

The Impact of Pet-Friendly Workplace Policies on Employee Wellbeing:

A Case Study of REDnote's "Friday Pet Day"

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The Proposing of the Question and Research Background

Exploring How Pet-Friendly Culture Shapes Employee Wellbeing at REDnote

Introduction of REDnote

Founded in 2013 by Miranda Qu and Charlwin Mao, REDnote is a leading lifestyle and social commerce platform in China. It combines user-generated content with e-commerce, where users share experiences, discover products, and shop directly.

Key strengths:

- Authentic community emphasizing real experiences and trust.
- Strong influence in beauty, fashion, and wellness.
- Seamless link between content and commerce.
- Core users: Gen Z and young professionals.



2024 Highlights:

- Estimated valuation: ~USD 17 billion.
- Revenue ≈ USD 1 billion per quarter (mainly ads + e-commerce).
- Growing focus on wellbeing, pets, and balanced lifestyles.

Vision & Culture

REDnote's mission is "to inspire lives and help everyone see and be seen." Its culture values creativity, openness, and wellbeing, aligning work with lifestyle expression.

"Pet-Friendly" Social Context

Many modern firms now host "Bring-Your-Pet Fridays" to create relaxed, people-centered workplaces.

- A 2022 survey showed 38% of Chinese employees felt pets at work reduce stress, and 36% said it improves wellbeing.
- China's pet economy hit RMB 345.3 billion in 2024, showing pets' growing social role.

In 2024, REDnote launched a "Pet-Friendly Friday" initiative at its Shanghai headquarters. The program allows employees to bring their own pets (mainly cats & dogs) to the office every Friday.

Aim:

- Align workplace culture with REDnote's "live authentically and joyfully" values.
- Responds to the rising pet ownership and mental-health awareness among Gen Z employees.
- Encourages stress relief, creativity, and cross-team connection in an informal atmosphere.

➔ The study investigates how REDnote's Pet-Friendly Friday influences employee wellbeing through stress relief and social support.

Literature Review and Research Significance

Impacts of Pet - Related Activities on Employee and our research value on REDnote's Pet Day

1 Review: The correlation between Pet and Working environments

- ◆ Facility dogs have been found to bring about relevant outcomes for patients, families, and staff in pediatric hospitals, significantly **enhancing staff sense of work accomplishment (Personal Accomplishment)** and **reducing turnover intentions**. (Rodriguez et al., 2022)
- ◆ In a study of creative advertising agencies, researchers found dogs **positively impact the work environment**, bringing “smiles to the other employees” and “sending out positive vibes” for owners, co-workers and management. (Elisa & Miguel Pina e, 2021)
- ◆ Pet-friendly practices **significantly boost employees' well-being and work engagement by meeting their needs for competence and belonging**. Simple practices (e.g., Pet Day,) are low-cost, high-return actions, while complex ones (e.g., Pets in Workplace) require cautious rollout to avoid potential conflicts. (Junça-Silva & Galrito, 2024).

2 Review: Studies on Pet types and their Relationship with Work Efficiency

Pet-Specific Details and Work Efficiency Outcomes:

- ◆ Employees with small dogs($\leq 5\text{kg}$) score significantly higher on working conditions and work quality than those with large dogs ($\geq 21\text{kg}$). (Hall & Mills, 2019).

Research Gap: Insufficient Coverage of Non-Dog Pets

- ◆ Gardner (2024) found that the vast majority of pet-workplace studies (25 out of 31) focus solely on dogs, while a small number involve cats or other pets (e.g., birds).



Research Significant

No research has explored how pet-related activities relate to employee satisfaction at REDnote or other major internet company.

- ✓ **Filling a gap in the academic field:** By conducting the research in a high-pressure, densely staffed internet workplace environment, this study clarifies the actual effect of Pet Days in relieving employees' stress and improving job satisfaction in large company, thereby providing evidence to address the gap in this area.
- ✓ **Optimizing Operational Practices:** Analyze the different impacts of pets on employees based on their differences in size, type, habits and other dimensions, helping enterprises formulate precise Pet Day management plans and improve operational efficiency and employee experience.

Hypothesis

Proposing hypotheses on how pet - related activities affect, based on Social Support Theory

- ◆ **Core theory - Social Support Theory:** Social support refers to various forms of assistance an individual obtains from their social network, including emotional support and instrumental support. Such support can help individuals buffer the negative impacts of stressors on their physical and mental health.
- ◆ **Application in “Pet Day”:** Pet Day offers a social interaction platform. Employees gain more emotional support by sharing pet - related stories and also get instrumental support (e.g., sharing pet food/toys) when interacting with pets. This enhanced social support reduces work stress and boosts job satisfaction.

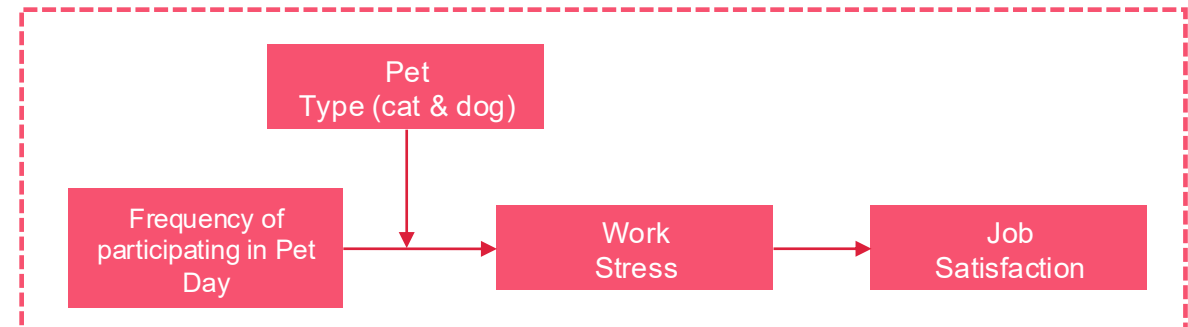
Logical Deduction

- ◆ **Main Effect:** According to the Social Support Theory, when a company implements Friday Pet Day, employees can use this activity platform to share pet-related stories with colleagues to gain more emotional support. Meanwhile, they also obtain instrumental support (e.g., shared pet food/toys) from colleagues or the company during pet interactions. The increased social support directly enhances employees’ positive feelings toward their work.
- ◆ **Mediating Effect:** Friday Pet Day creates a social interaction scenario for employees, enabling them to acquire more emotional and instrumental social support. This enhanced social support alleviates employees’ work stress; reduced work stress further fosters positive work perceptions, thereby significantly improving job satisfaction. Work stress thus plays a mediating role in the relationship between Friday Pet Day and job satisfaction.
- ◆ **Moderating Effect:** Social Support Theory holds that emotional support and instrumental support can only be obtained through smooth social interaction. In terms of general behavioral traits, dogs "proactively initiate" social interactions and are suited for high-frequency interactions, while cats "passively respond" to social interactions and are suited for low-frequency interactions. Based on the Social Support Theory, this difference in interaction styles affects the smoothness of socialization—and smooth socialization is a prerequisite for obtaining emotional and instrumental support.

◆ H1: Frequency of participating in Pet Day is positively associated with employees’ job satisfaction

◆ H2: Employees’ work stress mediates the positive relationship between Frequency of participating in Pet Day and their job satisfaction

◆ H3: Pet type (cat&dog) moderates the indirect effect of Frequency of participating in Pet Day on job satisfaction via work stress



Variables Definition and Research Methods Design

The Definition of the Core Variables and Major Research Methods, Including Questionnaire and Interview

1 Variables

	Indicator	Definition
Dependent Variable	Job Satisfaction (JS)	<i>Job Satisfaction</i> is one’s subjective positive evaluation of work, encompassing intrinsic aspects (e.g., achievement, creativity) and extrinsic factors (e.g., salary, supervision). Measured by Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, Short Form (MSQ-SF).
Independent Variable	<i>Pet</i>	<i>Pet</i> is a continuous integer-type variable that measures the frequency of employees’ participation in Pet Day.
Mediator Variable	Work Stress (WS)	<i>Work Stress</i> is one’s subjective experience of mismatched work demands & coping ability (tension, loss of control). Measured by Chinese Perceived Stress Scale (CPSS).
Moderator Variable	Type of Pets (ToP)	<i>Type of Pets</i> refers to different categories of pets. • We select cat & dog as the <i>ToP</i> options in the preliminary study.
Control Variable	• <i>Gender (Gen)</i> • <i>Age (Age)</i> • <i>Marriage (Marr)</i> • <i>Tenure (Tenure)</i>	Including typical demographic variables.

2 Questionnaire Research Design

Sample Scope

Non-managerial staff at REDnote

- Including Content operation, R&D staff, Product Manager, Functional support, others.

Collection Channel

Internal targeted delivery

- Via REDnote’s WeChat Work “workbench”.

Sampling Method

Stratified convenience sampling

- Strata: 4 job categories (match actual staff proportion, e.g., 40% content operation, 30% R&D).

Inclusion Criteria

Formal frontline staff (≥3 months tenure, being aware of REDnote’s Petday).

Timeline (Two-Wave Longitudinal Collection)

- **T1 (Pretest):** 1 week before first Petday
 - **Measure:** Previous petday participation, baseline work stress & job satisfaction, controls, job characteristics (function, position).
- **T2 (Posttest):** After 7 consecutive weekly Petdays
 - **Measure:** Petday participation (IV), current work stress (mediator), current job satisfaction (DV), ToP (moderator).

Incentives

- Non-material: Highlight “results optimize frontline welfare (e.g., Petday adjustment)”.
- Optional small incentive: Internal points (for T1+T2 completers, redeemable for afternoon tea/peripherals).

REDnote "Petday" Interview Plan

Explore specific scenarios where pets can relieve employees' work stress

1 Interview Subjects

Type	Number of people	Filter Criteria
Employees with dogs	3~4	Participated in Petday ≥ 3 times
Employees with cats	3~4	Participated in Petday ≥ 3 times
Employees without pet participation	2~3	Shared living experience on Petday, no pet allergies
Petday Organization Leader	1~2	Participate in rule formulation/coordination

2 Interview Process

1. Icebreaker (5 minutes): Chat about interesting pet stories/show Petday photos to evoke memories
2. Core Questions (20-25 minutes): Progress in the order of "Experience $\rightarrow$ Stress $\rightarrow$ Pet Type $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Suggestions"
3. Wrap-up (5 minutes) : Confirm information + Invite additional feedback
4. Follow-up: Send interview summary for verification within 24 hours

3 Design of Core Issues

Dimension	Key Issues
Basic Experience	1. Which areas does Petday often take pets to? Is there any spatial conflict? 2. What are the differences in the feelings upon arriving at work between Petday and ordinary working days?
Pets and Stress	1. When Petday is under stress, what does the pet do? Does the sense of stress change? 2. Has a pet ever increased your stress?
Pet type differences	1. How do the interactions of dogs and cats differ in their impact on stress? 2. Have you observed differences in stress levels among colleagues with different pets?
Stress and Satisfaction	1. After reducing stress with a pet, how does your job satisfaction for the day change? 2. Will your satisfaction decline if Petday is cancelled?
Optimization Suggestions	1. What adjustments do you hope Petday will make to its rules/facilities? 2. Do we need to develop differentiated rules for different pets?

Research Design and Expected Outcome

Analyze with a quantitative method and interview approaches to measure the effect of bringing pets to office.

Summary and explanations of the model

Model	Indication	Expected outcomes
$JS_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WS_i + \beta_2 Gen_i + \beta_3 Age_i + \beta_4 Marr_i + \beta_5 Tenure_i + \varepsilon_i$	• Test whether the mediator variable <i>WS</i> exerts a negative impact on <i>JS</i> and determine the magnitude of this impact.	✓ β_1 will be significantly negative, revealing that working pressure reduces working satisfaction.
$JS_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Pet_i + \beta_2 WS_i + \beta_3 ToP_i + \beta_4 Gen_i + \beta_5 Age_i + \beta_6 Marr_i + \beta_7 Tenure_i + \varepsilon_i$	• Test whether <i>Pet</i> increases <i>JS</i>. • Test whether the introduction of <i>Pet</i> and <i>Top</i> reduces the magnitude of <i>WS</i>'s negative impact on <i>JS</i>. • Find out whether cat or dog increases <i>JS</i> most according to β_3.	✓ β_1 and β_3 will be significantly positive, while β_2 will be less than equation 1, demonstrating the Petday improves employee's job satisfaction, as well as reducing work pressure. ✓ There are significant differences in the positive impact of different pet types. Pets that are highly interactive yet low-disturbance have the optimal effect, and the preference differences are related to employees' characteristics.

Summary and analysis of the interview



Step 1: Conclude interview results

- Using word cloud to supplements mainstream data analysis tools including bar and pie charts.
- Uncovering important concepts or trends that may be overlooked in text.

Step 2: Scenarios analysis

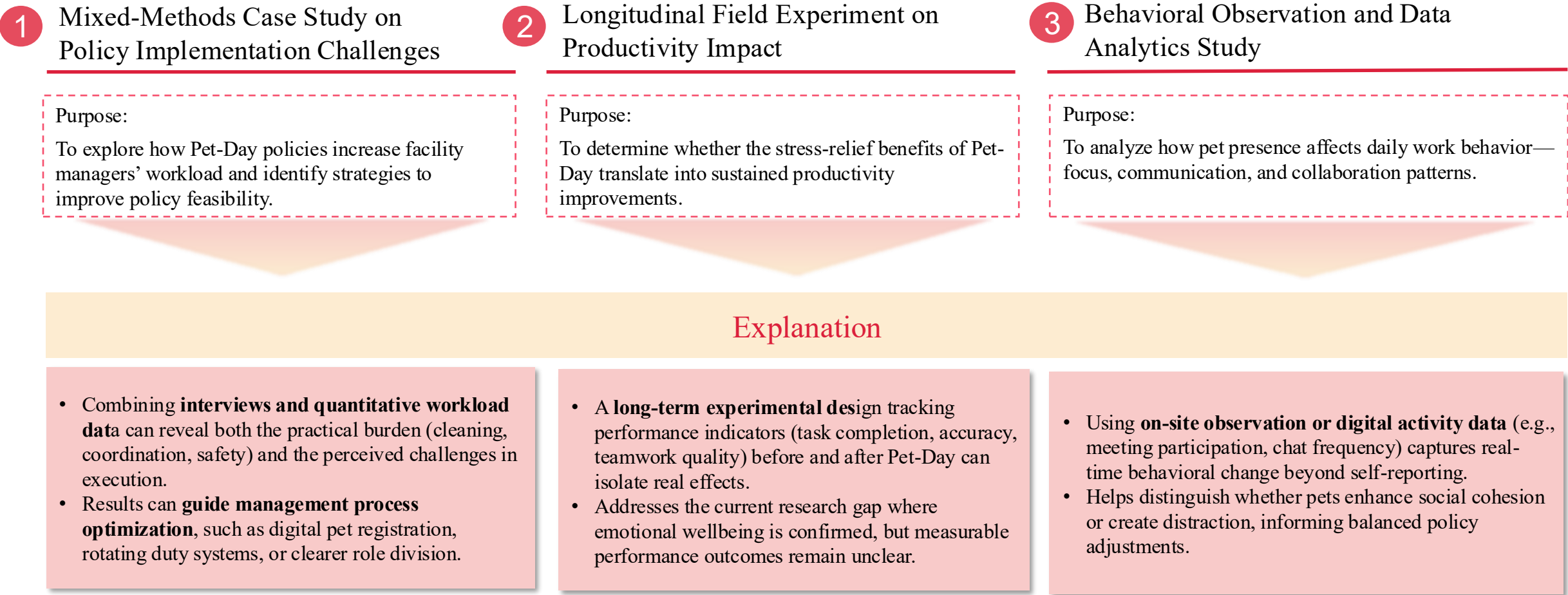
- Explore specific scenarios where pets relieve employees' work pressure.
- Compare the stress-relieving effects of different pet types.

Step 3: Conduct a pilot to verify

- Verify hypotheses and collect optimization suggestions for Petday by adjusting the duration, activity forms, and activity content.

Future research Directions

Future research should further examine REDnote’s Pet-Day policy to balance wellbeing and productivity.



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