Animal Companionship and Ethnic Diversity

To find out why some people from certain ethnic background do not prefer companion animals whereas others do. We developed a short survey to find some reasons behind these differences.

Tag Words: Animal; Interaction; Companionship; Ethnicity; Human-Animal Bond;

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Summary

The study of human-animal interactions and relationships is an extremely interesting topic. For a long time these relationships have been greatly prized among people such that they have accepted the animals as a part of their lives. In the United States, certain groups of people have accepted them as a family members and, as such, they play an important role in their daily routine (Holley, Lynn C.; Risley-Curtiss, Christina; Wolf, Shepard). These pets offer them unconditional love, support when they are alone, personal safety and security, and a way to fight certain medical conditions such as depression (Alan M. Beck' and N. Marshall Meyers). People with varied ethnic backgrounds, such as Indians, African Americans, Hispanics, and those of Spanish origin, have different relationships with companion animals (Holley, Lynn C.; Risley-Curtiss, Christina; Wolf, Shepard). It is very interesting to study these differences in relationships. In order to find these differences, we have developed a short survey that will help us identify why certain groups prefer to keep companion animals whereas others choose against it. In addition to this, we will be able to differentiate those who keep pets in accordance to their likes and dislikes.
The Issue: Ethnicity and Pet Ownership

People from certain ethnicity are less likely to keep companion animals. Our idea for considering the relationship between human-animal companionship was adapted from the paper “Animal – Human Bond and Ethnic Diversity”. The paper describes the various relationships with companion animals that are responsible for enhancing health effects on humans and, as a result, have enhanced their quality of life. Most of the people mentioned in the paper consider their pets as a part of their family. They take similar care of their pets as they do their loved ones and sometimes even more (Holley, Lynn C.; Risley-Curtiss, Christina; Wolf, Shepard). Research also shows that there is a complication in the relationship with respect to ethnicity. However, these relationships are still unknown; according to the paper, factors such as different cultural and ethnic backgrounds make it even more complicated because each and every one has a different outlook on life and how they want it to be (Sue-Ellen Brown). They have their own likes and dislikes and it is possible that such likes may vary from family to family. It is a highly volatile comparison with respect to ethnic backgrounds because a person’s outlook towards pets varies in accordance to where they were born and under what conditions they were raised (Sue-Ellen Brown). There have been minimal interventions in the exploration of relationships with companion animals in regards to ethnic diversity. The paper also offers different comparisons of pets as well the frequency with which they are considered pets. For example, more cats and dogs have homes with people than do snakes, horses, and other animals (Holley, Lynn C.; Risley-Curtiss, Christina; Wolf, Shepard).

The main idea for doing this research is too clarify these relationships between humans and animals. Our main goal is to understand and elucidate the different aspects of human behavior with respect to their different ethnic backgrounds. Our study will showcase why people fear companion animals: is it due to a choice they have undertaken or a phobia they have developed? We will be conducting surveys that will include people from a limited number of ethnic backgrounds. Questions from the surveys are on the next page.

The Service Plan: Survey

Animal – Human companionship survey

1) Male or Female
2) Age ( 1 – 25 ) (26 – 50) ( 51 – 75 ) ( 76 – 100 + )
3) Education – High School/ Bachelor/ Masters/ Doctorates
4) Ethnicity –
5) Religion –
6) Are you Vegan/ Vegetarian / Non – Vegetarian
7) Animals you preferred to have as a companion:
   - Dog
   - Cat
   - Bird
   - Rabbit
   - Fish
   - Horse
Survey results

We have decided to survey people from eastern countries in order to discover what some of the reasons are that make people less likely to have pets. Our goal is to improve the animal-human relationship so that people can take advantage of the benefits that may potentially be reaped from having a companion animal. We did this survey on people from varied ethnic backgrounds. Most surveys were done on people of Indian decent, those of the Islamic faith, as well as Whites. From our survey we found that those of Indian decent were less likely to have dogs because they are scared of them. Survey results showed us that Indians are scared of dogs because, in India, there are lots of street dogs that bark at people and sometimes even bite them. These street dogs are not vaccinated, so if they bite someone, then he or she will be at a high risk of contracting a disease, such as rabies, from the wild dog. Survey results showed that Indians rarely have cats as pets because there are lots of superstitions about black cats. For example, if a black cat crosses your path, then any work you engage in will be ruined. In India, it is not auspicious to keep black cats.

The survey of Muslim people showed that they are less likely to have dogs as pets because the hygienic mannerisms of dogs make them animals of impurity when held to the Islamic standards of cleanliness. Some Muslims were unaware of this and, as a result, claimed they were just following the example of their parents in the general abstinence from keeping dogs as house pets. However, many Muslim respondents were not aware that it is a dog’s the lack of good hygienic character—when juxtaposed to a cat’s for instance—which embodies the main reason behind Islam’s general dislike towards keeping dogs as indoor, house pets. Muslims, because they believe in the full authenticity of the Qur’an and Prophetic Tradition, believe that they should follow the Quran and the example of the Prophet even if they personally do not entirely understand the wisdom behind its commands. As such, some may abstain from keeping.
dogs as indoor pets but may not have endeavored to look for the proper Islamic explanation as to why the prohibition is as it is.

Besides religious belief, there are other forces which shape our behaviors and the way we act, such as culture and ethnicity. Children learn from their parents, especially their mothers. There is a great chance that if a mother does not want to have pets, the child also refuses to keep a pet at home. However, that does not mean they do not like animals (Dr. Ayoub M. banderker).

The survey conducted on Whites showed that they are more likely to have companion animals. People from the United States treat their companion animals as a part of their family. They are more likely to have both cats and dogs as pets.

This survey showed that Indians and Muslims are more likely to keep other companion animals, for example, rabbits, birds, fish, and other small animals. There are many Muslims who keep parrots, rabbits, birds, cats, and the like. However, based on the data, there are fewer people in Eastern countries who have pets when compared to Western countries. One important reason is that people in Eastern countries tend to have more communication with each other, so they are usually not lonely. In Western countries, however, people have fewer connections with one another, and that may be the major reason why more people in the West have companion animals than the East. Educating people about companion animals and the advantages to having them around can improve the human-animal relationship. Companion animals provide personal security. One would not feel lonely with a pet. Companion animals can reduce health problems like depression, obesity, blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and loneliness. Lastly, pets increase one’s sense of security, levels of socialization, responsibility, as well as their level of outdoor activities, and general engagement in exercise (Alan M. Beck’ and N. Marshall Meyers).

References:

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2) Ethnic Variations in Pet Attachment among Students at an American School of Veterinary medicine by Sue-Ellen Brown
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3) Health enhancement and Companion animal ownership by Alan M. Beck' and N. Marshall Meyers

4) Islam abuse and welfare in islam by Dr. Ayoub M. banderker(BVMCh)
   <www.islamicconcern.com/dogs.asp>

Editorials

To: North jersey newspaper. It is a Local community newspaper.
Animal Companionship and Ethnicity

Human relationship with companion animal is very common in United States. Mostly People in USA love companion animals and want to have one. In unites states, dogs, cats or both are found in at least one third of the households. Literature studies showed that affection towards companion animal enrich the quality of life. Companion animal provide them personal safety and unconditional love. Companion animals are in USA to help people with disabilities. Research showed the bond between human and animal is very strong, but people from different ethnic backgrounds and religion have different point of view about companion animals. People from certain ethnic background are scared of animals and don’t like to have companion animals. 

Examined that companion animal ownership among U.S adults ages of 21 to 64 and research suggested that white people are more likely than people of colored to have companion animal. Research interviewed non-latina/latinos, African American, Asian and others between the age group of 12 to 17. Researchers found out that white people are more like to have companion animal in their homes followed by latino/latina and Asian. African Americans were least likely to have companion animals. Research suggests that how attachment to pets varies from culture to culture. Need to find out if people from various ethnic backgrounds perceive any benefits from companion animals. Educational programs that talk about animal companionship and its benefits. Explain people how Companion animals can improve the quality of human life.

By Ankita Sejra

Reference:

To: Send to India West Newspaper – editor@indiawest.com (Editor – Bina Murarka)

INDIA WEST Newspaper is the most honored weekly Indian newspaper in North America. It was founded in 1975. Their Headquarter is in California.

Animal-Human relationship with dissimilar Ethnicities

According to many studies it has been proven that there is a positive enhancement of life by having companion animals. This fact does not hold true in many different ethnic backgrounds where having companion animals is taken as a sin or rather a burden to have. For this fact the parents build up a fear in their children so their interest for the pets is decreased and eventually stay away from pet animals. There are fitness enhancing effects on people by having pets around them and also it improves their quality of life. Having pet animals increases the owner’s exercise regime making them healthier by reducing obesity and other health related problems. For many elderly people having companion animals reduces depression and also increases their sense of security. After performing my own survey the results were that different ethnic background students had difference opinion on companion animals. Also, about 70% of people from Asian background; especially Indians had many reasons of not having a companion animal. These Diaspora of pet animals with people of different ethnic background is still worth to investigate.

By: Rishabh Shah

To: advertising@littleindia.com, editor@littleindia.com

-Little India is the largest circulated Indian publication in the United States, as well as the largest circulated overseas Indian publication in the world.
Animal-Human bond with different Ethnicities

Companion animals are a great way of reducing depression for many elderly people. Many people from different ethnicities like Asians, Hispanic and Muslims have fear to many pet animals. This could be partly due to the culture or religion where it would be a sin to have a pet animal in the households. Many children fear pet animals because their parents have not introduced them to these friendly animals. According to many studies, having companion animals keeps their owner healthy and busy. There are health enhancing effects on people by having pets around them, also it enriches their quality of life, and also many said that having pets around them was the reason they got up in the morning. There are many benefits of having companion animals such as problems like depression, obesity; Blood pressure, Cholesterol levels, and loneliness are reduced. It also increases the sense of security, socialization, responsibility, outdoor activities, and exercise of the owners.

By: Hita Bavishi

To: Woodbridge Sentinel Newspaper

Americans spend around $35 billion for their pet in year 2005, and pet industry is a major element in the U.S. economy. Based on a report, the amount of money the American spend will increase to $43 billion by 2011 with an average annual growth rate of 3.4%. In the year 2005, around $14.7 billion was spent on pet food. Every year, there are more people who investigate their money on pet industry, which made a pet industry a highly competitive environment. In the U.S.A, it is very easy to find pet shops. In recent years, there are many websites, which sell animal products, and there are million people who purchase pet products from online websites. Human beings like to share their emotions with other humans or other species, and that is because human like social life. Most families in the United States have at least one pet, and the pet becomes a member of the family. However, that is not the case for all societies and all cultures. You don’t find such animal/human relationship among all societies and ethnicities.

Some religions prohibit its followers from keeping pets at home. Muslim people, for example are not able to keep dogs in their house because the religion dictates that they must rinse their hands many times even if they simply touched them. I surveyed many Muslim people to find more information about animal/human relationship in Muslim communities. Based on the survey, religious restriction is one of the reasons for Muslims to have a less relationship with animals. The other reason is that they learned those beliefs from their families.

There are other factors, which influence animal/human relationship. Every year in China, many dogs are being exploited for their meat and fur. China has a very restricted law about animals. China has recently allowed the keeping of pets; however, it is very hard and complicated to register the owned pet. In some cities, pets are not allowed in public places, such as park. All of these restrictions cause many people to prefer not keep animals at home.

There are many factors, which influence human/animal relationship. In the United States, there are a lot of people who own a companion animal. That is not the case in all cultures and societies. In some countries, there are restricted laws about owning animals for many reasons.

By: Samira Behrooz

References: