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COMPANION ANIMALS IN FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS :
A SURVEY OF ATTITUDES

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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ABSTRACT

During the last three decades, there has been growing interest in the relationship between humans and their animal companions. The majority of research has been undertaken in Great Britain and the United States. The present research adds to this body of information through a survey of companion animals in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The aim of the study is to explore the role of pets and their positions within the family or household, relative to human family members. The focus of the research is the extent to which people think of their pets just as animals or as actual family members.

The subjects were 117 pet owning volunteers 68 percent of whom were female. The questionnaire was based on those used by Cain (1977) and Horn and Meer (1984) and was distributed to pet owners through veterinary surgeries, pet shops and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Sample demographic characteristics and frequency data relating to the survey questions are reported. A set of cross-tabulations were undertaken to investigate question responses in relation to demographic variables, and Chi-square tests performed.

It was found that most respondents considered their pets to be members of the family and the majority thought them to be human or almost human members. Significant gender differences were found with respect to how respondents view their pets on the human/animal continuum. Significant differences between cats and dogs were also

found concerning obedience, outings and neutering.

The current data have been contrasted with other studies where the same or similar questions have been asked. Overall, this sample of New Zealand animal owners does not appear to be markedly different to overseas respondents in their views on companion animals.

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PREFACE

"There are many reasons why people decide to own pets - to ease their own loneliness, to protect property, or for a purpose as practical as ridding a house or barn of mice. But much to some owners' surprise, they soon realise that they have entered into a very special relationship with a creature whose powers far exceed anything which the owner has been reared to expect. Pets, originally purchased as aristocratic creatures of display to be paraded in local shows, often end up in incalculably different roles - as confidants, peers and teachers."

(Wylde, 1980, pvii)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Families and animals have cohabited throughout generations almost since the beginning of known history. Close relationships between the two consequently reflect a human - companion animal bond which has its roots in the earliest civilizations. In an overview of the history of these relationships, Bustad, Hines and Leathers (1981) discuss various aspects of the significance of animals for humans. Firstly their role in the provision of food in that animals not only serve as food themselves, but have also been associated with the procurement of food for centuries. Secondly animals have been a measure of status and wealth; brideprice in many primitive cultures is measured in valued animals such as oxen, and even in modern societies owners of exotic or purebred animals are often awarded an elevated status. A third feature of the human - animal nexus is early humanity's association of animals with religion. The literature of many theologies has animals representing good and evil forces and some are regarded as sacred, an example being the Hindu cow. The supernatural also has a connection with animals, e.g. the black cat being thought of as the witch's 'familiar'.

The final component of the human - animal relationship discussed by these authors is that of companionship, and it is this aspect that predominates in contemporary western society.

Although people have long been aware of the bond humans share with animal companions, it is only during the last three decades that psychologists and veterinarians have observed, researched and documented the relationships arising from the cohabitation of people and animals in domestic contexts. Consequently the field is still relatively open to speculation and enquiry. Some of the earliest and most often quoted research was performed by Mugford and M'Comisky (1975). The focus of their investigation was "the effects of budgerigar or house plant companionship on the social attitudes, mental health and the happiness of old people living alone" (p63). After comparing questionnaire responses before and after the experimental period, the authors concluded that the presence of budgerigars was generally beneficial to the social and psychosocial conditions of the elderly subjects. In contrast, the response changes of those subjects given begonias did not significantly differ from the control group who had neither plant nor pet.

It appears then that animals and the companionship they provide can be of service to certain people. One of the main features of human frustration and deprivation is the lack of affection and attention - which may be regarded as love. If they are encouraged, pets may provide their owners with what is perceived as an unlimited amount of unconditional affection. One of the most rewarding aspects of interaction with animals is physical contact. They invite and reciprocate tactile contact which is not only supportive and comforting for the owner, but has been shown to have beneficial physiological effects such as reducing blood pressure (Katcher, in

Fogle, 1981). As Brodie (1981) reported, it is generally accepted that emotional stress can lead to elevated cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, smoking and obesity. Because these factors are implicated in reduced life expectancy, it is valuable to consider the part loneliness and emotional stress play, and how the companionship of animals may help to alleviate them.

Another well known study was that of Friedmann, Katcher, Lynch and Thomas (1980) who examined the twelve month survival figures for patients discharged from hospital following myocardial infarctions. Of the ninety two patients studied, fifty three were animal owners and only three of them died whereas there were eleven deaths among those who did not own pets. While this finding proved to be statistically significant, this result does not imply that ownership of pets causes longer life subsequent to heart attacks, but the apparent relationship is worthy of note.

Ryder (1973) observed that some pets can provide security - or at least a sense of it. Their owners feel defended against loneliness and in some cases they ward off physical dangers of burglary and assault. Pets can also be viewed as extensions of ourselves and as such they provide insight into personality and other psychological characteristics. Another facet of the human-animal relationship Ryder commented upon is that pets can often correctly gauge the emotional state of their owners. They appear to be able to detect feelings and can 'offer' their own form of comfort

with a lick or a nuzzle.

The level of effectiveness of pet therapy is, however, a controversial area in the companion animal literature. After reviewing a substantial number of articles and papers addressing the therapeutic uses of animals, Beck and Katcher (1984) perceived few cases in which the positive aspects of pet therapy had been sufficiently demonstrated. They admitted this does not mean that they do not exist, and therefore they suggested that existing programmes could provide valuable information if careful observations and longitudinal studies were undertaken. They concluded that "the emphasis on pet therapy distracts both research and lay interest from a much more important area of research -the characteristics of the relationship between the millions of essentially normal pet owners and their pets" (p420). This conclusion introduces the present research, which considers the role of the companion animal within the New Zealand family and the extent to which people think of their pets just as animals, or as actual family members.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The number of companion animals owned by New Zealanders as well as people of other nationalities appears to be rising. One reason as to why dog numbers are rising is the increasing crime rate, people consider that "would be" burglars are likely to be deterred by a large dog on the property and so feel more secure. In New Zealand this trend has led to an increase in the popularity of dog breeds that are recognised as exhibiting somewhat unpredictable and aggressive behaviour. According to several veterinarians interviewed during this research, another observable trend in this country is an escalation in the range of animal types being kept as pets. Rabbits have possibly accounted for the largest increase in recent years, considering the fact that a licence for ownership was required not so many years ago. Cage birds too have enjoyed a growth in popularity.

There is a multitude of reasons underlying pet ownership and there can be no denying that a special relationship exists between companion animals and their owners. The conditions of such relationships have been under scrutiny for many years, but only recently has experimental research in this area gathered a following in medical, veterinary and psychological fields. One of the most important justifications for research in the area of human-animal relationships arises from the strength of the bond that often forms

between the species. Attachment to a pet can range from tenuous, to pathological in some cases, depending on the degree to which the animal is integrated into its owner's lifestyle. The majority of owners would admit to some level of emotional involvement with their animal companions - a well known author and veterinarian acknowledged that he had fallen prey to what some would consider excessive attachment.

[The background to the following excerpt is that Herriot has discovered a growth on his dog Sam's face. Being too frightened to remove it himself in case something goes wrong, he calls on an old veterinary friend Granville to perform the task.]

"After the dogs had met and exchanged pleasantries Granville lifted Sam into his arms.

'Is that what you mean Jim? Is that what you're worried about?'

I nodded dumbly.

'Good God, I could take a deep breath and blow the damn thing off!' He looked at me incredulously and smiled. 'Jim, old lad, why are you so daft about your dog?'

'Why do you call Phoebe Phoebles?' I countered swiftly.

'Oh well . . . ' He cleared his throat. 'I'll get my equipment. Hang on a minute.' "

(Herriot, 1978, p224)

2.1 WHAT IS A COMPANION ANIMAL ?

The definition of a companion animal is not altogether straightforward. The Council for Science and Society (1988) noted that although it may be relatively clear that the term encompasses dogs and cats, it less clearly includes

other species such as horses, and is decidedly unclear for animals such as fish and rodents. It is possibly easier to make the distinction between companion animals and pets - the latter term covers all the abovementioned varieties plus any other creature kept by humans. A companion animal on the other hand is one that has a relationship with the owner, it is perceived as having a personality, and possessing its own unique style of interaction and behaviour. Although most kinds of pets have the potential to become companion animals, dogs and cats are most likely to be considered as companions in Western society. This is probably due to two reasons: firstly they are practically alone in the fact that they do not require containers, fences or tethers to establish their relationship with people and they are relatively easy to housetrain; secondly, they have a large repertoire of non-verbal expression with which to communicate both positive and negative feelings to their owners. Thus they can enter into a relationship with humans that is not altogether dissimilar to that which humans enjoy with each other. One difference in the relationships is described by Rynearson (1978) who wrote, "It would appear that the exchange of acceptance and affection between us and our pets is less complicated than human exchange of similar need and satisfaction" (p550). Perhaps this is one explanation of the strong bonds formed among people and their animal companions.

2.2 WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE OWN COMPANION ANIMALS?

In carrying out research it is always interesting to note the demographic patterns that materialize in relation to the target population, and pet owners are no exception. A study performed by Selby, Rhoades, Irvin, Carey and Wade (1980) established that out of 527 families, those who owned both a dog and a cat were more likely to have two children, those who owned only a dog or a cat usually had one child, and non-owners often had no children. The popular misconception is that people who are childless are likely to adopt pets as surrogate children, but in reality children and pets seem to be found together; the probability of having a pet is greater if one has a child as well. Veevers and Gee (1984, cited in Veevers, 1985) supported Selby et al's (1980) finding that childless couples are not more likely to own companion animals. Soares (1985) noted that pet ownership is highest among those in the population who have the most human companionship, namely married couples with children. Similarly, Harris (1988) stated that "although comparative research is needed, available evidence suggests that pets and children are found in the same households, in that high percentages of veterinary clients have children." (p195). Further findings of Harris's research were that those at the lower occupational level are more likely to own a dog than those at the high level. The reverse is true for cats; those with a university education are particularly likely to own felines.

Most of the investigations carried out in relation to companion animals appear to address the issue of pet ownership and its presumed benefits. However it is also interesting to inquire about why some people choose not to possess animals. A questionnaire administered to animal owners and non-owners revealed that "the major reasons given for non-ownership were housing limitations, emotional dissatisfaction with animals, destructive habits of pets and a transient household status" (Selby et al, 1980, p1274). Guttman (1981, cited in Covert, Whiren, Keith & Nelson, 1985) observed that non-pet owners perceive animals as a burden, a responsibility, or a cause of household untidiness.

2.3 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PET OWNERSHIP

It is easy to present only the positive aspects of animal ownership, and most owners would concede that caring for a pet is generally a rewarding experience. However there are also disadvantages inherent to the human animal alliance and it is important that at least some of these be presented alongside the more favourable points. One of the most important issues to consider in connection with pet ownership is the cost of keeping an animal. Holzman, a veterinarian from New York prepared an expenditure table to bring potential pet owner's attention to the financial commitment associated with keeping an animal for eleven years. Holzman's estimations included certain miscellaneous expenses such as grooming, licensing and boarding for one week of each year.

For an 80lb dog such as a rottweiler, Holzman's estimate was US \$8353, for a 40lb dog such as a collie he proposed a sum of US \$5902, a 10lb dog such as a terrier would cost US \$3525 and finally a 10lb cat approximately US \$3957. (Holzman cited in Meer, 1984)

Pets are expensive playthings in New Zealand too. Most owners decide to have their pets neutered sooner or later and the current (1990) rates for neutering range from \$48 for a cat castration to between \$160 and \$180 for a bitch spay. An ordinary 410gm tin of cat food costs about \$1.60 and those people who are unfortunate enough to own felines with fickle appetites and tastes, can expect to pay up to a dollar for one meal.

Quigley, Vogel and Anderson (in Beck & Katcher, 1984) studied the differences in attitudes towards pets by owners and non-owners. The 177 animal owners provided the following advantages and disadvantages of ownership: companionship (75%) was ranked the top advantage of pet ownership with love and affection (67%) close behind; pleasure (58%) and protection (30%) came next, followed by beauty (20%) and temperament (13%). Other advantages mentioned pertained to educational aspects (11%), challenge (10%) and breeding value (9%).

The owners' perceptions of the negative features of pet ownership were firstly responsibility (59%) then noise, odour and faeces (32%). Cost of ownership (22%) was next, followed by no disadvantages (15%) and negative temperament (11%). Other disadvantages included the need for restraint (10%), overpopulation (7%) and reproduction (6%).

The study carried out by Selby, Rhoades, Irvin, Carey and Wade (1980) reported that the major positive and negative features of animal ownership related to the animal's temperament. Positive aspects included gentleness, intelligence and playfulness while negative characteristics were listed as overprotectiveness, damage to furniture and the tendency to bite. The most important factors of pet ownership, however, were considered to be love, affection and companionship.

2.4 AN ANIMAL BY ANY OTHER NAME . . .

The name chosen for an animal companion is thought to express certain aspects of the human-animal relationship. Both Fogle (1983) and Veevers (1985) suggested that "one indicator of a tendency towards anthropomorphization might be giving the animal a human name" (Veevers, 1985, p20). Fogle presented a list of typical names for cats and dogs based on a classification system that arose from his personal observations. It appears that pets are named depending on such things as physical characteristics; e.g 'Spot' the dalmation, personality; e.g. 'Slasher', and personal history . . .

"'By the way, Mrs Bond' I asked, making my voice casual, 'I didn't quite catch the name of that last cat.' 'Oh Seven-times-three?' She smiled reminiscently. 'Yes, she is a dear. She's had three kittens seven times running, you see, so I thought it rather a good name for her, don't you?'

'Yes, yes I do indeed. Splendid name, splendid!' "

(Herriot, 1973, p159).

Harris (1983) devised a classification system for her research to compare with one designed by Thurber (1944/82, cited in Harris, 1983). The empirical system described by Harris included human names, names describing behaviour or personality, famous real or fictitious humans, famous real or fictitious animals, names of other species, names describing physical appearance, royal or military titles, unusual or inventive names and unclassifiable names. Fogle (1983) posited that the name an animal bears can suggest the role the animal is expected to play in the family situation. For example "the role that a family wants Perkins to play is different from that expected of Dave. Mr Pim will probably be given more independence than Cuddles. Rank is frequently given with names, and with it, authority. Duke and King are undoubtedly dogs to respect." (p39).

Hickrod and Schmitt (1982) suggested that naming an animal provides it with an identity, thus allowing it to be discussed as an individual and as a family member. The authors observe that owners talk to their pets as if they understood human conversation and this expressive speech is often spoken in front of other audiences.

2.5 FUNCTIONS OF PETS FOR PEOPLE

The most common reason why people keep pets is for companionship where the pet fulfills the social need in the owner for company and vice versa (Fox, 1985). However, many other types of relationship emerge in place of or beside the major companionship

role. For example, a working relationship exists where a dog is employed as a guard, a guide, or to herd sheep or cattle. Dogs are also commonly used in sporting situations as gun dogs and fox hounds. (Fox, 1985). Similarly, a cat can be kept primarily to keep rodents under control. Other authors have added to the list of functions by suggesting that "the kind of pet a person selects, like the kind of car one drives or the style of clothes one wears is a way of expressing one's personality Casual observers of the social scene have often noted the projection of self onto pets as an expression of one's character and habits (Veevers, 1985, p13).

" 'Just look at them limbs!' breathed Con, staring rapturously at the dog's muscular thighs. 'By heck, 'e can jump ower that gate as if it weren't there. He's what ah call a dog!'

As he spoke it struck me that Cedric would be likely to appeal to him because he was very like the boxer himself; not over-burdened with brains, built like an ox with powerful shoulders and a big constantly-grinning face - they were two of a kind."

(Herriot, 1978, p45)

Not only can a pet reflect what the owner considers to be his or her own virtues, it can also be thought to enhance them. Conversely, for a person who feels that he or she lacks virtue, the pet may serve to compensate. "In all such cases, however, the pet represents what the owner would like to be (hardly a surprise then, if it is true, that some owners are accused of growing to look like their pets!). If the owner feels he is living up to his own

ambitions then the pet confirms his image, if he feels he is failing then the pet makes up for his deficiencies." (Ryder, 1973, p663).

Fogle (1983) made the comment that during the 1970s every windswept, blonde haired model in London had a windswept, blonde haired afghan at her side. This observation leads onto another function pets can play, that of a status symbol. Because keeping animals is an expensive occupation, and some are more expensive than others, the kind of animal chosen reflects a particular status level. Saudia Arabian princes collect private menageries of exotic creatures and in 1974, ten thousand Americans reported keeping big cats as pets. (Time, cited in Veevers, 1985). It appears that only a very small percentage of people choose their pets cognizant of the status they represent (Harris, 1983), but the connection exists nonetheless.

Animals can also be viewed as social facilitators for they provide a neutral yet common ground for people to discuss (Veevers, 1985). In this respect they tend to break the ice in social situations among strangers since most people enjoy conversing about their respective pet's antics. Pets often wittingly or unwittingly provide entertainment for anyone who happens to be present. They encourage both active and passive involvement either through the throwing of balls and sticks in the case of dogs and cats, or the watching of mice in exercise wheels - which can be highly entertaining.

Another major function for companion animals is as surrogate people, and this role is the most important one in the present

research. It is common to anthropomorphize animals and endow them with human attributes such as emotions and thoughts. In a relationship between an animal and its owner, a pet can consequently take the place of a human in the owner's life. Animals can act as child substitutes; either in a situation where children are wanted or as Veevers reported, "in some instances, experience with trying to raise a dog or other pet has increased awareness of the tribulations of parenthood, and reinforced a disinclination towards it" (1985, p23).

One of the major contributors to the literature concerning the relationship between companion animals and people at all stages of the life cycle is Levinson. This author's two books (1969, 1972) and numerous articles explore many facets of the human/companion animal relationship. Levinson's publications range from the history of the relationship between pets and their owners (1968, 1972a), to predictions of the future of research into the relationship between people and their animal companions (1983) and a forecast for the year 2000 (1975). He has adopted several approaches to understanding and describing the bond between different species. A specific example is his paper on the bond between humans and cats (1972b). Another major focus is the importance of pets for children. Levinson suggested that:

"The personality development of an individual who has an animal companion or is surrounded by animals, if these animals play a significant role in his life, will be somewhat different from that of an individual who does not possess animals. The ownership of a pet may aid the development of adaptive personality traits. It may contribute to the establishment of a lifestyle which involves nurturance and companionship with a living creature that can sustain a conviction of life's worthwhileness even under difficult circumstances"

(1978, p1032-33)

Levinson encouraged the use of animals in therapy to the extent that he considered his dog to be a co-therapist, and he wrote widely about pet therapy for children with mental illness (1970, 1969).

Levinson has been a main instigator in the development of the companion animal field and is much quoted by his followers in subsequent research.

The companionship aspect of the human-pet relationship has many facets, and although not all of them will apply to every situation, they all can. Ryder (1973) listed tactile contact, empathy, sense of importance, loving and feeling loved, security and loosening the "stiff upper lip" as being the contributions an animal companion provides. Levinson would also include the enjoinder to play (1972).

2.6 PET THERAPY

According to McCulloch (1983), the first recorded use of animals in therapy was in 1792 at the York Retreat in England. The retreat was founded by William Tuke, a member of the

Quaker group the Society of Friends, in response to the inhumane methods of the lunatic asylums of the day. The emphasis of the retreat was on normality, and consequently patients were encouraged to wear their own clothing and to work in the gardens and care for the resident animals. Reading, writing and handcrafts were also advocated.

There can be little doubt that animals have the potential to play an important role in the lives of many people - particularly in specific situations.

"It has been my conviction that we have at our disposal a vast resource, largely untapped, for both preventative and therapeutic use in the field of mental hygiene. I am referring to the use of pets in psychotherapy."

(Levinson, 1972, p37)

The specific ways in which pet animals may aid in therapy vary according to the characteristics of the therapist, client and animal, although little research has been carried out with reference to the last. However Brickel (1980-81) noted that the following generalities appear in the literature. Initially the pet serves to facilitate therapeutic rapport through the reduction of client anxiety. Opening discussion can revolve around the animal before progressing to topics more pertinent to the client's situation. Having established a working bond or relationship, the pet's presence affords a source of tactile comfort. It appears that people are better able to voice fears and express emotions when an affectionate animal is providing reassurance. Corson, Corson and

Gwynne (1975) discovered that the employment of dogs in a hospital setting elicited positive responses in withdrawn, noncommunicative patients who had failed to respond favourably to traditional forms of therapy.

Programmes allowing prisoners to keep pets are being run in several reform centres in the United States. It appears that the loneliness and depression resulting from a term of imprisonment can be alleviated by an animal's company and support. A well known example of this was Robert Stroud, the celebrated convict who after befriending birds during his imprisonment became a world authority on ornithology. A film was subsequently made about Stroud; 'Birdman of Alcatraz'. A psychiatric social worker at Oakwood Forensic Centre in Ohio observed that the pet programme has reached even the hardened felons (Meer, 1984,).

To assess the extent to which animals are used in psychotherapy in the United States, Levinson (1972) randomly surveyed half of the members of the Clinical Division of the New York State Psychological Association. Of the 319 respondents, 39 percent reported familiarity with the use of pets in psychotherapy, 16 percent had used pets at one time or another and 51 percent recommended pets to their patients for home companions. The problems that were most frequently mentioned as being amenable to pet facilitated treatment were emotional and social isolation, schizophrenia, and desensitization of phobias.

In a group therapy environment, companion animals are used in conjunction with more traditional forms of treatment. "The pet

often becomes a conversation piece, a free zone that serves to stimulate interactions between the patient, the pet, and other people. Arkow calls this increase of interaction a rippling effect, Corson et al term it a social lubricant" (Wilson & Netting, 1983, p1425).

The companion animal can often be an integral part of the family system (Cain, 1977; Soares, 1985), and as a result, it can be a useful inclusion to a family therapy session. There are numerous reports of the family pet portraying the problems of a dysfunctional family - "in working with disturbed families who have pets, it has been our repeated observation that the pet can become ill and, if the disturbance in the family does not subside, may often die." (Speck, 1964, p152). Speck continued to suggest that pets often seem to reflect the feelings of the family members in a therapy session and their presence is therefore of value.

Schowalter (cited in Veevers, 1985) said that "the inquiry of patients about their experience with animals is often a fruitful approach for understanding their wishes, fears and displaced feelings." (p18) Similarly Jurgreis (1965, cited in Veevers, 1985) recommended that "therapists should not hesitate to discuss the family's relationships to their pets . . . Drawing attention to the behaviour of family pets is highly productive of useful therapeutic material. (p18)

The level of effectiveness of pet therapy is however a controversial area in the companion animal literature. This is demonstrated by Beck and Katcher's (1984) review of articles addressing the therapeutic use of pet animals. They discovered that the majority of the work was of a descriptive nature with few empirical studies being documented. The authors' main concerns, after summarising the literature, appeared to be the incorrect reporting of research by investigators other than the original author, and the misrepresentation of true results in an effort to present positive findings concerning pet therapy. Several of the relatively few "controlled" studies produced non-significant results and some of those which were significant, had not recognized certain potentially confounding variables. Although the authors perceived few confirmed advantages of pet therapy thus far, they suggested that existing programmes could provide valuable information if careful observations and longitudinal studies were undertaken. They concluded that "the emphasis on pet therapy distracts both research and lay interest from a much more important area of research - the characteristics of the relationship between the millions of essentially normal pet owners and their pets" (p420).

2.61 Attention Shifts

Although there is considerable interest in the use of animals in a therapeutic manner, according to Brickel (1982), scant attention has been paid to why they should be of therapeutic value.

He posited an explanation based on the classical conditioning paradigm which suggests that a behavioural response is elicited initially by an environmental stimulus. When the stimulus is perceived on subsequent occasions, the organism remembers the previous situation and its current response is influenced either positively or negatively. This results in the development of approach or avoidance behaviours, positive experiences being sought and negative ones avoided. In order to diminish or extinguish avoidance response patterns, the threatening stimulus is presented in the absence of an adverse response. When the feared event does not occur, the frightening aspects of the stimulus are neutralized. Other approaches involve pairing the frightening stimulus with a positive event or outcome, or by diverting attention from the perceived fear to a different feature of the environment. This "attentional shift" aspect of the theory may explain why pets are of value. Pets divert attention from an anxiety-generating stimulus which the client faces by providing auditory, tactile and cognitive input. Situations where this phenomenon has been observed include dentists waiting rooms where the presence of an aquarium of tropical fish produced a decrease in anxiety, as measured by physiological indicators such as heart rate and galvanic skin response, in the waiting patients. It appeared that the fish facilitated an attention shift with their relaxed swimming movements and bright colours. (Katcher, 1985)

In a veterinarian's waiting room Fogle (1983) observed the interplay between clients and their animals. It appeared to Fogle

that clients derived comfort in a worrying situation from physical contact with their pets. Cats were removed from their boxes and held on knees, dogs were lifted onto laps if they were small enough and large dogs were cuddled or held against the owners legs (Fogle, 1983). Presumably the clients considered themselves to be providing comfort for their anxious companions, and indeed this was probably the case. Additionally, however, Fogle suggested that they were receiving an equal degree of support themselves. Finally, Levinson (1969) found that the presence of his own pet dog during therapy sessions with children reduced the anxiety of his young clients, functioned as an ice breaker at the initial meeting and provided a spontaneous topic of conversation. Thus it appears that a form of distraction proves effective in diminishing anxiety, and animals, due to their physical and attributed characteristics, are ideal distractors. (Brickel, 1982) As Brodie expresses it, "companion animals can distract us from internal worries by acting as a neutral focus of attention." (1981, p199)

2.62 Alternative Therapeutic Roles

"As I looked at the young man, his face alight with pride and affection, I realised afresh what this dog meant to him. He had told me that when his failing sight progressed to total blindness in his early twenties he was filled with despair which did not lessen until he was sent to train with a guide dog and met Fergus; because he found something more than another living creature to act as his eyes, he found a friend and companion to share every moment of his days."

(Herriot, 1978, p154).

Most people are familiar with the idea of a guide dog for the blind where dogs, generally labradors, are trained to 'see' on behalf of a person who has lost their sight. However dogs can also be trained to listen for a deaf person or to perform tasks for a paraplegic person. These roles involve attracting a deaf person's attention when the phone, alarm clock or door bell rings, and fetching items from within the home and carrying shopping respectively. The Seeing Eye Dog programme has existed for more than fifty years and has placed over 7500 dogs in the United States and Canada. This organization employs German Shepherds and golden retrievers as well as labradors, and presently provides approximately 200 blind persons with dogs each year. Another similar programme is Guide Dogs for the Blind which was founded in 1942 for servicemen who lost their sight during World War Two. Other projects include Guiding Eyes for the Blind and Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind in New York and Pilot Dogs Incorporated in Ohio (McCulloch, 1983). There is also a pet adoption agency in New York which works on the premise that pets have a therapeutic effect on people with physical or mental illnesses (Speck, 1964).

Another animal well known for its therapeutic role is the horse in the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA). This is a world-wide organization offering disabled people the opportunity to learn to ride. It caters particularly for children and adults with congenital disabilities such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy and for many , this is

their first experience of movement outside a wheelchair. Riding can provide many positive encounters: contact with a non judgemental living creature; social contact with other people coping with disabilities and the chance to learn about the exercise and control of limbs and muscles. "There is (also) medical evidence to indicate that riding stimulates the circulation, loosens tension in muscles and improves relaxation" (Hayden, 1989, p40).

Two studies carried out in England, one with intellectually handicapped children and the other with young people suffering from anorexia nervosa, found marked changes following riding and contact with horses. The intellectually handicapped children demonstrated improvement in a series of different areas such as social interaction, improvement in speech and in their normal communication. Girls suffering from anorexia forgot about their own problems in their new found friendship with horses, and started to eat again. (Hayden, 1989).

In Auckland, New Zealand, Ambury Park Riding for the Disabled Centre runs five programmes targeted at children with special needs - be they physically, psychologically or emotionally impaired. The courses offered cater for up to one hundred and forty students and involve the teaching of academic, interpersonal, physical and vocational skills.

2.7 HOSPITAL COMPANIONS

During the last few years the medical profession has become interested in the potential benefits of allowing pets to visit their owners in the hospital situation. The strength of the relationship existing between many people and their companion animals, means that an enforced separation resulting from hospitalization can be traumatic for both parties. This situation is perhaps more likely to arise with children and elderly patients, who worry that their friend will not be properly cared for in their absence, but is a potential concern for most animal owners. The consequent interest in the idea of pet visiting schemes, has led to a number of articles concerning the benefits and drawbacks of firstly allowing animals to enter hospital wards, and secondly the possibility of keeping pets in the ward. One such article presents a comprehensive summary of the points in favour of and against housing various creatures in a hospital setting, and makes suggestions as to which animals might be the most appropriate (Cooper, 1976). Obviously a major concern is whether patients and hospital staff are likely to catch diseases from the animals. Zoonotic infections or diseases are those which can be transmitted from animals to humans, but it appears that there is no real risk except from psittacosis from parrots and some other cage birds, and fur and feather allergies (Ainsworth, 1989). Both authors stressed the importance of selecting an animal which is suitable for the prospective environment, not only for the patients' benefit, but to be fair to the animal as well. It is important to

ensure that each animal is fed, watered, housed and exercised correctly and has veterinary attention when required.

In New Zealand, several hospitals have established visiting schemes for pets, notably Palmerston North and Napier. Flip Calkoen and his 'dog-pound special' Flynn are a common sight wandering around Napier Hospital's geriatric and paediatric wards. The pair visit the elderly day care unit where the dog's visit engenders interaction and group spirit (Morris, 1989). At Palmerston North's Public Hospital a local vet and university lecturer, Jan Jones, was involved in founding a pet visiting scheme wherein volunteers with suitably healthy and friendly dogs and cats take their pets to visit certain wards on a regular basis.

Another example of pets in hospitals is the adoption by some institutions of a pet, often a cat, as a mascot. The companion animal 'lives in' and provides a level of interest, responsibility and affection for the people living there. Brickel (1979) investigated the effect of two feline mascots on a hospital ward with elderly patients. Staff reported that the pets were effective in encouraging patient communication, thus augmenting staff efforts to elicit verbal interaction and response.

2.8 COMPANION ANIMALS AND THE ELDERLY

Old age is often accompanied by loneliness and depression - especially for those who have few or no family members around for support and involvement. Hence much emphasis is placed on the benefits of animal ownership for the elderly. For the older person living alone, the companion animal initially represents something to care for (Gwathmey, 1980). In taking care of the pet, the elderly owner may be fulfilling some of his/her own needs concomitantly. "In walking a pet dog, he (she) also obtains exercise for himself (and may meet others in situations similar to his own). After selecting food for his pet, he also may become more aware of nutrition and of the importance of a balanced diet for himself. Finally he may be more accepting of the aging process in himself as he observes it in the shorter lifespan of his pet." (Pet Food Institute, 1979, p217). Some of the earliest research into the potential benefit of animal ownership for the elderly was carried out by Mugford and M'Comisky (1975). The focus of their investigation was "the effects of budgerigar or house plant companionship on the social attitudes, mental health and happiness of old people living alone." (p63). Prior to placing either a begonia or a bird with the elderly subjects, some with televisions and some without, a questionnaire was verbally administered. During a five month period a visiting scheme was established whereby a psychologist and a social worker called on each subject. At the end of the experimental stage, subjects completed the same questionnaire

and differences in responses were computed. The authors then concluded that the presence of budgerigars was generally beneficial to the social and psychosocial conditions of the elderly subjects. In contrast, the response changes of those subjects given house plants did not significantly differ from the control group who had neither plant nor pet.

Another study undertaken by Kidd and Feldmann (1981), investigated the relationship between pet-ownership or non-ownership among elderly subjects using scores on the Adjective Check List scales. Results suggested that "there are personality advantages in the elderly associated with pet-ownership". (p873). However the authors continue to admit that it is not possible to determine whether the observed advantages arise from the ownership of companion animals per se, or whether perhaps healthier personalities choose pets in the first place. In response to Mugford and M'Comisky's findings Kidd and Feldmann suggested that a "Hawthorne effect" may have been introduced through the research, "providing greater attention and more interpersonal contacts" (1981, p873). However, it needs to be noted that if the improvements resulted solely from the social contact and attention given to the subjects, the control and begonia groups would have demonstrated significant changes also -and this was not the case.

Brodie (1981) wrote that "the elderly are the group which can most benefit from the companion animal bond". (p198).

2.9 CHILDREN AND COMPANION ANIMALS

Although there is limited information about the relationship between the normal child and the companion animal (MacDonald, 1979), many authors have expounded theories as to their interaction. As was mentioned previously, Levinson appears to be the most prolific writer in this area, and he presents a comprehensive explanation of the social, emotional and physical interplay between children and their animal companions (1975a). Levinson's ideas are proposed from a developmental viewpoint, hence he outlines various needs the animal fulfills for the child as s/he progresses from infancy to adolescence. A pet primarily provides companionship and can be considered a sibling or friend, especially for the only child, and is an integral part of family interaction. Levinson suggested that animals facilitate learning in relation to developmental tasks such as toilet training and independence, and aid the understanding of sexual behaviour, birth and death. They also encourage children to play; "through play we learn about ourselves and our bodies; we develop a self-concept and learn in a non-traumatic fashion about the outside world." (1972a, p39). In playing with a companion animal, a child learns to be an active participant in life, indulging in significant socializing experiences. A child discovers non-verbal communication through interaction with animals and is able to act out and practise new roles, such as those of teacher, playmate and parent, in front of a non-judgmental audience. Ryder (1973) has similarly proposed that animals can be educative,

"teaching the child to understand the needs of a living creature, to accept its basic physical functions including those usually concealed by the human animal, and to gain a sense of responsibility in its care." (p666). The need for sensory stimulation and physical contact is strong in humans, and such needs can be fulfilled by a pet as well as by other humans. Animals don't withdraw affection when a child has misbehaved, their support is constant and their presence provides a source of continuity in a changing world.

Kellert and Westervelt (1983) studied the attitudes of children towards animals, and established three major age-related developmental stages in the way children relate to animals :-

- (1) 6-9 : increase in affective relationship
- (2) 10-13 : expansion in cognitive understanding and knowledge of animals
- (3) 14-16 ; increase in ethical concern and ecological appreciation of animals.

It has been suggested that poor children need pet companionship more than their wealthier counterparts (Levinson, 1972a), perhaps because, comparable to the children in large families with few material possessions, a companion animal might be the only object owned by an individual child. (Bossard & Boll, 1956, cited in MacDonald, 1979).

Much of the work carried out in the area of pets and children appears to be theoretical or observational, and is presented from an adult and often therapeutic perspective. In contrast Kidd and Kidd

(1985) approached 300 children and asked them how they felt about their pets. Most of the obtained responses indicated that pets do play the roles suggested by other theorists, but the children defined their pets as playmates and companions. "As the children progressed from 3 through 13 years more children in each age group saw pet ownership as a learning experience, and fewer children appreciated the pet solely for the pet's physical characteristics." (p25).

Poresky and Hendrix (1987) administered the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale to adults and concluded that their levels on the scale were related to the age at which they had their first pet. Several scores within the test, including the total positive self-concept score, were higher if the respondents were between 6 and 10 years old when they had their first companion animal.

A concern of many animal owners is children's propensity to be cruel to animals. MacDonald (1979) mentioned two authors, Ryder (1973) and Anthony (1973), who consider cruelty to animals to occur in a minor form in many children as a developmental stage. However, in a more extreme form it has been linked with firestarting and enuresis as a predictor of later violent behaviour. Animal abuse has been observed predominantly among school age boys and it is a common membership test for initiation into teenage gangs.

2.10 THE PLACE OF THE COMPANION ANIMAL WITHIN THE FAMILY

In the context of the interest in companion animals, Beck and Katcher (1984) made the point that an important area of research was being neglected in favour of inquiry into the therapeutic nature of human-animal relationships. The present research is proposed in response to their concern by considering the role of the companion animal in the New Zealand family situation. The main focus of the study will be whether people think of their pets just as animals, whether they are afforded family member status and the significance of this status transition.

Hickrod and Schmitt (1982) used a technique known as frame analysis to investigate a similar proposal and according to these authors, a pet is 'keyed' as a family member. "Since family members are human in American society the pet cannot actually achieve this status. The pet may be regarded as almost human, but it cannot become human or be unequivocally defined as human within the American context" (p57-58). Hickrod and Schmitt call the transition from mere pet to so-called family member 'becoming'. They suggest that the process is a gradual one that often takes place without owners being aware that it has occurred. Once the realisation has been made that the family wouldn't be the same without the dog/cat, then the animal has practically become a member of the family. However, this process only includes the creature in question, any other animals a family may possess, or the offspring of keyed family members, have to 'become' in their own right. This explains the

situation where people sell or give away their cat's kittens when they wouldn't entertain the thought of parting with the adult cat.

"Because the dog is a living creature, Americans place it on an animal-human continuum. A dog could be viewed as 1) an animal or nonhuman 2) a pet, that is, a toy or novelty, or 3) a keyed family member. . . . Society provides the key's "triggering mechanism" with its positive accent on pets. This emphasis gives the pet a "right of entry".

(Hickrod & Schmitt, 1982, p71).

In perusing the companion animal literature of the last three decades, four pieces of research stand out as being the most relevant to the proposed study - three of which were carried out in the United States, the other in Australia. Elements and ideas will be drawn from each, but the emphasis will be on providing a corner of the New Zealand piece of the jigsaw.

A study in the United States was carried out by Cain (1977) who investigated the role of the pet in the family system. Her interests lie in family therapy, specifically that which is based on the theoretical orientation of Bowen and his conceptualization of the family as an interrelated system. Cain's sample consisted of 62 volunteers representing 60 households in 11 states. Within these households, the number of pets ranged from one to 37 and the types included a skunk and a tarantula as well as the more commonly found varieties! Of all the respondents, 87 percent considered their pet to be a member of the family and only 10 percent did not, the other

3 percent were undecided. On the human-animal continuum, 56 percent thought of their pet as an animal, 36 percent reported that they regarded their pet as a person and the remaining 8 percent considered their pets to be somewhere between an animal and a human being. Concurring with the idea that pets act as a social lubricant, 37 percent of Cain's respondents "reported that they had made friends, increased their social contacts, or maintained social relationships by means of their pets" (p78). The author concluded with the statement that the pet is a significant member of the family.

Ganster and Voith (1983) surveyed 53 Australian cat owners, 81 percent of whom were female, to determine how they perceived and interacted with their pets. These authors asked similar questions to Cain (1977) and Horn and Meer (1984), and concluded that the role of pet cats in the lives of their respondents was influenced by certain factors. The presence of children or other pets in the household appeared to affect the human - animal relationship, as did the type of cat owned. The majority of the owners in Ganster and Voith's sample defined their relationship with their cat as having both animal and human components.

Horn and Meer's (1984) survey in the United States involved more than 13,000 'Psychology Today' readers. The sample was predominantly female (83%) and 12 percent of the respondents were non-pet owners, but most of these readers wanted to get a pet eventually. The study found that the vast majority of respondents

owned pets for pleasure and companionship. Ninety seven percent believed that children should have pets and most thought that owning pets helped to prepare a young couple for parenthood. Sixty percent of people said that their animal was extremely important to them and "...only one person in six treated pets strictly as animals. One in four looked on them as human members of the family and the rest as almost-human members" (p54). Of those people who considered pets to be family members, approximately a third regarded them as children.

Finally, Berryman, Howells and Lloyd-Evans (1985) assessed how pet owners view their relationships with their pets and how pet relationships compare with human relationships. The authors employed a repertory grid technique to look for patterns within the responses, and they concluded that "a significant similarity between perceptions of the pet relationship and that with own-child was found throughout the age range and among those with and without children" (p661). The other significant finding was that children and pets appear to offer similar rewards and occupy a comparable place on the fun/play and dependency dimensions.

In conclusion, while the research performed in the United States and Australia has provided useful insight into the human/animal relationship in those countries, the findings may not apply to New Zealand. The recurrent themes and ideas arising from previous investigations are valuable both as a starting point for research in this country, and as a basis for international

comparison. The present study consequently draws ideas from previous research in order to examine the New Zealand situation. This is a country with a strong agricultural background, many pets and pet types, and a well established veterinary profession. Therefore, there is a sound rationale for research into the human/companion animal bond. This study employs a survey methodology to examine the position of the companion animal in the New Zealand household; further information will be provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

In its definitions of companion, the Penguin English Dictionary includes "cheerful, friendly person; person hired to relieve the loneliness of another" (p152). Similarly it describes a **pet** as a "tame animal kept as companion; dearly loved and pampered person, esp. child" (p541). These explanations are in keeping with the previous discussion of the term companion animal in the literature review, and as Lasgarn sees the situation;

"Now-a-days, the modern terminology for a pet is a companion animal, and if ever there was a companion, that little cat was one to me. . . The ginger tom never left my side, except when I was at school. Then, he would wait at the bottom of the lane and, seeing me approach, would stand up, stretch luxuriously, then spring off the wall and delicately pick his way towards me, flourishing his fluffy tail and purring like a motor boat. When alongside, I would stop, he would climb onto my shoulders, and home we would go."

(Lasgarn, 1985, p17)

However despite the decision that 'companion animal' is the more correct and contemporary phrase to use, the questionnaire continues to employ the term 'pet'- the reasoning being that most lay people would still think of their animals as pets rather than companion animals. Additionally, the shorter designation is more easily incorporated into questions and responses. Another significant

consideration in the selection of the term was that the use of companion animal as a label triggers the thought of an animal - an undesirable situation when the focus of the research is whether pets exist as animals or humans in their owners thoughts.

In her study of pets in the family system, Cain defined family as "a household; all the people living in the same house. They may or may not be related by ancestry or marriage" (Cain, 1983, p73). This description is equally applicable to the current study as it encompasses the increasing prevalence of permutations on the theme of the nuclear family.

An adult is, for the purposes of this study, defined as a person over the age of 17. This discretionary point in the age range has been chosen because most people by the time they reach about 18 years of age have left their original family and are established into another household. Nevertheless, a category for teen-agers living at home has been included as they present another perspective on the role of the family companion animal.

3.2 SAMPLING DESIGN AND SELECTION

The ultimate goal of any piece of research must surely be to achieve results that can be generalized from the sample employed to the general population. This goal sounds feasible and indeed in a perfect world it would be, but the reality is somewhat different.

The degree of generality of the observed results pivots on a number of issues - one of which is random selection. For the present research the sample is drawn from the population operationally defined as animal owners, a population for which there is no membership list. Dog owners should feature on a register of dog licences, albeit not all canines are licenced, but there is no requirement for cats to be registered. Thus there is no way of identifying the majority of cat owners. Possibly most animals have visited a veterinary surgeon at some point in their lives, and records for these creatures will be retained at a surgery somewhere. However, there is no way to estimate what percentage of pets are kept on veterinary record and what differences exist between owners who visit vets and those who don't, or owners with unhealthy pets and those with well ones. Are vet frequenting owners displaying symptoms of hypochondriasis, or are they merely more vigilant in the care of their animals health? The second problem concerns who is prepared to participate in the research exercise. Conrad and Maul (1981) define this problem of volunteerism as "the extent to which significant differences exist between volunteers and nonvolunteers" (p277). Their comment is that research indicates that personality differences exist between those who are prepared to volunteer for research and those who are not. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1969, 1975 cited in Conrad & Maul, 1981) summarized research on the differences between volunteers and nonvolunteers and discovered that there is a tendency for the former to have higher educational levels, higher occupational status, stronger need for approval, higher intelligence

test scores and lower authoritarian scores.

The current study depends on animal owners' willingness to participate in the completion of questionnaires and this factor, plus the nonrandom nature of the sample, results in a sample that is far from representative. Consequently the results cannot be generalized to the wider pet owning population. The study does however attempt to give as many animal owners as possible the opportunity to be involved by distributing the questionnaires to various pet shops and veterinary surgeries.

3.3 QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

Although the general procedure followed by the majority of researchers is to carry out a test run or pilot study of a questionnaire or experimental design, in this case it was decided that the trial should be performed using the two United States questionnaires on which the current one is based. Copies of both forms were distributed to twenty animal owners known to the researcher. These people were chosen firstly because they had expressed an interest in the research and secondly, being members of the companion animal owning public, they had a useful contribution to make to the amendment process. They were asked to fill in both questionnaires and to recommend ways in which the questionnaires could be improved and adapted for the New Zealand climate. (See Appendix A). The feedback provided highlighted the ambiguous and

redundant nature of various items as well as signalling how the trial respondents felt about being asked particular questions.

The information arising from the questionnaire trials was then incorporated into the design of the questionnaire. Permission had previously been obtained from Cain, and Horn and Meer for parts of their respective questionnaires to be used in their original form, or to be amended. A few questions were drawn from these sources verbatim, but the majority were adapted with respect to wording or scaling. New questions were also included.

Although the questions were not presented in sections, the content of the questionnaire can be separated into three distinct parts. Firstly demographic details of the respondents, secondly the owners' attitudes and ideas about animals and pets in general and thirdly their feelings about their current pets and their perception of the animals' feelings about them. The questionnaire in its final form is reproduced in Appendix B.

3.4 PROCEDURE

Initially copies of the questionnaire were distributed to eight pet shops, eight veterinary surgeries and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Clients of these outlets were given the opportunity to participate in the research and, having completed the form, return it in the stamped addressed

envelope provided. Additionally, a 'letter to the Editor' was printed in "The Christchurch Mail" in an attempt to target those members of the public who had not previously been reached. (See Appendix C). The benefit of this was two-fold; firstly it had the potential to be read by the occupants of 15,000 homes in Christchurch, thus reaching people who don't necessarily visit veterinarians or pet shops, and secondly this was actioned once approximately two thirds of the hundred questionnaires sought had been returned. The results at that point showed that the vast majority of respondents were female, and since the male viewpoint was deemed necessary, the letter specifically called for male response. Subsequent to the printing of the letter, distribution venues were contacted and the proprietors were asked to encourage men to take the remaining questionnaires.

The distribution of questionnaires through the three types of venues and the subsequent call for male respondents resulted in a volunteer sample of 117 people who personally owned pets or were in contact with pets owned by other members of the same household. Since the questionnaires were collected through city sources, it can be presumed that the sample was predominantly urban. The types of animal mentioned in the responses, however, suggested that a small number of respondents lived on small holdings or farms.

Of the 117 respondents, 37 were male and 79 were female - one subject did not provide gender information. The age range was from

13 to 72. Table 1 provides information with regard to the respondents' demographic data.

TABLE 1
Demographic characteristics of the respondents presented in percentage form.

Age	%	Marital Status	%
10-19	12	Living with partner/spouse	62
20-29	30	Single	20
30-39	20	Separated/divorced	8
40-49	17	At home with parents	8
50-59	9	Widowed	2
60+	12		
Total	100		100
Occupation	%	Income (\$)	%
Professional/managerial	6	<10,000	6
Other white collar	24	10,000-19,999	25
Skilled / manual	25	20,000-29,999	18
Semiskilled / unskilled	12	30,000-39,999	20
Retired	12	40,000-49,999	7
Homemaker	8	50,000-74,999	17
Student / non working	13	75,000 +	7
Total	100		100

In addition to the demographic characteristics displayed in Table 1, the respondents were asked about their hobbies and interests to investigate the possible link between types of pets owned and owners' interests. The suggestion of a relationship between these two variables was made by Harris (1983) and will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five. The respondents interests and hobbies were classified as being indoor, outdoor or both, and it was found that the largest group, 66 percent of the sample, consisted of those respondents having both indoor and outdoor pursuits. The indoor and outdoor classifications both involved 17 percent of the respondent group.

Two questions concerning children were posed and it was found firstly that children were present in 36 percent of households, and secondly 95 percent of the sample had owned pets when they were children.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Due to the qualitative nature of the data elicited by the questionnaire, the majority of the analysis was observational and descriptive. The initial set of analyses to be computed were frequencies of the data relating to each item. These were accompanied by means where appropriate. Further analyses involved cross tabulations of data, most of which contrasted the respondents' demographic information with other data such as opinions and

subjective ratings. Chi-square tests were performed with an alpha level of $p < .01$. Although most of the results are detailed in the following results section, those of little interest or value to the investigation are discussed more briefly in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The results derived from the questionnaire can be divided into four sections and these will be discussed in the following order. Firstly the results of the demographic information will be presented and this section will include data concerning the number and types of pets owned by the respondents.

The second part comprises the subjects' general opinions and feelings about companion animals and their ownership. The results presented here include the advantages and disadvantages of pet ownership as perceived by the current sample, and the percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with a number of animal related statements about which their views were sought. This section leads on to the third one, in which the respondents were requested to discuss one particular animal companion in terms of his or her place within the family. The fourth and final component embraces the cross tabulations performed on the data in an attempt to see whether there are any apparent differences in the way certain subgroups view, or behave towards, their pets.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA CONCERNING PET OWNERSHIP

The number of animals owned by respondents ranged from one to approximately 100. The respondents with very large numbers of animals had listed quantities of fish in ponds and birds in

aviaries. The average number of animals owned was 7.6 but if the shoals of goldfish and flocks of birds are removed from the analysis, the average reaches the more realistic level of 4.4. The most interesting collections of pets owned by individual households included a dog, a cat, a bird, two rats and two Canada geese in one family and three dogs, three cats, six horses, two turtles, two pigs, two goats and a ferret in another. Altogether the following animals were mentioned:

TABLE 2
Types and numbers of pets owned by respondents and the number of households owning particular animal types.

Animal Types	Number of each type mentioned in in questionnaires	Number of Households involved
Fish	267 + 'fish' (3)	17
Cats	186	100
Birds	159 + 'birds' (1)	33
Dogs	151	83
Horses	40	14
Mice\rats	30	5
Rabbits	22 + 'rabbits' (1)	11
Bantams/hens	16	
Axelotals	4	
Sheep	3 + 'sheep' (1)	
Pigs	3	
Goats	3	
Roosters	1	
Magpies	1	
Guinea pigs	1	
Ferretts	1	
Cattle On farm		
Other		15
Total	892 + unspecified sheep, cattle, fish, birds and rabbits.	

As Table 2 shows, the largest numbers of animals were fish and birds, with cats and dogs being the next most popular pets. Horses, rodents, rabbits and hens were also well represented in this sample but only a few examples of the less common pets were listed. Although 267 fish were recorded, only 17 households were responsible for these pets and similarly only 33 families kept the 159 birds listed. One hundred households owned the 186 cats in the sample and 83 households kept the 151 dogs. Fourteen families owned horses, five kept mice and rats, and the rabbits were owned by 11 respondents. All the other animals, 33 of which were mentioned, were the responsibility of 15 different households.

4.2 PET OWNERS' ATTITUDES

The second section of results relates to questions surrounding pet ownership in its most general form. The first two themes to be investigated were the reasons why people originally acquired their pets, and why they own them now. The comparison can be seen in Figure 1 below.

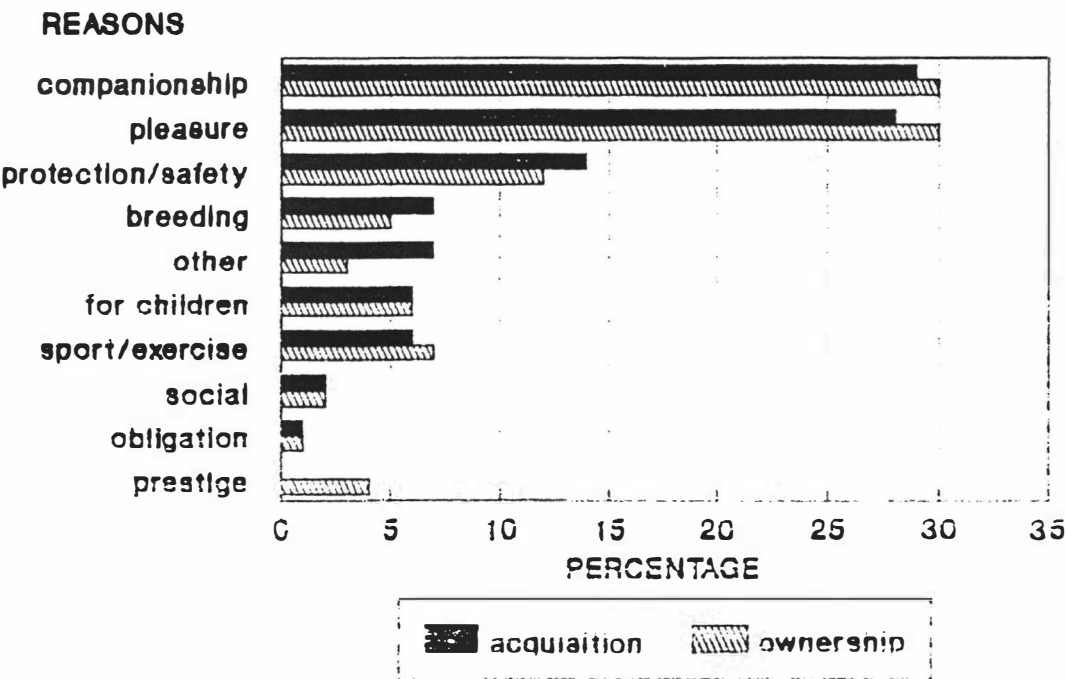


FIGURE 1 : A comparison of owners' reasons for acquisition and continuing ownership of their pets.

Figure 1 reveals very few differences in the responses to these questions - even the number of responses generated to the acquisition and ownership questions is comparable. Companionship and pleasure are clearly the major factors in the acquisition and continuing ownership of pets, accounting for 57 and 60 percent of the responses respectively. There appear to be no major differences between the reasons given for acquisition and those for continuing ownership. The obligation category was only included in the second

question, although some of the 'other' responses for the first question refer to obligation. An example of this was a respondent who felt obliged to take on a neighbour's cat when the neighbour left the district.

The question about when pets have been most important to their owners received a wide variety of answers. The highest numbers of responses lay in the classification representing more than one option (25%) and the 'other' category (21%). Sixteen of these said that pets were important all the time, and the other eight included comments such as when the respondent was seriously ill, during unemployment, after a separation and as a young woman on country walks. Otherwise 15 percent of respondents indicated that pets had been most important to them 'as a single person', 13 percent 'during childhood', 12 percent 'as a couple with no children' and 9 percent 'when there were two or more children at home'. The categories 'after the children had left home' and 'after a bereavement' each received 2 percent of the responses and 1 percent indicated that pets had been important 'when one child was living at home'. Five respondents chose not to answer this question.

TABLE 3
Advantages of pet ownership suggested by the respondents.

Advantage	No.	Percent	Examples
Companionship	151	69	Support, communication, pleasure, companionship
Entertainment	17	8	Amusement, fun, play, laughter
Safety/security	13	6	Home security, walking at night, personal safety
Education	9	4	Learning, interest, teaching children, seeing them grow
Exercise	9	4	Exercise, commune with nature, beach walks
Social	6	3	Meeting the vet, intro. to dog people, meeting people on walks
Personality	5	2	Intelligence, pride, gentleness
Responsibility	5	2	Home for homeless animals, ensuring their happiness.
Miscellaneous	5	2	Scaring people, amateur carpentry, pocket money
Total	220	100	

These results give a strong indication that the main advantage of owning a pet is the companionship and support provided by the animal. Although several similar categories were combined to produce the 151 responses included in this group, 69 percent of all answers mentioned the word companionship or company in their responses. Other answers included their loyalty and affection, someone to talk

to, relaxation and homeliness. Entertainment was the next most popular suggestion with 8 percent of the responses being to do with the fun and amusement dimension of pet ownership. The safety and security aspect was not far behind comprising 6 percent of responses. Education and exercise were equally ranked, each group containing 4 percent of the responses. The people who mentioned an educational point, commented on the interest of watching animals grow up, and learning about animals and their needs being important for both adults and children. The social advantages of pet ownership received 3 percent support, people who enjoyed the opportunity to meet other animal owners either on walks, at shows or through breeding circles. One respondent appeared to enjoy trips to the vet as well. The final three categories, each gaining 2 percent of responses were: personality features of the animals themselves, such as gentleness; responsibility - both to individual animals and to animals in general; and the responses which did not easily fall into any other category.

Interestingly enough three of the five responses in the latter group were forwarded by rabbit owners, who mentioned garden improvement through fertilizing, pocket money from breeding and amateur carpentry skills developed through building rabbit hutches. Another respondent saw his dog's prowess at scaring people, particularly the "meter man", as an advantage of pet ownership. The 117 respondents initiated 220 answers, an average of 1.9 responses each. However, many supplied four or more advantages of pet ownership.

The respondents were also asked to record the disadvantages of pet ownership and the results can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Disadvantages of pet ownership suggested by the respondents.

Disadvantage	Number	Percent	Examples
Holiday arrangements	39	28	Travel, arranging care, no holidays
Commitment	27	19	Tie, responsibility, limitations, vet visits
Mess	22	15	Dirty feet, hair, dead mice and birds, messes
Expense	16	11	Feeding, vet fees, dog registration, cattery
Guilt & distress	14	10	Fear of getting run over, exercise, worry
None	14	10	
Behaviours	10	7	Biting, eating rabbit, sharp claws, naughty.
Total	142	100	

When they were asked about the disadvantages of pet ownership, the 117 respondents supplied 141 answers, an average of 1.2 each. The largest response recognised the problem of what to do with pets during holidays. Thirty four respondents used the term holiday arrangements, while others discussed the problem of not being able to go away on the spur of the moment or having no holidays at all because of their pets. In general though, responses to this

question were more evenly spread than those to the previous query about the advantages of pet ownership. The largest group of disadvantages involved only 28 percent of the overall responses, the next one adding a further 19 percent. This second category included responses related to the commitment that accompanies animal ownership; time, feeding, the tie and health issues. One student commented on the difficulties incorporated in moving house with several animals in tow. Animals can also be messy creatures and 15 percent of the responses were in connection with mess and the resulting work required. Seven respondents complained of wet, dirty feet on the carpet, a further two of paw marks on the bench. One woman objected to offerings of dead mice and birds brought inside, and three more disliked fur and hair on the carpet and furniture.

The cost of feeding was mentioned by three people and six commented on veterinary bills. Five discussed costs in general. Altogether the expense grouping comprised 11 percent of the replies. The next two categories, guilt and distress and no disadvantages, contained similar numbers of comments, each collecting 10 percent of the replies. The guilt and distress section was represented by issues of providing sufficient exercise (8) and attention (2), and fear of pets being run over (1). Another respondent included the distress she felt when animals were hurt or killed. The same number of respondents said that they saw no disadvantages in connection with the ownership of their pets and several added that if there were disadvantages, they would not keep them. Finally, 7 percent of the disadvantages were mentioned in connection with animal

behaviours. Problems mentioned under this heading were destructive dogs, being bitten, either the owners themselves or their visitors, and sharp cat claws. One respondent was concerned for her rabbit's life when the dog fancied a snack.

The final part of this section refers to the comments at the end of the questionnaire where respondents were asked to agree or disagree with 14 statements about animals. The list began with three statements regarding respondents' feelings about owning pets. The first asked if the reader would like more pets, the second suggested that pets impose limitations as well as providing enjoyment and the third introduced the idea that owners may prefer not to have pets. The next four statements centred around children and the importance of animals for their education and understanding. One comment asked whether all children should have the opportunity to care for a companion animal. Two further statements dealt with couples; one suggested that couples without children are more likely to have pets than couples with children, the other investigated the respondents' thoughts concerning the idea that keeping a pet helps couples prepare for parenting. The remaining points related to issues such as pets visiting hospitals, pets being good companions for special populations and finally whether people should be licensed before being allowed to keep animals.

TABLE 5

Respondents' opinions on statements about animals.

Statement	Percentage		
	Agree	Disagree	No response
I would like to have more pets.	50	49	1
I enjoy my pet(s) but they impose limitations.	56	43	1
I would prefer not to have my pets.	2	96	2
Pets are more impt. for children than for adults.	15	85	0
Pets help children to learn about responsibility.	93	5	2
Owning animals helps ch. to understand life & death.	90	8	2
All children should have the chance to own a pet.	90	9	1
Couples without ch. are more likely to have pets than those with.	33	59	8
Caring for a pet prepares young couples for parenting.	32	59	9
Pet owners are more sociable than non-pet owners.	28	64	8
Pets are important for handicapped people.	90	7	3
Pets should be allowed to visit people in hospital.	79	18	3
Pets are good companions for elderly people.	100	0	0
People should be licensed before being allowed to keep pets.	73	25	2

Table 5 shows that opinion was divided on all but one of the above issues, everyone agreeing that pets are good companions for the elderly. There was a strong body of opinion in favour of; pets being important for persons who are handicapped (90%), pets helping children to learn responsibility (93%) and to understand life and death (90%). There was also a strong emphasis on all children having the chance to own a pet (90%), but the other issues produced a more divided response. Only two of the statements produced a response from all 117 subjects, all the others had missing responses ranging in number from 1 to 11.

4.3 INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN OWNERS AND THEIR PETS

The previous group of questions related to the respondents' views on animals in general whereas the third section focuses on the interplay between the owner and one particular animal of his or her own choosing. The majority of the respondents chose either a dog (66) or a cat (45) but two chose horses to discuss, two selected birds, one a rabbit and the other one chose a rat. One respondent did not answer the question concerning the source of the pet, but of the other 116, 47 percent came from a pet shop or breeder, 26 percent were gifts, 10 percent were adopted from the S.P.C.A. or dog pound, 10 percent were strays, 2 percent were bred by their current owners and 2 percent came from a veterinarian's surgery where they would otherwise have been euthanased. Two percent were bought through different sources, one through a paper advertisement the other from

a neighbour, and one got into the owners' car while they were out on a country walk one day.

The length of time these particular animals had belonged to the respondents ranged from two months to 21 years with 20 percent of them being owned for nine or more years and 64 percent for less than six years. The average length of ownership for the 116 respondents, from whom information was available, was five years. The length of ownership could be a function of the type of pet owned as, for example, rats and rabbits would not have the same life expectancy as dogs and cats. Horses tend to live longer than canines and felines but are also often owned by a number of people during their lifetime. Therefore, several factors may influence the length of time a person owns a horse; ponies are easily outgrown by children and since equine ownership requires a considerable time input, changing circumstances often encourage owners to sell a horse in favour of achieving different goals. In the present study the majority of respondents answered with respect to a cat or a dog, and as these animals experience a similar length of life, the responses should be reasonably comparable.

The names of the 117 animals in the sample could all be classified into two groups; human names, of which there were 51, and pet names. The reasons underlying the naming of the pets gave rise to the results summarised in Table 6.

TABLE 6
Reasons underlying the naming of pets.

Basis for name	Frequency	Examples
Owner liked name or thought it suited the pet	40	Sharla, Kate
Physical characteristics	22	Minus, Patch, Ming
Personality	11	Lucifer, Nip, Peppi
Specific persons	9	Luther, Kupe, Mishka
Abbreviations	4	Arthur, Besa, Ute
Source of pet	4	Boots, Alby, Lucky
T.V. shows, films etc.	3	Preshus, Leroy
Places	2	Clunie, Shaba
Previous pets	2	Toby, Lily
Total	97	

Although 114 reasons for pets names were supplied, Table 6 only displays 97 of them, because of the remainder, 12 pets were already named when their present owners acquired them and five made no apparent sense. The largest number of pets were so named simply because the family liked the name or thought it suited the pet. In these 40 examples no further reason was provided. The second category of pets named for their physical attributes gave rise to some most interesting reasoning; one cat in this section was called Minus because he was minus part of an ear, another was named muffin

as she was small at birth and multi-coloured and Ming the siamese cat was named for the colour of his eyes.

The basis for the personality names was clearly understandable, Nip was a quick and nippy cat, Lucifer stirred up his litter mates then watched them all get punished. Nine animals were named after famous persons, for example the cat called Hilary, after the New Zealand mountaineer Sir Edmund Hilary, due to her predilection for scaling curtains and furniture. The abbreviation section accounted for four names, Arthur being a bowdlerization of 'R for' since that pet was a rabbit. Similarly Steiny is presumably a contraction of 'Steinlager', a particular brand of local beer. The source of the pet decided four more names: Alby was a finch found at St. Albans swimming pool in Christchurch and Lucky was rescued from the S.P.C.A. The other seven names were from television programmes and movies (3), copied from previous pets (2), and placenames (2).

The next topic concerns the contrast between who owns and who is responsible for the family pet. The results are presented in Figure 2 on the following page.

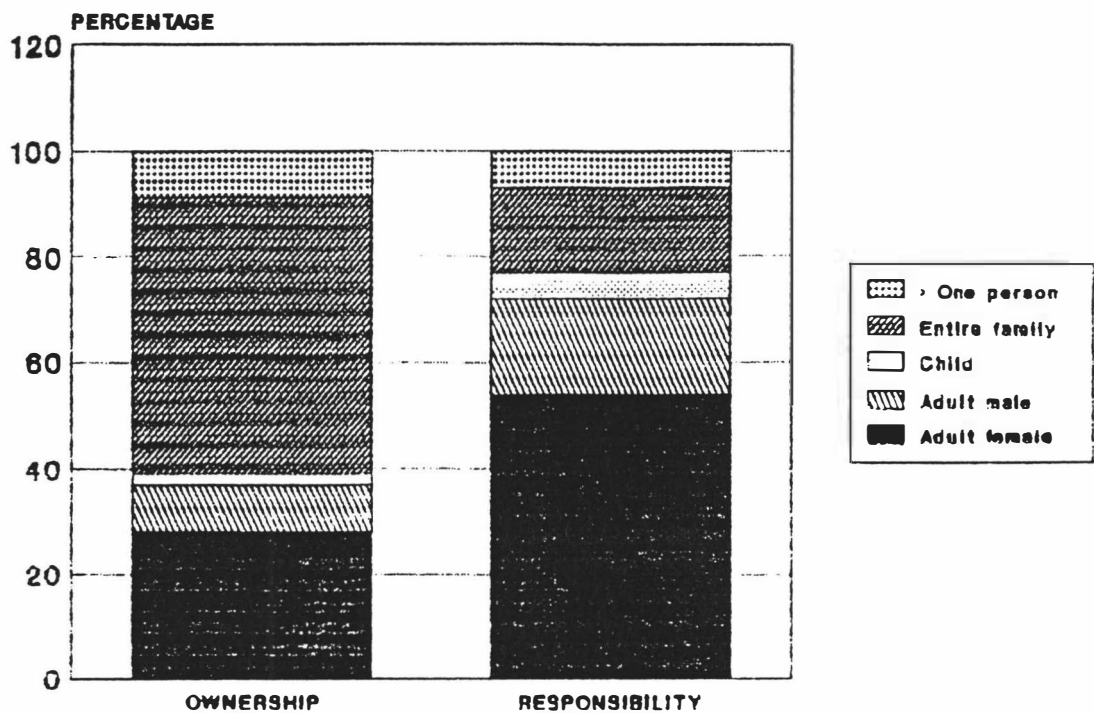


FIGURE 2 : A comparison of who owns and who is responsible for the pet.

Figure 2 shows that although the largest number of animals (52%) is owned by entire families, the largest proportion (54%) is cared for by an adult female. According to the respondents, adult males owned 9 percent of the animals but were responsible for 18 percent. In 2 percent of situations children owned the animals but in 5 percent of households they were responsible for them. Lastly, 9 percent of pets were owned by more than one person, generally an adult and a child, but in only 7 percent of families did more than one person have the responsibility for it.

When the respondents were asked if the sex of their pet was important, and if the pet had been neutered, the findings were as follows. The sex of the animal was said to be important by 38 percent of the respondents and 26 percent of these animals were now neutered while the other 12 percent were still entire. The other 62 percent reported that their animal's sex was not important and 49 percent of these pets were neutered and 13 percent were not.

The respondents were asked to elaborate on the reasons for their gender preference and the data was classified under the male and female headings. A clear preference for a female or a comment against males is placed under the female preference heading and conversely, a clear preference for a male or a statement against females is entered under the male preference heading. For example, both a response concerning the belief that female dogs are good defenders, from somebody wanting a guard dog, and a comment about male dogs being dirty, would appear in the female preference column.

The results in Table 7 below, demonstrate that of those respondents stating a preference for a pet of a particular gender (N=44): more wanted females than males. The most common reason for selecting a female over a male was temperament (11 responses). For example, two respondents considered bitches to be more protective than dogs and therefore wanted a bitch for a guard dog. The next largest group (9 responses) were those people who disliked male habits in cats and dogs and considered females to be cleaner and

tidier. Breeding was another common reason for wanting an animal of one sex rather than another (9 responses). This section however was more evenly balanced in favour of both sexes. Males' propensity for straying constituted the next four responses all of which were in favour of female animals. Three respondents stated that they wanted females to make a change from the males they had previously kept, and six respondents said that they just preferred males (4) or females (2). Four other respondents selected their pets for their appearance, three wanting male dogs because they were bigger, stronger and would be optimally off-putting to burglars. The one respondent holding a preference for the appearance of a bitch considered that females look tidier. Finally, four responses were in favour of males -because the neutering procedure is cheaper and less stressful for the animal (2), and because males don't have reproductive seasons during which other dogs can prove to be a nuisance.

Another general comment made by two people, one with reference to kittens and the other to rats, was that pairs consisting of one male and one female tend to get on with each other better than pairs of the same sex.

Table 7

Reasons provided by the respondents for the sex of their pets being important.

Reasons	<u>Response frequencies</u>	
	Female Preference	Male Preference
Temperament	11	-
Habits	9	-
Breeding	5	4
Straying	4	-
To make a change	3	-
Prefer	2	4
Appearance	1	3
Neutering	-	2
Seasons	-	2
Total	35	14

The next information continues on from the last section on the respondents' preferences for an animal of a particular gender. This question asked the owners to state reasons as to why their animals were or were not neutered. The findings are summarized in Table 8 on the following page.

TABLE 8
Reasons given as to why pets were or were not neutered.

Neutered (N=90)	Percentage	Not neutered (N=28)	Percentage
Problem of homes for offspring	26	No need	39
Behaviour curb	18	Breeding/showing	28
Don't want to breed	19	Cost	18
Responsibility	11	Not old enough	7
Stop straying and discourage strays.	11	It's cruel	4
Done by SPCA (4) or prior owner (2)	7	Have not got around to it	4
Health problems	4		
Unable to breed	3		
For animal's own protection	1		
Total	100		100

Table 8 indicates that 26 percent of the 90 reasons given for why respondent's pets had been neutered related to the problems of finding homes for the offspring if their pets did breed. Another 18 percent pertained to the curbing of unwanted behaviours such as spraying in cats.

Neutering was undertaken by 19 percent of the respondents as they had no wish to breed, or breed further, from their animals. A further 11 percent did not want the responsibility of adding to the already unmanageable number of unwanted pets. Neutering was performed on 11 percent of the animals either to stop them straying or to discourage other animals from visiting, and 7 percent were already neutered when their owners acquired them. For reasons of poor health 3 percent of the pets were neutered and one owner elected to have a pet neutered due to his own health, implying an awareness of the responsibilities that breeding entails. Another 3 percent of the owners wanted to breed from their pets but were not able to and another pet was neutered for its own protection.

Twenty eight reasons were provided as to why respondents' pets were not neutered and the largest group of these, 39 percent suggested there was no need. Responses in this category came from several owners whose pets were never allowed off the property unless on a lead, 1 who saw no need and one who stated that the pet was homosexual. The pets that had been kept entire for showing or breeding purposes involved 28 percent of the sample and 18 percent were not neutered because of the cost of the required operation. Another 7 percent of the animals were not yet old enough to be neutered, 4 percent of owners considered the procedure to be cruel and 4 percent "hadn't got around to it yet". These results include eight respondents who to some degree evaded the question being asked.

In the neutered section those who responded that their pets were already neutered when they acquired them provide no insight into whether or not they would neuter the animal had the decision not already been made for them. This situation also applies to those who's pets are not neutered because they are not old enough, they did not indicate whether they had any future intention of having their animal neutered.

Turning to the topic of how a particular pet was regarded, 18 percent of the respondents indicated that their pet was a human family member, and 33 percent stated that the pet was considered to be an almost human family member. Another 33 percent considered the pet to be an animal family member, 8 percent responded that it was an animal owned by the family and the other 8 percent provided varying responses: one respondent indicated that the pet was both a human family member and an almost human family member; another had not previously contemplated the matter but stated that the pet was "just part of the family, human or otherwise". Two animals were their owners' best mates" and one was considered to be a member of the flat. Two cat owners felt that they didn't own the cat, but that the cat owned the family and one young respondent described his male cat as a "dirty, smelly pain" .

The next question asking the participants how they related to their pet received 95 responses. Of these, 66 percent indicated they

related to the pet as they would to a child, 5 percent related to the animal as they would towards an adult, 1 percent interacted with the pet sometimes as a child and other times as an adult, and 26 percent as if it were some other sort of family member, animal or human. Nearly a fifth of the respondents chose not to answer this question.

A major theme of the present study is that of the animal as a family member. It is particularly interesting to consider when, and under what circumstances the pet owners realised that their animal had gained the status of family membership as opposed to being just an animal owned by the family. The respondents were questioned about this realisation process and their responses are represented in five categories in Figure 3.

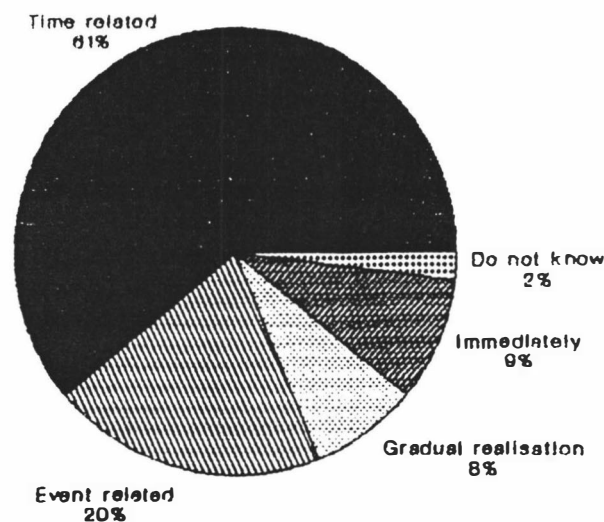


FIGURE 3 : The points at which respondents realised their pet had become a member of the family.

Ninety comments were made in response to this question about when it was realised that the pet had become part of the family. As can be seen in Figure 3, 61 percent of the responses were time related in that the respondents had put a chronological measure on their responses. Examples of these were; right from the beginning (49%), after about six months (2%) and two days after I got her (1%). A further 20 percent of the responses were event related, in that some event had taken place to bring the owner to a realisation about how the animal had become an integral part of the family. Examples in this category included when the animal was run over, when the kitten started playing with and sleeping beside the dog and when he started sleeping between us. One respondent described the acceptance point as being when she introduced her cats to a neighbour as 'my boys'. Another respondent wrote that "after our newborn came home, she (the dog) immediately took on the job of looking after him when he was asleep or in his pram".

The gradual realisation section involved 8 percent of answers that related to the gradual acceptance of the pet into the realms of the family. Although time periods were mentioned, they were not as precise as the time related comments. For example respondents wrote remarks like "when I realised the dog would rather eat our meals than his own", "as soon as I missed him when he wasn't around" and "when she started treating my home as hers". A further 9 percent of respondents made comments along the theme that all pets were immediately accepted as family members because that's how animals were considered and 2 percent of the participants did not know when

they had realised that the pet had become a member of the household.

For many people, holidays and weekends away pose problems regarding what to do with the animals in their absence. When the respondents were questioned about this issue, the following results emerged:-

TABLE 9
What happens to pets when their owners go away for a weekend and for a week.

	<u>Weekend</u>	<u>Week</u>
What the animal does	Percentage	Percentage
Stays at home	51	49
Boards at a cattery or kennels	10	20
Goes with owner	15	8
Other	24	23
Total	100	100

Table 9 shows that when the animal owners in this sample go away, whether it is for a week or a weekend, the largest number of pets stay at home. The difference in length of time away changes the next two categories in that only 10 percent of owners put their animals into a boarding establishment if they are going away for a short time, whereas 20 percent use this resource for longer time periods. The pet is taken away for weekends by 15 percent of

respondents whereas only 8 percent take them on longer holidays. The responses in the 'other' category include variations on the above themes plus a few respondents who admit that they don't ever go away even for a weekend so the situation does not apply.

When the respondents were asked about the place their pets spend the night, it was found that 43 percent of the 117 pets in the survey spend at least part of the night on or in somebody's bed, a further 10 percent sleep in bedrooms and 26 percent somewhere else in the house. Only 21 percent of pets spend the night outside the house, and many of those have their own special sleeping quarters or at least have beds in the garage.

In this sample of pet owners only 9 percent did not have photographs of their pet and 81 percent of those who did, kept them either in an album or on display at work or at home. 21 percent of the respondents stated that they celebrate their companion animal's birthday although this question met with derision from some owners. One respondent's comment was "I might be crazy, but I'm not that crazy". One hundred and four of the 115 responses to the query about whether or not the owners approached their pets for comfort or affection said yes they did and all but 3 respondents talk to their pets about a number of things.

Many of the respondents involved their pets in family outings and special occasions, and the descriptions of these events are

shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10
Special occasions and outings in which pets are involved.

Event	No.	Percentage
Outdoor activities	16	29
Everywhere dogs can go	10	18
Car plus outdoor activities	9	16
Miscellaneous	7	12
Special celebratory feasts	6	11
Family gatherings	5	9
Car rides	3	5
Total	56	100

When asked about the special occasions or outings that animals were involved in, 55 respondents said none at all, four chose not to respond and two responded inappropriately. The other 56 provided the events presented in Table 10. The largest group of answers can be classed together as outdoor activities and these involve picnics, swimming at the beach or river and walks - 27 percent of responses entered this category. The next classification, containing 18 percent of the responses, related to dogs. These respondents take their pets wherever it is feasible. Car trips, along with similar sorts of outdoor activities as were previously discussed, were mentioned by 16 percent of respondents. Another 5 percent of

companion animals enjoy travelling enough just to go for outings in the car.

The 12 percent of miscellaneous responses included comments about dogs accompanying their owners to work (2%), dog shows (1%), fights (1%), everywhere the owner ventures (1%) and on holidays (1%). One pet was sought for special occasions -being something of a showpiece. The celebrations heading encompassed three pets which enjoyed going to parties and three more which were provided with their favourite food on special occasions. Five of the remarks related to family gatherings in which pets are involved.

Often a household chooses to have a pet as a result of an event of significance such as a loss or a change in family composition. The respondents were questioned both about events occurring at the time of the new pet's arrival, Table 11, and about changes taking place after the animal's introduction, Table 12.

TABLE 11

Significant events occurring at the time of the companion animal's arrival.

Event	No.	Percentage
Death of previous pet	11	26
Death of relative	6	14
Death of owner	1	2
Acquired first home or left home	5	12
House change	5	12
Living alone	1	2
Family upheaval	3	7
Miscarriage	2	5
Pregnancy / birth	2	5
Birthday	2	5
Return from overseas	3	7
Unqualified	1	2
Total	42	100

Table 11 presents the variety of responses to the question concerning the presence or absence of significant events at the time of the pet's acquisition. The 117 respondents generated 121 answers, 79 of which were in the negative. The 42 responses acknowledging a significant event at that time are tabulated above. It would appear that a death, either human or animal, was the most common circumstance to occur at the time of the new pet's

introduction to the household as 43 percent of responses mention a death, 11 with respect to previous pets and the other seven with respect to human family members. A change of habitation was indicated in 24 percent of the answers, either a house change (4), respondents moving from home to form a new household (5), or living alone for the first time (1). Family upheaval and a return from overseas both account for 7 percent of the responses. Two pet owners had recently miscarried, one was pregnant and one family had a recent human addition at the time of acquiring a pet. These three categories encompass 14 percent of the 42 responses. Two animals were introduced to their families as birthday presents and another respondent agreed that a significant event had taken place at the time of the pet's arrival but the response was unqualified.

In response to the question of whether there was a change in the family as a result of the pet's arrival, 71 people answered negatively and the remaining 46 respondents generated 49 affirmative replies. These are classified in Table 12 below. The largest group of classifiable responses, 23 percent, pertained to the change in the family's routine in order to accommodate the pet. Changes within pet ranks, the animal "pecking order", catered for 16 percent of the responses with several owners discussing a cat's dislike for a canine addition or vice versa. It was recorded by 14 percent of the respondents that there was an increase in harmony and love in the family as a result of the pet's arrival. A further 6 percent said that there was more to talk about, share and take an interest in. Ten percent of the 46 respondents admitted to their

pet receiving special treatment and attention, and another 4 percent suggested that the new animal initiated more fun and play within the family.

The final comments could not easily be classified and they accounted for 27 percent of those who believed that change had taken place within the family as a consequence of the companion animal's introduction. These responses included observations such as: one respondent developed a cat allergy; a husband became jealous of the latest acquisition; the house now felt complete; one household's food bills escalated; a newly wedded couple enjoyed having pets to care for and one father reported that his son came home from school twice as fast once there was an animal companion awaiting his arrival.

TABLE 12
Changes in the family following the pet's arrival.

Changes	No.	Percent
Change of routine to incorporate pet	11	23
Changes within pet ranks	8	16
More harmony and love	7	14
Special pet treatment	5	10
More to share and talk about	3	6
Fun with pet	2	4
Miscellaneous	13	27
Total	49	100

When they were asked why this particular pet was special, 107 respondents generated 116 replies. The largest number of reasons, 49 percent, pertained to the animals' nature and temperament. Other comments included: the company provided by the animal (6%); the pet being part of the family (5%); the animal was the first one to be owned or cared for by the respondent (5%) and because the pet was saved by the respondent (3%). Another 3 percent considered their pet to be special because it was a friend or a child, 2 percent mentioned that s/he had survived an operation or an accident and 2 percent valued the experiences they had shared with their animal companions.

The results thus far have dealt with how the respondents feel about and treat their pets. The next focus is how pets respond to and treat their owners. One question asked of the respondents was how their pets had affected their social relationships with other people, if at all. Of the 111 respondents to answer this question, 65 percent replied that their pet had not affected their relationships with other people. A positive affect on their relationships was reported by 16 percent, 14 percent had been affected negatively, and the other 5 percent had been influenced both positively and negatively. Most of the explanations given related to dogs rather than cats with the negative features including visitors fear of aggressive behaviour in the pet. Positive examples included meeting people while out exercising the dog, making friends through breeding and shows and having something to start a conversation about when meeting people for the first time.

Table 13 displays the frequencies of certain pet behaviours about which their owners were questioned:-

TABLE 13
The frequency of certain pet behaviours observed by their owners.

<u>Frequency with which the behaviour occurs</u>					
Pet Behaviour	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Freq.
Greets owner (115)	1	1	5	20	88
Communicates (112)	2	8	17	37	48
Understands (113)	3	3	25	31	51
Obeys commands (114)	6	11	26	37	34
Seeks company (115)	0	4	10	31	70
Enjoys affection (115)	4	1	6	26	78
Is sensitive to emotion (110)	7	14	19	33	37
Makes owner laugh (115)	1	5	25	36	48
Calms owner (110)	14	13	26	27	30
Annoys owner (112)	16	46	38	4	8

Table 13 shows that the majority of animals in the sample interact quite often or even frequently with their owners in terms of greeting them when they arrive home (78%), understanding what is said (72%), seeking companionship (88%) and communicating with their

owners (76%). Additionally 91 percent of the respondents reported that their pet frequently or quite often enjoys affection and 64 percent said that their animal was similarly sensitive to their emotion. Fewer respondents indicated that their pets were a calming influence, 25 percent suggested that they rarely or never calmed them when they felt anxious, but neither did they annoy their owners - only 11 percent of respondents said that they were frequently or quite often annoyed by their animal companions. It was observed by 85 percent of the participants that their animals sometimes, quite often or frequently obeyed commands and 95 percent could elicit their owner's laughter at least sometimes. Nearly all the pets in the sample, 97 percent, were said to express affection towards family members while only 3 percent of the respondents indicated that they were not affectionate. Similarly 93 percent replied affirmatively when asked whether their pet seeks attention and only 5 percent provided a negative response.

The respondents were requested to rate the strength of their relationships with pets, past and present, human family members and friends on a scale of one to five. The results are tabulated as follows:-

TABLE 14

The strength of relationships between respondents and their relatives, friends and pets expressed in percentage form.

	<u>Strength of relationship</u>					
	(Strong)			(Weak)		
Key person :animal	1	2	3	4	5	N
Partner/spouse	79	14	1	2	4	81
Youngest child	83	13	2	0	2	40
Oldest/only child	81	13	4	2	0	53
Sister/brother	31	27	26	10	6	89
Current pet	64	26	6	4	0	103
Same sex friend	32	27	35	5	1	94
Childhood pet	45	29	18	7	1	87

Table 14 shows that most of the respondents used a '1' to represent their relationships with partner (79%), youngest child (83%) and oldest or only child (81%) - a '1' indicating the 'strong' end of the five point scale. The relative strengths of relationships with siblings, same sex friends and childhood pets show a greater degree of variation with the responses dispersed fairly evenly across the first three points on the scale. The relationship with current pet lies somewhere between the other two groups with 90 percent of the 103 responses being represented by 1s and 2s on the scale.

4.4 CROSS-TABULATION DATA

The fourth and final section reports some basic cross-tabulations of questionnaire responses on pet ownership topics in relation to sample characteristics. Chi-square tests were performed on the cross-tabulation data and where significant differences were found they are noted beside the relevant results. The alpha level was set at $p < .01$.

When gender information was cross-tabulated with the type of pet discussed in the questionnaire it was found that 54 percent of males chose dogs and 41 percent considered cats. Amongst females, 57 percent chose dogs and 38 percent selected cats for discussion. Both horse owners were female, the rabbit owner was male and one of each gender chose a bird to talk about.

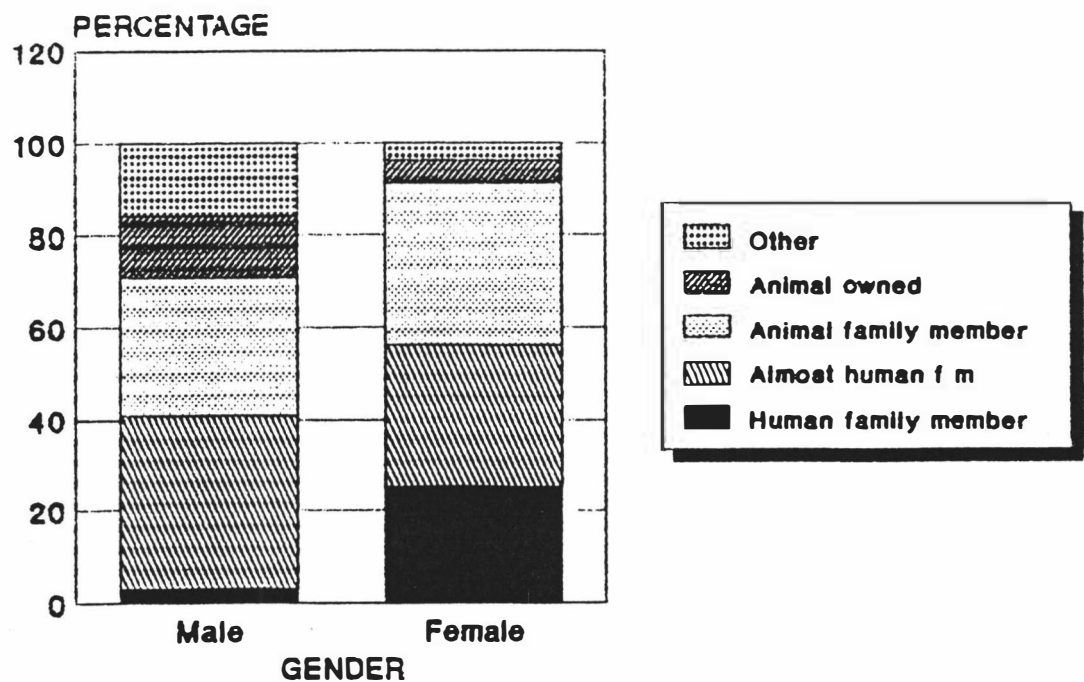


FIGURE 4 : How males and females consider their pets in relation to the family.

It can be seen in Figure 4 that while 25 percent of females considered their pet to be a human family member, only 3 percent of male respondents awarded this status to their pet. The next two categories were more evenly represented by both sexes with 38 percent of males and 31 percent of females considering their pet to be an almost human family member, and 30 percent of males and 35 percent of females deeming their pet to be an animal member of the household. The remaining two groups displayed a slight gender difference with 13 percent of male and 5 percent of female participants suggesting that their pets are animals owned by the family and 16 and 4 percent respectively indicating that the pet is considered in some other way. The entire data set is significant (N=116).

When the gender of the respondents was contrasted with how they related to their animals the following results emerged. 54 percent of males related to the pet as they would to a child compared with 72 percent of females. 11 percent of men related to the animal as an adult as did 3 percent of women, and 35 percent of male and 25 percent of female respondents treated their pet as some other sort of family member. These differences were not significant.

TABLE 15

Male and female perceptions of how frequently their pet annoys them.

Annoyance categories	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Never	4	11	12	16
Rarely	13	36	32	43
Sometimes	14	39	24	32
Quite Often	1	3	3	4
Frequently	4	11	4	5
Total	36	100	75	100

When gender information was cross-tabulated with the owners' perceptions of how frequently their animals annoyed them, it can be seen in Table 15 that there were negligible differences in the ratings. The largest number of respondents of both genders indicated that their pets sometimes or rarely annoyed them. These two categories accounted for 75 percent of both male and female responses.

In Table 16 below, the largest discrepancies can be seen in the 'sometimes' and 'quite often' categories. In the former, 21 percent more males than females suggested that their pets sometimes calmed them whereas in the latter, 14 percent more females than males reported that their pets quite often had a calming influence

on them. Despite the apparent trend, the result was not statistically significant in this study.

TABLE 16
Male and female perceptions of how frequently their pet calms them.

Calming categories	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Never	6	18	8	11
Rarely	2	6	11	15
Sometimes	13	38	13	17
Quite Often	5	15	22	29
Frequently	8	23	21	28
Total	34	100	75	100

Cross-tabulating the respondents' gender with whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement "couples without children are more likely to have pets than couples with children" produced the following results.

TABLE 17

Male and female opinion on whether couples without children are more likely to own pets than couples with children.

Gender	Percentage agreement	Percentage disagreement	Percentage of no response
Male (N=37)	41	51	8
Female (N=79)	29	63	8

This table shows that 12 percent more males than females agreed with the statement while 12 percent more females than males disagreed. Those respondents choosing not to answer made up 8 percent of both genders.

A similar result emerged from the cross-tabulation of gender with responses to the statement "people should be licensed before being allowed to keep pets". In this example 10 percent more females than males agreed with the statement and correspondingly 10 percent more males than females disagreed. Only 4 percent of the respondents abstained from answering this question.

The combination of age and the type of animal chosen for the purposes of the questionnaire, reveals that the owners of animals other than cats and dogs were all less than 40 years old. The owners of dogs and cats were well spread across all age groups, the only obvious disparity being that a greater proportion of dogs (15) than cats (7) belonged to respondents in the 40-49 age stratum.

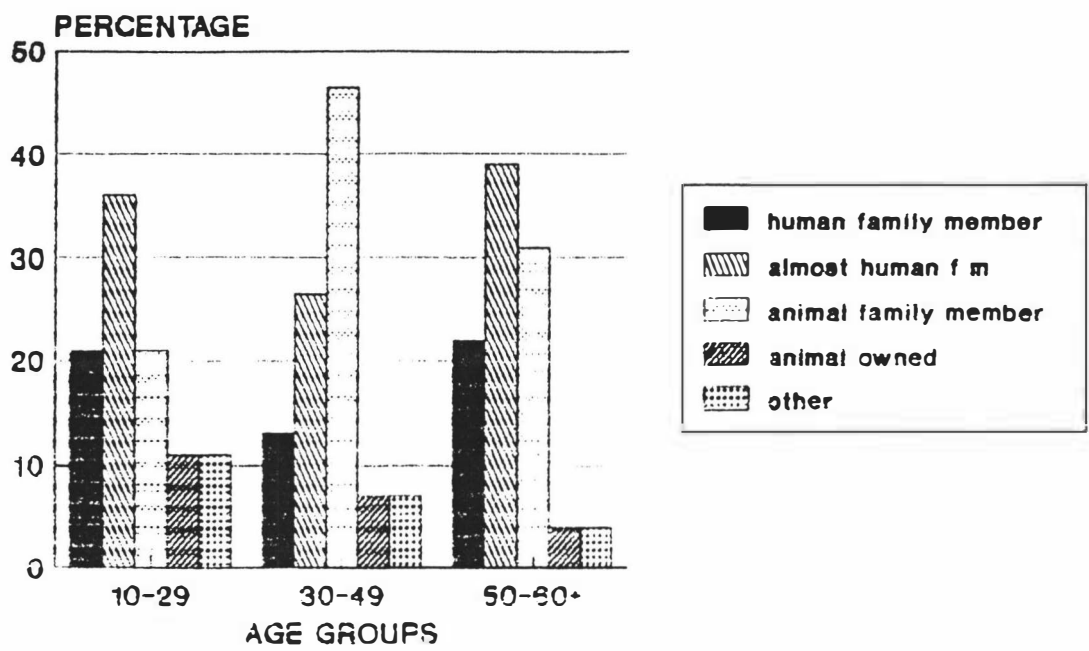


FIGURE 5 : The pet's position in relation to the family as seen by different age groups.

In Figure 5 it can be seen that in the youngest and oldest of the three age levels, the largest number of respondents considered their pet to be an almost human family member whereas in the middle group, the majority of respondents thought the pet to be an animal family member. Similarly more members of the same two groups considered their pet to be human than did those of the middle age range. The percentage of respondents thinking of their pets as animals owned by the family or in some other way decreased from 11 to 7 to 4 percent as age increased.

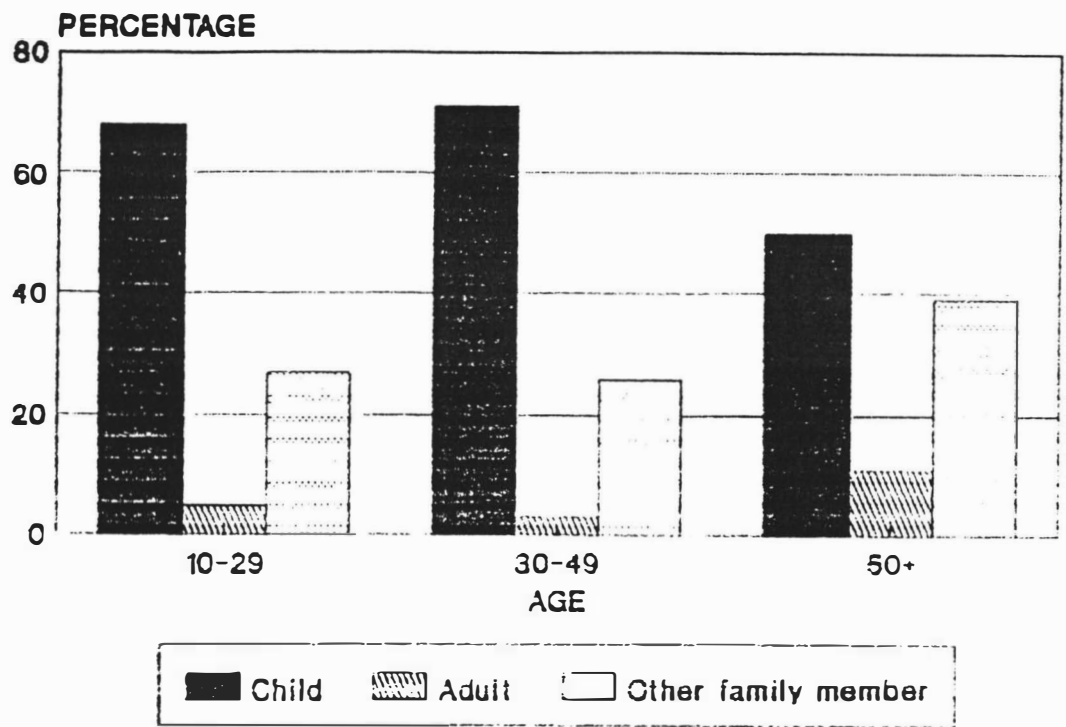


FIGURE 6 : How respondents in the three age categories related to their pets.

Figure 6 shows that 68 percent of the 10-29 year old group reported that they related to their pet as to a child. A further 5 percent related to the animal as an adult and the remaining 27 percent indicated that they related to their pet as if it were some other sort of family member. The middle group, aged 30-49 years, thought similarly to the youngest group although slightly more of these respondents related to their pets as children. In the group aged 50 years and over, half the respondents related to the animal as a child while the rest reported a relationship similar to that with an adult or some other sort of family member.

TABLE 18

The combination of age and strength of relationship with current pet.

(Percentage)						
<u>Strength of relationship on a scale of 1 to 5</u>						
<u>where 1 represents strong and 5 represents weak</u>						
AGE	N	1	2	3	4	5
10-29	44	61	27	7	5	0
30-49	40	55	32	8	5	0
50+	18	89	11	0	0	0
Total	102					

This table demonstrates the strong relationships respondents of all ages claimed to have with their companion animals. The majority of participants indicated the strongest position on the scale as being representative of the relationship and nobody indicated the weakest point. When the percentages of responses of 1 and 2 are combined for each age group, they range from 87 percent in the 30-49 age category to 100 percent in the 50+ group.

When the respondents' age statistics were combined with their opinions on whether couples without children were more likely to own pets than couples with children, the greatest level of agreement was found in the 30-49 age group (43%). At the other end of the scale 26 percent of the 50+ category agreed with the comment, however 21 percent of this group did not respond.

Disagreement with the statement about couples ranged from 57 percent in the 30-49 year group to 74 percent in the 50+ category.

When the three groups of respondents' opinions on whether pets are more important for children than adults were examined (N=111), it was clear that the majority of each group disagreed with the statement. The range of disagreement spread from 74 percent in the 50+ group to 85 percent in the 10-29 group. The cross-tabulation of age with opinions on whether pets should be allowed to visit hospitals, (N=111), produced strong levels of agreement at each age level. The scope of agreement was from 74 percent in the 10-29 year old group to 95 percent in the group of respondents aged 50 and over. These two groups also provided the parameters of disagreement with the lowest level being 5 percent in the latter group and the highest being 26 percent in the former.

The next series of cross-tabulations centred around whether or not respondents currently had children living in their households. Firstly the percentage of respondents with and without children who celebrate their pet's birthday was considered. The results can be seen in Figure 7 on the following page.

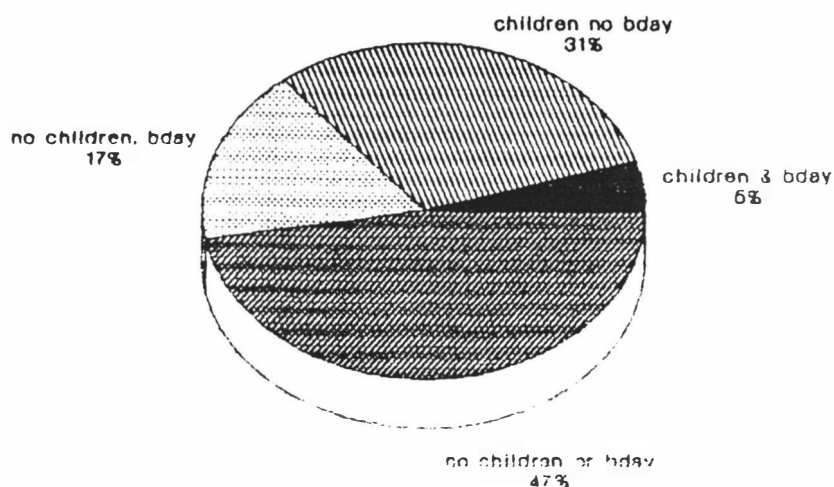


FIGURE 7 : The celebration of pets' birthdays by respondents with and without children.

Of the 113 respondents who supplied the information, it can be seen in Figure 7 that 5 percent both had children and celebrated their pet's special day, 31 percent had children and didn't celebrate the pet's birthday, 17 percent were without children and did celebrate the birthday of their animal companion and the remaining 47 percent had no children in their household and nor did they celebrate the animal's birthday.

The next two comparisons in this section dealt with opinions on firstly whether pets are more important for children than adults,

and secondly if respondents thought that owning animals helps young couples to learn about parenting. When they were asked to agree or disagree with the first statement, 5 percent of respondents had children and agreed that pets are more important for children than they are for adults. The other 31 percent of participants with children disagreed, as did 54 percent who had no children currently in their households. The remaining 10 percent did not have children at home and agreed that pets are more important for children than for adults. The second statement asked whether having pets to care for helps young couples to learn about parenting. This analysis ascertained that 11 percent had children and agreed and 24 percent had children and disagreed. A further 10 percent of participants were without children and agreed with the comment and the final 54 percent did not have children and disagreed with the idea that pets help couples to learn about being a parent. Of the 9 percent of the respondents who chose not to answer the question, 8 percent did not have children in their households.

Finally the information about whether or not respondents had children was compared with how they related to their pet. The percentages are tabulated as follows.

TABLE 19

How respondents with and without children relate to their companion animals.

Type of household	Relationship percentages		
	Child	Adult	Other
With children	63	3	34
Without children	68	7	25

Table 19 reveals that 63 percent of those people with children in their households related to their pet as they would to a child as did 68 percent of respondents without children. Pets were related to as adults by 3 percent of those with children and 7 percent of those without and the remaining 34 percent of respondents with children and 25 percent without treated the animal as they would some other sort of family member.

The data concerning the type of animal each respondent chose to discuss in the questionnaire was cross-tabulated with the respondents' hobbies, and the following results arose. Of the 65 canine owners, 15 percent enjoyed mainly outdoor activities, another 11 percent indicated predominantly indoor pursuits and the remaining 74 percent were involved in both indoor and outdoor leisure activities. Of the 45 feline owners, 13 percent appeared to be outdoor people, 27 percent mentioned indoor pastimes and the other 60 percent included both indoor and outdoor interests in their

lists. For both horse owners outdoor pursuits prevailed, the owner of the rat recorded indoor interests, the two avian enthusiasts responded with activities of both types and the rabbit owner preferred outdoor sports and activities.

The remaining cross-tabulations involving information about the type of pet the respondents had chosen to talk about have been presented only with respect to dog and cat owners. The owners of the other animals provided the requisite information, but the results would be based on too few numbers to be meaningful. One such computation examined the type of pet discussed and the frequency with which the respondents' animals obeyed commands. Of the 43 feline owners 9 percent reported that their cats never obeyed commands, 21 percent rarely did and a further 35 sometimes followed instructions. Additionally 23 percent were recorded as quite often obeying and the final 12 percent frequently did. 65 dog owners provided responses and of these only 3 percent said that their canine rarely obeyed commands, 15 percent sometimes did and 39 percent quite often obeyed. The remaining 43 percent indicated that their pets frequently responded to commands. These differences in species' response to commands were found to be significant (N=114).

As could perhaps be expected, 50 percent more dogs than cats were taken on outings with 73 percent of dogs and 23 percent of cats being involved in outings with the family. This species difference proved significant (N=113).

Information about neutering was cross tabulated with animal types and it was found that 98 percent of cats had been neutered compared with 63 percent of dogs. This difference was also statistically significant (N=117).

When dog owners opinions were sought on whether pets should be allowed to visit hospitals 82 percent said yes and 15 percent said no. The other 3 percent did not respond. Amongst cat owners 76 percent agreed that animals should be allowed to visit hospitals and 20 percent disagreed. Considering the cross-tabulation from the other perspective, it can be seen that of the respondents who agreed with the statement, 59 percent were owners of dogs and 37 percent were owners of cats. Of those respondents who did not agree with pet visiting in hospitals, 48 percent kept dogs and 43 percent cats.

Of the 33 respondents who considered pet owners to be more sociable than non pet owners, 73 percent owned dogs and 24 percent cared for cats. 75 owners disagreed with the comment and 53 percent of them were dog owners compared with 40 percent who kept a cat.

One hundred and fifteen respondents answered the question about whether they would like more pets than they presently owned, and 51 percent said that they would. To see if the decision was in any way related to the number of pets currently in the household the two sets of information were combined.

TABLE 20

The number of pets currently owned and whether respondents wish to have more pets.

Number of pets	N	<u>Percentage of total N</u>		
		more pets	no more pets	no response
1	19	58	42	
2	23	57	39	4
3	17	35	65	
4	10	40	60	
5	9	56	44	
6	6	50	50	
7	5	40	60	
Total	89			

The results in Table 20 revealed that the majority of the people owning one, two or five pets agreed that they would like more animals. Of thoses with six animals half would like more and the rest would not. In the other groups, more respondents disagreed than agreed with the suggestion of more animals.

The remaining 28 respondents owned between eight and 99 pets. These respondents have not been incorporated in the table as the numbers of fish and birds they own act as confounding variables.

4.5 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS WORK.

One of the main purposes of this investigation was to make a comparison between pet owners in New Zealand and those in other countries. The logical starting point was the United States, as a number of studies have been carried out there with regard to the companion animal. The first two reports chosen for comparative purposes were Cain's (1977) study of pets in the family system and Horn and Meer's (1984) survey of 'Psychology Today' readers. These were obvious selections since the investigation of New Zealanders' feelings towards their pets has embodied ideas and items from these questionnaires. The third set of contrasting data was the result of a survey carried out by Ganster and Voith (1983) to investigate the attitudes of cat owners towards their cats.

In order to make the comparisons as direct as possible, the only questions discussed in this section are those which were asked in at least two of the studies, and in a similar way. The comparisons are limited, nevertheless, by the different sampling methods employed by the researchers, and the variations in sample size.

4.51 Why People Own Pets

The question concerning why people own animals seems to have produced a similar response whenever it has been asked. As Fox (1985) stated, the most common reason why people keep

pets is companionship. Cain's open-ended query about reasons underlying ownership elicited 89 responses from the 62 respondents and 49 percent of these related to companionship and pleasure. Horn and Meer wrote "when we asked why people had pets, the reason overwhelmingly given was the obvious one: for pleasure and companionship" (p53). In the current investigation, the 117 respondents were offered 10 possible reasons for ownership of their present pets, including an 'other' category. Three hundred and thirty two responses were indicated, with companionship and pleasure composing 61 percent of them. In addition, when they were asked to consider the advantages of pet ownership in general, 54 respondents mentioned companionship.

A Minnesota study (cited in Horn & Meer, 1984) found that the predominant reasons for having pets were: companionship 71 percent; love and affection 52 percent and protection 36 percent. Protection and safety were also placed fairly prominently on Horn and Meer's list of ownership reasons. Cain received a 10 percent response in that category, and in the present questionnaire 12 percent of respondents recorded protection and safety as a rationale for owning pets. Sport and breeding were also listed in Cain's report with 2 percent of the sample mentioning these features of ownership. In this study, the sport and exercise category received 7 percent of the responses, and breeding received 5 percent. Cain's question concerning ownership produced no mention of prestige or status although as she explained, "this reason for having pedigree pets has been frequently mentioned in the pet literature" (p75).

In the present study three respondents indicated that prestige was a reason for ownership. However, methodological differences may be implicated as Cain used an open-ended format to the question of reasons for pet ownership. In this study a number of options were provided, including 'prestige'.

4.52 Status Of Companion Animals In Households

All four studies investigated the status of the companion animal within the structure of the family or household. The findings are presented in the following figure:-

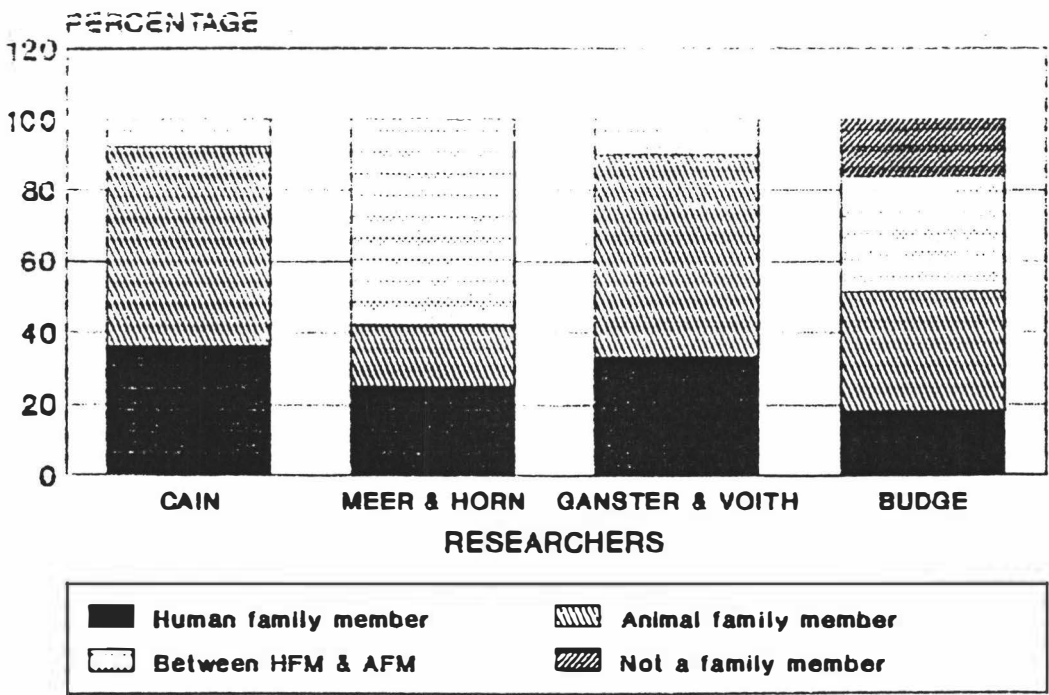


FIGURE 8 : Respondents' views of the place of the pet in the family.

Cain, and Ganster and Voith asked whether the pet was a member of the family. Cain found that 87 percent said 'yes' 10 percent said 'no' and 3 percent said both 'yes' and 'no'. Ganster and Voith established that all but one of the 52 cat owners, 98 percent, considered their cats to be family elements. The present research shows that 85 percent of the respondents considered their pet to be a member of the family while a further 8 percent considered it to be an animal owned by the family. This latter response did not appear in any of the previous studies, which could demonstrate a cultural difference in the consideration of animals. The other surveys, however, asked the question in an open-ended fashion whereas this study provided respondents with various options.

Following the questions about pets' roles within the structure of the family, a series of questions were asked about the treatment of the animal. For example, respondents were asked by three of the investigators whether or not they celebrate their pet's birthday. The percentage of affirmative answers ranged from 21 in the New Zealand study, through 25 in Horn and Meer's United States survey to 34 in Ganster and Voith's survey of cat owners.

According to Horn and Meer, 83 percent of animals belonging to readers of 'Psychology Today' slept inside the house with more than 50 percent spending the night in their owner's beds. In this study 79 percent of respondents reported that their pets spend the night inside the house; 43 percent in or on somebody's bed, a further 10

percent stay in the bedroom and the other 26 percent remain somewhere else inside the house. Several of the owners who admitted to putting their pets outside at night qualified their responses by describing 'animal houses' - complete with electric blanket and duvet in some cases!

Half of Horn and Meer's respondents confirmed that they kept photos of their pets in an album or displayed somewhere. Ganster and Voith found that the same applied to 61 percent of their sample, but the greatest response was found in the current investigation where 81 percent of the participants indicated that they kept photographs either in an album or displayed at home or at work.

Nearly all the pet owners made conversation with their pets. Horn and Meer reported that 99 percent of their 13,000 subjects talk to their animals and 97 percent answered positively in the New Zealand survey. When asked how often their pets understood what was said, 45 percent replied that their pets frequently understood, 27 percent said quite often and another 22 percent said that they sometimes understood. All of Ganster and Voith's owners talked to their cats, 74 percent a lot and 26 percent sometimes.

In Cain's questionnaire, 81 percent of the respondents described their pets as 'tuned in' to the feelings of family members. The New Zealand subjects, when asked if their pets were sensitive to their emotion, responded as follows:- frequently 32

percent, quite often 28 percent, sometimes 16 percent, rarely 12 percent and never 6 percent.

Three of the studies asked how pets affected their owners' social relationships. Cain wrote that 37 percent of the respondents reported that they had made friends, increased their social contacts or maintained social relationships by means of their pet. 27 percent of Horn and Meer's sample felt that pets had helped them to make friends and 15 percent of the present respondent group reported their pets having a positive affect on their relationships with others. A further 14 percent, however, said that their animals had a negative influence on their friendships - many respondents having problems with over protective dogs - and 4 percent said that their relationships had been affected both positively and negatively by their animal companions.

When Cain asked whether any significant events had preceded the arrival of the pet she received 48 responses from 41 subjects. In the present investigation 40 respondents reported significant episodes at that time. The results are displayed in Table 21 below.

The responses shared by respondents in both studies related to a change in geographical location, the death of a previous pet, a marriage and the setting up of a new household, and a new human addition to the family - or acknowledgement of the future event. Other responses included: a crisis at work (2%); a spouse starting graduate school (3%); and other family members being away (5%) for

the U.S sample. In the N.Z study: family upheaval (7%); the death of a human family member (17%); and a birthday (5%) were mentioned.

TABLE 21

The significant events reported as occurring before the acquisition of the pet.

Event	<u>Response Percentages</u>	
	Cain (1977)	Budge (this study)
Geographical move	39	19
Death of a pet	12	26
Marriage	10	12
New child	7	5
Total	68	62

This question led on to an inquiry about whether the presence of the new pet had effected any changes in the family. 32 percent of Cain’s respondents said ‘yes’ and 66 percent ‘no’ compared with 39 percent and 61 percent in this study. Positive changes mentioned in both countries were things such as: more playing with the pet; increased happiness of family members; less arguing and more harmony and love. On the other hand, other households reported more arguing, less time spent with each other and in the present research a jealous husband and the development of a cat allergy.

The format for the question asking when pets had been most important to their owners differed between Cain’s and the present research. Cain presented the question in an open ended fashion

whereas this study provided a forced choice format incorporating an open alternative. Nevertheless, three similar responses were generated as follows: firstly 6 percent of the U.S survey and 13 percent of the N.Z one reported that their pets had been of greatest importance to them during childhood. Secondly 5 and 11 percent of the two groups respectively supplied the response of 'as couples without children' and thirdly the option of 'after a bereavement' accounted for 15 percent of Cain's respondents and 2 percent of the recent group. The American investigation included 'during an illness' in that final figure. Several participants in both samples mentioned that animals were always important.

4.53 Naming Companion Animals

The feline study was the only one of the four not to enquire about animals' names. In the other three, the appellations chosen for pets were classified into two sections; human names and pet names. Cain revealed that 49 percent of the 138 names listed by her respondents were human names compared with 43.5 percent of the 117 names discussed in the present investigation. When the reasons given for the choice of particular names were analyzed, the following comparison was drawn:-

TABLE 22

Reasons underlying the naming of respondents' pets.

Reason for name	<u>Percentages</u>	
	Cain (1977)	Budge (this study)
Physical characteristics	30	19
Personality	-	10
T.V. shows, movies etc.	22	3
Specific persons	15	8
Already named	13	10
Places	10	2
Previous pet	5	2
Seasonal names	3	-
Liked name / suited pet	2	35
College mascot	1	-
Source of pet	-	3
No reason / nonsense	-	5
Abbreviations	-	3
Total	100	100

It appears that similar general themes underly the reasons for names in both studies. In Cain's example, however, it can be seen that the physical characteristics of pets gave rise to the largest percentage of names followed by names taken from television programmes, movies and book characters. In contrast, the greatest number of names among the local sample were chosen because the owner liked the name or thought it suited the animal -the majority of these were human names.

To date Horn and Meer have undertaken the numerically largest survey of peoples' views on companion animals. They were able to document sample characteristics on a number of demographic

variables. Comparative demographic data contrasting the Horn and Meer sample and the much smaller New Zealand sample are presented in Appendix D. In passing it is noted that despite the very large difference in sample size, the characteristics were not markedly dissimilar on the variables of marital status, gender and income distribution.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The overall profile of the pet appears to be one of a companionable creature who regularly greets the owner on his / her return to the house, seeks company and affection and is capable of understanding conversation and communicating in return. The companion animal can often facilitate laughter, calms some owners when they are anxious and in general does not seem to annoy - or at least not excessively. Most animals are obedient to some extent, but the average rating was affected by the independent nature of many felines. Their refusal to alter their whims for anyone but themselves was revealed in their owners responses.

5.1 COMPANION ANIMAL NAMES

The names respondents gave to their animal companions varied greatly. The reasons underlying the naming of pets, as has been pointed out by several authors including Fogle (1983), can disclose a lot about the relationship between pet and owner. In this investigation the names could be separated into three distinct groups: those which said nothing at all about the relationship, descriptive names which in some examples illustrated the presence of humour and affection in people's perceptions of their pets and a few which did describe the function the pet was expected to fulfill.

Several responses afforded no insight into the relationship

between animal and owner. These answers included comments such as "she looked like a FiFi" or "it sounded right". The majority of names were connected with appearance and personality more than the role the pet played within the family. One animal companion, a Rottweiler-Ridgeback-German Shepherd cross was perversely called Daisy because she didn't look anything like one when she was born. Ringo was a tabby cat with rings around his tail, and a St. Bernard was called George because the owner always wanted a St. Bernard called George -this one happens to be a female. One dog was called Ute, because German Shepherds are utility dogs in shows; Luther was a black cat named by a Presbyterian minister, and Boots arrived in the boot of a flatmate's car. Mickey's owners were out on a country drive one day and stopped for a walk. After their return to the car they drove off and did not realise until they had reached home that there was a silver tabby cat sitting on the back seat of the car. As the owner reported, "it was a bloody Mickey Mouse way to get a cat". Although an element of frustration as well as inevitability was involved in that particular story, affection and pride crept in too. Small lap dogs were called feminine and regal names such as Lady and Duke and family pets were given homely names such as Muffin and Hunny. Several owners relied on their children to name the animals and one respondent called her cat 'cat' because her 18 month old son could pronounce it.

However some of the replies illustrated the underlying expectations and features of the human -animal relationship. Killer,

the Rottweiler was so named because "it's a real good description" - this dog is used for fighting and is encouraged to attack visitors and unsuspecting meter readers. A german shepherd was called Rex because the owner considered the name to be appropriately regal and that presumably describes the position the dog holds within the household. Calling a siamese cat Ming also suggests a feeling about the pet, one of reverence and fragility perhaps. The problem with making such judgments though, lies in the interpretation of the meaning behind the reasons provided by respondents as to why they named their pets as they did. A face to face interview with pet owners would enable the researcher to explore more fully the relationship between the animal's name and the position it holds in the owner's affections and thoughts.

5.2 RESPONDENT ATTITUDES

Asking questions about respondents' attitudes towards their animals' roles and position in society highlighted some definite opinions amongst this particular sample of pet owners. When considering the connection between pets and children, nearly all of the respondents agreed that pets help children to learn responsibility and considered pets to assist children to gain understanding of life and death. There was equally strong support for the idea that all children should be given the opportunity to own a pet. It appears that pets are seen as being significant for members of other special populations also; the entire respondent

group considered animals to be good companions for the elderly and nine tenths of the sample indicated that pets are important for handicapped persons. The statement "pets should be allowed to visit people in hospital" received a less clear cut response albeit over two thirds of the respondents were in favour of the idea. The strongest agreement came from those respondents aged 50 and over while the greatest level of dissent was demonstrated by those aged 10 to 29. The type of pet respondents chose to discuss in the questionnaire may have influenced the decision regarding hospital visiting. A few more dog than cat owners agreed with the notion - perhaps because, in general, dogs are more easily transported and controlled than cats and it is likely that the respondents had their own pets in mind when completing the questionnaire.

Another item to receive a strong response was the suggestion that participants may prefer not to have their present pet or pets. All but a few of the animal owners rejected this comment although when asked if they would like to acquire more pets, only half concurred. There appeared to be a connection between the number of pets currently owned and whether the respondents wished to have more pets. Of those who agreed with this proposition half owned one, two or three pets and a further 20 percent owned between four and six at the time of response.

The licensing question was a pertinent inclusion since the issue of dog behaviour has recently had a high media profile in New

Zealand. The overall feeling seemed to be in favour of animal owners being licensed although a few respondents qualified their responses by agreeing that owners of canines should be required to hold a licence. The fact that all respondents answered this question could be indicative of the strength of opinion over this issue.

The greater proportion of the sample disagreed that pets are more important for children than adults, and overall, the presence or absence of children in respondents households did not appear to affect their responses. When the three age categories were examined however, the strongest agreement came from those respondents in the oldest age category followed by the 30 to 49 year age group. This latter response was more easily anticipated since two thirds of this group currently have children in their households and are consequently in a position to observe the relationships and interactions between children and pets.

As was discussed in Chapter Two, the popular misconception regarding the ownership of animals is that couples without children are more likely to keep pets than those with. Only a third of the respondents agreed with the comment in this questionnaire, so perhaps it is not such a commonly held idea in this country. There were no apparent age differences between those who agreed and those who disagreed, but 10 percent more men than women thought that couples without children were more likely to own pets. Previous research has demonstrated that pets and children go together

(Selby et al, 1980; Harris, 1988; Soares, 1985, & Veevers, 1985). In this sample just over a third of the respondents had children currently living in the same household, but as the sample could in no way be described as representative of the wider pet owning community, this result cannot be said to confound prior research findings.

Over half of the respondents disagreed with the proposition that caring for a pet prepares young couples for parenting. Equal percentages of those with and without children agreed with the statement but over a tenth of those without children did not respond as compared with one of those respondents with.

Less than a third of the sample considered pet owners to be more sociable than non owners with 19 percent fewer cat owners than dog owners being in assent. Disagreement proportions were similar amongst feline and canine carers and the balance of cat owners chose not to respond.

5.3 GENDER DIFFERENCES

When the results of the questionnaire were considered with respect to gender differences among the respondents, disparities were evident. In general more females than males expressed a closer relationship with their pets, a significantly greater proportion of women considered their animal to be a human or almost human family member whereas greater numbers of males thought of their pets as

animals owned by the family. A larger proportion of male respondents related to their pets as adults and more females related to their pets as they would to a child. A significantly greater number of females gave their animals a higher rating on the calming influence scale. There was no real difference in male and female annoyance ratings. When male and female opinions were compared, it was found that while more men than women thought that couples without children were more likely to own pets than those with, an equivalent proportion more women agreed that people should be licensed before keeping pets.

5.4 AGE DIFFERENCES

The questionnaire responses were also considered in light of age differences within the respondent group and some interesting patterns emerged. The strongest relationships between humans and pets occurred both in the youngest and the oldest age categories. This finding was in keeping with the results of previous studies which suggest that the position of the pet within the family changes over time as a consequence of family expansion. The majority of the youngest and oldest respondents considered their animals as human or almost human family members while in the intermediate age group more emphasis was placed on the pet as an almost human or animal member of the family. The oldest age category indicated stronger relationships with their pets than the other groups, the weakest bonds existed between the 30-49 year old respondents and their

animal companions. Two thirds of this latter group currently had children present in their households and, as was discussed previously in relation to the changing position of the pet within the family structure, the arrival of offspring is likely to push the animal further down the line of affection and attention. The changing family lifecycle possibly accounts for the strength of affinity between the older respondents and their pets. In general, these households do not contain children and the owners consequently have more time and fewer human contacts. The older respondents were more supportive of the notion of pet visiting schemes for hospitals than were the other groups. The least support for the idea came from those respondents aged between 10 and 29.

The respondents were asked to rate the strength of their relationships with family, a friend of the same sex and past and present pets on a five point scale. The results suggested that the relationships between owners and their current animals were rated similarly to those between the respondents and their spouse or partner and children. The relationships with childhood pets were reportedly less strong, followed by those between the respondents and their friends and siblings.

5.5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CATS AND DOGS

Although the type of animal discussed in the questionnaire was not directly controlled, the questions were more easily answered if the respondents had a cat or dog in mind. This slant evolved through these types of pets being the most typical and ubiquitous of animal companions - the principal focus of the questionnaire being companionship. The picture of a dog, cat and bird on the cover of the form may also have channelled respondents' thoughts towards one of these varieties. Nearly all respondents answered with respect to a cat or dog - even though many also owned other types of pet. One respondent who initially chose a cage bird to respond about realised once he had started to fill out the questionnaire that the questions could be answered more easily with reference to his cat. However another participant, who owned only a bird, persevered with the questions and commented at the end, "before we found Alby I thought birds were rather pointless pets. He was the first animal I have become really attached to since my childhood pet died". Two other respondents filled out the questionnaire with respect to their horses.

A small trend in the connection between the type of animal discussed and the respondents' hobbies was apparent. It was suggested by Harris (1983), that people who enjoyed indoor pursuits would be more likely to own small dogs or cats whereas people inclined towards the outdoors would prefer bigger dogs - and in this

study, horses. Although the pattern observed in the present study was not significant, more owners of cats than dogs indicated indoor leisure activities such as reading, knitting and other sedentary crafts. Greater numbers of dog owners mentioned activities such as swimming, running and other active sports.

Overall three highly significant results emerged in relation to differences between cats and dogs. It seems that in this sample at least, more cats were neutered than dogs, more dogs were taken on outings with the family than were cats and more dogs obeyed their owners' commands than cats. Possibly these latter two findings are connected in that if cats obeyed commands more readily, they might be taken out with their owners. The results certainly suggest that there is a difference in the role played by different companion animal species - a point which is worthy of further investigation.

5.6 RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON NEUTERING.

The theme of neutering of animals produced some strong opinions in this investigation, and the following quotation stimulated my interest in assessing whether there was a difference in the numbers of cats and dogs neutered in this sample .

"The castration of the male had certain, indefinable moral connotation, for although bulls were castrated to make them less aggressive and fatten more readily as bullocks, stallions emasculated to render them more manageable and tom-cats 'neutralised' to make them less of a general nuisance - dogs were only rarely done.

McBean, of course, had the answer to that one: 'A dog, Hugh, is man's best friend - and there are some things you just wouldn't be doing to your best friend, would you, now? '"

(Lasgarn, 1986, p96)

The generally accepted practice of castrating male animals has achieved greater significance due to the increasing numbers of unwanted pets. Cats of both sexes tend to be neutered at an early age unless they are being kept as stud animals. Many dogs are also neutered as a matter of course although this is probably more true of females than males. In this country and certainly in Great Britain the majority of male horses are castrated, generally as two year olds, but in other parts of Europe such as Spain and Portugal, far more male horses are kept entire whether they are used for breeding purposes or not. The reasons underlying the decision not to neuter an animal are many and diverse. It has been suggested by several authors (Levinson, 1972; Katcher & Beck, 1983; Fox, 1975) that many western owners identify with their animals' sexuality and freedom and so resist obeying leash laws or having their pets neutered. Conversely many reasons underly the decision to neuter an animal too. One of the anecdotes supplied in the present questionnaire was that of an entire male dog who was so anxious to reach the female next door, that he ate a hole in the venetian blind in order to climb out of the window. He was hastily neutered

following that episode. In the current investigation 98 percent of cats were neutered as were 63 percent of dogs. There was only one male horse in the study and he had been gelded. These results would therefore support the quotation from Lasgarn's autobiography.

5.7 ANIMALS AS FAMILY MEMBERS.

In Chapter Two Hickrod and Schmitt's (1982) ideas concerning the mechanics of thought whereby people accept their animals as family members were discussed. They suggested that the 'keying' process, in which pets become family members and are consequently treated as such, is often a gradual one that occurs without owners being aware of it. This explanation overlooks the possibility that for some owners the point of realisation may follow a particular event. In this study an attempt was made to assess both these options. 61 percent of respondents discussed the realisation point in the context of a time scale. Some of these were more arbitrary than others, e.g. 'after about six months', but others were quite precise e.g. 'two days after she arrived'. A fifth of the replies were event related and less than one tenth of the responses suggested that a gradual realisation of the pet as a family member had occurred. For example 'I missed him when he wasn't around'. It seems then that the mechanics of the acceptance procedure are individual, and the gradual realisation of the pet as a family member did not apply to the majority of the people in this sample.

It was reported by about a third of the respondents that a significant event had occurred at the time of the pet's introduction to the household. Most events involved distinct changes; either in the constitution of the family, or the geographical situation of the household. Although the acquisition of a new pet cannot be attributed necessarily to a recent event, many circumstances were related. For example, several respondents mentioned the idea that their homes did not feel complete without an animal. Additionally, when a new household was formed as a result of a marriage or some other reshuffling of living arrangements, the adoption of a companion animal was of high priority. A death in the family was another event which was mentioned in conjunction with the significance of a new pet's arrival. The most common situation was the death of one pet prior to the introduction of another.

Just less than half the respondents reported a change in the family after the arrival of a pet. The changes discussed were varied though, with changes in family routine and in the pet hierarchy topping the list. Several respondents noticed positive changes in the form of increased levels of harmony and love within the household. Some also recorded that the new pet initiated interest in animals, fun and play. Other responses were not so positive ; one owner developed an allergy and another noticed a rise in the family's food bills.

5.8 THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE COMPANION ANIMAL.

The changing role of the pet within the family structure, as the family moves through its life cycle, has been discussed by Salmon and Salmon (in Beck & Katcher, 1983) and Albert and Bulcroft (1988). Salmon and Salmon suggest that a continuum of pet importance exists along which different family types can be placed. They perceive that pets have the greatest importance for childless couples when they are considered to be friends, comforters, protectors, and children as well as being a source of exercise. Companion animals are apparently less important for single people for whom they act as companions rather than friends and are not thought of as child substitutes. In a family situation pets are of lesser importance, to the adults at least, for in this case they are described by the authors as playing the part of another family member - providing a playmate or friend for the children and companionship for themselves.

Albert and Bulcroft considered the stages at which people were most likely to acquire pets and they concluded that childless couples are most likely to acquire an animal companion. The next stage in the family life cycle where there is a tendency to obtain pets is when the children are of school age. These authors propose that

"The low rate of pet ownership among families with young children suggests that owning a pet may be incompatible with the needs of families at this stage of the family life cycle. The time-intensive process of caring for infants and preschool children may leave little time and energy for maintaining a pet. Thus, rather than being a source of affection and attachment for family members, a pet may be an additional stressor for couples experiencing the transition to parenthood."

(op. cit. p550)

This problem can lead to feelings of guilt on behalf of the young parents who, prior to the birth of the child, lavished love and attention on the pet but now lack the requisite time and energy.

A male respondent in the current sample described just this predicament since the arrival of his son. He had enjoyed a very close relationship with his cat before the birth of the child, and now felt guilt and concern for the animal to the point where he wished to give it to somebody who could provide a better standard of affection and care.

This topic is important for those who give advice to people about pets and their acquisition. Acknowledgement of the difficulty of juggling pet care alongside increased family pressures and demands resulting from the presence of young children is important. Parents are more likely to persevere with the ownership of pets if they can accept that they will appreciate them again in the not too distant future.

5.9 A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON.

In Chapter Four comparisons were made between New Zealand respondents' views on a number of questions concerning companion animals, and the responses to the same or similar questions in other studies. These results are now discussed. To help guide the discussion, frequency differences of 10 percent or more between samples on a given question are considered to signal a divergence of views. Smaller frequency variations have been taken to indicate little practical difference in opinion.

With respect to questions showing a difference in the frequency of response it was found that in Cain's (1977) sample, a greater proportion of respondents thought their pets to be human and animal family members. More respondents in the present study considered their pet to be between a human and animal family member. More of Cain's respondents reported that pets had positively affected their social relationships and more also described a significant event that had taken place prior to the pet's introduction to the household.

A comparison between Horn and Meer's (1984) study and the present one showed that the main differences in opinion were in connection with how the pet was considered. More of the American respondents thought of the pet as being somewhere between human and animal, and fewer thought of it as an animal family member. Photographs of pets were kept by more New Zealanders than Americans.

The Australian study undertaken by Ganster and Voith (1983) found more respondents thought of their pets as human than in the present study. More animals were considered to be family members by the Australian participants and a greater proportion of owners celebrated their pets' birthdays. Again, however, fewer photos were kept than was reported by the New Zealand respondents.

Overall the similarities outnumbered the differences in respondents opinions about their pets. Pleasure and companionship headed the list of ownership reasons, similar numbers of respondents owned pets as children and considered that pet ownership should be part of all children's upbringing. It appears that a large proportion of respondents in the three countries give their animals human names, talk to them and consider them to be responsive family members.

It is important to remember that there were methodological problems with this study. Classical random sampling or representative stratified sampling techniques were not possible - these issues were discussed in Chapter Three. The nonrepresentative nature of the sample means that the conclusions drawn from the questionnaire results may not apply to other people and their pets.

For the cross-tabulation analysis of type of pet and respondents' hobbies, the respondent group was split into cat and dog owners. On rereading Harris's example it is apparent that they should have been separated into owners of cats and toy or lap dogs,

and owners of active and larger dogs. To compare the findings of this study with the predictions made by Harris, a more precise division would have to be made.

The protection and safety question should have been divided into two parts, asking about personal and property protection as separate issues. For example, keeping a dog as a deterrent to intruders is somewhat different from owning a canine for personal protection when out running. The way this item was worded in the questionnaire did not differentiate the two aspects of protection and safety. Some of the distinction was revealed in the answers to the question about the advantages of pet ownership in which people discussed security of property and personal safety issues.

The demographic information concerning income and occupation were not used sufficiently as cross-tabulation variables. Interesting trends might have emerged had socio-economic status been cross-tabulated with respondent opinions.

One approach to research in the companion animal field would be to examine the different positions held by cats and dogs within New Zealand households. The present results suggest that the two species do play diverse roles, the consequence being that one type may be better suited to a particular household than another.

The question concerning the strength of relationships between respondents and their friends, family and animals could be developed further to form the basis of a repertory grid (a technique devised

by Fransella and Bannister, 1977) as performed by Berryman, Howells and Lloyd-Evans (1985). People could be asked to consider the same or similar people and animals as were used in this study. These 'significant others' would then become the elements of the repertory grid. They could then be asked to form constructs by considering three elements and selecting a way in which two of them were alike and different from the third. The contrasting ideas would then become the two poles of the construct with the remaining elements rated on a seven point scale according to the chosen criteria. This method could then be repeated several times to elicit a sufficient number of constructs (an approximate minimum of eight) to facilitate a computer analysis of the data. This technique would enable the researcher to explore subjects' individual frames of meaning with reference to their relationships with 'significant others', and more precisely to investigate how the relationship between human and animal compares with solely human relationships.

A lengthier piece of research could follow on from the findings of the present study in the form of a longitudinal assessment of the change in role and function of a pet within a developing family structure. As was mentioned above, the relationship a family enjoys with a pet is not a static affair, but one that changes in its degree of importance. The level of integration of the animal within the family is prone to variations as the family encompasses new members - both human and animal. It would be instructive to examine the position of the pet in a family at three different time periods

thus providing three points of comparison. Firstly before children enter the family relationship, secondly within the first child's initial year of life and thirdly, sometime after the advent of the child/children once the family has had a period of adjustment.

Future research notwithstanding, the present study has made a contribution to the companion animal field by providing the beginnings of a New Zealand viewpoint on the roles played by our animal companions. Furthermore it provides a first, albeit limited, data base on the opinions and attitudes of pet owners in this country for comparison with those elsewhere. This study can be used as a starting point for further research into relationships between humans and animals in New Zealand.

In 1975 Levinson propounded a forecast for the year 2000 in which he predicted a widespread reunion of humanity with nature, and more specifically, with the animal world. He predicted great changes in not only the interaction between people and their pets, but also in pets themselves. Levinson suggested that genetic engineering and our increased need for animal contact and support would lead to animals being bred to fulfil specific therapeutic roles. According to Levinson the task of the veterinarian would encompass the selection and training of these more intelligent animals which would be accepted as equals living in co-independence with their owners. He even foresaw animals in space, not as test pilots but as companions for aeronauts cut off from their usual systems of support.

Even if only a few of Levinson's forecasts are realised, the bond between people and their animal companions will be both vital and progressive. The need for a greater understanding of the interplay between the species will accelerate and the importance of research will increase concomitantly. The final word is best left to Levinson who generated such interest in companion animals. He predicted a real need for our futures to be linked when he said:

"In the year 2000 pets will become a very
important safety valve in a sick society."

(Levinson, 1972, p159)

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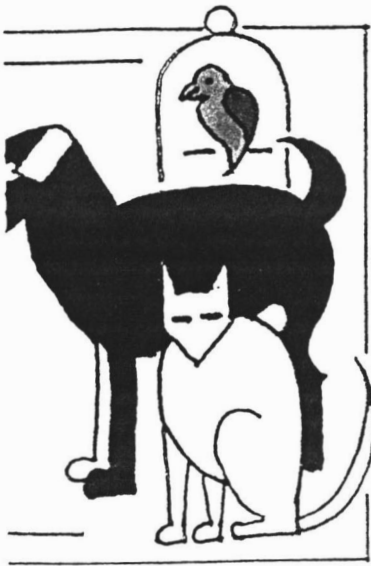
APPENDIX A

Dear

Thank you for expressing interest in my thesis research on the role of companion animals in the family. The questionnaire I intend to use is based on two that were developed in the United States, and I have enclosed copies in the hope that you would like to be involved in the process of adapting them for use in New Zealand. I would be grateful if you could answer the questions as they stand, but I am also interested to hear your ideas and suggestions about how these original questionnaires can be improved, or made more relevant to our conditions. Points you may like to consider include length, suitability for New Zealand animal owners, clarity of questions, points either not covered or repeated, plus any other areas of inquiry that occur to you. Please return the forms inside the envelope provided, it is not necessary to identify yourself if you wish to remain anonymous.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Claire Budge.



**IS THERE
A PET IN
YOUR FAMILY
?**

COMPANION ANIMAL QUESTIONNAIRE

to,

This questionnaire, which you are hopefully about to fill in, has been written in order to do research for my university degree. Although the first question asks for names, you will notice that your real name is not required and you can therefore remain anonymous. All participants' responses will be compiled and the information received will be written up as a masterate thesis. It is possible that an article may also be written at a later date but the main purpose of the research is to fulfill the requirements of my degree. Because I have to do a lot of research for it, it is important that I receive your completed questionnaire as soon as possible. Please return it in the prepaid addressed envelope provided. I would like to thank you in advance for taking part in this study, I hope it is an interesting and enjoyable experience.

Claira Budge

MY HOUSEHOLD CONSISTS OF ... PLEASE STAR (*) YOUR NAME.
(Real names need not be used)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RELATIONSHIP</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>GENDER (M/F)</u>
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

DID YOU HAVE PETS AS A CHILD ?

YES ☐ NO ☐

YES, RECALL THE ONES THAT WERE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU WHAT KIND WERE THEY AND WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES

<u>ANIMAL</u>	<u>NAME</u>
.....
.....
.....

MY HOUSEHOLD CURRENTLY HAS THE FOLLOWING ANIMALS ...

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>NICKNAME(S)</u>
DOG
CAT
HORSE
BIRD
FISH
RABBIT
MOUSE / RAT

HOW DID YOUR PET/S GET THEIR NICKNAME/S ?
.....
.....

I ORIGINALLY ACQUIRED MY CURRENT PET/PETS FOR ...
(Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMPANIONSHIP | <input type="checkbox"/> PROTECTION OR SAFETY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SPORT OR EXERCISE | <input type="checkbox"/> PLEASURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BREEDING | <input type="checkbox"/> FOR THE CHILDREN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRESTIGE | <input type="checkbox"/> TO MEET PEOPLE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Please specify) | |

more than one answer applies, please star (*) the major reason.

I NOW OWN MY PET/S FOR ...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMPANIONSHIP | <input type="checkbox"/> PLEASURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FOR THE CHILDREN | <input type="checkbox"/> PROTECTION OR SAFETY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SPORT OR EXERCISE | <input type="checkbox"/> BREEDING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRESTIGE | <input type="checkbox"/> TO MEET PEOPLE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBLIGATION | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Please specify) |

ain, if more than one answer applies, please star (*) the main reason.

MY PETS HAVE BEEN MOST IMPORTANT TO ME ...

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DURING CHILDHOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> AS A SINGLE PERSON |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AS A COUPLE WITHOUT CHILDREN | <input type="checkbox"/> AFTER THE FIRST CHILD WAS BORN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WHEN THERE WERE TWO OR MORE CHILDREN AT HOME | <input type="checkbox"/> WHEN CHILDREN HAD LEFT HOME |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AFTER A BEREAVEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Please specify) |

FOR ME, THE BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP ARE ...

.....
.....
.....

FOR ME, THE DISADVANTAGES OF PET OWNERSHIP ARE ...

.....
.....
.....

NOW CHOOSE ONE PET AND ANSWER THE REMAINING QUESTIONS WITH
RESPECT TO HIM OR HER

PLEASE INDICATE THE NAME, TYPE AND BREED OF THIS PET

NAME TYPE BREED

HIS / HER NAME WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE

MY PET ...

CAME FROM A PET SHOP OR BREEDER

CAME FROM THE S.P.C.A

WAS A GIFT

WAS A STRAY

OTHER (Please explain)

I HAVE OWNED MY PET FOR YEARS

WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE THIS PARTICULAR PET ? (E.g. type, breed,
colour, size, temperament etc.)

WHEN YOU ACQUIRED YOUR PET WAS IT'S SEX OF
IMPORTANCE TO YOU ?

YES [] NO [] IF YES, IN WHAT WAY ?
(Please describe)

HAS YOUR PET BEEN NEUTERED/SPAYED ?

YES [] NO []

IF / WHY NOT

THIS PET IS OWNED BY ... (More than one box may be indicated)

ME

PARTNER / SPOUSE

CHILD

ENTIRE FAMILY

OTHER (Please specify)

THE PERSON WHO IS MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM/HER IS ...

ME

SPOUSE / PARTNER

CHILD

OTHER (Please specify)

MY PET SPENDS THE NIGHT ...

ON OR IN SOMEBODY'S BED

IN A BEDROOM BUT NOT ON OR IN THE BED

SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE HOUSE

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

OTHER (Please specify)

DOES YOUR PET HAVE ACCESS TO THE HOUSE DURING THE DAY ?

YES []

NO []

DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR PET TO BE . . .

A HUMAN FAMILY MEMBER

AN ALMOST HUMAN FAMILY MEMBER

AN ANIMAL FAMILY MEMBER

AN ANIMAL OWNED BY THE FAMILY

OTHER (Please specify)

WHY ?

YOU TICKED BOXES 4 OR 5, SKIP THE NEXT TWO QUESTIONS

DO YOU RELATE TO YOUR PET AS YOU WOULD TO ...

A CHILD
AN ADULT
SOME OTHER FAMILY MEMBER

WHY ?
.....

AT WHAT POINT DID YOU REALISE THAT YOUR ANIMAL HAD BECOME PART
OF THE FAMILY ?

.....
.....
.....

WHEN I GO AWAY FOR A WEEKEND, MY PET ...

STAYS AT HOME
GOES TO A BOARDING KENNEL OR CATTERY
GOES WITH ME
OTHER (Please specify)

WHEN I GO ON HOLIDAY FOR A WEEK OR MORE, MY PET ...

STAYS AT HOME
GOES TO A BOARDING KENNEL OR CATTERY
GOES WITH ME
OTHER (Please specify)

FOR THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS CHOOSE THE NUMBER ON THE SCALE
PROVIDED THAT BEST REPRESENTS HOW YOUR PET RESPONDS, AND
ENTER IT IN THE BOX BESIDE EACH QUESTION

1 2 3 4 5
EVER RARELY SOMETIMES QUITE OFTEN FREQUENTLY

MY PET ...

MEETS ME WHEN I COME HOME	[]	SEEKS MY COMPANIONSHIP	[]
UNDERSTANDS ME WHEN I SPEAK	[]	COMMUNICATES WITH ME	[]
IS SENSITIVE TO MY EMOTION	[]	ENJOYS MY AFFECTION	[]
RESPONDS TO MY COMMANDS	[]	CALMS ME WHEN I AM ANXIOUS	[]
MAKES ME LAUGH	[]	ANNOYS ME	[]

1) DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUR PRESENT PET ?

YES []

NO []

YES. ARE THEY KEPT

1) IN AN ALBUM

1) DISPLAYED AT HOME

1) DISPLAYED AT WORK

1) IN YOUR WALLET OR PURSE

1) OTHER: (Please specify)

1) DO YOU CELEBRATE YOUR PET'S 'BIRTHDAY' ?

YES []

NO []

1) DOES YOUR PET ...

EXPRESS AFFECTION IN A PHYSICAL WAY

YES []

NO []

IF YES, TOWARDS WHOM

'ASK FOR' OR SEEK ATTENTION

YES []

NO []

IF YES, HOW

1) DO YOU EVER APPROACH YOUR PET FOR COMFORT OR AFFECTION ?

YES []

NO []

1) DO YOU TALK TO YOUR PET ?

YES []

NO []

IF YES, PLEASE ELABORATE, HOW, WHAT ABOUT ETC.

1) WAS ANYTHING UNUSUAL OR SIGNIFICANT HAPPENING IN THE FAMILY
WHEN YOU GOT YOUR PET ? (E.g. a birth or death, or a

house change)

NO []

YES [] (Please elaborate)

WAS THERE ANY CHANGE IN THE FAMILY AS A RESULT OF YOUR
PET'S ARRIVAL ?

YES ☐ (Please elaborate) NO ☐

DESCRIBE THE INTERACTIONS YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS WITH YOUR
PET ON A TYPICAL DAY

IS YOUR PET INCLUDED IN ANY SPECIAL OCCASIONS OR OUTINGS WITH
THE FAMILY ?

NO ☐ YES ☐ (Please explain)

HAS YOUR PET AFFECTED YOUR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH
OTHER PEOPLE ?

NO ☐ YES ☐ IN WHAT WAY ?

THIS PARTICULAR PET IS SPECIAL BECAUSE ...

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WHERE 1 REPRESENTS STRONG AND 5
REPRESENTS WEAK, PLEASE RATE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
FOLLOWING PEOPLE AND PETS ...

	STRONG	WEAK
HOUSE/PARTNER	1...2...3...4...5	
ELDEST CHILD	1...2...3...4...5	
YOUNGEST CHILD	1...2...3...4...5	
SISTER/BROTHER	1...2...3...4...5	
CURRENT PET	1...2...3...4...5	
MY SEX FRIEND	1...2...3...4...5	
CHILDHOOD PET	1...2...3...4...5	

BEFORE TAX MY HOUSEHOLD'S TOTAL YEARLY INCOME IS ...

LESS THAN \$10,000
\$10,000 TO \$19,999
\$20,000 TO \$29,999
\$30,000 TO \$39,999
\$40,000 TO \$49,999
\$50,000 TO \$74,999
\$75,000 OR MORE

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT OCCUPATION, OR PREVIOUS OCCUPATION
IF YOU ARE BETWEEN JOBS

.....

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR MARITAL STATUS ?

SINGLE
LIVING WITH PARTNER OR SPOUSE
SEPARATED OR DIVORCED
WIDOWED

WHAT ARE THE HOBBIES, INTERESTS AND GENERAL LEISURE ACTIVITIES
YOU PARTICIPATE IN ?

.....

.....
OF THESE, PLEASE CHOOSE THE THREE YOU ENJOY THE MOST AND LIST
THEM IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE

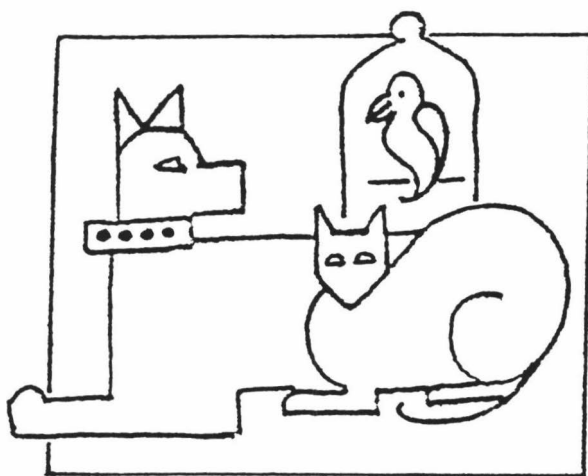
1. 2. 3.

PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU BASICALLY AGREE OR DISAGREE
WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BY CIRCLING 'A' FOR AGREE
OR 'D' FOR DISAGREE.

I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MORE PETS
I ENJOY MY PET/S BUT THEY IMPOSE LIMITATIONS
I WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE MY PET/PETS
PETS ARE MORE IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN THAN FOR ADULTS
PETS HELP CHILDREN TO LEARN ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY
OWNING ANIMALS HELPS CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND LIFE AND DEATH
ALL CHILDREN SHOULD BE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO OWN A PET
COUPLES WITHOUT CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE PETS THAN
COUPLES WITH CHILDREN
CARING FOR A PET PREPARES YOUNG COUPLES FOR PARENTING
PET OWNERS ARE MORE SOCIABLE THAN NON-PET OWNERS
PETS ARE IMPORTANT FOR HANDICAPPED PEOPLE
PETS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO VISIT PEOPLE IN HOSPITAL
PETS ARE GOOD COMPANIONS FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE
PEOPLE SHOULD BE LICENCED BEFORE BEING ALLOWED TO KEEP PETS

2 IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE, PLEASE
RECORD THEM BELOW

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, I
HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT AND ARE STILL ON SPEAKING TERMS WITH YOUR ANIMAL
COMPANIONS !



APPENDIX C

96 Chester St East
CHRISTCHURCH 1
26-7-90

RELUCTANT MALES

Sir,

Are men really less literate than their female counterparts?
Do they have fewer feelings for their animal companions, or are they afraid to express what they think? Whatever the underlying reason, my research on ~The Role of Pets in the Family~ is displaying more than a little bias towards the female viewpoint, women constituting approximately 75 percent of the respondent group to date. In order that the results represent both female and male opinions, I am appealing to all of Christchurch's pet owners, but especially males, to come to my aid by completing a questionnaire. Please phone 770-177 for further information.

Claire Budge

APPENDIX D

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PRESENT SAMPLE AND HORN AND MEER'S (1984) SAMPLE.

Gender of respondents has already been mentioned with 17 percent of the American sample being male and 83 percent female. This contrasts with 32 percent, male and 68 percent female in the local sample. However, if the present study had not drawn in extra male subjects via the 'letter to the Editor', a more similar gender response would have been obtained. It would appear that women are more inclined to respond to pet questionnaire requests.

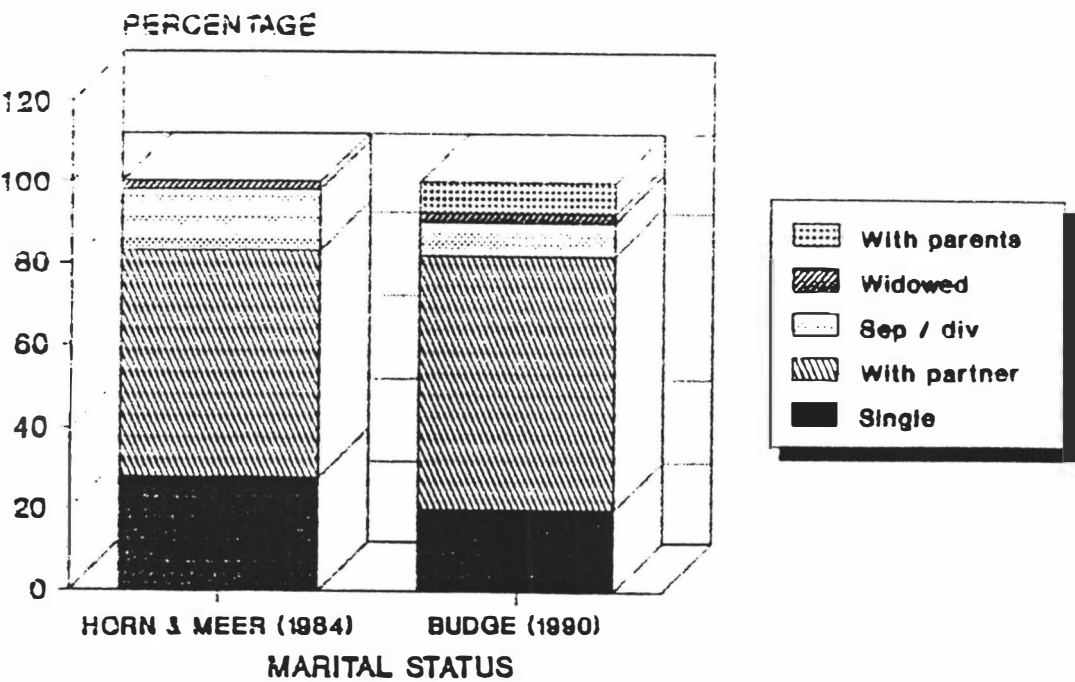


FIGURE 9 : A comparison of marital status of the respondents in Meer and Horn's study and the present study.

Figure 9 demonstrates that these figures are similar, with the largest group of respondents in both surveys living with a partner or spouse and single people comprising the next largest group. The 8 percent of New Zealand respondents living with parents represents the body of teen-age participants not present in Horn and Meer's sample.

TABLE 23
Gross annual household incomes

Income (in dollars)	Percentage	
	Horn & Meer (1984)	Budge (this study)
< 10,000	8	6
10,000 - 19,999	18	25
20,000 - 29,999	22	18
30,000 - 39,999	19	20
40,000 - 49,999	13	7
50,000 +	20	24
Total	100	100

Even though the dollar amounts have not been equated in terms of value or purchasing power, Table 23 shows the distribution of subjects across the income brackets in each country. The proportion of respondents was similar for five of the six categories. The major difference occurs in the income bracket \$40,000 - \$49,999 where the American sample had almost twice the number of respondents.

TABLE 24

Respondent age distribution

<u>Horn & Meer (1984)</u>		<u>Budge (this study)</u>	
Age range	Percentage	Age range	Percentage
< 25	20	< 20	11
25 - 34	33	20 - 29	30
35 - 44	25	30 - 39	20
45 - 54	14	40 - 49	19
55 - 64	6	50 - 59	9
65 +	2	60 +	11
Total	100		100

The age classification systems employed were somewhat different but Table 26 still displays certain similarities in the age distribution of the two samples.

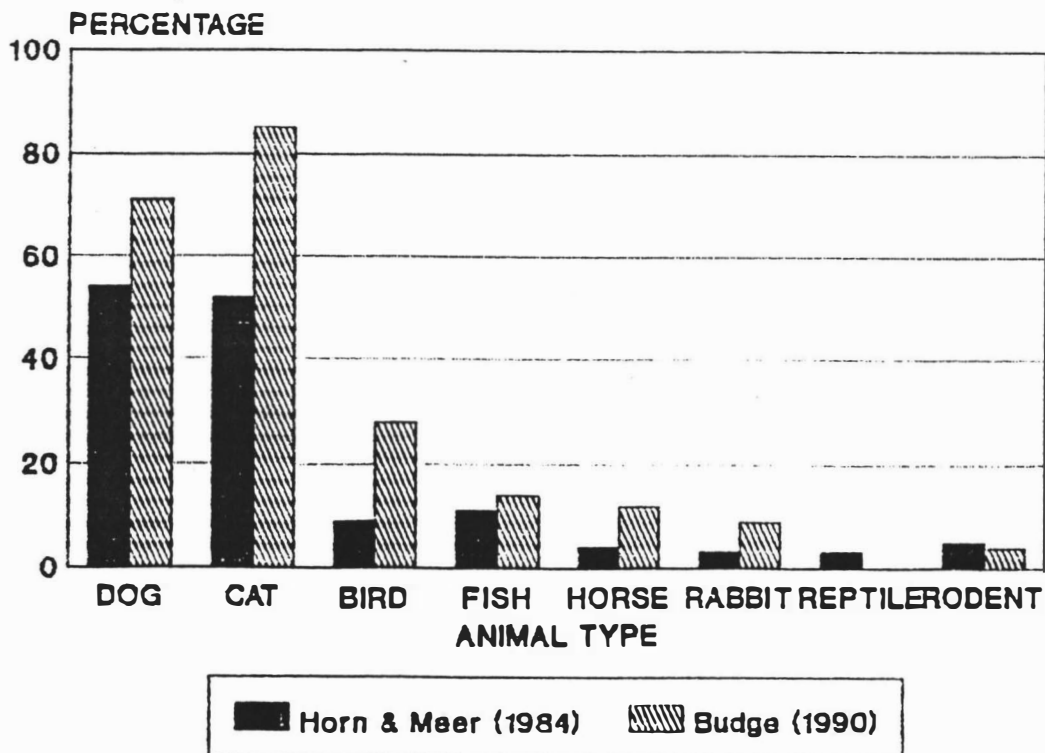


FIGURE 10 : Types of pets in households

This result would suggest that, with the exception of reptiles, the New Zealand households owned larger numbers of animals than the American - the percentage of dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, horses and other animal types appears to be considerably higher in this sample.