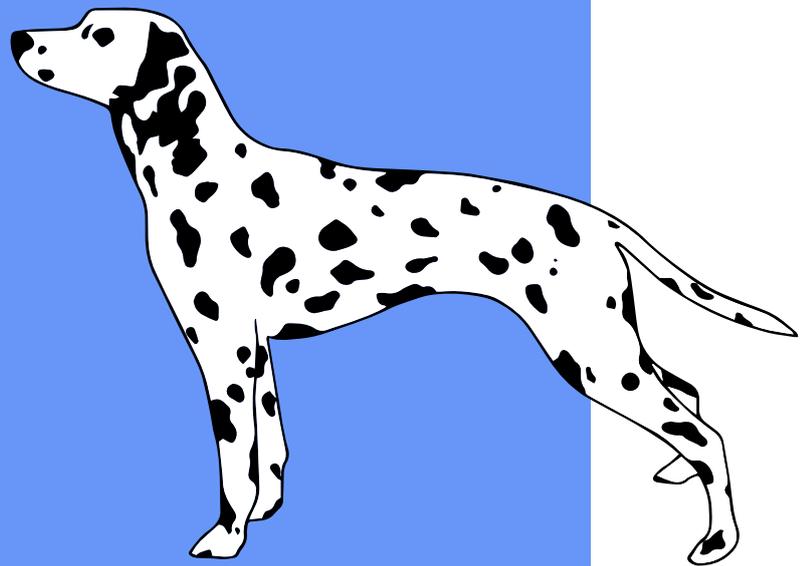


Improving Dog Training

QUT Design Research Dissertation



Nicole Hall
2020

Content

03 Abstract

04 Acknowledgements

05 Introduction

07 Literature Review

15 Research Design

18 Analysis and Findings

33 Discussion

35 Recommendation

42 Proposal

46 Justification

56 Conclusion

57 Reference List

Abstract

The following report explores how dog training is conducted by dog owners and trainers. This includes the preferred training method, experiences with different services and where owners and trainers each lack.

A literature review was conducted to investigate the impact of dog training and the various techniques used to conduct training. This found that overall, training is highly important to limit the risk of the development of behavioural issues. Furthermore, it was found that there are issues with how owners understand training including the impact of professional services.

This initial research informed the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were conducted with dog owners and trainers to understand key issues. These methods were chosen to use a mixed-method approach to gain a full understanding of experiences. Quantitative data were analysed using various graphs to understand trends. Qualitative data were analysed using a coding table to develop themes that highlight the main findings.

Findings revealed that owners and trainers lean towards positive reinforcement training. Furthermore, training requires personalisation to address dog behaviour and owner ability. Findings highlighted that owners struggle with the continuation of training outside sessions, this is a result of understanding and motivation.

These findings informed four proposed solutions that address core issues. The research and design solutions were used to create a proposal that establishes criteria for service or product design.

acknowledgements

A sincere thankyou to all who ensured this projects completion. To the dog owners and trainers who allowed me into their world and provided the basis of this project.

Acknowledgement to all the teaching staff for aiding in this development of this report and my overall design development.

A further thankyou to all my friends and family who supported me during this project, this semester and my whole degree.

Introduction

Pets are an essential aspect to many people's lives adding companionship, happiness and fun, while also improving mental health and overall wellbeing (RSPCA Knowledge Base, 2020). Approximately 62% of Australian households have pets overtaking the number of households with a child under the age of 16 (Vet Voice, 2020). This is reinforced by the fact that the pet industry is booming, with 2019 seeing \$13 billion spent (RSPCA Knowledge Base, 2020).

Dogs are continuously the most popular household pet with 40% of pet owners having a dog (RSPCA Knowledge Base). However, owners commonly cite undesirable behaviour, approximately 80-90% of dogs have some form of a behavioural issue (Wells & Hepper, 2000; Martinez et al. 2011). This behaviour can range from overexcitability, vocalisation including excessive barking, inappropriate toileting to more serious issues such as separation anxiety and aggression. Behaviour issues are an often-cited reason for surrendering a pet which in turn causes strain on the animal and welfare organisations (Bennett & Rohlf, 2007; Scott et al. 2018; Shore & Burdsal, 2008).

This highlights the need for proper dog training. However, a majority of households do not seek out expert behavioural advice in the form of puppy school, obedience training, etc. (Bennett & Rohlf, 2007). In addition to this, there is a vast number of training methods and attitudes towards training with a lot of debate surrounding which is the proper technique.

This report aims to understand dog training techniques and their effect on the animal to create a better at-home training environment for both owner and dog.

The following depicts the overall structure of the report.

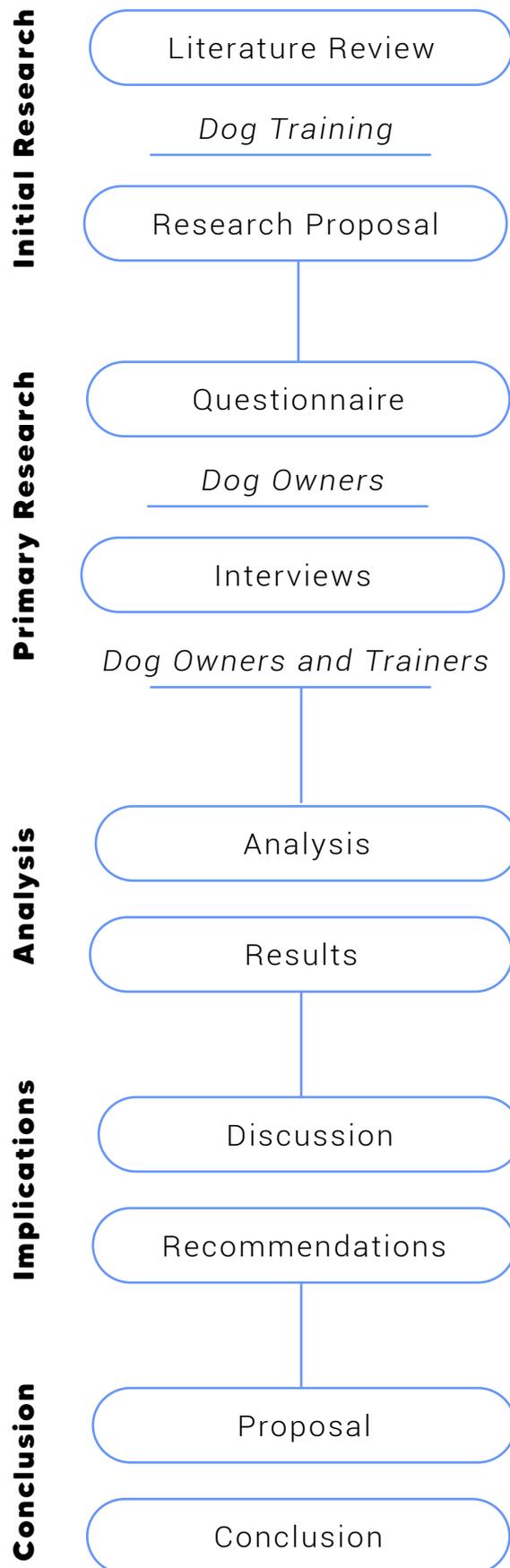


Figure 1. Report Structure

01 Literature Review

This literature review will begin by exploring 'undesirable' behaviours in pet dogs, their causes and consequences. Following this, both professional and at-home dog training techniques will be discussed. Lastly, the most popular specific training methods will be examined as well as their effects on the owner-dog relationship and the dog itself.

Dog Behaviours

Problematic behaviour can generally be split into two categories, a result of **nervousness** or **excitement** (Kobelt et al. 2003, p. 141).

Nervous behaviours, such as those shown in the diagram below, can have several causes, the most commonly attributed is separation anxiety (Storengen et al. 2014, p. 82).

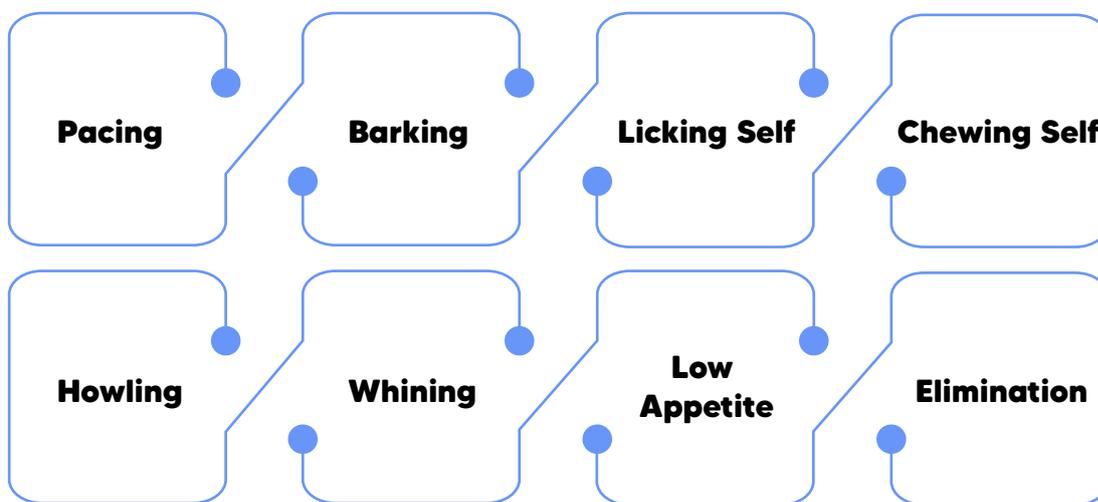


Figure 2. Nervous Behaviours

Separation anxiety refers to the dog's distress when their owner is leaving or has left (Storengen et al. 2014). This manifests through digging, destruction to doors and windows, drooling and escape attempts. Causes include lack of stimulation when left alone, new environments such as owners or surroundings, limited training, trauma and over-attachment (Storengen et al. 2014, RSPCA QLD, 2019). Whether dogs have an actual stress disorder, or they use bad behaviour as a means for attention (Cesars Way, 2019.) there are numerous suggested ways to treat the animal. Veterinarians may prescribe medications to calm the animal however, it is noted that this is a temporary fix (Cesars Way, 2019). RSPCA suggestions include doggy daycare, pet sitters, ensuring the dog has toys to play with while alone and crate training. Although these treatments themselves are disputed as some state that crate training only stops the dog from destructive behaviours without alleviating their stress (Paws, 2020). Many of these do not get to the root cause of the pet's anxiety (Cesars Way, 2019). Without treatment, separation anxiety is a contributing factor to the destruction of the pet-owner relationship leading to relinquishment. In addition to this, the RSPCA states that severe behaviour issues are the main reason for euthanasia as seen in the diagram below (RSPCA, 2019).

Another important note related to nervous behaviours is an owner's ability to detect the signs of stress and act accordingly (Mariti et al. 2012, p.217). Mariti et al. state that many owners often do not notice initial signs of stress such as low appetite and panting and as a result, almost all

owners in the study do not think that their dog was stressed often (2012, p.217). This means that the dogs' emotional wellbeing is not catered towards and causes the dogs to stress to heighten in turn making their signals such as barking and aggression distressing to owners.

Excited behaviours such as those shown in the diagram below. are typically exhibited by puppies and young dogs as a result of wanting to play, however, if uncorrected this may continue to adulthood (Martinez et al. 2011, p.230).

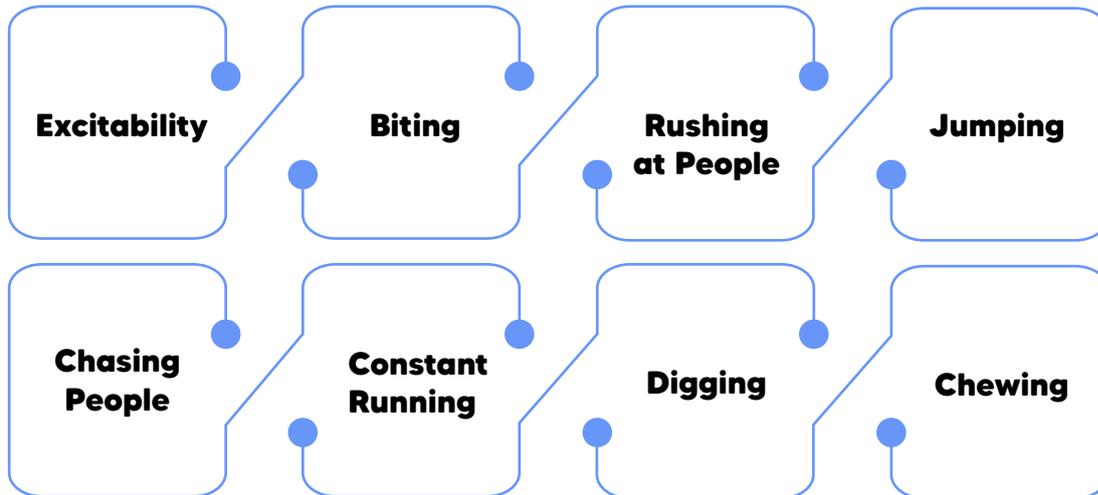


Figure 3. Excited Behaviours

Furthermore, small dog breeds such as chihuahuas or beagles are stated to have been more excitable and less obedient than large breeds (Arhant et al. 2010, p.138). Cesars Way states that overexcitability also known as hyperactivity is a sign that dogs have excessive energy that requires proper ways to exert it and calm them (2019). Suggested treatments include wearing out the animal with exercise and attempting to calm them with your energy (Cesars Way, 2019). However, Debra Horwitz states that the only way to properly address overexcitability is to (re)train the dog by reinforcing desired behaviours (2014).

Causes

There are many causes of canine behavioural issues. General disobedience, underlying disorders, owner experience and the time spent with the animal are all contributing factors that influence a dog's behaviour (Bennett & Rohlf, 2007, p. 66). It should also be noted that breed, sex, size and age all play a role in behaviour however it is debated to what extent amongst the literature (Arhant et al. 2010, p.141.). Scott et al. state that there is a correlation between the number of days a dog spent in a shelter and the likelihood of behavioural issues, however, it is unclear if the behaviours are long term (2018, p. 43). Beyond behavioural issues, a dog may not respond to training due to the communication method being used (Braem & Mills, 2010, p.54). It was found that a simple pause between a dog's name and the command can negatively impact a dog's performance, additionally posture, tone and the lack of a visual cue also impact the dog's ability (Braem & Mills, 2010, p.54).

Consequences

Undesirable behaviour in dogs can lead to a variety of negative consequences including traffic accidents, injury to dog/s or human, damaged property and lastly surrendering to the RSPCA or abandonment (Bennett & Rohlf, 2007, p. 66). The literature is in agreement that unaddressed behavioural problems are a major reason behind relinquishments and the destruction of owner-pet bonds (Shore et al. 2008, p. 64, Scott et al. 2018, p. 40).

Training Methods

Definitions

Positive Reinforcement Training

Delivering positive attention to the dog which may include verbal acclamations, food rewards or play, when the desired behaviour is exhibited. When an undesirable behaviour is demonstrated an owner may use negative punishment. This is done by removing something the dog desires such as attention to reduce the likelihood that action is repeated (Arhant, 2010, p. 133).

Punishment Based Training

Involves the use of aversive techniques such as startling and hitting when an undesired behaviour is shown (Guilherme Fernandes et al. 2017 p.2). This is also known as positive punishment.

These two training philosophies are debated widely amongst the literature, animal welfare groups, dog trainers and dog owners. However, it is noted that currently there is a swing towards rewards-based training due to the research indicating that punishment-based methods increase stress, aggression and ultimately creates more behavioural problems (Arhant 2010, p.132, Guilherme Fernandes et al. 2017, p. 11). Furthermore, it is stated that rewards-based training is positively correlated with the ability to learn a new task and the level of interaction between the dog and owner (Rooney & Cowen, 2011, p. 175).

However, despite the push to lessen the use of aversive training many dog owners continue to use punishment-based training to some extent (Rooney & Cowan, 2011, p.173). In one study by Rooney and Cowan (2011), it was found that zero dog owners use exclusively a rewards-based training method or punishment-based training. This highlights an issue, as dogs require consistency to show long term behavioural change (Arhant, 2010, p. 137).

Expert Training

Expert training refers to training carried out by professionals including behaviourists, puppy school and general obedience training. A large number of dog owners, approximately 76%, choose not to partake in professional dog training often stating the time and financial concerns (Shore et al. 2008, p.64). The literature agrees that these forms of obedience training are almost always beneficial for both the owner and the dog.

Puppy School

Puppy school is a common form of obedience training offered by organisations such as the RSPCA or companies like Pet Barn. Typically, puppy school follows the same general structure of a 4 to 5-week course consisting of one-hour sessions aimed at 8-16-week-old puppies to

train basic commands such as sit, stay, come and drop (Pet Barn, 2020, RSPCA QLD, 2020). Sessions may also address overexcitement, biting etc. (Pet Barn, 2020). The cost for puppy school ranges greatly from approximately \$250 - \$700+ (RSPCA, n.d., Positive Response, n.d.), however, this is for young dogs with no behavioural problems. Additional costs are required for private training and advanced training for older dogs and unwanted behaviours. A positive impact of puppy school revolves around that training basic commands such as sit, stay, etc. has a significant influence on the dog's ability to learn in the future (Seksel et al. 1999, p. 347). However, the effectiveness of puppy school is disputed by some. Specifically, puppy school enforces unrealistic expectations that a puppy is fully trained upon completion (Positive K9 Training, 2020.) This is supported by Seksel et al (1999, p. 348) who states that generally puppy school does not stop a dog from developing behavioural issues in later life. Furthermore, there is an issue with the experience level of trainers with many veterinary or welfare run schools utilising volunteers or vet nurses (Positive K9 Training, 2020.). This presents an issue as dogs that are trained properly from a young age are significantly less likely to develop behavioural problems (Gazzano et al. 2008, p. 126). It should also be noted that puppy school programs are standardised and therefore do not cater to each animals' individual needs.

Behaviourists

Behaviourists are a step beyond trainers and are qualified in the understanding cause of animal behaviour and work to correct the issues. Gazzano et al. (2008, p. 129) state that behaviourists are successful as dogs whose owners were advised by these therapists are significantly less likely to showcase behavioural problems. This is a result of behaviourists limiting the expectations that many owners place onto their pets. It is difficult to fully grasp the perception of behaviourists as the literature surrounding them is significantly lacking.

At-Home Training

At-home dog training refers to owner directed training without input from a professional trainer. Owners are significantly more like to use free services such as websites, helplines or a book rather than pay for classes or a behaviourist (Shore et al. 2008, p.70). Furthermore, it is fundamental that owners continue training at home even if they have had professional assistance. There is a gap in knowledge relating to owner directed training as many studies focus on the particular training method used rather than who was delivering the commands.

Training Tools

Clicker Training

Clicker Training is used at home and by professional trainers (Feng et al. 2017, p.2, Feng et al. 2016, p.35). Clicker training refers to the use of an audible sound when a dog performs the desired action and is traditionally accompanied by a food reward (Feng et al. 2016, p.35). There are numerous ways to deliver this training, typically a handheld device is used however, some trainers simply use their mouth to deliver the noise (Feng et al. 2017, p.5). Proponents of clicker training often cite the consistency of the sound admitted, therefore there is no way for the dog to misinterpret the signal (Feng et al. 2017, p. 7). However, Chiandetti et al. found that there is no difference in the effectiveness of a clicker compared to another form of marking (2016, p. 115). This means that other markers such as visual signals, patting the dog or food rewards alone are just as effective in conditioning the dog towards learned behaviour. This is important to note as trainers from the Feng et al. study stated that often the clicker device was cumbersome due to also holding a leash, treats or not having the clicker available 24/7 (2017, p.8).

Fugazza and Miklosi (2015) state that the Do as I Do (DAID) method is ultimately more effective than clicker training. The DAID method is a social learning technique that involves the human to demonstrate the desired behaviour and imitates that behaviour when the command 'Do it!' is heard (Fugazza and Miklosi, 2015, p. 146). The study found that the DAID method allows dogs to retain the action and increases the ability to act in contexts away from where the training took place (Fugazza and Miklosi, 2015, p. 149). However, the Fugazza and Miklosi (2015) study is the only one that compares the two methods.

Crate Training

Crate training is a relatively new dog training trend that involves the confinement of the dog to a crate to create a safe, private environment for them (Nicholas, 2020). Dogs often spend a significant amount of time in the crate having meals and often sleeping in there (Paws, 2020). Proponents of crate training suggest that dogs are den animals meaning that they are naturally inclined to seek out the safety of confined spaces (Nicholas, 2020). However, there are serious issues with crate training. Nicholas (2020) states that dogs are not den animals but do have a denning instinct. This means that dogs should not spend more than 5 hours a day in a crate as it may cause distress which can lead to injury (Animals O, 2018). Furthermore, there has not been any academic study about the effects of crate training therefore it is difficult to state whether it is truly beneficial to the dog or rather just a convenience for owners.

Electronic Training

Electronic Training is a broad term that refers to the use of electronic devices such as shock collars as an aversive training tool. These devices work by delivering an electric charge to a dog when it displays an undesirable behaviour, they are either bark or remote activated (Blackwell et al. 2012, p.94). The use of shock collars is controversial as many state that shock collars provide unnecessary harm to the dog while being a temporary fix that does not benefit long term behavioural changes (Blackwell et al. 2012, p.95, Guilherme Fernandes et al. 2017, pg.3). Furthermore, Guilherme Fernandes et al. (2017) state that training a dog with these devices leads to stress and anxiety which ultimately breaks down the dog-owner relationship. Blackwell et al. (2012) reinforce this idea by stating dogs trained with e-collars did not show any

positive behavioural change that would justify their use, especially when compared to other methods. Shock collars are also banned in numerous countries particularly in Europe, this enhances the understanding that e-collars of any sort are inhumane (Blackwell et al. 2012, p.99).

Alpha Dog Model

The alpha dog model is also known as dominance training was popularised by Cesar Millan and broadcasted to millions through his television show (Peeples, 2009). Dominance training is founded on the notion that as dogs are descendants of wolves, they therefore also pack animals with a hierarchy which their owners belong to (RSPCA, 2019). It is stated that the owner must become the 'alpha' as a means to address behavioural issues (RSPCA, 2019). However, this theory has been debunked as more studies became available that ultimately found that wolves did not display aggression to establish a hierarchy (RSPCA, 2019). Despite being debunked due to Millan's exposure of this method many dog owners still adhere to the theory which is ultimately the use of punishment-based training (Peeples, 2009). As stated previously in this report, punishment training is not as effective as reward training and ultimately causes stress and anxiety for the dog.

Research Gaps

There are several research gaps in the presented literature. Primarily revolving around the combination of professional expertise and at home dog training. As stated, puppy school and alternatives are not a cure-all for dog behavioural issues and dogs rely on their owner for consistent training following the programs to maintain the learned behaviour. Therefore, exploring how experts in the field can inform dog owners on training at home will be highly valuable.

Additionally, there is a knowledge gap surrounding at-home training in general with studies focusing on the training method as a whole. Beyond training methods, only one study (Braem & Mills, 2010) addressed the communication between trainer and dog, however, this does not take into account the difference between a professional and an owner.

Lastly, Rooney & Cowan states that zero owners use exclusively one training method (2011). The study focused on the broader training philosophy such as reward or punishment-based training. This emphasises a gap in knowledge surrounding the use of a combination of specific training methods. It would be valuable to understand what methods owners gravitate towards as well as their reasons behind their use.

02 Research Design

Research Questions

This section outlines the research question identified in the literature review. This section also presents the justification for the research methods used as well as how the methods were implemented.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to gain a broad understanding of how professional trainers teach dog training. This is in addition to understanding how dog owners implement training methods at home and their experiences with professional training.

Research Question/s

Two primary research questions were identified following the initial research. The questions include:

How can dog trainers improve their communication of training techniques and methods to dog owners?

It was identified in the literature review that 0% of dog owners use exclusively one training approach, therefore it is important to understand how trainers explain the information to dog owners. Furthermore, it was found that there is severe inconsistency regarding how dog owners conduct training therefore, understanding where trainers may lack in communicating how to continue with training post-sessions.

How can dog owners improve the implementation of training within a home setting?

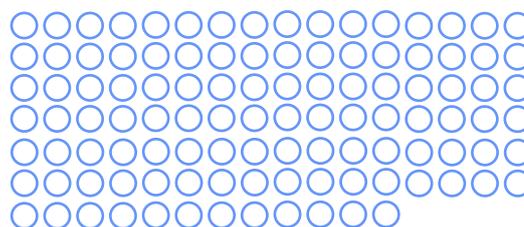
It was found in the literature review that 76% of dog owners do not seek out professional expertise concerning training. This coupled with the lack of consistency provides an interesting area of opportunity.

Research Methods

This study used two research methods to address the research questions, as shown in figure 4. The data collection utilised a mixed-methods approach, meaning that both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. A mixed-methods approach offers the means to gather more well-rounded and complete results than compared to a singular approach (Clark & Ivankova, 2016). This approach also allows for clarification of results from one method to another (Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

Questionnaire

108 Respondents



Dog Owner Interviews

2 Interviews



Dog Trainer Interviews

5 Interviews



Figure 4. Research Structure

Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire aimed to gather a broad range of dog owners' perceptions of experiences with both professional and at-home dog training. The survey design used a mixture of multiple-choice, Likert scale and short answer responses to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Toepoel (2016), seeking quantitative and qualitative data using an online survey allows for general behavioural questions to be asked along with more complex, attitudinal data. The questioning followed a general structure of basic demographic question regarding their dog/s being asked first. This was followed by behavioural questions regarding their use of professional or at-home training. The survey concluded with attitudinal questions about their experiences with these training approaches and thoughts regarding different training methods. This questioning was determined as a result of the literature review indicating that many owners do not utilise professional training therefore, the survey aimed to understand the reasoning and also the knowledge level of dog owners.

The survey received 108 responses and was conducted using Google Forms, an online survey platform and contained a total of 26 questions. Survey respondents were gathered through online forums including Facebook groups. However, it should be noted that these Facebook groups are dedicated training groups therefore the respondents may have a higher knowledge level than an average owner. This was addressed by conducted two follow up interviews with dog owners who self-reported low experience with training.

Interviews

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-Structured Interviews involve the use of some predetermined open-ended questions, creating a general structure but allowing for follow-up prompts that expands upon the participants' responses (Given, 2008). An example of questioning from this study includes: Could you tell me about your approach to training? This question was then followed up with why is that your preferred approach?

Semi-Structured Interviews were especially useful in this context as there is an immense variety of training methods even amongst those who utilise similar approaches such as force-free training. Furthermore, the literature review established that each dog has individual behaviours and therefore needs, using a semi-structured approach allows the interviewer to delve deeper into each participants' individual experience.

Interviews were conducted with both dog owners as a means to build upon the results gathered from the questionnaire and professional dog trainers. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with three current dog owners, with two participants owning the same dog. These interviews also allowed to gather information from dog owners of varying knowledge level regarding dog training. This was imperative as many of the questionnaire respondents generally had a high level of knowledge of proper training techniques due to their dogs having severe behavioural problems.

Interviews were conducted in person and online through zoom with participants sourced through a pre-established relationship. The interview environment was kept conversational and short both taking approximately 10 to 15 minutes. The general structure of the interviews followed simple questions regarding their dog, their dogs' behavioural issues. This was then followed with questions about their experience with training. This line of questioning allowed the interviewees to discuss their own experiences and allowed the interviewer to tailor the questions dependent on the responses.

Five expert interviews were conducted with professional dog trainers to gain an understanding of their training practices and their experiences with training in general as well as with owners. Each participant used a positive reinforcement approach to training, however, they all implemented this differently. Interviews were conducted via zoom as a result of social distancing requirements. However, this allowed for participants from various states to be included in the research. Interviewees were sourced through online means, including the Association of Pet Dog Trainers Australia (ADPT) directory using an introductory email that detailed the study. Interviews ranged from approximately 30 to 45 minutes in duration and questioning followed a conversational manner to allow for flexibility within responses and follow up prompts. Questioning followed a simple 4-part general structure that first asked about their expertise to build rapport. This was then followed by their approach to training and personal experiences including perceptions about owners. The final questioning was focused on their thoughts regarding the improvement of dog training.

All interviews were digitally recorded with participants consent and were transcribed at a later date.

Limitations

This study is subject to multiple limitations. Firstly, the expert interviews were all conducted with positive reinforcement-based trainers this therefore does not allow for comparison relating to the overall training approach. A broader range of training approaches would enhance understanding of what impacts both owner and dog education.

Furthermore, the sample size for expert interviews was relatively small (n=5) this was a result of COVID-19 and the impact that had on availability, especially relating to access to technology. This accompanied by the short time frame impacted the number of participants available for interviews.

The survey respondents were recruited through training specific online forums; therefore these dog owners may have a higher knowledge level regarding training and an increased commitment due to seeking out additional advice. Additionally, the two interviews conducted with current dog owners were recruited from the researcher's connections, resulting in convenience sampling.

03 Analysis and Findings

Analysis

This section details the analysis methods used for both the quantitative and qualitative data collected. This section also presents justification as to why these methods were chosen and how the results will impact the design proposal.

Quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire consisted of categorical and ratio data (Sheard 2017, 435). The data collected was graphically displayed into univariate and multivariate charts to understand key themes, differences and correlations amongst the responses. This method was chosen as it is a simple and effective means to understand patterns within data and graphically highlight the key insights.

Qualitative data were analysed using a thematic analysis method (Mills et al. 2010). According to Mills et al. (2017) thematic analysis refers to the coding of data through assigning categories to the data. Following this, the categories are sorted into broader themes to understand patterns and overarching ideas, as shown in appendix 1. The themes that emerged were both identified from the literature review for example external factors and during the coding stage including owner influence on training. These themes became the basis for the recommendations and design proposal.

Findings

This section presents the primary findings from the research conducted.

Dog Owner Findings

The following presents the key findings as a result of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was targeted towards current dog owners and aimed to understand common dog behaviours and attitudes of and experiences with a variety of training methods.

Behaviours and Owner Response

Firstly, Figure 5 depicts the rate of dog undesirable behaviours as reported by owners. The findings reveal that separation anxiety is the most commonly attributed behavioural problem, with 30.5% of the respondents stating their dogs' experiences this. This is followed closely by both overexcitability and excessive barking with 25.7% of participants stating that their dog showcases each of these behaviours. Moreover, aggression and reactivity to other animals were the only other behaviours that accounted for more than 10% of the responses, resulting in 15% and 11% respectively.

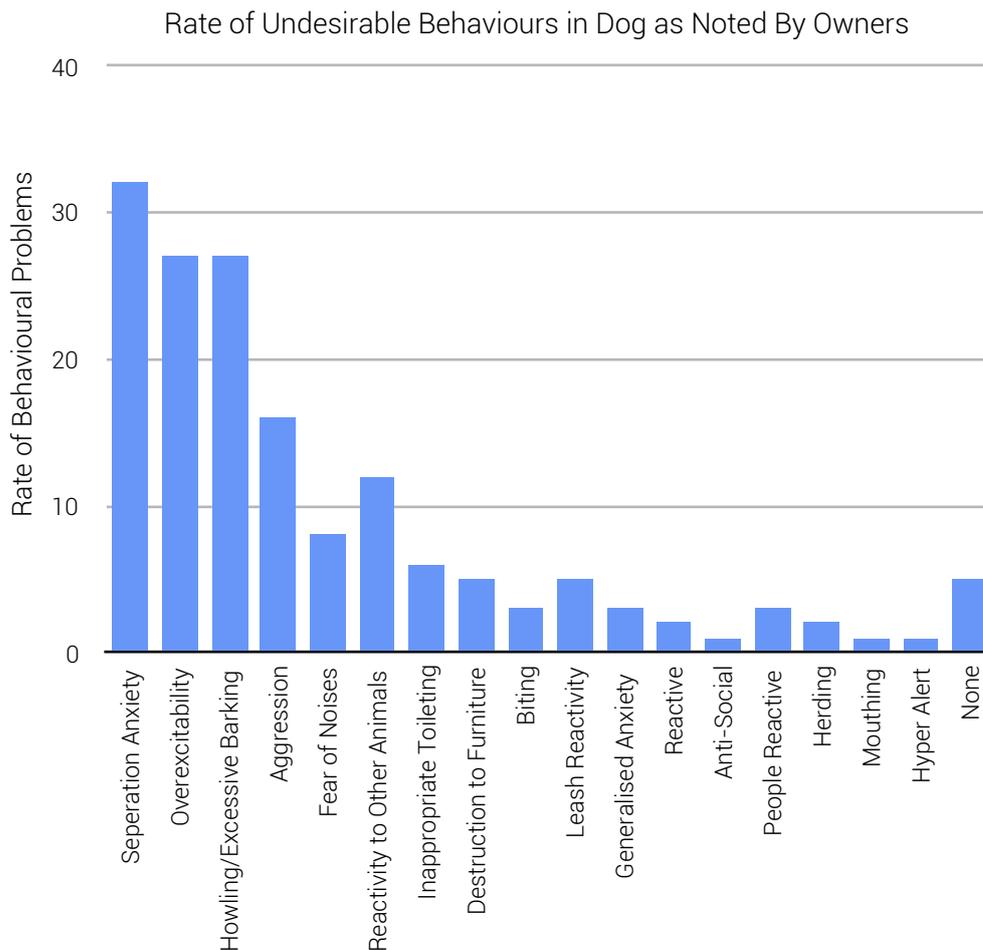


Figure 5. Rate of Behavioural Issues

Barking was established by one of the interviewee participants as the primary behavioural issue *"Probably barking's the main one. Yeah, like he's very sensitive to noises"* – Aaron and Janelle Pearce.

However, the other stated one dog exhibits general anxious and the other does not display any significant behavioural issues. *"Well, Hazel is just very nervous and doesn't like being away from people and have a lot of nervous habits.... He likes to run away. He thinks of it as a game ...and he likes to steal food"* – Jordan Lincoln

To understand the day to day means of addressing problematic behaviours, participants were questioned regarding their approaches. Figure 6 highlights that verbal reprimands, this includes "NO" cues, were significantly more likely to occur accounting for 35.6% of responses. Rewarding Desired Behaviours was the second-largest contribution resulting in 25% of responses. Other significant findings included redirecting behaviour, this means that the owner presented the dog with activities or toys to shift behaviour towards more appropriate outlets, resulting in 24% of responses. Finally, ignoring the dog was also a highly popular method, with 19% stating that they used this method.

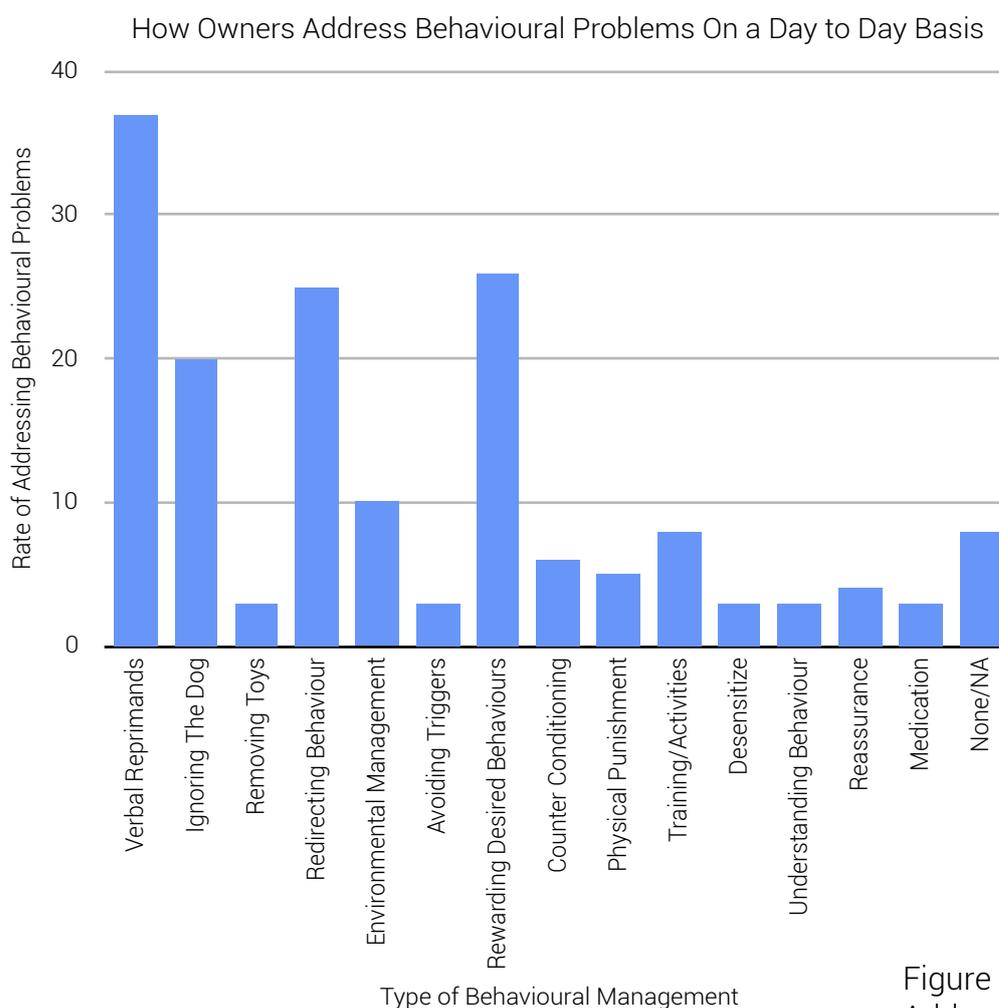


Figure 6. How Owners Address Behaviour

Interestingly, the participants who identified barking as their main issue stated that they primarily use verbal reprimands while they are at home, however, when not at home they use a vibration collar as a means to distract him. *"he has a barking collar when we're not home. Yeah. Just like one of those vibration ones like it's not a it's not a shock collar or anything"* – Aaron and Janelle Pearce

Furthermore, they stated that their response is heavily dependent on the behaviour. *"very rarely would he get a smack it's only in those sorts of big moments like if he runs out on the road or something and yeah, things that have big consequences"* – Aaron and Janelle Pearce.

Use and Experience With Professional Training

Figure 7 displays the rate of use concerning professional training services.



Figure 7. Usage Rates of Professional Services

Amongst these services, private training sessions were the most popular, as shown in figure 8, with 34 participants using these services. Of the 74 responses, 25 respondents stated that they participated in general obedience training. Additionally, puppy school had a high number of attendees with 28% of respondents stating they had previously used a puppy school. The use of a vet behaviourist also produced a significant data insight, with a 25% rate of response.

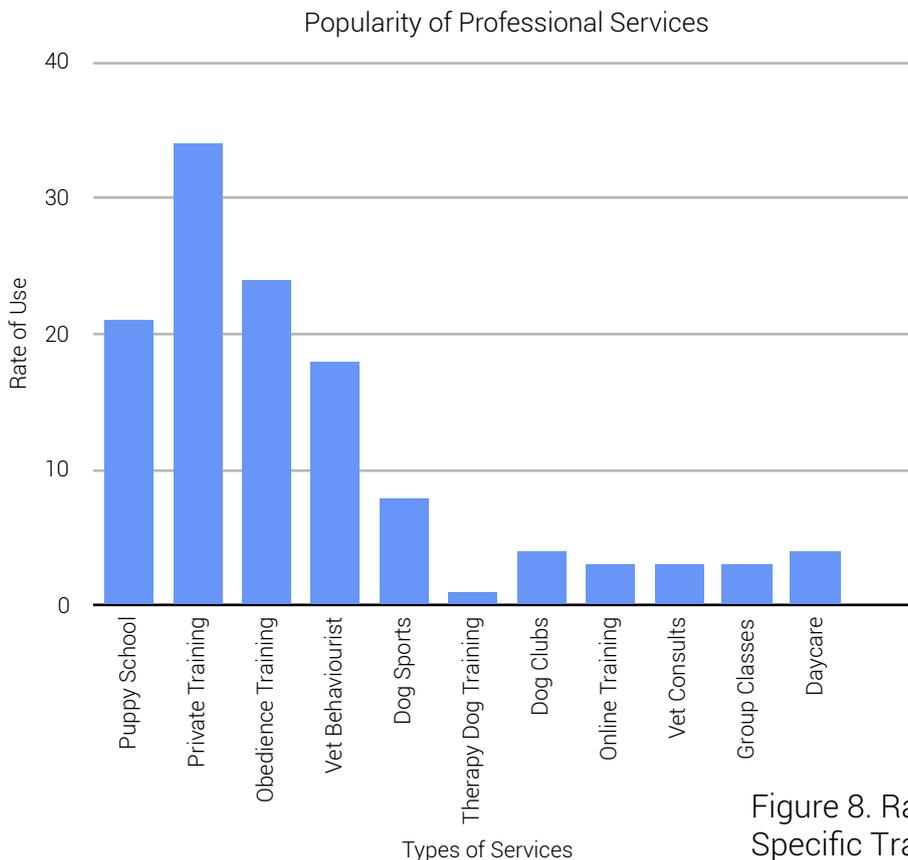


Figure 8. Rate of Use of Specific Training Services

Figure 9 showcases the preferred professional training solution about the three most common behavioural issues, separation anxiety, overexcitability and howling or excessive barking. The results indicate that puppy school is the most frequented method amongst owners whose dog exhibit separation anxiety. Owners whose dogs show excitable behaviour participate in private training consultation the most, at a rate of 37%. Regarding, howling or excessive barking, owners tended to seek out puppy school and private training at the same rate, 26%.

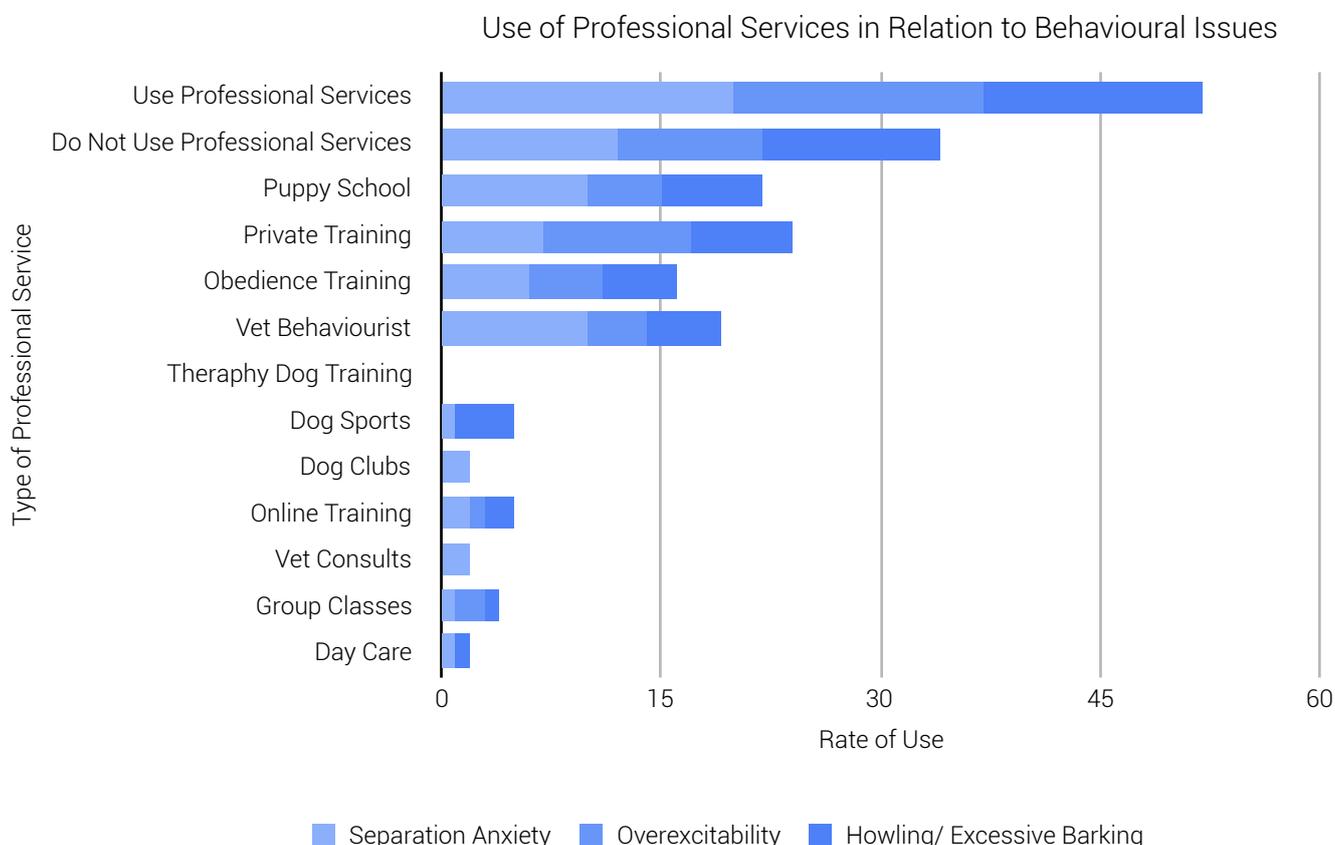


Figure 9. Usage Rates of Professional Services in Relation to Behavioural Issues

The respondents were asked to discuss their experiences with these services in a long answer format. The responses were mixed, however, swayed in a primarily positive direction. *“Very happy. We are continuing what the trainers recommended and can see improvement”* – Participant 6.

Many participants mentioned the effect that professional training services have on their development as an owner, meaning that they understand training and how to deliver training properly. *“I feel like the trainer is teaching me how to train my dog”* – Participant 55.

Additionally, feedback from trainers and the development of plans for at-home training were frequently mentioned concerning a positive experience.

“provides results, plans, guidance and assistance after the consult” – Participant 8

Feedback received was commonly associated with answering questions from owners, often stated trainers were readily available via phone. This ability for frequent communication may provide reassurance to owners and allows them to continue proper training in a home setting.

"I generally videotape my training, send it to her with any questions, and get feedback within a day. If I'm stuck, I can ask questions and get direction or resources to move forward." – Participant 19.

An interesting data insight revolved around the experience level of the trainer. The vastly different experiences provide insight into how owners may not be aware of the training they are receiving and the impact it has on their dog. The differences in experience with trainers highlight the lack of clarity within the industry.

"Disappointed with professional dog trainers due to lack of knowledge or suggesting wrong training methods (in hindsight)" - Participant 17

"The trainers were very knowledgeable" – Participant 22

In addition to this, interview participants stated that they received training information regarding training tools from pet shop attendants. "the people at the pet store were very helpful with picking what type of collar ... yeah, a few times we've had to go to the pet store for those sorts of things. I've actually been surprised with how knowledgeable they are on dog training" – Aaron and Janelle Pearce. This highlights an important aspect of owner knowledge and where they gather information from.

The training environment was also acknowledged negatively. Spatial considerations were cited, with owners stating that the training space was too small when compared to the number of dogs. *"the facility was fairly small for the size of class"* – Participant 47.

It is indicated that the training environment, including the number of dogs, has a direct influence on the dogs' ability to learn.

"Way too many dogs around made our dog not focus." – Participant 50.

Overall, those who used professional dog training services overwhelmingly stated that the training helped their dogs' behaviour long term, as shown in figure 10. 47% of respondents selected 5 'strongly agree' and 24% selected 4 'agree' that the services provided long term, combining to make up 74% of the results. This highlights the beneficial nature of, proper, professional services and how they should be integrated into any proposed solution.

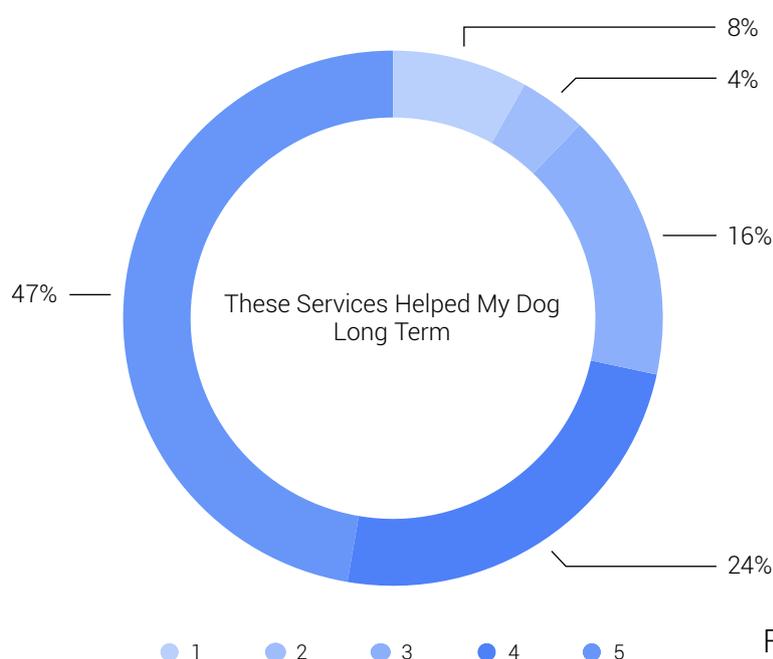


Figure 10. Perceptions of Professional Services

At home Training

For those who opted to not utilise professional services, prior knowledge was shown to be the most common response as shown in Figure 11. Prior knowledge included being a qualified trainer themselves or having a high level of experience with dogs.

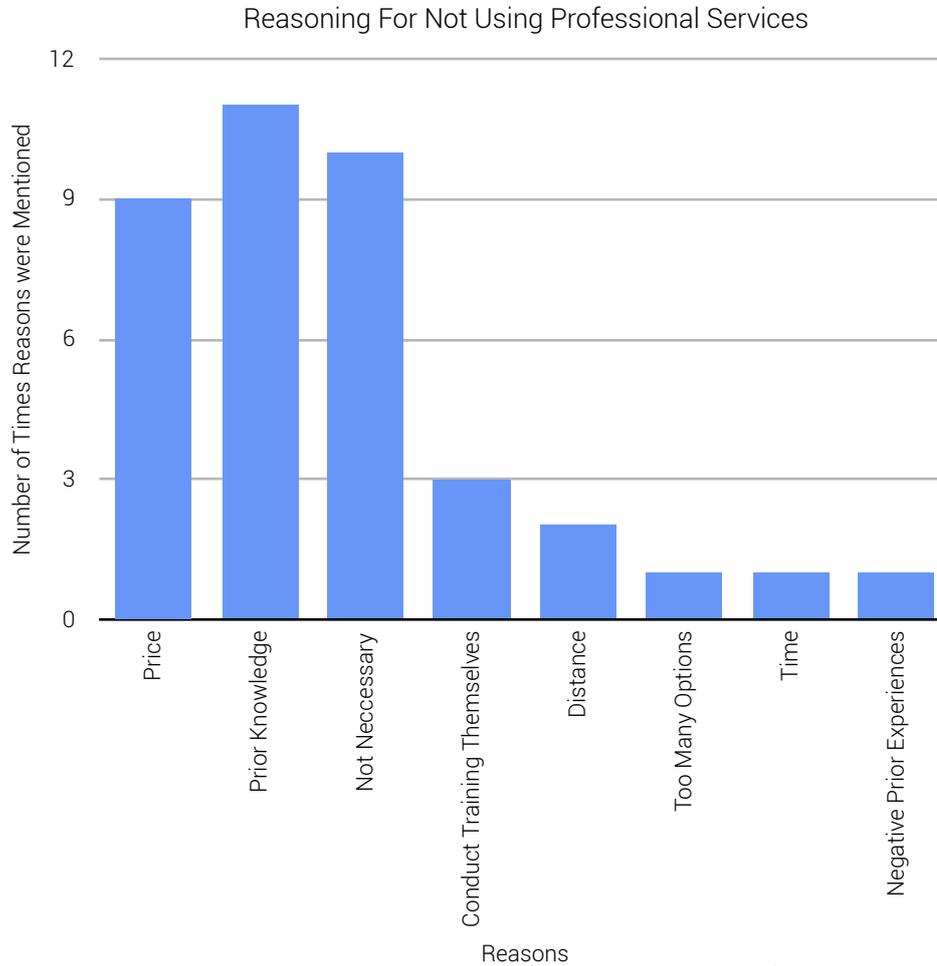


Figure 11. Reasons Behind Not Using Professional Services

Professional training was not viewed as necessary by 27% of respondents. This primarily referred to viewing their dogs' behavioural issues as not being severe enough for professional intervention as demonstrated by participant 73 *"My dogs have never had any real issues that I felt I needed desperate assistance with"*.

This idea was reaffirmed in the interview, with Jordan Lincoln stating that he would only seek training if *"they were really aggressive or anti-social, that kind of thing, or like threatening and, you know, threatening other dogs"*

The research also identified that cost of training as being a major influence on the decision not to use professional training. This highlights that while those particular owners may require professional assistance, they are not able to due to financial concerns.

The cost was further identified by Jordan Lincoln as the primary reason for not using professional training. *"because it was expensive"* – Jordan Lincoln

Overwhelmingly, dog owners stated the use of clicker and crate training, shown in figure 12, at home.

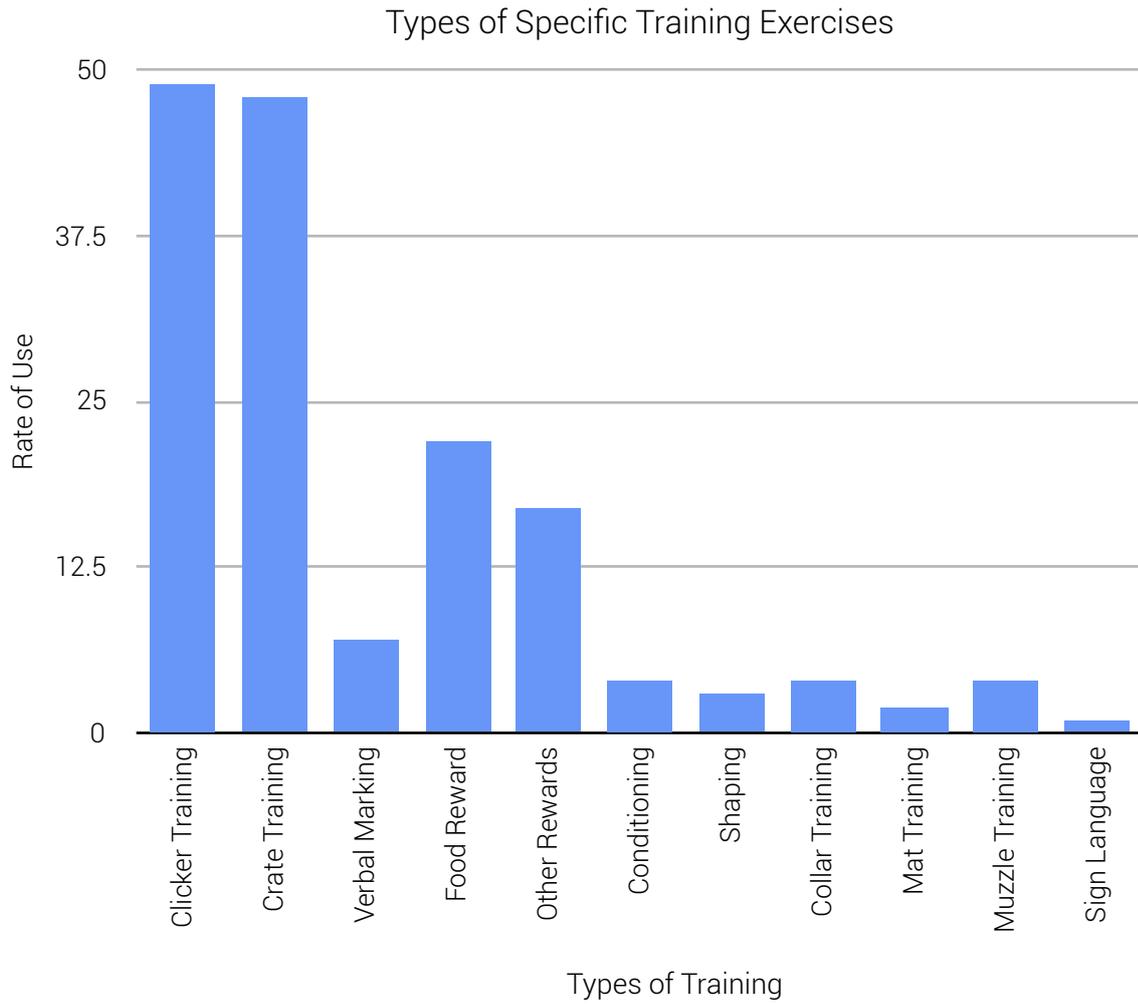


Figure 12. Usage Rates of At Home Training Tools

Notably, 22% of owners stated the use of food rewards. The use of food rewards is significant to understand how positive reinforcement may be best implemented.

As stated previously, where owner gather information is highly important as they may or may not be receiving correct advice. Figure 13 depicts the most popular means, online forums and websites were by far the most significant outcomes with 75% and 70% of responses respectively.

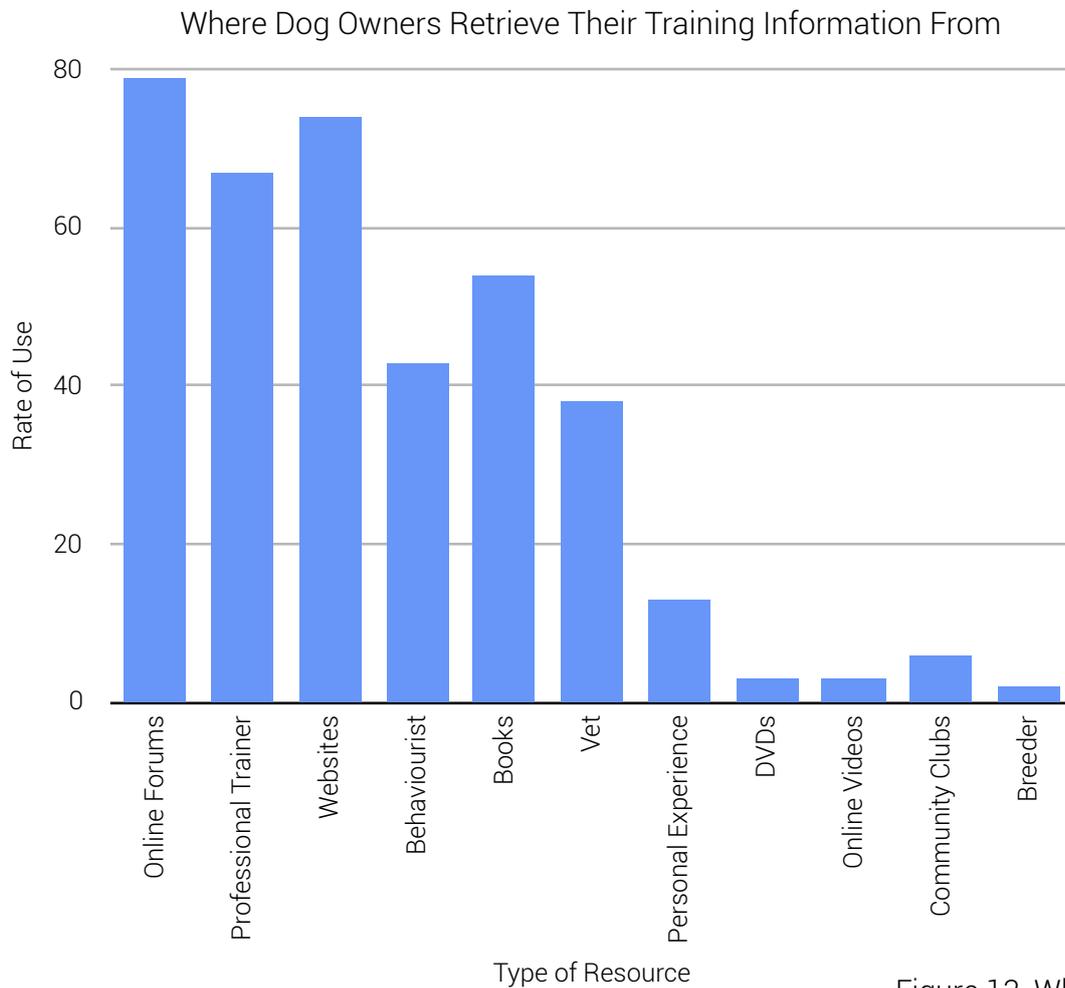
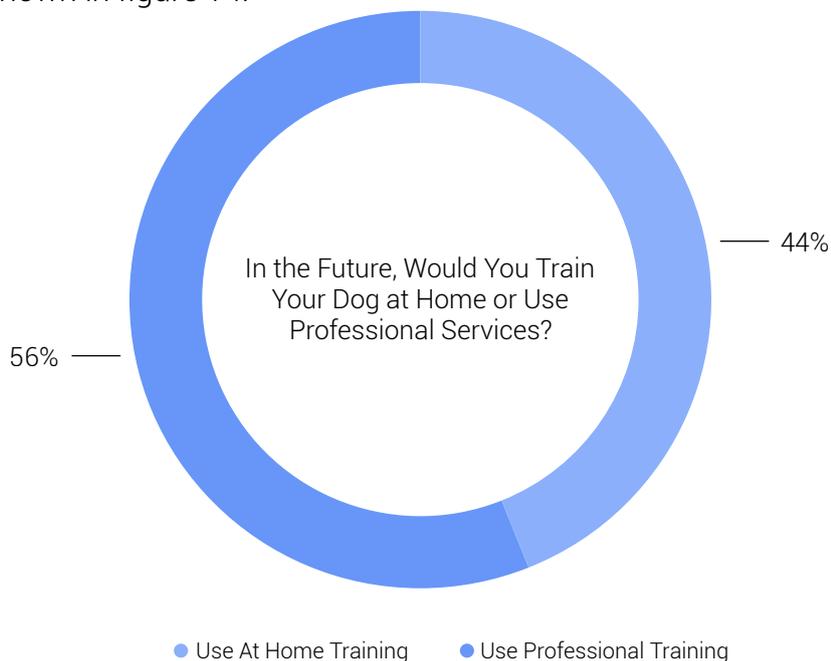


Figure 13. Where Owners Retrieve Information

Overall, 56% of respondents stated that they would choose to use professional training services in the future as shown in figure 14.



Perceptions of Training Approaches

Owner perceptions of different training methods greatly contributed to two main themes: dog comprehension and the impact of training.

In terms of dog comprehension, owners stated that positive reinforcement training greatly improves a dogs' ability to learn as stated by participant 92 *"improves the dogs' mindset whereas aversive methods (prong, verbal admonishment) cause confusion and reinforce the fear of the target thereby increasing aversion"*. This enforces the importance of using a training method that does not negatively impact the dogs' wellbeing and therefore the dogs' willingness to learn cues. However, this is contradicted by participant 59 *"my dog learned to only behave positively to treats and wasn't learning positive behaviours"*. This dispute may be a result of incorrect application of the training as stated by participant 30 who states that rewards training is often *"inappropriately utilized by ill-educated but well-meaning people"*.

Punishment Based Training was viewed by owners as having a negative emotional impact on the dog, particularly if the dog already demonstrates emotional issues such as anxiety. *"Builds anxiety, creates a dog who never feels safe ... creates a dog full of sadness and confusion"* – Participant 101. This quote highlights the fact that the training method chosen must be based upon what is in the best interest of the dog.

Moreover, in terms of the impact of training, the chosen training method was demonstrated to influence the owner and dog bond. Positive reinforcement training was stated by many to create a strong relationship based on trust.

"Trust is such an important aspect of the training relationship. Rewards based training allows a relationship to flourish" – Participant 31

When compared to responses surrounding punishment-based training it was frequently stated that this approach would cause the dog to fear their owner ultimately damaging the bond.

"It just makes them sacred of their owner who is meant to protect" – Participant 25

Dog Trainer Findings

The expert interviews resulted in seventy codes and ten overall themes, as shown in figure 15. The primary findings. Six themes will be discussed in depth.

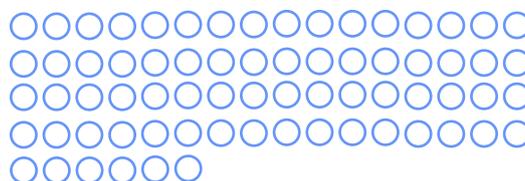
Expert Interviews

5 Interviews



Codes

70 Codes



Themes

10 Themes



Figure 15. Breakdown of Analysis of Expert Interview

Trainer Expertise

The first prominent theme that emerged during analysis were the various aspects that contribute to professional trainers' expertise. It was established that professional trainers have an increased knowledge surrounding the scientifically supported training methods that everyday dog owners may not be aware of.

"that if you've got a trainer, then a trainer can look at your dog and say, okay, that's not working, let's try a different approach. Or tell them why it is that they think that they're not getting the best results from their dog using the training techniques that they're using. And also the scientific background as well" – Victoria Peers

However, the inconsistency within trainer education and the unregulated industry was mentioned by 100% of participants. This may lead to many owners using either non-qualified trainers or those who are not using the most up to date methods.

"because there is a lot of people out and about without qualifications, and they even if they have a qualification, some of the qualifications still use aversive methods and jerking on a lead ... The amount of damage somebody can do, I think is really scary" – Bea Labady

This lack of mandatory education may have serious long-lasting impacts on the dog, causing emotional and physical harm. *"The majority people are not good at implementing corrections or that sort of training and so, therefore, the increased risk of harm is much greater... and I'm talking even about people who've done training courses"* – Margaret Keast

Personalisation

The following primary theme that emerged revolved around the personalisation of services towards dog and owners' specific needs. Tailoring training to a dog includes addressing behavioural needs, the pace of training and type of rewards used.

Addressing a dogs' emotional issues involves understanding their specific behavioural issues and employing the best-suited techniques. *"I've got a deaf dog if you tried to do that [punishment] with him he just wouldn't really trust you whatsoever"* – Sarah Campbell. This highlights the importance of modifying training approach dependent on needs.

This personalisation expands to the length of training, oftentimes depending on a dogs' understanding of training as well as their behavioural problems. *"There's some dogs that take a little bit longer depending on what the issues are"* – Margaret Keast".

Additionally, the type of reward used, food, toys, play, etc., must be adapted to what motivates the dog. *"We'll reinforce it with a ball or anything that the dog finds rewarding"* – Victoria Peers. However, food was the primary reward used as stated by the trainers. *"Food is probably the biggest one I use ... I find most dogs are usually really into food. So why not use it?"* – Margaret Keast

Owner personalisation refers to tailoring the way training is delivered to best address owner needs, this refers to during training sessions and instructions to continue training at home.

Owners must understand how to deliver a cue to their dog therefore trainers must teach in a way that is clear to each owner. *"Look, can you see where you're going wrong? Let's try it a different way. Because there's always there's a lot of different ways that you can that you can teach something"* – Victoria Peers

This is crucial as owners who do not understand how to deliver training during a session cannot continue training at home.

Owner Impacts on Training

All interviewees stated that dog owners have a significant impact on the delivery and outcomes of training. The primary impacts noticed include frustration during training, understanding of training and commitment level to continue training.

Owner frustration was stated to manifest when the dog does not immediately respond to training. *"it's more a case of the owner not being able to get that behaviour straightaway, so they give up, and they get frustrated ... So, first dog doesn't get it, it's my dog stupid just it can't learn"* – Victoria Peers.

This frustration may lead to aggression towards the dog as stated by Sarah Campbell *"once they start getting frustrated, it's really hard to start, you can say they're using subconsciously, you know, a bit of yanking a bit of pulling back"*.

Frustration may occur as a result of owners' lack of understanding regarding how to deliver training, this refers to verbal cues, hand signals and timing of reward. The repetition of a cue more than once ultimate confuses the dog and *"poisons the cue"* (Victoria Peers) for the dog. This means that the dog is unable to learn the proper cue as a result of the owners' lack of understanding. Additionally, Bea Labady states *"I think the timing is something that they struggle with"*. Timing is a highly important aspect of reward-based training to ensure that dogs understand the behaviour they are being rewarded for.

The primary owner issue that was mentioned by each interviewee was their overall commitment to training, specifically outside training sessions. *"So how far have you got and generally find that they've not got far at all"* – Victoria Peers.

It is stated that this may be a result of owner lifestyle *"and I do find a lot of my clients are shift workers"* – Sarah Campbell.

This often leads to trainers tailoring the delivery of training as stated by Julie Van Schie *"my preference is to not use any kind of ... chest halters to get the dogs to walk. Yeah. But I know that they're not going to do that at the time, and it takes a lot of skills ... is to break a lot of the things down into small bits so that they don't feel they've got too much to focus on"*. In addition to this, Victoria Peers stated that contextualising training motivates owners to continue *"we're teaching our dogs to leave it, why we're teaching them to leave it well, because when your dog say, they might come across a piece of food, it might be baited. You might see a snake you want your dog to leave it and I think if they can relate to that, then it will train a lot. A lot faster. They'll they'll work on it."*

Training Delivery

Training delivery refers to how a professional communicates training to dog owners. This includes the pace of training and follow up instructions.

The pace of training refers to the development of training throughout sessions as well as the specific numerical times such as weeks, hours and minutes. Regarding development, exercises are staged to be continued each week to aid in dog understanding. *"And then we do some exercises and the curriculum builds on what we've learned the previous week. So from a sit, we do that next time we lie down and then matt settling"* – Bea Labady.

Margaret Keast reinforces that breaking training down allows the dog to understand directions better, ultimately indicating a positive impact on their behaviour. *"Once they understand that breaking things, behaviours down into smaller chunks makes it a lot easier for success"*. Moreover, staging training is beneficial to the owner as it causes less stress as stated by Julie Van Schie *"they don't feel They've got too much to focus on ... and I find that tends to be quite successful if I do that"*. This approach also succeeds in owners have a greater ability to incorporate training into their everyday activities. *"can pick out 10 treats throughout the day and just do 10 repetitions of a behaviour ... or if you can do three, two-minute sessions every day, you're ahead of the pack"* – Margaret Keast

Follow up instructions, or homework, allow the owner to continue training at home which in turn continues the dogs' development. 80% of trainers stated the use of follow up instructions in the form of general homework or a detailed report. *"I always provide my private consults with a report"* – Victoria Peers. However, Julie Van Schie stated that not many owners seek out additional information *"some not a lot, actually ... but it's actually surprising that they don't tend to"*.

Dog Comprehension

The most prominent finding regarding dog comprehension involves socialisation. Socialisation refers to exposure to a variety of sounds, people and experiences by puppies ages 3 weeks+. This was stated to be one of the most significant periods in a dogs' life as they become accustomed to different environments.

"And it's, it's so important to expose those puppies to all types of environments, all types of situations, all types of people and places ... they're taking in all this information and the learning" – Victoria Peers.

However, two participants stated that there is a misconception regarding what socialisation entails. *"a lot of people misinterpret the fact that socialisation is dog on dog"* – Victoria Peers. *"It's not just puppy play, it's actually exposure to sounds and handling properly and just sort of learning"* – Sarah Campbell

Impact of Training

Similarly to dog owners, the trainers stated that positive reinforcement-based training has a positive impact on the owner-dog bond. *"So, there's never going to be a real true bonding relationship, because the dog will always be fearful of that person"* – Victoria Peers.

The connection between owner and dog is stated to be one of the most important aspects as it motivates the dog. *"it is very important, and the dog will be more likely to want to do things for you and with you. If you have a good bond"* – Bea Labady

04 Discussion

Introduction

This research aimed to understand dog training practices from the perspectives of both owner and professional trainers. The initial literature review highlighted that improper training is a contributing factor to relinquishments of pets to shelters and negatively impacting the owner and dog relationship. However, there were large gaps in research regarding how professional training is conducted and delivered. Furthermore, there were severe gaps involving the combination of professional and at-home training, especially how professional trainers instruct owners on how to continue training at home.

The following will build upon the literature review and highlight aspects that are in agreement with the literature and those that are in contradiction.

Training Method

The literature highlighted the swing towards positive reinforcement-based training due to increased information about the impact on dogs (Arhant 2010, p.132, Guilherme Fernandes et al. 2017, p. 11). Both owners and trainers reinforced this with the majority of owners stating that positive reinforcement 'is the most effective method'. Moreover, each trainer used positive reinforcement due to the method being scientifically supported as well as ethical decisions. While Rooney & Cowan (2011) stated that zero dog owners use exclusively one approach, the questionnaire established that owners often use exclusively positive reinforcement. However, within the dog owner interviews, it was stated that owners utilise punishment to address behaviours such as running on the road.

Professional Training

Use of Services

The literature highlights that the majority of owners do not seek out professional training services due to cost and time concerns (Shore et al. 2008, p.64). However, the questionnaire findings stated that the majority of owners used some form of professional training, as shown in figure 7. Although this may be a result of where respondents were recruited, dedicated training online groups. Furthermore, many of the respondents stated that their dog exhibited some form of behavioural issue, primarily separation anxiety as shown in figure 5.

The cost was identified in the literature review as a primary factor that influenced the decision to not use professional services. This was reinforced by the questionnaire respondents; however, this was expanded upon with many also stating their experience level and not deeming professional assistance necessary.

The cost was identified in the literature review as a primary factor that influenced the decision to not use professional services. This was reinforced by the questionnaire respondents; however, this was expanded upon with many also stating their experience level and not deeming professional assistance necessary.

Furthermore, the literature and the research conducted agree that all owners should partake in professional services due to the overwhelming benefits including socialisation.

Services

The literature review stated issues with, particularly puppy school concerning the experience level of those who deliver training (Positive K9 Training, 2020). The dog trainers all reinforced this issue stating that there is no government regulation surrounding required qualifications meaning that anybody can run dog training services. Furthermore, literature indicated that services such as puppy school give owners incorrect assumptions that they have a fully trained dog. This was reaffirmed by the trainers who stated that owners often want training to happen instantly and they are not typically aware of the length of the process.

Training Delivery

There is a gap in the literature revolving around how training is delivered to benefit both owners and dogs. As stated in the results section, owners stated that often the environment did not facilitate learning for their dog as a result of limited space or the amount the dogs present.

In addition to this, the literature did not acknowledge how beneficial breaking down training into small chunks is for owner motivation and dog comprehension.

Personalisation

The literature indicates that without treatment behavioural issues such as separation anxiety have severe consequences on owner and dog bond (Storengen et al. 2014, p. 82). However, the literature severely lacks regarding how specific behavioural issues should be trained. It is stated that nervous behaviours should be addressed by using toys and doggy daycare while excitable dogs should be worn out with play (RSPCA, 2019; Cesars Way, 2019). The research, however, indicated that training must be tailored towards each specific dog's behavioural issues and motivation. Dog owners reinforce this by stating that how they address the behaviour is heavily dependent on what behaviour is occurring. Specifically, owners whose dogs exhibited separation anxiety were much more likely to use vet behaviourist services, which are highly specialised as shown in figure #. This enforces the idea that these general recommendations are not suitable for effective dog training. This finding is significant as it leads to an interesting area of opportunity regarding the personalisation of training services.

Furthermore, the literature does not address owner understanding of dog cues which was demonstrated by trainers to influence how they explain and deliver training. Dog owners reinforced this with those expressing positive experiences revolved around their development as an owner. Additionally, the use of direct feedback and future training plans outside training sessions was deemed highly useful by dog owners as it allowed them to continue correct training at home. This was reaffirmed by trainers with the majority stating that they have 'homework' to owners or a tailored report. However, trainers stated that many owners do not maintain training at home.

To best deliver training it is clear that personalisation is a key factor in both addressing dog behaviour and improving owner ability. Furthermore, opportunities arise surrounding the development of instructional programs for outside training sessions that suit both owner and dog needs.

At-Home Training

Regarding clicker training, the literature review stated that while effective, other markers including food rewards or verbal praise are just as effective (Chiandetti, 2016). Moreover, issues regarding difficulty managing a clicker, leash and treats (Feng et al. 2017). This was reinforced by Bea Labady who stated that often owners have difficulty with timing of the clicker or may get overwhelmed due to all the tools. Additionally, it was stated that elderly people may have difficulty as a result of limited movement.

However, clicker training was the most popular at-home training tool used by owners, as shown in figure 12.

Furthermore, despite the lack of academic literature regarding crate training, it was deemed the second most popular method to be used by owners. However, it is still difficult to understand the long-term benefits.

The literature states that while both electronic training and alpha dog models have been scientifically criticised and debunked owners still use these particular tools. However, electronic collars were mentioned sparingly, with the majority of owners choosing to use positive reinforcement. Furthermore, the alpha dog model was not mentioned throughout either questionnaire or dog owner interview. This enforces the idea that owners are either more knowledgeable about the impacts of these methods or the methods are not being promoted to the extent they once were.

As stated previously, trainers affirmed the notion that owners are not consistent with their training between sessions and after training is complete. Arhant (2010) states that consistency is key for dogs to show long term behavioural change. This presents an interesting area of opportunity to develop product or service interventions.

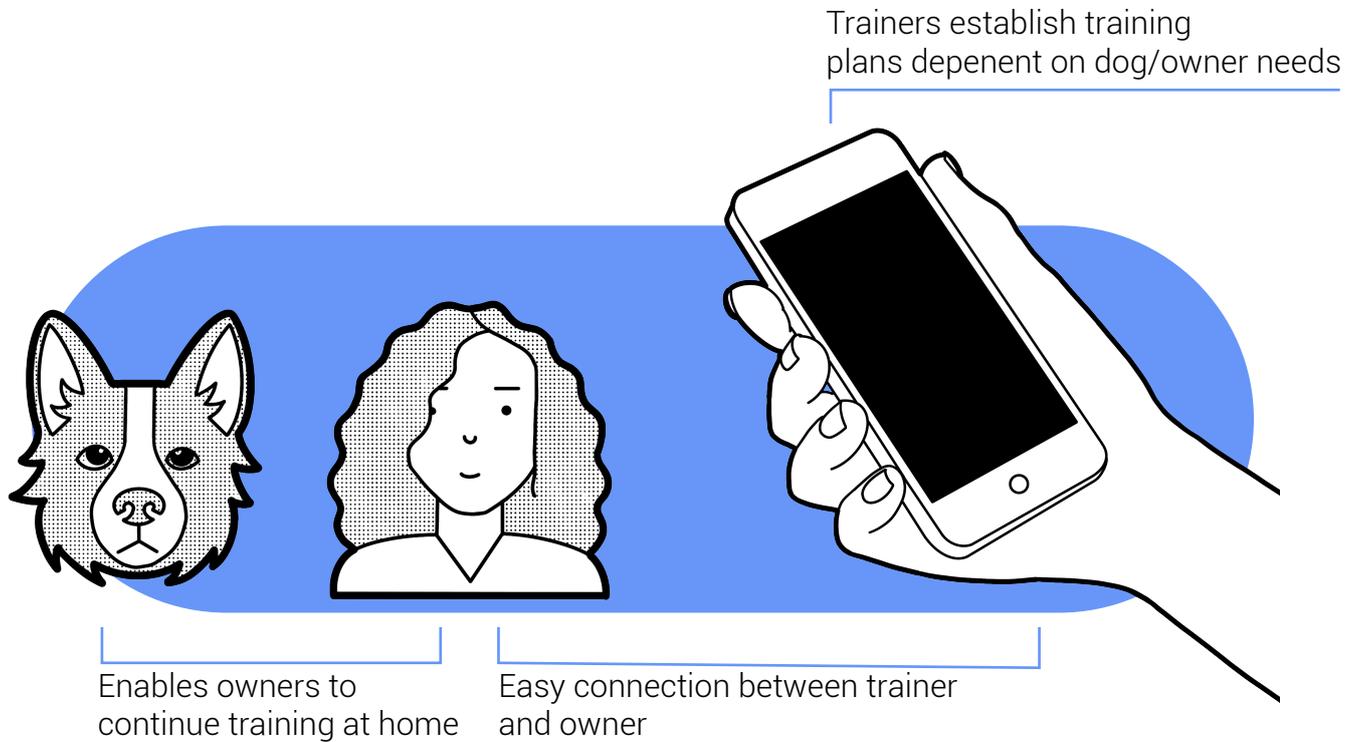
Shore et al. (2008) state that owners are much more likely to gain knowledge from free services such as websites than compared to paid professional services. Despite this, 68% of questionnaire participants stated the use of professional services and 56% stated they would use professional services in the future. However, online methods such as Facebook groups and websites were by far the most popular methods to gather training information, as shown in Figure 13.

Lastly, one aspect that trainers brought up that was missing within the literature revolves around the importance of socialisation. Socialisation was stated by trainers to be one of the most important aspects of training as it allows puppies to become accustomed to various experiences.

05 Recommendations

The previous sections discussed the research conducted and the results highlighted key areas of opportunity where product or service intervention could improve dog training. The following outlines four design opportunities identified based on the key findings.

Opportunity One – At Home Training System



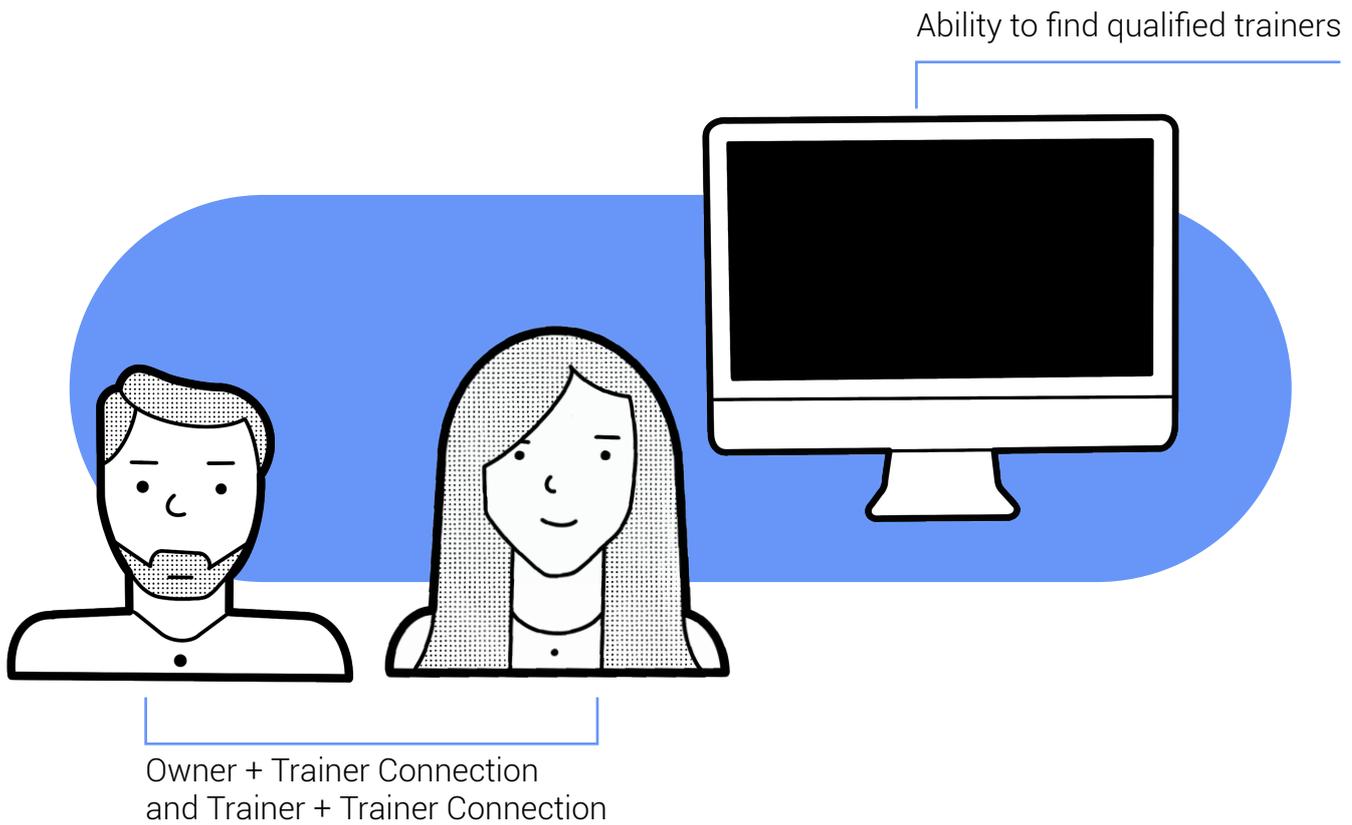
The at-home training system would aim to better communication between trainers and owners outside training sessions. Training instructions could be uploaded by trainers and trainers could track owner progress. Owners could then send videos or questions for feedback. Furthermore, the service could implement a community function where dog owners could discuss their dogs, training, etc. This is a result of owners indicated that online forums were a popular method for gaining information. Literature and research conducted highlighted that owners struggle to continue training at home despite how important it is for dog development. Furthermore, some trainers indicated that they had issues maintaining communication with owners. This interactive system could address some of these key issues. Additionally, personalisation was a key finding this could allow trainers to tailor advice and feedback for an at-home setting.

This service also presents opportunities relating to those who are unable to afford professional training services.

Limitations and Considerations

Limitations include the need for both professional trainers and owners to adopt the system. It is also important to consider how to motivate owners to have continued use of the system. Furthermore, it would be important to consider how delivery could be personalised to each dog, as this was found to be significant in a dogs' ability to learn.

Opportunity Two – Industry and Resource Connection



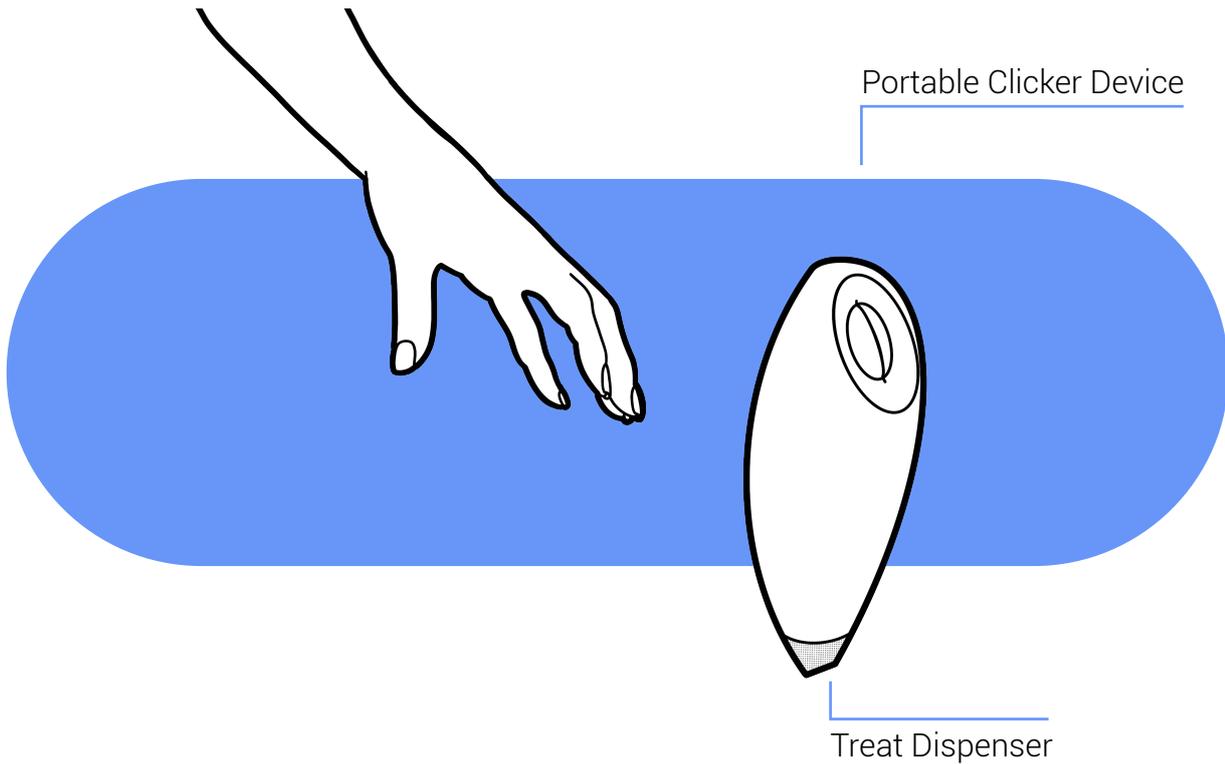
Each trainer stated there are significant issues with industry regulation. This leads to owners either using non-qualified trainers or those who use outdated methods. The concept involves a service that links qualified positive reinforcement trainers with owners. This addresses issues that owners had involving trainers who did not or could not address their dogs' specific issues. Another aspect of the concept involves the ability for trainers to share resources regarding programs or events with other trainers. This creates more opportunities for the continuing education of trainers, which was found to be important during research.

Limitations and Considerations

Limitations surround the integration of currently operating dog trainers as many are sole traders. Furthermore, as there is no industry regulation regarding qualifications and training approach it would be difficult to review each trainer. This leads to the need to consider a screening method for potential trainers.

Regarding owners, it must be considered how owners would access this resource. This is due to the wide age range of users thus implying the need for accessibility.

Opportunity Three – Clicker Training Treat Dispenser



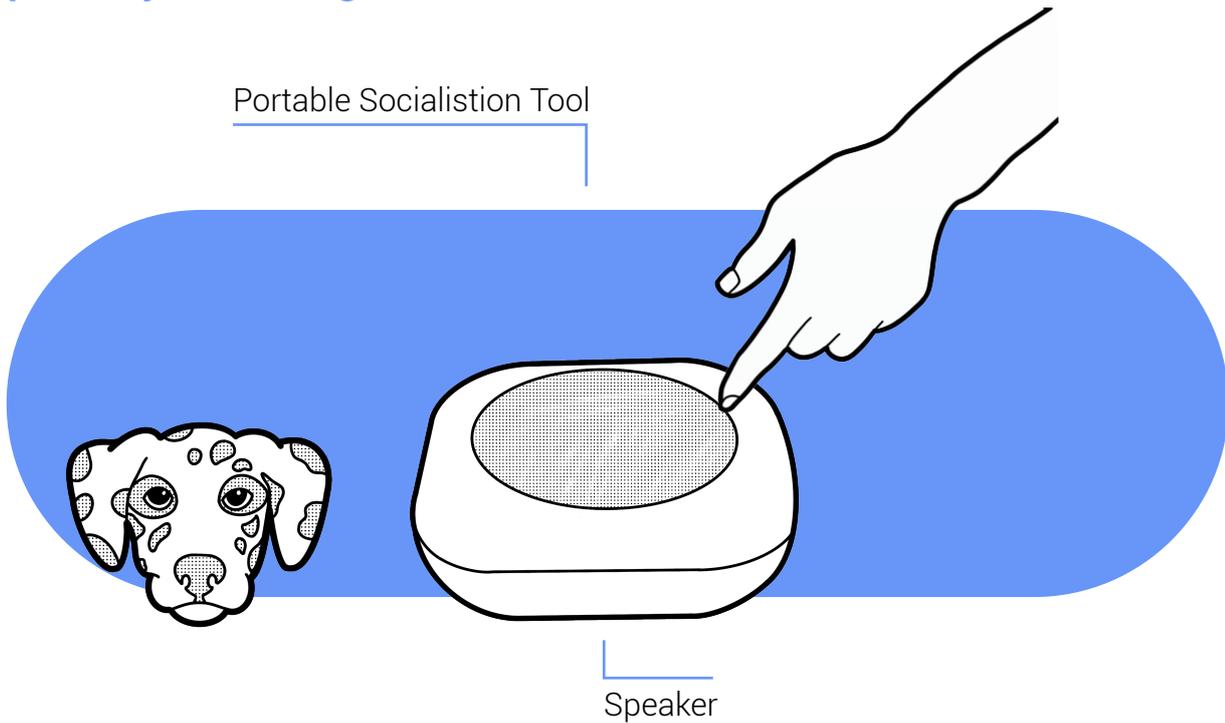
Both the literature review and further research indicated that owners have difficulty surrounding the use of a clicker. This was a result of the combination of holding a leash, treats and the clicker. Furthermore, it was indicated that some users including the elderly may have difficulty with the clicker. However, despite this, clicker training was deemed the most popular training tool as stated by dog owners.

The concept aims to redesign the clicker into a more ergonomic and user-friendly product. Incorporating a treat dispenser into the clicker eliminates the need to hold multiple items. Overall, the approach to clicker training would remain the same but be approached in a manner that addresses user needs.

Limitations and Considerations

The literature review indicated that the use of a clicker is not more effective than any other form of marking including verbal praise. However, owners did state a preference for using a clicker. Further limitations include that some dogs do not respond to food rewards therefore this product would not be suitable for all dogs.

Opportunity Four – Dog Socialisation Tool



Research implied that socialisation is one of the most important aspects concerning a dogs' ability to learn. It was further indicated that there is an overall misconception regarding what socialisation involves.

This concept involves a product that would allow owners to expose their dogs to various stimuli particularly sounds. This concept aims to increase an owner's ability to socialise their dogs from a home setting. However, this concept may also be useful for a puppy school environment as a tool to use while training is occurring.

Limitations and Considerations

The primary limitation for this concept involves that socialisation refers to the exposure worldwide experiences not just sounds. Furthermore, the socialisation period refers to puppies aged 3 weeks to 14 weeks. This means that the product is limited regarding the length of use and the number of owners it will aid.

06 Proposal

Introduction

Dog training is a process that is impacted by both trainers and owners. This means there is great potential for product and service intervention to address core issues with the process. The research conducted found owner struggles concerning many aspects of the dog training process, including continuing training at home and the delivery of training.

The proposed product or system intervention must consider the key findings from this report. This includes communication between owner and trainer, this means that owners understand training principles and can continue training at home. Furthermore, owners require access to qualified trainers who use up to date methods. Lastly, the solution must address usability concerns regarding owner's capacity to conduct training, this is due to the vast range of owner ability.

The following proposal states how these findings may be integrated into the design solution. Design criteria are also presented concerning the requirements of the proposed solution.

Design Intent

The overall aim of the design solution is to aid owners with dog training to ultimately improve how dogs are trained outside training sessions to reduce the number of relinquishments to shelters.

Justification

Lack of adequate training has serious consequences leading to behavioural problems within dogs. This then leads to the destruction of owner-dog bond, owner frustration and finally relinquishment to shelters (Shore et al. 2008, p.64, Scott et al. 2018, p. 40). Research indicated that owners impact a dogs' development due to their understanding of delivery, motivation and access to adequate resources. Combining professional training advice with solutions that primarily address owner concerns would aid with the improvement of dog training.

As stated previously, the owner-dog relationship is one of the important aspects of training. Improving how owners conduct training will allow for better bonds to form. Furthermore, employing techniques that address dogs actual behavioural and emotional problems will lessen issues in turn limiting the risk of owners surrendering their dog to shelters.

Context

The primary user group to be addressed is dog owners. This is due to literature, owners and trainers all stating issues with how owners conduct training. Trainers are also incorporated into solutions to address issues with communication and industry regulation. These users range in demographics due to the range of owners and trainers which results in many design considerations. This may include ease of use regarding technology for the elderly.

The solution is based on a dog training environment primarily aimed towards at-home training. This means that any product must easily be incorporated into home training practices and aesthetics. The solution may also be used within private training or group training environments. Geographically, the solution is to be used in Australia. This means that it must comply with Australian standards and regulations. However, as stated there is little to no legislation regarding dog training. Furthermore, according to the RSPCA (2019), there are no mandatory measures in place concerning pet toys.

Key Criteria

To achieve the aim of improving dog training several key criteria have been identified that should be incorporated into the design solution. This may develop throughout the design process.

Functionality

The design should improve the owner's ability to participate in and conduct proper training. This may include the use of qualified trainers or a better method for conducting at-home training.

Accessibility

Due to the broad range of user demographics, the solution must be accessible for all age groups. Additionally, the research found that there are distance and financial concerns regarding training therefore the solution should account for these issues.

Usability

As stated previously there is a broad age demographic concerning users. Therefore, the solution must accommodate all usability levels. This may include technology for elderly individuals and the overall ease of use.

Aesthetics

As the solution would primarily be used in a home setting, it must fit aesthetically within a home setting. Furthermore, due to the range of demographics, the solution must fit within multiple aesthetic preferences. In terms of a product solution, this may include having multiple colour scheme options.

Feedback

A primary criterion revolves around how owners will receive feedback about how training is progressing. For service interventions feedback should be from qualified trainers, this then brings about considerations regarding how this may occur. Physical solutions must incorporate feedback measures that aids in the use of the product. This may include sound or visual feedback.

Context and Personalisation

As training can take in many different environments including the home, public parks and vet clinics any solution should be able to be used within various contexts and scenarios. Furthermore, research established that training has many different forms, service solutions should have the ability for personalisation. This may be to dogs' behaviour, owner ability and schedule. Physical solutions should be adaptable to different ways owners or trainers wish to utilise the product.

Safety

The dogs' safety is a primary concern for any solution. The solution must take into account material selection, size, weight, etc. to ensure that risk is minimal. As there are no mandatory safety standards regarding pet products. Examining well-established products would be useful to understand the best method to increase the safety of the solution.

Durability

Due to the numerous contexts, physical product solutions must be durable and unlikely to break. Furthermore, physical products that directly interact with the dog must use durable materials.

Limitations

Complications arise as each dog responds differently to training methods, including which rewards motivate them. This is then applied to owners, with trainers stating they change their explanation of techniques depending on the owner.

Additionally, as training develops over some time it is important to consider how the solution may adapt to this.

07 Justification

Introduction

Pets, specially dogs, are a vital aspect to many people's lives, with approximately 40% of Australian households owning a dog (RSPCA Knowledge Base, 2020). Furthermore, the pet industry is growing steadily every year. Despite this, the research conducted in the previous sections of this report found severe issues with how dogs are trained and the training industry as a whole.

Initial research found that owners significantly lack regarding at home training, this is due to their understanding of training delivery and overall dedication. Initial concepts presented focused on different aspects of dog training, this failed to account for the complexities of training. A solution addressing a singular aspect of training does not meet the requirements for owners, trainers and dogs.

Pooch is a solution that utilises product and service integration. The products and service aim to simplify the at home training process. The solution has multiple options based upon the dogs ages, puppies, and behavioural issue such as separation anxiety. The kit that was the primary focus surrounding puppy training. This was a result of the research indicating that if puppies can be trained early the risk of complex issues later in life is greatly decreased.

The product solutions are based around the four areas of complex dog training. These include: bonding, productive play, separation anxiety and socialisation.

The Products

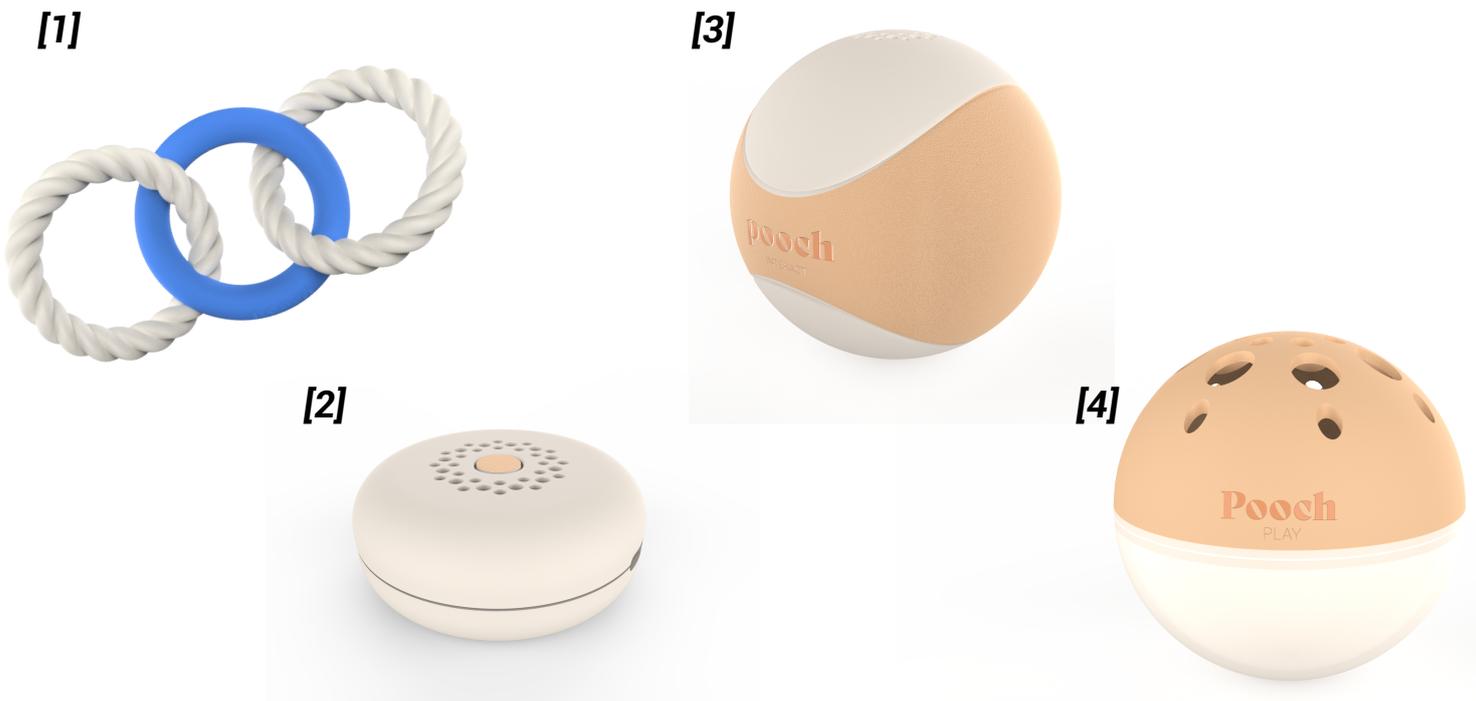


Figure 14. Pooch Products

[1] Bonding

Bonding between the puppy and other dogs is vital in ensuring that aggressive behaviours do not occur. Furthermore, bonding between a puppy and owner through play together means the owner and dog bond is able to grow. The tool developed is a tug toy that allows play between two parties to occur to teach important skills such as sharing.

[2] Socialisation

One of the most important aspects of puppy training is socialisation. Socialisation refers to the exposure of various stimuli including sound to puppies. This means that they are less likely to develop issues such as barking at noises and anxiety over time. The connected product is a speaker that exposes the puppy to various sounds such as storms and traffic. This product can also be used in clicker training in follow up training.

[3] Separation Anxiety

Puppies have often just been removed from their mothers and siblings it is important that they bond with their owners and new families. However, puppies can often become too dependent. This causes may cause the puppy to stress and anxiety to grow when separated from their owner because it is not plausible for an owner to be around at all times. The connected product involves a motion sensor and speaker to provide interactive play while the owner is not present.

[4] Play

A puppies ability to play is an important aspect of how they exert energy. The toy provides a product for the puppy to focus on to engage their brain. The puzzle toy provides both stimulating play and brain engagement.

Connected Application

The training system is delivered through the connected app. This application tailors training and provides daily activities for a dogs specific needs and the owners experience level. The app is a simple and easy means of delivering training instructions both written and visually. The ability to provide further training and progression over time is readily available on an online platform. Furthermore, trainers are able to upload their own training programs. This is due to the research indicating that each trainer teaches differently and each owner learns differently. This allows instructions to be tailored to each individuals needs.

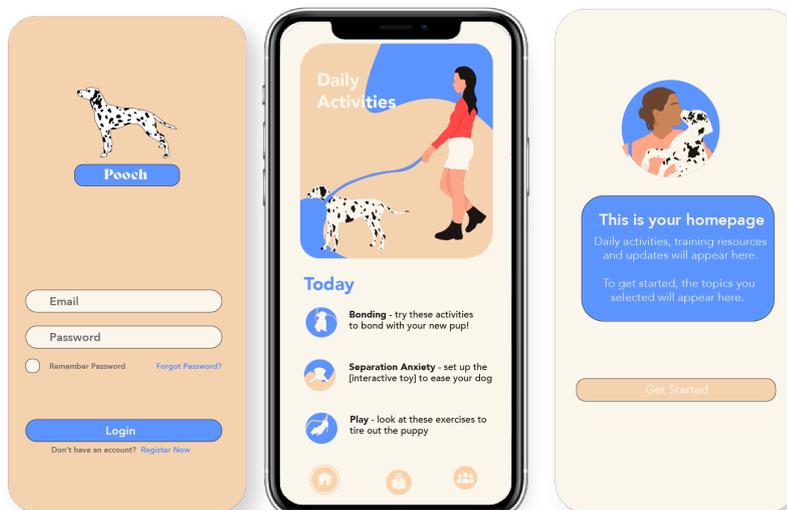


Figure 15. Pooch App

Existing Products

Existing products were researched to evaluate materials, form, technology, usability and impact on the dog.

Interactive toys

Interactive toys are the most tech based dog products. These are aimed at play when the owner is not present. As a whole the products are typically aimed at distracting the puppy rather than comforting the dog.

Slow feeding mats

Slow feeding mats are often large puzzle mats that encourages the dog to use their snout while eating. These mats are often made of soft materials to ensure safety for the animal. While the products are useful they are not often used for training practices.

Tug Toys

Current tug toys are either made completely of synthetic rope which causes issues with splintering. Issues also occur with the need for durability which often outweighs the need for soft rope in terms of puppy dental health. Other tug toys are often made to be used by the puppy by themselves while the owner is not present. This lack of owner presence with this type of toy can lead to aggressive play which can cause issues in the future.

Puzzle Toys

Current puzzle toys are often only one type of puzzle which means that the dog becomes aware of how to solve it, ultimately making them lose enthusiasm for the product as a whole. The majority of puzzle toys encourage dogs to use their noses to reveal a treat. This motivates the dog to play with the product while stimulating their brain.

Stuffed Toys

These toys are very common comfort items for animals. Often used throughout puppyhood to adulthood the toys are often used as chew toys.

It is important to note that while researching it was found that there is a lack of training products available. The products mentioned above are catered towards play rather than training.

Training Programs [books, videos, YouTube series]

There are many forms of training programs. As my solution is an at home solution, this type of training programs were researched. Many training instructions are delivered very simply however, as training is more complex the less resources are available. Furthermore, these programs do not allow for feedback to owners when they do not understand the instructions. These programs also do not take into account owner experience level. As a whole these programs are tailored towards the most common behavioural issues such as general obedience meaning that owners have to sift through a lot of content to find answers for their specific needs.

People, Activities, Context, Technology

This section details the PACT analysis conducted to ensure that the solution meets the needs of the target market and context.

People

The puppy kit that has been explored in depth for this project is aimed at novice dog owners who want to conduct or continue training at home. This target market is broad including all ages, ethnicities, abilities and socioeconomic status. This meant that the products and service had to include universal design principles to ensure that products were accessible to all. This was done by simplifying the overall products so they are easy to use and integrate properly.

The secondary user group are the dogs themselves. This meant it was vital to consider materials, forms and outcomes impact a dogs ability to learn, their enjoyment or engagement and their safety.

Activities

During the initial research phase of the project, it was found that there are many different activities involved within training. Dependent on the user: dogs, owners and trainers. There are many different training activities that occur within training however, this has been separated into the four major categories of play, separation anxiety, socialisation and bonding.

Within the Pooch system, the owner has multiple activities. Firstly, when owners start up, multiple questions are asked in order to tailor the content provided. Following this the owner synchronises the tech based products [the interactive toy and the socialisation tool] with the app. In terms of training, the owner selects which daily activities they wish to conduct each day. If they have connected to a trainer they are able to upload videos of their training progression for feedback. Other activities include conducting the actual training activities.

In the pooch system trainers are able to upload their own training programs. They are also able to send resources and provide advice within the community section of the app.

Context

The primary context for the Pooch system is dog owners home. This includes multiple homes types such as houses, apartments and so on. This resulted in the minimalist aesthetic to cater towards different needs and reducing the size of the items for easy storage. Furthermore, indoor and outdoor spaces have also been considered.

Secondary contexts of use include dog parks and other outdoor spaces dog training may occur. However this has primarily been considered for the socialisation and the bonding tool as the interactive and puzzle toy are catered towards an indoor environment.

Technology

Given the diverse user groups and overall goal to simplify the training process, technology has been kept to a minimum. Currently, dog products are low tech as a result of the context of use.

Scenarios

Bonding

When bonding with owners, other people and other dogs it is important that the puppy learns to share as well as gentle play.

Rest

A puppy establishes their own space within the home to feel safe and secure. Furthermore, during those times where an owner is not able to monitor the pet, it is essential that the puppy is in secure location.

Play

Play is essential for a happy and healthy puppy. Play for the puppy amplifies their happiness. Wears them out.

Separation Anxiety

Addressing separation anxiety while the dog is still a puppy is a great way to limit the possibility of severe anxiety disorders in the future.

Socialisation

During the critical period during puppyhood, exposure to various stimuli is essential for a dogs overall development.

Design Process

The double diamond process was utilised in this design process over semester two, 2020. Throughout the process, unit and personal milestones were used to ensure the project was on track. The overall process can be seen in figure #.

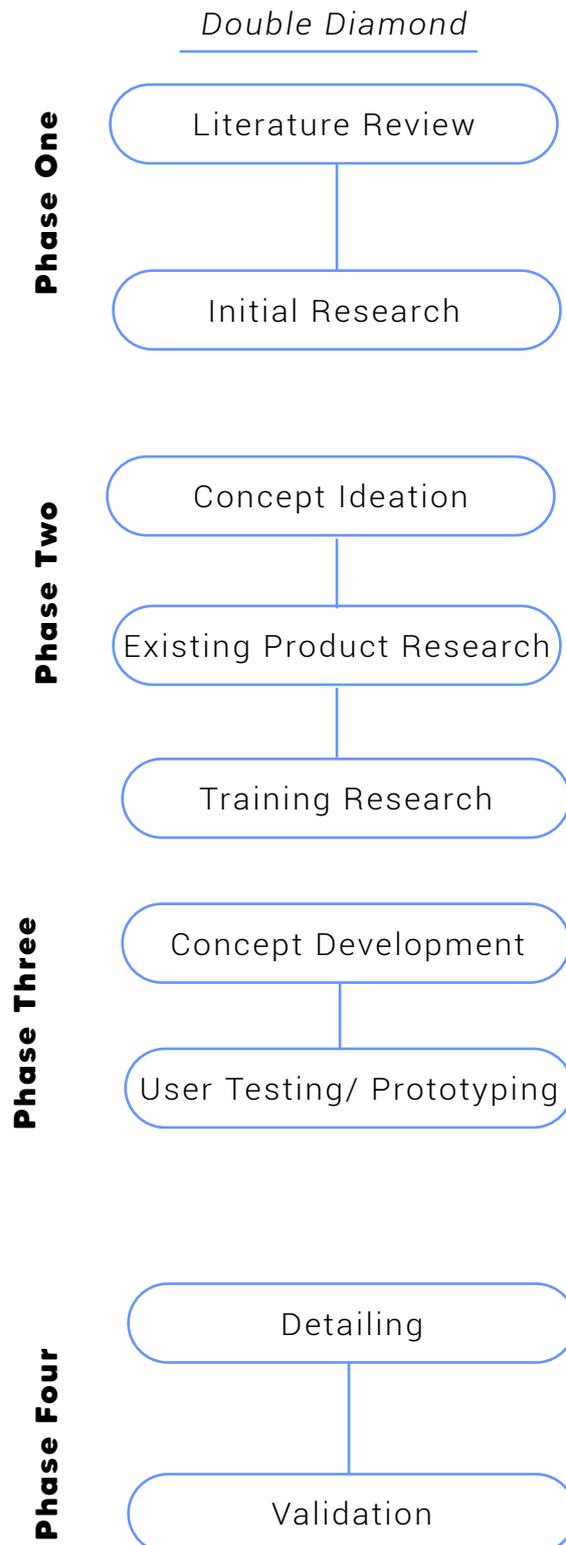


Figure 16. Design Process

Business Case

Market analysis

Due to coronavirus the pet, specifically dog, industry has seen a boom as a result of dog owners being required at home ultimately spending more time with their pets (Richardson, 2020).

Furthermore, Richardson (2020) projects that as a result of recent focus on pet wellbeing products will steer towards premium pet products. As a whole the industry is saturated however, the need for premium products in terms of materials, aesthetic and wellness are being sought after. Competition as a whole is high within the pet industry as this falls in line with the steady increase in the industry as a whole.

Market Position

During the further research stage of this project I was unable to find products that can be easily incorporated into the training program. If they are able to be incorporated the instructions of how to are unclear. Pooch offers a simple means of providing dog training at home. The incorporation of the designed products into the training system provides a unique and beneficial system for owners. Pooch also encourages the use of professional trainers through the ability to subscribe to their training programs based upon their strengths within training e.g. if a trainer is skilled in training aggressive dogs however the owner is unable to visit them in person due to distance, price, etc. they are able to gain their assistance.

Key Partners

The key partners for pooch are primarily revolved around dog trainers as both a resource and user of the service. Partnering with established, qualified positive reinforcement trainers will establish the brand and allow for the expansion of training delivery.

Key Resources

The key resources for the Pooch system are primarily related to the physical products, app development and the trainers connected to the system.

Path To Market

As online products are becoming more popular within the pet sphere, establishing Pooch online will allow for a competitive advantage to occur. As online communities are popular within dog training infiltrating this will create buzz around the products and system. Furthermore, as the Pooch system aims to differentiate itself amongst common dog toys, utilising an online campaign and market path is best suited. As many trainers are established online, this market path allows more trainers to subscribe to the system easily.

Final Design Discussion

Pooch

The initial design proposal had multiple products to address individual aspects of dog training. This did not address the complexities of the overall training process and the need for personalisation of training. The following section outlines the final design and how the overall design responds to the design criteria specified earlier in this report.

Product One Bond

The product made to address the bonding between two dogs or a puppy and their owner. The simple tug toy has been redesigned to address play between two parties. Current tug toys are often made for solo play to aid with biting.

Materials

There are many issues with current tug toys regarding material use. Many are simply made of only synthetic rope which is known to fray and the remnants can get stuck in the dogs throat causing great safety issues. Furthermore, the synthetic rope material is often too tough for puppies teeth and mouths leading to dental issues. The chosen material for the rope sections of this toy are natural cotton rope. This rope is treated so the fibres do not come apart. The cotton rope is approximately 20mm thick which allows the puppy to bite effectively. The overall texture of the rope is soft enough for the puppies to bite.

The inner part of the toy is made of natural rubber. Natural rubber provides a flexible yet durable section. Another option for this section was TPU however, TPU is not as durable which is necessary for the possibilities of biting. Furthermore, natural rubber does not have chemical properties that are harmful to the puppies.

Aesthetic

As a whole, the bonding toy is extremely simple. This was to counteract the heavy colours and textures of current dog products that alienate some owners.

Functionality/Usability

The soft rope provides comfortable yet effective biting for puppies. The natural rubber sections allows both biting and the owner to have something stable to grip onto. The double rings of rope allows multiple dogs to play together easily.

Product Two Socialise

The socialisation tool combines basic technology and a modern, simple form to redesign the current clicker. The tool utilises a speaker to produce sounds to expose the puppy to various stimuli to ensure that they do not become anxious or aggressive to new experiences over time. The socialisation tool is connected to the app via a bluetooth module to allow owners to schedule the exposures and types of sounds. Furthermore, the tool can be used in further training as a clicker to mark good behaviours.

Materials

The outer shell of the socialisation tool is made using ABS plastic and is manufactured using standard injection moulding. ABS is highly durable which is required in this context. Furthermore, ABS is commonly used in housing electronics. The button of the device is rubberised to provide textural difference for easy use.

Aesthetic

Current clickers are brightly coloured and do not consider ergonomics heavily. The overall goal was to modernise the entire design through a simple circular form that addresses ergonomic needs.

Functionality/Usability

The socialisation tool has been designed using a minimalist aesthetic which lead to the usability of the product. Featuring only one button that acts as both an on/off switch and during clicker training the overall form is simple. Furthermore, the product is to be used via the app to determine which function it can fulfil e.g. for socialisation while the owner is at work or as a clicker.

Product Three

Interact

The interact toy is an interactive device that utilises a motion sensor and speaker to provide engaging play while the owner is not present. The motion sensor allows the device to detect when the puppy is near, it then begins to move around to stimulate the dog. Furthermore, the speaker is connected via the app to allow the owner to input their voice as a means to calm to dog while they are not present. As a whole, this provides a comforting, engaging toy for the dog while they are puppies to lessen the likelihood of separation anxiety forming later in life.

Materials

The interactive toy is made up of multiple components. Primarily, an inner and outer shell. The inner shell is a 80mm sphere made of injection moulded ABS plastic to house the electronic components. The outer shell is a TPU sphere that is 3mm thick. This protects the electronics while providing a soft surface for the puppy to play with.

Aesthetics and Functionality

The spherical shape allows the device to roll freely around while maintaining the minimalist aesthetic. The overall aesthetic resembles the classic tennis ball aesthetic to fit within current dog products while still modernising them.

Product Four

Play

The toy that addresses play is a modular puzzle toy designed to engage the puppies brain through rewarding play. The puzzle toy is made up of two main components: the base and the top. The base is a cloudy ABS plastic which houses the treats. The top features various holes of differing sizes to create a puzzle in which the dog has to use their nose to retrieve the treats. The toy features multiple tops varying in difficulty to ensure that the puppy does not get accustomed to the puzzle making it less engaging. Current puzzle toys are single puzzles that the puppy becomes accustomed to which means that they lose interest in the toy altogether.

Materials

The cloudy ABS base provides a clear part to allow the owners to view how many treats are remaining. The top parts are composed of natural rubber which is durable, easy to clean and soft for the puppy to nuzzle.

Aesthetics

Similar to the other products, the puzzle toy utilises a minimalist aesthetic. The holes have been designed to follow a pattern to be visually pleasing.

Functionality

The overall design is simple. To join together the two parts use a simple lip joint that means the tops can be exchanged easily. Moreover, this allows the owner to insert treats easily.

System Design

The overall training system is delivered via the app. The initial design criteria stated that the products and systems had to simplify the overall training process. The app tailors instructions delivered based upon dogs behavioural need and owner experience level. Furthermore, the app features a community section that allows owners to post enquires which can be responded to by other owners or qualified trainers. This is due to initial research indicating that dog owners enjoy the community aspect of dog training. Furthermore, there are many ways in which training can be approached, providing various training options and opinions addresses this core issue.

As a whole dog products and training are separated. The goal of this design was to design simple dog products that address core training needs in a way that can be integrated easily into daily activities.

08 Conclusion

Conclusion

Dog training is a complicated process where owners struggle in various aspects. Unaddressed behavioural problems were indicated to lead to destruction in the owner-dog bond and ultimately relinquishments to shelters. Despite academic research into dog training showing that positive reinforcement is best for dog learning, some owners and trainers continue to use outdated methods. However, it was found that many owners now lean towards positive methods. Despite this, many owners continue to struggle to continue training outside of professional sessions, this was said to have consequences on dog learning.

As inadequate dog training has severe consequences including the surrendering of dogs to shelters, this study aimed to explore the experience of owners and trainers to ultimately improve dog training. This report detailed current academic literature and further research conducted to understand issues with the current delivery of dog training. This research-informed design recommendation and key criteria for the proposed solution.

Following the initial research and design proposal, the Pooch system was designed utilising both product and service design to create a simple, at home training system. The four products address the major four complex training programs for puppies. The training system is delivered via an app to allow for personalisation of training based upon the dogs behavioural needs and owener experience level.

09 Reference List

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10 Appendix

Appendix One

Coding Table

Theme	Code
Trainer Expertise	Qualifications [Q]
	Continuing Education [CE]
	Professional Trainer Knowledge [PTK]
	Scientific Supported Training [SST]
	Professional Organisations [PO]
	Trainer Education [TE]
	Trainer Ethics [TRE]
	Vet Recommendations [VR]
	Development of Training Methods [DTM]
	Non-Qualified Trainers [NQT]
	Trainer Experience [TREX]
	Lack of Knowledge [LK]
Personalisation	Tailoring Training [TT]
	Feedback [F]
	Follow-up Instructions
	Individualisation
	Understanding Behaviour
	Context [CXT]
	Addressing Dogs Behaviour [ADB]
	Punishment Based on Behaviour [PBB]
Owner Impacts on Training	Owner and Dog Bond [ODB]
	Lack of Knowledge [LK]
	Owner Aggression [OA]
	Owner Wants [OW]
	Owner Frustration [OF]
	Owner Commitment [OC]
	Owner Understanding [OU]
	Owner Ability [OAB]
New Owners [NO]	

Appendix One

	Incorporating Training into Everyday [ITE]
	Owner Lifestyle [OL]
	Owner Confidence [OCO]
	Owner Development [OD]
	Owner Emotions [OE]
	Personal Experience [PE]
	Prior Knowledge [PK]
Training Resources	Access to Resources [ATR]
	Tools [T]
	Range of Programs [RP]
	Written Information [WI]
	Research [R]
	Online Information [OIM]
Punishment	Physical Limitation [PL]
	Non- Physical Punishment [NPP]
	Aversive Punishment
	Verbal Reprimands [VRP]
Training Delivery	Tailoring Training [TT]
	Pace of Training [PT]
	Tools [T]
	Training Environment [TE]
	Distractions [D]
	Contextualising Training [CT]
	Explanation
	Feedback/Corrections [F]
	Simple Training [ST]
	Specific Exercises [SE]
	Dog Management [DM]

Appendix One

	Complex Training [CT]
	Clear Communication [CC]
	Slow Process [SP]
	Rewards [RW]
	Verbal Praise [VP]
Dog Behaviours	Causes of Dog Behaviour [CDB]
	Age of Dogs [AD]
	Breed [B]
	Dog Behaviour [DB]
	Addressing Dogs Behaviour [ADB]
	Excited Behaviour [EB]
	Attention Seeking [AS]
	Context Affecting Dog Behaviour [CADB]
	Did Not Require Training [DNRT]
	Protective of Owners [PO]
	Anxious Behaviour [AB]
Dog Comprehension	Dog Learning [DL]
	Dog Confidence [DC]
	Dog Reaction [DR]
	Distractions [D]
	Exposure [E]
	Dog Motivation [DM]
	Delivery [DEL]
	Dog Understanding [DU]
	Dog Comfort [DCM]
	Dog Focus [DF]
Impact of Training	Emotional Impact of Training [EIT]
	Owner and Dog Bond [ODB]
	Physical Impact on Dog [PID]

Appendix One

External Factors	Access to Resources [ATR]
	Industry Regulation [IR]
	Non Training Information [NTI]
	Personal Experience [PE]
	Previous Experience [PRE]

Appendix Two

Coded Survey Responses

OD	When a participant mentions their development as a trainer through bettering their training technique
TE	When the experience or knowledge level of the trainer or owner who is training the dog is mentioned
OBB	When the relationship between an owner and the dog is mentioned
FB	When the participant mentions receiving feedback from a professional dog trainer
SP	When a participant mentions the slow nature of training a dog using a particular training method.
PAT	When a participant mentions punishment-based training this may include vocal reprimands, physical reprimands (smacking), shock collars etc.
FFT	When a participant mentions force free training techniques this may include ignoring the dog.
ATT	When a participant mentions that the accessibility of training services (location, etc).
DB	When a participant mentions their dogs' behaviour this may include overexcitability, nervousness, etc.
C	When a participant mentions the cost of dog training
PTM	When a participant mentions that the training method, they are using has a proven record of working
T	When the participant mentions a specific training tool for example a muzzle.
EF	When a participant mention outward environmental factors that may impact their dog while they are training for example other dogs or noise
EID	When the participant mentions emotional impact on the dog as a result of training. These may include creating fear.
PID	When the participant mentions that training methods have had a physical impact on the dog which may include if the dog was harmed
PK	When the participant mentions that they had prior knowledge to either seeking out training or the reason they did not use professional training
CC	When the participant mentions that a training method clearly states what is expected of the dog
CX	When a participant mentions that training methods/techniques work differently for each dog or their dog responds differently depending on the situation
RFT	When a participant mentions receiving instructions/guides from the professional trainer on how to train their dog in the future
R	When a participant mentions that they did further research into training methods
OEB	When a participant mentions that their emotions/ personal beliefs impact the way in which they train their dog
D	When a participant mentions something that distracts the dog from training
OB	When a participant mentions any behaviour of theirs that may impact the training of their dog
DL	When a participant mentions something that aids or limits in their dog's ability to learn
M	When a participant mentions something that motivates their dog during training
DC	When a participant mentions something within training that boosts their dogs' confidence.
PE	When a participant mentions that a training method works well for them

11. Please outline your overall experience with these services.
NA
hasn't happened yet (due to COVID-19)
happy with the classes
Disappointed with the training early on. Much happier with force free methods
Excellent. They are now some of my best friends and I have developed so much as an owner that I was asked to take my 3rd (very reactive) dog as a last resort option, and she is blossoming!
Very happy. We are continuing what the trainers recommended and can see improvement.
Volunteer run clubs are useful for bonding and basic training but are not experienced and able enough to deal with extreme behavioural issues. K9 Pro is an excellent service that provides results, plans, guidance and assistance after the consult and deliver exceptional customer service.
Very happy, good results, provided tools to use into future
I loved them! My trainers were wonderful and I enjoyed supporting the Humane Animal Rescue shelters. They really helped to bond and build trust between my pup and I.
Excellent
Generally positive, except for a few trainers with whom we got into some arguments.
Positive. The obedience training was the most difficult as I felt they expected a lot from me as a new trainer and from my dog (who was 6 months)
Excellent, dog is not "cured" but he's very manageable.
Amazing. Wish I'd seen our now trainer first.
It was good as he was a puppy and learned the very basics
Disappointed with professional dog trainers due to lack of knowledge or suggesting wrong training methods (in hindsight), great experience with online training thus far
wasn't for me.
It has been very helpful. I do a lot of learning and training independently, and it has been great to send videos and get quick targeted feedback. The online format works well, as I live far from most reinforcement based trainers that have experience with fearful and aggressive dogs. I generally video tape my training, send it to her with any questions, and get feedback within a day. If I'm stuck, I can ask questions and get direction or resources to move forward.
Have'n done it yet but plan to
Good
Overall positive. I agree with the methods hence my choosing those programs, the trainers were very knowledgeable and I felt comfortable to ask any questions I had.
We have not been able to entirely fix the dog reactivity element of the behaviour but it has improved considerably.
Excellent! Perfect results
Excellent, it is a slow process
Really good.

Absolutely great, super supportive
Terrible if I could sue them I would. If Dog training was a regulated industry they would be out of business.
Two dogs over a period of twelve years who saw the same vet behaviorist
Felt overpriced (4x price of a single training in puppy school) and not as effective as a more traditional puppy school
The 2 I have chosen are very supportive
It slightly improved issues however it has not dealt with the issue completely
Very good
Absolutely incredible!
Very positive
Excellent
I have been working with trainers for 30 years.
Amazing. I have learnt so much from each dog trainer I have trained with
Two said they can't help my dog, two are still ongoing
Excellent. We'll worth time and money
excellent, explained the causes with up to date science to back it up
Dr Jacqui Ley - fabulous, although very expensive
Obedience school - could offer more assistance than they do.
several months of group classes
Great
Positive
Didn't make a difference
Decent, the facility was fairly small for the size of class
Not great... my young dog was constantly stressed, and was repeatedly put into more and more stressful situations until he eventually had a fight with another dog (his first and so far only fight) I wanted to leave but trainer forced a muzzle onto him and said he needs to learn how to get along with other dogs and that he'll get used to the muzzle. I watched my dog shut down in front of my own eyes... I said again that he's had enough and I left... we've never been back and his recovery is still continuing 12 mths on
positive reinforcement helped with basic commands but did nothing for curbing my dogs human aggressive behavior. Switching to scientific/alpha we found to be more successful slowly but surely
Not good. Didn't help. Way too many dogs around made our dog not focus.
Absolutely incredible. Our very scared, shy timid pup went from hiding under benches to exuding confidence like none other
Fantastic , cured my dog of lead aggression

Amazing
Excellent
Extremely helpful. I feel like the trainer is teaching me how to train my dog instead of just training my dog and moving on
Ok
Very positive
I would have skipped puppy class since my small dog was bullied by larger dogs. I had gone there because it was the highest rated obedience school in my area. I had to put in a lot of work after that to prevent severe issues from forming. The other classes I attended were great though.
I learned a lot and really enjoyed it
Very pleased and he works daily via message or phone. Can't do physical yet due to Corona.
Private trainers are very expensive, schools are cheaper
Fantastic.
The Force Free trainers were very helpful. The other I quickly abandoned when I did more research on the aversion method
Great, all three past CGC
no longer attend the obedience as I got sick of always being told to punish the dog and people scaring my dogs, behaviourist very helpful and continue to use - dog much more relaxed and not as aggressive, daycare somewhat helpful for separation anxiety dog
Good
The trainer really didn't do much said my rescue dog needed to adjust to new surroundings
Great, all three past CGC
Great, all three past CGC
Enlightening, empowering
Highly recommended - my dog is well socialised and well behaved, as well as being well adjusted
Exceeded expectations.
Really useful.
Long story. Some bad things. I know more about what to look for now

Appendix Two

17. In your view is rewards based training (force free) the most effective, why or why not?

For my dog yes. She's very food motivated

Yes, I think dogs are more motivated to 'work' for you if they are happy, and feel like they are achieving something

Yes, would never punish a dog

yes ... teaches the dog what you want and allows it to have some control

Yes, so long as you take time to find out what the dog likes and work within their current limits and gradually increase this.

Yes. Much better long term effects on my dogs

Yes, as this provides a better way to make the objective clear to the dog.

Absolutely- It's backed up by evidence and has worked so well for my 3 dogs.

Yes. Why be mean and intimidating if you can be kind and encouraging (and actually teach a dog something) and get a better result with no potential for fallout.

Yes. 1. Working with your dog becomes fun. 2. By building a relationship on trust and reward, your dog wants to work with you. 3. Dogs tend to lean into what gets them reward more than lean away from things that don't result in reward.

Yes. Dog wants to do the task, rather than fearful of consequences for not doing it. Less harmful, creates loving bond between dog and human

Yes! As long as you don't depend fully on edible rewards this is a great way to quickly and positively build trust between you and your pup.

Yes, it builds a bond, it lets your dog know what they should be doing instead just telling them not to do something.

Yes - Because it's significantly nicer and they respond so well to being rewarded.

Yes, helps solidify good habits

At times it is effective, at times it is not. It really depends on the dog and the problem that is occurring.

Yes. But also setting up for success is important so the "right thing" can be rewarded. I have found positive reinforcement training and ideologies amazing as they also help to adjust the feeling side of my dogs behaviours

Absolutely, the dog "gets" it. I do good thing, I get a reward

Yes for actual tricks training, no for general behavior training. Dog can be distracted by any food, and not realize why he is or isn't getting it if it is behavior based

Sometimes. But dogs need boundaries.

It is, my dog does not do well with negative reinforcement (I had an aunt who tried it on him while I was out of town).

Yes, dogs respond best to positive reinforcement. They don't understand punishment the way humans do and it will destroy your relationship

Yes. Because it has shown it has worked! My dogs know to look to me for their cues because of it.

Yes, my dog is scared of being hit from previous experiences, so you can't raise your voice or hand or he just covers.

Yes - this process teaches your dog what to do. While punishment can be helpful, without rewards the dog cannot learn what they should be doing instead.

Yes. most dogs live to eat

Yes. Rewarding for positive behaviour is the kindest form of training, and has worked so well for my anxious girl. It can take a while but building that bond is worth it.

Not always. The dog needs feedback on when they do the wrong thing, this cue can be trained using positive rewards based e.g. "leave it" or "stop"

Yes. You want a great relationship with your dog. They need to trust you and know nice things happen when you're together.

yes. It will get results, more slowly, but least aversive.

yes and no, depending on patience and availability, my dog learned to only behave positively to treats and wasn't learning positive behaviors, meaning we can have the perfect walk when I have treats, but if I didn't bring any after a month of consistent training, she would start to misbehave, completely forgetting her training when treats wasn't involved. need mix of reward and punishment training

Yes

Yes. Doggies need to be told when they're doing the right thing. Why would they do an action, without a reward. (We as humans wouldn't.)

Yes for tricks and recall because the dog has a goal to work towards

Yes for short periods of training as you have and can maintain the dogs attention.

Work for pay like us

I think rewards based is good, but I also correct her with a no if she jumps on people. It seems to work too.

Depends on the dog, for my girl one it is as its a motivator - my boy is too excited, wont listen nor is treat motivated outside the home

yes, because it is gentle

Yes, easier to get good results

Yes, I felt that the class I attended could have used some more rewards. At least for my sensitive dog.

Not the most but can be effective. Depending on the behaviour, most behaviours need to be corrected in some way while desirable behaviours praised and encouraged.

Yes, creating positive associations while learning is an ideal environment for learning and building confidence

No. While it worked for simple commands at home, it was unsuccessful for us out in the world with other distractions.

Sometimes. But I have huskies who often decide even a reward isn't worth changing their behavior.

Yes. Teaching a dog what you want them to do creates a better framework for a dog to make good choices

Sure. I think dogs react well to the presence of food.

yes because your pup gains confidence and enjoys its time with you bonding.

Yes, I've seen it work already

Yes, it is a positive way to train your dog.

Yes definitely! There's no other way. Training should be fun, not punishment

Yes. Dog who can learn to trust don't feel the need to react

Yes, because my dog is highly motivated by food, it makes the training stick. Strengthens bond in the long run

I don't know

Yes. Extensive peer reviewed literature supports this

Yes, because i believe positive reinforcement encourages good behavior

Yes, my dog is happy and wants to learn

I feel often rewards based training is inappropriately utilized by ill-educated but well-meaning people. This leads to bribing the dog to perform a behaviour and only getting that behaviour when food is involved. It is the most effective method when utilized appropriately in a choice based system where the dog is set up for success.

Trust is such an important aspect of the training relationship. Rewards based training allows a relationship to flourish, the dog associates good things with you, there is no fear. There is good motivation to change behaviour

Yes - builds trust & confidence in your dog

Definitely. It is slow but less likely to make the situation worse.

It depends on the dog, sometimes it works sometimes it doesn't, if a dog has no food or play drive then pats and praise work too. Every dog is an individual.

Yes, because it motivates the dog with positive reinforcement

yes, my anxious dog responded quickly once using these techniques

Yes because it is the most humane and efficient way to train and deal with behaviour Modification and build relationship

I couldn't give an informed opinion. I'd say yes because it worked with my dogs better than any other method.

Yes it has the best outcomes with the most limited downsides

Yes. He's more focused when there's rewards.

Rewards (and we should more properly call them "reinforcers" in order to reflect their true power the dog will repeat the behaviour and love doing it.

Yes, because it creates a dog that is confident and willing to problem solve and is engaged in the work. This is not to say that aversives never happen, that's not realistic. Ending a training session can be aversive to a lot of dogs, but it's important to have clear communication.

Depends. 90% of the skills my dog knows were taught with reward based training. But the most crucial in my opinion command "no!" (and the only one my shiba obeys 100% of times) was taught with negative reinforcement

Yes as you are reeducating the dog on what is appropriate behaviour and reassuring them, thus reducing fear.

Yes, as long as you know what rewards make your dogs tick! We have a cocker spaniel who will do anything for a ball, and a retriever who will do anything for food!

Yes, tried and true method used before.

Yes, corrects the dog and makes them more confident

Yes. I strongly believe forceful training creates further fear. Dogs try communicate. We shouldn't shut them down.

They are the most effective with an anxious dog. Trust is what I value most in my relationship with my dog

Yes, it seems to work out very well

Yes. Communicates with the dog, teaches them what to do and reduced fear associated with training etc

Yes. It's a wonderful motivator and let's the animal know they are not forced

Mostly yes. I think a firm NO is needed sometimes.

Dog needs to know who is the Alpha, if it has no respect because you only reward him he can get out of control

Yes, reward the behaviour you want to see and correct when necessary

Yes, as there is less risk of "fallout", and most dogs find it more enjoyable, so are usually willing participants.

Yes. My dog thoroughly enjoys learning new things. He can do complex behaviors and problem solve. Punishment based training does not seem to allow this freedom since the trainer has to show the dog, down to the smallest detail, exactly what they want. The sports that I am interested in rely on the dog being somewhat independent. I appreciate that my dog likes working with me. It also lets me know if my dog isn't feeling well if he doesn't want to work. With punishment based training, a dog might not be feeling well, but will still do commands because they do not want to feel worse with punishment.

Yes. I want my dog to have a positive association with the things he's afraid of

Yes

Rewards gives the dog a sense of worth and respects the owner.

Because science proves it to be.

Yes, because it keeps the dog calm and engaged instead of being scared.

Counter conditioning improves the dogs mindset whereas aversive methods (prong, verbal admonishment) cause confusion and reinforce the fear of the target thereby increasing aversion

Yes, builds a relationship with the dog as well as trust

Yes, ethology has shown its more effective and better for your relationship with the dog

Yes. Dogs learn faster and are keen to learn.

Depends on dog

Yes. It is much kinder and less stressful for the dogs. It is clearer. It encourages a proactive approach to dog training instead of knee jerk reactions

Yes. Dogs love treats

Yes. I have done considerable research, talked to many professional trainers and dog behaviourists and concluded, along with my own experience that this is the most effective method. It is not cruel, dogs, like humans, respond to kindness and praise. I was a teacher, and believe that dogs are very like children in many respects.

Yes. The dog learns what the owner is trying to teach

Yes, ethology has shown its more effective and better for your relationship with the dog

Definitely yes! Builds trust, allows understanding for the dog, creates a dog who feels safe

Yes - happy well adjusted dog responds to kindness, not out of fear

According to the literature it is. However, you can't avoid removing an appealing stimulus in some contexts. Strict adherence to 100% positive reinforcement does not strike me as a balanced approach. Yes. It has proven longer term results, no risk of punishment callous, less likelihood of behavioural fade.

Reward gives incentives

Yes. Like us dogs need a way of knowing they are doing the right thing. Rewards help with this. Doesn't need to be food or all the time once habits are formed.

Yes. It works

Appendix Two

18. In your view is punishment based training (aversive techniques) the most effective, why or why not?

No. Don't want the dog to be scared of me.

NO, you create a **fear filled environment where the dog is more worried about their safety and fight/light response than learning how to fulfill their role in the pack**

No. **Dogs don't understand punishment**

no ... **just punishes without teaching what is wanted. just doesn't fit my philosophy of life**

No. **fear and compulsion** are not effective for learning.

No. **Shuts down instead of addressing behaviour**

N/A

No. It ignores the reasons for what the dog is doing and is akin to putting a band-aid over an amputated limb. **It is also not backed up by science**

No. Potentially can ruin the relationship between dog and human. **may lead to fallout or a shut down dog. I don't want or need to use intimidation, corrections and dominance to train or interact with my dog.** Depends. Punishment in the sense of hurting a dog is not beneficial... **you get an unpredictable, nervous dog who follows you out of fear which is not effective. Punishment in the sense of withholding reward until a behaviour is performed can be very effective.**

Never. **I consider it abusive.**

No. **this breeds fear** and makes teaching new skills difficult because the dog doesn't fully trust you. I only use punishment when my dog does something dangerous and I can reprimand her while she does it.

No. **it hurts your bond with the dog and may cause unwanted aggression or behavior.**

No - because **they don't understand punishment like humans do**

if you can catch them in the act, yes

It should definitely not be a default, but it **can be a very useful tool, especially for some dogs.**

No. **Punishments make things worse, and they do not reach the dog a desired behaviour. Also impacts strongly on human animal bond.**

Nope, **the dog has no idea why it's in trouble.**

Not physical, I will yell once at my dog if he ignores commands, but I do not physically punish him

My balanced trainer gets a bad rap in terms of his style not being purely positive but **honestly the leash pressure techniques I've learned and how to bring my dog back below threshold with tricks and obedience requests has been invaluable**

It is not, I believe that the **key to a non-aggressive dog is avoiding aggressive behaviors.**

NO. **I feel very strongly about NOT using punishment based training for dogs. They do not understand it the way humans do. I believe it's very cruel to punish dogs for their unwanted behaviour. It's normal dog behaviour, but if it's unacceptable to you, show them what you want instead, don't punish them for it.**

No

No, it just **makes them scared of their owner who is meant to protect**

No - **it can help some by adding consequences once a behavior is learned**, but if used alone the dog is simply behaving less and creating conflict in the owner relationship.

No. **I don't want my dog to fear me**

No. **It's cruel and causes a dog to shut down rather than actually learn**

No, **do not want to reinforce fears** by using punishment

No, for punishment to be effective, it needs to be extreme enough to ensure that the behaviour is never repeated which requires much more force than appropriate.

Absolutely not. **In our case our dog came from the pound with a very traumatic background and punishment based training would have triggered his trauma and potentially created further undesirable behaviour**

No - **causes fear & aggression**

No. Could make a **nervous dog go straight from growling to biting**

Depends on the dog, every dog is different and it may work for some dogs but it might not work for others.

No, **because the dog doesn't really want to do something**, it is just conditioned to do it

punishment wasn't effective at all, **made the problem worse**

Punishment begins where knowledge ends. It **suppresses behavior and creates more problem behaviors** than you bargained for. **Does the opposite to building a relationship**

Never would work with my dogs. **I also would never hurt my dogs in any way, I feel that is cruel.**

No, human error is too rampant to work effectively

No. **It can make him scared of me.**

The **animal can shut down** and punishment based trainers have no understanding on how to train a dog, why they use punishment.

It's not the most effective, **but punishment is always going to be an important part of communication.** Negative punishment is still punishment. I would argue that most 'punishment based systems' are really reward based, assuming that people aren't applying the old yank and crank Koehler method approach full tilt (which is mostly negative reinforcement and positive punishment).

It feels like it **might be better for basic and potentially lifesaving commands**. I wouldn't recommend such techniques for **anything other than 'no!'**

Only **creates more fear** and doesn't fix the problem or help the dog

No, it **teaches them bad behaviour** and our cocker has **anxiety so this would scare him more**

No

I've never heard of it but sounds terrible

Definitely not

It doesn't create the relationship I want with my dogs

No. **Doesn't teach the dog what to do, only what not to do. Increases fear and anxiety**

Occasionally. My dog is well trained in general **but if he misbehaves I ignore him**. He seems to think that being severely ignored is literally the end of the world and so to me it's edging towards punishment

Not generally, I do think the dog needs to respect the handler though. I have seen too many dogs that **take advantage of their owners who are scared of correcting incorrect behaviour.**

You need a mix of both, the punishment shouldn't ever be abusive behavior though

I think punishment based training 'fixes' your dog fast however it doesn't fix the problem. The dog behaves **because he is scared of getting punished** not because he respects the owner or he learnt

On the technical definition of punishment, positive rewards based uses **negative punishment which is ignoring the dog**, think **this causes confusion and anxiety**. Positive punishment, **used in the right way, gives the dog feedback straight away rather than the dog guessing what you want**

No. **Your dog will fear you and behaviour issues will arise.**

no. **dog will tend to mask behaviour** or redirect.

Yes and no, while learning is pretty quick. Too much punishment, **your dog can become scared of you as well for physical discipline. Always sending her to a time out or walking on a short leash, she forgets the reason why she was on punishment to begin with. It isn't always right for physical discipline. It isn't always right for punishment training. It isn't always right for reward training. You need a mixture between punishment and reward training.**

No, **but I have used it when rewards based training was inapplicable, or hard to apply**

Sometimes for **undesirable jumping and other behaviors. it teaches dog consequences**

Rewarding and **encouraging appropriate behaviour is more successful longterm**

No **creates fear** lack of trust my boy is very sensitive

If they do anything really bad **we put them in time out for a few minutes to discourage the behaviour.** It's worked pretty well for the moment they are well behaved most of the time.

Sometimes, for example toilet training, you put their nose in it, give them a little smack and show them the grass - this worked for all my animals

no, because it **creates fear**

No, **cruel outdated training method**

No

No **but it has its place for corrections** along side praise for desirable behaviours.

No... **it damages owner/handler relationships**

Yes. **My dog zones out in situations she views as threatening.** She could care less about a reward being offered. But with a pinch collar, that physical contact between her and I, she can "hear" me.

No. I feel like it just **makes them either fearful or annoyed enough to become aggressive**

In the sense of the training quadrants, "punishment" has a place. **It gives dog feedback and ensures undesirable behaviors are not rewarded.**

Depends. I think it works if the dog is about to get into serious physical trouble it shocks them to stop and pay attention to you.

no **because it instills fear and no one is having fun when they are scared.**

No, it has unintended consequences like **making the dog scared of you** and trying to hide bad behaviour from you, like drinking his pee.

No, its not necessary

No way. **Why punish your dog for doing something they don't understand**

No - **only increases fear**

No. **because the dog becomes scared of you and loses trust/respect with you. Potentially damaging to your relationship long term.**

I don't think so

No. As above

No dont believe hitting a dog is right

No. It often results **in suppression of behaviour, without affecting the emotions underlying the behaviour, and can potentially increase stress and anxiety.**

No. **it doesn't address the underlying emotions. It only suppresses behaviors**

NO

No. **You get a dog that is afraid and nervous and it can back fire if it bites.**

Absolutely NO. Your dog will work **for you through fear.** Same as punishing a child. Really?

No. **because a scared dog is not a well behaved dog.**

See above

No it's not **because of the fall out relationship damaging**

No, **misapplied by an amateur it breaks the trust between you and your dog**

No. **Discourages learning.**

NO

Punishment based training made **my dogs more aggressive and fearful, and made me feel bad.**

No. **She doesn't understand why I punished her**

I abhor punishment based training. It **only makes a dog terrified and breaks its spirit. A dog should always want to do the right thing because of its innate desire to please.** A good trainer builds on this.

No **I don't believe in punishment of animals**

Definitely NO! **Builds anxiety, creates a dog who never feels safe.**

NO understanding of what is required, **creates a dog full of sadness and confusion**

No. **Fearful dog can trigger aggressive behaviour**

Removing an appealing stimulus is technically negative punishment. I believe this has to be one of the "tools" in your tool box. **Like #17 I don't believe that a one-sided approach is optimal.**

No

No. **Causes stress and retreat of feelings of dog. More likely to 'snap' as they hide warning signs.**

No. Can **cause fear and anxiety**

Appendix Three

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I abhor punishment based training. It **only makes a dog terrified and breaks its spirit. A dog should always want to do the right thing because of its innate desire to please.** A good trainer builds on this.

No **I don't believe in punishment of animals**

Definitely NO! **Builds anxiety, creates a dog who never feels safe.**

NO understanding of what is required, **creates a dog full of sadness and confusion**

No. **Fearful dog can trigger aggressive behaviour**

Removing an appealing stimulus is technically negative punishment. I believe this has to be one of the "tools" in your tool box. **Like #17 I don't believe that a one-sided approach is optimal.**

No

No. **Causes stress and retreat of feelings of dog. More likely to 'snap' as they hide warning signs.**

No. Can **cause fear and anxiety**