

CORRELATES OF PET-KEEPING IN RESIDENCE HALLS ON COLLEGE STUDENT
ADJUSTMENT AT A SMALL, PRIVATE, MIDWESTERN COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

A limited number of colleges and universities permit pets other than small aquariums in residence halls. No studies have been published documenting the effect of pets in residence halls. A matched two-group comparison of college students ($N = 50$) compared pet owners with non-pet owners on adjustment to college and grade point average (GPA). Participants completed the following instruments: Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Relationship Questionnaire (RQ), Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS), and Demographic Questionnaire. The two groups were similar on most demographic characteristics. Pet owners scored higher than non-pet owners on adjustment to college, anxiety, and GPA, but the differences were not statistically significant. Statistically significant between-group differences were found on LAPS scores and attachment tendency. In spite of equal numbers of participants having pets while growing up, students keeping pets in residence halls were more attached to their pets than those not keeping pets. The findings suggest that pet keeping while attending college can be beneficial for some students.

Key Words: Pet ownership, college students, attachment, adjustment to college