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The Development and Factor Structure of a Questionnaire Measure of the Strength of Attachment to Pet Dogs

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Abstract:

A 35-item questionnaire (DAQ: *Dog Attachment Questionnaire*) involving 5-point Likert responses to items designed to measure aspects of attachment to a pet/companion animal dog was constructed. The content was derived from theoretical treatments of adult human attachment, used in a broad sense as equivalent to an affectional bond. Items based on four groupings were modified for a pet dog. Two samples of dog owners ($n = 112$ and 306 , respectively) were used to investigate the factor structure of the questionnaire, using first exploratory and then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The questionnaire showed high overall internal consistency, it indicated a high level of attachment to the pets, and factor analysis indicated a four-factor solution, which was replicated using CFA in Sample 2. Three of these factors produced reliable subscales, indicating (1) degree of closeness with the pet; (2) caring and protecting the pet, and companionship; (3) as a secure base and a source of emotional comfort and well-being. In sample 2, Total DAQ scores were positively related to a single-item pictorial measure of attachment to the dog, and were higher for women than men but not associated with age or duration of ownership.

Keywords: [AFFECTIONAL BONDS](#); [ATTACHMENT](#); [DOG PETS](#); [QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT](#)

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