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Exploring the Reasons People Abuse Animals

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The research on animal abuse has grown over the years which has led to studies that determine the psychological implications of animal cruelty in relation to various societal and environmental agents. From these studies, researchers have addressed animal abuse and cruelty in general but have not established the cause of the behavior or reasons why people abuse animals. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the reasons motivating human beings to abuse animals. Using the qualitative method, this study used snowball sampling to interview a total of 10 professionals who work in the fields of veterinary medicine (veterinarians and veterinarian technicians) and who work in law enforcement and have investigated cases of animal abuse. The interview responses were recorded and analyzed qualitatively. The results of this analysis indicated that people abuse animals mostly due to lack of animal welfare awareness as well as due to the connection that exists between animal abuse and human violence. Animal rights and welfare organizations may benefit from the results of this study leading to positive social change through identifying how to break the connection that exits between human violence and animal abuse and how to spread animal welfare to cover a wider group of people. Furthermore, these organizations can collaboratively work with law enforcement agencies to detect and prevent animal abuse and cruelty at large.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and friends who have been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of graduate school and life. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving children, Kayla Buxton and Charles Bittinger whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity has made sure that I give it all it takes to finish that which I have started. I am truly thankful for having you in my life. I also dedicate this dissertation to my many friends and church family who have always loved me unconditionally and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

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I want to express my gratitude to the university review board and the URR Staff for the insightful comments and reviews offered by the anonymous peer reviewers at these units. The generosity and expertise of one and all have improved this study in innumerable ways and saved me from many errors; those that inevitably remain are entirely my own responsibility.

I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this project. Each of the members of my Dissertation Committee has provided me extensive personal and professional guidance and taught me a great deal about both research and life in general.

Finally I wish to extend my thanks to my family for their support and encouragement throughout the study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Animal cruelty is a persistent societal issue that needs to be addressed. This is mainly attributed to the possible psychiatric and emotional link of animal abuse with abuse of other people in the society. For instance, Johnson (2018) found that abuse and mistreatment of animals had a high connection to violent behaviors towards other humans, including rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, and murder. Nevertheless, the critical nature of the reasons, as well as implications, of animal abuse and cruelty on the society is normally understated and minimally associated with violent behavior between humans. As a result, cases concerning animal cruelty are shown to consistently increase by the year (Humane Society, 2019), which shows that current interventions aimed at protecting animals have yet to be effectively implemented. Moreover, in order to enhance the ability of the existing interventions as well as develop novel and effective strategies to protect animals, it is important to examine the root cause of animal cruelty: the reasons why people abuse animals.

Undoubtedly, gaining insight on why people abuse animals will extensively promote the ideal framework that can be used to establish effective interventions and practices aimed at detecting and preventing animal abuse. Furthermore, rational approaches can be determined and established, aimed at reducing cases of animal abuse as well as promoting various concepts aimed at preventing animal abuse and mistreatment, such as antispeciesism and vegetarianism. In this note, this exploratory study assessed the reasons why animal cruelty is rampant and concludes with possible approaches that can be used to prevent as well as reduce cases of animal cruelty and

abuse. The research featured a qualitative methodology that included extensive study on existing literature in order to gain in-depth insight on the research topic before presenting interview data.

In particular, this chapter introduces the topic of animal abuse and presents the nature of this problem and why it warrants further research. Generally, this research aimed to explore why people abuse animals, how to detect animal abuse, and examine potential preventative measures. This section presents the study's problem statement, which comprehensively discusses why the topic is of interest based on current literature on animal cruelty and abuse. The section also highlights the study's assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses that shape how the research was conducted. This is particularly important since it sets the tone as well as outlines the direction that the study took towards reaching an empirical conclusion on the causes of animal abuse and cruelty in the society.

Background

Several studies on animal abuse have been conducted with common findings and themes. For example, Altschuler (2017) demonstrated that the majority of animal abuse cases go undetected, and many animal abusers tend to continue with the abuse, likely due to not being caught. Similarly, Arluke (2017) found that an animal abuser's psychological state could result in severe abuse leading to death. Additionally, it is reasonable to assume that many cases of animal abuse go undetected because of the nature of the abuse (occurring in private settings) and animals being unable to report the abuse.

There is no specific date in history where human beings started to abuse animals. Animals played an important role in the society in the past where they offered humans a great deal of economic products. Animals were commonly used by human beings to provide clothing because their skins were used as clothes. As well, animals were a source of food, particularly a source of proteins. Additionally, animals were used as a means of transport as well as for purposes such as entertainment and training soldiers.

Nevertheless, animal cruelty has persisted over time and as a result a number of ways that have been established over time to manage vices done against animals as well as change people's attitude towards protecting animals (Traïni, 2016). For instance, antispeciesism is widely promoted to encourage human beings to view animals as equally deserving rights of other sentient beings. Moreover, veganism and vegetarianism are also promoted in order to make people reduce intake of meats and other animal by-products. Additionally, legislations aimed at protecting animals have been enacted to discourage animal abuse. As well, other measures taken to enhance animal rights and protection include educating individuals on the importance of animals, protecting the animal's habitat, and setting up homes for the exploited animals so they can be protected and fed.

Problem Statement

Domestic animal abuse is a significant problem in the United States (Randour, 2014). This assertion is clearly supported by a report released by the Animal Legal Defense Fund (2019), which shows that various states in the United States had weak legislations aimed at protecting animals, and thus a high number of cases concerning domestic animal abuse were recorded in these states. Moreover, the Humane Society

(2021) argued that the number of animal cruelty cases reported daily in the United States

was particularly high, which also adds up to the equally high number of unreported cases.

Based on these assertions, animal mistreatment and negligence are a major concern that

has also been illustrated to be correlated with other violent crimes. For instance, Hoffer et

al. (2018) assert that domestic violence and child abuse perpetrators were observed to

have been associated with animal cruelty. Brutality to animals is defined as administering

bodily pain, or at some extreme point, the death of an animal (Abubakar et al., 2018).

Due to the widespread prevalence of domestic animal abuse and its correlation with other

crimes, it is important to understand why people abuse animals and how animal abuse

can be prevented and detected.

There are various notions of how cruelty on animals starts (Arluke, 2017). One of

them being abusers' pre-established psychological state that consents them to begin

mistreating animals, and at some point, the situation might bring about the death of the

animal (Sollund, 2017). Most of the cases are not detected, and many animal abusers tend

to continue with the act, thus the rising instances (Altschuler, 2017). The focus of this

research was on understanding why people abuse animals and determining ways that

animal abuse can be prevented and detected. Findings from this research could help to

inform policy at various levels that prevent and deter animal abuse.

Purpose

The main purpose of this dissertation was to examine the perceptions and motives

that promote animal abuse and cruelty. As a result, the research determined contemporary

techniques employed to detect animal cruelty, including prevention. As mentioned

previously, research shows that animal abuse is correlated with other violent crimes, and it is estimated that a vast majority of animal abuse goes completely unreported (Humane Society, 2021). With this qualitative research study, I sought to increase the understanding of these two important points, inform the body of literature on this topic, and hopefully positively impact social change by informing policy in this area.

Significance

This study contributed to filling the gap in furthering the understanding of the reasons that people abuse animals, as well as a better understanding of how animal abuse could be prevented and detected. This study makes an original contribution by focusing on and reporting the knowledge of current field practitioners on these issues. This research supported professional practice and practical application by revealing the reasons that people abuse animals and determining ways to prevent and detect animal abuse through the lived experiences of field practitioners and experts. As mentioned previously, animal abuse is a serious issue not only because of the defenseless animals involved but also the fact that animal abuse is often correlated with other violent crimes. The research findings lead to positive social change by sharing the insights of field practitioners and experts. Determining the reasons and circumstances in which people abuse animals is one of the first steps in proactively addressing this problem. Further, understanding how to increase prevention and detection is also an important step in reducing animal abuse.

Theoretical Framework

As observed from the statement of the problem, the incidences concerned with animal abuse, cruelty, mistreatment, and brutality are alarming. Theoretically, two theories were used to inform the approach to this research. These theories are the routine activity theory and the deterrence theory. These theoretical frameworks were used to inform the research that answered the research questions of why people abuse animals and how animal abuse can be prevented and detected.

The deterrence theory was developed from the work of Hobbes, Bentham, and Beccaria. The theory is made up of three fundamental components: Certainty, severity, and celebrity. It ascertains that the more severe a punishment is, the higher the probability that was rationally calculating individuals will desist from any given criminal act (Ascione & Ascione, 2010, p. 87). Based on this theoretical perspective, it alludes that if animal abusers are given this sentencing objective based on the theory, it would ultimately discourage the people in conjunction with other animal offenders from committing animal brutality crimes. The idea regarding the deterrence theory is that the objective for sentencing an offender is to ensure that there is a reduction of the crime through the example of punishment or threat to the population at large.

There exist two divergent views regarding the deterrence theory: specific deterrence and general deterrence. Specific deterrence assumes that in the case of animal abuse, the sentence is adjusted with a view of deterring the animal abuser before the court and convincing the accused not to re-abuse the animal once again. On the other hand, general deterrence refers to the act of inducing others who had an agenda of abusing

animals not to do so. Since animal abuse as a crime is fairly common, then general

deterrence would work better to stop the act. In theory, the concept of denudation might

be employed to curb the activity (Ascione & Ascione, 2010, p. 74). In a general sense,

denudation refers to the act of convincing the entire community or public that the offense

in question is a typical true crime, a serious crime whereby respectable individuals are

shunned, and not a technical, obsolete, or minor crime. It informs every individual and

reassures law-abiding that the relationship between animal abuse and punishment is

considered logical and just.

Additionally, routine activity theory served as a theoretical framework in this

study. Routine activity theory was created in 1979 by Cohen and Felson and identifies

three elements to converge before the occurrence of a crime. These elements must be

prevalent before there is an occurrence of a crime: (a) a target or suitable victim, (b) a

motivated offender having inherently criminal intentions in conjunction with the ability

to act regarding these inclinations, and (c) the absence of a potential guardian who might

prevent the happening of the crime. These fundamental elements must converge in time

and space for a crime to occur. The theory provides a macro perspective on animal abuse

in the sense that it provides insights on how the changes in economic and social

conditions influence the overall animal brutality and victimization rate (Beirne, p. 87,

2016). Based on the theory, it can be postulated that abusing animals as a crime is a

structurally significant phenomenon, which means that the violations are neither trivial

nor random events. Therefore, it can be assumed that people abuse animals because

animals are there and that, in the case those animals would not be present, then this could not be happening.

This study was theoretically based on deterrence theory and routine activity theories. The theory of deterrence explains how punishment can discourage repetition of crime as observed in punitive behavior that results in cruelty against animals (Robert et al., 1985). In exploring the motives of people abusing animals, this theory is useful in highlighting what behaviors relating to retaliation, control, prejudice, and hostility in human beings influence animal abuse by the same people possessing those behaviors. On the other hand, the application of routine activity theory explains in detail how people select target animal victims to abuse, their motivation, and the impact of the absence of animal rights champions in promoting continued crime of animal abuse (Cohen & Felson, 1979). In essence, the environment under which these crimes against animals occur can be put into perspective with these two theories. The contribution of these theories in consideration of Arluke's (2017) assertion greatly informs the influencing activities, behaviors, and motives of inflicting pain, threatening, neglecting, and even killing animals, thereby facilitating the dissertation's critical analysis and recommendations. A qualitative exploratory study about individuals and law enforcement agents on animal abuse is a justifiable method of exploring the phenomena under this study.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Why do people abuse animals?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How can incidents of animal abuse be detected?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How can animal abuse be prevented?

Nature of the Study

This was a qualitative research study and aligns with answering the research questions, which seek to understand root causes of animal abuse. The use of the qualitative method in collecting behavioral data was appropriate and yields accurate and reliable results (see Wilson, 2018).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through qualitative analysis, which answered the questions of why people abuse animals, how the animals are abused, and what ways can be used to ensure animal abuse is eradicated. Since there is no specific numeric data, this data analysis method is the best for this research.

Possible Types and Data Sources

Individual interviews were conducted with professionals from the veterinary field and law enforcement officers with specific experience dealing with cases of animal abuse. These individuals had significant knowledge regarding animal abuse and shared their experiences to inform this research and answer the research questions. Data collection was done using interview guides. Interview guides are appropriate in collecting qualitative data that aims at exploring and describing a situation the way it is, according to Wilson (2018). Using a semistructured interview, the research questions were covered in-depth, and the opinions of the respondents were captured during the process of data collection.

Assumptions

I had two primary assumptions for this study. The first assumption was that most individuals have the same reasons for abusing animals. Second, since professional veterinary doctors and law enforcement officers come across injured animals most of the time, they understand the reasons why people abuse animals.

Scope

Seven professionals from the veterinary field and three officers from law enforcement were interviewed. The interviewees were from the same region. The interviews took place in 2 days, with each interviewee taking at most 2 hours during the interview. The study mainly focused on the reasons why people abuse animals, whether the abuse is intentional or unintentional, and if it is mainly planned among other theories concerning animal abuse.

Delimitations

The interviewees had a great deal of knowledge about animal abuse and records since they encounter the abused animals often. Because of this, they were asked the reasons why animals are abused. I, however, maintained high level of professionalism during data interpretations and only relied on participants' opinions to produce bias-free results.

Limitations, Challenges, Barriers

Some of the limitations, challenges, and barriers that were addressed during this study included access to research participants. I knew some people who work professionally in the veterinary field and some law enforcement officers as well. Second,

the interviewees were prone to bias since they were the only participants, and because I

was the one to interpret the data; the research results were prone to bias. This was

because it is the opinions of the participants and me which mattered, not the abuser. Any

limitations, challenges, and/or barriers were assessed, addressed ethically, and

approached with best practices in research.

This limitation could have been solved by adding another type of participant,

maybe an animal abuser, who was willing to help in the research. This would ensure that

I had first-hand information about animal abuse, therefore reducing the limitation of the

research. However, for this research, that did not happen due to the inadequate time and

resources that I did not have. Therefore, accessing the data for the abusers in the law

enforcement offices did not happen, though it was legitimate.

To address the bias, I reduced my opinions and interpretations and mostly relied

on the participants' data. Additionally, I used another method of research like the

quantitative method, where I had no room for my opinions on the research.

If I would have used the quantitative research method, most of these limitations,

biases, and challenges would have been minimal. This is because quantitative research

deals with data in the form of and numbers; therefore, it can be harder to manipulate the

data to fit into researcher expectations.

Significance

This research broadened the understanding of why people abuse animals and how

the cases of animal abuse could be reduced. After this research, key reasons why

individuals exploit animals can be established to prevent abuse in the future. To the

outside world, people have learned to live with animals with peace, and the world is in a better place for both domestic and wild animals.

Summary and Transition

This research was conducted mainly to understand the reasons why animal abuse cases increase and how the cases can be reduced. It was done to ensure that this society's behavior changes and that people learn to live well with animals. In Chapter 2, I will present the literature review, including a discussion of my theoretical framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Research on animal cruelty is a fairly recent research undertaking. Beginning with scholarly works such as by Tapia (1971), the research literature on this subject has grown over the years to include studies that determine the psychological implications of animal cruelty in relation to various societal and environmental agents. For instance, domestic violence was shown to be highly correlated to animal cruelty (Traini, 2018). Moreover, an international handbook on animal abuse was published in 2008, which offers research reviews, conceptual analysis, and studies on animal abuse and cruelty, including bestiality and hoarding, from diverse professional viewpoints, such as psychology and psychiatry, veterinary science, law enforcement, and social work (see Ascione, 2008).

Similarly, this study aimed to examine existing literature in order to determine and understand the reasons why individuals exploit animals and how this inhumane practice can be managed. Hence, this chapter provides a review of the current literature on animal abuse to include the extent and nature of animal abuse. In addition, the theoretical frameworks of deterrence theory and routine activity theory are presented. Finally, the gaps in the literature are presented. This chapter closes with a summary of those points out the most significant sections.

Theoretical Framework

Routine activity theory was created in 1979 by Cohen and Felson, calls for three elements to converge before the occurrence of a crime. This theory describes that some people who abuse animals do not do it on purpose. They hurt animals because they do not think about or realize what they are doing. Some of these people do not know that what

they are doing is cruel. For example, some people do not realize what kinds of different shelter animals need. They may keep a dog in their yard with a doghouse that is on the ground and gets flooded with water when it rains, or they keep their dog on a short chain all of the time. Some people will try to keep their pet under control by using cruel types of discipline. They may think that punishment and intimidation are the best ways to solve problems. Other people are cruel because they do not pay attention to their animals. For example, someone might forget to give their cat water for a few days or leave their dog in a car on a hot day with the windows rolled up. Often these people know better, but they either forget or do not care enough to pay attention.

Finally, some people hurt animals even though they think they are helping them. For example, some people have so many pets that they cannot care for them all. These people are called hoarders, and they take in so many animals because they love them. This theory is known as the deterrence theory, which was developed from the work of Hobbes, Bentham, and Beccaria. The theory is made up of three fundamental components: certainty, severity, and celebrity. Unfortunately, they cannot care for all the animals they take in, and the animals end up living in a place that is cramped, dirty, and unhealthy. Nearly all of these people can learn to understand that they are being cruel through education and increasing their awareness of the needs of our animal neighbors. Since most of the people who abuse animals make up this group, this means that most of the people who abuse animals can be helped with basic education.

The next biggest group of animal abusers does it on purpose but do not keep doing it for a long period of time. For example, a group of kids may decide to throw

rocks at a nest of baby birds they happened to see, or they may hurt a stray cat in their neighborhood. These people are usually young, and they hurt animals because they are not thinking or because they cannot stand up to their friends and peer pressure. The ones who are not really thinking might be mad at someone else (like their parents) and kick their pet dog because they cannot kick their parents. Or they may think it is fun to watch an animal run away scared, without really thinking about how the animal feels. The ones who are giving in to peer pressure might be trying to show off to their friends. Or they may be with a group of friends who are all trying to impress each other, and so they go along with what everyone else is doing. Intentionally hurting animals for any reason is serious. In most states, those caught doing this will face harsher punishment than those who hurt animals unintentionally. However, these people usually do not hurt animals more than a few times. They learn to think about how others feel, and they learn to stand up for themselves. This group can be helped through education and support, too.

The last group of people who hurt animals is the worst. These are people who intentionally hurt animals because they enjoy hurting things or because it makes them feel powerful. Many of these people would hurt other people if they could get away with it. They just choose to hurt animals because animals are more helpless than people. Why do these people hurt animals? There are different reasons. A lot of these people want to have control over others. They will hurt an animal because they think this means they control the animal. Or they may hurt the animal to control another person. For example, a husband might hurt the family's pet to show his wife what he could do to her if she does not obey his commands. Someone else might make his dog kill other dogs because he

thinks that makes him powerful. Others simply enjoy pain and violence. Those who enjoy violence might also destroy inanimate objects as well as animals and people. All of the people in this last group suffer from serious psychological problems that will probably not go away on their own. They often need the help of licensed professionals—like a psychologist. Research is not clear on why people become like this—most are probably born with their problems, but others can get their problems from brain damage, poisonous environments, or by being treated themselves badly. Without help, the psychological problems these people have can haunt them for their whole lives.

Alleged link to human violence and psychological disorders. There are studies providing evidence of a link between animal cruelty and violence towards humans. A 2009 study found that slaughterhouse employment increases total arrest rates, arrests for violent crimes, arrests for rape, and arrests for other sex offenses in comparison with other industries.

A history of torturing pets and small animals, a behavior known as zoosadism, is considered one of the signs of certain psychopathologies, including antisocial personality disorder, also known as a psychopathic personality disorder. According to *The New York Times*, "[t]he FBI has found that a history of cruelty to animals is one of the traits that regularly appears in its computer records of serial rapists and murderers, and the standard diagnostic and treatment manual for psychiatric and emotional disorders lists cruelty to animals a diagnostic criterion for conduct disorders. A survey of psychiatric patients who had repeatedly tortured dogs and cats found all of them had high levels of aggression toward people as well, including one patient who had murdered a young boy. Robert K.

Ressler, an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigations behavioral sciences unit, studied serial killers and noted, "Murderers like this very often start out by killing and torturing animals as kids."

Acts of intentional animal cruelty or non-accidental injury may be indicators of serious psychological problems. According to the American Humane Association, 13% of intentional animal abuse cases involve domestic violence. As many as 71% of pet-owning women seeking shelter at safe houses have reported that their partner had threatened and/or hurt or killed one or more of their pets; 32% of these women reported that one or more of their children had also hurt or killed pets. Battered women report that they are prevented from leaving their abusers because they fear what will happen to the animals in their absence. Animal abuse is sometimes used as a form of intimidation in domestic disputes.

Cruelty to animals is one of the three components of the Macdonald triad, behavior considered to be one of the signs of violent antisocial behavior in children and adolescents. According to the studies used to form this model, cruelty to animals is a common (but not universal) behavior in children and adolescents who grow up to become serial killers and other violent criminals. It has also been found that children who are cruel to animals have often witnessed or been victims of abuse themselves. In two separate studies cited by the Humane Society of the United States, roughly one-third of families suffering from domestic abuse indicated that at least one child had hurt or killed a pet.

TV and Filmmaking

Animal cruelty has long been an issue with the art form of filmmaking, with even some big-budget Hollywood films receiving criticism for allegedly harmful—and sometimes lethal—treatment of animals during production. Court decisions have addressed films that harm the animal, such as videos that in part depict dogfighting.

The American Humane Association (AHA) has been associated with monitoring American filmmaking since after the release of the 1939 film *Jesse James*, in which a horse has pushed off a plank and drowned in a body of water after having fallen 40 feet into it. Initially, monitoring of animal cruelty was a partnership between the AHA and officials in the Hays Office through the Motion Picture Production Code. Provisions in the code discouraged "apparent cruelty to children and animals," and because the Hays Office had the power to enforce this clause, the American Humane Association (AHA) often had access to sets to assess adherence to it. However, because the American Humane Association's Hollywood office depended on the Hays Office for the right to monitor sets, the closure of the Hays Office in 1966 corresponded with an increase in animal cruelty on movie sets.

In addition, other animal welfare organizations worldwide have also monitored the use of animals in the film.

By 1977, a three-year contract was in place between the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists which specified that the American Humane Association should be "consulted in the use of

animals 'when appropriate,'" but the contract did not provide a structure for what "appropriate" meant, and had no enforcement powers. This contract expired in 1980.

One of the most infamous examples of animal cruelty in the film was Michael Cimino's flop *Heaven's Gate* (1980), in which numerous animals were brutalized and even killed during production. Cimino allegedly killed chickens and bled horses from the neck to gather samples of their blood to smear on actors for *Heaven's Gate*, and also allegedly had a horse blown up with dynamite while shooting a battle sequence, the shot of which made it into the film. This film played a large part in renewed scrutiny of animal cruelty in films and led to renewed official on-set jurisdiction to monitor the treatment of animals by the AHA in 1980.

After the release of the film *Reds* (1981), the star and director of the picture, Warren Beatty, apologized for his Spanish film crew's use of tripwires on horses while filming a battle scene, when Beatty was not present. Tripwires were used against horses when *Rambo III* (1988) and *The 13th Warrior* (1999) were being filmed. An ox was sliced nearly in half during the production of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), while a donkey was bled to death for dramatic effect for the Danish film *Manderlay* (2005), in a scene later cut from the film.

There is a case of cruelty to animals in the South Korean film *The Isle* (2000), according to its director Kim Ki-Duk. In the film, a real frog is skinned alive while fish are mutilated. Seven animals were killed for the camera in the controversial Italian film *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980). The images in the film include the slow and graphic beheading and ripping apart of a turtle, a monkey being beheaded and

its brains being consumed by natives, and a spider being chopped apart. *Cannibal Holocaust* was only one film in a collective of similarly themed movies (cannibal films) that featured unstaged animal cruelty. Their influences were rooted in the films of Mondo filmmakers, which sometimes contained similar content. In several countries, such as the UK, *Cannibal Holocaust* was only allowed for release, with most of the animal cruelty edited out.

More recently, the video-sharing site YouTube has been criticized for hosting thousands of videos of real-life animal cruelty, especially the feeding of one animal to another for the purposes of entertainment and spectacle. Although some of these videos have been flagged as inappropriate by users, YouTube has generally declined to remove them, unlike videos that include copyright infringement.

The Screen Actors Guild (SAG) has contracted with the American Humane Association (AHA) for monitoring of animal use during filming or while on the set.[54] Compliance with this arrangement is voluntary and only applies to films made in the United States. Films monitored by the American Humane Association may bear one of their end-credit messages. Many productions, including those made in the US, do not advise AHA or SAG of animal use in films, so there is no oversight.

Routine Activity Theory

Routine activity theory was put forward by Cohen and Felson in 1979 to explain crime and crime changes (Grugan, 2017). The theory has helped us understand the aspect of criminal behavior and the motive fuelling it. According to Melander and Hughes (2018), this theory argues that three prevalent elements meeting at a time and space

convenient to perpetrate the crime must be all present. The three components include an offender who has criminal intentions and the ability to commit the act, a targeted victim, and the absence of a crime preventer. The crime intentions are generalized social activity patterns that both crime perpetrators and victims encounter in their day-to-day life.

In the context of animal abuse, this theory is useful in understanding why human beings target animals as victims as changes to their daily routines occur over time. Bunei and Barasa (2017) elucidated the perception changes in the human mind as a result of routine activity changes that may adversely affect their view on surroundings, including other people and animals. These changes, therefore, force people to confront new situations and may cause prejudice, hatred, and cruelty towards subjects. Daily life situations encountered by individuals influence their crime rate and, consequently, that of the entire society (Lemieux, 2015).

Routine activity theory is, therefore, a clear elucidation of how macro and micro levels of situation models converge to explain why crime occurs (Nurse, (2016). With increased and rapid changes in the social, economic lives of people across the globe, an increase in animal brutality can be viewed to be originating from the agreements of this theory. The situation model that claims the absence of a guardian who might prevent the crime from occurring is a fundamental pillar. It brings into focus the need for more animal rights crusaders to deter potential animal abusers from perpetrating the crime (Lowther, 2018).

Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory was developed from the work of philosophers Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham. The theory was developed from their belief that the motivation of people is pleasure and pain avoidance (Raaijmakers, Loughran, de Keijser, Nieuwbeerta & Dirkzwager, 2016). According to their argument, increasing the certainty, severity, and celerity of crime can reduce it. In essence, proponents of this theory believe the offenders' history and punishments handed earlier are influential in determining whether the offense will be repeated or not. Therefore, the presence of punishment deters criminals from committing the crime. People who commit or are likely to commit crimes are consequently discouraged from such acts if other offenders are punished.

The cases of inflicting pain, suffering, or causing death to animals can significantly reduce if an example is set by punishing offenders severely, swiftly, and with certainty. There are, however, different perspectives and complexities of deterrence theory. General and specific deterrence perspectives are the most common among contemporary theorists. Specific Terence addresses a particular case and offender in question to prevent them from committing the same crime again by adjusting the punishment to suit that offense (Bhattacherjee & Shrivastava, 2018). In the context of animal abuse, the suspect of animal abuse may be punished for that particular offense against the specific animal to discourage the offender from re-abusing the same animal in the future.

General deterrence, on the other hand, is aimed at preventing others who had an agenda of abusing any animal by way of punishing those found guilty of such an offense.

Lianos and McGrath (2017) argued that denudation works better with the application of a general deterrence perspective. Denudation involves creating awareness about crime and conviction to the entire society that the crime is real and severe. Animal abuse, therefore, can be seen as a severe crime, and the punishment administered to its perpetrators can be perceived as logical and just by the general public.

Animal Abuse Motivations

There are various possible reasons that act as motivation for people who abuse animals. Offensive Behavioural traits may be a result of social, economic, or environmental changes that affect people and make them brutal to victims (Seto, 2017). These traits may be either consciously or subconsciously stored in the minds of criminals. This study explores human retaliation behavior, human controlling behavior, prejudice against some animals, as well as hostile human characters against other human beings and their involvement in animal abuse.

Human Retaliation Behavior and Animal Abuse

People who have been angered by others or by animals may retaliate by doing the same to animals and people under their reach (Newberry, 2017). This revelation may, therefore, explain why acts of violence are found in some people and not in others. This retaliation may mostly be targeted to the same animal that angered the owner but can sometimes be targeted to any other animal. A person may, therefore, punish an animal excessively as a result of the animal's undesired behavior. However, selecting which animal to abuse may be done randomly based on the situation.

According to the assertions of the routine activity theory, changes in one's social life, such as those occasioned by physical or mental abuse, can result in people victimizing animals. Psychological illness-related issues such as depression can also cause some people to mistreat animals. Levitt et al. (2016) observed that people usually give names of people to pets, human food, and shelter and relate to them like human beings. However, when angered, they may retaliate by abusing the pets just like human beings. These punitive measures taken by people are specific deterrence measures that result in cruelty against animals. Deterrence theory asserts that punishment discourages people from committing a crime for fear of the pain and can be used to explain why individuals believe animals should also be punished.

Human Controlling Behavior and Animal Abuse

A person intending to control an animal, such as stopping a dog from the backing, may do so in a cruel manner (Newberry, 2017). This act may cause pain to the animal even when it was not intended to. Abusing pets outside the commonplace of residence may partly be explained by such a phenomenon since controlling an animal is common at home than outside. It can also happen when an animal is caged or under the chain, thereby inflicting pain or suffering to the animal.

Most of the controlling behaviors are antisocial (Gullone, 2011). Antisocial behavior involves the use of violence and aggression, disrupting individuals and society at large. It causes loss, mental or physical pain, and violates the rights of others. Animals may suffer acts of aggression directly or indirectly in the hands of the people. Improper

control of the animal results in punishing the animals, and one becomes an animal abuser in the process.

Ignorance is one of the behavioral causes of animal abuse. Levitt et al., (2016) claimed that some individuals believe abuse is beneficial to the animal. Such violence may be inflicted as animal training methods. Also, inappropriate housing that causes physical or mental suffering to an animal is considered animal abuse. Unfortunately, such activities may not be reported to the authorities most of the time.

Prejudice Against Some Animals and Animal Abuse

Prejudice is a biased view with unfounded truth against a subject (Peters, 2018). Believing some animals are harmful or associating them with something evil can be the root of the violation of their fundamental rights. Some cultural beliefs may permit torture, maiming, or even killing some animals. Randour (2014) claimed that people who perceive some animals as outgroups are likely to harm them. They hold negative perceptions about the animals or species of animals and can, therefore, easily abuse them.

Essentially, prejudice may yield hatred and resentment towards the subject. For example, people who believe cats are satanic may kill them for such beliefs. Equally, holding favorable perceptions towards an animal or species of animals can result in good relationships and protection of such animals. Since human behavior is influenced to a great extent by cultural beliefs, prejudiced views can pose a considerable risk to some animals and their future existence if these views are not changed.

Hostile Human Characters Against Other Human Beings and Animal Abuse

An attitude or feeling of rejection and subsequent intention to hurt people in retaliation can result from different sources (Díaz, 2019). Some hostile behavior may start from the time people are young as a result of rejection, abuse, or even neglect. Inheriting these feelings can cause resentment towards people and animals. Hostile people can be violent and unaccommodating.

Hostility towards people can be extended to animals hence violate their rights (Peters, 2018). According to Gullone (2011), antisocial behavior such as hostility towards other people is predictive of other adulthood problems such as failed relationships and crime. Where an individual is hostile to people, there are high chances that the individual might also be hostile towards pets and other animals he interacts with. Animals under the care of violent or aggressive individuals may, therefore, suffer the acts of their caregivers just like the people around them.

<center>**Empirical Review**</center>

Grugan (2017) argued that retaliating towards the animals kept by humans was significantly linked to animal abuse cases. The study concluded a significant number of cases of animal abuse in all forms were perpetrated by caregivers, mainly as a result of retaliation. The views of Randour (2014) were similar after the study found that both pets got punished often by their caregivers, pointing out punitive acts that could cause pain or injury to them.

Scheffer (2019) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between animal abuse and domestic violence. The study concluded that people who perpetrate domestic

violence are highly likely to abuse animals. This study elucidates the antisocial behavior in human beings and how they manifest in aggression, violence and cause pain to both fellow human beings and animals, especially domestic animals. The findings indicated a significant number of people were in violent relationships, and their pets were facing similar physical and mental torture challenges. The hostility of people was, therefore, highly associated with animal abuse.

Newberry (2017) studied different motivations for animal cruelty. Among the factors investigated were retaliation, human controlling behavior, and hostility of individuals. The study used a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. The results revealed retaliation behavior was the most significant motivation towards animal abuse. Additionally, the findings revealed a substantial number of cases went unreported to animal protection bodies. The results concurred with those of the study investigating pet abuse by the same researcher as well as the research by Scheffer (2019).

A similar study by Newberry (2017) examined animal abuse in the context of domestic violence. The study collected data from private forums online, with specific themes being identified. The results revealed the majority of the victims in abusive relationships opt to remain as a result of fear of their pet's safety. These findings have converged views that both the animals and people living with violent partners are subject to antisocial behaviors. The opinions of this study were in line with those of Scheffer (2019), underscoring the role of hostility in animal abuse.

A study conducted by Díaz (2019) investigated the Emerging Attitudes towards Nonhuman Animals. It was done on a sample of students at a Spanish University. It

concluded that prejudice was significantly affecting the way the subjects viewed the animal. The views towards animal groups that they were not closely interacting with were based on mere perceptions and not facts. This revelation was, therefore, an indication of how prejudice affects people's relationships with both human and nonhuman animals. Similar views were held by Alleyne and Parfitt (2017), who concluded perceptions influenced relationships and subsequent treatment of people and animals.

According to the findings of Arluke (2017), animal abusers start this behavior from various points and triggers. The research further pointed out pre-existing psychological state gives an okay to start the mistreatment. Altschuler (2017) concurred with the above findings and claimed most of the criminals do not stop this behavior once they start it. The increase in animal abuse thus was linked to continued abuse without deterrence or punishment to the offenders. Randour (2014) claimed that hostility and controlling behavior towards animals were highly related to hostility towards other people.

Viewing Animals as Objects

The reviewed empirical studies have identified the above motives as crucial in explaining the reasons for people abusing animals. People who have prejudice are highly likely to harm other people and animals, as well. Hostility, controlling behavior, and retaliation were equally identified. Research shows that, historically, wars and genocide often begin with a campaign of dehumanization. In other words, we can only go to war with other human beings when we strip them of their humanity through language. We are not built to kill each other.

Nonhuman animals are often viewed as objects. They are not sentient beings with emotions and needs, but merely a means to an end for those who would victimize them. If you get really mad at your laptop for breaking down on you, there is no moral imperative to stop you from throwing it across the room, beating it with a ball-peen hammer, or tearing it apart. You are angry at the device, so you destroy it because it has no sentience. When we view animals in a similar way animal cruelty results. The animal has no more significance than a tool or device. People who mistreat animals can separate themselves from the beings they hurt, so they do not feel as though they are doing anything wrong.

Using Animals for Monetary Gain

Many instances of animal cruelty result from the desire to make money. If someone can sell animal meat or by-products and make a profit, he or she can justify the slaughtering of innocent animals. In the farmer's mind, he or she is simply providing for his or her family.

The same goes for any industry that victimizes animals for human monetary gain:

- Selling furs and pelts.

- Breeding companion animals in a mill

- Purveying tickets to an animal entertainment show

- Stealing body parts from animals to sell as trinkets

The list goes on. Human beings are motivated by earning money, and if they have to engage in animal cruelty to get it, some will do so. Again, they are able to separate the animal from what it provides and to disregard its sentient nature.

Drug and Gun Trades

According to 2006 statistics, people who own vicious dogs are more likely to be involved in criminal enterprises. Of course, as any dog lover knows, canines are not born vicious. They are taught to behave aggressively by their owners. Pit bulls are often demonized as vicious, aggressive, and dangerous, but many people have loving pit bull pets who would never intentionally harm someone else. The problem is with the upbringing and training.

In many cultures, owning an aggressive dog is a status symbol that communicates to other criminals that they should not try to get one upon them. The animals become props for criminals who use them as protection from criminal rivals. This is its own form of animal cruelty because aggression goes against the dog's nature. Even police dogs, which are used to apprehend suspects — sometimes violently — are not intentionally harming another human being. It is their job, and they let go as soon as they are ordered to do so.

Unfortunately, dogs often get hurt or killed while accompanying their owners. If a drug deal goes bad and the guns come out, the chances of a dog getting shot go up exponentially. These animals do not understand what they are fighting for or against. Most cases of animal abuse involve the willful harming of a nonhuman animal. When a man kicks a dog for having an accident in the house or when a woman whips her horse for failing to respond to a command, those are instances of animal abuse.

One of the problems facing animal rights activists is that animal abuse rarely occurs in plain view. It happens behind closed doors and in factory farms that are not

open to the public. When we do not see it occur, we can pretend it does not exist. Unfortunately for the affected animals, it does exist. Animal cruelty and abuse is a systemic problem that often gets handed down from parent to child, a boss to a worker, and culture to culture.

There is a reason most jurisdictions have animal control officers. These members of law enforcement bravely investigate cases of animal abuse, prosecute the offenders, and rescue the animals. However, they are only effective when someone reports the abuse.

In some cases, animal neglect stems from ignorance. A person keeps an animal on his or her property and does not know how to properly care for that animal. This is not a justification for the neglect but a recognition that we need to educate people about the animals in their care. Neglect can also stem from disinterest. If a dog owner notices that the animal has sustained an injury, he or she is morally and legally obligated to obtain veterinary care. Unfortunately, some people are unwilling to spend the time and money necessary to heal their sick or injured pets. Similarly, a companion animal might go days or weeks without food because the owner "just forgets." That is not an excuse. Every day, emaciated, diseased, flea-ridden animals enter shelters. Some get adopted by loving families. Others are not so lucky. Worse, some animals spend their entire lives in neglectful circumstances. They eventually die of dehydration, malnutrition, untreated diseases, or other conditions.

For some people, there is a sense of entitlement toward animals. These people believe that we have the right to use animals in any way we wish, usually for monetary

gain. Exploiting animals is a form of animal cruelty, however, especially when the exploitation goes against the animal's instincts or forces the animal into scary or unsafe situations. Circuses, zoos, aquatic theme parks, and other venues often exploit animals in the name of entertainment. The crowds do not see how the animals are forced into submission, kept in tiny cages, and denied socialization with others of their own species. Did you know that 96 percent of a circus animal's life is spent in a cage? They are transported from city to city in trailers that lack climate control, and they often use barbaric devices to force performances, from bullwhips and chains to cattle prods.

Even zoos, which are often viewed as positive contributions to a community, have been rife with animal cruelty. Zoo animal abuse can take many forms, from starving animals to sending them to livestock options. This does not even take into account the many accidents that have occurred due to poorly constructed exhibits.

Human beings are often called "apex predators." Because of our unique skill set, we can dominate animals easily. The question is whether we should — and the answer is *no*. When humans prey on animals, we take away their agency and reduce them to nothing but the food on a plate. Sometimes, we even prey on animals without the desire to eat them. The fur farming industry is one solid example. There is no reason for humans to prey on animals. Endless cases of animal cruelty come from factory farming, hunting, and fishing. Consider, for instance, that anyone can get a hunting license. There is no test to find out if they can shoot straight. Every year, hunters maim animals with non-lethal shots, which mean those animals die slow, excruciating deaths.

Literature Gap

While a significant number of studies have been carried out addressing animal abuse in general, few of them have looked with clarity as to the cause of the behavior or reasons why people abuse animals. The increased number of cases of animal abuse despite the existing interested stakeholders points to a deeper problem that requires more profound exploration and practical recommendations to reduce the effects. This study, therefore, aimed to explore the reasons motivating human beings to mistreat animals and even kill them from a social and legal perspective. It further sought to create a more in-depth understanding of the existing policy and address the gaps that exist in terms of reporting the crimes and bringing the perpetrators to justice. I aimed to achieve the objectives by carrying a thorough investigation by collecting primary data from the relevant experts, policy enforcers and addressing the gap by issuing practical recommendations that will prevent and deter animal abuse.

Methodology Literature Review

A qualitative method of research was used in this study because most of the research entails theoretical narratives and opinions concerning the subject under study. This research methodology has been used by various researchers, including Scheffer (2019); who examined the relationship between animal abuse and domestic violence. Consequently, Scheffer (2019) concluded that individuals who perpetrate domestic violence are likely to hurt animals and cause animal abuse, Scheffer (2019). The reason why the paper considers Scheffer's (2019) study is because it is directly linked to the latter research.

Summary

The literature reviewed has created insights into the reasons people engage in the act of animal abuse. The routine activity theory was instrumental in elucidating people to engage in animal abuse frequently, even without their knowledge. It further emphasizes the contribution of changes to the social, economic factors in shaping human psychology to engage in animal abuse. Deterrence theory, on the other hand, was crucial in understanding why people punish animals and also why they are punished if they are cruel to them. The importance of observing animal rights as people enjoy their privileges is underscored. The four thematic areas concerning the motives behind animal abuse highlight human psychological factors driving the agenda of cruelty against animals, whether intentionally or not. The empirical review generally points out a general agreement of continued animal abuse in parts of the world. The literature gap of insufficient knowledge addressing the inherent reasons people abuse animals and the possible measures to address the challenge justifies a more in-depth exploration of the topic.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

This chapter covers the techniques that were used to collect and analyze the data. I used the study research questions to guide the investigation. The main purpose that was driving the study was to understand why people abuse animals. Further, the study determined the ways that animal abuse could be prevented and detected. To adequately answer the question, a clear methodology was developed. According to Check and Schutt (2012), a research methodology is a plan of action from designing to executing the research itself. The plan discussed in this chapter includes the research design, the paradigm, and the role of the researcher, sampling, and sample methods. Additionally, this section describes the data collection procedures and data analysis methods. The chapter also discusses the research trustworthiness and participants' rights protection. Finally, I discuss the data analysis method and presentation of the results.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design due to its suitability in building a profile about why people abuse animals. It was done by the use of an interview guide on a sample of the population. Ponto (2015) described a research design as generally the framework, organization, or configuration of the relationships among variables of a study and the plan of investigation used to obtain empirical evidence on those relationships.

The present study took an inductive orientation, which is generally associated with qualitative studies. An inductive approach, as described by Brannen (2017), is a strategy pertinent to qualitative data analysis that follows the predefined study objectives for efficient data manipulation. In particular, it is an approach that exploits in-depth

appraisal of raw data to build themes, concepts, and models via interpretation achieved from the collected materials.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

RQ1: Why do people abuse animals?

RQ2: How can incidents of animal abuse be detected?

RQ3: How can animal abuse be prevented?

Role of the Researcher

Sutton and Austin (2015) explained the role of the researcher as an observer and a participant at the same time. However, I was careful in participating to avoid increasing the bias in the results by keeping personal thoughts, views, and perceptions away from the study data collected. Additionally, there was a professional engagement with the participants to ensure the correct data was captured and recorded. In this study, there was an objective participation by me in the research process in addition to professional engagement with respondents. Administering interviews was done by me; hence, I played a critical role in data collection.

I facilitated the research process by assessing the respondents' thoughts, feelings, and views and recording them without distortion. The views of the participants were equally considered in the final analysis, which was done according to the best research practices. No conflict of interest was in this study as I was not engaged in any business or employment by any agency in animal protection or law enforcement agencies.

Sampling

This study interviewed seven professionals who work in the field of veterinary medicine (veterinarians and veterinarian technicians), as well as three professionals who work in law enforcement and have investigated cases of animal abuse. The snowball sampling technique was employed as I know professionals who work in veterinary medicine and law enforcement.

Data Collection procedures

Data was collected using the interviews. In design, the interviews were developed to have open-ended questions. The open-ended questions in the interview survey were pertinent to this study because they eliminated respondent bias and allowed participants to explore the study under their own terms. Since this study understood in-depth issues that required additional questions by me as researcher, interview guides were the most appropriate tools to help probe respondents. In addition to responding to study questions, I made observations on feelings, expressed attitudes, and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study even without asking deeper questions. All responses were recorded to allow for a detailed review during the analysis. The data were coded and transcribed using categorization (Wicks, 2017). The categorization of responses was based on their similarity to enhance accuracy. The objective of content analysis was to sort and assess all recorded responses and differentiate different levels of the content observed.

Data Analysis

The data collected through interviewing the participants was analyzed by me through qualitative analysis, whereby the sequence of the data was observed and recorded. I used inductive data analysis coding to find patterns in emotions, reasons, and ideas the participants have in common to get to know the reason why people abuse animals and how the participants feel about it, as well as the participant's opinions on the research. The collected data was tabulated to organize and simplify the analytical processes entailed in qualitative data (Sutton, & Austin 2015). In this research, content and thematic analytical models were utilized. The objective of content analysis was to sort and assess all recorded responses and differentiate different levels of the content observed. Thematic analysis was used to generate themes and primary ideas from the different levels of observed content and latent content from the context information included in the analysis.

Trustworthiness

I upheld the highest levels of ethical standards during the study. The data were kept confidential and were not altered to change the outcomes of the research. The clients were allowed to remain anonymous to ensure they were confident and truthful in responding to the interview. The data were also collected from the correct respondents; hence, results were believed to be valid. The respondents that were included in the sample were required to give trustworthy information that can be verified. The data collected were treated with integrity, even as it moved from one form to another to avoid distortion. All the sources were acknowledged.

Protection of the Participant's Rights

The respondents were informed of their right to participate voluntarily or even decline altogether if they did not wish to participate. Additionally, their responses were used only for the study, and they were not victimized for the responses they gave in this study. No right was violated. Permission was obtained from Walden university to collect, transmit, and store the respondents' data and responses under the Walden IRB approval number 07-11-22-0344909. A consent form was signed by participants to confirm they participate in the study willingly without coercion or intimidation.

Presentation of the Results

The findings of this research will be presented to stakeholders such as those working in the veterinary medicine field, law enforcement officials who investigate cases of animal abuse, as well as the general public, specifically those who are interested in the topic of animal abuse. The findings will be presented in a concise and clear manner.

Summary

This chapter presented and supported the research methods that were used to conduct this study. The reasons why people abuse animals were studied, and the alternatives were presented so that people may use the alternatives and instead avoid the abuse. This study described ways to reduce animal abuse in the state so that people may learn to live again with animals in peace.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter outlines and reviews the study results. I collected qualitative data during the interviews to answer the study's three research questions. The research questions were:

RQ1: Why do people abuse animals?

RQ2: How can incidents of animal abuse be detected?

RQ3: How can animal abuse be prevented?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the results of the study as to why people abuse animals, including the methods and ways that can be used to detect animal abuse incidents and how animal cruelty can be prevented. The research findings are also discussed in relation to the previous research and available literature on animal abuse in order to identify the similarities and differences between this study and previous literature. In Chapter 3, a detailed research methodology was given.

Data Collection

The qualitative data discussed in this chapter were collected using interviews. I recruited 10 people for this study; seven people from the veterinary health services field and three law enforcement officers who have dealt with animal abuse cases in the past. I conducted Zoom meeting interviews with them. I administered the individual interviews using Zoom. All interview sessions were recorded, and the audio files were saved for analysis.

During the interviews, I used a set of seven open-ended questions and played the role of being both an observer and a direct participant to the data collection process.

However, I maintained high levels of professional engagement with the respondents to ensure that the data collected and captured was correct and unbiased. The respondents were also allowed to provide their views and responses without pressure. Through the use of interviews, I was able to make observations on feelings, expressed attitudes, and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study even without asking the respondents deeper questions.

<p align="center">**Findings from Interview Data**</p>

The qualitative data in this study is composed of responses to open-ended questions through the use of interviews. In this section, I discuss the interview results, starting with the response rates of the selected participants and their profiles before moving on to the key takeaways from the respondents' responses. The descriptions of the topics prominently use the participants' own voices.

Participation and Response Rate in Interviews

The response rate to my interview requests with various selected participants was surprisingly positive. Within the veterinary field, the proposed number of participants was almost achieved. However, while general practice veterinarians were found ready and willing to be interviewed, relatively few law enforcement officers participated compared to my original plan. Table 1 below shows the summary of the actual participants against my proposed samples in the two categories of participants.

Table 1.

Participation and Response Rate in Interviews

Field of Profession	Proposed Sample	Actual Responses
Veterinary	8	7
Law Enforcement	5	3
Total	13	10

Profile of Respondents and Related Details

This study recruited a group of respondents from two major fields – veterinary services field and the law enforcement field. Table 2 illustrates the profile of the respondents indicating their profession.

Table 2.

Profile of Respondents

Type of Profession	Number of Respondents
General Practice Veterinarian	4
Veterinary Dermatologist	1
Poultry Veterinarian	2
Law Enforcement Officer	3

The above table presents a diverse range of professionals from both fields with the general practice veterinarians being by far most common profession with four individuals (40% of the sample) out of 10 respondents. The diversity of respondents fulfilled the dissertation's purpose to obtain a broad spectrum of perceptions and motives that promote animal abuse and cruelty, how to detect animal cruelty in a better way, and how to prevent animal abuse.

Interview Data Results and Analysis

From the thematic analysis that I performed on the 10 interview recordings, three themes were identified as discussed below. Based on the interviews, I observed overlaps between some of the themes.

Theme 1: Animal Cruelty and Human Violence

In responding to my open-ended questions, respondents expressed their opinions and views without being pressurized and some of these responses touched on the connection that exists between animal abuse and human violence. Most of the respondents especially from the law enforcement field indicated that animal cruelty is a co-occurring crime with human-related violence; be it in children, marriage partners, elders and various groups of our societies.

One respondent clearly indicated that most of the people who carry out actions of animal abuse such as hurting of pets are usually linked to prior actions of hurting other humans before starting to hurt animals. Although many people have the assumption that animal abusers begin by hurting animals before progressing to humans, this is not always the case. There only exist a small number of animal abusers who begin with hurting

animals before moving into human violence of hurting other humans. The same respondent while enumerating reasons why people abuse animals concurs that, "some people abuse animals to displace the hostility directed towards them… for instance abused children will often abuse animals to get even for their abuse."

The above comment shows that a bigger number of the children, who are exposed to childhood abuses of different kinds while at their young ages, are more likely to be exposed to animal cruelty at some point later in their lives. Interpersonal and domestic violence for example forces such children to suffer from maltreatment, neglect and physical abuse. These circumstances results to the children growing up with the belief that violence is an acceptable method of resolving interpersonal conflict. The outcome of growing up with this mentality and perception puts such children at a high risk of perpetuating and extending the cycle of violence, not only to human beings, but also animals in future during their youth or adulthood.

Normally domestic violence offenses are assumed to be associated in settings of intimate partners. However, these offenses frequently occur at the same time or are predecessors to other types of violent offenses. One respondent who is a law enforcement officer noted:

> Animal cruelty can also be very intentional, organized and goal directed just as is the case in domestic violence situations where the abuser may decide to harm an animal to coerce, terrorize and/or intimidate a victim and/or for retaliatory acts towards a victim.

The same respondent argues that crimes such as rape, assault, arson, murder and sexual abuse of children are mostly carried out by individuals who have a history of animal abuse or will have high likelihood of abusing animals after committing such crimes.

Two General Practice Veterinarians provided a slightly different view of the relationship between human violence and animal abuse. They indicated that acts of animal fighting coordinated by humans especially for sporting activities and entertainment purposes are also acts of human violence that fuel the abuse of animals. For instance, sport activities such as cockfighting, dog fighting and bull fighting are the most common types of animal fighting activities (viewed to be actions of human violence by the two respondents), which encourage the abuse of the animals especially the ones which lose on such sports. One respondent while providing reasons why people abuse animals noted that, "For sport events like rode, cockfighting, bull fighting inhumane activities."

Sometimes animal fighting can end up to the losing side abusing the animal after the competition as noted by one respondent, "Retaliation for animal misbehavior i.e. punishment for unwanted or undesirable animal behavior such as during sport events." The other Veterinarian indicated that entertainment activities such as film making to be one of the reasons people abuse animals, even though this may not be perceived as animal cruelty by majority of humans. One of the respondents provided the following statement:

Other people end up abusing animals during the process of normal human entertainment – for example animal abuse during film productions is prevalent

worldwide, even in some big budget Movies one cannot think of - Hollywood movies. Often it has been purported that the kind of treatment given to animals during the process of making films is offensive and objectionable. Serious harm has been caused to animals including death.

Animal abuse in entertainment space can also be associated with those cases where some individuals love watching acts of crime being performed by others especially via what is called the dark web. As noted by one of the law enforcement officers, some individuals will abuse animals "to enhance their own aggressiveness by impressing others with one's capacity for violence" and thereby generating money from their evil acts by being paid by their watchers.

All respondents who explained human violence as a linkage to animal cruelty noted that the reason for the continued relationship between these two offenses is because the punishment(s) for animal abuse are not harsh enough to deter most people. On respondent stated the following while expounding on why animal abuse and human violence does not cease in our societies:

> In most states even after abusing animals, the penalties and punishments induced to the accused end up being not so harsh to an extent that the same person who had abused an animal in the past is still permitted to pet or tame similar or different animals in the future, i.e., afterwards. If the penalties were such that you cannot be allowed to keep animals any more in your lifetime after abusing an animal(s), then this would scare off humans from abusing animals at all.

Although the legal penalties in some states may be strict and harsher than in other states, this does not always prevent animal abusers owning animals in future, which explains why the relationship between human violence and animal abuse continues to exist from generations to generations. Therefore, more efforts need to be put on disconnecting this connection especially by addressing the main causes of human violence which will eventually help victims avoid committing animal abuse after experiencing human violence of any kind.

Theme 2: Animal Abuse and Lack of Animal Welfare Awareness

Some of the respondents indicated that animal cruelty occurs due to the varied awareness of animal rights and welfare in different groups of people. In areas where people do not value animals to have rights just like humans, ending up with more cases of animal abuse as well as less knowledge available to the people on how, why and when to identify incidences of animal abuse. On the other hand, areas where animal rights have clearly been outlined with clear and strict penalties to those who abuse their animals or animals belonging to others presenting less cases of animal abuse. Such areas are also filled with people who are well versed with animal welfare and pass this knowledge from generation to generation. Children in these areas are also not taught of violence to animals as a legal form of dealing with issues in the society. Hence, children grow up with the mentality of taking good care of their pets; giving their pets enough water, good shelter and factoring the health and general well-being of these pets.

Although the cases of human violence and animal abuse may not be common to this group of people, sometimes the small number who ends up abusing animals will have

different reasons behind committing the animal cruelty. One respondent indicated, "Some people abuse animals because of … Uncontrollable emotions resulting in behaviors directed at animals, for example anger and also in other cases rage." The same respondent added the statement that, "sometimes because of detrimental behaviors towards a particular species for instance: cat haters."

If such people who have prejudicial behaviors towards a particular animal species are given enough animal welfare awareness, they may be in a position to change their judgments on certain animals. Just because an individual loves dogs more compared to cats, does not constitute any reason to treat cats inhumanely. Another respondent agreed on this and added that for more animal awareness to be spread in the society, then better ways of detecting animal abuse need to be discovered and people be educated about them. Once people are trained on detecting animal abuse, then educating them on animal well-being based on the animal abuse activities they have detected and shared with the necessary agencies themselves, becomes easier. This respondent noted the following statements when responding to the question of how to become aware of animal abuse incidents:

> Volunteering to work at your local animal shelter… Even showing support for animal welfare on the internet via social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, e.g., for example let's say posting photos of you and your pet. Also associating yourself with companies, organizations and other bodies that actively champion against animal cruelty like Natural Farms.

One of the law enforcement respondents argues that a key principle of raising awareness on animal welfare in the society is by encouraging people to first know who or what organization handles what. If the society learns where to direct cases of animal abuse, then such instances will be dealt with as early as possible before the victim animal at hand receives more abuse from the abuser. This respondent indicated:

Reach out to your local animal shelter. Talk to your local animal shelters and rescue organizations about what sorts of cruelty issues they deal with and what is their preferred way of report to them. The criteria and protocol will always be different from one organization to another, so being aware of who is willing to handle what in advance is important.

They went on to emphasize,

Call your nearest animal shelter organization and let them know, "I am making an effort to educate myself about animal cruelty prevention. What kind of animal abuse and rescue cases do you work with there and how am I supposed to report an abused animal if I encounter one in my area?

If an individual has the necessary contact information of the local animal shelter and rescue organizations which are ready to investigate animal abuse, then reporting animal cruelty straight away the individual notices one becomes simple and straightforward. The individual is also aware of the artifacts that the target organization needs whether it is a photo of the scenario, a short video or even some sort of evidence to aid in the follow up process.

One, however, needs to be very careful when reporting animal abuse cases to the local animal shelter organization or the law enforcement authorities. The individual who has identified the act of animal abuse has to differentiate between his/her input and that of the animal shelter organization or law enforcement authority towards stopping the animal abuse. He/she should only alert the target organization and not to intervene the action of abuse to the animal. A law enforcement respondent noted:

> Only focus on alerting the authorities but avoid intervening. If you witness an act of violence in progress against an animal in your area, call the local police station right away. If the animal in question appears to be in a life-threatening situation, avoid direct intervention of the situation. Instead you can have emergency services dispatched immediately.

> If the animal is in a very dangerous condition, such as being locked in a car or having an act of violence performed against them, call the law enforcement authority right away and stay nearby in the vicinity so that you can inform them of the animal's condition as you await an officer to be dispatched to handle the situation.

> On the hand, suppose the animal still needs help but is not in an immediately threatening situation, such as being chained up outside or with a skin condition that is not being treated, report the matter to animal control as soon as possible instead.

To promote animal awareness to cover a wider group of people, one general services Veterinarian stated that one can take the initiative of organizing community campaigns

where officers from animal shelter organizations will be invited to speak with the public. Speakers from animal rights and rescue agencies are often eager to speak to the public about proper animal care and about animal abuse. You can organize church groups, teams of coworkers, social clubs, community help groups, offices and school group and ask these officers to come and give literature on general animal care and how to combat animal abuse.

Another respondent from the veterinary field also added that volunteering to our respective local animal shelter organizations can help promote animal awareness. This respondent stated that most of the animal shelter and rescue organizations are usually underfunded and understaffed. Therefore, many of these organizations rely on volunteers to deliver the necessary services in our societies to promote animal welfare. The respondent indicated:

> Call your local animal welfare or shelter organization directly and let them know, you are interested in volunteering to work with them. Ask them how you can get more information about getting started. Also provide them with your availability when you call. Be flexible regarding what you are willing to do. It is good to note that volunteers will do everything from playing with the animals to cleaning up kennels and play yards. This is all necessary work to keep the animals happy and health.

If an individual is not in a position to volunteer to support the staff of these organizations, you can as well open fundraising campaigns where the money raised will be sent to these

organizations and be used to fund their operations. The money can also be used to make a positive difference for animals around your area and the country as a whole.

Sending suggestions to the animal rights organizations and law enforcement authorities to let them on the sections of the law where you want to see stricter regulations regarding animal abuse can also help promote animal welfare awareness in your area, another respondent added. These recommendations help the animal protection organizations understand what matters most to you and your group at large when it comes to animal welfare and prevention of animal abuse. These statements need not to be perfect but it is good to remember that any recommendation to the organizations will always make an impact on animal care and prevention of animal cruelty.

Theme 3: Combating Animal Abuse by Detecting and Preventing Animal Cruelty

During the data collection process, respondents provided several ways that can be adopted to reduce animal cruelty by human beings. These responses constituted a theme of collective ways and methods that can be utilized to detect and stop animal cruelty. Some of these opinions are for detecting possible cases of animal abuse while others provide different mechanisms that animal rights, law enforcement and the public can collaboratively implement to reduce cases of human beings abusing animals; whether willingly due to human violence or unwillingly due to lack of knowledge on animal welfare. An overlap exists on some of the methods suited for preventing animal cruelty with a slight variation on the approach used to present the method by different respondents.

As an individual, to help combat animal cruelty, one need to take the initiative of first learning how to detect possible animal abuse instances in the community. One respondent indicated that:

> Acquire an understanding of the signs of animal cruelty every day, and keep an eye out for them within your community. These signs may include: inadequate shelter or being tied up outdoors even in harsh weather conditions such as rain, collars that are tight enough to cause wounds, animals kept in unclean area littered with feces, garbage, or potentially harmful objects, ongoing injury or illness, conditions such as fleas, ticks, hair loss, or scaly skin that is not actively being treated among others.

Being able to identify the various signs of animal abuse forms the foundation of combating animal cruelty. With this knowledge, an individual can then be able to join the collective efforts of animal rights organizations of promoting animal welfare in our communities by accurately reporting animal abuse cases to our local animal shelter and law enforcement organizations whenever we experience or observe actions of animal cruelty. Another respondent while discussing how to detect animal abuse cases, noted:

> The animal shows evidence of being trained for or having been utilized in a fight battle: This is usually particularly common with Pit Bull Terriers and indeed roosters. You may come across training implements, treadmills, spring poles, etc. More likely, you will take note of self-evident signs of trauma, such as scars, open wounds, infections or even missing body parts, such as ears or partial tails.

Since the aim of this process to make sure that animal welfare knowledge reaches as many people as possible in our community, a veterinarian respondent indicated that the knowledge one acquires would be better placed if this was shared with the people around us. They stated, "Educating the people around you about the topic of animal cruelty. Help people in your community to understand that they can intervene in situations where animals are being neglected, abused or even tormented."

The same respondent added that it is always worth noting that sometimes human violence may be the root cause of animal abuse. Having an understanding of these two crimes will therefore pave way for controlling and thus preventing animal cruelty. This respondent emphasized, "Consider that neglect of animals can be closely linked to domestic violence."

Educating people around us of the knowledge that we possess regarding animal abuse should always start with our immediate partner- our children, our families then our friends before moving to our community at large. This was supported by the statement of focusing first on training our children which was noted by several respondents as follows:

> Train children to have respect for animals. If you have children or if you work with children, educate them to show respect toward living things. Helping to foster a more mindful future is one of the best hopes for stopping animal abuse long-term. Teach children by example. Use kind tones and compassionate words toward your pets and other animals, rather than telling them to "shut up," or saying other things a child would perceive as hurtful.

Similarly, another respondent stated, "Teaching your children to have respect for animals. Help them to grow up to become the future advocates for animals."

Based on the thematic analysis of the responses collected, apart from learning the detection of animal abuse case and educating others about the same, we can also help other people who are either directly or indirectly affected or are about to be forced to abuse animals by the prevailing circumstances on their end, e.g. being overwhelmed by their large number of animals, lack of enough capital and resources to provide good shelter to their animals etc. One respondent stated that assisting animal owners constitutes a wide range of activities and not only helping them to raise their animals. Other respondents supported this opinion by noting:

- "Shelter an animal in need."

- "Animal abuse can be prevented by … Providing help to those who are overwhelmed with their animals. An animal owner may not have the required resources to give the animal the appropriate care."

- "Be a good example of kindness to other pets –Make an effort to foster a pet that has been abandoned."

Fostering a pet or an animal that has faced abandonment therefore is a good action towards the global role of reducing animal cruelty. Many animals may be abandoned by their owners for various reasons including the ones mentioned earlier. Animal recovery organizations are focused on helping such animals by giving them a permanent home where they will feel cared for and loved. As an individual, we can also perform the same function before these organizations intervene to offer help.

According to a veterinary Dermatologist, more advanced technology should also be integrated into the organizations that handle animal health care and rights such as forensic clinical examinations. These types of examinations will offer great insights into animal health, injury and behavior, especially when investigating a case of animal abuse to determine the root abuse that the animal received from the person in question. This will therefore help in elucidating the reasons for the animal's presenting condition. Other technologies such as diagnostic imaging, ultrasonography and nuclear imaging should also be included in veterinary practice to boost the overall process of detecting instances of animal abuse so that it can be prevented as early as possible.

Other than encouraging people to report cases of animal abuse, and animal neglect, protection to the reporters also needs to be made so that people do not fear being frightened by the animal abusers. This was expounded by a law enforcement respondent who noted, "Provide guarantees of legal protection to the persons who take the initiative of reporting animal abuse and cruelty cases to animal welfare organizations and other law enforcement authorities." This respondent stated that sometimes a person may witness animal abuse being committed by his/her neighbor or someone else within their community but fail to report the matter to the necessary authorities. In most cases, this is always accompanied by the fear of if the person reports the abuser; the abuser may later come after them to harm them a revenge of being reported by the reporter to the animal rights organizations. However, if legal protection is assured to all reporters by the concerned authorities, then people will be comfortable and will not fear reporting cases of animal abuse whenever they observe them anytime.

More than 50% of the respondents argued that the punishment(s) for animal abuse are not harsh enough to deter most people. One respondent noted that:

> Even after abusing animals, the charges and penalties induced to the accused end up being not so harsh to an extent that the same person who had abused an animal in the past is still permitted to pet or tame similar or different animals in the future. i.e. afterwards. If the penalties were such that you cannot be allowed to keep animals any more in your lifetime after abusing an animal(s), then this would discourage humans from abusing animals at all.

Therefore, to prevent animal abuse, there is need for stricter laws for the protection of animals. Stronger animal welfare laws and harsher penalties will lead to fewer animal abuse cases. We all need to support tough legislation on animal welfare laws. Throwing our weight behind stricter animal abuse laws helps ensure those who hurt defenseless animals have to face the consequences of their actions.

Conclusion

The method of presentation of findings used in this chapter largely followed on the categories of themes obtained from recorded responses of the open-ended interview questions. All respondents in the interviews raised key points as expected through answering of questions directly, and through providing additional view in the seven open-ended questions and discussions conducted. The various themes obtained included reasons and reasons addressing the issue of animal cruelty, why people abuse animals, how animal abuse can be detected, preventive measures towards curbing animal abuse, how to develop better legal protection animal welfare laws and how to be a good example

by taking good care of one's pet or tamed animal(s). The various groups of respondents in the interview processes, that is, General practice Veterinarians, Veterinarian Dermatologist, Poultry Veterinarian and law enforcement officers all provided varied and converging information thereby allowing for cross-comparisons of the respondents' views.

The findings presented in this chapter mark the various reasons that make people abuse animals as well as measure that can be put in place to detect and prevent animal cruelty cases in the society. This information helps to bridge the gaps o existing literature of the reasons why people abuse animals. In the next chapter, these findings are further analyzed, interpreted and theoretically contextualized.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The main purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and motives that promote animal abuse and cruelty in our society as well as determining contemporary techniques that can be employed to detect and prevent animal cruelty. As mentioned in Chapter 1, research shows that animal abuse is correlated with other violent crimes, and it is estimated that a vast majority of animal abuse goes completely unreported (Humane Society, 2021). This study was conducted to increase the understanding of animal abuse and cruelty, contribute to the literature on this topic, and positively impact social change by informing policy in this area.

From the data collected and analyzed, I found that many cases of animal abuse and cruelty are closely related to matters of human violence. Lack of animal welfare awareness was also observed to be a key contributor to animal cruelty. In order to effectively combat animal abuse, research findings showed that the first step involves providing necessary animal welfare education to all members of the society. This would then translate to better and rapid ways of detecting animal abuse in our areas, before moving further to effective preventive measures of animal abuse.

Interpretation of the Findings

This section provides an interpretation of the study findings presented in Chapter 4 in a descriptive form. Since the data was collected via interview discussions with target participants during the data collection phase, this interpretation is purely qualitative. This approach provides a technique of revealing detailed information on the topic of animal abuse and cruelty.

Almost 70% of respondents agreed that there exists a linkage between animal cruelty and human violence. These respondents indicated that most of the animal abusers are linked to prior actions of hurting other humans before starting to hurt animals. During the review of existing literature in Chapter 2, it was found that human to human violence results to the same behavior being extended to animal abuse. According to Peters (2018), hostility towards people can be extended to animals thus violating the rights of animals. As the research data shows, many of the respondents agreed to the fact that inheriting the feelings of hostile behavior especially from a young age from acts of violence such as abuse, neglect, or rejection at a family level, has very high chances of motivating such people to develop animal resentment when they grow up. This finding conforms to the existing knowledge of the linkage between animal abuse and human violence. One respondent indicated that several crimes committed by people were linked to a future or a past act of animal abuse. These crimes included not only domestic violence but also other crimes like rape, arson, assault, murder and sexual abuse of children.

A variance of human violence was also outlined from the data collected as indicated by two respondents from the veterinary field: animal fighting for sporting and entertainment purposes, such as bull fighting and cock fighting. From the literature review in Chapter 2, it was observed that humans inappropriately use animals for entertainment activities such as TV and film making. This also constitutes actions of animal fighting meant for sport activities as previously mentioned. In such scenarios, animal abuse may sometimes result, particularly when an animal loses.

Other individuals practice slightly different forms of human violence and animal abuse. Some people love watching crimes being committed by other humans to fellow human beings or animals. This type of human violence makes use of the "dark web" to view such crimes. In this scenario, the actors generate money from their viewers while abusing animals. This finding conforms to the reviewed literature in chapter where, according to Randour (2014), some people view animals as objects and use those animals for monetary gain.

Another key finding as to why people abuse animals is due to lack of animal welfare awareness. Many respondents indicated that most of those who end up abusing animals lack necessary education and information of the importance of animals to human life as well as the rights to which those animals are entitled. These respondents argued that the society lacks the knowledge to properly take care of their pets and how to handle other peoples' animals, including what type of care and food each animal needs. Therefore, animal welfare and rights need to be clearly defined for each state to keep people in those areas well educated and aware of the treatment they should offer to their animals. Local animal welfare organizations also need to broadcast their contact information to their local people and the entire society at large to simplify the process of reporting animal abuse cases.

The study also enumerated a key finding towards combating animal abuse and cruelty. The respondents during data collection provided several ways that can be adopted to reduce (detect and stop) animal cruelty by human beings. Firstly, the linkage between animal abuse and human violence provides a basis of combating animal abuse.

Respondents noted that the punishment(s) and legal penalties for animal abuse are not

harsh enough to deter most people from abusing animals. This explains the continued

relationship between animal abuse and human violence. If these penalties and

punishments are so much strict and harsh that animal abusers are not allowed to own

animals in the future after abusing an animal at present, then the linkage and relationship

of human violence and animal abuse from one generation to another would be eliminated

completely. There exists a need therefore for each state to implement stricter penalties

and legal charges to individuals who abuse animals. Secondly, to enhance animal abuse

prevention across our society, the people need to be aware of ways of detecting animal

abuse instances. At an individual level, being able to identify the various signs of animal

abuse forms the foundation of combating animal cruelty. One needs to take the initiative

of first learning how to detect possible animal abuse instances in the community. Since

the aim of this process is to make sure that animal welfare knowledge reaches as many

people as possible in our community, a veterinarian respondent indicated that the

knowledge one acquires would be better placed if this was shared with the people around

us. Once a wider group learns how to detect animal abuse instances, they can then be able

to join the collective efforts of animal rights organizations of combating animal abuse in

their respective communities by accurately reporting animal abuse cases to their local

animal shelter and law enforcement organizations whenever they experience or observe

actions of animal cruelty.

Once the larger number of people are aware of animal welfare and have learned

the various methods and ways of detecting animal abuse and cruelty, then the world can

move forward towards stopping animal abuse. For instance, more advanced technology such as forensic clinical examinations can be integrated into animal rights organizations' operations and those that handle animal healthcare. Animal rights organizations can further assure and/ provide protection to the reporters so that people do not fear being frightened by the animal abusers after they report them to the appropriate law enforcement and animal rights organizations.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is the lack of data from animal abusers' perspective themselves. The study recruited respondents only from the veterinary and law enforcement areas. No data was collected by engaging the animal abusers who are already or have been charged by the appropriate law enforcement agencies. Although accessing data from the abusers in the law enforcement agencies is a legitimate process, this study did not achieve that due to inadequate time and resources that I did not have.

By engaging directly with various Veterinary professionals and law enforcement officers, first-hand information was gathered, analyzed and finally interpreted based on the participants' opinions and responses. To reduce biasness during analysis and interpretation of the data collected, I mostly relied on the respondents' opinions and responses than considering their own interpretations and opinions. This high level of professional engagement was also maintained during the interviews when collecting data from respondents. This approach was used to reduce the limitation of this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research has enumerated several findings in the knowledge of animal abuse and reasons why people abuse animals. Although these findings have provided answers to the research questions and achieved the outlined objectives, there are number of gaps in this study's knowledge that follow from the discussed findings. These gaps would benefit from further research to extend and further the theory that has been developed here;

1. It would be helpful to access and capture the data of animal abusers themselves in law enforcement offices to reduce the biasness of the results explored as to why people abuse animals. This would provide opinions and first-hand information of those who deal with animal abusers (veterinary professionals and law enforcement officers) as well as the individuals who abuse animals either willingly or unwillingly.

2. More methodological work is needed to incorporate quantitative research methods alongside qualitative approaches to reduce the room for the researcher's opinions on the research because quantitative research deals with data, samples, and numbers; therefore, it is hard to manipulate the data to fit into your expectations. Combining the two approaches would provide an in-depth exploration on animal cruelty and reasons people abuse animals.

3. Further research could also explore the legal penalties defined for various states and compare that data to the frequency of animal abuse on those areas based on the laws in place.

Implications for Research Practice

Positive Social Change

The main aim of this study was to explore the various reasons why people abuse animals. This has been achieved by successfully collecting responses of people who directly deal with animal cruelty matters – veterinary professionals and law enforcement officers.

Based on the research results, the first major practical contribution of the present research is that it provides much empirical information and data on the various reasons that motivate people to abuse animals. This information is important in developing frameworks that can be utilized to promote a positive social change towards animal welfare at different levels. At the individual level, this information can be used to help individuals learn the importance of animals to our lives, how we need to treat and take care of these animals and how to identify when animals are being abused so that we can report such cases to the necessary authorities. A family setup or level can also utilize the information analyzed in this study to be aware of the role each one serves in combating animal cruelty in their community. Parents can benefit by learning how to educate their children and those near them how to take good care of their pets, animal rights and general animal welfare. The animal rights organizations and the law enforcement authorities on the other hand can use this information to identify the gaps that are existing in how they deal with animal abuse cases such as the legal laws and policies in place to protect animals and how that can be improved or changed to reduce and prevent animal abuse instances by the society.

A second important implication of this study derives from the study's finding on the relationship that exists between human violence and animal abuse. This finding points to specific types of crimes that relate to cases of animal abuse. This information can be of great use to human rights organizations in identifying the linkages from human violence activities and animal cruelty, thereby providing a basis for the solutions that these organizations can formulate to eliminate this relationship. Collaboration can also be derived by the two types of organizations – human rights and animal rights bodies on how both can work together to implement policies meant to prevent animal abuse.

Finally, this study provides an implication to the need to review the existing laws that are meant to deter people from animal abuse. These include all legal penalties, charges and punishments that each state has in place to promote animal welfare. The study indicates that most of the respondents noted that the existing laws are not harsh enough to reduce cases of animal abuse by people. Therefore, each state can take another look at how they have implemented such laws and make the necessary changes

These implications can all be viewed as everyone's role in preventing animal abuse in our society starting from an individual level, to a family level, a community level, state level and finally as a union of human beings across the world.

Conclusion

The objectives of this study have been achieved by establishing the reasons why people abuse animals. The research findings enumerated in chapter 4 have also provided answers to the research questions outlined in chapter 1. Using a qualitative methodology,

various concepts of animal abuse on the subject topic have been established and interpreted.

From the research results, the reasons that motivate people to abuse animals can all be curbed if all stakeholders play the recommended measures. Although this might look the role of solely animal rights organizations and law enforcement agencies, combating animal abuse and cruelty remains to be everyone's role in the society. All individuals, despite of their profession, can contribute towards an animal abuse free world. It is important to note that this begins from the individual level of becoming aware of animal welfare, spreading that knowledge to people around us and finally working with rest of the pyramid (other individuals and those organizations which deal with matters of animal care, welfare, rights and abuse cases) collaboratively to prevent animal abuse.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

1.) How would you define animal abuse?

2.) Can you provide some specific examples of animal abuse cases?

3.) Why do people abuse animals?

4.) How do you become aware of incidents of animal abuse?

5.) How could more cases of animal abuse be detected?

6.) Are the punishment(s) for animal abuse harsh enough to deter most people? Why or why not?

7.) How can cases of animal abuse be prevented?