Appendix A

*Letter of Invitation to Participate*

**Project title: Life With Pets**

Dear Invitee,

You are invited to participate in a study for a psychology undergraduate research project. The primary purpose of the research is to train the student researchers in the methods of behavioural research. The secondary purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of pet owners.

For this research, participants will partake in two separate interviews, each approximately 60 – 90 minutes in length. We are researching the experiences and meanings of owning a pet. Two of the three student researchers have owned and been around pets their entire lives, whereas the other has not. Consequently, all three report very different experiences in regard to pets. Because of this, we wish to further explore people's different views and perspectives on what it means to be a pet owner. We will look to explore the differences between owning a pet in urban and rural centers and what potential impacts these situations have. We also look to explore, if any, gender differences and pet species differences. Potential topics of interest include activities, interactions, and relationships with pet(s). We will also aim to explore economic and political areas and factors within this topic.

The first interview will consist of a life history interview, which will be used to understand the participants history and past experiences with pets. The first interview will also include the first portion of the semi-structured interview, focusing largely on activities with pets. The second interview will contain the remaining half of the semi-structured interview, which topics include loss, investment, parenting, economics, and politics. The two interviews will be audio recorded with the participants permission and transcribed upon completion. The interviews will take place approximately seven days apart. The study should take approximately 120 - 180 minutes of your time in total.

Your data will be kept completely confidential and no personally identifying information will be linked to your data. Data will be coded using pseudonyms that will not be associated with any names or personally identifying information. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. You may withdraw from the study at any time before March 1st, 2018 without explanation or penalty of any sort.

Additionally, there will be no compensation for participation in this project, however you will help us to develop our research skills and to gain a better understanding of the experiences of pet owners.

If you are interested in participating in this research or if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact one of the student researchers or our supervisor.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you!

**Sincerely,**

Tesia Belosowsky, Department of Psychology, [tdb715@mail.usask.ca](mailto:tdb715@mail.usask.ca)

Samantha Feser, Department of Psychology, [sjf361@mail.usask.ca](mailto:sjf361@mail.usask.ca)

Kaelyn Welch, Department of Psychology, [kdw317@mail.usask.ca](mailto:kdw317@mail.usask.ca)

**Supervisor**:Kathrina Mazurik, Department of Psychology, kathrina.mazurik@usask.ca Telephone: 306-966-2603

Appendix B

Consent Form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Preferred Full Colour Large | *Participant Consent Form* |

**Project Title:** Life With Pets

**Researchers**: Tesia Belosowsky (tdb715@mail.usask.ca), Samantha Feser (sjf261@mail.usask.ca), Kaelyn Welch (kdw317@mail.usask.ca), Undergraduate Students, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan

**Supervisors**:Kathrina Mazurik, Department of Psychology, 1-306-966-2603, [kathrina.mazurik@usask.ca](mailto:kathrina.mazurik@usask.ca)

**Purpose and Objective of the Research**: The primary purpose of the research is to train the student researchers in the methods of behavioural research. The secondary purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of pet owners. We wish to explore people's different views and perspectives on what it means to be a pet owner. We will look to explore the differences between owning a pet in urban and rural centers and what potential impacts these situations have. We also look to explore, if any, gender differences and pet species differences. Potential topics of interest include activities, interactions, and relationships with pet(s).

**Procedures:** Participation in this study consists of two separate interviews, each lasting approximately 60 – 90 minutes and taking place approximately 7 days apart. The interviews will be audio recorded, with your permission, to aid in the ease of the transcription process. You have the right to request the recording be stopped at any time. Transcript release will not be obtained for the interviews. Only the student-researcher, the supervisor and potentially the participants will have access to the data and reports. Thus, the confidentiality of the participants will not be compromised. Interviews will consist of three parts; a socio-demographic questionnaire, a brief life-history and a semi-structured interview. The life history will aim to understand your history and past experiences with pets, whereas the semi-structured interview will focus on your current experiences with your pet(s). Some topics include activities, interactions, and relationship with pet(s). Interviews will take place at a location convenient to you. Interviews will take place in a location convenient to you, such as study rooms at the University of Saskatchewan or your home.Transcription will begin upon the completion of interviews. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

**Potential Risks**: There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. Participants are encouraged to answer only those questions they are comfortable with. At the end of the study you will be given a sheet that better explains the nature of the study and you will be given a chance to ask any further questions that you might have.

**Confidentiality**: Your data will be kept completely confidential and no personally identifying information will be linked to your data. Your data will be reported a pseudonym and will not be associated with any names or personally identifying information. Consent forms will not be linked with the data. The data and consent forms will be stored securely at the University of Saskatchewan by the supervisor. Normally, the data will be destroyed once the course has been completed. When the data is no longer required, it will be destroyed beyond recovery.

**Right to withdraw**:Your participation is voluntary and you have no obligation to participate. You can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort prior to March 1, 2018. Should you wish to withdraw, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed beyond recovery. Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply until March 1st. After this date, it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred, and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

**Follow up:** To obtain results from the study, please feel free to contact the supervisor by e-mail, kathrina.mazurik0@ usask.ca.

**Questions or Concerns**: If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point. You are also free to contact the researchers at the numbers or e-mails provided above if you have questions at a later time. This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee on date of approval: **TBD**. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Behavioural Research Ethics board through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (866) 966-2975.

**Consent to Participate**:Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Name of Participant* *Signature Date*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Researcher’s Signature Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***

Preferred Full Colour Large Appendix C

Data Release Form

Life With Pets

We would like to ask your permission to share the research report with the other participant(s). We will attempt to keep your identity confidential by replacing your name with a pseudonym and the removal of obvious identifying statements. Please indicate below if you agree or disagree to share the research report with the other participant(s). If you do not provide your permission, each participant will receive a copy of their own transcript for the records instead of a copy of the research report.

Please complete the following to indicate your preference:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: I allow the researchers to share the research report with all research participants.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: I do NOT allow the researchers to share the research report with all research participants, and therefore the researcher will provide each participant with only a copy of their own interview transcript.”

Preferred Full Colour Large Appendix D – Instrument: Interview Questions

First Interview

Life History

1. **Can you tell me about your past experiences with pets up until this point in your life?**

* Have you always had a pet?
* How many?
* What was your first?
* When and why did you get them?

1. **How do you see your future with pets?**

* Will you get more pets?
  + Why or why not?

Semi-Structured Interview

1. **Tell me about your current pet(s).**

* Demographics (age, species, etc.)
* How and why did you get your pet(s)?
* Was there a reason that you chose that name (or kept name in adopted situations)?
* How does your pet act around you?
  + Ex. Excitable, calm, does it listen to you, scratch everything?
* Does your pet get along with other animals?
* Other descriptions?

1. **Identify the activities that you do with your pet(s).**

* For each of the activities they list:
  + How does that activity make you feel?
  + Why do you do that activity?
    - For your pets’ enjoyment? Health?
    - For your enjoyment? Health?
    - Other reasons?
  + Who participates in the activity?
    - Partner, friends, family, other animals?
      * If no one, why not?
    - Do you interact with them?
      * If yes, how so? If no, why not?
    - Do they interact with your pet?
      * If yes, how so? If no, why not

Second Interview

\*Questions 7, 8, and 11-16 contain sensitive material

1. **How would you describe your relationship with your pet(s)?**

* How did you create a bond with it?
* How did your relationship develop?
* Is your relationship possession based?
  + Do you discipline or reward your pet for certain behaviours?
* Do you train your pet?
  + Why or why not?
* Do you consider your pet family?
  + Why or why not?

1. **How does leaving your pet(s) with others feel?**

* Which is your primary source?
  + Family? Friends? Kennel?
  + Why?
* Does leaving them concern you in any way?
  + Bad habits developed at those places?
  + Does it hurt your relationship with your pet(s)?
  + Feel guilty for leaving them or “burdening” others to take care of them?
* Where are some places that you do bring your pet(s)?
* If you leave your pet at home alone:
  + Why?
  + What is the longest you will leave them alone?
    - Why?

1. **Have you ever lost a pet?**

* From death? Runaway?
  + What happened?
* How difficult was this experience?
* What did it feel like?
* How did your world change?
  + What did it change? Routines?

1. **What would it mean to lose your current pet(s)?**

* Would it change your life drastically?
* Would you get another pet?
  + Why or why not?

1. **What makes a “pet” different than an animal?**

* What constitutes a pet to you?
* Do you consider fish pets?

1. **Do you prefer cats or dogs?**

* Why?

1. **How much of an investment is a pet?**

* Approximately how much does it cost each month to provide/take care of you pet(s)?
* What are the major cost factors?
  + Toys? Food? Vet bills?
* How much does it cost in time?
* What are the major time factors?
  + Walks? Playtime?

1. **What do you think of the price of Vet bills?**

* Do you take your pet to the vet?
* Is the price appropriate?
* Where do you draw the line for vet bills?
  + Is there a price that you aren’t willing to pay?
  + Why or why not?

1. **What do you think of the price of pet food compared to the ingredients (that are allegedly) in it?**

* Do you get what you pay for?
* Do you prefer to buy it or make your own?
* Do you agree with the pricing of pet food?

1. **Is it worth it to own a pet?**

* Why or why not?

1. **What is your preferred method of obtaining pets?**

* SPCA, special breeders, other methods?
  + Family, friends, strays?
  + Why?
* Which ones are you against?
  + Why?

1. **How do you feel about…?**

* The possibility of certain breeds of cats/dogs being banned in cities?
* Declawing of cats?
* Neutering?

1. **Any other comments about the experience of owning a pet?**

Preferred Full Colour Large Appendix E

Debriefing Form

We would like to initially thank you for your participation in this study. This study was conducted through the Department of Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan for our 3rd year course. The primary purpose of this research study was to train the student researchers in the methods of behavioural research. The secondary purpose of the study was to examine the experiences of pet owners. We explored people's different views and perspectives on what it means to be a pet owner. We looked to explore the differences between owning a pet in urban and rural centers and what potential impacts these situations have. We also looked to explore, if any, gender differences and pet species differences. Topics of interest included activities, interactions, and relationships with pet(s).

Current research on this topic is limited, and thus we wanted to expand the body of knowledge. Current studies show a large focus on before and after life with pets, with not much focus on the actual experiences during owning a pet. Possible reasons for getting a pet, and the grief that comes along with losing a pet are two of the main topics found in literature. The life history and semi-structured interviews allowed us as researchers to understand the experiences you have with your current pet(s), an area we feel is lacking in current research.

It is essential that we reiterate your data will be kept completely confidential and no personally identifying information will be linked to your data. Transcript release was not obtained for the interviews. Only the student-researcher, the supervisor and potentially the participants will have access to the data and reports. Thus, the confidentiality of the participants will not be compromised. Your data will be reported under a pseudonym and will not be associated with any names or personally identifying information. Consent forms will not be linked with the data. The data and consent forms will be stored securely at the University of Saskatchewan by the supervisor. The data will be destroyed once the course has been completed.

If you are interested in some of the research mentioned above, feel free to look at these studies:

Belk, R.W. (1996). Metaphoric Relationships with Pets. *Society and Animals, 4*(2), 121-145.

Staats, S., Wallace, H. & Anderson, T. (2007). Reasons for Companion Animal Guardianship (Pet Ownership) from Two Populations. *Society and Animals, 16,*279-291.

Lizabeth M. Eckerd, James E. Barnett & Latishia Jett-Dias (2016) Grief following pet and human loss: Closeness is key, *Death Studies*, 40:5, 275-282.

Sandra Barnard-Nguyen, Megan Breit, Keith A. Anderson & Joelle Nielsen (2016) Pet Loss and Grief: Identifying At-risk Pet Owners during the Euthanasia Process, *Anthrozoös*, 29:3, 421-430.

If you have any questions about the study, or wish to obtain a copy of your transcript or data (provided all participants have signed a data release), please contact one of the student researchers at the emails listed below or the supervisor, Kathrina Mazurik (306-966-2603).

Thank you again for your participation.

Tesia Belosowsky, tdb715@mail.usask.ca

Samantha Feser, sjf361@mail.usask.ca

Kaelyn Welch, kdw317@mail.usask.ca