



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***A SURVEY ON THE AWARENESS OF PET OWNERS TOWARDS  
THE PET FOOD LABEL***

**DINAESH KUMAR A/L SIVANANTHAN**

**FPV 2018 25**

**A SURVEY ON THE AWARENESS OF PET OWNERS  
TOWARDS THE PET FOOD LABEL**

**DINAESH KUMAR A/L SIVANANTHAN**

A project paper submitted to the

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universiti Putra Malaysia

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the

**DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF VETERINARY MEDICINE**

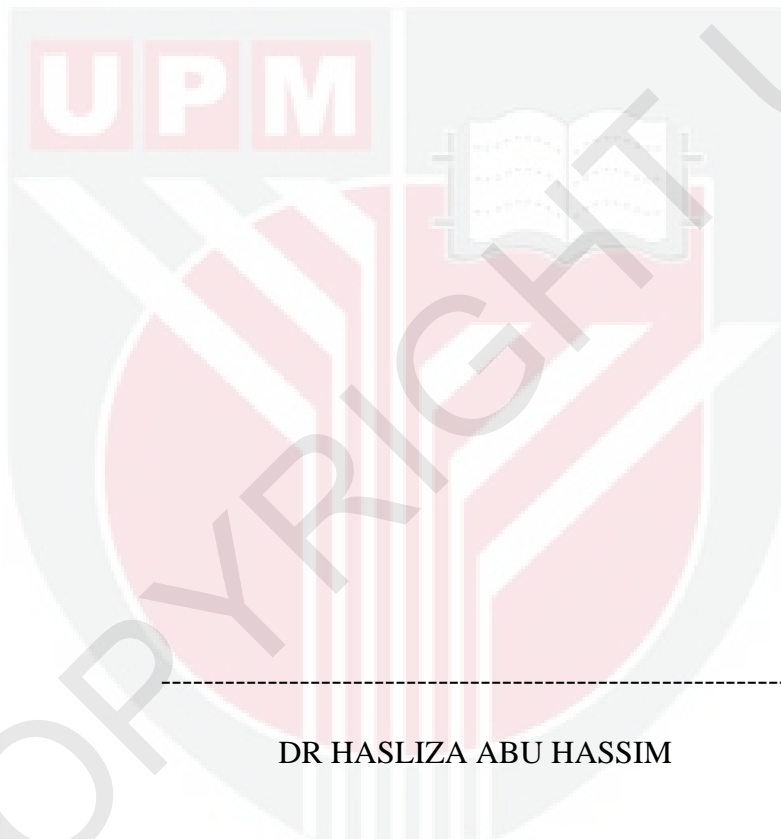
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Serdang, Selangor DarulEhsan

**March 2018**

## **CERTIFICATION**

It is hereby certified that I have read this project paper entitled “A Survey on the Awareness of Pet Owners towards the Pet Food Label” by Dinaesh Kumar a/l Sivananthan and in my opinion it is excellent in terms of scope, quality and presentation as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the course VPD 4999 –Project.



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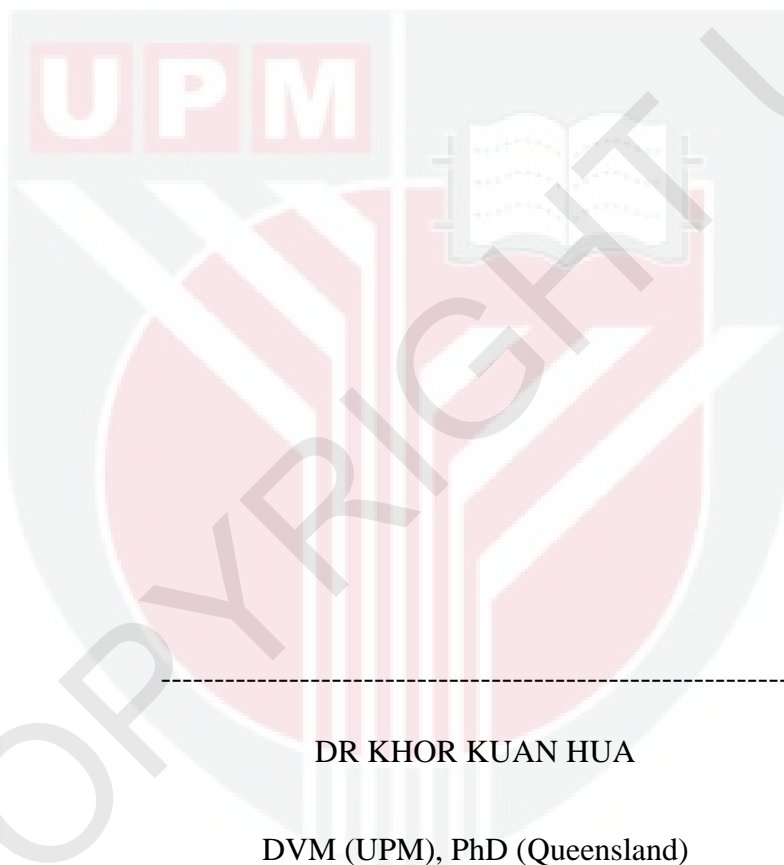
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## DEDICATION

This project paper is dedicated to my supervisor, co-supervisor, Animal Medical Centre Sdn. Bhd., Pets Corner Sdn. Bhd., Dr. Sivagurunathan, Dr. Amilan Sivagurunathan, Mr. Shrilan Sivagurunathan, Dr. Liew Yin, Miss Sunitha Menon, my beloved respondents, all companion animal pet owners, dearest lecturers and my fellow friends.



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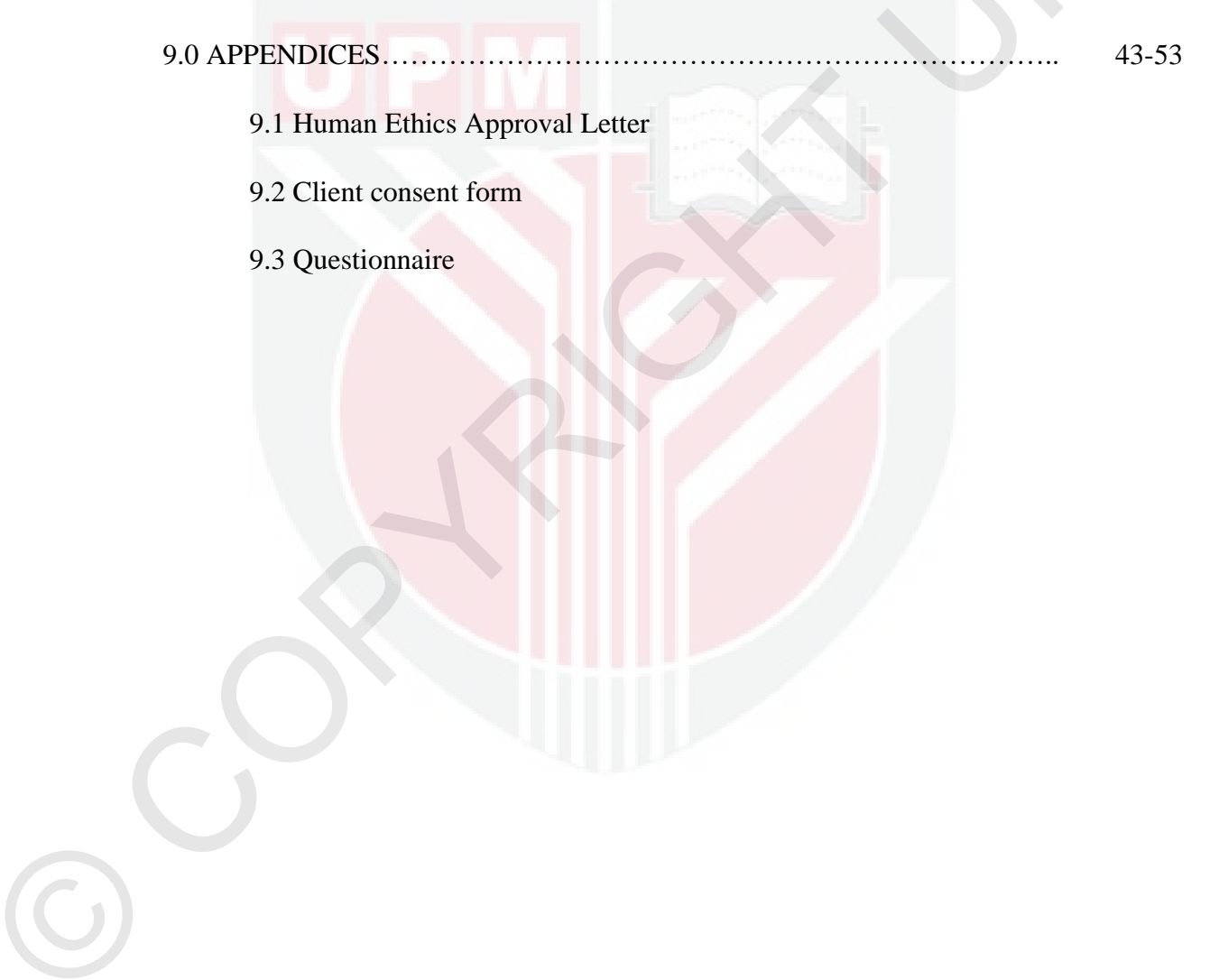
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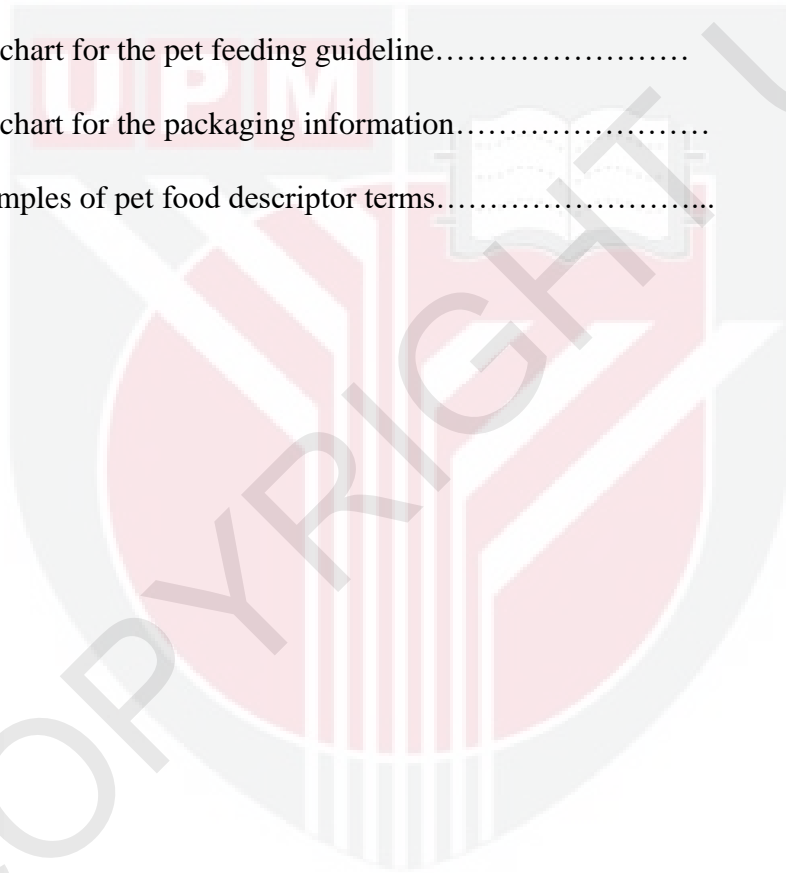


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## **Abstrak**

Abstrak daripada kertas projek yang dikemukakan kepada Fakulti Perubatan Veterinar untuk memenuhi sebahagian daripada keperluan kursus VPD 4999 - Projek

### **Kesedaran Pemilik Haiwan Kesayangan Terhadap Label Makanan Haiwan**

oleh

Dinaesh Kumar a/l Sivananthan 2018

Penyelia: Dr Hasliza Abu Hassim

Penyelia bersama: Dr Khor Kuan Hua

Label makanan haiwan adalah dokumen undang-undang yang dikawal selia oleh Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) dan merupakan cara utama komunikasi antara pengeluar makanan haiwan dan pemilik haiwan kesayangan. Terdapat beberapa aspek seperti kesedaran kepada jenis kategori makanan yang berbeza, bahan-bahan, panduan makan dan label pembungkusan yang perlu diketahui oleh pemilik haiwan peliharaan bagi memastikan mereka memberikan jumlah yang tepat dan jenis nutrien yang diperlukan oleh haiwan mereka. Sesungguhnya, nutrient imbalan disediakan pada usia dan kehidupan peringkat tertentu haiwan adalah penting untuk memastikan pembangunan dan pertumbuhan yang betul. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan tahap kesedaran pemilik haiwan kesayangan pada label makanan haiwan dan untuk menentukan faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada kesedaran mengenai label makanan haiwan. Label makanan haiwan peliharaan boleh diambil mudah tetapi ia mempunyai kesan yang besar daripada keseluruhan kesejahteraan kesihatan haiwan. Oleh itu, untuk lebih memahami tahap kesedaran pemilik haiwan peliharaan pada label makanan haiwan, kajian yang telah dijalankan di mana 150 pemilik haiwan kesayangan telah diberikan satu set soal selidik yang diadaptasi daripada

kajian penyelidikan “The University of Glasgow”. Data dianalisis menggunakan cara yang deskriptif dan kemudiannya dikira dalam SPSS. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kesedaran pemilik haiwan kesayangan pada label makanan haiwan adalah rendah dan faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada kesedaran label makanan haiwan adalah carta ulasan pelanggan, gambar berilustratif, maklumat ringkas, warna yang menarik dan saiz fon tetapi factor penyumbang utama kepada kesedaran pemilik haiwan kesayangan pada label makanan haiwan adalah penggunaan tidak wajar saiz fon dan carta ulasan pelanggan. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kesedaran yang rendah terhadap label makanan haiwan dalam kalangan pemilik haiwan kesayangan boleh membawa kepada isu-isu kesihatan yang serius terhadap haiwan kesayangan mereka pada masa hadapan.

Kata kunci: *Label makanan haiwan, Pemilik haiwan kesayangan, Soal selidik, Kesedaran, Faktor-faktor*

## **Abstract**

An abstract of the project paper presented to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in partial fulfillment of the course VPD 4999-Project

### **A Survey on the Awareness of Pet Owners towards the Pet Food Label**

By

Dinaesh Kumar a/l Sivananthan

2018

Supervisor: DrHasliza Abu Hassim

Co-Supervisor: DrKhorKuan Hua

Pet food label is a legal document regulated by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) and is the primary means of communication between the pet food manufacturers and pet owners. There are several aspects such as the awareness on the different type of food categories, ingredients, feeding guide and packaging labels that should be known by the pet owners to ensure they deliver the precise amount and type of nutrients required by their pet. Indeed, balance nutrients provided at a specific age and life stage of the pet is important to ensure proper development and growth. The objective would be to determine the level of awareness of pet owners on the pet food label and to determine the factors contributing to the awareness of the pet food label. The pet food label may be taken for granted but it has major effect of the overall well-being of the animal's health. Therefore, to better understand the level of awareness of pet owners on the pet food label, a survey was conducted in which 150 pet owners were given a set of questionnaire adapted from The

University of Glasgow's research study. The data was analyzed using a descriptive manner and then tabulated in SPSS. Results showed that, the awareness of pet owners on the pet food label is low and the factors contributing to the awareness of pet food label are customer review charts, fancy and illustrative pictures, simple and direct information, attractive colors of packaging and font size but the main contributing factors to the awareness of pet owners on the pet food label would be improper usage of font size and customer review charts. In conclusion, this study shows that the low awareness of pet food label among pet owners can lead to serious health issues of their pet in the future.

*Keywords: Pet food label, Pet owners, Questionnaire, Awareness, Factors*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) regulates the pet food label for the easy communication between pet food manufacturers and pet owners (Lisa, 2009). The validation of the nutritional level of "complete and balanced" dog or cat foods depends on the AAFCO Dog and Cat Food Nutrient Profiles and the AAFCO Feeding Protocols which are the only methods recognized by AAFCO. A label will not be accepted even if a product is validated by a feeding trial but does not meet the AAFCO Dog or Cat Food Nutrient Profiles. The product has the minimum and not more than the maximum levels listed for a specific nutrient in the profile is considered an unqualified reference to an AAFCO Dog or Cat Food Nutrient Profile (AAFCO, 2014).

Pet owners play a very important role in providing their pet with the best food to ensure an overall good health of their pets. There are many aspects such as the awareness on the packaging, ingredients and different type of food categories that the owner should be aware to ensure they deliver the correct amount and type of nutrients for their pet. Balanced nutrients provided at a specific life stage of their pet helps to ensure a proper growth and development. Pet food is different from the food humans consume whereby pet owners will not consume these products directly. Hence, pet owners experienced on pet food and by watching their pet eating, touching and smelling of the food. Other factors such as brand, health issues and aroma can influence the consumer in the final selection process and their preparedness to pay (Cuellar, 2013). Therefore, it is considered to be of a great interest to discover the relationship between health-related claims on pet food packaging and the consumers' perception (Huang, 2014).

Moreover, pet food has a common feature whereby packaging and branding techniques are needed to attract the attention of their buyers. Attracting text information on the pet food packaging with a purpose for health promoting or taste promoting conveys different information for choosing a particular food for their pet. Pet owners that fail to interpret these information on the pet food label may lead to consequences of undernourishing or overnourishing their pet. This might cause a reduced performance and risk for several health disorders which may lead to death (Bren, 2001). The proper awareness among pet owners on the proper understanding of the pet food label is essential to ensure a healthy lifestyle and longevity of their pet. According to a previous study, the food packaging is considered an important model to allow a good way of interaction between manufacturers, distributors and the valued consumers (Kuvykaite, 2009). Thus, academic interest in the pet food packaging has become important over the years.

There have been studies assessing the association between manufacturers and consumers and how this product information had an impact on the final purchasing decision (Wells 2007, Garber et al., 2000 and Folkes 2004). The pet food packaging has various marketing information via its communicable aspects such as the packaging shape, size, color, material, carried information and graphic applications (e.g. brand logo, fonts, pictorials, etc.). All of these elements together communicate various marketing messages to the consumer in both the purchase and consumption phases. These elements provide to the visual recognition of a particular pet food since “the first taste is almost always with the eye”, i.e. visual sensations aid in the perception since the first encounter with products is often with the eye (Kaufmann, 2011).

**Justification of study:**

1. There may be negligence in reading pet food label and feeding of pet food among the Malaysian pet owners.
2. Various health issues associated to neglecting of pet food label.

**Objectives of study:**

1. To determine the level of awareness of pet owner on the pet food label.
2. To determine the factors contributing to the negligence of the pet food label.

**Hypothesis of study:**

1. Null Hypothesis (Ho): Pet owners are aware on the pet food label.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (HA): Pet owners are not aware on the pet food label.



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