Comparing the Personality Traits of Dog Owners and Parents

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The purpose of this study is to identify a statistical relationship between owning a dog and the Big Five Personality Facets. Many prospective parents have decided to practice with a dog before having a child because it's believed to prepare you. Some people believe owning a dog will make you a better parent. To investigate this belief I constructed a five minute survey that included the IPIP Big Five Personality test and categorizing questions of my own creation, the major two being “do you own a dog?” and “are you a parent?” My goal being to get as many survey responses as possible I created a website to house my survey and promoted the page through email, social media, local organizations and a variety blogs I contacted based on their follower demographic. I succeeded in collecting 4000 individual surveys on an international scale, and proceeded to analyze the data using the Chi-square test for dependence, the T-test for difference in the mean and Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient. I found that conscientiousness is dependent on dog ownership with a 0.1% significance level and there is a positive change in the mean conscientiousness score between non-dog owners and dog owners with a 0% significance level. These values are both impressive showing a definite relationship between the two groups. According to recent studies the trait of conscientiousness in parents correlates to children having fewer externalizing behaviors, this is one example as to how this found relationship could potentially point to dog ownership creating better parents. The next step will be to conduct a longitudinal study to determine if the association with dogs raises conscientiousness, or if conscientious people are more likely to get dogs. It’s unclear right now which way the dependency leans.

Awards Won: