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Pet Attachment and the Social Support that Pets Provide to College Students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to see how the quality of a person's attachment to their pet affects their perception of the amount of social support they are receiving from that pet. We recruited a sample of 309 undergraduate students who were pet owners. Students were enrolled in a General Psychology course at Kennesaw State University during Spring 2017. Data were collected using SurveyMonkey®. To measure the quality of pet attachment, we used the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale. To measure perceived social support, we adapted the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. There was a significant relationship between quality of attachment to one's pet and perceived social support [$r(307) = 0.77, p < 0.001, r^2 = 0.59$]. We also collected demographic data on variables such as ethnicity, gender, year in college, species of pet owned, number of years of pet ownership, and pet gender. We studied how these different variables affected the quality of pet attachment and perceived social support.

Keywords: pet attachment, perceived social support, benefits of pet ownership

Out of all United States households, more than two-thirds have pets and most people consider their pet as an integral part of their family and believe that their pet has a positive impact on their health and well-being (Herzog, 2011). The relatively new area of research on pets and their owners' well-being is becoming increasingly popular. Researchers have found that simply petting an animal, such as a dog or even a snake, or watching fish, can reduce stress and blood pressure (Herzog, 2011). Researchers have also found that pet ownership reduced the number of doctors' visits; pet owners made 15% fewer doctors' appointments than non-pet owners (Headey & Grabka, 2007). One hypothesis that has been put forth to explain how pet ownership can have health benefits is that people tend to develop high levels (quality) of attachment, as defined by close emotional bonds, to their pets (McNicholas,

Collis, & Morley, 1995). Researchers have found positive correlations between the quality of attachment to a pet and owners' health, happiness, well-being, and self-esteem (see Amiot & Bastian, 2015 for a review). However, Herzog (2011) points out that many of these studies are correlational in nature and so we cannot conclude that a high quality of attachment leads to better health and well-being. For instance, health, happiness, stress, etc. can depend on socioeconomic status, marital status, income, age, diet, and exercise habits. In addition, individuals with good health, happiness, and finances to begin with may be more likely to own a pet and have a strong attachment to their pet.

Another hypothesis that has been put forth to explain the health benefits of pet ownership is that pets are perceived to be a

source of social support (Collis & McNicholas, 1998). Many researchers have found that social support (and more so, *perceived* social support) improves health and well-being (see reviews in McConnell, Brown, Shoda, Stayton, & Martin, 2011; Wells, 2009). Although social support has been traditionally thought to be received from other people, researchers have suggested that it can come from pets as well. Many reasons have been suggested for why pets can be considered a source of social support. McConnell et al. (2011) believe that one reason could be the inclusion of pets in a person's group of "close others," defined as the group of people who are closest to a person and whom the person trusts. Researchers have found that having "close others" in one's life greatly increases social support and well-being, and it could be that people are receiving these benefits from pets because they are including them in their "close others" category. In fact, pets were seen as giving as much support as siblings and parents—people we may be attached to the most. Another research team, Collis and McNicholas (1998), hypothesize that another reason for why pets could be a source of social support is because of the notion that they are always available and not judgmental or unpredictable. They also explain how one of the aspects of social support is feeling needed. So, one reason a pet might provide so much social support is because they need their owners to care for them, and owners feel needed. Lastly, the researchers bring up how interacting with pets does not require the same degree of social skills as interacting with other people, so it can be less tiring and reduce the possibility of burnout. Along with that, it may provide a refuge from human communication.

Although there have been some studies conducted on perceived social support from pets, and many studies

conducted on the relationship between the quality of attachment to pets and their owners' health, happiness, stress, well-being, loneliness, and self-esteem, there have been no studies conducted as yet on the relationship between attachment quality and perceived social support in the context of pet ownership. The purpose of this research was to fill this gap in the literature and see how the quality of attachment to one's pet is related to the perception of social support they are receiving from that pet. We hypothesized that there will be a significant, positive relationship between quality of reported attachment to one's pet and the amount of perceived social support from that pet. Apart from testing this hypothesis, we also examined how different variables such as gender, species of pet owned, number of years of pet ownership, and pet gender affect the quality of pet attachment and perceived social support from one's pet. Previous researchers included these variables (e.g., Smolkovic, Fajfar, & Mlinaric, 2012; Zasloff, 1996), and further study can improve our understanding about how these variables can affect quality of pet attachment and perceived social support from one's pet.

Method

Participants

Participants were 309 Kennesaw State University undergraduate students (see Table 1 for demographic data). These students were enrolled in an Introductory Psychology course in Spring 2017. Each student was required to be over 18 years old and a current pet owner. The mean age was 20 years of age (range was 18 to 63 years). The students were recruited using SONA, which is an online experiment management system used by the Department of Psychology. After completing the survey, the

students were rewarded with points to be applied to their course.

Table 1. *Demographic Data*

Independent variable	Percentage
Participant gender	
Female	67.4
Male	31.9
Year in school	
Freshman/Sophomore	75.93
Junior/Senior	24.07
Ethnicity	
Caucasian	66.0
African-American	18.1
Other	15.9
Species of pet	
Dog	73.5
Cat	21.0
Other	5.5
Living situation	
Living with pet	56.3
Living away from pet	43.7
Length of ownership	
< 2 years	28.01
2 or more years	71.99
Pet gender	
Female	54.7
Male	45.3
Caregiving	
Primary caregiver of pet	59.1
Not primary caregiver of pet	40.9
Type of pet	
Family pet	60.8
Participant's pet	39.2
Visitation frequency	
At least once a week	50.94
Less than once a week	49.06

Questionnaires

Participants completed a SurveyMonkey® survey (Appendix A). This survey began with an informed consent and a verification that the participant was over the age of 18 and a current pet owner. After this, the participant was asked a series of demographic questions, such as species of pet (dog, cat, other), participant and pet gender (male, female), year in school (freshman/sophomore, junior/senior), length of pet ownership (less than 2 years, 2 or more years), living situation (living with pet, living away from pet), etc. (see Appendix A for a complete list). Following the demographic section was the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale, also known as LAPS (Johnson, Garrity, & Stallones, 1992). This is a Likert-style survey with 23 items that measures the individual's quality of attachment to their pet. It includes items such as: "I believe my pet is my best friend" and "My pet makes me feel happy." The participants must assess each item, selecting one of seven options from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Out of the 23 items, two were reverse coded. Scores were added across the items and ranged from 23 to 161, with higher scores indicating greater attachment to pets (Cronbach's alpha for LAPS for the current sample was 0.95). After completing the LAPS, the participants were given a revised version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). The MSPSS is a 12 item Likert-scale questionnaire (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988) that we revised to apply to pets rather than other people. It includes items such as: "I can share joys and sorrows with my pet" and "My pet cares about my feelings." There were seven options from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with one of the twelve items reverse coded. Scores were added across the items and ranged from

9 to 63, with higher scores indicating greater perceived social support from pets (Cronbach's alpha for MSPSS for the current sample was 0.935).

Analysis

We used Pearson's correlational analysis to see whether there was a relationship between quality of reported attachment to one's pet and the amount of perceived social support from that pet. We also used one-way analysis of variance to study how the various demographic variables affected the quality of pet attachment and perceived social support. The alpha level was set to 0.05 for all analyses. LSD posthoc tests were used for testing specific mean differences.

Results

There was a significant relationship between quality of attachment to one's pet and perceived social support [$r(307) = 0.77$, $p < 0.001$, $r^2 = 0.59$].

We looked at how the different demographic variables affected perceived social support and attachment to pets (Tables 2 to 5). There were no significant differences in MSPSS scores or LAPS scores among participants of different ethnicities (Caucasian, African-American, other), lengths of pet ownership (less than 2 years vs. 2 or more years), pet gender (male vs. female), visitation frequency if living away from pet (at least once a week vs. less than once a week), and whether or not they were living with their pet. MSPSS and LAPS scores were significantly higher for females when compared to males, and for freshmen/sophomores when compared to juniors/seniors. There was also a significant difference in both MSPSS and LAPS scores

among participants who owned different species of pets (dogs, cats, or other animals). LSD posthoc tests for both MSPSS and LAPS indicated that there was no significant difference between dog owners and cat owners, but scores were significantly higher for participants with dogs when compared to

other animals ($p < 0.001$). LSD posthoc tests also indicated that scores were significantly higher for participants with cats, when compared to other animals, both for MSPSS ($p = 0.006$) and LAPS ($p = 0.002$). These other animals included birds, fish, reptiles, and small mammals.

Table 2. *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) Means and Standard Deviations*

Independent variable	Mean	SD	N
Ethnicity			
African-American	48.05	12.58	56
Asian-American	41.62	12.01	13
Caucasian	48.26	12.86	204
Hispanic/Latino(a)	46.77	12.56	26
Middle Eastern	50.50	17.68	2
Native American	42.50	6.36	2
Mixed	49.00	6.48	6
Participant gender			
Female	50.42	11.27	207
Male	42.46	13.44	98
Year in school			
Freshman/Sophomore	48.78	11.77	224
Junior/Senior	45.06	14.06	71
Species of pet			
Dog	48.84	12.22	227
Cat	46.91	11.80	65
Other	37.53	16.57	17
Living situation			
Living with pet	48.30	12.15	174
Living away from pet	47.19	13.26	135
Length of ownership			
< 2 years	47.69	12.24	86
2 or more years	47.87	12.86	221
Pet gender			
Male	47.42	13.49	168
Female	48.31	11.62	139
Caregiving			
Primary caregiver	50.16	11.39	182
Not primary caregiver	44.43	13.64	126

Type of pet			
Participant's pet	51.31	10.91	121
Family pet	45.56	13.17	188
Visitation frequency			
At least once a week	47.32	13.07	81
Less than once a week	47.76	13.34	78

Table 3. *Multidimensional Scale Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) One-Way Analysis of Variance*

Independent variable	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial η^2	Power
Ethnicity	0.68	6, 302	0.67	0.01	0.27
Participant gender	29.24	1, 303	< 0.001	0.09	1.00
Year in school	4.89	1, 293	0.03	0.02	0.60
Species of pet	6.80	2, 306	0.001	0.04	0.92
Living with pet vs. living away from pet	0.59	1, 307	0.44	0.002	0.12
Length of pet ownership	0.01	1, 305	0.91	0.00	0.05
Pet gender	0.38	1, 305	0.54	0.001	0.09
Primary caregiver vs. not	16.02	1, 306	< 0.001	0.05	0.98
Participant's pet vs. family pet	15.94	1, 307	< 0.001	0.05	0.98
Visitation frequency	0.04	1, 157	0.84	0.00	0.06

Table 4. *Lexington Attachment to Pets (LAPS) Means and Standard Deviations*

Independent variable	Mean	SD	N
Ethnicity			
African-American	117.29	20.50	56
Asian-American	106.54	29.08	13
Caucasian	121.91	21.17	204
Hispanic/Latino(a)	120.69	21.56	26
Middle Eastern	110.00	35.36	2
Native American	124.50	3.54	2
Mixed	114.00	12.98	6
Participant gender			
Female	124.87	18.95	207
Male	111.03	22.52	98
Year in school			
Freshman/Sophomore	121.99	19.59	224
Junior/Senior	115.24	23.48	71

Species of pet			
Dog	121.78	21.04	227
Cat	119.22	20.89	65
Other	101.29	21.25	17
Living situation			
Living with pet	120.84	21.39	174
Living away from pet	119.17	21.61	135
Length of ownership			
< 2 years	119.06	21.56	86
2 or more years	120.73	21.44	221
Pet gender			
Male	119.58	22.88	168
Female	121.08	19.64	139
Caregiving			
Primary caregiver	125.08	18.94	182
Not primary caregiver	113.06	22.98	126
Type of pet			
Participant's pet	127.50	18.38	121
Family pet	115.35	22.00	188
Visitation frequency			
At least once a week	119.00	22.30	81
Less than once a week	120.29	20.49	78

Table 5. *Lexington Attachment to Pets (LAPS) One-Way Analysis of Variance*

Independent variable	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial η^2	Power
Ethnicity	1.45	6, 302	0.20	0.03	0.56
Participant gender	31.37	1, 303	< 0.001	0.09	1.00
Year in school	5.79	1, 293	0.02	0.02	0.67
Species of pet	7.58	2, 306	0.001	0.05	0.94
Living with pet vs. living away from pet	0.46	1, 307	0.50	0.001	0.10
Length of pet ownership	0.38	1, 305	0.54	0.001	0.09
Pet gender	0.37	1, 305	0.54	0.001	0.09
Primary caregiver vs. not	25.12	1, 306	< 0.001	0.08	1.00
Participant's pet vs. family pet	25.47	1, 307	< 0.001	0.08	1.00
Visitation frequency	0.15	1, 157	0.70	0.001	0.07

Analysis also indicated that participants who considered themselves as their pet's primary caregiver had significantly higher MSPSS and LAPS scores than participants who did not consider themselves as their pet's primary caregiver. Similarly, participants who considered the pet to be their own pet had significantly higher MSPSS and LAPS scores than participants who considered the pet to be a family pet.

Discussion

There was a significant, positive relationship between quality of attachment to one's pet and amount of perceived social support from that pet. Because we know that perceived social support is related to well-being (McConnell et al., 2011; Wells, 2009), this could be a significant finding. Although we cannot say that one caused the other, this finding still implies that attachment is a very important aspect of social support and, thus, could be the mediator between pet ownership and increased well-being. In order to better understand attachment quality and perceived social support, we looked to the analysis of different demographic variables.

We found that women scored higher on the perceived social support and attachment scales when compared to men. This finding was similar to previous research on pet attachment (e.g., Smolkovic et al., 2012). Flaherty and Richman (1989) hypothesize that this may be because of learned social roles. They explain how women tend to be more dependent on social support than men. Also, women tend to be more sensitive to their own needs, especially when it comes to emotional support. Thus, in our study, women may have been more likely to express high levels of perceived social support because they are more sensitive to the amount they are actually receiving and

because they view social support as very important. Men, on the other hand, may not have expressed high levels because they tend not to be as sensitive to their emotional needs, which is likely caused by society teaching them not to express their softer emotions.

In our sample, 96% of freshmen and sophomores were between the ages of 18-20. Juniors and seniors ranged in age from 21 to 63. We found that freshman/sophomores scored higher on the perceived social support and attachment scales when compared to juniors/seniors. Most freshmen and sophomores are away from their homes/families for an extended period for the first time in their lives. It is possible that this situation may lead to a closer bond with a pet and a perception that they are deriving greater support from a pet. By the time students are juniors/seniors, they may have developed a strong support network on campus, and so rely less on their pets. The finding that younger participants have a stronger attachment to their pets than older participants is similar to what has been found in previous research (for example, Netting et al., 2013). These researchers studied a sample of participants ranging in age from 18 to 73. Apart from using LAPS to assess attachment to a pet, they also used a scale to measure social support from other people. They found that younger participants scored lower on the social support measure and higher on LAPS, and they hypothesized that younger people are more attached to their pets because they have not yet developed a strong enough social support network.

We found that the species of the pet had a significant effect on MSPSS and LAPS scores. LSD post-hoc tests indicate that dog owners do not differ from cat owners on attachment and perceived social support, but both dog owners and cat owners had higher attachment and perceived social support

scores when compared to owners of other kinds of pets. This is similar to previous research on pet attachment (e.g., Zasloff, 1996). One explanation for this finding is that people may be spending more time caring for, and interacting with, dogs and cats, and this is reflected in the higher MSPSS and LAPS scores. Another possibility is that dogs and cats are more facially expressive than other animals, such as fish and reptiles. This can affect attachment quality and perceived social support, which, in turn, could have affected the way in which participants responded to the Likert scale items. However, we recognize that only 5.5% of our participants were owners of other animals (fish, reptiles). A larger sample size better representing owners of these other kinds of animals may have yielded different results.

Results from a previous study indicated that people who owned pets for more than three years had higher attachment scores than people who owned pets for less than three years (Smolkovic et al., 2012). However, we found that length of ownership did not affect attachment scores. One reason for this difference could be that we used a different measure of attachment. The previous researchers used The Experience in Close Relationships Scale (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), whereas we used the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale. Also, Smolkovic et al. (2012) used different time spans for length of ownership than we did (less than 3 years and more than 3 years). Without enough differentiation between years of ownership, Smolkovic et al. (2012) may have included brand new pet owners with people who had owned their pet for almost 3 years (in the “less than 3 year” group). Brand new pet owners may not have been as attached to their pets either because of lesser time spent with them, or because young pets (puppies, kittens) are more demanding than they are supportive. It may

be important for future researchers to keep these issues in mind and use a standard measure of pet attachment and consistent time-spans for length of ownership across studies for ease of comparison.

Another very important significant difference was that pet owners who considered themselves as their pet’s primary caregiver scored higher on MSPSS and LAPS when compared to those who did not. On that same note, pet owners who considered their pet to be “their own pet” scored higher on MSPSS and LAPS when compared to those who considered their pet to be a family pet. This seems to show that an important aspect of receiving perceived social support is tied to being a primary caregiver of one’s own pet. An explanation for this could be that a person will receive more perceived social support and be more attached to their pet if they have a sense of responsibility and ownership towards it. This is an important finding because it shows that simply having a pet in the household may not provide all the benefits of pet ownership. Family members may not reap all the benefits unless they consider themselves as the primary owners of their pet and unless they take on many of the caregiving responsibilities.

To our knowledge, this is the first study looking at the relationship between quality of attachment to one’s pet and the amount of perceived social support from that pet. Our findings on how attachment quality and perceived social support are affected by the owner’s gender, year in school, species of pet, caregiver status, and whether or not the pet is considered to be the participant’s pet or a family pet, add to the growing body of research on human-animal relationships. We would like to note, however, that one weakness of our study is that we did not closely control for family-wise error owing to

the preliminary/exploratory nature of this research.

Our finding that quality of attachment to a pet is related to perceived social support has important implications for human health and quality of life. We hope that this finding will influence other researchers to pursue interventions to increase attachment to pets and perceived social support from them. Because the current research was correlational, a long-term experimental study may be able to uncover more about the relationship between pet attachment, perceived social support from a pet, and owner's health and well-being.

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Appendix A Survey

ONLINE SURVEY CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Study: The relationship between college students and their pets

Researcher's Contact Information: Olivia Carlson, 678-662-5476, ocarlson@students.kennesaw.edu

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study conducted by Olivia Carlson of Kennesaw State University. Before you decide to participate in this study, you should read this form and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Description of Project

The purpose of this research project is to examine college students' relationships with their pets.

Explanation of Procedures

You will be asked to complete 3 questionnaires:

1. Demographic questionnaire
2. Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale
3. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (adapted)

Time Required

It is expected that this study will take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no known risks or anticipated discomforts in this study.

Benefits

Although there will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study, the researcher may learn more about college students' relationships with their pets.

Compensation

You will receive partial credit toward the research requirement in your introductory psychology class. If you do not wish to participate in research to fulfill this requirement, you may complete an alternate assignment instead. Please contact your psychology instructor for more details about the alternate assignment.

Confidentiality

The results of this participation will be confidential. All participants will be given unique identifiers. Participants' data and their unique identifiers will be entered into SPSS/Excel. All data will be kept confidential. Data will be stored on a password protected online survey system (SurveyMonkey). Internet Protocol addresses will not be collected by the survey program.

Inclusion Criteria for Participation

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.

Use of Online Survey

Internet Protocol addresses will not be collected by the survey program.

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 585 Cobb Avenue, KH3403, Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, (470) 578-2268.

PLEASE PRINT A COPY OF THIS CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS, OR IF YOU DO NOT HAVE PRINT CAPABILITIES, YOU MAY CONTACT THE RESEARCHER TO OBTAIN A COPY

- I agree and give my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.
- I do not agree to participate and will be excluded from the remainder of the questions.

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age in years? _____

2. How would you classify your ethnicity?

- a. African-American
- b. Asian American
- c. European American/Caucasian
- d. Hispanic or Latino/a
- e. Middle Eastern
- f. Native American
- g. Pacific Islander
- h. Other _____

3. What is your gender?

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Other _____

4. What is your year in college?

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior
- e. Other _____

The following questions are about a pet that you live with currently, or one that is at home with your family. If you have more than one pet, please think of your favorite pet when answering the questions.

5. What kind of pet do you own?

- a. Dog
- b. Cat
- c. Bird
- d. Fish
- e. Reptile (snake/turtle/lizard)
- f. Small mammal (rabbit/hamster/rat/mouse/gerbil)
- g. Other _____

6. Which of the following best describes your pet ownership situation?

- a. I don't live with my pet but I see my pet when I visit home
- b. I live with my pet

7. How long have you owned this pet?

- a. 3 months or less
- b. 4 to 6 months

- c. 6 months to a year
- d. 1 year
- e. 2 years
- f. More than 2 years

8. If you **don't** live with your pet, how often do you see it?

- a. Every day
- b. A few times a week
- c. Once a week
- d. A few times a month
- e. Once a month
- d. A few times in a year
- e. Once a year
- f. Not applicable because I live with my pet

9. Which of the following best describes your pet?

- a. It is considered as your pet, even if you are away from it
- b. It is considered as a family pet

10. When you are with your pet, are you the primary caregiver?

- a. Yes
- b. No

11. Your pet is_____

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. I don't know

12. Your pet is_____

- a. a rescue animal that you adopted
- b. one that you purchased from a pet store or a breeder
- c. a gift from someone
- d. None of the above options describe my pet

Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale

16. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about your favorite pet.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Mildly disagree	Neutral	Mildly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
My pet means more to me than any of my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quite often I confide in my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that pets should have the same rights and privileges as family members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe my pet is my best friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quite often, my feelings toward people are affected by the way they react to my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I love my pet because he/she is more loyal to me than most of the people in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy showing other people pictures of my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think my pet is just a pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I love my pet because it never judges me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet knows when I'm feeling bad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often talk to other people about my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet understands me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about your favorite pet.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Mildly disagree	Neutral	Mildly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
I believe that loving my pet helps me stay healthy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pets deserve as much respect as humans do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet and I have a very close relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would do almost anything to take care of my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I play with my pet quite often.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider my pet to be a great companion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet makes me feel happy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that my pet is a part of my family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not very attached to my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Owning a pet adds to my happiness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider my pet to be a friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

18. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about your favorite pet.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
My pet is around when I am in need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can share joys and sorrows with my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet really tries to help me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get the emotional help & support I need from my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet does not comfort me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet is a real source of comfort to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can count on my pet when things go wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can talk about my problems with my pet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pet cares about my feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>