

The answer to job stress? Why, a pet!

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Research [published](#) in the *International Journal of Management Practice* has looked at the relationship between job stress and well-being in people who are pet owners. The work suggests that pets can play a significant part in their owners' lives beyond the obvious role of owning a pet.

Jehn-Yih Wong, Ying-Ying Cheng, Chia-Ying ChouHua, and Shih-Hao Liu of Ming Chuan University in Taipei, Taiwan, surveyed 228 pet owners in order to investigate how job stress impacts life satisfaction and [emotional exhaustion](#) and to determine whether a strong attachment with a pet can ameliorate these potentially detrimental effects.

Job stress is defined as anxiety, dissatisfaction and other [negative emotions](#) associated with one's work. They can all affect emotional and [physical health](#). The researchers reiterate earlier findings that found that high levels of job stress are linked to decreased life satisfaction and increased emotional exhaustion.

They raise the idea of coping mechanisms and used structural equation modeling and multi-group analysis to tease out the relationships better pet owners with a strong emotional attachment to their animals and job stress.

Intriguingly, the team found that while pet attachment did not actually influence a person's overall life [satisfaction](#), it had an effect on emotional exhaustion in those suffering job stress. Pet owners with stronger attachments to their pets actually reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion than those with weaker attachments.

This seems to be a counterintuitive finding that suggests that while pets provide significant companionship and [emotional support](#), a deeper attachment may also amplify the emotional burden during stressful periods. Conversely, it might be that those people with strong attachments to their pets are more likely to be in touch with their emotions and able to recognize and express that kind of exhaustion more readily than others.

Less paradoxically, those pet owners who felt a strong bond with their pets did report that the negative impact of job stress on [life satisfaction](#)

was less pronounced. Similarly, the reported greater emotional exhaustion associated with job stress in those people was somewhat mitigated by having a pet.

This indicates that pet attachment can serve as a form of social support, helping to buffer against the adverse effects of [stress](#) in a manner similar to support from close human relationships.

More information: Jehn Yih Wong et al, Job stress and well-being: the moderating role of pet attachment, *International Journal of Management Practice* (2024). [DOI: 10.1504/IJMP.2024.139697](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMP.2024.139697)

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