



Information for Dog Trainers

Dogs of Edinburgh

The Human-Dog Bond, Dog Training, Personality and Emotional Intelligence.

A project by Linnea Lyckberg*, supervised by Prof Elizabeth Austin*, Dr Alexander Weiss*, Dr Susan Jarvis**, and Dr Therese Rehn***.

*Psychology Department, The University of Edinburgh

**Scotland's Rural College

***Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

dogsofedinburgh.com

Aims of the Project

The project is firstly intended to examine what variables are associated with *mutual attachment between the dog and the owner*, such as demographics, dog characteristics, personality and interactions.

Secondly, we are looking at *dog owners', dog professionals' and a control group's emotional dispositions* and how they are influenced by the aforementioned variables, experience and interaction with dogs and dog training.

Benefits

There are numerous documented positive effects of participating in dog training classes, such as improved manners and obedience of dogs, leading to increased enjoyment for the dog owners and less risk or inconvenience for the public. Dog training classes also encourage informed and responsible dog ownership which leads to improved care for and well fare of dogs.

Based on previous research we have hypothesise that the following effects may occur as a result of dog training:

1. **Increased frequency of positive interactions** between the dog and owner will help promote dog welfare as well as a mutual bond.
2. **Increased mutual relationship satisfaction.** A positive relationship is necessary for the mental and physical health benefits from human-dog interactions to take place. Secure attachment of the dog to the owner will help the dog to *cope better with stress* and new situations. Increased owner relationship satisfaction decreases the chance of the dog being *relinquished to an animal shelter*.
3. **Improved emotional dispositions of the dog owner.** Activities with dogs may help the owners improve their emotional dispositions which

are associated with positive social relationships between humans, and *increased owner wellbeing*. It may also increase the likelihood of the owner acting in a supportive way to the dog, *decreasing stress and improving welfare*.

If there is an increase in emotion dispositions after participating in dog training, *interacting with dogs can teach us to better understand other humans as well, which provides evidence for some very interesting generalisation across species*.

If these developments can take place, under what circumstances do they happen? In what type of owners and dogs does this change occur more frequently? What influence do factors such as personality, demographics, dog characteristics, and how often the owners play, pet, groom and walk their dog have on the effects?

Depending on the results we may be able to create a Personality Match-Making Model for breeders and shelters, as well as providing scientific evidence to support recommendations for certain dog-owner interactions and activities (such as dog training classes) to help develop owner emotional dispositions and relationship with their dog.

Participants and Recruitment

We would like to invite dog owners to complete a survey before and after participating in dog training in order to examine the possible effect of dog training on human-dog interactions and relationship, as well as the emotional disposition of the owner.

If you would be interested in voluntarily participating in this international scientific study on the human-dog bond, the first step (1) would be to fill in the online survey for dog trainers, as well as (2) inviting i) clients who are on a waiting list and will not begin training within the next 8 weeks, or ii) clients who are about to start training, to complete the online survey for dog owners.

(1) Link for survey for dog trainers

https://edinburghppls.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_7ND5qDcunLL4rXv

(2) Link for survey for dog owners

https://edinburghppls.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aWBAkExzal0UtCZ

Please feel welcome to contact the authors of the study at the contact details provided at the end of this document for any additional questions.



Information for Participants

The Human-Dog Bond and Individual Differences

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the human-dog bond, conducted by Linnea Lyckberg, supervised by Professor Elizabeth Austin and Dr Alexander Weiss at the University of Edinburgh, Dr Susan Jarvis at the SRUC, and Dr Therese Rehn at SLU. The study has been approved by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh.

In this study, you will fill in a questionnaire about your and your dog's characteristics, personality, interactions, and your emotional dispositions. The survey is expected to take roughly 45 minutes to complete. **Two months after completion of the survey you will receive an email with a link to a second survey.** It is important for the study that you fill in both surveys.

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/destroyed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you. You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered, unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome.

There are no known risks for you in this study.

All your personal details will only be used to pair the first survey with the second one. All details will be securely stored and only accessible to the researcher. All results will be anonymous and no identifying information will be published.

For any more information or to be updated on the final results of the study, please contact:

Linnea Lyckberg l.lyckberg@gmail.com
Prof Elizabeth Austin Elizabeth.Austin@ed.ac.uk

School of Psychology, Philosophy and Language Sciences
7 George Square
Edinburgh
EH8 9JZ