

# Examining the Relationship between BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, And People of Color) Communities and Their Companion Animals

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**Abstract:** *This study explored and investigated the relationship between the Blacks Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities with their companion animals. This study used Attachment Theory as a lens of analyses about the relationships between (BIPOC) communities with their companion animals in Waller County, Fort Bend County, and Harris County, Texas. This study used a qualitative methodology and implemented “Case Study” approach in the collection of data “Focus Group” interview process. This study found that all the participants in all clusters owned different kinds of pets and Animals such as dogs, cats, ball python, and blue tongue Lizard just to mention a few. The study found that they owned the pets and animals for several reasons and purposes such as support, companion, child, family, sibling, emotional, and for protection. The study summed that there were some relationships between BICOP communities and their pets and animals (Companion Animals). The study suggests that all public and private policies’ decisions-makers should develop and implement holistic across the board pets and animals; especially companion animals’ polices that are user-friendly to all; which will and could bring some positive social changes to all owners in the state of Texas and possibly beyond.*

**Keywords:** *companion animals, pets, animals, relationships, supports, needs, BIPOC, Dogs, Cats, Lizards, Snakes, Ball Python, Blue Tongue Lizard.*

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## I. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and investigate the relationships between the Blacks Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities with their companion animals. Research has shown that many Anglo-Americans and Europeans, have some unique relationships with their animals (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Kurdek, 2008; 2009; Kwong & Bartholomew, 2011; Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2011a for more). Many consider them as either pets or some view them as companion animals. It is arguable that people in general can easily systematically or even symmetrically develop some kinds of relationships with their pets due to various assigned tasks, reasons, or purposes (see Wallach et al., 2018 for more). However, limited studies exist on this critical missing link topic about the relationships BICOP communities have with their companion animal. The question now becomes, what are the relationships between the (BIPOC) communities with their companion animals? This was the primary focus purpose of this qualitative research study (see Gray, 2018; Ramp & Bekoff, 2015; Wallach et al., 2020; Wallach et al., 2018 for more). Therefore, this research study was focused primarily on the relationships between the BIPOC community and their companion animals.

## II. Background and Problem Statement of the Study

College of Veterinary Medicine (2018) reported that approximately 44 percent of households have dogs while 35 percent have cats. These figures exclude other companion animals which could include horses and rabbits just to mention a few. College of Veterinary Medicine asserted that pet owners have reported that there are many benefits of owning a pet or companion animal. Some of these benefits include but are not limited to the enhancement of overall health and improvement of quality of life. Research further shows that it is possible for human beings to develop close relationships with their pets or companion animals for several reasons or purposes (see Beck & Madresh, 2008; Kurdek, 2008; 2009; Kwong & Bartholomew, 2011; Noonan, 2008; Woodward & Bauer, 2007; Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2011a for more). While these companion

animals may have some well-defined responsibilities for several reasons; they may be limited when dealing with BIPOC communities. Herzog (2017) reported that white people are 3 times more likely to own dogs and 5 times more likely to own a cat when compared to blacks. The study found that black people would be “half as likely to own a dog and less than a third as likely to own a cat as other respondents” (para. 7).

Additionally, study upon study have shown and showcased that the overall companion animals were/are owned for some various reasons, need, and purposes and their significance to the fundamental human needs, cannot and must not be undermined or underestimated in anywhere society (see College of Veterinary Medicine., 2018; Herzog., 2017; Ramp & Bekoff., 2015 for more). Above all, the significance of the conservations of companion animals’ challenges have been echoed in many research studies for years (see Gray, 2018; Wallach et al., 2018; Wallach et al., 2020 for more). Regardless, it is believable that companion animals can be trained and grounded to assist human in different environments effectively, efficiently, and proficiently across the board. Basically, many in the BICOP communities have been subjected to some forms of negative stigmas when it comes to owning companion animals in their communities for some unknown reasons.

In fact, many in BIPOC communities classified their pets or companion animals as significant to them, due to the duties they perform in their day-to-day lives. These needed duties and responsibilities of these pets or companion animals create certain attachments which are fundamental for the owners. For example, such relationships can create several types of attachments such as attachment figures, adult attachment, and animals as attachment figures as stipulated and pinpointed that “Theoretical arguments have been forwarded in support of the idea that humans can develop attachments to buildings, places, or inanimate objects... as well as to god or religious leaders” (see Nedelisky & Steele, 2009; Bradshaw, Ellison & Marcum, 2010, p. 3 for more). This argument validated that it is possible for BIPOC communities to develop and form similar relationships with their pets or companion animals as pinpointed and stipulated above. However, limited literature were/are available to validate the relationships BIPOC communities have or can symmetrically or systematically develop and form similar relationships with their pets or companion animals without being underscored, undermined, or discounted by societies’ laws enforcements entities, and public policies; and that was the primary focus of this research study.

### **III. The Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this qualitative research was to explore and investigate the relationships between BIPOC communities and their pets and animals; especially with their companion animals.

### **IV. The Significance of the Research Study**

This study should provide valuable lessons and insights into the relationships between BIPOC communities and their pets or companion animals in general. Furthermore, this study should shed some valuable light on the understanding of the relationships between BIPOC communities and their pets or companion animals. Finally, this study should shed some overwhelming understanding between BIPOC communities, communities leaders, environmental communities leaders, public policies decision-makers, and public health decision-makers about the importance and significance of the relationships between BIPOC community’s pets or companion animals in their every day-to-day life.

### **V. Theoretical Framework**

This research study employed the theoretical framework of Bowlby 1969 and 1973 which explored, developed, stipulated, and pinpointed that;

...as a conceptual framework for exploring and discussing the nature of the relationships that humans share with nonhuman animals. In relation to this, key questions have arisen, centered upon (a) the proposition that animals are able to satisfy human attachment needs, reflecting attachment figures in their own right; (b) whether we might employ similar models to human attachment research when seeking to explore the specific nature (e.g., dimensions and manifestations of insecurity) of the attachment between humans and animals; and (c) the role of animals (direct and indirect) in working with human attachment issues in therapeutic and care settings. (p. 1)

This theoretical framework underscored and concluded that it was/is possible for some developed forms of relationships that people share with their animals such as pets or companion animals; hence it was selected as the applicable workable theoretical framework of this qualitative research study.

### **VI. The Design of the Research Study**

This research study was designed to interview a minimum of 20 BIPOC community residents about their relationships with their pets or companion animals in their communities. Furthermore, the participants were broken down into 5 participants per interview; a minimum of 3 hours was set aside for an interview. Participants were given an “Email Screening Script” and “Telephone Screening Script” form which highlighted

the purpose of this research study, the dates and time needed for these interviews to be conducted, and participants were not exposed to any treatments, which limits any forms of risk to humans, pets, and animals. It should be noted that all participants read, reviewed the Informed Consent Form, and agreed to participate in this research study (see the Email Screening Script” and “Telephone Screening Script” in the appendix below, for more). This research study used **Focus Group** research approach to primarily focus on BIPOC community residents’ relationships with their pets or companion animals in their communities (see the interview questionnaire in the Appendix below, for more). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted through Zoom meetings; and the results and the findings were collected using Otter transcription software, and collected data were analyzed and self-hand coded.

## **VII. Methodology**

### **Participants Selection**

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for this study. This allowed participants to be selected from a specific group. Participants selected had either had experiences with pets or currently have pets (Gangle & Smick, 2009; Verial, 2013). This allowed the researcher to gather in-depth information on their experiences with pets or companion animals. Participants were selected from four different ethnic groups which included Hispanic, Blacks, Caucasians, and Asians. While 20 participants were selected, only 18 participants participated in this study. One participant from the Asian cluster and one from the Caucasian cluster were not able to participate due to unavoidable circumstances. As such, this focus study included eighteen participants. This study used “**Case Study Approach**” qualitative methodology.

## **VIII. Research Questions**

This qualitative research study posed three major research questions;

### **Research Question (RQ 1):**

What are the relationships between BIPOC communities and their companion animals?

### **Research Question (RQ 2):**

How do BIPOC communities perceive their relationships with their companion animals and what type of companion animals do they have?

### **Research Question (RQ 3):**

What are the experiences BIPOC communities have with their companion animals?

### **Assumptions**

This research study was conducted with two primary assumptions;

#### **Assumption 1:**

BIPOC community’s residents have some forms of relationships with their companion animals

#### **Assumption 2:**

BIPOC community’s residents have no relationships with their companion animals

## **IX. Data Collections**

This study included four focus groups (Hispanics, Asians, Blacks, and Caucasians) with a total of 18 participants. Otter software was used to record and transcribe interviews. The interviews were also recorded via zoom and notes were taken during the interview process. The data collected was self-hand coded.

## **X. The Results and Findings of the Study**

Each cluster was interviewed at an agreed time via zoom. Otter transcription software was used to analyze data. Interviews were also recorded. In this analysis, examples of verbatim words were included to capture the participants’ spoken words. Some responses were also paraphrased. Also, the researcher paid attention to participants’ body language, gestures as well as facial expressions as they responded to each question. Themes were selected based on word similarities. The Hispanic group was the first to be interviewed. Caucasians were interviewed followed by Black and Asian participants. The Hispanic and black clusters had five participants. While the white and Asian clusters had four participants. Each cluster was to include five participants; however, two participants did not participate in the focus group interviews due to unforeseen circumstances.

**Table 1. Order of Participants by Site of Interview**  
Order of Participants Presented by Site of Interview

Sites	Assumed names of participants	Percentages of Participants
Zoom (Cluster 1)	P1C1 P2C1 P3C1 P4C1 P5C1	27.8%
Zoom (Cluster 2)	P1C2 P2C2 P3C2 P4C2	22.22%
Zoom (Cluster 3)	P1C3 P2C3 P3C3 P4C3 P5C3	27.8%
Zoom (Cluster 4)	P1C4 P2C4 P3C4 P4C4	22.22%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Selected Missing Participants Cluster 2 and Cluster 4 (M)</b>		<b>10%</b>

Note. Z=Zoom P=participant C=Cluster M=Missing Participants

**Table 1** showed that 5 out of 18 or 27.8% participated in this study from clusters 1 and 3 while 4 out of 18 or 22.22% participated from clusters 2 and 4 with a totality of 18 out of 18 or 100% actually participated in this research study. However, 2 out of 20 or 10% of the previously selected participants did not participate in this study (see table 1 above for more).

**Table 2.**

**Table two identifies the themes for each research question. The themes were selected based on word similarities**

Themes Found in Research Question

Research Question 1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3
Child	Family	Emotional
Support		
Companion	Sibling	Protection

**Table 2** showed that majority of participants classified their pets/animals as child, support, companion, in research question 1. Furthermore, participants perceived their pets/animals as their family and siblings in research question 2. Additionally, participants considered their experiences with their pets/animal as emotional support and protection purposes in research question 3 (see table 2 above and participants' responses below for more).

### Research Question (RQ 1):

#### What are the relationships between BIPOC Communities and their companion Animals?

The first research question was as follows: What is the relationship between BIPOC communities and their companion animals? The responses from all the participants in the Hispanic focus group were similar. It was clear that all the participants had a favorable relationship with their companion animals. They responded that they considered their pets as family members. Some of them viewed their pets as children. The themes that emerged were child, companionship, and family. The words child emerged from several participants. In the first cluster (Hispanic group), four of the five participants responded that they considered their pets as children. Only one participant responded that she considered her pet as her baby. In the second cluster, participant one in the Hispanic focus group was very enthusiastic. From her response, you could clearly see the connection she has with her pet. I observed that there was a smile on her face as she talked about her pet. She responded as follows:

#### Child

*She is part of my family. She is like a child that everywhere you go you take whenever you can you take her with you. She's I mean, she is so much part of my family that even when my mother when visits, she comes to see her granddaughter. That's the way she put it, I come to see my granddaughter. She loves this dog.*

Participant 2 in the Hispanic focus group also responded with the same sentiment.

*That's fine, the same she's a part of the family when I had my children, they were introduced as her sister, they have a sister. She's part of the family. She has her own place in our family.*

All the other participants in this group had similar responses. Only one participant responded that she viewed her pet as her baby. In the second cluster (Caucasian) the word baby was not used by any participant. In the third cluster (Black), the word child emerged from several participants. Four out of the five participants responded that they considered their pets as their children. Only one participant responded that she considered her pet as her kid. Participant number 2 had a smile on her face as she responded:

*I am close to my dogs. They are like my children because I have never had children and I really treat them that way. I'm very overprotective with them. I know how a lot of people treat animals and it is my job and duty to protect them. I definitely treat them like my children, and they are definitely my family.*

Participant 3 in this cluster also responded that:

*I would definitely agree with what she said. My dogs are family to me. They are my kids, especially my first one. She's like my baby. There was one time she almost died, and I felt like I almost died with her. So, I'm very close to my pets. They have their own birthday. They have birthday parties. They get party hats. Yes, I a very, very close with my pets.*

Participants in cluster four (Asian) also had similar responses, two out of the four participants referred to their pets as their babies. Participant 2 in this cluster responded:

*...This is my first baby. I don't know exactly what to say. She's just soft and fluffy.*

The second research question was as follows: How do BIPOC communities perceive their relationships with companion animals?

### **Companion**

In the first cluster (Hispanic), all the participants responded that they considered their pets as companions. Participant number three responded that her pet is always next to her. She stated that her pet keeps her company and instead of talking to herself she talks to her dog.

In the second cluster (Caucasian), the word companion emerged from several participants. In this cluster, three out of the four participants responded that they considered their pets as companions. Two participants responded that they considered their pets like family. Participant 4 in this cluster responded that she considered her cats as a companion. She further responded that her pets calm her and relax her. Three participants in the third cluster responded that they got dogs because they loved dogs. Also, they got dogs for companionship. This was also shared by participants in cluster four.

### **Research Question (RQ 2):**

#### **How do BIPOC communities perceive their relationships with their companion animals and what type of companion animals do they have?**

The second research question was as follows: How do BIPOC communities perceive their relationships with their companion animals and what type of companion animals do they have? Responses provided from all the four clusters were similar in meaning. The themes that emerged for this research question were family and siblings. All the participants in the four clusters have dogs. Some of the participants have cats. However, participant 4 in the Hispanic cluster also had rabbits, ducks, and horses. Participant in the second cluster had a ball python and a blue tongue lizard.

### **Family**

In the first cluster (Hispanic), all the participants responded that they consider all their pets as family. Participant number four in this cluster responded that she introduced her pet to her children as their sibling. She responded that she is part of the family, and she has her own place in their family. Participant five in this cluster responded that

*Yeah, I think she's considered part of the family just because she's also taken into consideration with everyday decisions. You know, like is she taken care of as she should? Make sure we do not leave the door open.*

Participants in the second cluster all responded that they consider their pets as part of the family. Participant number one responded.

*Yes, they are part of the family. They are part of pretty much all the things we do as a family. When we are at the dinner table, they are there sitting with us. When we are watching TV, they are pretty much there with us...*

In the third cluster, four participants responded that they considered their pets as family members. Participant three in this cluster responded that her dogs are family. Participant number two in this cluster was very passionate as she expressed her feeling toward her pet. She had a smile on her face and her voice was filled with enthusiasm.

*This is my baby I am sorry; I think this is my baby and is part of the family. She bears my last name (participant laughs out loud). I am not trying to be delusional; you know, I did not carry her in my belly, but she is my family. He was adopted to my family. He is part of the family. We think of him that way. We are concerned about it that way. You know, we know of course he is the dog, but he is family, he is our friend and that is how I consider him.*

The theme family did not emerge in cluster four, however, they responded that they considered their pets as children or siblings.

### **Sibling**

In the first cluster (Hispanic), two participants responded that they considered their pets siblings. Participant number two responded that she had her dog prior to having her children. When the children were born, they considered her as a baby sister. Participant number four in this cluster also uttered a similar sentiment. In the second cluster (Caucasian), the theme of siblings emerged from two participants. In the third cluster (Black), the term sibling did not emerge, however, similar terms like kids, brother, and sister emerged when responding. Two participants in the fourth (Asian) cluster expressed that they felt like their pets were their siblings. Participant number 3 in this cluster responded that her pet fits in her family like a little sister. She further responded that they feel like they have a little sister, and they often tease her, and she teases them back. She also stated that her pet comforts her during difficult times especially when it storms.

### **Research Question (RQ 3):**

#### **What are the experiences BIPOC communities have with their companion animals?**

#### **Emotional support**

Three participants in cluster one responded that they got their pets for emotional support. The theme emotional support did not emerge in the second cluster however, in cluster three two participants responded that their pets have helped them during difficult times. Four Participants in the fourth cluster responded that they got their pets for emotional support. Participant number three from the Asian cluster was very emotional and started crying when she spoke about how her pets got her through difficult times. She responded that;

*I am not gonna cry I am crying just a little bit right now. She helped me get through a lot. During school, she helped me. My mother passed away and my brother went away. It is just that we have been through a lot. So yeah (participants sniffles) we try to enjoy each other's company. She just really makes me wanna cry.*

#### **Protection**

Another theme that emerged was protection. Participants in all four clusters responded that they felt safe when they are with their dogs. Participant 2 in cluster 3 responded that she feels that her children are protected around their pets. Other participants responded that they felt safe around their dogs.

**Table 3. Emerging Themes**

<b>Mentioned Emerging Themes</b>	<b>Mentioned Time</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Panic	15	55.6 plus %
Freak out	6	22.2 plus %
Culture	5	18.5 plus %
Service Animal	1	3.7 plus %
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3** Identified some emerging themes based on the results and findings of the focus group interviews; for example, 15 out of 27 or 55.6% claimed that they panic whenever their companion pets or animals were reported missing; furthermore, 6 out of 27 or 22.2% claimed they will freak out whenever their companion pets and animals become missing. Additionally, 5 out of 27 or 18.5% claimed that they owned companion pets and animals due to their historic cultures of growing up with pets and animals in their houses when they were children; and 1 out of 27 or 3.7% claimed that their pets and animals were owned for services purposes (see Table 3 above and participants' responses below for more).

### **Panic/freak out**

**This is a theme that emerged when participants were asked how they would feel if they discovered their pets were missing**

All the participants responded that they would go into a panic or freak out if their pets went missing. This question elicited the most responses from the participants. Most of the participants in all four clusters responded that they would panic, get search parties, put up reward money, and go crazy. Participant three in the third cluster gave an in-depth response that;

*If my dogs were any of my dogs are missing, I would freak out. Because when you have a breed like a pit bull or a rottweiler people want to get them and do terrible things and fight them. Mine are all spaded and neutered so they can't breed but I would be terrified that they would be mistreated or hit by a car. I feel like by keeping them inside all the time, they are much safer...*

Participant three in cluster two responded by stating that she would be terrified if her pet went missing. She responded that;

*Especially in the part of town that I live in, people don't typically take care of their pets the way that I do. And that includes when they are driving so people aren't you know mindful of, you know, dogs running across the street. And so, my immediate thought is to like, go to the street., like checking, make sure that they are not, you know, going to get hit by a car or something like that. Because yeah, this part of town, you know, they just don't care about animals the way that we do so I would be really terrified for their wellbeing if I knew that they were missing.*

### **Service Animal**

Another emerging theme was service animals. Participant one in cluster 3 responded that

*I want to get him to be certified so that he can be a service animal. He does go everywhere we go but he cannot get on a plane. It was for my husband, so we want him to be a service animal for him. That was one of his desired pets which was a standard puddle. And I did not know anything about standard puddles. I did not know that they were going to grow so quickly. To grow as fast as he has, he is humongous, and I can't do anything with him. So, when I started taking him to the doctor as a puppy, he was bigger than most of the other dogs and he was only four months old.*

When participants were asked if they would consider having other pets, their responses were similar. All the participants did not consider having other pets. Some responded that having pets was like having children. Others responded that it was time-consuming. Also, most responded that they would only like to have one pet. Also, all the participants responded that they prefer having dogs rather than cats. All but one participant in the four clusters responded that they grew up with pets in their families. However, one participant who was of African descent responded that while she grew up with pets, they were not allowed in the homes. She responded that

*Actually, my culture of course comes from African culture. Animals are supposed to be watchdogs. They are supposed to be outside trying to hunt for themselves. So, most of my family or even fellow Africans coming in, they look at you and say oh you have a dog? Why are you letting him kiss you? So, they see that that is a dog as far as why are you so close and compassionate. Even though you have a dog in the home it is supposed to be a watchdog. So, you are not supposed to hug them. This is not all Africans, but from a cultural background, this is how most Africans respond...*

Students enrolled in undergraduate program (Health and Kinesiology) course at Prairie View A&M also assisted in transcribing data.

### **Research Students' Transcriptions of collected data**

**Most of the participants in all clusters had similar responses. The most common themes that emerged included companion, child, sibling, panic, and emotion.**

Most Participants in the Asian cluster referred to their pets as their children. Participant two responded that she cherished her pet in the same way a mother would cherish their child. participant two classifies her pet as family. Wherever she goes she likes to bring her pet with her if she can. All the participants responded that their pets were included just like any other family member. Participants in all clusters stated that their pets had

multiple roles. Their pets were viewed as either their child, or sibling, and one participant in the Hispanic cluster referred to her dog as her granddaughter.

Participant one in the Hispanic cluster stated that;

*She is part of my family. She is like a child that you take everywhere you can take her. She's I mean, she is so much part of my family that even my mother when she visits, that's what she comes to see, her granddaughter. That's the way she puts it. I came to see my granddaughter. She loves this dog.*

#### **Another theme that emerged was the word “Companion”**

While speaking to the Hispanic population, the recurring theme was companionship. When asked “what is your relationship with your pet? Participant one described how she was remarkably close to her pet and stated, “she’s, my companion.” While participant three explained how their pet is like another person. She reported that she can talk to her pet “instead of talking to myself, I talk to the dog.” The participant stated that their dog is always present and around, which is why they are so close. Participant four continued the theme of companionship by stating their pet was there when they “didn’t have family or anything” and kept them company through their times of need and loneliness. The participant also mentioned how their pet filled the void of having a family when they were by themselves. This theme emerged from all the clusters. There were many similar themes that emerged from the Asian, Caucasian, and Black clusters. All the participants in the four clusters reported that they had an emotional bond with their pets. Participant four in the Asian cluster reported that her pet offers her emotional support.

*She stated that “I mean, I don’t know about everybody else, but I got her when I was by myself. Now we’re surrounded by people, but for a very long time it was just she and I.”*

She explains how she and her pet have a very close relationship. Picturing it only being the two of them, in the beginning, can show how tight their bond may be now. Participants reported that they got their pets when they were very young, and they have built a strong relationship with their pets. They reported that their love has grown over time. This shows the participants look at their pets as more than just an animal, they consider their pets as family members. The participants also explained the love they had for their pets. Most of them grew up with animals and always had a connection with their pets. Some participants reported that their pets keep them company and they are there to comfort them during good or bad days. One participant stated that her pet is the first thing she caters to at the beginning and end of the day. The participant explains her relationship with her pet as being equivalent to a relationship she would have with a first child. She stated that the amount of support she gets from her pet is equivalent to the support she receives from a human being. Participants reported that their pets changed their lives in many ways. All participants expressed panic should their pets go missing.

**Table 4. Types of Pets and Animals Owned by the Participants**

<b>Race/Ethnicities of Participants</b>	<b>Pets and Animals Owned</b>	<b>Total</b>
Hispanic	4 dogs 1 Cat	5
Blacks	8 Dogs	8
White	4 Dogs 2 Cats 1 Ball Python 1 Blue Tongue Lizard	8
Asian	5 Dogs 1 Cat	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>

**Table 4.** Showed that Hispanic participants owned 4 dogs and 1 cat, Black participants owned 8 dogs, White participants owned 4 dogs, 2 cats, 1 ball python, and 1 blue tongue lizard and Asian participants owned 5 dogs and 1 cat. Collectively, all participants currently owned 21 out of 27 or 77.7% dogs, 4 out of 27 or 14.8% cats, 1 out of 27 or 3.7% ball python and 1 out of 27 or 3.7% blue tongue lizard (see Table 4 above for more).

**Figure 1. A Dog Owned by one of the Participants**



**Figure 1.** Showed a specialized dog owned by one of the participants and due to participant's privacy and confidential reasons, its specializations were not disclosed in this study (see Figure I above).

**Figure 2. A Dog Owned by one of the Participants**



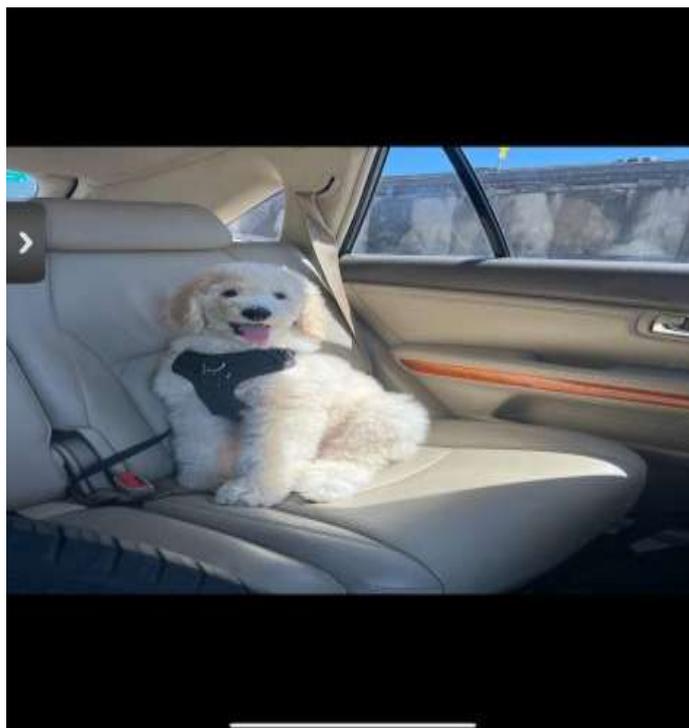
**Figure 2.** Showed a specialized dog owned by one of the participants and due to participant's privacy and confidential reasons, its specializations were not disclosed in this study (see Figure 2 above).

**Figure 3. A Cat Owned by one of the Participants**



**Figure 3.** Showed a specialized cat owned by one of the participants and due to participant's privacy and confidential reasons, its specializations were not disclosed in this study (see Figure 3 above).

**Figure 4. A Dog Owned by one of the Participants**



**Figure 4.** Showed a specialized dog owned by one of the participants and due to participant's privacy and confidential reasons, its specializations were not disclosed in this study (see Figure 4 above).

## **XI. Results and Findings of the Study**

The study found that similar words were used more often. Words like family, child, companion, baby, and panic emerged from several participants. The study also found that these participants loved their pets. Additionally, the study found that most of these participants grew up with pets and echoed similar sentiments on the benefits of having a pet. However, one of the participants who identified themselves as African reported that even though she grew up with pets, having a pet in the African culture is often viewed negatively; this means that majority of Africans have a mixed feeling about having a pet in their homes. For example, she reported that most Africans who visit her home are surprised that she has a pet that she treats like her child.

All the participants also reported that they would go into an extreme panic, should their pets disappear. They would send out posters. They will reach out through social media. They will offer rewards and file police reports. One participant went into depth and spoke about when one of her pets disappeared. For example, she reported that her pet disappeared for one week but was able to find its way back home. She reported how her family was distraught during that week. She was extremely shocked when her pet made her way back home after a week.

This clearly shows the connection that can be developed between animals and their owners. Also, one participant in the black cluster reported that she did not really like animals. However, her spouse has a dog and her relationship with the dog has clearly blossomed. For example, she reported that she has inherited a pet because of her spouse and was clearly falling in love with the pet. She found that once a pet was introduced into her home by her spouse, she naturally became the primary caretaker of this pet. Another result of finding that was in this study was surprising was that the study found that almost all the participants reported that they would not get additional pets if something happened to their current pets. They reported that pets were very tedious to maintain because they require a lot of work and commitment. However, they stated that they do not see their lives without their pets; in fact, that the formed and systematic developed bond between their pets and them were irreplaceable. One participant in cluster three reported that her pet brought her out of depression, and she was visibly crying when she talked about the relationship she had with her pet.

## **XII. Interpretation of the Results and Findings of the Study**

The study found that there are overwhelming relationships between Blacks Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and their pets and animals. The study found that many BIPOC communities saw their pets and animals as child, for support purposes and as companion in their responses to research question 1. The study further found that BIPOC communities considered their pets and animals as families and siblings in research question 2 and they considered they owned their pets and animals for emotional and protection reasons.

Based on the results and findings of this study, it showed that there are some kinds of relationships between BICOP communities and their pets and animals (see Table 2 & analyzed data above for more). The study found that not only White Americans and Europeans have some formed and developed relationships with the pets and animals because those in the BICOP communities do as well. The study also found that their reasonings, needs, and purposes of owning pets and animals especially (companion animals) were somehow similar between White Americans and Europeans and BICOP communities. Furthermore, the study found that BIPOC community's residents actually have some forms of relationships with their companion animals.

## **XIII. Confirmations and Disconfirmations of the Study's Theoretical Framework**

The study found that BICOP communities posed similar reasoning and purposes of owning pets and animals in their communities. The study found that majority of the BICOP communities viewed their pets and animals as for companions, children, siblings, supports, family, and for protection just to mention a few. The results and findings of this study confirmed the Attachment Theory as Bowlby (1969 & 1973) stipulated that it is possible for humans to form and develop some kinds of relationships with their pets and animals due to human attachment needs, model as dimensions and direct or indirect manifestations of insecurity, play some roles, and working partners just to mention a few. The study confirmed that the BICOP communities residents were able to form and develop some kinds of relationships between their pets and animals in their communities which correlated with the Attachment Theory.

## **XIV. Analysis of the Study's Assumptions**

### **Assumption 1:**

*BIPOC community's residents have some forms of relationships with their companion animals*

### **Assumption 2:**

*The study did not find that BIPOC community's residents have no relationships with their companion animals*

### **Assumptions Analyses**

The study found that BIPOC communities' residents actually have some formed and developed relationships with their companion animals. The study further found that BICOP communities' residents actually have some forms of relationships with their different kinds of pets and animals especially with their companion animals in their communities and for different reasons and purposes. As such, the study rejected the Assumption 2 that *"BIPOC community's residents have no relationships with their companion animals."* However, the study found that there were formed and developed relationships between the BICOP communities' residents and their companion animals in their communities. In fact, the study accepted the Assumption 1 that *"BIPOC community's residents have some kinds of relationships with their companion animals"* in their communities; contrary to the Assumption 2 which stipulation that there were no relationships in the BICOP communities' residents and their companion animals. Therefore, the study accepted Assumption 1 and rejected Assumption 2 due to the results and findings of the study.

### **XV. Limitations of the Study**

This study had several limitations as addressed below;

1. The participants of this study came from Waller County, Fort Bend County and Harris County, Texas which cannot be generalized statewide or nationally.
2. This study was conducted using only qualitative methodology; which limits the number of participants and limited larger scalability and generalization of its results and findings.
3. This study used "Case Study" concentrating on Focus Group responses which were not as comprehensive because this Case Study' participants were from 3 counties alone in the state of Texas which limits its robust data analyses components.
4. Generally, in any "Pilot Study" such as this research study its' overall acceptances of its' findings and results are usually limited due to the "small scale" of its' participants.
5. This study contains only 18 participants which limits its overall statewide and national generalization due to limited generated statistical data from its results and findings.
6. Above all, this study only included 2 males (11%) participants out of 18 which limits the male's viewpoints about their relationships with companion animals.

### **XVI. Discussion and Conclusion**

There are no doubt form humanistic viewpoints all areas, places, and stages, owning some kinds of pets and animals generally, were driven by some collective and individualized needs. However, the purposes or reasons as to why BICOP communities owned their pets and animals are somehow debatable in many societies in the past and today, especially among White and Europeans in American. For instance, BICOP communities owning any kinds of pets and animals becomes questionable among and between environmentalists, communities' leaders, law enforcement entities, and public policies decision-makers just to mention as few, as to why BICOP communities owned any kinds of pets and animals in their communities.

In fact, this study validated the relationships BIPOC communities can symmetrically and systematically form and develop some universal similar relationships with their pets or companion animals holistically; and their relationships should not be subjective to being underscored, undermined, or discounted by societies' laws enforcements entities, environmentalists, communities' leaders, and public policies' decision-makers. The overall results and findings of this study holistically aligned perfectly with the Attachment Theory of Bowlby in 1969 and 1973; which explored, developed, stipulated, and pinpointed that it is possible for humans to form and develop some kinds of workable relationships with their pets and animals. The BIPOC communities residents are not exempted from this historic theory.

While the concerns about as to why BICOP communities owned some pets and animals (companion animals) especially in their communities continued indefinitely. However, the results and findings of this study indicated that BICOP communities residents' reasonings, needs, and purposes of owning them were statewide, nationally, and possibly universally similar to other companion animals owners; across the board. This study also highlighted that like Anglo Saxons or White Americans communities' pets and animals especially companion animals' owners, BICOP communities residents' pets and animals especially companion animals' owners acquired theirs from different sources such as buying, inheritances, gifts, families, friends, and public and private adoptions; just to mention as few. As such, the results and findings of this study should shed some valuable lights as to why BICOP communities residents owned some kinds of pets and animals in their communities and possibly create some understandings to all amount their ownerships of pets and animals. Finally, this study shed some valuable lights statewide, nationally, and possibly internationally, which will and could bring some "Positive Social Changes" about the benefits associated with BICOP communities' residents for owning pets and animals especially companion animals.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

This study posed several recommendations for BICOP communities' leaderships, public health leaderships, public policies' leaderships, environmentalists' leaderships, law enforcements' leaderships, recommendation for future studies as shown below.

### **Recommendation for the Overall Communities Leaderships and Policies' Decisions-Makers and BIPOC**

#### **Communities**

1. The study recommends that overall communities' leaderships should know that the needs, purposes, and reasons of owning companion animals in the BIPOC communities are universal; and they should be treated as such.
2. The study recommends that law enforcements public polices' decisions-makers should implement laws and policies that include all residents everywhere across the board.
3. The study recommends that BIPOC communities should understand that owning companion animals can significantly enhance their lives
4. The study recommends that BIPOC communities should overlook the stigma associated with owning companion animals.
5. Also, the study recommends that BIPOC communities are educated on the importance of owning and caring for companion animals.
6. Finally, one of the most disturbing unintended results and findings of this research study was whenever BICOP communities residents' pets and animals especially companion animals in BICOP communities are missing, the effects of the implications cannot be undermined, underscored, or even understated in any language. As such, this study recommends that since there are overwhelming online communications' platforms today, such as telephone, social medias, posters' posts in the BICOP's communities, and many others just to mention a few, these effective communications' platforms should be used by anybody who finds these missing pets and animals, especially the companion animals to contact the actual owners as to reunite the missing pets and animals, especially the companion animals with their rightful families' owners.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

1. This study recommends that future research studies should be more comprehensive than this research study by employing "Mixed Method Approach" which should address some missing links that this current study posed.
2. This study recommends that future research studies should include larger data which could address issues of lack of generalizations of the current research study due to limited analyses of data.
3. This study recommends that future research studies should scale-up their explorations and investigations research's platforms as to create larger validities, credibility, and reliabilities than this current study pinpointed.
4. Finally, this study recommends that future research studies should be more robust than this current research study.

### **Acknowledgement**

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### **Conflict of Interest**

We shared no conflict of interests in this study

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## Appendixes

### Email Screening Script

**Protocol Title: Examining the Relationship between BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Communities and their Companion Animals.**

Hello, my name is Dr. Catherine Kisavi-Atatah from the department of Health and Kinesiology at Prairie View A&M University.

I am emailing you because:

- you gave permission to be contacted to participate in this study

**The purpose of this study research is to explore and examine the relationships between BIPOC communities and their companion animals. This research study will help describe the relationships between diverse communities and their companion animals. The information gained from this study will**

**support a better understanding of the relationships. It will also inform our proposal for a request for a more expansive and comprehensive concerning this study in the state of Texas.**

**If you permit me, may I ask you questions to see if you qualify for this study?**

Before I ask you the screening questions, I would like to tell you about what we will be doing with the information you give us.

Whether you join the study or not, the information collected today may be seen by researchers at Prairie View A&M University, any sponsor of the study, and those responsible for oversight of the study. We try to make sure that the information we collect from you is kept private and used only for the research study we are discussing. If you do not agree to continue the phone call, it will not affect your current or future relationships with Prairie Vieq A&M University.

Your personal information will not be kept if you choose not to enroll in the study or if you do not qualify to be in the study.

If you are interested in this study, we will:

- Proceed with the written consent process

*Please email me at [cakisavi-atatah@pvamu.edu](mailto:cakisavi-atatah@pvamu.edu) if you have any additional questions.*

#### **Telephone Screening Script**

**Protocol Title: Examining the Relationship between BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Communities and their Companion Animals.**

Hello, my name is Dr. Catherine Kisavi-Atatah from the department of Health and Kinesiology at Prairie View A&M University.

I am contacting you because:

- you gave permission to be contacted to participate in this study

**The purpose of this study research is to explore and examine the relationships between BIPOC communities and their companion animals. This research study will help describe the relationships between diverse communities and their companion animals. The information gained from this study will support a better understanding of the relationships. It will also inform our proposal for a request for a more expansive and comprehensive concerning this study in the state of Texas.**

Your taking part in this phone call is completely voluntary.

**If you permit me, may I ask you questions to see if you qualify for this study?**

I will be collecting information about you during this phone call. Before I ask you the screening questions, I would like to tell you about what we will be doing with the information you give us.

Whether you join the study or not, the information collected today may be seen by researchers at Prairie View A&M University, any sponsor of the study, and those responsible for oversight of the study. We try to make sure that the information we collect from you is kept private and used only for the research study we are discussing. If you do not agree to continue the phone call, it will not affect your current or future relationships with Prairie Vieq A&M University.

Your personal information will not be kept if you choose not to enroll in the study or if you do not qualify to be in the study.

We have completed the telephone screening portion of our call.

- Do you have any questions?
- Do you think you would like to take part in this research?

If you are interested in this study, we will:

- Proceed with the written consent process

*Please contact me at 8322837936 if you have any additional questions.*

### **What are the Relationships between Compassionate Pets' Owners and their Pets?**

#### **Research Data Collections' Interview Questions**

##### **RQ1: Demographic Range Question**

1. Age
2. Race
3. Ethnicities
4. Locations
5. Gender
6. Types of Pets Owned
7. Durations of Owning Pets

##### **RQ2: Data Collections**

1. Do you own any pets?
2. Have you ever owned pets?
3. What types of pets do you or own?
4. Where did you get your pet?
5. For how long have you owned these pets?
6. Why did you decided to own these pets?
7. What type of relationships do you have with these pets?
8. Are you very close or separated from your pets; how and why?
9. Are you concerned regularly about the health wellbeing of your pets?
10. Do you consider your pets as part/s of you family and how?
11. What would you do or react if your pet is declared missing?
12. Do you consider having more pets, which types, how, and why?
13. Have you ever adopted any pets from any "non-profits or charity organizations" in the last 5 years or lees?
14. What experiences have you had with your pets?
15. Did you grow up with pets?
16. How does your culture view pet?