

Personality Features of Pet Owners

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Introduction: The diversity of domestic animals which kept by humans can be explained by the realization of a certain need that pets carry out. This raises the question of the complementarity between the owner's personality and the characteristics of the pets.

Purpose: To investigate the personality features of the owners of dogs and cats, depending on their gender.

Methodology: The study was attended by 68 people. 40 persons (20 men, 20 women) aged 25–46 are the owners of dogs; 28 persons (14 men, 14 women) are the owners of cats. 25% of women and 20% of men live in rural areas, 75% of women and 80% of men are residents of the city. Among the dog owners, 14 women (70%) and 16 men (80%) have higher education, 6 women (30%) and 4 men (20%) have secondary education. Among the owners of cats, 21 persons have higher education (9 women, 12 men), secondary education – 7 persons (3 men, 4 women). The owners of dogs are for the first time 4 women (20%) and 4 men (20%); 16 women (80%) and 16 men (80%) have been owners of dogs before and have some experience in communicating with animals. For the first time, cats have 6 men and 4 women; others had previous animal retention experience.

We used the following research tools: the author's Questionnaire; MMPI; Questionnaire of masculinity-femininity (S. Bem); Scale of social support (D. Zimet); Scale of emotional response (A. Magrobyan, N. Epstein).

Results: Testing using the Questionnaire of masculinity-femininity allowed the following results: 19 women (95%) and 18 men (90%) showed an IS index of ± 1 , which indicates almost absolute androgyny of all surveyed dog owners. Among the owners of the cats, the results were distributed differently: 6 women (43%) and 10 men (71%) were found to have androgyny. The high level of femininity in women holding cats can be compared with the physiological characteristics of the pets themselves. We can assume that people feel intuitively what the quality of animal will be close to them, and make a choice according to their preferences.

Using MMPI we made an unexpected conclusion: a significant excess of the "impulsiveness" scale was found in 86% of men and 71% of women who are cats owners. Also, the overwhelming number of respondents among dog owners (95% women and 85% men), as well as 100% women 86% of men who are cats owners, showed an excess of indicators on a scale of optimism. We came to the conclusion that the pattern is probably related to the actual social situation in Ukraine. We can assume that, regardless of the pet, people are saturated with stressful events, the monotony of everyday life, and therefore they seek for change. The significant increase in femininity scores we also explain as a response to today's events. Excess was found in 90% of women – owners of dogs, 86% of women – owners of cats, and 50% of men – owners of cats and dogs. Such high rates for women are likely to indicate the acquisition of masculine traits, responsibility and discretion in actions and decision-making. Based on the results of the survey on the Scale of social support, one can see that the indicator of social support in the form of a family is: for owners of dogs – 85% (women) and 95% (men), average – 90%; for owners of cats – 86% (women) and 93% (men), average – 89%. Such data indicate that in both groups the most significant social support is expected from the immediate environment. Accordingly, they more influence the formation of behavior and satisfaction with social support. In general, social support has proven to be significant for most of the subjects. Respondents mostly rely on their surroundings, count on support and understanding by the most significant figures in their lives, most satisfied with the state of affairs with the immediate surroundings.

According to the Scale of emotional response, high rates of empathy in women were obtained regardless of the animals they hold (80% of the owners of the dogs and 86% of the owners of the cats). It is known that the ability to emotional responses is in the turn correlation with aggressiveness and predisposition to violence; in high correlation with complacency, willingness to forgive others. The average rate of empathy for men was within the normal range. Interestingly, none of the respondents showed low or very low levels of empathy among pet owners. We explain this data by the fact that keeping and communicating with pets can't leave anyone indifferent.

Practical value: Based on the results of the study, we formulated recommendations for choosing a pet.

Conclusion. The vast majority of analyzed dog owners (95% of the total) are androgens. Women who hold pets are generally more empathic than men who hold pets.

Keywords: individual differences, personality traits, psychometric test.