

Perceived Human and Companion Animal Support as Predictors of Positive Emotions

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Guided by Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory, positive emotions are understood to expand cognitive and behavioral capacities and strengthen psychological resources that promote well-being. Although perceived social support is consistently linked to positive mental health outcomes, the relative contributions of different support sources, including companion animals, remain underexplored. This study examined the associations between perceived support from family, friends, significant others, and pets and positive emotions among Filipino adults. A cross-sectional online survey was conducted during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic with 294 Filipino adult pet owners. Participants completed the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), the Comfort from Companion Animal Scale (CCAS), and the Positive Affect subscale of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). Multiple regression analysis was used to identify predictors of positive emotions. Results indicated that perceived support from family, significant others, and pets significantly predicted positive emotions. The overall model was significant, $F(4, 289) = 14.75, p < .001$, accounting for 17% of the variance in positive emotions ($R^2 = .17$). Support from pets emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .25, p < .001$), followed by significant others ($\beta = .24, p = .002$). In contrast, perceived support from friends was negatively associated with positive emotions ($\beta = -.20, p = .016$), possibly reflecting contextual stressors and altered social dynamics during pandemic-related restrictions. The findings highlight the importance of diverse support systems, particularly companion animals, in fostering positive emotions during periods of heightened stress.

Keywords: positive emotions, perceived social support, companion animals, Broaden-and-Build Theory, COVID-19, Filipino adults

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North American Journal of Psychology, 2026, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1101-1109
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