

Why Do Even Committed Dog Owners Fail to Comply with Some Responsible Ownership Practices?

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Abstract:

Various dog management behaviors must be performed by owners to promote both the welfare of dogs and community health, safety, and amenity. While most Australian dog owners are compliant with practices known to characterize responsible dog ownership, even responsible owners sometimes fail to act responsibly. In addition, there remains a minority of owners who, for unknown reasons, do not comply with any recommended practices. The aim of this study was to use the results of an online survey comprising 1016 dog owners to investigate relationships between demographic, attitudinal, dog-owner relationship variables, and responsible dog ownership behaviors. These behaviors included confinement, registration, microchipping, desexing, participation in formal obedience training, and regular socialization practices. Compliance was generally high in this self-selected sample, but it was not unanimous, ranging from 98% for confinement of dogs to 64.3% for attendance at obedience classes. A series of sequential logistic regression analyses revealed that management behaviors could be predicted from attitudinal and dog-owner relationship variables independently of demographic information. The influence of normative expectations was a recurrent predictor of owners' compliance with many of the management behaviors. This has important implications. Educational campaigns to promote specific practices amongst otherwise responsible dog owners are most likely to be effective if these specific attitudes are addressed.

Keywords: [ANIMAL MANAGEMENT](#); [ATTITUDES](#); [COMPLIANCE](#); [DOG-OWNER RELATIONSHIP](#); [RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP](#)

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