CONSIDERING CANINE COMPANIONSHIP: AN EXAMINATION OF DOG OWNER TRAVEL DESIRES

USING THE MODEL OF GOAL-DIRECTED BEHAVIOR

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The purpose of this study is to investigate how internal and external sources influence dog owners' desire and intent to travel with their dogs, using the model of goal-directed behavior (MGB). Specifically, this study investigates 1) the demographic profile of participating dog owners, 2) the relationship between dog owners' Anticipated Emotions (AE) and their desire to travel with their dogs, 3) dog owners' Attitudes toward the act (Aact) of traveling with their dogs and its relationship with their desire to travel with dogs, 4) the relationship between Subjective Norms (SN) and dog owners desire to travel with dogs, 5) owners' Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) over their dog-accompanied travel situation, 6) the relationship between desire for dog-accompanied travel and Behavioral Intent (BI), and 7) the relationship between Past Behavior (PB) and the desire and BI regarding future travel with dogs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The human-dog relationship predates written history and some studies indicate that

domesticated canine evolution occurred alongside human evolution beginning as many as

fourteen thousand years ago (Clutton-Brock, 1999). The overall relationship is extremely

complex and multifaceted. Each personal bond is as unique as the pair itself. Dogs take on the

roles of guardians, companions, status symbols and even children among their people. Dotson

& Hyatt (2008) found that anthropomorphism has caused the dog to be elevated to family

member or child surrogate. The increasing importance of pets can help marketing cater to dog-

owning consumers (Veevers, 1985). Consistent findings of the ever-greater importance of dogs

make understanding consumer trends easier. As the human-dog relationship has become

stronger, consumers seek ways to express this bond (Hill, Gaines & Wilson, 2008). However,

these family members are largely relegated to possessions when the human family departs for

vacation.

Even as the status and prevalence of the dog rise across all demographics in the United

States (U.S. census, 1999), their care is largely provided by professionals. According to

IBISWorld (2012) market research boarding and grooming represents a five billion dollar

industry. This is a rapidly growing segment of the overall pet industry and it appears to

expanding in part because the tourism industry has yet to create a desirable vacation model

that includes canine family members. Despite stronger-than-ever human-dog relationships,

relatively few vacationers are accompanied by their dogs due to the lack of suitable

accommodations (Carr & Cohen, 2009). It is important to understand how owner emotions and perceptions are influenced by the policies of vacation accommodations that claim to be dog-friendly.

1.2 Previous Literature

When animals are considered in the realm of academic study, the focus has consistently been on those animals that provide or enhance tourist attractions (Curtin, 2005; Hughs et al., 2005). According to The Humane Society of the United States " there are approximately 78.2 million owned dogs in the United States" while "39% of U.S. households own at least one dog" and with "60% of owners owning one dog" and "twenty-eight percent of owners owning two dogs" (Humane Society, 2011). As an industry, hospitality has examined the roles of exotic or wild animals in parks, captivity and even as vectors for parasites. That domestic animals can influence the touristic experiences of their owners and be consumers themselves has received scant attention (Carr & Cohen, 2009).

The influence of dogs in the lives of their owners becomes more significant each year, representing a number of roles from guardian to family member (Dotson & Hyatt, 2008). Pet ownership and in particular ownership of companion dogs has been repeatedly linked to positive health benefits (Anderson, Reid & Jennings, 1992; Cline, 2010; Cutt, Giles-Corti, Knuiman & Burke, 2007; Jennings, 1997). Dogs motivate owners to get out of the house, take walks and otherwise increase activity (Gillespie, Leffler &Lerner, 2002; Hultsman, 2011). While dog owners are generally more active than non-owners, just the act of stroking a companion canine decreases blood pressure and elevates the level of oxytocin-a hormone known to cause positive feelings-in the human system (Salmon, Timperio, Chu & Veitch, 2010). The positive

impact of dog ownership is also linked to social well-being with dogs serving as an extension of their masters in daily interactions with the environment (Veevers, 1985; Wells, 2009). The fact that most dog owners view their dogs as children (Serpell, 2003) has led the marketing world to categorize pet owners in their own marketing segment (James et al., 2004).

Non-academic publications abound with various perspectives from around the hospitality industry. In the next five years, the pet industry should enjoy additional growth despite general economic sluggishness. Mintel "expects the industry to maintain a steady pace of growth, increasing by 33% over the next five years to reach $67.7 billion in 2016." They cite pet lovers' regarding of pets as family members as driving the growth in products and services in pet travel, services and hotels, (Mintel, 2012). The sheer volume of pet ownership has been enough to make the hotel industry take notice, with more firms offering pet-friendly lodging (Lansing, 1997; Kirkland, 2009). LaQuinta Inns and Suites, Motel 6, Studio 6, Holiday Inn, IHG Candlewood, Staybridge, Sheraton, Westin, and Best Western each have dog-friendly policies with fewer restrictions than many of the more luxurious brands (Dogfriendly.com, 2012). Despite the oftentimes-higher restrictions, luxury brands are increasingly making a show of their "dog-friendliness" by offering amenities geared to the pampered pooch (Glaser, 2011; Wilson, 2012). Consumers seeking guidance need only look as far as the web for tools such as Dogwonderful.com or Dogfriendly.com to help them sort through the vast range in availabilities and services of "pet-friendly" accommodations.

In their 2011 study, Chen et al., cited the significant gap in the understanding of human-dog joint consumption of leisure activities as motivation for their work. The anthro-zoological discipline has explored general co-participation as it influences marketing (Aylesworth et al.,

1999), however very little research has been dedicated to activities designed for dogs (Greenebaum, 2004). Veterinary medicine and marketing are two major disciplines that recognize the dog as a major influence to the consumer (owners), though not recognizing the dog as a consumer. It has been suggested that pet ownership be used to identify market segments, (James, Charles & Torres, 2004).

Indeed, as the dog's role has extended past mere companion to that of family member, consumers have expressed this role in lavish spending habits (Hill, Gaines & Wilson, 2008). Additionally, academic examination of dog owners' desires and behavior within hospitality has been largely limited to consumers in Australia (Carr & Cohen, 2009) and Taiwan (Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011; Hung, Chen & Peng, 2011; Hung Chen & Peng, 2012; Hung & Petrick, 2011). There have been only two American studies on dogs in hospitality and both were from a business marketing perspective rather than considering motivation and behavior (Dotson & Hyatt, 2008; Dotson, Hyatt & Clark, 2010). A quick scan of researcher names also reveals that studies are conducted by a very small number of academics. This greatly limits the perspectives that inform the present body of knowledge.

Despite the plentitude of consumer information regarding dog-friendly businesses, there is relatively little research on the topic. Previous researchers have relied on piecing together findings from various disciplines to conduct their work on dogs as participants in hospitality (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011; Dotson & Hyatt, 2008; Dotson, Hyatt & Clark, 2010Hung, Chen & Peng, 2011; Hung Chen & Peng, 2012; Hung & Petrick, 2011). They have drawn from anthropology, marketing, veterinary medicine, and economics.

1.3 Significance of Research

This study was designed to fill the gap in current research. To date very little academic

research has been dedicated to dog-friendly accommodations. Even less attention has been

granted to the idea of shared, human-dog vacation experiences. Marketing professionals have

already assisted other industries (veterinary and consumer products) in capitalizing on this.

James, Charles & Torres-Baumgarten (2004) suggest that pet ownership be used to identify

market segments. The literature—and significant lack of literature—is an indicator that further

research is needed to provide real data to the hospitality industry with regard to moving

beyond merely "pet-permissible" policies. If other industries are any indication, dog owners

should be acknowledged as a significant portion of hotel patrons. Effectively addressing their

desires may amount to a multi-million dollar niche market segment within the hospitality

industry.

Mosteller (2008) reported that pets play many important roles as owners navigate

relationships with others, with nature and with themselves. Indeed, as their role has extended

past mere companion to that of family member, consumers have expressed this role in lavish

spending habits (Hill, Gaines & Wilson, 2008; Holbrook, 2008). This research seeks to

understand the motivations of and constraints faced by of dog owners as they consider

whether or not to include their dogs in leisure travel. Pets are viewed as an extension of the self

(Cavanough, Leonard & Scammon, 2008; Jyrinki, 2012), indicating that pet-related consumption

is driven by profound emotions linked to pets, which are more than mere objects. The

veterinary industry has already begun capitalizing on the human-dog bond. Doctors have

expanded their line of medical services recently to include procedures previously conducted

only on human patients. Favorable consumer response to such offerings and willingness to pay for these services indicate that increased expansion in hospitality and tourism would be similarly embraced (Geissler, 2003).

This research is significant as the results provide implications to hoteliers and further into the hospitality industry, as a clear picture of related dog owner behavior intent is as yet, unrealized. This study acknowledges the demonstrated desires of consumers for more personalized experiences. The hospitality industry abounds with countless ways consumers can spend their money. It has been shown consistently that consumers demand innovation and managers need to account for the changing desires. The boutique hotel is preferred for the unique options it provides (Victorino, Verma, Plaschka, & Dev, 2005; Aggett, 2007). Consumers are searching for a more fulfilling experience (Morrison, Pearce, Moscardo, Nadkarni, & O'Leary, 1996 and Jones, 1999); niches should be carved out so hoteliers can compete on greater differentiation. Hung, Chen, & Peng's (2011) research explores predictors of taking pets along when traveling. They concluded "in some cases owners make pets fit in to their lifestyle, but sometimes the reverse is true."

An important result of this research is to expand the body of knowledge. Previous academic study on dogs (or even pets) as participants in the hospitality industry is extremely limited. Existing research has only been recently undertaken, leaving neither robust history of findings nor a wealth of models. TPB is the most common framework applied to the topic (Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011; Hung, Chen & Peng, 2011; Hung Chen & Peng, 2012). Motivation-Ability-Opportunity (MOA) was applied in one study but among a homogeneous sample frame.

To date, no other studies have undertaken to test empirically those findings (Hung & Petrick, 2011).

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how internal and external sources influence dog owners' desire and intent to travel with their dogs, using the model of goal-directed behavior (MGB). Specifically, this study investigates 1) the demographic profile of participating dog owners, 2) the relationship between dog owners' Anticipated Emotions (AE) and their desire to travel with their dogs, 3) dog owners' Attitudes toward the act (Aact) of traveling with their dogs and its relationship with their desire to travel with dogs, 4) the relationship between Subjective Norms (SN) and dog owners desire to travel with dogs, 5) owners' Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) over their dog-accompanied travel situation, 6) the relationship between desire for dog-accompanied travel and Behavioral Intent (BI), and 7) the relationship between Past Behavior (PB) and the desire and BI regarding future travel with dogs. Figure 1 depicts the way construct variables are proposed to influence one another. The constructs are considered and evaluated based on items and scales from previous studies that used similar constructs. The aim is greater understanding of conditions impacting dog owners' desires and intent to travel with their dogs.

1.5 Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) has long been used by social psychology (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) explain the way in which attitudes, emotions and norms influence desires. By adding perceived behavioral control in 1991, Ajzen acknowledged that subjects experiencing

7

greater perceived control showed stronger desires to enact the target behavior. MGB both "expands and deepens" TPB by including variables that increase accountability of variance in intention and behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Emotions have been found to have considerable influence within the hospitality industry, including tourist decision-making (Brunner-Sperdin & Peters, 2009; Smallman & Moore, 2010). In this study, emotions are expected to have a similar correlation with perception. This study examines the relationship between a variety of reported emotions and perceptions.

The emotional attachment to companion canines is often expressed in owners' assertion that their dogs are their family members, even children (Mosteller, 2008). Interacting with their dogs has essentially become a family affair for many owners. Additionally, emotions are closely tied to the experiential nature of the tourism industry.

TPB was found to be appropriate in examining dog owners' decision making due to the emotions surrounding the human-dog bond and behavioral intent (Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011, Hung, Chen & Peng, 2011). While seeking to understand and predict the actions of pet owners, their conceptual models each included pet attachment, owning to the emotional attachment that influences the formation of attitudes and further, enactment of behaviors.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH MODEL AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Terms Used

The following terms are used in this study:

Anticipated Emotions (AE) refer to expected outcomes resulting from a sought after goal. They appraise the situation and consider the consequences based on success or failure. AEs depend on the subject's understanding of a situation and potential consequences and result from an individual's standard of reference (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). In this study, emotions used by Perugini & Bagozzi (2001) are embedded within the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale, LAPS (Johnson, Garrity, and Stallones, 1992). LAPS has been used in a number of academic studies to evaluate how close owners feel they are to their pets. Attachment has often been used to identify owner-pet relationship. Zasloff (1996) used eleven items on the Comfort from Companion Animals Scale to measure the amount of comfort derived from companion animals. Stallones et al. (1990) measured attachment with their seven Pet Attachment Questions that were also used by Chen, Hung & Peng (2011) and Hung, Chen & Peng (2012) when assessing the bond between owners and their dogs. Several studies pertaining to the economics of the human-dog bond recognize that consumers who claim greater affection for their canines often express that in their spending patterns, often seeking lavish or human-grade products or treatments for their dogs (James, 2004, Hill, Gains & Wilson, 2008; Mosteller, 2008). Inclusion of AEs into the LAPS items frames the attachment items in such a way to reflect owners' perception of success or failure based on their standards.

Examples of AE scale items include, "I am happy that I am very attached to my dog," and, "I would feel guilty if I couldn't do something to take care of my dog."

Attitudes toward the act (Aact) are distinguished by their creation from learned response to an action over time. Attitudes are therefore shaped and conditioned based on previous observations of approval or disapproval reinforcement (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). This study borrowed dog-accompanied travel items from previous studies, (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Hung, Chen & Peng, 2012; Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011). Items include the internalized perception of propriety of taking a dog and the degree to which the dog is included in leisure activities. These items reflect owners' learned attitudes regarding dog-accompanied travel. Examples of Aact scale items include, "My planned activities include my dog," and, "It is less effort to take my dog than leave it behind."

Perceived Control (PBC) refers to the amount of control a dog owner believes he or she has in a given situation. Ajzen (1991) added PBC to TPB as an additional independent variable used to predict outcome. The inclusion of PBC in the MGB model reflects PBC influence on subject outcome behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). This study recognizes the array of accommodation availability and policies. Dog owners are influenced in their decision making by the degree to which they can affect the outcome. There are several possible ways by which to define availability of services. In this study Services shall be all lodging accommodations that self-identify as "dog-friendly." There appears to be no industry standard for the meaning of dog-friendly although several countries have taken steps to recognize the importance of pet travelers and are lessening restrictions. The Canada Tourism Commission developed a pet-friendly tourist accommodation certification program (Carr & Cohen 2009), though it allows for

inconsistencies regarding price and restrictions between firms. This study recognizes availability as any lodging outlet that identifies itself as "dog- or pet-friendly." This will be measured using three variables often cited in tourism reviews and which appear to have the greatest influence on consumers: Whether or not hotel guests incur additional charges for bringing their pets (pet fees or cleaning deposit); Whether or not hotels impose a size, weight or breed restriction; and Whether or not hotels impose seasonal restrictions (dogs allowed only during the off- or low-season). Additional considerations include proximity to tourist attractions and knowledge of existing/competing pet policies, though these are less crucial.

Subjective Norm (SN) refers to the level of approval the subject imagines he or she would garner from the most influential people in his or her life. This perceived approval or disapproval results in a feeling of being accepted for taking or wishing to action that is either aligned with or opposing the social consensus. When one imagines that his or her beliefs are in accordance with the beliefs of the social network, one will more readily act on those beliefs. The availability of dog-friendly accommodations may reinforce an owner's belief that dogs should be included whereas lack of such accommodations may influence an owner to believe that dogs should not be included. In this study the influence of close family and friends are considered in the understanding of dog owners' subjective norms. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which people close to them would approve of their reasons for wanting to travel with their dogs. Items include, "People close to me would ____ of my idea that my dog makes my vacation more enjoyable."

Past Behavior (PB) refers to action taken by dog owners regarding whether or not they included their dogs when they traveled for leisure. Acknowledging that past behavior is a

significant predictor of dog owners' future behavior (Ajzan, 1991; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Hung & Petrick, 2011), this study will gather information regarding the previous travel behavior patterns. Owners are asked how often they previously traveled with their dogs and the extent to which the dog influenced their planning and travel adjustments. Items included, "I adjusted my plans to accommodate my dog," and, "I looked for hotels that did not charge a fee for dogs."

Behavioral Intent (BI) refers to the action respondents plan to take regarding whether or not to include their dogs in leisure travel plans. The aforementioned constructs work together to shape dog owner's desire to take his dog with him on leisure travel which, in turn, influences BI. While the scope of this study makes it untenable to know whether and how participants acted upon their intent, it does gather information about that intent. Direct questions allow respondents to provide a clearer understanding of if and how their future leisure travel plans will include their dogs. Items were the same as those used in PB, but in future tense. For example, "I am willing to adjust my plans to accommodate my dog," and "I plan to look for hotels that do not charge a fee for dogs."

2.2 Research Model

The research model used in this study provides a visual representation of the proposed relationships between the seven constructs. Four parallel precedent variables: anticipated emotions, attitudes toward the act, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are anticipated to have positive influence on the determinant variable, desire, which, in turn, is expected to have a positive influence on the outcome variable, behavioral intent to travel with dog. Past behavior is a non-parallel, predictor variable, expected to have a positive influence on

both desire and behavioral intent. Additionally, word of mouth is included as a peripheral

component that both influences and is influenced by desire and behavioral intent. This model

was derived from Perugini & Bagozzi's (2001) Model of Goal-directed Behavior (MGB) (Figure

1).
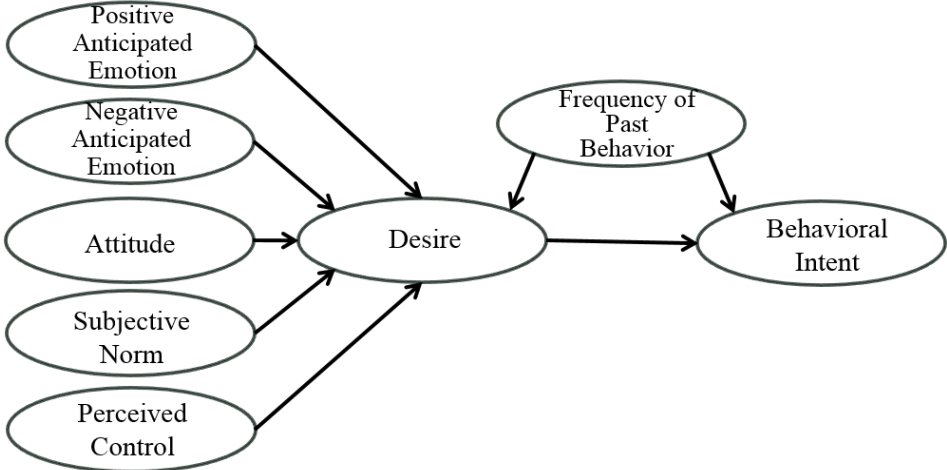
Figure 1. Model of Goal-directed Behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001)

Using the TPB, this study examines the desire and behavioral intent of dog owners

considering including their canines on a leisure trip. The relationships between precedents AEs,

Aact, SNs and PBC and Desire are identified. Additionally, Desire is considered a precedent to

BI. It is expected that owners who most strongly desire taking their dog and who have done so

in the past will report a greater BI to engage in dog-accompanied travel.
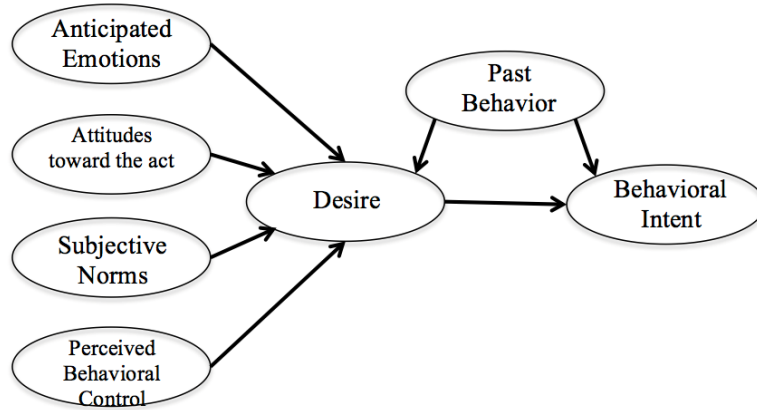
Figure 2. Research Model

2.3 Research Objectives

The following research objectives were established for this study:

Research Objective 1: Identify the attributes of participant dog owners' profile using demographic and of social media information.

Research Objective 2: Examine dog owners' desire to travel with their dogs by segmenting desire levels.

Research Objective 3: Examine dog owners' level of desire to travel with their dogs, relative to precedent variables:
a) Anticipated Emotions,
b) Attitudes toward dog-accompanied travel,
c) Social Norms, and
d) Perceived Behavioral Control.

Research Objective 4: Identify the key factors among precedent variables.

Research Objective 5: Examine dog owners' desire to travel with their dogs relative to their Behavioral Intent to travel with their dogs in the future.

Research Objective 6: Examine the relationship between owners' past travel behavior and
a) their desire to travel with their dogs and
b) their intent to travel with their dogs in the future.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

The sampling frame of American dog owners consisted of participants identified through

North Texas dog interest organizations having an online presence and through purposive

snowball sampling among dog owners known to the researchers. This was conducted through

email and social media. A web-based survey was generated, using the Qualtrics.com platform.

Use of this platform through purposive snowball sampling, yielded 196 usable surveys. The

small sample size poses a limitation to the generalizability of the findings while providing a

preliminary examination on which to build further studies.

Data was collected from June to September 2014. The online survey platform, Qualtrics,

allowed respondents to access the survey when it best suited their schedules and increased

comfort levels in the setting of their own choosing. However, this method experienced a 40%

survey abandonment rate. As more people engage the digital world via smart phones, they

regularly triage the types of things to engage in various formats. Social media is mobile-friendly;

many people use only their smart phones to access their preferred platform. The survey used in

this study was accessible via URL on any web-connected device. However, it was difficult to

actually take the survey from a small-format screen such as a phone. While the survey was

developed for easy navigation using a conventional computer, it is believed that some

participants gave up upon encountering difficulty reading it on a small screen. That said, the

time stamps of responses showed a pattern of abandonment and completion that may indicate

a move from a mobile device to a computer in order to participate.

3.2 Instruments

This study incorporated the use of several instruments to better understand this under-examined topic. The objectives were examined through the desire construct, and further evaluated through the examination of AE, Aact, SN, PBC, PB, WOM and BI variables.

Demographic information was used to profile dog owners on level of education, race/ethnicity, number of dogs, gender, age, annual household income, and on whether the participants have children under the age of 18 living in their home. Use of social media was also considered. Items regarding relationships and topics had been used previously in word of mouth marketing study, (Carl, 2006). Participants were asked to consider their social media usage. They rank-ordered the types of people with whom they have social media contact. Choices included both close and distant relationships such as strangers and romantic partners. They were also asked to identify the seven topics they most frequently discussed on social media.

The desire construct was measured through the use of a bipolar scale, with 10 items. This scale was adapted from the scale originally used by Zaichowsky (1985). The 10-item involvement scale used by Josiam, Kinley & Kim (2004) and Smeaton et al. (1998) was shown to be reliable. This reaffirms its usability in this study as an abbreviated form of Zaichowsky's 1985 original with 20 items. This descriptive scale is measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Strongly Disagree* to 6-*Strongly Agree*. Here, the scale was used to measure involvement as it relates to dog owners. All of the participants indicated their involvement with regards to what traveling with their dogs meant to them. Segmentation of dog owners based on their involvement levels was then conducted.

16

The AE variable was measured using a modified version of the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale. It was modified to reduce the number of items and combine similar items. Additionally, items were phrased in such a way to allow participants to consider their emotional outcome in attachment context. This 20-item, bipolar scale is measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Strongly Disagree* to 6-*Strongly Agree*. This scale reflected the level of emotional attachment the participants associated to their dogs. Examples of AE scale items include, "I am happy that I am very attached to my dog," and, "I would feel guilty if I couldn't do something to take care of my dog."

The Aact variable was measured using an 11-item, bipolar scale. These were used to examine the learned attitudes regarding dog-accompanied travel. Aact items were measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Strongly Disagree* to 6-*Strongly Agree*. This study borrowed dog-accompanied travel items from previous studies, (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Hung, Chen & Peng, 2012; Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011). Examples of the Aact scale include "my dog makes my vacation more enjoyable," "my dog is part of my leisure experience," and "I will not travel unless my dog can come with me." This scale reflected the internalized attitude regarding taking one's dog along on leisure travel.

The SN variable was measured using a 12-item, bipolar scale. Items were derived from previous studies' items regarding dog-accompanied leisure and from previous application of the MGB model reflecting PBC influence on subject outcome behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). They were framed, asking participants to report the level of support they would receive from others regarding those desires. For instance, "People closest to me would _____ of my idea that

my dog makes my vacation more enjoyable." Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Strongly Disapprove* to 6-*Strongly Approve*.

The PBC variable was measured using a 9-item, bipolar scale asking participants to report how much control they felt they have over various aspects of dog-accompanied travel. "I have ___ control over …" various items including fees, staff attitudes, policies and amenities. Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*No Control* to 6-*Complete Control*. Items on this scale were derived from previous application of the MGB model reflecting PBC influence on subject outcome behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). This study recognizes the array of accommodation availability and policies. Dog owners are influenced in their decision making by the degree to which they can affect the outcome. Examples of PBC scale items include, "I have ___ over the dog-friendly policies of a hotel," and, "I have ___ over the staff attitude toward dogs."

The PB variable was measured using items from previous studies of dog-accompanied travel, (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Hung, Chen & Peng, 2012; Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011). Participants were asked how often they took their dog with them. Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Never* to 6-*Always*. Another 13-item, bipolar scale asked participants to consider the degree to which they took action to include their dog. Items were measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Strongly Disagree* to 6-*Strongly Agree*. Items included, "I adjusted my plans to accommodate my dog," and, "I looked for hotels that did not charge a fee for dogs."

The BI variable was considered the outcome variable, given the scope of this study. It was measured by applying a "future intent" context to items used in previous studies of dog-

accompanied travel, (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Hung, Chen & Peng, 2012; Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011).

First, participants were asked how often they intend to take their dog in the future. They

responded using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Never* to 6-*Always*. Another bipolar scale

consisted of 14-items that were the future versions of PB items. Items were measured on a 6-

point Likert scale ranging from 1-*Strongly Disagree* to 6-*Strongly Agree*. These included, "I will

adjust my plans to accommodate my dog," and, "I will look for hotels that do not charge a fee

for dogs."

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Participant Profile

A total of 196 usable surveys were collected. Participants could decline responding to any item throughout. As expected, this was most commonly seen among demographic information. The first purpose of this study was to identify a participant profile.

Research Objective 1: Identify the attributes of participant dog owners' profiles using demographic and social media information.

The main body of survey respondents was largely homogeneous. Participants were 77.0% female and 86.2% were of White/Caucasian American ethnicity. The majority of respondents were in the two age brackets of (26-35) at 24.5% and (36-45) at 28.6 %. With regard to income 46.9% of the respondents reported an annual income ranging from $30,001 to $90,000, reflecting that the majority are of the middle class. Most respondents have attained post-secondary education with 45.9% having a bachelor's degree and 25.0% having a master's degree. A majority (72.4%) of the respondents reported not having children under the age of 18 living in the household. Dog ownership demographic information was also collected: 42.9% reported having one dog, 39.8% reported having two dogs, and 17.3% reported having three or more dogs (Table 1). This information provides a snapshot of the dog owners participating in this study. Given the sampling method called for dog owners to reach other known dog owners via social media, the homogeneous slice of US dog owners is not surprising.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographics		N	(%)
Gender	Male	43	21.9
	Female	151	77.0
Age	18-25	19	9.7
	26-35	48	24.5
	36-45	56	28.6
	46-55	37	18.9
	Over 55	34	17.3
Income	$30,000 or less	0	0.0
	$30,001-90,000	92	46.9
	$90,001-150,000	59	30.1
	$150,001 or more	22	11.2
Ethnicity	White American	169	86.2
	All others	27	13.8
Children under 18?	Yes	53	27.2
	No	142	72.8
Total number of dogs in household	1	84	51.1
	2	78	39.8
	3	18	9.2
	More than 3	16	8.2

*figures do not equal 100% due to "declined" responses

Social media usage offers additional insight into the composition of the sample. The

purposive sampling used in this study presents an opportunity to query dog owners about their

use of social media. Seven types of relationships were rank ordered, according to how much

dog owners interacted with them using social media (Figure 3). A low score indicates more

interaction than a high score. Mean scores were used to determine that participants have the

greatest amount of social media interaction with their friends (2.62) and best friends (2.64),

and their least amount of interaction with strangers (6.16). While it may seem odd that

partners/spouses are ranked only third, it is likely due to the fact that participants are apt to

interact more face-to-face in those relationships. Closer relationships such as friends and family

often shape SNs. Social media should be considered another method by which dog owners

perceive SNs. Dog owners were also asked to select the seven topics most frequently discussed

using social media. The most frequently listed items are in order: Animals/Pets, Hobbies,

Life/Living, Arts/Entertainment, News/Events, Travel, and Home (Table 2). Frequency counts

are based on the number of times they appeared in all participants' list of seven. It is not

surprising that dog owners reached via social media reported Animals/Pets and Hobbies in their

top seven topics. The subject of dog-accompanied travel is also represented in the Travel topic.

In fact, 79.5% of study participants reported telling friends and relatives about hotels/brands

with dog-friendly policies. Many participants were recruited through their dog club member

base. This is a subset known to travel to dog events, so it is not surprising that they would

discuss each of these topics among their groups. Some may have even considered accessing the

survey via social media a discussion of Animals/Pets.
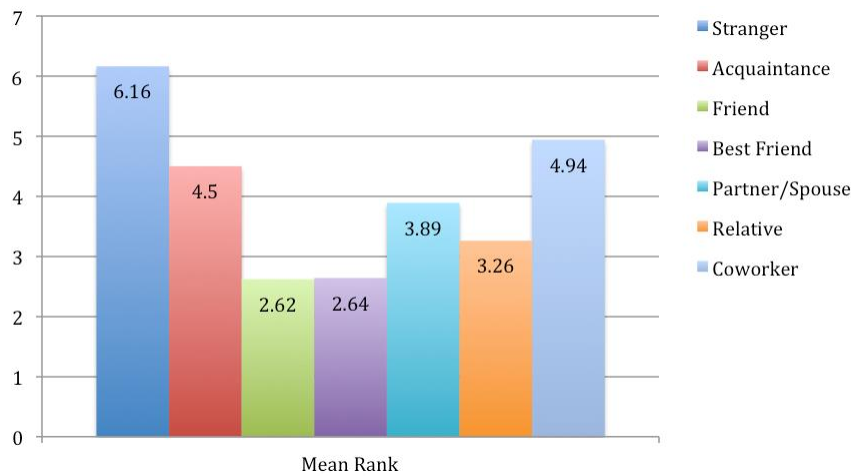
Figure 3. Social media interaction by relationship type

Table 2.

Demographic Frequency Counts and Percentages

Topic Category	N	%
Animals/Pets	172	87.8
Hobbies	146	74.5
Life/Living	144	73.5
Arts/Entertainment	118	60.2
News/Events	117	59.7
Travel	116	59.2
Home	103	52.6
Health	86	43.9
Education/Learning	77	39.3
Work/Professional	65	33.2
Buying Products	57	29.1
Sports	55	28.1
Buying/Using Services	54	27.6
Technology/Science	48	24.5

Note: N exceeds 196 participants because each listed 7 topics

4.2 Model Testing

The second purpose of this study was to test the applicability of the MGB to the topic of

dog owner desire with regard to dog-accompanied travel. Scales used in the survey were

evaluated for reliability via SPSS, and all were found to be reliable. It is believed that the PB

scale is slightly less reliable than the others due to the phrasing of four items that were worded

in a negative light as compared to the other ten items. For example, "I only took my dog

because it was more convenient than boarding," versus, "I avoided boarding because I wanted

my dog with me." The four negative items resulted in mean response scores noticeably lower

than the other items.

- The AE Scale was reliable with an Alpha of .841 across the 20 items.

- The Aact Scale was reliable with an Alpha of .892 across the 11 items.

- The SN Scale was reliable with an Alpha of .857 across the 12 items.

- The PBC Scale was reliable with an Alpha of .816 across the 9 items.

- The Desire Scale was reliable with an Alpha of .967 across the 10 items.

- The BI Scale was reliable with an Alpha of .856 across the 14 items.

- The PB Scale was reliable with an Alpha of .789 across the 14 items.

Research Objective 2: Examine dog owners' desire to travel with their dogs by segmenting desire levels.

The 10-item desire scale used for this study was fashioned after Zaichowsky's original 1985 involvement scale. Chronbach's alpha was calculated to ascertain reliability of this modified scale. The score of alpha = .967 is on par with Zaichowsky's original and is acceptable in social sciences. The mean desire score was found to be 4.5517 (SD = 1.20309). The median score of 4.8000 is close to the mean, reflecting a normal distribution. The range of mean desire scores was divided into three categories of low (1-2.666), medium (2.667-4.333), and high (4.334-6) desire (Table 3). These levels were established to represent the distribution. Desire to travel with one's dog has not been previously studied using the involvement scale.

Table 3.

Dog owner desire levels

	Low desire (1-2.666) N (%)	Medium desire (2.667-4.333) N (%)	High desire (4.334-6) N (%)
Numbers and percentages	14 (7.78)	51 (28.33)	115 (63.89)
Mean desire score = 4.55			
Median desire score = 4.80			
Modal desire score = 6.0			
Reliability of 10-item scale; alpha = .967			

It is not surprising that most (56.67%) of respondents were identified as high desire. The purposive sampling method deliberately sought to reach dog owners through other dog owners. That they took time to participate indicates their investment to dog-related projects and themes. No significant desire segmentation differences were identified among varying demographics such as race, education and age. Desire level will be analyzed with BI.

Research Objective 3: Examine dog owners' level of desire to travel with their dogs, relative to precedent variables:
  a) Anticipated Emotions,
  b) Attitudes toward dog-accompanied travel,
  c) Social Norms, and
  d) Perceived Behavioral Control.

Correlation analyses were used to examine the relationship between precedent variables and the desire construct (Table 4, Figure 4). The number of items in each scale necessitated the use of calculated averages.

Table 4.

Bi-variate Relationship Between Desire and Precedent Variables

	Anticipated Emotions	Attitudes Toward the Act	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioral Control
Pearson Correlation	.463	.686	.729	.116
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.126

The relationship between average desire and average AEs is positive, but moderate. This may indicate that a stronger emotional connection to one's dog does not mean that one wants to have it along for vacation. The relationship between average desire and average Aact is positive and moderate. This indicates that owners who have learned attitudes favoring dog-accompanied travel show a greater desire to include their dogs. Average SNs were found to have a strong, positive relationship with average desire. The desire to include a dog increases as

perceived positive support of others increases, demonstrating the influence of people close to the dog owner. The more owners believe that their family/friends support their reasons for wanting to take their dogs, the more they actually want to do so. Average desire does not have a statistically significant relationship with average PBC. This indicates that owners who do not feel they can influence factors regarding dog-related travel still desire to take their dog with them. Regression analysis of the variables showed SNs and Aact to be most impacting on average desire (Table 5). It is believed that AE was subsumed by Aact because both variables reflect internal status and SNs remained through regression as a reflection of external influence.

Table 5.

Predictive Relationships Between Desire and Precedent Variables

	Attitudes Toward the Act	Subjective Norms
Beta	.503	.393
Correlation Significance	.000	.000
Adjusted R square = .616		
Regression Significance p = .000		

Examination of desire level segmentation was also performed using ANOVA analyses (Table 6). Precedent variables AE (F = 15.545), SN (F = 47.313), and Aact (F = 45.117) were all shown to have variance between the segments (significant at $p < .001$). This is not surprising as one would expect greater influence of those variables to result in higher levels of desire. Average SN and Average Aact were found to be the strongest predictors of desire, accounting for 61.6% of the variance (significant at $p < .000$). This is indicates that the sentiments of others play an important role. Aacts are the result of learned patterns of attitudes and SNs are the

26

direct perception of support from people close to respondents. The notable exception was PBC.

Lack of statistical difference between the desire segments may indicate that perceived control

over the travel situation has less influence on desire than the other three variables. Hotel

policies regarding size and quantity restrictions vary widely (TripAdvisor.com, 2010;

Dogfriendly.com, 2014), so it is worthwhile to note that ANOVA analysis revealed no

differences between desire segments were noted with regard to size and quantity of dogs in

the home.

Table 6.

Variance Between Desire Segments and Desire Precedent Variables

	Anticipated Emotions	Attitudes Toward the Act	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioral Control
Low Desire	4.0571	3.2028	3.0897	2.7698
Medium Desire	4.4510	4.4026	3.7766	2.9527
High Desire	4.7518	5.6568	4.5550	3.0973
F	15.545	45.117	47.313	.984
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.376

Research Objective 4: Identify the key factors among precedent variables.

Anticipated Emotions - Once the AE scale was established as a reliable scale with an

alpha value of .841 across the 20 items, a factor analysis was run. The 20 items were reduced to

five factors that explain 65.516% of the variance (Table 7). The dimension reduction was done

with suppressing absolute values under the value of 0.4.

- Factor 1 is named "*Family Members*" and includes the AE items of: proud to show

   pictures of my dog, proud to talk about my dog, dog is a big part of family, happy that

   dog is a great companion, satisfied that dog is a great companion, satisfied that dog is a

27

friend. These items account for 35.089% of the variance. The items in this factor are tied together by a sense of positive feelings associated with the dog being part of the family. Those who experience these AE consider their dogs as family members, most likely children. Most participants do not report children in the household, so they likely share photos and discuss their dogs as proud parents of their "fur babies."

- Factor 2 is named "*Health Partners*" and includes the AE items of glad dog helps me stay physically healthy, glad dog helps me stay emotionally happy, delighted to play with dog often, happy I am very attached to dog, satisfied dog adds to my happiness. These items account for 12.141% of the variance. The items in this factor are tied together by the idea that the dog is a partner in a physically and emotionally healthy relationship. Those who relate to these items include their dogs in their lifestyle choices, finding pleasure from doing so.

- Factor 3 is named "*Fuzzy Buddies*" and includes the AE items of sad if I couldn't confide in dog, disappointed if dog was not best friend, disappointed if dog was less loyal than people, disappointed that dog is just a dog, and frustrated if dogs don't deserve respect. These items account for 6.995% of the variance. The items in this factor are tied together by the idea that the dog is seen as a buddy, faithful and deserving of admiration. Those who relate to these items respect their dogs as friends who are loyal and probably trusted agents during trying life events.

- Factor 4 is named "*Dog's Yardstick*" and includes the AE items of ashamed dog means no more than friends, worried feelings toward people not affected by their reaction to dog and ashamed if dog judged me. These items account for 5.807% of the variance. The

items in this factor are tied together by the role the dog plays in judgment. Those who

relate to these items respect their dogs as creatures capable of judging and opinions of

others are influenced by their interactions with their dogs.

- Factor 5 is unnamed and includes the AE items of frustrated dog doesn't understand

  emotions and guilty if I couldn't care for dog. These items account for 5.484% of the

  variance. The items in this factor do not appear to be linked by any particular theme.

The desire categories are related to all AE items loading in Factor 1 and Factor 2. ANOVA

analysis revealed significant variance between the categories to be .001 for these factors, likely

because they are directly linked to strong relationships with the dog and the emotional

connection for sharing life experiences.

Table 7.

Factors of Anticipated Emotions

	Factor loading	% of Variance
Factor 1: Family Members		35.089
Proud to show pictures of my dog	.818	
Proud to talk about my dog	.816	
Happy dog is a big part of family	.697	
Satisfied that dog is a great companion	.696	
Satisfied that dog is a friend	.687	
Factor 2: Health Partners		12.141
Glad dog helps me stay physically healthy	.836	
Glad dog helps me stay emotionally happy	.792	
Delighted to play with dog often	.717	
Happy I am very attached to dog	.629	
Satisfied dog adds to my happiness	.608	
Factor 3: Fuzzy Buddies		6.995
Sad if I couldn't confide in dog	.795	
Disappointed if dog was not best friend	.767	
Disappointed if dog was less loyal than people	.629	
Disappointed if dog is just a dog	.615	
Frustrated if dogs don't deserve respect	.608	
Factor 4: Dog's Yardstick		5.807
Ashamed if dog means no more than friends		
Worried if feelings toward people not affected by their reaction to dog		
Ashamed if dog judged me		
Factor 5: Unnamed		5.484
Frustrated dog doesn't understand emotions	-.731	
Guilty if I couldn't care for dog	.568	

Attitudes toward the act - Once the Aact scale was established as a reliable scale with an alpha value of .892 across the 11 items, a factor analysis was run. The 11 items were reduced to two factors that explain 60.839% of the variance (Table 8). The dimension reduction was done with suppressing absolute values under the value of 0.4.

- Factor 1 is named "*Have dog, will travel*" and includes the Aact items of: choose hotels that allow dogs, want to use hotels that allow dogs, know which hotels are suited for my dog needs, tell friends about dog friendly hotels, planned activities include dog, dog is well behaved enough for hotel, there are dog-friendly activities outside hotel. These items account for 49.816% of the variance. The items in this factor are tied together by the attitude that planning to include a dog is just part of the leisure planning process. These owners actively seek business and locations that will suit their dog needs and have socialized their dogs to participate.

- Factor 2 is named "*Convenience Seekers*" and includes the Aact items of dog is acceptable size/breed for hotel, less expensive to take dog, easy to travel with dog, less effort to take dog. These items account for 11.022% of the variance. The items in this factor are tied together by the attitude that taking the dog must outweigh the associated costs. Those who relate to these items include their dogs when it is less costly or less convenient to leave them behind. The time and effort required to accommodate a dog while traveling must be minimal.

The desire categories are related to all Aact items but one each in Factor 1 (There are dog-friendly activities outside hotel, p = .028) and Factor 2 (Dog is an acceptable size/breed for hotel, p = .065). ANOVA analysis revealed significant variance between the categories to be .001 for all other items in both factors.

Table 8.

Factors of Attitudes Toward the Act

	Factor loading	% of Variance
Factor 1: Have dog, will travel		49.816
Choose hotels that allow dogs	.843	
Want to use hotels that allow dogs	.836	
Know which hotels are suited for my dog needs	.827	
Tell friends about dog friendly hotels	.804	
Planned activities include dog	.760	
Dog is well behaved enough for hotel	.546	
There are dog-friendly activities outside hotel	.492	
Factor 2: Convenience Seekers		11.022
Dog is acceptable size/breed for hotel	.765	
Less expensive to take dog	.713	
Easy to travel with dog	.664	
Less effort to take dog	.614	

Subjective Norms - Once the SN scale was established as a reliable scale with an alpha value of .857 across the 12 items, a factor analysis was run. The 12 items were reduced to three factors that explain 62.042% of the variance (Table 9). The dimension reduction was done with suppressing absolute values under the value of 0.4.

- Factor 1 is named "*Support Dog Inclusivity*" and includes the SN items of: dog part of leisure experience, dog makes vacation more enjoyable, love dog too much to leave behind, makes dog happy, safer with dog along, and avoid guilt for leaving dog behind. These items account for 26.562% of the variance. The items in this factor are united by the perception that friends/family support the participant's desire to include his/her dog. Including the dog to improve the quality of the vacation is a justification understood by participants' family and friends.

- Factor 2 is named "*Support Lack of Trust*" and includes the SN items of don't trust dog

  with others, boarding options are unsatisfactory, and will not travel without dog. These

  items account for 18.223% of the variance. The items in this factor are tied together by

  the perception that family/friends support the participant's unwillingness to trust the

  care of the dog to others. This is interesting because those influencing the SN may be

  the same individuals not entrusted with the care of participants' dogs.

- Factor 3 is named "*Support Avoidance of Negatives*" and includes the SN items of avoid

  causing dog stress, miss dog, and no one cares for dog as well as me. These items

  account for 17.256% of the variance. The items in this factor are tied together by the

  perception that family/friends support the participant's desire to avoid negative

  outcomes associated with not taking the dog.

Table 9.

Factors of Subjective Norms

	Factor loading	% of Variance
Factor 1: Support Dog Inclusivity		26.562
Dog part of leisure experience	.843	
Dog makes vacation more enjoyable	.836	
Love dog too much to leave behind	.827	
Makes dog happy	.804	
Safer with dog along	.760	
Avoid guilt for leaving dog behind	.546	
Factor 2: Support Lack of Trust		18.223
Don't trust dog with others	.765	
Boarding options are unsatisfactory	.713	
Will not travel without dog	.664	
Factor 3: Support Avoidance of Negatives		17.256
Avoid causing dog stress	.842	
Miss dog	.747	
No one cares for dog as well as me	.612	

The desire categories are related to all SN items but one each in Factor 1 (Avoid guilt of leaving dog behind, p = .003) and in Factor 2 (Don't trust dog with others, p = .007). ANOVA analysis revealed significant variance between the categories to be .001 for all other items in both factors.

Perceived Behavioral Control - Once the PBC scale was established as a reliable scale with an alpha value of .816 across the 9 items, a factor analysis was run. The nine items were reduced to three factors that explain 71.430% of the variance (Table 10). The dimension reduction was done with suppressing absolute values under the value of 0.4.

- Factor 1 is named "*Facilities*" and includes the PBC items of: having a dog exercise area nearby, location of hotel, and dog-friendly amenities. These items account for 43.288% of the variance. The items in this factor are united by the physical traits associated with hotel selection. These items pertain to the physical qualities dog owners can use to determine whether or not to patronize a hotel.

- Factor 2 is named "*Management*" and includes the PBC items of: dog-friendly policies of hotel, fees charged for bringing dog, and staff attitude toward dogs. These items account for 15.106% of the variance. The items in this factor are linked together because they are a direct result of hotel management. They are intangibles that contribute to the general sense of welcome for dog owners. Owners also use these items to differentiate between hotels when making accommodation selections.

- Factor 3 is named "*Usage*" and includes the PBC items of: selecting a hotel, service dog receives at hotel, and recommendations for dog-friendly hotels. These items account for 13.036% of the variance. The items in this factor are linked together because they

reflect the type of information owners can act on. They are largely dependent on others'

opinions to be seen as useful to dog owners.

Table 10.

Factors of Perceived Behavioral Control

	Factor loading	*% of Variance*
Factor 1: Facilities		43.288
Having a dog exercise area nearby	.870	
Location of hotel	.856	
Dog-friendly amenities	.793	
Factor 2: Management		15.106
Dog-friendly policies of hotel	.887	
Fees charged for bringing dog	.885	
Staff attitude toward dogs	.663	
Factor 3: Usage		13.036
Selecting a hotel	.775	
Service dog receives at hotel	.714	
Recommendations for dog-friendly hotels	.568	

ANOVA analysis revealed no significant variance (p < .001) among the desire categories

regarding any PBC items, in any factor. This indicates a feeling among all dog owners that they

have limited control regarding their dog-travel situations.

Research Objective 5: Examine dog owners' desire to travel with their dogs relative to their
Behavioral Intent to travel with their dogs in the future.

Despite stronger-than-ever human-dog relationships, relatively few vacationers are

accompanied by their dogs due to the lack of suitable accommodations (Carr & Cohen, 2009).

Chen, Hung & Peng (2011) found owners that share an "emotional bond with their [dogs] will

be more likely to have an attitude that favo[u]rs taking them along." As demonstrated by

examination of the precedent variables, identifying strong, direct linkage to desire is not so

readily accomplished. Further, a simple bond is not enough to sway dog owners to take their

beloved canines with them. Carr & Cohen's (2009) work found that despite a strong desire to take their dogs with them on holiday, actualization of this desire is low, due in part to lack of suitable accommodations. Empirical examination between desire to travel with one's dog and behavioral intent to do so using the MGB has not previously been undertaken. Correlation analysis was conducted to understand the relationship between desire and BI. All desire items had a positive relationship (significant at the .001 level) with average BI scores (Table 11). Correlation scores ranged from .458 (Taking dog is essential) to .627 (Taking dog is wanted). This reflects moderate strength across all items. Further, a regression analysis demonstrates the desire items together are able to predict 42.9% of BI variance. Additional regression indicates that the item, Taking dog is wanted item (Beta = .627) is the strongest predictor of BI, able to predict 39.0% of the variance in BI. This is not surprising, as the term "wanted" is a direct statement of "desire."

When further examined, using the desire level segmentation of dog owners, practical differences emerge (F = 69.388, p < .001). This is because dog owners who report stronger desire to take their dogs with them are more likely to intend to carry out those desires when planning their next vacations. Owners who experience a low desire are unlikely to consider their dogs during leisure planning.

Table 11.

Bi-variate Relationship Between Behavioral Intent and Desire

	Pearson Correlation	Significance
Important	.626	.000
Interesting	.596	.000
Means a lot to me	.616	.000
Valuable	.543	.000
Beneficial	.609	.000
Relevant	.560	.000
Exciting	.529	.000
Appealing	.598	.000
Essential	.458	.000
Something I want	.627	.000

Research Objective 6: Examine the relationship between owners' past travel behavior and
a) their desire to travel with their dogs and
b) their intent to travel with their dogs in the future.

As the human-dog relationship has become stronger, consumers seek ways to express

this bond (Hill, Gains & Wilson, 2008). However, these family members are largely relegated to

possessions when the human family departs for vacation (Hung, Chen & Peng, 2011). A look at

past behavior can offer insight into desire to travel with one's dogs. Most (52%) owners

reported taking their dogs with them some of the time or most of the time. Correlation analysis

was conducted to understand the relationship between PB and desire as well as PB and BI

(Figure 4). Average desire scores have a strong, positive relationship (significant at the .001

level) with average BI (ρ = .643). It is more likely that high desire owners would have taken their

dogs on previous leisure travels than low desire owners. The high desire segment was

comprised of 66.8% of study participants. Correlation analysis was also conducted to examine

the relationship between PB and BI. Average PB scores have a strong, positive relationship

(significant at the .001 level) with average BI (ρ = .731). Among all desire segments, 70.9%

intend to take their dog with them for leisure travel at least some of the time.
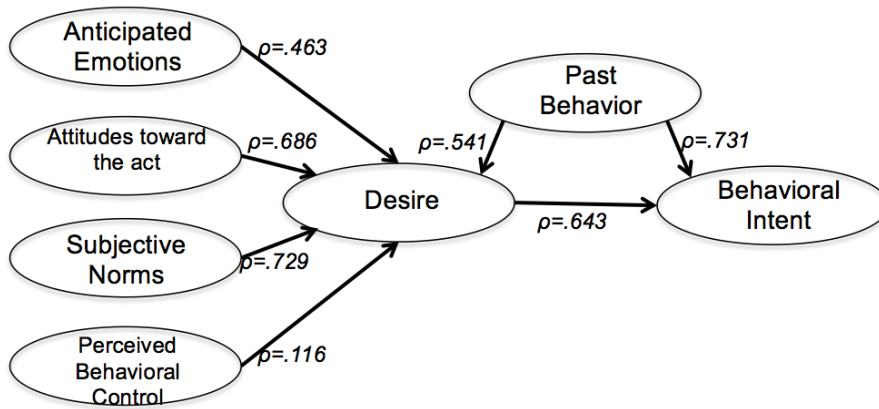

Figure 4. Relationships between study variables

Regression analysis demonstrated that desire and PB together are able to account for

62.5% of BI variance (Table 12). ANOVA indicated statistical differences (at the .001 level)

among the desire segments regarding both PB (F = 37.542) and BI (F = 56.785).

Table 12.

Predictive Relationships Between Behavioral Intent and Desire and Past Behavior

Statistics	Desire	Past Behavior
Beta	.770	.133
Correlation Significance	.000	.000
Adjusted R square = .625		
Regression Significance p = .000		

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The findings of this study are limited, given the small sample size. However, they do describe a segment of dog owners and the relationships between the precedent variables and desire and between desire, PB and BI. Results identify the key factors of precedent variables acting on desire as well as predictors leading to desire and BI. Findings from this study contribute to the body of knowledge on the topic and provide useful information to managers within the hospitality industry.

5.2 Profiling Dog Owners

This study provided a profile of participating dog owners beyond basic demographic information. While it is true that basic demographics (age, race, income, gender) offer insight into the surface-level composition, this study also added a level of demographic activity by including social media participation. Unsurprisingly, study participants are active users of social media. The very sampling method recruited dog owners known through social media networks. Everyday conversations and interactions in are important to marketing, (Carl, 2006). Social media is a valid and oft-used electronic method of word of mouth marketing campaigns (Litvin Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). The data gathered indicates that three of the top seven social media topics are directly relevant to owners traveling with dogs: Animals/Pets, Hobbies and Travel. These are among the most commonly discussed subjects and indicate that dog owners talk about things that directly affect them, including travel. Information is shared most greatly

among friends and these relationships likely impact one another's SNs. It is also an indication that SNs are formed and internalized among communities which may be geographically separated, but able to exchange ideas and values through social media.

5.3 Understanding Desire

This study reaffirmed the usefulness of the MGB, showing that the precedent variables to desire as well as PB. However, it was noticed that PBC has the weakest correlation and was not shown to reflect differences among the desire level segments. This is an interesting result, indicating that PBC is a more complex variable than first thought. It was expected that desire segmentation would differ amongst demographic components, particularly income and age. However, none were noted, owing perhaps to the large number of high desire participants. Given the wide variety in hotel availability, policies and fees as well as the logistical implications of traveling with a dog, it is recommended that future research examine PBC more closely. It is unsurprising that desire and BI are positively correlated based on previous work in other studies, (Perugini & Bagozzi, Chen, 2011; Hung, 2012; Zaichowsky, 1985; Smeaton et al., 1998; Josiam et al., 2004). Desire is a reliable predictor of intent. In this regard it may be interesting to examine whether PBC could be a moderating variable between desire and BI.

5.4 Looking Back to Look Forward

Consistent with the TPB and MGB, dog owners' past behavior is positively correlated to both desire and BI. Owners who have taken their dogs with them before are more likely to want to do so again, and they intend to do so. This may be due to the familiarity inherent in having done an activity before. They have gotten past the first-time jitters or worked through planning

shortfalls to arrive at the conclusion that taking their dogs met their personal goals to a level of satisfaction that repeating the act is deemed worthwhile. It would be interesting to examine more closely the types of experiences had by owners who had previously traveled with their dogs. This could provide additional insight into they kinds of practical hurdles and rewards encountered.

5.5 Theoretical Implications and Contributions

The findings of this research seek to advance our knowledge of dog owners' desires and intents in both a theoretical and practical sense. First, this study provides theoretical insight in understanding the AE owners experience as they consider how they feel about their dogs. Additionally, the Aact, SNs and PBC provide a travel framework with which to establish levels of desire for dog-accompanied travel. This resulted in a more complete understanding of the decision-making process, using a solid theoretical foundation. Previous studies have examined pets' influence on owners' lives largely through the ways in which dogs influence self-image and consumer habits. Using TPB (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; (Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011; Hung, Chen & Peng, 2011; Hung Chen & Peng, 2012) the travel desires and intent of dog owners is better understood. Among the limited academic research on pets and hospitality, activities planning is studied within the framework of TPB. It is offered that leisure planning among pet owners follows the planning pattern among families with children due, in large part, to the parent-child relationship reported by pet owners, (Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011). This study acknowledges the role of dogs in their owners lives and provides further insight in understanding how owners with varying human-dog bonds perceive approval or disapproval from others and perceived control regarding accommodations. Additionally, while previous studies focused on the

influence of pets on owners' leisure planning and the constraints limiting pet-accompanied leisure travel, this study expands our understanding of dog owners' perceptions by including of hotel attributes (policies, fees, dog-friendliness) and the perception of control over these items. Extant research explored whether and to what extent owners' desires to include their dogs in vacation plans were fulfilled as well as the constraints that prevented fulfillment (Carr & Cohen, 2009).

Furthermore, this study adds to the very limited academic research on dogs as co-consumers in the hospitality industry. While not directly making purchase decisions, dogs have become extensions of their owners (Mosteller, 2008). This partnership has yet to receive research attention as a target market group of significance within hospitality (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Chen, Hun & Peng, 2011). In Carr & Cohen's 2009 study, respondents evaluated the ease of traveling with dogs to various types of accommodations but no specifics are included as to the subjective norm represented by the qualities of the amenities themselves. This study sheds light on the people, experiences and hotels influencing dog owners' desires.

Finally, while this study employed sample population surveying, as did previous research (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Chen, Hung & Peng, 2011; Hung Chen & Peng, 2012; Dotson, Hyatt & Clark, 2010), this study incorporated the constructs using MGB. Furthermore, each previous study addressed a decidedly unique set of relationships. While the concept of dogs on vacation with owners is the common theme, so little has been systematically researched that no history of the topic has emerged. Virtually each study on the subject could be viewed in an exploratory light. This study continued that trajectory, extending the application of TPB and implementing MGB.

5.6 Managerial Implications and Contributions

This study provides valuable insights that hoteliers, travel agents and peripheral leisure service providers can use to develop their business concepts and marketing activities. The dog owning market segment has been under-examined. This study demonstrates that dog owners' desire to include their dogs when the situational considerations favor doing so. Marketers could conceivably present hotel dog-friendliness culture as an amenity as the study reveals that more open dog policies were perceived favorably and increased the desire to patronize those businesses. Participants indicated that they discuss their travel desires, intents and experiences via social media. Proprietors would be wise to actively engage with these consumers regarding dog-friendly offerings. Hotels and related businesses can use this information to assess their offerings and make adjustments to policies, practices and marketing. Dog owners routinely refer to the key components of service quality on accommodation reviews such as TripAdvisor.com. Alternately positive and negative, most reviewers are on either end of the satisfaction spectrum. Additionally, information sharing within social media dog communities and personal networks influences decisions about including a dog and determining which businesses to patronize. Hotels seeking business from the growing dog-owning market segment should carefully weigh the variables when developing their dog policies. Hotels should also bear in mind that dog owners discuss travel on social with other dog owners. Experiences are shared and many owners are familiar with hotels that suit their needs. Organizations can leverage this information to participate in the dialogue rather than existing as passive providers.

Peripheral businesses in the neighborhood of dog-friendly hotels also stand to gain better understanding as a result of this research. Restaurants and retailers near more dog-friendly hotels may consider allowing pet dog into areas, as permitted by local ordinances or including dog-related products. In this way, a business partnership potential may be developed thereby creating a more dog-friendly community and loyal customers.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

The dearth of historical research on the topic has forced contemporary examinations to remain exploratory. A great number of variables exists among the many relationships and constructs within the realm of vacationing dog owners' desire to incorporate their dogs. The surveys collected by previous researchers offer insight, but it remains difficult to gather full-picture information without conducting very large focus group research. As such, it was necessary to limit this initial look into the subject to a handful of variables that follow a well-established TPB and respected MGB. Even so, the amount of previously unknown relationships means that additional studies should be conducted to validate the findings of this study. The limited scope also precluded examination of outcome behavior, the intricacies of social media usage and the effect of price as a marketing influence.

This study examined desire and BI data from respondents who had been identified as dog owners by other known dog owners. This purposive sampling method inherently omitted data gathering from owners outside these networks. It was determined that medium and high desire owners are not only more interested in the topic, but also are more likely to have had some experience personally considering dog inclusion while vacationing. Future studies should aim for larger sample sizes, across a greater diversity of demographics. The great

preponderance of dog owners in this study was comprised of educated, white, middle-class women. This is likely a function of the social media sampling method. People generally share social connections with others who share similar backgrounds. The survey experienced a 40% survey abandonment rate. It is believed that this was due to the format offering less-than-friendly viewing on mobile devices, which are increasingly popular way to access the Internet. Future researchers (of this an other subjects) should consider seeking mobile friendly survey platforms.

5.7 Recommendation for Future Studies

In addition to replication of these findings, it is suggested that closer examination of the main constructs to provide more granularity of information. Specifically, dog owner PBC appears to have a more complex relationship with desire than the MGB allows. The results of this study indicate that PBC may be acting as a barrier to desire. A further suggestion for examination is the exploration of the business-level decision-making process and practices among hotel companies. This would require access to secondary data from willing participants representing the hospitality industry. Once that is accomplished, it would be interesting to investigate the plausibility of establishing a standardized rating system for dog-friendliness. This would allow owners greater ability to evaluate accommodations in preparation for their vacations. Research on the use of dog boarding facilities as compared to use of dog-friendly accommodations among high desire level dog owners may also shed light on the nature of dog owners' desires, given specific leisure travel destinations. The growing availability of high-quality boarding facilities (APPA, 2012) may be influencing the perceived importance of dog-friendly hotel policies. Clearly, exploration of this subject remains in its infancy and calls to mind

more questions than it is able to answer. Separate examination of similar profile, low-desire

owners could provide another perspective by which to differentiate all aspects of the MGB in

this application.

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