



Pet Attachment and Attitudes: A Continuation and Extensional Study

Showalter, R., Cortez, M., & Polewan, R., Ph.D.

Stephen F. Austin State University; Department of Psychology; Nacogdoches, Texas



INTRODUCTION

Background research

•Previous research from the Behavioral & Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory has suggested that an owner's dog attachment is related to both the owner's personality and the dog's personality (Cortez, M., Showalter, R., & Polewan, R., 2015).

Research purpose

•The purpose of the present study was to extend the previous research by assessing if an owner's attachment style would be related to the attachment to their pet.

Hypothesis

•The researchers hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between the owner's attachment style and the attachment to the dog, as based on the previous work within the lab.

METHOD

Participants

- Students from Stephen F. Austin State University
- N=192 (Male = 16.1%; Female = 83.9%)
 - Dog owners = 81.3%
 - Cat owners = 9.4%
 - Reptile owners = 1.6%
 - Rodent owners = 2.6%
 - Other = 5.2%

Materials

- Qualtrics
 - Participant Demographics
 - Pet Demographics
 - The Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS; Johnson, Garity, & Stallones, 1992)
 - The Pet Attitude Scale – Modified (PAS-M; Templer et al., 1981; Munsell et al., 2004)
 - The Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996)
 - Dependent attachment style
 - Anxious attachment style
 - Close attachment style

METHOD

Procedure

- Participants signed up on SONA Systems and were directed to the survey link on Qualtrics.
- Once the participants read through the informed consent and selected "yes" to participate, they would begin the survey; the survey took about 30 minutes to complete.
- After the participants complete the survey, they were given feedback on the purpose of the current study, as well as the hypothesis.
- Additionally, the feedback had the contact information of all of the researchers, the advisor, and the contact information of the counseling office in case of issues.

RESULTS

- Results revealed a significant positive correlation between attachment to pets scale and owner attitude on pets, a significant negative correlation between attachment to pets scale and the dependent attachment style, and a significant positive correlation between attachment to pets and the anxious attachment style.
 - Scoring higher on attachment to pets was correlated with scoring higher for pet attitudes.
 - Scoring higher on attachment to pets was correlated with scoring lower on the dependent attachment style.
 - Scoring higher on attachment to pets was correlated with scoring higher on the anxious attachment style.
- Additionally, the results revealed a significant negative correlation between owner attitude on pets and the dependent attachment style and a significant positive correlation between owner attitude on pets and the anxious attachment style.
 - Scoring higher on attitude for pets was correlated with scoring lower on the dependent attachment style.
 - Scoring higher on attitude for pets was correlated with scoring higher on the anxious attachment style.

Correlations of owner attachment, pet owner attitudes, and adult attachment styles

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
LAPS	—				
PASM	.832***	—			
Close Attachment	.030	.011	—		
Dependent Attachment	-.165*	-.178**	.448***	—	
Anxious Attachment	.212**	.146*	-.347***	-.421***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 1. Correlation table of owner attachment, pet owner attitudes, and adult attachment styles.

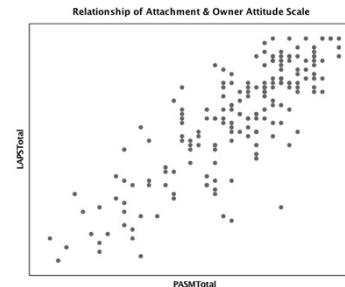


Figure 1. Scatter plot graph of owner attachment and pet owner attitudes.

DISCUSSION

Conclusion

•The current results showed significant relationships between owner attachment, pet owner attitudes, and adult attachment styles.

Implications

- The findings suggest that owners who are attached to their pets are likely to have a positive attitude about pets.
- Overall, the findings suggest that the attachment style of the owner may influence their attachment and attitude towards their pet and may better establish the relationship between human and dog attachment.
- The findings may also help better define how attachment may be a useful tool in human-animal interaction.

Limitations

- Small sample size
- Self-report measures/online study
- Specific to traditional pets
- Specific to college students

Future Research

- Future research should look into attachment and personality between humans and untraditional pet animals (e.g., reptile, rodent, other).
- Future research should also look into how attachment may influence decisions regarding the pet.

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AUTHOR CONTACT

Showaltera@titan.sfasu.edu
Mendozaam@titan.sfasu.edu
Polewanrj@sfasu.edu

