A question of fit:

Cultural and individual differences in interpersonal justice perceptions

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the link between employees' adult attachment orientations and perceptions of line-managers' interpersonal justice behaviors, and the moderating effect of national culture (collectivism). Participants from countries categorized as low collectivistic (N = 205) and high collectivistic (N = 136) completed an online survey. Attachment anxiety and avoidance were negatively related to interpersonal justice perceptions. Cultural differences did not moderate the effects of avoidance. However, the relationship between attachment anxiety and interpersonal justice was non-significant in the Southern Asia (more collectivistic) cultural cluster. Our findings indicate the importance of 'fit' between cultural relational values and individual attachment orientations in shaping interpersonal justice perceptions, and highlight the need for more non-Western organizational justice research.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational justice has received a great deal of research attention (Kim and Leung, 2007) because it has been linked to a range of important organizational outcomes, including employee trust, commitment and extra-role behaviors (Colquitt, 2001). Four dimensions of organizational justice are commonly identified (Colquitt, 2001): *distributive justice* - fairness of resources and rewards; *procedural justice* - fairness of decision making processes and procedures; *informational justice* - fairness of (line manager) explanations regarding decisions; and *interpersonal justice* - perceived dignity, respect and politeness shown by supervisors in their interactions with employees.

Emerging empirical evidence suggests that *interpersonal justice* maybe particularly salient in predicting important employee workplace attitudes and behaviors (Holtz and Harold, 2013; Bies, 2005). According to Holtz and Harold (2013), for most employees, "day-to-day, interpersonal encounters are so frequent in organizations that interpersonal justice often becomes more relevant and psychologically meaningful to employees [than distributive, procedural or informational justice]…" (p. 341). Fairness heuristics theory also suggests that the quality and fairness of ongoing, and frequent, interpersonal interactions with line management may provide employees with key cognitive short cuts when making overall organizational justice and trust judgments (Jones and Martens, 2009; Lind et al.,).

However, despite growing recognition of the importance of interpersonal justice (Holtz and Harold, 2013) and its consequences (for a review, see Colquitt et al. 2001), little is known about how individual differences contribute to employees' perceptions of interpersonal justice. Moreover, little justice research overall has been conducted in non-Western contexts (Greenberg, 2001). Existing cross-cultural research has tended to focus on the moderating effects of culture in the relationship between procedural justice and employee

outcomes (Kim and Leung, 2007). Therefore, there is a clear need to better understand how perceptions of interpersonal justice vary between individuals and cultures.

As a step towards addressing these gaps, the present study has two goals. First, in order to assess the role of individual differences, we examine the relationship between employee attachment orientations (Bowlby, 1969/82) and perceptions of (line manager) interpersonal justice. Primeaux and colleagues (2003) proposed that employees perceive justice through a subjective ethical lens. We argue that an individual's attachment orientation may similarly serve as a perceptual filter to shape interpersonal justice perceptions. Second, in order to assess cultural differences, we investigate whether the link between attachment orientations and interpersonal justice perceptions differs in more collectivistic Southern Asian contexts compared with Western/Anglo contexts. According to Primeaux et al. (2003), individuals' cultural attributes are integral to the lens through which justice is perceived. In line with this idea we test a 'cultural-fit hypothesis' (e.g., Friedman et al., 2010; Ward and Chang, 1997). We propose that, between cultures, the strength of association between attachment and justice perceptions depends on the extent to which an individual's attachment orientation is compatible with the relational values and expectations of their culture.

This research makes important contributions to the justice and attachment literatures. First, we extend recent research that has begun to examine the role of individual traits linked to relational predispositions in predicting justice judgments (e.g. De Cremer et al., 2008; Van Hiel, et al., 2008). Second, we add to limited knowledge about cross-cultural effects on justice perceptions (Geenberg, 2001). Third, we contribute to the still limited body of organizationally focused attachment literature (Richards and Schat, 2011) by linking attachment orientations to interpersonal justice. Finally, we answer calls for much needed investigation of the cultural boundary conditions of attachment theory in organizational settings (Harms, 2011).

4

In this paper, we begin by briefly introducing key concepts and research in the attachment theory and interpersonal justice domains. Next, we develop the research hypotheses with reference to the ethical lens (e.g. Primeaux et al., 2003) and cultural fit (e.g. Ward and Chang, 1997) frameworks. This is followed by the research methods and findings. We conclude with a discussion of the main findings and their implications for theory and practice.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) is a well-established relationship theory in social and developmental psychology, yet it has only recently been adopted by organizational researchers (Harms, 2011). Attachment theory posits that, through formative experiences of caregiving in significant relationships, individuals develop relational schema manifested as attachment orientations (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). Attachment orientations represent relationship histories as generalised beliefs and expectations about the worthiness of the self and dependability of others in relational contexts (Bowlby, 1973). As such, they provide a relatively stable relational template which guides individuals' approach to, and management of, relationships throughout life (e.g., Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1973; Hazan and Shaver, 1987).

Individual differences in adult attachment orientations are typically measured along two orthogonal dimensions: attachment anxiety and avoidance (Brennan et al., 1998). According to Brennan and colleagues (1998), attachment anxiety reflects worries about being accepted, and a preoccupation with achieving closeness in relationships; attachment avoidance reflects a distrust of the relationship partner and a reluctance to depend on the other in relationships. Low scores on one or both dimensions indicate a person who is

securely attached, with positive models of both the self and others in relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

In organizational research, a small but consistent body of findings has shown that secure attachment is generally associated with a range of positive individual, team and organizational outcomes (Harms, 2011). In contrast, attachment insecurity (i.e., higher avoidance or anxiety) has been associated with more negative outcomes, including relationship difficulties (Hardy and Barkham, 1994) reduced citizenship/pro-social behavior (Richards and Schat, 2011; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007), lower organizational commitment (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007), and higher turnover intentions (Richards and Schat, 2011).

Interpersonal Justice

Interpersonal justice is concerned with the line manager-employee relationship and, in particular, the dignity, respect and politeness shown by line managers in their interactions with employees (Colquitt, 2001). According to the multiple needs model (Cropanzano et al., 2001) interpersonal justice matters to employees for three key reasons: first, fair treatment by one's line manager signifies group acceptance; second, it signals an individual's value to the immediate work group/team (i.e., instrumental/relational needs); and third, it meets expectations regarding moral/ethical norms of leader behavior at work (i.e., deontic needs) (see also, Mayer et al., 2008). Hence, there is a clear business, as well moral/ethical, case for developing line managers who can consistently show integrity, honesty and respect in their interpersonal interactions with employees (Neubert et al., 2009).

Past research has tended to focus on the relational consequences of employees' perceptions of interpersonal (in)justice. For example, DeConinck (2010) found a positive relationship between interpersonal justice and employee trust in the line manager. Jones (2009), in an experimental setting, found a negative relationship between interpersonal justice

and counterproductive work behaviors directed at the supervisor, and that this relationship was mediated by desire for revenge against the supervisor. Theoretical explanations of these relationships are typically grounded in social exchange theory, in which the line manager-employee relationship is viewed as an ongoing reciprocal exchange (Lavelle et al., 2007). In brief, being treated with dignity and respect by one's line manager is likely to be reciprocated via increased trust and commitment towards the line manager. Conversely, a lack of dignity, politeness and respect is likely to lead to more negative employee attitudes and behaviors (Lavelle et al., 2007).

More recently, scholars have begun to explore the relational antecedents of employees' interpersonal justice judgments. Research investigates whether line manager-employee relationship quality predicts employees' interpersonal justice judgments. For example, in a longitudinal field study, Colquitt and Rodell (2011) found support for an iterative relationship between employees' perceptions of line manager trustworthiness and interpersonal justice. In other words, line manager trustworthiness both predicted, and was predicted by, employees' interpersonal justice perceptions (Colquitt and Rodell, 2011).

Attachment and Perceptions of Interpersonal Justice

The present study aims to extend our knowledge of how the line manager-employee relationship may act as an important source of interpersonal justice perceptions (Erdogan and Liden, 2006). As a point of departure, Primeaux et al. (2003) proposed that perceptions of others' justice behaviors are subjectively shaped during interaction by a mediating (ethical) lens. The lens is based on the Five Beliefs Model (see Caldwell et al., 2002) which states that individuals hold personalised schema – beliefs and expectations – for viewing the world. Accordingly, Primeaux et al. (2003) outline the lens that shapes justice perceptions as comprising beliefs and expectations about: 1) *the self* (e.g., self-worth, personal goals); 2)

7

others (e.g., our relationship to others and their duties towards us); 3) *the past* (e.g., how the present is influenced by past relationships and events); 4) *the present* (e.g., an evolving union of 'what is and what we perceive' p. 190) and, 5) *the future* (e.g., what we wish for in tension with what we perceive as possible). Based on this model, we suggest that attachment orientations may offer a useful way of understanding how individual differences serve as a lens or perceptual filter that shapes interpersonal justice perceptions. Consistent with the notion of a perceptual/ethical lens, the relational schema underlying attachment orientations represent historically embedded beliefs, and future expectations, about the self and others in relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Moreover, in line with the lens metaphor, attachment-related beliefs and expectations are known to predispose individuals to perceive and evaluate interpersonal interactions in characteristic ways (Collins and Read, 1994; Game, 2008). In the remainder of this section, we outline how attachment avoidance and anxiety may shape employee perceptions of interpersonal justice.

Attachment avoidance is associated with past experiences of consistently unresponsive and unsupportive interactions in relationships with significant others (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). In order to avoid the pain of future rejection, avoidant individuals develop a relational strategy of self-reliance aimed at avoiding, and denying the importance of, key relationships (Collins and Read 1994). These behavioral tendencies are accompanied by strong mistrust of others, and habitually negative attributions for others' behavior (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

In organizational settings, the work behaviors of more avoidant individuals are motivated by the goal of maintaining independence and emotional distance (Hazan and Shaver, 1990). Supporting this, studies indicate higher attachment avoidance is associated with a strong preference to work alone (Hazan and Shaver, 1990) and reduced support seeking (Richards and Schat, 2011). In turn, higher avoidance has been linked to greater

dissatisfaction and conflict in relationships with work colleagues (Hardy and Barkham, 1984; Hazan and Shaver, 1990). In leader follower dyads, more avoidant employees reported lower quality leader member exchange (LMX) relationships (Richards and Hackett, 2012). In addition, Davidovitz et al. (2007) found that attachment avoidance was related to more negative appraisals of leaders' abilities and more negative perceptions of leaders as a source of support, irrespective of leaders' actual behaviors.

Attachment anxiety is associated with past experiences of inconsistent support from relationship partners (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). To try to reduce the risk of current partners being inconsistent, anxiously attached individuals are hyper-vigilant regarding partners' motives (Collins and Read, 1994) and they engage in frequent acceptance-seeking behaviors (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005). However, efforts to gain approval and develop closeness in relationships are often frustrated (Richards and Schat, 2011). In pursuit of closeness, anxiously attached individuals may intrude on partners' psychological space, leading partners to distance themselves and inadvertently confirm anxious individuals' negative expectations (Lavy et al., 2009). Constantly fearing rejection, anxiously attached individuals are quick to perceive violations of trust in relationships (Mikulincer, 1998), and to make negative attributions for partners' behaviors (Collins, 1996).

In the workplace, anxiously attached individuals use work as an alternative means to gain approval and meet their needs for closeness and approval (Hazan and Shaver, 1990). Consistent with this, higher attachment anxiety is associated with more frequent support seeking (Richards and Schat, 2011). Research also indicates that when attempts to win closeness at work fail, higher attachment anxiety is associated with a range of work difficulties (Hardy and Barkham, 1994). Problems include concerns about relationship quality (Hardy and Barkham, 1994); feeling misunderstood or underappreciated (Hazan and Shaver, 1990); more negative perceptions of group cohesion and support from leaders/supervisors

(Davidovitz et al., 2007; Schirmer and Lopez, 2001); and lower ratings of LMX quality (Richards and Hackett, 2012).

In sum, theory and research suggest that an insecure attachment orientation (anxiety or avoidance) may serve as a subjective lens (c.f., Primeaux et al., 2003) which predisposes individuals to perceive and evaluate others in ways that confirm negative expectations (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). Moreover, the evidence suggests that both attachment anxiety and avoidance are consistently associated with low trust and negative appraisals of relationship partners, including leaders/line managers. Building on prior research linking perceived line manager trustworthiness to interpersonal justice perceptions (Colquitt and Rodell, 2011), insecurely attached employees should be more likely to perceive interpersonal treatment by their line managers as less fair:

Hypothesis 1: Attachment avoidance and anxiety will be negatively related to perceptions of interpersonal justice.

Culture as a Moderator of Interpersonal Justice Perceptions

The attachment construct is considered universally valid based on research replicating the bi-dimensional structure of attachment anxiety and avoidance across multiple national cultures (Schmitt et al., 2004). Initial evidence also suggests that attachment orientations may have consistent effects on relationship dynamics in contexts beyond the Western settings traditionally studied. For example, Friedman et al. (2010) found that attachment insecurity predicted (romantic) relationship outcomes for individuals in culturally diverse nations (US, China and Mexico). Given this, we expect the basic associations between attachment orientations and interpersonal justice (i.e. the main effects outlined above) to be similar irrespective of national culture.

In addition, Primeaux et al. (2003) highlighted that cultural attributes may play an important role in the ethical lens that shapes justice perceptions, since cultures vary with regard to the norms, values and expectations governing relationships (Hofstede, 2001). Indeed, Triandis and Suh (2002, p. 135) suggest that behavior is a function of personality and culture, such that "the meaning individuals give to a particular event may differ from culture to culture". Therefore, we propose that the *extent* to which attachment orientations and interpersonal justice perceptions are related may vary for individuals in different cultures (Friedman et al., 2010).

A well-established framework for understanding cultural differences in relationship values and orientations is individualism-collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). Fundamentally, individualistic and collectivistic cultures vary in the degree to which they prioritise personal versus group goals and identity (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Individualism emphasizes the uniqueness of the self, autonomy, personal achievement and competition (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). In contrast, collectivism emphasizes the connectedness of people to each other (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Collectivists prioritise values of belongingness, group harmony, co-operation and loyalty above personal desires (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995).

According to the 'cultural fit hypothesis' (Searle and Ward, 1990; Ward and Searle, 1991; Ward and Chang, 1997) people are better adjusted when their personality and values are congruent with the dominant cultural values of the society in which they reside. Conceptually, the notion of cultural fit has parallels with person-organization (P-O) fit – the congruence between individual and organizational values (e.g., O'Reilly et al., 1991). However, the focus of the cultural fit hypothesis is on the compatibility of individual level characteristics and nation level cultural norms (see Ward and Chang, 1997). Consistent with the hypothesis, research has demonstrated that congruence between expatriate/sojourner and

host nation levels of extraversion predict individual adjustment and well-being (e.g., Armes and Ward, 1989; Ward and Chang, 1997).

Related organizational research suggests that cultural fit, assessed as person-nation congruence in individualism-collectivism, (Parkes et al., 2001) is linked to more beneficial work-related outcomes including employee commitment, job-satisfaction and turnover intentions (Felfe et al., 2008; Wasti, 2003; Yao and Wang, 2006). To the best of our knowledge only one previous (non-work) study has operationalized cultural fit as the congruence between individual attachment orientations and nation level collectivism. Friedman et al. (2010) found that, in a more collectivistic country (China), individuals higher in attachment avoidance reported stronger negative perceptions of social support in close relationships, compared with avoidant individuals in a less collectivistic country (US). The authors attributed their findings to the lack of congruence between the emotional distancing behaviors that are characteristic of attachment avoidance, and the strong cultural expectations of relationship closeness in more collectivistic societies.

In the present research, we draw upon the Freidman et al. (2010) application of the cultural fit hypothesis to explore the role of culture in the link between employees' attachment orientations and interpersonal justice perceptions. In brief, following Friedman et al. (2010), we propose that the respective relational goals of attachment anxiety and avoidance have different degrees of congruence with the relational values of collectivism. We suggest that, for individuals in more collectivistic countries, the extent of attachment-culture (in)congruence will affect the strength of association between insecure attachment and interpersonal justice perceptions. Below, we elaborate the hypotheses for attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety.

Individuals higher in attachment avoidance exhibit a desire for self-reliance (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007) which may directly conflict with collectivistic values.

According to Hofstede (2001) collectivism prioritises group membership and the achievement of group goals above autonomy and personal achievement. Collective goals are pursued through group-work and co-operation (Triandis, 1995). This emphasis on interdependence could frustrate avoidant individuals' preference for working alone and maintaining emotional distance in working relationships (Hardy and Barkham, 1994). In the context of the line management relationship, in more collectivistic cultures, line managers may view avoidant employees' preference for independence particularly negatively given the importance of putting group interests before self-interest (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Further, line managers may construe avoidant individuals' coping strategies as disrespectful, or hostile, and withdraw their support (Keller and Cacioppe, 2001). When line managers withdraw attention and support, it can negatively affect quality of the leader member exchange relationship, and the nature of tasks assigned to employees (see Schreisheim et al., 1999). Such treatment may confirm avoidant individuals' negative expectations of line managers (e.g., Richards and Hackett, 2012), thus enhancing negative perceptions of interpersonal justice:

> *Hypothesis 2a*: Culture will moderate the negative relationship between attachment *avoidance* and interpersonal justice perceptions such that the effects of attachment avoidance are *stronger* for Southern Asia (collectivistic) individuals.

The degree of congruence between the relational goals of anxiously attached employees and collectivistic values is less clear cut. Anxiously attached individuals desire close relationships at work (Hazan and Shaver, 1990), and they tend towards a high degree of support seeking in the workplace (Richards and Schat, 2011). This fits well with collectivistic norms regarding more intimate, longer-term, and co-operative work relationships (Triandis et al., 1990). In addition, anxiously attached employees prefer team work to individual projects (Hazan and Shaver, 1990). This is congruent with the collectivistic prioritisation of group

goals and collaboration above individual achievement (Triandis, 1995). Taken together, anxiously attached employees may experience more opportunities to fulfil attachment-related needs in collectivistic workplaces, and their preferred work style appears to fit with the group-focused expectations of collectivism. In turn, this attachment-culture congruence may enable anxiously attached individuals to develop more trusting and satisfying relationships (Freidman et al., 2010) with line managers.

However, opposing the congruence discussed above, Friedman et al. (2010) observed that the motivations behind anxiously attached individuals' preference for close relationships may be 'self-serving'. In other words, anxiously attached individuals may seek relationship closeness as an end in itself to satisfy the need for self-worth (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). In addition, anxiously attached individuals may become over-dependent on leaders' support, tending to 'cling' to them (Harms, 2011). Such a focus on self-interested relationship closeness may not fit well with collectivism. Collectivists are less calculative in relationships (Hofstede, 2001) and maintain connectedness in relationships even when it is not personally advantageous (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). The apparent 'double-edged' nature of attachment anxiety (Friedman et al., 2010) makes it more difficult to predict interaction effects. On balance, however, we expect that in more collectivistic cultures the appearance of congruence between attachment anxiety and collectivism will weaken the negative association between attachment anxiety and interpersonal justice perceptions:

> *Hypothesis 2b*: Culture will moderate the negative relationship between attachment *anxiety* and interpersonal justice perceptions such that the effects of attachment anxiety will be *weaker* for Southern Asia (collectivistic) individuals.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

As part of a larger study investigating career experiences three hundred and forty one individuals from 'Anglo' (N= 205) and 'Southern Asia' (N=136) nations completed an online questionnaire. The response rate was 27%. Online surveys typically yield a lower response rate than traditional postal questionnaires (Bryman, 2012). However, all participants were enrolled on a distance learning MBA program and the composition of the sample was representative of enrolments on the program. We selected distance learning students for two reasons. First, they were ideally located in many different representative countries. Second, whilst studying part-time via the internet participants were also employed full-time across a range of occupational sectors and levels. Access to participants was negotiated through the MBA Program Director and, where relevant, via secondary (local) contacts in the surveyed countries. Participants were invited to access the questionnaire via an e-mail link to the online survey provider Survey Monkey. The survey was implemented and completed in English (the language of study for all participants). In compliance with the ethics codes of the researchers' respective institutions, survey participation was based on informed consent. Before consenting to complete the survey, prospective participants read information about the nature of the research, the fact that taking part in the research was entirely voluntary and anonymous, and the purpose for which data would be used. No course credit or other incentives were provided for participation. Completed questionnaires were submitted anonymously on-line.

Examination of the characteristics of the Anglo and Southern Asia samples suggested they were largely equivalent, strengthening the validity of subsequent analysis and findings. The mean age of the Anglo sample was 40.38 years compared with 35.82 years in the Southern Asia sample. Men made up 68% of the Anglo sample compared with 70% of the

Southern Asia sample. The mean tenure of the Anglo sample was 3.98 years compared with 3.66 years in the Southern Asia sample.

Measures

In line with recommendations for cross-cultural comparative studies we conducted split sample equivalence tests (Tucker's Phi) on the main model variables (e.g., Vandenberg and Lance, 2000). These tests allow the researcher to confirm the validity and reliability of the study's measurement scales across different respondent groups – in this case the Southern Asia and Anglo groups (Van de Vijver and Leung, 1997). We also compared the reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of the study scales across groups. Tucker's Phi findings between .95 and 1.00, and strong comparative Cronbach's alpha scores between samples provide evidence of scale equivalence (Van de Vijver and Leung, 1997). Details of the results of these diagnostic tests are included below. All scale items used in the study are in the Appendix.

Interpersonal Justice. Employee perceptions of interpersonal justice were measured using a 4-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001). A sample item is, "Has [your line manager] treated you with dignity?" Participants responded on a 5-point scale from (1) a small extent to (5) a large extent. Cronbach's α was .93 for the sample overall. A Tucker's Phi of 1.00 and comparative Cronbach's alphas of .92 (Southern Asia) and .93 (Anglo) confirmed the validity and reliability of these scales across both samples.

Attachment Orientation Following Richards and Schat (2011) and Game (2008) we adapted items from Brennan et al.'s (1998) Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) scale, replacing references to romantic partners with 'others' or 'other people'. 16 items measured the two dimensions of attachment: *attachment anxiety* (8-items) and *attachment avoidance* (8-items). Sample items include, "I worry a lot about my relationships with other people" (anxiety) and "I try to avoid getting too close to people" (avoidance). Participants responded

on a 7-point scale from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Cronbach's α scores were .91 (anxiety) and .85 (avoidance) for the whole sample.

For *attachment anxiety*, a Tucker's Phi of 1.00 and comparative Cronbach alphas of .90 (Southern Asia) and .91 (Anglo) confirmed the validity and reliability of the scale across both samples. We excluded one item in the *attachment avoidance* scale from further analysis ('I usually discuss my problems and concerns with others') because of weak loadings and evidence of non-equivalence (of this single item) across the two samples. For the amended 7-item scale, a Tucker's Phi of .99, and comparative Cronbach's alphas of .83 (Southern Asia) and .86 (Anglo) confirmed good validity and reliability across the two samples.

Societal Culture Based on previous research conducted as part of the GLOBE studies (e.g., Gupta et al., 2002), participants were allocated to either an 'Anglo' or 'Southern Asia' cultural cluster based on nationality (i.e., country of origin). Only individuals from countries that were part of the original GLOBE studies, or near neighboring countries with generally accepted cultural similarity, were included in the analysis. The Anglo cultural cluster included individuals from the UK, US, Canada, Australia and Ireland. The Southern Asia cultural cluster included participants from India, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. According to the GLOBE classification system, countries in the Southern Asia cluster score significantly higher on in-group collectivism compared with those in the Anglo cluster (Gupta et al., 2002). Furthermore, differences in collectivism between the Anglo and Southern Asia clusters are greater than any within-cluster differences (Gupta et al., 2002). For analysis, culture was dummy coded as 0 (Anglo) and 1 (Southern Asian).

Controls In line with previous attachment theory research we controlled for respondent gender, age and tenure, total number of line managers (i.e., previous plus current), length of current line manager relationship and current line manager's gender (e.g., Game, 2008). Given the sample characteristics (i.e., MBA students) it was also important to control

for expatriate status, that is, whether respondents were currently residing / working within their home country or a host nation. Recent international HRM research has highlighted the potential for greater cultural convergence between individuals on expatriate assignments (e.g., Tung, 2008).

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations between all the study variables were calculated (see Table 1). Significant bivariate correlations were observed between the independent and dependent variables, giving us confidence to proceed with hypothesis testing.

Enter Table 1 Here

All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 20 (IBM Corp., 2011). The hypotheses were tested using moderated regression analysis, following the principles set out by Aiken and West (1991). First, all variables were centred and the two interaction terms (Anxiety x Culture and Avoidance x Culture) were calculated. All control variables were entered into the first step of the regression analysis. The main effects of all independent variables were entered in the next step. Finally, the interaction terms were entered. To aid interpretation of statistically significant interactions, levels of interpersonal justice and global anxiety, and interpersonal justice and global avoidance, were plotted for the Southern Asia and Anglo samples. Simple slope analysis was also conducted (Aiken and West, 1991).

Main Effects of Attachment Anxiety/Avoidance on Interpersonal Justice (Hypothesis 1)

As hypothesized, across cultures both attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .05$) (see Table 2) and attachment anxiety ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .00$) were significantly and negatively related to employee perceptions of interpersonal justice. Hypothesis 1 was fully supported.

Enter Table 2 Here

Moderating Effect of Culture (Hypotheses 2a and 2b)

Against the expectations of hypothesis 2a, culture did not moderate the relationship between attachment avoidance and employee perceptions of interpersonal justice ($\beta = -.08$, *ns*) (see Table 2). However, supporting hypothesis 2b, the negative relationship between attachment anxiety and employee interpersonal justice perceptions ($\beta = .18$, $p = .03$) was moderated by cultural context (see Table 2 and Figure 1). Simple slope analysis confirmed the hypothesized direction of the interaction effect. The relationship between attachment anxiety and employee interpersonal justice perceptions was significant for the Anglo sample (b = -.25, t = -3.89, $p = .00$) but non-significant for the Southern Asia sample (b = -.02, t = -0.24, *ns*). Partial support, therefore, was found for hypothesis 2 overall.

Enter Figure 1 Here

DISCUSSION

The main aim of this study was to examine how adult attachment orientations and culture are associated with employees' perceptions of interpersonal justice. Our findings highlight the importance of attachment orientations for understanding individual differences in employee perceptions of interpersonal justice. The results indicate that, across national boundaries (i.e. beyond any effects of culture), when employees hold higher levels of attachment anxiety and/or avoidance, they are more likely to perceive interpersonal injustice in relationships with their line manager. This supports previous theory and research suggesting that, throughout many different societies, attachment orientations function in a generally consistent manner to guide perceptions and evaluations in relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Friedman et al. 2010). Furthermore, this finding supports the view that beliefs and expectations characterizing insecure attachment may function as a negative perceptual filter in employees' relationships with line managers (Game, 2008). This is in line with former proposals regarding a mediating ethical lens that shapes individual differences in justice perceptions (e.g. Primeaux et al., 2003).

The evidence of a main effect of insecure attachment on interpersonal justice perceptions is in line with existing research linking attachment insecurity to negative appraisals of leader support and relationship quality (e.g., Davidovitz et al., 2007; Richards and Hackett, 2012; Schirmer and Lopez, 2001). It is also consistent with previous justice research which demonstrated positive associations between employee perceptions of line manager trustworthiness and interpersonal justice (Colquitt and Rodell, 2011). Our study also supports the hitherto limited research which has demonstrated connections between individual differences in personality (e.g. Big 5, locus of control) and organizational justice perceptions (e.g., Lilly and Virick, 2006; Shi et al., 2009).

Importantly however, the extent to which attachment orientations were associated with interpersonal justice perceptions in the present research depended on cultural differences between the clusters of nations studied. In particular, the association between attachment anxiety and perceived interpersonal justice was weaker, indeed non-significant, for employees in the Southern Asia (higher collectivistic) cultural cluster compared with those in the Anglo/Western (lower collectivistic) cluster. This finding is in line with Primeaux and colleagues' (2003) contention that individuals' cultural attributes are integral to the perceptual lens through which justice is perceived. Moreover, it is consistent with a cultural fit interpretation (c.f., Friedman et al., 2010). For Southern Asian employees, attachment anxiety, characterized by a strong need for emotionally close and supportive relationships (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007), may be more compatible with prevailing collectivistic norms and expectations regarding the attainment and maintenance of closer work relationships (Triandis et al. 1990). It may be that such attachment-culture congruence, in turn, facilitates more trusting relationships (Friedman et al., 2010) and hence more positive perceptions of interpersonal justice line managers.

A cultural fit interpretation is consistent with past research that has explored the effects of congruence between person level individual differences and national culture. For example, Friedman et al. (2010) found that attachment anxiety was associated with high (romantic) relationship satisfaction for individuals in more collectivistic countries but not in the less collectivistic US. In addition, organizational research focusing on congruence between person and nation level collectivism indicated that higher person-level collectivism was a stronger predictor of commitment in more collectivistic countries (Parkes et al., 2001). Our findings are also in line the multiple needs model (Cropanzano et al., 2001) which posits that line manager interpersonal justice signals group acceptance and value to employees. From this perspective, the results suggest that anxiously attached individuals in more

collectivistic societies may be better able to meet their attachment needs for closeness and validation (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007) through their line manager relationships.

Notably, we did not find any evidence of the hypothesized 'off-setting' effects of self-serving motivations associated with attachment anxiety (e.g., Friedman et al., 2010). In other words, the motivations underlying anxiously attached individuals' strategies for achieving closeness did not reduce the theorized congruence effects between attachment anxiety and collectivism. This may indicate that, in contrast to intimate relationships, the underlying motives for proximity-seeking behavior are perhaps less evident, or less relevant, for anxiously attached individuals in work-settings.

Interestingly, the strength of association between attachment avoidance and interpersonal justice perceptions did not vary significantly between cultures. That is, employees with avoidant attachment orientations in both higher and lower collectivistic nations held similarly negative views of their line managers' interpersonal justice behaviors. The absence of a cross-cultural effect of attachment avoidance in our study contrasts with previous research in which avoidance was found to have stronger negative effects on (romantic) relationship satisfaction in more collectivistic contexts (Friedman et al., 2010). However, this discrepancy could be accounted for by the differences inherent in romantic and work relationships. In particular, romantic relationships place additional emotional demands on partners - requiring, for example, significant self-disclosure and care-taking – which are especially uncomfortable for avoidant individuals (Friedman et al., 2010). Our research is nevertheless important in enhancing the cross-cultural generalizability of previous organizational attachment research linking attachment avoidance to a range of negative work-related outcomes (Hardy and Barkham, 1994; Hazan and Shaver, 1990; Richards and Schat, 2011). Most modern organizations depend on some degree of teamwork – indeed group working is considered by some to be ubiquitous (Guzzo, 1996). Consequently, irrespective of

national culture, more avoidant employees who find it difficult to trust others (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007) and prefer to work alone (Hazan and Shaver, 1990), may experience poor fit between their habitual attachment orientation and any *organizational* culture that emphasizes teamwork and task interdependence. This is fully consistent with the notion of person-organization (P-O) fit (e.g., O'Reilly et al., 1991). Hence, it may be fruitful for future researchers to explore the effects of attachment orientations using such a framework.

Overall, it appears that in more collectivistic work contexts, relative to avoidance, attachment anxiety may offer some relational benefits (or fewer disadvantages) in relationships with line managers. While we have framed these effects in terms of 'cultural fit' this should not be taken to imply that 'insecure' anxious attachment behaviors are simply more 'acceptable' in certain cultures. Instead, it may be that what is defined as 'insecure' in Western contexts is closer to the norm, or at least is not considered dysfunctional, in more collectivistic contexts. Indeed, in Southern (and South-east) Asia, individuals tend to report higher mean levels of anxious attachment in close relationships compared with Western individuals (Schmitt et al. 2004). Furthermore, recent critiques point to the fact that dominant conceptualizations of attachment theory are based on normative, middle-class Western ideals of attachment and 'healthy', or secure, relationships (Rothbaum et al., 2000). However, such an approach ignores the wide variation in relational ideals between cultures (Keller, 2013). Taken together, this suggests that theories of attachment and justice in organizations that were developed in Western populations should not be assumed to apply to all cultures unequivocally. Scratching beneath the surface can uncover a more nuanced and context-specific picture.

The present study is the first to investigate cross-cultural differences in the relationship between adult attachment orientations and interpersonal justice. Our findings should therefore be considered as preliminary and our conclusions tentative. Nonetheless, we

contribute to theory and research in the justice and attachment domains in important ways. First, the findings support and extend emerging evidence concerning the role of individual differences in predicting organizational justice perceptions (e.g., De Cremer and Sedikides, 2005; Lilly and Virick, 2006). Our research confirms that the attachment orientations individuals bring with them to the workplace are associated with interpersonal justice perceptions and the strength of this association may vary depending on national culture. Second, this study contributes to the limited body of research focusing on attachment in the workplace (Richards and Schat, 2011). In particular, it is the first study to link attachment style differences to ethically relevant work outcomes. Third, our findings answer growing calls for organizational researchers in general (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2007), and justice scholars (e.g., Greenberg, 2001; Primeaux, et al., 2003) and attachment theorists in particular (e.g., Harms, 2011; Keller, 2013), to move away from Western normative conceptualizations of theories and constructs and develop alternative, culturally nuanced understandings.

Practical Implications

Our findings have important practical implications. Across cultures, the association of attachment avoidance with negative interpersonal justice perceptions may threaten employees' ability to develop trusting relationships with their line managers (see Colquitt and Rodell, 2011). With the exception of employees in more collectivistic cultures, attachment anxiety may also increase the risk of relationship difficulties with line managers. In light of the relative stability of attachment orientations (Bowlby, 1973), it is unrealistic to expect to change employees' attachment dispositions (Richards and Hackett, 2012). Instead, it may be more beneficial to try to improve justice perceptions by training managers to understand and respond to the relational goals of insecurely attached employees.

24

For example, in order to respect avoidant employees' need for greater self-reliance and emotional distance (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007) managers could: assign fewer collaborative tasks; communicate more by e-mail than face-to-face; and accept that non-task related interactions with colleagues may be unwelcome (Boatwright et al., 2010). Managers should also recognize that avoidant employees are less likely to seek help or advice (Richards and Schat, 2011), so they should refrain from imposing support which could be perceived as controlling (Collins and Shaver, 1994). When working with anxiously attached employees managers should recognize that these individuals have a stronger than average need to feel accepted, valued and appreciated at work (Hazan and Shaver, 1990). In this case, managers could: emphasize and demonstrate approachability; be consistent in providing support and reassurance; assign collaborative tasks; and enhance employees' sense of being 'in the loop' by including them in unit/group wide communications (Boatwright et al., 2010).

Our findings also have intercultural implications. Managers in more collectivistic countries need be less concerned about employees with higher attachment anxiety, since they appear no more likely to report negative interpersonal justice perceptions than employees with lower attachment anxiety. However, expatriate managers from less collectivistic cultures should be aware that the well-established collectivistic expectations of closer working relationships and greater dependency on leaders (Hofstede, 2001) are not shared by all (especially avoidant) employees (Triandis and Suh, 2002). To this end, pre-departure cross-cultural training (see Caligiuri et al., 2005) could incorporate sessions (e.g., role play) to help managers understand employees' attachment orientations and the effects of (in)congruence with the wider cultural environment. Finally, since attachment anxiety may be beneficial compared to attachment avoidance, organizations could assess attachment orientations when selecting employees for expatriate assignments in more collectivistic cultures.

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of the present research is that culture was not directly assessed at the individual level. National clusters are a proxy so may not accurately equate to cultural dimensions (e.g., Keller, 2012). Therefore, we cannot be certain whether the findings are attributable to values associated with collectivism specifically, or to additional cultural dimensions. For example, the Anglo and Southern Asia cultural clusters also differ on the GLOBE dimension of 'humane orientation', which concerns the value placed on being caring and fair towards others (Gupta et al., 2002; House et al., 2002). This could have influenced the relative salience between cultures of justice issues in interactions with line managers. A further limitation is that the participants were all MBA students. Membership of the degree program could have had some culturally homogenizing effects leading to underestimation of the effects of societal culture in our findings. The research findings should be interpreted with caution until further research is undertaken to address these concerns.

Future research should attempt to replicate the findings of the present study, addressing these limitations. Additionally, the research could be extended to investigate possible mediators of the relationship between attachment and justice perceptions (e.g., trust, perceptions of cultural fit). Studies could also include measurement of line managers' own attachment orientations and their ratings of employees' fit with workplace relational norms. Research using diary studies, interviews, observation would be beneficial, in order to capture in greater depth the nature and effects of attachment in the line management relationship, as it plays out in different cultural contexts. Finally, the extent to which expatriate employees' attachment orientations fit with host culture attachment norms and the effects for relationships with supervisors and co-workers could be examined.

CONCLUSION

The results of our study suggest that individuals' attachment orientations and national culture are relevant variables, meriting further investigation, for understanding how employee perceptions of interpersonal justice may be formed. Our findings show that more negative interpersonal justice perceptions are associated with dispositional attachment insecurity which may function as a perceptual filter, or ethical lens, during interactions (c.f., Primeaux et al., 2003). In addition, the study highlights that cultural context moderates the strength of this association in ways that are consistent with a cultural fit hypothesis (e.g., Ward and Chang, 1997; Friedman et al., 2010). An understanding of individual differences in attachment orientations, and their congruence with the surrounding cultural context, may help managers to improve employees' perceptions of interpersonal justice. This, in turn, may assist the development of more trusting relationships overall (Colquitt and Rodell, 2011).

Appendix: Measurement Items Used in Analysis

Interpersonal Justice

1. Has he/she [line manager] treated you in a polite manner?

2. Has he/she [line manager] treated you with dignity?

3. Has he/she [line manager] treated you with respect?

4. Has he/she [line manager] refrained from improper remarks or comments?

Attachment Avoidance

1. I am very comfortable being close to other people (R).

2. I don't feel comfortable opening up to other people.

3. Just when people start to get close to me I find myself pulling away.

4. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with other people (R).

5. I prefer not to be too close to others.

6. I don't mind asking other people for comfort, advice, or help (R).

7. I try to avoid getting too close to people.

Attachment Anxiety

1. I worry a lot about my relationships with others.

2. I get frustrated when other people are not around as much as I would like.

3. I worry that other people won't care about me as much as I care about them.

4. I worry a fair amount about losing people.

5. I often wish that other people's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them.

6. I worry about being alone.

7. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved in relationships.

8. If I can't get people to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.

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TABLE 1

Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations between the study variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	-	-										
2. Age	38.55	8.14	-.14*									
3. Tenure	7.27	4.19	-.08	.40***								
4. Expat	-	-	.10	-.15**	-.05							
5. LM Gender	-	-	.16**	-.06	-.04	-.12*						
6. LM Tenure	2.87	3.04	.00	.20**	.25***	.10	-.17**					
7. Number LM	5.83	4.64	-.08	.27***	.23***	-.19**	.02	-.28***				
8.Culture (Anglo/S Asian)	-	-	-.01	-.28***	-.11*	.44***	-.11	.12*	-.21**			
9. Attachment Anxiety	3.26	1.30	.03	-.21***	-.17**	.13*	.00	-.05	-.13*	.24***		
10. Attachment Avoidance	3.21	1.08	.10	-.12*	-.08	.01	-.10	.07	-.06	.08	.13*	
11. Interpersonal Justice	3.99	1.02	.01	.06	.10	-.11	.00	.00	.04	-.11	-.23***	-.10

Notes: N=341; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; LM Gender = the gender of the respondent's line manager; LM Tenure = the length of the respondent's relationship with their current line manager; Number LM = the respondent's total number of line managers they have had at work

TABLE 2

Summary regression analysis for the interaction effects of culture and attachment avoidance,

and culture and attachment anxiety, on interpersonal justice

Step	Independent variables	Std. Error	β	p	Δ R²
1	Gender	.15	.04	.51	.02*ns*
	Age	.01	-.02	.80	
	Tenure	.01	.11	.12	
	Expat	.14	-.09	.17	
	LM Gender	.16	-.02	.79	
	LM Tenure	.03	-.02	.82	
	Number LM	.02	.00	.98	
2	Culture (Anglo/SE Asian)	.16	-.05	.40	.06**
	Attachment Anxiety	.05	-.20	.00***	
	Attachment Avoidance	.06	-.12	.05*	
3	Attachment Anxiety x Culture	.11	.18	.03*	.02†
	Attachment Avoidance x Culture	.12	-.08	.30	

Notes: N=341; † $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; LM Gender = the gender of the respondent's line manager; LM Tenure = the length of the respondent's relationship with their current line manager; Number LM = the respondent's total number of line managers they have had at work

FIGURE 1

Simple slope analysis for the interaction effect of culture and attachment anxiety on interpersonal justice