Pets in the Workplace: The Impact of Pet-Friendly Policies on Employee Stress and the Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

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ABSTRACT

PETS IN THE WORKPLACE: THE IMPACT OF PET-FRIENDLY POLICIES ON EMPLOYEE STRESS AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

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This study investigated whether pet-friendly workplace policies, specifically dog-friendly policies, serve as a buffer against stress, as well as impact perceived organizational support (POS). Using a mediational questionnaire design, this study examined whether the availability of a pet-friendly policy was significantly related to employee occupational stress levels and employee POS, with POS mediating the relationship between a pet-friendly policy and stress. One-hundred eighty-eight full-time employees recruited via crowdsourced and snowball sampling methods completed an online survey, including several measures of workplace attitudes. Results supported all hypotheses, revealing that the presence of a pet-friendly policy was significantly related to lower stress, and POS fully mediated this relationship. Significant interactions were also found, indicating that this effect was stronger for dog owners than for employees without dogs. Ultimately, these findings provide support for the affordance of a pet-friendly policy in organizations, when appropriate.

Keywords: pet-friendly workplace policy, perceived organizational support, occupational stress

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Let the workplace go to the dogs! As workplace stressors can be major contributors to an individual's stress level, it is worth considering novel and innovative methods to provide employees with buffers against workplace stress. Similar to wellness programs, family-friendly policies, and employee assistance programs, pet-friendly policies could prove to be a valuable asset in the fight against workplace stress. Pet-friendly policies are defined as "rules, guidelines, and procedures that accept, welcome, and regulate the presence of pets into the working environment, in order to benefit from the human-animal bond and interaction" (Johnson, 2005, p. 23). Although research on pets in the workplace is still young and developing, there is a solid foundation of evidence exhibiting a myriad of psychological and physiological benefits that accompany the human-pet bond (Allen, Blascovich, & Mendes, 2002; Barker, Rogers, Turner, Karpf, & Suthers-McCabe, 2003; Miller, Kennedy, DeVoe, Hickey, Nelson, & Kogan, 2009; Staats, Sears, & Pierfelice, 2006). Furthermore, pets have long been used in pet therapy, also known as animal-assisted therapy (AAT), and have been shown to have significant positive impacts on the reduction of clients' stress (Barker, Knisely, McCain, Schubert, & Pandurangi, 2010; Tsai, Friedmann, & Thomas, 2010; Willens, 2013). Recent research has pointed to the potential extension of these human-pet benefits to the workplace, and this study aims to provide support for this extension and encouragement of pet-friendly workplace policies by exploring the relationships between pets at work, employee stress, and employee perceived organizational support (Johnson, 2005; Norling & Keeling, 2010; Perrine & Wells, 2006; Wells & Perrine, 2001).

Pets and Stress

Small domestic animals have been used to supplement different types of therapy for decades, yet the history of the human-animal bond goes back centuries. In the mid 1800's, institutions and hospitals treating mentally ill patients in England kept populations of small animals on the grounds or in certain wards (Serpell, 2000). In the late 1800's and early 1900's, Sigmund Freud often had his Chow Chow, Jofi, present during psychoanalysis sessions with clients upon discovering that it encouraged clients to feel comfortable and confide (Beck, 2010). After World War II, the United States military encouraged the use of dogs in therapy for psychiatric patients (Johnson, 2014). However, widespread usage of pets as therapy was not initiated until the 1980s, when Friedmann, Katcher, Lynch, and Thomas (1980) discovered that pet-owning cardiac patients experienced increased survival after being discharged from a coronary care unit.

Pet therapy is defined as "the use of hand contact with pets to promote relaxation among hospital patients, nursing home patients, and now everyday pet owners who claim better health through decreased resting heart rate and blood pressure values" (Seaward, 2012, p. 457). As mentioned in the definition, pet therapy can be applied in a variety of settings and with a variety of recipients (Adamle, Riley, & Carlson, 2009; Engelman, 2013; Majic, Gutzmann, Heinz, Lang, & Rapp, 2013; Mallow, Mattel, & Broas, 2011; Stewart, Chang, & Rice, 2013). Pet therapy typically involves holding, petting, feeding, or grooming small domestic animals, such as cats or dogs, and can provide a buffer against stress by lowering systolic and diastolic blood pressure, heart rate, salivary cortisol, and self-reported anxiety (Allen et al., 2002; Barker et al., 2010; Seaward, 2012).

Outside of official therapy, everyday pet owners have reported feeling physically and psychologically better after touching and interacting with their pets. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014), pets can decrease cholesterol and triglyceride levels as well as feelings of loneliness. Pet owners also experienced buffering from stressful life events and made fewer doctor visits (Allen et al., 2002). Though it is yet to be determined, this may be due to a link between the release of beta-endorphins and other neuropeptides and touching pets (Seaward, 2012). A study by Miller et al. (2009) examined the changes in oxytocin levels of dog-owning, working adults after interacting with their dog(s) following a full day of work. They found that the production of oxytocin, a neuropeptide that plays a role in bonding and stress relief, significantly increased in women after dog interaction and decreased in women without dog interaction; this effect on oxytocin levels was similar to those obtained from massage (Miller et al., 2009). Furthermore, Serpell (1991) conducted a study in which adult participants either received a new dog or cat or did not have a dog or cat. After the first month, both dog and cat owners reported a significant reduction in minor health problems, and this effect persisted up to ten months post-acquisition for dog owners. Considering stress often leads to negative health consequences, these findings imply that participants with pets may have experienced significantly less stress, aiding in the improvement of their general health. In a later study, McNicholas and Collis (2000) found that the differences in physical health between pet owners and non-pet owners could not be explained by differences in socioeconomic status, age, dietary habits, exercise, or alcohol consumption, further supporting the possible notion that pet owners experienced improved physical health due to pets' impact on stress levels.

In addition to the physical and rejuvenating benefits of pets and pet therapy, pets have also been shown to facilitate social interaction. In a dog-walking observational study, people with a dog experienced significantly more encounters with other people, many from strangers, than people without a dog (McNicholas & Collis, 2000). Thus, not only does interacting with a pet lower the physical symptoms of the stress response and provide relaxation, but it also helps a person gain social support. In addition, pets can directly offer social support without developing supporter burnout or causing concerns about the stability of the relationship, which can be negative side effects of human social support (McNicholas et al., 2005). Pets can increase self-efficacy, self-esteem, and generally encourage positive affective states, all of which can increase coping skills and enhance one's ability to handle stress (Allen et al., 2002; Willens, 2013).

Pets in the Workplace

Given the myriad of positive physiological, psychological, social, and emotional benefits that pets can offer humans, it is no wonder that recent research has begun to explore the perceptions and impact of pet-friendly policies in organizations. In the last fifteen years or so, pet-friendly organizational policies have been becoming increasingly more popular. A survey of Americans and Canadians conducted in the late 1990's found that 24% of respondents reported bringing their pets to work (McCullough, 1998). In 2005, www.dogfriendly.com listed more than 260 pet-friendly employers around the world, most of which were located in the United States (Johnson, 2005). More recently, a 2010 telephone survey of 90 Swedish employers found that 40% allowed dogs in the workplace, most of which were categorized as in the outdoors, production/construction, office-based, and visitor-based industries (Norling & Keeling, 2010). However, less than

10% of these employers had written policies regarding dogs at work. In 2013, Nestle Purina, the St. Louis-based pet food manufacturer that avidly promotes pet-friendly workplaces, held a nationwide "Pets at Work Contest" to feature and reward pet-friendly companies and received about 140 company applications (Reed, 2013). These 140 companies surely represented only a portion of a larger pool of pet-friendly organizations. At Nestle Purina, hundreds of cats and dogs can be found at the St. Louis headquarters each week. Other well-known companies that boast pet-friendly policies include Domino's, Amazon, Procter & Gamble, and Google. However, most organizations currently offering this benefit to employees are small companies (Wells & Perrine, 2001). Even organizations that usually do not allow pets in the workplace may do so on "National-Bring-Your-Pet-to-Work-Day", a day initiated by Pet Sitters International to celebrate the joys of pet ownership and encourage employees to adopt pets from shelters or rescue groups; this observance typically falls around June 20 or June 21 (Johnson, 2005; Reed, 2013).

In general, pets in the workplace have been perceived as having more benefits than drawbacks (Wells & Perrine, 2001). For instance, from an employee standpoint, dogs and cats at work were seen to improve health and mood, provide a pleasant diversion from work and a sense of calm, and provide companionship (Johnson, 2005; Perrine & Wells, 2006; Wells & Perrine, 2001). The responsibility of taking a pet outside now and then encourages employees to leave their desks, go outside, and walk around with their pet, thus facilitating daily exercise and improving both health and mood. Perhaps equally important is that pets foster social support and team building among coworkers (Perrine & Wells, 2006; Wells & Perrine, 2001). After all, individuals with a

pet are perceived as warmer and more pleasant than individuals without a pet (Perrine & Wells, 2006). Coworkers may also take turns caring for pets in the office, such as taking them outside for walks and potty breaks. Furthermore, pets allow for healthy breaks throughout the day, stimulate employees to get to know each other and become more engaged through socialization, and by relaxing the mood, can cultivate more inspiration (Purina, 2014). These benefits are not limited to pet owners; many non-pet owners enjoy the company of others' pets as well as have more satisfaction regarding the organization's flexibility and concern for employees (McCullough, 1998). However, it has been indicated that employees with pets at work experience greater benefits than do those without pets, or those who do not bring pets to work themselves (Wells & Perrine, 2001).

Pet-friendly workplace policies can also be advantageous at an organizational level – applicant attraction may increase, voluntary turnover and absenteeism may be lower, employee commitment may be higher, and the relaxed, flexible atmosphere contributes to the organizational culture (Johnson, 2005; McCullough, 1998; Purina, 2014). Purina's employee surveys have actually indicated improved job satisfaction as a function of their pet-friendly policy (Purina, 2014). Of particular importance to organizations, pet-friendly policies are typically considered a low-cost and high-visibility opportunity (McCullough, 1998). Most of the work associated with offering such a benefit falls upon facilities management, legal departments, and the employees themselves. Once in place, it is up to the employees to check with coworkers around them to gauge any potential issues around bringing pets, to bring only well-trained and socialized pets that are contained and not distracting, and to clean up after pets' accidents

and shedding properly. Despite an overall low cost for the organization, the benefit is highly visible, thus retaining employees and attracting a great deal more.

Of particular relevance for this study, several studies have found that pets in the workplace are specifically related to less stress (Johnson, 2005; Norling & Keeling, 2010; Perrine & Wells, 2006; Wells & Perrine, 2001). According to a *Los Angeles Times* article by Brown (2012), researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University divided employees from one medium-sized company into three groups: those who brought dogs to work, those who owned dogs but did not bring them to work, and those who did not own pets. Employee stress levels were then analyzed using saliva samples to measure cortisol, a known resultant stress hormone, and surveys administered four times a day. No significant differences were found in the cortisol measurements, but on average, employees who brought dogs to work self-reported an 11% decrease in stress levels by the end of the day. Meanwhile, employees in the other two groups experienced up to a 70% increase in daily stress levels on average. Although more commonly studied with dogs, this finding has also been extended to cats (Brown, 2012).

In addition, having the ability to take pets to work helps reduce employees' stress associated with arranging the whereabouts of the pets while at work. According to Norling and Keeling (2010), most dog owners leave their dogs at home during the day but would prefer to bring them to work if allowed. Many owners expressed concern over the lack of supervision as well as regret over leaving the dog alone all day (Johnson, 2005; Norling & Keeling, 2010). Given this, pet owners may often rush out of work at the end of the day in order to reach their pets sooner. However, employees with pets at

work do not experience such concerns and therefore may work longer hours, which then benefits the employer (McCullough, 1998).

Overall, having a pet-friendly policy is highly beneficial for both the organization and employees for a number of reasons previously identified. Many employees would happily welcome such a policy, and some employees would even be willing to accept a lower wage or pay a fee for the ability to bring pets to work (Norling & Keeling, 2010). Spending time in the workplace may also benefit pets as it allows for increased socialization in a different setting as well as with many different people and other pets. Pets will also experience more interactions and benefit from more exercise than they may have otherwise gotten if left at home alone.

Considering the great deal of stress employees must manage on a daily basis, the stress reducing effect of dogs and cats in the workplace is perhaps greatly underutilized. Employers are likely unaware of many of these benefits, including the ability for pet-friendly policies to enhance the outcomes of other employee-focused organizational programs. For instance, getting daily exercise from walking a dog during work breaks would surely complement an organizational wellness program. Similarly, an unpublished mini-dissertation by Johnson (2005) examined the effectiveness of pet-friendly policies in South African organizations on enhancing the outcomes of an employee assistance program (EAP). In particular, she confirmed the overlap between pet-friendly policies and EAPs on outcomes such as reducing stress and its related health risks, improving psychological and emotional stability, promoting healthier living, reducing healthcare costs, decreasing absenteeism and turnover, enhancing employee morale and loyalty,

providing employees with better work-life balance, improving interpersonal skills, and enhancing the organization's image as a caring employer (Johnson, 2005).

A commonality between stress-reduction programs such as wellness programs, EAPs, and pet-friendly policies is the employees' perception that the organization cares for them. Indeed, offering these employee-focused programs and policies is under the control of the organization, and thus likely illustrates concern for employees' health and happiness. Feeling supported by one's organization is a characteristic of perceived organizational support, which may be found to be a direct consequence of pet-friendly organizational policies.

Pets and Perceived Organizational Support

Introduced in 1986, the concept of perceived organizational support (POS) is defined as employees' "beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986, p. 501). The basic underpinning of the theory of POS holds that employees determine whether they receive favorable or unfavorable treatment from the organization, and this view, as a function of personification of the organization, results in an indication that the organization itself either favors or disfavors the employee (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

POS affects the attitudes and behaviors of employees by a) instilling an obligation to help the organization via the norm of reciprocity; b) enhancing the effort-outcome expectancy related to performing and receiving recognition or rewards; and c) increasing affective attachment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). After perceiving the organization to be committed to the employee, the employee then feels

obliged to return the commitment, thus illustrating the norm of reciprocity. Furthermore, POS conveys to employees that the organization will reward them for good work, thereby strengthening the effort-outcome expectancy of employees and enhancing both performance and employee self-esteem. Finally, POS builds employees' affective commitment to the organization by fulfilling socioemotional needs of care, approval, and respect and encouraging the incorporation of organizational membership into the self-identity (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Three main antecedents of POS have been identified through a meta-analysis of studies from 1986 to 2002: perceived fairness, supervisor support, and rewards and job conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Of particular relevance here is the job conditions component of the third antecedent. Specifically, conditions of the job, such as work overload or underload, role ambiguity, role conflict, and physical or environmental dangers, can influence the degree of POS. On the one hand, negative job conditions will likely induce stress in employees. Because these conditions are generally perceived as under the control of the organization, the experience of these stressful conditions can result in lower POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). On the other hand, positive job conditions such as family-friendly and pet-friendly policies will likely reduce stress in employees and increase POS by the same function. Having the ability to bring one's pet(s) to work may lead some employees to feel more supported by the organization and increase perceptions of the organization's concern for them.

Organizations should strive for high levels of POS because it can yield a multitude of positive outcomes. First, POS has been repeatedly found to be significantly positively related to overall organizational commitment, perhaps even as strongly

correlated as $r = .71$, $p < .001$ (Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009). POS is also related to higher levels of job involvement or employee engagement. When employees feel supported and are rewarded for their good work, they usually experience greater competence and self-worth. As this has been shown to relate to greater engagement and interest in work, it would then follow that POS potentially yields enhanced job involvement and engagement through greater interest in, and self-efficacy related to, one's work (Bakker, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

A consequence of particular interest to organizations is that of performance. Job performance is typically divided into two categories – task and contextual performance. Task performance refers to performing work activities prescribed by one's job which directly contribute to an organization's products or services. In contrast, contextual performance is defined as going above and beyond one's formal job to support the organization and coworkers, such as volunteering to perform work outside an employee's responsibilities, exhibiting enthusiasm in one's work, offering assistance to others, endorsing and supporting organizational objectives, and performing other organizational citizenship behaviors (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Given this distinction, POS has been found to positively impact contextual performance. Moorman, Blakely, and Niehoff (1998) found that POS was significantly positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors such as interpersonal helping, completing tasks beyond requirements, and externally promoting the organization's image. Furthermore, POS was positively related to innovation in the sense of providing constructive, anonymous, voluntary suggestions for the organization that might improve productivity (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990).

Yet another positive consequence of POS is the relationship between POS and lower occurrences of employee withdrawal behaviors, which include tardiness, absenteeism, and voluntary turnover. Because of the sense of obligation employees with high POS may feel, a result is often an increase in punctuality and attendance; coming to work and arriving on time may be ways that employees attempt to reciprocate the POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Presumably, having the ability to bring one's pet(s) to work will heighten this sense of obligation. Thus, a pet-friendly policy may lead to better attendance and reduced turnover, partly as a function of higher POS.

Finally, POS is often related to more positive affect at work and higher job satisfaction by demonstrating the availability of assistance when needed and yielding feelings of competence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Riggle et al. (2009) found a moderate to high positive correlation between POS and job satisfaction, $r = .61$, $p < .001$, and even found POS to explain nearly 38% of the variance in job satisfaction.

In today's world, pet dogs and cats are commonly considered part of the family. More and more dog and cat owners are spending significant amounts of money to feed their pets high-quality, all-natural food, groom them regularly, offer them mind-engaging toys, change out collars and leashes with the seasons, and take them to daycare. Entrepreneurs in Virginia have even opened a "doggy gym", an indoor gymnasium filled with dog-oriented treadmills, obstacle courses with tunnels and hurdles, and balance balls (Hendrix, 2014). Considering this widespread passion for pets, perhaps pet-friendly organizational policies function similarly to family-friendly organizational policies. Undoubtedly, pets and human family members are quite different and have different time

and attention needs. However, the attachment many people have with pet dogs and cats may be significant enough that the availability of pet-friendly policies may yield similar positive outcomes as the availability of family-friendly policies, such as increased POS. An important note here is the difference between availability of a policy and usage of a policy. Work-family literature has examined the question of whether availability of a policy or usage of a policy more significantly impacts policy outcomes. Some research has found that availability alone has more of an effect than actual usage (Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Casper & Harris, 2008; Quarton, 2013). Thus, the current study focuses solely on the availability of pet-friendly policies rather than usage of pet-friendly policies.

Family-friendly work policies may include spending accounts for dependent care, resources for elder care and child care, and on-site child care. The availability of such policies has been found to be significantly related to positive work attitudes, specifically job satisfaction, affective commitment, and intentions to stay (Butts et al., 2013). In addition, greater availability of family-friendly work policies was associated with higher family-focused POS, a specific category of POS analyzed in the study (Butts et al., 2013). Furthermore, family-focused POS was more strongly related to these work attitudes than availability of the policy alone, signifying that the POS is crucial to achieve the full benefits of the policy on employee attitudes (Butts et al., 2013). This indicates that when organizations offer family-friendly policies, employees view the organization as concerned for their family. This view then leads to the positive outcomes of increased job satisfaction, enhanced affective commitment, and greater intentions to stay. Thus, POS was found to mediate the relationship between the availability of family-friendly policies

and positive employee outcomes. Several studies have supported the conceptual model that family-friendly policies "influence work attitudes through perceived organizational support" (Butts et al., 2014, p. 3). For instance, Quarton (2013) found that availability of work/non-work practices increased attraction to the organization via greater levels of perceived organizational support. The current study seeks to discover a similar relationship but substitutes pet-friendly policies for family-friendly policies (or work/non-work practices), and job stress for work attitudes or attraction. There has been a severe lack of research examining the effects of family-friendly policies on stress (Butts et al., 2013). Taking it one step further, no extant research that the present researcher could find has been conducted examining the effects of pet-friendly policies on stress.

Perceived Organizational Support and Stress

Presumably, a high level of POS would lead to less stress on the job. Considering that POS has been shown to increase self-esteem and self-efficacy, both vital defenses against stress, as well as improve mood and enhance job engagement, it would logically follow that a significant positive relationship would be found between POS and job stress. Indeed, one study examining the impacts of work/non-work practices and POS on organizational attractiveness found that job stress was significantly negatively related to POS (Quarton, 2013).

Although there seems to be a dearth of research exploring a relationship between POS and job stress, POS has been found to affect similar factors, such as stressful job conditions, strain, burnout, and work-family conflict, and play a role in relationships between stress and other organizational constructs. For instance, POS was found to mediate the relationship between hindrance stressors (stressors that impede personal or

work goal achievement) and cognitive-emotional strains (such as anger or depressive symptoms) (Richardson, Yang, Vandenberg, DeJoy, & Wilson, 2008).

Using a sample of salespeople, an example of boundary-spanning workers who "operate between the firm and its environment," Stamper and Johlke (2003) found that POS was significantly negatively related to role ambiguity and role conflict, two sources of occupational stress (p. 570). Furthermore, they found that POS moderates the effects of role ambiguity and role conflict on job satisfaction and intention to stay. Thus, higher levels of POS are related to less role ambiguity and role conflict, as well as assuage the negative effects of role ambiguity on job satisfaction and the negative effects of role conflict on intention to stay (Stamper & Johlke, 2003).

A study investigating the relationship between POS and burnout for front-line hospitality workers discovered that POS was negatively related to two main constructs of burnout – exhaustion and cynicism – and positively related to the third main construct – personal efficacy (Walters & Raybould, 2007). Increasing employees' POS was suggested as a way to reduce or prevent burnout from occurring in occupations particularly susceptible to burnout, such as the service and hospitality industries (Walters & Raybould, 2007). Although different concepts, burnout is highly associated with extreme occupational stress and exhibits many of the same symptoms.

Work-family conflict is considered a negative consequence of a lack of work-family balance. It is a widely experienced stressor for employees both in the United States and abroad, and it has been shown to be related to stress-related outcomes (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). As discovered in a meta-analysis, work-family conflict was negatively related to POS: employees perceived more organizational support

when they experienced little or no work-family conflict (Kossek et al., 2011). It could also have been that the organizations perceived as more supportive actually offer more family-friendly policies, thereby reducing employees' actual work-family conflict. For the purpose of the current study, work-family conflict is considered a similar outcome to stress. Thus it seems possible that, because POS has been shown to be negatively related to work-family conflict, it should also be negatively related to job stress.

Current Study

The goal of the current study is to demonstrate further the positive consequences of pet-friendly organizational policies by exploring the potential impact of such a policy on POS and employee stress. Thus far, no extant research to the researcher's knowledge has been conducted examining the relationship between pet-friendly policies and POS, the relationship between POS and stress, or these three components together. Literature has evidenced that the presence of pets in the workplace is related to less stress; therefore, I expect this relationship to be significant. However, this study also aims to discover whether pet-friendly policies lead to higher POS, whether POS and stress are significantly related, and consequently, whether POS partially mediates the relationship between pet-friendly policies and employee stress. For the sake of simplicity, the current study will focus on dogs in the workplace rather than pets in general. In summary, the main research question is, "Does the availability of a pet-friendly policy increase an employee's sense of POS, thereby decreasing his/her stress?" Considering the myriad of ways pets can help reduce human stress levels, I hypothesize that POS will partially, rather than fully, mediate the relationship between a pet-friendly workplace policy and stress.

H_{1a}: The existence of pet-friendly policies and employee stress will be significantly related, such that *employees* working at pet-friendly organizations will have significantly less occupational stress than *employees* working at pet-prohibited organizations.

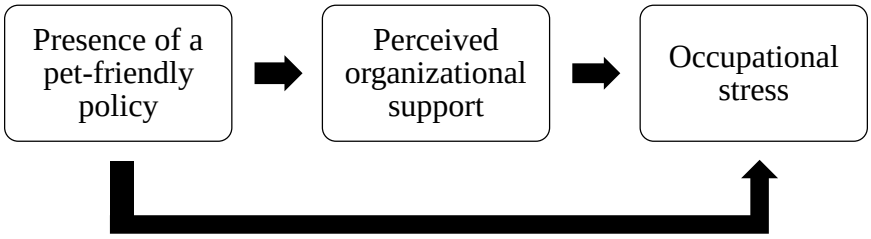
H_{1b}: The existence of pet-friendly policies and employee stress will be significantly related, such that *dog owners* working at pet-friendly organizations will have significantly less occupational stress than *dog owners* working at pet-prohibited organizations.

H_{2a}: The existence of pet-friendly policies and POS will be significantly related, such that *employees* working at pet-friendly organizations will report significantly higher POS than *employees* working at pet-prohibited organizations.

H_{2b}: The existence of pet-friendly policies and POS will be significantly related, such that *dog owners* working at pet-friendly organizations will report significantly higher POS than *dog owners* working at pet-prohibited organizations.

H_3: POS will be significantly negatively related to employee stress.

H_4: POS will partially mediate the relationship between the presence of a pet-friendly policy and employee stress.



CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were first recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online pool of crowdsource workers who complete human intelligence tasks (HITs) for payment. Usage of this source of participants has been shown to be equally, if not more, effective than traditional university participant pools as well as more ethnically diverse, more reliable, and having more work experience (Behrend, Sharek, Meade, & Wiebe, 2011). They were screened for age, employment status, length of employment at current employer, and country of work and residence so that only those who were above age 21, employed full-time, had worked at their current employer for at least six months, and currently worked and resided in the United States were included.

The MTurk sample yielded 171 participants, but few worked at pet-friendly organizations. In order to obtain a sufficient number of participants in the pet-friendly workplace groups, the sample was bolstered by recruiting additional participants utilizing a snowball/network sampling strategy (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Landers & Behrend, 2015). Upon sharing the survey through social networks with contacts at various organizations known to be pet-friendly, an additional 53 participants were gained. These additional participants completed the survey voluntarily and without payment, and the same eligibility requirements were applied.

A total of 224 respondents completed the survey. Three attention check items included in the survey asked respondents to choose a specified rating. Failure to respond correctly to these three items resulted in elimination. Thus, six respondents (3%) were

removed due to incorrectly answering the attention check items. Data quality was also ensured by comparing answers to questions that were asked twice in the survey. For example, respondents were asked whether or not they own a dog, whether or not they are allowed to bring dogs to work, and whether or not they sometimes bring their dog(s) to work, in two different places within the survey. Three respondents (1%) were removed due to answering these questions inconsistently. Furthermore, 22 respondents (10%) were removed due to ineligibility to participate (e.g., under age 21, do not work full-time, do not reside in the U.S.), and five respondents (2%) were removed due to incomplete data.

This left a total of 188 respondents to be included in the data analysis (see Tables 1-3), with 149 (79.3%) sourced through MTurk and 39 (20.7%) sourced through snowball/network sampling. Of these respondents, 124 (66%) were dog owners, and 64 (34%) did not own a dog. Additionally, 54 (29%) worked at pet-friendly workplaces, and 134 (71%) worked at non-pet-friendly workplaces. Of those working at pet-friendly workplaces, 37 (69%) were dog owners and 17 (31%) did not own a dog. Of those working at non-pet-friendly workplaces, 87 (65%) were dog owners and 47 (35%) did not own a dog. The average number of dogs owned by a respondent was 1.46 (*SD* = .75).

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of Dog Ownership and Pet Policy Groups

Characteristic	*n*	%
Dog Ownership		
Dog owner	124	66%
Non-dog owner	64	34%
Pet-Friendly Workplace		
Pet-friendly	54	29%
Pet-prohibited	134	71%

Note. $N = 188$.

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of Participants at Pet-Friendly Workplaces

Characteristic	*n*	%
Dog Ownership		
Dog owner	37	69%
Non-dog owner	17	31%

Note. $N = 54$.

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of Participants at Pet-Prohibited Workplaces

Characteristic	*n*	%
Dog Ownership		
Dog owner	87	65%
Non-dog owner	47	35%

Note. $N = 134$.

Of these 188 respondents, all were full-time employees (50.5% male, 49.5% female) from 23 major industry categories around the United States (see Table 4). Industry categories were drawn from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010 Standard Occupational Classification, and there were no restrictions for industry category. The most common industry categories reported were Other (13%), Computer and mathematics (12%), Education, training, and library (10%), Sales and retail (8%), and Business and financial operations (7%). Some industries specified in the "Other" category included management consulting, consumer packaged goods, human resources, and public relations and communications[1]. Respondents ranged in age from 21 to 61 years ($M = 32.87$, $SD = 7.87$). Sizes of the companies respondents were employed

[1] The majority of snowball sampled respondents identified as within the "Other" industry category.

at ranged from less than 10 employees to 1,000 or more employees, with 40% of respondents reporting his/her current employer to have 1,000 or more employees, 15% reporting 100-499 employees, 12% reporting 20-49 employees, and 10% reporting 10-19 employees. Organization sizes of less than 10, 50-99, and 500-999 employees were all reported at less than 10% each. Hours worked per week ranged from 35 to 75 hours (M = 43.47, SD = 6.12), and length of tenure at current employer ranged from 6 months to 30 years (M = 5.12 years, SD = .50 years). Respondents consisted of owners (0.5%), managers (30.9%), and staff/employees (68.6%). Forty-three percent were married, 38% were unmarried and not cohabitating, and 20% were unmarried and cohabitating.

Table 4. Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	95	50.5%
Female	93	49.5%
Industry		
Architecture and engineering	4	2.1%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	10	5.3%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3	1.6%
Business and financial operations	13	6.9%
Community and social services	1	0.5%
Computer and mathematics	23	12.2%
Construction and extraction	3	1.6%
Education, training, and library	20	10.6%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	2	1.1%
Food preparation and serving	7	3.7%
Healthcare practitioners and technicians	10	5.3%
Healthcare support	10	5.3%

Legal	4	2.1%
Life, physical, and social sciences	4	2.1%
Management	6	3.2%
Office and administrative support	10	5.3%
Personal care and service	1	0.5%
Production	8	4.3%
Protective services	3	1.6%
Sales and retail	15	8.0%
Transportation and material moving	6	3.2%
Other	25	13.3%
Age		
21-27	47	25.0%
28-34	86	45.7%
35-41	33	17.6%
42-48	8	4.3%
49-55	11	5.9%
56-61	3	1.6%
Company Size		
Less than 10 employees	13	6.9%
10-19 employees	18	9.6%
20-49 employees	22	11.7%
50-99 employees	16	8.5%
100-499 employees	28	14.9%
500-999 employees	15	8.0%
1,000 or more employees	76	40.4%
Hours Worked per Week		
35-45 hours	141	75.0%
46-56 hours	39	20.7%
57-67 hours	7	3.7%

68-75 hours	1	0.5%
Length of Tenure		
6-11 months	9	4.8%
1-5 years	112	59.6%
6-10 years	49	26.1%
11-15 years	12	6.4%
16-20 years	3	1.6%
21-30 years	3	1.6%
Position in Company		
Owner	1	0.5%
Manager/supervisor	58	30.9%
Staff member/employee	129	68.6%
Marital Status		
Married	80	42.6%
Unmarried, not cohabitating	71	37.8%
Unmarried, cohabitating	37	19.7%

Note. $N = 188$.

Measures

Attachment to pets. In order to disguise the purpose of the study, dog-owning participants' self-reports of attachment to their pet dogs was measured using the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS) (Johnson, Garrity, & Stallones, 1992; see Appendix A). This measure is related to pet ownership but does not focus the participants' attention on bringing pets to work. The LAPS consists of 23 items, was found to be suitable with dog owners, and has excellent construct validity, content validity, and internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .93). Participants are instructed to rate extent of agreement on each statement provided. Examples of statements include,

"My pet and I have a very close relationship", and "I feel that my pet is a part of my family." For this study, the LAPS' original four-point scale (0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 3 = *Strongly Agree*) was adjusted to a five-point scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*) to offer a neutral response to participants so they were not forced to agree or disagree. A total score of 23 indicates low attachment to their pet(s), and a total score of 115 indicates high attachment to their pet(s). Several items are reverse scored, which was done before calculating the total score. Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate internal consistency (alpha = .94).

To determine whether the participant was in the pet-friendly group (dogs allowed at work), or pet-prohibited group (dogs not allowed at work), four additional items were added at the end of the LAPS and excluded from the LAPS total score calculation. These items utilized Yes/No answer options and included, "I am allowed to bring my pet to work with me", "I sometimes bring my pet to work with me", "I sometimes take my pet to public areas such as parks", and "I sometimes take my pet to the homes of friends and/or relatives." Responses to the item, "I am allowed to bring my pet to work with me," determined group membership. The other three items were included in order to further mask the purpose of the study.

Work stress. All participants, regardless of their group, completed three workplace attitudes measures. First, participants completed the Stress in General (SIG) scale, a general workplace stress measure (Stanton, Balzer, Smith, Parra, & Ironson, 2001; see Appendix B). The SIG consists of two subscales: Pressure and Threat. The Pressure subscale is characterized by feelings of stress related to time pressure, and the Threat subscale is characterized by feelings of a serious, negative work experience. Together,

the subscales provide an overall indication of job stress, avoid focusing on specific sources or types of stress, and are not limited to specific industries or contexts (Stanton et al., 2001). Respondents are instructed to indicate whether each of fifteen total items describes their job using a three-point scale, where 1 = Yes, 2 = No, and 3 = Cannot Decide. Example items for the Pressure subscale include "Demanding" and "Hectic", and example items for the Threat subscale include "Nerve-wracking" and "Overwhelming". Two items on the Pressure subscale are reverse-scored, and three items on the Threat subscale are reverse-scored. For the purpose of this study, scores for each subscale were combined to obtain one overall stress score. Possible total scores on the SIG can range from 15-45, with lower scores indicating higher levels of workplace stress. The SIG was advantageous to use in the current study due to its satisfactory psychometric properties, simple and quick completion, and broad applicability. In addition, the SIG avoids measuring specific factors contributing to stress and instead captures broad, overall workplace stress levels, which were of interest in this study (Stanton et al., 2001). Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate internal consistency (alpha = .89).

Perceived organizational support. Second, participants completed the 17-item shortened form of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986; see Appendix C). The SPOS is considered to be the best measure of POS, particularly due to its superb psychometric properties such as construct validity, content validity, and internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .90; Riggle et al., 2009). Participants are instructed to rate extent of agreement on each statement provided using a seven-point scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*). Ratings on these statements are intended to address feelings about the organization participants currently

work for, including but not limited to, perception of the organization's satisfaction with the employee's performance, appreciation of the employee's extra effort, consideration of the employee's opinions, and concern about fair pay and employee well-being. Items include "The organization cares about my well-being", and "The organization strongly considers my goals and values." Possible scores range from 17 (low POS) to 119 (high POS). Half of the items are negatively worded and half are positively worded so as to reduce response biases; therefore, seven of the items were reverse scored. Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate internal consistency (alpha = .97).

Work-family conflict. Third, participants completed the shortened version of Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams' (2000) multidimensional measure of work-family conflict, abbreviated and validated by Matthews, Kath, and Barnes-Farrell (2010; see Appendix D). Work-family conflict was measured to disguise the purpose of the study further, and as a possible exploratory variable. This shortened version of the measure of work-family conflict condensed the original 18-item measure (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000) into a six-item measure, with three items (one subscale) measuring work-family conflict and three items (the other subscale) measuring family-work conflict (Matthews, Kath, & Barnes-Farrell, 2010). The shortened version is considered to have good psychometric properties, as it was found to have high internal consistency (coefficient alpha > .70), good test-retest reliability (work-family conflict = .75, family-work conflict = .61), and was concurrently related to measures of work-family balance and role stressors (Matthews, Kath, & Barnes-Farrell, 2010). Furthermore, the shortened version retains a major advantage of the multidimensional measure of work-family conflict – representation of all three types of pressures involved in the construct of work-family

conflict (time, strain, and behavior-based) as theorized by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Respondents are instructed to rate the degree to which they have experienced the conflict represented in each of the items using a five-point scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*). A sample item from the work-family conflict subscale is "I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family." A sample item from the family-work conflict scale is "I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on family responsibilities." Because the current study is only interested in overall work-family conflict, scores from both subscales were combined into one total score. Possible total scores can range from 6-30, with higher scores indicating greater work-family conflict. Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate internal consistency (alpha = .76).

Demographic information. The demographic questionnaire (see Appendix E) collected information about participants' age, gender, marital status, and country in which the participant lives and works. Additionally, participants were asked to report employment status, number of hours worked per week, industry category in which they work, size of current organization, length of employment at current organization, and whether the participant identifies as an owner, manager/supervisor, or staff member/employee. Participants also reported ownership of a dog, how many are owned, and whether the dog(s) live(s) with the participant. Participants in the pet-allowed group were also be asked to report whether pet dog(s) are brought to work with them, how often dog(s) are brought to work, how long the dog(s) are in the workplace per day, and where the dog(s) are allowed in the workplace (see Appendix F). Participants in the pet-prohibited group and participants without dogs did not see these additional items.

Control variable. Because organizations may offer pet-friendly policies in addition to family-friendly policies, which are known to impact POS (Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Casper & Harris, 2008; Lambert, 2000; McCarthy, Cleveland, Hunter, Darcy, & Grady, 2013; Quarton, 2013) and job stress (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Quarton, 2013; Teo & Waters, 2002) but are not of interest to this study, the availability of any type of family-friendly policy was measured and used as a control variable. At the end of the demographics questionnaire, all respondents were provided with a list of 22 family-friendly policies (Quarton, 2013) and asked to mark all that are offered by his/her current employer. This list includes: flextime, compressed work weeks, telecommuting, job sharing, seasonal schedules, paid or unpaid personal leaves of absence, sabbaticals, leave sharing, on- or near-site child care centers, child care information and referral, emergency child care assistance, school-age programs, child care discounts or vouchers, elder care information and referral, elder care discounts or vouchers, health promotion programs, employee assistance programs, stress management seminars, wellness-related newsletters, support groups for employees who have work/life balance issues, training for managers on work/life balance issues, and handbooks for employees and managers on work/life policies (see Appendix E). From this item, a total number of policies checked was used as a measure of existence of family-friendly policies.

Procedure

A pilot study of eight graduate students was conducted to determine the completion time of the survey and to ensure clarity of instructions. Results of the pilot study indicated that the survey took an average of 18 minutes to complete, which helped

determine appropriate payment for MTurk workers. Pilot study feedback also led to slight wording adjustments on a demographic item and the attention check items.

Initially, participants were recruited to complete the study and screened via a HIT on MTurk. First, participants were given eight minutes to answer eight screening items (see Appendix H) and were paid $0.05 for completion of the screening. Those who met the participation criteria were encouraged to access one of two second HITs, entitled "Survey for Dog Owners" or "Workplace Survey", depending on whether the participant reported owning a dog(s). These second HITs provided instructions and a link to the survey on SurveyMonkey. The researcher sent a recruitment email via MTurk to each qualified worker to increase the likelihood of participation. When participants were redirected to SurveyMonkey, they were first provided with and asked to read and accept the consent form. Upon giving consent, participants were given directions for completing the survey.

Participants were first asked whether or not they currently own a dog(s). Those responding with "yes" then completed the LAPS, and participants were determined to belong to either the pet-allowed group or pet-prohibited group based on whether their current employer allows dogs in the workplace (as identified through an additional item on the LAPS questionnaire). Dog-owning participants then completed the three workplace attitudes questionnaires as well as the demographics questionnaire. Dog-owning participants in the pets-allowed group completed additional items regarding dogs in the workplace.

Participants without dogs skipped the LAPS and went straight to the three workplace attitudes questionnaires, then the demographics questionnaire. In order to

determine whether participants without dogs belonged to the pet-allowed or pet-prohibited group, after the demographics items, participants were asked to report whether their current employer allows dogs in the workplace. Participants who either did not own a dog(s) or did not work at a pet-friendly organization did not complete the post-demographics additional items regarding dogs in the workplace. At the very end of the survey, all participants completed three items: "Do you think your company should allow pets in the workplace?", "Select one statement from the list below that best describes your feelings regarding pets in the workplace", and "Would you bring your pet dog to work with you if you could?" (See Appendix G).

After completing the survey, all MTurk participants were paid $1.00, debriefed on the purpose of the study, and provided contact information of the researcher in case of any questions or concerns. Non-MTurk participants followed the same procedure but were not screened first and were not paid for completion of the survey.

In order to ensure clean and high quality data, three attention check items were included throughout the survey. An example of these attention check items is, "Please select 'strongly agree' if a human is completing this survey." Participants who did respond correctly to these items were removed from the sample. Additionally, participants were informed prior to completing the survey that attention check items would be presented to ensure a computer algorithm was not being used to complete the questionnaire, and incorrect responses to this item would result in denial of payment.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Measures of Internal Consistency

Reliabilities for the LAPS, SIG, and SPOS were excellent (alpha = .94, alpha = .89, and alpha = .97, respectively), and reliability for the WFC scale was good (alpha = .76). Upon finding good reliabilities, summed composite scores were calculated for each participant on each measure.

Preliminary Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all major variables, and a series of Pearson *r* correlations were conducted (see Table 5). Several correlations were found to be significant; however, only those most important to the hypotheses will be mentioned. The number of family-friendly policies was significantly related to the presence of a pet-friendly policy, $r(186) = -.33$, $p < .001$. The more family-friendly policies offered, the more often a pet-friendly policy is also offered. Family-friendly policies were also significantly related to occupational stress[2] ($r(186) = .22$, $p = .001$) and POS ($r(186) = .31$, $p < .001$). The more family-friendly policies offered, the lower the levels of stress and the higher the levels of POS. Occupational stress was significantly related to the presence of a pet-friendly policy, $r(186) = -.27$, $p < .001$, indicating that having a pet-friendly policy is associated with lower levels of stress. POS was also significantly related to the presence of a pet-friendly policy, $r(186) = -.41$, $p < .001$, indicating that having a pet-friendly policy is associated with higher levels of POS. Finally, POS

[2] Higher scores of occupational stress represented lower levels of stress.

Table 5. Descriptives and Correlations of Independent Variables, Dependent Variables, and Select Demographic Variables (N = 188).

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	32.87	7.87	-											
2. Gender[a]	-	-	.00	-										
3. Years of Tenure	5.12	4.49	.52**	.02	-									
4. Weekly Hours Worked	43.47	6.12	.01	-.02	.16*	-								
5. Organization Size[b]	5.01	2.06	-.06	.08	-.03	-.02	-							
6. Dog Ownership[c]	-	-	-.10	-.02	-.08	-.07	-.04	-						
7. Pet Attachment[d]	92.58	15.53	-.25**	.27**	-.29**	-.07	.12	-	.94					
8. WFC[e]	14.03	4.40	.06	-.18**	.00	.13*	.00	-.08	-.16*	.76				
9. Family-Friendly Policies (Covariate)[f]	4.49	3.42	-.08	.06	-.04	-.07	.46**	-.03	.14	-.27**	-			
10. Pet-Friendly Policy (IV)[g]	1.71	.45	.04	-.27**	.03	-.17**	-.02	.03	-.09	.23**	-.33**	-		
11. Work Stress (DV)[h]	23.72	5.08	-.07	.10	-.12	-.22**	.00	.06	-.01	-.55**	.22**	-.27**	.89	
12. POS (Mediator)[i]	80.98	23.24	-.02	.11	.00	-.11	-.10	-.01	.07	-.56**	.31**	-.41**	.44**	.97

Note:* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Note: Coefficient alphas are located on the diagonal

a. Gender was coded as 1 = male, 2 = female

b. Organization size was coded as 1 = less than 10, 2 = 20-49, 3 = 50-99, 4 = 100-499, 5 = 500-999, 6 = 1,000 or more employees

c. Dog ownership was coded as 1 = dog-owner, 2 = non-dog-owner

d. Pet attachment could range from 23-115, with higher scores indicating greater pet attachment

e. Work-family conflict could range from 6-30, with higher scores indicating higher work-family conflict

f. Number of family-friendly policies could range from 0-23

g. Pet-friendly policy was coded as 1 = yes, 2 = no

h. Work stress could range from 15-45, with lower scores indicating higher stress

i. Perceived organizational support could range from 17-119, with higher scores indicating higher POS

was significantly related to occupational stress, $r(186) = .44$, $p < .001$. Higher levels of POS were associated with lower levels of stress.

Additionally, the source of participants (MTurk or snowball sampling) was examined in relation to pet attachment, work-family conflict, stress, POS, family-friendly policies, dog ownership, and pet-friendly policy. In general, MTurk participants and snowball sample participants were fairly similar (see Table 6). Because the snowball sample was included to increase the number of participants working at pet-friendly organizations, the majority of snowball sample participants worked at pet-friendly organizations ($M = 1.03$, $SD = .16$), while the majority of MTurk participants worked at pet-prohibited organizations ($M = 1.89$, $SD = .31$).

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of Major Variables Based on Sampling Source.

Source/Variable	*M*	*SD*
Snowball/Network Sample (*N* = 39)		
Pet attachment	93.38	14.83
Work-family conflict	12.77	3.56
Dog ownership	1.38	.49
Pet-friendly policy	1.03	.16
Family-friendly policies	7.38	4.71
Stress	25.59	3.17
POS	98.15	15.43
MTurk Sample (*N* = 149)		
Pet attachment	92.39	15.76
Work-family conflict	14.36	4.54
Dog ownership	1.33	.47
Pet-friendly policy	1.89	.31
Family-friendly policies	3.73	2.51
Stress	23.23	5.37
POS	76.48	22.87

Hypotheses Tests

Pet-friendly policies and stress. Hypothesis 1a stated that the presence of a pet-friendly policy would be significantly related to occupational stress, such that employees working at pet-friendly organizations would have significantly less stress than those working at pet-prohibited organizations, and Hypothesis 1b specified that this would be found for dog owners. These were tested with a 2 (Pet-friendly: yes or no) x 2 (Dog owner: yes or no) ANCOVA, with the presence of family-friendly policies as a covariate and occupational stress as the outcome. There was no significant main effect found for dog ownership on occupational stress. A significant main effect was found for the presence of a pet-friendly policy on occupational stress, $F(1,183) = 4.75$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$ (see Table 7). Respondents working at pet-friendly organizations reported significantly less occupational stress ($M = 25.91$, $SD = 3.68$) than respondents working at pet-prohibited organizations ($M = 22.84$, $SD = 5.31$). Thus, Hypothesis 1a was supported.

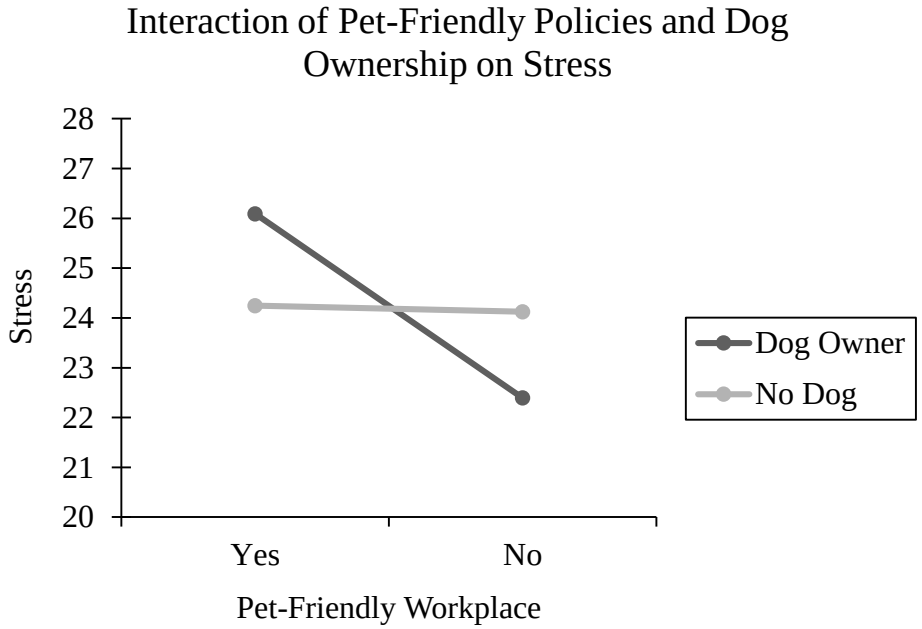
There was also a significant interaction found between dog ownership and the presence of a pet-friendly policy on occupational stress, $F(1,183) = 4.64$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Simple main effects analysis showed that there was a significant difference between participants working at pet-friendly organizations and participants working at pet-prohibited organizations on stress levels depending on whether they owned a dog, $F(1,183) = 14.34$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. Dog owners working at pet-friendly organizations reported significantly less occupational stress ($M = 26.09$) than dog owners working at pet-prohibited organizations ($M = 22.39$), but there was no significant difference in occupational stress levels between non-dog owners working at pet-friendly

organizations (*M* = 24.24) and non-dog owners working at pet-prohibited organizations (*M* = 24.12; see Figure 1). Thus, Hypothesis 1b was also supported.

Table 7. Analysis of Covariance of Stress as a Function of Pet-Friendly Policies and Dog Ownership, With Family-Friendly Policies as Covariate.

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Covariate	1	99.73	99.73	4.30	.04	.02
Pet-Friendly Policy	1	109.98	109.98	4.75	.03	.03
Dog Ownership (DO)	1	.10	.10	.00	.95	.00
PFP x DO	1	107.53	107.53	4.64	.03	.03
Error	183	4,241.09	23.18			
Total	187	4,824.06				

Figure 1. Interaction between Dog Ownership and Presence of a Pet-Friendly Policy on Occupational Stress.



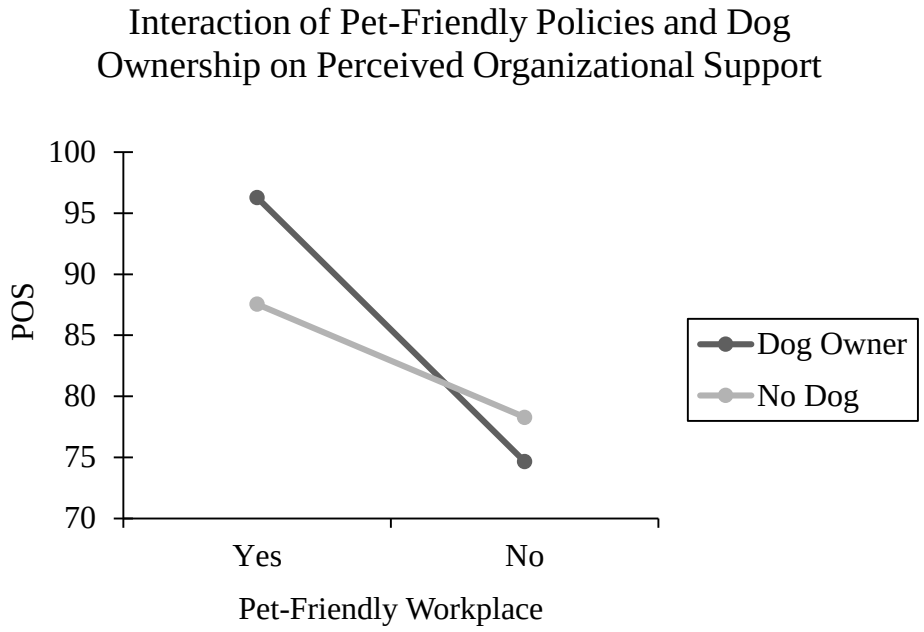
Pet-friendly policies and POS. Hypothesis 2a stated that the presence of a pet-friendly policy would be significantly related to POS, such that employees working at pet-friendly organizations would have significantly higher POS than those working at pet-prohibited organizations, and Hypothesis 2b specified that this would be found for dog owners. These were tested with a 2 (Pet-friendly: yes or no) x 2 (Dog owner: yes or no) ANCOVA, with the presence of family-friendly policies as a covariate and POS as the outcome. Results largely mirrored those for stress as the outcome. There was no significant main effect found for dog ownership on POS. A significant main effect was found for the presence of a pet-friendly policy on POS, $F(1,183) = 16.63$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$ (see Table 8). Respondents working at pet-friendly organizations reported significantly higher POS ($M = 95.96$, $SD = 16.24$) than respondents working at pet-prohibited organizations ($M = 74.94$, $SD = 22.94$). Thus, Hypothesis 2a was supported.

The interaction between dog ownership and presence of a pet-friendly policy on POS was marginally significant, $F(1,183) = 2.97$, $p = .09$ (see Figure 2), and in the direction supporting the hypothesis. Simple main effects analysis showed that there was a significant difference between participants working at pet-friendly organizations and participants working at pet-prohibited organizations on POS depending on whether they owned a dog, $F(1,183) = 26.28$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$. Dog owners working at pet-friendly organizations reported significantly higher POS ($M = 96.27$) than dog owners working at pet-prohibited organizations ($M = 74.65$), but there was no significant difference in POS between non-dog owners working at pet-friendly organizations ($M = 87.54$) and non-dog owners working at pet-prohibited organizations ($M = 78.23$). Thus, Hypothesis 2b was also supported.

Table 8. Analysis of Covariance of POS as a Function of Pet-Friendly Policies and Dog Ownership, With Family-Friendly Policies as Covariate.

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Covariate	1	3,693.18	3,693.18	8.54	.00	.05
Pet-Friendly Policy	1	7,193.16	7,193.16	16.63	.00	.08
Dog Ownership (DO)	1	219.07	219.07	.51	.48	.00
PFP x DO	1	1,286.06	1,286.06	2.97	.09	.02
Error	183	79,169.93	432.62			
Total	187	100,967.92				

Figure 2. Marginally Significant Interaction between Dog Ownership and Presence of a Pet-Friendly Policy on POS.



POS and stress. Hypothesis 3 stated that POS would be significantly negatively related to occupational stress. This was tested with a hierarchical regression with family-friendly policies, the covariate, inserted in the first block, POS in the second block, and stress as

the outcome. There was a significant direct effect of POS on occupational stress, β = .41, *b* = .09, *t*(185) = 5.99, *p* < .001, indicating that higher levels of POS were associated with lower levels of stress (see Table 9). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Table 9. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Relationship Between POS and Stress With Family-Friendly Policies as Covariate.

Order of Entry/Variable	*b*	*SE*	β	*t*	*p*
Block 1					
Covariate	.13	.10	.09	1.30	.20
Block 2					
POS	.09	.02	.41	5.99	.00

Mediation model. Hypothesis 4 stated that POS would partially mediate the relationship between presence of a pet-friendly policy and occupational stress. Because all three relationships were found to be significant, this hypothesis was tested with a hierarchical regression, entering family-friendly policies (the control variable) in the first block, the presence of a pet-friendly policy in the second block, POS in the third block, and stress as the outcome. Excluding POS from the model, there was a significant direct effect of presence of a pet-friendly policy on occupational stress, β = -.23, *b* = -2.54, *t*(185) = -3.06, *p* = .003. With POS included in the model, there was no longer a significant direct effect of presence of a pet-friendly policy on occupational stress, β = -1.07, *b* = -.10, *t*(184) = -1.29, *p* = .20 (see Table 10). Thus, POS was found to fully mediate the relationship between presence of a pet-friendly policy and occupational stress, and Hypothesis 4 was supported but with full, rather than partial mediation.

Table 10. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Relationships Between Pet-Friendly Policies, POS, and Stress With Family-Friendly Policies as Covariate.

Order of Entry/Variable	*b*	*SE*	β	*t*	*p*
Block 1					
Covariate	.10	.11	.07	.97	.33
Block 2					
Pet-Friendly Policy	-1.07	.83	-.10	-1.29	.20
Block 3					
POS	.08	.02	.38	5.20	.00

Exploratory Analyses

As previously mentioned, the LAPS and WFC measures were included in the survey partially in order to mask the purpose of the study, but also to be included in exploratory analyses without specific hypotheses. Pet attachment, as measured by the LAPS, was found to be significantly related to age ($r(122) = -.25$), gender ($r(122) = .27$), and work-family conflict ($r(122) = -.16$). This indicates that younger respondents tended to report higher attachment to pets, females tended to report higher attachment to pets, and those reporting a higher attachment to pets also reported lower work-family conflict.

Work-family conflict, as measured by the WFC scale, was significantly related to gender ($r(186) = -.18$), hours worked per week ($r(186) = .13$), number of family-friendly policies offered ($r(186) = -.27$), and presence of a pet-friendly policy ($r(186) = .23$). This denotes that males tended to report higher work-family conflict, more hours worked per week was associated with higher levels of work-family conflict, and more family-friendly policies and/or a pet-friendly policy offered were associated with lower levels of work-family conflict. Not surprisingly, work-family conflict was also significantly related to

POS ($r(186) = -.56$) and stress ($r(186) = -.55$), indicating that lower levels of work-family conflict are associated with higher levels of POS and lower levels of stress.

Practices and Beliefs Regarding Dogs in the Workplace

All participants were asked at least three questions regarding pets in the workplace, and participants who reported bringing their dog(s) to work answered additional items detailing practices of bringing dogs to work. First, the findings regarding these practices will be presented. As previously mentioned, 54 respondents reported working at pet-friendly organizations. Of these 54 respondents, 37 reported owning a dog(s). Of these 37 dog-owning respondents, 29 (78%) reported bringing his/her pet dog(s) to work. First, participants were asked about how often dogs are brought to work. Fourteen percent of respondents indicated bringing their dog to work daily, 17% bring their dog to work two to three times a week, 14% bring their dog to work once a week, 14% bring their dog to work once every two to three weeks, 21% bring their dog to work once a month, and 21% bring their dog to work a few times a year. Additionally, 79% of respondents indicated that their dog(s) is/are typically at work for a full day (7-12 hours), while 17% answered a half day (4-6 hours), and 3% answered a few hours (1-3 hours). Next, participants were asked about where dogs are allowed in the workplace. The most common places in which dogs were allowed included one's personal workspace (e.g., office, cubicle; n = 27), the office one works in (n = 20), outdoors (n = 18), hallways (n = 17), and lounge rooms/common areas (n = 10). However, some respondents also indicated that dogs were allowed in conference rooms (n = 7), a specified dog site (e.g., dog room or dog park; n = 7), and cafeterias (n = 2). When asked

whether dogs are required to be kept in a crate while at work, all respondents answered "no" (n = 29).

The first of three questions answered by all participants, no matter their group, was, "Do you think your company should allow pets in the workplace?" In response, 44% of participants answered "yes", and 56% answered "no". Second, participants were asked to select a statement from a list that best described their feelings regarding pets in the workplace. Statement options included, "Pets should NOT be allowed in the workplace", "There should be limits on the number of pets allowed, but not the type of pets allowed", "There should be limits of the type of pets allowed, but not the number of pets allowed", "There should be limits on BOTH number and type of pets allowed", and "There should NOT be limits on either number or type of pets allowed". Thirty-nine percent responded that pets should NOT be allowed in the workplace, 36% responded that there should be limits on both number and type of pets allowed, 11% responded that there should NOT be limits on either number or type of pets allowed, 9% responded that there should be limits on number of pets allowed, and 5% responded that there should be limits on type of pets allowed.

Finally, participants were asked whether they would bring their pet dog to work if they could. Response options included, "I do not have a dog", "My company already allows dogs in the workplace (whether you bring a dog to work or not)", "Yes, I WOULD", "No, I WOULD NOT", and "It depends". Thirty percent of respondents indicated that they would NOT bring their dog(s) to work if allowed, 28% replied that they do not own a dog, 20% replied that their company already allows dogs at work, 13% indicated that they WOULD bring their dog(s) to work if allowed, and 9% replied that it

depends. Comments following the response of "It depends" included concern over the safety or appropriateness of dogs in the workplace due to the work setting/industry type, concern over the dog's behavior at work, concern over the behavior and/or health of others' dogs at work, and concern about distraction while on the job. In addition, participants' comments mentioned that it would depend on one's workload and anticipated whereabouts for the day, whether it was a special occasion, the benefit of bringing a dog to work when there would be no supervision at home, as well as the benefit of a dog with customers/clients/patients.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

As researchers and practitioners alike have become increasingly interested in employee attitudes and workplace outcomes, there has been a rise in research examining workplace policies and procedures that may play a key role. Despite this, very little research has concentrated on the increasingly popular idea of offering pet-friendly workplace policies. Considering the high amount of stress many U.S. employees face in today's workforce, it would be beneficial to explore potential workplace policies that are able to mitigate these stress levels. One such policy could be a pet-friendly policy, as pets have been found to have significant effects on human stress levels, and studies have shown that this effect may extend to the workplace as well (Brown, 2012; Johnson, 2005; Norling & Keeling, 2010; Perrine & Wells, 2006; Wells & Perrine, 2001).

By surveying full-time employees at both pet-friendly and pet-prohibited organizations, I investigated whether the presence of a pet-friendly workplace policy is related to employees' occupational stress levels. I hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between the existence of a pet-friendly policy and employee stress, such that employees (and specifically dog owners) working at pet-friendly organizations would have significantly less stress than employees (and dog owners) working at pet-prohibited organizations. My results supported my hypotheses, revealing that the presence of a pet-friendly policy does indeed relate to lower occupational stress levels in employees. Furthermore, a significant interaction indicated that dog owners' stress levels significantly differed based on whether they worked at a pet-friendly or pet-prohibited organization, with those at pet-friendly organizations reporting lower stress

levels than those at pet-prohibited organizations. However, respondents without dogs did not significantly differ on stress level between pet-friendly and pet-prohibited organizations. Thus, not surprisingly, the impact of a pet-friendly policy on stress is especially prominent with dog owners. Considering that in 2012, about 36.5% of U.S. households owned at least one pet dog (American Veterinary Medical Association, 2012), this finding could be particularly relevant for many U.S. workers.

Additionally, perceived organizational support (POS) was hypothesized to play a role in the relationship between pet-friendly policies and stress. For several reasons previously discussed, a case could be made that pet-friendly policies may be related to higher POS. Furthermore, although there is a lack of research on the relationship between POS and stress, a case could also be made that higher POS may be related to less stress. Therefore, I hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between the existence of a pet-friendly policy and employee POS, such that employees (and specifically dog owners) working at pet-friendly organizations would have significantly higher POS than employees (and dog owners) working at pet-prohibited organizations, and that POS would be significantly negatively related to stress. Both of these hypotheses were supported. Moreover, similar to the dog ownership-pet friendly policy interaction on stress, a marginally significant interaction was found for POS, indicating that dog owners' POS significantly differed based on whether they worked at a pet-friendly or pet-prohibited organization, with those at pet-friendly organizations reporting more POS than those at pet-prohibited organizations. In contrast, respondents without dogs did not differ as substantially as dog owners on POS between pet-friendly and pet-prohibited organizations. However, both dog owners and non-dog owners did report more POS

when employed at a pet-friendly organization than when employed at a pet-prohibited organization. Thus, although the impact of a pet-friendly policy on POS is especially effectual with dog owners, it may also prove to be a positive factor for the POS of non-dog owners.

Finally, I hypothesized that POS would mediate the relationship between the presence of a pet-friendly policy and stress. My results supported this hypothesis as well, principally revealing that POS fully mediated the relationship between pet-friendly policies and stress. Although I only hypothesized a partial mediation, the finding of a full mediation is interesting. It supports the notion that pet-friendly policies not only reduce stress, but moreover reduce stress through increased POS, which also tends to yield additional positive employee attitudes and organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment (Riggle et al., 2009), improved job performance (Moorman et al., 1998; Eisenberger et al., 1990), and higher job satisfaction (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Riggle et al., 2009). Considering the potential rewards of high employee POS, organizations may want to consider providing a pet-friendly policy in order to increase POS. Organizations may also want to provide a pet-friendly policy to reduce employee stress levels. In summation, according to my findings, the benefits of offering a pet-friendly policy may be twofold – it may increase employee POS and reduce employee stress simultaneously.

Another interesting finding involved relationships between attachment to pets and certain demographics. More specifically, females and younger respondents tended to report higher attachment to pets than males and older respondents. This may have implications for organizations within female-dominated industries. Perhaps the offering

of a pet-friendly policy would yield more significant outcomes for female employees than male employees due to the relationship between gender and pet attachment. Thus, the finding of significant relationships between a pet-friendly policy and POS and stress may best serve female-dominated organizations. Similarly, the relationship between age and pet attachment could have implications for all organizations as more and more people of the younger Millennial generation enter the workforce. Younger workers may react more positively or be more attracted to pet-friendly organizations due to their greater attachment to pets. Therefore, organizations may want to consider developing a pet-friendly policy in order to attract or retain young workers.

While very little research has investigated the actual relationships between pet-friendly policies, employee attitudes and organizational outcomes, a few previous studies have examined employees' beliefs and reactions to pets in the workplace (Norling & Keeling, 2010; Perrine & Wells, 2006; Wells & Perrine, 2001). This study also addressed the beliefs of respondents regarding dogs in the workplace, and findings were mixed regarding agreement with previous research. First, Norling and Keeling (2010) found that 53% of the dog owners in their sample would choose to bring their pet dog to work if allowed. From my sample, 43% of dog owners either already do or would choose to bring their pet dog(s) to work if allowed, and 13% of dog owners would choose to bring their pet dog(s) to work under certain circumstances. Thus, my sample seemed almost equally willing to bring pet dogs to work as the previous sample. One important distinction, however, is that my sample was strictly American, while the other was Swedish (Norling & Keeling, 2010). Second, Wells and Perrine (2001) and Perrine and Wells (2006) both found that respondents perceived pets in the workplace as stress relievers, which was

actually supported by the current study's findings. However, despite the decent percentage of dog owners who indicated the desire to bring pet dogs to work, my results revealed that 56% of all respondents (dog owners and non-dog owners) believe their company should NOT allow pets in the workplace. This finding was not paralleled in previous research and seems to contrast the benefits of dogs in the workplace that were previously presented. A likely explanation for this finding may be due to the industry or setting in which the respondents work. For example, several respondents reported working in the retail/sales industry. Given that salespeople may need to travel frequently, and that retail employees are often on their feet and required to interact with customers and keep the products and/or storefront tidy, this industry is likely not well-suited for a pet-friendly policy. Likewise, pet-friendly policies may not be appropriate for some companies, such as manufacturing and chemical plants, restaurants, and construction companies, due to health and safety reasons for employees, customers, and pets alike.

Beyond gauging participant beliefs regarding dogs in the workplace, I also analyzed the practices of those who do bring dogs to work, which had not been assessed in previous research. My results revealed that most dog-owning respondents working at pet-friendly companies do bring pet dogs to work (78%). Furthermore, the majority of respondents reported bringing their pet dog(s) to work at least once a week (45%), and a fair number of respondents reported bringing their pet dog(s) to work once a month (21%) or a few times a year (21%). When dogs are in the workplace, they tend to be there for a full day (79%), are most commonly allowed in employees' personal workspaces (e.g., cubicles or offices), departmental offices, outdoors, and hallways, and are never required to be kept in a crate.

Implications

The findings of this study offer implications both for organizations and practitioners as well as researchers on the topics of occupational stress, POS, pet-friendly and family-friendly policies, pet attachment, and work-family conflict. As previously mentioned, given that the relationship between pet-friendly policies and stress was fully mediated by POS, it would be very beneficial for organizations to consider offering some sort of pet-friendly policy. If implemented properly, the offering of this type of policy could lead to higher POS and less stress, thereby increasing several positive organizational outcomes such as improved performance, lower rates of absenteeism and counterproductive work behaviors, greater organizational commitment, and greater job satisfaction. Furthermore, in the case of POS, dog owners and non-dog owners alike may perceive greater organizational support with the availability of a pet-friendly policy. Given the relatively low cost to develop and implement such a policy and the high visibility and effectiveness of it, more organizations may want to consider allowing pets in the workplace.

However, pets are not well-suited to all organizations, industries, and workplaces. There are downsides to allowing pets in the workplace, such as allergies, accidents, distractions, and other problems related to poor pet training (McCullough, 1998; Perrine & Wells, 2006). Employee, customer, and pet safety are also important factors to consider. An organization should carefully consider the appropriateness and thoroughly research best practices in developing pet-friendly policies in order to achieve the best outcomes. Additionally, the policy should be well-documented with written rules regarding usage of the policy (McCullough, 1998; Purina, 2014). Some potential rules

may include requiring dogs to be on a leash, requiring supervision of pets at all times, prohibiting sick pets or pets with fleas from coming to work, prohibiting pets that exhibit any signs of aggression, requiring proof of training after excessive accidents or problems before a pet can return to work, and asking that employees not bring a pet to work if a coworker indicates that he/she is allergic to the pet (McCullough, 1998). Furthermore, Nestle Purina provides pet-friendly policy guidelines and steps to take before implementing the policy, such as obtaining support from building/facilities management, preparing legal documents such as liability waivers, and determining what veterinary documentation will be required before a pet may come to work, at www.purina.com/better-with-pets/pets-at-work. This may be an appropriate resource for organizations that are considering offering a pet-friendly policy.

Additionally, although not the focus of the current study, exploratory analyses revealed that work-family conflict was significantly related to family-friendly policies, pet-friendly policies, occupational stress, and POS. Therefore, when researchers and practitioners think about workplace policies such as family-friendly and pet-friendly policies, they should also keep in mind that these policies could potentially decrease employees' work-family conflict as well.

Finally, as previously mentioned, pet attachment was significantly related to gender and age of participants, such that females and younger workers tended to report higher pet attachment. Again, this could imply that organizations with a significant amount of young and/or female employees, or organizations that would like to attract more young and/or female employees, could especially benefit from offering a pet-friendly policy.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

A few potential limitations of the study should be noted. First, the sample was relatively small, reducing statistical power. However, this did not seem to be a factor as all hypotheses were supported. A larger sample size may have simply resulted in stronger effects, and might have shifted the marginally significant interaction of pet ownership and pet-friendly workplace on POS into a significant interaction.

Also, the sampling strategies used may have introduced a few limitations. The initial sampling strategy, obtaining participants via MTurk, could be limited in that participants are paid to complete the study and thus may have rushed through, failing to pay full attention with the sole motivation of end payment (Landers & Behrend, 2015). With this concern in mind, three attention check items were included, resulting in the removal of six participants who answered any one of them incorrectly. Three additional participants were removed for inconsistently answering items that were repeated during the survey. Additionally, some MTurk participants may have provided inaccurate demographics on the screening survey in order to be considered eligible to complete the survey. This may have contributed to the number of participants removed from data analysis due to ineligibility (n = 22, 10%). Despite these concerns, research has shown that crowdsourced (MTurk) samples exhibit very representative and diverse demographic characteristics (Behrend et al., 2011; Berinsky, Lenz, & Huber 2012). This is especially beneficial as it helps to avoid oversampling from WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) populations (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Landers & Behrend, 2015).

Although required in order to obtain enough participants in the pet-friendly groups, the second sampling strategy, a snowball/network strategy, may have resulted in a partially biased sample. Contacts at a handful of organizations known to be pet-friendly were asked to share the survey link with others at their organization. This method may have limited the generalizability of the results and thus reduced the external validity of the study (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Landers & Behrend, 2015). Because contacts were asked to share the survey with colleagues, it is possible that groups of participants within the sample held the same or very similar positions. Furthermore, characteristics of the primary organizations from which many participants were drawn may prevent the findings from generalizing to organizations of other sizes, industries, locations, etc. Additionally, participants from the snowball/network sampling were not screened for eligibility prior to completing the survey, contributing to the 22 respondents (10%) removed due to ineligibility. Issues over confirming eligibility of referred respondents is a problem associated with snowball/network samples discussed by Biernacki and Waldorf (1981). However, utilization of this sampling strategy was appropriate in the current study due to the focus on the highly specific and somewhat rare respondent characteristic of employment at a pet-friendly organization (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Landers & Behrend, 2015).

Second, this study's findings were based on self-report data. Although a significant amount of psychological research relies on self-report data, it is possible that respondents did not truthfully complete the survey, did not understand questions, or did not take the time to answer as honestly as possible, leading to response bias (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Self-report data may also be considered a limitation in terms of

the increased effects of social desirability on responses (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). In organizational research, these effects tend to arise due to participants fearing that their organization will somehow gain access to survey responses (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). However, this was not likely a factor in the current study because all participants were informed prior to beginning the survey that the purpose of the study was in fulfillment of a student's master's thesis, and respondent anonymity was assured.

Although not exclusive to self-report data, common method variance is also a concern, as a survey was used to assess all variables in the study. This could inflate or deflate relationships among constructs (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Related to common method variance, respondents may have been clued in to the constructs being measured, and thus implicit theories and illusory correlations may have affected the responses. Implicit theories and illusory correlations refer to respondents' own beliefs regarding relationships among the variables being measured, and these may affect how a participant responds to the study's measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). For instance, if a participant deciphered that the study was gauging stress levels in relation to being offered a pet-friendly workplace policy, his/her beliefs regarding pets impacting stress levels in the workplace may have affected his/her responses on the stress measure. In order to combat this, two additional measures were included to mask the purpose of the study (the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale, and the Work-Family Conflict measure), and the earliest instance of asking respondents whether their organizations were pet-friendly was embedded within several other items related to taking pets outside of the household.

Finally, it is important to note that this study was strictly correlational in nature, and thus no causation should be inferred. Other variables may play a role in the relationships found, and there may be other possible explanations for these relationships. For example, company culture or organizational size could play a role. More research is needed to investigate potential underlying factors and examine the effects of pet-friendly policies in a more experimental fashion.

Given the lack of research on the topic of pet-friendly workplace policies, there are numerous opportunities for future research directions. For instance, future research could replicate the current study with cats or other pets that may be allowed in the workplace. For many people, pet cats are just as important and considered part of the family as pet dogs. In addition, cats may prove less disruptive and easier to manage in the workplace while still providing similar benefits to employees. Likewise, future studies could replicate the current study with organizations in other industries or focus on obtaining participants from a wide variety of organizations in order to achieve greater external validity. Often, small organizations tend to allow pets at work more frequently than large organizations, and owners may tend to bring pets to work more often than regular employees (Norling & Keeling, 2010; Wells & Perrine, 2001). Thus, it would be interesting to investigate what percentage of pet-friendly organizations are small, as well as what percentage of people who bring pets to work are owners of the company. The current study was able to capture a sample that included both large and small organizations, and almost all respondents were employees rather than owners.

Another direction for future research would be to investigate the usage of pet-friendly policies in countries other than the U.S. Norling and Keeling (2010) conducted

their study with Swedish participants, and the Swedish participants' attitudes about dogs in the workplace were fairly similar to those found in the current study. However, it would be interesting to examine whether pet-friendly policies are popular and effective in other countries or cultures. Surely, different cultures will view these policies differently depending on how they perceive pets. One particular topic might be the different views of pet-friendly workplace policies based on collectivistic versus individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 1980).

Future research is also warranted in the area of *availability* of a policy versus *usage* of the policy. As previously mentioned, literature on work-family balance has examined whether availability of a policy or usage of a policy more significantly affects policy outcomes. Some research has found that availability of a policy is more impactful than actual usage of the policy (Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Casper & Harris, 2008; Quarton, 2013). Thus, while the current study focused solely on the availability of pet-friendly policies rather than usage of pet-friendly policies, future research could delve deeper into this area and determine whether availability versus usage yields different outcomes regarding pet-friendly policies.

Finally, it may be beneficial to investigate potential moderators or underlying components of the relationships between pet-friendly policies, POS, and stress. For example, pet attachment may influence these relationships, such that employees with low or no pet attachment may not react as positively to pet-friendly policies as employees with high pet attachment. Perhaps pet attachment plays a moderating role in these relationships or in relationships between the presence of a pet-friendly policy and other employee attitudes, such as job satisfaction or affect at work. Likewise, there may be

other factors present in pet-friendly organizations that account for variance in employees' POS and stress, such as leadership style, nature of the work, innovative or relaxed culture, reward systems, or other employee benefits. Due to its significant relationships with pet-friendly policies, POS, and stress, the number of family-friendly policies offered was accounted for in the current study. However, there may be other organizational policies or practices that tend to be present in pet-friendly companies worth examining. For instance, perhaps pet-friendly organizations tend to be led by employee-oriented rather than task-oriented leaders (Blake & Mouton, 1964), or by leaders who emphasize consideration versus initiating structure (Fleishman, 1973). Perhaps pet-friendly policies tend to be offered by creativity-focused companies looking to inspire employees by providing a relaxed, fun environment, and giving plenty of recognition for great work. These are just a few examples of potential underlying factors that may be associated with pet-friendly policies, POS, and/or stress.

Conclusion

As companies look for new and innovative ways to attract and retain talented employees, engage employees, and bolster job performance and job satisfaction, different organizational policies and initiatives come into practice. One such policy that has been gaining traction is the idea of a pet-friendly workplace. Past research has demonstrated the stress-reducing and therapeutic effects of pets, but few studies have examined whether these effects extend to the workplace. To date, the few studies that have attended to pet-friendly workplace policies have simply assessed employee reactions and attitudes surrounding these policies rather than investigated the relationships between these policies, employee attitudes and organizational outcomes. Moreover, no extant research

has directly examined the relationship between pet-friendly policies and perceived organizational support (POS) or the relationship between POS and stress. Thus, the current study sought to establish whether pet-friendly policies were related to employee POS and employee stress, and whether POS mediated the relationship between pet-friendly policies and stress.

Focusing solely on dogs in the workplace, the current study first found that the presence of a dog-friendly policy was significantly related to occupational stress, such that stress levels were lower when a dog-friendly policy was offered. Second, dog-friendly policies were found to be significantly related to POS, such that POS was higher when a dog-friendly policy was offered. Third, POS was significantly related to stress, such that higher POS was associated with lower stress levels. Finally, POS was found to fully mediate the relationship between dog-friendly policies and stress. All of these results were found while accounting for number of family-friendly policies offered as a covariate. In addition, interactions were found between dog ownership and presence of a dog-friendly policy on both stress and POS, indicating that the effects were more pronounced for dog-owning employees than non-dog-owning employees. This study also gauged the beliefs of participants regarding dogs in the workplace, including whether they believed their organization should allow dogs at work, as well as assessed the practices of employees who bring dogs to work, such as how often dogs are brought to work, how long dogs are typically at work per day, and where in the workplace dogs are allowed.

Essentially, results of the current study revealed that, when appropriate, organizations would benefit from offering a pet-friendly policy. Of course, this policy

should be carefully created and properly managed, and this type of policy will not be suitable for all organizations. However, pet-friendly policies have been found to decrease employee stress by enhancing employee POS. This enhanced POS in turn is likely to lead to other positive organizational outcomes and reduce negative outcomes. The presence of a pet-friendly policy was also significantly related to less work-family conflict, and even more relationships with positive organizational outcomes may be discovered in future research. Meanwhile, few to no disadvantages have been identified other than concerns about cleanliness, safety, and health, all of which can be mitigated with a proper policy and well-communicated rules.

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APPENDIX A

LEXINGTON ATTACHMENT TO PETS SCALE (LAPS) AND ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Instructions: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following brief statements about your pet dog(s) using the scale provided. Then answer the four Yes/No questions at the end.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

1. My pet means more to me than any of my friends.
2. Quite often I confide in my pet.
3. I believe that pets should have the same rights and privileges as family members.
4. I believe my pet is my best friend.
5. Quite often, my feelings toward people are affected by the way they react to my pet.
6. I love my pet because he/she is more loyal to me than most of the people in my life.
7. I enjoy showing other people pictures of my pet.
8. I think my pet is just a pet. (R)
9. I love my pet because it never judges me.
10. My pet knows when I'm feeling bad.
11. I often talk to other people about my pet.
12. My pet understands me.
13. I believe that loving my pet helps me stay healthy.
14. Pets deserve as much respect as humans do.
15. My pet and I have a very close relationship.
16. I would do almost anything to take care of my pet.
17. I play with my pet quite often.
18. I consider my pet to be a great companion.
19. My pet makes me feel happy.
20. I feel that my pet is part of my family.
21. I am not very attached to my pet. (R)
22. Owning a pet adds to my happiness.
23. I consider my pet to be a friend.

24. I sometimes take my pet to public areas such as parks.
    - Yes
    - No
25. I sometimes take my pet to the homes of friends and/or relatives.
    - Yes
    - No
26. I am allowed to bring my pet to work with me.
    - Yes
    - No
27. I sometimes bring my pet to work with me.
    - Yes
    - No

APPENDIX B

STRESS IN GENERAL SCALE (SIG)

Instructions: For each of the following words or phrases, select: 1 for "Yes" if it describes your current job, 2 for "No" if it does not describe your current job, or 3 for "?" if you cannot decide.

	Yes	No	?
Demanding……..	1	2	3
Pressured……..	1	2	3
Hectic……..	1	2	3
Calm (R)…….....	1	2	3
Relaxed (R)……..	1	2	3
Many things stressful……	1	2	3
Pushed……..	1	2	3

	Yes	No	?
Irritating…….	1	2	3
Under control (R)……..	1	2	3
Nerve-wracking…….	1	2	3
Hassled…….....	1	2	3
Comfortable (R)…….	1	2	3
More stressful than I'd like…	1	2	3
Smooth-running (R)……..	1	2	3
Overwhelming……	1	2	3

APPENDIX C

SURVEY OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT (SPOS 17)

Instructions: Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about your current employer, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement on the scale provided.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. The organization values my contribution to its well-being.

2. If the organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so. (R)

3. The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me. (R)

4. The organization strongly considers my goals and values.

5. The organization would ignore any complaint from me. (R)

6. The organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me. (R)

7. Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.

8. The organization really cares about my well-being.

9. The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.

10. Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice. (R)

11. The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor.

12. The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.

13. If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me. (R)

14. The organization shows very little concern for me. (R)

15. The organization cares about my opinions.

16. The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.

17. The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible.

APPENDIX D

ABBREVIATED WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT MEASURE

Instructions: Rate the degree to which you feel you have experienced the conflict represented in each of the items using the scale provided.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities.

2. I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family.

3. The behaviors I perform that make me effective at work do not help me to be a better parent and/or spouse.

4. I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on family responsibilities.

5. Because I am often stressed from family responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work.

6. Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at home would be counterproductive at work.

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. What is your age? ____

2. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

3. What is your marital status?
   - Married
   - Unmarried, not cohabitating
   - Unmarried, cohabitating

4. Do you currently reside in the United States?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Do you currently work in the United States?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Which best identifies your current employment status?
   - Full-time
   - Part-time
   - Self-employed, full-time
   - Self-employed, part-time
   - Unemployed
   - Retired

7. How many hours per week do you typically work? _____

8. How long have you been working at your current employer? _____ years _____ months

9. In what industry category do you currently work?
   - Architecture and engineering
   - Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media
   - Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance
   - Business and financial operations
   - Community and social services
   - Computer and mathematics

- Construction and extraction
- Education, training, and library
- Farming, fishing, and forestry
- Food preparation and serving
- Healthcare practitioners and technicians
- Healthcare support
- Installation, maintenance, and repair
- Legal
- Life, physical, and social sciences
- Management
- Military
- Office and administrative support
- Personal care and service
- Production
- Protective services
- Sales and retail
- Transportation and material moving
- Other: _____

10. Approximately how many employees work for your employer?

- Less than 10
- 10-19
- 20-49
- 50-99
- 100-499
- 500-999
- 1,000 or more

11. At your current employer, which of the following would your position best be described as?

- Owner
- Manager/Supervisor
- Staff member/Employee

12. Please indicate which of the following workplace policies are currently offered by your employer. Select all that apply.

- flextime (able to choose starting and quitting times within certain limits)
- compressed work weeks (work fewer days for longer hours)
- telecommuting/teleworking (choose where to work; for example, from home using a personal computer)
- job sharing (share the responsibilities of a full-time job with another employee)

- seasonal schedules (work only during certain parts of the year; for example, during tax season only)
- paid or unpaid personal leaves of absence
- leave sharing (one employee is able to transfer personal leave to another employee who has exhausted his/her available leave)
- sabbaticals
- on- or near-site child care center
- child care information and referral (to provide information regarding local child care services or child care assistance)
- emergency child care assistance
- school-age programs (before school, after school, during school holidays and vacations)
- child care discounts or vouchers (to help reduce child care costs)
- elder care information and referral (to provide information regarding local elder care services or elder care assistance)
- elder care discounts or vouchers (to help reduce elder care costs)
- health promotion programs
- employee assistance programs
- stress management seminars
- wellness-related newsletters
- support groups for employees who have work/life balance issues
- training for managers on work/life balance issues
- handbooks for employees and managers on work/life policies
- none of the above

13. Do you currently own a dog/dogs?
    - Yes
    - No

14. Does your employer allow employees to bring pet dog(s) to work with them? *(only participants without dogs see this item)*

15. How many dogs do you own? ____ *(only participants with dogs see this item)*

16. Do your dog(s) currently live with you? *(only participants with dogs see this item)*
    - Yes
    - No

17. Does your employer allow you to bring your pet dog(s) to work with you? *(only participants with dogs see this item)*

APPENDIX F

PETS-ALLOWED GROUP – ADDITIONAL ITEMS

1. Do you bring your pet dog(s) to work with you?
    - Yes
    - No

2. How often do you bring your pet dog(s) to work with you?
    - Daily
    - Two to three times a week
    - Once a week
    - Once every two to three weeks
    - Once a month
    - A few times a year

3. How long is/are your dog(s) at work with you per day?
    - Full day (7-12 hours)
    - Half day (4-6 hours)
    - A few hours (1-3 hours)

4. Where is/are your dog(s) allowed at work? Select all that apply.
    - My personal workspace (e.g., office, cubicle, etc.)
    - The office I work in
    - Conference rooms
    - Hallways
    - Lounge rooms/common areas
    - Cafeteria
    - A specified site (e.g., dog room)
    - Outdoors
    - Other (please specify).

5. Are you required to keep your dog(s) in a crate(s) while they are at work?
    - Yes
    - No

APPENDIX G

BELIEFS ABOUT PETS IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Do you think your company should allow pets in the workplace?

- Yes
- No

2. Select one statement from the list below that best describes your feelings regarding pets in the workplace.

- Pets should NOT be allowed in the workplace.
- There should be limits on the number of pets allowed, but not on the type of pets allowed.
- There should be limits on the type of pets allowed, but not on the number of pets allowed.
- There should be limits on BOTH number and type of pets allowed.
- There should NOT be limits on either number or type of pets allowed.

3. Would you bring your pet dog to work with you if you could?

- I do not have a dog.
- My company already allows dogs in the workplace (whether you bring yours to work or not).
- Yes, I WOULD bring my dog to work with me if I could.
- No, I WOULD NOT bring my dog to work with me if I could.
- It depends (please specify why).

APPENDIX H

MECHANICAL TURK SCREENING SURVEY

Short Self Survey

Instructions: Please answer all of the following questions to be paid for this HIT.

1. What is your age? _____

2. Do you currently reside in the United States?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Do you currently work in the United States?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Which best identifies your current employment status?
   - Full-time
   - Part-time
   - Self-employed, full-time
   - Self-employed, part-time
   - Unemployed
   - Retired

5. How long have you been working at your current employer? _____ years _____ months

6. What pet(s) do you currently own? Select all that apply.
   - Dog(s)
   - Cat(s)
   - Bird(s)
   - Horse(s)
   - Hamster(s), gerbil(s), guinea pig(s), mouse/mice, rat(s), or ferret(s)
   - Reptile(s)
   - Fish
   - Other
   - None

7. Which of your pet(s) currently live with you? Select all that apply.
   - Dog(s)
   - Cat(s)
   - Bird(s)

- Horse(s)
- Hamster(s), gerbil(s), guinea pig(s), mouse/mice, rat(s), or ferret(s)
- Reptile(s)
- Fish
- Other
- None

Thank you for your participation!