

Pawsitive Impact: How Pets Enhance Our Psychological Well-Being

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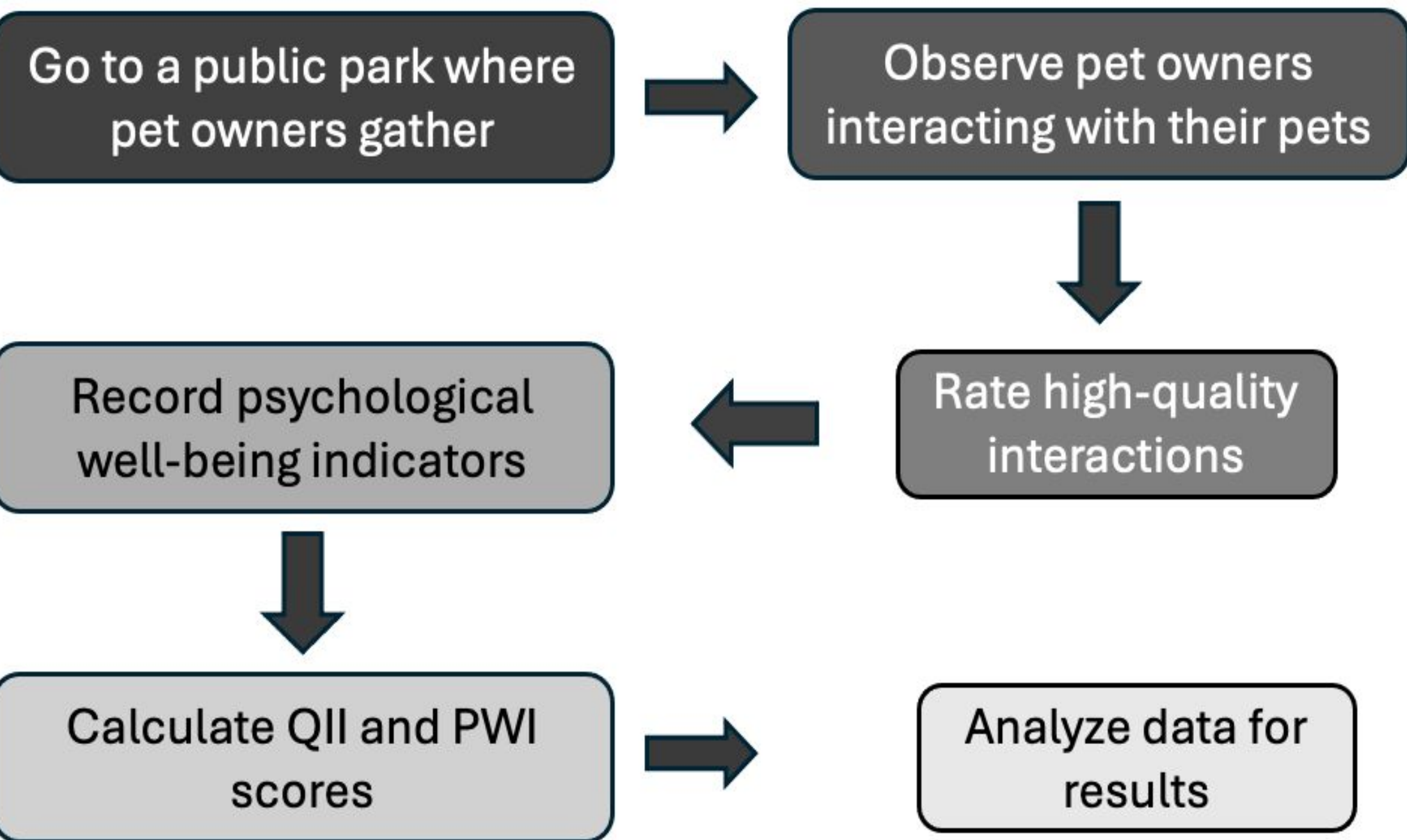
BACKGROUND

- Psychological Well-being is the whole package – not just the absence of illness. It's about positive connections and finding meaning in life (Adler et al., 2017).
- Good vibes lead to good lives. When individuals flourish, they light up their communities too, making psychological well-being a big deal for everyone's health (Huppert, 2009).
- Pets do more than just keep us company. They can lift our spirits, but it's not just about having them around – how we interact makes a big difference (Janssens et al., 2020).
- Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that pet owners with a score of 1 (meaning high quality of interaction) on the Quality of Interaction Index (QII) have higher scores on the Psychological Well-being Index (PWI) than those with a score of 0 (meaning low quality of interaction) on the QII.

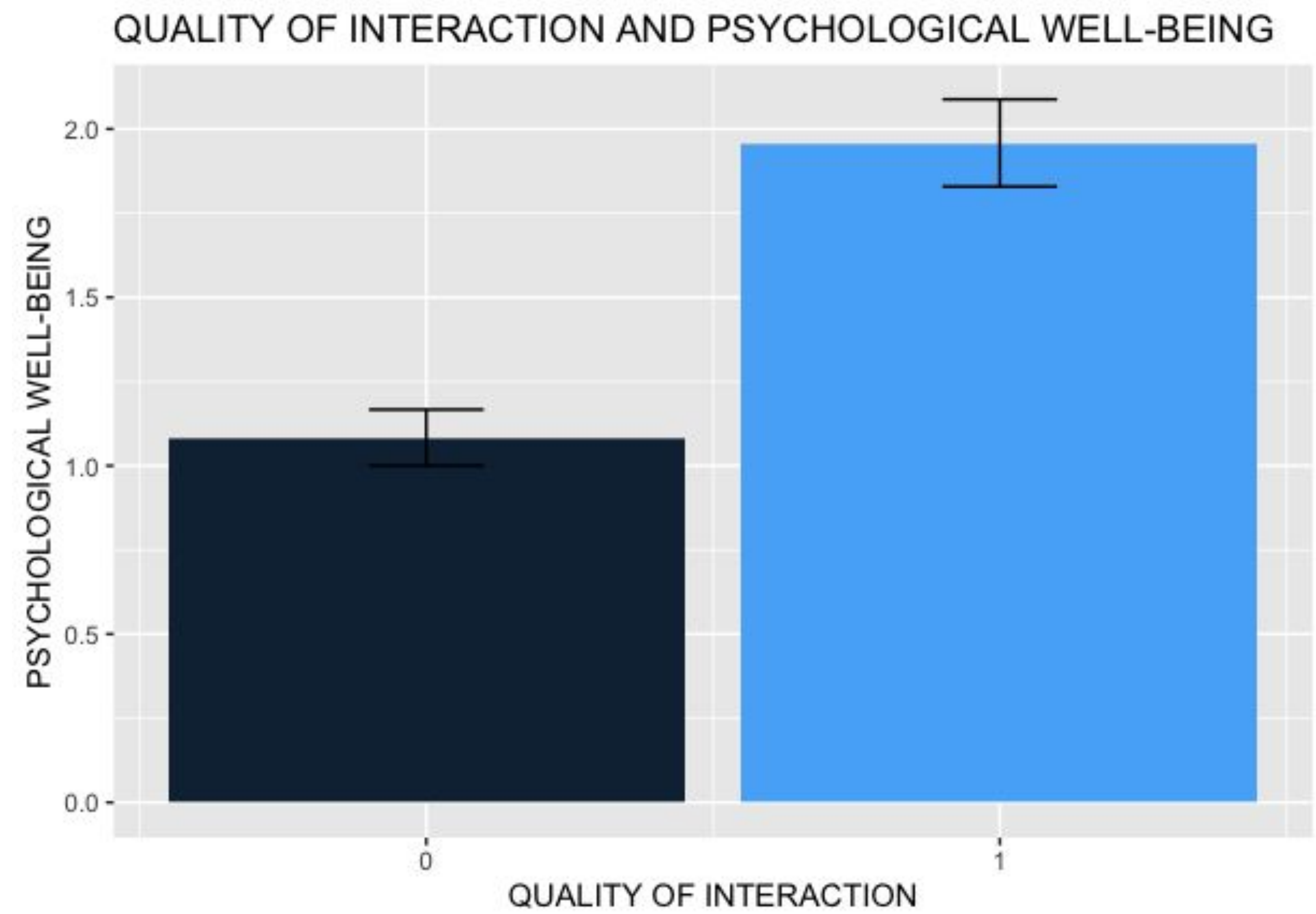
METHODS

- This study is a naturalistic observational research design to examine the relationship between quality pet interactions and psychological well-being..
- Sample: 60 pet owners in a public park (N=60). Half high quality interactions (n=30) and half low quality (n=30).
- Predictor: Quality of Interaction Index (QII) based on play and caregiving
- Criterion: Psychological Well-being Index (PWI) measuring smiles, laughter, and indicators of purposeful engagement like skill teaching .

PROCEDURE



Pet owners with more engaging and caring interactions with their pets experience significantly better psychological well-being.



Note: The bar chart illustrates a clear trend where pet owners with high-quality interactions (denoted by '1') show notably higher psychological well-being scores compared to those with low-quality interactions (indicated by '0').



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RESULTS

Two Sample t-test
data: outcome by predictor
t = -3.3133, df = 58, p-value = 0.0007961
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means between group 0 and group 1 is less than 0
95 percent confidence interval:
-Inf -0.4335589
sample estimates:
mean in group 0 mean in group 1
1.083333 1.958333

- $t(58)=-3.31, p<0.05, d'=1.07$
- Low-quality interaction group scored lower ($M=1.08, SD=0.40$) than high-quality interaction group ($M=1.96, SD=0.88$).
- All the originally collected and coded data was used as none needed to be thrown out.

DISCUSSION

- There was a significant, large effect of the quality of pet-owner interactions on psychological well-being.
- Support was found for the alternative hypothesis, the null was rejected.
- **Strengths:** Observing in a public park provides external validity, reflecting authentic interactions between pet owners and their pets.
- **Weaknesses:** The observational study cannot establish causal relationships between interaction quality and psychological well-being due to a lack of manipulation and random assignment.
- **Future Directions:** Future studies should identify and control extraneous variables to strengthen causal inferences and expanding research to larger and more diverse samples would increase the generalizability of the findings.
- **Implications:** Studies on pet-owner interaction and psychological well-being can inform care practices and public policies, promoting collective well-being.

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