RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PET ATTACHMENT, SELF COMPASSION AND MENTAL WELLBEING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

by

Shaiza Azhar

Bsp201044

Department Of Psychology

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

Capital University of Science & Technology,

Islamabad

January, 2024

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Shaiza Azhar

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A Research Thesis submitted to the

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

Capital University of Science & Technology,

Islamabad

January,2024

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

It is certified that the Research Thesis titled "Relationship between Pet attachment, Self Compassion and Mental Well-being among Young Adults" was carried out by Shaiza Azhar, Reg. No. BSP201044, under the supervision of Ms. Irum Noureen, Capital University of Science & Technology, Islamabad, is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a Research Thesis for the degree of BS Psychology.

Supervisor: --

Ms. Irum Noureen

Lecturer

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences

Capital University of Science & Technology, Islamabad

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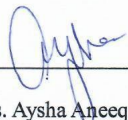
By

Shaiza Azhar

Registration # BSP201044

Approved By

_____

Supervisor

Ms. Irum Noureen

_____

Ms. Aysha Aneeq

Internal evaluator I

_____

Ms. Anam Mehmood

Internal evaluator II

_____

Thesis Coordinator

Ms. Irum Noureen

_____

Head of Department

Dr. Sabahat Haqqani

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my family and their moral support and valuable insights through my journey

DECLARATION

It is declared that this is an original piece of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged in text and references. This work has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution for tertiary education and shall not be submitted by me in future for obtaining any degree from this or any other University or Institution.

Shaiza Azhar

BSP 201044

January, 2024

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am really thankful to my supervisor Ms. Irum Noureen for her dedication, guidance, and help in writing this thesis and for providing me the moral support,cooperation, and understanding in difficult times.

ABSTRACT

Pet attachment is the strong emotional bond that develops between a person and their pet. The concept of pet attachment acknowledges the deep and meaningful connections that can exist between humans and animals, enriching the lives of both parties involved. Self-compassion is the act of treating oneself with kindness, care, and understanding, particularly during times of personal suffering or failure. Mental well-being is an essential component of overall health and happiness.The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between young adults mental health and self-compassion for dogs. This study had examine animal bonding and sample of 300 had be taken from young adults dog owners of Rawalpindi /Islamabad.

The scales of Lexington attachment to pet scale, self-compassion scale and the Warwick – Edinburgh mental well-being are used to find out the relationship among the three variables using the quantitative technique of research. Purposive sampling technique is used in this study. Correlational analysis was conducted using SPSS software. Results shows correlational analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between pet attachment, self-compassion and mental well-being (r=.100).This study aims the more attachment in young adult dog owner, it provokes the more self-compassion in individual which lead to a high mental well-being.Understanding attachment theory beyond human relationships may help improve animal-assisted therapy programs and service animal programs. Clinical implications of companion animals and therapy animals are discussed. Limitations of the study are discussed. Suggestions for future research include longitudinal, experimental, and retrospective studies to further explore the human-animal bond in greater depth, as well as exploring differences of dog ownership with various populations and cultures.

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Introduction

Pet attachment is the strong emotional bond that develops between a person and their pet. It involves feelings of affection, companionship, and a sense of responsibility towards the dog Many people consider their dogs to be members of their family and treat them accordingly. Because of the intense bond that develops between dogs and their owners, losing a dog may be extremely upsetting and sad (Zilcha-Mano et al., 2012). Dog attachment is a strong emotional bond that improves the well-being of both the dog and the owner by bringing them joy, comfort, and companionship.

Pet attachment can varies from person to person, and various people may develop their dogs to varying degrees of connection. Dogs can also be a source of happiness, amusement, and relaxation. Playing with or hugging a pet releases endorphins, which lowers stress levels. Additionally, taking care of a dog, including feeding, grooming, and playing with it, instills in the owner a sense of responsibility and nurturing. The link between the dog and owner is further strengthened by this involvement in caring duties (Sable, 1995). These fulfilling encounters help people develop powerful emotional attachments.

Dogs are accepting and loving, and they don't pass judgement. They offer a safe and reassuring presence for their owners because they do not judge. In times of stress, bereavement, or emotional upheaval, this can be especially helpful. The strength of the attachment can vary depending on a variety of factors, including personality, past experiences, and the behaviour and temperament of the pet (Krause-Parello, 2012). Dog attachment is the human psychological connectivity with their

dog and an attachment relationship between dog' s owners and the companion pet (Garrity et al, 1989).

The human animal bond has been defined as the emotional attachment between people and animal (Risley-curtiss et al., 2010). It's crucial to understand that dog attachment is reciprocal. Dogs form attachment to individuals in the same way that we form attachments to them. They are dependent on humans for their survival, and the relationship they develop with their human partners gives them a sense of comfort and belonging. They rely on Individuals for support, safety, and love, and in exchange, they show us their love and steadfast loyalty. Dogs are also remarkably adept at detecting our moods. They are able to detect minute changes in human behaviour and body language and frequently react with compassion and understanding.

Their innate ability to read our emotional states is quite amazing and may be a great source of comfort when things get tough. The unconditional love that dogs give is one of the main factors in the close bond that exists between people and their pets (Bowlby, 1969). Dogs don't evaluate us based on our weaknesses or flaws. They support and adore us unconditionally and accept us for who we are. Dogs are always there to offer consolation and a listening ear, or rather, a listening paw, whether we've had a bad day or are feeling depressed. Simply having them around might make us feel at ease and secure and serve as a constant reminder that we are never truly alone (Bowlby, 1969).

Shared memories and experiences foster the bond between humans and their dogs. These shared experiences, whether they involve playing catch, taking walks in the park, or just cuddling on the couch, forge enduring bonds. They become treasured memories that remind us of the love and happiness they bring into our lives. Dogs can

be important source of comfort and companionship for individual of all ages (Bowlby, 1969).

Attachment to dogs and other pets can be similar in many ways, but there are also some differences. For example, cats are often seen as more independent and aloof than dogs, which can make forming an attachment to a cat a bit more challenging than forming an attachment to a dog. However when a cat does form an attachment to its owner, it can be as strong and meaningful as the attachment that a dog forms with its owner (Stammbach & Turner, 1999).

Pet therapy has multiple, extensive advantages. Being among animals can have a profoundly positive effect on one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As an illustration, spending time with a lovable pet can help lessen stress, worry, and sadness. Endorphins, which are brain chemicals that naturally elevate mood, can be released simply by caressing an animal, resulting in feelings of relaxation and contentment. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that the presence of animals lowers blood pressure and pulse rate, improving cardiovascular health. The capacity of pet therapy to promote socialization and enhance interpersonal skills is one of its amazing features. Researches shows that autistic people prefer interactions with animals over humans and that 80% of autistic children have participated in pet therapy. (Banks, 2002).

Dogs have a special talent for removing obstacles and promoting communication. Many people, particularly those with social anxiety or autism spectrum disorders, find it simpler to interact with dogs than with people. Dogs offer people unwavering affection, acceptance, and a nonjudgmental presence, which helps people establish trust and grow confident in their interactions. This benefits not only the therapy clients but also the animals themselves because it can lead to improved

social skills and higher self-esteem. Children with learning disabilities or behavioral issues have benefited greatly from animal-assisted treatments because the animals may act as compassionate, nonjudgmental companions and speed up the learning process (Hooker et al., 2002).

Self-compassion is the act of treating oneself with kindness, care, and understanding, particularly during times of personal suffering or failure. It involves recognizing and acknowledging one's own pain and suffering with kindness and empathy, rather than with harsh self-criticism or judgment. Self-compassion has three major components: Self kindness, Common humanity and Mindfulness These three elements work together to form a comprehensive foundation for self-compassion. Self-compassionate people approach their experiences with mindfulness and non judgment, acknowledge the commonality of human challenges, and are compassionate toward themselves. (Neff, 2003).

Self kindness is being understanding, supportive, and kind to oneself, especially when experiencing pain or disappointment, is known as self-kindness. There are several advantages to self-compassion practise for mental and emotional health. It can lessen anxiety and despair, boost self-esteem, reduce self-criticism, and promote general psychological wellness. By being kind to ourselves, we cultivate an interior space that is encouraging and nourishing and promotes growth, healing, and self-acceptance (Neff & Germer, 2013).

Self-compassion has been consistently associated with improvements in overall well-being. Here are some ways in which practicing self-compassion contributes to enhanced well-being Self-compassion is linked to lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. By treating oneself with kindness and understanding during difficult times,

individuals can mitigate the negative impact of emotional challenges on their mental health. (Neff, 2003)

Common humanity is recognizing that hardships and suffering are a universal aspect of the human experience. Self-compassion recognizes that everyone experiences tough moments, which helps to build a sense of connection with others rather than feeling alone or weird (Neff, 2003). Mindfulness is being mindful means paying attention to one's feelings, thoughts, and physical experiences without filtering them or suppressing them. Self-compassion can be more easily cultivated when people are able to observe their pain with an attitude of curiosity and non-attachment (Neff & Germer, 2013).

The process of growing self-compassion is giving oneself the same level of attention and support that one would provide to a loved one. This is treating oneself with compassion, kindness, and forgiveness.Studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of self-compassion tend to experience greater psychological well-being. They often report lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress (Kristin Neff, 2003).

The cultivation of an enhanced self-image is heavily dependent on self-compassion. Self-compassion urges people to substitute a more sympathetic and understanding inner voice for harsh self-judgment. People can escape the vicious cycle of self-talk that feeds a negative self-image by admitting and embracing their flaws. Self-compassion enables people to accept their flaws and acknowledge them as common aspects of the human experience rather than aiming for an unachievable goal of perfection. This change in viewpoint encourages a more positive and grounded self-image. Speaking to oneself with encouragement and positivity is a key component of practicing self-compassion. A more positive and affirming self-image is developed as a result of this constructive self-talk, which also helps to boost

confidence and self-worth. Self-compassion lessens the inclination to negatively compare oneself to other people. People become less critical of themselves and more empathetic toward themselves when they acknowledge the shared humanity of hardships and setbacks.Growing in self-compassion helps people become more emotionally resilient, which enables them to deal with obstacles and setbacks without suffering a serious damage to their self-esteem. This ability to bounce back from setbacks supports a positive self-image. (Neff, 2003)

The findings showed that having dogs is a real part of the modern lifestyle for nurses, giving them social support and possibly increasing their self-compassion. The effects of dog ownership on the physical and mental health of nurses should be the subject of increased research, and pet-based therapies should be created (Jiang H, 2023).

In a study for four to eight years, they were monitored and provided responses to questionnaires regarding their health and well-being on a regular basis. Individuals with hobbies reported higher levels of enjoyment, better health, less symptoms of sadness, and more life satisfaction than those without hobbies (Heidi, 2024).

Mental well-being is an essential component of overall health and happiness. It encompasses a range of factors, including emotional, psychological, and social well-being. When people are mentally well, they are better able to cope with life's challenges and stresses, and to make meaningful contributions to our communities. One of the key aspects of mental well-being is self-care. This involves taking care of our physical health, such as getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, and exercising regularly (Victor et al., 2000). It also involves taking care of our emotional needs, such as practicing self-compassion, setting boundaries, and engaging in activities that bring us joy.

Self-care can help people manage stress and prevent burnout, practicing self compassion can contribute to a greater sense of overall well-being. Another important aspect of mental well-being is seeking support when we need it. This can include talking to friends or family members, seeking professional help from a therapist or counselor, or joining a support group. Seeking support can help us feel less alone and more connected to others, and can provide us with the tools we need to cope with difficult emotions or situations(Crego et al., 2022).

A person who is in a condition of mental well-being is one who is able to work well, recognize their own skills, manage everyday stressors, and give back to their community. It involves the capacity to properly control one's emotions, positive connections, emotional resilience, and a feeling of purpose (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022).

The ability to recognize one's potential, lead a meaningful life, and benefit one's community, the capacity to overcome obstacles, recover from failures, and change while maintaining an optimistic attitude, having a good attitude on life and a sense of optimism, as well as feeling a sense of autonomy, competence, and self-esteem are all components of mental well-being (Barker & Wolen, 2008).

Mindfulness has been proven to be effective in reducing stress. By bringing attention to the present moment, individuals can break the cycle of rumination about the past or anxiety about the future, leading to a calmer and more centered state people who are more mindful tends to have a high mental well-being, the past or anxiety about the future, leading to a calmer and more centered state people who are more mindful tends to have a high mental well-being.

Literature review

Pet attachment, self-compassion and mental well-being are the variables that were investigated among young adults. The attachment literature will also provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between humans and their dogs.

Research has shown that pet attachment can have a positive impact on a person's mental health. Dogs provide companionship and can help to reduce feelings of loneliness and depression. They can also help to lower stress levels and improve overall mood. According to research on how dog preference, ownership, attachment, and attitudes are related to human-animal interactions and empathy (Daly & Morton, 2006). Dogs and their owners generally create strong bonds with one another The benefits of having a dog have been studied in adults (Allen et al., 1991).

Pet attachment can also have physical health benefits. Dog owners have lower blood pressure and are less likely to suffer from heart disease. Dogs can also encourage their owners to be more physically active, which can lead to improved fitness and overall health (Friedmann & Thomas, 1995). According to dog ownership and health in older adults, the study found that dog ownership was associated with better physical health and psychological well-being in older adults (Parslow et al., 2005). In a study dog attachment and depression in older adults, the study found that dog attachment is associated with lower levels of depression in older adults (Raina et al., 1999).

In a study dog ownership and cardiovascular risk, the study found that pet ownership was associated with reduced risk of heart disease (Friedmann & Thomas, 1995). In a study dog attachment and stress this study found that dog attachment was associated with lower levels of stress in dog owners (Wu et al., 2018). A study, dog ownership and children health the study states that dog ownership was associated with

better physical health and cognitive development in children (Hawkins & Williams, 2017). According to research dog attachment and resilience, this study found that dog attachment was associated with greater resilience in the face of stress and adversity (Thompson et al., 2014).

According to research dog ownership and sleep, study states that dog owners tend to have better sleep quality than non-dog owners. In a study dog ownership and exercise the study found that dog owners tend to get more exercise than non dog owners (Mein & Grant, 2018). According to the role of dogs in enhancing human well-being, the study states that dogs can serve as source of social support and help to reduce stress and anxiety levels (Friedmann & Thomas, 1995). In a study dog ownership and social interactions , study founds that dog ownership was associated with increased social interaction and reduced feeling of loneliness and isolation (Krause-Parello, 2012).

According to research, dog ownership and quality of life, study found that dog ownership was associated with better quality of life in dog owners (Hawkins & Williams, 2017). In a study dog attachment and coping strategies, study found that dog attachment was associated with greater use of positive coping strategies in dog owners (Mueller et al., 2021). According to study dog attachment and empathy it states that dog attachment was associated with greater empathy in dog owners (Khalid & Naqvi, 2016).

Studies (Neff, 2009) reveals that self-compassion is substantially connected with psychological well-being Increased happiness, optimism, curiosity, and connectivity as well as a reduction in anxiety, sadness, and failure-related fear are all associated with higher levels of self-compassion.

Likewise, graduate students indicated that their families' and friends' support served as useful coping mechanisms for the difficulties associated with graduate school, which could account for the advantages they perceived from having dogs (Bufka et al.,2012). In a large sample including young and old participants, eighty-one percent of participants agreed with the statement that identified their dog as their best friend (Netting et al., 2013).

The special bond that humans have with their dogs has made it clear how important dogs are to people's lives. One idea that has been examined in the past in connection with dog ownership is attachment; it was found that people who had a close bond with their dogs were more adept at adjusting to college life than those who did not (King, 2011).

The first demonstration of an association between dogs and health was an early study of 92 heart-attack victims in which 28% of dog owners survived for at least a year as compared to only 6% of non–dog owners (Friedmann & Thomas, 1980). These findings generated a flurry of research on the positive impact of interacting with dogs. For example, stroking dogs have been reported to reduce blood pressure and stress levels. Researchers have also reported that psychological benefits accrue from living with dogs. These include studies showing that dog owners have higher self-esteem, more positive moods, more ambition, greater life satisfaction, and lower levels of loneliness (El-Alayli & Ciolli, 2006).

Epidemiologists have also connected dog ownership to better health and well-being (Headey & Grabka, 2011). An epidemiological study of Chinese women found that dog owners exercised more, slept better, felt more physically fit, and missed fewer days from work than women without dogs. Further, these effects were

particularly strong for individuals who reported that they were very closely attached to their dogs

This article is a bio-psycho-social proposal about improvement of resilience to diseases, including the COVID-19, due to affective attachment between humans and dogs. Resilience concerns the physical and emotional human capacity to respond positively to the adverse events such as diseases. Recently, some authors have proposed independent hypotheses about role of oxytocin (OT) and crossed immunity to increase the psychological resilience and immune response against the COVID-19. This includes the well-known benefits of the human-dog affective attachment on human health. And proposes that a strong and reciprocal affection between human and dog can increase the resilience and resistance to COVID-19, due the role of OT in the immune response, adding to crossed immunity. Other benefits such as emotional buffering, mental comfort and stress alleviation are adjunctive roles of dogs on human health and vice-versa (Beck, 1996).

Neff, Hseih, and Dejitthirat (2005) found that self-compassion was positively connected with learning mastery objectives and adversely associated with performance goals in classroom settings. Research has shown that self-compassion can have numerous benefits for mental health and well-being. It can help to reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, improve self-esteem, and increase resilience in the face of adversity. It can also lead to greater feelings of happiness, contentment, and life satisfaction. (Møller et al., 2018).

According to self compassion and mindfulness, study states that self compassion was associated with greater mindfulness and reduced level of stress (Neff, 2011). In a study self compassion and resilience, it states that self compassion was associated with greater resilience and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression

(Neff & McGehee, 2010) According to research self compassion and self esteem it states that self compassion was associated with greater self esteem and reduced self criticism (Neff, 2003).

In the literature, mental well-being has been defined and assessed in a variety of ways. "Mental wellness" is a term some researchers used interchangeably with "happiness" and "life satisfaction" (Easterlin, 2003). Described generically as a condition of subjective well-being that includes both happiness and life satisfaction, mental well-being is a state of well-being that includes both in the study Investigating the link between neighbourhood environment and mental health (Dong H, 2017).

According to research, the importance of boundaries it states that setting healthy boundaries can improve mental well-being and reduced symptoms of stress and anxiety (Prince et al., 2007). In a study the benefits of hobbies study states that engaging in hobbies can improve mental well-being and reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety. According to research the impact of exercise on mental health it states that regular exercise can improve mental well-being and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. In a study the benefits of mindfulness it states mindfulness practices can improve mental well-being and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression (Dong H, 2017).

For more than a decade, scientists and researchers have searched for a true definition of mindfulness. The difficulty in establishing an exact definition results from the multiple meanings of mindfulness across the world, as well as its use across many different fields. Mindfulness, also known as sati, is an ancient word, with olden meanings ranging from spiritual to physical. Sati was first translated to English in the late 1800s by the Buddhist scholar T.W. Rhys Davids (1881). The difficulty in defining mindfulness comes from sati, since its meaning emphasizes mindfulness as

an experience, rather than a practice, and is one of the first steps towards enlightenment in Buddhism (Rhys Davids, 1881).

Mindfulness is a technique used in psychotherapy to help patients address both physical and psychological discomforts. The idea behind this multifaceted technique is derived from Jon Kabat-Zinn, who developed this meditative technique from Buddhist practice. Kabat-Zinn started out at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he was introduced to the Buddhist philosophy. From here, he opened his own Stress Reduction Clinic and applied Buddhist teachings to develop what we know today as mindfulness (Shea, 2018). This later evolved into the more science-contextualized Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

MBSR is a treatment plan involving mindful meditation and yoga. The most common mindful meditation is known as the body scan, where the individual focuses their attention starting at the top of their head, moving all the way down through their body to their toes, acknowledging every physical sensation along the way (Selva, 2020). Although it is applicable to many different individuals, some potential negative side effects of mindfulness are physical discomfort, muscle tension and relaxation-induced anxiety (Nam & Toneatto, 2016). There are many different MBSR techniques, making it a treatment option for children, young adults, adults and older adults.

Nilsson and Kazemi (2016) determined five core elements of mindfulness after reviewing 33 cross-cultural descriptions of mindfulness from various traditions. Awareness appeared in more than half of the definitions they analyzed and is likely the most well-known aspect of mindfulness. Another common theme, ethical-mindedness, is the idea that the individual can contribute to justice, peace and an ecological balance in the world and society. The third common theme is external events, which highlights the importance of external stimuli and happenings outside of

the body. One must be aware of the outside environment in order to become comfortable and accept the inability to predict or control external circumstances. Cultivation is the development of character, providing a counterbalance to negative events and allowing for extensive insight of the self. The final core element is of present-contentedness, or being aware in the present moment and viewing one's experiences and thoughts non judgmentally. This is the element of mindfulness that is most relevant to the current investigation on what elements of AAT help contribute to reductions in anxiety. Mindfulness has been applied in the clinical setting through MBSR. Originally meant as a solution to the lack of chronic pain management due to its ability to induce a detached observation of the self and insight into actuality of present phenomena, it has now been developed as a way to help with psychological morbidity. Psychological morbidity is an anxious, depressive mental state that can occur when a person receives a medical diagnosis, such as cancer (Tobin et al., 1993). This psychological morbidity leads to ruminative thoughts (e.g., inability to process emotions, repetitive acknowledgment of dark thoughts), jump starting the cycle of anxious and depressive symptoms for newly diagnosed individuals. Through the implementation of mindfulness and group therapy techniques, Deckersbach et al. (2012) found that when levels of mindfulness increased, levels of rumination decreased, and that mindfulness was an effective interrupter for rumination.

More recently, MBSR has been applied to stress reduction, depressive tendencies, substance abuse and emotional well-being (Niazi & Niazi, 2011). Through a meta-analysis of 9 studies, it has been found that MBSR techniques lead to reduced stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout as well as increased job satisfaction (Ghawadra et al., 2019). In these MBSR therapies, oftentimes a meditation is the

preferred way for mindfulness practice, either sitting upright in a chair or cross legged on the ground (Baer, 2006).

In a study by (Cordon et al., 2009) looking at attachment styles and perceived stress, participants filled out self-report assessments in both a pre and post test format. Participants were then enrolled in an MBSR program for 8 weekly 2.5 hour sessions, and were also instructed to apply what they learned in the MBSR program for 45 minutes a week outside of the sessions. Both the secure and insecure attachments style groups experienced significant decreases in perceived stress scores.

Attempts at establishing MBSR among effective anxiety treatments that include Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Exposure Therapy, and relaxation techniques show promise. A meta-analysis conducted by (Khoury et al., 2013) found MBSR to be superior to mere relaxation, imagery, art therapy or psycho education across an analysis of 200 studies and it was inferior only to CBT for treatment of anxiety disorders.

Often related to mindfulness is Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR). ASMR results in a static-like sensation, often referred to as 'tingles' that travel from the skull down the spine. To achieve the tingling sensation, audio-visual stimuli are used, with certain actions, or 'triggers,' resulting in the ASMR state. This has been seen to assist in stress reduction and pain management, while also acting as a form of intense relaxation (Barratt & Davis, 2015). Barratt and Davis also found that one of the most common triggers is slow movements, causing an ASMR state in 53% of participants, with repetitive movements also being very popular at 36%. These slow and repetitive movements could be, for example, a form of animal interaction during an AAT session.

Mindfulness and MBSR are widely applicable, since an individual does not need to be in a lab setting or a counseling session to apply the techniques. Due to the basis on meditative practices in MBSR, once the individual learns how the process goes, they would no longer require guidance or direction from an outside source and can practice at home. This opens up many possibilities for at-home state stress reduction.

Theoretical framework

John Bowlby, the first person to champion the concept of attachment as a enduring psychological connection between individuals, laid the foundation for understanding the attachment people feel toward their dogs through attachment theory. In line with John Bowlby's attachment theory, dog owners have the capacity to develop attachment bonds with their dogs that closely resemble the bonds formed with other people. These attachments play a role in shaping how individuals manage their emotions, seek support, and provide a source of comfort and stability, particularly in challenging and stressful circumstances (Bowlby, 1978). Essentially, John Bowlby's groundbreaking work on attachment theory served as a crucial framework for understanding the enduring psychological connection between individuals and their dogs. This connection transcends a mere owner-dog relationship, exerting influence on emotional management, patterns of seeking support, and offering a substantial source of comfort in times of stress and difficulty. As implied by attachment theory, it became feasible to grasp the emotional significance of dogs and the impact of losing a furry friend on individuals' mental health and overall well-being. Bowlby's attachment theory not only helped us understand the deep and lasting bond between people and their dogs but also shed light on how this connection affects

emotions, support-seeking behaviors, and provides comfort in challenging times. The theory made it possible to explore the emotional value of dogs. Dog owners establish profound emotional connections with their dogs, viewing them not merely as animals but as companions and sources of comfort and support. In return, dogs often become significant attachment figures, offering a sense of security and unconditional love to their owners. The relationship between people and dogs can be seen as a reflection of attachment theory, which encourages self-compassion and improves mental health. In the end, dogs' companionship, emotional support, and sense of security can have a good impact on people's relationships with others and themselves, ultimately enhancing their psychological health and well-being. Attachment of dog owner with their dog varies in context of attachment styles. In secure attachment style, dogs that receive constant love, care, and attention from their owners can develop strong bonds with them. Dogs that are securely bonded to their owners feel secure and dependable while they explore their surroundings. In anxious attachment style like people, dogs can also develop nervous attachment styles. Dogs that have an anxious attachment may be the product of traumatic events, uneven care, or inherited tendencies. Anxious attachment dogs may react to changes in their surroundings or the absence of their owner by becoming clinging, scared, or experiencing separation anxiety. In avoidant attachment style, Similar to humans, some dogs may grow into avoidant attachment types, which are typified by a refusal to ask for their owners' comfort or proximity. This can be the consequence of abuse or neglect in the past. Avoidant attachment can make a dog seem distant, self-sufficient, or uninterested in interacting with people. In disorganized attachment style, dogs may exhibit erratic or contradictory behaviors, which are frequently the result of traumatic or abusive experiences. Anxious and avoidant behaviors can coexist in dogs with disordered attachment, as they react to

their owner's actions or environmental changes with uncertainty or fear. A dog's attachment bond with its owner can be influenced by various aspects of the human-dog interaction, such as emotional adjustment, consistency, and responsiveness. Secure bonds between dogs and their owners are linked to favorable outcomes like enhanced trust, better behavior, and enhanced well-being for both the dog and the owner, much like human attachment partnerships. Most of the dog owners carry a secure attachment style with their dog. By encouraging secure attachments and offering the care and support required for their dogs' emotional and behavioral growth, dog owners who are knowledgeable about attachment theory can help their pets develop into strong, wholesome relationships.

Rationale

To gain a deeper understanding of the relationships and interactions that exist between people and their dogs, the current study investigated self-compassion, mental health, and pet attachment. The link between owning a dog and human health and mental well-being is getting more attention, additionally studies have shown that owning a pet can improve a person's physical and mental well-being.It is possible to detect a complicated connection between pet attachment, self-compassion, and mental health. Dogs can be a special source of unwavering love and support, which can improve a person's capacity for self-compassion. People may experience a stronger sense of self-worth and acceptance as a result of providing for their dogs and receiving love in return, which results in an increase in self-compassion.

Self-compassion can also affect how people view and react to the needs of their dogs. It might improve the caregiver's capacity to give their dogs the proper attention, empathy, and emotional support, so fortifying the attachment relationship. The major objective is to ascertain the variations in these factors among dog owners,

as well this will facilitate people with pet therapy in order to cope with everyday stressors (krause- parello & kolassa, 2016) this study has also significance in social settings. Mental health professionals can use this knowledge to develop effective interventions and improve the well-being of people and their dogs.

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between pet attachment, self-compassion and mental well-being among young adults.

2. To find out the role of demographic variables (gender, family system) among pet attachment, self-compassion and well-being among young adults.

Hypotheses

1. Self-compassion and pet attachment will be positively correlated among dog owners.

2. Mental well-being and attachment to a pet will be positively correlate among dog owners.

3. There will be a positive relationship between self-compassion and mental well-being.

4. There will be a significant difference in gender and family system in Pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being in young adults.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Research design

This was a quantitative and correlational study. The study was conducted by administering a questionnaire to a selected group of respondents. The research design allow the collection of data that was precise, and the data obtained from it can be statistically analyzed and interpreted.

Population and sample

Study sample was of 300 participants, selected from Rawalpindi/Islamabad encompassing both male and female by using G power software.

Sampling technique

Purposive sampling technique has been used. Participants are selected on purpose, those participants are selected who are dog owners. By using this method, data can be collect efficiently and effectively from dog owners.

Inclusion criteria

Age limit (18-25) young adult dog owners in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Exclusion criteria

Pet owners other than dogs were excluded for the current study.

Instruments

To collect comprehensive data for examining the relationship between pet attachment, Self compassion, and mental well-being among young adults in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, the researchers employed a correlational survey approach

along with Purposive sampling. Demographic form capture information such as age, gender,education, family system, and socio economic status.

Lexington Attachment to pet scale (LAPS-M)

This scale was developed by Johnson, Garrity and Stallones in 1992. It consists of 23 items. This scale is used to evaluate human emotional attachment to their pets, and it is applicable on dog. It consists of 23 items. Items 8 and 21 are reserved item because they are written negative. Each item of the scale measure different aspects such as: item 10,11,12,13,15,17,18,19,21,22,23 measures general attachment item 1,2,4,5,6,7,9 measures people substitutions whereas item 3,8,14,16,20 measures animal rights. This scale is in English language, it has more version available in Spanish, Mexican languages. Its response rate is (1-4). This scale has the reliability of 0.96. Lexington's pet attachment scale had a cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.918.

Self-compassion scale

The SCS-SF was developed by kristin neff in 2003. It has only 12 items. This scale is in English language. It is a short version of original self compassion scale (SCS). Self compassion scale is a self-report measure that is used by adults to measure their capacity for self-compassion the ability to hold one's feelings of suffering with a sense of warmth, connection and concern. The items are rated on a five point likert scale, ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). The scale has been validated in many different populations, including college students, cancer patients, and individual with depression and anxiety.The SCS-SF measures these aspects and offers information about a person's level of self-compassion.

The Warwick- Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS)

This scale was created by Sarah Stewart in 2007. It was developed at the universities of Warwick and Edinburgh in the united kingdom. This scale is in English language. It has 14 items, each of which is designed to measure an individual's level of positive affect, satisfaction with life and functioning. The WEMWBS has been validated in many different populations, including adolescents, adults, older adults.

It has been shown to have good reliability and validity. The WEMWBS is an important tool for individuals to assess their level of mental well-being and to identify areas where they may need to improve. Its response rate is (1-5). it has the reliability 0.87. WEMWBS is a measure of mental well-being focusing entirely on positive aspects of mental health.

Procedure

Participants were selected from Rawalpindi/Islamabad from purposive population that are dog owners. Personal approval was taken for data collection. Participants had sign a consent form, be informed of the study's goals and objectives prior to participation and have the option to withdraw at any time.They were also be informed of their confidentiality rights. Once all are willing to fill it, they were requested to share their actual information and fill out the scales of Lexington Attachment to pet scale, self-compassion scale and the Warwick – Edinburgh mental well-being. They were provided by a demographic sheet and questionnaire, once they fill out the questionnaire. Data taken from participants, was statistically analyzed and only use for the research purpose.

Ethical consideration

Anonymity and confidentiality were assured of the participants. Several precautions were made to preserve the participants' anonymity and privacy. In order

to indicate their willingness to participate, participants would be required sign a consent form. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study if they wish to do so at any time. This further assured that their decision to participate was wholly their own and was based only on their own free will. Any information that may be used to identify an individual was kept apart from the study data and retained securely. The data was only accessible to the researcher who were directly involved in the study

Scales that were used for this study were obtained by the author. There was no biasness made by researcher with the participants. A dedication to performing the research ethically was further demonstrated by the project receiving ethical approval from an ethical review committee. To preserve the integrity and validity of the study findings as well as the rights, wellbeing, and privacy of the participants, it is crucial to abide by these ethical principles. This research study emphasizes the crucial relevance of preserving the rights and welfare of the participants by keeping strict ethical standards. Ethical considerations are crucial in safeguarding the well-being and privacy of the individuals involved. Following ethical criteria guarantees that each participant gives their informed permission after receiving full disclosure about the study's objectives, methods, potential dangers, and benefits. Additionally, measures are taken to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, ensuring that their personal information and data remain secure and cannot be traced back to them.

Respecting participants' rights and ensuring their well-being fosters a trusting relationship between researchers and participants. It encourages open and honest participation, leading to more accurate and reliable data collection. Moreover, ethical considerations contribute to the transparency and integrity of the research process, promoting the credibility and validity of the study's findings. The researchers'

commitment to ethical conduct enhances the overall quality and trustworthiness of the study, allowing for meaningful conclusions and implications to be drawn from the collected data. In conclusion, upholding ethical standards in research is essential for protecting participants' rights, maintaining confidentiality, and promoting trust and transparency. By adhering to these ethical principles, this study ensures the integrity of the research process and contributes to the credibility and reliability of the study's results.

Statistical analysis

Data analysis was done by using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS, version 25). Descriptive analyses were performed, a Spearman Bivariate correlation was used for the non-normal distribution of data in order to observe the relationship between Pet Attachment, Self Compassion and Mental Well-being and a Mann-Whitney U-test analysis was used to see the significant difference in demographics.

CHAPTE 3

RESULTS

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being among young adults. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS- version 26. Initially, the demographics characteristics were identified through frequencies and percentages. Means and standard deviations were computed as descriptive statistics to offer an overview of the data and to summarize the characteristics of the research participants. Furthermore, the study assessed the reliability of the measurement scales used to assess dog attachment, self compassion, and mental well-being. Reliability analysis, such as Cronbach's alpha, was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement instruments and ensure that they were reliable measures of the constructs under investigation.. It was non-normal distribution of data in order, Spearman's correlation was computed to examine the relationships between pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being.. This statistical technique allows for the quantification of the strength and direction of associations between variables, providing insights into the potential connections among the study variables. By employing these analytical techniques, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between pet attachment, self compassion, and mental well-being among young adults. The findings from the analysis will contribute to the existing knowledge on the topic and may have implications for interventions and support strategies aimed at individual's attachment to pet.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the participants

Demograhic characteristics	Categories	*f*	*%*
Gender			
	Male	96	32
	Female	202	67
	Not preffered to say	2	7
Education			
	Matric	-	-
	Intermediate	31	10
	Under graduate	241	80
	Postgraduate	28	9
Family System			
	Joint	80	26
	Nuclear	220	73
Live with			
	Parents	246	82
	Relatives	38	12
	Hostel	16	5
	If other (specify)	-	-
Social Status			
	Lower	7	2
	Middle	272	90
	Upper	21	7

Note N=300 (n= participants). %= Percentage

Table 1 intend the number of males (*f*= 96%) participated in the study and female (*f*= 67.3%). Data was collected from different universities. Students were from different level of education like intermediate (*f*= *10*%), undergraduate (*f*= *80*.3%),

and postgraduate (*f* = *9.3*%). As for family system maximum participants belong to nuclear family (*f*= 73.3%) as compared to joint family (*f* = 26.7%). As for Live with maximum participants live with parents (*f*= 82.0%), some live with relatives (*f*= 12.7%) and other participants lives in hostel (*f*= 5.3%). Maximum participants are from the middle class (*f*= 90.7%), Some participants are from upper class (*f*= 7.0%) and few are from lower class (*f*= 2.3%)

Table 2

Psychometric properties of the Pet attachment, Self Compassion and Mental Well-being

Scale	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*a*	Range	
					Actual	*Potential*
LAPS-M	23	50.29	9.78	.839	21-69	0-69
SCS-SF	12	36.46	5.21	.658	24-53	12-60
WEMWBS	14	47.41	9.78	.896	14-70	24-70

Note: n= no. of items, M= median, SD= standard deviation, α= alpha reliability

Table 2 intend that psychometric properties for the three scales used in this study. The Cronbach's α value for Lexington attachment to pet scale was (α= .83) which shows high level of internal consistency. The Cronbach's α value for Self compassion scale was (α=65) which also shows high internal consistency. The Cronbach's α value for Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale was (α=.89) which also shows high internal consistency.

Table 3

Descriptive statistic: Mean, Median,Mode,Skewness,Kurtosis,KS

Scales	*M*	*Median*	*Mode*	Skewness	Kurtosis	K-S	*P*
LAPS-M	50.29	50.0	48.0	-.51	.29	.06	.00
SCS-SF	36.46	36.0	36.0	.16	.68	.07	.00
WEMWBS	47.41	47.0	39.0	-.30	.77	.05	.02

Note: M= mean, SD= standard deviation, KS= Kolmogorov-Smirnov, LAPSM= Lexington attachment to pet scale, SCS-SF= self compassion scale, WEMWBS= Warwick-edinburgh mental wellbeing scale

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of LAPS-M, SCF-SC and WEMWBS LAPS-M shows (mean = 50.29), SCS-SF shows (mean = 36.46) and BCI shows (mean = 47.41). LAPS-M show non-normal distribution with respect to (skewness= -.51) and (kurtosis=.29) values. SCS-SF show non-normal distribution with respect to (skewness= .16) and (kurtosis= .68) values. WEMWBS show non-normal distribution with respect to (skewness= -.30) and (kurtosis= .76) values.

Figure 1
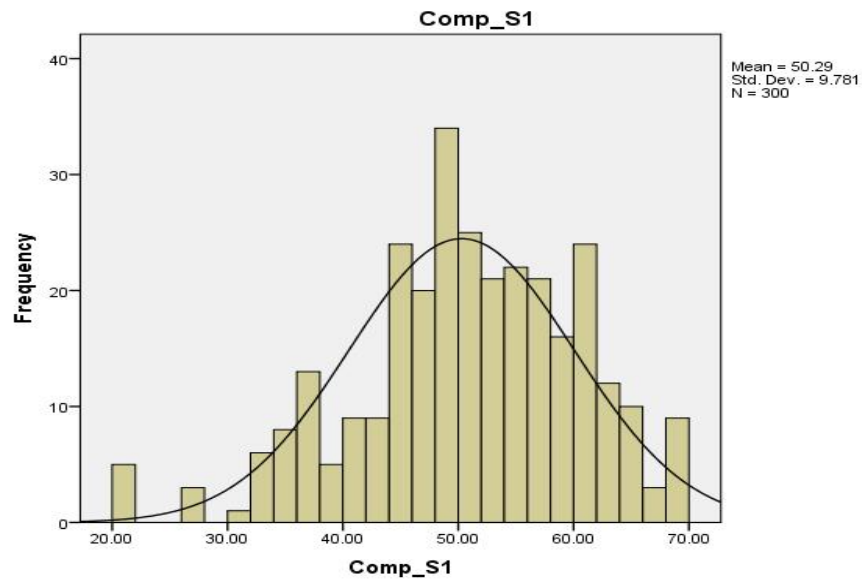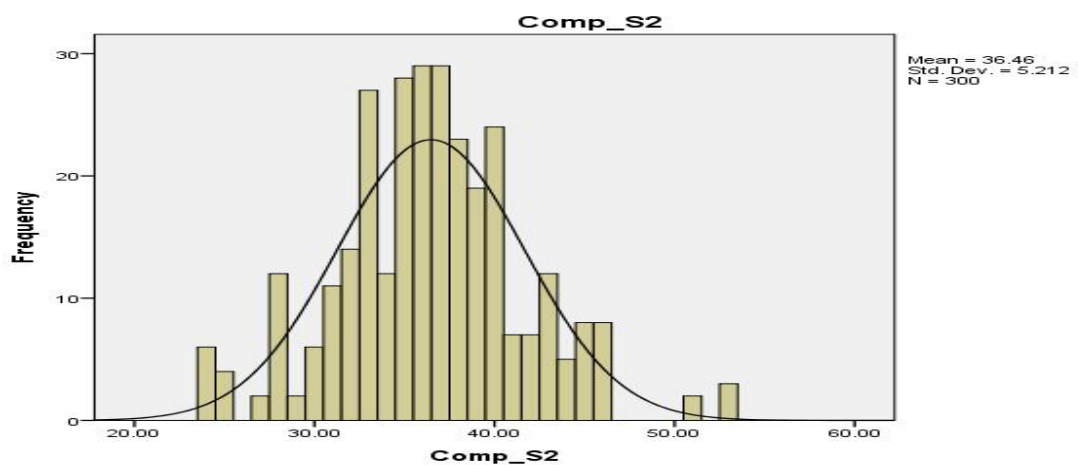

Distribution of Scores for Lexington attachment to pet scale

In figure 1 the histogram curve distribution is non normal data is distributed non normally, distribution is mesokurtic kurtic because of medium kurtosis tail.

Figure 2

.

Distribution of Scores for Self-compassion scale

In figure 2 data is distributed non normally in the form of curve, distribution is leptokurtic because kurtosis is greater.

Figure 3
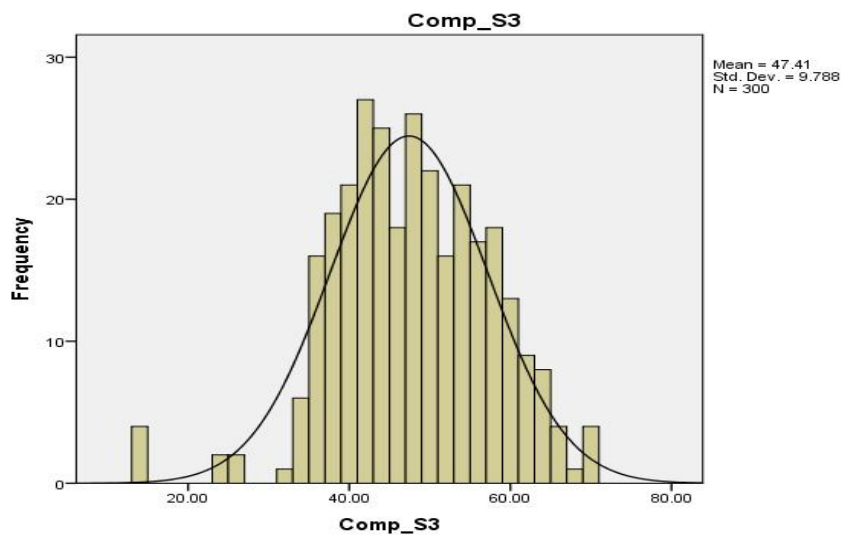
Distribution of Scores for mental well-being scale

In figure 3 the data is distributed non normally in the form of curve, distribution is leptokurtic because kurtosis is greater.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics and correlation for pet attachment, Self compassion scale and mental well-being scale by using Spearman's rho correlation

Variables	N	1	2	3
LAPS-M	300	1.000	.100	-
SCF-SC	300	.100	-	.424**
WEMWBS	300	-	.424**	1.000

Note: N= no of participants, LAPSM= Lexington attachment to pet scale, SCS-SC

Table 4 presents the correlation between Lexington attachment to pet scale (LAPS-M) and Self compassion scale (SCF-SC) is positive (rho = .100). This indicates that there is a positive relationship between attachment to pets and self-compassion The correlation between Lexington attachment to pet scale (LAPS-M) and Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS) is also (rho = 1.000). This suggests that there is a positive relationship between attachment to pets and mental well-being. The correlation between Self compassion scale (SCF-SC) and Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS) is highly significant (rho = .424**). Hence 1,2,3 is accepted that states they are positively correlated.Overall there are positive relationships between attachment to pets, self-compassion, and mental well-being.

Table 5

Mann-Whitney U- Test values for Comparison of Gender for pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being

Variables	Male	Female	P	U
	Mean Rank	*Mean Rank*		
LAPS-M	121.96	162.59	.000	7052
SCS-SF	149.87	149.32	.95	9660
WEMWBS	137.94	154.99	.11	8586

Note, P value= Significance value, LAPS-M= Lexington attachment to pet scale, SCS-SF= Self compassion scale, WEMWBS= and Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale U= difference between the two ranks total

Table 5 indicated that the LAPS-M mean rank for males (121.96) is significantly lower than for females (162.59), indicated by a P-value of 000. This suggests a significant difference in a LAPS-M between genders. Males have a mean rank of 149.87, while females have 149.32. The p-value of .95 it appears to be no significant difference between males and females in this variable as the P-value is close to zero There's a significant difference favoring females (154.99) over males (137.94) based on the P-value of .11 in mental well-being.

Table 6

Mann-Whitney U- Test values for Comparison of family system for pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being

Variable	Joint	Nuclear	P	U
	Mean Rank	*Mean Rank*		
LAPS-M	139.31	154.57	.17	7905
SCS-SF	152.09	149.92	.84	8672
WEMWBS	139.98	154.33	.20	7958

Note, P value= Significance value, LAPS-M= Lexington attachment to pet scale, SCS-SF= Self compassion scale, WEMWBS= and Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale U= difference between the two ranks total

Table 6 indicated that in LAPS-M more participants are from the nuclear family system (154.57) than joint family system (139.31) with the p value of .17. In SCS-SF more participants are from the joint family system (152.09) than nuclear family system (149.92) with the p value of .84. In WEMWBS more participants are

from nuclear family (154.33) than joint family system (139.98), with the p value of .20 Hence hypothesis 4 is accepted there is significant difference in gender and family system of participants for Lexington attachment to pet scale, Self compassion scale and Warwick- Edinburgh mental well-being scale.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being among young adults. To achieve this objective, a correlational design was employed. The study included a total sample of 300 participants, consisting of dog owners from Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Statistical analysis was conducted using the software SPSS. As the data was found to be non-normally distributed, Spearmen correlation was utilized to examine the relationships between pet attachment, self compassion, and mental well-being. The Spearman correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of monotonic relationships between variables, making it suitable for analyzing non-parametric data. Additionally, the study explored any significant differences among gender and family system. Demographic variables were compared using the Mann-Whitney test, which is a non-parametric test suitable for analyzing differences between two independent groups.

The questionnaire utilized in this study consisted of several components. Firstly, a demographic sheet was used to collect information on participants' age, gender, educational background, and other relevant variables. Secondly, The Lexington attachment to pet Scale (LAPS-M) was employed to assess participants' dog attachment levels. The Self Compassion Questionnaire (SCS-SF) was also administered to measure perceived self compassion. Lastly, the Mental Well-being Questionnaire (WEMWBS) was used to evaluate the mental well-being experienced by the participants.

By employing these measures and statistical analyses, the study aimed to gain insights into the relationship between pet attachment, self compassion, and

Mental well-being among young adults. The findings have the potential to contribute to our understanding of the factors influencing dog owners' mental health and well-being and may inform interventions and support programs aimed at promoting their overall psychological welfare. Extensive research has already demonstrated the significance of these variables in understanding mental health in this specific population.

One specific objective of this research was to explore the association between pet attachment, Self compassion, and mental well-being among young adults. The literature suggests that more pet attachment leads to high self compassion and high mental well-being. Stress and anxiety levels have been linked to interactions with dogs, such as petting or spending time with them. A happier and calmer mood can be attributed to the physiological reactions, which include the release of oxytocin and serotonin, it can be hypothesized that there will be a positive correlation between pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being among young adults.

By examining the relationship between pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being this study aimed to contribute to the existing body of research and deepen our understanding of the factors influencing mental health in young adults. The findings from this study have the potential to inform interventions and support strategies that promote pet attachment and ultimately manage more self compassion and better mental well-being in this population.

The second objective of this study focuses on investigating the role of demographics (gender, family system) between pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being. The evidence provided in Table 5 supports this objective by demonstrating there are more female participants and less male participants it indicated that female participant have more pet attachment, self compassion and

mental well-being in this study and more participants in this study belongs from the nuclear family system than joint family system, there are more pet owners who belongs from the nuclear family system.

Hypothesis: Pet attachment and Self compassion will be positively correlated. The results support this hypothesis, as there is a statistically significant positive correlation coefficient of (rho = 0.100) between the Lexington attachment to pet scale (LAPS-M) and the Self compassion (SCS-SF). This indicates a weak positive relationship between pet attachment and self compassion. The findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of pet attachment tend to have slightly higher levels of self compassion.

Hypothesis: Pet attachment and mental well-being will be positively correlated. The correlation between Lexington attachment to pet scale (LAPS-M) and Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS) is also (rho = 0.067). This suggests that there is a positive relationship between attachment to pet and mental well-being. The findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of pet attachment tend to have higher levels of mental well-being.

Hypothesis: There will be a positive relationship between self compassion mental well-being The correlation between Self compassion scale (SCF-SC) and Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS) is highly significant (rho = .424**). . This suggests that there is a positive relationship between self compassion and mental well-being.

Hypothesis: There will be a significant difference in gender and family system in pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being scales.The results support this hypothesis, as the Mann-Whitney U tests comparing gender (male and female) and family system (Nuclear, joint) did yield significant differences in scores for Pet

attachment (LAPS-M), Self Compassion (SCS-SF), and Mental well-being (WEMWBS).

Hence Hypothesis 1,2,3 is accepted that states they are positively correlated. And 4 that states there will be a significant difference between gender and family system in dog attachment, self compassion and mental well-being. Overall there are positive relationships between attachment to pets, self-compassion, and mental well-being.

Studies have examined the idea of attachment between people and their dogs, comparing it to attachment between parents and children. It is believed that this attachment plays a role in the beneficial impacts on mental health. (Archer, 1997).

Pet attachment, which is defined as the strong emotional ties that people develop with their animal friends, is important for developing self-compassion and mental health. Because they offer unconditional affection and friendship, dogs and people have a special bond that frequently results in a strong sense of emotional support. Individuals can express themselves authentically in a safe setting since these interactions are nonjudgmental, which enhances emotional well-being (Neff, 2013).

Self-compassionate people are better at recognizing their own value and validating their accomplishments than they are at looking for approval from others. Their self-esteem is less reliant on acceptance from others. Self-validation is an effective technique for managing stress. People can handle pressures better when they feel that their experiences and emotions are valid. As a result, the physiological and psychological effects of stress on general mental health may be lessened (Neff, 2013).

The findings indicated a strong correlation between empathy and dog attachment. In addition, the results indicated that women outperformed men in terms of empathy and pet connection. Stronger dog attachment was demonstrated by dog

owners who spent less time with their animals. Empathy was found to be significantly predicted by dog attachment, with the intimacy component of dog attachment showing the most variation for the empathy dimension of feeling for others. Responsive sobbing, empathy, and emotional attention followed, in that order. Finally, it was found that gender significantly modifies the effect of dog attachment on empathy, with women scoring better on empathy with higher levels of pet attachment than men (Aliya & Irum, 2016).

People may have different attachment styles with their dogs, ranging from secure to anxious or avoidant. The nature of the attachment can impact how individuals manage their stress and relieved by dog presence. Many older people think about their dogs when making a decision to move house, including considering whether a move to supported accommodation will be difficult for their dog. A perceived absence of pet-friendly supported accommodation may be contributing to sub-optimal decision-making by older people (Hennemann, 2022).

Practicing self-compassion lowers negative self-bias and fosters a peaceful, contented state of mind with a propensity for kindness, caring for others, interacting with others, and being able to control oneself under pressure (Hans et al., 2019).

The data supporting dogs' potential to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of a few chronic conditions most notably diabetes, cancer, and epilepsy is also covered in this study. Within a theoretical framework, mechanisms behind animals' capacity to improve human health are examined. The majority of the research evaluated supports the well-established notion that "pets are good for us" (Allen, 1996).

Since 1970, the number of pet owners in the US has tripled. There are 164 million pet owners in the US at the moment, with dogs accounting for over 70% of the total (Humane Society, 2014).

It is not unusual to see dogs seated next to their owners on a restaurant patio or traveling in the cabin of an aircraft. The significance of dogs has grown across a range of situations. For instance, in order to meet the demands of their companions, dog owners spent billion dollars on food, treats, medical costs, and other necessities in 2013. Additionally, there are state and federal laws and regulations that are tailored to the needs of the dog-owning community in western countries. Examples of these laws and regulations include extra rental fees and deposits for families that welcome dogs. (Associated Press, 2013).

The study of the relationship between humans and dogs has attracted more attention within the last 20 years. Despite the fact that dogs and cats are the most common pets in Western culture, contends that having a relationship with any living thing can expand a person's repertoire of behaviors and reciprocal interactions by serving as an object of attachment, such as when a person projects their emotions onto a dog. (Karen, 1994).

Studies of dog ownership have demonstrated a positive relationship to both mental and physical health such as positively contributing to the emotional and mental health of homeless people as well as the elderly (Siegel, 1990).

Conclusion

 In general, dogs appear to provide owners with benefits that non-owners do not experience. This present study explored dog attachment with respect of self compassion and mental well-being. Individuals with strong dog attachment lead to high self compassion and high mental well-being. Dogs have become a growing focus of research, but little is known about the impact they have in people's everyday life. There has been a heavy emphasis in research on exploring the positive benefits therapy animals have in Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA), but therapy animals are

behaviorally trained and clearly receptive of their owner's needs. On the contrary, pets are not professionally trained, yet we encounter them most often.

Limitations

The study was conducted only in Rawalpindi/Islamabad, so the results might not be generalized to other relevant cities, relying on self-report measures opens the door to response bias and subjective interpretations. Participants may give socially desirable responses. The use of self-report measures may also limit the objectivity and validity of the data collected. Using purposive sampling to select people who have a dog can cause selection bias. The sample might not accurately reflect the wide variety of dog owners and their experiences. The reliance on online questionnaires as a data collection tool. Because of their simplicity and accessibility, online questionnaires are becoming increasingly popular. The lack of face-to-face connection with researchers may result in a lack of clarity or lost opportunity for explanation. Online questionnaires rely on participants having internet connection and being acquainted with technology, which can create selection bias and limit the generalizability of the findings. Dog owners who have frequent access to veterinary services may be a segment of the population, often with a higher socioeconomic position and a stronger devotion to dog care. This restriction may generate selection bias since it excludes those with little income or who reside in remote places with restricted access to veterinary clinics. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the attachment and mental well-being of a variety of pet owners, particularly those with financial constraints or living in marginalized neighborhoods. Furthermore, concentrating on dog owners with access to veterinary facilities may accidentally overlook the perspectives of people who rely on alternative healthcare professionals

or unconventional approaches to pet care. This study is done on dog owners, future researchers can do comparative study between dog owners and non dog owners to find out the role of pet attachment, self compassion and mental well-being variables. Researchers could examine if the kind of pet (cats, birds, etc.) affects the kind and degree of the relationship between mental health and self-compassion. Certain pets could offer certain advantages, and knowing these differences can help develop tailored treatment plans.

Future Implications

This study can help shape the creation of specialized therapies and support services for those who have a dog by understanding the impact of pet attachment on self compassion and mental well-being. The research may contribute to public health initiatives that promote mental well-being among dog owners. Recognizing the significant emotional relationship between humans and their dogs This study may involve in the integration of dog assisted interventions or animal-assisted therapy (AAT) in mental health treatments. AAT is carried out by qualified experts who collaborate with animals to support therapeutic approaches. The selection of animals is based on the needs and preferences of the clients as well as the therapeutic objectives. AAT involves incorporating animals into therapeutic sessions to enhance well-being and promote emotional healing. As research continues to explore the benefits of dog attachment and self-compassion. This study help Promoting appropriate dog ownership within households may yield long-term advantages for the social and emotional growth of children, dogs in working settings or stress management programs may enhance resilience and general well-being. This understanding can contribute to improved animal welfare practices, informed pet

ownership guidelines, and enhanced human-animal interaction interventions. This research can help promoting positive mental health outcomes in both clinical and non-clinical settings. Understanding the role of dogs in fostering feelings of security, companionship, and emotional support can guide the integration of dogs into mental health treatment plans and wellness programs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Consent form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am Shaiza Azhar, an undergraduate student of BS psychology at Capital University of Science and Technology. The title of the research study is " Relationship between pet attachment, self compassion and mental well being among young adults". The purpose of the research is partially fulfillment of BS degree and to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships and interactions that exist between people and their pet.I hereby invite you to take part in the study. I assure you that information taken from you will be kept confidential and used only for research purpose. If you feel uncomfortable you can withdraw from the research, and your provided data will be discarded.

Your help, support and participation will be highly appreciated. Thank you!

Signature: _____

(I am willing to participate in this research)

Contact: Shaizaazhar343@gmail.com

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

For the following items, please select the response that is most descriptive of you

or fill in the blank as appropriate

1 What is your age_____

2 What is your gender

1) Male 2) Female 3) Not preferred to say

3 What is your Education? _____

4 What is your Family system?

1) Joint 2) Nuclear

5 Who do you live with?

1) Parents 2) Relatives. 3) Hostel 4) If other (Specify)

6 Please choose one of the following that describe your social status.

1) Lower 2) Middle 3) Upper

APPENDIX C

PET ATTACHMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with some very brief statements about

your favorite pet.

0=strongly disagree   1=somewhat disagree

2=somewhat agree   3= strongly agree

No.	Items	0	1	2	3
1.	My pet means more to me than any of my friends				
2.	Quite often I confide in my pet.				
3.	believe that pets should have the same rights and privileges as family members				
4.	I believe my pet is my best friend				
5.	Quite often, my feelings toward people are affected by the way				
	they react to my pet.				
6.	I love my pet because he/she is more loyal to me than most of the people in my life.				
7.	I enjoy showing other people pictures of my pet.				
8.	I think my pet is just a pet.				
9.	I love my pet because it never judges me.				
10.	My pet knows when I am feeling bad.				
11.	I often talk to other people about my pet.				
12.	My pet understands me.				
13.	I believe that loving my pet helps me stay healthy.				
14.	Pets deserve as much respect as humans do.				
15.	My pet and I have a very close relationship.				
16.	I would do almost anything to take care of my pet.				
17.	I play with my pet often.				
18.	I consider my pet to be a great companion.				
19.	My pet makes me happy.				
20.	I feel that my pet is part of my family.				
21.	I am not very attached to my pet.				
22.	Owning a pet adds to my happiness.				
23.	I consider my pet to be a friend.				

APPENDIX D

SELF COMPASSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:

Almost Never   **Almost always**

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1.	When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.					
2.	I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.					
3.	When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.					
4.	When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.					
5.	I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.					
6.	When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.					
7.	When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance					
8.	When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure					
9.	When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong					
10.	When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.					
11.	I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.					
12.	I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.					

APPENDIX E

MENTAL WELLBEING QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

1=none of the above   **2=rarely**   **3=some of the time**

4=often   **5=all of the time**

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
2.	I've been feeling useful					
3.	I've been feeling relaxed					
4.	I've been feeling interested in other people					
5.	I've had energy to spare					
6.	I've been dealing with problems well					
7.	I've been thinking clearly					
8.	I've been feeling good about myself					
9.	I've been feeling close to other people					
10.	I've been feeling confident					
11.	I've been able to make up my own mind about things					
12.	I've been feeling loved					
13.	I've been interested in new things					
14.	I've been feeling cheerful					

APPENDIX F

AUTHOR'S OBTAINED PERMISSIONS

Thank you for completing the registration for a Licence to use WEMWBS for non-commercial purposes.
You now have access to the scales and the associated resources here on our website: https://warwick.ac.uk/wemwbs/using/register/resources
We suggest you bookmark this page for future reference.
The information declared on your Registration Form is documented below. Please retain a copy of this email as a record of your Licence together with the Terms and Conditions you have accepted.
https://warwick.ac.uk/wemwbs/using/non-commercial-licence-registration/shrink-wrap_licence_-wemwbs_non-_commercial_v3_8.9.20.pdf.
If you have any questions please contact us via email:
wemwbslicence@warwick.ac.uk

Johnson, Tim <timj@uic.edu>   Sat, Sep 30, 2023, 7:48 AM ☆
to me ▾

Dear Shaika—-I am pleased to grant you permission to use the LAPS measure in your research. Regards, Timothy johnson.

Sent from my iPhone - typos are inevitable - Please reply to timj@uic.edu.

> On Sep 30, 2023, at 12:48 AM, Shaiza Azhar <shaizaazhar343@gmail.com> wrote:
>
>

...

Thank you for reaching out! All scales and supporting research articles which contain reliability, validity, psychometric information and scoring, as well as permission letters can be found on her website here

To support your research, you might consider exploring this comprehensive list of published research articles on self-compassion here: http://self-compassion.org/the-research/. Articles are listed by category and author name.

Let me know if you have any other questions. Good luck with your research!

With kind regards -
Amy Noelle
Certified MSC Teacher
Assistant to Dr. Neff

Amy Noelle
Certified MBSR, MSC & mPEAK Coach
Assistant to Dr Kristin Neff

APPENDIX G

APPROVAL LETTER

**Capital University of Science and Technology
Islamabad**

Islamabad Expressway, Kahuta Roa
Zone - V, Islamabad, Pakist
Telephone :+92-(51)-111-555-66
:+92-51-448670
Fax: :+92-(51)-448670
Email: :info@cust.edu.p
Website: :www.cust.edu.p

Ref. CUST/IBD/PSY/Thesis-627
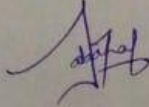August 7, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) is a federally chartered university. The university is authorized by the Federal Government to award degrees at Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate level for a wide variety of programs.

Ms. Shaiza Azhar, registration number **BSP201044** is a bona fide student in BS Psychology program at this University from Spring 2020 till date. In partial fulfillment of the degree, she is conducting research on "Relationship between pet attachment, self-compassion, and mental wellbeing among young adults.". In this continuation, the student is required to collect data from your institute.

Considering the forgoing, kindly allow the student to collect the requisite data from your institute. Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Please feel free to contact undersigned, if you have any query in this regard.

Best Wishes,

Dr. Sabahat Haqqani
Head, Department of Psychology
Ph No. 111-555-666 Ext: 178
sabahat.haqqani@cust.edu.pk