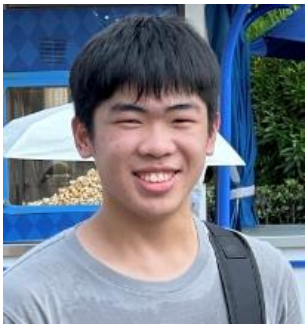
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Pet Owners' Mental Health: Exploring the Relationships of the Different Pet Types, Owners' Personality Traits, and Mental Health.





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Abstract:

Statement of the Problem: Pet ownership has gained increasing attention as a factor influencing psychological well-being. This study examines the complex relationship between different pet types (dogs, cats, and multi-pet ownership), personality traits, and mental health outcomes. While previous studies have explored the general benefits of pet companionship, limited research has systematically analyzed how pet types interact with owners' personality traits to influence psychological well-being.

Methodology and Theoretical Orientation: Using a mixed-method approach, this research employs the Big Five Personality Traits scale, DASS-21, PWB, and WHO-5 to assess (1) the personality profiles of dog, cat, and dual-pet owners, (2) the positive and negative mental health effects of different pet types, and (3) the moderating role of personality traits in these relationships.

Findings: Preliminary findings suggest that dog owners exhibit higher extraversion and agreeableness, which correlate with lower stress and anxiety levels. Cat owners, on the other hand, score higher on openness but also report increased neuroticism. Multi-pet owners show a balanced personality profile, benefiting from emotional stability and adaptability.

Conclusion & Significance: Additionally, the study highlights the reciprocal relationship between pet companionship and mental health. Owners with higher stress levels tend to seek emotional comfort from their pets, while pets, in turn, respond to their owners' emotional states. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of pet ownership's role in mental health interventions, supporting the integration of pet-assisted therapies tailored to different personality types.

Keywords: DASS-21, PWB, pet types, pet-assisted therapy, personality traits, psychological well-being, mental health

Biography

Professor Mein-Woei Suen has obtain PhD degree from the University of Birmingham in UK. His research interests are Social Psychology, gender stereotype influences, stereotype threat effects, stereotype boost effects, stereotype threat deduction, LGBTQ-related issues, and mental health etc. Currently, he is also the Honorary Chairman of the Taiwan Applied Psychology Association (TAPA) and the chairperson of the gender-equality education and social issues research center (GEESIRC), Asia University in Taiwan. Since 2007 to now, he has successfully obtained several research grants from the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), in Taiwan and completed them.

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About Research Topic

Pet ownership plays a crucial role in shaping psychological well-being, yet the intricate relationship between pet type, personality traits, and mental health remains underexplored. This study investigates how different pet types—dogs, cats, and multi-pet ownership—interact with owners' personality traits to influence their mental health outcomes.

Using a mixed-method approach, this research examines personality differences among pet owners and assesses their psychological well-being using validated tools such as the Big Five Personality Traits scale, DASS-21, PWB, and WHO-5. The study aims to uncover how pet type influences stress management, emotional regulation, and overall mental health.

By analyzing bidirectional effects between pet ownership and mental well-being, this research contributes to a broader understanding of animal-human interactions. The findings are expected to inform psychological interventions, guiding mental health professionals in designing pet-assisted therapies tailored to different personality profiles.

About Institution:

Taichung Second Senior High School (TSSH) is one of Taiwan's leading high schools, known for its academic excellence and comprehensive student development programs. TSSH emphasizes critical thinking, research skills, and scientific inquiry, fostering a culture of intellectual growth among students. The school actively collaborates with universities and research institutions, encouraging student participation in psychological and behavioral studies. Many TSSH graduates pursue higher education in social sciences, further contributing to Taiwan's academic and professional communities.

Asia University (AU), founded in 2001, is a prestigious institution located in Taichung, Taiwan. It is recognized for its excellence in interdisciplinary research, innovation, and social impact. The university is home to leading research centers, including the Center for the Gender-Equality Education and Social Issues Research (GEESIRC), which focuses on social psychology, gender studies, and mental health. The Department of Psychology at AU actively engages in empirical studies on human behavior, personality traits, and psychological well-being, contributing to advancements in academic and practical applications. AU has consistently ranked among Taiwan's top private universities and maintains strong international collaborations.

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