

The Relationship among Pet Owners' Attachment, Commitment, and Bonding after Hurricane Harvey

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Introduction

- Previous research suggests that pet owners may not evacuate from a disaster area if they cannot take their pets with them (Heath, Kass, Beck, & Glickman, 2001).
- Additionally, previous research suggests that the relationships among pet owner attachment, commitment, and bonding are positively related (Showalter, Cortez, & Polewan, 2016).
- In order to better understand why this may occur, the researchers aim to explore if there is a relationship between the how attached the owner is to their pet, how committed the owner is to their pet, and the bonding between the owner and pet.

Hypothesis

- It was hypothesized that there will be positive correlations between how attached the owner is to their pet, how committed the owner is to their pet, and the bonding between the owner and pet, suggesting that the more attached, committed, and bonded an owner is to their pet the less likely they are to evacuate without their pet.

Method

Participants

- 507 undergraduates (438 female, 69 male)
- 169 were excluded

Measures

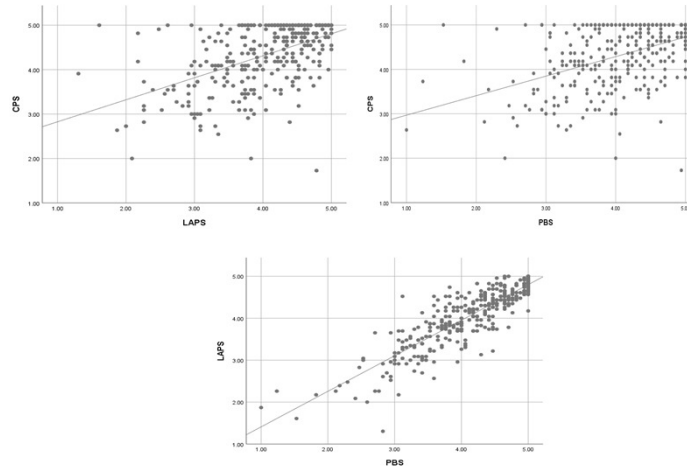
- Pet and Owner Demographics Questionnaire
- Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS; Johnson, Garrity, & Stallones, 1992)
- Miller-Rada Commitment to Pets Scale (Staats et al., 1996)
- Pet Bonding Scale (PBS; Angle, Blumentritt, & Swank, 1993)

Procedure

- The study began early October 2017, after the devastation of Hurricane Harvey.
- Participants were recruited through SONA Systems.
- Participants completed an online questionnaire through Qualtrics.
- After completing the survey, participants were debriefed.

Results

- There was a significant positive correlation between pet owners' levels of attachment and commitment to their pets, $r(326) = .466, p < .01$.
- There was a significant positive correlation between pet owners' levels of commitment and bonding with their pets, $r(326) = .865, p < .01$.
- There was a significant positive correlation between pet owners' levels of attachment and bonding to their pets, $r(326) = .433, p < .01$.



- There was no significant difference before or after Hurricane Harvey in the relationship of attachment, commitment, or bonding (r to z transformation).
- Of those who reported having to evacuate at some point ($N = 67$; 7.3%), 64 participants reported taking their pets with them.

Conclusions

- The current study results suggest that owners who were committed to their pet were more likely to be attached to their pet and to have a bond with their pet. These findings are consistent with previous research that suggest similar relationships (Showalter, Cortez, & Polewan, 2015).
- However, the present study did not show that these patterns of relationships were significantly different for participants' survey after Hurricane Harvey than those surveyed before.
- Future research should examine variables that determine how attachment, commitment, and bonding affects whether individuals chose to stay with their pet.

References

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