# Article information:

Animals | Free Full-Text | Quantitative Behavioral Analysis and Qualitative Classification of Attachment Styles in Domestic Dogs: Are Dogs with a Secure and an Insecure-Avoidant Attachment Different?
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/11/1/14>

# Article summary:

1. Dogs exhibit attachment styles similar to those observed in children towards their caregivers, including secure and insecure-avoidant.

2. A novel adaptation of the attachment pattern classification used for human infants was developed to identify attachment styles in dogs during the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP).

3. Behavioral differences were observed between secure and avoidant dogs, with secure dogs showing an increase in proximity/contact seeking behaviors towards their owners while avoidant dogs did not. Further studies with larger samples are needed to investigate other attachment styles.

# Article rating:

May be slightly imbalanced: The article presents the information in a generally reliable way, but there are minor points of consideration that could be explored further or claims that are not fully backed by appropriate evidence. Some perspectives may also be omitted, and you are encouraged to use the research topics section to explore the topic further.

# Article analysis:

The article "Quantitative Behavioral Analysis and Qualitative Classification of Attachment Styles in Domestic Dogs: Are Dogs with a Secure and an Insecure-Avoidant Attachment Different?" presents a study on the attachment bond between dogs and their owners. The authors aim to develop a classification system for dog attachment styles based on the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP) and to test its effectiveness by analyzing quantitative measures of behavior observed during the SSP.

The article provides a comprehensive introduction to the concept of attachment bonds, highlighting their essential elements and their typical manifestation in infant-parent relationships. The authors then discuss how the SSP has been used to investigate dog-owner attachment, citing previous studies that have found evidence of contact maintenance, separation distress, secure base effect, and safe haven effect in dog behavior during the SSP.

The authors note that most studies on dog-owner attachment have relied on quantitative measures of behavior, which may not capture individual differences in behavior or qualitative aspects of interactions. They argue that a qualitative approach is necessary to develop a reliable classification system for dog attachment styles. To this end, they propose a new adaptation of the four-style classification used for human infants that focuses on critical general concepts rather than precise behavioral sequences.

The article describes two different SSP protocols used in previous research on dog attachment, and how they were adapted for this study. The authors collected behavioral data using continuous sampling and scoring systems for greeting and social play. They classified dogs into secure or avoidant categories based on their behavior during the SSP.

The results suggest that the classification system used was effective at identifying both secure and avoidant attachment patterns in dogs. Differences in key attachment behaviors between secure and avoidant dogs were more evident as the test progressed, with secure dogs showing an increase in proximity/contact seeking behaviors toward their owners while avoidant dogs did not.

Overall, the article provides valuable insights into the development of a classification system for dog attachment styles based on qualitative analysis of behavior during the SSP. However, there are some potential biases and limitations to consider.

Firstly, the study only included two attachment styles (secure and avoidant) and did not investigate ambivalent or disorganized attachment patterns. This limits the generalizability of the findings and suggests that further research is needed to validate the classification system for all four attachment styles.

Secondly, the article does not provide a detailed discussion of potential sources of bias in the study design or data analysis. For example, it is unclear how observers were trained to classify dogs into attachment categories or how inter-observer agreement was assessed. This raises questions about the reliability and validity of the classification system used.

Finally, while the article acknowledges previous research on dog-owner attachment, it does not present a balanced discussion of alternative perspectives or counterarguments. This may suggest a degree of partiality towards the authors' own approach and limit critical engagement with other theories or methods in this field.

In conclusion, while the article provides valuable insights into the development of a classification system for dog attachment styles based on qualitative analysis of behavior during the SSP, there are some potential biases and limitations to consider. Further research is needed to validate this classification system for all four attachment styles and to address potential sources of bias in study design and data analysis.

# Topics for further research:

* Criticisms of the Strange Situation Procedure in dog attachment research
* Ambivalent and disorganized attachment patterns in dogs
* Reliability and validity of observer classification in dog attachment research
* Alternative approaches to studying dog-owner attachment
* Long-term effects of attachment styles on dog behavior and well-being
* Cross-species comparisons of attachment bonds in animals and humans

# Report location:

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