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TRAVELING WITH MY DOG:

Exploring the role of animal agency in the co-creation of tourism experience

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Abstract

The research explores the agency of dogs in shaping tourism experiences. It examines how dogs, as active agents, influence their guardians' decisions, social interactions, and emotional engagement during the tourism journey. This research contributes to the growing understanding of multispecies interactions in tourism, emphasizing the need to recognize animals' agency and their meaningful impact in the co-creation of tourism experiences. In this research, I acknowledge the tourist and the dog as a dyad, being at the heart of the experience and aim to recognize their interspecies entanglement and mutual role as travelers. As the number of companion animals and the facilitation of services for them are increasing, combining animal agency in the context of traveling with dogs appears relevant for the current tourism consumers and industry.

By understanding the impact of a dog on a human's subjective tourism experience, this study aims to provide insights into the phenomenon and the importance of why it is important to accommodate tourism beyond human agency. The main research question is: How is the dog's agency reflected in the co-creation of the tourism experience? This research question is followed by two sub-questions: How do dogs take part in co-creating tourism experiences? How is the dog displaying agency on a holiday? The research is conducted by semi-structured interviews combined with preliminary data from user-generated posts on social media.

The research findings revealed that dogs significantly impact the guardian's tourism experience. The findings represent the holistic influence of dogs, including social, emotional, and actual effects on the tourism journey. Additionally, further analysis highlighted four categories of impact reflecting dogs' agency within the tourism experience: dogs shaping human sensory perception, need for negotiation and adaptation, shared more-than-human agency, and the dog's impact on social dynamics. These insights contribute to the importance of including non-human animals' as active participants in tourism, shaping meaningful connections between and beyond the guardian and the dog.

KEYWORDS: Co-creation, tourism experience, animal agency, travel with dog, more-than-human agency

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

There is a growing interest in animal well-being in today's society, leading to increased research and awareness. As humans and animals are often separated in daily life, many seek ways to better understand and connect with animals outside of it. This interest has contributed to the rise of animal-based tourism, which offers various opportunities for human-animal encounters that go beyond the domesticated animals (Von Essen et al., 2020). However, not all human-animal interactions occur within tourism. The growing trend of pet ownership, particularly dogs, also reflects society's increasing desire for companionship with animals (American Pet Product Association, 2023; Zaki, 2023).

Therefore, this thesis focuses on dogs, as they are one the most common companion animals in Finland, where the research is conducted (Statistics Finland, 2020). It's estimated to be over 800,000 dogs in Finland (The Finnish Kennel Club, 2023a), and yearly registered dogs have exceeded the number of children born in families in recent years (Finnish Kennel Club, 2023b; Statistics Finland, 2023). Dogs are very dear to their guardians, to whom they provide unconditional love (Blouin, 2012). People interact with their dogs in various ways, and often, the presence of a pet can generate benefits similar to a conversation with a family member or a friend and even resemble a companionship similar to humans (Veevers, 1985). This strong bond is what defines them as companion animals.

As perceptions of dogs are shifting from pets to companion animals, further understanding their value in decision-making and everyday habits is essential. Companion animals became especially important during the peaks of the Covid-19 pandemic, as the increased time spent at home heightened the awareness of the need for companions in many households (Ho et al., 2021; The Finnish Kennel Club, 2023b). As a result, Kylkilahti et al. (2016) explain that living with companion animals impacts people beyond their daily routines, as they also shape people's consumer habits.

Beyond their presence in everyday life, dogs also play a role in shaping tourism experiences. The increasing number of companion animals has fueled the need for pet-friendly tourism options (Buhalis & Chan, 2023). Carr (2017, p. 112) explains that many people see their dogs as

family members and, therefore, tend to take them on holidays with them. The tourism experience is known to be affected by many factors outside of the one perceiving it (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009, p. 322), which is why companion animals also affect the holistic experience perceived by the human part. Therefore, the impact of companion animals on the tourism experience can be very holistic — the travelers need to adapt their decisions from choosing a destination, transportation, restaurants, and activities to the ones that also cater to the animal companions' needs (Kirillova et al., 2015).

This thesis focuses on the viewpoint that dogs are not just passive pets but are active agents who give and take. This perspective is also adopted by Kylkilahti et al. (2016) in their re-search on co-consumption habits between dogs, their owners, and service providers. In contributing to the dogs' agency, I will continue to refer to them as companion animals instead of “pets” to avoid the questionable division of “pets” and “owners” – similar to Ophorst and Bovenkerk (2021, p. 255). Understanding the nuances between a companion animal and a pet makes it easier to understand the realities of people who view their dogs as family members. Furthermore, understanding the people as guardians and not owners emphasize the responsibility and sensitivity in the human-dog relationship rather than seeing animals as property (Carlisle-Frank & Frank, 2006, pp. 236-239).

When discussing human families and family holidays, research highlights that travel companions significantly influence the overall satisfaction of a tourism experience (Su et al., 2022). Moreover, holidays are co-constructed with travel companions, as Frochot and Kreziak (2017, pp. 31-34) emphasize that tourists actively create a sense of togetherness through shared activities. Building on Veevers' (1985) conclusion that companion animals can supplement human companionship, I argue that dogs should not be viewed as separate from human travel companions regarding their impact on perceived value. Like human companions, dogs contribute to shared experiences and co-create the tourism journey.

The stages of the co-creation occur at various levels and involve multiple connections, which Binkhorst and Den Dekker (2009, pp. 322-323) describe as the tourism experience network. Ideally, the network includes anything and anyone who could have impacted on the subjective tourism experience of an individual. A simple way to understand co-creation is through tourist-firm relations, in which companies aim for higher customer satisfaction and customizations through the consumer's active participation (Sugathan & Ranjan, 2019, pp. 207-208). However,

it is equally relevant when considering multispecies tourism, for instance, when traveling with a dog.

As awareness of animal rights and ethical considerations in tourism grows, academic research on the role of animals in tourism has expanded (Carr et al., 2018; Fennel, 2011; Markwell, 2015; Rickly & Kline, 2021). It is understood that traveling should not be done to the detriment of nature or animals. These discussions align with the broader shift from anthropocentric to post-anthropocentric perspectives, recognizing the agency and role of non-human animals in shaping tourism experiences. This thesis contributes to this evolving discourse by exploring the role of dogs agency affecting the tourism experiences, advocating for a more inclusive understanding of tourism beyond the traditional human-centered frameworks.

1.2 Previous research

In this thesis, I utilize the concepts of animal agency and co-creation in the context of traveling with companion animals. Initially, co-creation was introduced as a tool to demand a shift from the firm-centric perspective and put customers to the center of service production (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). As a response, this research contributes to the shift by including dogs alongside humans at the center of the service production. This shift has also been researched by Tallberg and Hamilton (2022), who research the entangled role and the impact of human-animal relations within businesses and organizations. Similar to them, this thesis contributes to decentralizing humans by including dogs in tourism journeys, the analysis offering firsthand descriptions of dogs shaping and contributing to tourism experiences. Both co-creation and animal agency are relatively novel approaches to interpreting the realities of those who travel with dogs, forming an interesting base for research.

The concept of co-creation was first understood as a tool to create better value for consumers; therefore, it is a theory that has been adopted by researchers in marketing. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) are among the best-known authors in the context of co-creation. Their studies contributed to the pioneer's understanding that value is co-created in interaction with the firm and its customers. The authors emphasize the role of a customer as an active value creator in the experience environment instead of the previously believed passive role of a consumer who would find value only from the services provided and enabled by the firms. Recently, co-creation has also been adopted in the tourism context, in which it has been examined

comprehensively through touristic experiences (Prebensen et al., 2017) and in event management (Lugosi et al., 2020).

Similar to the purpose of this thesis, Bertella (2014) researched co-creation concerning animal-based tourism experience. Bertella illustrates that tourism experiences consist of indirect and direct factors shaping the overall experience. In animal-related tourism, the animals are direct and one of the most powerful subjects that actively shape the experience. Bertella's animal-based context concentrates on sled dogs and their role as co-creators, as the study establishes the central power that the presence and behavior of sled dogs have on the tourists' experiential value. Importantly, she also noted that having companion animals at home influenced the interspecies encounters in those tourism environments, incorporating those “pets” into her tourism experience network. Also, Campos et al. (2017) examine animal-based tourism concerning on-site co-creation. The study was conducted in a marine park where visitors participated in a dolphin show, including swimming and playing with the dolphins. Their study concludes that co-creation, with the help of involvement and attention, enhances the memorability of animal-based tourist experiences through the multisensory elements.

Winter (2020) notes the need to develop animal ethics from a tourism perspective. They explain that stating animal interest and animal well-being as a principle within the anthropocentric tourism industry is crucial in today's society. A recent study by Von Essen et al. (2020) demonstrates the issues regarding animal ethics in animal-based tourism. The study notes that animals used to entertain tourists face a significant risk of neglect of welfare and animal rights. They illustrate the controversial use of animals in tourism activities such as safaris, zoos, hunting activities, animals as a form of transportation, culinary delights, or symbols of places. It is always concluded that the animals that are used in tourism are often cruelly mistreated and portrayed as objects for human entertainment (Burns, 2015; Fennell, 2013; Von Essen et al., 2020; Winter, 2020). Even though the ethical perspective is not the upfront concept or a theme of this thesis, it is still the supporting factor in the background on why animal inclusivity in research matters. This matter has also been brought to discourse by Tallberg et al. (2024) by introducing multi-species inclusivity – a concept that emphasizes that justice and rights should not be limited only to humans, but organizations and businesses should implement ways to include animals in those practices as well.

Many of these ethical discussions and issues about animal rights begin with whether animals are seen as sentient beings. Hurst & Grimwood (2023) criticize the approach of sentience as being limited in animal ethics research and propose the concept of agency to be a more appropriate stance. In particular, the authors call for an understanding of different forms of agency and state that the meaning of animal agency cannot be fulfilled as long as the basis for the concept is formed through traditional explanations like animal consciousness, reflexivity, or autonomy. They further conclude that an inclusive understanding toward agency should mirror animals' actions and decisions instead of human perception of their sentience or abilities. This thesis explores the matter of animal agency regarding traveling companion animals who take part in consuming tourism activities alongside humans.

1.3 Traveling with companion animals

Traveling with companion animals forms the empirical context of this thesis. The reasoning behind the context is the increase of offering pet-friendly services - a phenomenon that was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic (Ho et al., 2021). The hotel industry adapted to the pandemic by targeting new customer groups, such as people who travel with their companion animals (Buhalis & Chan, 2023, p. 7). As people who travel with their companion animals often face different constraints when planning and taking part in the trip (Chen et al., 2014), they are often willing to spend more for the sake of their companion animal (Buhalis & Chan, 2023, p. 7).

Nowadays, the role of a dog is better understood as part of the family and as a family member that provides unconditional emotional value, companionship, and comfort (Cohen, 2002; Owens & Grauerholz, 2019). Kylkilahti et al. (2016) explain this as a dyadic relation, as the companion animals give emotional value but also take resources such as time and money. Some even recognize similarities in parental relationships between humans and non-human animals to parenthood for a human child, as the companion animals get similar nurturing, pampering, and care (Owens & Grauerholz, 2019). It is precisely the attachment to the companion animal that motivates people to include them on family holidays (Hidalgo-Fernández et al., 2023, p. 346; Hung et al., 2016, p. 387).

However, traveling with companion animals also presents challenges and constraints, requiring more planning compared to trips without them (Hung et al., 2016). People who travel with their

companion animals have more constraints on where to go, how to get there, and what to do there. Evidently, these constraints affect multiple aspects of tourism experiences, including transportation, as spots for trains or airplanes are often limited and cost extra. For instance, a “pet fee” on a Finnish train is 4-8 euros, depending on the trip, and the seats are limited to one pet wagon (VR Group). Still, some of these constraints may be eased in certain cases - as service animals, for instance, are often understandably allowed even in places outside of the pet-friendly services (Huss, 2010).

Finding suitable accommodation is another common constraint for people who travel with companion animals (Carr & Cohen, 2009; Gretzel & Hardy, 2015, pp. 274-275). Pet-friendly services do not only mean allowing companion animals; accommodation businesses can also offer valuable amenities such as pet spa services, pet sitting or walking, separate dog potty areas, gifts at check-in, and pet bedding to attract the customer group (TripsWithPets, 2018).

Despite the increasing number of companion animals in tourism, research on them as active participants in tourism remains limited. Carr (2017) highlights the need to view dogs as sentient beings with their own values and rights in human families. Unlike human children, companion animals often face more restrictions, leading to difficult choices for people traveling with them. Yu and Li (2023) recognize the need for better facilitation of services for companion animals. They explain the constraints that tourists often have to cope with, such as negotiating about taking their companion animal with them and, if it is not allowed, whether to leave them back home, lie, or even sneak them with them. Consequently, Dilek et al. (2020) suggest that by understanding companion animals as travel companions, the tourism industry could start better accommodating the needs of this growing target group.

1.4 Purpose of the study

This study aims to explore the identified research gap in understanding the role of animal agency in co-creating tourism experiences with companion animals. The tourism experience in this thesis is understood through five stages that Hall (2011) uses to explain a travel experience, encompassing phases before, during, and after the trip. As the combination of animal agency and co-creation related to traveling with dogs involves novel knowledge, the research is conducted using qualitative methods that seek to provide deeper understanding of the impact of companion animals, specifically dogs, on tourism experiences.

Enders-Slegers (2000) highlights that human-animal relationships share similar features with human-human relationships, suggesting they can be analyzed in similar ways. In addition, co-creation, at its core, emphasizes shared participation and mutually formed experience. Bertella et al. (2019, p. 300) elaborate that the term "co-" originates from the Latin *cum*, meaning "with," strengthening the notion of togetherness. In more-than-human studies, the notion of "doing with" is particularly relevant (Huopainen, 2022b, p. 7), creating an interesting link between the two concepts.

Therefore, the main research question is formed as the following: How is the dog's agency reflected in the co-creation of the tourism experience? To answer the main research question, the following sub-questions are created: How do dogs take part in co-creating tourism experiences? How is the dog displaying agency on a holiday? The key theoretical concepts used to understand the phenomenon include animal agency and co-creation of the tourism experience, which are examined in the empirical context of traveling with companion animals.

The research data consists of seven semi-structured interviews and preliminary data from social media observations on the Instagram platform including 19 posts. A qualitative analysis is conducted to answer the research questions. The analysis for both data is done with theory-guided content analysis to understand the social realities of the people, with the theoretical concepts guiding – but not determining- the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). The groundwork for theoretical concepts thrives from an interpretative social sciences approach that is based on empathetic understanding. The theoretical framework supports the understanding of multiple realities constructed by those who live in them (Jennings, 2010, p. 40). The paradigm follows the same epistemology of knowledge being formed through the active participation of all sides, where respondents can be seen as co-researchers rather than where a clear distinction exists between the researcher and the objects (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012, p. 32).

The research begins by introducing the theoretical concepts. First, co-creation is defined and exemplified in broader light and then proceeded to explain in more specific for tourism context and lastly through the lens of non-human agents facilitating co-creation. Second, animal agency is brought to discussion with first introducing multispecies world in general, and then condensing the focus to the agency, animal agency in tourism context and lastly in specific the agency of dogs. The concepts were divided into two chapters, for that they both focus on different point of view. Tourism experience is a subjectively constructed human experience for which multiple others take part in co-creating it; hence the focus is on the human. By including animal agency

in separate chapters, the purpose is to really emphasize the role of animals in those human-animal encounters, and not solely discuss them in relation how they affect human's experience. After the theory is introduced, the research methodology is discussed in one chapter. Findings and discussion are separated in individual chapters – the findings exclusively focus on representing the data whereas the discussion complements that data with implications connected from the theory. Lastly, alongside final conclusions, the limitations of the study and future research ideas are proposed.

2. EXPERIENCE CO-CREATION IN TOURISM

Volo (2009 p. 119) describes tourism as the marketplace for experiences. Experiences, from marketers' points of view, are offerings in the marketplace that can be sold similarly to goods and services (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). When considering tourism experience, we tend to see ourselves in the destinations, perhaps engaging in local activities or enjoying a meal in a restaurant. However, the tourism journey itself consists of far more factors than the on-site activities. Thus, Volo (2009, pp. 119-120) separates tourist experience from other experiences to something greater – tourist experiences are mental and subjective interpretations that tourists by themselves create based on their values, acquired knowledge, and memories. The characteristics that make tourism experiences stand out from others are that they happen in a different habitual and spatial sense to everyday lives (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009, p. 6; Cohen, 1979). According to Volo (2009, p. 121-122), tourist experiences are unstaged, meaning that service providers or marketers do not facilitate them; instead, tourists create the essence of the experience through their own motives and interpretations.

Hall (2011, p. 10) explains the tourism experience from the tourist's perspective through five different stages: decision-making and anticipation, travel to the site, on-site behavior, return travel, and recollection. The model illustrates that although on-site activities can be the journey's peak experiences, several supporting experiences shape the outcome (Volo, 2009, p. 118). Consequently, even if a human being is not yet a tourist when they are at home planning the trip, those are the moments when the frames to the future holidays are set and therefore play an important role in the evaluation of the whole tourist experience (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009, p. 9). Furthermore, anticipation and recollection contribute to the notion that the experience takes place not only during the activity but also in imagination in anticipation of pre-formed images (Frochot & Kreziak, 2017) and in the memory and reminiscing the trip (Jaakkola et al., 2015, p. 193). Therefore, the experience environment and the actors facilitating them depend on the current stage of the tourism journey.

Binkhorst and Den Dekker (2009, pp. 318–323) introduce a model to conceptualize the influencing factors within different experience environments, referred to as the tourism network. The tourism network model adopts an integrative approach, emphasizing the interconnectedness of pre-travel, on-site, and post-travel phases. At the core of this network is the tourist, whose

decisions and experiences are shaped in their home environment and its associated factors, which later on influence the tourism on-site reality.

Thus, tourists actively adapt their current environment to align with pre-formed expectations of the destination, occasionally overlooking negative elements to preserve the intended experience (Frochot & Kreziak, 2017). On the other hand, pre-travel motivators, such as attractions, can become less meaningful in post-travel recollections, as moments of unique personal experiences or unexpected events often become the most meaningful (Park & Santos, 2017, pp. 22-24). These meaningful experiences involve active participation by the tourists, demonstrating another form of co-creation where tourists reshape their perceptions and memories of the trip.

The tourism network further highlights the interaction of different experience environments, illustrating how past experiences influence present ones. For example, decisions related to work or family in the home environment can affect the tourist's engagement with the destination (Binkforst & Den Dekker, 2009). Similarly, lifestyle factors, such as having a dog, impact consumer behavior and tourism experiences, even when the dog is not directly involved (Bertella, 2014; Kylkilahti et al., 2016). This interconnectedness underscores the role of various human and non-human agents in shaping the co-creation of tourism experiences.

2.1 Defining co-creation

Nowadays, the outlook on the experience industry has been accompanied by a more extensive understanding of seeing consumers in an active role in experience production and creation alongside the service providers (Campos et al., 2018; Inanc & Kozak, 2020 pp, 512-515). The idea of co-creation was first brought to the public in the context of marketing, where it is used as a tool to create unique value for customers. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) demonstrate the difference between doing “with” instead of “for” customers. A shift from production-orientated marketing to consumer-centric recognizes customers or tourists as active participants, marking a change from a perspective of providing services to someone into engaging them in the process of value creation. For that reason, Grönroos and Voima (2013) emphasize the power of interaction between the service providers and customers for the value creation. In addition, value creation occurs from any actor to another and is not solely bound to firm-tourist interaction, as Vargo and Lusch (2016, pp. 6-7) highlight.

Nowadays, the common motivations to travel are often described as wanting new experiences and getting contrast to everyday life (Azevedo, 2010, p. 42). Furthermore, the tourists' decision-making process tends to prioritize hedonism, with emotions gaining more influence than rationality (Frochot & Kreziak, 2017 p. 25). Thus, engaging tourists as active participants rather than merely providing services for them, contributes significantly to the hedonistic experience industries where consumers are integrated to the service production process to increase the memorability and experienced value of events (Chen & Rahman, 2018).

The concept of co-creation has multiple definitions depending on the perspective of context, for which Campos et al. (2018) have written a comprehensive literature review to detect the differences. According to their organizational perspective, companies advocate including tourists in the design and production process of a tourism experience by creating experience environments for customers to act and interact in (Morgan, 2007; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This definition understands all parts of the supply chain in part of the co-creation, such as online platform designers for services that consumers use to interact in the planning stage, thus possibly creating value for themselves (Campos et al., 2018, pp. 371-386; Font et al., 2021). Interaction can also occur between a bot or as one-way communication between the tourist and the online platform on the company's website (Font et al., 2021). The organizational definition is widely used to explain value creation done through co-creation. From a value creation perspective, tourist involvement creates more excellent value for themselves (Rihova et al., 2013). In general, co-creation is defined both as a tool and an outcome, as it creates ways to provide value and is also the result that is constructed in interaction with different agents (Inanc & Kozak, 2020, pp. 512-513).

The tourist perspective centers the tourist as an active co-creator and -producer of the experience within the experience environment (Ek et al., 2012, pp. 125-127). The experience is co-created between the tourist and the organization (Azevedo, 2010; Sugathan & Ranjan, 2019) as well as between other tourists or actors (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, pp. 6-7). There are both objects and subjects in the experience environment (Bertella, 2014, pp. 115-116). The perspective understands tourists as consumers in this environment who construct their holiday by actively choosing services and modifying their stay through different components (Frochot & Kreziak, 2017).

Regardless of the multiple definitions of co-creation depending on perspective, certain factors appear repeatedly in the definitions. The combining factors that repeat in Campos et al.'s (2018) literature overview are active participation and interaction between consumers and other actors, whether it is an organization, fellow traveler, local people, or any other affecting actor. Active participation facilitates increased satisfaction in experience-based consumption, as concluded by Prebensen and Xie (2017). Active participation also has social meanings beyond physical participation, as tourists actively create time of togetherness for their travel companions during holidays (Frochot & Kreziak, 2017, pp. 31-34). After defining the key dimensions that co-creation encompasses, Campos et al., (2018, p. 391) have defined co-creation as the following: “A co-creation tourism experience is the sum of the psychological events a tourist goes through when contributing actively [...] in activities and interacting with other subjects in the experience environment”. This thesis follows a similar explanation, as the focus is on the tourist’s experience while considering the influence of others within the same experience environment.

From the co-creation perspective, the tourist experience is shaped by the reciprocal interaction between the tourist, the destination, and the various services or providers involved in their journey (Bertella et al., 2018, pp. 57-60). According to Gentile et al. (2007, p. 397), those interactions evoke personal responses and are influenced by the tourist's level of participation and engagement in the experience. Additionally, the tourist's prior expectations combined with the reactions from those interactions contribute significantly to the overall experience, again highlighting the importance of active involvement in shaping the subjective tourist experiences (Gentile et al., 2017, p. 397).

Overall, experience co-creation involves multifaceted interactions with tourists and other factors within the experience networks. The factors that are included are diverse, including friends, family, online communities, staff, travel agents, food, transportation, accommodation, and tour operators, all shaping the tourism experience. It is important to understand that those factors include also non-human aspects, such as technology, that play a significant parts in co-creation by influencing how tourists interact with their environment (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019; Font et al., 2021). Additionally, Bertella (2014) emphasizes the inclusion of animals as contributing agents within the experience network. These examples highlight how co-creation involves collaborative and participatory aspects among different actors, all working together to create value within the experience (Phi & Dredge, 2019). The impacts of this co-creation process for value creation are further explored in the next chapter.

2.2 Impacts on value creation

Experience and value are deeply intertwined in a circular relationship, where one continually influences the other (Jaakkola et al., 2015, pp. 193-195). In the tourism experience, value is not solely determined by service providers but is co-created through interactions and collaborations involving multiple stakeholders, including tourists, service providers, and other participants (McColl-Kennedy & Cheun, 2018, pp. 70-71; Vargo & Lusch, 2016). Customers define value through the perceived benefit from a product or service, which is influenced by their active participation and the surrounding social environment (Font et al., 2021). Echeverri and Skålen (2011, pp. 351-353) refer to this as interactive value formation, highlighting the interaction between different actors.

The shift from a company-centered value creation perspective to a customer-centric view highlights the tourist as the central actor in co-creating value. Service providers can facilitate resources and offer value propositions, but the ultimate value interpretation depends on the tourist's experience and perception (Font et al., 2021; McColl-Kennedy & Cheun, 2018). The role of customers as value determinators is especially evident in event industries, where social interactions and a sense of belonging among participants significantly contribute to the co-creation of value (Kolyperas & Sparks, 2018), and service consumption and production happen simultaneously (Echeverri & Skålen, 2011, p. 353). Therefore, the concept of value co-creation involves multiple actors and understands the customer as someone who creates value for themselves and others while simultaneously benefiting from the value generated by others (Hendricks & Schmitz, 2022, p. 840; Vargo & Lusch, 2016, p. 9).

In the context of traveling with dogs, the relationship between companion animals and their guardians illustrates value creation through dyadic interaction. According to Syrjälä et al. (2014), dogs contribute to the guardians' joy and well-being, and guardians derive value from their animal's happiness and emotional connection. The dog's actions, emotions, and interpreted experiences influence the guardian's decisions and perception of service quality, positioning the dog as an active agent in value creation (Syrjälä et al., 2014, pp. 28-32). Together, the human and the companion animal form a shared understanding of value shaped by their interactions and mutual participation (Hendricks & Schmitz, 2022).

Thus, value creation and co-creation can expand beyond traditional human interactions to include non-human actors, such as companion animals, as active contributors in experiences

where they are involved (Syrjälä et al., 2014). This highlights the multifaceted and co-created nature of value creation in the tourism experience environment, where the value outcome is shaped by the inputs of all participants. It illustrates how value creation has multiple co-creators, even if the value itself is subjective and individually constructed by individuals' perceptions.

Alongside value being interactively formed by different actors, Echeverri and Skålen (2011) argue that value can also be co-destructed through the interaction between consumers and service providers. Value can be co-destructed when the elements of practices such as procedures, understanding, and engagement are incongruent, meaning that the two parties involved disagree on the practices during the provider-customer interaction (Echeverri & Skålen, 2011, pp. 367-368). In tourism, the value co-destruction can take place between tourists and residents (Lin, Chen & Filieri, 2017), tourists and employees, or between other tourists (Adam, 2021; Han et al., 2021). According to Han et al. (2021, pp. 200-201), other tourists' contributions to co-creation can be seen as negative when they cause disturbance or competition for services. It is noteworthy that value co-destruction implies misbehavior from one of the parties involved; hence, the behavior and reaction arising from a challenging situation is key in avoiding value destruction. Co-destructing requires active involvement in destruction.

Overall, value co-creation or co-destruction does not only happen in human-human interactions. This is especially evident in the tourism environment, where non-human agents, such as animals, technology, and environmental factors, also significantly shape the co-creation process and influence the experiences and their outcomes. Hence, the next chapter explores more deeply how these non-human agents can also facilitate co-creation on their parts.

2.3 Non-human agents facilitating co-creation

Including non-human agents in tourism experience co-creation is a relatively novel concept. However, animals have long been central to tourism businesses, actively shaping and contributing to experiences through their interactions with humans. This chapter explores this concept of non-human agents through working animals, companion animals, service animals, and farm animals, as well as natural elements such as nature or weather. The purpose of illustrating these non-human agents is to showcase the extent of multispecies co-creation in tourism, where experiences are shaped through dynamic interactions among humans, animals, and the environment.

Working animals provide a common example of how non-human agents take part in co-creation. In equestrian tourism, horses play an integral role, not only as a means of transportation but as active participants in the overall experience. Notzke (2019) describes horses as co-creators of the experience by offering companionship, protection, and inspiration to riders. The horses enable tourists to access remote areas safely and together, providing meaning through multisensory experiences. Equestrian tourism highlights the reciprocal relationship between humans and horses; horses co-create and facilitate meaningful connections between tourists and the environment (Notzke, 2019).

In light of this, animal-based tourism experiences often highlight the active participation of non-human agents. Similar to equestrian tourism, Campos et al. (2017) discovered that dolphins, for instance, play a significant role in the memorability of swimming-with-dolphins experiences. According to their study, the sensory elements of the encounters with dolphins—such as the sounds, movements, and presence of dolphins—enhance the memorability of the events by focusing tourists’ attention on those elements of co-creation (Campos et al., 2017). Similarly, those animal-based tourism experiences can evoke memories of animals, such as those companion animals who are not present in the actual situation but still affecting the co-creation and value outcome of the tourism experience in the memory (Bertella, 2014, p. 122). Warkentin (2011) follows up on the topic of dolphin experiences, noting that the actors and their roles experience a shift in their dynamics when encounters occur in open water compared to those in captivity. In these settings, dolphins can choose whether to engage with humans, emphasizing their agency in the co-creation process. (Warkentin, 2011, pp. 115-117).

While the above experiences are often designed for human pleasure, they illustrate another example of non-human agents facilitating the co-created tourism experience. Furthermore, it showcases how multispecies interactions provide an opportunity to create personally meaningful experiences (Bertella, 2014; Campos et al., 2016; Danby et al., 2019; Warkentin, 2011). Respectively, Bertella et al. (2019) researched co-creation in wildlife tourism, aiming to understand the co-creation from the animal’s point of view. Their study includes a fictional dialogue between a dolphin and a human, illustrating their limited possibilities to understand each other. Their study concludes that the experiential value from wildlife encounters can be seen only partly reciprocal, as dolphins are interpreted to mostly approach humans out of curiosity, not so much for a meaningful experience.

The previous examples provide demonstrations of situations where animals are taking part in the experience co-creation. However, even in tourist farms, the relationship between humans and animals continues to reveal the concept of non-human agency. In such farms, tourists engage with the animals by petting, feeding, or taking part in tasks such as milking and shearing (Tully & Carr, 2021, p. 89). These interactions are not one-sided; the animals' past experiences with humans influence their responses, thus shaping the tourists' perceptions and memories (Hoarau-Heemstra & Kline, 2022, p. 5). For instance, animals that have previously experienced stress or negative encounters with humans may keep displaying hesitation or aggression with them, reminding us of the importance of ethical practices in ensuring positive relationships between tourists and animals (Tully & Carr, 2021, pp. 89-96). Hence, Tully and Carr (2021, p. 95) account for understanding the animals' lives as a whole; bad interactivity between humans and animals can lead to stress for humans and the animals in their own mental and social lives.

Companion animals, such as dogs, actively contribute to co-creating tourism experiences. The difference to previously discussed non-human agents relies on the outlook that dogs merely participate in leisure activities, not so much produce the experience (Carr, 2014, p. 71). Consequently, humans ultimately make the traveling decisions, yet dogs influence these choices, as guardians often consider what their dogs will enjoy and what ensures their well-being (Ying et al., 2021, p. 82). In addition, the relationship between dogs and guardians is generally described as mutually beneficial, with humans gaining companionship, while dogs receive care, food and companionship (Dotson & Hyatt, 2008, pp. 460-461). Therefore, the interplay of agency and deep bond provides the basis for understanding the nature of their multispecies traveling, where both actors' needs and desires are negotiated to shape mutually rewarding experiences (Danby et al., 2019; Dashper, 2020). Traveling dogs are considered sentient beings by their guardians, and they might expect service providers and other people to see them in the same light (Carr, 2017, pp. 112-113). This complex human-dog relationship is further elaborated in chapter 3.3. Dogs as agents.

Beyond being companion animals, service dogs play a distinct role in travel experiences by providing essential support to their guardians. Hendricks and Schmitz (2022) emphasize the caregiving value creation that occurs through the emotional attachment between humans and their animal companions. These relationships enhance the well-being of both humans and dogs, which shapes the value outcomes of their shared experiences. Rickly et al. (2022, pp. 8-10) note that traveling with service animals introduces unique challenges, such as ensuring the animal's

safety and accommodating their needs in unfamiliar environments. These partnerships, however, highlight another form of active role that animals can have in human environments by enabling and enriching their tourism experiences.

Nature also plays a crucial role as a non-human agent in co-creation. Instead of being a passive background, it actively contributes to interactive, unpredictable, and unique experiences, as exemplified by “hunts” for the northern lights in the Arctic regions. From an experience point of view, nature offers both premises for participation and a learning environment to engage in (Carvalho et al., 2023; Rantala & Mäkinen, 2018). Rantala and Puhakka (2020, pp. 498-499) emphasize that nature fosters well-being and continuous learning, acting as a co-creator by challenging participants to adapt to changing conditions. Hence, in line with Garcia-Rosell et al. (2019), who include nature as a stakeholder in tourism, nature as a co-creator should be understood as enabling and providing instead of being utilized.

In addition to animals and nature, technology is emerging as a non-human agent in co-creation. Virtual platforms and real-time digital interactions, such as those in the metaverse, offer new opportunities for personalized and immersive tourism experiences (Buhalis et al., 2023). Furthermore, as explained in previous sections 2.1 and 2.2, online platforms facilitate co-creation and even take part in executing it (Font et al., 2021). These technological innovations expand the concept of non-human agency, creating online and offline spaces where physical and virtual interactions together shape the tourism experience.

Ethical considerations are crucial when integrating non-human agents into tourism. Danby et al. (2019, p. 295) insist that animals involved in leisure activities must be treated with respect and care, acknowledging that they have not chosen to participate in these activities regardless of whether the animal’s role is as a working animal or a companion animal. Ophorst and Bovenkerk (2019) similarly stress that humans have a high responsibility when obtaining an animal, the least being to provide them good welfare. With that being said, building strong, respectful relationships between humans and animals is crucial for fostering positive outcomes and avoiding harm for either party.

To summarize, non-human agents such as animals, nature, and technology significantly impact the way that tourism experiences are shaped. However, they are often overlooked by the traditional human-centered focus on tourism. These non-human agents actively influence how experiences unfold. For instance, animals interact with tourists in various ways, affecting the

overall experience (Bertella et al., 2019), while nature contributes to tourism more than just as scenic views (Rantala & Mäkinen, 2018). Even technology plays a role by facilitating interaction during travel (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Recognizing the role of these non-human agents in tourism helps to view industry in a broader and more interactive light. In the next chapter, I will explore how animals, and specifically their agency, contribute to shaping tourism experiences.

3. ANIMAL AGENCY IN A MULTISPECIES WORLD

Recently, the anthropocentric view of the world has been accompanied by strengthening the notion of non-human agents and their interspecies entanglement to everyday manners and living (see; Räsänen & Syrjämaa, 2017; Räsänen et al., 2020; Valtonen et al., 2020). Previously, animals have been well-researched regarding how they are affected by cultural, political, and economic forces, for instance, in the studies of animal ethics (Fennel, 2011). However, the interspecies entanglement becomes especially evident in their contribution to social life between humans and companion animals involving continuous mutual care and embodied encounters (Sayers et al., 2023, pp. 550-551). Their contribution to social life is also a starting point for this thesis when non-human animals are perceived as active agents instead of passive objects shaping a multispecies world.

A multispecies world naturally understands that there are other beings alongside human agency that are entangled with their history and existence (Bubandt et al., 2022, p. 4). There are many concepts to explain entanglements of multiple species, one of them forming around multispecies livelihoods. According to Thomsen et al. (2023, p. 1197), multispecies livelihoods understand the right for humans and non-human animals to exist while ensuring the necessities of life without violating each other's right to live. In addition, Danby et al. (2019, p. 292) refer to this as the common world understanding the overlapping of realities where lives of different kinds are embedded. Moreover, interspecies entanglements suggest intersubjectivity, meaning that actors within the entanglement both affect and are affected by each other (Sayers et al., 2023, p. 542). With similar conclusions, these interspecies entanglements imply that animals could be brought to be part of stakeholder theory, where it is understood that animals have their significant role in those networks, derived from the emotional impact they embark on humans (Tallberg et al., 2022).

The nature of the relationship between humans and non-human animals is especially distinguishable in working environments. Throughout human history, animals have been used to work on farms and for protection, entertainment, or transportation (Carr, 2021, pp. 41-42; DeMello, 2012, pp. 88-87). The relationships can be exploitative on the human part; therefore, it is fair to say that animals have been used as tools for human purposes (Carr, 2021, p. 41). However, with more research on animal sentience and intellect, the conditions can be improved, and nowadays, working animals and their welfare are also considered in law, even though there

is still room for improvement. Furthermore, human-animal relationships offer an excellent viewpoint for researching animal behavior and agency in conditions where they work together, albeit the work is most often monitored by humans (Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 5).

Working animals have been domesticated for human purposes for thousands of years (De-Mello, 2012, pp. 88-87). Thus, there is a distinction between, for example, wild dogs and the ones that are domesticated and selectively bred for different intentions (Ophorst & Bovenkerk, 2021, p. 255). Working animals include all animals that humans use to perform tasks. There is no difference whether the task is emotional, such as offering support, or physical, such as being used for hunting, carrying items or people, or smelling explosives (Carr, 2021, pp. 41-42). Additionally, the concept of working with animals extends beyond direct human use to include settings such as zoos, animal trainers, therapists with animals and other areas, where humans interact with and care for animals (Yam et al., 2023) In the best-case scenarios, the animals would be recognized as part of the organization's structure as workers entitled to rights and welfare in those work environments (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021; Tallberg, et al., 2022).

Working with animals is significant in tourism, and it often offers touchpoints for interacting with animals in various tourism destinations. In the tourism context, animals should not be only passive objects; rather, they actively contribute to the creation and shaping of the experience (Bertella, 2014). Consequently, the working conditions of animals become a critical factor in tourism practices. Poor working conditions are not only ethically problematic but can also be perceived by tourists, having a potential negative effect in the overall quality of their experience (Klos et al., 2018). Therefore, recognizing animals as sentient agents in tourism would highlight the importance of ensuring their welfare and fair treatment. Burns (2019) emphasizes that need to move beyond viewing animals solely as tourism commodities, by incorporating eco-centric approaches on an organizational level in tourism planning and management. Establishing good working relationships between humans and animals promotes mutual care and compassion, which ultimately enhances affectivity on both sides (Tallberg et al., 2022; Yam et al., 2023). When animals are seen only as passive participants, the complexity of human-animal relationship can be easily overlooked. However, it is the emotional attachments in interactions between workers and animals that often bring deeper meaning to the work, emphasizing the reciprocal nature of those human-animal relationships (Tallberg et al., 2022, pp. 7-9).

In the context of tourism, interspecies communication plays a vital role in the co-creation of experiences, with human-animal interactions facilitating mutual understanding. As humans and non-human animals do not share the same language, understanding the animals' minds involves interpreting their gestures, expressions, and actions beyond linguistic barriers (Huopalaainen, 2022b, pp. 969-970). However, this communication is not one-sided — animals actively interpret and respond to human cues, and the challenges may also appear from humans' inability to interpret them. Animals like dogs are skilled at interpreting human communication and expressing their own needs. Yet, it is the human who might overlook those expressions by not being able to understand and interpret the non-verbal communication of other species (Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 12). As suggested by Carter and Charles (2013, pp. 334-335), the symbolism in human language differs significantly from non-human animals and affects the perceived agency of others. Consequently, the animals cannot explain symbolic aspects or reflexive embodiment that results in their disability to organize against power structures that influence their lives collectively.

As Huopalaainen (2022b, p. 964) calls it, interspecies communication consists of interactions between senses like smell, sound, touch, and sight. In tourism, those multisensory exchanges and embodied experiences are essential for co-creation, allowing for deeper engagement between humans and animals (Dashper, 2020). Additionally, Game (2001) highlights how non-verbal, embodied exchanges between humans and non-human animals constitute interconnected communication, which is particularly relevant in tourism settings where such interactions directly shape visitor experiences.

Recognizing interspecies communication as a co-creative process requires shifting toward more-than-human methodologies, where animals and humans are considered as co-creators of meaning (Huopalaainen, 2022b; Tallberg & Hamilton, 2022). This way, interspecies tourism encounters become dynamic and negotiated experiences shaped by the responses and actions of animals (Bertella et al., 2019, pp. 305-307). This approach ensures sustainable and ethical practices by understanding the importance of animal contribution. It challenges traditional tourism perspectives towards more inclusive practices that understand tourism beyond human agency.

As explored by authors such as Danby et al. (2019), the notion of animal agency illustrates that animals are active participants in shaping the outcomes of human-animal interactions, with their

responses influencing tourism co-creation. The further attributes of various forms of agency and exploration of factors that constitute agency are expanded on next.

3.1 Defining animal agency

The definition of agency varies, and there is not one clear explanation to determine what agency is, who possesses it, and on what level. Äijälä (2022, pp. 27-30) explains the debate behind the concept of applying agency to animals; to obtain agency, one should have self-awareness, intentions, language, and the ability to affect power relations and structure. Therefore, the basis of this explanation is sentience; as Thomas (2016, p. 35) describes, agency is the factor that differentiates animals and humans, for example, from plants. According to Hurst and Greenwood (2023), this can be a very limiting view, and other aspects are just as crucial to gaining insight into the more-than-human world. For instance, they espouse a posthumanist approach to describe that capacity for agency can be defined through decisions and actions rather than anthropocentric criteria such as sentience or autonomy. For instance, Carter and Charles (2013, p. 327) explain agency as the ability to act and shape things. This thesis contributes to the literature that acknowledges animals' power as agency to shape the surrounding world and shape situations out of the animal-self. Similarly to Thomas (2016, p. 12), the research leads from the assumption that these animals possess minds that they control, rather than arguing whether there is enough understanding of the evidence that animals possess their wills.

It is vital to understand the effectiveness of views towards animals as agents. The concept of animal agency is significant because the treatment of animals depends on how they are perceived—either as interactive and sentient beings or as passive objects (Burns 2019; Tully & Carr, 2021). When animals are viewed solely as passive objects, their welfare and right to life may be compromised, leading to less equitable treatment.

Carter and Charles (2013) explain that a broader power structure influences agency. They conclude that the animal's capability to shape the surrounding world is limited by their position within those power relations and the human actors involved. Therefore, they make the distinction between primary and corporate agency, understanding the ability to possess agency without being able to make a collective change to human-created power structures. As Räsänen and Syrjämaa (2017, p. 1) put it, despite the power imbalance in the human-animal relationships, animals are still active agents as they can influence human behavior and our view of the world.

This view is absorbed as well by Äijälä (2022), who understands agents as beings within their own social and cultural collectivities in which they can act and make changes based on their preferences and deal with the consequences of their decisions. In their own social collectivities, it is also said that the senior sled dogs are the best mentors for the younger ones; they display behaviour that younger puppies can model and learn by their examples instead of human orders (Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 9). Therefore, agency implies the animal's ability to take action and not only be impacted by the world – but also actively engage as an agent among other entities (Charles & Carter, (2013)

The constitutive attribute for agency is rationality, and without it agency cannot exist (Thomas, 2016, p. 16). Different animals obtain different levels of rationality, meaning that they also have different levels of agency. Rationality is a fair base for the agency, but it is a relatively narrow approach to understanding non-human animals and their intentions. Besides rationality, another attribute of agency is the ability to make choices. As Thomas (2016, p. 7) explains, the ones who can make choices possess a will, and those who possess a will are justified in moral obligations from humans. Furthermore, she reasons that making choices reflect acting for a reason, which leads to the assumption that the act is based on personal beliefs or preferences. Acting for a reason can appear as a willingness or unwillingness to do things (Huopalainen, 2022b). Resistance to obedience in favor of a human reflects agentic behavior; it means that the animal is acting for its preferences. However, it mostly happens on an individual level instead of a higher, collective resistance (Carter & Charles, 2013). Nevertheless, not having corporate agency and political influence, as Carter and Charles describe previously, does not exclude the agential actions that animals take on an individual level.

The animal agency gets complicated with domesticated animals, who are often the most entangled in human life. Because these animals have been domesticated, humans are often the dominant ones in situations where human and animal societies overlap (Dashper, 2020, p. 7) thus limiting animals' agency in a sense (Bovenkerk & Ophorst, 2021). Therefore, it can be debated whether animals act based on their own preferences and beliefs or out of obedience and whether this behavior reflects agency. On the other hand, even if domesticated animals act according to an order given by a human, they may still do it of their own will (Koski & Bäcklund, 2017). In those situations, animals can show their preferences through sound, movement, or resistance (Carter & Charles, 2013; Dashper, 2020, pp. 5-7; Huopalainen, 2022b; Thomas, 2016). In ad-

dition, by showing unwillingness to be led by humans, they can further co-participate in changing the leadership dynamics (Huopainen, 2022a, p. 96), showing further agency attributes over the animal's own social and cultural collectivities.

3.2 Exploring animal agency in the tourism context

Many animals contribute to tourism and other sectors, but it is important to highlight that they do not enter the workforce of their own accord (Coulter, 2016, pp. 78-81); instead, they are “made to work.” Although the initiative to work does not originate from the animals themselves but is determined by humans, the nature of human-animal relationships in work is more complex than that. While the animals used for work are domesticated and often raised for specific purposes, they have a say in the jobs they can undertake based on their individual abilities. García-Rosell and Hancock (2022, pp. 100-102) refer to this as recruitment and draw parallels between recruiting seasonal human workers and selecting suitable reindeer for the upcoming tourist season. For example, a reindeer that feels uncomfortable around humans will not be utilized for pulling a sleigh, ensuring everyone's safety. Thus, the animals' behavior and agency also influence whether they can work with tourists.

Humans have constructed specific images of animals that influence the way they are perceived among us (Wiener, 2018). The human-constructed images also impact the tourism industry, as some animals are seen with human-like features that offer a good ground for interaction, such as dolphins, who are presented with human traits like intelligence and friendly and playful behavior (Campos et al., 2017, p. 105; Wiener, 2018, pp. 147-149). Markwell (2020) describes the phenomenon as anthropomorphism, arguing that attributing human-like features to animals is a key in transforming them into attractions or even symbols of tourism. This kind of objectifying animals as attractions limits their agency (Burns, 2019), as does favoring certain species with cuter or more human-like features over others based on their appearances (Valtonen et al., 2020, p. 8). Furthermore, Hoarau-Heemstra and Kline (2022, p. 7) explain that the relationship between an animal and a tourist depends on how the animal is seen by the tourist – positive perception evokes a positive reaction and vice versa. As the modern tourism industry plays a key role in providing touchpoints for human-animal encounters (Winter, 2020), the perception of animals becomes especially important.

The values, interpretations, and ethical judgments of the observer deeply influence the perception of animal agency. Tallberg et al., (2022, p. 10) highlight that emotionally significant encounters between tourists and sled dogs shape visitors' animal welfare assessments. Tourists often interpret howling or barking as emotional expressions (Äijälä, 2014), which in turn inform their ethical stance on the animals' treatment. These interpretations can influence public discourse, especially through reviews (Klos et al., 2018), where concerns about working conditions may affect business profitability, illustrating how animals, through their perceived agency, impact tourism operations (Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 11).

Since tourists' perceptions of animal's agency are subjective, they can vary widely. The affective power of sled dogs—their ability to emotionally impact visitors—plays a key role in shaping these responses (Tallberg et al., 2022). This approach positions animals as participants in stakeholder interactions, even if their agency is mediated through human interpretation. The degree to which an observer acknowledges agency often depends on their sensitivity to interspecies communication (Tallberg et al., 2021, p. 9). As noted earlier, in contrast to anthropocentric understandings of language, animal agency is expressed through multisensory communication such as movement, posture, vocalizations, and responsiveness indicating emotions, preferences, and needs (Huopalainen, 2022b). In addition, Äijälä (2014) emphasizes the role of physical presence and movement in displaying dog agency, while Notzke (2019) explores how horses influence social dynamics in tourism. By including animal perspectives, these approaches showcase a deeper understanding of their role, confirming that animal agency is actively negotiated through human-animal interactions rather than merely perceived (Bertella et al., 2019; Danby et al., 2019).

3.3 Dogs as agents

Understanding the difference between wild dogs and domesticated dogs is essential. Companion animals are the result of thousands of years of domestication, which Ophorst and Bovenkerk (2021, p. 256) describe as dogs being “anthropocenic animals.” They argue that dogs are among the most successfully domesticated animals because they adapt well to the human environment and depend heavily on humans as companions—both key criteria for measuring the degree of domestication. Furthermore, Ophorst and Bovenkerk explain the complexity of domesticated dogs and their agency; companion dogs' decision-making in areas like where to live is limited. Nevertheless, due to their high level of adaptability, they do not feel frustrated in their agency

but have learned to express their preferences to humans in another way. For instance, dogs can communicate their preferences and feelings, such as discomfort, through barking, thus possibly shaping the upcoming events in the situation (Carter & Charles, 2013, pp. 326-327).

Dogs do not only communicate themselves but also understand human communication, which may be another result of the dog's nature of adaptation in the domestication process, as stated by Kaminski and Nitzschener (2013, p. 296). According to them, dogs have even better abilities to understand forms of human communication than, for instance, chimpanzees, despite the latter's close relativeness to human beings. Therefore, the issue lies in other meanings rather than the dog's alleged inability to understand the world. The problem lies more in the human's way of anthropomorphizing the world while neglecting more-than-human meanings, from which the lack of understanding of interspecies communication is a good example (Game 2001; Huopalainen, 2022b). To better understand dogs, other forms of interpretation should be developed. Dogs as companions will receive fairer treatment by enhancing our knowledge of attentive listening through all senses, not just conventional human communication (Carr, 2014).

Due to their domestication, dogs are seen as obedient animals, which might seem limiting to one's agency. However, Koski and Bäcklund (2017) illustrate through dog sports how even goal-oriented and human-controlled situations can reflect the agency of the dogs involved. They highlight the intertwined relationship between a dog and its handler in agility and how performance results from the dog's willingness and understanding of the consequences of different actions, thus demonstrating the co-creation of mutual interspecies agency.

Historically, while humans have depended on dogs for protection and hunting, dogs have relied on humans for shelter. This interdependence highlights a mutually beneficial relationship, showcasing dogs as active agents throughout history (Ophorst & Bovenkerk, 2021, p. 256). Furthermore, it is stated that dogs provide social support for their guardians through enhancing social encounters, preventing loneliness, and providing security (Antonacopoulos & Pychyl, 2008, p. 141). Dogs' emotional and social value further establish their role as active agents. Hence, Ophorst and Bovenkerk (2021) assert that the least humans can do in return for companionship is to ensure proper welfare. Unfortunately, human dominance often still leads to exploitative or neglectful relationships (Huopalainen, 2022b, p. 963). Nevertheless, many dog guardians recognize how their dogs influence daily life, co-creating spaces where intertwined

routines, emotions, and behaviour occur. The coexistence of these two beings fosters intersubjectivity across species, allowing them to adapt to one another (Huopainen, 2022b). This concept of intersubjectivity is reinforced by Włodarczyk (2021), who identifies a shared more-than-human agency that extends beyond individual beings to broader social contexts.

Włodarczyk (2021) explores the human-dog agency, which she describes to be both a target of regulations and an active subject. In her study, she recognizes the human guardian and the dog as a dyad, in which the human or dog agency cannot be completely separated but instead form their own hybrid agency. Conducted in a dog park, her study shows how the experiences of the dog and the guardian become inseparable in the narratives shared by the human guardians. She illustrated this point, stating that “the activities themselves are perceived as being carried out for the dogs and with the dogs” (Włodarczyk, 2021, p. 507). Similarly, Huopainen (2022b, pp. 962-964) refers to the multispecies assemblages humanimals, implying the inseparable beings of multiple species. Similar shared agencies have been detected with guide dog partnerships, in which the dog and a human as a dyad form an interdependent agency. These partnerships are an outcome of thorough training, during which both species learn to understand and adapt to each other (Pemberton, 2019, p. 99).

Similarly, Coulter (2016b) describes instances where dogs voluntarily engage in protective and caregiving roles within homes, further demonstrating their agency beyond mere human control. Kylkilahti et al. (2016) also describes this dyadic relationship where dogs provide emotional value. Dogs are particularly attuned to human distress, sensing emotional and physiological changes such as hormones, pheromones, or even cancers (Huopainen, 2022b, p. 970), which enhances their caregiving role. Coulter (2016b) continues that while much of this labor is informal, it is increasingly recognized, especially with the rise of emotional support animals. Through this work, dogs significantly contribute to human well-being, offering both physical protection and emotional support (Coulter, 2016b).

Recognizing dogs' agency and their emotional and social skills forms the base of this thesis. In the research their influence for daily interactions for the guardian's experience is examined in the context of tourism. Since dogs actively participate in daily life at home, their involvement and actions could greatly influence the emotional and experiential aspects of tourism. This element will be explored in depth in the research findings and discussion.

4. RESEACH METHODOLOGY

The study aims to find out the role of dog's agency in the co-creation of tourism experiences. The research focuses on people's experiences traveling with their dogs to understand the realities of those who want to include their animal companions in their holidays as well. The research follows the constructivist paradigm as the phenomenon is understood by those who operate in it (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, pp. 31-36). According to Jennings (2010, 39-41), a paradigm consists of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological basis of research that guides action. Following the constructivist paradigm where everyone can produce knowledge (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, pp. 31-36), the methods used contribute to one of the study's key theoretical concepts; co-creation. Duim et al. (2018) apply co-creation to the field of tourism research, understanding the linkage and similarities between the concept and research in social sciences – both highlight collaborative knowledge and effort between diverse actors. Similar to tourism experiences, knowledge co-creation is context-dependent and can be influenced by disruptions driven by researchers and other actors (Lugosi, 2018).

In line with the constructivist paradigm, the study follows the methodology of qualitative research (Jennings, 2010). The data is gathered through seven semi-structured interviews and enriched by preliminary data consisted of 19 social media posts. This data triangulation is used to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Social media is further used as a tool to find interviewees who feel committed to the topic, which, for one's part, also contributes to the trustworthiness of the study (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012, p. 118; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

The interview themes are constructed around the tourism journey. However, the chosen analysis method follows a theory-guided perspective, in which the analysis is inductive, and it aims to make generalizations from individual or independent aspects within the research context. Due to limited amount of data, broader generalizations cannot be made, but the research findings represent the reality of those who were interviewed. So, theory will guide but not determine the forming of questions to answer the pre-determined research questions. Mainly, the research concepts will tie the research findings together at the end of the analysis process. Therefore, the themes that led the interview setting are also considered in the final data analysis. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, p. 97) refer to this as theory-guided analysis when the theory as prior knowledge serves as a tool for interpretation, while the units of analysis are drawn directly from the data, generating new insights.

4.1 Empirical setting

As a distinctly anthropocentric industry, tourism is mainly designed to create human satisfaction (Dashper, 2020, p. 8). However, it involves many other factors than just humans, offering a variety of different multispecies encounters (Danby et al., 2019). This thesis contributes to the importance of researching animal impact, not only where animals stand concerning tourism activities but mostly how they affect the human tourism experience. Despite bringing attention to the animal's perspective, the thesis focuses on the human's leisure, as holidays are a human-created phenomena for humans. However, the research is conducted in a way that animal perspectives are also brought up through understanding their impact on the tourism experience, albeit they are narrated by someone other than themselves.

I realize the contradiction in researching the linkage between animal agency and tourism experience when it is only communicated by the human part in the interview. However, the study shares the understanding of Dashper (2020, p. 4), who describes human and companion animal relationships as following: "People who spend significant time around individual animals learn to communicate effectively with them, to read their moods, assess their wants and dislikes, and many animals, in turn, can do the same with humans". The dogs are narrated by their guardian as the facilitator of multispecies encounters (Bertella et al., 2016). Therefore, interviews are suitable for describing the realities of those who practice traveling with companion animals and have a better experiential understanding of it. This perspective suggests that the interviewee participants are better equipped to interpret the dogs they have spent years with, rather than having a researcher solely observe and interpret them from an outside perspective.

In order to gain an understanding of the dog's agency, desires, needs or behaviour, the interviewees are encouraged to describe situations also from their dog's point of view at times. While the main focus is on the human's perspective, for example, after the guardian has described their holiday, they are then asked to explain how their dog might describe it. Describing activities from both human and dog perspectives can create a more holistic picture of their intersubjective interaction. The approach of articulating situations is hoped to open a door for more attentive hearing of the non-human animal and their world. When one is purposely put in somebody else's shoes, it could even unconsciously help the interviewees to describe a situation from another perspective, which can lead to the creation of new information about the situation. While there is criticism of letting knowledge production be led solely by the more privileged

human agency while speaking for animals (Dowling et al., 2017), Włodarczyk (2021) detects a difference between speaking for and speaking with companion animals, talking about the merged more-than-human agency of dogs and their guardians. According to this perspective, humans and dogs are not separate subjects during the holiday; they share the tourism journey by being articulated as “us” or “we”. This thesis embraces the same perspective of recognizing more-than-human agency by interpreting language and the attention given to non-human animals.

The interviews were recorded to be later transcribed and analyzed (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012, p. 119). The transcribed data is analyzed through content analysis, as the gathered data is coded into classes through frequencies, similarities, and differences that appear in the text (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012, pp. 39-41). Coding is a tool to transform the transcribed data into meaningful segments, where similarities and themes are put together (Rubin, 2021, pp. 185-187). According to Jordan and Gibson (2004, p. 226), data comparison can be started during the interviews, when patterns that emerge from the conversation can be utilized in later interviews with other participants, thus seeking verification of the topic’s relevance for the study.

As the research aimed to get the best possible understanding of the desired topics (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018), I saw interviews as a suitable method for my research, emphasizing that the humans that I interview are the ones who are describing the realities of them and the dogs. The research interviewees are my gate to understanding their world, and their knowledge and empathy for the dog guides the inclusion of multispecies reality.

Social media content is gathered before the interviews and is first analysed as a separate item. After the content analysis of the interviews, the same preliminary data is included in the primary data to be analyzed by the same content analysis means as the interviews. The posts are coded and divided into meaningful segments (Kananen, 2017, p. 137). Only the written text of each post will be taken into consideration in the data analysis; the pictures are not further analyzed to keep all the existing data in the same text format. The key difference to interviews is that the approach in social media is that the purpose is not to find a fit to any theory, but more to get objective information of the research phenomena to further use as part of the study (Juhila, 2021).

4.2 Data collection

4.2.1 Social media observation

The purpose of preliminary social media data was to work as preliminary knowledge to form valid themes for the interview setting. Social media posts were found on Instagram through the hashtag #koiraystävällinen (dog-friendly) to discover the issues or meanings travelers give to dog-friendly services. Instagram was chosen as the platform for the preliminary data, as it enables easily to explore posts within certain tags and is one of the most popular social media platforms. This hashtag was chosen as it is commonly used in Finland by normal consumers spreading information about dog-friendly services. As one of the sub-questions studies animals as agents, the social media observations and analysis provide insight into how the dogs are seen and described in the posts, thus possibly justifying the means of animals as active agents. The subjectivity, individuality, and how animals are positioned in relation to the human world could possibly be reflected in the social media posts.

The data was gathered from Instagram by searching newest posts under the given hashtag. Two criteria were set to ensure the posts' objectivity and honesty. First, the post had to be made by an individual and not by a company profile or clearly as paid advertisement for companies. The posts that had the indicators of being motivated by advertisement were left out. Furthermore, if the picture in the post did not include a dog, the post was left out. The latter was done because it was noted that sometimes hashtags were used merely for publicity, not because they represented the post's content. By those standards, the social media data was gathered during one sitting by screenshotting the newest posts at a time on one afternoon in October 2023. By not giving a specific date, I hope to contribute to the anonymity of these posts and the people behind them. It is good to note that all these posts were made from public profiles to public social media; hence, they were visible at least at the time of the data gathering. What this means from an ethical point of view is further noted in the chapter on research ethics. The focus in social media posts was not only on the content but also on the kind of profile, whether it was a profile of a human individual or a profile specifically made for dogs. The used language gave a perspective on whether the posts were written from a human or dog perspective.

After saving the posts that fit the preformed criteria, I again carefully read them all through and ended up having 19 posts as my data. The quotes from each of them were taken into Word. I retained the original screenshots in a separate folder to preserve them in original form if needed. It was important to store the data behind a password, as they also include the user names of these people. Therefore, in the research itself, only those quotes were analyzed to prevent any form of identifiers from appearing in the data. Although I did not include the pictures in image

form in the data analysis, as I focused on what was said, I occasionally wrote a short description of the picture next to the quote, such as “Dog in a shopping cart,” if that felt relevant but was not clarified in the text format. After reviewing what was said several times, I wrote comments in Word and color-coded things that implied similar themes. A separate analysis was written based on those themes that rise from the quotes, but it would be connected to the primary data only after interviews were analyzed. All in all, the posts resembled various situations where dog-related services occurred, and they provided insights to understand the research phenomena and perspective in a coherent manner.

4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Seven interviews were gathered during the spring of 2024. Interviews are commonly used in qualitative research when the aim is to understand in-depth descriptions of life through the participants' experiences (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012, p. 118; Jennings, 2010). As stated earlier, the decision for semi-structured interviews leaned on the idea of people knowing how to interpret their companion animals better than an outsider and therefore being able to articulate the dog's language and signs more deeply through the multispecies communication created over time (Dashper, 2020).

To explore the relationship between the guardians and the dogs, the research participants were invited to engage in a thesis interview in a public Facebook group for people who travel with their dogs. Facebook groups provide a community where it is possible to recruit people to participate in research by their own initiative. This Facebook group was chosen because it could be presumed that it represents a group of people who are presumably interested in traveling with their dogs, as they have purposely joined a Facebook group in this matter. The data collection began from a post where I invited people to notify me of their interest in engaging in an interview about a dog's impact on the tourism experience. The interested people could reply by sending a message to me privately. As the initiative to take part in research came from the people's own will, it was presumed that they were enthusiastic about sharing their experiences for the matter, thus developing better knowledge than someone who would have been chosen as an interviewee by random selection (Klenke, Martin & Wallace, 2016, p. 9).

The number of responses was positively surprising, bringing approximately 25 people to share their willingness to participate in the research. The only criteria set in the post was that the traveling, in this research, meant a trip somewhere, including commercial accommodation such

as a hotel or Airbnb. Both domestic and international traveling were included since the difference between them did not feel relevant from the co-creation and animal agency viewpoint. In addition, the Facebook group was Finnish and therefore the recruitment post was also written in Finnish, leading to only Finnish interviewees. Seven of the 25 respondents were selected for interviews based on the differences in their travels. It is to be noted that all the respondents were women. The purpose was to find regular people who take their dogs with them on their holidays. However, some respondents also stated that they regularly travel to attend dog shows and similar activities across Finland and neighboring countries. Since the study focused on such tourism that is often seen as a way to spend human-centered leisure, respondents who shared their traveling habits outside of the dog-motivated traveling were prioritized – even if traveling to a dog show would still be motivated by the human.

As the study did not focus on a specific tourism service but rather on the tourism journey as a whole, the themes of the interviews consisted of providing insight into all of the five stages that Hall (2011, p. 10) describes to include in a travel experience; decision-making and anticipation, travel to the site, on-site behavior, return to travel, and recollection. These themes were shared with the interviewees before the interview in order for participants to be more prepared to understand the tourism experience comprehensively. Along with the research themes, I sent each participant a letter of consent (Appendix 1.) that was signed online before the interviews or, if preferred, agreed upon verbally at the start of each interview recording.

All interviews were conducted in Finnish using either Teams or online video calls via WhatsApp, depending on the participant's preference. The participants were asked beforehand for permission to record the audio while ensuring the anonymity of the research. Typical of semi-structured interviews, the foundation of questions remained consistent across each research setting while still allowing space for the conversation to explore topics beyond the prepared questions. However, the semi-structured interview settings enabled better exploration of interconnectedness and links between interviewees' past experiences (Jordan & Gibson, 2004, p. 222). The questions were designed to be open-ended to avoid simple yes or no responses. Probe questions were sometimes used to enhance understanding and prevent the answers from being solely the researcher's interpretation. Mutual understanding and reassurance also further enhance the study's validity (Jordan & Gibson, 2004, p. 222).

4.3 Content analysis

Content analysis was chosen as the method to analyze the data to provide consistent and clear conclusions about the existing text. Specifically, the data was examined through a theory-guided perspective. A theory-guided approach is driven by inductive thinking, and it understands that the data is first examined without presumptions and theory, thus letting the main topics emerge from the data. By using this method, the data was connected to the theoretical aspects only at the end of the analysis process (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

The analysis process started with transcribing all the interviews. At this stage, a decision was made that only the actual statements of the individuals were taken into account; other forms of communication, such as tonality and body language, were disregarded from the transcription process. This decision leaned on the idea that the audio seemed to give truthful and relevant information on the interviewee's viewpoints. Also, in the interview setting, only the audio was recorded, which means that in any case, there would be no video recording of the interview in order to analyze body language or sign language. However, these felt irrelevant for the present scope of a study and potentially had a risk of discomfort for the interviewees had they been video recorded. If time had not been a constraint and the scope of the study had been broader, more specific transcription on other types of communication could have been practiced as well.

In the transcription process, the audio files were uploaded to Microsoft Word to individual documents. Then, the audio files were transcribed to text using an automatic Word function. This function was used to ease the transcription process, not as a sole method. After Word had transcribed the audio into text, I reviewed all the interviews to correct the incorrectly transcribed parts. The data was kept in Finnish, as translating the statements into English felt irrelevant yet at that step. While transcribing all the data word-by-word, I understood the entirety better and started writing notes on similarities and exciting points of view. Initially, I had one Word document for each transcription, with a total of 90 pages of data.

Next, all relevant parts from each interview were combined into one document. Each interview was color-coded with one color to group the text into more logical entities under the topics discussed in the interview. The original phrases were subtly simplified, but the separate phrases from each interview were not yet merged. The purpose of grouping the data under the interview themes was to compare the appearance of certain topics, even if quantity would not be the deciding factor in qualitative analysis. Color-coding all the interviews allowed me to follow which original phrase was taken from which interviews, as they were copy-pasted to different

documents multiple times along the way. Knowing that the orange sentence is from the orange interview enabled me to more easily get back to the phrase's roots when needed. During this step, I read all the data multiple times while making decisions on their relevancy. These steps of reducing irrelevant data and grouping the relevant ones into one document provided the platform for the actual analysis, which now consisted of 15 pages of simplified phrases (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

The next phase included the simplified phrases clustered with certain subclasses that either emerged or were detected from the data after re-reading it. Elo and Kyngäs (2008, p. 109) refer to this as open coding, when topics are created while reading the text. The purpose was to create a list of quotations organized by their topics (Rubin, 2021, p. 185). The subclasses were based on what appeared from the data; I purposely tried to set my focus out of theory, which would be included only later in the process to keep the beginning of the analysis data-driven. Every sentence of the remaining data was coded, most having trails to multiple subclasses (Rubin, 2021, p. 187). The codes were marked after each sentence, after which each sentence was transferred to OneNote. Each code represented a subclass that constituted one column, including all the phrases relating to that topic. The same sentence could appear in multiple subclasses while still being color-coded to correspond to their original interview. I chose OneNote as the platform because it allowed me to easily remove sentences or move different subclasses next to each other to compare the data better. I had 27 columns, each representing a subclass with its simplified expressions. The subclasses were kept rather self-explanatory and stood for different categories, for instance, "Presence of a dog cause positive or negative encounters", "Dog impacts on decisions of accommodation", "Compromises made", "Dog's happiness is important", "Activities done because of the dog" and "Dog slows down the pace of the trip". Furthermore, I coded the data according to the place, for instance, whether the quotations referred to a hotel, restaurant, on-site experience, or prior to the trip (Rubin, 2021, p. 186).

Then, the subclasses were mixed and matched to reform and merge them under new general classes. Merging contents together when making both the subclasses and general classes was a critical part of the analysis process, as these judgments of merging, separating, or excluding phrases would determine the research outcome (Kananen, 2017, p. 137; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Abstraction was used as a methodological tool to merge subclasses into general classes, after which they would be linked to the main classes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, pp. 110-111). For this, I created a chart in Word, including the subclasses in one column and a general class in

the second column. I had 19 subclasses, which created five general classes (Table 1). In a completely data-driven content analysis, the main classes would be then derived from combining and analyzing the general classes. As my research aimed for the theory-guided analysis, this is when I linked the remaining classes to my theory concepts. The findings are further discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 1. Summary of sub- and general classes

SUBCLASS	GENERAL CLASS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays with dogs are longer and usually not spontaneous • Choose of destination • Dog impacts on the decision of accommodation • Dog impacts on the decision of transportation 	=> Thorough planning and anticipation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog causes positive encounters (people) • Dog causes negative encounters (people, animals) • Communications caused by the presence of a dog 	=> Added social encounters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moments of togetherness • Dog's presence is grounding and enriching • The dog's behavior bring new perspectives 	=> Impact on tourism experience (emotional)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog slows down the pace of the trip • The dog's physical needs and rhythm guide daily activities • Dog-related activities • Dog-related constraints 	=> Impact on the realization of tourism journey (actual)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worry caused by the dog • Dog's role as a family member • Compromises for the dog • Dog's happiness in important 	=> Relation between the human and the dog

4.4 Research ethics

To ensure the ethical aspects of doing research, this thesis follows the guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012). The thesis is written with an understanding of the responsibility between the researcher, the research participants, and the whole research community. The role of a researcher as part of a research community is understood by giving credit

to the original authors and their input to the field of tourism research. In addition, ethical issues have to be considered in both of the data collections, as the research consists of both interviews and preliminary data from social media.

Research participants' personal information is handled with anonymity and conducted in a way that they cannot be recognized from the result (Ranta & Kuula-Luumi, 2017). The anonymity of research for the interview participants was highlighted both in the Facebook post and in the letter of consent before the interview, which participants either signed and sent to the researcher beforehand or acknowledged their consent on audio at the beginning of the interview setting. The anonymity of interviewees was ensured by using pseudonyms in the research findings by referring to them with an "I" for the interview followed by a number, such as "I3". To distinct, social media posts are referred to with a "P" for the posts followed by a number of the post.

In the interview setting, voluntary participation was highlighted, the possibility to withdraw from research was noted at the beginning of each interview, as well as the freedom not to answer any question. The contents of the conversation were explained beforehand to the participants on the Facebook post and later in the letter of consent. The recruitment post explained the purpose of the research briefly, and later alongside with the letter of consent (Appendix 1) it was shared, that the participants can think of the tourism journey as a whole, explaining that the interview structure follows the steps of full tourism journey (see Appendix 2) In addition, as part of the interpretive paradigm, the interview participants were treated with respect and offered freedom to talk about each subject to the extent they wanted, as their viewpoint is highly valued. It is important that the interviewees feel safe and that there is no physical or mental harm done in the interview setting.

When gathering preliminary data on social media, it was important to keep the anonymity of all participants and present the results in a way that does not allow direct quotes to be traced in an online search. The few quotes that are used in the research findings are translations from the original post. Hence, they cannot be traced back as they are presented in this thesis. In addition, the quotes do not mention any details that would give away location or other information that should be kept private. For instance, if the post mentioned going to a specific concert, the quote only refers to it as a concert without including the name of the artist. The preliminary data that is gathered from Instagram is stored for only the period of the research time and encrypted with a password in a way that no unauthorized access is possible.

As the social media data was gathered through public posts posted with a specific hashtag, there is a relevant ethical issue related to the consent of these participants. However, as anonymity and privacy are ensured in the research process, it is not perceived necessary to inform the people behind the accounts about the conducted research. The choice is further justified by the fact that these selected posts were made by public accounts by using public hashtags that are specifically intended to increase visibility beyond the user's immediate network. The Oxford English Dictionary defines hashtags as "A word or phrase preceded by a hash sign and used to identify messages relating to a specific topic" (Oxford English Dictionary). Therefore, by using hashtags, users actively contribute to broader public discussion by setting traces to wider topics on their posts. In addition, hashtags in Instagram are entirely voluntary, and so is having a public profile. Had the posts been made in a private group or without metadata tags, this matter would certainly have been treated differently.

Lastly, there are some considerations of animal ethics within the research context that should be made. It is important to note that even though this thesis discusses animals and their impact, there was no separate consent retrieved from the dogs, although they indirectly took part in the research. Similar observations have been researched by Claire Mancini, who describes that animal consent can also be mediated by their guardian with certain criteria. According to her, the mediator, in this case the human companion, should have the abilities and understanding to have a vested interest in the animal's wellbeing, knowledge of the individual characteristics of the animal, and legal authority to consent over the animal (Mancini, 2017 p. 62). Therefore, by obtaining human consent, it could be argued that animal consent was also secured, as the guardians possessed the necessary qualities to mediate on behalf of their dogs. However, it is important to acknowledge that, from an ethical point of view, true consent from the animal may not have been fully attained.

5. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the content analysis. The abstraction process enabled to combine and find classes that would complement the existing theory in the last part of the analysis. The research made it possible to identify that co-creation takes place on several different levels with several different actors when traveling with a dog. Furthermore, several factors implied dog's possibilities of shaping situations through their agency and that traveling with a dog is an all-encompassing experience. The purpose of this chapter is to showcase the key findings of the data while reflecting the sub research questions: 1) How dogs take part in co-creating tourism experiences and 2) how the dogs are displaying their agencies on a holiday.

This chapter solely presents the findings from the data, which are later connected and analyzed in new light with theory in the Discussion chapter. The sub-questions are addressed in the chapter by detailing the general categories derived from the data in content analysis. The general classes derived from the data are as following: Through planning and anticipation, added social encounter, relation between the human and the dog, impact on the tourism journey (emotional), and Impact on the realization of the tourism journey (actual). It is illustrated through each section of this chapter how the dogs display their agencies and how the experience is co-created between the guardian and the dog.

5.1 Thorough planning and anticipation

Tourists very actively co-create their own experiences; they design and plan the trip, actively participate on-site, and often report and share tips from the trip and evaluate it afterward (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009). The role of co-creation is even emphasized before the trip when the act of traveling is done with a dog. All the participants described that the planning has to be done more thoroughly when traveling with a dog. The dog impacts comprehensively the planning of the trip, albeit they do not communicate it themselves or directly decide and plan a holiday for their families. Therefore, the impact is more indirect than direct, and the human makes the decisions considering the dogs' wellbeing. The dog's comprehensive impact on the trip includes the choice of destination, timing of the trip, way of transportation, and accommodation. All these factors become more time-consuming when travelers consider and seek solutions that also fit their dog's needs. These are described in the chapters and quotes below.

In general, the participants described that their destinations with dogs are calmer with close access to nature. The destination planning is done with the intention of what is good for them and where the dog's wellbeing is not neglected. Most participants agreed on not choosing the busy and big cities as the destination, and they also excluded countries that could be too hot for the dogs in the summer. Furthermore, the way of transportation and choice of destination foster each other, as all of the interviewees used methods other than flying as their transportation, thus excluding destinations that are not possible to reach by car, train, or ferry.

We like the countryside and quieter places, there both the dog and the people are the happiest. (I7)

Without a dog, we would go to city destinations or to more distant destinations where there are more people (I5)

Without the dog, we would fly and [the traveling] would be more city-focused, including accommodation. (I2)

The impact on timing can refer to many things – the length of the trip, the season when the trip takes place as well as the time between the booking to the actual departure day. Dogs come to the holiday with the same routines and needs as they have in their everyday lives; while people “activate their vacation modes,” the dogs have to be considered holistically in timing the trip in a way their needs and routines are not neglected. As the planning is more time-consuming, some interviewees noted that there have been fewer spontaneous trips compared to a time without a dog. The reasons derive either from planning taking more time, the dog needing more time to adjust, or people not being able to go on a holiday even without their dog because they cannot find a dog sitter with last-minute notice. Therefore, having a dog impact both traveling with and without the dog.

Sometimes I feel like taking a spontaneous "last minute offer" weekend trip when the weather is good, and then I feel a bit down that I can't. (I6)

You can't really make quick visits that if you notice that [dog] is tired, she may not be able to calm down enough to eat. And then again if she does not eat and does not calm down so then she is not nice travel companion /../ so if you go somewhere longer like abroad to go to a dog show for the weekend then it is better to leave already on Thursday so that it is like long weekend. And not so that you drive there late at night and then you are in the ring and drive through the night, that is just too hard. (I3)

Here, the dog's behaviour and wellbeing has impacted the planning to the point that the dog's actions have prolonged the length of the trips to make them better for all participants. Therefore, it's not just the presence of a dog—there is a causal connection between the dog's behavior and prolonged trips.

Transportation is also thought of more thoroughly when traveling with dogs. Participants agreed that the car is an easy way of transportation, but many also travel by ferry to neighboring countries. The ease of going by car was noted, by being able to pack all the necessary things and plan the route as it pleases. When traveling with public transportation such as buses and trains, interviewees point out that seats should be booked in advance due to the limited number of dog-friendly seats. Furthermore, ferries have restricted access for dogs, as dogs are mostly welcome on route trips, not cruises on most ferry lines. Especially in summer, dog-friendly cabins can be sold out during the peak season. Therefore, they should be booked in advance. This is illustrated by one interviewee, who describes their booking process for a summer trip to Europe.

So I booked for example a ferry to Tallinn because of the fact that the pet cabins do not sell out so quickly and it is still only 2 hours /../ But, for example, even if already now I'm starting to think about the way back, if you come through Sweden, I know that between Stockholm and Turku in the summer time the pet cabins sold out and then again there the cabin is only possibility. Of course, you have to anticipate a lot, because there are fewer places available. (I2)

Alongside with transportation, accommodation takes more time to plan and book. Not all rooms or apartments or cottages accept dogs, thus participants spend time filtering out the suitable options. Many note that even if different booking sites offer the option to filter dog-friendly options, they still need to call or message the accommodation provider to clarify the amounts of fees, whether they are per day, per dog, or one-off fee. In addition, one interviewee mentioned the need to clarify the specific room types where dogs are allowed, which often are the rooms in the cheaper categories. Most of this is experienced as time-consuming and could be easily improved with clear communication on websites. Lastly, accommodation should have features that will enable the dog to feel safe and comfortable, such as no steep stairs and at least one bedroom in the bottom floor with the dog.

5.2 Added social encounters

Traveling with a dog opens the door to a world of social encounters as it introduces various sets of communications often derived from the dog's presence. Interviewees noted that added social encounters are mostly seen as positive and welcome. The encounters usually consist of other people wanting to pet the dog, asking for tips, or sharing experiences about traveling with a dog. The described social encounters were interactions between another tourist and the interviewees, taking place on ferries, on walks, in restaurants, and anywhere in public. Furthermore, the described social encounters were something that would not happen in the same sense had there not been a dog in the situation. Even small acts, such as strangers smiling, were noted to increase when walking and traveling with the dog. The encounters can be sudden pleasant experiences that bring happiness to both the dog and the human.

The fact that she enjoys it [walking] so much. You can see how excited she is and how she likes to sniff and look at all the new and interesting things and then she likes it when people come to pet her and admire her. (I7)

Well, [the dog] probably acts as a kind of icebreaker between people so that you get to know people more easily and you get to talk to different people. (I6)

One time there was an exchange student /./ and he came to ask if he could take a picture [of the dog] /./ and I talked to him and there was a viewpoint and he wanted to go there, so then he took pictures of the dog at the viewpoint. /./ It's always nice when there is this kind of positive encounters, especially when you are traveling solo. So always nice to get some chatting buddies and other. (I3)

However, some interviewees noted that not all encounters are positive. As one interview describes it “Those bad encounters are the kind of comments that are purposely said so that you hear it, but that person has no intention of coming and saying it to you directly” (I2). In addition, there can also be other animals, such as other dogs without a leash, that cause stress, especially abroad, which I2 and I3 noted. Even if these encounters are few compared to the good ones, they still affect the situations. And, as illustrated in the following social media post, these negative encounters take place just as suddenly as the positive ones:

Today there was also an older lady who stared at me and [the dogs] with a look of disdain while we were booking a table. She was going to sit next to us. I said she could find some other table if she didn't like dogs. She said she was going to do that, as she didn't want to sit and eat with those dogs staring at her. /.../ Said she does like dogs, but not these dogs, yeah right. When we were leaving, [she]

was using baby talk to a little dog that was with an older couple. So that was that.
(P5)

Here, it highlights how the dyad formed by the human and the dog is exposed to other people's opinions and likings. In the quote above, the issue was the size or breed of the dogs, which was something that another person found undesirable. It illustrates how the co-creation of the experience is also influenced by other people and their perceptions of the animals. These perceptions of others and the actions they elicit, contribute to social encounters for the interviewees, both positive and negative.

5.3 Relation between the human and the dog

This section delves in to the dynamics between the people and the dogs, and how these dynamics contribute to dogs as travel companions. For many participants, the dogs are more than just “pest”; they are considered members of the family whose presence enrich everyday lives by providing comfort, routines, and company. This relationship is significant in a travel environment involving compromises and adjustments to meet the dog's needs. The family member-like setting was vivid both in social media observation and in the interviews. In the social media observations, this could be detected through the wording – when the posts were written from the dog's narrative, they would refer to the guardians as mom and dad. If the post was written from dog's narrative, none of them would refer to the guardian as “owner” for instance. Interviewees described dogs' comprehensive meaning in their lives as family members, a way of life, and someone they can pamper and care for.

Here I am with my dad on a city holiday. I stayed nicely in my hotel room, enjoying the peace and quiet of the room while dad and mom went to a concert. Daddy and mommy praised how convenient the entrance was from the inside of the hotel to the concert venue. So, five paws [rating]. (P13)

Dog brings such joy to everyday life. For me, it's a very healthy and grounding way to enjoy moments and the ordinary everyday life. And I noticed it in the way I had always justified not getting a dog by the fact that we travel so much during the holidays. And then, when he came to live with us, I realized that he makes

everyday life so much better that I can somehow organize the holidays as well.
(I2)

The role of the dog is more diverse than someone to pamper, there are also certain aspects that the dogs provide for the human. Most interviewees highlighted that the dog activate them to exercise through the daily walks and having a uplifting and stress-relieving impact on their lives. In addition, dogs can bring safety both at home and when traveling, a very important note pointed out by one of the interviewees.

Especially during this trip when I have been alone, she has expelled some shady people couple of times /../ So in one Airbnb apartment around 4-5 o'clock someone tried to get into the apartment and she went to the door which was on the street level facing the street directly. So I woke up thinking did I hear right that someone is trying to get in and I looked at the dog and she was lying on the ground and was really alert and then she went to the door and began to make noise and barking and growling and she barked quite differently in a situation like that, so then they left from there. (I3)

Above, the dog is actively participating in the situation and acting based on their own senses instead of under human control. The short story illustrates how the dog is taking action in the situation and bringing safety to the guardian. It illustrates the notion of the relation between them, how it goes deeper than the dog being someone to pet or someone to take on a walk with. The dog can contribute to the feeling of safety, which, on the other hand, is one of the greatest needs to fulfill.

Central to the experience is the dog's happiness, which not only reflects the care and commitment of the human but also significantly influences the overall quality of the experience. All interviewees reflected that the dog's happiness is important. Furthermore, the dog's happiness can also radiate back to the human, bringing happiness to themselves as well.

When the dog is super happy, then it makes me really happy plus one morning /../ we went for a morning walk and it was kind of gray and it was raining, but then dog had slept so well at night and was so energetic and then she commands me that I should run around with her and not just walk, so it's just so joyful and makes me feel good too. (I3)

The dog's happiness is more than just seeing them happy, it is all the little and big things done to maintain their happiness and wellbeing. On a holiday, this often leads to compromises that can impact the actual realization of the trip. Furthermore, one interviewee described: "The trips are planned on the dog's terms" (I4), and later on described having their trips currently on pause right due to dog's health issues and not wanting them to get sick while traveling. There is a deep meaningful relationship in the background, and the understanding of this bond provides crucial context for displaying the emotional impact dogs have on the tourism experience, a subject that is explored in the next section.

5.4 Impact on tourism experience (emotional)

This section digs deeper into how the relationship between humans and dogs reflects the tourism experience on an emotional level. As interviewees noted the all-encompassing importance dog's have on their everyday life, it is no wonder that the connection follows on holidays as well. For humans, holidays are a good way to create more time together (Frochot and Kreziak, 2017, pp. 31-34) and enjoy the moments of togetherness. Many interviewees described wholesome moments and the impact and perspectives that the dog has brought to the specific experiences. They note that many emotional aspects of holidays come from being together with the family, which in these scenarios includes the dog as well. For instance, traveling with dogs was described as: "Let's say it's like going with a family member, like having the kids with you, because [the dog] is one of us and we go together" (I4). Therefore, the emotional impact of a dog can be seen on a similar level as with any other family member. Of course, they cannot be fully compared together as the dog is dependent on the guardian, but similarities can be noted. Furthermore, the moments of togetherness are described as important both for the dog's and people's points of view.

The best memories are the kinds of being up there in the high mountains and it's so beautiful and the air is so fresh and then you're sitting in a restaurant there. And we eat some lovely local food and the dogs lie under the table and then I secretly feed them all sorts of things even though I'm not supposed to. Those are such all-encompassing experiences. (I7)

[Name of the cinema] organized possibly the first dog cinema in Finland, a film screening where dogs were welcome! They gave good instructions in advance,

so mom knew to bring a water cup, cup for treats and a blanket. The cinema provided a buffet for the dog-guests, and they took dogs into account by keeping the lights dim and the sounds lower than normal. The movie was also suitably quiet so that puppies could watch it too. Each dog had their own sofa in the auditorium, so there was no need to be too close to the neighbors. That was so much fun! (P1)

I think that he likes the fact that we are all together all the time, that on a holiday we are almost 24/7 all in the same place. I think that from [dog's] point of view, those nature trails and the sort of unhurriedness are probably wonderful. (I2)

Well, it's still the same thing for me. That we are all in the same place and if we do something we do it together and I really like the fact that on holiday there are no schedules and no stress and no routines and no deadlines and no need to be anywhere at any particular time. (I2)

Above, the interviewee I2 first describes what could be the best thing about their holidays for the dog's point of view and after describes it from their own perspective. She notes that they are the same moments of togetherness and created memories that become valuable. Furthermore, the impacts of a dog can be noticed whether the dog is taking part on the holiday or not, as elaborated in the following quotes.

If we are traveling without the dog, so then the trip is that we look at her pictures and videos from our phones so even if there is no dog with you, she is still mentally present all the time. (I6)

First of all, I would miss her if she's not there, but then, at times, when it's just the two of us [without the dog] and we're somewhere nice - then [we think] "Oh if we had been able to take [the dog], imagine how she would like to run on that sandy beach" or something like that. She is such an important part of life. (I7)

The data shows that the emotional impact that the dogs bring goes beyond the shared moments. Both the interviews as well as the social media observations emphasized the positive outcome brought from the presence of the dog. Most of the interviewees also noted that due to the personal characteristics of the dog, traveling with them was quite easy. If there were worrying or stress attached, they often related to general worry of the dog in situations such as leaving them in the car, glass-shatter on the side of the road, or dogs getting sick on the way. Examples also show how the dog impacts the emotional value through their agency. Dog's agency is reflected in the next examples of dog-like behavior (Koski & Bäcklund, 2017), which can sometimes

collide with the preferred or expected behavior in the human world, thus shaping the experience for the human on the emotional level.

She had a false pregnancy which started to show symptoms at the destination. We did all the procedures and left her in the room and went to eat as the restaurant didn't allow dogs. Our dinner was interrupted because the reception called that the neighbors complain in the next room that our dog is screaming all the time and so there was nothing else to do but to get the dog out of there and go out and well it was a little bit unpleasant. It was upsetting because the dog felt bad and it was upsetting for the room neighbours that they had to listen to the screaming, and also upsetting for us that our dinner in the fancy expensive restaurant was left unfinished. (I6)

Your face when you hear that there is a café and an art exhibition at the station this month and it is #dogfriendly. It echoes nicely in the old station's ticket hall when the dog warms up voice there. Just because you can. 10 points for the good manners. "Yayyy"

The station also has a yoga hall, I wonder if they offer yoga classes for four-legged friends? I could send this one to practice relaxation and meditation there. The current mantra I'm chanting does not really lower blood pressure. (P4)

Furthermore, dogs were described as bringing new perspectives with their dog-like behavior. Due to the needs and routines that they bring on a holiday, like daily walks alongside with their curiosity, comes also the aspect of slowing down and being in the moment. The grounding effect or perspective of the dog can open the possibility of experiencing a regular situation with better exposure to the surroundings and senses in a way where the dog is also led by its senses.

The fact that when you walk with the dog outside, also at home, and so on you observe the surrounding nature somehow more carefully than when you are not with the dog. In my opinion, /../ you somehow observe the world more accurately and a maybe a little richer. (I1).

Well yeah the dog is a family member, so it is nice to share experiences with the dog involved and it's fun to play with her somewhere on the beach and throw a stick in the water and she goes to get it and so on. /../ So she was swimming there on the beach and in the sea chasing a ball and a stick and digging a hole in the sand and that was like something really grounding for everyone there in that moment. (I6)

I don't really like any public places, so it is calming to have her there [on a train] and she puts me in an easier mood and she reads my moods and as she calms down, I take her calmness to myself as well. (I3)

The impact on the tourism experience at an emotional level is remarkable, and the dogs are co-creating experiences through their participation, regardless of whether they are physically present. The strong attachment to each other embodies that even if the dog is left at home, it would affect the emotional environment in people's minds, as explained: "If the dog stays home, then there is always a bit of a worry about how she will manage." (I1). Moreover, all interviewees highlighted positive memories from their trips with dogs, reinforcing their desire to include them in future travel plans. The findings show dogs' emotional impact on several stages of tourism journeys.

5.5 Impact on the realization of the tourism journey (actual)

After describing the social and emotional effect that dogs cause on traveling, this section concludes the findings by presenting the actual impact that they have on the on-site experiences. This section illustrates the concrete actions where the dog's presence shows and ties up together the previous findings. This section excludes the parts of where dog impacts before the trip, as this formed chapter 5.1 Through planning and anticipation. Thus, the actions included in this section involve the dog's impact on traveling to – and from the site, as well as the on-site experiences.

The first finding regarding the actual impacts understands that the dogs slow down the pace of the trip. This was widely noted in the transportation step by many interviewees who noted the need to make more stops with the dog. However, stopping more on the road may also lead to exploring new nice places and enabling them to explore those places they would normally just drive through. I2 described that due to knowing that they have to stop more on the road, they would check from a map where to make the stop to have it somewhere that seems to have a nature trail or forest around. She described that this has enabled them to stop to nicer places on the road compared to the times when they have traveled without a dog. Also, when traveling abroad car rides can take days compared to a few hours flight without a dog, which also makes the transportation already a big part of the experience. On-site, the dogs are described to slow

down the daily rhythm, which is something that was experienced to differ from when traveling without a dog.

They somehow slow down the pace, that it cannot be like that you just storm from one attraction to another, and then you are totally exhausted when you get back to the hotel in the evening. You must take it a little calmer. (I7)

Dogs' needs and daily rhythms are also included in the holiday, and in some cases, they can also guide the daily activities. The most common activity is walking. The interviewees were divided in this part, as some people said that dogs have increased the daily walks, especially in the close premises of accommodation, but some people pointed out that they have done even more hiking and walking prior to having a dog. The dogs' daily routines and needs were also noted by interviewees who used ferries, where dogs still need to do their businesses on the restricted outside "potty area". This was admittedly described in negative light due to its filthiness, affecting negatively the experience. According to several interviewees, the filthiness can lead to dogs refusing to relieve themselves in the intended area, and instead relieving themselves on the hallways or in the cabin. This sort of stress is something that people who travel with their dogs inevitably experiences.

Walking is one factors that brings part of the home routine to the holiday environment. Another factor that brings routine is described as the dog's sleeping rhythm, which may lead to earlier mornings and shorter nights than without one. The examples below demonstrate how the dog affects the interviewees' holiday rhythm by their own needs and routines.

You can take him with you for dinner and it's lovely to sit there with him but then we have a bit of an early bird dog who gets tired in the evenings, so you will notice when he starts to get tired [in the restaurant] so then we go home and don't go out for drinks any more after dinner, at least not as easily. (I2)

In the morning you need to wake up at a certain time, so that you can do the morning walks and evening walks, which is different than if you were without the dog. /../ We walk a lot anyway, but it would probably be something less on the dog's terms, so if [the dog] wants to go out at 7am then we go out at 7am, but if she's not with us then we go out around noon. (I6)

When it comes to whether dogs can affect the realization of daily activities, the findings concordantly describe it as indirect affect. As many interviewees noted, the dog impacts but does not itself decide, hence often the human agency overrules the animal agency in a sense. Therefore, rational decision-making is done by guardian, albeit they adapt to dog's needs and compromise their own interests or holiday habits for them due to the earlier established meaningful and emotional bond between the two. Daily holiday activities are modified in a way that is considered to fit both the people and the dog. Most interviewees noted to prefer eating in terraces in restaurants, to be able to have their dogs there as well. Nevertheless, interviewees explained also activities that are done solely because of the dog, such as going to a pet store, dog parks or getting suitable vaccines for the dog to leave or enter another country.

Well, certainly she affects in the way that we choose the day's program according to her needs. We observe the dog all the time so let's say that today we have planned to go around a 7 km nature trail, but if after 2 km it seems that she is not interested in it, then it will be interrupted so that her well-being is cared for. (I6)

For example, in the hottest time in Europe you cannot go on a walk, because then the dog overheats so that then you have to be somewhere where she can rest. We have to sit somewhere, have a siesta in a restaurant or under a tree or in a camper van or in a hotel. ././ You need to organize the day in a way that the dog is comfortable. (I7)

Furthermore, participants described several situations, how the dog or traveling with one can restrict activities. Most commonly this was noted as restricted access to indoor spaces, such as museums, restaurants or shopping centers. Even though the participants emphasized policy being reasonable and not needing to take their dogs with them everywhere, it does not take away the constraint this creates for them and the decision to make – whether not go at all, whether to take turns in going, or whether to leave the dog to a hotel or a car for a while. Interviewees also described to activate the dog and tiring them in the beginning of the day, so that they would be able to do dog-restricted activities while the dog would be able to rest in the room. Only one interviewee noted that they have not yet left the dog alone to the accommodation on a holiday.

Lastly, the constraint that was mentioned several times was the airline policy. As mentioned in the beginning, none of the interviewees had flown to their destinations with a dog. Common concern was the issue of not being able to take the dog inside the cabin, due to them exceeding the maximum weight. For instance, Finnair states on their website to have 8 kg weight limit for

“pets” in the cabin (Finnair). Yet, some of the interviewees said to be open to at least consider flying, if this policy was updated. Though, as (I3) pondered “It would certainly be easier for me emotionally, but I don't know if it would be for the dog.”. Hence, their consideration of the dog’s wellbeing affects in the background in this case as well. However, not being able to fly with the dog was not only seen as a negative thing. Not being able to fly can bring a new perspective on traveling instead of their old habits and enables to have a car in the destination also.

I think that this is a change for the better, that I have actually enjoyed this because of the fact that you have a car with you in the destination, so it allows you to have your accommodation somewhere a little further away where there is perhaps much nicer scenery and more space and, in that way, nicer facilities. But if we were just the two of us we would probably choose the kind of easy to walk everywhere -type of accommodation. (I2)

All in all, these findings represent the sub-questions by illustrating thoroughly how the dog is actively is actively shaping events during the full tourism journey. They showcase multiple situations, where the dogs are affecting the tourism experience by displaying their agency. This chapter has given emphasis on the data in order to competently illustrate the realities of the research participants. Next, these realities are examined with theory in order to comprehensively understand the significance of the dog’s role in the co-creation of the tourism experience.

6. DISCUSSION

The findings represented the extent to which traveling with dog has an effect on through specific examples and quotes. This chapter explores the findings within the existing theory of animal agency and co-creation while answering to the main research question: How is the dog's agency reflected in the co-creation of the tourism experience? This chapter is constructed around the greater meanings, that could be derived from the findings. These meanings all represent an aspect of the role of dog's agency in the co-creation of the experience. The data demonstrates dogs as active participants whose presence influences tourism experience in meaningful ways. The findings matter as they showcase how the dog's agency is reflected through multiple stages and how the dog is taking part in co-creating the tourism experiences on an emotional, physical and social level.

Firstly, based on the data, it is clear that the dogs do not just patiently wait at home or follow the human – they actively take part in shaping the events and their wellbeing is considered thoroughly on holidays. The human-dog interactions, interpreted by human and built over time, impacts on the outcome of the events (Danby et al., 2019). This aligns with Thomas (2016, p. 7), who argues that animals' agency is not only expressed through direct actions but also through the indirect capability to shape other' actions and decisions. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the discussion, on how tourism experiences are co-created by multiple factors, while explaining the importance of animal agency in these multispecies experiences.

This chapter specifically reveals the multifaceted tourism experience that guardian and dog together create by providing more holistic information on the bond between the human and the dog and the change in social dynamics they together face. With the help of this discussion, it is possible to add knowledge of the reason why these animals are brought on holiday, what it means for the guardian and how this shapes their experience. The results emphasize the role of the dogs in these scenarios, so that they could be seen as more than just “pets” who are owned by someone. Instead, the importance and reciprocal care between these two subjects is here better understood, highlighting the dog as an active participant. As an outcome, the bond between the guardians and dogs has the possibility to reshape the way human-animal relationships are perceived in tourism.

6.1 Dogs shaping sensory perception

One key instance in which dogs contribute to the co-creation of tourism on-site experiences is through their ability to alter human perceptions within the destination. Several participants noted that traveling with their dog encouraged them to be more present in the moment, for instance during walks or playing by a beach. Therefore dog's presence enhanced the co-creation of multisensory experiences, enabling the guardians to pay attention to sensory elements, such as sounds, touch or smell that they might otherwise overlook. This aligns with prior studies indicating that animals can affect how humans engage with their environment (Campos et al., 2016; Notzke, 2019). In this research, the dogs' natural curiosity to explore their surroundings held emotional value for the guardians, who described observing the world as richer and more accurate with the dog. This is especially relevant, as seeing the dog happy and playful reflects emotions back to the human, who can experience joy through their dog's happiness (Syrjälä et al., 2014, pp. 29-30).

Therefore, traveling with dogs can improve the guardian's ability to experience the world from a different perspective. These experiences enable embodied exchanges (Game, 2001) that allow the guardian to connect more deeply with their surroundings through their dog's perspective. Understanding this connection is crucial, as it reveals how such events can alter the guardian's perception of their surroundings while highlighting the significant and active role dogs play in that process (Campos et al., 2016; Notzke, 2013).

Furthermore, the dog's agency is also displayed by their resistance, as the data exemplified situations where a dog was too tired to walk a longer hike or refuses to relieve themselves on a filthy potty area on the ferry. In those moments of resistance (Charter and Charles, 2013) the guardian may also feel stress, embarrassment, or concern for their dog's well-being, demonstrating how intertwined their experiences are (Syrjälä et al., 2014, pp. 28-32). These moments further illustrate how the dog's agency actively impacts the sensory experience, sometimes in unpredictable ways that require adaptation and care from the guardian.

Beyond sensory engagement, dogs also contributed to feeling of safety and comfort in unfamiliar holiday environments. For instance, one interviewee explained how the dog scared off potential burglars by barking, reinforcing the idea that the dog co-contributed to feelings of safety while creating a significant emotional impact for the guardian. This is especially important in tourism, where the experiences take place outside of the known home environment. This factor aligns with Carter & Charles (2013), who highlight how non-human agency is often expressed

through spontaneous, independent actions that impact human well-being. It shows how in a threatening situation the dog acted based on their own instinct and preferences, not by a command, illustrating clearly why somebody would bring their dog on a holiday, who here displays even as a guardian.

Understanding dogs as active participants in the tourism experience could expand and redefine the space they are given within the context. Although the tourism industry is designed by and for humans and the dogs do not actively decide taking part in it (Dashper, 2020)), it is the impact they have on one's tourism experience that should not be neglected. When one travels with their dog, the concept of a tourist expands beyond a solely human-centered identity to a multispecies dynamic, suggesting that the tourism industry could better accommodate and target experiences that acknowledge this broader perspective.

As this chapter later on describes, this highlights an interesting dynamic of shared agency within the human-dog dyad: while guardians ultimately make the final decisions, those decisions are heavily influenced by the presence and behavior and actions of their dog (Kylkilahti et al., 2016; Syrjälä, et al., 2014). Therefore, while dogs express agency through their preferences and actions, the degree to which their agency can be expressed is ultimately mediated by human structures and priorities (Dashper, 2020 p. 9), and the varying levels of dog-friendliness in different destinations. This highlights the importance of understanding animal agency as relational rather than autonomous (Äijälä, 2022, pp. 27-30); it emerges and is constantly negotiated through interactions between the dog, its guardian, and the surrounding environment

6.2 Negotiation and adaptation

Hereby, I discuss how the dog, with their agency, is negotiated and adapted to the human-constructed holiday environment. It is noteworthy that even if dogs show preferences and take action, it is clear that the extent to which the dog could have an impact is monitored and limited by humans (Räsänen & Syrjämaa 2017, p. 1). However, the research findings illustrated that the decisions are constantly made with the consideration of the dog's well-being and needs. This means that the dog's indirect influence guides human choices and actions, similar to what Kylkilahti et al. (2016) have concluded. The interview participants compromised their own holidays in order to create a good environment for the dog. This shows in compromises on transportation,

choosing destinations that are not so crowded, and slowing down the pace of the trip. Sometimes, these decisions even prioritized the dog's comfort over their own — for instance, none of the interview participants had traveled by plane with a dog.

According to Richards (1999, p, 190), tourism as an industry is centered around services and experiences, and thereupon the access to those experiences can directly impact an individual's quality of life. However, traveling with a dog introduces certain constraints that may limit access to specific experiences, possibly leading to a neutral or negative impact on the overall tourism experience. Restrictions on accommodation, activities, and public spaces can complicate the ease of travel (Carr & Cohen 2009; Yu & Li, 2023). Due to these limitations, the interviewees adapted their holiday habits by taking turns, skipping or managing the day in a way that it was possible to leave dogs alone for a while. Leaving the dog behind felt more justifiable when they had first engaged in activities to keep the dog active, ensuring that the dog would be able to have a rest when others took part in human-only activities. However, also in those instances, the interviewees still expressed concern for the dog. On one hand, this reflects human authority in decision-making, but on the other, it highlights an ongoing negotiation in which the dog's responses influence daily activities (Bertella et al., 2019.) As discussed in the findings, one dog had never yet been left behind on a holiday, as the interviewee described the dog showing signs of distress when separated. This underscores the guardian's responsibility to recognize and respond to the dog's cues while also highlighting the individuality of each dog.

If tourists typically prioritize hedonism in their decision-making, allowing emotions to exert greater influence than rationality (Frochot & Kreziak, 2017, p. 25), the involvement of dogs clearly enhanced the level of rational reasoning regarding what is most beneficial for all parties. The guardians do not just blindly prioritize their own enjoyment, but are willing to compromise for the shared experience. For instance, the holiday rhythm is modified to match with the dog's daily rhythm, and activities or continuum of nights were described to be negotiated by the responses and actions of the dogs. These decisions are made based on the consideration of the animal, from the belief or knowledge that it is better to do something other way in respect for the dog (Ying et al., 2021). Implicitly, there is the strong emotional attachment from both the human and the dog, allowing them to adapt the dog's daily routines to the holiday environment (Danby et al., 2019; Dashper, 2020; Huopainen, 2022b).

6.3 More-than-human agency

The findings of this study align with the concept of human-dog dyads as more-than-human subjects, where agency is distributed across species rather than being exclusively human- or animal-centered (Włodarczyk, 2021). Rather than being passive objects of tourism, dogs actively participate in shaping experiences, yet their agency is continuously negotiated within human-structured environments and legislation (Carter & Charles, 2013; Włodarczyk, 2021).

The tourists create the subjective meaning of the tourism experience by their own motives and interpretations (Volo, 2009, pp. 119-120). If the human experiences joy through the dog's happiness and greatly values its wellbeing, then attitudes towards the dog shapes the experience for the human as well. The presence of dogs reveals in both value co-creation and value co-destruction in the tourism experience. On one hand, dogs facilitate positive encounters, creating moments of joy, discovery, and emotional connection. On the other hand, challenges arise when access is restricted or their presence is perceived as disruptive by other tourists or service providers (Chen et al., 2014). These instances highlight the shared agency between the guardian and the dog; together, they form a single unit—often treated not as separate entities but as a collective "human-and-a-dog" subject. Crucially, there is intersubjectivity between the species, implying that they both change each other (Sayers et al., 2022). As a result, regulations and societal attitudes impact not just the animal but the entire dyad, influencing their experiences in ways that would not have significance among human-only travelers (Włodarczyk, 2021).

The theory in the chapter 2 illustrated the diversity of different factors in the experience environment. These interconnected actors like service providers, other tourists, internet, accommodation, restaurants, animals, tour operators, airlines, nature and so forth all affect the experience co-creation and evoke different reactions and responses for the human in the center of the experience (Binkhorst and Den Dekker, 2009, pp. 318-323). For travelers with dogs, the traditional human-centered model of tourism expands to include multispecies interactions. Taken together, these insights suggest that merging the human in the center into the human-and-a-dog dyad not only evokes different responses in experience network settings but also adds activities and actors that would not typically be part of a human-only travel experience.

To elaborate, Bertella et al. (2018, pp. 57-60) explain that the tourist experiences emerge from reciprocal interaction between the tourist, the destination, and the various other actors. Consequently, when the experiencer is redefined as human-and-a-dog dyad, the responses the human-and-a-dog evoke changes accordingly. This was evident for the interview participants who

demonstrated how their itineraries were adjusted to accommodate the dog-related activities, incorporating dog parks, walks in the close premises, added stops on the road, vaccination, searching dog-friendly places and visiting pet stores to their holidays. These are all factors that in most parts would not exist in human-only traveling. Consequently, these multispecies aspects of their holidays enable the guardians to engage with destinations differently. Walking through a forest or along a beach with a dog, for instance, may increase sensory awareness and alter the guardian's perception of the environment. As previously discussed, this multisensory engagement, influenced by the dog's instincts and actions, can enrich tourism experience through its aspects of co-creation for the whole dyad (Danby et al., 2019).

6.4 Interspecies encounters and social dynamics

Dogs influence their guardians' tourism experience and act as mediators of social interactions. Traveling with dogs increase positive social encounters, as the findings suggest the dog functioning as an icebreaker for conversation. The evoked interaction is in a key role in the experience co-creation and having a meaningful contribution to the overall experience (Gentile et al., 2017, p. 397). Interactions with an exchange student for one participant sparked a positive chain of events, including photographing the dog at a viewpoint on the premises. The dog played a vital role in co-creating a meaningful meeting for both the student and the traveler. In those moments, even by allowing the social interaction to happen, the dog's response to those encounters is the factor creating meaningful experiences (Bertella, 2019) that create experiential value for the human participants.

Whether these interactions create value for the dogs themselves is unclear; as Bertella (2019) concluded, it is difficult to determine whether animals perceive such encounters as meaningful. Nevertheless, the interview participants in this research were generally trusted to assess their dog's comfort (Dashper, 2020, p. 4), ensuring that such encounters are not done to the dog's detriment but can be trusted to leave a positive mark; otherwise, they would naturally be shortened or avoided. Therefore, based on the methods used and collected data, it is only possible to assume that the encounters are meaningful for the humans involved, not so much for the dogs.

Despite the social benefits, traveling with a dog can also lead to negative encounters. While dogs demonstrate a high level of adaptability to human-structured environments (Ophorst & Bovenkerk, 2021, p. 256), their agency is evident in moments of unpredictability—such as

barking, reluctance to enter a space, or reactions to unfamiliar stimuli (Huopainen, 2022b, pp. 9-10). These reactions, which might not align with human expectations, can lead to tension in the shared tourism environments where other tourists, staff and other actors also exist. One example from the interviews involved a dog experiencing a false pregnancy during a holiday. The situation affected the dog's and guardians' well-being and disrupted planned activities, such as discontinuing a restaurant dinner. Additionally, it had social implications, influencing interactions and the social tourism experience also for other guests, who were alerted by the dog's barking.

In extreme cases, negative interactions can manifest in social rejection or conflict. Since dogs and their guardians are often perceived as a single unit (Włodarczyk, 2021), negative attitudes directed at the dog—whether due to personal preference, cultural differences, or regulations—directly impact the human traveler's experience. This was exemplified by one social media post where an older woman vocalized her displeasure with having to sit next to a breed of dogs she did not find desirable. This moment illustrated how experiences are affected and co-created also by other people and their perception and views of the subject. In fact, when another tourist expresses discomfort with a dog's presence or when a traveler is denied entry to an establishment due to having a dog, the social dynamics of tourism shift from co-creation to potential value destruction wherein interactions result in friction rather than enrichment (Echeverri & Skålen, 2011). These situations illustrate the complex interplay between human and dog agency in tourism environments, reinforcing how guardians and their dogs navigate social expectations together.

Ultimately, this research presents that dogs' agency in tourism is not only about their ability to act independently but also about how their presence reshapes guardians' experiences, decision-making, and interactions within the broader tourism journey. By recognizing and integrating the more-than-human perspective (Danby et al., 2019; Sayers et al., 2022), tourism studies and so forth the industry can better understand the evolving nature of those experiences that extend beyond the human-centered experiences.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Tourism, along with other industries, has shifted from providing products to consume to creating something more significant – providing tools for meaningful experiences in service environments where people can themselves navigate and partake in personalized experiences. The emphasis on the individuality of experiences and the role of the tourist actively shaping them has changed the status of a passive tourist into someone who is an actively involved in the center of the experience creation process. Simultaneously, tourism, along with other industries, is shifting from an anthropocentric view of the world to something that understands the multiple other livelihoods within it, evoking a rising amount of research and policies for animal welfare, nature conservation, and sustainability. Hence, this thesis contributes to literature in the tourism field by incorporating dogs and more-than human agency into the subject of tourist. By making sense of animal agency and focusing on the animals involved in tourism it further contributes to the field of human-animal studies. Rather than concentrating on animals involved in the tourism industry, the aim was to direct the discussion to those animals who, in a way, engage in and consume tourism products alongside their human companions as participants. Therefore, the research also contributes to the field of co-creation, expanding the idea of co-creation to animals and human-animal dyads.

The study was conducted from a perspective that aligned the methodology and research goals to understand how companion animals, particularly dogs, impact the human-tourism experience through their agency. To better frame the impact, the concept of co-creation was introduced to create tools to understand the involvement of different actors in the tourism experience. Applying animal agency to co-creation created an interesting synergy, where understanding animal agency enhances co-creation and vice versa.

The tourism journey of traveling with a dog was researched using seven semi-structured interviews, enriched by data collected from social media observations to understand how the dogs are displayed in dog-related posts, possibly describing the shared experiences with the dog. The point was to find neutral information on how the dogs and their effects are described on social media. Those social media observations were done before the interviews, helping to create better interview questions that would provide more comprehensive knowledge of the tourism experience as a whole. The interview participants represented people who chose to travel with their dogs. Their background, professions, age, or other demographics were irrelevant to the

research as long as they shared the same interest in traveling with dogs. With that been said, it is good to remember that all of the interviewees were women although it was not a criterion for the interviews. The interviews enabled the knowledge creation from the interviewees' side, allowing them to describe their tourism journeys with dogs that could later be analyzed with the research concepts.

The dogs' impact on the tourism journey was described to be holistic, shaping the experience on social, emotional, and physical levels. The dogs were brought along as family members that, on the one hand, can only indirectly affect the travel decisions but, on the other hand, are considered widely before, during, and after traveling. Because of the family-like bond, the well-being of the dog is put into important light, making the guardians compromise their own usual holiday habits to fit the needs of the dog. The dogs caused constraints during travel and in on-site experiences but also allowed the research participants to engage more deeply with their surrounding nature, creating grounding moments of togetherness.

The research detected four different ways to describe the effects of dogs' agency on the tourism experience. Firstly, their agency was found to shape the human's sensory perception, enabling greater multisensory engagement for the guardians. Second, the negotiation and adaptation between guardians and dogs shaped the tourism experience, as guardians adjusted their plans, pace of the trip, and activities to consider their dogs' needs, often prioritizing the dogs' well-being over their own comfort. This ongoing negotiation demonstrated the mutual influence in the human-dog relationship, where the dog's responses shape the following adaptations. Most importantly, the research discovered support for the subject of the human-and-dog dyad and how the inclusion of animals during holidays affects the subjective tourism experience and social dynamics. This research promotes the human-and-dog dyad as a co-creative unit, where agency is distributed across both species rather than being exclusively human-driven. The presence of dogs actively shapes social dynamics by facilitating positive interactions and fostering experiential value while also introducing constraints that can lead to social friction or value destruction, those indeed experienced by the human part.

These findings emphasize the need for a more-than-human perspective in tourism studies, as it recognizes how multispecies interactions influence experiences, decision-making, and social dynamics within tourism environments. By all means, this research contributes to knowledge creation on co-creative factors that shape the tourism experience, emphasizing the subjective

experience over the organizational view. While the research is conducted from a human perspective with a focus on the human experience, it also aims to contribute to the knowledge creation of a multispecies world where animals are integrated into societal frameworks as beings with intrinsic value and agency. Tallberg, et al., (2024) refer to this concept as multispecies inclusivity, advocating for change to recognize and incorporate animals and their well-being and interests into organizational and societal processes rather than commodifying them as resources. By including animals in the research, I argue that even when conducted from a human perspective, this study contributes to animal inclusivity and advocacy, highlighting non-human animals, as long as it is carried out with ethical consideration and without causing harm to the animals involved.

To conclude the research, it was found that dogs' agency have a significant and active role in the co-creation of the tourism experience. I purposely used chapter 5. Findings to solely represent quotes from interviews and social media posts to share the data without immediately linking it to theory. The aim was to provide enough space to highlight the individual experiences each participant had to share. I believe it is clear that dogs are not understood as a homogenous group of beings in our everyday lives, but the individuality and meaning derived from that uniqueness can be easily overlooked when observing and setting boundaries for human-dog travelers. As one interviewee said: "There are dogs, and then there are dogs" (I2), meaning that no set of clear instructions or boundaries can be applied to all travelers with dogs. However, it is clear that the dogs' presence holds significance for the guardians and that they are desired travel companions — not despite but because of their animalness. By acknowledging this, future research and industry practices can better accommodate multispecies tourism, hopefully creating more inclusive and meaningful experiences for both humans and animals.

7.1 Limitations of the study

While this research provides meaningful insights to tourism experiences when traveling with a dog, some limitations should be noted when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the interview questions followed the same structure as a tourism journey. However, it was soon apparent after the first interviews that the travel from the destination and the co-creative elements of recollection after the journey could not be described as deeply as other stages. Most likely, when asking about traveling to the destination, it can already mix up memories from traveling from the des-

mination, so the “traveling” phase could easily blur into one. During the interview, the participants were asked whether traveling from would differ from traveling to the stage, and if this did not lead to new insights, the conversation would quickly shift to more fruitful topics. In a way, all the interviews contributed to recollection, but this aspect was less emphasized in the analysis. This could also be due to the interview questions, and there might have been a better method to identify co-creative elements during the question creation process. Therefore, this study puts higher significance on the stages of pre-travel, traveling, and on-site experience, which were also highlighted in the data.

As mentioned in the data collection, all the interview participants were women. It is unclear whether this will affect the research findings, but gathering other perspectives to describe the experiences would be beneficial. Although 25 respondents expressed their availability for the research, they were all women. Given these numbers, I did not feel the need to seek another perspective specifically. Of course, the number of interviews should be increased to more than seven for a broader discussion. However, since social media observations are also being used as data, this felt sufficient for the current research.

Furthermore, the data was collected using online platforms and not actively during travel, which could mean that some details considered irrelevant at the time of actual travel might be overlooked, compared to if the travel happened simultaneously with the data collection. One of the interview participants was currently traveling with their dog, providing a more detailed description of events. With additional resources, the data collection methods could embark on new insights, whether gathered on-site or through alternative approaches.

In terms of methodology, the present study used qualitative research methods, and the primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews in order to gain insight into the research phenomena. Although the interviews are suitable for describing human experiences, they do set boundaries for profoundly understanding the animal world. For sure, interpreting animal agency by using human language and their descriptions set certain limitations. Given the rising amount of research done from, for example, post-humanist approach, other methods that align with that approach could provide a more coherent perspective regarding animal agency. However, the present methods provided insight into the realities of the research participants, and therefore, the dogs’ agency were researched in that context.

The social media observations also presented certain limitations, which should be acknowledged despite being used as preliminary data. The data was collected solely based on a trending hashtag that I, as the researcher, had observed in advance to occur in dog-related posts. However, the chosen hashtag, #koiraystävällinen, specifically implies a positive association, meaning it might exclude possible descriptions of scenarios where a service or location has not been dog-friendly. Additionally, the term dog-friendly does not necessarily indicate that the context of the post is related to tourism. Even if the post describes experiences such as dining or attending an event, these activities may occur in a person's hometown rather than during travel.

In Finnish social media posts, no widely used alternative hashtags were found that specifically highlighted traveling with dogs, which is why the term dog-friendly was selected despite those limitations. By doing so, the preliminary data would be in the same language as the primary one to clarify the analysis process. In contrast, English-language social media offers a broader range of travel-specific hashtags, such as #traveldog, which in April 2025 has over 881,000 posts on Instagram. To improve the coherence and applicability of social media data in future research, either a more selective approach to Finnish-language data collection could be considered, or the scope could be expanded to include international content with English keywords.

Lastly, as this study relies on the qualitative data from interviews and social media posts, findings are naturally subjective and only represent the research participants' subjective experiences, which may not fully capture universal patterns. Since the research focuses solely on specific cases of dog-related traveling, the findings should not be generalized to other contexts or types of tourism involving animals.

7.2. Proposals for future research

As this research focused on traveling with dogs, it would be interesting to conduct research considering also other animals such as cats or horses. Every animal has their characteristics and needs, requiring different kinds of care but also offering different kinds of care to the human companion. Each animal species is also observed differently by other people in the service environment, thus shaping the social dynamics. There are certainly different societal constraints for horses and dogs. Therefore, the perspectives of how other companion animals actively participate in the co-creation of tourism experience would provide more holistic information of those non-human animals as actors in the tourism environments.

Currently, the study focuses on the guardian's tourism experience with a dog, but knowing how the dogs themselves experience the shared holidays would certainly open a door for more inclusive tourism. Naturally, the study should be conducted using different methodologies; for instance, multispecies ethnography that incorporates sensory experiences with traditional ethnographic tools to explore human- animal interactions from nonhuman perspectives (Dashper, 2020, p. 4). Also, traditional ethnography tools could be used to conduct participant observations of other people's tourism experiences, or correspondingly, autoethnography if the researcher documents their own holiday with a non-human animal. Collecting data using different methods could enhance understanding the animal perspective by detecting sensorial elements beyond human language.

Lastly, another valuable proposal for future research could explore the power of animal agency from an organizational and infrastructural point of view in the tourism context. While this study highlights how dogs influence tourism decisions on an individual level, future research could consider how tourism providers and destination management organizations adapt with their policies to the growing presence of traveling animals. Even in this research, many interviewees noted that many European countries were ahead of Finland in dog-friendliness, implying that cultural and societal differences also affect the policies. Researching how businesses incorporate more-than-human considerations or dog-friendliness could offer insights into structural challenges or opportunities for enhancing multispecies tourism. Additionally, comparative studies between destinations, in this case Finland and another dog-friendlier country, could reveal the impact of policy differences further contributing to the development of inclusive multispecies tourism.

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APPENDIX 1. Letter of Consent

TUTKIMUSSUOSTUMUS

Hyvä haastateltava /tutkimukseen osallistuja,

Opiskelen kansainvälisellä linjalla matkailututkimusta Lapin yliopistossa. Olen pyytänyt Teitä osallistumaan haastatteluun pro gradu -tutkielmaani varten, minkä tarkoituksena on lisätä ymmärrystä koirien vaikutuksesta heidän kanssa matkailevien matkailukokemukseen.

Tutkielmani otsikko on ”Traveling with my dog: Exploring the role of animal agency in co-creation of tourism experience”. Tutkielman ohjaajana toimii Linda Tallberg.

Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja vastauksia tullaan käyttämään vain tutkimustarkoitukseen. Ensimmäisistä aineistoa tullaan käyttämään pro gradu -tutkielmassani ja siihen liittyvissä julkaisuissa.

Tutkimus noudattaa tutkimuseettisen neuvottelukunnan määrittelemiä vastuullisen tutkimuksen periaatteita. Aineisto käsitellään nimettömänä. Osallistumisenne haastatteluun on vapaaehtoista ja mikäli myöhemmin haluatte vetäytyä tutkimuksesta, voitte tehdä sen ilmoittamalla asiasta alla mainitulle ohjaajalle.

Tarkempaa tietoa tutkimuksesta ja haastattelumateriaalien käytöstä saa ohjaajaltani Linda Tallbergilta / XXXX

Ystävällisesti,

Manda Vähäkangas XXXX
Matkailututkimuksen opiskelija
Tourism, Culture & International Management

Suostun haastatteluaineiston käyttöön tutkimustarkoituksessa.

Allekirjoitus

Päivämäärä

Nimenselvennys

APPENDIX 2. Interview structure

Tausta:

1)Elämäntilanne ja suhtautuminen koiriin:

Kuvaile tämän hetkistä elämäntilannettasi, kenen kanssa asut, mistä arkesi koostuu?

Kerro minulle sinun koirasta?

Mistä lähtien sinulla on ollut koira? Onko sinun perheelläsi ollut aiemmin koiria, (jos kyllä, onko niissä ollut eroavaisuuksia).

Miksi halusit ”hankkia” koiran? Mitä koirat merkitsevät sinulle?

Mitä koet, että koira saa sinusta, ja mitä itse saat koirasta?

Millaista arkesi on koiran kanssa?

Miten koirasi kommunikoi sinulle tarpeistansa (nälkä, vessahätä) ja tunteistansa? (Ilo, suru, pelko?). *Kuvaile tilanteita joissa koirasi on onnellinen ja tilanteita missä hän tuntee pelkoa tai surua.*

Minkälaisia asioita koira ymmärtää sinun kommunikoinnista? Sanat yms, entä eleet ja tunteet?

Jos olisit [koira], miten kuvailisit arkeasi?

Miten koirasi kuvailisi arkeaan/vapaa-aikaansa/harrastuksiaan/miten rentoudut?

Miten koirasi kuvailisi, mikä saa hänet hyvälle tuulelle?

2)Matkailutottumukset (yleisesti)

Kerro omin sanoin matkailutottumuksistasi, matkailenko kotimaassa/ulkomailla ja minkälaisista matkoista pidät?

Kuvaile matkailuasi koiran kanssa, kuinka usein (vuodessa) ja minkälaisille matkoille lähdet koiran kanssa?

Mikä on matkan syy/tarkoitus koiran kanssa matkaillessa?

Oletko matkaillut myös aiempien koirien kanssa?

Kuvaile, minkä takia haluat / et halua ottaa koiraa mukaan matkoille?

Minkälaisia asioita pitää tehdä toisin kun koira on mukana? Minkälaisia rajoitteita koiran kanssa matkailussa on vs ilman koiraa?

Oletteko harjoitelleet koiran kanssa matkailua etukäteen?

3)Ennen matkaa / Mieti tilannetta jossa olet varaamassa matkaa (koiran kanssa)

Millä tavoin koira pitää huomioida matkan suunnittelussa?

Mitä asioita varaat etukäteen ennen matkaa? Kuvaile varausprosessia.

Mistä löydät tietoa majoituksesta, kohteesta?

Eroaako matkan suunnittelu jollain tapaa ilman koiraa matkaillessa?

Millä tavoin koira vaikuttaa matkakohteen ja muiden ennalta varattujen valintaan (majoitus, kulkuneuvo, kohde)

4)Matkakohteeseen siirtyminen

Kuvaile matkustamista kohteeseen, miten se sujui?

Mitä asioita pakkaat koirallesi mukaan matkalle?

Millä tavoin koira suhtautuu autossa/junassa/lentokoneessa matkaamiseen? Ilmaiseeko koira itseään tilanteessa?

Vaikuttaako koira matkan tekoon, kuten pysähdysten määrään?

Onko matkustusvaiheessa ilmennyt ongelmia?

Jos tilanteessa on muita ihmisiä, miten he suhtautuvat koiraan ja miten koira suhtautuu muihin ihmisiin?

5) Kohteessa

Kuvaile mistä esimerkkipäivä koostui kohteessa, aamusta iltaan? Pyri kertomaan, mikäli koira oli mukana tilanteessa

Mietitään tarkemmin tiettyä aktiviteettia(^), miten koira osallistui tilanteeseen?

→ Millä tavoin muut tilanteessa olevat ihmiset huomioivat koirasi?

→ Entä miten koira huomio muut ihmiset?

Mieti tilannetta matkalta joka oli mielestäsi erittäin mukava, mikä teki siitä niin hyvän?

Luuletko että koirasi nauttii matkalla tehtävistä tekemisistä? Esim? Miksi?

Kuvaile tilannetta matkalta, jossa koirasi vaikutti onnelliselta? Miksi luulet että koirasi nautti siitä?

Kuvaile tilannetta matkalta, jossa koira vaikutti stressaantuneelta? Miksi luulet, että koirasi ei pitänyt siitä?

Onko matkalla sattunut tilannetta jossa itse tuntisit stressiä tai epämiellyttävää oloa? Miten koira on toiminut tilanteessa?

Kuvaile ruokailua kohteessa, kävittekö ravintolassa vai suositko syömistä majoituksessa?

Miten majoituksessa on huomioitu koiran yöpyminen? Peti, ruokaa tms yms?

→ Onko niillä vaikutusta koiran viihtyvyyteen?

Miten kohtaamiset muiden matkailijoiden kanssa sujuivat kohteessa? Miten muut matkailijat reagoivat koiraan? Miten se vaikuttaa heidän kokemukseen?

Oletko kohdannut ongelmatilanteita kohteessa?

Mitä asioita teet eri tavalla lomalla, kuin arjessa?

Jos olisit [koira], miten kuvailisit matkaasi?

Mitä näit? Mitä koit? Mikä oli parasta reissusi? Oliko reissussa jotain mistä et pitänyt? Jos saisit päättää, olisitko tehnyt jotain toisin?

6) Kohteesta pois matkustaminen

Miten kohteesta pois matkustaminen on sujunut?

Onko matkustaminen pois ollut erilainen kuin kohteeseen saapuminen?

Miten valmistaudut koiran kanssa matkustamiseen?

7) Matkan jälkeen / Muistelu

Kun mietit mennyttä matkaa, mitkä asiat tulevat ensimmäisenä mieleen?

Minkälaisia tunteita se herättää?

Muuttuiko suhtautuminen koiraasi matkan aikana?

Miten koirasi kuvailisi matkaasi?

Minkä uskot olleen koirasi lempihetki? Miksi näin?

8) Koiran vaikutus matkailukokemukseen

Oletko kokenut että koiran mukaan ottaminen vaikuttaisi matkailukokemukseen positiivisesti tai negatiivisesti?

Millä tavoin koira voi muuttaa matkailukokemusta tai tapahtumien kulkua?

Voiko koira vaikuttaa siihen mitä seuraavaksi tehdään? Miten se ilmenee?

Voiko koira muuttaa matkailukokemustasi ja sen tapahtumia?

Millä tavoin matkailuyritykset voisivat huomioida koirat ja koiran kanssa matkailijat paremmin?