

# Photographing Their Way

# to ADOPTION

A Study on the Impact of Photo Quality on Perceived Adoptability of Shelter Dogs

## Background

Each year, 6.5 million dogs and cats are surrendered to shelters. Of those,

**1.5 MILLION** are euthanized

## The Solution

↑ increase adoption rates

+↑ increase shelter capacity

**SAVE LIVES!**



## the STUDY

How does appearance impact adopter perception?

Do photos have an impact on perceived adoptability?

Are personality judgments made when viewing a particular photo?

### HYPOTHESIS:

1. Dogs shown outside of a kennel would rate more favorably
2. Featuring a handler with a dog would rate more favorably

## 12 CONDITIONS

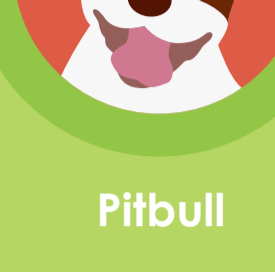
### 3 DOGS



Mixed Breed Black to assess coat color bias, AKA "Big Black Dog Syndrome"



Mixed Breed Multi-Colored the "control"



Pitbull to assess negative breed stereotypes

### 4 SETTINGS

In a Kennel

In a Shelter Room

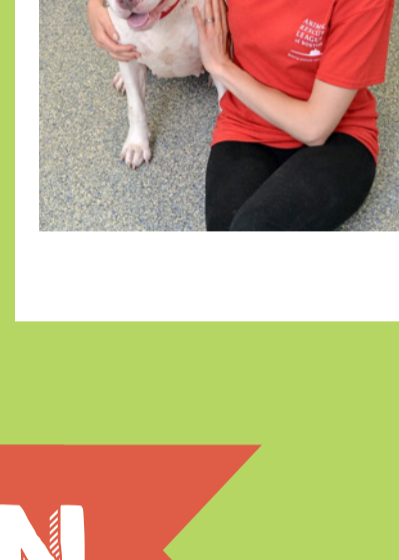
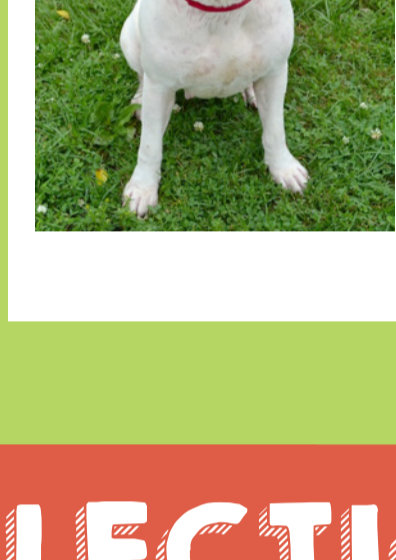
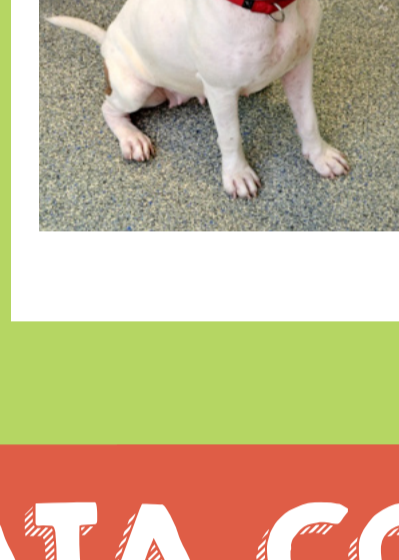
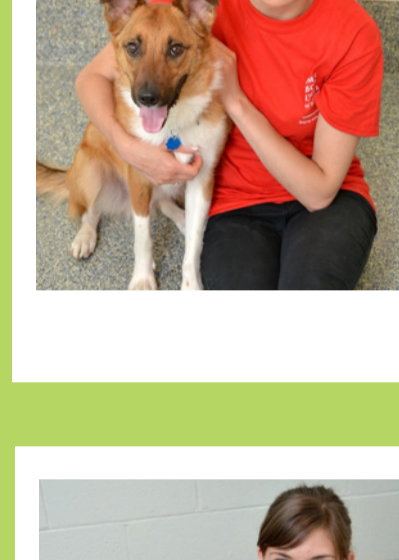
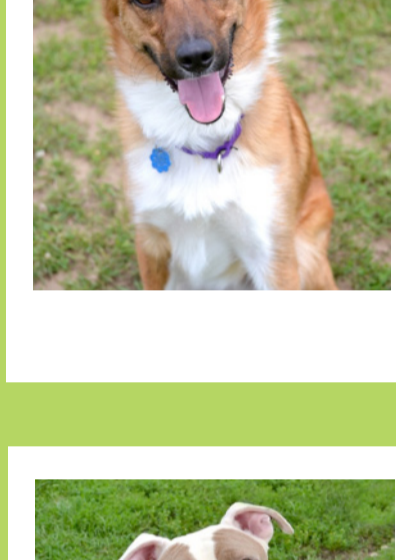
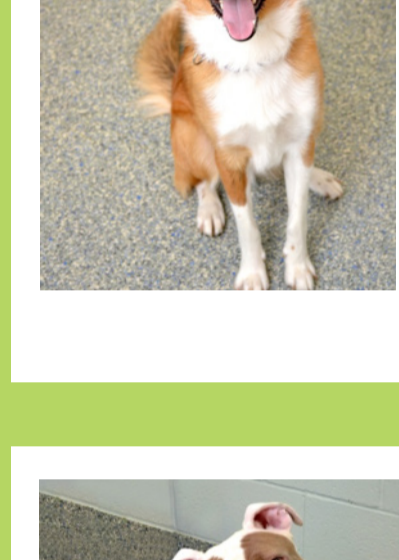
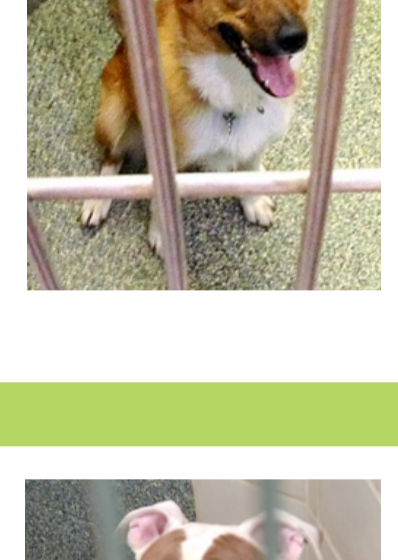
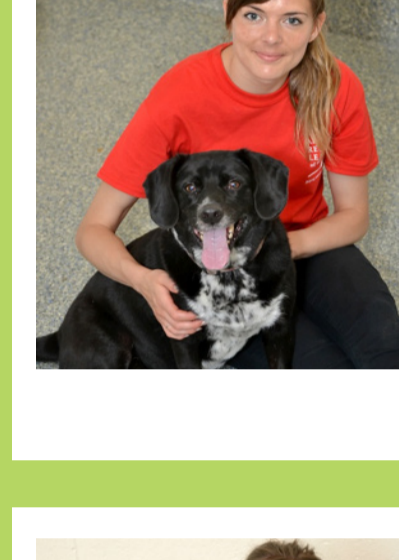
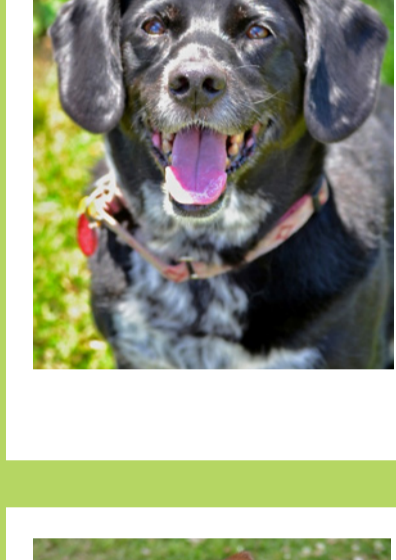
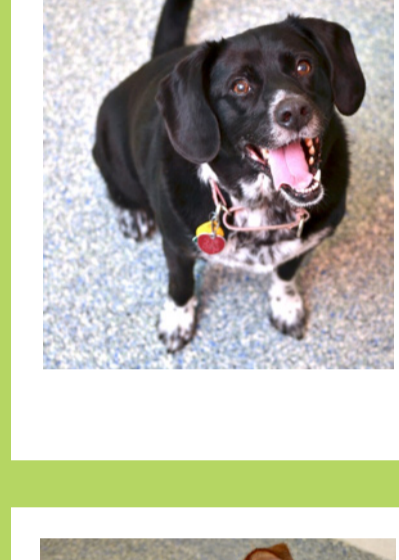
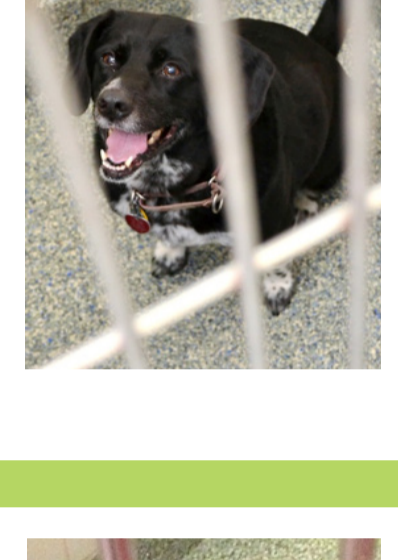
Outdoors

With a Handler

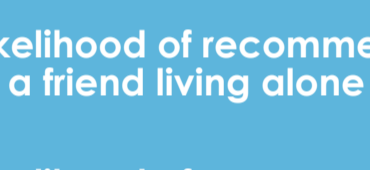


1 of 12 possible photos (below) was shown to survey respondents recruited from Pefffinder.com, along with a series of questions regarding:

- adoption interest
- personality assessments of the featured dog
- personal pet ownership history



## DATA COLLECTION



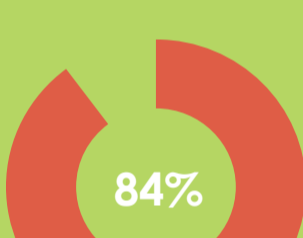
## DOGS WERE RATED ON

- Appeal of photo
- Appeal of dog in photo
- Interest in receiving more info about dog
- Interest in adopting dog
- Likelihood of recommending to a friend living alone
- Likelihood of recommending to friend with children under the age of 10
- The five MCPQ-R dimensions (personality inventory based on the Big 5 personality traits): Trainability, Extraversion, Amicability, Neuroticism, and Motivation

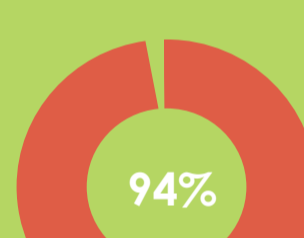
## the RESULTS

1,132 survey responses

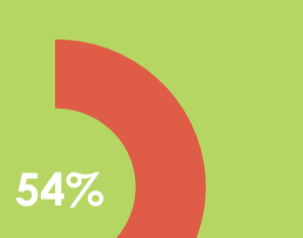
### Demographics



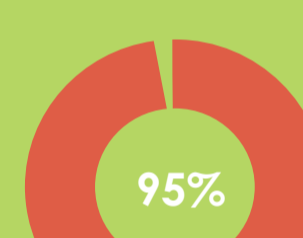
caucasian female



age 30-59



have owned a dog

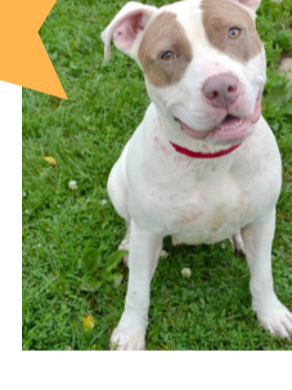


plan to adopt a dog

### Appeal of Photo



rated highest



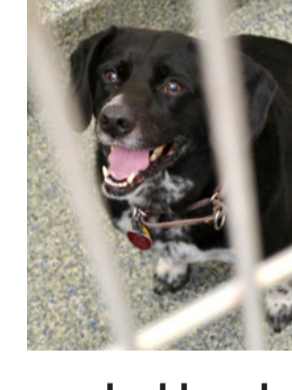
rated highest



rated least favorable



rated least favorable



rated least favorable

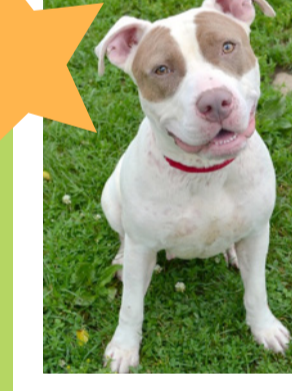
### Interest in Adopting Dog



rated highest

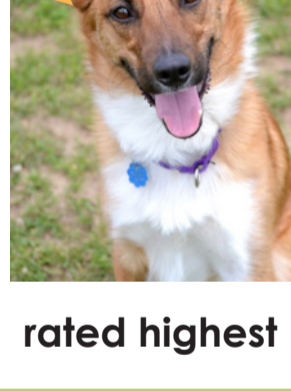


rated highest

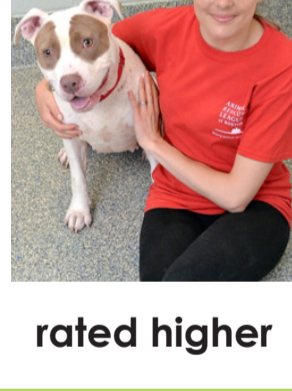


rated highest

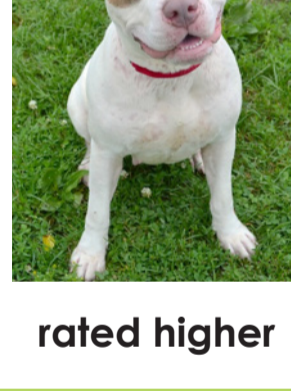
### Interest in Receiving More Info About Dog



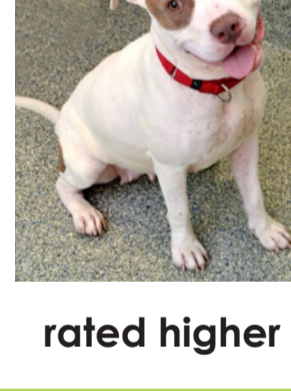
rated highest



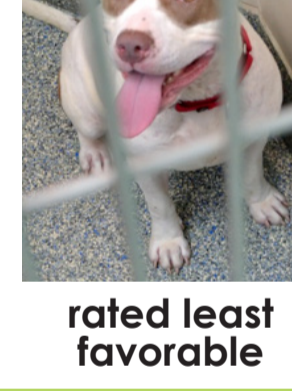
rated higher



rated higher



rated higher

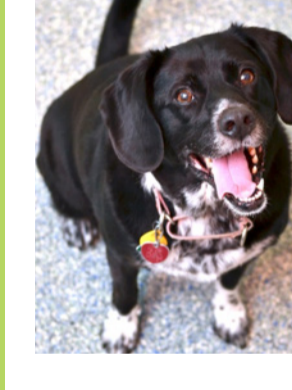


rated least favorable

### Likelihood of Recommending to a Friend Living Alone



rated highest



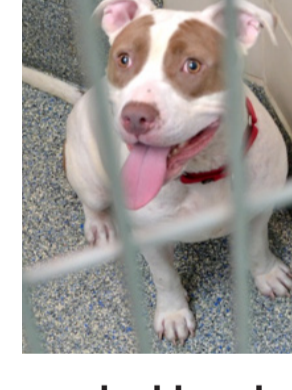
rated higher



rated higher

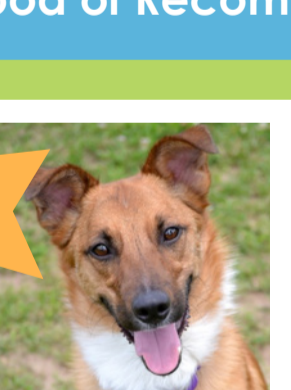


rated least favorable

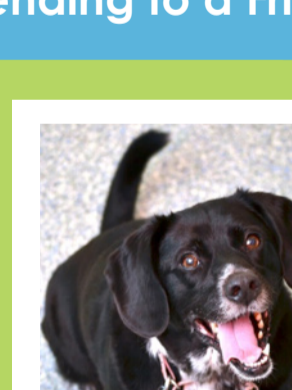


rated least favorable

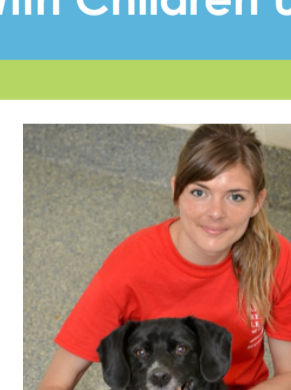
### Likelihood of Recommending to a Friend With Children Under the Age of 10



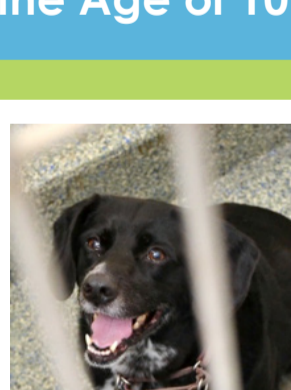
rated highest



rated higher

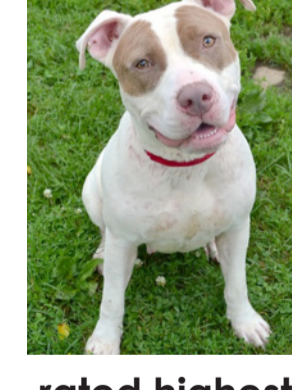


rated higher



rated least favorable

### The Five MCPQ-R Dimensions



rated highest for:

**TRAINABILITY**



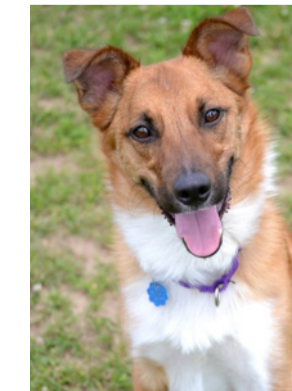
rated highest for:

**AMICABILITY & NEUROTICISM**



rated higher for:

**EXTRAVERSION & AMICABILITY**



rated highest for:

**EXTRAVERSION, MOTIVATION, TRAINABILITY & AMICABILITY**



rated highest for:

**EXTRAVERSION**



rated least favorable for:

**TRAINABILITY**

## CONCLUSION



Study results confirmed that appearance is extremely important, and that displaying dogs in kennels is perceived negatively across all featured dog types.



Both the outdoor and shelter room condition had a positive impact on adopter perception, while the presence of a handler did not have a significant positive impact for any dog type.



Our findings suggest that shelters can greatly influence the impressions and perceptions of potential adopters simply with the information they provide to the public – namely, photos of their adoptable dogs.

Source: 2013-2014 study of 2,153 respondents to survey hosted on Pefffinder.com. Research conducted as final thesis project for completion of the Masters in Animals and Public Policy program at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine.

For more information on this study, please contact principal investigator, Hella Zarkhosh, at hella.zarkhosh@gmail.com.

References: ASPCA (2017). Pet Statistics. Retrieved 10/5, 2017 from https://www.asPCA.org/animal-homelessness/shelter-intake-and-surrender/pet-statistics

Workman, M.K., Hoffman, C.L. (2015). An Evaluation of the Role the Internet Site Pefffinder Plays in Cat Adoptions. Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, 18(4), 388-97.

Lay, J.M., McGreevy, P., Bennett, P.C. (2009). Inter-rater and test-retest reliability of the Monash Canine Personality Questionnaire-Revised (MCPQ-R). Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 119, 85-90.

Study completed with cooperation from:

