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## **Many Americans without Cats at Home Buy Into the Stereotypes of Multiple-Cat Owners, Describing Them as Lonely, Homebodies, and “Crazy Cat Ladies”**

### ***In Contrast, Multiple-Cat Owners Point Out the Many Benefits of Having Several Cats***

**New York, NY** – Americans’ perceptions of multiple-cat owners vary dramatically depending on whether or not they have cats at home, according to a new survey conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Tidy Cats. While majorities of non-cat owners agree that “lonely” (69%) or “crazy cat lady” (58%) tend to describe multiple-cat owners, most of those who own two cats or more disagree (only 22% agree with each of these two epithets).

Those who own several cats tend to paint a much more positive picture, as they are most likely to describe people who own multiple cats as being caring and loving (96%), generous (90%), well adjusted and fulfilled (87%), and liking company (87%). Other prominent attributes include:

- Energetic/full of energy (75%)
- Clean and tidy (75%)
- A homebody (59%)

They are less likely to agree that the terms “crazy cat lady” (22%), lonely (22%), disorganized (14%), messy and disheveled (14%), or anti-social (11%) tend to describe multiple-cat owners.

Many adults who do not own a cat have very mixed perceptions of multiple-cat owners.

On the positive side, top attributes that non-cat owners would use to describe multiple-cat owners include caring and loving (81%), liking company (70%), and generous (63%).

However, non-cat owners are much less likely to use other positive traits, such as well-adjusted and fulfilled (44%), energetic (38%), and clean and tidy (32%) to describe multiple-cat owners. At the same time, non-cat owners are more likely than are multiple-cat owners to say they would describe people with more than one cat as being a homebody (75%), lonely (69%), a “crazy cat lady” (58%), messy and disheveled (50%), disorganized (46%) and anti-social (44%).

In fact, when probed with another question, a total of 62% of non-cat owners say they agree with the statement, “when I think about people with multiple cats, I think of the phrase ‘crazy cat lady’” (22% strongly agree and 41% somewhat agree). This association is most common among those under the age of 35 (73% agree).

As shown below, the biggest gaps in perceptions of multiple-cat owners between multiple-cat owners and those who do not have a cat pertain to their being lonely (minus 47 points), well-adjusted and fulfilled (plus 43 points) , and clean and tidy (plus 43 points).

	Multiple-Cat Owners	Adults without Cats	Difference in percentage points
Caring and loving	96%	81%	+15
Generous	90%	63%	+27
Well adjusted/ fulfilled	87%	44%	+43
Likes company	87%	70%	+17
Energetic/ full of energy	75%	38%	+37
Clean and tidy	75%	32%	+43
Homebody	59%	75%	-16
Crazy cat lady	22%	58%	-36
Lonely	22%	69%	-47
Disorganized	14%	46%	-32
Messy and disheveled	14%	50%	-36
Anti-social	11%	44%	-33

- Among those without a cat at home, men are even more likely than women to attribute negative characteristics to multiple-cat owners, particularly “crazy cat lady” (63% of men vs. 53% of women), anti-social (50% vs. 37%), and lonely (74% vs. 63%). Adults under age 35 who do not own a cat are also more likely than those aged 55 and older to agree that these traits describe multiple-cat owners.

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted May 21-26, 2009. For the survey, national samples of 750 adults aged 18 and older who do not own a cat and 500 adults who own more than one cat from Ipsos’ U.S. online panel were interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample’s composition reflects that of the U.S. adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of 750 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.6 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire adult population of non-cat owners in the United States had been polled. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of 500 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 4.4 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire adult population of multiple-cat owners in the United States had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

Non-cat owners also tend to make negative associations with the homes of multiple-cat owners. At least seven in ten believe that household with multiple cats have furniture and bedding that is covered in hair (85%), are smelly (75%), and have worn or damaged furnishings (73%). Majorities of non-cat owners also picture these homes as being cluttered (66%), unsanitary and dirty (58%), having outdated décor (56%), not well maintained (56%), and disorganized and chaotic (53%).

Despite these negative associations, few multiple-cat owners are embarrassed or evasive about their pets. Only 13% admit that they sometimes do not tell people about the number of cats they



own. Even fewer (8%) say that they hesitate to host holidays or events at their home because others are uncomfortable with the number of cats they have. Similarly, just 8% say that they are sometimes embarrassed to invite friends over because of their cats. Nearly nine in ten cat owners (87%) say that their cats do not prevent them from keeping their home clean and odor-free.

Rather, they are proud of their pets and recognize a variety of benefits of having multiple cats. For eight in ten (83%), their cats keep life interesting and entertaining. Nine in ten people with multiple cats (89%) say that they are proud to let people know about their pets.

Most (88%) also credit their cats with making their lives more fulfilling and rewarding, and over two-thirds (69%) say that they find it fulfilling to be able to provide a good home to their cats. Majorities also agree that their cats bring balance and harmony (52%) and a source of energy (51%) to their household. Additionally, four in ten (43%) acknowledge that their cats help to connect their family. Just 6% fail to see any of these benefits.

- Women are more likely than men to recognize the benefits of having several cats, particularly when it comes to bringing a source of energy (60% vs. 37%) and harmony (59% vs. 42%) to the household. Women are also much more likely than are men to get a sense of fulfillment out of providing a good home for their cats (75% vs. 60%).

Multiple-cat owners are fairly split when it comes to debunking the myths and misperceptions that others have about people who have several cats. They are most likely to wish to debunk the idea that households with multiple cats smell, selected by 35%.

Nearly a quarter (24%) say that the “crazy cat lady” stereotype is the one they would most like to be rid of, preferring terms such as “cat lover” (32%), “animal lover” (13%), “loving, caring, generous person” (11%), “cat owner/person” (11%), or “pet owner/provider” (7%).

One in eight would prefer to discredit the idea that they are lonely homebodies (13%) or that their homes are messy and chaotic (13%). Fifteen percent would not choose to debunk any of these myths.

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