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Companion animals provide numerous psychological, emotional, and physiological benefits for their owners, one of which is that they may serve as outlets for nurturance {Savishinsky, 1983 #20}. Previous research has shown that people are attached to their pets {Holcomb, 1985 #3} and that attachment to pets involves nurturance {Rynewson, 1978 #9}. Generativity, conceptualized as concern for the next generation {Erikson, 1950 #16}, encompasses nurturance, and a connection between the two has been supported in recent research {Van de Water, 1989 #12}. That nurturance is involved in both pet attachment and generativity suggests a relationship between the concepts.

In this study, we investigated the relationship between attachment to pets and generativity with the expectation that attachment to pets would be positively related to generativity in young adults. A second aim of the study was to replicate the initial findings regarding pet attachment {Holcomb, 1985 #3} and generativity {McAdams, 1992 #7}, especially concerning gender, age, and being a primary caregiver of a pet.

Many studies demonstrate the beneficial effects of companion animals. Friedmann, Katcher, Lynch, and Thomas {, 1980 #22} found that having a pet in the home was the strongest predictor of 1-year survival following discharge from a coronary care unit. These effects were independent of socioeconomic status, social network, geographic mobility, and living situation. Katcher {, 1981 #18} found that touch-talk dialogue with animals was associated with lower blood pressure than dialogue with people. Mugford and M'Comisky {, 1975 #19} found that a group of elderly people who were given budgies showed greater improvement in their attitudes toward people and their own psychological health than before they owned the budgies. Hyde, Kurdek, and Larson {, 1983 #4} reported that college-aged pet owners had higher empathy and interpersonal trust scores than people without pets.

The positive effects of pets may be partly due to the fact that they invite nurturance. Savishinsky {, 1983 #20} proposed that pets serve as outlets for nurturance, displacement, and projection and can function as child substitutes at various phases of the life cycle. Katcher and Beck {, 1987 #5} suggested that people in urban societies are often deprived of opportunities to be nurturant and affectionate toward others and that pets can serve as an extension for human nurturing. Caring for a pet also wards off depression and despair, for it gives the owner a feeling that he or she is productive {, 1983 #14}.

Veterinarians have observed that people are often very attached to their pets {Voith, 1984 #21}. Attachment, which initially referred to the bond that develops between a caregiver and his or her infant {Ainsworth, 1974 #13}, is defined in several ways. It can refer to an emotional state or feeling and also to specific behaviors that an individual uses to keep another individual close to him or her {Voith, 1984 #21}. Specific patterns of attachment, however, depend on individual differences among species, early experiences, and environmental conditions. A genetic predisposition may even underlie the development of attachments {Voith, 1984 #21}.

Activities that build and maintain attachments between people may also occur between individuals and their pets {Voith, 1984 #21}. Many of the interactions that take place between people and their pets resemble those that take place between individuals and their children. This is because children and pets share many of the same attributes. Pets are similar to children in that they rely on someone to take care of them. Many pets can be picked up and carried, just like children. In this respect, pets may be viewed as perpetual children {Voith, 1984 #21}.

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Companion animals provide numerous psychological, emotional, and physiological benefits for their owners, one of which is that they may serve as outlets for nurturance (Savishinsky, 1983). Previous research has shown that people are attached to their pets (Holcomb, Williams, & Richards, 1985) and that attachment to pets involves nurturance (Rynearson, 1978). Generativity, conceptualized as concern for the next generation (Erikson, 1950), encompasses nurturance, and a connection between the two has been supported in recent research (Van de Water & McAdams, 1989). That nurturance is involved in both pet attachment and generativity suggests a relationship between the concepts.

In this study, we investigated the relationship between attachment to pets and generativity with the expectation that attachment to pets would be positively related to generativity in young adults. A second aim of the study was to replicate the initial findings regarding pet attachment (Holcomb et al., 1985) and generativity (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), especially concerning gender, age, and being a primary caregiver of a pet.

Many studies demonstrate the beneficial effects of companion animals. Friedmann, Katcher, Lynch, and Thomas (1980) found that having a pet in the home was the strongest predictor of 1-year survival following discharge from a coronary care unit. These effects were independent of socioeconomic status, social network, geographic mobility, and living situation. Katcher (1981) found that touch-talk dialogue with animals was associated with lower blood pressure than dialogue with people. Mugford and M'Comisky (1975) found that a group of elderly people who were given budgies showed greater improvement in their attitudes toward people and their own psychological health than before they owned the budgies. Hyde, Kurdek, and Larson (1983) reported that college-aged pet owners had higher empathy and interpersonal trust scores than people without pets.

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Companion animals provide numerous psychological, emotional, and physiological benefits for their owners, one of which is that they may serve as outlets for nurturance [1]. Previous research has shown that people are attached to their pets [2] and that attachment to pets involves nurturance [3]. Generativity, conceptualized as concern for the next generation [4], encompasses nurturance, and a connection between the two has been supported in recent research [5]. That nurturance is involved in both pet attachment and generativity suggests a relationship between the concepts.

In this study, we investigated the relationship between attachment to pets and generativity with the expectation that attachment to pets would be positively related to generativity in young adults. A second aim of the study was to replicate the initial findings regarding pet attachment [2] and generativity [6], especially concerning gender, age, and being a primary caregiver of a pet.

Many studies demonstrate the beneficial effects of companion animals. Friedmann, Katcher, Lynch, and Thomas [7] found that having a pet in the home was the strongest predictor of 1-year survival following discharge from a coronary care unit. These effects were independent of socioeconomic status, social network, geographic mobility, and living situation. Katcher [8] found that touch-talk dialogue with animals was associated with lower blood pressure than dialogue with people. Mugford and M'Comisky [9] found that a group of elderly people who were given budgies showed greater improvement in their attitudes toward people and their own psychological health than before they owned the budgies. Hyde, Kurdek, and Larson [10] reported that college-aged pet owners had higher empathy and interpersonal trust scores than people without pets.

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