

Characteristics of Pet Owners: Motivation and Need Fulfillment

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Pets are a part of the lives of many people in the world today. This study builds on previous research on characteristics of pet owners and the needs satisfied by their pets. We analyzed the motivational dominances of cat and dog owners and their relationship to the needs fulfilled by their pet. Fifty-six participants were recruited to complete the MSP (Apter et al., 1998) and a 45-item needs fulfillment survey constructed by the authors. Although no differences were found in state dominances between dog and cat owners, results revealed that dominances correlated with particular needs met by pet ownership. For instance, the extent to which participants felt their pets satisfied practical needs correlated with levels of arousal avoidance, conformity, alloic mastery, alloic sympathy, optimism, and effort. Social need satisfaction was correlated with telic dominance, arousal avoidance, conformity, autic mastery and sympathy, alloic sympathy, optimism, and arousability. Finally, emotional need satisfaction was correlated with telic dominance, arousal avoidance, conformity, autic mastery and sympathy, alloic mastery and sympathy, optimism, and arousability. These relationships help to form a more complete picture of pet owners, as well as the extent various dominance levels are related to the needs that can be fulfilled by pet ownership.

Keywords: Reversal theory, motivation, need fulfillment, pet ownership, pets, personality, HEXACO

For many people, pets play a central role in their lives; pets can serve as a family member, friend, or confidant. According to the Humane Society of the United States (2011), 39% of American households include dogs and 33% include cats. Despite their prevalence, multiple aspects of pet ownership have gone relatively unexamined. It is noteworthy to outline the importance of studying human-pet interactions and what benefits may be gained therein. To begin, there are an increasing number of studies that are citing the benefits of pet ownership. For instance, the health benefits of pet ownership are relatively well documented (McConnell & Brown, 2011; Rowan & Beck, 1994). Owning a pet is related to fewer cardiovascular problems, lowered blood pressure, and reduced cholesterol levels. It is possible that the improvement in health may result from the presence of a pet that reduces the impact or perception of psychological stressors (Rowan & Beck, 1994).

One example of such stressors was documented by Hansen et al. (1999). They studied the effect of having a

dog in the doctor's office during stressful child medical procedures. Although no physiological calming effects were reported, the children showed a dramatic reduction in behavioral anguish when permitted to pet the dog. The pet likely served as a distraction and this method of behavioral calming is now in use in several clinics (Hansen et al., 1999).

The first well-documented study to examine the personality characteristics of pet owners was done by Kidd and Kidd (1980). Although they used a biased sample of visitors to dog shows, obedience classes and vets, they tested participants on autonomy, dominance, nurturance, and aggression. Participants identified whether they were pet lovers, dog lovers, or cat lovers. Self-reported pet lovers were significantly lower in autonomy, whereas male cat lovers were significantly higher in autonomy than all other groups. On dominance, male pet lovers and male dog lovers were higher, whereas female cat lovers were lower. In respect to nurturance, female pet lovers showed higher levels, but cat lovers in general had low levels. Finally, for aggression, male dog lovers were higher and female dog and cat lovers were less aggressive. This study thus found variations in personality based on both sex of owner and pet preference (Kidd & Kidd, 1980).

Other research has examined personality differences among pet lovers, dog lovers, and cat lovers. Participants were asked to report what they felt about dogs, cats, and pets so they could be separated into groups. Dog lovers have been found to be higher in extraversion, agreeableness, and con-

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scientiousness when compared with cat lovers; however, they are lower than cat lovers in neuroticism and openness to new experience (Gosling, Sandy, & Potter, 2010). When asked for self-reports, dog lovers rated themselves as more masculine, independent, and athletic than cat lovers (Perrine & Osbourne, 1998). Many people have a stereotype in their mind when someone is labelled a dog or cat person and one study examined the perceived and real personality differences between these groups. Interestingly, the stereotypical differences in dog and cat lovers may not fully match the actual differences. Participants were asked to label the personality of an identified dog or cat lover and they labelled dog owners as more masculine and athletic than cat owners in general. This finding was significant, despite an insignificant difference in number of male and female dog lovers. Dogs may induce activity and athleticism due to walking requirements, so dog owners may be perceived as more active by participants. Male dog owners were seen as the most dominant and male cat owners were perceived as more feminine than male dog owners (Perrine & Osbourne, 1998). Overall, this study found that not only are there personality differences between dog and cat lovers, but the real personality differences may not be the same as the dog person or cat owner stereotypes.

In this field of research, many of the studies were done on dog and cat owners due to their prevalence in the population. However, some research has been done on the owners of more atypical pets. Owners of horses have been found to be high in masculine characteristics and low in nurturing and intellect (Kidd, Kelley, & Kidd, 1983). Turtle owners are typically high in belongingness, are determined and dependable and snake owners are high in desire for change and are unpredictable; bird owners are high in both connectedness and nurturance and are loving and social (Kidd et al., 1983). Within each type of owner, there were interactions with gender. For instance, male owners of horses and female owners of birds were highest on measures of aggression and dominance. In general, females with conventional pets, like cats and dogs, were less open to new experiences than were women who owned reptiles (Hergovich, Maurer, & Riemer, 2011). Female owners of birds and spiders were higher on agreeableness and openness than males of the same pet types; males owning cats and rodents were higher in agreeableness and openness than females with the same pets (Hergovich et al., 2011). Both studies showed significant differences among the personality of the owner and the type of pet they own.

Need Fulfillment

Several studies have documented the social needs and happiness of pet owners. Owners are more physically fit, feel less lonely, and feel better about themselves than do non-owners (McConnell & Brown, 2011). The happiness and welfare of owners are maximized when they have both

human and pet sources of social support. However, it has been found that dogs can sufficiently satisfy social needs even when human sources are readily available (McConnell & Brown, 2011). To further emphasize social need satisfaction, McConnell and Brown (2011) determined that thinking about one's pet after an instance of social rejection reduced psychological distress to the same extent as thinking about one's best friend. Pet owners may even be more likely to turn to their pet during times of stress than anyone else other than their partner (Kurdek, 2009).

Most people seem to get their pet for companionship (Endenburg, Hart, & Bouw, 1994; Harris, 1983; Hirschman, 1994; Staats, Wallace, & Anderson, 2008). As a companion animal, pets can serve as a friend, a self-image of the owner, or as a family member (Hirschman, 1994). Some owners tend to apply human characteristics to their animals and they typically experience high attachment to these animals and consider them part of the family (Hirschman, 1994). Within families, pets can be treated as a sibling or a child.

Other than companionship, pets reduce loneliness. Students are especially likely to report that their pet helped them during a distressful period or that their pet makes them feel less lonely (Staats et al., 2008). Cats especially are selected by the owner to prevent loneliness, whereas dogs are more commonly reported to increase activity (Staats et al., 2008). Parents may also get pets to teach children responsibility, which is often the case for rodents (Endenburg et al., 1994). Some exotic animals also have ornamental value, or can show high class and wealth (Hirschman, 1994).

People tend to agree on the positive aspects of ownership of various pets; Harris (1983) asked participants to read an explanation of a pet owner and report what pet would be the best for this person. He found that selection of pet type for this person was highly predictable across different participants. Although benefits and needs of the pet-owner relationship have been documented, the well-being of the owner may be significantly affected by the personality of one's dog (Cavanaugh, Leonard, & Scammon, 2008). Dog personality has been measured in multiple studies with the use of the Canine Big Five Inventory (Turcsán, Range, Virányi, Miklósi, & Kubinyi, 2012; Cavanaugh et al. 2008). Owners rated their dogs as having a similar personality to their own and the similarity remained even when rated by an outside third party. There was thus some support that people may be attracted by the characteristic personality of certain types of pets, not just attribute their own personality to their pet (Turcsán et al., 2012).

Cavanaugh et al. (2008) found that dog owners preferred for their dogs to bring more of certain personality traits to the relationship than they did. As a suggestion for further research, they proposed that owners may select this animal because its personality complements their own personality and fills in the needs that are unsatisfied (Cavanaugh et al.

2008). The findings in these studies suggest that more research on the subject of personality and needs is required to fully understand the relationship.

Not all studies agree on the ability of pets to fulfil needs. A study done on Catholic parochial clergy found that the ownership of an animal actually increased stress and emotional tiredness (Francis, Turton, & Loudon, 2007). However, the authors suspected that this was due to a lack of personal time and the social nature of the job. The clergymen likely had their social needs satisfied at work and did not have ample time or convenient scheduling to include a pet in their home life (Francis, et al., 2007).

Motivational Dominances

Many studies have documented the existence of a relationship between ownership of various pets and personality traits. However, no studies have linked pet ownership with motivational dominances and need fulfilment. Reversal theory runs in opposition to typical personality theories that focus on stable traits across the lifespan; it focuses instead on a flipping between opposing motivational states that is induced by changes in the internal or external environment (Apter, 2013). This implies that it is possible for people to interpret the same situation differently based on their current motivational state (Thatcher, Kurada, Legrand, & Thatcher, 2011). This can provide a more comprehensive glimpse at an individual's internal environment, as it explains how people can seem completely different based on the situation.

Despite a possibility to inhabit both states in each motivational dyad, people tend to have a dominant state (Apter, 2013). The most studied dyad is the telic and paratelic states. The telic state flows from a level of positive low arousal to negative high arousal, from relaxation to stress. People who are telic dominant are typically very goal oriented and prefer to be in states of lower arousal (Legrand & Apter, 2004). In contrast, the paratelic state encompasses a negative low arousal to a positive high arousal, or boredom to excitement (Apter, 2013). Paratelic dominant individuals are motivated by enjoyment and achieving high levels of positive arousal (Legrand & Apter, 2004).

Some studies have shown that the state reversal from a high stress in the telic state to high excitement in the paratelic state can be an enjoyable experience and may be why people seek out risky activities (Legrand & Apter, 2004). In studies concerning performance under pressure, state dominance can also play an important role. Paratelic dominant individuals may prefer being in more challenging situations with higher levels of arousal and may also perform better in these situations (Cromer & Tenenbaum, 2009). Other examples of the differences between telic and paratelic dominant individuals have been found in sports. For instance, telic dominant individuals may be more likely to exercise for extrinsic gain and to reach set goals, while paratelic dominant individuals

may exercise more often for the joy of the exercise (Segatto & Lafreniere, 2013).

The Motivational Style Profile used to measure the states of the Reversal Theory also measures some other motivational states. Negativistic and conformist dominances measure the tendency of the individual to avoid following the rules in a situation or to follow the lead of others; this has been a focus in studies of rebelliousness (Lafreniere, Menna, & Cramer, 2013). Mastery and sympathy, or the desire for control or the desire for sympathy is often combined with the autic and alloic states that involve feelings directed towards oneself, or towards others.

Present Study

The findings of the previous studies have several important applications. Whereas personality has been related to preference for different types of pet, it has also been related to the attachment levels for each pet (Bagley & Gonsman, 2005). This may suggest that some personalities may benefit more strongly from interactions with pets, such as pet therapy. Pet therapy can involve the pet as the only treatment or provide reasons to change behavior (Levinson, 1984). Although many studies have examined the connection between personality and pet type, there has been no research done on the dominant motivational states of pet owners. The current study will, we hope, fill this gap and broaden the current research by considering what needs individuals with different motivational dominances satisfy by owning their pet.

Our study has two research questions. To begin, we will examine the relation between the type of pet owned and the owner's motivational dominance. It is expected that cat owners will be more likely to be telic dominant based on the desire for lower states of arousal that seem to be characteristic of cat ownership. On a related note, cat owners may also be more likely to be arousal avoidant (Legrand & Apter, 2004). Dog owners may be more likely to be high in paratelic dominance and arousal seeking due to the energy involved in owning many dogs (Apter, 2013).

Secondly, we will examine the relation between motivational dominances and needs fulfilled by pets so as to determine whether people with certain state dominances seek out a pet to fulfil a certain need. This will illustrate whether people with different dominances may get the same type of pet, but that pets may serve different functions and satisfy diverse needs. Specifically, we hypothesize that individuals who are high in alloic mastery will have more practical needs fulfilled by their pets. Individuals who are high in alloic sympathy will have more emotional needs fulfilled by their pets, based on their ability to be understanding of others (Lafreniere, Menna, & Cramer, 2013). Participants who have a high level of paratelic dominance are expected to have a high level of social need fulfilment, as they seek arousal and may be involved in more interactive activities with their

pets (Apter, 2013). Individuals high in telic dominance are expected to be high in emotional and social need fulfillment based on their enjoyment of relaxation and the pleasure that may be gained from being able to have these needs fulfilled by staying at home with a pet (Legrand & Apter, 2004). Finally, individuals who are high in arousability may have their emotional needs better satisfied by owning a pet.

Methods

Participants

Fifty-six participants (49 females, 7 males) were recruited through the Participant Pool from the University of Windsor and compensated with partial course credit. Participants were recruited from all years in university ($M = 2.6$, range: 1-6 years). Only current pet owners were permitted to participate in the study, as indicated in the pool advertisement (37 dog owners, 19 cat owners). Pet type was classified according to dog or cat ownership. If the participant listed more than one type of pet, the first pet he or she listed was used for the analysis; participants were instructed to use the pet they felt the closest to for the study. Participants' average age was 21.5 years, with a median of 20 years. Participants had owned their dog or cat for varying lengths of time ($M = 7.46$, $SD = 5.79$) and there was no statistical difference between dog and cat owners in the length of time they owned their pet. Three participants' data were excluded from the study for owning birds or rabbits; and one participant was excluded for omitting their pet ownership.

Measures

Along with a demographics questionnaire addressing age and sex, participants completed the Motivational Style Profile (Apter, Mallows, & Williams, 1998) and the Personal Needs Fulfilled by Pets Questionnaire developed by the researchers. Using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"), the Motivational Style Profile assessed participants' metamotivational state dominances. The Motivational Style Profile consists of 70 items that measure 14 subscales. Five of those subscales record levels of opposing motivational states, telic (e.g., "Do things I consider important") and paratelic (e.g., "have fun"), arousal avoidance (e.g., "Like to be tranquil") and arousal seeking (e.g., "Try to do exciting things"), negativist (e.g., "Like to break rules") and conformist (e.g., "Attempt to fit in with others"), autic mastery (e.g., "Like to feel powerful") and sympathy (e.g., "Welcome attention from others"), and alloic mastery (e.g., "Help other people succeed") and sympathy (e.g., "Am a good friend"). The final four subscales are optimism (e.g., "Expect the best"), pessimism (e.g., "Believe things will turn out badly"), effortfulness (e.g., "Show determination") and arousability (e.g., "Get worked up about

things") (Apter et al., 1998). The measure has adequate internal consistency ranging from 0.50 to 0.84 on the different subscales. In the current study, similar internal consistencies were found, although the paratelic subscale had a lower alpha of 0.462 (see Table 1). The authors of the MSP reported adequate test-retest reliability ranging from 0.53 to 0.92 for the different scales and showed some patterns of concurrent validity with personality measures, such as the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and the Myer Briggs Type Indicator.

With no existing scales to measure human-animal interaction needs, the researcher developed The Personal Needs Fulfilled by Pets questionnaire. Other scales focused on levels of attachment, or only measured social needs. Using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "not at all or never" to 5 = "to a great extent or always"), the Personal Needs Fulfilled by Pets questionnaire consists of three factors: (1) practical needs (15 items, alpha = .824, e.g., "Does your pet help you reach some of your goals?") (2) social needs (14 items, alpha = 0.899, e.g., "Does your pet provide you with companionship?") and (3) emotional needs (16 items, alpha = 0.921, e.g., "To what extent do you love your pet?"). Note that the internal consistencies of some of the factors reached the above values after some questions were removed. Further reliability and validity analyses are being determined in a subsequent study.

Procedure

Participants came to the laboratory in groups of up to five students to complete the surveys. The surveys were answered on a Scantron bubble sheet with the demographics on the back and were kept separate from their consent form. Thus, the participants' names were not traceable back to their responses. Upon completion of the measures, the participants were given a debriefing form that outlined the study. Institutional Ethics Approval was obtained for this study.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Pet Ownership and Motivational Dominance

For all analyses, the significance level was set at an alpha of 0.05. No differences were found for state dominances between dog and cat owners ($p > .05$), when using an independent t -test (see Table 1).

Hypothesis 2: Motivational Dominance and Needs

Correlations were conducted to determine the relation between motivational dominances and the extent to which participants exhibited the three categories of needs fulfilled by pets (see Table 2).

Telic and paratelic. Telic dominance was correlated with social need fulfillment and emotional need fulfillment. Paratelic dominance was not correlated with any needs.

Table 1
*Independent t-test Results, Means, and Standard Deviations for
 Cat and Dog Owners and Motivational States*

	Dog		Cat		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Telic	19.81	2.69	19.16	2.99	0.829	.411
Paratelic	17.00	2.17	17.89	2.64	-1.355	.181
Arousal Avoidance	17.51	2.71	16.21	2.76	1.691	.197
Arousal Seeking	16.81	2.75	17.37	3.65	-0.642	.524
Negativity	10.73	3.25	11.58	3.78	-0.877	.384
Conformity	18.03	2.19	17.11	2.92	1.328	.190
Autic Mastery	17.35	2.28	16.79	2.90	0.796	.429
Autic Sympathy	17.22	2.91	17.52	2.22	-0.407	.685
Alloic Mastery	19.86	2.85	20.74	2.86	-1.082	.284
Alloic Sympathy	20.35	2.38	19.95	3.52	0.509	.613
Optimism	18.84	3.17	18.89	3.73	-0.060	.952
Pessimism	12.30	3.13	12.42	3.53	-0.134	.894
Arousability	16.46	4.05	15.84	2.91	0.654	.516
Effort	19.43	3.39	19.32	3.37	0.122	.903

Alloic mastery and sympathy. Alloic mastery was positively correlated with practical need fulfillment and emotional need fulfillment. Alloic sympathy was positively correlated with practical need fulfillment, social need fulfillment, and emotional need fulfillment.

Autic mastery and sympathy. Autic mastery was positively correlated with social need fulfillment and emotional need fulfillment. Autic sympathy was positively correlated with social and emotional need fulfillment.

Arousal avoidance and arousal seeking. Arousal avoidance was correlated with practical need fulfillment, social need fulfillment, and emotional need fulfillment. Arousal seeking was not correlated with any needs.

Arousability. Arousability was correlated with social need fulfillment and emotional need fulfillment.

Negativity and conformity. Negativity was not correlated with any needs. Conformity was correlated with practical needs, social needs, and emotional needs.

Optimism and pessimism. Optimism was correlated with practical need fulfillment, social need fulfillment, and emotional need fulfillment. Pessimism was not correlated with any needs.

Effort. Effort was correlated with practical need fulfillment.

Discussion

We expected there would be a relation between the type of pet owned and the motivational dominance of the owner. This hypothesis was unsupported, such that motivational dominances were not significantly different between dog and cat owners. This was an interesting finding due to personality differences that have been found in previous studies (Kidd & Kidd, 1980; Gosling, Sandy & Potter, 2010). Specifically, we

hypothesized that cat owners would be more telic dominant and arousal avoidant, while dog owners would be more likely to be paratelic dominant and arousal seeking. T-test results showed no significant difference in any motivational dominances between dog and cat owners. More research is needed to determine whether this remains true for other types of pets and whether there is a difference between pet owners and non-pet owners. Previous research has not uncovered many differences in personality when strictly examining pet ownership; significant differences however emerged when *preferences* were analyzed. This may have played a role in our study's findings.

We also anticipated a relation between the owners' motivational dominances and the type of needs their pet satisfied; herein several correlations were found. It was interesting that significant correlations were found with levels of social and emotional needs and levels of the telic state, but not the paratelic state; and with arousal avoidance, but not arousal seeking. We had specifically hypothesized that telic dominance would be correlated with emotional and social need fulfillment and this hypothesis was supported. However, the hypothesis that paratelic individuals would gain more social need fulfillment was not supported. It is possible that paratelic individuals have these needs adequately fulfilled by factors outside their pet, as they may be more likely to seek fulfillment if bored (Apter, 2013). Further research is required to determine whether individuals who own pets are more telic dominant and likely to avoid arousal. At the very least, telic individuals may gain more from pet ownership.

Again, more research needs to determine whether pet owners and non-owners show any differences in state dominances. Individuals higher in conformity also had their practical, social and emotional needs satisfied to a greater extent,

Table 2
Correlations Between Motivational States and Practical, Social or Emotional Need Fulfillment

	PN	SN	EN	T	P	AA	AS	N	C	AtM	AtS	AIM	AIIS	O	P	A	E
Practical Needs	1																
Social Needs	.667*	1															
Emotional Needs	.742*	.910*	1														
Telic	.257	.332*	.308*	1													
Paratelic	.130	.089	.162	-.003	1												
Arousal Avoidance	.271*	.498*	.443*	.371*	-.262	1											
Arousal Seeking	.204	.151	.199	.058	.496*	-.133	1										
Negativity	.222	.102	.054	-.167	.531*	-.253	.511*	1									
Conformity	.337*	.423*	.433*	.336*	-.081	.566*	.017	-.122	1								
Autic Mastery	.212	.332*	.372*	.529*	.106	.103	.248	-.135	.167	1							
Autic Sympathy	.004	.358*	.334*	.294*	.169	.459*	.033	-.058	.475*	.349*	1						
Alloic Mastery	.300*	.217	.339*	.338*	.192	.308*	.355*	.046	.405*	.165	.205	1					
Alloic Sympathy	.313*	.276*	.358*	.472*	.040	.413*	.191	-.095	.395*	.214	.163	.653*	1				
Optimism	.318*	.320*	.402*	.498*	.253	.188	.292*	-.113	.222	.364*	.101	.527*	.249	1			
Pessimism	.084	.207	.128	-.065	-.118	.058	-.095	.219	.202	-.047	.245	-.153	-.056	-.559	1		
Arousalability	.020	.301*	.272*	.093	-.212	.284	-.015	-.084	.374*	.090	.529*	.115	.190	-.209	.502*	1	
Effort	.308*	.244	.253	.704*	-.087	.138	.305*	-.072	.347*	.548*	.124	.407*	.372*	.551*	-.121	-.058	1
M	42.46	54.79	64.09	19.59	17.3	17.07	17	11.02	17.71	17.16	17.32	20.16	21.21	18.86	12.34	16.25	19.39
SD	8.97	9.3	10.77	2.78	2.36	2.78	3.06	3.42	2.48	2.49	2.68	2.86	2.79	3.33	3.24	3.69	3.35
Reliability	.824	.899	.921	.765	.462	.603	.703	.782	.507	.55	.543	.853	.766	.858	.731	.816	.893

although it would be interesting to determine if this is only true for owners of the typical household pets. Autic mastery was correlated with social and emotional need fulfillment. This finding was not expected and poses an interesting relationship to be addressed in future studies. According to Apter et al. (1998), individuals who are dominant in autic sympathy have the need to feel loved. Pets are considered by many people to love their owners with a seemingly unconditional love and this feeling of love and belonging may cause people to experience more emotional satisfaction from pet ownership.

We hypothesized that alloic mastery would be correlated with practical need fulfillment and this was supported. Alloic mastery was correlated with practical need fulfillment and with emotional need fulfillment. It is possible that individuals who place their pets in competitions, or profit financially from their pet, may feel powerful by their pet experiencing success (Apter et al., 1998). We also hypothesized that alloic sympathy would be correlated with emotional need fulfillment and this gained partial support. Alloic sympathy was correlated with all types of needs and is related to enjoying giving to others. Again, pets are largely dependent on their owners and their owner's generosity. Individuals who enjoy sharing with others and giving to dependent individuals will likely be more fulfilled by owning a pet. It is interesting and unexpected that alloic mastery and alloic sympathy were both correlated with at least two needs and should be addressed in future studies.

Optimism was unsurprisingly correlated with all needs, as high levels of optimism would likely lead to a very positive outlook on their relationship with a pet. It was hypothesized that arousability would be correlated with emotional need fulfillment and this was partially supported. Arousability was related to social and emotional need fulfillment and these individuals may be more likely to develop emotional connections with pets based on their ability to become more easily emotionally stimulated. Finally, effort was related to practical needs. Effort refers to a tendency to pursue goals with a great amount of energy and most goals that are developed in pet ownership are of a practical nature, for instance in competition or profit.

Gosling, Sandy, and Potter (2010) found relationships between the type of pet loved by the participant and the owner's personality traits. Although our study did not find any connection between type of pet owned and the motivational dominance of the owner, it can be expected that there may be relationships with some personality traits and the needs satisfied based on the correlations found between the MSP and pet needs.

Limitations

This study did have some limitations that may account for some of the findings. For instance, the study was based

on pet ownership and not pet preference. This was done to avoid people hypothetically predicting what needs would be fulfilled by a pet they do not own. However, many people are not able to own the pet that they would prefer to own due to living accommodations and financial restraints. If pet preference had been studied, there may have been more conclusive findings. Some participants may also have owned more than one pet and, although the first pet they listed was used for analysis, their other pets may have affected their responses and the first pet they listed may not have been their closest pet. Participants who owned both dogs and cats may have reduced the potential differences between dog and cat owners. Another limitation of this study is that it was based on correlational data and so no causal conclusions could be reached. As well, it was based on only a small university sample, many of whom may still live at home and own the pets that their family has selected. Since the sample consisted of university students who were in Psychology classes, it may not be possible to generalize the results to other samples. This study also only focused on levels of motivational dominances generally and could not measure current motivational states in the course of the test.

Future research may focus on pet preference, or may attempt to target different pets than cats and dogs and include non-owners as a control. More research can be done on causality and determining why individuals of various state dominances select their pets. Research can also address the characteristics of individuals who own both dogs and cats and include them as a separate group. Finally, it would be interesting to study people's perceptions of the characteristics of owners of different pets and test for the presence of the stereotypical images of "dog people" and "cat people".

Conclusions

Overall, there were no significant differences between cat and dog owners and the motivational dominances of their owners. This result was surprising because of the differences in cat and dog owner stereotypes present in the population. In fact, it was fascinating to find how similar dog and cat owners were on the different motivational dominances. More support for the hypotheses was found when looking at the motivational state dominances of the owners and the needs that are fulfilled by their pet. These results show that for some individuals with certain traits, pet ownership can be an important part of fulfilling various emotional and social needs. These findings show that we cannot stereotype the characteristics of an individual based on what pet they own, as cat and dog owners were very similar across the various motivational dominances. After further research it may be possible to disprove some of the modern stereotypes of "dog people" and "cat people". However, based on the levels of the individual's motivational dominances, it may be possible

after further research to predict how much fulfillment they would experience from pet ownership.

Pet therapy appears to be growing, especially in elder care. The findings from this study suggest that owners of different pets are similar in their motivational dominances. Pet therapy may thus benefit from using both dogs and cats, especially for who may experience more social and emotional need fulfillment. Owning a pet has benefits for many individuals and fulfills many needs, no matter the person's motivational dominance.

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