

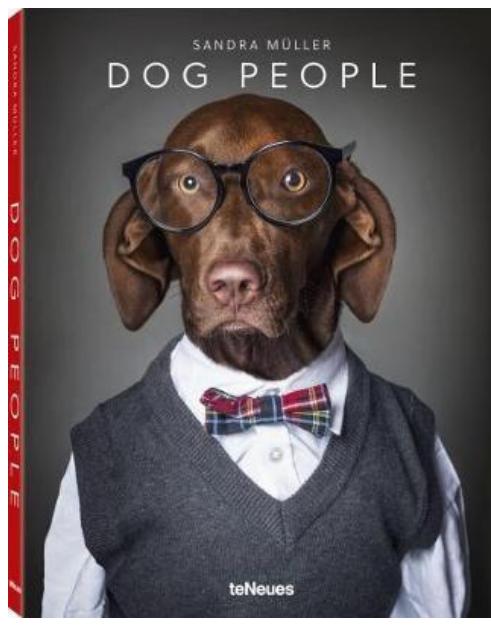
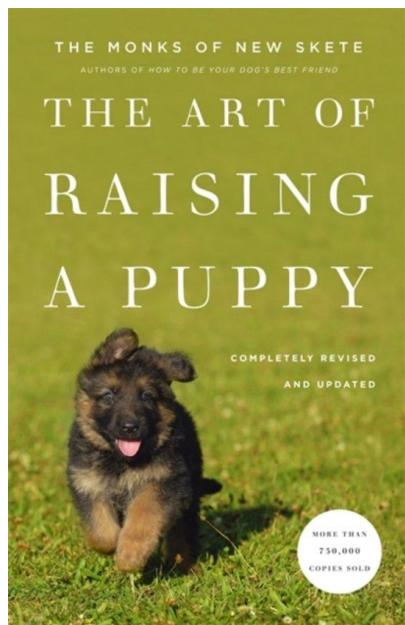
# Research Journal Design Ethnography

Ruben de Zwart  
14138638

## Dog owners



Assignment Research for Design  
Bachelor program User Experience Design, The Hague University of Applied Sciences



# 1 Orientation: exploring the subculture

## What I know (perform desk research)

Dog owners have to take good care of their dog. Dogs need a lot of attention. They also give a lot of attention. Thus, dog owners receive a lot of love from their dog and this makes them generally happier than the average human, especially compared to those without a pet/relationship partner.

They also need to walk their dog more than once per day and this takes time, but it also makes sure they get outside more. Being outside brings benefits<sup>1</sup>.

I can imagine they are generally not in a hurry when they walk their dog. This means they enjoy being outside for a walk everyday at least twice. I can imagine this is good for their inner peace<sup>2</sup>. It might also give them a lot of opportunity to let their mind get very creative as the human brain happily generates a lot of thoughts when walking relaxed/moving. Especially when it is in a familiar environment. It's like standing in the shower/sitting on toilet but better because of the walking/moving<sup>3</sup>.

Dog owners are responsible<sup>4</sup> because they are taking care of an animal.

## Reflection

Dog owners are responsible and invest a lot of time in taking care of their dog(s). They get a lot of positive attention from their dog(s) from this in return. This generally makes them more healthy and happy.

## What I assume

Dog owners are probably social people. Most of them like to chat. It's like how smoking people behave (forming groups to talk) but healthy and a little more private (smaller groups). They like to pet their dog(s), so they are probably the type that like to cuddle/touch. They are open to make new connections/friends easily.

## What I am curious about

What about the introvert type of dog owner? I can imagine some dog owners prefer the company of their dog/friend over the company of a human.

Are dog owners more creative than average?

Are dog owners more healthy than average?

Have dog owners an increased empathy?

How does it show that dog owners are social?

## What I did this week

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2019/08/23/dog-owners-slimmer-fitter-earn-study-shows/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://mentalfloss.com/article/51153/10-benefits-being-dog-owner>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.scsnationals.org/the-human-body-is-meant-to-move/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/getting-a-dog-or-puppy/are-you-ready-for-a-dog/dos-and-donts-of-dog-ownership/>

<b>activity</b>	<b>results, relevance, impact</b>	<b>hours spent</b>
Desk research, locating sources	Internet adds knowledge to my assumptions	2
Digesting and interpreting information	Summarizing the information I found	2
Present information in research journal	What is useful from my summary? Added that to journal in a short story form in my own words.	1
Read chapter interviewing	Different ways & timing to ask a question and other useful interviewing tips acquired.	1

## 2 Getting to know the people: basic interviewing

### Interview schedule first interview

#### Introduction

Hey I'm Ruben.

I'm doing a research about dog owners for my school project.

I would like to interview you.

All information will be anonymously and you can leave at any point during the interview.

Do you have 10 minutes of your time for me?

Do you have any questions?

All right let's start :)

#### Questions

What is the name of your dog?

How did you get your dog?

Why did you get the dog?

What role plays your dog in your family?

Can you tell me in detail how you experience having a dog?

#### Closure

All right we've come to the end of the interview. Do you have any questions?

Do I still have your permission to use our conversation anonymously for my school assignment?

I would like to thank you!

Have a nice day, bye.

#### Examples of follow up questions

What is the story behind the name of the dog?

Is this your first dog? Have you had experience with dogs before?

When did you start wanting to get a dog?

Are other people also taking care of your dog (sometimes)?

What does the dog mean for all other people that interact with him?

How do you take care of your dog?

How do you spend time with your dog?

What do you do with your dog, besides taking care of him?

### Preparation/plan of interview

- Bring a phone to record audio.
- Location: in a park where dog owners occasionally let out their dogs.
- Walking around in the park while doing the interview; this creates a relaxed setting and the dog owners are used to this, it is their natural environment/habit(at).
- Bring my questions on a sheet of paper, like a note block.
- Good weather will increase my audio quality and odds of convincing a stranger to talk to me for at least 10 minutes.
- Conduct interview during day time while it is not (yet) dark outside; further increasing my odds.

START

greet

interview for school

ANON: mous & can leave ANY time

10 minutes

ANY Questions?

Questions

NAME of Dog?

How Did you get THE Dog?

Why Did you get A Dog?

WHAT Role plays Dog in your Family?

CAN you Tell me in Detail:

How Do you Experience HAVING A Dog?

-Understand and memorise the structure of an interview by using the hand-out from class.

observation sheet for interviews	
	quotes / remarks
<b>1. start of the interview</b>	welcome mention of objective of the interview how long, registration orientation – putting the participant at ease
<b>2. listening attitude</b>	eye contact body language tone of voice, inviting active listening
<b>3. asking questions</b>	use of schedule open questions fixed questions with suggestive effect (leading question) follow up questions clarity of questions reactivity – letting the participant lead.  Repeat their ANSWERS
<b>4. naming and summarizing</b>	naming content (repeating) - clarification naming non-verbal communication (posture, gestures, gaze) naming feelings naming thoughts  Shows you ARE involved
<b>5. structuring</b>	pauses focus on topic, objective in mind phases in the interview conclusion of topics with summary checking conclusions with the participant
<b>6. closure</b>	elegant ending room for last remarks acknowledgement

**Transcript first interview**

**Link to audio:**

<https://voca.ro/mxynsqtsRa4>

Hallo excuse me madam, can I ask you something?

Hi mi name is Ruben, I am a student from a school and I would like to interview you for a school research.

It has to be in English?

Yes.

Haha because that's the case.

Yeah, it has to be in English unfortunately, so maybe you are interested. It will be anonymously and you can leave at any time if you want.

It's okay .

And we can walk if you want.

Yeah, it's okay, this way?

Yeah sure. Okay so, I have to ask interviews about -

What, about, your school project?

Yes.

Wat is je vak in het engels?

User Experience Design. It's about being a designer for the best user experience. So, for a target audience, we have to figure out: what does the user want and what do they need. And Design-

I know, my son is studying industrial design.

Oh! That's very nice! In TU Delft?

Yes

Nice

And he is very interested in, how do you call, it has to be also user design but the.. Het heeft een naam in het engels.

Industrial product design.

Nee nee nee nee. Nee, ik bedoel ff in het nederlands hij is geïnteresseerd in daar gaat hij ook wel uiteindelijk zijn master in doen.

Ja.

Hij heeft een app voor de gezondheidszorg bijvoorbeeld he.

Ja?

Nou dan gaan het bijvoorbeeld over de. Want hij zit meer in die. Hij vind dat meer artificial environment.  
En dan gaat het over, of hoe optimaal is het gebruikersconform voor de gebruiker.

Ja dat heeft een naam. Dus je hebt een app en die benader jij? Weet je wat ik bedoel?

**Ja, ik weet wat u bedoelt.**

Je mag wel je zeggen hoor.

**Okay.**

Maar daar gaat dit dus niet over.

**Nee. My research is about dog owners. I have to get to know the user, because I don't know much about you. Because, I've never been a dog owner myself.**

Okay.

**So I have some questions about the user group. What kind of dog is this?**

This is a Labrador.

**Okay, This is yours?**

Yes it's mine.

**Okay. Can I know the name of the dog?**

Guusje, haha.

**Oh that's very nice! How did you think of that name?**

Because first we want to have a.. This is a female. We want to have a male. And his name zou geweest zijn-

**Would have been Guusje?**

Would have been Guus!

**If it was a male?**

So but at the last moment we changed the gender, hoe zeg je dat?

**Gender.**

Ja gender. because they have another behaviour.

**Okay and how did you get Guusje?**

Haha dat zijn allemaal van die engelse namen!

**Do you remember?**

Ja, ja!

**Was it a long time ago?**

9 years.

Ja? Oh that's long!

I search on internet for, ja wat is een Fokker in het engels ook alweer?

A breeder, dog breeder?

Ja want ras is breed.

Ja.

Ja and the difficulty with Labradors is you have to have a good Fokker.

Because you have a breed with open hips and bones.

So, when you have found one you have contact with but first you want to meet the Fokker.

Haha i don't know any names.

Yeah it's alright if you use the Dutch name.

So you are looking for trust.

Yeah?

you want to have a good Fokker.

Yes.

So if the feeling is okay,

he has a good story.

And his behaviour with de nesten, hoe zeg je dat? Wat voor nest? Is een nest ook een nest?

Ja.

So through internet.

So 9 years ago Wow.

Guus! Guus kom! Kom hier! Die mag geen eendenpoep eten.

Can you tell me, why did you get a dog?

Why? Because I..

I had a trauma.

I had a fall on the ice.

Ja?

So I had a big..

Concussion?

Ja? Hersenschudding.

So I couldn't function. Functioneren.

Ja ja function.

Function. I was only laying on the couch. Very very very tired and afterwards we take it off something, hoe zeg je dat, iets blij's. Something..

Something happy!

Happy in the house. Something goal. New goal. Because you have to educate the dog.

Ja?

Because ja normally they are a lot. Hoe zeg je dat.

After an accident, there is a lot of sad times. Sad things.

Also but normally when you think about the dog you think I don't have any.. I don't have time. It cost a lot of my.. You have.. Hoe zeg je bezwaar? Er zijn altijd bezwaren om het niet te doen snap je.

Ja. Because you had the time anyways.

Yeah! Yeah that's..

All right! That's something positive, after something negative.

Yeah

That's interesting! Can you tell me what role does the dog play in your family?

It's a big part of the family. It's not like a child but. Nou hoe zeg je dat. Nou dingen draaien om ons met zijn allen.

That's very nice to hear. All right can you tell me in detail how you experience having a dog?

Okay I can because now she is 9 and always something on your mind is when what will happen when she will die.

Ja.

Because now you experience about the dog it's very nice. You have a structure in your day. You have a lot of pleasure with her. You always go outside, even if it rains or.. the weather is no issue. BUT now my family has changed because 2 sons are studying and now living.

Ja? Abroad, out of the house. Oh no not abroad, it is in the same country, not in the house anymore.

Ja and my husband stays for 3,4 days in Friesland for his work so it's only me and a little bit of (?) to go out with her. And then now when she was the first one two years it's very heavy.

Ja.

Because this bred is, she is strong. She don't listen.

A little rebel!

Yeah! Yeah yeah really! Now it's a completely different dog!

Ok? Oh really?

Yeah! Completely different. Now she is ja hoe zeg je dat een engeltje een angel. Only when the food is in het spel she will not listen but normally. Ze gaat waar ik ga.

**She listens very well except when it comes to food**

Yeah so also the education.

Okay.

Yeah.

**Did it feel like her personality changed? After her first 2 years, because first she was a rebel, then not, or did her behaviour become better**

No no they are.. They are adult after 3 years, so then their brains are developed. Ze zijn in staat om tot mij te richten. Normaal als ze pup zijn, kinderen zijn ook overal mee bezig behalve met jou. En om het te trainen zodat ze op jou gericht zijn net als jij, jij focust, je concentreert je op mij

**Ja**

Nou dat kunnen ze helemaal niet als ze jong zijn,  
dus ik snap ook wel waar het vandaan komt  
ondertussen is het super zwaar. Sterk.  
Dus daar zit je dan met zo'n recalcitrant ding dat alle kanten op gaat.

**They have a lot of energy. Yeah I love that.**

Ja. Ja. So maybe this was my first dog so maybe when I have another one, I have experience. So...

**Allright!**

Yeah.

**Well. I think our 10 minutes are done. So I would like to thank you a lot.**

Voor welk vak is dit nou?

**I have to learn how to interview people for research and design.**

Ja maar, en welke opleiding?

**Voor user experience design.**

Op de HBO?

**Ja. Haagse Hogeschool.**

Het gaat dus echt over interview. Ohja.

**Yeah because I have to find out what the user wants. Later I have to design a website, so that the user for the website can find everything very fast.**

Ohja dat is een hele goeie.

Ja so for this interview I would like to thank you and ask your permission again if I can use this interview for my school research.

Jaja you don't know my name so it's okay.

Okay thank you.

Nou success nog!

Do you have any questions ?

Ik vroeg me af, ff in het nederlands.

Ja?

Heb je doorgevraagd? Want jij stelde een vraag, en daar gaf ik een antwoord op, heb je toen doorgevraagd, was dat nodig?

Een heel klein beetje maar.

Ja want dat zit namelijk in een interview he dat je dus. Kijk als het goed is heeft iedereen een eigen reden waarom je een hond neemt. (?) Misschien gaf ik het antwoord al. Maar ik weet niet of dat interessant is voor jou.

Ja ja zeker! Maar u sprak wel heel veel, dat vond ik heel fijn. Dat is mij ook geleerd, van je moet vooral veel je mond houden en de interviewer laten praten.

Ja dat klopt maar als je de interviewer geinterviewd hebt heb je niet zo veel gesprek.

Ja dat klopt, maar ik heb ook weer geleerd dat vrouwen veel meer praten dan mannen of veel meer woorden gebruiken dus ik dacht ik ga een vrouw aanspreken.

Ja en voorbeelden!

Voorbeelden?

Ja ik gebruik altijd voorbeelden, van ja net gras toen ik klein was en een man zegt gewoon van: aja nee ze is nu gewoon volwassen en ze luistert.

He heel erg bedankt!

He succes nog!

En nog een fijne dag!

Hoi!

## **Methodological learnings**

Copy three examples from the transcript, where you did well as an interviewer. Add an explanation

Copy three examples from the interview, where could have done better. Add an explanation.

### **Good interview skills**

#### **Example 1**

**Maar daar gaat dit dus niet over.**

**Nee. My research is about dog owners. I have to get to know the user, because I don't know much about you. Because, I've never been a dog owner myself.**

**Okay.**

**So I have some questions about the user group. What kind of dog is this?**

#### **Explanation**

As soon as I got the chance, I steered the interview back in the right direction on topic again.

#### **Example 2**

**Haha i don't know any names.**

**Yeah it's alright if you use the Dutch name.**

#### **Explanation**

Direct language question.

#### **Example 3**

**Did it feel like her personality changed? After her first 2 years, because first she was a rebel, then not, or did her behaviour become better**

#### **Explanation**

I summarized a bit which was at a good point in the interview to make my question very clear, and made me sure I understood her story so far.

## **Interview skills need improvement**

### **Example 1**

In page 1/6 of the transcript: the start of the interview.

**Yeah sure. Okay so, I have to ask interviews about -  
What, about, your school project?**

### **Explanation**

After the start, the interview is first being led away off-topic. The woman I was interviewing took a bit of control instead. This was kinda okay because the start of the interview end with "Do you have any questions before we start?" But I should still remain in full control as the one conducting the interview. And I wasn't because she interrupted me mid sentence.

### **Example 2**

**Because first we want to have a.. This is a female. We want to have a male. And his name zou geweest zijn-**

**Would have been Guusje?**

**Would have been Guus!**

### **Explanation**

I interrupted her here. It felt very natural, but I still should try to never do this. She wasn't bothered by this and immediately continued because my guess was in the right direction.

### **Example 3**

**Heb je doorgevraagd? Want jij stelde een vraag, en daar gaf ik een antwoord op,  
heb je toen doorgevraagd, was dat nodig?**

**Een heel klein beetje maar.**

**Ja want dat zit namelijk in een interview he dat je dus. Kijk als het goed is heeft iedereen een eigen reden waarom je een hond neemt. (?) Misschien gaf ik het antwoord al. Maar ik weet niet of dat interessant is voor jou.**

**Ja ja zeker! Maar u sprak wel heel veel, dat vond ik heel fijn. Dat is mij ook geleerd, van je moet vooral veel je mond houden en de interviewer laten praten.**

**Ja dat klopt maar als je de interviewer geinterviewd hebt heb je niet zo veel gesprek.**

**Ja dat klopt, maar ik heb ook weer geleerd dat vrouwen veel meer praten dan mannen of veel meer woorden gebruiken dus ik dacht ik ga een vrouw aanspreken.**

### **Explanation**

I say a lot of unnecessary things here that are not very professional. Even if it's at the end so it doesn't influence the answering of the core questions anymore, I should not do this again.

## Learnings about the subculture

### excerpt 1

**So but at the last moment we changed the gender, hoe zeg je dat?**

**Gender.**

**Ja gender. because they have another behaviour.**

### Explanation

Dog owners may know that dogs have different behaviour based on their gender. The dog owners may base their decision between getting a certain gender of dog based on this.

This is important information because it shows that dog owners are empathetic and responsible people for taking this into account before they make their choice.

### excerpt 2

**Ja and the difficulty with Labradors is you have to have a good Fokker.**

**Because you have a breed with open hips and bones.**

**So, when you have found one you have contact with but first you want to meet the Fokker.**

**Haha i don't know any names.**

**Yeah it's alright if you use the Dutch name.**

**So you are looking for trust.**

**Yeah?**

**you want to have a good Fokker.**

**Yes.**

**So if the feeling is okay,**

**he has a good story.**

**And his behaviour with de nesten**

### Explanation

Dog owners sometime put quite some effort into choosing/buying a dog. It starts with choosing what breed of dog they want, but it doesn't end there. They then have to find a (good) Fokker who sells one of those dogs from that breed.

This is important information because it again shows all the effort dog owners are consciously taking/making before getting a dog, showing they are responsible people.

### excerpt 3

**Can you tell me, why did you get a dog?**

Why? Because I..

I had a trauma.

I had a fall on the ice.

Ja?

So I had a big..

**Concussion?**

Ja? Hersenschudding.

So I couldn't function. Functioneren.

**Ja ja function.**

Function. I was only laying on the couch. Very very very tired and afterwards we take it off something, hoe zeg je dat, iets blij's. Something..

**Something happy!**

Happy in the house. Something goal. New goal. Because you have to educate the dog.

Ja?

Because ja normally they are a lot. Hoe zeg je dat.

**After an accident, there is a lot of sad times. Sad things.**

Also but normally when you think about the dog you think I don't have any.. I don't have time. It cost a lot of my.. You have.. Hoe zeg je bezwaar? Er zijn altijd bezwaren om het niet te doen snap je.

### Explanation

This is a very personal reason why this dog owner got a dog. She didn't have time for a dog at first. But after an accident she was wasting her time and needed a new goal in her life, so she took care of a dog.

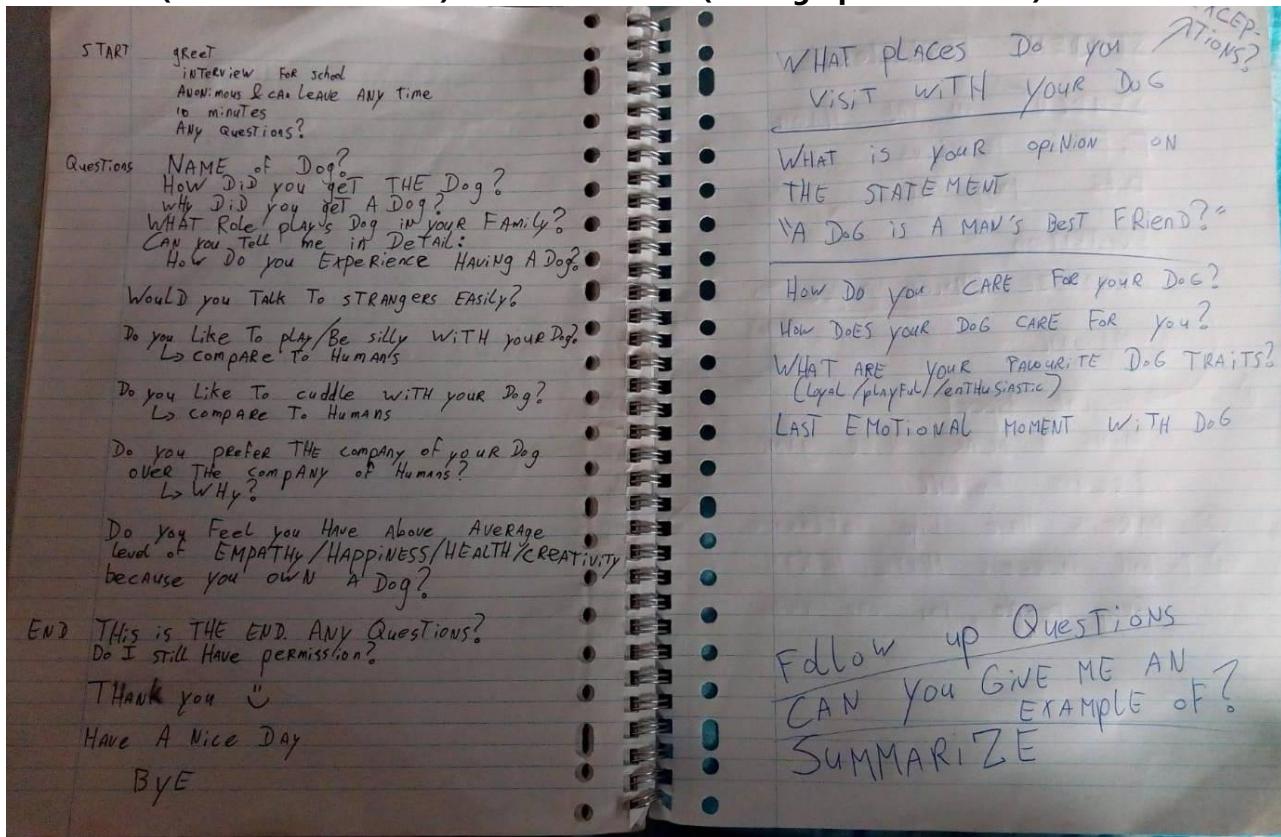
This is important information because it gives insight to how a reason for getting a dog can be very personal, and what kind of impact this life changing decision, of getting a dog, can have.

## What I did this week

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Preparing first interview	Made template of 10-minute-interview	1
Conducting first interview	Some failed attempts, with good weather finally found someone. Got Audio of interview now.	Lost count
Making transcript	Written interview on screen now so I can analyze it better.	3
Interpreting transcript	Good & bad points in the interview and things I learned from the user group.	2
Present information in research journal	Written those useful things short and powerful. I have a nice overview of them now.	1

### 3 Getting to know the people: ethnographic interviewing and observation

#### Protocol (interview schedules) second interview (ethnographic interview)



For the ethnographic interview, I started with my first interview as a base and expanded from there. I added more questions

#### IN-DEPTH QUESTIONS:

- Would you say you talk to strangers easily?
- Do you like to play/be silly with your dog? What about playing with humans?
- Do you like to cuddle your dog? How about cuddling/ touching humans?
- Do you prefer the company of your dog over the company of humans? Why?
- Do you feel you have a higher level of empathy/happiness/health/creativity because of owning a dog?
- What's the difference in raising a dog compared to a human child?
- What places do you visit with your dog? Any exceptions?
- What is your opinion on the statement: "A dog is a man's best friend"?
- How do you take care of your dog?
- How does your dog care for you?
- What are your favourite dog traits?
- Can you tell me about the last emotional moment you had with your dog?

I had a lot of trouble to find a stranger willing to take a 30 minute interview, and days were getting shorter and colder. I really wanted to interview someone that I didn't know already, as this would be the case later when I have to conduct research when I have a real job.

I ended up asking my contacts if they knew English speaking dog owners. My brother knew a lady living in his street that he occasionally bumped in when going outside to the supermarket and set up a meeting to walk with her while she would take out her dogs. She works as a flight attendant on long international flights and therefore speaks good English.

So I could finally have a 30 minute interview with someone I had never met before.

## Methodological learnings

Link to audio: <https://voca.ro/59yyxDsmeyj> English starts at 1:25

### Good interview skills ethnographic interviewing

#### Example 1

12:30-12:44

(Example question) Would you say because you are so social, because you meet so many other dog owners, that you are very social in general, that you can easily approach strangers? (looking at her asking for examples)

#### Explanation

Very good follow up question based on her previous answer. And I got a very nice answer about dogs also being used as help-dogs to make socially awkward children/ children with disabilities more social or to help war veterans with psychological problems. Dogs are a very big social aspect in their life. It makes them go outside where they meet other people.

#### Example 2

(Hypothetical Interaction Question) 27:30-28:00 Do you sometimes talk to your dogs (looking at her with question in my eyes: how?)

#### Explanation

The answer was yes, all the time. It's almost the same way you treat a small human child. Knowing that this is almost no difference is like knowing that the dog owners take care of a small child.

## Learnings about the subculture

### excerpt 1

8:00-8:12 It's really important that you are the boss of the dogs.

#### Explanation

You are their caretaker, and the one in charge. Always. Otherwise the dogs take over the power, and this could result in them getting aggressive.

This is about the relation between dog owner and their dog. They are like best friends, but they are not equal.

Some breeds are quite calm but in general this is applied to all dog owners.

So, dog owners have to take/be in charge.

**excerpt 2**

9:30-10:06 Starting your day with taking care of your dog by walking them outside is a very good start of the day. Always. It gives a lot of energy.  
11:50-12:07 it keeps you busy every day, I walk at least 1,5 hour a day.

**Explanation**

This lets dog owners feel much better in general. This walking activates the body, which is good for both the physical and mental health.

**excerpt 3**

10.40-11.00 Got a lot of friends by walking my dogs. It's a big part of my social life.  
19.33-19.53 when you are alone and you get a dog, you are getting to know a lot of people and it's good for your social life.

**Explanation**

Dog owners are much more social compared to non-dog owners, because of meeting so many people while walking their dogs every day. Many dog owners encounter multiple other dog owners so many times that they become friends over time. This happens naturally. They are used to engaging in conversation while walking their dog, especially with other dog owners. They at least greet each other and it is very common that they make a small talk when too. This happening at a daily basis expands their social network between dog owners quite rapidly at start and quite big overtime. The dogs also know and recognize other dogs and become more social towards each other.

**excerpt 4**

28:15-29:20 they sense everything. I am going on winter sport and the dog already sees that I am going and he thinks "Oh my god" because he knows what is coming, that I will be away for some time and he is really sad about it.

**Explanation**

Dog owners know that their dogs are smart to understand some complex situations/context. Also, when the dog owner is scared, the dog also starts to show scared behaviour. That the dog owners notice this about their dog, shows that they have a high level of empathy. (understanding animal behaviour).

## **Visiting people in context, collection of visuals**

I asked myself: where do dog owners go?

I came up with 4 locations: beach, forest, walking their dog outside (in parks) and at the vet (animal doctor). Finding dog owners at the beach and woods at this time of the year might be difficult and make it harder for me to observe them unnoticed, and the vet would be a bit private/personal/awkward. So I choose to visit multiple dog parks at different times of the day (but not while it was dark outside). This is where dog owners go multiple times of each day/week. I will find them there fast and probably encounter multiple dog owners there. I knew of some parks close by where I live that were quite big and even are separated into 2 sections: where dogs are allowed and where dogs are not allowed. I choose to visit those 2 big parks first and see if I encounter any other dog owners along the way going there.

I want to observe how dog owners interact with other dog owners, how they interact with their dogs and what they do in general besides walking.

I will try to do this unnoticed like a fly on the wall but might also engage into a little chat with them. I am curious how dog owners will respond if a stranger (me) meets them and straight up gives a compliment about their dog. With non-dog-owners in a shopping mall this would be weird, maybe even unpleasant, and might be ignored. I have a feeling this might go very different and I will probably get a lot of positive responses.

## **Methodological learnings**

Positive response indeed! I got noticed by some of the dog owners (a camera stands out) They all gave me permission to take some pictures in the parks. I encountered a lot of dog owners there and also some on the way. I have enough pictures. I saw some nice acts/behaviour and lots of social interaction. What I didn't like is that I couldn't overhear what the dog owners were talking about with each other.

## Learnings about the subculture



Cleaning up after her dog



Accidentally tripping over his dog



Social life: friends from neighbourhood all talking about one of the dogs.



A dog owner getting touched/playfully bitten by a dog from another dog owner.



A dog owner walking his own dog and 2 other dogs that are from other dog owners.  
(I asked him about it)



An old dog owner, still playing with her dog.  
Using a stick to help throw a ball.



A dog owner touching a dog from another dog owner.



A young dog owner playing with his dog.

## What I did this week

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Making protocol ethnographic interview	Preparation for the interview.	1 hour
Conducting ethnographic interview	Took me a lot longer to find someone for this. But the interview was less than an hour. Got a lot of information from this!	1 hour
Interpreting ethnographic interview	Listening half an hour of audio several times to get all the useful information out of it.	3 hours
Visit to the subculture, capturing visuals	Taking photos at several parks.	3 hours
Interpreting visuals	Ordering 30+ photos and choosing nice ones to show here.	1 hour
Present information in research journal	Interpreting the data was part of this.	Also 3 hours.

## 4 Adding data

### Impression and questions

Question 1: What do dog owners like less about being a dog owner?

Question 2: What do dog owners do when they can't take care of their dogs? If they are ill or on holiday?

Question 3: How do dog owners deal with their dog aging faster than them and probably dying sooner than themselves?

Question 4: To what extend can dogs improve human mental health and how is this done?

### Themes further research (via empirical data and desk research)

For sources, see the links in the RAW DATA

#### **Theme 1: The negative side of being a dog owner.**

##### **Description**

We know people get dogs because it brings lots of benefits like joy and good company. But what are the downsides?

##### **Data**

Financial cost. Buying a dog, its food, toys, supplies and especially visits to the vet are expensive. (Also see sources in the link sources part of the RAW DATA)

Loss of freedom. Having a dog means taking care of a dog. Every day. You need to arrange something like a shelter for your dogs when you go on holiday.

Decreased cleanliness in your home. Like hairs. And dogs can be clumsy and damage your stuff.

If you have friends/visitors with an allergy coming over, it's torture for them. Dogs are not allowed everywhere. Some examples include part of a park. Public spaces like shopping areas (especially inside). A lot of businesses (E.G. some (fancy) restaurants). A lot of shops (E.G. clothe stores). And even public transport. When not allowed inside, dog owners need to let their dog wait outside. (Also see the observation pictures in the RAW DATA)

## **Theme 2: Solutions when dog owners can't take care of their dog for some time.**

### **Description**

Dog owners can get ill, might want to go on a holiday occasionally or need to go on a business trip occasionally. Or maybe they have some really busy periods with work or college. If this results in them not having enough time to take care of their dog, what solution could solve this?

### **Data**

If you can't take your dog with you; you need someone else to take care of your dog. There's 4 options:

- Pet Kennel service. A big company which is like a hotel for pets.
- In-home pet boarding. This is very similar to a kennel service, but at the own home of another pet owner instead of a big company.
- Pet sitting. Hiring another pet owner to visit your house a few times every day to take care of your pet.
- Asking a friend or family member to take care of your pet. Again, this can be done by letting the person visit your house while your pet stays in its own home or letting the pet stay at their place until you are able to take care of your pet again. (Also see the link in the RAW DATA)

## **Theme 3: Dogs are not only good for the physical health, but also the mental health. But how does this work? And how can dogs help humans (heal)?**

### **Description**

Dog owners are generally happier, so having a dog improves your happiness. The statement "A dog is a man's best friend" certainly holds some truth.

### **Data**

Like mentioned before, mental health/happiness is increased by walking, spending more time outside, and simply having the company of a dog. (also interacting with it, like cuddling)

Besides that, I dived a little deeper, and found more info about service dogs<sup>5</sup>:

They are not just there for any physical disability, but also:

- Psychiatric service dogs:

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dogster.com/lifestyle/10-types-of-service-dogs-and-what-they-do>

- Helps with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety.
- Gives a sense of safety.
- Forcing the human to take care of the dog makes them take care of themselves, too.
- When people have had a time of trauma, like: terrorism, abuse, military service, working as a first responder in medical aid and even natural disasters, then these dogs could be helpful.

-Autism support dogs:

- reduces isolation.
- Easier to connect with other people due to functioning as an icebreaker.
- Provides predictability, which is greatly appreciated by some people that have autism.

(Also see the link in the RAW DATA about the TED Talk)

### **What I did this week**

<b>activity</b>	<b>results, relevance, impact</b>	<b>hours spent</b>
Formulation impressions and questions	Created themes to further research to gain an even deeper understanding of what it means for a human to have a dog in their life.	1
Desk research: .....	Found information online to answer my 3 themes.	4,5
Empirical research: .....	Did some observation in my local area (not the parks again, but shopping areas) to take some photos and ask some low key questions.	2,5
Presenting data for three themes in research journal	Did this while doing the desk research. Adding the photos took only a minute and the interviews only confirmed the information I already found online.	0

## 5 User Insights

### User insight 1: Dog owners are very responsible leaders.

Taking care of dogs requires a lot of effort and structure in your life; it brings a big responsibility. It can be compared to taking care of a young child, for 10-15 years. To train/raise the dogs, the dog owners need to be in charge.

#### Data from interviewing

"It's really important that you are the boss of the dogs."

8:00-8:12 *ethnographic interview*.

"Starting your day with taking care of your dog (...)"

9:30-9:40 *ethnographic interview*.

#### Data from observation

This was mostly body language and shouted commands.

"<name of the dog> HIER!" (means 'here')

"ZIT!" (means 'sit')

"AF!" (means 'off')

"NEE!" (means 'no')

Dog owners talk to their dogs as if they are a small child.

#### Data from desk research

<https://pethelpful.com/dogs/The-Advantages-and-Disadvantages-of-Having-a-Dog>

<https://www.yourpurebredpuppy.com/buying/articles/should-you-get-a-dog.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peUVLEUj-AM>

Explained responsibilities and challenges of owning a dog on blogs/videos online.

## **User insight 2: Dog owners are very social people and are part of a big social network of other dog owners in the area where they live.**

Dog owners encounter other dog owners daily when walking their dog. Hence, they know many other dog owners in their area and they interact a lot with them; it is a big part of their social life.

### **Data from interviewing**

"When you are alone and you get a dog, you are getting to know a lot of people" *19:20-19:40 ethnographic interview.*

"Here is my social life"

*19:20-18:40 ethnographic interview.*

### **Data from observation**

See the 30 photos in appendix A.

Dog owners almost always greet each other when they pass each other while walking; they often ask how things are going at the moment, too. While encountering other dog owners in the parks, they often stand together and talk.

### **Data from desk research**

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/having-dogs-is-good-for-your-social-life/>

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/dog-owners-more-social-four-14969167>

Explained benefits of owning a dog on blogs online.

### **User insight 3: Dog owners are both physically and mentally above average healthy. And dogs can be a great help with mental issues.**

Dog owners are more physically active (they need to walk their dog at least twice a day). Due to this, they are physically more healthy compare to average people.

This increased physical health, alongside the aforementioned social impact (see User insight 2) increase the mental health of dog owners, too.

#### **Data from interviewing**

9:30-10:06 Starting your day with taking care of your dog by walking them outside is a very good start of the day. Always. It gives a lot of energy.  
11:50-12:07 it keeps you busy every day, I walk at least 1,5 hours a day.

#### **Data from observation**

See the 30 photos in appendix A.

Not a single dog owner looks grumpy.

All the 55+ dog owners look in good shape.

Some quotes I overheard when dog owners engaged into conversation:

"It's so nice to walk my dog at this time of the day." (translated)

"After my kids moved out I was alone but I'm not alone anymore"

#### **Data from desk research**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service\\_dog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_dog)

<https://www.dogster.com/lifestyle/10-types-of-service-dogs-and-what-they-do>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U\\_nDaGzam0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_nDaGzam0A)

<https://www.nine.com.au/entertainment/viral/how-owning-a-dog-improves-your-physical-and-social-health/dad8d02f-e3c3-4102-9500-671dd1de1544>

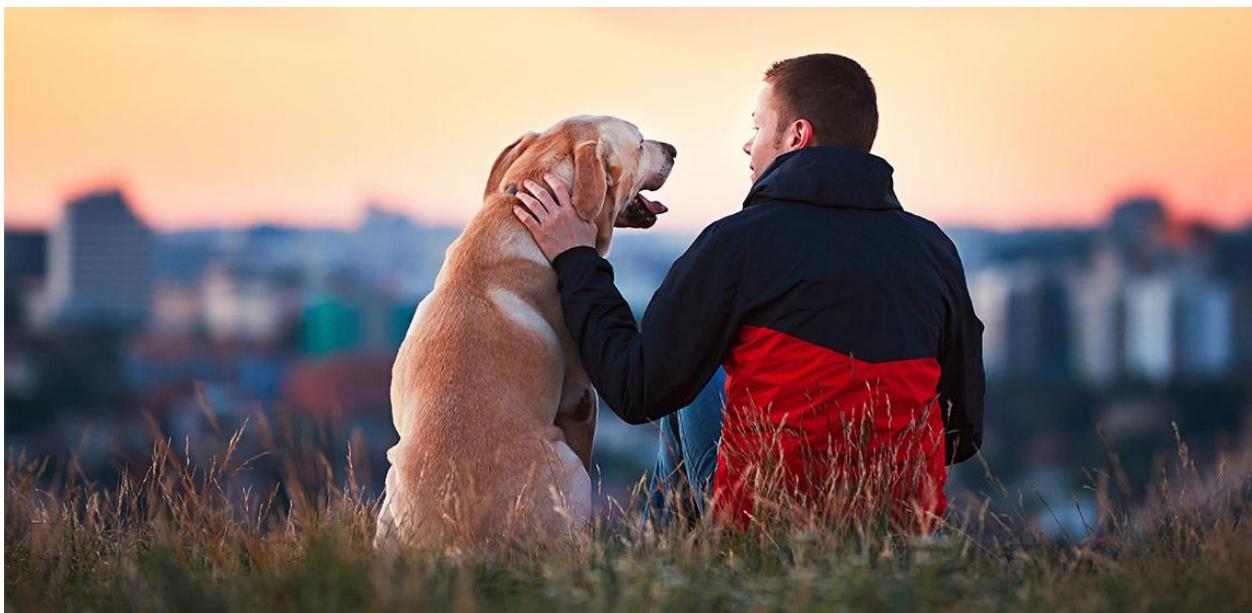
Types of service dogs and their benefits, explained in blogs and videos online.

### **What I did this week**

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Analyze all interview data	Summary about gathered info on dog owners.	2
Analyze all observation data	Summary about gathered info on dog owners.	1
Analyze all desk research data	Summary about gathered info on dog owners.	3
Formulate user insights	User insights.	2

## 6 Ethnographic Description

### The ethnographic description



#### User insights

Responsible/Mentally Strong  
Happy  
Healthy  
Social

#### Goals/ Needs

Have a best friend/emotional support  
Have structure in life  
Receive love  
Give love/take care of someone

#### Strengths

Improved physical health  
Improved mental health  
Leader  
Increased Empathy

#### Frustrations

High costs  
Dog restrictions  
Low life expectancy of dogs  
High effort, especially at start to train

## **Final reflection**

The biggest challenge for me was that I had to interview 2 strangers. I Learned:

- How much effort it can be to find participants, and how connections can really help out here.
- A 10 minute audio transcript is already quite a lot of useful data; more than I had anticipated.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> interview was the big learning point. After the 1<sup>st</sup> one, which was very natural, I really put some effort in how I could expand this to make it 3 times as long.
- Both preparing & conducting the ethnographic interview and analysing the data from it are very useful for my research skills to become a good User Experience Designer.

## **What I did this week**

<b>activity</b>	<b>results, relevance, impact</b>	<b>hours spent</b>
Make the ethnographic description	Ethnographic description made	2
Prepare presentation	Selecting photos, making a PowerPoint, deciding what to tell about my target group, insights and design vision.	2
Complete research journal Final reflection	Wrote final reflection.	1

## Appendix a: Collection of 30 pictures





















ge 43











Research Journal Ruben de Zwart page 48

## Appendix b: Second batch of data (week 5)



<https://pethelpful.com/dogs/The-Advantages-and-Disadvantages-of-Having-a-Dog>

<https://www.yourpurebredpuppy.com/buying/articles/should-you-get-a-dog.html>

[https://m.petmd.com/dog/care/evr\\_multi\\_top\\_pet\\_boarding\\_options](https://m.petmd.com/dog/care/evr_multi_top_pet_boarding_options)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peUVLEUj-AM>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U\\_nDaGzam0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_nDaGzam0A) TED TALK

<https://www.dogster.com/lifestyle/10-types-of-service-dogs-and-what-they-do>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service\\_dog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_dog)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autism\\_service\\_dog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autism_service_dog)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychiatric\\_service\\_dog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychiatric_service_dog)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Therapy\\_dog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Therapy_dog)