

Eastern Kentucky University

Encompass

---

Online Theses and Dissertations

Student Scholarship

---

January 2018

## The Horse: A Driving Force for the Lifestyle of Grooms

Nicole Foright

*Eastern Kentucky University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://encompass.eku.edu/etd>



Part of the [Other Animal Sciences Commons](#), [Sociology of Culture Commons](#), and the [Work, Economy and Organizations Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Foright, Nicole, "The Horse: A Driving Force for the Lifestyle of Grooms" (2018). *Online Theses and Dissertations*. 567.

<https://encompass.eku.edu/etd/567>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Encompass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Online Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Encompass. For more information, please contact [Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu](mailto:Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu).

The Horse: A Driving Force for the Lifestyle of Grooms

By

Nicole Michele Foright, OTS

Thesis Approved:

  
Chair, Advisory Committee

  
Member, Advisory Committee

  
Member, Advisory Committee

  
Dean, Graduate School

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Science degree at Eastern Kentucky University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. Brief quotations from this document are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgements of the source is made. Permission for extensive quotation from or reproduction of this document may be granted by my major professor in [his/her] absence, by the Head of Interlibrary Services when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this document for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature Maile Foright

Date 12/11/17

HORSE: A DRIVING FORCE FOR THE LIFESTYLE OF GROOMS

BY

NICOLE M. FORIGHT

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
Eastern Kentucky University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

2018

© Copyright by NICOLE M. FORIGHT 2018  
All Rights Reserved.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the faculty whose unwavering support, grew in me passion and strength; especially the days I felt were impossible.

“Quisieron enterrarnos, pero se les olvido que somos semillas.” -Mexican Proverb

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisory committee chair, Dr. Shirley O'Brien, OTR/L, FAOTA, for her expertise, individualized attention, and committed drive; which persisted throughout not only this project, but the entirety of my schooling which started in the Occupational Science program. Similarly, I thank my advisory committee members, Kathy Splinter-Watkins, OTR/L, HPCS, FAOTA and Dr. Melba Custer, OTR/L, for their endless support and kindness; both in and out of the classroom.

Unending thanks to Misdee Wrigley Miller, owner of Hillcroft Farm, for supporting this project and sharing her passion for Combined Driving with me. I have such admiration for her incredible skill and moxie. Thanks to the grooms who participated in this study, your incredibly fierce determination and perseverance inspired it all. This is for you. I feel privileged to share so many unique and wonderful experiences- I could not have done this without you, my team.

Thank you to my family and friends for always encouraging my endeavors, whatever or wherever they may be: in a barn, rugby pitch, classroom, or at home. I needed each of you along the way to bring joy, laughter and love into my life. Especially my closest friends in the program: Chelsey Cobler, my first forever-friend; and Rachel Vick, my soul sister and rock this semester. Most of all, thanks to my father, mother, brother, grandmothers, and grandfathers; because of you I never quit and always try, believe in the journey, follow my heart, fiercely love and care for others, always remember "there's got to be a pony in here somewhere" - but above all, I will work hard and never settled for anything less than great. Thank you.

## ABSTRACT

The fundamental components of co-occupational relationships between humans and animals and their impact on occupational identity is an area for exploration in the study of occupation. Evaluating the lives of persons whose daily occupations involve working with animals contributes to the exploration of human-animal co-occupations. The aim of this research was to understand the lifestyle of International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving grooms and their symbiotic relationship with horses. This qualitative descriptive study used three methods for data collection and triangulation: semi-structured interviews, observation, and photographs, from 4 participants who served as gatekeepers understanding the culture surrounding the driving community. The data was coded apriori and analyzed using the Model of Human Occupation to understand the volition, habituation, performance capacity, culture, context and environment that shapes experience. Themes were identified. Results reinforce the importance of meaning within daily engagement as occupational beings. Implications for occupational therapy practice will be suggested.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Introduction.....	1
	Background and Need .....	1
	Statement of Purpose .....	3
	Grand Question .....	3
	Definition of Terms .....	3
	Assumptions .....	5
	Biases .....	6
	Literature Review .....	6
	Introduction .....	6
	Interspecies Relationships and Co-Occupation .....	8
	Lifestyle Integration of Occupational Choice .....	12
	Occupational Identity and Motivation .....	16
	Summary .....	20
II.	Journal Article Manuscript .....	21
	Title .....	21
	Author .....	21
	Author’s Affiliation .....	21
	Abstract .....	21
	Key Words .....	22
	Introduction .....	22
	Background .....	23
	Interspecies Relationships and Co-occupation .....	25
	Lifestyle Integration of Occupational Choice .....	29
	Occupational Identity and Motivation .....	32
	Purpose .....	36
	Grand Question .....	36
	Methods .....	36
	Procedure .....	37
	Data Analysis .....	38
	Participants .....	38
	Findings and Themes .....	39
	Horses Driving Grooms .....	39
	Volition .....	39
	Habituation .....	40
	Performance Capacity .....	40
	Context and Environment .....	41
	Occupational Identity .....	41
	The Groom Lifestyle .....	42
	Volition .....	42
	Habituation .....	43

Performance Capacity .....	44
Context and Environment .....	45
Occupational Identity .....	46
Passion for Performance .....	46
Volition .....	46
Habituation .....	47
Performance Capacity .....	47
Context and Environment .....	48
Occupational Identity .....	48
Discussion .....	48
Limitations .....	50
Conclusion .....	51
Implications for Practice .....	51
Future Research .....	53
References .....	55
Appendices.....	59
Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Application.....	60
Appendix B: Authorization Letter .....	75
Appendix C: Consent to Participate in a Research Study .....	77
Appendix D: Verbal Recruitment Script to Participate in a Research Study .....	81
Appendix E: Interview Questions .....	83
Appendix F: Journal Submission Requirements .....	86

## I. Introduction

International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Grooms personify occupational beings who actively engage in daily activities with horses. These individuals contribute a unique capacity to explore animal-based occupation and its impact on identity. Grooms interaction directly with horses, results in shared participation and contribution to interspecies co-occupation. Purposefully applying Kielhofner's Model of Human Occupation (2008) for data collection and coding facilitated identification of connections between grooms' daily occupations and this theoretical view. By investigating the lifestyle of grooms, researchers draw conclusions about the implications of this dynamic interspecies relationship.

### Background and Need

The quality and standard of an internationally ranked professional groom compares to that required of elite sports team members. As highly motivated individuals, grooms invest extensive time and effort working long and hard hours to perfect their craft. When competing internationally, they move their entire equine operation every three to five months accommodating attendance at prestigious events both locally in their home country or at global competitions. In preparation for every show, they pack to the brim truckloads of equipment to compete and maintain consistency of the horses' environment. No typical 9A.M.-5P.M. work periods exist. They must attend to the horses any time of day or night; because caregiving is the primary role of a groom. The interspecies relationships that emerge experience "co-occupation" when engagement in occupation together results in aspects of shared

physicality, emotionality, and intentionality (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). However, the job title “groom” expands, rather ambiguously, encompassing a multitude of tasks and activities to support show performance.

Combined Driving Events (CDE) involve three demanding phases of carriage driving, requiring dynamic synchronicity from every team member, both horses and human alike (United States Equestrian Federation [USEF], 2017). This exemplary equestrian sport, necessitates talent and perseverance during the spectacular adrenaline inducing performances (Fédération Équestre Internationale [FEI], 2017). A competing 4-in-Hand team requires four horses, two grooms, and one driver. Ideally, the human’s partnership with the horses reaches its apex at competition, representing the commitment and effort devoted to understanding and perfecting team communication. The pairing of human and horse creates deep and unique relationships founded upon interaction and the connection which grows through shared experiences (Hausberger, Roche, Henry, & Visser, 2008). Drivers and grooms work and train with the horses through endless hours of preparation; because it is within the time invested into the horse-human relationship which creates this incredible display of strength and endurance. This “co-being” includes moments of mutuality, engagement of two species together, and a domestication of each other by being together (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowle’s, 2013). Hausberger, et. al., advocate for further research into proper understanding of this dynamic relationship.

The current research project contributes a unique study applying occupational science theory to a population and setting not typically researched, or to date, that is

missing in the literature. Through exploring grooms' involvement in and experience of horse and human co-occupation; this study attempts to identify the relationship's impact on the human condition. Little research exists on the human-horse partnership, resulting in a lack of understanding of the full nature of co-occupation; therefore, this study adds breath to the research pool by evaluating occupational components of this interspecies relationship.

### Statement of Purpose

This qualitative descriptive study attempts to understand the motivations and occupational identities experienced by International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Grooms, through evaluating their daily life and co-occupations between horses and humans. Applying the Model of Human Occupation to frame data collection, facilitated finding connections between horse-human relationships, co-occupations, and their impact on occupational identities and motivations of grooms.

### Grand Question

The grand question that this research seeks to address is: What occupational identities and internal motivations do individuals that work as grooms for the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Show Circuit experience during horse with human co-occupations?

### Definition of Terms

Combined Driving: "A three-phase carriage driving discipline, [it is] the human equivalent of a triathlon [...] The driven dressage phase tests the driver & their horse(s) on harmony, impulsion, ease of movement and suppleness through a sequence of

scored movements in an arena. Typically, the second phase is the fast-paced and demanding cross-country marathon. The marathon tests a horse's fitness, stamina, and agility along with a driver's accuracy and judgment as they navigate an intricate series of hazards which will include water, steep hills, and sharp turns - all within the fastest time possible. The last phase, the cones course, times the competitor while they accurately negotiate an intricate, winding course of narrowly-set cones without knocking them with the carriage wheels. While combined driving is a technical and demanding sport, it can be enjoyed by people of any age, and with any breed of horses or ponies." (USEF, 2017, para. 1-3)

Context: Interrelated cultural, personal, temporal and virtual conditions that impact an individual (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2014).

Co-occupation: "... two or more people sharing engagement in an occupation. This mutual engagement is assumed to be a natural part of the human experience and as with other occupations, co-occupations encompass purposeful daily activities that hold meaning. Despite its longevity, however, understanding of the way humans co-create occupation experience is limited." (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow; 2009, para. 1)

Environment: External influences, socially or physically, which impact occupational choice (AOTA, 2014).

Groom: "a person responsible for the feeding, exercising, and stabling of horses" (Groom, 2017)

Habituation: Occupational patterns developed in daily life, which include ones' roles, habits, and routines (Kielhofner, 2008).

Model of Human Occupation (MoHO): Occupational Therapy conceptual practice model with the central belief that people interact and adapt to the environment through a dynamical open-system. MoHO attempts to explain how occupational motivation, patterns, and performance occur and influence individuals (Kielhofner, 2008).

Performance Capacity: Ability or skill level possessed by an individual; contributed to by motor, processing, and communication capabilities (Kielhofner, 2008).

Occupational Identity: We are what we do, because occupational participation with meaning creates identity (Kielhofner, 2008).

Volition: Internal thoughts which guide or motivate a person's active decisions; comprised of: values, interests, and personal causation (Kielhofner, 2008).

### Assumptions

Principal motivation for this study arose from the primary researcher's passion for horses and the belief in grooms as highly motivated individuals who value engagement with horses. Therefore, researchers assume that evaluating grooms' occupations accurately depicts the experience of daily horse-human co-occupations, and that interspecies relationships form through this consistent interaction.

Qualitative research assumes that participants convey truthful information during interview sessions and accurately report data. As well as, the belief that remaining aware of biases throughout data collection and analysis, decreases the likelihood of influence while reporting results.

## Biases

The primary researcher's personal belief that grooms are highly motivated individuals who experience occupational identity interwoven with their co-occupations with horses, serves as motivation for the study. Therefore, contributes a lack of neutrality. Identifying and acknowledging bias throughout this study critically impacts validity. The researcher has prior history with horses, the driving culture and grooms. This prior engagement is acknowledged and shared openly.

## Literature Review

### *Introduction*

This purpose of this literature review will be to discuss and inform supporting literature structured by themes that increase understanding of the multiple dimensions that influence this profession. Difficulty arises when trying to nail down and define the ambiguous title of "groom" because of its complexity. Therefore, overarching themes consist of: interspecies relationships and co-occupation, lifestyle integration of occupational choices, occupational identity and motivation. Search strategies utilized during the completion of this literature review began with a comprehensive search of the databases Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, Cochrane Library, CINHALL, PubMed, and AJOT. Search terms modified in various combinations included terms and phrases, such as: horse and/with human interactions, Combined Driving, interspecies relationships, co-occupation, occupational identity, motivation, and Model of Human Occupation. Low levels of evidence suggest lack of scientific knowledge on interspecies relationships between horses and humans,



application of the term “co-occupation” regarding engagement of occupations with horses, integration of choice into lifestyle, implications of association with equine culture, and/or the impact of animals on occupational identities and motivation. The following articles were identified as best evidence to support the objectives of this study, outlined in Table 1.

Table 1, Selected Literature

Article	Level of Evidence
Latimer, J., & Birke, L. (2009). Natural relations: Horses, knowledge, technology. <i>Sociological Review</i> , 57(1), 1-27. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2008.01802.x	Level Five, Literature Review
Maurstad, A., Davis, D., & Cowles, S. (2013). Co-being and intra-action in horse-human relationships: a multi-species ethnography of be(com)ing human and be(com)ing horse. <i>Social Anthropology</i> , 21(3), 322-335. doi:10.1111/1469-8676.12029	Level Five, Ethnography
Cederholm, E. A. (2015). Lifestyle enterprising: The ‘ambiguity work’ of Swedish horse-farmers. <i>Community, Work &amp; Family</i> , 18(3), 317-333. doi:10.1080/13668803.2014.933091	Level Five, Ethnography
Pickens, N. D., & Pizur-Barnekow, K. (2009). Co-occupation: Extending the dialogue. <i>Journal of Occupational Science</i> , 16(3), 151-156. doi: 10.1080/14427591.2009.9686656	Level Five, Featured Article
Phelan, S., & Kinsella, E. A., (2009) Occupational identity: Engaging socio-cultural perspectives. <i>Journal of Occupational Science</i> . 16(2).	Level Five, Featured Article

### *Interspecies Relationships and Co-Occupation*

Animals can provide companionship, social interaction, support, and play an enormous role in their owners' lives (Wells, 2009). A recent shift in Western culture explained by Maurstad, Davis, and Cowles (2013), views nature and culture as mutually interactive, rather than in opposition. When they discuss the relationality with horses, a shared sense of "co-being" and "becoming" between human and horse emerges; as narratives highlight feelings of being part of the horse through intuitively reacting to each other. Furthermore, the connection becomes likened to a craving or addiction. In fact, horse-human relationships involve this emotional bond, despite the trend in selling or trading horses for competition usability and suitability (Hausberger, Roche, & Visser, 2008).

To communicate effectively, humans need a natural "feel" for horses and good coordination. In driving and riding, objects or "aids"; such as, bits and whips, specialize and direct human-horse communication. Starting at a young age, individuals must be educated through work and training, to progress and scale up activity demands performed with the horse. Education using these specific aids and training, teaches the horse to understand and differentiate meaning in human action. Humans learn to fine tune the delivery of messages. Heavy emphasis lies on interaction, to enhance the horse or humans' natural qualities through exercising and working. For example, reading a horse's body to determine what exercises they need, like lifting weights at the gym to develop different muscles. This involves moments of the human controlling the actions of the horse. However, the relationship to be performed characterizes

moments, not of dominance, rather working together in extension of the other. In fact, this performance epitomizes expertise of horsemanship and mastery; revealing the nature and essence of horse and human. Profound change occurs through hard work and investment into the relationship. This change effects not only the horses, but humans as well (Latimer, & Birke, 2009).

Ability to attune to and understand the subtle equine signs of distress, requires extensive interaction with animals. Horses are animals with natural herd instinct of a prey animal, therefore they recognize the dominance of humans and yield to them as predatory animals. The discourse used to discuss horses typically speaks of beauty and love; yet ironically, we seek to control and tame them while also using the objective language of science to explain their animalistic behavior. There is an interesting distinction seen among those who work with horses; when referring to principles of training or something similar the horse typically spoken of as “the” horse, whereas when discussing the partnership or identity of the animal the horse has personification of a close friend. Most persons who interact with horses seek “oneness” with the animal (Birke, 2008). Yet, human-animal studies lack understanding of this theme and why it occurs.

Noticeable appeal lies in a horse’s potential to excel beyond that of human capabilities; however, learning to communicate with the horse fundamentally draws grooms in. Understanding the horses’ personalities, debatably trumps understanding humans in careers containing extensive horse interaction. Learning to “speak horse” and be “in tune”, not only facilitates proper safety making grooms less likely to sustain

injury (Birke, 2007). Grooming and preparing the horse, both cultivates and enhances nature. In turn, interactions with the animal create a deeply rooted bond, which manifest behind grooms every action. Persons who own or work with horses typically view them as companions or partners, but above all, as individuals; despite the lack of verbal expression of emotion from horse. This ability is a hard-won skill; to understand a horses' thoughts and feelings requires a high degree of sensitivity (Birke, 2008).

The human-horse connection requires understanding of horses, individually, for their character to manage each animal on its own terms. Interspecies relationships physically challenge both individuals as well, because control of the body essentially creates this intelligible communication. The complexities of this take time to perfect, but the sustained engagement affects behavior. As each get to know the other, the ability to communicate grows and becomes reflected in performance. Their bodies communicate through cues and signs developed between the partnership. Through exploration and discovery of capabilities, they create and understand each other's body kinetics. However, each contribute to more than performance alone. This shared relationality contributes interspecies communication through somatic attention and attunement. Humans care for and influence mental well-being in horses. Implying more than simple body kinematics play into the nonverbal communications (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013).

Often trainers speak of horses taking responsibility for action, implying an active choice in contrast to the control necessary to instruct movements. This contradicts the common assumption of subject and object relationality; implying

subjects become entangled as agentive individuals both contributing to the experience requiring action and response from one another. The co-being relationship consists of three points of relationality: mutuality, active engagement from two agentive individuals, and 'becoming' horse and human together. However, the "co-" in "co-being" both connects and separate, because of the fleeting and tenuous nature. Intracorporal moments of mutuality create the experience of co-being and synchronicity. When both become in sync, humans feel a deep intuitive connection. Many who interact with horses would argue the animal's self-awareness in behavior, explaining a complex and co-contributed communication. Learning and adapting to being with each contributes to becoming horse and human together, in a form of "co-shaping" and "co-domesticating" (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013).

Embodying occupation together, grooms perform synchronously with companionship of horses daily. Traditionally "co-occupation" is defined by shared engagement between two or more people (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). However, the level of performance, communication, and understanding between horses and humans during shared engagement of occupation necessitates the application of this terminology when discussing the relationship. The horse-human relationship, although a non-verbal and interspecies one; includes each element of co-occupation. Likened to the involvement between coach and player, the horse acts upon its free will when interacting and performing actions, and not every interaction between horse and human results in co-occupation. These fleeting episodes mark when both agents reach synchronicity. Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow (2009) explain that

co-occupation contains: shared physicality, relating to the engagement in mutual motor behavior linked to one another with fluidity, as they temporally share experience together; shared intentionality, requiring purpose during engagement and an understanding of one another's roles; and shared emotionality, occurring from mutual responsiveness to emotional tone from both participants. This notably contributes to the debatable nature of considering horses 'individuals with free agency', particularly in a relationship which requires control and handling. However, International 4-in-Hand Grooms and the horses not only perform together, they perform at a high level; implying advanced and skilled communication.

Although the horse-human relationship is of major importance both at competition and for pleasure, there is little proper scientific literature of the determinants or consequences of this pair. For an above average performance effective cooperation between horse and human determines results. The human must not only be able to control themselves in body and mind, but equally need to communicate effectively with the horse and its character (Hausberger, Roche, & Visser, 2008). The dynamics of this communication can be explored further as they relate to lifestyles and occupational choices.

#### *Lifestyle Integration of Occupational Choice*

The competitive horse world's differentiated groups partially define themselves on how horses, skills, activities and people rank. Riding moves beyond "pleasure", by involving competition and sport. Many describe persons with an affinity with horses, as having the skill "in their blood", or "bred through generations". Therefore, an aspect

of familial life embeds itself within the culture. Embodied and experiential, hard work and discipline foster knowledge which passes through generations. Childrearing in equine cultures holds significance. A common site for horse shows, mothers or fathers go as far to strap their (human) baby to them to maintain involvement in interaction with horses or the communities social culture, thus meshing 'work' and family lives. Children grow up around horses from the start. Socializing children to and being around horses becomes part of the culture. Common phrases such as being 'born under a horse's feet' or 'in a stable', highlight this trend. In extreme cases, the horses become priority and children second (Latimer, & Birke, 2009).

Many who work with the animal explain a passion for horses and describe it as a lifestyle. The choice to exist within this culture marks a junction in life to enhance individual choice and autonomy. Often emotional bonds to a specific horse marks the decision to maintain a life with horses. Common humor lies in this culture when discussing the presumed irrationality from allowing horses to dictate their life. The emotionality and fastidiousness in the decision denotes disassociation from typical work, through actively engaging in caring work. Horse-farmers often explain the emotional work of caring for the well-being of the horses, and its importance. They truly care about their partners and their mental wellbeing. This capacity requires a competency in horsemanship, based through lifelong experience and tacit knowledge (Cederholm, 2015).

The simultaneous dissociation and embracement of professional roles, as well as ambiguity of roles and relationships commonly impacts horse-farmers. Role conflict

between different social positions effects most cultures; including those in the equine industry, despite the ambition and attempts to integrate lifestyle with work. Unlike concrete job titles and careers; grooms' ambiguous work demands span a variety of tasks with an ever-fluctuating daily-do list. Working from home, or the home-work dichotomy challenges the typical spatial and symbolic differentiations between work and domestic life. The contradictory cultural values create ambivalence within individuals, concerning family life and their work obligations. Tension arises from competition between autonomy, flexibility, and self-realization; and the structural, temporal, and spatial constraints from animal farming. However, the attempt to manage this tension relies more on navigating and negotiating boundaries, rather than demarcating them (Cederholm, 2015).

Work life balance decision making occurs two ways. Proactive choice, influencing the amount of burden from responsibility; and reactive choice, influencing how to meet those responsibilities. If decision making overly relies on external context, one could deduce high rates of similarity between households. Therefore, the concept of work and life balance complexly allocates action or activities to categories organized by motivation. For example, the desire to create extrinsic or objective utility occurs when failure to perform 'necessary labor' threatens the sustainability of life or work. In a way, this imposition onto the household reflects their choice in occupation. Oppositely, 'recreational labor', produces intrinsic or subjective utility; because of the pleasure or enjoyment experienced through free choice. Income and 'free' time determine the range of choices available. Everything outside paid employment, yet



encompasses home or family; becomes categorized as 'life'. Paid employment becomes 'work' and care work becomes 'life' (Ransome, 2007).

To maintain occupational engagement within the worker role, occupational embeddedness contributes three forces: fit, links, and sacrifice. A person's ability match occupational demands and the degree of interest matching reward contributes to the job's 'fit'. When individuals associate with people and activities within their job, this tie or 'links' them socially. Lastly, the amount of loss if they left the job determines the 'sacrifice' (Ng & Feldman, 2009). Ambiguous work such as that in equine industries necessitates delicate and fluid balancing among work and life or business and lifestyle. Social roles blur with distinctions questioned, modified, or reinforced when negotiating boundaries. Horse farmers lifestyle work, interactions and social relationships reinforce value in their work. In this field work identity of a lifestyle worker requires running a nonbusiness-like business, which consequently results in tensions between emotional distance and closeness as professional friendships become social forms of ambiguity. However, individual agency and freewill inspire action toward work-life balance in horse associated occupational cultures. This trend may also occur in industries of creative orientation such as sport, recreation, tourism, and hospitality; because lifestyle readily becomes embedded within the product itself (Cederholm, 2015).

The common value in "doing", identity from output, and the intrinsic motivation of performance intrepidly links grooms and professional athletes. Typically, sharing interest in the competition of a sport supports formation of a solid communal

relationality. The players, and supporting members of populations, such as those seen in the National Football League (NFL) or another high caliber sporting environment, create context for community which draws people together. Purposeful action and role fulfillment maintains the involvement and commitment to the driving sport. Organizations with more roles than people, experience a strong sense of community. This binds them with fuel from mutually demanding obligation and reciprocity (Warner, Dixon, & Chalip, 2012). The community of supporting members in driving sport typically assist one another when challenges arise. Delegation and being 'good at' asking for help in populations who work with horses indicates the importance of knowledge in and from friendship networking, thus transforming it into a form of skill used to manage their operation (Cederholm, 2015). The interconnected relationships between animal and human uniquely effect driving sport and those who identify within it. Additional complexity cultivates as derivation of a team's performance starting with the footfall of horses.

#### *Occupational Identity and Motivation*

Humans construct and communicate identity through participation in occupation. Therefore, we create identity through what we do, generating the contexts needed for meaningful existence. This meaning contributes to wellness through life satisfaction (Phelan & Kinsella, 2009). Identification within a group, typically drives willingness to sacrifice one's interests for its perceived goals and needs. Sharing social identity transforms a team of winners to a winning team. Groups are not solely external structures which provide context for individuals. Instead, groups impact

one's identity through shaping and transforming by the capacity to be internalized. Therefore, the sense of self varies based on social context. Personal identity, or self-concept, behavior, and individuality, drive context; where social identity, or shared membership with others in a group, drives different contexts. When referring to self 'I' or 'me' leads self-concept, whereas social identity coins terms such as 'we' or 'us'; further contributing to the comparative and relational belief of social identity. Meaning of ingroup membership only relates in comparison to an outgroup. Social identities contribute substrate for understanding the change from contents of individuals into the collectives of sport. Moreover, the capacity to identify 'self' through social identity allows them to engage within the group (Rees, Haslam, Coffee, & Lavalley, 2015).

To excel in elite professional sports, athletes generally choose and form a strong bond with their occupation, in which the support of family, friends, coaches, etc. contributes to the goal of advancement. Individuals provide major motivational roles in sport: support, pressure, competence related information, socialization, and models to emulate (Bengoechea & Streat, 2007). Players consequently form their identity through this athlete role. Common mantras of "live, breathe, and eat (the sport)" entrench athletic cultures, ideally to evoke dedication and commitment. To become a professional athlete, players routinely sacrifice educational and social roles. This impacts two different ways; when roles become mixed between a strong athletic identity and other identities, long-lasting psychological benefits. These include enhanced social interactions, positive experiences within the sport, and increases in

motivation. In contrast, when athletic identity becomes one-dimensional, they may only identify within their sport, neglecting other social roles (Mitchell, et. al., 2014). It is the symbolic relevance of a role which drives devotion, resulting with variations of perceived value between others associated with the role. When stress accumulates to one role, 'strain-based conflict' arises. Integrating work experience with emotional or personal contexts, stems from the emblematic perception of work as a reward (Ba', 2011).

The equine world holds merit in performance and sport; however, being and living with horses they symbiotically co-create and enhance one another through cultural socialization and action. Persons who work with horses often describe themselves and others as "horsey", or a "horsey person" or someone in the outgroup as "not a horse person". The way people create relationships with animals supports construction of culture and sociability through linking performance to identity. Assimilating horse and human supports place and identity for both, as they relate into "horsey" communities. Suggesting nature and cultures implicit relation. This relationality with horses, generates the existence of the equine community. Allowing place and identity for intermingling of animals and people (Latimer, & Birke, 2009).

The new term 'becomings' refers to this type of emergence; as relations of symbiotic attachments, nonhierarchical unions, and amalgamation of agentive beings; transforming objects into subjects (Kirksey, & Helmreich, 2010). Agency does not require intention as a prerequisite as a relational concept. Rather than humans and animals acting solely alone, social meaning and context generates via interaction

between people and the world. Through observing agency in other species, we recognize animals do not passively exist. Despite lack of understanding in their experience of agency, they remain biological organisms with motivations and objectives. The ability to sense and perceive our environment, albeit through different sensory reception, facilitates the capability for action. Therefore, both animals and humans, engage and intervene during situations independently yet in relation to context. Humans learn to recognize demeanor and behavior in other living beings, yet the unpredictability influences interaction. Most situations involve adapting to the animals' behaviors in close proximity. This physicality contributes to developing bonds with the animal based in reciprocated trust (Poole, 2015).

Social bonding or attachment positively influences humans psychologically and physiologically. Suggesting that humans develop positive behaviors and emotions while caring for animals, similarly to infant-mother connections. By maintaining proximity and the ability to differentiate individuals contributes to this connection. For example, parents and their children typically show special behaviors by recognizing each other and sharing specific behaviors. Dependent upon the human and animal pair, the ability to form social bonds influences the relationship. However, these bonds contribute mentally and physically to the stability of sociability in humans (Nagasawa, Mogi, & Kikusui, 2009).

Horse-human relationships engender trust and attachment, because horses are interactive partners. Typically owning horses involves extensive emotional, financial, and temporal commitments; yet involvement tends to increase overtime. The intense

and intimate bonds formed with horses contributes to a sense of 'self', often being equated to a mirror. This identity construction supports community bonding and camaraderie, because the occupational embeddedness, commitment, and constellation of task completion inspires commonality through mutual emotional attachment to the community (Spiggle, 2008)

There are multiple communities within the equine world, each with their own rules and customs (Birke, 2007). Working side by side with grooms granted an insider view into the cultural climate of Combined Driving. Grooms' behavior demonstrated an observable commitment to their duties and robust drive to perform as they feverishly completed a multitude of tasks for long hours without breaks. The job provides constant challenges as they must adapt their actions to the needs of the animals. Learning to be in touch with horses often requires self-reflection and personal development to evolve horsemanship skills (Birke, 2007).

#### *Summary*

Lack in understanding of the symbiotic relationship and co-occupations between horses and humans inspired this study. Analyzing the lifestyle of grooms provides a unique opportunity to add breadth to Occupational Science research through applying theory to an otherwise overlooked population. Limited literature, with majority being level five exploratory evidence, create necessity to research and understand the components and implications of horse-human relationships. Why is it that people who love horses, love horses? And what makes them dedicate their life to involve themselves with these animals?

## II. Journal Article Manuscript

### Title

THE HORSE: A DRIVING FORCE FOR THE LIFESTYLE OF GROOMS

### Author

NICOLE M. FORIGHT, OTS

### Author's Affiliation

Chair, Advisory Committee: Dr. Shirley O'Brien, OTR/L, FAOTA

Member, Advisory Committee: Kathy Splinter-Watkins, OTR/L, HPCS, FAOTA

Member, Advisory Committee: Dr. Melba Custer, OTR/L

Eastern Kentucky University

109 Aberdine Way

Georgetown, KY 40324

nicole\_foright@mymail.eku.edu

### Abstract

The fundamental components of co-occupational relationships between humans and animals and their impact on occupational identity is an area for exploration in the field of Occupational Science. Evaluating the lives of persons whose daily occupations involve working with animals contributes investigation into the implications of interspecies relationships. The aim of this research was to understand the lifestyle of International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Grooms to determine the impact of symbiotic relationship with horses. This qualitative descriptive study used three methods for data collection and triangulation: semi-structured interviews,

observation, and photographs from 4 participants who served as gatekeepers facilitating comprehensive exploration of the culture surrounding the carriage driving community. The data was coded apriori and analyzed using the Model of Human Occupation to understand the volition, habituation, performance capacity, culture, context and environment that shapes experience. Themes were identified. Results reinforce the importance of meaning within daily engagement as occupational beings.

### Keywords

Combined Driving, interspecies relationships, co-occupation, motivation, occupational identity, Model of Human Occupation

### Introduction

Despite the global and cross-cultural popularity of horse-human interactions, little is known about how and why these relationships impact individuals. Furthermore, current literature only begins to explore contents of those interactions. Lack of knowledge in interspecies relationality leaves gaps when trying to understand implications of Occupational Science fundamentals like: co-occupation, occupational choice, motivation, or animal-related identities (i.e. 'horse/cat/dog person', etc.). International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Grooms' work duties and performance quality derives from extensive interactions with the horses they care for. Therefore, this population can uniquely provide insight into their horse affiliated lifestyle, as we apply Occupational Science perspective attempting to understand why and how they integrate horses into their daily activities. By investigating the groom lifestyle, we seek



to illuminate why humans choose to engage in occupations with horses, and determine any contributions this interspecies relationship provides for the human.

### Background

The competitions or Combined Driving Events (CDE), involve three phases of carriage driving (United States Equestrian Federation [USEF], 2017). The inception of these incredible feats of fitness and stamina, originates through endless hours of preparation with the horses. Paramount importance resides in skilled and dynamic synchronicity between every team member, horses included. This exhilarating equestrian sport requires both aptitude and perseverance to perform all three adrenaline-inducing phases (Fédération Équestre Internationale [FEI], 2017). A 4-in-Hand Combined Driving team includes a minimum of four horses, two grooms, and one driver. Ideally, the interspecies relationship reaches its apex at competition, representing the commitment and energy spent to understand and perfect team communication. The horse-human pairing engenders relationships which inspire deep connection, founded upon interaction and shared experiences (Hausberger, Roche, Henry, & Visser, 2008).

Grooms primarily attend to and care for horses (Groom, 2017). However, the ambiguity which accompanies the 'groom' title expands its role, encompassing a variety of activities and tasks to be performed any time of day or night necessary. No typical 9A.M.-5P.M. work periods exist, when investing into a lifestyle built from high levels of motivation and drive. For example, to accommodate show attendance internationally, grooms relocate the entire equine operation between countries. This

process requires extensive preparation and adaptability to manage relentless and inevitable change along the journey. For competitions, they must pack truckloads full of the equipment (harness, carriages, etc.) needed for each phase, and objects (feed, bedding, hay, etc.) to maintain environmental consistency for the horses. The standard and quality desired in a professional groom mirrors the excellence and expectations of team members on elite sport leagues; because of their indispensable commitment invested into the product over long, and often difficult, work hours. However, the time spent interacting with each animal over time creates unique interspecies relationships which experience “co-occupation”, during cooperative occupational engagement. This assignation between horse and human results in shared physicality, emotionality, and intentionality (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). A “co-being” emerges from those moments of mutuality and engagement from the two species together, resulting in a domestication of each other by being together (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013). Hausberger, et. al. (2008), advocate for further research to add proper understanding into this dynamic relationship.

The field of Occupational Science currently lacks research into co-occupations between animals and humans, limiting understanding of the true essence and implications of co-occupation. Overall, little scientific research exists discussing the human-horse partnership or its impact on motivation or identity. This research adds breath to the literature pool by evaluating occupational components that comprise the horse-human relationship. Investigating grooms’ involvement in and experience of co-occupation with horses, this study attempts to identify the interspecies relationship’s

impact on the groom lifestyle; contributing a unique study applying Occupational Science theory to a population and setting not typically researched and, to date, is missing in the literature.

### *Interspecies Relationships and Co-occupation*

Integrating animals into one's life can provide companionship, social interaction, support, and affect roles (Wells, 2009). A recent culture shift explained by Maurstad, Davis, and Cowles (2013), reference a mutually interactive dynamic of horse-human relations, rather than opposition between nature and culture. The described relationality with horses, includes a shared sense of "co-being" and "becoming" together. Narratives of which highlight feelings of being part of the horse, intuitively reacting to each other. This connection becomes likened to a craving or addiction, which perpetuates involvement and active seeking of this relationship. Noticeable appeal lies in a horse's potential to excel beyond that of human capabilities; however, learning to communicate with the horse fundamentally draws grooms in.

Body control provides the foundation for intelligible communication, generating physical challenge for both horse and human. This complex process elicits sustained engagement in attempt to perfect this physical communication. The connection via body kinetics, cues, and signs improves and reflects the partnership during performance together. As they spent time together, capabilities emerge and grow through learning to understand each other's body movements. Humans must effectively communicate to nurture and encourage positive mental well-being in the

horse and elicit a performative response. This deepened communication and relationality approaches somatic attention and attunement, suggesting more than exclusively body kinematics effect nonverbal communications (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013).

As a prey animal, the horses' herding nature instinctually recognizes the dominance from the predatory nature of humans. Many speak of seeking 'one-ness' with horses. Yet, discourse of beauty and love of the animal, ironically, also highlights control and an objectivity to their animalistic behavior. When referring to principles of training or horses' nature, the horse becomes 'the' animal. Alternately, when discussing the partnership or identity of an animal, the personification becomes that of a close friend (Birke, 2008). To communicate with the horse, drivers and riders need an intuitive 'feel' for them and high levels of coordination. Typically starting at a young age, education occurs through working and training with the horse. Objects like bits and whips, called 'aids', direct the communication teaching the horse to understand and differentiate intent from human action. The delivery of messages becomes refined, as emphasis on interaction enhances the horse or humans' natural qualities through exercising and working together. Although these involvements contain elements of human control, the relationship embodies moments of extension, rather than dominance. Hard work invested into the relationship profoundly changes both human and horse. Harmonious performance together epitomizes horsemanship and mastery. This process reveals the complex nature and true essence of an interspecies relationship (Latimer, & Birke, 2009).

Acquiring the hard-won skill of dynamic synchronicity requires high degrees of sensitivity. Learning to read horse communication and be in sync with them influences safety (Birke, 2007), as grooming and preparing the horse cultivates and enhances nature creating a deeply rooted bond based in trust. The companionship or partnership manifests underpinning grooms' actions. Despite lack of verbal communication of emotions, persons who work with horses see them as individuals (Birke, 2008). Although trends in selling or trading horses for competition exist, the horse-human relationships reportedly still involve emotional bonds substantiating the sensitive nature of this interspecies phenomena (Hausberger, Roche, & Visser, 2008). When horses co-contribute to the formation of complex interspecies communication, the behaviors of individuality and identity indicate some level of agentic characteristic. Trainers imply active choice when speaking of a horses' responsibility to engage and actively demonstrate the requested movement. This contrasts the apparent control necessary to instruct such actions. The commonly assumed prescription of subject and object relationality contradicts, as subjects become entangled agentic 'co-beings' contributing to the experience via action and response from one another. However, the "co-" in "co-being" intentionally connects and separates, representing its tenuous and fleeting nature. The deep intuitive connection from corporal moments of mutuality creates the feeling of synchronicity. During such interactions, three important components emerge: shared mutuality, participation of two agentic individuals, and 'becoming' horse and human together. The

amalgamation of working, adapting, and learning together contributes to a 'co-shaping' and 'co-domesticating' of one another (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles, 2013). Shared occupational engagement between two or more persons, defines 'co-occupation'. This phenomenon consists of moments with shared: physicality, from temporally shared engagement in mutual motor behavior with fluidity; intentionality, through purposeful engagement with an understanding of one another's roles; and emotionality, from mutual responsivity to emotional tone (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). International 4-in-Hand Drivers and Grooms with the horses not only perform together, they perform at a high level of proficiency; implying advanced and skilled communication. Although non-verbal and interspecies, dynamic performance and communication through joint embodiment in occupation necessitates application of this terminology. However, considering horses individuals with free agency becomes debatable, particularly in a relationship which requires control and handling. Nevertheless, if likened to involvement between player and coach, horses act upon freewill when interacting and performing actions asked by the human.

To execute an above average performance, cooperation and communication must be effective. This requires self-control and discipline of body and mind from the human, with an equal need to successfully interconnect with the horse's character (Hausberger, Roche, & Visser, 2008). Little scientific literature exists detailing the determinants or implications of this pair; regardless of its critical importance at competition or even riding for pleasure. The dynamics of this communication can be explored further as they relate to lifestyle and occupational choice in grooms' lives.

### *Lifestyle Integration of Occupational Choice*

The common value in “doing”, identity from performance, and the intrinsic motivation of performance intrepidly links grooms and professional athletes. Shared interest in competition of a sport supports solid communal relationality. Players and supporting members, such as those seen in the National Football League (NFL) or another high caliber sporting environment, create context for community which draws people together. The interconnected relationships with animals uniquely effect driving sport and those who identify within it. Additional complexity cultivates from derivation of team performance residing in the horses’ hoofbeat. However, delegation and being ‘good at’ asking for help in those who work with horses indicates the importance of knowledge in and from friendship and networking. Transforming it into a skill, utilized to manage the operation (Cederholm, 2015). Purposeful action and role fulfillment, maintains groom involvement and commitment to driving sport. Organizations like driving, with more roles than people, facilitate a strong sense of community fueled by the mutually challenging responsibilities and skilled tradeoff of tasks (Warner, Dixon, & Chalip, 2012).

Horsemen’s simultaneous dissociation and embracement of professional roles, results in ambiguity of roles and relationships. For example, collective social history in a lifestyle-work culture contains attributes of both business and home. The symbolic perception of work as a reward, supports the integration of work and personal or emotional contexts. However, if the perceived value differs between individuals, stress then localizes to one role and ‘strain-based’ conflict arises (Ba’, 2011). The equine

industry is no exception to this conflict. Work identity of a lifestyle worker requires running a nonbusiness-like business, consequently resulting with tensions between emotional distance and closeness. Vague worker roles necessitate delicate balancing between business and lifestyle. Competition between autonomy, flexibility, and self-realization generates tension, despite the cultures ambitious attempts to fully integrate lifestyle work. Abstruse work demands and ever-fluctuating daily-do lists, leave the profession devoid of concrete expectations - like that seen in an archetypal job or career. Contradicting cultural values concerning work obligations and family life further perpetuates ambivalence and the structural, temporal, and spatial constraints of animal farming create atypical obstacles to handle. Professional friendships become social forms of indistinctness as social roles blur and distinctions are questioned, modified, or reinforced. The common tendency to work and live on the same farm, also creates a homestyle-work dichotomy which challenges typical spatial and symbolic boundaries between domestic life and work. However, the attempt to manage boundaries and conflict relies more on navigating and negotiating, rather than demarcation (Cederholm, 2015).

Income and time available determine the range of occupations. Decision making concerning work life balance occurs two ways, proactive or reactively. Proactive choice influences the total burden of responsibility, whereas reactive choice influences how to meet those responsibilities. If we assume this process relies prominently on external context, deduction might conclude high rates of similarity among geographically proximal households. Yet, this is not the case. Work life balance



complexly depends on internal motivation during prioritization and organizing of activities. Sociologically paid employment becomes categorized as work, and everything outside paid employment, but still encompassing home or family; becomes categorized as life. The combination of leisure and work results in “recreational labor”, which produces intrinsic or subjective utility based upon the pleasure or enjoyment experienced through occupationally embedded free choice (Ransome, 2007).

Occupational embeddedness contributes three forces: fit, links, and sacrifice; to maintain engagement within worker roles. The perceived ability to match occupational demands and the degree to which personal interest matches reward, contributes to the job “fit”. Association with people and activities within their job, “links” them to the social network. The “sacrifice” is the hypothetical expectation of loss from ending a job (Ng & Feldman, 2009). Individual agency and freewill within embedded occupations, inspires fervent action from lifestyle-workers. This trend applies to many industries of creative orientation such as sports, recreation, tourism, and hospitality. The products embedment into lifestyle substantiates value in the work itself. Essentially, the passion for horses provides the valued origin for the lifestyle of grooms, who partake in “caring work”. Choosing to affiliate oneself in this culture marks a junction in which autonomy becomes enhanced. Often emotional bonds with a specific horse inspire this choice. The fastidiousness and emotionality from choosing to work with horses signifies disassociation from typical work. Yet, common humor appears when discussing presumed irrationality in allowing horses to dictate their life. The emotional work of caring for horses and their mental wellbeing, becomes the utmost importance, as they

genuinely caring about and for the horses. This capacity requires a competency in horsemanship, based through lifelong experience and tacit knowledge (Cederholm, 2015).

Competitive horse cultures differentiate groups a variety of ways. Some include: competition rank/status, breed/discipline of horses, horsemanship approach/skills, discipline specific activities, and innate social grouping. Persons raised in the culture with an affinity for horses, become labeled by skills “in their blood”, or “bred through generations”. The aspect of family entrenches itself within the culture. Common phrases such as being ‘born under a horse’s feet’ or ‘in a stable’, highlight this trend. Childrearing in equine oriented cultures holds significance. Personified and pragmatic hard labor with discipline constitutes the knowledge that passes through generations. Socializing children to and being around horses becomes part of the culture, as they grow up around horses from the start. A common site for horse shows, mothers or fathers use slings or a pack carrying their baby with them, to maintain hands-free involvement and interaction with horses and to participate socially. In extreme cases, the horses even take priority over family (Latimer, & Birke, 2009). The community built between horses and humans generates multiple formats which inspire identity and motivation.

#### *Occupational Identity and Motivation*

The equine world’s occupational performance demands contribute merit to its title as a sport (Latimer, & Birke, 2009). Athletes or roles requiring quality performance, create a strong bond with their occupations to excel professionally;

typically, this cultivates identity within their sporting role. Common mantras of “live, breathe, and eat (the sport)” entrench athletic cultures (Mitchell, et. al., 2014). The engagement in occupation allows humans to construct identity through what they do. This produces context to supports formation of a meaningful and purposeful life. Experiencing meaning within occupation contributes to life satisfaction and wellness (Phelan & Kinsella, 2009). The perception of work as reward (Ba’, 2011), motivates the integration of work experience with personal or emotional contexts in these professions. When roles mix between a strong athletic identities and other identities; social interactions, positive experiences within the sport, and increased motivation create long-lasting psychological benefits. However, if athletic identity becomes one-dimensional they neglect other roles, and only identify within their sport (Mitchell, et. al., 2014).

Dedication and commitment to become a professional athlete results in routine sacrifice of educational and social roles. The assistance physically or emotionally from coaches, family, and friends contributes to the athlete’s goal advancement. Motivational inspiration from other members in the community provide: support, pressure, competence related information, socialization, and models to emulate (Bengoechea & Streaan, 2007). Identification within a group contributes a willingness to sacrifice personal interest for the groups perceived goals or needs. The sharing of social identity transforms a team of winners, to a winning team. Proving more than purely external structures, communities form substrate for social context. Groups, impact identity by shaping and transforming individuals’ capacity for internalization of

the whole. To be in an ingroup, requires an outgroup; the capacity to identify 'self' within that ingroup allows engagement with the collective group. In contrast to referring to self as 'me' or 'I', social identity applies terms like 'we' or 'us', contributing the relational and comparative beliefs of social identity (Rees, Haslam, Coffee, & Lavalley, 2015).

The implicit relation between nature and culture within animal-human relationship supports a cultural construction founded in sociability via interspecies performance and joint identity. The relationality with horses inspires existence of common vernacular within "horsey" communities. For example, typical reference to someone who works with horses, could be a "horsey person" or "horseman", and delineation of outgroups occurs through phrases referencing others as, "not a horse person". Equine culture supplies place and identity for the intermingling between animals and people. Being with and living around horses, both species co-create and enhance one another via shared action and cultural socialization. Assimilation of horse and human provides substrate to foster co-occupational identity within both. (Latimer, & Birke, 2009).

Humans psychologically and physiologically benefit from social bonding and attachment. When caring for animals, humans develop positive behaviors and attitudes, not dissimilar to infant-mother connections. Maintained proximity and an ability to differentiate between other individuals forms initial connection. The capability to form interspecies bonds influence both agents of the relationship. For example, parents typically show special behaviors to their children by recognizing each

other and communicating through shared behaviors. Animal-human bonds contribute mentally and physically to stability of sociability (Nagasawa, Mogi, & Kikusui, 2009). The term 'becomings' refers to emergence of interspecies relationships of symbiotic attachment, nonhierarchical combinations and unifications of agentive beings. This transforms the view of experiential objects into subjects with potential for action (Kirksey, & Helmreich, 2010). Humans and animals interact within the world rather than act alone. Social meaning and context form from interaction with environment. Therefore, agency as a relational concept, does not need a prerequisite intention. Observing agency in other species, scientists recognize animals' active engagement rather than passively existing. Although the experience of this agency remains unknown, irrefutably animals persist as biological organisms with objectives and motivations. Sensation and perception of environment, despite differences in sensory reception, facilitates relational action. Although humans and animals intervene in situations independently, it still occurs relative to context. Over time humans learn to recognize behavior and demeanor from other living beings. However, the unpredictable nature of animals necessitates adaptation when working together. Animal relationships based on reciprocal trust develop from the shared physicality (Poole, 2015).

Learning to be in tune with horses involves self-reflection and individual skill development to evolve horsemanship aptitude. Interactive horse-human relationships engender attachment and trust which involves extensive emotional, financial, and temporal commitments. Ties created from intense and intimate relationships mirror

each other and contribute a sense of 'self'. The multitude of subdivisions among the greater 'horse world', each contain their own rules and discipline specific customs (Birke, 2007). The construction of identity within culture supports community bonding and camaraderie. Its popularity resides within the occupationally embedded nature, because commitment and constellation when completing tasks inspires mutual emotional attachment to the commonalities experienced within communities (Spiggle, 2008).

### Purpose

This qualitative descriptive study seeks to understand the motivations and occupational identities of grooms in the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving show circuit, and how horse with human co-occupations impact grooms. Evaluating the life of grooms; as well as, utilizing the Model of Human Occupation to frame data collection assisted in finding any correlations between those co-occupations and their impact on occupational identities and motivation in grooms.

### Grand Question

The grand question that this research seeks to address is: What occupational identities and internal motivations do individuals that work as grooms for the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving show circuit experience during horse with human co-occupations?

### Methods

This study used a descriptive qualitative research design (Stanley, 2015). This design was chosen to best study the selected group and address the research

question. The study received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the researcher's university prior to initiation of the study.

### Procedure

The first participant was found utilizing gatekeepers' suggestions in the community and a Verbal Recruitment Script as described in the IRB approval (Appendix A). All other participants were found via snowball sampling and the Verbal Recruitment Script. Participants were presented with an Informed Consent Form and Photo and Video Release Form to read and sign before the interviews were conducted. Interviews followed a semi-structured format consisting of 27 open ended questions; intended to gain insight on the dimensions of occupation outlined by Kielhofner's (2008) Model of Human Occupation: volition, habituation, performance capacity, context and environment. These questions are listed in Appendix B. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes-2 hours, and were completed in multiple sessions to accommodate the grooms' schedules. All interviews were audio recorded using a digital recorder and transcribed verbatim. Member check occurred with the participants upon transcription of the interviews.

Observations collected the researcher's perspective of each grooms' participation in daily co-occupations with horses. Participants were presented with an Informed Consent Form and Photo and Video Release Form to read and sign before the interviews were conducted – included sections concerning observation. Informal Observation occurred throughout Thursday-Sunday at Combined Driving Event (CDE). Formal Observation occurred 1 hour in the evening, sitting in a localized area relative

to viewing each participant. Documentation included handwritten field notes and audio logging via electronic recorder

Photos were taken via cellular phone, of 3 out of 4 participants, capturing images staged by the grooms' intended to portray their lives in natural context. Participants were presented with an Informed Consent Form and Photo and Video Release Form to read and sign before the interviews were conducted. Participants were asked to stage 3 photographs that would portray their work as a groom. Images captured using camera on researcher's password protected cell phone.

#### Data Analysis

All data was compiled and triangulated during data analysis. Apriori coding using the Model of Human Occupation, framed thematic development from which collective and individual themes were identified.

#### Participants

Gatekeepers identified via the researcher's personal connection to the driving community, assisted with obtaining the first participant. Snowball sampling was then used to recruit others. Participants voluntarily took part in this study and met the following criterion: over the age 18, working as a full-time groom, who travel with the horses yearly, worked their current job over a year, and work for an elite 4-in-hand team with global recognition. There were 2 males and 2 females of diverse age, nationality and phases in their career. To protect their confidentiality, demographic information is broadly reported.



## Findings and Themes

Experience of occupation occurs on multiple levels. The Model of Human Occupation categorizes the factors of occupation as: volition (internal thought processes), habituation (performance patterns), performance capacity (ability to perform tasks), context and environment (circumstance and settings) (Kielhofner, 2008). Exploring the lives of grooms through investigating these concepts provides a basic understanding of the human condition as experienced by individuals who actively engage in co-occupation with horses; conceptualizing the fundamental attraction and contributing factors of a horse-human relationship. Three major themes emerged from the data: horses driving grooms, the groom lifestyle, and passion for performance; each theme will be discussed.

### Horses Driving Grooms

#### *Volition*

“The day that you’re done- you have you bags packed and a plane ticket home- that’s the day that one of the horses gets sick or they need you and you think – I can’t bloody leave them, so you end up staying and it becomes worth it.”

Horses provide a valued and motivating passion, which inspires the daily occupations of grooms. The data represented two avenues for continued occupational engagement with horses, both starting at a young age. There was either an “instant connection”, or a hobby which turned to a more serious endeavor after experiencing good results and natural talent for the sport. Each groom chose a horse to stand with in their photos, which implies work identity from association with the animal. Grooms

also positioned themselves close to the horse, displaying more genuine expression than compared to photographs with objects. When asking grooms if they had a special connection to any of the horses, they each said yes, with an excited and thorough explanation why. One groom responded, “all of them”, further explaining she could never pick just one.

#### *Habituation*

“When the horses need something, it doesn’t matter what time it is [...] That’s the main thing we all circle around.”

Horses inspire morning and nightly chores, yet everything in the day changes based upon the horses or the driver; requiring a need to be adaptable. The only consistency in a groom’s life paradoxically is constant change. Familial development and children cause role shifting; as role’s associated with horses ranked with varying importance relative to their stage of life.

#### *Performance Capacity*

“You do it all for the horses. You have such a bond with them.”

Grooms daily performance involves horses. The drive to be with horses draws heavy attraction by providing an easy social connection. Grooms typically prefer working with horses. The influence of the animal drives and motivates grooms to finish long or challenging days; because caring for horses is their primary passion. Every groom discussed their ability to influence horses to perform and grow. This ‘caregiving competition’ results in extensive time around the animals. Individuality surfaced when they spoke about specific animal’s traits or ability. Each show day grooms spend

numerous hours prepping, caring for, working with and around the horses. The early mornings and late evenings begin and end with the horse.

#### *Context and Environment*

“The horses are the main priority, which is sometimes hard to give up.”

Everything is shaped for the horses, with widespread sums of equipment and ample space dedicated to each horse. The grooms relocate the entire equine operation internationally multiple times a year, and every show environment is adapted to suit the horses. Climate effects the physical and emotional work atmosphere, impacting both the humans’ and horses’ mood and behavior daily. Grooms manage environmental and contextual change both proactive and reactively planning and adapting, to positively impact work efficiency and the horses’ performance. This was observed constantly during the setup and break down of the barn area at competition, as well as when utilizing its functionality throughout each day.

Not only did grooms mention the social component of relationships with horses, they also expressed their preference in it, over human-human interaction. The social context of interspecies relationship observed was one of extension, as the horses mirrored attitudes of their handler.

#### *Occupational Identity*

“I’m definitely literally, horse crazy [...] It’s always been horses. There’s never been anything else.”

Grooms coming into or phasing out of their career, view being a 'groom' as a big responsibility, caring for the animal, and an ability to influence the horses. They all have a shared identity within the passion for horses. Their drive is constant as each groom articulated that they will always pursue horses, whether it be directly or indirectly in the equine industry. The horses are spoken of as individuals by the grooms, each with personalities and feelings. The way they speak of horses was as if they were speaking of friends.

Triangulated data represented the complexities of this profession's interconnection with horses through co-occupation, with the connecting theme of valuing horses, particularly as individuals. The grooms either connected with their favorite horse because of the time invested to understand the individual, or because of an appreciation for their work ethic and "try". For those who found the investment rewarding, there was variance between intrinsic or extrinsic motivators. It was either the intimate connection and relationship shared for the sake of itself, or the using of this bond and understanding them mentally and physically to improve the horses' quality and results. The grooms who valued a horses' performance and personality, liked the horse for who they are.

### The Groom Lifestyle

#### *Volition*

"The job itself is so much more than the title. I don't think there's a good enough description that covers everything that goes on. It is a lifestyle. It's a way of life."

The initial interest in horses began through either an instant connection with the horses, or a hobby which became sport. Grooms value the horses and the high-quality nature of performance seen in the horses, job, and show results. Employer personality and team dynamics were also valued, because of the high rate of interaction between individuals, which became likened to a familial or community atmosphere. Grooms also valued the time spent within the profession, as a source of pride and passion from “earning your visible stripes”.

#### *Habituation*

“You give up your life. I’ve done this since [a young age], given up the normal: 9AM-5PM, weekends, bank holidays, Christmas, vacation- basically forfeit.”

A habit mentioned as a common social construct amongst grooms was drinking coffee. All other habits were personal preferences to improve working conditions supporting engagement in activities. Through observation each day was different for the grooms. The day started and ended with a similar pattern of chores. Routines depend on the day; morning and night barn chores remain relatively similar, but that’s where the commonality ends.

Roles varied based on development across the lifespan. Initiation reflects one’s occupational choice as they explore and learning from others; young grooms work hard to experience as much as they can within the industry to invest in their career. This leads to lifestyle integration of occupational choice, as purposeful action drives improvement professionally while seeking life balance. Over time expansion of roles results in shifted values as individuals’ perspectives change from experience. Finally,

after extensive engagement in valued occupations, the attainment of competence and identity occur.

#### *Performance Capacity*

“It’s more of a lifestyle than a job. [...] More in the direction of taking care of family of children or something like that.”

To be a highly effective groom requires integration of social, physical, and intellectual abilities. Part of the job is learning to adapt socially between persons from “all walks of life”. The high rate of interaction amongst the team spurs a need for communication skills. However, half of the grooms reported feeling socially inept, and all grooms mentioned preferring to work with the horses. The job itself demands a great deal of strength and fitness to maintain performance throughout daily tasks. Intellectually grooms must have a good memory. Two grooms even stated that an almost “photographic” memory is necessary. Most felt a common misconception was lack of intelligence because of the physical nature in the job. This is simply not the case, as they continuously process and analyze quickly to adapt to changes. To work at such a high-level, grooms must always utilize their mind and multitask to support productivity.

Typical management of change comes from planning and maintaining the “big picture” or adapting to “roll with it”. Each groom reported feeling effective in their duties. However, the derivation of why they felt effective varied depending on level of experience. The groom newest to the scene and the most experienced groom, relied upon internal values. The up and coming groom had a passion to learn, experience,

and internalize others' styles. Grooms in the middle of their career spoke of confidence in measurable results and the opinions of others. The groom with the longest career reported knowledge from experience making him effective within his role.

#### *Context and Environment*

“It’s more of a lifestyle than a 9AM-5PM job. If you’re going to take it and run with it properly, then you have to jump in 100%.”

Observation, photographic, and interview data support viewing this profession as a lifestyle. Both physical and social environment effects this culture extensively, because travelling for shows is their way of life. Its impact becomes especially apparent during competition, when show grounds become a proverbial melting pot of individuals and horses who live for the sport. Each competition, in near ritualistic fashion, marks various anniversaries and homecomings within the community. Friends reunite, horses make debuts, all sorts of daily gossips spread adrift the energetically charged air. Excitement stirs, waxing and waning, from performance during each phase of competition. A telltale characteristic of the high contact nature and culture assures that “everyone knows everything about everyone”. Also, it’s not uncommon to see dogs and children fully integrated onto the scene. Team dynamics may change from people and horses coming and going; yet social history remains an important part of the groom lifestyle. In fact, each groom humorously reference having “too much” history within the sport.

Driving is a subgroup to the greater “Equine Industry” and contains many social groups based in shared commonality, social history, competition stature, and time

spent in the sport. The driving world contains much diversity among drivers, grooms, and trainers by containing persons of various nationalities, socioeconomic status, personalities, and age. Crossover is also common as many who drive, also ride.

#### *Occupational Identity*

“Most grooms you meet have a slight madness about them. If they’ve been in it long enough then they’re definitely a bit crazy- but in a good way!”

Although each participant identified as a groom. They expressed difficulty when trying to accurately illustrate the occupational demands. Grooms stress their work as a lifestyle, not a job. The year-round commitment revolves around the horses - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. They work until the job is done and emphasized that it’s not a typical 9AM-5PM. Self-identified roles and their importance changes over time, coordinating with typical milestones across the lifespan. They also reported learning their trade from experience, trial and error, or learning for others.

#### **Passion for Performance**

##### *Volition*

“I am passionate. I do love it, it is what I’m going to do, and I have a high drive for it.”

Grooms increased initial interest in the sport as they procured good results and experienced a natural talent for it. Primary motivation for sustained involvement was mixed between the horses themselves or horse performance, with one outlier expressing family as their primary motivation. Although this seems to be mixed data, each circumstance is grounded in the commitment to “doing”. For those motivated by the horses as individuals, caregiving was their main priority in combination with



maintaining outside perspective throughout to avoid getting caught up in the details. When motivation is derived off horse performance, the drive for perfection and results becomes the focus. Even with family as motivation, it was the ability to provide and care for them which drove performance.

#### *Habituation*

“It’s a daily drive of producing. The drive for perfection.”

Care for the horses and commitment to the profession drive grooms with a constant trajectory for improvement. Each day, their mentality is the same: do the best you can do. Habits and routines, support the groom’s work-a-holic mentality and total operational efficiency. Grooms explained that the quest for perfection can cause strain and burnout, negatively impacting other roles and then their overall health suffers. As a result, these highly involved, consuming, and at times one-sided perceptions of reality produce occupational imbalance.

#### *Performance Capacity*

“That is very rewarding, taking care of an animal that maybe could perform and be more of an athlete than the groom himself, you know? [...] What I don’t appreciate in a horse is when they have plenty of quality and don’t have the right work ethic.”

The demanding nature of the job forces one to get used to working all day with the mindset “your body is your job”, doing it all for the horses. The persistent drive to improve results in constant thought, processing of feedback, and forward thinking. Grooms of this caliber perform at a high level, constantly creating quality. They are

known and respected throughout the industry for this. They employ the combined faculties of social, physical, and intellectual capabilities to adapt to changes.

#### *Context and Environment*

“You’re doing it because you love it, you have to love it to do it.”

Passion for the profession surfaced throughout all data. Everything grooms do supports the horses and performance, whether it be orientation or proximity of objects, ease of transport, geographic location, etc.

#### *Occupational Identity*

“I’ve always prided myself on taking that sense of ownership of my job. Pride about the animals, the driver the product. [...] Pride and respect for what you do, because it’s the cause of itself.”

The grooms at the apex of their career view it as standard and a reflection of self, with pride in performing at a high level. The shared identity among them as a “horse person” further contributes a value in ‘doing’ around, with, and for the horses they care for, because it is the passion for horses which inspires their lifestyle.

#### **Discussion**

Co-occupational participation from horse and human requires shared physicality, emotionality, and intentionality (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009). The achievement of high-quality co-occupational performance begins in the countless hours spent working together building each unique horse-human relationship (Hausberger, Roche, Henry, & Visser, 2008). Horses, as individual beings, serve as the foundation for occupational participation amongst combined driving grooms. The job

provides more than just salary, by facilitating unique experiences of mutuality from co-being, co-doing and becoming with horses (Maurstad, Davis, & Cowle's, 2013).

Humans generate and convey our identity by engagement in meaningful occupations.

This in turn promotes wellness by satisfying our need for purpose in life (Phelan & Kinsella, 2009). This culture uncompromisingly chooses their occupations on behalf of, or directly with, horses; because of the value consequentially derived from

understanding horses for who they are, as individuals. As evident by how humans identify ourselves, it's safe to say: you are who you are, because of what you do.

Meaning, we prescribe roles and titles in attempt to explain or dictate what we do (i.e. "I'm a police officer", "truck driver", etc.) Since co-occupations are composed of shared identities and roles of high value, participation in the joint identity becomes the cause of itself.

Grooms are highly motivated, effective, hardworking, and passionate individuals. Lifestyle work of creative oriented industries, such as this, embed occupation within the product, thus supporting individual agency and freewill (Spiggle, 2008). The integration of work and life, results in occupational choice driven by the actions and needs of the animals. Managing the change -which inevitably and invariably persists a life revolving horses- requires adept skill in adaptation. Despite the immense challenge and stress levels this creates, the desire to maintain an identity associated with horses endured. Grooms relentlessly attempt to balance both livelihood and interests, through uniquely entwining work duties with horses and every aspect of their lives. The jargon used by grooms to personify individual horses,

compares to that used when describing a close friend or relative. One groom laughably equated her passion for horses to an addiction. As if some obligatory and unwavering drive permeates the underlying current which manifests her occupational intentionality, consistently revitalizing her desire to remain interrelated with horses and distinguishable within the equine industry. Paradoxically, even ambition categorized as “internal” motivation presented this inextricable link with the horse. The choice to exist within the horse world enhances autonomy and motivates occupational engagement. This is a profession driven by emotionality and fastidiousness, which rouses decision making founded upon the well-being of the horses (Cederholm, 2015). Integrating occupational choice creates a self-directed path which sustains involvement, as it substantiates a meaningful life. Combined driving culture provides the context for individuals to join each other forming a collective founded upon comradery and mutual love for the sport (Latimer, & Birke, 2009). The lifestyle begins and ends with horses for a reason: they care about their partners.

### Limitations

This study assumes that evaluating grooms’ occupations accurately depicts the experience of co-occupation and the relationships acquired through consistent interaction with horse. When conducting qualitative research, the investigator assumes participants will provide truthful information during interview sessions and not report only favorable details. Therefore, human behavior and the manipulability of truth limits this study. As well as, the belief that remaining aware of biases throughout data collection and analysis decreases the likelihood of influencing the reporting of

results. The researcher's personal belief that grooms are highly motivated individuals with occupational identity interwoven with co-occupation with horses, serves as motivation for the study and therefore contributes a lack of neutrality from the primary investigator. Identifying and acknowledging bias throughout the study, critical impacts validity; because of the researcher's prior history with horses, driving culture, and grooms.

### Conclusion

A dynamic born in nature, which built empires and shaped history; the hoofbeat of a horse ignites passion in the heartbeat of man. Horses provide meaning in occupational engagement by supplying substrate for relationships. The blood, sweat, and time dedicated to one other profoundly transforms both horse and human. By refining and fine-tuning communication, they reach symbiosis and extension (Latimer, & Birke, 2009). Epitomizing expert horsemanship and mastery, synergistic performance illuminates and unleashes the untamable spirit of the horse. Soft muzzles, kind eyes, and horsepower motivates the lifeblood and purpose which makes a groom's life worth living. The studies overarching theme: We are who we are, because of what we do; and we do what we do, because of who we are.

### Implications for Practice

The following implications from this study support Occupational Therapy practice:

- Interspecies relationships are valued
- Interspecies co-occupation creates shared identity in which occupational engagement is meaningful and motivating

- Occupational choice creates a purposeful life when integrated into a lifestyle
- Occupational Science informs Occupational Therapy

This study demonstrates the complexities of the human condition experienced by grooms'. This study reinforces the importance of understanding occupational identity as experienced through co-occupations. Humans learn to recognize behavior and demeanor in living beings, the physicality from interaction develops connections with animals based upon reciprocal trust (Poole, 2015). Animals are a source of motivation for humans (Birke, 2008), because we create identities from the shared performance in occupations (Cederholm, 2015). The identity acquired through such lifestyle work, has ties to occupational embeddedness, motivation, and assemblage of performance which creates commonality and mutuality within the community (Spiggle, 2008). This understanding grants the potential to influence activity participation and occupational engagement, because through choosing our occupations, we prescribe meaning to the action because of its self-directed and intentional nature (Phelan & Kinsella, 2009). Implications of co-occupation, extend beyond solely human-animal interactions. Similar synergetic and reciprocal relationality occurs between caregiver-patient, marriages, colleagues, and other relationships built upon extended time spend engaging in shared occupations. Therefore, co-occupational relationships create meaning and motivation from engagement together.

Occupational Science informs Occupational Therapy (Larson et. al., 2003); because we must understand function to understand dysfunction. This study

contributes to understanding interspecies co-occupation, supporting its integration into intervention. Data provides exploration into implications for Hippotherapy (Hoesly, et. al., 2016), because integrated use of horses as a therapeutic modality. The co-occupational relationship between client and horse can provide substantive interactions and occupation-based activities supporting self-concept and identity for clients when riding or driving a horse. The studies fundamental contribution in line with Occupational Science, stated previously: we are who we are, because of what we do; and we do what we do, because of who we are. Therefore, identity is inspired from performance; this in turn leads to more engagement and participation because identity itself is motivating.

#### Future Research

A cross cultural study on the experience of motivation within high performance worker roles could provide insight into the value of performance. The results of this study pointedly suggest a correlation between value in doing as motivation. More research to explore connections between life satisfaction and occupational choice could support implications of lifestyle work. The premise of the horse as the primary drive for the lifestyle of grooms, proposes further research into the components of the horse-human relationship exploring how and why these bonds form. The integration of nature and culture through ethnographic review could inspire insight into the psychosocial and communicational components. More research is needed to determine if/how the term “co-occupation” should be applied to occupations completed with shared engagement by animals. Occupational Therapy as a profession

would benefit from understanding the relationality between derivation of identity and motivation from co-occupation and/or intraspecies relationships.



## References

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2014). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process (3rd ed.). American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 68(Suppl. 1), S1-S48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2014.682006>
- Ba', S. (2011). Symbolic boundaries: Integration and separation of work and family life. Community, Work & Family, 14, 317–334. doi:10.1080/13668803.2010.520845
- Bengoechea, E. G., & Streat, W. B. (2007). On the interpersonal context of adolescents' sport motivation. Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 8, 195–217. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2006.03.004
- Birke, L. (2007). "Learning to speak horse": The culture of "natural horsemanship". Society & Animals, 15, 217-240.
- Birke, L. (2008). 'Talking about horses: control and freedom in the world of natural horsemanship'. Society and Animals 16, 107–26.
- Cederholm, E. A. (2015). Lifestyle enterprising: The 'ambiguity work' of Swedish horsefarmers. Community, Work & Family, 18(3), 317-333. doi:10.1080/13668803.2014.933091
- Fédération Équestre Internationale. Driving. (2017). Driving. Retrieved from <http://www.fei.org/disciplines/driving>
- Groom. (2017) In Merriam-Webster online. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/groom>

- Hausberger, M., Roche, H., & Visser, E. K. (2008). A review of the human-horse relationship. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 109(1), 1-24. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2007.04.015>
- Hoesly, B., Wood, W., Osmann, E., McDaniel, C., Rose, M., & Finkstrom, R. (2016). A 35-year systematic mapping review of refereed publications on hippotherapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 70(4\_Supplement\_1):7011505151p1. doi: 10.5014/ajot.2016.70S1-PO5020.
- Kielhofner, G. (2008). *Model of human occupation: Theory and application* (4th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Kirksey, S. E. and S. Helmreich (2010). 'The emergence of multispecies ethnography'. *Cultural Anthropology*, 25(4), 545–76.
- Latimer, J., & Birke, L. (2009). Natural relations: Horses, knowledge, technology. *Sociological Review*, 57(1), 1-27. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2008.01802.x
- Maurstad, A., Davis, D., & Cowles, S. (2013). Co-being and intra-action in horse-human relationships: a multi-species ethnography of be(com)ing human and be(com)ing horse. *Social Anthropology*, 21(3), 322-335. doi:10.1111/1469-8676.12029
- Mitchell, T. O., Nesti, M., Richardson, D., Midgley, A. W., Eubank, M., & Littlewood, M. (2014). Exploring athletic identity in elite-level English youth football: a cross-sectional approach. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 32(13), 1294-1299.
- Nagasawa, M., Mogi, K., & Kikusui, T. (2009). Attachment between humans and dogs. *Japanese Psychological Research*, 51(3), 209-221.

- Ng, T. H., & Feldman, D. C. (2009). Occupational embeddedness and job performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30(7), 863-891.
- Phelan, S., & Kinsella, E. A., (2009) Occupational identity: Engaging socio-cultural perspectives. *Journal of Occupational Science*. 16(2).
- Pickens, N. D., & Pizur-Barnekow, K. (2009). Co-occupation: Extending the dialogue. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 16(3), 151-156. doi: 10.1080/14427591.2009.9686656
- Poole, K. (2015). The Contextual Cat: Human-Animal Relations and Social Meaning in Anglo-Saxon England. *Journal of Archaeological Method & Theory*, 22(3), 857-882. doi:10.1007/s10816-014-9208-9
- Ransome, P. (2007). Conceptualizing boundaries between 'life' and 'work'. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18, 374–386. doi:10.1080/09585190601167425
- Rees, T., Haslam, S. A., Coffee, P., & Lavalley, D. (2015). A social identity approach to sport psychology: Principles, practice, and prospects. *Sports Medicine*, 45(8), 1083-1096.
- Spiggle, S. (2008). Making connections: Partner quality, identity, and community. *Journal of Business Research*, 61(5), 455-456. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2007.07.018
- Stanley, M. (2015). Qualitative descriptive: a very good place to start. In S. Nayar & M. Stanley (Eds.), *Qualitative research methodologies for occupational science and therapy* (pp. 21-36). New York, NY: Routledge. doi:9781138283503

United States Equestrian Federation. (2017). Combined driving. Retrieved from  
<https://www.usef.org/compete/disciplines/combined-driving>

Warner, S., Dixon, M. A., & Chalip, L. (2012). The impact of formal versus informal sport: Mapping the differences in sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology, 40*(8), 983-1003.

Wells, D. L. (2009). The Effects of Animals on Human Health and Well-Being. *Journal of Social Issues, 65*(3), 523-543.

## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Application

## Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Application



### Application for Expedited/Full Review

---

#### Instructions:

1. All applications for IRB review must be submitted online by the Principal Investigator.
  2. After completing this application form and all required attachments, access the online submission portal at [eku.infoready4.com](http://eku.infoready4.com). Choose Application for Expedited/Full Review from the list of available opportunities and click the Apply button on the right. If needed, you can filter the category column by Institutional Review Board (Human Subjects Research).
  3. If you are a current ECU employee or student, click the option to log in as an ECU user. Your user name and password are the same as what you use to log in to ECU's network. Your user name is not your email address.
  4. Complete the basic information in the online application and upload this application form and all required attachments in their original file formats (i.e., Microsoft Word documents). Please do not save your files as PDFs.
  5. Upon receipt of a new online application, an IRB administrator will review the submission for completeness and return incomplete applications for updates prior to processing.
  6. Once an application is accepted by an IRB administrator, it will be assigned to the faculty advisor (if the principal investigator is a student) and the department chair for approvals prior to being reviewed by the IRB.
  7. If the IRB reviewers have questions or request updates to the application materials, the principal investigator will be notified by email and asked to resubmit the application online.
  8. Once the IRB has approved the application, the principal investigator will be notified by email.
- 

#### 1. Title of Project:

Horse with Human Co-occupation: Examining the Occupational Identities and Motivations of Grooms in the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Show Circuit

#### 2. Principal Investigator:

Principal Investigator Name: Nicole M. Foright OTS  
Department: Occupational Therapy

#### 3. Faculty Advisor, Committee Members, and Degree Program (required if PI is an ECU student):

Primary Faculty Advisor: Shirley O'Brien Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

Committee Members (required for theses, dissertations, scholarly projects, field experience, or other studies guided by an academic committee):

Melba Custer PhD., OT/L

Kathy Splinter-Watkins MOT, OTR/L, HPCS, FAOTA

Degree Program: Occupational Therapy

**4. Other Investigators:** Identify all other investigators assisting in the study. Attach additional pages if needed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized to obtain consent? Yes No

Responsibility in Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized to obtain consent? Yes No

Responsibility in Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized to obtain consent? Yes No

Responsibility in Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized to obtain consent? Yes No

Responsibility in Project: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Study Period of Performance:** upon IRB approval through February 2018

Note that research may not begin until IRB approval has been granted.

**6. Funding Support:** Is the research study funded by an external or internal grant or contract? Yes No

Funding Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of funding application narrative attached? Yes (required if study is funded)

**7. Risk Category:**

Not greater than minimal risk. Minimal risk is defined as "the probability and magnitude of physical or psychological harm that is normally encountered in



the daily lives, or in the routine medical, dental, or psychological examination of healthy persons.”

- Greater than minimal risk, but of direct benefit to individual participants
- Greater than minimal risk, no direct benefit to individual participants, but likely to yield generalizable knowledge about the subject’s disorder or condition
- Research not otherwise approvable which presents an opportunity to understand, prevent, or alleviate a serious problem affecting the health or welfare of participants

**8. Type of Review:** Expedited Review (complete item #8 below)    Full Review (skip item #8 below)

**9. Expedited Review Categories:** If the proposed study represents not greater than minimal risk, and all activities fall within one or more of the categories below, the study is eligible for expedited review. Please check all applicable categories of research activities below.

- 1)  Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met.
  - (a) Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review.)
  - (b) Research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.
  
- 2)  Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows:
  - (a) From healthy, nonpregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds. For these subjects, the amounts drawn may not exceed 550 ml in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week; or
  - (b) From other adults and children considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects, the collection procedure, the amount of blood to be collected, and the frequency with which it will be collected. For these subjects, the amount drawn may not exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml

per kg in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.

- 3)  Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means. Examples: (a) Hair and nail clippings in a nondisfiguring manner; (b) deciduous teeth at time of exfoliation or if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (c) permanent teeth if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (d) excreta and external secretions (including sweat); (e) uncannulated saliva collected either in an unstimulated fashion or stimulated by chewing gumbase or wax or by applying a dilute citric solution to the tongue; (f) placenta removed at delivery; (g) amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor; (h) supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus, provided the collection procedure is not more invasive than routine prophylactic scaling of the teeth and the process is accomplished in accordance with accepted prophylactic techniques; (i) mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab, or mouth washings; (j) sputum collected after saline mist nebulization.
  
- 4)  Collection of data through noninvasive procedures (not involving general anesthesia or sedation) routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves. Where medical devices are employed, they must be cleared/approved for marketing. (Studies intended to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the medical device are not generally eligible for expedited review, including studies of cleared medical devices for new indications.) Examples: (a) Physical sensors that are applied either to the surface of the body or at a distance and do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy; (b) weighing or testing sensory acuity; (c) magnetic resonance imaging; (d) electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, ultrasound, diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography; (e) moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight, and health of the individual.
  
- 5)  Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis). (Note: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)
  
- 6)  Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

- 7)  Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (Note: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)
- 8)  Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened IRB as follows:
- (a)  Where (i) the research is permanently closed to the enrollment of new subjects; (ii) all subjects have completed all research-related interventions; and (iii) the research remains active only for long-term follow-up of subjects; or
  - (b)  Where no subjects have been enrolled and no additional risks have been identified; or
  - (c)  Where the remaining research activities are limited to data analysis.
- 9)  Continuing review of research, not conducted under an investigational new drug application or investigational device exemption where categories two (2) through eight (8) do not apply but the IRB has determined and documented at a convened meeting that the research involves no greater than minimal risk and no additional risks have been identified.

## **10. Background:**

- a. Provide an introduction and background information for the study and provide a discussion of past research findings leading to this study. Cite literature that forms the scientific basis for the research.**

The proposed ethnographic study seeks to understand the motivations and occupational identities of grooms in the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving show circuit, and how horse with human co-occupations impact grooms. Co-occupations occur when at least two individuals engage together in an occupation. Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow (2009) explain that co-occupations are transformed and identified by aspects of shared physicality, shared emotionality, and shared intentionality. When grooms engage in their daily occupations with horses, together, they participate in co-occupation. The Fédération Équestre Internationale (2017) explains that driving is one of the most spectacular, adrenaline filled equestrian sports. It is an incredible display of fitness and stamina. The work of grooms with the horses create the

foundation that make it all possible. 4-in-Hand Combined Driving requires a team of 4 horses, 2 grooms, and 1 driver that dynamically work together to complete 3 demanding phases at each competition (Combined Driving 2017). Grooms live to care for the horses and their equipment, both at international shows and at various training barns around the world. Grooms work long hard hours often without days off. When traveling, they must pack everything and bring it with them to keep the environment consistent for the horses. It is not a typical time regulated, 40 hour a week, job. Instead, whenever the horses need you, you're there. It is comparable to working on an elite Olympic Sports team.

Purposefully applying Kielhofner's Model of Human Occupation (2008) to frame the interview questions, we seek to find connections between grooms' daily occupations and this theoretical view. This will highlight the relationships experienced through horse and human co-occupation; and its impact on humans' volition, habituation, and performance capacity, all of which are experienced in environment. Utilizing the terminology specified in the American Occupational Therapy Association's Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (2014) will draw connections with therapeutic ADL's, IADL's, and the groom's work of "grooming" the horse, and how these occupations impact overall performance. Hausberger, Roche, Henry, & Visser (2008) discuss the deep and unique pairing of human and horse relationships: how horses and humans interact, and how that connection grows through shared experiences. This information will be used to guide and understand any behavioral observations witnessed from the grooms working directly with the horses. Hausberger, et. al., advocate for further research into proper understanding of this dynamic relationship. Maurstad, Davis, & Cowles (2013) explain an ethnographic study which analyzed data from 60 open-ended interviews from a variety of riders in the Midwestern United States, and Norway. This study devised 3 emerging themes after researching this "co-being" between horses and humans: moments of mutuality, engagement of two different species together, and a domestication of each other by being together. These concepts directly impact grooms experience of occupation, identity, and motivations. This research will attempt to understand grooms as an occupational being, contributing to the current literature by adding breadth to the research pool.

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2014). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process (3rd ed.). American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 68(Suppl. 1), S1-S48.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2014.682006>

Combined Driving. (2017). Retrieved from  
<https://www.usef.org/compete/resources-forms/disciplines/combined-driving>

Fédération Équestre Internationale. (2017). Driving. Retrieved from <http://www.fei.org/disciplines/driving>

Hausberger, M., Roche, H., & Visser, E. K. (2008). A review of the human-horse relationship. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 109(1), 1-24. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2007.04.015>

Kielhofner, G. (2008). *Model of human occupation theory and application* (4th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams &Wilkins.

Maurstad, A., Davis, D., & Cowles, S. (2013). Co-being and intra-action in horse-human relationships: a multi-species ethnography of be(com)ing human and be(com)ing horse. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, 21(3), 322-335. doi:10.1111/1469-8676.12029

Pickens, N. D., & Pizur-Barnekow, K. (2009). Co-occupation: Extending the dialogue. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 16(3), 151-156. doi: 10.1080/14427591.2009.9686656

## **11. Research Objectives:**

### **a. List the research objectives.**

The grand question that this research seeks to address is: What occupational identities and internal motivations do individuals that work as grooms for the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving show circuit experience during horse with human co-occupations?

This research will seek to understand the co-occupations between horses and humans through evaluating the life of International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Grooms; as well as, utilize the Model of Human Occupation to frame our data collection to find if a relationship exists between those co-occupations and their impact on occupational identities and motivations of grooms.

## **12. Subject Population:**

**a. What criteria will be used to determine the *inclusion* of participants in the study?**

Adults over the age 18, full time groom, travel with the horses yearly, have worked their current job over a year, work for an elite 4-in-hand team with global recognition

**b. What criteria will be used to determine the *exclusion* of participants in the study?**

Persons under the age of 18, grooms with less than one year experience, work for a driver other than 4-in-hand team, only work part time, only work at shows or only work in the main stables, must be fluent speaking English

**c. Anticipated Number of Participants (*maximum*): 10**

**d. Age Range of Participants: 18-65**

**e. Gender of Participants:** Male Female or Gender not relevant to study

**f. Ethnicity of Participants:** \_\_\_\_\_ or Ethnicity not relevant to study

**g. Health Status of Participants:** \_\_\_\_\_ or Health status not relevant to study

**h. Which of the following categories of subject will be included in the study? Please check all that apply.**

1.  Adult Volunteers
2.  College Students age 18 and older
3.  Minors (under age 18) – attach Form M
4.  Pregnant Women (other than by chance)
5.  Fetuses/Neonates

- 6.  Hospital Patients
- 7.  Patients at Inpatient Mental Health Facilities
- 8.  Decisionally-Impaired Individuals – attach Form I
- 9.  Institutionalized Decisionally-Impaired Individuals – attach Form I
- 10.  Prisoners – attach Form P
- 11.  Other – Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Project Location:**

**a. Where will the study take place?**

At various Combined Driving horse shows during spring and summer 2017

**b. If the study will take place at a location other than EKU, attach a letter from an authorized representative of the organization granting permission to use facility for research purposes.**

EKU only     Letter(s) attached

**c. Will any data be collected through organizations other than Eastern Kentucky University?**

No     Yes, complete the following:

- Will personnel of the organization be involved in the data collection process or have access to data after collection?  No     Yes - If yes, list personnel on page 1, include copies of CITI completion reports, and define role here:

\_\_\_\_\_

**14. Recruitment of Participants:**

**a. How will prospective participants be identified for recruitment into the study?**

Snowball sampling; through my experience in this culture from previous work in the equine industry, I have identified a few gatekeepers that I can ask to identify grooms to start this study. From those grooms, I will ask for other suggestions for grooms to interview.

**b. Describe the recruitment procedures to be used with potential participants.**

All potential subjects' involvement in this study will be voluntary and they can choose to end their involvement in the study at any time. The first participant will be found through the gatekeepers mentioned in section 14 a. and recruited using a Verbal Recruitment Script. Upon conclusion of their interview, they will be asked to pass on flyers to other potential subjects they may know.

**c. Recruitment materials to be used:** Check all that will be used and attach copies:

None   Advertisement   Flyer   Telephone Script   Verbal Recruitment Script   Cover Letter   Other:

**15. Ensuring Voluntary Participation**

**a. Who will be responsible for seeking the informed consent of participants?**

The student researcher, Nicole Foright.

**b. What procedures will be followed to ensure that potential participants are informed about the study and made aware that their decision to participate is voluntary?**

This will be disclosed before participation in research through the Verbal Recruitment Script, and during the completion of the Informed Consent Form before the interview.

**c. How will consent be documented?**

Consent will be obtained through participants' signature on Informed Consent Form, and confidentiality will be discussed orally before the interview and they will be asked to choose a pseudonym.



**d. What consent documents will be used in the study? (Attach copies of all).**

Informed Consent Form    Parent/Guardian Permission Form    Child/Minor Assent Form    Oral Script

Other:

**16. Research Procedures**

- a. Describe in detail the research procedures to be followed that pertain to the human participants.** Be specific about what you will do and how you will do it. If applicable, differentiate between standard/routine procedures not conducted for research purposes from those that will be performed specifically for this study.

The first participant will be found utilizing gatekeepers' suggestions in the community and a Verbal Recruitment Script. All other participants will be found via snowball sampling and the Verbal Recruitment Script. Subjects will then be presented with an Informed Consent Form to read and sign before the interview is conducted. The interviews will be around 30 minutes-2 hours, and are semi-structured following the interview questions attached to this document. They will be recorded using both phone and computer audio recordings, and may be completed in multiple sessions to accommodate the grooms' busy show schedules. Concluding the interview, the participants will be asked for permission using a Photo and Video Release Form to be photographed and observed while participating in their daily co-occupations with horses. These photos and observations will be used as research material only to triangulate data. Information from interviews by subjects who choose to not be observed or photographed will still be utilized in study. Photographs will be used as visual artifacts in data. Observation data will be recorded through written fieldnotes, and audio logs. Interviews will be transcribed verbatim, and then shared via email with each participant individually for member checking. They will be asked to read and approve of the transcription, as well as to add any additional information they deem necessary. All data will then be compiled and coded, concluding with abstracting both collective and individual themes that emerge.

**17. Potential Risks**

- a. Describe any potential risks**—physical, psychological, social, legal, or other.

To the best of our knowledge, this research will have no more risk of harm than what the subject would experience in everyday life.

**b. What procedures will be followed to protect against or minimize any potential risks?**

Pseudonyms of participants' names will be used. All photographs will be taken at angles to have their face obscured. While at the show all data will stay with me or in a locked case. Upon return to the university, all information will remain locked in a cabinet in the Disney building in which only the research team will have access. All researchers' computers are password protected and emails are encrypted. All information written, printed, audio and video files will be destroyed after the retention period has ended.

**c. How are risks reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefit to participants and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result?**

This research is minimal risk and the information gathered from this study outweighs the potential risks.

**d. Will alternative choices be made available to participants who choose not to participate?**

No   Yes, Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**18. Incentives and Research Related Costs**

**a. Will incentives be offered to participants?** No   Yes, complete the following items:

- 1) What incentives will be offered? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) If monetary compensation will be offered, indicate how much the participants will be paid and describes the terms of payment. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Describe the method of ensuring that the incentives will not compel individuals to agree to participate in the study. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Describe how the incentives will be funded. \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Will there be any costs to the subjects for participating?**  No  Yes:  
Describe any costs that would be the responsibility of the subjects as a consequence of their participation in the research. \_\_\_\_\_

### **19. Research Materials, Records, and Confidentiality**

- a. What materials will be used for the research process?** Include a description of both data collected through the study as well as other data accessed for the study.

Data collection will include: audio files from interviews with typed verbatim transcriptions, hand written and audio logged data and typed transcriptions from observations, photographs of grooms with horses, also emails for member checking will be printed.

- b. Who will have access to the data?** If anyone outside the research team will have access to the data, provide a justification and include a disclaimer in consent documents.

Only the research team. No outside personnel.

- c. Describe how and where research records will be stored.** Note that all research-related records must be maintained for a period of three years from the study's completion and are subject to audit. Following the completion of the study and throughout the records retention period, student research records must be maintained by the faculty advisor who signs the application.

Data collected from participants will be kept on a separate password protected flash drive within a locked office. Only the researcher will have access to this information. Any paper copies of data will be kept within a locked file within a locked office to which only the Principle Investigator has access. Electronic data will be kept for 3 years on the password protected flash drive in a locked office after the conclusion of the project. At that time, all data will be wiped/destroyed. Upon completion of the study, research records will be stored on campus by my faculty advisor, Dr. Shirley O'Brien.

- d. How will data be destroyed at the end of the records retention period** (i.e., shredding paper documents, deleting electronic files, physically destroying audio/video recordings)?

Shredding paper documents, and deleting all electronic files both audio and written will be completed after retention period. This includes photos, observation data, and interview data.

- e. Describe procedures for maintaining the confidentiality of human subjects data.**

Subjects will be informed that all information will be kept confidential prior to data collection, and they will be asked to choose a pseudonym. Data will then be coded and pseudonyms will be used in place of subjects' names. All information will be kept locked until the retention period has expired, and then destroyed.

**20. Application Components** *(Check all items that are included):*

A completed application package must include the following:

- Application Form
- CITI Training Completion Reports for all investigators, key personnel, and faculty advisors
- If applicable: Form M: Research Involving Minors/Children
- If applicable: Form P: Research Involving Prisoners
- If applicable: Form I: Research Involving Decisionally-Impaired Individuals
- If applicable: Form W: Research Involving Wards of the State
- If applicable: recruitment materials (i.e., advertisements, flyers, telephone scripts, verbal recruitment scripts, cover letters, etc.)
- If applicable: Consent form (required in most all cases), assent form (for subjects who are minors), and parent/guardian permission form (if subjects are minors)
- If applicable: Instrument(s) to be used for data collection (i.e., questionnaire, interview questions, or assessment scales)
- If applicable: grant/contract proposal narrative (required if study is funded)
- If applicable: letter(s) granting permission to use off-campus facility for research

## Appendix B: Authorization Letter

## Appendix B: Authorization Letter

Re: Live Oak CDE

Danielle Aamodt <danielleaamodt@gmail.com>   Reply all |  DA

Yesterday, 11:01 PM

Foright, Nicole M.

Nicole,

As the Event Secretary, representing the Organizing committee for Live Oak CDE, I authorize your request. You may perform research on the show grounds, understanding that those who volunteer to participate will be doing so on their own accord & can opt out at any time. We like to encourage the exposure of our sport. Please accept this email as our approval for your project, in accordance with EKU.

Thank you and good luck. We hope you enjoy being at our Event!

Kind regards,

Danielle Aamodt, Show Secretary  
Live Oak International CDE  
March 7-12, 2017  
Ocala, FL

On Wed, Feb 22, 2017 at 12:03 PM, Foright, Nicole M.  
<[nicole\\_foright@mymail.eku.edu](mailto:nicole_foright@mymail.eku.edu)> wrote:

Hello,

My name is Nicole Foright. I have attached a letter requesting authorization to conduct research for my master's thesis utilizing the show grounds at the Live Oak CDE in Ocala, FL.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nicole Foright

## Appendix C: Consent to Participate in a Research Study

## Appendix C: Consent to Participate in a Research Study



### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

#### **Horse with Human Co-occupation: Examining the Occupational Identities and Motivations of Grooms in the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Show Circuit**

##### **Why am I being asked to participate in this research?**

You are being invited to take part in a research study about your occupations as a groom. You are being invited to participate in this study because you work as a full-time groom, travel with the horses yearly, have worked your current job over a year, and work for an elite 4-in-hand team with global recognition. If you take part in this study, you will be one of up to 10 people to do so.

##### **Who is doing the study?**

The person in charge of this study is Nicole Foright at Eastern Kentucky University. She is being guided in this research by Shirley O'Brien Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

##### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of this study is to examine the horse with human co-occupations experienced by grooms, to better understand their occupational identities, and motivations. Understanding the whole experience of horse with human co-occupations, and more specifically, how these co-occupations impact people who make a living from interacting with horses and who identify themselves as "grooms", will add necessary theoretical and occupation based research into the field of Hippotherapy. By doing this study, we hope to learn more about your occupational experiences as a groom, and what factors influence your occupational identities, and internal motivations

##### **Where is the study going to take place and how long will it last?**

The research procedures will be conducted at the Live Oak CDE in Ocala, FL. You will need to come to a mutually agreed upon location on the show grounds, one or more times during the study until the interview is complete. This visit will take about 1-2 hour(s) total, but I am willing to break it into 30 minute parts to accommodate your schedule. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is once, long enough to complete the interview.

##### **What will I be asked to do?**

As a participant in this study you will be asked to answer a series of 27 questions about your work as a groom. This information will be documented using audio files being recorded on both an audio recorder and a computer. If you grant further consent with the separate attached Photo/Video Release Form, your work may be subjected to



observation after the interview. This observation will not get prevent you from completing your tasks as a groom, and you may ask me to leave at any time. This will occur while engaging in your daily co-occupations with the horses. You can still participate in the interview without granting consent for the Photo/Video release.

**Are there reasons why I should not take part in this study?**

You should not partake in this study if you are under the age of 18, or do NOT meet the following criteria: work as a full time groom, travel with the horses yearly, have worked your current job over a year, work for an elite 4-in-hand team with global recognition, and speak English fluently.

**What are the possible risks and discomforts?**

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

You may, however, experience a previously unknown risk or side effect.

**Will I benefit from taking part in this study?**

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study.

**Do I have to take part in this study?**

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

**If I don't take part in this study, are there other choices?**

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except to not take part in the study.

**What will it cost me to participate?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

**Will I receive any payment or rewards for taking part in the study?**

You will not receive any payment or reward for taking part in this study.

**Who will see the information I give?**

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about this combined information. You will not be identified in these written materials. Pseudonyms will be utilized to maintain confidentiality, and any contextual information that may give away your identity to your community, will be omitted.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from the information you give, and pseudonyms will replace it. All research materials will be kept in my mentor's office in the Disney building, at ECU under lock and key.

However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court. Also, we may be required to show information that identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as Eastern Kentucky University.

**Can my taking part in the study end early?**

If you decide to take part in the study, you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to participate. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to end your participation in the study. They may do this if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons.

**What happens if I get hurt or sick during the study?**

If you believe you are hurt or if you get sick because of something that is done during the study, you should call Nicole Foright at 859-321-2978, immediately. It is important for you to understand that Eastern Kentucky University will not pay for the cost of any care or treatment that might be necessary because you get hurt or sick while taking part in this study. That cost will be your responsibility. Also, Eastern Kentucky University will not pay for any wages you may lose if you are harmed by this study.

**What if I have questions?**

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Nicole Foright by cell 859-321-2978, or by email [nicole\\_foright@mymail.eku.edu](mailto:nicole_foright@mymail.eku.edu) . If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the Division of Sponsored Programs at Eastern Kentucky University at 859-622-3636. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

**What else do I need to know?**

You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your condition or influence your willingness to continue taking part in this study.

*I have thoroughly read this document, understand its contents, have been given an opportunity to have my questions answered, and agree to participate in this research study.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person taking part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person providing information to subject

## Appendix D: Verbal Recruitment Script to Participate in a Research Study

## Appendix D: Verbal Recruitment Script to Participate in a Research Study



### Verbal Recruitment Script to Participate in a Research Study

#### Horse with Human Co-occupation: Examining the Occupational Identities and Motivations of

#### Grooms in the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Show Circuit

**Hello, my name is Nicole Foright. I am an Occupational Therapy student at Eastern Kentucky University working on my thesis.**

I was wondering if you would be interested in taking part in a research study about your occupations as a groom. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about four people to do so. All you would need to do is take an hour or two, at your convenience, to meet with me for an interview to talk about your life as a groom. All information that you provide will remain completely confidential and the data will only be reviewed by myself, my mentor Shirley O'Brien, and 2 other committee members.

Is this something you would be interested in? Yes or No?

You are being invited to participate in this study because to my understanding you work as a full time groom, travel with the horses yearly, have worked your current job over a year, and work for an elite 4-in-hand team with global recognition, so please let me know if any of that information is inaccurate. I can restate them if you need.

\*If subject meets criteria: ask if they have any questions prior to the study, schedule meeting and thank them for their time.

\*If subject does not meet criteria: inform them they will not be able to participate in the study, thank them for their time and consideration.

## Appendix E: Interview Questions

## Appendix E: Interview Questions



### Interview Questions

#### **Horse with Human Co-occupation: Examining the Occupational Identities and Motivations of Grooms in the International 4-in-Hand Combined Driving Show Circuit**

1. What would you consider your role in the barn?
2. Tell me about what a normal day is like.
3. Identify what being a "groom" means to you?
4. Would you consider yourself a "horse person"? Why or why not?
5. What is something that you think is important for non-"horse people" to understand?
6. What are some things that set your job apart from non-horse related jobs?
7. Is there a specific horse that you have a deeper connection with in the barn than the others?
8. Explain to me your beliefs about your physical, intellectual, and social abilities as a groom.
9. How effective do you think you are?
10. What are some things that you value about your job?
11. What first drew your interest to work with horses?
12. Explain some of your daily habits.
13. Do you have any noticeable routines? If so, what are they?
14. What causes change to your habits? How do you manage this change?
15. Identify some roles in your life.
16. What is the most important role in your life out of that list?
17. How do you think you perform as a groom?
18. How do you think others perceive your performance as a groom?

19. How do you utilize your mind while working?
20. How do you know what to do?
21. How does the environment effect your work?
22. Explain to me how you use space and objects with your job.
23. Are there social groups in the Combined Driving world?
24. Would you consider Combined Driving its own culture? Why or why not?
25. Do you think you will always work with horses? Why or why not?
26. What motivates to do your job when you're having a hard day?
27. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

## Appendix F: Journal Submission Requirements



## Appendix F: Journal Submission Requirements

### *Manuscript Length*

Articles should be no longer than 7,000 words (including references).

### Manuscript Structure

All manuscripts should be typed double-spaced, with generous margins, and left justified.

The elements of the manuscript should be in the following order:

Title

Author, author's affiliation—including faculty, department or institute, university, full mailing address, and author's e-mail address:

Abstract

Keywords

Body of text

Endnotes

References

Tables

Figures

The journal makes use of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 2010) and, for additional style guidance, *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th ed.) ([chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](http://chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html)).

### *Abstract and Keywords*

Manuscripts should include a short abstract of 120–150 words maximum, as well as up to five or six keywords. In the abstract, the active voice should be used, with no use of the first person (“I” or “we”).

### *Headings*

All headings are flush left.

**The First Level Heading**

*The Second Level Heading*

### *Text Citation*

In the text, use the author's last name followed by comma, year of publication, and page number if any material is a quotation.

Jones (2005) writes the following:

The animals in the circus gave their trainers an ultimatum (Jones, 2005).