

II Scientific Analysis of the Bond between people and pets: summary of results



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Part 1: What is society's attitude towards pets?

Is Spain a pet-loving country?

Do we like having pets?

Key data:

- 43% of Spaniards live with a pet.
- Half the population (50%) say they would like to have a pet or continue to have one at home.
- When asked "Do you like pets?":
 - 76% of Spaniards say yes.
 - Around 16% of Spaniards say no.
 - Around 8% have no particular opinion.
- When asked "Does your pet make you happy or would it if you had one?":
 - 74% of Spaniards say yes.
 - Around 17% of Spaniards say no.
 - Around 9% have no particular opinion.

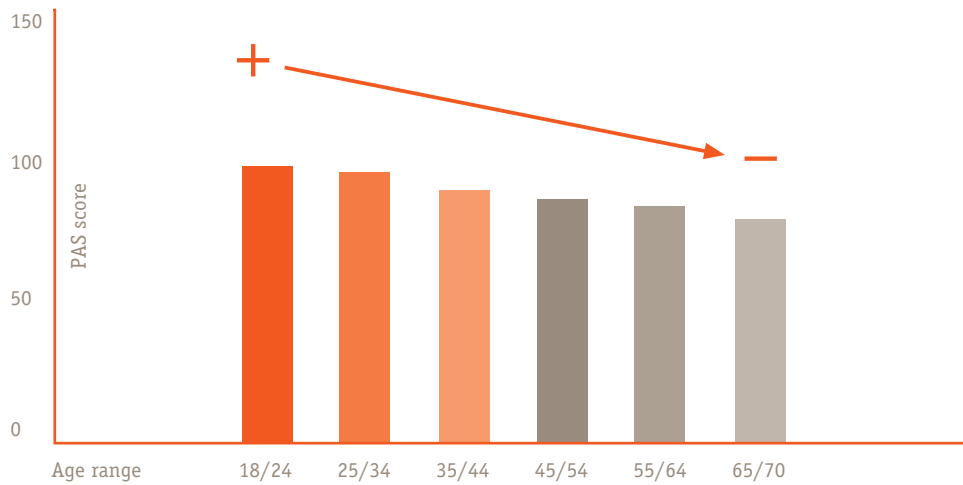
Conclusions

- The results of our research suggest that Spain has a very positive attitude to pets.
- Some of the population don't have a pet but may have one in future.

Do Spaniards increasingly love their pets?

Key data:

- The affinity that Spaniards have for their pets decreases with age.



* PAS (Pet Attitude Scale).

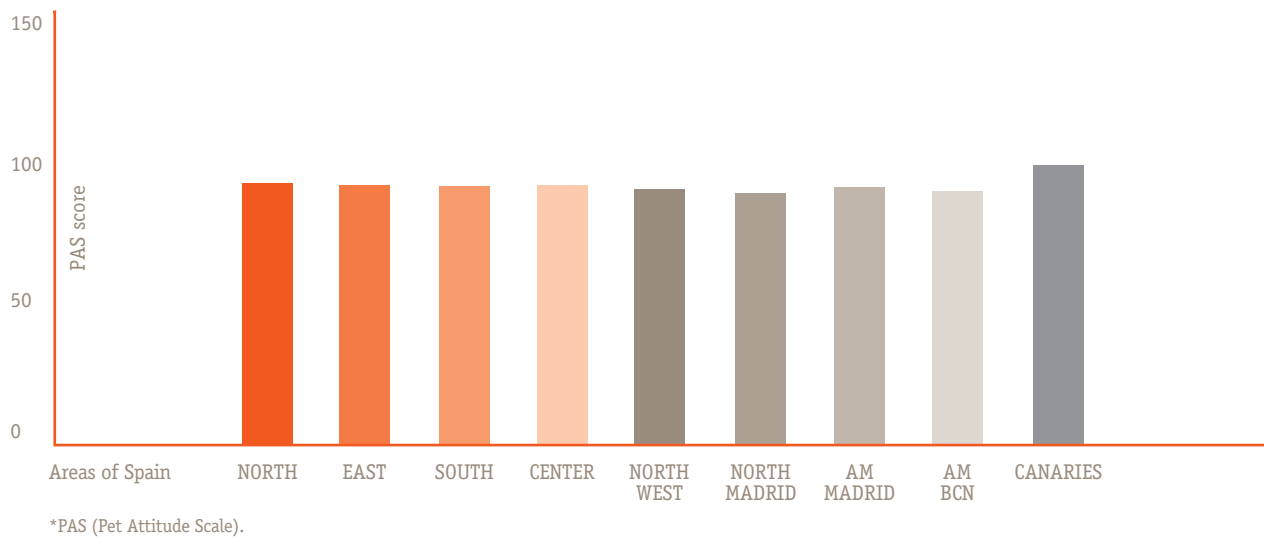
Conclusions

- Our interpretation of the results (though not necessarily the only one) is that new generations have a more positive attitude towards animals than their parents and grandparents.
- This result highlights the benefits of educating children about coexisting with pets.

Are there differences between Spaniards in their affinity for pets?

Key data:

- There are no significant differences between the autonomous regions, except in the Canary Islands.
- Canarians achieve a slightly higher score than the rest of the Spanish population.



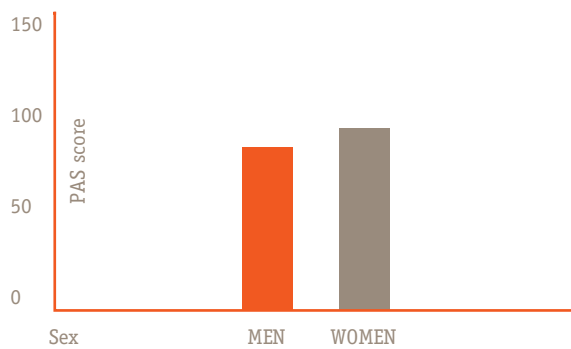
Conclusions

- Affinity for pets is similar among the various autonomous regions.

Are there differences between men and women in their affinity for pets?

Key data:

- Women score a little higher than men in their affinity for pets.



*PAS (Pet Attitude Scale).

Conclusions

- Spanish women have a slightly more positive attitude towards animals than men.
- In educational terms, this is interesting because previous studies suggest that, in Western countries, the opinion of women is more influential than that of men as regards children's attitudes towards pets.

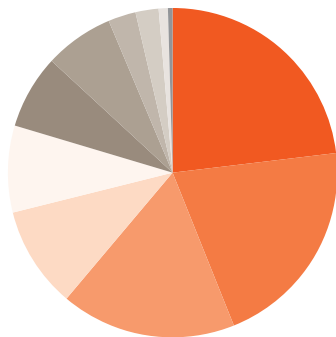
What are the main reasons why Spaniards don't have pets?

The following data corresponds to the proportion of the population who have never had a dog or cat.

Key data:

- 16% of people state that "They don't like pets".

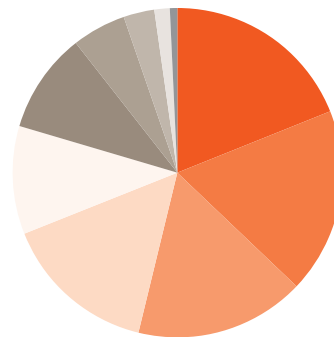
Reasons for not having a dog:



Total=238

- 21.42% Lack of space
- 19.32% Lack of time
- 15.96% Not in the home (smell and dirt)
- 9.24% I don't like animals
- 7.9% Because of the responsibility involved
- 6.72% Others
- 6.3% Allergies
- 2.52% Suffering
- 2.52% Illnesses
- 2.52% Fear
- 2.1% They don't let me at home
- 2.1% We have children
- 0.84% Financial reasons
- 0.42% Legal restrictions

Reasons for not having a cat:



Total=160

- 15.6% Lack of space
- 15% Lack of time
- 13.75% Not in the home (smell and dirt)
- 12.5% I don't like animals
- 12.5% Allergies
- 8.75% Because of the responsibility
- 8.12% Others
- 4.37% Fear
- 2.5% Illnesses
- 2.5% Suffering
- 2.5% They don't let me at home
- 1.25% Children at home
- 0.6% Financial reasons

Conclusions

- The main reasons for not having a dog or cat are time and/or space limitations.
- Financial limitations are not an important reason for Spaniards not having a pet.

How important are pets for us?

Key data:

- Most of the respondents (76%) believe that a pet should be treated with the same respect as any other member of the family.
- 70% of respondents say they communicate with their pet and understand it, or would if they had one.
- 62% of respondents say that they talk to their pet or would if they had one.
- 66% of respondents dedicate some of their time every day to playing with their pet or would if they had one.
- 31% of respondents consider their pet to be much more important than any of their friends.

Conclusions

- Pets are considered to be members of the family.
- People like to communicate with their pet and consider them a source of emotional support.

Is it worth caring for a pet?

Key data:

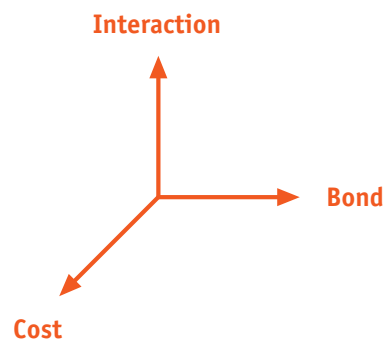
- Un 70% de los encuestados consideran que vale la pena tener una mascota.
- Un 78% de los encuestados está de acuerdo en decir que les gusta mucho ver cómo las mascotas disfrutan de su comida.
- Sólo el 16% de los encuestados considera que tener una mascota es malgastar el dinero.

Conclusions

- Caring for a pet is not complicated.
- Furthermore, for many people caring for their pet is in itself a source of pleasure and well-being. Most people enjoy feeding their pet.

Part 2: How do people relate to their dogs?

- In the first study on the bond we focused on describing what dog owners think and feel. Based on this initial study, we wanted to find out what the overall impact of having a dog has on the family's quality of life and lifestyle.
- In order to achieve this, we worked with a group of over 4000 dog owners.
- It is important to point out that this study was carried out in association with AVEPA, the association of Spanish vets specialised in caring for small animals, and Affinity Petcare.
- In order to study the relationship between people and their dogs, we used the Monash Dog Owner Relationship Scale (MDORS), which allowed us to analyse the 3 fundamental aspects of the relationship between people and their dogs:
 - What activities do they perform?
 - What is their emotional bond?
 - What impact does living with a dog have on a person's quality of life?



Key data:

- We identified 2 different groups of owners based on the characteristics of the bond.
- The first group, which we defined as "emotional", represents 75% of our population. They are characterised by a relationship in which the emotional bond with the dog is very intense. For these people, their dog is a very important source of emotional support, particularly in difficult situations.
- The second group, which we defined as "pragmatic", represents 25% of the rest of the population studied. For them, living with a dog brings benefits, but the emotional dimension is not as intense.
- An interesting aspect is that the assessment of negative factors seems to be a rational and relatively objective process, because it is similar in people with an "emotional" relationship and in those with a "pragmatic" one.

Conclusions

- For the vast majority of dog owners, their dog is a very important source of emotional support, particularly in difficult situations.
- If the benefits of the relationship exist, the negative factors are unimportant.

What do children think?

- Last year we gathered data from a group of 8 to 10-year-old children using a closed questionnaire.
- This year, we wanted to survey the opinions and feelings of children, allowing them to answer freely.
- The study is based on a structured analysis of the children's statements.

Key data:

- We can establish a ranking of the most frequently uttered words:
 1. caring
 2. playing
 3. feeding
 4. loving
 5. company
 6. friendship
- The most significant aspects of the relationship that children build with pets:
 - Activity companion (60%).
 - Emotional support (46%).
 - Caring or taking responsibility (32%). In this section, girls demonstrate a greater sense of responsibility in caring for pets than boys.
- Attributes that children spontaneously give to pets:
 - Personality traits (26%).
 - Happy, friendly, loving, etc.
 - Expression of emotions (10%).
 - Sadness, happiness, anger, etc.
- Positive physical characteristics (28%).
 - Soft, warm, etc.

Conclusions

- Children spontaneously give the following attributes to animals: emotional support, companion in play and activities, and a living being that needs care.

Overall conclusion of the analysis

- Most people like pets. That is what the survey of the general population says and it confirms the analysis of the bond felt by people who already live with a dog.
- The majority of children have an affinity for animals. This result is consistent with the hypothesis that curiosity and affinity for nature and living beings is a universal human trait.

Data sources

Data based on the research conducted in 2013–2014 using the Pet Attitude Scale (PAS) and Monash Dog Owner Relationship Scale (MDORS).

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