



Original Contribution

EFFECT OF TEMPERAMENT TYPE ON SOCIALIZATION AMONG COMPANION DOGS

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ABSTRACT

An investigation on the influence of the nervous system type on the course of socialization in companion dogs was observed. In the experiment, 8 puppies from two breeds: Pekinese and Poodle, were included. A test was carried out and it was determined that dogs with temperament types L and F would be socialized more rapidly and more easily compared to those of type G and A.

Key words: temperament, socialization, dog, type.

INTRODUCTION

The dog is perhaps the first animal species to be reared by man. It has served as a guard, assistant in hunting, sport, company, a source of food and for work.

Most of these characteristics are still beneficial but the dog's role as a pet and human companion is becoming more and more important, thus making it the most popular companion animal (1).

The subject of socialization of dogs has occupied and still focuses the attention of many scientists and ethologists (2, 3, 4, 5). The way of socialization of the dog is very important with regard to its future complex behaviour (6).

The studies demonstrate that in many cases, the contacts between the animal and man are not successful. This is also valid for the relationships between dogs themselves (7, 8). In this connection, the type of the nervous system (i.e. temperament) has a considerable impact on the socialization of these animals and for the development of their behaviour patterns (7, 8).

In man, Hippocrates distinguished four types of temperament:

- sanguine: calm, steady, strong, optimistic;
- choleric: more excitable, less balanced but strong;
- melancholic: sad, weak and prone to

depression;

- phlegmatic: slow, more stable than the melancholic one, but also weak.

Similarly, four principal temperament types in dogs have been identified (8):

type L: strong and calm dogs;

type F: open-minded, responsive, obedient dogs;

type G: indifferent, insensitive, merciless dogs;

type A: prone to anxiety, fear and aggression.

If a parallel between canine and human temperament is performed, the following correlations should be present:

| <u>Dog</u> | <u>Man</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Type L (both genders) | } = Sanguine |
| Type F (males) | |
| Type F (both genders) | } = Choleric |
| Type F (female) | |
| Type G (males) | } = Phlegmatic |
| Type G (both genders) | |
| Type A (both genders) | } ≠ Any human temperament type |

Numerous authors (8, 9, 10) have performed experiments, showing that the process of socialization was easiest in dogs from the L and F temperament types. That is why, here arises the question how to determine the

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temperament type in the dog with regard to its socialization. This is done by applying a test (11) that is run under specified conditions. Using this test, the nervous system types of dogs, used mainly as guards, has been determined.

In the available literature, we did not find reports on different dog breeds used as human companions. Accordingly, we decided to investigate the effect of temperament type on the behaviour patterns of puppies from such breeds.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The experiment was performed in September 2007 with eight puppies from the Pekinese and Poodle breeds.

The application of the test required special conditions that were observed very strictly. The puppies were aged 7 weeks and placed in another room (with area of 8 m²), completely unfamiliar to them. The two bitches were separated from their offspring in adjacent premises. The experimental design was consistent with normative for animal protection and humane attitude to experimental animals as well as with zoohygienic standards for this species and category of animals.

The applied test was spread into 7 experimental phases:

Phase A: observation on the behaviour of puppies when placed in an unfamiliar environment (duration 30 minutes). During the first 10 min, the investigator is at a sufficient distance from the animals (3 m) in the same premises; this ensures non-disturbance of the animal. During the next 10 min, the investigator moves slowly towards them.

Phase B: observation on the behaviour of puppies when throwing an object – red plastic ball with diameter 10 cm (duration 30 minutes);

Phase C: observation of puppies' behaviour to an unfamiliar low dull noise, recorded on a tape (a ship horn) for 30 minutes;

Phase D: observation of the behaviour of puppies after introducing in their premises an unfamiliar object (an old alarm clock) and reproduction of a clear strong sound (alarm clock sound) 2 minutes later (duration 30 minutes);

Phase E: observation on animals' reaction when the investigator stands amongst puppies, without moving or talking (duration 30 minutes);

Phase F: inspection of puppies' reaction to the introduction of mothers amongst them in the presence of the investigator (duration 30 minutes);

Phase G: observation of the behaviour of animals at the sight of easily accessible food placed in three metal round bowls (duration 30 minutes).

The procedures in the described experimental stages were performed consecutively within 3 days.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phase A: The observation on the behaviour of tested puppies showed that one female Pekinese and two Poodle from both genders remained silent (did not bark) and apparently, their behaviour was manifested in inspection of the unknown environment. According to the test, these three puppies should belong to the group with type L temperament (sanguine type of nervous system).

One male Pekinese barked incessantly against the type L representatives, trying to play with them. Its behavioural pattern corresponded to type F (sanguine temperament as well).

Two male Pekinese remained without moving and stared around whining. They were apparently not concentrated and after 7–8 minutes, followed the other puppies. This behaviour placed them in the type G temperament type (phlegmatic).

Two Poodle puppies (one male and one female) moved in circle and screamed. According to the test, they belonged to type A temperament (weak type).

After the 15th minute, puppies from temperament types L and F were already playing together and occasionally, those with type G were also involved in the play.

The representatives of type A continued to move in a circle at the same place, trying to get far away from the other puppies.

When the investigator moved very close to the animals, puppies from types A and G first ran toward him whereas those of type F came closer without hurrying. Type L stared at the man from a distance or did not pay him any attention.

Phase B: In this case, 10 minutes after throwing the ball, the dogs with temperament type L ran in a hurry in its direction, biting and inspecting it.

The Pekinese with type F temperament moved in a circle around the ball cautiously and prudently and subsequently, was involved

in playing with the puppies from type L.

The representatives of type G clearly exhibited fear and worry from the thrown object. They remained on their places or moved away from the ball.

The puppies from type A also were troubled by the object; they wept and moved a greater distance away than those of type G. Five minutes later, they calmed down but remained at the same distance and did not approach.

Phase C: In reaction to the noise (ship horn sound), only the dogs from type L remained on their place in amazement, whereas all others, with no exception, ran away in panic.

Phase D: In the beginning of this stage, the animals of type L ran away.

The puppy of type F stopped and waited, whereas those of types G and A were worried and anxious, running away from the ringing alarm clock. After 5 minutes however, only the puppies of type L approached the clock regardless of the noise and tranquilly inspected it with the paws, even biting it.

Phase E: The behaviour of puppies in this part of the experiment was interesting. Initially, the puppies of types G and S approached the investigator, even jumping on him.

The puppies of type F was staying nearby, staring at the man, but did not come closer.

The animals of type L were not interested and played with the others.

Phase F: Here, the first puppies that ran to welcome their mothers, were those of type L, followed by type F and then, by the others. The type L puppies moved firstly to the mammary glands. Afterwards, an interesting fight for leadership was observed. The other animals also tried to demonstrate a similar behaviour, but without success.

Phase G: In reaction to bowls with commercial food, the animals of type L did not fight, but approached calmly and ate from the bowls.

The puppy of type F came a little later (after 2 minutes). There was no conflict between types L and F; only the puppy of type F frequently changed its place around the bowls.

There was a conflict between the animals of types G and A, manifested by biting and barking at each other. They demonstrated nervousness, anxiety and instability at the sight of food. After 7-8 minutes, they calmed down and found their place near the bowls.

The observed behavioural reactions during the seven parts of the test allowed us to conclude that puppies with temperament types L and F would be socialized (adapted to the environment) more rapidly, more easily and in less time than animals with temperament types G and A. This assumption is also supported by the observations of a number of authors (6, 7, 8, 9, 10). They showed that the temperament type regulates the process of socialization, and that it passes the most rapidly and easily in dogs with temperament types L and F.

The question with the socialization of dogs with temperament types G and A is more interesting. The reported data (7, 8) showed that it occurred with more troubles. Yet it is not established which socialization would be less problematic: that of puppies of type G or that of type A.

From a commercial point of view, it could be assumed that when choosing a companion dog, the most preferred (and the most expensive) puppies would be those with sanguine temperament. Therefore, if we want to anticipate the future education and adaptation of our dog to its environment, it is necessary to evaluate it with regard to its development. Being informed about its behavioural reactions at the earliest age would make it possible to categorize the puppy to a certain temperament type. Thus, the way of the socialization of a companion dog would be predicted without difficulties.

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