

Elena Beuttner

TOURISTS' FRAMING OF POSITIVE ANIMAL WELFARE

The Example of Dog Sledding in Finnish Lapland

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Author: Elena Beuttner

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Abstract

On a global scale, the use of animals in tourism has gotten more and more popular. In Finnish Lapland this trend can also be observed. In 2017 dog sledding replaced snowmobiling as the most popular tourist activity and husky dogs have been identified as the biggest group of animals in Lapland's animal-based tourism industry. With the popularity growth of animal-based tourism, the attention towards ethical treatment of animals in the tourism industry has also increased. In the academic community, the concept of animal welfare is a well-researched one, however, the focus has been largely on eliminating negative experiences for animals. Recently a new concept has emerged, which is that of positive animal welfare. The concept of positive animal welfare has mostly been explored among livestock, farm, or zoo animals, but not yet in the context of animal-based tourism.

The objective of this study is to explore what constitutes positive animal welfare in the minds of tourists who have participated in animal-based tourism activities, using the example of dog sledding in Finnish Lapland. In other words, the aim is to find out if tourists are familiar with the term positive animal welfare, what they think it means, what they think it entails, what kind of associations they have with it, and how they think it can be achieved. The study was of qualitative nature with free association narrative interviews as method for data collection. The contact to participants was established with the help of the commissioner of this thesis, Bearhill Husky. Ten interviews were conducted with a total of eleven participants. Data analysis was carried out by use of thematic analysis.

The findings of this study show that tourists were not familiar with the term positive animal welfare and had rather differing ideas of what it means. The most common association was that of physical health, followed by mental health. The expertise of the animals' caretakers was also seen as crucial, as the participants identified them as the main influencers of the animals' wellbeing. Only one participant brought up the perspective of the animals' needs. As such it appeared that tourists still approach positive animal welfare mainly from a human-centred point of view. This thesis contributes to the general body of knowledge surrounding positive animal welfare and brought a new perspective to this concept by examining it in a tourism context. Various practical implications were derived, for example, the development of in-depth kennel tours as a new animal-based tourism product.

Keywords: animal-based tourism, positive animal welfare, animal welfare, dog sledding, mushing, frame analysis

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In January 2021 I adopted my first dog, who is an Alaskan husky and a retired sled dog. He was given up for adoption by the kennel because of the financial strain that the COVID-19 pandemic caused. I was happy to see that many tourist kennels in Northern Europe chose to put their dogs up for adoption. But it also made me wonder if other kennels might have opted for another solution, such as mass euthanasia. This was the case in Canada after the 2010 Winter Olympics, where an employee of a Whistler-based dog sledding kennel “was ordered to kill nearly 100 dogs as the sledding business slowed following the close of the Olympics” (McCrimmon, 2013). The case drew a substantial amount of media attention at the time and the employee in question received probation and was ordered to pay a fine (The Canadian Press, 2012). As I was aware of this incident, it got me thinking about how the lack of tourists, and consequently the lack of income, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the sled dogs and their welfare. Thus, I decided that for my master thesis I want to dive deeper into the topic of animal welfare in the tourism industry.

On a global scale, the use of animals in tourism has gotten more and more popular (Bohn et al., 2018, p. 3) and thus, also the attention towards ethical treatment of animals in the tourism industry (Jones & Comfort, 2021; Winter, 2020). France, for example, recently passed a law that will forbid circuses to use animals in their shows as well as the captivity of marine mammals in amusement parks (BBC, 2020). It is predicted that the use of animals in the tourism industry will likely increase in the future (Carr & Broom, 2018; Winter, 2020), however, the knowledge about “animals' biology and their needs” (Winter, 2020, p. 1), or in other words the knowledge about animal welfare, is predicted to decrease. In the academic community, the concept of animal welfare is a well-researched one (Fennell, 2013, p. 325). The five freedoms, for example, which were formulated by John Webster in 1993/1994, are well-known worldwide and have had a large influence on animal welfare legislation (Mellor, 2016, pp. 2-3). The five freedoms include “(1) freedom from hunger and thirst, (2) freedom from discomfort, (3) freedom from pain, injury, or disease, (4) freedom to express normal behaviour, and (5) freedom from fear and distress” (Miller et al., 2020, p. 1). As one can see, the focus is mostly on eliminating negative experiences for animals (Miller et al., 2020, p. 1). Recently, however, a new concept has emerged, which is that of positive animal welfare (Lawrence et al., 2019, p. 1). While there

is no single definition of positive animal welfare, it can be said that this concept “emphasises the welfare relevance of providing animals with opportunities to have positive experiences, in addition to minimising negative experiences” (Vigors & Lawrence, 2019, p. 2). Given the previous prediction by Winter (2020, p. 1), however, tourists will most likely not be aware of this new approach.

1.2 The Research Gap in Animal Welfare

The concept of positive animal welfare has mostly been explored among livestock, farm, or zoo animals (Lawrence et al., 2019, p. 3). For example, Mattiello et al. (2019) conducted a study to identify indicators for the positive animal welfare of ruminants. Miller et al. (2020, p. 12) reviewed existing literature in order “to provide animal care professionals at zoos and aquariums a framework to explore and evaluate changes in behavioral diversity [...] as a potential positive indicator of welfare”. Vigors and Lawrence (2019) interviewed livestock farmers, exploring their attitudes and thoughts on positive animal welfare. That same year Vigors (2019) conducted another study, this time on the framing of the concept of positive animal welfare by citizens and farmers in Scotland. To my knowledge the concept has not yet been researched in the context of the tourism industry.

From 2016 to 2018, the Multidimensional Tourism Institute of the University of Lapland implemented a research project named “Animals and Responsible Tourism: Promoting Business Competitiveness through Animal Welfare”, which brought forth various reports and studies surrounding animal welfare mostly in Northern Finland (Animal Tourism Finland, 2021). From the studies of this project, Bohn et al. (2018, p. 3) found that animal-based tourism activities have become a mainstay of Lapland’s tourism industry. Both as tourist attractions and in destination branding (Bohn et al., 2018, p. 3). Bohn et al. (2018, pp. 10-11) identified husky dogs as “the largest animal group” within Lapland’s animal-based tourism industry, estimating around 4.000 individuals at the time of their study. Moreover, the demand for dog sledding as a tourist activity has grown steadily and in 2017 replaced snowmobiling as the most popular activity (Haanpää & García-Rosell, 2020, p. 231). The previously mentioned project also brought forth two significant reports, one of which detailed “Lapland tourists’ consumer behaviour and attitudes towards animals and animal-based tourism” (García-Rosell & Äijälä, 2018) while the other one focused on user-generated content on four different social media platforms and aimed to uncover topics in the discussions surrounding animals in the Lappish tourism industry (Klos et al., 2018).

Both reports clearly showed that tourists who come to Lapland are concerned about the wellbeing of animals in Lapland's tourism industry (García-Rosell & Äijälä, 2018; Klos et al., 2018), however, they do not give an insight into how the tourists would define the concept of animal welfare.

To summarise, huskies are the largest group of animals used in Lapland's tourism industry (Bohn et al., 2018, pp. 10-11), dog sledding has become the most popular tourism activity in Lapland (Haanpää & García-Rosell, 2020, p. 231), previous animal welfare studies in Lapland have not focused on how the tourists understand and interpret animal welfare (García-Rosell & Äijälä, 2018; Klos et al., 2018), positive animal welfare has not been studied in the context of tourism, and because positive animal welfare is a rather new concept tourists might not be familiar with it. Thus, the need arises to explore tourists' understanding of animal welfare, more specifically positive animal welfare, in the touristic dog sledding industry. With the words of Vigors (2019, p. 3): "before positive welfare can be effectively taken forward and promoted in society, there is a timely need to better understand how critical stakeholders [...] perceive and interpret positive animal welfare".

1.3 Research Aim and Research Design

The objective of this study is to explore what constitutes positive animal welfare in the minds of tourists who have participated in animal-based tourism activities, using the example of dog sledding in Finnish Lapland. In other words, the aim is to find out if tourists are familiar with the term positive animal welfare, what they think it means, what they think it entails, what kind of associations they have with it, and how they think it can be achieved. For this, I will use the theoretical concept of framing which will be explained in detail in the subsequent chapter. To give a short insight into this concept already, it can be said that one aspect of framing is the subjective interpretation of information (Goffman & Berger, 1986, p. 10). As there is no widely accepted definition of positive animal welfare and it is a rather unknown concept (Vigors, 2019; Vigors & Lawrence, 2019), the interpretations of what it entails might differ from individual to individual. Depending on each person's background and experiences with animals in general, with animal-based tourism, and with dog sledding in particular, positive animal welfare might be understood in different ways. Thus, framing is a suitable approach in order to find out each tourist's interpretation of and associations with the term positive animal welfare. Furthermore, this approach of framing has already been used and established in a study by Vigors (2019),

where farmers' and citizens' interpretation of positive animal welfare was examined. Thus, forming a reliable base to utilise the same approach in a different context.

Two types of data were collected for this study: primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected and analysed by ways of a thorough literature review. The literature review lays the basis of this study and will explain the two key concepts, namely framing and animal welfare. Primary data was collected through free association narrative interviews. The contact to potential interviewees was established through the commissioner of this thesis, Bearhill Husky. The fieldwork period lasted for two weeks in the month of January during which ten interviews were conducted with a total of eleven participants. Ontologically, a pluralistic view was employed and epistemologically, the thesis took an interpretivist approach.

The following main research question as well as its three sub-questions will be answered:

- 1) What constitutes positive animal welfare in the minds of tourists?
 - i. What internal frames do tourists draw from when presented with the term positive animal welfare?
 - ii. How do tourists think positive animal welfare can be achieved in dog sledding tourism?
 - iii. Who can influence positive animal welfare in the tourism industry according to tourists?

By answering the above questions, this study will, firstly, contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding positive animal welfare as well as introduce this concept to tourism research. Secondly, it will enhance the understanding of this concept by scholars as well as non-scholars. Thirdly, the study will possibly draw more attention to this rather new concept and motivate other animal-based tourism entrepreneurs to explore this topic as well. Lastly, this research will shed light onto the thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions of tourists, providing animal-based tourism actors with a better understanding of their clientele. From this newfound knowledge about clients, various managerial implications can then be derived. Thus, enabling the animal-based tourism industry to provide their customer with experiences of higher quality.

1.4 The Dog Sledding Industry and Thesis Commissioner

At this point, because this thesis is specifically concerned with the welfare of sled dogs, I believe it is worthwhile to give a short overview of the state of the touristic dog sledding industry in Europe. Dog sledding is also sometimes called mushing and “refers to a transport method or sport in which a dog or a team of dogs pulls a sled in snowy conditions, or a rig if there is no snow cover” (Äijälä et al., 2020, p. 126). Äijälä (forthcoming) points out that dog sledding is a relatively recent development in Northern Europe with the first sled dogs being used for racing. The region of Finnmark in Norway was pivotal in this, as Europe’s longest and most distinguished race, the Finnmark Race, has been organised there since 1981 (Granås, 2018, p. 48). Many owners of dog sledding kennels did not start their kennels specifically for tourism but recognised and implemented it as a way to earn extra income (Granås, 2018, p. 55). As such, using sled dogs for touristic operations is an even newer development (Äijälä, forthcoming). Nowadays in Finnish Lapland there are approximately 50 husky farms, which offer tourism activities (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021, p. 109) and which operate all-year-around (García-Rosell, 2022). The majority of which are located in Fell Lapland (Bohn et al., 2018, p. 8). The safaris provided for tourists can vary in length, from just a few meters to multi-day tours (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021; Tallberg et al., 2021). Included are usually a kennel tour, cuddling of the dogs, and some educational information (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021; Tallberg et al., 2021). The dogs mainly live in outside kennels and the most prominent breed is the Alaskan Husky (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021; Tallberg et al., 2021). Some kennels also have “Siberian Huskies, which is the breed commonly depicted in the commercial marketing and internet material for tours” (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021, p. 109). Although husky dogs are not an indigenous species in Northern Europe, they have become a prominent symbol of the local tourism industry (Granås, 2018, p. 49). These dogs’ working life has an average of ten years, although it depends on each individual, after which they are either kept by the business, given up for adoption or euthanised (García-Rosell, 2022). Multiple kennels with strong no-kill policies have recently come together in order to advocate for the development of more humane practices in the dog sledding industry (García-Rosell, 2022).

One of those kennels is Bearhill Husky, one of Rovaniemi’s local dog sledding kennels and commissioner of this thesis project. Bearhill Husky was first established in North Carelia in 2003 but relocated to Rovaniemi in 2012, where they now focus on shorter tours and day trips (Bearhill Husky, 2021a). The majority of Bearhill Husky’s tours start by a guide

greeting the guests and taking them to a dressing room. After being provided with warm overalls, gloves and hats, the guests are taken to a demonstration sled where they receive safety information which is crucial on the sled ride. Then the guests are taken to their assigned sled, usually with two people per sled. At this stage in time there is usually no time for cuddling or getting to know the dogs, as they are very eager to start running and pulling. The guide starts driving the first sled and the guests follow. After they return from the sled ride, the guests have plenty of time to get to know their team of dogs, give them treats, take pictures, and cuddle the dogs. A short kennel tour usually follows where the guide shows the free running fence, a fenced in forest area where the dogs can run free as the name suggests. Additional to that, usually the guests get the chance to cuddle, play with and hold the current puppies as well. After the short kennel tour the guests gather in a wooden hut where they are provided with hot juice and cookies. Here, the guide gives what is called the 'husky talk'. A short presentation about the different types of huskies, the history of dog sledding and the animal welfare practices. Furthermore, guests are able to ask any questions that they might have. Lastly, the group of visitors is taken back to the dressing room and then returns to their accommodation by the provided shuttle bus.

Bearhill Husky has a strong focus on conducting responsible tourism, having implemented numerous steps regarding all three pillars of sustainability (Bearhill Husky, 2021b), these being social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Purvis et al., 2019, p. 681). For their business practices they have been awarded three sustainability labels, one of them being for example the Sustainable Travel Finland label (Bearhill Husky, 2021c). Bearhill Husky promotes "animal welfare to educate [...] guests as well as improve living conditions for working dogs" (Bearhill Husky, 2021b). When it comes to the welfare of their own dogs, Bearhill Husky (2021d) realises that their dogs "work hard and deserve respect and care for their efforts". Thus, they take care of older dogs by rehoming them, puppies are not bred for display but to rejuvenate the kennel when needed and they take necessary steps for population control (Bearhill Husky, 2021d).

Furthermore, Bearhill Husky regularly participates in animal welfare research projects conducted by the University of Lapland (Bearhill Husky, 2021b) and as of this year they have become an official partner of the master's degree programme in tourism, culture and international management at the University of Lapland (TourCIM Master's Degree, 2021). Bearhill Husky is currently interested in gaining more knowledge about their clientele as well as to shed further light onto the treatment of sled dogs in the tourism industry in

Finnish Lapland. These aspects as well as their focus on sustainability, on educating the public about animal welfare, and their already existing involvement in the research activities of the University of Lapland makes them a suitable commissioner for the topic of my master thesis.

1.5 Chapter Outline

The first chapter of this thesis gave a brief introduction to the studied topic, explained the background of the study and research problem, the research aim was discussed, and one main research question as well as three sub-questions were formulated. Furthermore, the dog sledding industry at large and the commissioner of this project were introduced, and the methodology was outlined. Hereafter, a comprehensive literature review will follow, explaining the two key concepts of this study, namely framing and animal welfare. Within the concept of framing two approaches will be presented, that of frames in communication and frames in thought. Furthermore, it will be discussed how this concept has been applied in previous studies regarding the tourism industry and within animal welfare. Following thereafter, the concept of animal welfare will firstly be defined, then discussed in the context of the tourism industry and, finally, the specific concept of positive animal welfare will be examined closely. Subsequently, in chapter 3, the research methodology will be explained in detail, including the method of free association narrative interviews along with its strengths and weaknesses. A justification for use of this method will be given. Moreover, data collection and data analysis will be explained thoroughly, and a first preview of the results will be given. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will continue with an in-depth analysis of the interviews and the findings will be discussed. Subsequently, chapter 7 will offer a more comprehensive discussion of the underlying meanings. Lastly, a conclusion will be drawn, and the research questions will be answered. Furthermore, managerial implications, limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for further research will be given.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Framing

Framing is a concept that has been studied extensively and has been utilised and applied in many different scientific disciplines (Asplund, 2014; Benford & Snow, 2000; Dewulf et al., 2009). Erving Goffman, a Canadian sociologist, is usually thought of as the pioneer of framing, due to his very influential book “Frame analysis” which was originally published in 1974. An earlier mention of the concept of frames, however, can be found already in the article titled “A theory of play and fantasy” by Gregory Bateson (1955). Through the analysis of play in animals, Bateson essentially discusses the complexity of human and nonhuman interaction, pointing out the paradoxical, situational, and layered character of it (Lynch, 2013, p. 107). Depending on the context, the relationship between the actors, the background of the actors, and many more factors, a certain verbal or non-verbal action can be interpreted in different ways (Bateson, 1955). Because “definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them” (Goffman & Berger, 1986, p. 10).

Although there is no widely accepted definition of the concept of framing (Asplund, 2014; Dewulf et al., 2009), the quotation by Goffman sums up very well what frames, framing and frame analysis is all about: the subjective interpretation and/or presentation of information. Because there is an abundance of literature on the topic of framing, it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to go into detail about every aspect of framing theory. One thing that is crucial though, is to define and distinguish the three main terms, namely frames, framing and frame analysis. All three words are very similar and have been used in similar contexts as well, sometimes even interchangeably, thus, a certain confusion surrounds these terms (Dewulf et al., 2009, p. 156). The following paragraph will look at each term more closely.

I want to begin with the word framing. From a linguistic viewpoint, the word is a verb which means that it implies an action taking place (Asplund, 2014, p. 24). Thus, it can be understood as the action of interpreting a certain issue and attaching an understanding to said issue (Asplund, 2014, p. 24). This is sometimes also referred to as frame formation (Asplund, 2014, p. 24). In other words, framing can be seen as the procedure by which frames are created (Asplund, 2014, p. 35). Consequently, the term frame, sometimes also referred to as schema (Lakoff, 2010, p. 71), needs to be addressed. Danilov and Mineev

(2019, p. 108) define frames as “as messages that impart meaning or perspectives to a given issue”. Nijland et al. (2018, p. 3) define frames as “cognitive schemas of interpretation, mental filters or ‘mindsets’ through which we perceive reality and that guide our action, the process of fitting new information into one’s mindsets (‘sense-making’), or combinations of these”. From these two definitions one can already see that there are two sides to the framing coin, so to say. Frames can be seen either from the point of view of the sender, as indicated by the definition by Danilov and Mineev, or from the point of view of the receiver, as the definition by Nijland et al. suggests. The former is referred to as frame in communication, whereas the latter refers to frame in thought (Chong & Druckman, 2007). More detail about each concept will be given in the two ensuing sections. Comprehensively, it can be said, however, that frames give meaning to a certain issue by presenting different parts of it with more or less salience (Vigors, 2019, p. 2). Lastly, the term frame analysis refers to the investigation of the framing process and the resulting frames (Goffman & Berger, 1986, p. 11).

Frames in Communication

Frames in communication are also sometimes called media frame (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 100). A simple way of explaining frames in communication is that “it is often not *what* is said but *how* something is said that determines human perception” (Vigors, 2019, p. 2). Thus, a frame in communication refers to how the sender constructs their message in regard to, for example, the words, phrases, photographs or other images, colours, and types of displays they use (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 100). These choices then reveal what the sender of the message regards as salient (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Vigors, 2019). An example by Danilov and Mineev (2019, pp. 108-109) demonstrates this considerably well. The authors argue that different people have different attitudes towards oil exploration in Northern environments (Danilov & Mineev, 2019, pp. 108-109). Some people see it as an opportunity for economic development, whereas other people see it as harmful for the environment and other already existing industries (Danilov & Mineev, 2019, pp. 108-109). Consequently, when presenting this issue to the public, each group of people would highlight different aspects of oil exploration in order to convey their own attitude towards this issue. Or in other words, they would present the issue of oil exploration in the North through differing frames. In summary, “frames [in communication] can be understood as messages that impart meaning or perspectives to a given issue” (Danilov & Mineev, 2019, p. 108) and they reveal what a speaker finds

significant (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 101). As a more detailed example, the following paragraph will discuss two types of communication framing, namely attribute framing and risky choice framing.

Starting with attribute framing, this is a type of framing “in which some characteristic of an object or event serves as the focus of the framing manipulation” (Levin et al., 1998, p. 150). This means that features of an object can either be described by using positive wording, i.e., gain-frame, or by using negative wording, i.e., loss-frame (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 399). For example, a gain-frame will emphasise the benefits obtained from the use of a certain object, while a loss-frame will emphasise the negative outcomes avoided from the use of a certain object (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 399). A practical example are medical procedures or surgeries, which can be described either by their survival rate or their mortality rate (Levin et al., 1998, p. 159). Both frames will evoke different emotions and, thus, reactions in the target audience (Levin et al., 1998; Zhang et al., 2018). Moving onto risky choice framing. “In this type of framing, the outcomes of a potential choice involving options differing in level of risk are described in different ways” (Levin et al., 1998, p. 150). So-called “qualitative risk features” (Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016, p. 235), which can either be risk attenuating or risk amplifying, are perceived, evaluated and reacted to by the target audience. An example for this type of framing will be given later on when I demonstrate how framing has been applied in the tourism industry.

Frames in Thought

“They develop a corpus of cautionary tales, games, riddles, experiments, newsy stories, and other scenarios which elegantly confirm a frame-relevant view of the workings of the world” (Goffman & Berger, 1986, p. 563). This quote by Goffman describes the concept of frames in thought. Frames in thought can be understood as the way that a person understands and makes sense of information (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Danilov & Mineev, 2019; Dewulf et al., 2009; Nijland et al., 2018; Vigors, 2019). This is sometimes also called “the cognitive approach to framing” (Dewulf et al., 2009, p. 158), internal frame (Vigors, 2019, p. 2) or individual frame (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 101). When a person is presented with new information they draw from their existing knowledge and attitude, i.e., existing frames, in order to make sense of the new information (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Danilov & Mineev, 2019; Dewulf et al., 2009; Nijland et al., 2018; Vigors, 2019). Dewulf et al. (2009, p. 159) explain this well by saying that “frames [in

thought] are memory structures that help us to organize and interpret incoming [...] information by fitting it into pre-existing categories about reality”. According to Vigors (2019, p. 2), these frames in thought can furthermore influence the way someone interprets, assesses and then responds to information.

Circling back to the concept of frames in communication, Danilov and Mineev (2019, p. 109) had defined this as “persuasive message which triggers the revision of evaluative beliefs”. Thus, the previously discussed frames in communication can have an influence on the receiver’s frame in thought (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Danilov & Mineev, 2019; Vigors, 2019). This change in attitude through encountered frames in communication is referred to as the framing effect (Danilov & Mineev, 2019, p. 109). Figure 1 below demonstrates this.

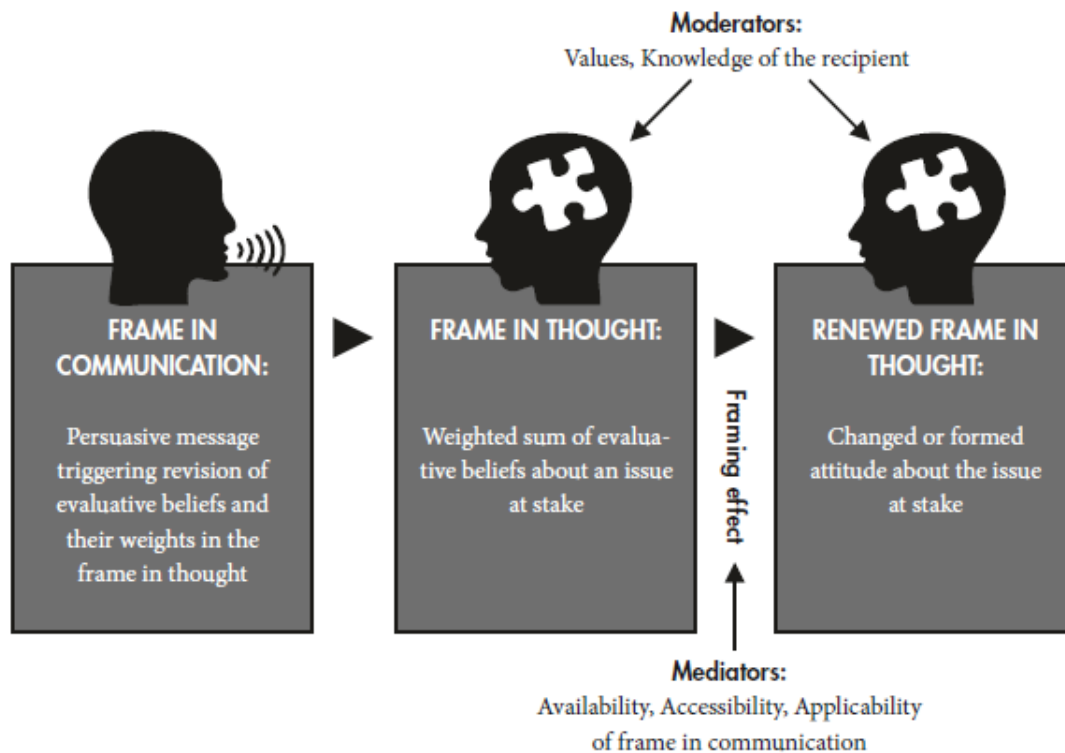


Figure 1: Graphic Depiction of Framing Model
Source: Danilov & Mineev, 2019, p. 109

One could further argue that frames in thought and frames in communication have a reciprocal relationship. The frames in communication that someone encounters affect their frame of thought, however, the frame in thought that a person has also affects the frames in communication that they utilise. Thus, figure 1 could also be viewed the other way around.

I want to find out how tourists make sense of and interpret positive animal welfare, or in other words which internal frames they draw from when presented with the term positive animal welfare. As such, the frames in thought theory will be the concept that I will utilise in my study. Exactly how this will be done, will be explained subsequently in the methodology chapter 3.

Applications of the Concept of Framing

As stated before, the concept of framing has been studied extensively and has been applied in many different scientific disciplines, such as psychology, linguistics, communication, and political science (Asplund, 2014; Benford & Snow, 2000). Due to Goffman's influential book, however, the concept has received most attention in the field of sociology (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 611). As this thesis will explore the tourism industry as well as the concept of animal welfare, it is important to see how framing has been applied in these two areas. The remainder of this subchapter will provide more detail on this.

The concept of framing has been extensively utilised within tourism studies, leading to an almost overwhelming amount of literature. However, after a thorough investigation, four main themes emerged where the concept of framing had been applied. Firstly, the framing of tourism destinations in general, especially with regards to destination image (Pan & Ryan, 2007; Zhang et al., 2018) or with regards to tourists' risk perception of said destination (Kapusinski & Richards, 2016; Kapuscinski & Richards, 2018). Secondly, the framing of a specific tourism destination (Hammett, 2013; Hansen, 2020; Pan et al., 2011; Santos, 2004). Thirdly, the framing of a certain type of tourism (Jun & Oh, 2015; Martini & Buda, 2020; Mason & Wright, 2011; Zbucha, 2015). Lastly, the framing of sustainable, responsible or environmentally friendly tourism (Huang et al., 2016; Schweinsberg et al., 2017; Yoon et al., 2019).

Starting with the framing of tourism destinations in general, as indicated above, the focus is mainly on the perception of tourists. For example, Zhang et al. (2018) conducted a study on 272 participants with the aim to determine how message framing impacts a person's perception of an image of a destination. Through presenting the participants with differently framed messages about a well-known Chinese tourism destination, it was concluded that "consumers under gain-framed message condition tend to have higher destination image perceptions compared to those under loss-framed message conditions"

(Zhang et al., 2018, p. 404). Kapuscinski and Richards (2016) conducted a study about risk perception of leisure tourists. The experiment was done through an online survey where the participants were asked to consider a holiday in a certain country (Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016, p. 238). Thereafter, they were presented with differently framed news articles about a terrorism or political instability occurrence in said destination (Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016, p. 238). One finding of this study was that “readers of article versions A (risk amplifying) perceived more risk than those who read versions B (risk attenuating), regarding both terrorism and” (Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016, p. 241) political instability. Both studies provide significant information for those in charge of destination marketing (Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018).

As for the framing of specific destinations, the focus is mainly on the representation of a destination in mass media, such as TV commercials (Pan et al., 2011) or major newspapers (Hammett, 2013; Hansen, 2020; Santos, 2004). The outcomes of these studies are, of course, highly specialised to each destination. For example, through the video content analysis of two New Zealand tourism television commercials, one launched in 1999 and the other in 2007, Pan et al. (2011) found that the old commercial focused on nature and scenery, while the new commercial focused more on adventure activities and the way of life of locals. Hansen (2020, p. 9) examined 225 unique newspaper articles regarding tourism in Copenhagen, in order to find out “how frame contents are related to frame implications”. He found that tourism in Copenhagen was most often framed either as a social conflict or in a commercial or economic context (Hansen, 2020, p. 9). The responses by locals to the former frame was a desire to restrict tourist numbers, whereas the response to the latter frame was to attract more tourists (Hansen, 2020, pp. 9-10). The latter study is “highly useful to those interested in public opinion about tourism issues” (Hansen, 2020, p. 10), whereas the former gives an insight into destination image (Pan et al., 2011, p. 597).

The third theme was the research into framing of a certain type of tourism. This includes, but is not limited to, medical tourism (Jun & Oh, 2015; Mason & Wright, 2011), cruise ship tourism (Zbucnea, 2015) and dark tourism (Jamal & Lelo, 2011; Martini & Buda, 2020). Interestingly, most studies within this theme were examining medical tourism. Six journal articles could be found in the University of Lapland online library databank regarding the framing of medical tourism either from an international perspective (Lee et al., 2014; Mason & Wright, 2011), or from the perspective of a certain nationality such as Australian (Imison & Schweinsberg, 2013), or Korean and American (Jun & Oh, 2015; Jun, 2016).

For cruise ship tourism and dark tourism only one and two publications could be found, respectively. Furthermore, it is important to mention that, for example Jamal and Lelo (2011) as well as Zbucnea (2015) use the word framing as meaning framework, examining dark tourism and cruise tourism from a wider tourism industry frame.

Most studies concerning the last emergent theme, namely the framing of sustainable, responsible or environmentally friendly tourism, examined tourists' responses to different frames concerning such tourism (Huang et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2019). For example, a study done by Huang et al. (2016, pp. 242-243) tested the three following hypotheses: "tourists with higher environmental concern behave more environmentally conservatively", "tourists with lower environmental concern behave more environmentally conservatively with a framing message than with no framing message" and "tourists with lower environmental concern behave more environmentally conservatively with a framing message under non-threatening rather than threatening conditions". The results of the study supported all three hypotheses (Huang et al., 2016, p. 243). A different study by Yoon et al. (2019) examined tourists' attitude towards and response to different frames regarding responsible tourism. The study showed "that gain-framed messages have more positive effects on both the attitude towards an advertisement and behavioral intention than loss-framed messages" (Yoon et al., 2019, p. 11). Both of these investigations provide valuable insight for environmental policy makers and those wanting to promote environmentally friendly tourism behaviour (Huang et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2019).

In order to comprehensively discuss how framing has been used in animal welfare studies, I had to broaden my approach to the literature review slightly. Thus, not only studies specifically on animal welfare were scanned, but also studies relating to animal rights. The review of the literature revealed that most of the research examines animal welfare from one of two angles: frame in communication (Buddle & Bray, 2019; Croney, 2010; Maynard, 2018; Randall & van Veggel, 2021) or frame in thought (Deimel et al., 2012; Mika, 2006; Nijland et al., 2018; Skarstad et al., 2007; Vigors, 2019).

Those studies which employ the frame in communication angle examine, for example, how animal welfare or animal rights are presented in the media (Buddle & Bray, 2019; Maynard, 2018), how animal rights groups communicate their objectives (Freeman, 2010; Freeman, 2014), or how animal welfare is discussed in academic settings (Croney, 2010; Randall & van Veggel, 2021). Concerning the first example, Maynard (2018) found that

North American magazines mainly describe zoos and aquariums in a positive way. Thus, Maynard (2018, p. 188) suggests that this could also influence the perception of the public in a positive way. Buddle and Bray (2019) found a different situation in Australia, where the print media frames the government and farm animal production industries negatively and puts them in a juxtaposition to ethical farmers, who are framed positively. Thus, essentially shifting the responsibility onto the consumer by communicating that it is their responsibility to choose a humane animal products producer to purchase from (Buddle & Bray, 2019, p. 371). Moving on to the frames in communication employed by animal rights groups, Freeman (2014, p. 226) discovered that most animal rights groups “[use] animal welfare ideology to achieve animal rights solutions”. This means, the communication was framed to appeal to people’s deeper values such as compassion and respect for animals, dislike of animal cruelty, or morality (Freeman, 2014, p. 226). Lastly, the discussion of animal welfare in the academia largely revolves around examining linguistic elements and their implications (Croney, 2010; Randall & van Veggel, 2021). All of the discussed studies make important contributions in order to understand how animal welfare is presented in the media and how the public might hence respond to it. It is important to mention here that none of the studies were concerned with the tourism industry.

Those studies which employ the frame in thought angle examine, for example, the framing of meat consumption (Nijland et al., 2018), the framing of animal rights movements (Mika, 2006), or the framing of farm animal welfare (Deimel et al., 2012; Skarstad et al., 2007; Vigors, 2019). Starting with the first example study, Nijland et al. (2018) conducted fifty semi-structured in-depth interviews with consumers which revealed that the framing of meat consumption is highly connected to emotions. In the next example study by Mika (2006) eight focus group discussions were held, studying the participants’ response to visual ad campaigns by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals). Mika (2006, pp. 937-939) found that most responses were negative and put the participants in a moral dilemma, thus, not making it very likely that the participant will join the movement. Concerning the last example, it is crucial to discuss and explain Vigors’ (2019) research in detail as this study paired with my personal interest in the dog sledding industry inspired this master thesis project. Vigors’ (2019, p. 3) research “explores both how positive welfare is framed in thought by key animal welfare stakeholders and suggests how ought positive welfare be framed in communication by animal welfare science”. Free association narrative interviews were conducted with a total of 15 citizens and 28 farmers (Vigors, 2019, pp. 4-5). The citizens framed positive animal welfare either as having positive experiences or as

being free from negative experiences, where the former included aspects such as enjoying a natural environment, having enough space, and a positive relationship with humans, while the latter included aspects such as preventing health problems, and guaranteeing no harm (Vigors, 2019, pp. 7-9). The farmers saw positive animal welfare through three frames (Vigors, 2019, p. 9). The first being good husbandry (i.e., decreasing stress for the animals, ensuring their health, and meeting resource needs), the second being proactive improvement (i.e., exceeding the status quo and actively bettering practices), and the third being the animal's point of view (i.e., respecting the animal's preferences) (Vigors, 2019, pp. 9-13). My research will take a similar approach by exploring tourists' frames in thought through the use of free association narrative interviews. Thus, Vigors' study functions as one of the main underpinnings of my study. However, instead of examining the frames in thought of two different groups of people, I will solely focus on one group, i.e., tourists. In any case, all of the three detailed studies add valuable insights into how the vast public sees, interprets and understands animal welfare related topics. Once again, however, it is important to notice that none of the studies were concerned with the tourism industry.

From this comprehensive discussion, one can see that the concept of framing has extensively been applied in both tourism studies as well as animal welfare studies. Frames in communication as well as frames in thought have been explored. However, to my knowledge, no research exists which combines all three, meaning research regarding frames in thought about animal welfare within the context of the tourism industry.

2.2 Animal Welfare

A very short introduction into the topic of animal welfare was already given in the first chapter of this thesis. Nonetheless, I believe that it is worthwhile to dive deeper into this topic. Thus, providing a more thorough understanding of the concept and the research that has already been done.

The concept of animal welfare has varying definitions. Broom (1986, p. 524) defines welfare of an animal as "its state as regards its attempts to cope with its environment". Carr and Broom (2018, p. 16) define animal welfare as "a scientific concept describing a potentially measurable quality of a living animal at a particular time". Fennel (2013, p. 326) describes it as "a family of perspectives that deal with scientific and moral questions regarding the use of animals". From these three definitions one can already see potential

difficulties regarding this concept. The first controversy around the concept of animal welfare is the issue of measurability (Carr & Broom, 2018; Fennell, 2013). Most scientists measure indicators such as physiology and behaviour (Fennell, 2013, p. 326), however, other parties argue that these factors alone are not enough (Broom, 1986; Fennell, 2013). Furthermore, Carr and Broom point out (2018, p. 4) that any measurement and interpretation of such welfare measurements will always be built on human metrics and the mere concept of animal welfare is a human construct. Thus, it is very difficult to assess how animals really feel in certain situations as it is always seen through the human lens. The second issue lies in the question of morality. Some people believe that animals should never be used by humans under any circumstance, thus, also seeing pets as problematic, while others believe it is acceptable for humans to use animals as long as they are appropriately cared for (Carr & Broom, 2018, p. 4). Thus, one can see that opinions are divided. One very important aspect, however, that is sure about animal welfare, is that it is not concerned with the ethical considerations of killing animals (Carr & Broom, 2018, p. 16). “The animal welfare issue is what happens before death” (Carr & Broom, 2018, p. 16).

Subsequently, I would like to discuss animal welfare within the context of tourism. For this, the concept of animal-based tourism needs to be defined first. Von Essen et al. (2020, p. 1) describe animal-based tourism as a type of tourism that involves activities “offering passive viewing or active interaction with wild, semi-wild or captive animals”. Thus, a wide range of tourism activities involving animals count as animal-based tourism and there are differing amounts of interaction between the human tourist and the animal (von Essen et al., 2020, p. 1). As such, the passive viewing of animals in a zoo can be classified as animal-based tourism just as much as the more involved activity of horseback riding can be considered animal-based tourism (Carr & Broom, 2018; von Essen et al., 2020).

Coming back to the topic of animal welfare, in 2013 Fennel (p. 325) found that animal welfare in the tourism industry was an understudied topic. However, since then animal welfare in a tourism context has received more attention. Nowadays it is a relatively well-researched issue. There are studies focusing on the perspective and behaviours of the tourists (García-Rosell & Äijälä, 2018; Moorhouse et al., 2017; Sneddon et al., 2016). There are multiple articles highlighting the challenges of animal welfare in tourism (Fennell, 2013; Gallagher & Huveneers, 2018; García-Rosell & Hancock, forthcoming; Moorhouse et al., 2017; von Essen et al., 2020). Other research focuses on legislative aspects of animal welfare in tourism (Duffy & Moore, 2011) or on how various tourism

companies broach the topic of animal welfare to the public (Jones & Comfort, 2021). A particular article, which I would like to point out, is titled “Mobile video ethnography for evoking animals in tourism” by Äijälä (2021, p. 1), in which he uses “mobile video ethnography as a way to account for and understand how tourism emerges through encounters between living agents”, namely humans and non-humans animals. In this paper, the concept of animal agency is discussed. On one hand, scholars argue that “consciousness, self-awareness, intentions, and thought, as well as [the ability] to develop complex language” (Äijälä, 2021, p. 2) are requirements to have agency. On the other hand, some scholars argue that anything that has impact or effect possesses agency (Äijälä, 2021, p. 2). Äijälä (2021, p. 2), however, argues that agency exists on a spectrum and is influenced by social relationships with humans and other non-human animals. Thus, “non-human animals are agents entangled in human-dominated structures” (Äijälä, 2021, p. 2). This relates back to the argument made by Carr and Broom (2018, p. 4) that animal welfare is an idea entirely shaped by humans. Äijälä (2021, p. 11) suggests using bio-sensing technology as well as multidisciplinary cooperation in order to learn more about “what matters or what might matter to animals in the context of animal welfare”. Similarly, Haanpää et al (2021) have utilised the methodological approach of videography in order to get a deeper insight into human-animal relationships and non-human agency in a tourism context. They furthermore argue that using less traditional methodologies in animal welfare research, such as the videography approach, could be an aid in moving away from the human-centric viewpoint (Haanpää et al., 2021, pp. 110-112). Another study I would like to point out is by García-Rosell and Tallberg (2021), as it takes up the thus far rather unexplored idea of animals as tourism stakeholders. By employing a feminist view on stakeholder theory García-Rosell and Tallberg (2021, p. 118) argue that animal workers become stakeholders because of the shared emotions and social relationships with their owners and the customers. In their conclusion, the question is posed if animal workers should receive similar work benefits as their human counterparts such as pension plans, healthcare, and other values on top of their usefulness in terms of workers (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021, p. 119). This notion adds a whole new depth to animal welfare which will need to be investigated and discussed further. One could further ponder if positive animal welfare might be a means to achieve this.

Positive animal welfare, as aforementioned, does not have a generally accepted definition. But it can be said that this concept focuses on providing animals with positive experiences instead of merely avoiding negative ones (Lawrence et al., 2019; Vigers, 2019; Vigers &

Lawrence, 2019). According to Lawrence et al. (2019, p. 2) it has emerged “as a reaction against an undue focus on negative aspects of welfare and reduction of harms”. The first mention of positive animal welfare can be found in Boissy et al (2007) and one year later Yeates and Main (2008) developed the concept further by discussing potential assessments of positive animal welfare. Since then, there have been nine more studies which specifically mention the term positive animal welfare and which clearly aim to advance the concept (Lawrence et al., 2019, p. 3). For a comprehensive overview, see the assessment done by Lawrence et al. in their 2019 article “What Is so Positive about Positive Animal Welfare? - A Critical Review of the Literature”. In this article, Lawrence et al. furthermore detail those characteristics which define positive animal welfare. These include positive emotions, positive affective engagement, quality of life, and happiness (Lawrence et al., 2019, pp. 4-11).

As for the first characteristic, it has been established that animals are capable of experiencing emotions (Lawrence et al., 2019; Mellor, 2012; Phillips, 2008) and there have been approaches to develop practical assessments of positive emotions in animals (Mattiello et al., 2019; Napolitano et al., 2009). The second characteristic, positive effective engagement, “represents the experience animals may have when they actively respond to motivations to engage in rewarding behaviours, and it incorporates all associated affects that are positive” (Mellor, 2015, p. 3). Positive effective engagement is important, as it provides a connection between positive emotions and functional behaviours such as maternal care and foraging (Lawrence et al., 2019, p. 7). Quality of life can be understood as “as a continuum from negative to positive with positive welfare situated at the higher end of the continuum based on either the animals’ overall emotional state or the available opportunities for the animal to have a good life” (Lawrence et al., 2019, p. 9). Lastly, happiness in animals as a characteristic of positive animal welfare, was first mentioned by Yeates and Main (2008) by drawing comparisons to the measurement of happiness in humans. Webb et al. (2019) then further investigated this subject matter and found that some aspects of happiness in humans can be applied to animal happiness while other cannot. For example, the component of affect is likely similar between humans and animals, while the cognitive factor of happiness in humans cannot be applied to animals (Webb et al., 2019, p. 71). Furthermore, it was concluded that animal happiness “is about the balance of positive and negative affect” (Webb et al., 2019, p. 71). Webb et al. (2019, p. 71) furthermore point out, however, that more research into the conceptualisation of animal happiness is needed in order to develop appropriate means of assessment for it.

As one can see from this review of the literature, animal welfare is a well-researched concept and has been studied in many different contexts, while the concept of positive animal welfare is still rather under-researched and relatively ambiguous. As such, there is a need to investigate this concept further. The literature review gave an overview of the existing literature surrounding the key concepts, namely framing and animal welfare. It was demonstrated how the two concepts have been studied previously and, specifically, how they were examined with regards to tourism. The most important terms were defined and explained in detail. With that in mind, I will now continue with the implementation of my study.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Philosophical Background

The master thesis will investigate two types of data – primary data and secondary data. Secondary data was examined as part of a thorough literature review, as “reviewing previous research [...] on a topic is a vital step in the research process” (Veal, 2006, p. 121). However, the focus of this chapter will be on the collection and analysis of primary data, meaning data which will be newly collected for this specific study (Veal, 2006, p. 39).

Before detailing the method of primary data collection and analysis, however, it is important to address the philosophical underpinnings that will guide this study. In the social sciences, such as tourism, research can be somewhat messy and it is common for the researcher to not be able to be fully objective (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 34). Furthermore, according to Bensemann (2011, p. 154) research is inevitably characterized by certain interests. This can be, for example, technical interest, practical interest or emancipatory interest (Bensemann, 2011, p. 154). Hence, it is important for the researcher to be aware of one’s subjectivity as well as research interest, and to make the underlying values and beliefs known (Bensemann, 2011; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004).

This brings me to the topic of paradigms. Paradigm can be understood as those values and beliefs that shape someone’s view of the world (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 34). Ontologically, a pluralistic view will be employed. This means that this research approach does not believe in “one ‘true’ reality” (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 36), but it realises that definitions of reality might differ from person to person (Bensemann, 2011, pp. 154-155). Epistemologically, the thesis will take an interpretivist approach, meaning that “research is undertaken in a collaborative fashion, with the researcher and the researched viewed as partners in the production of knowledge and the interaction between them being a key site for both research and understanding” (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 36). With an interpretivist approach the main research objective is an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in a certain context and at a specific point in time, which requires an intimate relationship between researcher and data (Bensemann, 2011, p. 154). As Veal (2006, p. 37) eloquently formulated: “The interpretive researcher [...] tries to ‘get inside’ the minds of subjects”. This interpretivist paradigm mainly employs a qualitative methodological approach (Bensemann, 2011, p. 155). On top of trying to get into the minds of research

participants, qualitative research methods are mostly used when exploring attitudes (Veal, 2006, p. 99) or when “interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 4). This is exactly what this thesis sets out to do. Thus, the ontological, epistemological, and methodological viewpoints this thesis takes, point to a qualitative research method. This chapter will now continue to discuss the ways of primary data collection as well as data analysis.

3.2 Free Association Narrative Interview

As mentioned above the data collection method will be of qualitative nature. The main research objective of this study is to find out what constitutes positive animal welfare in the minds of tourists. In other words, the aim is to find out what kind of associations tourists have with the concept of positive animal welfare. Thus, the method of free association narrative interviews seems suitable.

The free association narrative interview method “is an open approach to interviewing, which combines the story-telling role of narratives with the psychoanalytical principle of free association” (Vigors, 2019, p. 3). I want to start by going into detail about the first aspect of this definition, i.e., the open approach to interviewing. In contrast to structured or semi-structured interview methods, the free association narrative interview method does not utilise a pre-defined agenda of questions (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 31). Instead, the interviewee is merely introduced to a topic (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 63). The interviewee can then, without any feedback or interference by the interviewer, create their own narrative around this topic (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, pp. 63-64). Therefore, it “encourages participants to tell their story and to take ownership of how that story is told” (Vigors, 2019, p. 4). This brings me to the second aspects of the above definition, i.e., storytelling. Storytelling and narratives are an inherent part of the human species and one of our main ways to communicate (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Through storytelling, Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000, p. 58) argue, people can put things into order, make sense of topics, and “the narration [...] reveals [...] the actor’s symbolic system of orientations”. The last aspect of the definition, i.e., free association, is a method used in psychoanalysis (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Kris, 1996; Vigors, 2019). With the free association method, the interviewee tries to communicate whatever thoughts appear in the moment (Kris, 1996, p. 3), thus, enabling unconscious thoughts to surface (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 37).

According to Veal (2006, p. 99), qualitative research methods are commonly utilised “when the focus of the research is on meanings and attitudes [...]; when exploratory theory building [...] is called for; when the researcher accepts that the concepts, terms and issues must be defined by the subjects and not by the researcher in advance”. All three of these statements hold true for the approach that my thesis will take, which supports the use of a qualitative research method.

Hollway and Jefferson (2000, pp. 8-26) argue that traditional question-and-answer type of interview methods, such as structured and semi-structured interviews, are based on a number of false assumptions. For example, that the interviewees will understand the words used in the same way as the researcher understands them or that the interviewees are sure about their emotions towards the researched topic and will openly talk to about it (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, pp. 2-8). Furthermore, in most structured as well as semi-structured interviews it is mostly the interviewer who is responsible for the produced content, as going through multiple pre-planned questions can limit the thought horizon of the interviewees (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, pp. 8-31). The free association narrative interview method counteracts these false assumptions, by letting the interviewee take the lead (Gillham, 2005, p. 45). Moreover, as previously discussed, the narrative aspect of this interview method combined with the association method is suitable for uncovering participants’ unconscious thoughts as well as their inner orientations, i.e., internal frames (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Kris, 1996).

The free association narrative interview method of course also has various weaknesses. Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000, pp. 65-67) point out two main weaknesses of narrative interviews. These are, firstly, that the interviewee will most likely make assumptions about what the interviewer wants to hear and construct their answers accordingly (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, pp. 65-66). Secondly, that the warm-up phase of such interview holds a lot of importance and is highly dependent on the social skills of the interviewer, as this will most likely determine the course of the remainder of the interview (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, pp. 66-67). Gillham (2005, p. 53) furthermore points out that it can be difficult to keep the interviewees talking or, contrarily, enable the interviewee to talk very much, resulting in very long interviews.

All of the above considered, the strengths of the free association narrative interview method outweigh the weaknesses in the context of this particular study. Furthermore, Gillham

(2005, p. 45) argues that unstructured interview methods, such as the free association narrative interview method, are most suitable when research for a certain topic is still in an initial phase. As is the case for this study. Thus, the free association narrative interview method presented itself as the appropriate choice for primary data collection.

3.3 Data Collection

As the interest of this study is concerned with animal-based tourism, specifically with regards to dog sledding in Finnish Lapland, the decision was made to interview tourists who have taken part in such dog sledding tours. The contact to interviewees was established through Bearhill Husky.

The interviews were carried out with the help of Bearhill Husky. At first, I had planned to hold the interviews on the premises of Bearhill Husky, preferably right after the guests return from their dog sledding ride. However, due to logistical reasons and time restraints this was not possible. Furthermore, I had formulated a recruitment letter (see Appendix 1) in which the topic of my study was briefly introduced, and people were asked to contact me in case they were interested in participation. The sales staff of Bearhill Husky sent this recruitment letter via e-mail to all of their guests for the months of January and February. However, unfortunately, I did not get a single response back. Thus, I decided it might be more fruitful to recruit participants on-site. I spent a total of five days spread over two weeks at the kennel of Bearhill Husky, getting to know the guests from each tour and handing out small recruitment surveys (see Appendix 2) in order to catch peoples' interest. I have compiled the results of the survey and provided them to Bearhill Husky, however, I will not analyse them any further in this thesis as they are not relevant for this study. At the very end of the survey, people were able to leave their contact information either in the form of an email address or a telephone number. I then contacted the guests on the same day of their tour and asked who would be interested in further participation. Surprisingly, I received many positive responses and was able to achieve my planned number of participants in a much shorter amount of time than anticipated. In total, ten interviews were held during the month of January. One interview was done with two people at once, as they were a couple. Thus, leading to a total number of eleven participants. Two interviews were held immediately after the guests' tour on the bus ride from Bearhill Husky's premises back to the city centre of Rovaniemi, thus face-to-face. Another two interviews were held over a simple phone call without seeing the other person. The remaining six interviews

were held via video call on the platform Zoom. Two of the ten interviews were held in German, as that was the participant’s and my native language. The other eight interviews were held in English. The interviews varied quite a lot in their length with the longest interviews lasting 51 minutes and the shortest one lasting 18 minutes. Every interview was voice recorded. Table 1 provides a more detailed overview of the configuration of each interview.

Table 1: Interview Details

Interview No.	Participant No.	Platform	Interview Language	Interview Length
1	P1	Face-to-face	English	21 minutes
2	P2	Zoom	English	34 minutes
3	P3	Zoom	English	25 minutes
4	P4	Telephone	German	51 minutes
5	P5 & P6	Face-to-face	German	25 minutes
6	P7	Zoom	English	24 minutes
7	P8	Zoom	English	28 minutes
8	P9	Telephone	English	51 minutes
9	P10	Zoom	English	31 minutes
10	P11	Zoom	English	18 minutes

Although the interview method is that of unstructured interviews, an interview guideline was created in order to have back-up questions in case an interviewee genuinely did not know what to say. The interview guideline was developed during the months of November and December and can be found in appendix 3. Firstly, some warm-up questions were asked about the participants’ background. This was to help the interviewee feel comfortable speaking. Similar to Vigors’ (2019) approach, I then presented the interviewees with just one open-ended ‘invitation’ question: “Positive animal welfare – can you tell me what comes to your mind when you hear this term?”. The interviewee was then free to say whatever came to their mind, thus, creating their own narrative around the topic of positive animal welfare. Only when the interviewee had concluded their free narration, had discussed all their associations, and had confirmed the end, I began what Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000, p. 64) call the “questioning phase”. Here, the aim is to fill possible gaps in the story by asking follow-up questions that mirror the wording used by the interviewee

(Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 64). During this phase the previously formulated back-up questions were utilised as support and guideline. The last step was the “concluding talk” (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, pp. 64-65) in which I sought even further in-depth information by providing the participant with a more relaxed and small talk like atmosphere.

Table 2: Participant Details

Participant No.	Age Range	Nationality	Pets	Special Diet
P1	30 – 40	Belgium	Yes	No
P2	40 – 50	Ukraine	In the past	No
P3	50 – 60	Great Britain	Yes	No
P4	60 – 70	German	In the past	No
P5	20 – 30	German	In the past	Vegetarian
P6	20 – 30	German	In the past	Mostly meatless
P7	50 – 60	Great Britain	In the past	No
P8	50 – 60	Great Britain	In the past	Vegetarian
P9	30 – 40	Finland	Yes	No
P10	20 – 30	USA	Yes	No
P11	50 – 60	USA	Yes	No

Although I did not have many requirements for my participants, other than that they are over 18 years of age, I do think it is worthwhile to give an insight into the participants’ background, which can be seen in table 2. The group of eleven participants was rather heterogenous, with many different nationalities, age levels, and connections to animals. The youngest interviewees were in their early twenties, while the oldest was most likely in their late sixties. I say most likely because I did not ask the interviewees for their age but estimated it myself. In terms of nationality, I interviewed three Germans, three Brits, two Americans, one Finn, one Belgian, and one Ukrainian. Five participants were current pet owners and the rest have all had pets in the past but for varying reasons did not have any pets at the time of the interview. Two of the participants were vegetarian, one participant’s diet was mostly meatless due to their partner being vegetarian, and all the other participants did not have any dietary requirements. In the following chapters I will refer to each participant with their assigned number.

3.4 Data Analysis

After the completion of the interviews, each one was manually transcribed and anonymised, meaning that the names of the participants were erased and any potentially identifying information, that came up during the interview, was removed. Subsequently, the data was coded according to “emergent themes” (Veal, 2006, pp. 210-211). Although the study by Vigors (2019) is one of the main underpinnings of this thesis, as explained previously, I chose a different approach to data analysis than Vigors did. Vigors (2019, p. 5) used the constant comparison method in their data analysis, which is a part of the grounded theory approach to data analysis (Boeije, 2002, p. 391). However, as pointed out by Braun and Clarke (2013, pp. 186-187), grounded theory is an approach that is incredibly complex and only feasible for extensive research projects with little to no time restrictions. As such, this was not suitable approach that I could take in this study. Furthermore, as this project was my very first experience with qualitative research, the grounded theory approach seemed too advanced, and I could not be certain to carry it out correctly. Thus, I decided on a different approach to data analysis that is still grounded in the data itself. As a means for data analysis, I used the approach of thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis “is a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions” (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). As such, one advantage of thematic analysis lies in its flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2013) and in its suitability for inexperienced researchers (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2), such as myself. Furthermore, Braun and Clark (2013, p. 178) argue that thematic analysis can be utilised to analyse a rather wide range of data types and to answer a wide range of research questions. Nowell et al. (2017, pp. 4-11) outline a six-step process of how to conduct a thematic analysis which I followed. The process started out by immersing myself in the data, meaning I transcribed the interviews and subsequently read through each transcript multiple times. During this initial phase, Nowell et al. (2017, p. 5) point out, that it is also important to make oneself aware of personal thoughts, biases and perspectives towards the studied topic. As such, during this phase, additionally to immersing myself in the data, I also took a closer look at my own thoughts and feelings towards dog sledding in general. Those will be detailed in the following subchapter 3.5 on ethical considerations. The second step of the process involved generating a first set of codes and by this bringing a certain structure to the data set (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 5-8). Here, software programs

can be used for help, however, I decided to take a more old-school approach by printing all the transcripts and using different coloured pencils and marginalia to categorise the participants' answers. After the very first coding was done, I perhaps had too many codes, as I struggled with creating larger categories. However, I managed to organise the codes into three overarching themes, namely health, knowledge and animal's needs. Thus, completing phase three. Nowell et al. (2017, p. 8) point out that "researchers [should] not be so strongly guided by the research question" during this stage as it could lead to disregarding unrelated yet relevant themes. As such, the themes were derived through an inductive approach, meaning that they emerged primarily from the data itself instead of from the theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Phase four then involved reviewing the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). During this phase I, for example, decided to break down two of the themes into sub-themes. Thus, splitting up the theme of health into physical health and mental health and the theme of knowledge into knowledgeable caretakers, educating outsiders, and training of the dogs. In the second to last phase I revised the name of the themes in order to "immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 10). The last phase then consisted of writing up the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

Before beginning with the in-depth data analysis in the next chapter, I want to give a brief introduction to the findings already now. First of all, I think it is noteworthy that none of the participants had heard of positive animal welfare before, it was a completely new term for all of them. However, everyone had of course heard of animal welfare and when asked if they saw a difference between the two concepts eight participants thought there was a difference, while three participants thought that they are identical. The latter group argued that animal welfare is already something positive.

You're looking for animal welfare, you're looking for the welfare of that animal, the wellness of it, and you wanna believe that that's positive. Yea, I think it's the same. (P1)

It [animal welfare] should be the intrinsically positive. So that one sees not only that the animals are not doing badly, but animal welfare should generally also go so far that one sees that the animals are doing well. (P6)

I think I would just, personally, I would associate them as one and the same thing. So, for me, animal welfare must be positive because its looking after an animal well. You can't, you can't ... animal welfare that's bad welfare. [...] [N]o, for me it's one and the same thing. (P7)

Participant 8 furthermore posed an interesting question, asking if there should even be a difference. The participants who did see a difference between animal welfare and positive animal welfare primarily thought of positive animal welfare as aiming for a higher standard and going beyond the basic needs of animals as well as focusing on positive aspects only.

The positive welfare for me it's much more warmer description. [...] So, it's not the basic one, it's advanced level, if you want. (P2)

Well, positive animal welfare [...], it makes you feel as though it would be better in a positive way rather than just animal welfare. It gives you reassurance that they're being cared for. (P3)

Positive animal welfare. So, animal welfare is kind of clear. Somehow that you, I guess, give the animals an adequate environment and that you don't harass them. [...] But the term positive animal welfare, I don't know, it probably goes beyond that. (P4)

I suppose maybe the positive animal welfare maybe is a bit more active about taking active steps to improve animal welfare. Whereas animal welfare might just be more about making sure that their basic needs are met. Maybe that's how I see the difference. (P8)

[I]f you are talking about animal welfare you are going to establish if it's good or if it's bad. And maybe this one [positive animal welfare] only concentrates on the good one? (P9)

All of the participants' thoughts on positive animal welfare, its influencers, and the achievement of it in the dog sledding industry, could be summarised into three overarching themes, namely health, knowledge, and the animal's needs perspective. The overarching theme of health was the most prominent one and includes both physical and mental health of the sled dogs. The theme of knowledge includes actual knowledge and expertise in terms of dog care by the caretakers. But it also includes the dissemination of knowledge from the caretakers of the dogs to outsiders, such as the guests of the tour or the general public. Furthermore, I decided to include the appropriate training of the sled dogs in this theme as well, as this requires certain knowledge from the dog trainer as well as it includes a form of knowledge transfer between the animals themselves as well as between the humans and the animals. The last theme approaches positive animal welfare from the perspective of the animal and its needs. In the hereafter following chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, I will continue with an in-depth analysis, discussion, and interpretation of each theme.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

As a researcher it is important to be aware of one's own bias, therefore, I want to disclose my own attitude towards and thoughts on animal welfare in the dog sledding industry at this point. I would like to start by saying that I fully support dog sledding if it is done in an ethical way. From my own experience of owning an Alaskan Husky and from having taken part in dog sledding tours and observing the dogs carefully, I can say that these dogs love what they do. The breeds most commonly used, Siberian huskies and Alaskan huskies, are dog breeds that are specifically bred for this type of activity (K9 Web, 2021; The American Kennel Club, 2021a). Just as Border Collies have a strong herding instinct (The American Kennel Club, 2021b) and Rottweilers have a strong instinct to protect (The American Kennel Club, 2021c), a Husky's instinct will lead them to running and pulling (K9 Web, 2021; The American Kennel Club, 2021a). I would actually argue that the sledding activity provides positive mental and physical stimulation for these dogs and, thus, increases their welfare. Of course, there are always individual dogs who deviate from this and are not fit to be worked on the sled, however, in my experience this is the exception.

What I mean by the aspect of conducting dog sledding in an ethical way is that one needs to realise that these dogs are professional athletes. Just as an Olympian marathon runner would spend a long time in training, monitoring their progress, carefully watching their nutrition and consulting with doctors, the same should be done for these sled dogs. They need to be gradually trained, monitored closely, and checked by a veterinarian in order to ensure that they are fit to run. They should not be overworked or forced to run in too high temperatures. If physical injuries occur these should be treated immediately and adequately, and the dog should be given enough time to fully recover. When not working on the sled, the dogs should be provided with a place to stay that is big enough for free movement and a hut or similar that acts as a protection from harsh weather. If all of this is adhered to, then I am in full support of the sport of dog sledding, as I believe it provides this breed with the necessary mental and physical stimulation that improves their welfare. Perhaps, I would even argue, that it provides a form of positive welfare.

Moving onto ethical considerations while conducting research. Firstly, I would like to share this very insightful quote by de Laine (2000, p. 1):

The production of knowledge puts fieldworkers in close contact with subjects and this closeness creates problems with the management of anonymity and confidentiality. Ethical problems and dilemmas are a necessary part of fieldwork. They cannot be adequately anticipated and usually emerge *ex post factum*.

Ethical behaviour in research includes universal aspects such as plagiarism and reporting of truthful results (Veal, 2006, p. 70), which I will touch upon again at the end of this chapter. However, when the research is done on humans and when the relationship between researcher and human participants becomes very close, as pointed out by de Laine above, there are many additional aspects to consider (de Laine, 2000; Veal, 2006; Wiles, 2012). As this is the case in this thesis, the main focus for now will be on ethical principles for research involving human subjects.

According to Veal (2006, p. 71), there are three general principles of research ethics, which are “a. that no harm should befall the research subjects; b. that subjects should take part freely; and c. that subjects should take part on the basis of informed consent”. Similar information can be found in the publication by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK (2019) as well as by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009). The following three paragraphs will explain in detail what each principle entails.

The principle of no harm means that the carried-out research may not cause any physical or mental damage (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2019; National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009; Veal, 2006). The element of physical harm is mostly relevant in medical research, while the element of mental harm is relevant in the field of psychology (Veal, 2006, p. 71). In the field of social sciences either of these are not usually applicable, but the principle of no harm still persists mostly in the form of data privacy and confidentiality (Veal, 2006, p. 71). Thus, harm resulting from improper storage of data (National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, p. 8) must be avoided. For this study that means “the protection of privacy should be ensured through anonymisation measures and through the regulation of access to data for secondary research” (National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, p. 12). The anonymisation needs to be done in such a way that third parties cannot easily identify research subjects (National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, p. 12). Particularly for my study, this means that the audio files as well as the transcripts are stored only on my personal computer or on my personal mobile phone, both of which are password protected. Furthermore, already during the transcription of each interview, the real names of the interviewees were erased, and each

participant was assigned a number instead. Any information that could identify a person was redacted.

The second principle of voluntary participation includes a number of aspects. Firstly, the participants should be able to choose freely if they would like to participate and they are also able to refuse participation (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2019, p. 51). Secondly, the participants are able to cease their participation at any point during the research project (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2019, p. 51). Thirdly, the participants are free to withdraw their participation all together (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2019, p. 51). All of these standards were adhered to in the research project at hand. Specifically, this was accomplished by providing the participants with my detailed contact information as well as with the contact information of my supervisor, Outi Rantala. Thus, if a participant decides to withdraw their participation, they can contact me or my supervisor for this at any time.

The last principle of informed consent means that research participants must be informed about the content of the study, the purpose of the study and what participation entails (National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, p. 7). “It involves providing participants with clear information about what participating in a research project will involve and giving them the opportunity to decide whether or not they want to participate” (Wiles, 2012, p. 25). In other words, the researcher “must make their research goals explicit and seek permission from [...] the people” (de Laine, 2000, p. 1). For this thesis project this was done by providing the research participants with a letter of consent (see appendix 4), which explains the details of the study and the consequences of participation. For the interviews which were held in person, the interviewees got the chance to read this document prior to the start of the interview and also keep one copy for themselves. For the interviews which were held over the phone or over Zoom, the participants received the letter of consent as a PDF document via email a few days before the interview. Additionally, before the start of each interview, I went over the contents of the letter of consent again and explained each interviewee their rights. Each participant was also able to ask additional questions in order to fully understand what is stated. As the research on minors would require further ethical considerations, the age limit of participants was set to a minimum of 18 years.

As previously stated, reporting truthful results is an important ethical principle in every research project (Veal, 2006, p. 70). On that note, I need to acknowledge two things. Firstly, by having a touristic dog sledding kennel as the commissioner of this thesis, there is a certain bias in analysing and presenting the interview results. I was, of course, truthful in reporting what the interviewees have said and also honestly and openly stated the issues that they have addressed. But I also need to recognise that, at least subconsciously, I did not want to paint Bearhill Husky in a bad light. As such, it could be that I have focused more on the positive animal welfare examples that the interviewees noticed during their visit at Bearhill Husky. Secondly, I need to acknowledge potential discrepancies due to the language used. As previously stated, two of the interviews were held in German. I will use and have already used in subchapter 3.4, direct quotations from those interviews which were translated by myself. I did my very best to translate the participants' statements as accurately as possible, however, as I am not a professional translator, there might still be the chance of a certain disparity. Furthermore, it is important to mention that during the interviews held in German I used the term *Tierschutz*, which is the most common German translation of animal welfare. However, the German word *Schutz* literally translated means protection. As such, the word *Tierschutz* does not only imply welfare of animals but also the protection of animals and their rights. This might lead to differentiating associations among the German-speaking participants in this study compared to those participants that I spoke with in English.

4. ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH HEALTH

4.1 Physical Health

When I posed the question “positive animal welfare – what comes to your mind when you hear that term?” the most prominent association that the participants had was certainly surrounding the topic of physical health. Therefore, this is the first topic I will take a closer look at during this analysis. Within the aspect of physical health most participants were concerned with the animal’s environment and stated that a natural environment and sufficient space were two crucial criteria.

Positive animal welfare. Well, I think the first thing that I think is their natural environment. Leave the animals as much as possible to their natural environment. (P1)

I would say it [positive animal welfare] is an environment where animals can live safely, and they’re being looked after. (P3)

When I asked Participant 3 for a further explanation of what they mean by “being looked after”, their response was: “I mean that they are fed – you know their basic needs are met. So, fed, watered, kept warm, [...] proper medical checks, vaccinations, and issues addressed if they’re not well”. Additionally, to these criteria mentioned, a balanced exercise, that the animals are not harmed, and that their stress levels are kept low were also aspects that were mentioned by other participants quite frequently. If we recall the five freedoms mentioned previously, namely “(1) freedom from hunger and thirst, (2) freedom from discomfort, (3) freedom from pain, injury, or disease, (4) freedom to express normal behavior, and (5) freedom from fear and distress” (Miller et al., 2020, p. 1), it becomes quite clear that the main points listed by the participants are nearly a blueprint of these. Thus, it seems that the respondents in this study largely interpret positive animal welfare from a similar viewpoint as the five freedoms, meaning that the focus is mainly on avoiding negative experiences for animals. This is not surprising, as much of the existing animal welfare research focuses on negative experiences and elimination thereof (Webb et al., 2019, p. 62). Furthermore, news coverage on animal welfare specifically in the tourism industry mainly points out cases in which animals are abused and urges tourists to avoid such attractions, for example riding elephants (Neale, 2021) or taking pictures with tigers (Eschner, 2017). In fact, a brief Google search of the words *animal welfare in tourism* generated a large number of articles either detailing active animal abuse in tourism settings

or articles which celebrate the end of animal abuse in a certain tourism situation. I did not find a single article highlighting examples of positive experiences for animals in tourism settings. Thus, this apparent one-sidedness in news coverage may shape tourists' way of thinking about animal welfare, I would imagine. Furthermore, it seems that the focus on physical health comes from the ability to scientifically measure it.

I think it's hard, you can't ask them. [laughs] That would be the first way. But yea, you can't. [...] Obviously there are people who have been studying animals for a very long time, so I think there is a science [...] to see if they're healthy. (P1)

Multiple participants noted that they would like the sled dogs to be happy, thus, showing concern for their mental health as well, but that it was not something that could be measured or scientifically determined for certain. Thus, measurability or determinability seemed to be the main reasons for the prominence of the physical health frame. The mental health frame will be analysed further in the hereafter following subchapter.

I want to come back to the element of space once more, as that was mentioned by every participant, and it is similar to Vigors' (2019) findings. Most often zoos were brought up as a negative example where animals are provided with too little space and in terms of the dog sledding experience, some participants questioned the enclosures which the sled dogs are kept in when they are not pulling a sled.

There is only one thing that I wasn't sure about was the [inaudible] where the dogs were roaming around. You know, the younger ones. And I was a bit, I didn't know whether that was enough space for them. (P7)

So, I just find the cages very small. And I would have found it somehow nicer if they would have significantly more space. That would be my idea or my thought. What I would find nice if they were, so to speak, like wild animals. [...] Just have a huge fenced off area where they then can run freely. (P5)

[A place] [w]here they can run free, where they have a lot of space, because obviously they're very energetic animals. (P1)

Vigors (2019, p. 8) found a similar space-related frame in their study and linked it to the concept of autonomy. Animal autonomy means “enabling animals to exert some control over their environment” (Vigors & Lawrence, 2019, p. 3). The Merriam-Webster (2022a) online dictionary defines the word free as “not subject to the control or domination of another”. Thus, I would argue that the use of the word “free” or “freely” in the answers of

my participants implies a similar outlook as the one found by Vigors. Additionally, to this, participants 1 and 5 were evidently concerned with the breed characteristics of the sled dogs, as they both mentioned their desire to run and their high energy levels. Thus, this brought upon a concern for space. These breed specific concerns were also noticeable when speaking about other aspects of the environment, for example temperature.

[T]his type of climate, this type of weather obviously that they are basically made for, naturally. So, as the people told me today, they [the dogs] don't work in over fifteen degrees. So, I think the average temperature should be a lot lower than that. Or where it doesn't, or very rarely, goes over that temperature they don't feel comfortable in. I think that would be, yea, a good place for them. (P1)

I'm originally from Texas, so not quite the same conditions as there [Lapland]. I always question when people have Huskies in Texas. Seems kind of weird. (P10)

Both participants certainly have valid concerns, as husky dogs are a northern breed and, thus, are best suitable for a colder climate (McCormick, 2020). However, I think it is less known that most northern dog breeds are actually quite adaptable in terms of temperature (Frei Bandieri, n.d.; McCormick, 2020). This is due to their double-layered coat, which provides insulation during the winter (McCormick, 2020) and “air-condition in summertime” (Frei Bandieri, n.d.). I can imagine two possible explanations for where this temperature frame might originate. The concern for temperature might come from the fact that both participants are dog owners. Among dog owners the dangers of overheating in dogs are usually very well-known, as it can be deadly (Meyers, 2021). Or the concern for temperature might also come from the way that husky dogs are visually represented in the media. A Google images search for the term *husky dog* shows, firstly, almost exclusively pictures of Siberian Huskies and, secondly, pictures of said dogs in the snow. The latter case would be a perfect example of the framing model which was presented in figure 1 on page 15. To recall, figure 1 illustrated what Danilov and Mineev (2019, p. 109) called the framing effect, in which the way an issue is presented, i.e., the frame in communication, shapes the way the recipient of the message thinks about the issue, i.e., their frame in thought. As such, husky dogs being presented primarily as Siberian Huskies in a winterly setting, will have an impact on what the viewers of these pictures thinks about this breed and what kind of assumptions they make about their breed characteristics and their needs.

In terms of achieving these physical health criteria within the dog sledding industry criteria such as regular veterinary checks, adequate resting periods, care before and after the tours,

as well as safety on the tour itself were mentioned. Participants 6 and 7 made various observations during their time at Bearhill Husky. Care before the start of the sledding tour was done as a means to prevent injuries, for example, by putting boots on the dogs' paws (noticed by P6 and P10) and by being careful when attaching them to the sled (noticed by P7). Safety on the tour itself was achieved by an employee on a snowmobile chaperoning the tour. In this, participant 6 stated specifically that they felt the chaperoning employee was not only there to have an eye on the tourists but on the dogs and their wellbeing as well. Participant 7 made a similar observation.

[T]he people who were driving around checking the – I know they were checking that we were okay, but I also sensed that they had an eye on the dogs to make sure that they were okay. (P7)

Additionally, participant 4 pointed out that they would have accepted being on a separate sled than their spouse during the tour in order to minimise the overall weight that the dogs have to pull.

Yes, so that you don't say, I'm going to put two people on a sled who know each other, for example married couples, just because they are married couples. But that one perhaps puts a little consideration on the total weight. And says, so here they are both a bit heavier, I'll divide them on two sleds, so that the approximate, so that, well ... that it [the weight] is tolerable [for the dogs]. (P4)

Participant 7 furthermore continued describing the care after the tour.

And when we got back, I was impressed with how everybody looked after the dogs [...]. Including both the tourists and the staff. There was a real sense of we need to treat them, we need to look after them, we need to feed them, we need to water them, we need to make sure that they're calm and nice and settled. (P7)

However, all of the participants were furthermore concerned with the care of the dogs outside of the tourist gaze. Meaning, that the care before, during, and after the tour is good and needed, but that the real question is how the dogs are treated once the tourists leave the premises. As such, the next logical conclusion for all participants was that the main influence on the dogs' physical health lies in the hands of the caretakers.

[I]f we capture animals and keep them in captivity, it's up to us to look after them and make sure they have the best life possible. [...] [F]irst and foremost, the people who are actually taking care of them. (P1)

Well, I think [...] ninety percent of the responsibility is with the guys who are working there on the farm. (P2)

So clearly, it's the owners and then the staff who are with the dogs on a day-to-day basis. I think they'd probably be the most important people in terms of the animals' welfare. (P7)

At this point it is timely to discuss the aspect of training of sled dogs, as that is something that is done by the caretakers. I will touch upon this again briefly in the subsequent chapter on knowledge, however, at this moment I would like to focus on training methods used.

Two participants were concerned about this.

So, the animals are used to being cheered on in some way, so with cheering calls. But not with a whip or something or with sticks or something. Like sometimes it's kind of... a riding crop or something. That wasn't done at all. And I didn't see that anywhere either and I actually found that – So let's say I want to have some speed now, then it could also come to that sometimes, right? And that you then just use something like that. And that's not what happened there [at Bearhill Husky]. (P4)

And then also how they are trained to pull the sleds. That it is not done with too much punishment but rather with, like, positive incentives. Because you wonder a little bit how they are brought to do that voluntarily. And how to deal with them if the dog is perhaps in puberty and perhaps in the middle of the race or in the middle of the tour for tourists simply doesn't want to anymore. [...] How then the dog is dealt with, so that they are not punished for it too much. (P6)

From these quotes, one can see that the concern that animals might be physically harmed, for example beaten with whips, is prominent. The fact that participant 4 specifically noticed and pointed out the lack of using sticks or whips makes me wonder if they have experienced other animal-based tourism activities where that was the case. This once again supports what I discussed earlier that the main focus of animal welfare is still on avoiding negative experiences.

All in all, the physical health of the sled dogs was the frame that presented as the most salient. Every participant mentioned the basic nutritional needs such as a good diet and sufficient access to water, as well as the principle of no harm. As such, it can be concluded that among tourists the avoiding negatives frame (Vigors, 2019) is still rather prominent when it comes to the physical health of working sled dogs.

4.2 Mental Health

As previously mentioned, most participants were also concerned with the dogs' mental wellbeing. This mental health frame presented in a few different ways. The most associated word was happiness, many participants stated that they would like for the dogs to be happy. The concept of happiness was followed by a concern for the human-animal relationship.

I'm thinking about harmony when the people, the men, can live with animals in harmony. That it's the relation built on the happiness. (P2)

And also, I guess, sort of caring for them and, yea, meeting their sort of emotional needs [...]. They [animals] have feelings, don't they? Particularly the more domesticated ones. But yea, if [...] they have a need, whatever the need is, if it's a health need or whether it's a physical need or a mental need, they're as important I would think. (P8)

While all of the participants seemed to realise and acknowledge that the sled dogs are animals who are capable of having feelings, i.e., sentient creatures (Campbell & Lee, 2021; Lecorps et al., 2021), none of the participants were able to explain this concept further or clarify how one would ascertain that a sled dog is happy. This comes as no surprise, considering that the scientific research on animal happiness is still in its infancy. Webb et al. (p. 62) stated in an article from 2019: "Although a number of articles addressing animal welfare mention the term animal happiness, this term is either not defined or defined inconsistently". If the academic community is not even sure yet what animal happiness really is, then it is unlikely that the general public would know. What was interesting to me, however, was one interviewee, namely participant 9, who suggested ways to improve an animal's psychological state. It has recently been suggested that animals, especially in captivity, can experience extreme emotional states such as depression (Lecorps et al., 2021) and one way to prevent depression-like symptoms or improve an animal's mental state is by providing enrichment (Carlstead & Shepherdson, 2000; Moesta et al., 2015). "Enrichment involves the practice of increasing the physical, social and temporal complexity of captive environments" (Carlstead & Shepherdson, 2000, p. 337). Participant 9 stated: "Positive animal welfare. So, it's enrichment for me. Environmental enrichment". They then went on to explain exactly how they provide enrichment for their own pet dog.

[F]or example giving tasks, nose work, searching, putting to hide something and let them find it. To freeze different foods in different balls adequate for dogs. To let them then work a lot to try to defreeze the food, to try to lick it out of the toy. To use different shapes of toys, to give them a lot of things to chew. (P9)

Especially chew toys, for example, “are thought to encourage play, exploratory, or foraging behavior and to decrease boredom” (Moesta et al., 2015, p. 166), while scent-related enrichment can bring forth more relaxed behaviour in canines (Moesta et al., 2015, p. 168). Enrichment in general has been proven to alleviate stress in captive animals (Carlstead & Shepherdson, 2000; Moesta et al., 2015) and from my own experience as a dog owner I can say that providing my dog with such environmental enrichment has made for a much calmer dog at home. Because of this answer and explanation by participant 9, I was then interested if they also see the pulling of the sled as a form of enrichment.

I would not know to call it enrichment for them, but it is definitely something that they are looking forward to, they are looking forward to spend their energy. And they enjoy it. It seems. (P9)

This seemed to be a common response from many participants. The pulling of the sled itself does not provide positive animal welfare, however, it provides the dogs with their needed exercise and, putting it casually, gives the dogs something to do. In more academic wording, I got the impression that the participants thought the pulling of the sled provides the dogs with purpose. Purpose can be understood as “meaningful activities in which to engage” (Scheier, et al., 2006, p. 291).

So, this kind of running gives the dogs some, some positive moments as well. Because otherwise, how their lives should look like? You're sitting, you're, well ... you have to do something, right? (P2)

As one can see from this quote, participant 2 views the sled pulling as a positive activity for the dogs, because they would otherwise not have alternative activities to occupy themselves and their time. Other participants merely saw the sled pulling as a form of exercise and indicated that they would like the dogs to engage in diverse activities additionally to the sled pulling. Participant 4, for example, suggested throwing a ball for the dogs to chase or going on leisure walks with them as alternatives to provide the dogs with a wider range of engagements. Leisure walks in the forest would provide the dogs with multi-sensory enrichment and playing fetch provides them with the opportunity to engage in natural hunting behaviours. I would, therefore, argue that with this suggestion participant 4 unknowingly speaks of environmental enrichment.

Concerning the human-animal relationship, DeMello (2012, p. 420) found that “it appears that humans need and want to stay connected to animals”. She further argues that as us

humans learn more about the complex social behaviours and the capacity for human-like emotions of animals, the lines between humans and animals become blurry (DeMello, 2012, p. 420). Especially companion animals, such as dogs, are increasingly interwoven into humans' lives, placed on a similar level as human companions, and sometimes even seen as fully-fledged family members (DeMello, 2012, pp. 419-420). This need to connect with the sled dogs was also evident from the participants responses and one participant saw it as an integral component for positive animal welfare.

[B]uilding friendship, relationship, close relationship, warmer relationship. So that's the positive welfare. [...] You're trying to be part of their life, to integrate somehow your time and their time. [...] It's not just the question, the dogs are eating enough or drinking enough water, et cetera. It's much more, I would say, it's a synergy between human and animals. (P2)

During the sled ride many participants explained that they felt as part of one team with the dogs.

[Y]ou could somehow empathise a bit with these animals. And not just say, I'm back here on the sled and I drive you and you have to do your job. But that one had a little bit, yea, [...] a group feeling with the animals. So, you could create a closeness. (P4)

I felt as though they were in charge as much as I was really. (P7)

I noticed that at some point they [the sled dogs] started to look back at, I guess, at me and I remembered [the guide] saying that when they looking to you [...] they are knowing that, yes, we are a team now. (P9)

To me, however, it seemed as though most participants considered the human-animal relationship primarily from the point of view of the humans. Many interviewees (P1, P2, P3, P9, P10) explained how spending time with animals improves their own mental health and provides them with positive emotions, which is something that has been supported abundantly (Odendaal & Meintjes, 2003). But only two participants (P2, P9) expressed that they thought spending time with humans also improves the animals' mental health. Participant 3 made a remark, which I think pointed out what many other participants were also thinking: "With the love it sort of brings the care with it" (P3). Thus, the human-animal relationship is crucial because the humans are in charge of taking care of an animal and when the human has a positive relationship with the animal and has strong emotions for the animal, they will make sure the animal has a high quality of life. This is complementary with a study done on the attribution of emotions to companion animals, namely dogs and

cats, which found that respondents who had strong emotional attributions to their companion animal also had a higher level of attachment (Su et al., 2018, pp. 8-11). Su et al. (2018, p. 11) furthermore point out that “animal emotions have been identified as a critical marker for animal welfare”. The described feeling of being a team with the dogs may therefore translate into positive welfare for them, i.e., the dogs.

The last element of mental health that participants emphasised was social interaction, both with humans and with other dogs. However, I got the impression that the latter was more important than the former.

[A] dog is a pack animal, that there are other dogs, for example, around. It is a lot of comfort for them. (P9)

I think where it comes down to is the difference between the affection part of it. Like the human interaction. But who am I to say that dogs actually need human interaction? I'm not really sure. (P10)

It has repeatedly been proven that dogs are social animals (Feddersen-Petersen, 2007) and that they “have a strong inherent desire to interact with other dogs” (Holcova et al., 2021, p. 1), thus, this is something that is known to the general public and now surfaced during the conducted interviews. Interestingly, according to a study done by Hennessy et al. (1998) especially domesticated dogs experience positive benefits from human interaction. For example, “human contact has been found to be more effective than canine contact both in quieting puppies isolated in a novel environment [...], and in reducing the cortisol response of adult dogs tested under” (Hennessy et al., 1998, p. 75) stressful environments. The question posed by participant 10 can, as such, not be answered directly. But what can be said is that dogs do benefit from interaction with both humans and other dogs and, thus, it might contribute to their positive welfare. The participants were appeared to be aware of this.

5. ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

5.1 Knowledgeable Caretakers

The third outstanding association, after physical health and mental health, which participants formed to the concept of positive animal welfare was one surrounding different aspects of knowledge. As previously discussed, the interviewees saw the main responsibility for (positive) animal welfare in the hands of the caretakers of said animals. Thus, within the knowledge frame, participants attached a high value to the knowledge of the caretakers.

I felt that the staff had the knowledge of the animals. They seemed to know each individual. Again, that gives one confidence that there is a level of genuine care for them. (P7)

I suppose it's about having a really good knowledge of the dogs, of their breed, [...], having people look after them who are really knowledgeable, who can, who understand how the dogs behave in different situations and what that means. So, I guess it's people who have an, you know, a good understanding of dog behaviour. [...] [A]nd that comes from, I guess, from spending time and working with the dogs and getting to know the fact that they all have individual personalities as well. (P8)

Another very important thing is to know your animal or dog very well, to study your animal and to have basic information about different physiological problems like hips, back and joints. (P9)

[W]e did talk with these guys who had the reindeer, you know, this young man. He has his own herd that he's inherited [...]. And how much of a steward they are for those reindeer. [...] So, it's just interesting. (P11)

The Merriam-webster online dictionary (2022b) defines stewardship as “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care”. And even though this quote by participant 11 references reindeer, I do still think it can be applied to how the participants thought of sled dog care as well. All interviewees made similar statements as the four above. Thus, all participants thought the knowledge of the animal is an integral part to improving its welfare. Mellor et al. (2009, p. 118) made a similar argument by stating that by “studying the ecology and behaviour of existing [...] species, or close relatives, contributes to our understanding of how the domesticated species should be managed to maximize their welfare”. In this argument, the authors were specifically referring to dogs and their ancestors the wolves. Thus, having knowledge of the animal species that one is taking care of is seen as crucial. As can be seen from the quote by

participant 9, this also connects again to the physical health of the dogs. But in my opinion the statements made by the participants go even beyond just species knowledge. Both participant 7 and participant 8 made a reference to individuality. Thus, it seems that it is not only important to have knowledge about the animal species in general, i.e., knowledge about dogs. However, much importance is also placed on knowing each individual dog and their distinctive personality. This is unsurprising, as “results of personality studies in animals have revealed suggestions of human personality traits in different species of animals” (Svartberg & Forkman, 2002, p. 134), including dogs. Participant 4 described a fitting example from the start of their dog sledding tour as to how this level of knowledge was apparent at Bearhill Husky. Before their sled took off, there was some conflict between the two dogs strapped in as lead dogs. One of Bearhill Husky’s employees noticed this and decided to change the positioning of the dogs last minute in order to ensure a smoother ride for both dogs and humans. Participant 4 pointed out that he was impressed with this level of attention and consideration.

We both found that to be a very positive thing. [...] [B]ecause with all the hustle and bustle and with all the yapping and barking, [...] that he apparently also observed this. And that he then also took this into consideration. To give the animals, so to speak, [...] more optimal conditions, at least in this sport exercise. (P4)

Furthermore, participant 9 pointed out that having uninformed caretakers can have a negative impact on the animals’ welfare. Especially when the caretakers are financially profiting off the animals.

[W]hen you put people that are not very educated, you give them animals, that cannot defend themselves and then you make a business out of them ... It’s a very, very, very dangerous combination. (P9)

Even though this might not be such a pressing issue anymore in Finland, to my knowledge, it certainly is in other parts of the world. Mishra and Mitra (2020), for example, analyse cases of animal abuse in India. In India’s dairy farming industry artificial insemination of the animals is often done with unsterile tools because the farmers are unfamiliar with the risks (Mishra & Mitra, 2020, pp. 592-593). And although inexperience was most likely not a defining factor in this incident, the case of mass euthanasia of sled dogs following the 2010 Winter Olympics in Canada (McCrimmon, 2013; The Canadian Press, 2012), which I described in the introduction, is another prime example of financial greed by humans impacting animal welfare. But even if no profit motives are involved and the caretaker has

the best intention, animal abuse may still occur due to either unwilful or wilful ignorance. Loving (2011), for example, points out that owners of horses might unknowingly harm their beloved animal by providing too much food and, thus, causing obesity. The same applies for dogs (Bland & Hill, 2012). Thus, I would argue that the participants are legitimate in ascribing importance to the knowledge and experience level of the dogs' caretakers.

5.2 Educating People Outside of the Kennels

Multiple participants suggested that positive animal welfare in the dog sledding industry could be achieved by, which I found best described as, educating people outside of the kennels. I chose the term outside, because some participants talked about educating the tourists visiting the kennels, as such referring also to themselves, but numerous interviewees also saw importance in educating the general public. As such, by people outside of the kennels, I mean all people who are not directly involved with the kennel and who do not spend any more time than an average tourist at the premises. This includes the guests and the wider public, but it excludes for example the owners, staff or volunteers at the kennel. I will start with the general public, as this was mentioned in more general terms. Whereas the education of guests was discussed by the participants in much more detail.

The education of the public was seen as an important aspect of animal welfare in general, not just in the dog sledding industry. Participant 2, for example, argued that society has an impact on animal welfare legislation and, thus, an educated society is necessary to drive the positive animal welfare development forward. Both participant 1 and participant 8 saw the younger generations as crucial actors. While participant 3, for example, found that a positive aspect of keeping animals in captivity was that it increases awareness for said animals.

[T]he society itself should drive this conversation, first. Because politics just follow the society. [...] [S]ociety playing a very, very significant role to drive this. To demand this if you want. That you're visiting some place with animals it should be like this. If society do not take care, like, well, nothing will happen. (P2)

I think a lot of people just are ill informed. [...] I think [...] people have to be more educated about it from school at a young age. [...] There has to be more informed people. (P1)

I think as well, it's the right sort of time to look at it [animal welfare]. [...] [B]ecause there are [...] always young people interested in sort of developing these kind of social causes. (P8)

Also, it [animals in captivity] can be a place for people to come and see them as well because [...] it sort of brings awareness of animals lives to sort of other people that wouldn't normally be able to see them. (P3)

In my opinion, all four interviewees make relevant arguments. In 2006 already Horgan and Gavinelli (pp. 303-305) argued that consumers, at least in the EU, are increasingly demanding better treatment of farm animals and spoke of a “seismic shift” in mindset which legislators and policy-makers would have to respond to. A 2019 study on exotic animals, for example, found that “a 73% increase in students seeing the illegal trade of exotic animals as a negative effect on the wild populations of these species was seen after an information session on this topic” (Spee et al., 2019, p. 12). Studies also suggest that “conservation initiatives by zoos increase the awareness of zoo visitors” (Fukano et al., 2021, pp. 919-920). Thus, supporting the arguments made by the participants that educational sessions can shape opinions as well as that animals in captivity can raise awareness among the public.

Now coming to the education of the tourists, it is worth pointing out that this was again linked back to the knowledge of the caretakers. Thus, knowledgeable caretakers are a prerequisite for the education of the guests. Once this condition is fulfilled, a knowledge transfer from the caretakers to the tourists can and should happen, as pointed out specifically by participant 10.

What I found cool was that in the beginning the guide talked about their attitude and said that we have to take care of the dogs and that it is important that we are a team with the dogs. And that it is ultimately also our job to make sure that the dogs are doing well. (P5)

[T]he fact that they gave us some background knowledge of the animals which seemed to indicate that they wanted to share the knowledge of the animal with you, so that you would look after the animal well. That's how it came across to me. (P7)

[L]ike I don't know very much about reindeer, for example. I am trusting that the people in Finland know more about it than I do and can educate me properly. (P10)

Furthermore, there seemed to be a consensus among the interviewees that in case no active information transfer is happening, at least transparency about animal welfare practices is

expected and creates reassurance of positive welfare practices. Participant 1, for example, described how elements such as the living quarters of the dogs were visible for the tourists. As such, no information exchange was happening, i.e., the guide was not explaining anything to participant 1, but they could simply see the practices for themselves and gain assurance through that. Another example came from participant 8 who pointed out that my presence at the kennel and Bearhill Husky's willingness to cooperate with the academia was reassuring, arguing that a kennel with poor welfare practices would not be willing to take part in such a project. Participant 10 brought up the example of an accident and that transparency about how the kennel handles this will be of importance.

It was nice to see that today. [...] [Y]ou see where they [the sled dogs] are living, you see what they are feeding them, you see how they are treated. [...] And I left here with a positive, positive vibe. With a positive idea, how this company treats their dogs. (P1)

[B]ecause I really do think that if there was a kennel that was worried about being put under scrutiny, they wouldn't want anybody outside coming in. (P8)

[I]f a husky broke a leg on a ride with tourists, like, how would they handle that? Like, right then and there. Would they put the puppy down? Would they keep the puppy and heal it and then hopefully, like, put it in an adoption situation? [...] Because the tourists are gonna want to know. (P10)

Although I was not able to find any specific studies on how transparency about animal welfare practices influences consumers' trust into the organisation, I did find an interesting study about consumer trust within the field of corporate social responsibility. Kim and Lee (2018, p. 119) found that "people are more likely to trust and be willing to advocate for an organization that communicates CSR initiatives in a highly transparent manner". One could imagine that the same is true for animal welfare practices.

Through this knowledge frame, and specifically the element of educating outsiders, multiple participants also realised their own role in the animal-based tourism industry, once in terms of making purchasing choices and once in terms of their own behaviour during the animal-based activity.

I do think that the consumer of the product or the tourists can influence that [animal welfare] to some degree because they could choose not to participate. (P11)

Our responsibility, when we're visiting some kind of places it's just to again follow the rules. And try as much as you can not to harm the animals and just to be very nice with them. (P2)

By saying that visitors to animal-based tourism activities need to follow the rules, participant 2 implies that a set of rules was communicated to them in the first place. Thus, this transfer of knowledge between, in this case, the guides and the tourists, and the quality thereof has an impact on the welfare of the animals. When we take a look specifically at the dog sledding tour offered by Bearhill Husky, some participants were of the opinion that the rules were communicated clearly and sufficiently, while other participants were not satisfied.

I think it was sufficient. I think they summarised it enough to where we knew that our – like the break was the most important thing, that we needed to be calm to the animals. [...] I think we could, like, take away the main points and, like, keep things safe. (P10)

I was nervous and I still was nervous before driving it [the sled]. So, something lacked. [...] Some knowledge, I cannot put it in words what it was. [...] [I]f this woman would have said maybe, you know, they [the dogs] are so super trained that they will go where they have to go, and when you break, they will break, and you have a complete like good team. But I was not so sure about that. (P9)

Similarly, when it came to the topic of animal welfare in general, some participants thought the information given was adequate, while a few others stated that they would have liked to learn more.

[T]hey could have sat us down and talked to us for four hours about welfare and maybe that's what someone would have wanted [...] but I think sometimes less is more when you're, like, trying to talk to tourists and make sure they're doing the right things. (P10)

That would perhaps be another thing there on site, that one maybe learns a little bit more about these animals. In advance. How old they are, and how they are trained, and whether they really enjoy it and that they have this joy for running. I think with that, one would be able to create also this closeness better. Between the animals and the tourists. So that it is not so, so consumed, so to speak. But that one then knows also a little bit more beforehand. (P4)

I think maybe that one could, at such a husky tour as today, at the beginning maybe [...] explain a little about the huskies. What kind of dogs they are, why they need a lot of exercise, what they were used for in the past by the Inuit. [...] And how it came about that they started these sled dog farms [...]. [S]o that you have a bit more background. Because that was not conveyed at all during the tour. (P6)

The common saying that you cannot please everyone seems to be very true in this case. While participant 10 was content with the amount of information they received, both in terms of safety on the tour and in terms of general animal welfare, participant 9 did not find

the safety information sufficient. Participant 4 and participant 6 made it very clear that they would have liked to learn more about general animal welfare, sled dog history, and breed characteristics. Both of them furthermore specifically pointed out that they would have liked to receive more information on the dogs' welfare before the start of the tour instead of afterwards. I do find it important to mention at this point that both participants 4 and 6 are native German speakers. As the tours are held in English, perhaps some of the information was given but might have not been fully understood. Nevertheless, it can be said that all interviewees enjoyed learning about the sled dogs and saw information exchange, both about safety guidelines and about general animal welfare practices, as a necessity for the continued wellbeing of the sled dogs.

5.3 Training of the Dogs

The last element within the knowledge frame is the training of the dogs. As discussed previously, some participants (P4, P6) pointed out the training of the dogs in the context of training methods and their potential for physical harm. However, now I would like to focus on the knowledge aspect, which was brought up by participant 2 and participant 9.

And I understand that the dogs is basically trained. It's not like, you know, we find some dogs, we catch some dogs on the streets and say, well, let's do some running, right? So, there's a proper training behind it. (P2)

[S]ince they [the sled dogs] are little, they are taught into take a lot of exercise by pulling. [...] They were trained since they were little to pull. (P9)

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines the word training as “the skill, knowledge, or experience acquired by one that trains” (2022d) and the verb teach as “to impart the knowledge of” (2022c). As such, the choice of words by both participant 2 and participant 9 indicates that they realised that there is a certain experience gain and knowledge intake that the dogs go through in order to evolve into fully fledged sled dogs. Including, for example, direction commands, awareness of when to spend energy and when to save energy, passing other teams and being passed (Äijälä, 2020; Hetta Huskies, n.d.). Äijälä (2020, p. 28) points out that a substantial amount of works goes into this training from both humans and dogs. On another level this also relates to two other previously discussed themes, namely, knowledgeable caretakers as well as physical health. From my personal understanding, the caretakers of the dogs need to be highly knowledgeable about the physiological composition as well as psychological condition of each dog in order to decide on the best

training approach. They need to get to know the dogs in detail and find out which dog has the potential to run as a lead dog, which dogs get along and work well together as well as their different running styles and paces (Hetta Huskies, n.d.). Furthermore, it is also crucial that the humans who are training the dogs realise and honour the dogs' skills and understand the dogs (Äijälä, 2020, p. 28). Äijälä (2020, p. 28) specifically points out that “touristic mushing entails that sled dogs and humans share knowledge and are able to communicate at some level”. In terms of physical health, the training needs to be scheduled gradually in order to develop endurance, built up the necessary muscles, and avoid injuries (Hetta Huskies, n.d.). Even though these listed points were not specifically mentioned by the participants, there still seemed to be an understanding that the training of a sled dog is a process and requires a great deal of considerations and expertise.

6. ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH ANIMAL'S NEEDS PERSPECTIVE

The two themes presented so far mainly saw animal welfare from the point of view of humans and their actions. For example, the physical health is determined by what the human feeds to their animals and in what kind of environment they keep them, the mental health is determined by the kind of entertainment the human provides. The knowledge frame also mostly focused on the expertise of the human caretakers and their ability to pass this expertise onto either other humans or the animals. When asked “positive animal welfare – what comes to your mind when you hear that term?”, only participant 8 specifically used the words “animal’s needs” and only participant 9 elaborated on this in the context of dogs.

The animal’s needs are [...] paramount. (P8)

[T]hey [dogs] need to be able to show me what they need. [...] [I]f they are happy, if they are afraid, if they like something. [...] [T]hat they get to smell, they get to zigzag on the walk. [...] To do their needs, you know, where they need to do them, where they want to. (P9)

An animal’s need can be defined as “a requirement, fundamental in the biology of the animal, to obtain a particular resource or respond to a particular environmental or bodily stimulus” (Bousfield & Brown, 2010, p. 4). These include physiological needs such as nutrition and hydration (Bousfield & Brown, 2010, p. 4), but also behavioural needs such as foraging and nest building (Jensen, 2002, pp. 32-33). The former was easily recognised and discussed by all participants, as presented in subchapter 4.1, even if they did not specifically use the words “animal’s needs”. The latter, however, was only explicitly discussed by participant 9. Thus, at first, I will focus mainly on the answers given by this participant.

In the quote above, participant 9 already mentions one crucial behavioural need of dogs, namely smelling. Holcova et al. (2021, p. 1) confirm that “olfaction is important [...] especially in canids”. Through sniffing, dogs collect information (Holcova et al., 2021, p. 1) as well as communicate with other dogs (Řezáč et al., 2011, p. 172). Furthermore, I would argue that the verbiage “to do their needs” hints towards urination, as that is a behaviour that often occurs in connection with sniffing and is usually done with the intention of marking (Westgarth et al., 2010, p. 45).

[F]or example giving tasks, nose work, searching, putting to hide something and let them find it. To freeze different foods in different balls adequate for dogs. To let them then work a lot to try to defreeze the food, to try to lick it out of the toy. To use different shapes of toys, to give them a lot of things to chew. Chew bones, other things that are adequate for them. (P9)

This was the quote that was already used and discussed in subchapter 4.2 in the context of mental health. But I want to have a look at it again from the perspective of animals' needs, or in particular dogs' needs. Participant 9 again refers to the need for sniffing by listing nose work and scent following. Additional to that, they also mention working for food in particular by chewing. The ancestor of the domesticated dogs, i.e., wolves, feed on different kinds of prey animals that require dismembering and chewing before they can be ingested (Arhant et al., 2021, p. 1). Even feral dogs feed on carcasses which require a substantial amount of chewing (Arhant et al., 2021, p. 1). As such, Arhant et al. (2021, p. 1) point out that "the motivation to dissect and chew might not be satisfied by bowl-feeding commercially available dog foods". Furthermore, Jensen (2002, pp. 31-33) suggests that there are certain behaviours in animals that are "hard-wired", meaning that they will still be performed even though they might have become unnecessary due to domestication.

I do realise that this analysis has now taken a bit of a turn towards the natural sciences. However, with this in-depth analysis of how participant 9 talked about dog behaviour and pointed out different needs of dogs and by comparing it to existing literature on behavioural needs of dogs, I wanted to illustrate in what ways exactly they considered the animal's needs. As a dog owner themselves, participant 9 was very aware of behavioural needs that go beyond physical health. At this point I would like to point out an article by Äijälä et al. (2020) in which the authors developed a scenario of what a typical day of a sled dog could look like in the future and how the dog's needs could be determined by technology. Äijälä et al. (2020, pp. 133-135) outline a 24-hour period in the day of a working sled dog where a micro-chip transmits vital information about the wellbeing and the needs of the dog to its caretaker as well as to the tourists. For example, the chip informs the caretaker about the dog's vitals and overall condition so that they can provide the dog with the correct amount of nutrition and water (Äijälä et al., 2020, p. 135). But the chip could also provide tourists with information about the dog's mood, letting them know if the dog desires interaction with the tourists or not (Äijälä et al., 2020, p. 135). Although such technology is most likely still far in the future, as the design of this scenario was merely speculative (Äijälä et al., 2020, p. 132-134), it still demonstrates an inventive and inspiring approach as to how

animal's needs could, firstly, be determined and consequently be respected in the future. Figure 2 below provides a more comprehensive overview and explanation of this scenario of future development.

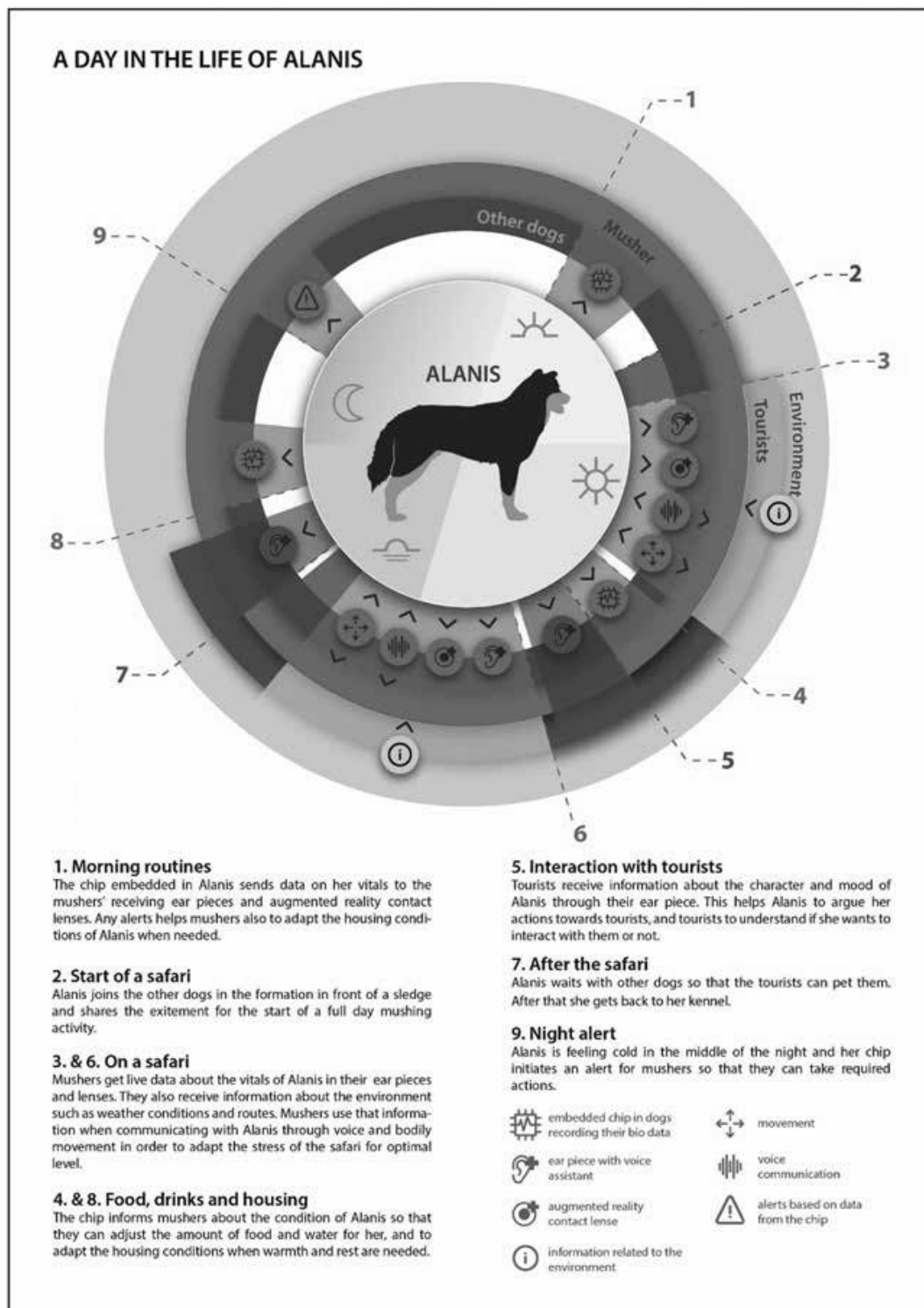


Figure 2: A day in the life of Alanis: Future scenario for determining sled dogs' needs
Source: Äijälä et al., 2020, p. 135

Turning towards more social scientific aspects of the animal's needs perspective now, Participant 9 continued their answer from page 56 with the quote below.

Because they show the better, I can then try to direct them to the right path. [...] [I]t's much that they get to show what they are interested in and then I will see if it's good for this moment. (P9)

I wanted to take a closer look at this statement because it stood out to me. As just discussed, participant 9 was the only one to both mention the animal's needs perspective and to elaborate on it extensively. The focus of this participant's answers was initially on the animals and their wants and needs, as covered thus far, yet, with the statement above the focus shifts from the perspective of the animal towards the role of the human. Participant 9 says they will "direct" the animal, which implies a certain control exerted by the human, I would argue. In my opinion, the verbiage "I will see if it's good" furthermore suggests that the human knows better than the animal and, thus, the final decision if the animal's needs should, can and will be met or not lies with the human. Moreover, what does it say that other participants did not specifically mention the animal's needs? Muldoon et al. (2016, p. 359) found that in children, "the development of an emotional relationship with animals is a necessary prerequisite to recognition of their needs". For adults no emotional connection is needed to recognise physical health needs, I would argue. Any adult knows that animals need species appropriate nutrition and hydration, which is why I think the physical health frame was so prominent during the interviews. But judging from the lack of the animal's needs perspective among participants, I would argue, that an emotional connection is needed in order to recognise needs beyond physical health. The subsequent discussion chapter will examine this and other underlying meanings further.

7. FURTHER DISCUSSION

I want to start this discussion by considering the human-animal relationship. From the interviews themselves and from the preceding analysis, it appears that the participants see humans as the central actor in human-animal relationships. Humans are the ones in charge of the physical as well as the mental health of animals, humans are the ones who disseminate knowledge about animal welfare, and humans are the ones ultimately managing animals' needs. This could be largely due to the fact that animals cannot verbally communicate with humans. As participant 1 pointed out in subchapter 4.1, you cannot ask animals if they are physically and mentally well or if they enjoy a certain activity or if they have a need that is not being met. And understanding and interpreting an animal's non-verbal behaviour requires knowledge of the species that not everyone might have, as exemplified by participant 8 below.

Because, you know, what might appear to somebody [as] 'oh that dog is distressed', to somebody else it could be 'actually the dog is excited'. And, you know, I certainly don't feel qualified, but obviously there are [qualified] people. (P8)

Additionally to that, Birke and Hockenhull (2012, pp. 2-3) point out that especially in Western cultures, which all of the participants are part of, humans and animals have conceptually been separated, with animals often presented as sub-human, not-human or other. Thus, "reinforcing hegemony of humans" (Birke & Hockenhull, 2012, p. 3). Synonyms for hegemony include predominance, authority and leadership. All of these terms imply a hierarchy with one party in charge of or dominating another. As such, it is no surprise that the participants would consider the human point of view above all else. And how can they not? Especially in the case of touristic dog sledding, it is undeniable that humans have a huge impact on the wellbeing of the animals. So, how can we not consider the human point of view and the human impact above all other? The participants seemed to have a similar train of thought. By the statements listed below I came under the impression that, essentially, **because** we are using animals for our own entertainment, we **therefore** need to make sure they are well.

In this case we are doing tourism and you are using the dogs for your own entertainment. So, in theory it's not that great. [...] But if they are then used for this, do it as good as you can and treat them as well as you can. (P1)

That if you use animals in tourism, [...], that you also make sure that the animals do what they would do by their nature, so to speak. (P6)

[M]ake the animals' lives not necessarily any worse for what we can, when we do use them, in a sense. [...] [M]aking sure they don't suffer for our benefit. (P9)

I think from these statements, although not directly vocalised, an underlying ethical question arises: how can we justify using animals for human benefit in the first place? Frey (2002, p. 288) has written an absolutely captivating discussion on this issue where they state that, “the issue of use at all is [...] fundamental. If we cannot satisfactorily deal with this issue, then it would seem to follow that we must, if we are morally serious, give up using animals [all together]”. The author furthermore argues that humans essentially try to shift accountability away from themselves for example, by blaming legislation or by downplaying our own drawn benefit (Frey, 2002, pp. 289-290). The three participant statements above gave me another impression, which I already touched upon. In touristic dog sledding the use of the dogs is already an established fact. The interviewees did not discuss the ethical issue that comes with using the dogs in the first place. No, they discussed the ways by which their pre-established usage can be made morally acceptable, i.e., through taking care of their welfare. This made me further wonder what the participants would have had to say about the welfare of animals which are not used by humans. Are animals in the wild responsible for their own welfare? Are humans only obligated to consider the welfare of those animals which we use for our own good? What about those animals that do not directly provide anything for humans, be it as a food source or as an entertainment source? And what about those animals that are commonly seen as “non-attractive, annoying, and troublesome creatures” (Valtonen et al., 2020, p. 2) like mosquitos? From these questions one could go into an extensive ethical discussion about humans' impacts on the earth and its inhabitants at large, considering that our activities here on this earth are cause for an abundance of problems. However, that would be beyond the scope and aim of this thesis. From these posed questions, I want to take the species aspect under further scrutiny.

Valtonen et al. (2020) wrote an interesting article in which they discuss narratives surrounding the just mentioned mosquito. In works on multispecies encounters in tourism the mosquito, and also other small insects, have usually been presented in a very negative light, with the mosquito being depicted as something that a tourist wants to avoid or outright kill (Valtonen et al., 2020, p. 8). Why is it that killing a mosquito is a common

practice and no one bats an eye when it is done? But the euthanasia of retired sled dogs receives a media outcry? I would argue that it involves a certain species discrimination by which the life of one species is deemed more valuable than the life of another species (Frey, 2002, p. 293). It is no secret that “for most people, [...] meaningful and enduring relationships with animal kin are those with companion or domesticated species, mostly mammals [...] – those in whom we may be able to recognize at least some emotional similarities” (Birke & Hockenhull, 2012, p. 2). With this quote we arrive back at the human-centric view from the beginning. It seems as though, the more similar an animal is to humans, the more concerned we are for their wellbeing. On this note, I want to bring up the interview with participant 1. Participant 1 was a former owner of reptiles, namely of an iguana and a chameleon. When speaking about the sled dogs, participant 1 was also one of the people that mentioned mental health in terms of wanting the dogs to be happy. When speaking about the reptiles, however, participant 1 only ever spoke about their physical health. As such, not acknowledging that reptiles might also be capable of feeling emotions like happiness or sadness.

You have to keep the humidity up and the temperature. The right food. You have to give them extra additives every several days to keep them properly nutritioned. (P1)

Additional to that, participant 1 again focused on the human point of view by concluding his talk about reptiles with the statement: “I wouldn’t take a reptile anymore, because it’s really hard work”. I am of course not trying to paint any of the participants in a bad light here. They were all genuinely concerned with the welfare of the sled dogs and animals in general. But I do still think it is telling of how they really frame animal welfare, which is from the point of view of humans. I have furthermore been wondering if exactly therein lies the difference between animal welfare and positive animal welfare. Does positive animal welfare imply that we consider the animal point of view first, instead of the human point of view? And what kind of implications does that have for the touristic dog sledding industry and the animal-based tourism industry at large?

If we take a detour and consider farm animals, Buller (2012, p. 53) argues that their welfare has “been largely understood in terms of their ability to ‘perform’ as food sources”. This is supported by the findings of Vigors’ (2019) study, which, as said before, is one of the main underpinnings for this thesis project. Vigors (2019, p. 9) found that farmers predominantly framed positive animal welfare in terms of productivity. In their mind a productive animal

was an indicator of a happy and a healthy animal that is being well cared for (Vigors, 2019, p. 9). However, few farmers also took on an animal's point of view (Vigors, 2019, pp. 12-13). They were of the opinion "that even with the best quality of care, or the best provision of resource needs, or the best management systems, the animal won't have a positive life if their preferences and point of view are not taken into consideration" (Vigors, 2019, p. 13). This is a similar mindset that I found came across in the answers of participant 9 as discussed in the previous chapter number 6. In subchapter 5.3 when discussing the training of the dog, I furthermore touched upon some ways in which the dogs' preferences are taken into account by some kennel operators already. For example, by only letting dogs run in the lead that have the cleverness and show the drive for it (Hetta Huskies, n.d.) or by rehoming dogs in case they are not suitable for a touristic dog sledding kennel (Frei Bandieri, 2021). The scenario created by Äijälä et al. (2020), which was described in the previous chapter, is another way that we can perhaps consider the animal's point of view in an even larger scope in the future. In any case, taking the animal's point of view and their preferences into consideration and taking active steps towards a positive welfare might in the long-term also benefit the business, as brought up by participant 8.

I think certainly if you're involved in leisure and using animals for leisure and tourism, it [animal welfare] absolutely should, you know, be at the forefront because I think it's a way of promoting a business in a positive way [...]. I think they would definitely attract more customers if they've got a better rating in terms of positive animal welfare. So, it's kind of a win-win really. Better for the animals and should be better for the businesses as well. (P8)

This type of win-win situation has been demonstrated for example in the context of environmentally friendly business practices. A study by Montabon et al. (2007, pp. 1007-1009) found that environmental management practices, such as recycling and proactive waste reduction, have a positive impact on business performance. I could imagine that the same applies for animal welfare practices in the animal-based tourism industry. I have found one example from the tourism industry in which this type of win-win situation has been achieved. The Il Ngwesi II Group Ranch in Kenya is a prime case of ethical business practices supporting business performance (Gilisho, 2020). Here, wildlife conservation, community development and business performance all go hand in hand (Gilisho, 2020). Furthermore, another component resonates from the statement made by participant 8 when they say that such dog sledding kennel should promote their business through highlighting their positive animal welfare practices. As discussed earlier in subchapter 5.2, some of the interviewees stated that they would have liked to learn more about welfare practices for the

sled dogs, specifically **before** the start of the tour. All of these comments point towards a certain pattern that I noticed: soothing one's own conscious. If one is told before the start of the tour that the dogs are well taken care of and how exactly they are taken care of, then one can take part in the sled ride with a peace of mind. But because this information transfer did not happen before the start of the tour, as the so-called 'husky talk' typically happens during the sled ride as described in subchapter 1.4, one participant (P5) actively admitted to their own cognitive dissonance and for a few other participants (P8, P11) I noticed a certain cognitive dissonance shining through in their statements. It seemed as though the participants either simply assumed that the sled dogs were well taken care of, or they consciously or subconsciously decided not to pay too much thought to this issue in order to ease their own mind.

Yes, I think that if you have participated [in a dog sledding tour], then you try a little bit to reduce the uneasy feeling that you have, cognitively. And I have to say that this also happened to me. That I thought, 'not to worry, they've got it pretty good, running is also their natural behaviour, it's also fun for them'. (P5)

But actually, you kind of just assume that they [the dogs] are being looked after. And it was only afterwards that I thought, well, I hope they really are. (P8)

I always get a little twinge of 'is this the right thing?' or 'is this not the right thing?' [...]. My daughter arranged the trip, so she's the one who kind of booked all this stuff. So, I kind of just went along with it. (P11)

Without diving too far into the theory of psychology, I want to explain cognitive dissonance shortly. The term was coined by Festinger (1957). It can be understood as inconsistencies that a person notices in themselves, for example in their beliefs, knowledge or opinions, and then tries to actively reduce these inconsistencies (Festinger, 1957, pp. 1-3). In the context of wider animal welfare, the cognitive dissonance that comes with meat consumption has been studied extensively (Dowsett et al., 2018; Rothgerber & Rosenfeld, 2021). In the case of the participants, I would argue that the dissonance, or the inconsistency, arose between their desire to take part in the dog sledding tour and their uncertainty about the treatment of the dogs or the uncertainty if the pulling of the sled is potentially harmful for them. As such, it made me wonder what the statement by participant 8 on the previous page was really about. Was it really about the benefit for the dogs and ultimately the business? Or was it perhaps subconsciously more about the fact that it would have soothed their own doubts? They stated furthermore that they did not consider the treatment of the dogs before the start of the tour, but only afterwards (see

quote by participant 8 above). That makes me wonder if they consciously or subconsciously suppressed these kinds of thoughts beforehand? Or did this really simply not cross their mind? And would an advertisement by Bearhill Husky, highlighting animal welfare, have really changed anything? Contrarily, another participant pointed out that they personally do not trust advertisements when it comes to animal welfare by stating: “[Y]ou know, the more colourful the pages, the more you have to think about what’s wrong behind it” (P9). In my opinion, this relates back to the aspect of transparency that was discussed in subchapter 5.2. Essentially, I would argue that this means that (positive) animal welfare is something that cannot just be talked about. But it is something that needs to be actively demonstrated by the kennel and, thus, something that can be seen by the visitors. For example, as described in the previous chapters, at Bearhill Husky the interviewees noticed that some dogs were wearing boots to prevent injuries. The interviewees were also able to watch the staff attach the dogs to the sled and pointed out that this was done with care. Another situation where, for example, the extensive knowledge and close attention paid by the staff of Bearhill Husky was apparent was described by participant 4 in subchapter 5.1. These are all fitting examples of situations where Bearhill Husky and its staff demonstrated (positive) animal welfare to their visitors.

Although this discussion has certainly posed more questions than it answered, I think we can take away three main points. Firstly, animal welfare is still largely interpreted through a human-centric lens and perhaps by shifting this lens towards the animal’s point of view we could be on a path towards achieving positive animal welfare. Secondly, taking steps towards positive animal welfare within the touristic dog sledding industry should be a given, as the chances are high that it will not only benefit the animals, but it should, in the long run, also improve the business performance. Thirdly, (positive) animal welfare needs to be visible for guests coming to the kennel, as spoken words might not be believed, and more information needs to be disseminated perhaps already before the guests arrive at the kennel.

8. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to explore what constitutes positive animal welfare in the minds of tourists who have participated in animal-based tourism activities by using the example of dog sledding in Finnish Lapland. It was explored if the participants were familiar with the term positive animal welfare, what kind of associations they had with the concept, and how they thought it could be achieved in the touristic dog sledding industry. The main research question was: What constitutes positive animal welfare in the minds of tourists? Under the guidance of this main question, I also looked at what internal frames tourists draw from when presented with the term positive animal welfare, how tourists think positive animal welfare can be achieved in dog sledding tourism, and who has an influence on the (positive) welfare of sled dogs. Ten free association narrative interviews were carried out with a total of eleven participants.

The findings of this study showed that tourists were not familiar with the term positive animal welfare and had rather differing ideas of what it means. Some participants understood animal welfare and positive animal welfare to be the same concept, while others perceived a difference between the two. The most common distinction between animal welfare and positive animal welfare was the belief that positive animal welfare goes beyond the status quo. For the concept of positive animal welfare three main frames were present in the answers of the participants, namely health, knowledge, and the animal's needs perspective. The most common association was that of physical health, as that is easily measurable. This included elements such as regular veterinary checks, up-to-date vaccines, and sufficient space to move. Mental health was also brought up by the majority of participants, however, more ambiguously. Multiple participants stated that they would like for the sled dogs to be happy but were not able to elaborate further on what that exactly means. Enrichment, social interaction with either humans or other animals, and giving the captive animals a purpose, for example case through the sled pulling in this case, were suggested as a means to achieve positive mental health. Within the theme of knowledge, interviewees placed much importance on the expertise of the caretakers of the animals, followed by the education of what I termed as people outside of the kennels, meaning anyone who does not own, work or volunteer for the dog sledding kennel. In terms of knowledgeable staff, it was essential for the participants that the staff not only have species-specific knowledge, but also knowledge of the personality of each individual animal. Within the element of educating people outside of the kennels, interviewees were

referring to themselves, i.e., providing tourists with sufficient safety and animal welfare information, but also to the general public. Furthermore, there seemed to be a consensus that if knowledge is not actively transferred, at least transparency about animal welfare practices is expected and creates reassurance of positive welfare practices. I discussed this last aspect further in the context of cognitive dissonance, which I noticed in some participants. It seemed as though some interviewees would have liked to receive more information about sled dog welfare in order to ease their own doubts. Training of the dogs was another aspect that arose under the knowledge frame. This was linked back to the knowledge of the caretakers, as they are the ones carrying out the training. In this frame I found it notable that the participants seemed to realise that in order to bring up a fully-fledged sled dog a lot of expertise, time and training is necessary. As such, they also identified the caretakers or the staff of the kennel as the most important influencers of sled dog welfare. The general public or society as well as the tourists themselves were also brought up as crucial actors in achieving positive animal welfare. The former through driving a societal change and, thus, advancing legislation. The latter through making ethical purchasing choices. The last theme that emerged was that of the animals' needs perspective. Here, it was interesting that only one participant specifically brought this up, while the rest of the interviewees did not. This supported the notion that positive animal welfare is still approached primarily from a human point of view. Furthermore, I came under the impression that the participants did not question the fundamental ethical issues that arise with using animals for tourism purposes in the first place. The usage and captivity of the animals was a given and was then seemingly justified with concern for and achievement of their wellbeing.

This thesis contributes to the general body of knowledge surrounding positive animal welfare. It furthermore brought a new perspective to this concept by considering it within the context of the animal-based tourism industry, which had not been done thus far. My personal hope is that this thesis will encourage even further research into the concept of positive animal welfare and, thus, bring more awareness towards this topic. Which in the long-term will hopefully benefit animals in all kinds of circumstances. In addition, the study provided an insight into the thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions of tourists and discussed some further ethical dilemmas that arise. In the tourism industry at large, for example, the usage of animals all together perhaps needs to be reevaluated. Furthermore, the human-animal relationship in Western cultures as well as the apparent species discrimination are aspects that should be rethought. Of course, this will not happen

overnight, and it might still be a long time before the majority of tourists really consider the sled dogs' point of view and it will probably be even longer before someone thinks twice before killing a mosquito. However, I do believe that taking up these topics in the academia is a first step towards a more species-inclusive and animal-centred way of thinking.

In terms of specific managerial implications for touristic dog sledding kennels, the guides could provide more detailed information about the dogs, their breed history, and their welfare before the start of each tour. Or such information could be made more accessible and easier to find on the company website. As stated during the previous discussion chapter, however, animal welfare is something that needs to be demonstrated and be easily seen by tourists instead of just talked about. Thus, touristic dog sledding kennels could consider developing a new product which provides an in-depth kennel tour for their visitors. As part of this product, they could show their guests around the kennel premises and have a staff member explain day-to-day practices. Perhaps even an immersive element could be added by including the tourists in the feeding or grooming of the dogs. With this, tourists would get a more detailed insight, have a special and memorable experience as they get to see "behind the scenes", and be reassured about the care of the dogs. This engaging product could either be offered in conjunction with a sled ride or as a stand-alone experience. As many participants mentioned the aspect of space, touristic dog sledding kennels could also, if possible, enlarge the dogs' enclosures and, if existent, making sure to show the tourists the free running fence, as Bearhill Husky already does.

As with any research project, there are certain limitations to this study. As previously indicated, the participants' background was not very important to me. However, I do think it is important to keep in mind that all of the interviewed people seemed to come from the upper and middle class. They were all able to afford a multi-day vacation to Lapland including the dog sledding activity, which is known to be rather expensive. Thus, their views might differ from people coming from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, the number of people interviewed was rather small, compared to Vigors' (2019) study. As such, perhaps the richness of data does not suffice to paint a clear picture. Additionally, I find it important to mention that this was the first time for me conducting research interviews, which means that I was rather inexperienced in this task. Perhaps a more skilled and experienced interviewer would have been able to collect even more in-depth data.

For future research projects I suggest examining this same topic but from the perspective of the kennel owners and their staff. It would be interesting to see what kind of associations they have with positive animal welfare and how they think it can be implemented in their own kennels. One could then compare the outcome to the answers given by my participants. Furthermore, undertaking a similar study but within the context of a different animal-based tourism activity would give a more comprehensive idea of how different types of tourists view this topic. As stated during the analysis, many of my participants had rather negative views of certain types of animal-based tourism activities, for example, zoos and circuses. Interviewing frequent visitors to such places about positive animal welfare might provide further insight into how they view the welfare of those captive animals. Another suggestion for future research is to consider the communication aspect further. What I mean by that is that one could look into how existing positive animal welfare practices in the tourism industry need to be communicated to the tourists in order for them to recognise it as such. This would perhaps also create a path towards the previously discussed win-win situation, thus, motivating more animal-based tourism operators to invest in providing positive animal welfare.

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APPENDIX 1: The Recruitment Letter

DO YOU LIKE SLED DOGS?

ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT THE WELLBEING OF SLED DOGS?

DO YOU WANT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ON THIS TOPIC?

PARTICIPATE IN MY STUDY!

Hello,

My name is Elena Beuttner, and I am master student of Northern Tourism (NoTo) at the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland. I am currently writing my master thesis under the supervision of Professor Outi Rantala (contact details: +385404844202, outi.rantala@ulapland.fi).

As part of my thesis, I am conducting a study on animal welfare in the dog sledding industry. The purpose of the study is to find out more about how tourists, such as yourself, think and feel about animal welfare in the dog sledding industry. Bearhill Husky, who you booked your dog sledding tour with, is helping me find participants.

You do not need any prior knowledge. I am simply interested in your feelings and thoughts towards this topic. Participation would mean the following:

- You participate in your dog sledding tour as planned.
- On the bus ride back to the city centre we have a chat about animal welfare. OR After your tour, we find a quiet coffee shop in the city centre where we have a chat about animal welfare.
- The conversation will be voice-recorded.
- Your answers will be analysed in my thesis.

All information will of course be processed anonymously and personal information that appears in the conversation will be left out or changed. Before the interview, you will receive information on data protection and the use of the data, as well as a declaration of consent.

Please contact me directly, or my supervisor Outi Rantala, if you are interested in participating in my study or if you would like to receive more information about it!

Sincerely,

Elena Beuttner
NoTo Master Student
+43 677 626 631 66
ebeuttne@ulapland.fi

APPENDIX 2: The Recruitment Survey



LAPIN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND



DO YOU LIKE SLED DOGS? PARTICIPATE IN MY STUDY!

My name is Elena Beuttner, and I am a master student of Northern Tourism (NoTo) at the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland. I am currently writing my master thesis under the supervision of Professor Outi Rantala about animal welfare in the dog sledding industry.

If you would like to participate, please answer the questions below.
Please indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly agree			Strongly disagree			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoyed my tour today.							
The sled dogs are well taken care of.							
The sled dogs enjoy pulling the sled.							
The sled dogs have a high quality of life.							
Animal welfare in tourism is important.							

What is the main reason you chose Bearhill Husky for your dog sledding tour?
Please only choose one answer.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Price | <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation from others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical treatment of their dogs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone else chose for me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distance/Length of the Tour | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: |

Are you willing to participate in a more detailed interview? Leave your contact information below!

First Name	
Are you 18 years or older?	
E-Mail Address	
Phone Number (incl. country code)	

Contact Details:
Elena Beuttner, +43 677 626 631 66, ebeuttne@ulapland.fi
Outi Rantala, +385 40 484 4202, outi.rantala@ulapland.fi

APPENDIX 3: The Interview Guideline

Interview Guideline for the Thesis Project:

TOURISTS' FRAMING OF POSITIVE ANIMAL WELFARE IN ANIMAL-BASED TOURISM ACTIVITIES

The Example of Dog Sledding in Finnish Lapland

Warm-up	
2 – 3 minutes	<p><u>Introduction (done by the Interviewer):</u> Explain what the study is for Explain the rights of the participant Get signature on consent form Explain the interview method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you briefly introduce yourself? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age range (<i>only if I cannot tell their age</i>) ○ Nationality ○ Background regarding animals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you ever had or currently have pets? ▪ What role do animals play in your life? ▪ What previous experiences with animals do you have? ▪ What is the meaning of animals for you? ▪ What previous ABT* experiences have you had? ○ Previous contact with animal welfare topic ○ Diet
Positive Animal Welfare	
20 – 25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive animal welfare – can you tell me about what comes to your mind when you hear this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follow-up questions depending on the answers given.
Back-up Questions	
<i>Only applicable if participant has nothing to say</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How about the term animal welfare – does something come to your mind about this? • If you think about the sled dog ride you just had – what comes to your mind about the quality of life of the dogs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you now have any associations with or thoughts about the term animal welfare or positive animal welfare?

<p><i>Only applicable if participant has nothing to say</i></p>	<p><i>If they still have nothing to say continue here:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the reason that you have no thoughts or opinions on this topic? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why does nothing come to your mind? <p><u>Avoiding Negatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does it take, in your opinion, for an animal to live a good life? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What about sled dogs specifically? ● What elements do you think are part of animal welfare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you give any general examples? ○ Can you give any examples that relate to the sled dog ride you just had? ● How do you think animal welfare can be evaluated or measured? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which specific criteria would you use? ○ Which criteria would you use specifically for sled dogs? <p><u>Working towards Positives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have you heard of the term positive animal welfare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If yes, can you explain to me what it is? ○ If not, what do you think it could mean? ● What was the first thing that came to your mind when you just heard the term positive animal welfare? ● Do you think there is a difference between animal welfare and positive animal welfare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why or why not? ○ If yes, what exactly makes the difference in your opinion? ● How do you think positive animal welfare can be evaluated or measured? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which specific criteria would you use? ○ Which criteria would you use specifically for sled dogs? <p><u>Actors in Animal Welfare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who is, in your opinion, responsible for animal welfare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who is, in your opinion, responsible for animal welfare in the tourism industry? ○ And for sled dogs specifically?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you think can influence animal welfare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who do you think can influence animal welfare in the tourism industry? ○ And for sled dogs specifically?
Closing	
1 minute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think your participation in the dog sledding tour has changed or influenced your opinion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why or why not? • Is there anything else you would like to add?

*ABT = Animal-Based Tourism

Questions mostly derived from:

Spooner, J. M., Schuppli, C. A., & Fraser, D. (2014). Attitudes of Canadian citizens toward farm animal welfare: A qualitative study. Livestock Science, 163, 150-158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.livsci.2014.02.011>

Anneberg, I., Lassen, J., & Sandøe, P. (2021). For the Sake of Production-And the Animal, and Me. How Students at Danish Agricultural Colleges Perceive Animal Welfare. Animals, 11(3), 696. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11030696>

Vigors, B. (2019). Citizens' and Farmers' Framing of 'Positive Animal Welfare' and the Implications for Framing Positive Welfare in Communication. Animals, 9(4), 147. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9040147>

APPENDIX 4: The Letter of Consent

LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear Participant,

My name is Elena Beuttner. I am Master student at University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland under the supervision of Associate Professor Outi Rantala (+385404844202, outi.rantala@ulapland.fi). You are invited to participate in my master thesis study entitled "Tourists' Framing of Positive Animal Welfare in Animal-Based Tourism Activities". The purpose of the study is to explore how tourists, who have participated in animal-based tourism, frame the concept of positive animal welfare by using the example of dog sledding in Finnish Lapland.

The result of the study will be published as part of my master thesis. The thesis is conducted as part of the master's degree programme in Northern Tourism (NoTo).

By signing this letter, you give consent to use the interview material confidentially and exclusively for research purposes. The research follows the principles for responsible conduct of research dictated by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research. The data will be handled anonymously. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw your permission even after signing this document, by informing the below mentioned contact person.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, if you would need further information regarding the study and the use of the research data.

Sincerely,

Elena Beuttner
NoTo Master student
+43 677 626 631 66
ebeuttne@ulapland.fi

I give consent to use the interview as data for the purpose mentioned above.

Signature

Date

Print Name