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**Are views regarding show horse welfare influenced by owners perceived locus of control**L. BRIZGYS<sup>1,\*</sup>, M. VOIGT<sup>2</sup>, C. HELESKI<sup>3</sup>, L. PFEIFFER<sup>1</sup>, C. BRADY<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Purdue University, Youth Development and Agricultural Education, West Lafayette, IN, USA<sup>2</sup>Iowa State University, Extension 4-H Youth Development Program Specialist, Ames, IA, USA<sup>3</sup>University of Kentucky, Ag Equine Programs, Animal and Food Sciences, Lexington, KY, USA\*Corresponding author: [lbrizgys@purdue.edu](mailto:lbrizgys@purdue.edu)

Management of show horses dedicated to competition frequently limits natural behaviors and meeting of needs. To advance the improvement of show horse welfare, an understanding of human psychological characteristics underlying behaviors that impact owner decision making must be established and evaluated. In this study, the Locus of Control theory identified by Julian Rotter (1966) was employed. Rotter posits that an individual can have an internal or external locus of control, which has an impact on their interactions with the world. The aim of this study was to explore relationships between individuals' locus of control and show horse welfare as a potential variable contributing to opinions regarding show horse welfare in America. A digital survey from 956 respondents regarding welfare beliefs and locus of control was analyzed via anonymous Qualtrics survey distribution methods. Cronbach's Alpha for 24 locus of control and 111 welfare items, selected for the scope of this study, were 0.845 and 0.775 respectively. Multiple regression analysis was used between locus of control and individuals' perceptions of show horse welfare. Internal loci of control directed towards the individual's ability to lead (Beta=0.034,  $P<0.0001$ ) and goal achievement through hard work (Beta=0.036,  $P=0.003$  or better  $P<0.01$ ) significantly predicted perceptions of show horse welfare. Two identified variables represent factors that relate to an individual's perceived control of working with show horses. The results support the hypothesis that individual tendencies towards an internal or external locus of control has an effect on aspects of horse management that effect on how individuals contribute to a horse's welfare.

**Keywords:** show horse; locus of control; perception; training; management; welfare

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**How Australian horse owners determine if their horses have their social and behavioral needs met: findings from a mixed-methods survey of 505 horse owners**

K. THOMPSON\*

Central Queensland University Appleton Institute, 44 Greenhill Road, Wayville, South Australia, 5034, Australia

\*Corresponding author: [kirrilly.thompson@cqu.edu.au](mailto:kirrilly.thompson@cqu.edu.au)

To understand how Australian horse owners and carers determine the health and welfare of their horses, two questions were included in a national online survey designed by the Australian Horse Industry Council and completed by a convenience sample of 505 Australian horse owners in 2012 and 2013. Around half (56%) the participants strongly agreed that their horse had its social and behavioral needs met completely, as evidenced by: the provision of unmediated company with another horse (59%), living in a paddock (36%) and having mediated contact with another horse (24%). A subsidiary question asking where improvements could be made was addressed by 126 participants who considered the following important to equine well-being: competitions and outings; training and work; interaction with humans; and experiences that would occur 'in nature'. Findings provide the basis for a theoretical discussion of the politics of 'nature' and anthropomorphism. In some instances, interpreting horses as being 'like' humans motivated horse keeping practices largely considered

positive (such as providing conspecific companionship). However, there were also instances where interpreting horses as being 'like' humans motivated practices potentially negative or stressful (such as training and outings). Findings suggest that the relationship between anthropomorphism and equine welfare is not necessarily negative and may even be advantageous. There may be benefits in developing an education and communications framework based around human-horse similarity and difference as part of the public communication of Equitation Science.

**Keywords:** welfare; anthropomorphism; survey; social; behavioral; education

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**Does leadership relate to social order in groups of horses and can it be transferred to human–horse interactions?**E. HARTMANN<sup>1,\*</sup>, J.W. CHRISTENSEN<sup>2</sup>, P.D. MCGREEVY<sup>3</sup><sup>1</sup>Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Animal Environment and Health, Uppsala, Sweden<sup>2</sup>Aarhus University, Department of Animal Science, Tjele, Denmark<sup>3</sup>Sydney School of Veterinary Science (B19), University of Sydney, Australia\*Corresponding author: [Elke.Hartmann@slu.se](mailto:Elke.Hartmann@slu.se)

A prevalent, traditional approach to horse-training is based on the belief that human dominance and leadership over horses is required to gain their respect and compliance. However, this denies the horses' complex social organisation and the many factors determining rank. Hierarchies often manifest during resource competition which is usually absent in training. Furthermore, studies have shown that leadership is not unique to the highest ranked or oldest horse of the group but that any horse can act as leader (initiating group movement). Thus, the relevance of incorporating such concepts into human-horse dyads is probably low. This is supported by empirical data on four groups of Icelandic horses and Standardbreds (5 horses/group), studied during different tests at pasture (novel object/surface, competition for food) to determine if movement initiators were distinguished by rank. Horses could leave a pen (15x13m) to explore four objects (umbrella, pool noodles, doll, blanket), traverse four surfaces (plastic tarpaulin [PT] folded; PT unfolded; PT with traffic cones; PT with taped crosses) and feed during four limited resource tests. Data revealed that highest-ranked horses initiated movement in only 6% of 48 tests. The latency to leave the pen did not differ between the highest (Mean 330 secs  $\pm$  134 SE) and all lower-ranked horses (258  $\pm$  89;  $W=36$ ,  $P>0.05$ ). Thus, rank did not predict leaders, nor was movement initiation consistent across test contexts. An understanding of horses' social behavior is therefore more reliable in safeguarding horse welfare than translating dominance and leadership constructs into training.

**Keywords:** equine; human; behavior; dominance; leader; training

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**The influence of equine behavior in the language of teaching and learning equestrian sports**

C.A. HALL\*

Online Horse College 392, Bribie Island Road, Caboolture 4510, Australia

\*Corresponding author: [Cristine@onlinehorsecollege.com](mailto:Cristine@onlinehorsecollege.com)

Ongoing research in Equitation Science has advanced our understanding of equine behavior to improve the wellbeing of horses that are trained for equestrian sports. Teaching equestrian sports is considered by equestrians to be different to teaching other sports because the horse, as a sentient being, is present. However, to date, there has been little research that has identified if, how, or when the behavior of the horse may impact or influence the ways that equestrian coaches teach. Results from a (qualitative) thematic analysis of 26 coach observations and eight coach interviews suggest that some,