HABSCORE Factsheet: Quantifying the Strength of the Human-Animal Bond

To quantifiably measure the human-animal bond among pet owners on a global basis, researchers developed HABSCORE, a scale that builds upon scientifically-validated academic research.

The HABSCORE expands on other scales that focus on attachment, such as the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS) and the CENSHARE Pet Attachment Survey and breaks the human-animal bond down into four distinctive dimensions:

1. **Attachment** – the emotional connection the owner feels to the pet

2. **Humanization** – empathic attributes the owner projects onto the pet

3. **Commitment** – the changes/sacrifices the owner is prepared to make to accommodate their pet

4. **Integration** – the extent to which the pet is integrated in the owner’s everyday life

Each of the 16,000 pet owners participating in this survey answered 14 Questions, which covered each dimension of the human-animal bond. The global average HABSCORE was high at 57.9 out of a maximum possible score of 70.0.

**HABSCORE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OWNER-FOCUSED</th>
<th>PET-FOCUSED</th>
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<tr>
<td>(How pet owner defines his/her own role in the relationship)</td>
<td>(How pet owner defines the pet’s role in the relationship)</td>
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**FEELINGS-LED (Automatic responses)**

- **ATTACHMENT**
  The emotional connection the owner feels to the pet

- **HUMANIZATION**
  Empathic attributes owner projects onto the pet

**ACTION-LED (Reflective actions)**

- **COMMITMENT**
  The changes/sacrifices an owner is prepared to make to accommodate their pet

- **INTEGRATION**
  The extent to which the pet is integrated in the owner’s everyday life
To examine whether the strength of the human-animal bond had a correlation to pet owner behavior, respondents were divided into thirds: lower, mid and upper bond tiers. The range and average score for each bond tier was:

- **Lower**: 14-55 Average 48.4
- **Mid**: 55-62 Average 58.6
- **Upper**: 63-70 Average 66.2

**Overview of HABSCORE Distribution**

- **HABSCORE GLOBAL AVERAGES**
  - All pets: 57.9
  - Dogs: 58.7
  - Cats: 56.9
While there were some minor differences by species and country, there were no strong cultural differences in terms of how the bond is experienced and expressed.

### Survey Methodology

In 2021, the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) and Zoetis commissioned an international survey of pet owners to gain a deeper understanding of how the human-animal bond is perceived and experienced among pet owners worldwide.

Survey participants included 16,140 dog and cat owners in 8 countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Japan and China. Participants were the primary caretakers of their pet and the sample was nationally representative by gender, age and region. In case of multiple pet households, participants were asked to focus on only one of their pets, which were randomly allocated throughout the survey.

For more information, please visit: [www.habri.org/international-hab-survey](http://www.habri.org/international-hab-survey)