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Breed preference behaviours and prevailing bad habits in pet dogs (*Canis familiaris*) of western coastal city of India

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Abstract
The dog has been a very good companion of human being since domestication. Dogs like to be a part of the pack and choose human being as their leader. Dog keeping now considered as status symbol in society and well associated with socioeconomic status of owners. Study of dog behavior helps in achieving desired behavior like obedience & toilet manners. It also helps to control bad habits in dogs. Separation anxiety controlled by positive behaviour towards the pets and exercise. Two hundred owners rearing dogs were randomly selected from Surat city of South Gujarat during year 2018. Data were collected from owners emphasizing dog-owners relationship through personal interview with the help of structured questionnaire and visit of house hold. Behaviors were studied along with bad habits. The collected data were analyzed for frequency & chi-square test (X^2). Most preferred breed was moderate size Labrador followed by German Shepherd in study area. Dogs were generally very docile and mixing type (70.0%). Most of the owners (62.00%) were unable to control dog while exposure to strangers. Reactions to loud noise include excessive barking, in dogs as reported by 42.50 percent owners. Majority (38.00%) of owners observed less walking in dogs. Majority of the owners observed game playing in their dogs, moreover, this behaviour varied significantly among the owners. Majority (88.50%) of owners reported proper care of puppy by bitch and rest of respondents observed no dam-puppy interaction. Dam-puppy interaction varied significantly among the owners. Majority of owners showed undesirable behavior similarly most of the respondents used anti-barking collars in pets although mainstream owners adopted the use of puppy training pads related to toilet manner. Only 14.0% of owners faced complain against dog barking by their neighbor. There is a need to improve awareness and information to dog owners towards scientific rearing.

Keywords: Prevailing bad habits, pet dogs, *Canis familiaris*

Introduction
Dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) was first domestic species, which has been selectively bred to achieve desirable behaviour, sensory capability and physical attributes (Perri and Angela, 2016) [2]. The dog has been a very good chum and close companion of human being since domestication used for hunting food animals and also guarding his belonging especially the livestock (Shibu and George, 2012) [3]. Long association of human beings with dogs is well known since domestication has led to uniquely attuned to human behaviour. Dogs like to be a part of the pack and choose human being as their leader in other words they will be fearful in absence of human being. Its influence on human society, given them additional name like 'man's best friend' or 'furry companion' or 'fine feathered friend' (Wood *et al.*, 2007) [13]. Dog keeping now considered as status symbol in society and well associated with socioeconomic status of owners (Swaimul *et al.*, 2009) [7]. Understanding dog behavior and how dogs think will give us a major advantage in both training and achieving desired behavior like obedience & toilet manners. It also help to control bad habits in dogs like begging, leash pulling, chewing, hyper-salivation, nipping, jumping up etc. by distracting and redirecting. Separation anxiety is the common problems associated with dogs controlled by positive behaviour towards the pets just before separation and using optimum exercise protocol.

Materials and Methods
A total of 200 dog owners were randomly selected from two zones of Surat city of South Gujarat during year 2018. Data were collected from owners emphasizing dog-owners relationship through personal interview with the help of structured questionnaire & visit of house hold. Behaviors such as temperament, reaction to the loud noise, attitude, excessive

barking, walking, game playing, care giving and house breaking behaviours were studied along with bad habits like anxiety, distress, aggression, destructive stance etc. The collected data were subjected to analysis for calculation of frequency & chi-square test (X^2) using trial version of SPSS software to understand behaviours and its prevalence (Snedecor and Cochran, 1994) [4].

Results and Discussion

Breed preference: Results of the study revealed that most preferred breed was Labrador (22.50%) followed by German Shepherd (15.50%) presented in Fig.1. X^2 value (131.24; P = 0) showed significant difference for breed preference among house hold. Preference for medium size breed was also reported by VijayKumar *et al.* (2004) [10]; Sonawane (2018) [5].

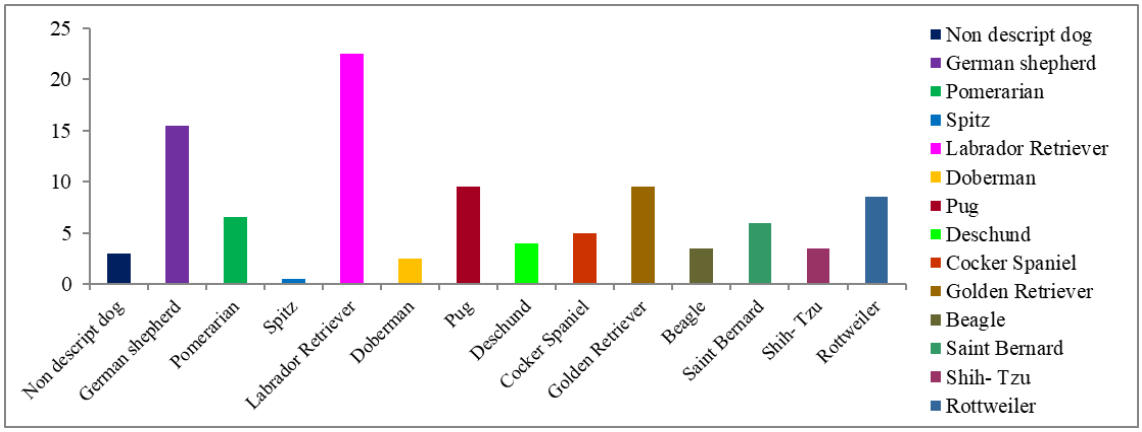

Fig 1: Frequencies of preference for dog breed

Temperament/ behaviour of dog

The data regarding the temperament of dog clearly suggests that nature ranges from very docile and mixing, docile, aggressive to very aggressive in 70.00, 14.50, 8.00 and 7.50% respectively. The chi-square value (X^2 = 218.440) suggests that dogs with very docile and mixing nature were significantly more prevalent in survey area (Table-1.0).

Table 1: Distribution of owners as per the temperament of dog

Dog behaviour	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Very docile and mixing	140	70.00	218.440	0.00	3
2. Docile	29	14.50			
3. Aggressive	16	8.00			
4. Very aggressive	15	7.50			

Behaviour control in dog

Most of the owners (62.00%) were unable to control dog while exposure to strangers although some of the pet owners (38.00%) were able to control behaviour of their dogs (Table no. 2). The chi-square value (X^2 = 11.520) suggests that ability of owners to control belligerent dog behaviour vary significantly in survey area. Controlling a dog while exposure to strangers was also reported as most common problem by Yamada *et al.* (2019) [14]. Dogs showing aggression towards their owner or strangers and separation anxiety did improve with behavioral treatments (Takeuchi *et al.* 2001) [8].

Table 2: Behaviour control in dogs

Ability of owners to control dog while exposure to stranger	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Yes	76	38.00	11.520	0.00	1
2. No	124	62.00			

Reaction to loud noise

Reactions to loud noise of dog include excessive barking/aggressiveness, fearful and other behaviour in 42.50 34.50 and 23.00 percent of owners respectively (Table no. 3). Chi-square value (X^2 = 12.221) showed significant variation with respect to reaction to loud noise in survey area.

Table 3: Distribution of the owners as per the reaction to loud noise in dogs

Reaction to loud noise	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
Fearful	69	34.50	12.221	0.00	2
Excessive barking/aggressiveness	85	42.50			
Other behaviour	46	23.00			

Walking activity in dog

Majority (38.00%) of dog owners observed less walking followed by high and very high walking activity in 33.50 and 28.50 percent of owners respectively (Table no. 4). Chi-square value (X^2 = 2.710) indicated that walking activity did not vary significantly in survey area.

Table 4: Distribution of the owners according to their walking activity in dog

Walking activity in dog	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Less	76	38.00	2.710	0.25	2
2. High	67	33.50			
3. Very high	57	28.50			

Game playing behaviour of dog

Perusal of result revealed that majority (91.50%) of the pets owners reported game playing in their dogs however, only 8.50 per cent of dog owners were not observed the same (Table no. 5). The chi-square value (X^2 = 137.780) suggest that game playing varied significantly.

Table 5: Distribution of the owners as per the "game playing behaviour" of dog

Game playing behaviour	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Yes	183	91.50	137.780	0.00	1
2. No	17	8.50			

Care of puppy by bitch

It is revealed that majority (88.50%) of owners noticed proper care of puppy by their bitch however, only 11.50 per cent of owners observed no dam-puppy interaction (Table no. 6). Maternal care and interaction of dam-puppy vary significantly among the owners in the finding.

Table 6: Distribution of the owners as per the care of puppy by bitch

Proper care to puppy by bitch	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Yes	177	88.50	118.580	0.00	1
2. No	23	11.50			

Undesirable behaviour of dogs

Majority of dog owners perceived undesirable behaviour in their dog (58.00%) however; some of (42.00%) the owners were not observed undesirable behaviour such as anxiety or distress, aggression and destructive behaviour of dogs due to isolation (Table no. 7). The chi-square value (X^2 = 5.120; P=0.01) suggests that bad habits/ undesirable behaviour varied significantly among the dogs of owners. Most of pet dogs (80%) showed undesirable behaviour (Tamimi *et al*., 2013) [9] which is towards higher side from this experiment. Over excitement, jumping and rushing at people and dogs are common problems reported by Koblet *et al* (2003) [1].

Table 7: Distribution of the owners as per the undesirable behaviour of dogs

Undesirable behaviour/ bad habits due to isolation	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Yes	116	58.00	5.120	0.02	1
2. No	84	42.00			

Use of anti-barking collars in pets

Majority (59.00%) of respondents used anti-barking collars in pets although 41.00 per cent dog owners had no idea of device (Table no. 8). The chi-square value (X^2 = 6.480) suggest that use of device among dog owners varied significantly (P=0.01) in the survey area. Anti-barking collar reduces barking incidence also reported by Steiss *et al.* (2007) [6], they also reported that collar significantly did not influence blood cortisol level in dogs.

Table 8: Distribution of the owners according to use of anti-barking collars in pets

Do owners have idea of use of anti- barking collars	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Yes	118	59.00	6.480	0.01	1
2. No	82	41.00			

House breaking in dog

Majority of dog owners (90.00%) adopted the use of puppy training pads related to toilet manner. Adoption of said practice showed full awareness of dog owners in the study areas. However, some of the owners (10.00%) not train their dog with respect to toilet manners (Table no. 9). The chi-square test value (X^2 = 128.0) suggest that house breaking protocol was significantly (p = 0.00) more adopted in the study area.

Table 9: Distribution of the owners according to their house breaking in dog

Do owners have idea of puppy training pads related to toilet manner (House Breaking)	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Yes	180	90.00	128.00	0.00	1
2. No	20	10.00			

Neighbors complain against the dog

Only 14.0% of dogs owners had complain against dog barking (Table no. 10) by their neighbors. The neighbors complaint especially against barking by dog varied significantly (p=0.00) among the owners. Excess barking is common problem in dog is also reported by Wells and Hepper (2000) [12]. Controlling excess barking by taking advice of veterinarian was suggested by Villalobos (2005) [11].

Table 10: Distributions of the owners according to their neighbors complain of dog

Neighbors complain especially against barking by dogs	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square test		Degree of freedom
			Value	P-Value	
1. Yes	28	14.00	103.680	0.00	1
2. No	172	86.00			

Conclusions

Most preferred breed was moderate size Labrador followed by German Shepherd in study area. On the basis of clue of behaviour and prevailing bad habit, owners provided interventions in management practices of their pets with the help of veterinarians to overcome the situations. In general there is a need to improve communication status using aids leaflets, literatures etc. in order to disseminate methodical information to dog owners for scientific rearing.

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