Validating the Kubinyi et al. Personality Scale in Shelter Dogs

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Introduction

In recent years, psychology researchers have attempted to relate the presence and personality of dogs to human psychology and well-being. Bao (2016) showed that dog owners scored higher on overall positivity and happiness than non-dog owners. If ownership of a dog can lead to higher happiness levels, then research on animal shelter adoptions might help to identify relationships between adopters and the dogs that contribute to this happiness. Willen et. al (2014) concluded that petting dogs for longer periods of time reduced cortisol and stress behavior in shelter dogs. They also showed that a lack of interaction with friendly caretakers could lead to behavior that may threaten the chance of the dogs’ adoption. Behavior shown by shelter dogs and their perceived personality directly impacts their chance of adoption, and dog personality has been successfully measured by dog owners according to the Kubinyi personality scale (Kubinyi, 2009). If accurate in shelter dogs, the scale can be reliably used as a crucial information source for potential adopters.

Objective

The aim of this study was to validate the Kubinyi scale that measures dog personalities (Kubinyi et al. 2009) with resident shelter dogs

Methods

Dogs were assessed according to the Kubinyi scale which consists of 16 items that correlate to personality traits. The researcher determined which traits the dogs possessed by assigning the following ratings for statements paired with the 16 traits: 0 – I do not agree, 1- I partially agree, 2- I agree. One hundred dogs were assessed at ten different animal shelters in Rhode Island. An additional researcher validated ratings by observing the same dogs at a separate time.

Results / Conclusion

Publication of the results of the study are pending.