"This School is Part and Parcel of Myself": Workplace Attachment Promotes Positive Affect Among Teachers through Work Engagement

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The current paper examines the relationship between teachers' attachment to their institution and positive affect, through work engagement. In addition, the hypothesized path model considers two predictors of workplace attachment, namely teaching experience in the current institution and the frequency of communication with colleagues in an ordinary working day. Data were gathered from 289 primary school teachers employed in Turkish public schools through convenience sampling. A structural equation modelling method was applied for testing the hypothesized path model. Findings demonstrated teachers who frequently communicated with their colleagues had a high workplace attachment. Furthermore, primary school teachers who had a stronger attachment to their institution more engaged to their work, which in turn leads to higher levels of positive affect and lower levels of negative affect. Although previous literature emphasized the importance of the workplace on employee well-being and work engagement, previous work on teachers' attachment to their institutions and its consequences is limited. With these findings, the current paper made important theoretical and practical contributions (e.g., examining the predictors and well-being outcomes of emotional and cognitive bonding to work environments in a non-WEIRD sample) considering attachment to work environments is a less-studied topic in the place attachment literature as compared to other contexts (e.g., neighborhoods, cities).

Introduction

Forming meaningful connections with a particular place (i.e., home, neighborhood) is essential for almost every human being. Also conceptualized as place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992; Lewicka, 2011), these ties help us to construct and maintain our social identities (Lalli, 1992; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996), and to disconnect from emotional and cognitive

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burden of daily life (Hartig et al., 2001). Besides, prior work suggested that place attachment promotes life satisfaction (Casakin & Reizer, 2017) and well-being (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010). However, studies investigating interactions between individuals and their surroundings have been mostly conducted in the limited number of places, including homes (e.g., Meagher & Cheadle, 2020), neighborhoods (e.g., Lewicka, 2005), and cities (e.g., Lalli, 1992). But contexts such as workplaces have got little attention (e.g., Rioux & Pignault, 2013a) although the previous studies highlighted the vitality of workplace's physical and social environment on employee well-being (e.g., Bergefurt, 2022). In addition, the number of studies that examine teachers' attachments to their institutional spaces (i.e., schools) is relatively low. So, to address these gaps, the essential aim of the current paper is to examine workplace attachment and life satisfaction relationship among educational staff (i.e., teachers) working in elementary schools in Türkiye. Work engagement is also considered to mediate this association.

Work Engagement

For decades, numerous researchers have examined the elements that affect employees' engagement in their work. Work engagement is "a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Prior work has emphasized the positive association between employee engagement and their motivation, as well as their enthusiastic involvement in their work (Bakker et al., 2008). Furthermore, research has shown that engaged employees not only experience higher job satisfaction (Tims et al., 2013), but they are also less likely to have intentions of leaving their current positions (van Beek et al., 2014). Moreover, studies have consistently demonstrated a positive correlation between work engagement and enhanced work performance (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023; Yao et al., 2022). According to Bakker (2009), engaged employees perform better in their tasks since they generally are in a better mood while working, report better health, easily build their resources regarding their jobs and daily lives, and positively influence their colleagues in terms of work motivation.

Additionally, prior research has indicated that engaged employees tend to report better physiological and psychological health (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Specifically, research has consistently shown a positive association between work engagement and both life satisfaction (Liu et al., 2019) and psychological well-being (Caesens et al., 2014). On the other hand, work engagement has been found as negatively associated with depressive (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012) and psychosomatic (Schaufeli et al., 2008) signs of health issues. Besides its direct effects on physical and psychological health, work engagement may also boost well-being through the promotion of healthy behaviors. As an example, Amano and colleagues (2020) highlighted that engaged employees do more physical exercise and adopt a healthier drinking habits (i.e., consuming no or moderate amounts of alcohol). The majority of the relationship between work engagement and psychological health is that it improves life satisfaction and well-being, reducing the likelihood of experiencing stress, anxiety, sadness, exhaustion, and psychological tension (Cortés-Denia et al., 2023).

Prior literature on employee engagement highlighted that several factors lie behind work engagement (Maslach et al., 2001). Humphrey and colleagues (2007) classified these antecedents as motivational (e.g., having control on own work, carrying out various tasks, perceiving his/her work as important and beneficial to others), social (e.g., receiving social support from others in the workplace), and contextual (e.g., having a noise-free workspace) characteristics. In this meta-analysis study, authors also showed that these characteristics are

associated with consequences for both work (e.g., work performance, work satisfaction, organizational commitment) and well-being (e.g., experienced stress, burnout). Similarly, Maslach and colleagues (2001) suggested that perceiving a fair workload, having autonomy at work, being acknowledged and rewarded, working with helpful colleagues, perceiving no violations of fairness and justice at work, and finding meaning resulted in higher work engagement.

Workplace Attachment and its Consequences

Workplace attachment is another factor that affects work engagement and employee well-being, as earlier studies (İnalhan & Finch, 2004; Rioux & Pignault, 2013a) suggested. Throughout their lives, individuals seek to construct meaningful relationships with others including family members as well as particular places such as homes. Those connections are essential to preserve individuals against potential harm (Ainsworth et al., 2015) and have specific positive consequences for them. For example, positive cognitive and emotional bonds with the place predict greater levels of well-being (Scannell & Gifford, 2017) and ensure a feeling of security (Giuliani et al., 2003).

Earlier research on place attachment asserted that numerous variables influence its intensity, including time spent in the place (i.e., length of residence) and social connections. Lewicka (2010) classified these predictors of place attachment as socio-demographic determinants (e.g., homeownership, time spent in a specific place), social determinants (e.g., having positive communication with other individuals in the residential area), and physical determinants (e.g., the presence of restorative places in the neighborhood).

Among these variables, time spent in the specific place and homeownership have been consistently found to positively predict place attachment (Lewicka, 2011; Mesch & Manor, 1998). Previous studies indicated that establishing positive ties through creating memories with a specific place requires time (Bonauito et al., 1999). Besides those socio-demographic predictors, physical aspects of a place are also critical to forming connections with a place. Specifically, the existence and accessibility of restorative environments (e.g., urban parks) in the neighborhood (Bonaiuto et al., 1999) and the presence of the spaces where inhabitants walk, exercise, and interact with others securely (e.g., Manzo, 2018) are some physical characteristics that foster place attachment. The social context of the place is another determinant that encourages or discourages attachment to the place. According to Scannell and Gifford (2013), positive contacts with other people in the residential area help individuals to form positive bonds with the place. Since these relationships provide several benefits (e.g., getting emotional assistance from neighbors and maintaining a sense of security), individuals quickly establish positive ties with the place (Dallago et al., 2009).

Although there are many studies investigating people-place relationships in the contexts like home (Lewicka, 2010; Meagher & Cheadle, 2020), neighborhoods (Lewicka, 2005), cities (Lalli, 1992), and educational environments (Cemalcılar, 2010), only a few papers have explored this association at the workplace level (Rioux & Pignault, 2013a; Rioux & Pignault, 2013b). A hospital environment served as the setting for one of these studies. The study reveals a positive correlation between a higher degree of job engagement and a more secure workplace attachment, mediated both positively by workplace comfort and negatively by the perception of challenging patient interactions (Mura et al., 2023).

Previous studies investigating the consequences of workplace attachment demonstrated that attached workers tend to report higher job satisfaction (Rioux & Pignault, 2013a; Rioux,

2016; Scrima et al., 2019), they are more emotionally attached to and involved in their organizations (Rioux & Pignault, 2013b), and exhibited more organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., being a negotiator in a conflict situation in the workplace, helping other employees when they experience difficulties in their tasks) in the workplace (Le Roy & Rioux, 2012; Nonnis et al., 2022; Rioux & Pavalache-Ilie, 2013). Besides, a study conducted with school principals (Shen et al., 2021) demonstrated that workplace attachment may be a protective factor for principals who suffered from work stress and considering leaving their institutions.

The Present Research

The number of studies that examine teachers' attachments to their institutional spaces (i.e., schools) is relatively low, as stated previously. So, the essential objective of this study is to comprehend possible determinants and consequences of workplace attachment for teachers. Particularly, the current research seeks to understand how primary school teachers' attachment to their school environments influences their life satisfaction and the role of their engagement with their work in this relationship. Considering the past studies mentioned previously, our expectation is that teaching experience in the current institution and the frequency of communication with colleagues in an ordinary working day predict greater workplace attachment. Besides, we expect that greater workplace attachment result in better work engagement, which in turn results in a high level of positive affect and a low level of negative affect (see Figure 1 for our hypothesized path model).

The hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Teaching experience in the current institution and the frequency of communication with colleagues on an ordinary working day would both positively predict greater workplace attachment.

H2: Workplace attachment would be a positive predictor of work engagement.

H3: Work engagement would positively predict positive effects but negatively predict negative ones.

H4: Work engagement would mediate the relationship between workplace attachment and positive and negative affect. Thus, we expected that greater workplace attachment results in better work engagement, which in turn results in a high level of positive affect and a low level of negative affect.
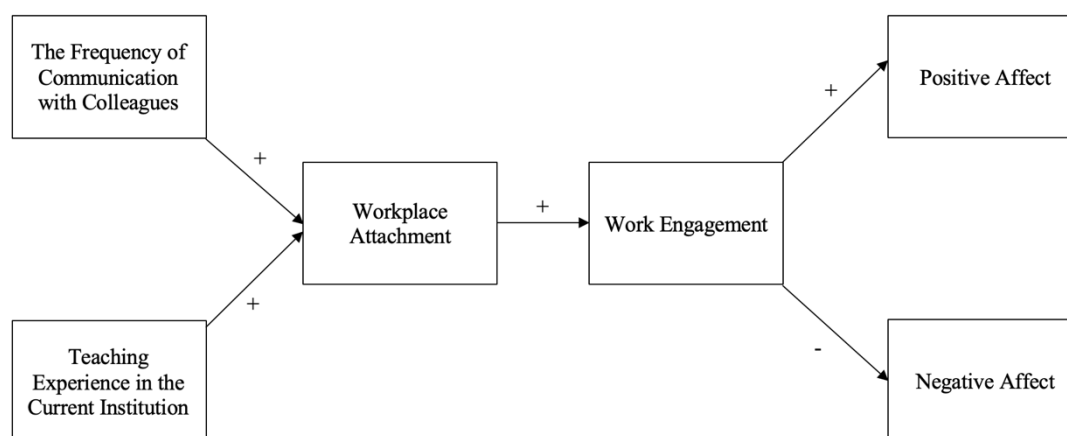

Figure 1. The hypothesized path model.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The final dataset of the current study consisted of 289 (154 males, 132 females, three did not want to state; M_{age} = 37.46, SD_{age} = 9.29) primary school teachers. 229 participants filled out the survey battery online and remaining 60 participants completed the questionnaire in pencil. Ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Committee of İnönü University (Decision Number: 2021 - 10).

Instruments

Demographic Information Form. The following questions were asked to understand the participants' demographic characteristics: gender, age, teaching experience (as month), teaching experience in the current institution (as month), the frequency of communication with colleagues in a standard working day, whether they live in rural or urban areas, and the population of the place where they live.

Workplace Attachment Scale. Rioux (2006, as cited in Rioux and Pignault, 2013a) developed this scale to understand employees' emotional bond with their workplaces. Rioux and Pignault (2013a) adapted this scale to teacher sample (i.e., "I am attached to my workplace", "There are some places in the school which bring back memories".). Participants specified their responses on a 1 (definitely don't agree) to 5 (definitely agree) Likert scale. This 7-item unidimensional scale was adapted into Turkish in this study (Cronbach's α = .87) (see Figure 2 for factor loadings and item labels) (see the Appendix for the Turkish version).

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Schaufeli and colleagues (2002) developed this instrument to measure work engagement levels of employees. The original version has 17 items and 3 dimensions as vigor (i.e., "At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well"), dedication (i.e., "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose"), and absorption (i.e., "When I am working, I forget everything else around me"). Turkish adaptation studies of the scale were completed by Eryılmaz and Doğan (2012). Respondents indicated their responses on a 1 (definitely don't agree) to 5 (definitely agree) Likert scale. Internal reliabilities for the Turkish version were found as .68 (student version) and .80 (employee version) for vigor, .91 (student and employee versions) for dedication, and .73 (student version) and .75 (employee version) for absorption.

Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS). Watson and colleagues (1988) developed PANAS to measure positive and negative affect of individuals. This 20-item scale has two dimensions as negative affectivity (i.e., upset, hostile) and positive affectivity (i.e., determined, excited). The internal reliability scores for original version .85 (for positive affectivity) and .88 (for negative affectivity). We used Turkish version of this scale (Cronbach's α = .86 for positive affect and .83 for negative affect) (Gençöz, 2000).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Prior to test our hypothesized model, we performed some preliminary analyses (i.e., descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and independent samples t-tests). After checking univariate and multivariate outliers, we detected and deleted 4 outliers from final dataset.

Table 1 provides the current study's sample characteristics and Table 3 shows descriptive statistics, internal consistencies, and bivariate correlations.

We checked the skewness and kurtosis characteristics of the hypothesis model variables to ensure their normality. The frequency of communication with colleagues (*skewness = -1.41, kurtosis = 1.74*), teaching experience in the current institution (*skewness = 1.24, kurtosis = 1.67*), workplace attachment (*skewness = -.395, kurtosis = -.356*), work engagement (*skewness = -.678, kurtosis =.808*), positive affect (*skewness = -.468, kurtosis = -.242*), and negative affect (*skewness = 1.48, kurtosis = 2.51*) variables were normally distributed (see Kline, 2011).

We also conduct a series of independent samples t-tests to see whether statistically significant differences regarding gender and location of residence. Findings revealed that male and female respondents were not differed in terms of their scores of workplace attachment ($M_{male=}$ 3.56, M_{female} = 3.48, t = -.78, p = .437), work engagement ($M_{male=}$ 3.78, M_{female} = 3.94, t = 1.89, p = .06), positive affect ($M_{male=}$ 3.69, M_{female} = 3.74, t = .57, p = .570), and negative affect ($M_{male=}$ 1.72, M_{female} = 1.59, t = -1.79, p = .08). Moreover, participants who live in rural and urban areas were not differed in terms of their scores of workplace attachment ($M_{rural =}$ 3.45, M_{urban} = 3.54, t = -.70, p = .484), work engagement ($M_{rural =}$ 3.79, M_{urban} = 3.86, t = -.75, p = .456), positive affect ($M_{rural =}$ 3.58, M_{urban} = 3.74, t = -1.38, p = .169), and negative affect ($M_{rural =}$ 1.67, M_{urban} = 1.65, t = .15, p = .879) (see Table 3).

Table 1 *The Difference Between Gender and Location of Residence is Based on the Study's Variables.*

| | Gender | | | | | |
| | Male | | Female | | | |
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Workplace Attachment	3.56	.88	3.48	.86	-.78	.437
Work Engagement	3.78	.72	3.94	.68	1.89	.06
Positive Affect	3.69	.75	3.74	.8	.57	.57
Negative Affect	1.72	.6	1.59	.61	-1.79	.08
	Location of Residence					
	Rural		Urban			
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Workplace Attachment	3.45	.96	3.54	.85	-.7	.484
Work Engagement	3.79	.73	3.86	.69	-.75	.456
Positive Affect	3.58	.78	3.74	.78	-1.38	.169
Negative Affect	1.67	.69	1.65	.59	.15	.879

Note. *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard Deviation. Workplace attachment, work engagement, positive affect, and negative affect were rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Table 2 *Demographic Information*

Variables	f	%	Variables	f	%
Gender			*Rural or Urban?*		
Female	154	45.7	Rural	58	20.1
Male	132	53.3	Urban	231	79.9
Not Stated	3	1.0			
Geographical Region			*Frequency of Communication with Colleagues*		
Marmara	17	5.9	Never	3	1.0
Aegean	7	2.4	Rarely	16	5.5
Central Anatolia	17	5.9	Sometimes	86	29.8
Mediterranean	14	4.8	Frequently	183	63.3
Black Sea	4	1.4	Not Stated	1	.3
Eastern Anatolian	109	37.7			
Southeastern Anatolian	104	36.0			
Not Stated	17	5.9			
Population Size					
Less Than 2.000	43	14.9			
Between 2.000 and 10.000	41	14.2			
Between 10.001 and 100.00	81	28.0			
Between 100.001 and 1.000.000	92	31.8			
More Than 1.000.000	30	10.4			
Not Stated	2	.7			

We conducted bivariate correlation to see the relationship between variables. Age was positively significant with work experience ($r = .922$, $p < .001$), experience in the current institution ($r = .506$, $p < .001$), and populational size ($r = .353$, $p < .001$). The frequency of communication with colleagues is positively related to workplace attachment ($r = .246$, $p < .001$), work engagement ($r = .200$, $p < .001$), and positive affect ($r = .206$, $p < .001$), but negatively related to negative affect ($r = -.190$, $p < .001$). As we expected, workplace attachment positively correlates with work engagement ($r = .537$, $p < .001$), positive affect ($r = .401$, $p < .001$), and negatively correlates with negative affect ($r = -.340$, $p < .001$). We present the prominent relationship results here, and Table 2 provides more details.

Table 3 *Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach Alphas and Bivariate Correlations Between Study's Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	—								
2.Work Experience	.922***	—							
3. Experience in the Current Institution	.506***	.508***	—						
4. Populational Size	.353***	.373***	.225***	—					
5. The Frequency of Communication with Colleagues	.085	.148*	.152*	.029	—				
6. Workplace Attachment	.084	.099	.113	.110	.246***	— (.87)			
7. Work Engagement	.053	.094	.119*	.023	.200***	.537***	— (.95)		
8. Positive Affect	.006	-.017	.064	.111	.206***	.401***	.609***	— (.94)	
9. Negative Affect	-.053	-.064	-.071	.009	-.190***	-.340***	-.369***	-.358***	— (.86)
Mean	37.46	163.49	60.89	3.09	3.56	3.52	3.85	3.71	1.66
Standard Deviation	9.29	110.25	50.73	1.22	1.65	.87	.70	.78	.61
Minimum	22	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.40	1
Maximum	65	504	267	5	4	5	5	5	4.30

Note. 1) Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the scales can be seen in parentheses. 2) N = 289, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

The Factorial Structure of Workplace Attachment Scale

As indicated, Workplace Attachment Scale (Rioux, 2006; Rioux & Pignault, 2013a) was adapted into Turkish in the current study. A confirmatory factor analysis using the jamovi

was conducted to verify the one-dimensionality of the Workplace Attachment Scale for the current sample. Results demonstrated that the model did not fit the data well, $\chi2$ (n = 289, df = 14) = 58, $\chi2$ / df = 4.14, p < .001, CFI = .95, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .10, 90 % CI [.08, .13], SRMR = .04 (Bentler, 1990). Findings offered a modification solution as to put an error covariance between Item 3 and Item 6. Since these items are theoretically similar (see Figure 1 for item labels), adding error covariances is acceptable (Chou & Bentler, 2002). Thus, the model modification was made, and results showed that the second model fit the data better, $\chi2$ (n = 289, df = 12) = 29.1, $\chi2$ / df = 2.43, p < .01, CFI = .98, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .07, 90 % CI [.04, .10], SRMR = .03. Standardized parameter estimates for the one-factor model are indicated in Figure 2.
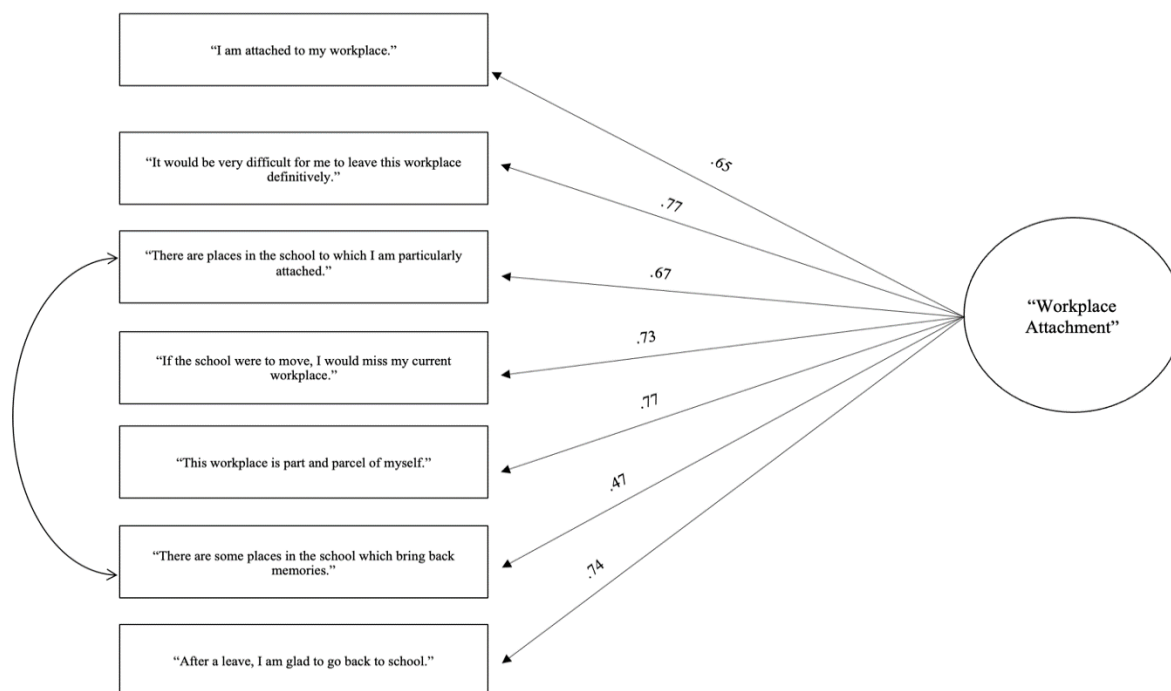

Figure 2. One factor model of Workplace Attachment Scale and standardized parameter estimates.

Main Findings

To analyze our hypothesized model, a path analysis was employed. While teaching experience in the current institution and the frequency of communication with colleagues in a standard working day was our exogenous variables, workplace attachment, work engagement, positive affect, and negative affect were our endogenous variables. The model fitted the data well, $\chi2$ (n =284, df = 8) = 19.2, $\chi2$ / df = 2.4, $p < .05$, CFI = .96, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .07, 90 % CI [.11, .18], SRMR = .05.

Considering the effect of predictor variables on workplace attachment, while the frequency of communication with colleagues (β = .24, SE = .08, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.165, .470]) significantly predicted workplace attachment, teaching experience in the current institution did not (β = .08, SE = .001, p = .199, 95% CI = [-.001, .003]). Work engagement was significantly predicted by workplace attachment (β = .54, SE = .04, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.354, .513]). Moreover, work engagement significantly predicted positive affect (β = .61, SE = .05, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.569, .774]) positively and negative affect (β = -.37, SE = .05, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [-.229, -.371]) negatively. The overall explained variance (i.e., R^2) in workplace attachment was .07, in work engagement was .29, in positive affect was .37, and in negative affect was .14 (see Figure 3 for standardized parameter estimates).

The current study's model also revealed several mediations. The variables of workplace attachment and work engagement played a mediator role in the model. The indirect effect of the frequency of communication with colleagues on positive affect (β = .08, SE = .03, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.043, .142]) and negative affect (β = -.05, SE = .01, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [-.071, -.018]) via workplace attachment and work engagement was significant. Moreover, workplace attachment had a significant indirect effect on positive affect (β = .33, SE = .04, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.222, .360]) and negative affect (β = -.20, SE = .03, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [-.092, -.199]) via work engagement.
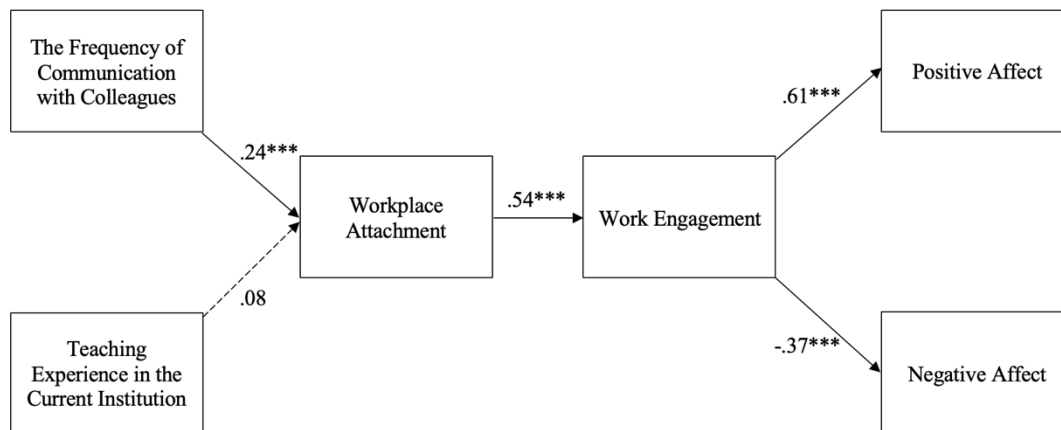

Figure 3. The path model; $\chi2$ (n = 284, df = 8) = 19.2, $\chi2$ / df = 2.4, $p < .05$, CFI = .96, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .07, 90 % CI [.03, .11], SRMR = .05.
Note. Nonsignificant paths were displayed as dotted lines. Numbers are standardized coefficients. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Discussion

The present research intends to reveal possible predictors and outcomes of workplace attachment for primary school teachers in Türkiye. Specifically, our essential purpose is to understand how teachers' emotional bonding with their schools influences their life satisfaction and the role of their engagement in their work in this association. To our knowledge, the current work is the first study examining teachers' emotional attachment to their institutions and its well-being and job-related outcomes (i.e., work engagement).

Previous work highlighted that time spent in a particular place (e.g., home, neighborhood, city) is one of the consistent determinants of place attachment (Lalli, 1992; Lewicka, 2011), since developing positive social connections with others (i.e., neighbors, colleagues) and forming place-related memories require time (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). In this regard, our expectation was teaching experience in the current institution would positively predict workplace attachment. Nevertheless, in contrast to our hypothesis, workplace attachment is not dependent on the time spent as a teacher in the current school, as in Rioux and Pignault's (2013a) study. Our findings are also parallel with some of the past research that found no significant association between time spent in a place and place attachment (e.g., Harris et al., 1996; Stokols & Shumaker, 1982), although most studies revealed a clear positive association (e.g., Lalli, 1992). According to Lewicka (2011), most of the studies have not investigated the shape of this relationship. In particular, with reference to Lalli (1992) and Harlan et al. (2005), she argued that the level of place attachment reaches its peak in the first years of residence and remains more stable after this initial experience of the place. In addition, several studies (Gustafson, 200; Hummon, 1992; Lewicka, 2013) demonstrated that time spent in a specific place is not a prerequisite for place attachment. Specifically, in her study, Lewicka (2013) made a distinction between the concepts of place-inherited and place-discovered. While the former is characterized by a strong sense of attachment based on memories related to the place and a longer duration of residence in the place, the latter refers to an active style of attachment that is characterized by intentional and active engagement with a place.

In the current study, we found a clear predictive role of the frequency of communication with colleagues on workplace attachment, in line with our expectation. Similarly, previous literature on predictors of place attachment suggested that the role of the place's social context on place attachment is undeniable (e.g., Scannell & Gifford, 2013). As mentioned earlier in this paper, having positive interactions with others (e.g., neighbors) is crucial for establishing positive bonds with the place since these relationships support individuals in numerous ways, including receiving emotional and financial help from neighbors, and providing a feeling of safety (Dallago et al., 2009). From an organizational perspective, earlier work highlighted that daily interactions among colleagues (i.e., organizational communication) positively predict job satisfaction (Blegen, 1993; Mehra & Nickerson, 2019). In another study, Lee and Brand (2005) suggested that employees feel more satisfied with their work and perceive higher group cohesiveness when they easily access the places where they communicate with their colleagues.

Regarding workplace attachment and work engagement relationship, our findings revealed that workplace attachment positively predicts work engagement, in parallel with our expectation. In line with this result, previous work also suggested workplace attachment supported employee satisfaction (Rioux & Pignault, 2013a; Rioux, 2016; Scrima et al., 2019) and emotional attachment to the organization (Rioux & Pignault, 2013b). However, a toxic work environment was found to be detrimental to employee satisfaction and well-being

(Rasool et al., 2021). Considering our sample characteristics (i.e., teachers), the findings of a paper by Shen et al. (2021) demonstrated that being emotionally connected to the workplace plays a vital role in reducing work stress.

Although not the same, some components of the school climate may be related to workplace attachment, and teachers' well-being in their educational environments is closely linked to school climate (Dreer, 2022). The concept is used as an umbrella term that includes 14 indicators in five domains (National School Climate Center, 2020). These five dimensions are safety (i.e., norms of the institution regarding violence, bullying, etc., the feeling of physical security, and the sense of social-emotional safety), teaching and learning (i.e., utilizing supportive teaching practices and bolstering social and civic learning), interpersonal relationships (i.e., being respectful for individual and cultural differences, creating an environment that fosters supportive educator-student and student-student relationships), institutional environment (i.e., positive identification with the institution, wellness of the physical facilities of the institution, and promoting social inclusion of learners with disabilities), social media (i.e., feeling secure in terms of all forms of violence such as physical harm, verbal abusing in online platforms), and staff only (i.e., creating a supportive environment for all staff, and nurturing relationships among school staff).

Previous work indicated that a positive school climate predicted higher levels of job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012; Türker & Kahraman, 2021), well-being (Dreer, 2022), and lower levels of burnout (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Teachers working in a nurturing school climate also reported that they are less willing to change their institutions (Chang et al., 2017). They have also been found more committed to their jobs if they receive better support from their colleagues (Thapa et al., 2013). But teachers who perceive insufficient support from school officials (i.e., school principals) and who are not included in decision-making processes report higher levels of turnover intention (Cohen et al., 2009).

Conclusion

Individuals spend most of their time in their homes and workplaces. According to a study conducted in European cities (Schweizer et al., 2007), people spend only four hours in places other than their homes and workplaces. Considering this fact, negative experiences in the workplace have adverse psychological consequences for employees. Also called job stressors, unsatisfactory working conditions may lead to mental health problems (Haslam et al., 2005; Linden & Muschalla, 2007). These job-related mental health issues have several consequences for employees' health and business productivity, including higher numbers of work accidents (Welker-Hood, 2006), and higher levels of absenteeism (Ganster & Rosen, 2013).

Although earlier studies highlighted the importance of the workplace on employee well-being and organizational outcomes, the literature on teachers' attachment to their schools and its consequences is fairly limited. To fill this gap, our study's main objective was to understand how elementary school teachers' attachment to their institution has a role on their life satisfaction and the mediating role of work engagement in this association. Our expectations are partially supported by our findings. As indicated previously, while teachers who frequently communicated with their colleagues were found to have higher workplace attachment scores, tenure in the current institution was not related to workplace attachment. Moreover, in line with our hypotheses, higher levels of workplace attachment result in better work engagement, which in turn results in a high level of positive affect and a low level of

negative affect. With these findings, we believe that the current paper made important theoretical and practical contributions. Emotional and cognitive bonding to the work environments is a less-studied topic in the place attachment literature as compared to other contexts such as neighborhoods and cities. So, examining its predictors and outcomes is worthwhile, especially considering that we collected our data from a non-WEIRD sample. Also, most of our participants (73.7% of the total sample) were from Eastern Anatolian and Southeastern Anatolian regions of Türkiye. As compared to other regions, these two areas are socio-economically less developed (Ünsal & Sülkü, 2020) and have lower levels of schooling (Ministry of National Education of Türkiye, 2022). Therefore, understanding the predictors of work engagement and life satisfaction of teachers in these regions is essential to provide high-quality education to the people settling in these areas as well as to increasing the schooling rate. In addition, some of the teachers working in Eastern Anatolian and Southeastern Anatolian regions are novice ones who are doing their compulsory services to the state. Considering the fact that teachers who are just beginning their careers are psychologically and professionally disadvantaged as compared to experienced ones (Hoigaard et al., 2012), and attrition rates are higher among novice teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003), establishing a healthy and nurturing working environment for them is essential.

The findings of the current paper need to be evaluated by considering some limitations. First, our study's design is correlational, not experimental. In other words, since the data utilized in the paper were based on participants' self-reports, this study's results do not provide a cause-and-effect relationship. For that reason, prospective studies relying on experimental and longitudinal data are needed to replicate our findings. Another limitation of the study is that most participants work in the city centers of the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian region. Additionally, teachers assigned to these regions on mandatory duty tend to stay for shorter periods, which may hinder their ability to form strong bonds with their institutions. Moreover, since most teachers live in the city center, they are more likely to have closer relationships with their colleagues. However, it is still unclear what the workplace attachment level is and how it may differ for those who teach and live in rural areas. To address this gap, it is recommended that future studies should include a sample from different regions of the country and ensure a rural-urban balance in sampling.

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Appendix

İş Yeri Bağlılık Ölçeği Türkçe Formu (Turkish Version of Workplace Attachment Scale)

Aşağıdaki maddelerde şu an görev yaptığınız okul hakkında çeşitli ifadeler bulunmaktadır. Bu ifadeleri dikkatlice okuyarak, onlara ne ölçüde katıldığınızı belirtiniz (1= Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum, 2= Katılmıyorum, 3= Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum, 4= Katılıyorum, 5= Kesinlikle Katılıyorum).

1. Kendimi çalıştığım okula bağlı hissederim.
2. Çalıştığım okuldan temelli ayrılmak benim için çok zor olur.
3. Okulda özellikle bağlılık hissettiğim yerler vardır.
4. Okulum başka yere taşınacak olsa, şimdiki okulumu özlerim.
5. Çalıştığım okul benim ayrılmaz bir parçamdır.
6. Okulda bana anılarımı hatırlatan bazı yerler vardır.
7. İzin dönüşü okula döndüğümde mutlu olurum.