

Chapter # 7

ATTACHMENT PROFILES AND INSTITUTIONAL TRUST: A person-centered analysis of teachers' relational dispositions

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ABSTRACT

Trust is critical in effective school functioning, yet its dispositional antecedents remain underexplored. This study examines how teachers' attachment orientations influence institutional trust within school communities. Drawing on attachment theory, the research employed Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to identify distinct teacher profiles based on closeness, dependence, and anxiety. Four profiles emerged: Secure, Anxious, Fearful-Avoidant, and Dismissing-Avoidant. Analysis revealed significant differences across these profiles in levels of trust toward principals, colleagues, students, and their parents. Teachers with secure attachment style reported the highest trust across all relational domains, while avoidant profiles exhibited the lowest. Anxious teachers reported moderate trust, reflecting ambivalent relational patterns. These findings suggest that teachers' relational dispositions, rooted in early attachment experiences, shape how they interpret institutional dynamics and respond to trust-building efforts. The study contributes to the literature by bridging intrapersonal and organizational perspectives on trust and offers practical implications for leadership and professional development. Recognizing attachment-based tendencies may help create more responsive strategies to foster trust in educational settings.

Keywords: attachment theory, latent profile analysis, organizational trust, teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Trust is widely regarded as a cornerstone of effective educational environments, influencing collaboration, leadership effectiveness, and student outcomes. In most empirical investigations, trust has been examined as a consequence of institutional or interpersonal behaviors, such as leadership style and communication (Sun, Zhang, & Forsyth, 2023). However, this view overlooks the dispositional foundations that teachers bring to their professional relationships. Teachers do not enter school settings as blank slates. Instead, their expectations, perceptions, and reactions are filtered through internal working models formed in early relational experiences.

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982; Hazan & Shaver, 1987) provides a framework for understanding how predispositions shape interpersonal dynamics. While it has informed teacher–student relationship research (e.g., Spilt & Koomen, 2022), little is known about how teachers' attachment orientations affect trust in other school stakeholders. Existing work links attachment styles to affective trust in principals (Karapinar, 2015), but broader investigations into trust among colleagues, students, and parents remain scarce. In ambiguous or high-stakes contexts, attachment schemas may be especially influential, guiding teachers' interpretations of others as benevolent, reliable, or threatening (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

The present study seeks to address this gap by integrating a person-centered approach to explore the role of attachment orientations in shaping trust among teachers. In line with calls for more integrative perspectives, this study utilizes the Latent Profile Analysis

(LPA; Morin, Meyer, Creusier, & Biétry, 2016) to examine attachment profiles as a way of capturing how closeness, dependence, and anxiety interact in patterned combinations rather than in isolation. While variable-centered studies have provided valuable insights, they may obscure meaningful heterogeneity across individuals. A profile-based approach is theoretically important because it mirrors the multidimensional nature of attachment theory, which posits that attachment orientations are not reducible to single factors but instead reflect characteristic patterns of relational schemas. This approach offers a more nuanced understanding of dispositional influences on school relationships, with implications for leadership, professional development, and organizational climate.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Defining Attachment

Attachment theory, developed by Bowlby (1982) and further elaborated upon by Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1979), provides a foundational framework for understanding the emotional bond between a child and their caregiver, as well as its impact on self-perception and social development. Central to the theory is the concept of internal working models, defined as cognitive schemas shaped by early interactions that guide expectations and behaviors in future relationships. Ainsworth et al. (1979) identified three distinct infant attachment styles, secure, anxious/avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent, highlighting individual differences in attachment.

Bowlby (1982) argued that early relational patterns shape later social functioning, and Hazan and Shaver (1987) extended this to adult romantic relationships, linking secure attachment to stability and anxious attachment to instability. Collins and Read (1990) advanced the field with a multidimensional model of adult attachment, comprising closeness (comfort with intimacy), dependence (trust in others' availability), and anxiety (fear of rejection). Secure attachment combines high closeness and dependence with low anxiety, whereas anxious attachment reflects high anxiety with moderate to high closeness and dependence. Avoidant styles involve low closeness and dependence: dismissing-avoidant individuals show low anxiety and emphasize self-reliance, while fearful-avoidant individuals report high anxiety, seeking intimacy yet fearing harm.

Building on the broader application of Bowlby's attachment theory within workplace contexts (Yip, Ehrhardt, Black, & Walker, 2017), attachment theory has been increasingly applied in education, particularly in teacher–student relationships. Building on parent–child attachment research, teachers have been conceptualized as secondary attachment figures in early childhood (Spilt & Koomen, 2022). Studies show that early caregiving, relational schemas, and attachment styles shape interaction quality (García-Rodríguez, Redín, & Abaitua, 2023). For example, avoidant attachment and negatively valenced teacher narratives predict reduced classroom emotional climate, lower sensitivity, and limited perspective-taking (Sher-Censor, Nahamias-Zlotolov, & Dolev, 2019). The Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) initiative applied these insights, improving student outcomes and reducing disciplinary issues (Rose, McGuire-Snieckus, Gilbert, & McInnes, 2019), highlighting the practical value of attachment-informed practice.

2.2. Defining Trust

The concept of trust has been a central concern in educational research for over three decades, yet it remains a complex and contested construct lacking a universally agreed-upon definition (Bukko, Liu, & Johnson, 2021). Despite numerous attempts across disciplines to delineate its meaning, trust continues to be understood in varied and sometimes contradictory

ways, prompting scholars to note the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the term (Shayo, Rao, & Kakupa, 2021). Within the educational domain, trust is understood as a dynamic, reciprocal process among stakeholders. Hoy and Tarter (2006) defined faculty trust as mutual teacher–parent commitment to students’ well-being, extending to principals, colleagues, and families. Keravnos and Symeou (2024) highlighted eight leadership practices, fairness, respect, reliability, transparency, and emotional support, as central to building trust. Similarly, Hong et al. (2020) emphasized shared values, professional confidence, emotional safety, and openness to vulnerability as key conditions for cultivating trust in schools.

Foundational research has highlighted the pivotal role of trust in promoting school effectiveness, recognizing it as a core dimension of interpersonal, professional, and institutional relationships (Shayo et al., 2021). Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) concept of *relational trust* highlighted respect, competence, and personal regard among principals, teachers, parents, and students as key to school improvement. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2011), analyzing survey data from 2,104 teachers in 84 Flemish secondary schools, found that teachers’ perceptions of students’ teachability strongly predicted trust, with organizational context also influencing it, while student culture’s academic orientation did not. Recent evidence shows that trust shapes culture and climate, strengthens relationships, and supports student achievement (Zhang, Bowers, & Mao, 2021). In centralized systems, trusted leaders demonstrate higher efficacy and foster cohesive communities (Keravnos & Symeou, 2024). Trust also predicts teachers’ self-efficacy, linked to adaptive organizational behaviors (Choong, Ng, Ai Na, & Tan, 2020), and enhances well-being by reducing depressive symptoms and buffering long working hours (Tsuyuguchi, 2023).

Building on these contributions, Bormann, Niedlich, and Würbel (2022) highlighted the need to understand trust in education through a multidisciplinary lens, noting its complexity across individual, institutional, and societal domains. They proposed a comprehensive model that links trust in and among educational settings, educational attainment, generalized social trust, and educational governance. This framework underscores that trust in schools is not confined to dyadic relationships but is deeply embedded within broader systemic dynamics.

2.3. The Relationship Between Attachment and Trust in Teachers

Researchers have examined how attachment styles shape trust in educational relationships, especially between teachers and students. Studies show that teachers’ attachment orientations influence their capacity to build and sustain classroom and collegial interactions (Ning, Lee, & Lee, 2015; Price, 2012). For instance, Riley (2010) emphasized the impact of teachers’ attachment styles on their capacity to navigate and maintain both classroom and staffroom relationships, highlighting the role of attachment processes in shaping emotional regulation during everyday educational challenges. Similarly, empirical evidence supports the importance of teacher-student relationships in serving as a secure base, fostering emotional security and resilience in children (Spilt & Koomen, 2022).

While research has examined attachment and trust in teacher–student dynamics, studies on broader school relationships, including principals, colleagues, and parents, are limited. However, teachers’ internal working models likely guide how they construe others’ intentions. For instance, securely attached individuals may view ambiguous behavior as benign, anxiously attached teachers as exclusionary, and avoidant teachers may minimize relational engagement. Karapinar (2015) found secure and preoccupied attachment styles predicted affective trust in principals, but evidence on collegial or parent interactions remains limited. This gap underscores the need for system-level studies on how attachment orientations influence trust across the school community.

3. AIMS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Building upon the literature reviewed above, the present study was designed to address two primary aims: (a) to identify distinct attachment profiles in teachers and (b) to investigate whether these profiles are associated with differences in trust toward principals, colleagues, and students/parents. Attachment research typically distinguishes three dimensions (anxiety, avoidance, and dependence), but the following hypotheses focus on anxiety and avoidance, as these are the most consistently validated (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Dependence, though included in the LPA, conceptually overlaps with the other two and is less reliably supported as a distinct construct (Ravitz, Maunder, Hunter, Sthankiya, & Lancee, 2010). Thus, the following research hypotheses were proposed:

H1. Distinct latent profiles will emerge based on teachers' experiences related to closeness, dependence, and anxiety (Hypothesis 1).

H2. Teachers assigned to profiles characterized by higher levels of closeness will report higher levels of trust (Hypothesis 2a), while profiles marked by high anxiety will report lower levels of trust (Hypothesis 2b).

4. METHOD

4.1. Sample

The final sample comprised 314 Greek in-service teachers. Among the participants, 94 identified as men (29.9%), 218 as women (69.4%), and 2 (0.6%) chose not to disclose their gender. Their age ranged from 22 to 67 years ($M = 41.93$, $SD = 11.25$). Regarding marital status, the majority ($N = 196$, 59.3%) reported being married or in a committed relationship, and 128 (31.2%) were single, divorced, or widowed. In terms of educational attainment, 181 participants (57.6%) held a bachelor's degree, 129 (41.1%) held a master's degree, and 4 (1.3%) held a doctoral degree. Concerning their professional context, the majority were employed in general education ($N = 214$, 68.2%), and 100 were working in special education (31.8%). Participants reported between 1 and 37 years of teaching experience ($M = 14.38$, $SD = 10.76$).

4.2. Materials

4.2.1. Revised Adult Attachment Scale - Close Relationships Version

The Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996) was used to assess teachers' attachment patterns. The scale was translated from English to Greek using a standard forward-backward translation procedure. It includes 18 items that assess three dimensions, each comprising six items: close (e.g., "*I find it relatively easy to get close to people*"), depend (e.g., "*I know that people will be there when I need them*"), and anxiety (e.g., "*I want to get close to people, but I worry about being hurt*"). Responses are provided on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (very characteristic of me). In the present study, the three-factor solution was confirmed, and the confirmatory factor analysis showed that the model fit the data very well ($\chi^2(127) = 2.598$, $p < .000$, CFI = .942, TLI = .930, SRMR = .052, RMSEA = .065, 90% CI [.062, .081]). The reliability of the subscales was found to be good (Cronbach's $\alpha_{\text{close}} = .89$, Cronbach's $\alpha_{\text{depend}} = .86$, Cronbach's $\alpha_{\text{anxiety}} = .93$).

4.2.2. Omnibus Trust Scale

The Omnibus Trust Scale (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003) was used to measure faculty trust in schools. The scale was translated from English to Greek using a standard forward-backward translation procedure. It includes 26 items, of which 8 refer to trust toward principal (e.g., “*The principal in this school is competent in doing his or her job*”), 8 refer to trust in colleagues (e.g., “*I have faith in the integrity of my colleagues*”), and 10 refer to trust in students and their parents (e.g., “*Parents in this school are reliable in their commitments*”). Responses are typically provided on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). In the present study, the three-factor solution was confirmed ($\chi^2(230) = 2.354, p < .000$, CFI = .937, TLI = .924, SRMR = .048, RMSEA = .069, 90% CI [.063, .0777]), and the reliability of the subscales was found to be good (Cronbach’s $\alpha_{\text{principal}} = .92$, Cronbach’s $\alpha_{\text{colleagues}} = .94$, Cronbach’s $\alpha_{\text{students_parents}} = .90$).

4.3. Procedure

The research received ethical approval from the author’s affiliated university. All research activities adhered to the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) and followed the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union. Data were gathered through an online questionnaire, distributed via convenience sampling using social media channels and educator-focused professional networks. Prior to participation, individuals received a detailed overview of the study, including its aims, ethical safeguards, and data handling procedures. Consent was obtained digitally, and respondents were assured that their involvement was entirely voluntary and anonymous. The data collection phase was conducted from April to May 2025.

4.4. Data Analyses

Initial analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS (Version 27) to assess intercorrelations and evaluate the suitability of parametric methods. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations) were computed to summarize the data structure.

To address Hypothesis 1, LPA was performed in R (Tidy, Mclust) using RStudio (version 2024.12.1 Build 563). Models with two to five profiles were tested. Given the often-conflicting results from fit indices such as AIC, BIC, AWE, CLC, and KIC (Akogul & Erisoglu, 2017), the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP; Saaty, 1990) was employed. AHP integrates these indices into a Composite Relative Importance Vector (C-RIV), supporting a more objective model selection. The model with the highest C-RIV was retained (Akogul & Erisoglu, 2017).

To test Hypotheses 2a and 2b, ANOVAs were conducted to examine whether the resulting profiles differed significantly in levels of trust toward principals, colleagues, students, and parents.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Means and Correlations Between the Examined Variables

Preliminary analyses examined the mean scores and intercorrelations among key study variables. The mean scores indicated moderate to high levels of closeness among teachers, with slightly lower average scores for attachment dependence and anxiety. Concerning trust, participants reported relatively high trust toward school principals, followed by trust in students and parents, and slightly lower trust in colleagues. Additionally, the correlation matrix revealed statistically significant associations between attachment dimensions and trust variables (Table 1).

Table 1.
Means and Correlations of the Examined Variables.

Variables	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
Attachment						
1. Close	3.18 (.93)					
2. Depend	2.70 (.76)	.58**				
3. Anxiety	2.68 (1.03)	-.24**	-.22**			
Trust						
4. Trust toward principal	4.12 (1.06)	.45*	.47**	-.20**		
5. Trust toward colleagues	3.71 (1.03)	.43*	.39**	-.18**	.52**	
6. Trust toward students and parents	3.81 (.81)	.16**	.30**	-.15**	.18**	.31**

Note. ** $p < .01$ level

5.2. Attachment Profiles

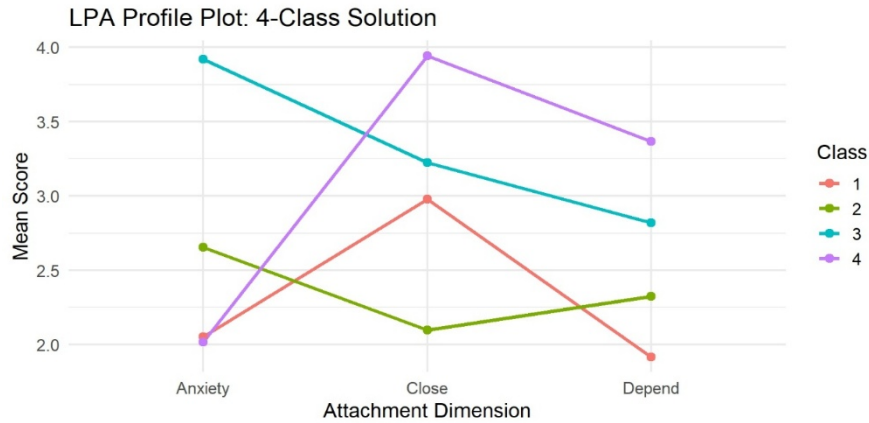
To identify distinct attachment profiles, LPA was performed, testing models with two to five latent profiles. The fit criteria and C-RIV for the estimated profile solutions are presented in Table 2. Based on the profile solution with the best fit indices and the highest entropy and C-RIV score, we concluded that four attachment profiles could be distinguished.

Table 2.
Fit Indices of Attachment Profiles.

N classes	AIC	AWE	BIC	CLC	KIC	Entropy	C-RIV
2	2245.04	2332.53	2271.28	2295.55	2252.04	.851	.957
3	2256.05	2393.54	2297.30	2401.85	2267.05	.756	.902
4	2191.34	2378.82	2247.58	2323.56	2206.34	.814	.902
5	2253.34	2490.82	2324.58	2472.12	2272.34	.745	.834

Figure 1 displays the 4-class attachment profile identified. Class 1 ($N = 68$; 21.66%) was designated as “Fearful-Avoidant”. Characterized by relatively low levels of attachment anxiety, moderate comfort with closeness, and low willingness to depend on others, this group reflects ambivalence toward intimacy. Individuals in this class may desire close relationships but simultaneously fear rejection and avoid reliance on others. Class 2 was labeled “Dismissing-Avoidant” ($N = 59$; 18.79%). Defined by low comfort with closeness, moderate anxiety, and moderate levels of dependence, this profile reflects emotional distancing and discomfort with intimacy. Class 3 ($N = 89$; 28.34%) was labeled “Anxious” as it was marked by high attachment anxiety and moderate scores on both closeness and dependence. These individuals may crave emotional closeness but feel insecure or unworthy, which can lead to a fear of abandonment and excessive concern about relational approval. Finally, Class 4, the largest subgroup, was labeled “Secure” ($N = 98$; 31.21%). Displaying low anxiety and high scores on both closeness and dependence, this profile aligns with secure, well-adjusted relational functioning. Thus, hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Figure 1.
Latent Profile Plot Across Four Classes.



5.3. The Association of Attachment Profiles with Trust

The next aim of the study was to examine the associations between the attachment profiles and trust dimensions. Analyses of variance revealed statistically significant differences across profiles in trust toward principals [$F(3, 310) = 22.341, p < .001, \eta^2 = .178$], colleagues [$F(3, 310) = 20.327, p < .001, \eta^2 = .164$], and students and their parents [$F(3, 310) = 11.660, p < .001, \eta^2 = .101$]. Post-hoc comparisons with Bonferroni correction (Table 3) revealed that securely attached teachers reported the highest trust, followed by anxious, while fearful- and dismissing-avoidant teachers reported the lowest. The results confirmed hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Table 3.
Means and Pairwise p -values from Post-hoc Comparisons Between Attachment Latent Profiles and Trust.

Profiles	Trust toward the principal	Trust in colleagues	Trust in students and parents
	Mean (<i>SD</i>)		
Fearful-Avoidant	3.65 (.99)	3.26 (.78)	3.41 (.77)
Dismissing-Avoidant	3.65 (.90)	3.43 (1.05)	3.86 (.80)
Anxious	4.13 (1.01)	3.56 (.97)	3.73 (.77)
Secure	4.12 (.93)	4.30 (.95)	4.13 (.75)
Comparisons between groups			
	p -values		
Fearful-Avoidant vs Dismissing-Avoidant	1.00	1.00	.007
Fearful-Avoidant vs Anxious	.011	.282	.054
Fearful-Avoidant vs Secure	< .001	< .001	< .001
Dismissing-Avoidant vs Anxious	.018	1.00	1.00
Dismissing-Avoidant vs Secure	< .001	< .001	.256
Anxious vs Secure	< .001	< .001	.004

6. DISCUSSION

The present study employed a person-centered approach to explore the associations between teachers' attachment styles and their trust in faculty members. Several noteworthy findings emerged, offering valuable insights into the relational dynamics within educational settings. Four profiles emerged, Fearful-Avoidant, Dismissing-Avoidant, Anxious, and Secure, aligning with core dimensions of adult attachment (Collins & Read, 1990) and earlier typologies (Ainsworth et al., 1979; Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). Findings support the theoretical distinction between secure and insecure attachment and highlight the value of multidimensional models for capturing nuanced relational patterns.

Teachers with secure attachment reported the highest trust levels, followed by anxious teachers, while Fearful-Avoidant and Dismissing-Avoidant profiles showed lower trust. This aligns with attachment theory, which links secure orientations to positive internal working models and confidence in relational contexts (Bowlby, 1982; Simmons, Gooty, Nelson, & Little, 2009). Prior empirical evidence has shown that secure attachment supports emotional regulation, openness, and interpersonal sensitivity, facilitating trust in others' availability and behavior (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2007; Esposito, Totaro, Di Maro, & Passeggia, 2024). Such individuals are more likely to engage in open communication, interpret others benevolently, and sustain stable relationships, highlighting the organizational value of secure attachment for cohesive school climates.

The Anxious profile, which reported moderate levels of trust, appears to reflect a relational ambivalence. While anxiously attached individuals desire connection and approval, their underlying fear of rejection may trigger hypervigilance, potentially undermining trust even in supportive environments (Collins & Read, 1990). Anxiously attached teachers may show dependency and heightened emotional attunement, initially supporting trust. However, overinvestment, unrealistic expectations, or misinterpreted cues can undermine it, resulting in conditional trust driven by emotional need rather than stable confidence. This pattern reflects a paradoxical strategy that blends affiliative and defensive behaviors rather than being purely maladaptive.

In contrast, teachers within the Fearful-Avoidant and Dismissing-Avoidant profiles demonstrated the lowest levels of trust. This is consistent with theoretical models in which fearful individuals desire intimacy but expect rejection, while dismissing individuals prioritize autonomy and minimize the value of close relationships (Bartholomew, 1990). Both avoidant types may resort to relational withdrawal or emotional disengagement, which likely restricts opportunities for building trust, even in objectively supportive school environments (Bao, Li, Zhang, Tang, & Chen, 2022).

While securely attached teachers showed consistently high trust, insecure profiles displayed greater variability, especially toward colleagues and students' parents. This indicates that attachment styles influence trust differently across relational targets. Trust in principals may be shaped more by authority and role clarity, whereas trust in colleagues and parents may develop through repeated interactions, activating attachment-based scripts. Future research should examine moderators such as perceived intimacy, authority, and emotional demands across relational contexts.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter connects attachment theory with organizational trust, highlighting teachers' relational dispositions as a foundation of school dynamics. By examining how attachment shapes trust in leaders, colleagues, and families, the study underscores the value

of person-centered approaches in educational research. Positioning attachment as a bridge between psychology and organizational practice emphasizes its practical relevance: relationally attuned professional development, mentoring, and trust-oriented leadership can strengthen school communities. Against the backdrop of a global trust crisis in education, marked by strained teacher–leader relations, accountability pressures, and declining public confidence, these findings suggest that rebuilding trust requires not only structural reforms but also attention to the psychological processes guiding educators’ perceptions and behaviors.

As Bormann et al. (2022) note, trust is embedded in multi-level governance, and reforms, accountability pressures, and high-stakes testing can strain educator–leader trust. Centralized accountability may foster surveillance over collegiality, causing insecurely attached teachers to perceive demands as threats (Abbaspour, Hosseingholizadeh, & Bellibaş, 2024), whereas policies promoting autonomy and collaboration can strengthen trust. Career-stage differences may further complicate this picture. Novice teachers, often reliant on external validation, may exhibit fragile or anxious trust, whereas veteran teachers may draw on accumulated relational capital to sustain secure orientations, or, conversely, reinforce dismissing tendencies if institutional disappointments accumulate (Smith, Ulvik, & Helleve, 2019). Future longitudinal research is needed to trace these trajectories across the professional lifespan.

Finally, attachment-based trust dynamics should be understood within systemic challenges and global educational trends. Trust supports teachers’ socio-emotional well-being, resilience, and relational pedagogy, protecting against burnout, attrition, and low morale (Liu, Chen, Cheng, & Xiao, 2023). In contrast, low trust may hinder leadership and increase disengagement, exacerbating teacher shortages. In the post-COVID era, with strained institutional trust from rapid reforms and increased workload, secure attachment is particularly important for professional collaboration and organizational resilience. Linking attachment profiles to these systemic issues underscores how fostering trust and emotional safety in schools can address pressing educational challenges.

8. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study’s findings have implications for teacher development and school leadership, particularly in light of educational psychology’s growing focus on socio-emotional perspectives and organizational resilience. Trust is influenced not only by organizational practices but also by teachers’ attachment orientations and relational schemas, suggesting that conventional interventions like communication training may be insufficient. Integrating attachment-informed approaches, such as relational self-reflection workshops, emotionally attuned peer coaching, and mentoring that models secure trust-building, can strengthen socio-emotional competencies and support authentic trust. At a whole-school level, scalable strategies such as restorative practices or relational coaching can embed trust-building into daily routines, aligning systemic conditions with relational awareness to foster resilient, trusting communities.

The study also offers guidance for leaders addressing resistance to trust-building. Teachers with fearful-avoidant or dismissing-avoidant profiles may not respond to institutional initiatives due to relational hesitancy rather than leadership deficiencies. Leadership strategies that combine structural consistency with relational sensitivity, providing emotional safety, supporting autonomy, and enabling gradual, low-risk trust experiences, may be more effective in engaging these teachers. By attending to attachment-related dispositions, schools can promote socio-emotional well-being and adaptive resilience, supporting both individual and organizational capacity to thrive amid change.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences, and the use of self-reported measures may be subject to bias. In addition, the emphasis on background theory, while intended to situate the study within a robust conceptual framework, may appear extensive and could be streamlined in future research to sharpen the focus on empirical findings. Additionally, conducted in Greek schools, with hierarchical structures and strong interpersonal expectations (Saiti & Eliophotou-Menon, 2009), the findings may overemphasize authority-based trust and limit generalizability. Future research should investigate how cultural dimensions such as power distance and collectivism influence the relationship between attachment and institutional trust, ideally through cross-cultural comparative designs. Finally, although the three attachment dimensions theoretically yield eight patterns, empirical studies often identify fewer due to rarity or limited measurement distinctiveness (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). In this study, a four-profile solution provided the best fit and reflected the most salient relational orientations among teachers. Future research should examine larger, more culturally diverse samples to determine if additional profiles emerge in educational contexts.

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