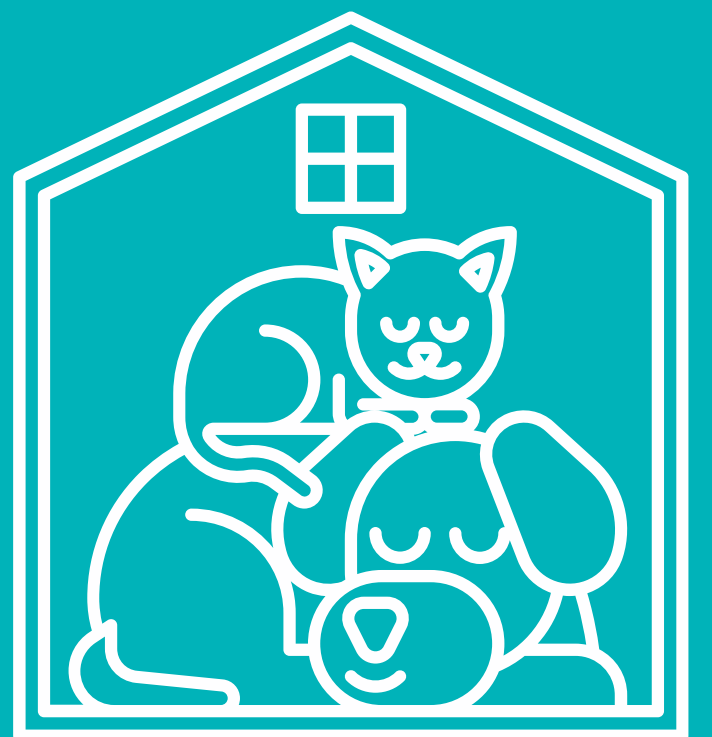


THE TENDENCIES OF ANIMAL ADOPTION AND RELINQUISHMENT DURING COVID-19

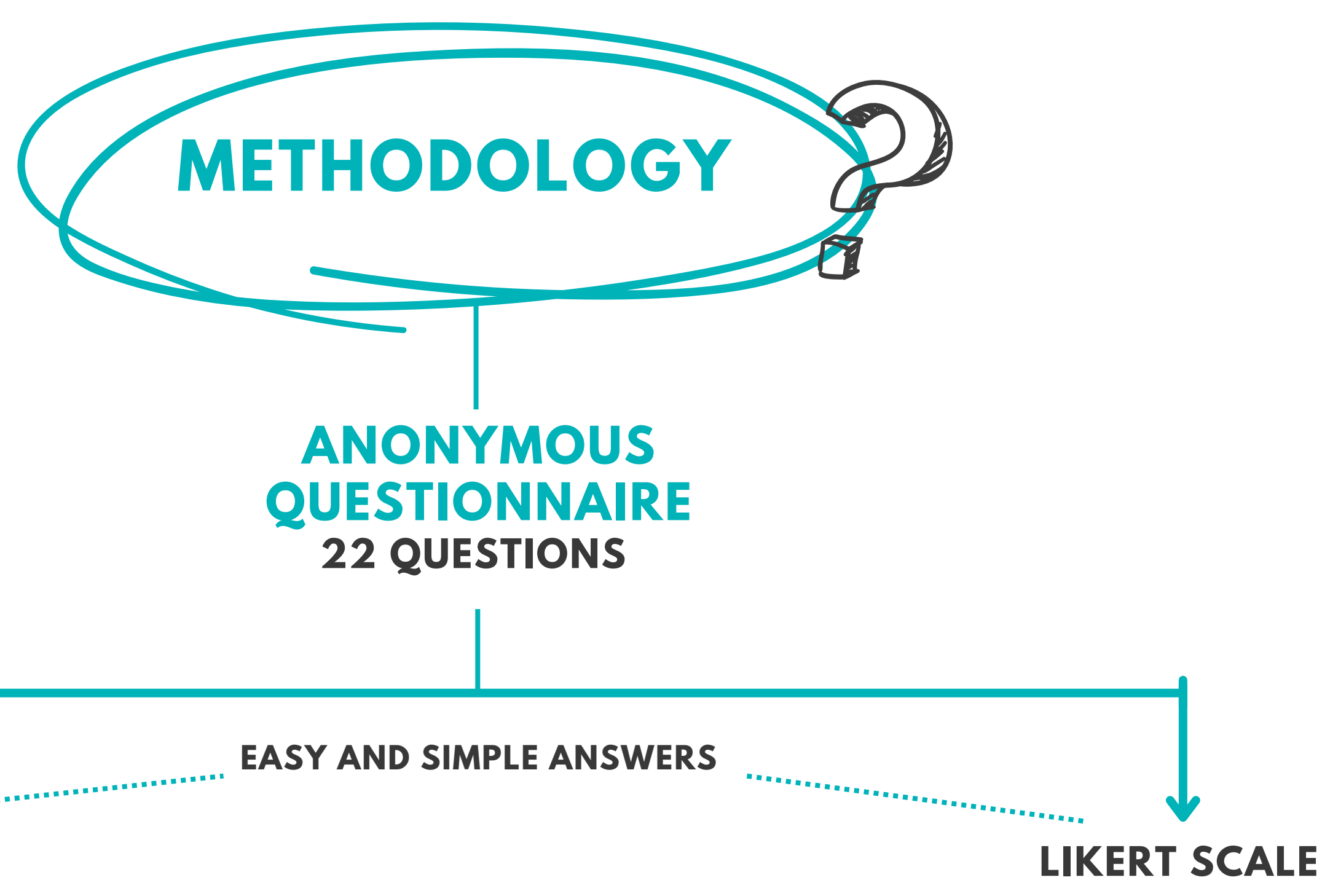
'DOES COVID-19 INFLUENCE THE ADOPTION OF ANIMALS?'



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INTRODUCTION

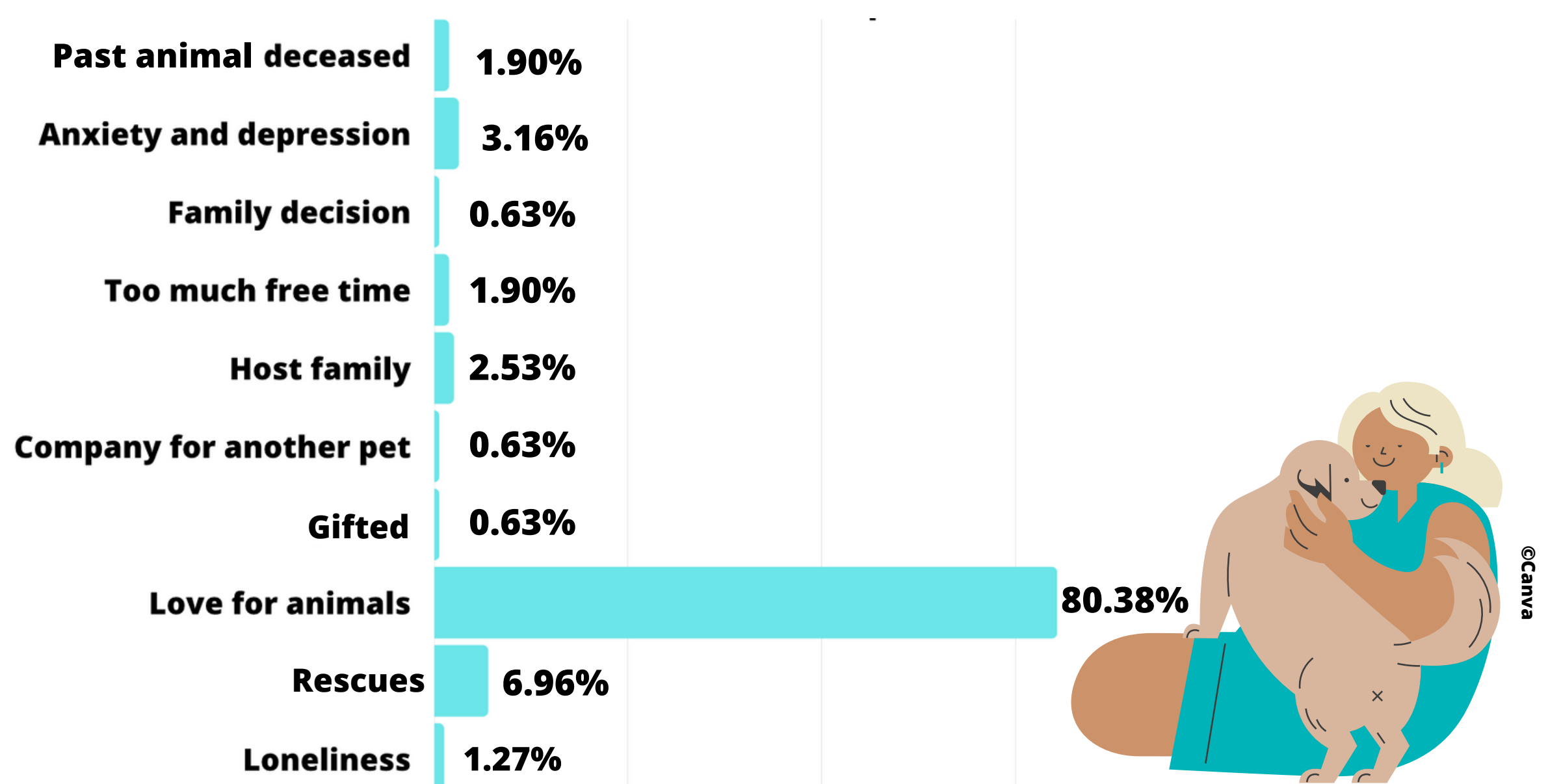
The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way of living globally. From social distancing, working/studying from home to lockdown itself, the populations daily routines experienced substantial changes. Additionally, with the stay-at-home order reinforcement, the amount of hours spent isolated from society and restricted from our normality increased, which consequently **increased levels of loneliness and boredom**. This limitation resulted in the **population resorting to companion animals to ease these emotions**. However, even with the search for animal companionship, the **abandonment of pets was still a problem reported** due to the pets being hard work, the decision of the acquisition being impulsive, death of the tutor, rumors of animals being reservoirs of the virus, among others. With the realisation of this study, we are aiming to determine if the **COVID-19 pandemic influenced the tendencies of pet acquisition**.



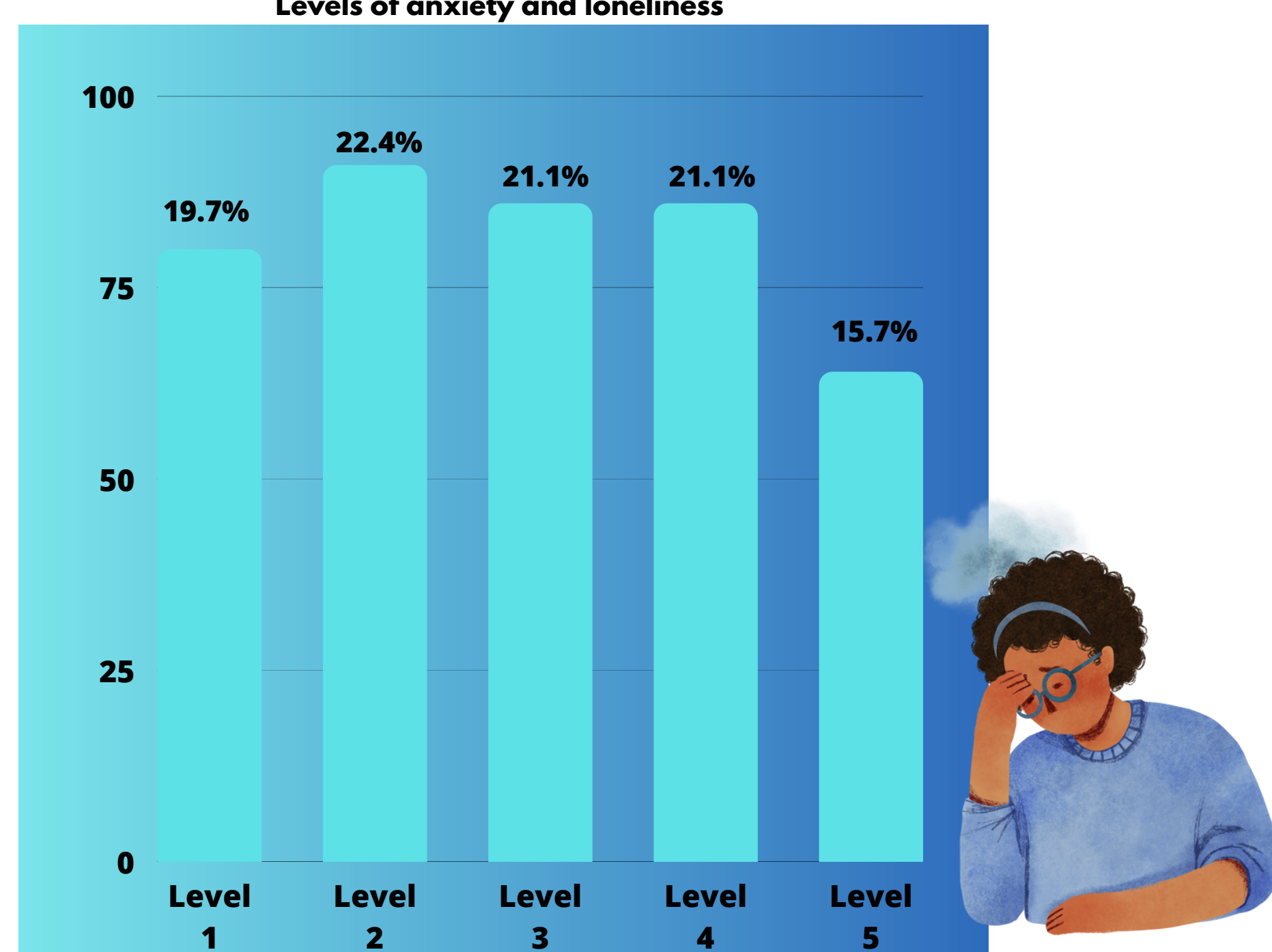
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With a total of 407 respondents of the questionnaire, the data collected allowed to analyse that out of all respondents, **249 (60.2%)** of them didn't acquire a pet during the pandemic, but **158 (39.8%)** did. Out of those who did acquire a pet, there was different reasonings behind the decision, which are represented in the graphic below.

Adoption rate and motives



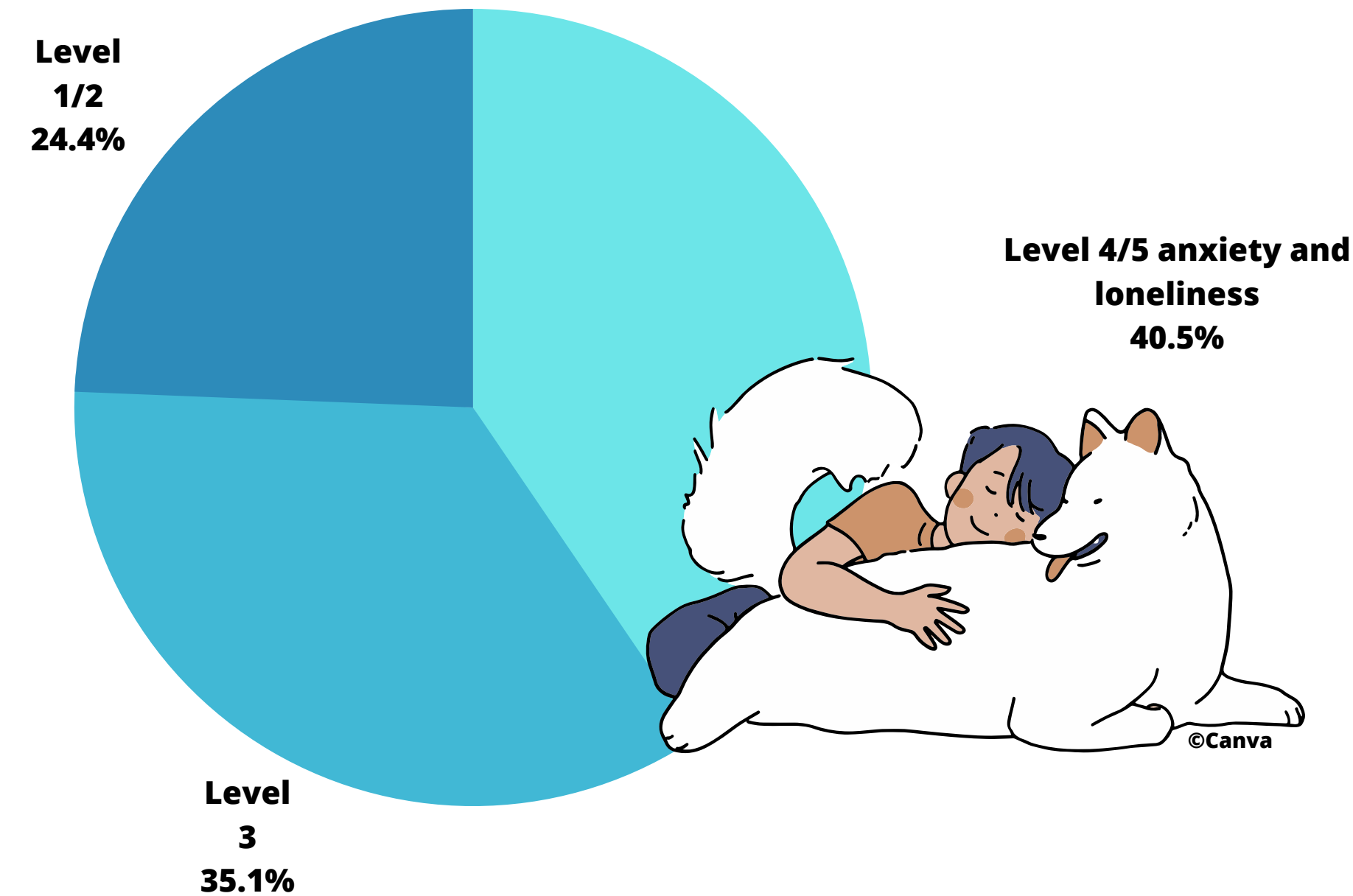
Levels of anxiety and loneliness



Using the Likert scale (level 1-5), a total of 57.9% of the respondents felt considerable levels of anxiety, depression and loneliness during the pandemic period

Furthermore, **284 (69.78%)** people felt significant positive changes to their emotional state due to the pet. Additionally, there's a significant correlation ($p < 0.002$) between the levels of anxiety and loneliness and the increment in emotional state due to their pets. Out of all **143** individuals that felt levels 4/5 of anxiety and loneliness, **115 (80.42%)** of them felt positive changes to their emotional state. Of those 115 people that had levels 4/5 of anxiety and loneliness, 4 (2.67%) acquired pets due to anxiety and depression; 1 (0.67%) because their past animal deceased; 2 (1.33%) had too much free time; 1 (0.67%) was a gift; 46 (30.67%) adopted because of their love for animals; 2 (1.33%) were rescues and the other 2 (1.33%) were due to loneliness, giving a total of 58 people (38.67%). **The remaining 92 people (61.33%) didn't acquire pets.**

IMPROVEMENT OF EMOTIONAL STATE



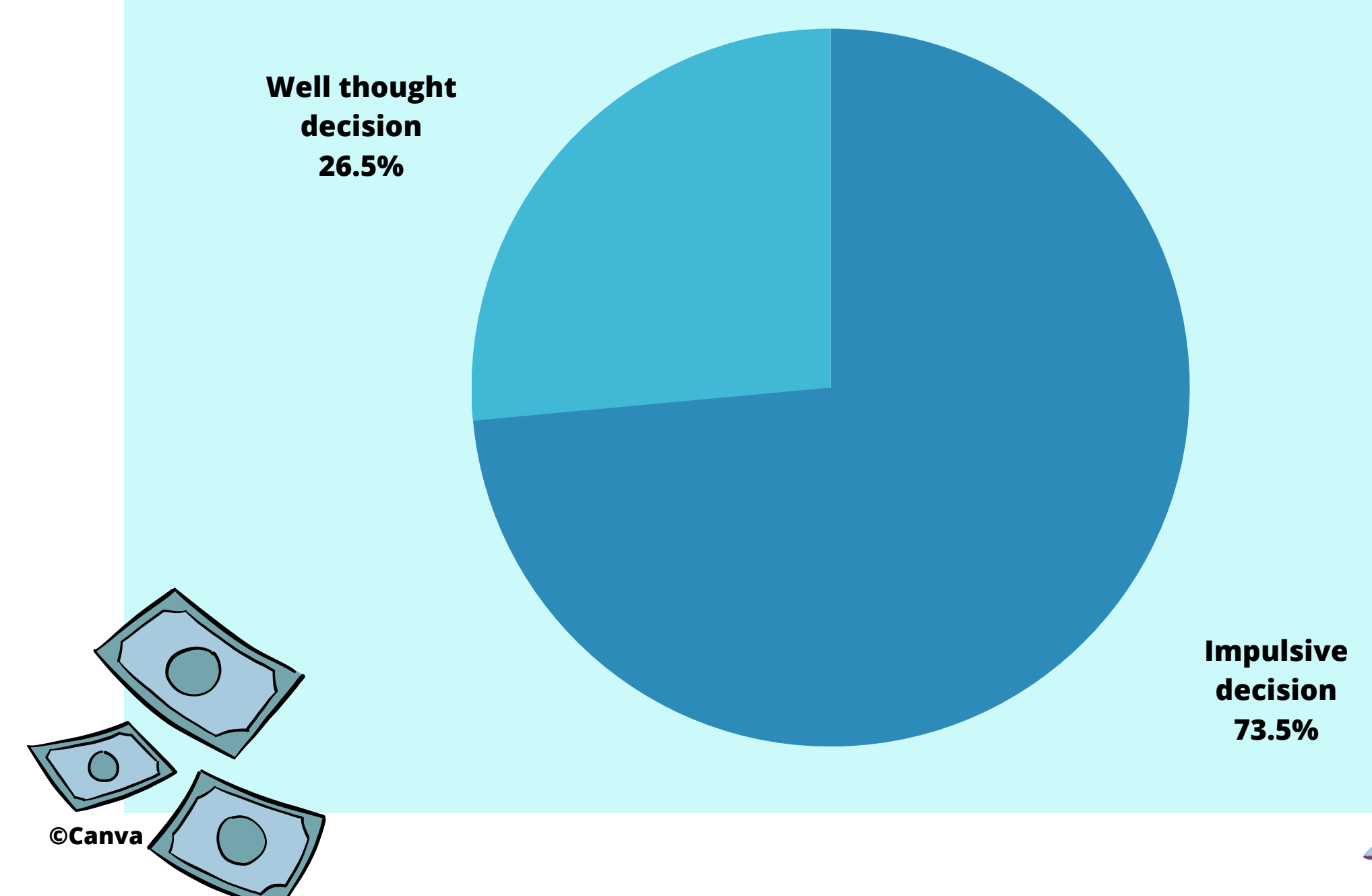
When asked if the respondents felt that during the pandemic period their bond with the pet was strengthened, **240 (58.96%)** of them replied with the levels 4 and 5, which means that more than half of the studied population felt that the relationship with their pet effectively improved due to the pandemic period.

Relatively to the people who thought about giving away their pet, only **4 (0.98%)** of the total respondents revealed having pondered this decision, all of which **only one had economic difficulties**. The reasonings behind it were: illness - 50%; too much work - 25% and, the remaining 25%, did not reveal the reason.

Those who carried out the action of giving away the animal - **5 (1.22%)** - had not pondered of doing it before. It is important to clarify that out of all 5, none of them presented economic difficulties.

Regarding the correlation between the economic difficulties in maintaining the animals and if the acquisition of the animal was an impulsive decision or not, the result shown is significant ($p < 0.002$). Of the **34 people** who experienced economic difficulties, **25 of them (73.52%) felt that acquiring the animal was an impulsive decision**.

Acquisition of pets related to economic difficulties



CONCLUSION

This study reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic had a role in the influence on the acquisition of a pet.

Regarding the abandonment rate, lower than expected, which reveals positive results and that despite the economic difficulties, the tutors didn't neglect their pets needs.

The tendency of animal acquisition during the COVID-19 pandemic increased, which alleviated the feelings of loneliness and boredom due to the addition of a pet.

Yes, COVID-19 has influenced the adoption of animals.