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Animals **2012**, 2(2), 144-159; doi:10.3390/ani2020144**OPEN ACCESS****Article****Why Did You Choose This Pet?: Adopters and Pet Selection Preferences in Five Animal Shelters in the United States****Emily Weiss** ^{1,*}, **Katherine Miller** ², **Heather Mohan-Gibbons** ³ and **Carla Vela** ⁴¹ Shelter Research and Development, Community Outreach, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA®), 424 E. 92nd St., New York, NY 10128, USA² Applied Science and Research, Community Outreach, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA®), 424 E. 92nd St., New York, NY 10128, USA³ Applied Research and Behavior, Community Outreach, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA®), 424 E. 92nd St., New York, NY 10128, USA⁴ Hunter College, City University of New York, 695 Park Ave., New York, NY 10065, USA

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Simple Summary: This study examined reasons why adopters chose their pet in an animal shelter, what behaviors were first exhibited by the pet to the adopter, what information was important during their selection process, and the relative importance of seeing the animals' behavior in various contexts.

Abstract: Responses from an adopter survey (n = 1,491) determined reasons for pet selection, type of information received by the adopter, and the context in which the animal's behavior was observed. Appearance of the animal, social behavior with adopter, and personality were the top reasons for adoption across species and age groups. Most adopters stated that information about the animal from a staff member or volunteer was more important than information on cage cards, and health and behavior information was particularly important. Adopters found greater importance in interacting with the animal rather than viewing it in its kennel. The results of this study can be used by shelters to create better adoption matches, prioritize shelter resources and staff training, and potentially increase adoptions. Additionally, some simple training techniques are suggested to facilitate adopter-friendly behaviors from sheltered dogs and cats.

Keywords: adopter; adoption; dog; cat; animal shelter; appearance; behavior; greeting; interaction; selection

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