

JANUARY 2024 | VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

# ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

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## BARKING UP THE RIGHT TREE: UNDERSTANDING UK DOG GUARDIANS' VISITS TO SHARED OUTDOOR LEISURE SPACES

Shared outdoor leisure spaces (SOLS) are multi-user spaces such as parks, woodlands, and beaches which are often frequented by people with their dogs. These spaces are used for a variety of recreational activities and are often located near people's homes.

Based on past research, this study by PhD candidate [Lori Hoy](#), [Dr Brigitte Stangl](#), and [Prof Nigel Morgan](#) developed and tested a conceptual model to better understand what drives people with dogs to visit SOLS in the UK.

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## **OUTDOOR LEISURE WITH DOGS: AN EMPIRICAL EVALUATION OF VISITING SHARED OUTDOOR LEISURE SPACES IN THE UK**

**Lori Hoy, Dr Brigitte Stangl & Prof Nigel Morgan**

Participating in outdoor leisure activities, including visiting SOLS, provides multiple mental, physical, and social well-being benefits for humans and dogs. Dogs need sensory, physical, and mental stimulation and opportunities to express their 'dogness' while human health and well-being can be positively impacted by being outdoors and participating in physical and social activities.

This study examined visits to shared outdoor leisure spaces (SOLS) with dogs, such as parks, woodlands, and beaches in the UK. Based on past qualitative and descriptive data, hypotheses and a conceptual model were developed. An online survey of dog guardians (n = 602) was analysed using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to test the impacts of human intrinsic

motivation; dog well-being; the community benefit; and social bonding on the components of leisure involvement (attraction, centrality, and self-expression), and subsequently intention and visiting behaviour in relation to SOLS. The results showed that human intrinsic motivation and community benefit had a positive impact on all aspects of leisure involvement, while dog well-being only affected attraction, and social bonding impacted centrality and self-expression.

These findings contribute to a better understanding of dog guardians' behaviour of visiting SOLS in the UK, providing insights for stakeholders responsible for designing, managing, and promoting these spaces.

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**A focus on the design and maintenance of SOLS that are attractive because they facilitate socialisation and community activities, while communicating the potential well-being benefits, will attract dog guardians who enjoy and are highly involved in regular visits to SOLS**

Hoy, L. S., Stangl, B., & Morgan, N. (2023). Outdoor leisure with dogs: an empirical evaluation of visiting shared outdoor leisure spaces in the UK. *Leisure/Loisir*.

Link: [bit.ly/3tELK7O](https://bit.ly/3tELK7O)