

Identification of Gender Disparity in Well-Being and Personality Characteristics of Animal Lovers/ Non-Lovers and Pet Owner/ Non-Owner

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The human-animal bond could bring joy, compassion, and humor. Attachment between human-animal have been intimately linked to gender health, wellbeing, and potentially the survival of humankind. The present research aimed to identify gender differences in personality i.e. extraversion, agreeableness, conscience, neuroticism, and openness and wellbeing in relation to pet ownership/ non-owner and animal love/ non-loving attributes. The data was collected from 300 males and females through purposive sampling technique from different public and private institutes of Lahore, Pakistan. For evaluating people's personality outcomes and wellbeing associated with presence of animals in their lives, SPSS analysis was used by applying Pearson product moment correlation and independent sample T-test. In Pakistan, pet owners and animal loving may also be linked to healthy attributes. The results showed significant gender differences with subsequent change in personality characteristics outcomes. Male pet owners have slightly higher levels of agreeableness, neuroticism, openness than female pet owner who had slightly higher extraversion quality. The personality characteristics has been found significantly and positively correlated with well-being among animal lovers. The increase in animal love is associated with high level of personality characteristics.

Keywords: Extraversion, agreeableness, conscience, neuroticism, openness, well-being, pet ownership, animal lover, gender differences

Worldwide people have been owned pets as a rising trend. American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has described the bonding between human-animal is wonderfully active relationship. From early centuries, human have been benefited and lived prosperously with animals (Lone, 2016). For emotional and physical wellbeing of human and animal, there have been reciprocal relationship based on attachment, behavioral, spiritual, and sensory verbal exchange among them (Bowen, et al., 2020). The bonding between human and pets has always been seen fascinate for other people. The owners of pet might be admitting and enjoying the emotional and unconditional love with their pets (Mueller et al., 2020).

Research showed that emotional and physical well-being of both human and pets have been enhanced with the connection and attachment behavior between each other that has been built through love and care by human (Wanser et al., 2019). Pets play vital role in mental and physical well-being of elderly people as they can get rid of hopelessness, depression, dementia and coronary diseases. The interaction of children with companion animals may also improve their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development (Mueller et al., 2020). For senior citizens, dog strolling proved physically healthy in leisure time as they used to walk with them (Cutt, et al., 2008).

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Numerous studies have revealed that low rate of heart related health problems was linked with having pet among proprietors as compare to non-proprietors (Qureshi et al., 2009). The adults over 50 years, who had puppy or cats, their blood strain is crucially controlled as compare to those without pets (Friedmann et al., 2013). The dogs have been proved to be non-judgmental and tolerant therefore people used to enjoy their companionship. For animal proprietor, animals have been the source of stress relive in certain circumstances (Allen et al., 1991).

In western and non-western culture, children' and young people's self-esteem and positive self-image has been improved due to horse and dogs as their pets. Their social circle has been enhanced due to their association with pets and people living around them (Purewal et al., 2017). Human-animal interaction have been observed with gender disparities in various domain including; animal treatment, connection with pet, animal protection, and haunting. Women have always been showing extraordinary attitude and protective toward animals as compare to men who were most likely less favorable and abusive for animals (Harold, 2015).

The theoretical framework most suitable for the current study is attachment theory of Bowlby (1979). According to research, individuals can build significant relationships to their animals, while some pets exhibit attachment behaviors toward their human caregivers. In some circumstances, these ties have been proven to maintain or enhance both species' physical and emotional well-being. Because most human-animal interaction research has focused on adult owners, we know less about childhood pet attachment. However, there is growing evidence that pets may play a vital role in the growth and well-being of both children and adults. Moreover, child-pet relationships may be especially beneficial for children who do not have solid or secure ties to their human caregivers.

The present research was designed to explore the gender differences in love and attitude toward animal living within their house or outside home. In Faisalabad, a cross sectional study was carried out to investigate human knowledge and attitude toward urban birds from November 2019 to February 2020. The results indicated that pigeon has been considered most popular bird in residential areas of Faisalabad while myna was remained least popular. People of Faisalabad were greatly concerned for more adaptation of parrot and sparrows as compare to myna (Nawaz et al., 2021).

Higgs, et al. (2020) conducted an exploratory study to identify the use of various animal species on the basis of human's beliefs and mental capacity. For measuring human attitudes toward animal exploitation, Animal Purpose Questionnaire (APQ) was used. The results found that dolphins and dogs were the most endangered species on the planet. A study was carried out to explore animal mindedness by analyzing the attitudes and perception concerning animal use. A survey questionnaire was filled by 96 participants for identifying variations in traits among individual that might reinforce those attitudes towards animal use. The results indicated that there has been 37% of variation in attitude that was closer to use of animal regardless of gender and vegetarianism (Knight et al., 2004).

Research was conducted for analyzing the impact of keeping pets in home, either popular or unpopular on children' behaviors in Slovakia. The study was carried out in 3 phases, in study 1 Pests (potato beetle) were used, in study 2 predators (wolf), and in study 3 disease carriers (mouse) were studied. A famous animal (ladybird beetle, rabbit, and squirrel, respectively) acted as a control in every poll. A pair-sensible statistics was used for findings of results that indicated that

children had higher recognition for popular animals as compare to unpopular species (Prokop & Tunnicliffe, 2015).

A cross cultural research was carried out to identify the perspectives of students belong to Europe, US, and Asia regarding animal consciousness and their use in society. The results found that European students, US and Asian students have varied degree of condone for animal cruelty at farms due to gender and culture diversities (Phillips & McCulloch, 2010). Another qualitative research was conducted to get insight attitudes of Italian youngsters' toward animals. The results found themes including using animals in circuses, pet ownership, pet attachment, puppy loss, animal torture, anxieties of animals, animals' assurance, emotional road killing, and behaviors towards hunting, use of furs, leather-based clothing, and zoos. The findings depicted that animals have been playing giant role in the lives of human beings who always been using them in numerous ways (Pagani, et al., 2015).

Rault et al. (2020) conducted research for identifying the importance of a healthy human-animal relationship for welfare of animals by relying on social cognition, adaptation, bonding and associative learning. The results revealed that animal have been demonstrating voluntary technique. They might be showing different signs for interaction, enjoyment and excitement in relation to human beings. For exploring human-animal relationship, a study was carried out through animal-assisted therapy. The results found that having pets at home could make it possible to assist children' improved social mobility. On the other hand, it may also assist sufferers to cope up with their health issues (Catala, et al., 2019).

A comparative study was carried out for exploring personality features of people having dogs and cats as their pets. The study revealed that dog people have been more punctual, energetic and aggressive as compare to cat people who were found to be empathetic, reflective and open-minded (Rettner, 2014). Herzog (2015) conducted research for analyzing gender differences in human-animal connection. The finding revealed that female was more engaged and have outstanding association and behavior for animals as compare to males who had been less favorable attitude toward animals.

Another research investigated gender differences in attitudes towards animal exploitation through online survey from approximately 1000 individuals in Portugal. The findings revealed that men were least like supported for species and human superiority as compare to women (Bennett, 2018). It can be concluded from the above portion that pets play an important role in personality and wellbeing of an individual. Therefore, the current study explored the relationship of personality and wellbeing with respect loving and non-loving nature of participants. Moreover, the study also examined the gender difference in personality and wellbeing among pet owners and non-owners. In the light of above-mentioned discussion, it is being hypothesized that:

- There will be a relationship between personality (extraversion, agreeableness, conscience, neuroticism, and openness) and wellbeing of animal lovers.
- There will be significant difference in the personality, and wellbeing animal lovers and non-lovers
- There will be a significant difference in personality and wellbeing of people who have pets and who doesn't
- There will be significant gender difference in personality and wellbeing of people who own pets

- There will be a significant difference in personality and wellbeing with respect to loving animals

Method

Present study was designed to explore gender differences and relationship of their attitude and personality with wellbeing of pets or animals living around them.

Research design

Present study was designed to explore gender differences and relationship of their attitude and personality with wellbeing of pets or animals living around them. Quantitative research design was used for investigating gender differences in attitudes that people have towards animals and explored their relationship with personality as well as wellbeing form Lahore, Pakistan.

Participants

A sample of $N=300$ participants was selected through purposive sampling technique including both males and females with age range 15-40 that comprised of 150 participants who were animal lovers having pets and 150 participants who were non-animal lovers. The present study included those participants who were animal lovers and non-animal lovers with age between 15-40 years. The present study excluded the old people, transgender and children. The details of the participants are given below in the table.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentages showing Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=300)

Demographic variables	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	125	41.7
Female	175	58.3
Age		
15-20	64	21.3
20-25	121	40.3
25-30	72	24.0
30-40	43	14.3
Education Level		
Below Matric	161	53.7
Intermediate	116	38.7
Master	23	7.7
Marital Status		
Married	194	64.7
Single	93	31.0
Divorce	7	2.3
Widow	6	2.0
Family Structure		
Joint	160	53.3
Nuclear	110	36.7
Extended	30	10.0

ANIMAL LOVERS/ NON-LOVERS AND PET OWNER/ NON-OWNER

Pets			
Yes		150	50.0
No		150	50.0

Table 1 displayed the demographic data of the participants. Out of the total 300 samples, 125 males and 175 females were selected from different institutions including Below Matric (161), Intermediate/ Bachelors (116), Masters (23) within age groups of 15-20 years (64), 20-25 years (121), 25-30 years (72), and 30-40 years (43). Majority of participants living in joint family (160) nuclear family (110) and living in extended family (30). Most of the participants were married (194), single (93), divorced (7), and widowed (6).

Measures

In the present research structured questionnaires were used for measuring gender differences in attitudes toward animals and relationship with their own personality and wellbeing of animals were also analyzed. For measuring personality traits, Big Five Inventory the tool was used that comprised of 44 items following 5-point Likert scale (John & Srivastava, 1999) and it had a Cronbach Alpha was .62 in current study. Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-Being was also been used that was comprised of 6 subscales following 7 items per scale and seven-point Likert scale (Ryff, 1989) which had the reliability of .90.

Procedure

In current study online survey method was used through Google form for data collection. The questionnaire was disseminated on numerous social media groups with brief objective of the research. Informed consent was taken from respondents both male and females belong to different age group and educational sectors. The respondents were assured about maintaining the confidentiality of their information. For data analysis, the researcher used SSPS by applying Independent sample T-test and one way ANOVA on results.

Results

The present study designed to explore the differences and associations of personality and wellbeing of participants having pets or not having pets on the basis of their gender. The data was analyzed by using statistical tests i.e. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis and independent sample T-test.

Table 2

Pearson Product Moment correlation showing the relationship between personality type and wellbeing among animal lovers and non-lovers (N=300)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Love Animals -		.36**	.16*	.50*	.75*	.82*	.41**
2 Extraversion		-	.65**	.64**	.57**	.64**	.81**
3 Agreeableness			-	-.66**	.68**	.61*	.85**
4 Conscience				-	.62*	.68**	.84**
5 Neuroticism					-	.61*	.83**
6 Openness						-	.84**
7 Well-Being							-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The result indicated that personality characteristics including; extraversion, agreeableness, conscience, neuroticism, and openness has been significantly and positively correlated with wellbeing among animal lovers. The increase in animal love is associated with high level of personality characteristics.

Table 3

Independent sample t-test of animal lovers and non-lovers with respect to personality and wellbeing (N=300)

	Animals				<i>t</i> (<i>df</i>)	<i>p</i>	95%CI		<i>Cohen's d</i>
	Lovers		Non-Lovers				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Wellbeing	170.15	4.74	170.98	4.50	1.09 (298)	.27	-1.21	.58	-
Extraversion	30.20	5.98	28.30	4.26	1.42 (298)	.002	.98	.16	.36
Agreeableness	28.08	2.78	28.47	3.03	1.15 (298)	.25	-1.01	.16	-
Conscience	28.19	4.46	24.17	2.41	.18 (298)	.03	.71	.59	.62
Neuroticism	29.98	4.88	24.92	2.85	.68 (298)	.04	.66	.58	.49
Openness	33.25	4.18	30.15	2.17	.50 (298)	.02	1.21	.45	.68

The results in above table indicated that no significant differences were found between animal lovers and non-animal lovers in term of wellbeing and agreeableness while more extraversion, conscience, neuroticism, and openness were observed in animal lovers.

Table 4*Independent sample t-test of pets with respect to personality and wellbeing (N=300)*

	Pet-Owner		Non Pet-Owners		<i>t</i> (<i>df</i>)	<i>p</i>	95%CI		<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>UL</i>	<i>LL</i>	
Wellbeing	173.95	24.34	170.46	25.45	.17 (298)	.04	6.15	5.17	.55
Extraversion	27.93	2.60	24.50	2.47	1.48 (298)	.01	1.0	.14	.34
Agreeableness	30.07	2.79	28.50	3.04	1.27 (298)	.02	-1.01	.16	.29
Conscience	32.70	2.46	28.13	2.68	1.44 (298)	.05	1.09	.23	.45
Neuroticism	29.98	24.89	27.94	2.85	.14 (298)	.03	1.01	.15	.29
Openness	35.90	4.16	33.25	3.70	.77 (298)	.04	6.99	.06	.64

The results revealed that there were found significant differences of personality and well-being of individuals. Participants' proprietors of pets have higher characteristics of extraversion, agreeableness, conscience, neuroticism, and openness than those who didn't own any pets.

Table 5*Independent sample t-test of gender with respect to personality and wellbeing who owns pet (N=300)*

	Gender				<i>t</i> (<i>df</i>)	<i>p</i>	95 CI		<i>Cohen's d</i>
	Males		Female				<i>UL</i>	<i>LL</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Wellbeing	171.95	23.85	169.86	24.96	.52 (147)	.02	9.98	-5.8	.51
Extraversion	24.81	2.44	25.07	2.78	6.13 (147)	.54	.58	-1.1	-
Agreeableness	29.64	2.87	27.44	2.56	2.68 (147)	.008	2.09	.32	.32
Conscience	27.73	2.52	27.68	2.42	.14 (147)	.89	.85	-.73	-
Neuroticism	25.24	3.04	24.70	2.70	1.14 (147)	.25	1.47	-.39	-
Openness	33.40	4.24	32.35	4.03	1.54 (147)	.12	2.38	-.29	-

The results depicted in above-mentioned table that there was found significant gender differences concerning well-being of individual owing pets. Males who have been owing pets, having slightly high level of well-being as compare to females pet owners. Furthermore, male pet owners have slightly higher level of agreeableness, neuroticism, openness than female pet owner who had slightly higher extraversion quality.

Discussion

In the present research, identification was carried out in gender disparities, relationship, characteristics and wellbeing among animal lovers and non-lover & pet owners and non-owners. The data was collected through purposive sampling technique by using structured questionnaires sets from the participants on the basis of their association with animals and pets from various private and public institutions. The first hypothesis identified the relationship of animal lovers with their personality and well-being. The result indicated that well-being and personality characteristics including; extraversion, agreeableness, conscience, neuroticism, and openness were highly correlated. When people might be having lovely feelings for animals around them, they

would surely be engaged in physical activities for welfare of those animals which may inversely or positively affect their own personality characteristics and well-being.

Su and Martens (2018) conducted a study in Netherlands, that was a Dutch case to identify the ethical Ideologies relate to public attitudes toward animals. The findings have revealed out that respondents' gender and age had been each particularly associated with their attitudes closer to animals. The relationship between public sentiments toward animals and idealism was strong that have been confirmed prior findings in the United States and China.

The second hypothesis was formulated to explore disparity of personality characteristics and well-being among animal lovers and non-lovers. The findings revealed differences in personality characteristics (extraversion, conscience, neuroticism, & openness) while well-being found to be similar with no difference among participants having love or hate for animals. It was proved that personality of individual who were having love feelings for animals that are also living things has been improved due to emotional sentiments. While well-being remained stagnant for both. The results were supported by the findings of the study conducted to identify the relationship between personality and pet relationships. The survey was carried out to ask happiness, social awkwardness, and androgyny associated with pet ownership. The findings showed no link between desiring to acquire a pet and stereotypical feminine features, androgyny, and pet choosing and it was found that pet owners were more like to be happier (Paluska, n.d).

The results of the third hypothesis which was, found to be significant differences in personality with all aspects and well-being of individuals who were proprietor of pets and non-proprietor. The pet owners were used to engage in animal welfare activities which gives them inner peace and satisfaction for their own health and well-being. The hypothesis is supported by research conducted to explore influence of pet ownership on people living in various cultures, the findings revealed that owing pets such as dogs and horse have been improved self-esteem and emotional health among children and youngsters (Purewal et al. 2017).

When fourth hypothesis were analyzed gender differences in personality and wellbeing of people who own pets. Significant gender differences were found in wellbeing and friendliness that have been owned pets. Males were more likely to have good wellbeing and friendly as compare to females. The finding of the results is inversely supported by the research carried out to analyze the gender differences in attitude toward animals among college student. Women have been more likely endorsed animal rights principles and struggled to care about them (Eldridge & Gluck, 1996).

Conclusion

Animal could be a source of happiness, attraction and joy for human being. The relationship and attachment between human-animal always found to be reciprocal and revolutionary which may stimulate fitness and wellbeing of each other. All over the world, people have always been fascinated by the bonding between humans and their companion animals. Animals and pets are considered as treasure of family by pet proprietors due to love, emotional support, and bonding with them. In the present study, the researcher explored the individual wellbeing and personality characteristics that have been improved due to owing pets or animal living around them. Gender differences and relationship between variables including personation and wellbeing were also explored. The finding brought some differences in personality

characteristics of male and female owning pets or not and having love/hate feelings for animals. Male were found to be having higher level of wellbeing and personality characteristics i.e. extraversion, agreeableness, conscience, neuroticism, and openness.

Limitation and recommendation

One of the largest limitations is that there is no way to determine how long anyone owned a pet, which may be important when examining health outcomes. The data was collected only from Lahore in post COVID-19 period; thus, it was hard to approach maximum participants. In future demographic in qualitative investigation can be done to explore the phenomena and data should be collected throughout Pakistan.

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