

Dog-owner relationship appears similar for dogs born in Canada versus imported there

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A Siberian Husky called Donkey photographed in Vancouver, Canada. Credit: Justin Veenema, Unsplash, CC0 (creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/)

Contrary to some beliefs about internationally sourced dogs, a new survey analysis has found no evidence for a poorer relationship between

Canadian dog owners and dogs born outside of Canada versus in Canada. Kai von Rentzell of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, and colleagues present these findings in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* on June 15, 2022.

Prior research suggests that the number of dogs adopted and sold across international borders is increasing worldwide. This increase has raised concerns about potential health and [behavioral problems](#) in dogs imported from countries with largely unregulated animal husbandry practices. Owners who relinquish dogs often cite "problematic" dog behaviors, so a growing body of research seeks to deepen understanding of the dog-owner [relationship](#).

To shed new light, von Rentzell and colleagues conducted two online survey studies of Canadian dog [owners](#). One study involved 803 owners who answered questions from standard scales and questionnaires that address the dog-owner relationship. The second study expanded on the results of the first by asking 878 [dog owners](#) additional questions about difficult dog behaviors, training, health, attachment, and the burden of dog ownership.

Statistical analysis of results from both surveys revealed that the quality of dog-owner relationships was similar between owners of dogs born in Canada and owners of dogs born outside of Canada. Both groups of owners reported equal satisfaction with and attachment to their dog, and occurrences of problematic behaviors and [health issues](#) were similar between the two groups. Furthermore, owners of dogs born in Canada were more likely to report use of harsh training methods and higher expectations for their dogs.

These findings are in line with other research suggesting that owner attitudes may play a greater role than dog characteristics in determining the quality of dog-owner relationships.

The authors say they consider this study to be exploratory and that further research is needed to confirm their findings and to tease out underlying relationships and nuances. For instance, the findings may have been influenced by differences between owners who chose to acquire a Canadian-born dog versus an internationally sourced dog.

The authors add: "A large number of dogs are arriving in Canada from overseas each year. The current study reports the findings of two studies that investigated whether owners of dogs imported to, versus owners of [dogs](#) born in, Canada reported differences in their owner-dog relationship."

More information: Investigation into owner-reported differences between dogs born in versus imported into Canada, *PLoS ONE* (2022). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0268885](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0268885)

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