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"My Baby is a Dog": Exploration of Pet Parent Identity

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“My Baby is a Dog”: Exploration of Pet Parent Identity

By

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ABSTRACT

Lacey Yvonne Boston, "'My Baby is a Dog': Exploration of Pet Parent Identity" Thesis Master of Arts in Sociology, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN, May 2014

This quantitative research examined dog owners (n = 100) regarding their relationship with their pets. After beginning to treat her own dog as a child she questioned what happens when a human child enters a family and what impact that has on the pet owners' identity. The researcher hypothesized that having children under the age of 18 in the home would impact dog owners' identity and salience based on their relationship with their pet. She created 13 questions for the survey which operationalized the concepts of identity salience and prominence. By surveying 100 dog owners and asking them about certain activities they do or do not participate in with their dog, the researcher caught a glimpse into the importance of dog owner identity. Demographic questions were added to the survey for purposes of correlating parenthood and dog owner identity. It was proposed that a dog owner with human children under 18 have a less prominent and salient dog owner identity when compared to dog owners with no children under 18 living at home. After distributing the surveys, coding, entering and analyzing the data the results supported her hypotheses. These findings are informative for the actions of dog owners juggling more than one role. The data gave the researcher a peek into the actions of dog owners and the impact they have on their roles as dog and human parents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After an all-around terrible day I[1] arrive home from school where I open the door with a frown on my face and a sad demeanor. Slowly, I hear clicking sounds growing faster and louder on the hardwood floors of my hallway until at last I am greeted with a running jump of excitement from my Boston terrier, Bossy. She is so overjoyed that her stubby black and white body bends left then right repeatedly in a happy "welcome home" dance. She puts her two front paws up on my leg and her tongue incessantly flails in and out. If she *could* pounce all the way up to my face and soak me with kisses, she *would*. How could I stay upset with a greeting like that from someone who loves me so much? My mood changes immediately and a smile breaks out across my previously sullen face. She is my biggest fan. It does not matter if I failed an exam that day, got a speeding ticket, or lost thousands of dollars in a poor stock market deal; she is never disappointed in me. We never fight over whose turn it is to take out the garbage or do the dishes, and all she asks me for is love, food, and a walk now and then. I act as if she is my precious dog baby and I am her mother. I am not only aware of my motherly actions, but I continually comply with them without reservation. After transitioning into doggy parenthood, on top of referring to myself as "mommy" and my dog as "baby", I even refer to my husband as "daddy". "Bossy; go with Daddy and he will let you outside," I offer her. "Come lie with mommy!" I say when it is time for bed. Instead of

[1] I chose to write this thesis from a first person perspective. This is for a very specific reason: to connect the researcher to the reader. I agree with theorists such as Patricia Hill Collins about the researchers necessity to disclose their position related to the research, whom, as described by Mary Jo Neitz, "understand[s] that writers as well as subjects are located, and that location matters"(Dillon 2003). It is for this reason that I chose to pen this research as I have in order to create a more human and relatable piece of work. It is my belief that scholarship should not be reserved only for those that have had the privilege to earn a college education.

"purchasing" her and treating her as another object in my home I have symbolically adopted her as my surrogate child.

After living like this for two years now I wonder just how normal this "human-dog" family really is (Power 2008). I certainly cannot be the only college student with a dog that is treated like a child. As a matter of fact, I know plenty of dog owners who have similar relationships to their dogs. This is the relationship I want with my dog and one that I realize I have created myself. What fosters a relationship originating in a purchased item, like a dog, being treated as much more than a commodity? Which types of people are more likely to fall into this "dog as family" dynamic and how far do they take it? How common is it today for a dog to be brought to the status of almost human? There are a plethora of questions regarding this topic but this study will focus on just one; the identity of "dog owner" and what makes that identity more prominent and salient.

Just how committed am I to my identity as Bossy's mother? Since I just phrased the previous question pertaining to myself as "Bossy's mother" rather than "Bossy's owner" is that question even warranted? Since I am a young college student with no human children of my own I have no qualms about spoiling my dog, spending lots of time with her, and treating her like my baby. If and when I do have children how will they change my relationship with Bossy? I am interested in what ramifications the birth of my human child will have on my relationship with my very beloved dog child. This must be important beyond my own life and curiosity considering there are an estimated 70 million dogs as pets in the U.S. today (AVMA 2012). How do other people interact with their pets and how are their relationship dynamics with their dogs different than mine? This question has prompted me to study the difference between the ways a human

parent negotiates their dog owner identity compared to a person not currently engaging in a human parent role. Therefore my hypothesis is that family structure affects the priority of pet owner identity. My theoretical framework and the exploration of the previous research will serve as the basis for this research study. If we look closer into how strong of an identity dog owners have we could potentially make this information of use in future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

While literature around this topic is not exactly abundant, what has been written is generally innovative, exciting and thorough. A book series entitled "Animals, Culture, and Society" which includes such books as *Understanding Dogs* by Clinton Sanders (1999), *If You Tame Me* by Leslie Irvine (2004) and *Regarding Animals* by Arnold Arluke and Clinton Sanders (1996), is especially insightful into the relationships between humans and their companion animals. Dogs' size and habits prompted humans to invite them, as opposed to another species, into our homes (Irvine 2004). To touch on the existing and still simultaneously connect the literature with my particular research frame I have created four subsections of the literature review: (1) identity and roles among humans; (2) dog self; (3) dogs as family; (4) the effect of dogs on humans' mental and physical health.

Identity and Roles

Identity is something we all have but about which we rarely think critically – unless you are a social scientist of course. Identity fits seamlessly into our lives and is constantly changing with the roles we play and our agency as humans to portray their importance. For the purposes of this study we will be framing identity as "parts of a self composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play" (Stryker and Burke 2000:284). This section will cover some terminology that is pertinent to understanding the research design and findings with the help of previous literature on identity.

Sheldon Stryker has provided much insight into the conceptualization of identity (1968; Stryker and Serpe 1994). Stryker theorizes that our identities, which are made up of several roles and have rather blurry boundaries, make up our "self" and that these identities are placed in a hierarchy based on the importance of each identity to the person (1968). Stryker conceptualizes a few terms which relate to the importance of an identity. These concepts include: identity salience, commitment, and role behavior (Stryker 1968; Stryker and Serpe 1994).

Self structure can be broken down into two dimensions further defined by Sheldon Stryker which are identity commitment[2] and identity salience. "The concept of identity salience may be defined as the probability, for a given person, of a given identity being invoked in a variety of situations" (Stryker 1968:560). An example of a very salient identity is race, for it cannot be easily disguised and it generally affects the person in all of their different life settings whether it is work, school, home or the public. A dog owner with a bumper sticker that states, "My Boston Terrier is smarter than your honor student" or has photos of their pet at work would be considered to have high identity salience. One with dog owner identity salience is likely talk about their dog in other roles of their lives, or choose to forego an event to spend time with their dog.

Commitment refers to the strength of feeling associated to a certain identity and the result of choices made which affects or changes relationships with others (Stryker 1968). It is the "depth of the relationships entered by virtue of an identity" (Stryker 1968:561). Essentially, how strongly a person is attached to their role and how emotionally engrained in their life this identity becomes reflects the amount of commitment the subject has for a role. When a person mourns the death of their pet for a

[2] Moving forward "commitment" will be used interchangeably with "identity prominence."

long time, perhaps almost as much as that of a human relative, they could be assumed to have strong commitment to their role as dog owner. Likewise, when a person lets their dog kiss them on the face, sleep in their bed, or says "I love you" to their pet, they are making choices which reflect the commitment level of that identity. It is probable that these actions will change the subjects' relationship with others. Sheldon Stryker (1968) also explains that where identity commitment is observed, identity salience is implied. One is followed by the other; strong identity commitment is bound to intensify identity salience.

It is important for one to take into account the behaviors of a person to better understand identity, as implied by Sheldon Stryker in his article regarding the relevance of symbolic interaction theory in family research (1968). Actors often name themselves and others for the sake of placing all in a position which evokes certain expectations (Stryker 1968). By naming oneself a "pet parent" or referring to a dog as a "child" one is altering that actors' social position and "in so doing they create internalized expectations with respect to their own behavior" (Stryker 1968:559). A pet parent is thus a new expected role that has been made alternative to that of pet owner. It is through social interactions that people learn how to act towards and connect with certain objects. If someone were to encounter a dog owner that refers to their dog as their baby and gives them kisses they should understand not to say, "It's just a dog, what is the big deal?" or "ew" as that might offend the pet owner based on their pet owner identity. These behaviors which express the importance of a certain identity in comparison to others can be better understood with the previous explanations of identity salience and commitment.

Role behavior is also made up of two parts: role selection and role performance.

Role selection involves the participant's agency in choosing to engage in a role while role performance involves meeting the expected actions of a role (Stryker 1968; Stryker and Serpe 1994; Stryker and Burke 2000). From a dog owner to choosing to kiss their dog and call them their baby, to only doing what is minimally required to care for them; the owner is showing how highly they value this role. Some people may view allowing a dog to kiss you on the face as dirty and gross, while others welcome it. This is all symbolically constructed and viewed through our acted-out identities. Being strongly committed to one's role as "dog parent" would presumably be more accepting of kisses from their dog. So by assembling the aforementioned concepts one can create the framework for understanding and navigating Stryker's identity theory and the salience hierarchy.

Greer and Egan (2012) analyzed the literature surrounding role salience and hypothesized three different outcomes for people juggling multiple roles. Their first hypothesis suggested that having a variety of roles that were very different from one another would result in higher general satisfaction. It was later discovered from their research that people much prefer having multiple similar roles. Their second hypothesis suggested that the more roles a person fulfills at one point in their life the higher satisfaction they will receive. The first two hypotheses coincide similarly with the concept of role enhancement which "suggests that, *under particular circumstances*, multiple roles can enhance well-being" (original emphasis; Cline 2010:118). The third hypothesis claimed that more simultaneous roles result in more role conflict. This hypothesis easily relates to role strain theory which refers to the problems resulting from a person attempting to fulfill many, and possibly conflicting, roles (Goode 1960). The

general understanding of roles creates a problem of potentially too few or too many roles to maintain. In a study to be more thoroughly explained later, the researcher claims that the additional role of dog owner for married couples potentially created more role strain and therefore did not result in lower scores of depression for those subjects as compared to unmarried respondents (Cline 2010). Greer and Egan (2012) cite Stryker and his theory of identity hierarchy as they explain that we are rarely made aware of our salience until we are forced to choose one role over another because of role conflict. This literature became pertinent to the research design and analysis of the survey in question for operationalizing the determining factors for dog owner identity.

Dog Self

It was previously believed that since dogs did not maintain a language they did not have a self either. Sanders (1993) claims in his autoethnographic and participant observation work that even though dogs do not have a verbal language, they still can communicate with us. He goes on to explore the way that humans interpret their dogs' identity. Since dogs do not share our language they cannot verbally confirm that they have a shared reality. Sanders believes that dogs are "minded coactors" whom purposely act toward achieving goals via social exchanges with humans and other canines as well (1993:207). Gaunet and Deputte (2011) further acknowledge the ability of dogs to communicate with humans via visual contact, attention-getting behaviors, and spatial nearness to a desired object in the presence of their human caretakers. From the study of 21 dogs the researchers observed and analyzed the dogs' attempt to communicate with their owners. The results included a very different set of actions between the dogs' attempt to get a desired item when their owner was present from when their owner was

absent from the room. Dogs purposely acted toward their owner to communicate that they desired a specific object and glance back and forth from the object and their owner to make them understand what they wanted.

In Sanders' (1993) study, for which he interviewed 24 dog owners, he says that owners shape the identity of their dog as the owners transition the dog's role from object to surrogate child. A major part played in this transition is the intense emotional ties people have with their dogs. According to Sanders (1993), the human-dog relationship is different than any human-human relationship because it is based on affection and allows a criticism-free interaction. Regarding the mindedness of dogs Sanders compares the creation of their "self" to that of families creating a self for a family member that is severely disabled. He explores four factors that assist in the creation of identity for our pets.

First is the attribute of thinking for which he argues dogs can think of their actions and the results of the outcomes as well as remember previous experiences. His example portrays an older dog of his which purposely slowed down to play with a younger puppy who could not keep up when on a hike. Dogs can communicate that they have a shared definition of the situation; they can take the role of the other and can also assign a future implication to the event (Sanders 1993:212). Additionally, dogs have preferences, such as a favorite toy or food and place to sit. Dogs show preference by choosing one thing over another when given a choice between the two. The third factor Sanders identifies is reciprocating or giving as they are receiving which most dogs do by returning love and affection. Lastly is being incorporated into a social place, which of course in any family setting is true, unless a dog is kept isolated for its entire life. Based on these factors,

along with the emotional ties people have to their dogs, Sanders (1993) argues that dogs do, in fact, earn an identity which humans do shape but under almost all circumstances still exists. The human is in charge of interpreting the dogs' emotion, whether they understand them as joy, love, sadness or vindictiveness; it is still an emotion even though it is translated by humans into whatever they perceive them to mean.

Anthropologist Sue Parker claims all animals must have some form of self knowledge as they all have some knowledge that their "being is located in or originates in their bodies" (1997:76). It is apparent through the research around the topic that dogs are seen to have a self and identities which they act out but we as humans must negotiate with them. We do this in part by communicating with our pets. Tannen (2004) explores this communication in her study of two families and their interactions with a dog over a week-long period. She uses the term "ventriloquizing" to label the act of speaking for a third party while they are present (2004:402). We not only speak to our pets but for them in the roles we need them to fulfill. Her study showed several ways that "talking the dog" was a social lubricant for family communication and interaction (2004). According to Tannen speaking to or for the dog served a variety of purposes for the family such as, "frame shift to a humorous key, buffer criticism, deliver praise, teach values to a child, resolve potential conflict with a spouse, and create a family identity that includes the dogs as family members"(2004:399).

Dogs as Family

A review of literature regarding dog owners uncovered that many respondents referred to the dog as a member of their family. Whether it was simply a member of the family (Faver and Cavazos 2008; Irvine 2004; Sanders 1993,1999; Tannen 2004;

Veldkamp 2009), a sibling (Kaufman and Kaufman 2006), or a baby (Greenebaum 2004; Power 2008; Prato-Privede, Fallani and Valsecchi 2006) the majority mentioned the prevalence of a relationship between humans and dogs that is compared to a human-human relationship dynamic. In a study specifically researching the relationships of Latino college students (n = 200) to their animal companions the researchers found that 92% of respondents referred to their pet (cat or dog) as a member of their family (Faver and Cavazos 2008).

Ramirez (2006) explores how owners use gender norms to select the appropriate dog, construct gender ideologies of their dog, and use their dog to display their gender through 26 semi-structured interviews with dog owners. The participants often attributed gender stereotypes to dogs through their descriptions and explanations of their pets. Often they claimed that male dogs were more assertive and dominant; whereas female dogs were submissive and pretty. Several owners reported their relationships with their dogs as emulating that of human relationships. Admittedly, the owners became like mother or father to their pets (Ramirez 2006). Women are more likely to refer to dogs as children and speak to them in a mothering tone, better known as a baby voice (Prato-Privede, Fallani and Valsecchi 2006; Ramirez 2006; Britton and Button 2005).

Greenebaum (2004) used her participant observational study at a dog bakery social hour called, "Yappy hour" to demonstrate what great lengths owners will go to in order to please their "fur-babies." These owners traveled on average 30 minutes to an hour to allow their dogs to play with other dogs and buy them a treat from the bakery while they enjoyed socializing with other dog owners. According to the American Veterinarian Medical Association almost six in every ten dog owners considers their pets

as family (AVMA 2012).

According to Tannen (2004) calling a significant other "mommy" or "daddy" in regards to the dog can be seen as a reinforcement of the bond between the couple. She also states:

> Examples of family members talking as, to, or about the dogs in the dogs' presence constitute instances of the continuous, seamless shifts in framing and footing that characterize conversational discourse in general and family discourse in particular… Thus, talking the dog is a resource by which individual speakers accomplish interaction while reflecting and constituting their family identity. (Tannen 2004:417)

By giving our dogs a voice we create a self for them and shape our own family identity. A study done by Walsh (2009) showed that speaking to the dog as well as ones' spouse resulted in greater life satisfaction and marital satisfaction as well as emotional and physical health.

In a case study done by Kaufman and Kaufman (2006) on a young boy suffering the loss of his dog, their notes often mentioned how the child associated the dog as a family member. The boy reported the dog to be a close friend which shared unconditional love with him and helped him to play away his stress. This constant relationship not only created stability for him, it also gave him the benefits of a non-judgmental, non-parental companionship as another researcher described it (Power 2008).

The Effect of Dogs on Humans

Research regarding the benefits of owning an animal has been tried from several different angles. Studies on the effect of animals on humans range from physiological effects to emotional effects. Physiologically, research has shown that dog ownership often leads to less minor and major ailments as well as faster recovery from illness (Wells

2009). Overall, owners tend to experience positive consequences as a result of owning a dog; as elaborated in the corresponding research studies.

In Cline's (2010) study on the role of dog ownership she interviewed 200 adults using random digit dialing asking 200 questions. The interviews lasted an average of one hour and only a small amount of questions pertained to her specific study. She hypothesized that depression rates would be lower for dog owners based on the mediating variables of dogs as "social support" and increased "physical activity." She found that she could not strongly conclude owning a dog decreased the likelihood of depression in the general population; this could partly be attributed to the small sampling size for her study (Cline 2010:118). The moderating variables she used included age, sex and marital status. Although she felt strongly that all subjects benefitted somewhat from dog ownership, her findings revealed that women and single persons benefitted more than men and partnered people (i.e. report lesser likelihood of depression). The reason for these hypotheses included that dog owners often come into contact with other people because of their dogs. A dog owner, for instance, has a whole supplementary list of social spaces they might visit such as doggy daycare, Dog Park, grooming salons, veterinarians and pet related stores. Owning a dog is also seen as an additional reason to engage in physical activity like going on walks with their dog. Income could also play a factor as a moderating variable in a study like this since a dog owner must be able to afford to financially visit such spaces. Both of these variables can be seen as mediating variables since owning a dog means more physical activity as well as more social ties and both of those things are generally related to lower depression. Therefore owning a dog should correlate to lower depression. This comes as little surprise since dogs have shown

to be a deterrent for loneliness and isolation (Wells 2009).

A similar study done by Rijken and Beek (2010) of 3500 older adult persons with a chronic illness in the Netherlands illustrated the differences in activity levels between dog owners and non-dog owners. While there was not a significant difference in social contact and loneliness levels they did see a spike in the physical activity scores of dog owners. Results showed 50% of non-dog owners' self-reported level of physical activity met "the standard of being healthy active," yet 70% of dog owners did meet the standard (Rijken and Beek 2010:281). The same did not prove true for cat owners.

A study done to test the effect of holding an animal on students' (n = 62) blood pressure revealed that a small yet significant decrease in systolic blood pressure was seen shortly after the animal was removed from their lap (Somerville et al. 2008). This test could not be seen as very internally valid due to relatively low sample size and the combining the results for dog and cat samples which could be important to the dependent variable in their study. Had the two variables been separately analyzed their effects could have been different across the two species.

Not only do dogs offer companionship and reportedly aid our health but 86% of the respondents in the study on Latino students also reported feeling a sense of safety because of their dogs. Only 44% of pet owners reported their cats creating a sense of safety (Faver and Cavazos 2008:254). An experimental study done on 16 older adult patients at a nursing home found that Animal Assisted Activities produced lower scores of depression measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) Scale (Le Roux and Kemp 2009). Upon follow up they were told by subjects that the contact with the dogs

reminded them of fond memories with their own pets. The subjects in the experimental group did not have lower anxiety scores on the Beck Anxiety Inventory test.

Britton and Button (2005) interviewed prison staff and inmates at a facility in Kansas which placed prisoners in charge of training puppies. The researchers found that many inmates and administrative staff reported the company and responsibility of dogs to be very therapeutic for the inmates (Britton and Button 2005). In one account, a very angry and troublesome inmate became grounded and focused when given the opportunity to work with the dogs. His behavior changed to the point that he did not receive disciplinary action for months at a time.

They are such an impactful part of our lives that we cherish them almost to a fault because of the amount of pain we suffer at the loss of such a beloved member of the family. People often mourn the death of their dog because of the strength of their attachment and intense emotional ties to the animal (Sanders 1993; Kaufman and Kaufman 2006). Veldkamp (2009) did an entire study on the transition of pets as family members in Japan and the rituals involved in pet funerals and graves. He explained that pets can act as a function to fulfill a "diluted family" including single persons and empty nesters (Veldkamp 2009:344). He observed that the familial bond only lasts until death when pets are buried at a separate resting place from humans.

Dogs are an important factor in many human lives. Dogs affect the way we act, the things we buy and the connections we make not only with our dogs but with other humans as well. I believe anyone claiming that pets do not impact our society on a level worth studying is hugely mistaken. A dog owner will negotiate a self for their dog, share their homes, food and beds with their dog, and even mourn their death possibly including

a funeral. It is for these reasons I find it evident that we have allowed our dog owner identities to weave their way into our personal selves and become an integral part of our lives.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study suggests that a larger quantitative survey regarding pet parent identity can be helpful in finding the difference between dog owning families with and without human children. I chose to conduct this study using a survey so the results can be a stepping stone to a consequent, larger study which can be more representative of the pet owner population. This study will show us the prevalence and degree to which American families adopt the human-dog family dynamic. The results could be beneficial for organizations marketing to pet owners. Research like this could lead to and connect with studies done on the health benefits from strong dog owner social roles. Studying the social support systems affiliated with dog owner identities will produce information on the benefits and strains of becoming a dog owner.

Hypothesis

Based on existing literature I hypothesized that families with human children in the home would report lower pet parent identity salience and commitment. I expected the respondents to have a more salient and prominent identity as human parent. Conversely, I hypothesized that pet owners with no children or children that are no longer in the home would demonstrate higher salience and commitment to their pet parent identity. I believe that people are more likely to treat pets as children in the absence or replacement of human children. An example of this includes young persons with no human children wanting to see what it is like to be responsible for another living thing. On the other end of the spectrum are older couples whose children have moved out of the house. These couples have become empty nesters and may choose to fill the void of human children

with dog children. For purposes of quantitative statistical analysis my hypotheses are stated here:

> H1: *Dog owner identity prominence will be lower for respondents with children under 18 years of age living in their home and higher for respondents without children under 18 years of age.*
>
> H2: *Dog owner identity salience will be lower for respondents with children under 18 years of age living in their home and higher for respondents without children under 18 years of age.*

Thus the null hypothesis is that dog owner identity prominence and salience are not affected by the presence of children under 18. Through the data collection and analysis I tested these hypotheses and subsequently I explain the research study and findings.

Research Design

For studying my hypotheses I used the variable of "Children under 18" as the independent variable and "Identity Salience" and "Identity Prominence" as the dependent variables. These variables were operationalized through carefully designed survey questions (survey available in Appendix B). For this study I created a survey consisting of 14 questions regarding the demographics, living situation and specifics about the respondent and their dog(s). I also created 13 questions operationalizing identity salience and commitment by asking about the respondents' relationship with their dog(s). The survey was then distributed to dog owners in Southern Minnesota. The survey was created entirely by me and my thesis committee at a thesis proposal meeting. Concepts were drawn from Stryker (1968) and I was inspired by the articles in the literature review but the survey is my own.

The first part of the survey included a few questions regarding the demographics of the dog owner and their dog(s). The survey began asking "What is your age?" with a blank for writing in their age. Then the survey asked "What is your sex?" with the option to circle either "M" for male or "F" for female. The respondent was then asked to "Enter the quantity of all that currently apply:" for two questions regarding four groups of persons in a matrix. "How many of these relationships do you have?" and "How many of the following live with you at the same address?" were asked regarding four different relationships. These relationships were listed as "Significant other/spouse/partner," "Roommates," "Children under 18 years of age", and "Children 18 years of age or older." This gave me information on which relationships they have and who, if anyone, lives with the respondent and their dog.

After the matrix involving the respondents' relationships were the questions about their dog(s). This was a matrix for them to fill in and check the answers pertaining to their dog. To separate between multiple dogs I had them identify the dog by their age instead of their name to ensure confidentiality. After writing their dogs' age in the far left box they were asked to check a category for weight, a choice for who the dog belongs to, and one for the dogs main role. The options for dogs' size were "Small 1-40lbs.," "Medium 41-80lbs.," and "Large 80+ lbs." The options for "To whom does this dog primarily belong?" were "Myself," "My partner and I," "My partner," "My child(ren)," "My family," and "Other." Lastly was, "What is the primary role of this dog?" with options of "Pet," "Breeding," "Service," "Hunting," "Show," and "Other."

The second part of the survey asked questions about certain ways the respondent treats their dog. Identity prominence was measured by the respondents' self-reported

frequency of participating in the following actions. First, respondents were asked to identify the frequency of which they refer to their dog as a child. This question was posed as, "How often do you refer to your dog as your child/baby/sibling?" They were also asked to identify the frequency of talking to their dog as though they were human. This question was posed as, "How often do you talk to your dog as though they were human?" Next, the respondents were asked to identify the frequency that they allow their dog to sleep in their bed with them at night. This question was posed as, "How often do you allow your dog to sleep in bed with you at night?" The respondents were then asked to identify the frequency that they say "I love you" to their dogs. This question was posed as, "How often do you tell your dog 'I love you'?" Respondents were also asked to report the frequency of how often they celebrated their pet on holidays including their birthday. This question was posed as, "How often do you remember/celebrate/purchase gifts for your dogs' birthday/adoption anniversary or the holidays?" Lastly, for identity prominence, respondents were asked to report the frequency of dressing their dogs in clothes. This question was posed as, "How often do you dress your dog in clothes?" The variable of identity prominence was analyzed through the sum of these questions.

Identity salience was measured by the respondents' self-reported frequency of the following activities. Respondents were asked to report the frequency of talking about their dog in general, with friends, with family, with co-workers or classmates, and with other dog owners. These questions were posed as: "How much do you talk about your dog in conversations in general?", "How much do you talk about your dog with your family?", "How much do you talk about your dog with your friends?", "How much do you talk about your dog with your coworkers or classmates?", and "How much do you

talk about your dog with other dog owners?" Respondents were also asked to report the frequency at which they missed or left events early because of their dogs. This question was posed as, "How often do you refrain from doing things or leave events early to get home to your dog(s)?" The variable of identity salience was analyzed through the sum of these questions.

All of the questions in the second half of the survey gave the respondent five options from which to answer on a Likert scale. The Likert scale was used to measure the frequency of the previous activities with the following choices: "Never," "Rarely," "Sometimes," "Often," and "Always." The five questions regarding how often the respondent talks about their dog had the final option of "A lot" instead of "Always." This decision was made because it was deemed unlikely that anyone "Always" talks about their dog during conversations among different social groups. These questions were meant to operationalize concepts related to the dog owners' identity. I analyzed the responses to see how prominent and salient their dog owner identity was with regards to the identity hierarchy (Stryker 1968).

Data Collection

The sample for this study consisted of 100 survey responses by adult (over the age of 18) dog owners in Southern Minnesota. The sample is non-probability purposive. The reason for the chosen sample was because of limited time and availability of respondents. I found this sampling technique to allow for easily accessible respondents and a fairly inexpensive data collection technique. Some of the respondents were dog owners known to me or were acquaintances of dog owners that had already taken the survey; this is also known as snowball sampling. The remainder of dog owners surveyed were approached at

various public parks in a college town in Southern Minnesota. I spent many days in the summer of 2013 with a clipboard, pen, and container of dog treats at public parks throughout the city. A majority of this time was spent in a public fenced-in dog park. In the park, I approached people who appeared to be dog owners[3] over the age of 18 and asked them if they would be willing to answer a few questions about their dog. When they replied, "Yes," I handed them the clipboard and asked them to please read and sign the informed consent form (see Appendix A)[4]. They only needed to sign the form if they wished to have their name associated with their answers. None of the people I met in public spaces refused participation in the study. After finishing the survey the respondent handed back the clipboard and I offered them a treat for their dog. Depending on if they wanted the treat or not, I gave the treat to their dog or to them directly and I moved on to another respondent. Although I expected many people to refuse participation in the study, I was surprised that all the dog owners I encountered were willing to participate.

I assumed the respondents were giving implied consent by voluntarily participating in the survey and by reading the informed consent attached to the front of the survey. The informed consent form attached to the survey assured the respondents that their survey responses would be confidential and their answers cannot be associated back to them. All respondents were given the option to sign the informed consent form stating they did not mind that their name was associated with their answers. This form also contained an explanation of the purpose of the study and the contact information for me, my thesis advisor, and the IRB director if they had any questions. There were no

[3] Generally by the presence of their dog.

[4] My name on the informed consent and survey are different from that on the final copy of this research as I was not married when I began conducting the survey and was married at the time my final paper and findings were written. Thus, my last name changes from maiden, Theodorson, to married, Boston.

imminent risks that I was aware of which pertained to the respondents volunteering to participate in this survey. However, I still explained that there was a minimal chance of risk since questions about their pet could bring to light some tender emotions. I am aware that my sample was not random and therefore cannot be considered representative of any larger population.

The concepts being used for this study are identity salience and identity prominence or commitment. Identity salience is seen as the possibility of one identity to be noticeable across multiple different roles the actor portrays (Stryker 1968). An example of this is a dog owner talking about their dog in places that are not dog related such as their job, a class room, or with a friend at the grocery store. A dog owner who has a salient dog owner identity does not leave their identity as "pet owner" at the door of their house when they leave; it follows them everywhere they go.

Identity prominence or commitment to a role is the strength of the feeling associated with a certain identity and the strength of certain relationships because of the role (Stryker and Burke 2000). A person who loves their dog very much and is committed to their identity as a dog owner is likely to spend extra time and money on their pet. For instance many pet parents take their dog to dog parks, get their dog groomed, buy clothes for their dog and have a picture of them at their desk. This things show attachment to the persons' dog owner identity because they are willing to show their strong connection to their pet no matter what role they are playing. Now I will explain how the survey questions I have chosen will relate to these concepts.

There are seven questions I have chosen that were operationalizations for the dependent variable of identity salience. A dog owner with low dog owner identity

salience will not allow their dog owner identity to be present as often when acting out another role. Since identity salience regards the likelihood of one role to appear in the setting of another role I used questions asking the respondent if they talk about their dog in different settings. This was measured by asking the respondents to share how often they talk about their dog in general, with friends, with family, with co-workers and classmates, and with other dog owners. When a dog owner claims to talk about their dog often in a variety of settings then it is assumed that their identity as dog owner is a salient one. I also included a question asking the respondent how often they leave events early or refrain from attending social functions in order to be with their dog. This question considered the amount of alternate social interaction the respondent sacrifices to be at home with their dog. These questions were meant to operationalize the salience of their dog owner identity spilling into other aspects of their social life.

As a marker for commitment I attempted to measure the strength of their role with the remaining questions. A person that is strongly committed to their role as a dog parent will share their emotions of love with their dog. They will not care about having, subjectively "gross," saliva kisses from their dogs. They are willing to share their bed with their dog, and maybe even label their dog as their "baby." The questions I chose for the survey were meant to operationalize identity prominence because they are perceived to be indicators of this variable. The intention is to assume that someone who participates in the aforementioned activities has granted their pet access to activities generally reserved for humans. For example, usually humans only speak to and say "I love you" to one another. A bed and clothing were created by humans, for humans. Animals do not know when their birthday is, let alone that it calls for celebration. Kissing is normally for

humans that are involved in an intimate relationship. Lastly, a person who is someone else's "child" is one born from the same genes or having an incredibly close bond with the parent figure. I believe these questions will accurately operationalize commitment. A person who considers their dog a commodity, and therefore themselves as merely owner, would be less likely to participate in previously stated activities. Since about half of the questions are written to operationalize the concept of identity salience and half operationalize identity prominence I feel my study shows good context validity. It is important that there are multiple indicators for each concept which allows for cross referencing of questions.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

The answers to the surveys were coded in interval, nominal and ordinal levels. For greater detail please refer to the actual survey used in the study available in Appendix B. For all variables in the survey a code of -9 was given to any questions that respondents either skipped or missed. This was done to avoid skewing the data with 0 as "No Response" coding. The variable of age was coded as an interval of one year for each year of age. Sex was coded nominally (1=Male, 2=Female). "How many of these relationships do you have?" was coded as a question of whether or not they had the relationship and was not coded by the number or relationships the respondent recorded. If the respondent put a number in the box for each relationship other than zero they were identified as having that relationship ("significant other/spouse/partner", "roommate", "children under the age of 18", and "children over the age of 18"). If they put a zero or did not write anything in that box, they were assumed to not have that relationship and were coded as such (1=Yes, 2=No). The same procedure was used for the answer to the survey question "How many of the following live with you at the same address?" regarding the same group of relationship options. The dog's age was entered as an interval of one for each year. The dog's size was categorized and coded ordinally as follows (1=Small(1-40lbs.), 2=Medium(41-80lbs.), 3=Large(80+lbs.)). "To whom does this dog primarily belong?" was coded as follows (1=Myself, 2=My Partner and I, 3=My Partner, 4=My Child(ren), 5=My Family, 6=Other). Answers to the survey question "What is the primary role of this dog?" were coded (1=Pet, 2=Breeding, 3=Service, 4=Hunting, 5=Show, 6=Other). For the questions regarding identity salience and

commitment the responses were coded as follows (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always or A lot). I used SPSS to calculate the significance of differences between the results from dog owners with children under 18 in the home compared to families with no children under 18 in the home.

In an attempt to consolidate the multiple dependent variables in the survey I ran two factor analyses in SPSS. To create a compound variable for both the concept of identity salience as well as commitment I ran a factor analysis with the chosen variable indicators. The results of those tests are seen below with the identity salience factor on

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor
	1
How often do you refrain from doing things or leave events early to get home to your dog(s)?	.611
How often do you talk about your dog(s) in conversations in general?	.875
How often do you talk about your dog(s) with your family?	.793
How often do you talk about your dog(s) with your co-workers or classmates?	.855
How often do you talk about your dog(s) with your friends?	.930
How often do you talk about your dog(s) with other dog owners?	.836

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. 1 factors extracted. 4 iterations required.

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor
	1
How often do you refer to your dog(s) as your child/baby/sibling?	.704
How often do you speak to your dog(s) as though they were a human?	.710
How often do you allow your dog(s) to sleep in bed with you at night?	.616
How often do you allow your dog(s) to kiss (lick) you on the face?	.675
How often do you tell your dog(s) "I love you"?	.808
How often do you remember/celebrate/purchase gifts for your dogs' birthday/adoption anniversary or the holidays?	.677
How often do you dress your dog(s) in clothes?	

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. 1 factors extracted. 4 iterations required.

the left and identity prominence factor on the right.

By analyzing the Exploratory Factor Analysis correlation table I concluded that of

the seven variables expected to represent commitment six of them were found to be significant. This means that six of the seven variables are significantly correlated to the latent variable subsequently labeled “Identity Prominence”. The outlier variable, “How often do you dress your dog in clothes?” had an eigenvalue of less than 0.5 correlations to the latent variable and was deleted from the new factor construction. This is why it is missing from the table. I transformed the remaining correlating variables into a new variable for the purposes of running a MANOVA (multivariate analysis of variance) test. This was done by taking the six chosen variables (“How often do you refer to your dog as your child/baby/sibling?”, “How often do you talk to your dog as though they were human?”, “How often do you allow your dog to sleep in bed with you at night?”, “How often do you tell your dog ‘I love you’?”, and “How often do you remember/celebrate/purchase gifts for your dogs’ birthday/adoption anniversary or the holidays?”) and adding their numerical codes together then dividing it by six to find the mean answer of these questions for each respondent.

The results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis for identity salience concluded that all six of the chosen variables were strongly correlated. This means that all of the variables were significantly correlated to the latent variable subsequently named “Identity Salience.” The factor analysis showed that the all variables (“How often do you refrain from doing things or leave events early to get home to your dog?”, “How often do you talk about your dog in conversations in general?”, “How often do you talk about your dog with family?” “How often do you talk about your dog with coworkers/classmates?”, “How often do you talk about your dog with friends?”, and “How often do you talk about your dog with other dog owners?”) were correlated enough to justify a new variable

factor based on the correlation of the variables to the latent variable. The same procedure was applied with the six chosen variables as was done for the "Identity Prominence" variables. I created the new variable by adding the responses for each of the variables and dividing them by six to find the mean as the numerical data for the newly generated variable. The two newly generated dependent variables, "Identity Prominence" and "Identity Salience," were tested via MANOVA with the independent variable of "Children under 18." The test of MANOVA was to show how the different variables affected one another.

Findings

I created a test for MANOVA with "Children under 18" as the independent variable and the two new factors, "Identity Salience" and "Identity Prominence" as the dependent variables. The resulting data output table is shown below.

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[c]
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.903	432.675[b]	2.000	93.000	.000	.903	865.350	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.097	432.675[b]	2.000	93.000	.000	.903	865.350	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	9.305	432.675[b]	2.000	93.000	.000	.903	865.350	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	9.305	432.675[b]	2.000	93.000	.000	.903	865.350	1.000
CU18	Pillai's Trace	.066	3.262[b]	2.000	93.000	.043	.066	6.524	.608
	Wilks' Lambda	.934	3.262[b]	2.000	93.000	.043	.066	6.524	.608
	Hotelling's Trace	.070	3.262[b]	2.000	93.000	.043	.066	6.524	.608
	Roy's Largest Root	.070	3.262[b]	2.000	93.000	.043	.066	6.524	.608

a. Design: Intercept + CU18

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using alpha = .05

To avoid a higher chance of Type 1 Error or false rejection of the null hypothesis the Wilks' Lambda test was used. A one-way MANOVA revealed a significant main effect for "Children under 18," Wilks' $\lambda = 0.934$, $F(2, 93.000) = 3.262$, $p = 0.043$, partial eta squared = 0.066. The power to detect the effect was 0.608. There is a statistically significant difference between people with and without "Children under 18" in terms of

dog owner "Identity Salience" and "Identity Prominence" at α = .05. With the Wilks' Lambda significance level just below 0.05 at 0.043 I am inclined to report that having children under 18 does affect a person's dog owner identity. I have therefore chosen to reject the null hypothesis.

In the following data table we can see that "Children under 18" has a statistically significant effect on "Identity Prominence" (F(1,94) = 6.467; p = 0.013). However, by separating the data in the MANOVA the new level of significance is set at p < .025 to account for the multiple dependent variables. "Identity Salience" then has results of (F(1,94) =4.285; p = 0.041) which is no longer considered significant.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[c]
Corrected Model	Identity Prominence	6.451[a]	1	6.451	6.467	.013	.064	6.467	.711
	Identity Salience	3.449[b]	1	3.449	4.285	.041	.044	4.285	.535
Intercept	Identity Prominence	665.033	1	665.033	666.658	.000	.876	666.658	1.000
	Identity Salience	656.324	1	656.324	815.397	.000	.897	815.397	1.000
CU18	Identity Prominence	6.451	1	6.451	6.467	.013	.064	6.467	.711
	Identity Salience	3.449	1	3.449	4.285	.041	.044	4.285	.535
Error	Identity Prominence	93.771	94	.998					
	Identity Salience	75.662	94	.805					
Total	Identity Prominence	1390.889	96						
	Identity Salience	1312.972	96						
Corrected Total	Identity Prominence	100.222	95						
	Identity Salience	79.111	95						

a. R Squared = .064 (Adjusted R Squared = .054)

b. R Squared = .044 (Adjusted R Squared = .033)

c. Computed using alpha = .05

The following correlation table also illustrates this relationship between "Identity Prominence" and "Identity Salience" as correlated to the variable of "Children under 18." The correlation table uses the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and the number of participants to calculate the significance level or probability factor. The correlation between "Identity Prominence" and "Identity Salience" is the highest with a Pearson Correlation $r = 0.730$ and a significance of $p = .000$. The next highest is "Identity

Prominence" and "Children under 18 Years Old" at $r = 0.259$ which is significant in a two-tailed test at $p = 0.010$. The lowest correlation is between "Identity Salience" and "Children under 18" at $r = 0.211$and $p = 0.038$.

Correlations

		Children Under 18 Years Old	Identity Prominence	Identity Salience
Children Under 18 Years Old	Pearson Correlation	1	.259**	.211*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010	.038
	N	100	99	97
Identity Prominence	Pearson Correlation	.259**	1	.730**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010		.000
	N	99	99	96
Identity Salience	Pearson Correlation	.211*	.730**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.000	
	N	97	96	97

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Based on discrepancies for a final word in deciding significance among statistical findings I was uncertain how to report the findings of this study. Assessing these findings shows "Identity Prominence" and "Children under 18" have a positive significant correlation as reported by both of the analyses shown above. "Identity Salience" and "Children under 18" also had a positive correlation but it held a weaker significance and was not significant in the MANOVA tests of between-subjects effects. Although the findings were considered significant by the settings on SPSS and my own expectations, some may argue the significance level was set too high at $\alpha = 0.05$. In an analysis with a lower set significance level, around $\alpha = 0.01$ or lower, these findings would not be significant. I chose to remain consistent with the test results and $\alpha = 0.05$.

Therefore I decided to report that both hypotheses are supported:

H1: *Dog owner identity prominence will be lower for respondents with children under 18 year of age living in their home and higher for respondents without children under 18 years of age.*

H2: *Dog owner identity salience will be lower for respondents with children under 18 years of age living in their home and higher for respondents without children under 18 years of age.*

Dog owner identity commitment was significantly impacted by having children under 18. I concluded that dog owners do experience a significant role shift when they have children. Their dog owner identity is set on the back burner and the identity of human parent becomes more prevalent. I assume this is because the dog no longer gets

the attention it once did, and the child is now the most important thing to care for in the new parents' lives. Many websites and blogs even suggest spending less time with your pet as pregnancy progresses to get them accustomed to their new norm after the baby comes (Fields 2014).

As for identity salience, although it was not a strong significance, it can be suggested that having children under 18 will also affect this variable. In today's society this is easily seen through social media; some people post photos of their dogs on Facebook and others post photos of their babies. This somewhat complies with Stryker's (1968) idea that prominence is a precursor for and will be accompanied by salience. In this case, dog owners tended to show more prominence at home than salience among their other identities. What was most important to me is that prominence was stronger than salience in terms of significance because this conforms to the ideas of Stryker (1968). It would be backwards for someone to gush about their dog in many other settings and not be infatuated with their dog at home.

The correlations table further elaborates the results stated by showing a significant positive correlation between having no children and stronger identity prominence and salience. Respondents reporting no children under 18 were more likely to partake in the actions stated for identity salience and prominence. Since parents of human children naturally have more responsibilities and people to care for they are going to lose time they once spent with their pet. This is why professionals in dog training suggest slowly preparing your dog for having less time spent together. If a dog is not prepared they can get jealous and then potentially aggressive because of the lack of attention (Fields 2014).

Although the significance between having children under 18 and the dependent variables of identity prominence and identity salience was weak, this study has potential to teach us more. After a brief review of the correlations tables and analysis of the data I believe that the sex of a dog owner greatly impacts the relationship one has with their dog. A supplementary correlations table illustrating this can be seen in the table below.

Correlations

		Identity Prominence	Identity Salience	Sex
Identity Prominence	Pearson Correlation	1	.730**	.436**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	99	96	98
Identity Salience	Pearson Correlation	.730**	1	.448**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	96	97	95
Sex	Pearson Correlation	.436**	.448**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	98	95	98

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From conversation with respondents and analyzing survey responses I am given the impression that women participated in activities from this survey more often than men. This is supported through research discussed in the literature review including Ramirez (2006) and Cline (2010) regarding the likelihood of women to speak to their dogs and "mother" them as a child. This may also have something to do with women seeking more companionship from the dog. Many men I have known do love their dogs; however, the dog also serves the functional purpose of hunting partner. This is a common use for dogs in Minnesota and across the Midwest where many dogs are trained to retrieve small game after it is shot with a gun.

Women are also more likely to label their dog as a child or baby which I see as a function of our social expectations (Prato-Privede, Fallani and Valsecchi 2006; Ramirez

2006; Britton and Button 2005). We are socialized to be nurturing and prepared for human babies so we automatically assume that role with another helpless being such as a dog. I personally enjoy the company of my dog and understand how my relationship with her could be compared to that of mother and child. These are profound feelings that could be better explored through a future study on the symbols and meaning of dog ownership.

Limitations

This study has many limitations and shortcomings. Due to the lack of funding for the study the time available for data gathering was limited. I also could not offer a more substantial thank you gesture than a dog treat to the respondents. Another setback was that I could not get permission to loiter at a public place such as the mall or a pet related store where dog owners frequent. Collecting data in Minnesota also limited time in which I could collect data outside at parks before the weather drove people inside and therefore unattainable as public respondents.

While I did my best to think objectively regarding this study, my personal bias as a dog owner has undoubtedly affected this research in many ways. Although I believe that complete objectivity is an unattainable utopia when conducting research; I still regard it as a righteous goal towards which researchers should strive.

Other limitations of this study became apparent after analyzing the surveys. Some respondents believed there should be an option to categorize the dogs' primary role as "Family member." About five respondents checked one answer and then wrote on the side of the paper "family member." One respondent also explained to me that her dog was a medical necessity for an anxiety disorder from which she suffered.

There was not an option for which respondents over the age of 18 could identify they were living with their parents. Instead, when the issue arose I asked them to claim their parents as roommates. Another problem included that some dog owners had multiple dogs and that their dogs were treated differently. The best example was a respondent that explained they allowed one dog to "kiss" them on the face all the time but the other dog eats feces and was never allowed to kiss them on the face. This resulted in a conflict as to how they should respond to the question on the Likert scale from "Never" to "Always."

With more time and another chance to execute this research I would fix these errors regarding the survey and dig deeper into the data. It would give me more time to focus on the differences in relationships to dogs based on the sex of the owner and possibly even the breed of the dog. I particularly find research connecting pets to mental and physical health intriguing and significant. This is something I can only aspire to be a part of sometime in the future.

APPENDIX A

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

You are reading this notice prior to participating in a research study by taking a survey as part of Lacey Theodorson's Graduate Thesis on dog owner identity. The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationships between owners and their dogs.

The survey should take approximately five minutes. This study poses only minimal risk to you and should you feel any discomfort you have the option to stop participation at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will in no way affect your relationship to Minnesota State University, Mankato and you will by no means be punished for or lose benefits by refusing to participate.

Your answers will be recorded and analyzed for research purposes but will be confidential and not traceable back to you. If you would like to have your identity linked to your answers you may do so by printing and signing your name with a date at the bottom of this page. The identifying data will then be kept locked safely in storage on Minnesota State University, Mankato for two years and then destroyed.

It is your right as a participant to obtain a copy of the informed consent form. If you so choose, you may ask the researcher for a copy at this time or contact one of the investigators (Dr. Barbara Keating and/or Lacey Theodorson) listed below.

You will be offered a generic dog treat for your participation in this study. It is not required that you accept it and it is not considered payment for your help. It is, rather, a sign of gratitude for your participation.

Thank you for participating in this survey.
Lacey Theodorson

IRB Case number: 468512-4

For information or questions regarding the study you may contact:
Principal Investigator: Dr. Barbara Keating 5073895604
Student Investigator: Lacey Theodorson 6514427086
For information on the rights of the research subjects of this study you may contact:
MNSU IRB Administrator: Barry Ries 5073892321

If you agree to participate in this study please complete and return the attached survey to the researcher.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____Date: _____

APPENDIX B

This study is concerned with the relationship of owners to their dogs.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your sex? M / F

Please enter the quantity of all that currently apply:	significant other/ spouse/partner	Roommate(s)	Child(ren) under the age of 18	Child(ren) 18 years of age and older
3. How many of these relationships do you have?				
4. How many of the following live with you at the same address?				

	Size of Dog			To whom does this dog primarily belong?					What is the primary role of this dog?						
Dog(s) Age	Small (1-40lbs.)	Medium (41-80lbs.)	Large (80lbs.+)	Myself	My Partner and I	My Partner	My Child(ren)	My Family	Other	Pet	Breeding	Service	Hunting	Show	Other

Questions:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
5. How often do you refer to your dog(s) as your child/baby/sibling?					
6. How often do you speak to your dog(s) as though they were a human?					
7. How often do you allow your dog(s) to sleep in your bed with you at night?					
8. How often do you allow your dog(s) to kiss you (lick you) on the face?					
9. How often do you tell your dog(s), "I love you"?					
10. How often do you remember/celebrate/purchase gifts for your dogs' birthday/adoption anniversary or the holidays?					
11. How often do you refrain from doing things or leave events early to get home to your dog(s)?					
12. How often do you dress your dog(s) in clothes?					

APPENDIX B

Questions:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	A lot
13. How much do you talk about your dog(s) in conversations in general?					
14. How much do you talk about your dog(s) with your family?					
15. How much do you talk about your dog(s) with your co-workers/classmates?					
16. How much do you talk about your dog(s) with your friends?					
17. How much do you talk about your dog(s) with other dog owners?					

Thank you so much for your participation and cooperation in this survey! Your help is very much appreciated!

Lacey Theodorson
Graduate Student, MNSU Mankato

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