Why Do People Own Horses? The Experiences of Highly Involved Dressage Horse Owners in the United Kingdom

Darcy Bornemann

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Abstract

Horse ownership is simplistically defined through the possession of a horse; however, the logistics of keeping horses and using horses are evidenced as far more complex than the mere ownership of an object. Although it is understood horses and humans develop a relationship built on a mutual communication system, the horse is more the focus of the relationship than the human despite humans' position of power as the possessor. The existing areas of research seek to describe the equestrian population, the physiology and biomechanics of the horse rider, and the culture of human-horse relationships. Missing from these, however, is the underlying motivation to own horses, because humans can access horses without ownership. This thesis uses an inductive qualitative approach to investigate the motivations for dressage horse ownership (because equestrians appear to self-segregate by competitive discipline). Twenty-one highly involved dressage horse owners ranging in age, experience, and professional affiliation with horses were interviewed. Two core themes emerged. The core theme 'Getting Into Horses' is composed of people's discussions around becoming horse owners and has two motivation themes: 'Always Wanted' and 'Securing the Horse'. Respectively, these comprise people's attraction to horses and how they first became horse owners. The core theme of 'Horse-Human Interaction' is composed of people's discussion regarding their interactions with the horses they own and contains two motivation themes: 'Caregiving' and 'Using the Horse'. Respectively, these cover how caring for the horse is motiving and how riding and training is motivating for ownership. All the themes come together to form a novel theory of horse ownership motivation. The horse ownership theory is explained by utilising four other theories. Biophilia explains the initial attraction to horses. Self-determination theory explains how horse ownership is fulfilling of humans' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Attachment theory and achievement goal theory work in conjunction with self-determination theory to further explain why human-horse interactions are fulfilling of relatedness and competency needs. Horse ownership is motivated by the ability to control the decision-making regarding the horse, which becomes important as humans begin interacting with horses and experience satisfaction through their subsequent relationship with the horse. Furthermore, ownership protects the human-horse relationship because ownership provides the power to control decision-making.

Declaration of Original Content

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Author: Darcy Jean Bornemann

Signed …….

Date ……..29.01.2020…..……

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To my parents – Thank you, for everything. There are not enough words...

A heartfelt thank you to all of my interview participants who gave of their time and freely spoke of their horse ownership experience, especially those who opened their door to a complete stranger and trusted in me enough to recommend their friends. Your stories are the heart of this study. I hope I did them and you justice.

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Preface

Reflexive Declaration of Researcher Involvement in the Study

It would probably seem counterintuitive to say this research was completed by someone not interested in doing research. And indeed, that is how this thesis began its life. Its existence three years after inception is representative of how curiosity about people and a love of horses grew into a deep affection for horse owners—a group with whom I identify. I am a horse owner.

My equestrian career started with riding lessons, and I later became an instructor. I studied equestrianism at the undergraduate level, then horses at master's level, and taught at university level on equestrian-themed programmes. I moved from the USA to the UK in 2009 and brought my beloved equine partner (Joker) on the journey with me. Life continued on, and working in academia one eventually needs a doctoral degree to progress, and so I started a doctoral programme full-time in July 2016.

Working in an academic world obsessed with horses (understandably) I was always drawn to frustrations of 'traditionalism' in equestrianism. Working in equestrian subjects in academia, I met a lot of horse owners and saw 'traditionalism' at work. Each year I would teach about horse nutrition, and each year I would watch every group of students pass the module but fail to apply the principles outside the classroom with their own horses. At the time, a lecture hall and practical seminars seemed a powerful platform to influence lots of positive change to horses, but it seems in reality they were pretty ineffective.

I took this idea with me to my doctoral project thinking perhaps horse ownership had to do with the types of horse owners. I could create a horse owner typology that could better inform how to pitch information to make it more effective. In trying to formulate a study to do this, it turned out there was not that much out there about horse owners, and thus the question of 'why people own horses', arose. I hope this line of inquiry forms a foundation for answering other questions about horse owners.

Through the process I have developed my research voice and wish to use it as an advocate for horse owners. I hope you enjoy reading this thesis as much as I enjoyed creating it and discover an appreciation for horse owners and their horses.

Darcy Murphy, Gloucestershire UK, October 2019

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BD	-	British Dressage – UK national governing body for competitive dressage
BEF	-	British Equestrian Federation – UK national governing body for a wide range of equestrian activities
BETA	-	British Equestrian Trade Association
BHIC	-	British Horse Industry Confederation
BHS	-	British Horse Society
CIEH	-	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
DEFRA	-	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
e.g.	-	*exempli gratia* (for the sake of example)
et al.	-	*et alia* (and others)
etc.	-	*et cetera* (and other similar things)
FEI	-	Fédération Equestre Internationale – the international governing body for seven equestrian disciplines and two para-equestrian disciplines
HSE	-	Health and Safety Executive
i.e.	-	*id est* (in other words)
NHRI	-	Newmarket Horseracing Industry
ROA	-	Racehorse Owners Association
SDT	-	Self-Determination Theory

Glossary

affiliated	-	An equestrian competition or activity associated with and regulated by one of the national governing bodies.
bolt(ing)	-	Where the horse accelerates quickly and unexpectedly as if fleeing imminent danger.
bond	-	A human's perception of a positive relationship with another social actor which is great personal importance and emotional investment.
CDI3*	-	A ranking of an international dressage competition for senior riders regulated by the (FEI). The highest international rank is 5*.
colic	-	Describes abdominal pain in horses, usually associated with the digestive tract. Can be life-threatening.
dressage	-	An equestrian discipline requiring the horse and rider to perform a prescribed pattern of different movements on flat ground. During a competition, each movement is scored individually by one or more judges. As the competitive level increases so does the technicality of the pattern, difficulty of movements, and number of judges. Some competitions require patterns set to music.
eventer	-	1. A person who rides a horse in the discipline of eventing. 2. A horse used primarily for competing in the discipline of eventing.
eventing	-	An equestrian discipline comprised of the three separate disciplines: dressage, cross-country, and show jumping. In competition it is intended to test the horses' obedience, stamina, and power, and traditionally takes place over three days, starting with dressage, then cross-country, and then show-jumping.
hack	-	To ride the horse down the road or off-road through the countryside.
interaction	-	Single incidences of behavioural exchanges between individuals.
mucking out	-	Removal of horse excrement and soiled bedding from a stable. Also includes the addition of clean, dry bedding material, tidying of the bed through sweeping, and provision of food and clean water as required.
on-the-bit	-	A physical connection between the horse and rider when the horse is ridden. It is characterised by the horse adopting and maintaining a steady posture, where the front plain of their face is perpendicular or near perpendicular to the ground (i.e. on the vertical), neck is arched, and the horse appears to move forward with fluidity, energy and balance.

put-down	-	When a horse is humanely euthanized.
reins	-	Strips of sturdy material connected to the horse's bit (or head). Traditionally used by the human to communicate turning and stopping.
relationship	-	The result of a series of interactions and can be negative or positive.
rug	-	Horse clothing – either for wearing in the stable or outside to keep warm. Used as both a noun (a rug) and a verb (to rug).
rugging	-	To put on or change a horse's rug.
schooling session	-	To ride the horse practicing specific skills and patterns of movements often in an arena, ménage, or other designated space.
tank-off	-	Similar to bolt(ing) but with a connotation the horse is running away with the rider for reasons other than fear.
unaffiliated	-	An equestrian competition not recognised by or associated with one of the national governing bodies. Competitions are still likely to run under the affiliated rulebook.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis

1.1 Introduction to Chapter 1

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis. It opens with the aim of the research project and the objectives used to guide the investigation of the research question 'Why do people own horses?' and the rationale for the study. This chapter includes the outcomes of an initial literature review underpinning the design of the study, the methodology, and the method, and it concludes with an outline of the rest of the thesis structure.

1.2 The Research Domain

This research is situated within the consumer behaviour field. As a research field, consumer behaviour is inclusive of economics, behaviourism, psychology, and sociology. In the context of this research, all perspectives will be touched on at times, but psychology will be predominately used to explain horse ownership. In this thesis the horse owner is the consumer, and the product being consumed is the horse's ability and the human-horse relationship.

1.3 The Research Questions

This research focuses on answering the question: Why do people own horses?

- What motivates people to participate in the equine industry as a dressage horse owner?
- What keeps people motivated to continue to be dressage horse owners?

1.4 The Research Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate experiences of horse owners in the dressage discipline, ascertaining their motivations to own horses for the purpose of providing a novel explanation of dressage horse ownership that contributes to the understanding of the consumption of horses and horse owner-related activities of the equine industry in the United Kingdom.

1.5 The Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To critically analyse the theoretical concepts related to horse ownership,
2. To inductively explore the experiences of dressage horse owners for their motivations to own horses,

3. To critically analyse the experiences of dressage horse owners for their motivations to own horses, and

4. To critically analyse motivations of dressage horse owners' emergent from the inductive investigation, in relation to existing theory, knowledge, and any relevant equine industry dressage horse owner related activities.

1.6 Defining 'Consumption'

Consumption is defined in this thesis as the acquisition, use, and disposal of products as explored in marketing and consumer literature (e.g. Belk 1988; Hirshmann, 1994; Belk, 2010).

1.7 Defining 'The Horse as a Product'

The definition of the horse as a product within this thesis is confined to the horse as an entity (e.g. the animal), the horse's ability (e.g. physical or temperamental aptitude for an activity), and the human-horse interactions associated with human-horse relationships (e.g. companionship). These are concepts on which equestrian research focuses as outlined in Section 1.11. For clarity, the thesis does not deal with consumption of the horse as a food product or other material products produced from the physical, biological parts of the horse.

1.8 Defining 'Horse Owner'

This thesis defines 'horse owner' as the person with the legal responsibility for the animal as stated by the Animal Welfare Act, (2006) Section 3, paragraph 3 and named as owner in the horse's passport in compliance with Horse Passport Regulations (2009).

1.9 Defining 'Highly Involved' in Relation to Horse Ownership

This definition builds on the definition of the horse owner above by differentiating horse owners according to their interaction with their horse. The interaction is based on the number of role titles the horse owner adopts in addition to 'horse owner' and fits on a continuum from low involvement to high involvement adapted from Stone's (1984) behavioural marketing characteristics (Figure 1). The more relevant a product is to an individual, or the more decision-making that is required, the more involved a consumer is presumed to be (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003). Thus, the more role titles a participant adopts (e.g. groom,

Behavioural Involvement of Horse Owners

Figure 1 *Behavioural involvement of horse owners based on Stone (1984) behavioural marketing characteristics of involvement.*

manager, trainer, etc.), the more highly involved they are presumed to be because of the increased opportunities for decision-making and one-to-one interaction with the horse. All participants in this study perceived themselves as filling at least three or more roles in relation to their horse.

1.10 The Rationale

The proposed outcomes of this research address continuing concerns raised by Robinson (1999), van Weeren (2008), Thompson and Haigh (2018), and Thompson and Clarkson (2019) about a lack of knowledge about horse owners' decision-making or perceptions and horse owners' apparent reluctance to adopt new information or evidence-based practices. Their presumption is the lack of adoption of new or evidence-based practices or information by horse owners is detrimental to horse welfare—a core equine industry concern (BEF Strategy, 2015; BHS, 2019). Specifically, van Weeren (2008) argues the notion of traditionalism in equestrian culture as a barrier where "*the essentials of horsemanship and the rules for horse husbandry may not have changed for millennia*" and these "*traditions and unchallenged dogmas…have been passed through many generations of horsemen*" (p. 289). More recently, Thompson and Haigh (2018) suggest the barrier may be a perception of specific practices as overly mechanistic.

Robinson (1999) makes a general call for a better understanding of horse owners and the 'human' side of the horse-human relationship (p. 45). Additionally, horses and horse-related activities are dangerous (see Ball et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2015). Therefore, those engaging with and managing horses require specialised and continued education to encourage best practice in keeping with published welfare standards (see DEFRA, 2017) and to support safe horse-human interactions (Hausberger et al., 2008; Hasler et al., 2011).

1.10.1 Reasons for focusing on horse owners

Each horse is attached to a human—an owner. Even feral horses live on lands managed by humans with some organisation having responsibility for managing their land and population control. In the United Kingdom, the owner is the legal party responsible for the animal and has a duty of care to provide the animal with basic needs (i.e. food, shelter, companionship, expression of natural behaviour, and freedom from fear, distress, and disease) outlined in the Animal Welfare Act (2006). Horse owners can provide for the needs themselves or arrange for others to meets the needs of the animal.

According to the British Equestrian Trade Association (2019), there are approximately 374,000 horse-owning households in the United Kingdom (UK). They form a part of the UK equine industry, which has an estimated economic value of £8 billion Gross Output (BETA, 2015). Horse owners finance the upkeep of horses, the yards where they are kept, the personnel that make up the equine industry, and companies offering horse services and products. Understanding and supporting horse owners is therefore imperative for the future of the equine industry and, as argued, important for influencing horse welfare.

The current lack of understanding of horse owners is likely a result of the lack of focus on horse owners as a prominent or appreciated role within the equine industry. Examples exist from the racehorse industry including Case (1988), Fox (2005), and ROA (2016). Researchers instead focus much of their attention on the horse, the horses' response to human interactions, or continued efforts to articulate the human-horse relationship (i.e. the product). This thesis looks to focus on understanding the consumer—the horse owner—through their motivation for consuming the horse and the horse-human relationship. The study will thus provide insights into the consumers' behaviour as horse owners in response to the call made by Robinson (1999).

From the literature presented thus far, it is evident horse owners experience external pressures from a variety of sources (e.g. researchers, social circles, and government) to behave in certain ways regarding their horses' welfare. Horse ownership can cost relatively large amounts of financial and time resources to participate, costing upwards of £800 per month for full livery services (BHS, 2014). Such external pressures can, in theory, thwart the motivation to participate (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, it appears that horse owners have a low social status compared to other equestrian roles or are under-appreciated despite their core position within the equine industry structure (e.g. Case, 1988; Fox 2005). The evidence leads one to wonder what it is that entices consumers to become horse owners, and what then keeps some horse owners motivated to continue participating despite these potentially thwarting conditions.

1.10.2 Reasons for focusing on dressage

Dressage is a subgroup (i.e. discipline) of equine activity in the equine industry to which horse owners may affiliate. The BEF Member Bodies website (BEF, 2019) lists other common examples (e.g. show-jumping, eventing, driving, etc.). This thesis focuses on dressage horse owners in response to the specific call from Dumbell et al. (2010) "*to provide evidence to*

support informed discourse" (p. 22) about equestrianism in dressage and in response to a paper by Wolframm et al. (2015) suggesting personality differences related to intellect—of the big five personality traits (Goldberg, 1993)—between dressage riders and eventers. According to BETA (2015), most horses are ridden (81%) and most horse owners ride (98.2%) (Boden et al., 2013), meaning the riders in the study were most likely owners. Thus, this thesis focuses on the subgroup of dressage rather than actively mixing subgroups because personality type impacts behaviour and motivation levels (Judge & Ilies, 2002).

Within any discipline subgroup, horse owners may fulfil more roles than 'horse owner', such as trainer, groom, manager, or rider. Fox (2005) identifies that not all horse owners share subgroups nor fulfil the same roles, resulting in wide variances of subgroup and role combinations. For example, some horse owners may be 'hands-off' and only fill the ownership role, letting others manage, ride, groom, and train their horse. Conversely, other owners may fulfil all roles, doing everything with their horse. Explanations for the variances in role behaviour and subgroup selection are only speculated upon, and something this thesis helps address through analysing highly involved (i.e. 'hands on') dressage horse owner motivations. Ryan (2012) argues, in motivational literature, that understanding motivations is fundamental to understanding people's behaviour. By understanding dressage horse owner motivations, the equine industry can better understand dressage horse ownership.

Literature inclusive of other equestrian disciplines is utilised within the thesis when dressage-specific examples are unavailable or inappropriate.

1.11 Current Understanding of Horse Ownership

The available literature on horse ownership was consulted to address the following objective:

1. To critically analyse the theoretical concepts related to horse ownership.

The aim of the literature search was to build a theoretical framework for investigating horse ownership. The search revealed a relatively fragmented evidence base. Papers make passing allusion to horse ownership being motivated for a variety of reasons, some seemingly contradictory. Only a few defend or evidence these assertions in meaningful ways (e.g. Coulter, 2014). Consequently, there is a wide scope for investigating assertions about horse ownership motivation. To organise the literature body, the researcher identified 'clusters' of equestrian literature and determined what the clusters contributed to an understanding of horse ownership motivation. Next the animal and pet literature were investigated. This

literature was largely about dogs, but at times mixed animal groups included horses. Further searches explored the general motivation literature specifically regarding equestrianism and horse ownership.

The rest of this chapter presents five equestrian literature clusters deemed relevant to this thesis: economic & marketing, horse behaviour, horse riding & performance, human-horse interaction, and human-human interaction in an equestrian context. The remaining equine related themes and clusters, determined to be outside the scope of this research or auxiliary to horse ownership, are also briefly introduced. The animal and pet literature are treated collectively as one cluster—companion animal—as there is a more established theoretical position. The motivation literature specifically referencing equestrianism focuses on horse riding and so is grouped with the horse riding and performance cluster.

As each literature cluster is introduced, the motivational theories or concepts related to horse ownership are extracted. The extracted motivational theories and concepts are introduced and critically analysed in Chapter 2. Special attention is given to introducing the economic and marketing cluster because it provides important contextual information regarding horse ownership and the equine industry.

1.11.1 Economic & Marketing Cluster

The research field of economics and sub-discipline marketing seek to explain and predict human behaviour with regard to consumption (Shaw et al., 2010), often formulating predictions via mathematical equations or using complex models to explain and at times predict economic movement. In this cluster the measuring tools treat the horse as an asset, product, or object reported about; measurements include how many there are, who has them, what their monetary value is, what they are they used for, and so on.

1.11.1.1 Defining Horse Ownership

As a cluster of economic and marketing type research, the literature should be a source of the definition of 'horse owner'; however, horse ownership is ambiguously defined. Authors may use the label 'horse owner' for their participant group, but sample groups often include participants claiming other equestrian roles (e.g. managers, care-takers, etc.) (see examples Boden et al., 2013; BETA, 2015; Visser & Van Wijk-Jansen, 2012). Further ambiguity is illustrated through the Henley Centre Report (2004). DEFRA, the equine industry, and Welsh and Scottish governments commissioned the Henley Centre to produce a report establishing a baseline for a long-term economic strategy for the UK equine industry. One of the Henley

Centre's overall conclusions was the general structure of the industry means people cannot be exclusively divided into groups like professional and leisure; additionally, the linkages and overlaps between groups are of significance (p. 2). However, likely out of a need for simplicity, researchers firmly segment professional and leisure (e.g. Hasler et al., 2011; Hockenhull & Crighton, 2013a; Wolframm et al., 2015; BETA, 2015; Dashper & St. John, 2016). There have been no reports published since 2004 comparable to the Henley Centre report.

Legislation offers something more concrete for the definition of 'horse owner'. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 defines owner as, "*a person who owns an animal shall always be regarded as being a person who is responsible for it*". The Horse Passports Regulations of 2009 stipulate all horses are required to have passports (except wild or semi-wild horses not within the scope of this thesis), and owners must apply for the passport; any changes of ownership must be registered with the passport-issuing agency. Thus, an owner is recorded for each horse in the horse's passport. Ownership, as referred to by the legislation, also implies the normative conditions outlined by Snare (1972) and Belk (2010) regarding the concept of property and possession. Property infers ownership and comes with certain permissible actions when interacting with the object, including the right to use the object, ability to give permission for others to use the object, and ability to permanently transfer ownership rights to another person through mutual consent (i.e. selling). The owner is the only person allowed those actions.

1.11.1.2 Describing the UK Horse Ownership Market

Related to economics is marketing, utilising the practices of segmentation and target marketing using demographic, geographic, behavioural, and psychographic information pioneered by Kotler in 1980 (Beane & Ennis, 1987). For example, these data types are often the measures collected as 'Big Data' and used in the algorithms of social media sites and media streaming platforms to make advertising and viewing recommendations. Although not to the same scale as 'Big Data', BETA does collect relatively large amounts of demographic, geographic, and behavioural information to track industry trends.

BETA's National Equine Survey is a quadrennial report in its sixth iteration (2019) and is a global leader in consistency and duration of reporting equestrian activities compared to other countries including Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the United States of America (USA). BETA's ability to follow industry trends generates questions about why trends change and about participants' motivations for behaving differently. For example, in 2019 BETA reported

374,000 horse-owning households, down from 446,000 in 2015, and down from 451,000 in 2011. The BETA (2019) report shows the continuing downward trend in UK horse-owning households is countered by an increase in horse riding participation.

BETA (2015) asked 'why horses are kept' (p. 58). In this instance the meaning of the question is associated with use of the horse for a particular discipline rather than any more complex motivational concepts. Some more detailed information about horse ownership is found in the Racehorse Owner Association (ROA) Owner Survey (2016). The survey followed a similar downward trend seen in racehorse ownership between 2009 and 2015; it focused on why racehorse owners entered or left horse racing rather than on what motivated owners who stayed involved. The reasons for leaving were related to feelings of poor service provision from host venues and horse trainers. These are not themes reported in the BETA report. For clarity it is important to note the racehorse industry is separate from the industry group BETA surveys. BETA and the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) produce industry reports independent of each other.

The Henley Centre (2004) report introduced previously in this section tried to model the whole UK equine industry but cited "*the general lack of robust and transparent data on all elements of the industry",* making the application of a standard economic sizing model not viable (Henley Centre, 2004). Most information was sourced from the BETA (1999) survey and a 1996 economic report from the British Horseracing Board (now called the BHA) but also sourced trade press and industry organisations such as the British Horse Society (BHS) (Henley Centre, 2004). The Henley Centre concluded the UK equine industry was fragmented in multiple contexts (e.g. participant roles, industry structure) but made considerable effort to make sense of the industry with the information available. To do this they created three conceptualisations of the UK equine industry, and each illustrates horse owners as core participants. When depicted as consumers in an expenditure flow model, horse owners feed into nearly all categories of the final consumption of goods and services the equine industry offers, more so than any other consumer category listed (Henley Centre, 2004, p. 14).

1.11.1.3 Marketing and Capturing Horse Owner Behaviours and Perceptions

As with industry reports, many researchers look at demographic, geographic, and behavioural data of equine industry participants (see Boden et al., 2012; Boden et al., 2013; Wylie et al., 2013; Dumbell et al., 2018). Most are fairly descriptive of the population—like the industry reports—or focus on the horse, using owners as a gateway providing little evidence of

motivation. As part of the behavioural data, researchers enquire about participants' perceptions of their behaviour towards their horse, horse welfare, and their horse management practices. A few of these participant behaviour studies provide stronger clues to horse ownership motivation, such as Gamrat and Sauer (2000), Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011), Scantlebury et al. (2014), Hemsworth et al. (2012), and the ROA survey (2016). Motivation is a concept that seeks to explain and sometimes predict human behaviour. Those papers focusing on the horse owner—rather than using the horse owner as a gateway to accessing information about the horse—provide clues to explaining horse ownership behaviour.

In summary, horse owners are the core of the equine industry, whether professional or leisure. Most industry research captures their description and can now track trends, while a few seek to understand the barriers to involvement with activities. Many studies looking at owner behaviour are concerned with perceptions of horse welfare or of horse care. This new research provides a contribution to knowledge by focusing on horse owners as consumers, adding evidence of what motivates horse ownership.

1.11.2 Horse Behaviour Cluster

Considered in isolation, the horse behaviour cluster is outside the scope of this research, however parallels exist with both the economic cluster and the human-horse interaction cluster. These parallels make this cluster relevant to mention for information purposes. The horse behaviour cluster parallels with the economic cluster with regard to horse owners' perceptions. The horse behaviour cluster also uses horse owners as gateways to measuring the prevalence of horse behaviour (Lee et al., 2001; Albright et al., 2009; Hockenhull & Creighton, 2013b) and at times will enquire about owners' perception of the behaviour they report using an *a priori* survey method (e.g. McBride & Long, 2001; Litva et al., 2010; Hötzel et al., 2019; Fenner et al., 2019). However, the majority of studies use direct observation methods to study horse behaviour and observe human-horse interactions from a positivistic perspective; many of the studies are designed as laboratory settings using a behaviourism tradition (Larose et al., 2007; Proops & McComb, 2012; Lanata et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2016).

In observing human-horse interaction, this literature body parallels the human-horse interaction cluster characterised by a more interpretivist research approach. The behaviourism tradition does seek to understand human motivation but only considers external, environmental factors as causal (Skinner, 1977; Delprato & Midgley, 1992). However, in research areas outside animal observations and training, behaviourism has been supplanted

by models and theories more inclusive of observations made in field conditions (i.e. outside the laboratory setting) and peoples' perceived experiences (Bowlby, 1969/1997; Meehl, 1992; Latham, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, behaviourism is more specific to learning behaviour. Given these conditions, behaviourism is not considered a feasible approach to explaining human motivation for horse ownership although behaviourism's historical influence on psychological theories is recognised in this thesis.

1.11.3 Horse Riding & Performance Cluster

This literature cluster focuses on the performance of the horse as an athlete, the horse and rider as a unit, and the rider as an athlete (e.g. von Lewinski et al., 2013; Münz et al., 2014; Bartolomé & Cockram, 2016; Williams & Tabor, 2017; Clayton & Hobbs, 2017). The literature cluster is dominated by physiology and biomechanical research, but as with other sports, there is a portion of the literature cluster concentrated on sport psychology (Meyers et al., 1999; Petho, 2016) and riding motivation (see below). This cluster also includes research on horse riding as leisure (e.g. Buchanan & Dann, 2006; Wu et al., 2015). It is from the riding motivation literature and the leisure literature that stronger motivational connections exist relevant to this thesis; these connections include Weiner's (1972, 1985) achievement motivation (Lamperd et al., 2016), Bandura's (1982) self-efficacy (Beauchamp & Whinton, 2005), Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) flow theory (Jackman et al., 2015), Deci & Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (Mitchell, 2013) and Azjen's (1985) theory of planned behaviour (Hemsworth, 2012). From the sport leisure context is Stebbin's (1982) concept of serious leisure (Dashper, 2017a; Schuurman & Franklin, 2016). Because of the physical interaction of the human and horse during horse riding, this literature cluster has strong parallels with human-horse interaction clusters; the difference is the horse riding and performance cluster is characterised by specificity to performance, competition, the rider role, and the physical and psychological attributes, whether professional or leisure. In this literature the horse is regarded as a 'tool', necessary equipment to participate in an activity or achieve a goal (Dashper, 2014; Dumbell et al., 2018).

This literature cluster is relatively new with much of the specific equestrian-related research published within the last 10–15 years. The motivation literature from this cluster is still disparate in many ways, but as a collective it is able to provide an awareness of the experiences of riding and what motivates riders to achieve at a high competitive level. Riding is one portion of the horse ownership experience. People do not have to own a horse to ride one. For example Dumbell et al. (2010) and Dumbell et al. (2018) investigated dressage rider

demographics and demonstrated high-level competitors were less likely to own the horses they rode. At the other end of the rider spectrum are people learning to ride horses; these riders normally hire horses for lessons with a riding school. Collectively the information available indicates riding motivation explains a of portion of motivation associated with interacting with horses—for those who ride—but it is unclear how riding motivation and horse ownership motivation integrate (if at all).

1.11.4 Human-Horse Interaction Cluster

Human-horse interaction literature deals with human experiences of the horse-human relationship, human perception of the horse, and cultural relationships with the horse more than physiology. This cluster generally uses interpretivist approaches of social construction and symbolic interactionism. In comparison to the horse behaviour and horse riding and performance literature, this cluster explores the social construction of the horse (e.g. Coulter, 2014) and humans' perception of riding or interactions with their horse (Birke & Hockenhull, 2016; Birke & Thompson, 2018). In a simplistic illustration, the horse behaviour and horse riding and performance clusters deal mostly with the 'mechanics' of behaviour and riding while the human-horse interaction cluster deals with the human experience operating the machine (i.e. the relationship).

Dashper (2017a) provided an overview of the research field's positions on the term 'ownership', which conveys a social meaning of dominance and the horse as property. Despite this social meaning, animal ownership is argued as more analogous to the term guardian. Some people reject the title owner and adopt 'guardian' feeling more in partnership with their animals, objecting to the malicious connotations of the term ownership (Carlise-Frank & Frank, 2006). In concurrence with Dashper (2017a, p. 36), none of the participants in the literature reviewed for this thesis spoke of their horse experiences in terms of malicious dominance over the animal. However, examples of the in-balance of autonomy in favour of the human over the horse are still very evident. For instance, Birke (2008), Dashper (2014), and Coulter, (2014) looked at horse riders' perceived subjective verses objective value of horses and concluded the two positions are ambiguous. Even the ascription of agency to the horse does not eliminate discussing the horse as an object. Therefore, in defining the horse owner this thesis narrows to the proportion of the relationship that constitutes the imbalance—the horse as property—and the social construction of this term that shapes the ability of participants to become horse owners and cease horse ownership. Furthermore, the term 'ownership', as defined for this thesis, remains consistent and applicable across the

literature clusters, despite any moral objection to the social freedom the term imputes to the human participant of the human-horse relationship.

Within the human-horse interaction cluster, much of the in-depth discussion about the human-horse relationship references motivation concepts. Dashper (2017a) cited the satisfaction participants obtained from mucking out (p. 57). Maurstad et al. (2013) noted the satisfaction a participant feels being with their horse (p. 333). Birke and Thompson (2018) reported on the bliss Thompson felt during her personal experience of transporting her horse (p. 103). While themes related to motivation arose, it was not the focus of the research, making it unfeasible to discern credible conclusions about ownership motivation. However, the presiding themes of the literature cluster of 'relationship', 'communication', and ambiguity between subject and object that highlighted potential motivations mean these concepts—like the motivation theories from the horse riding and performance cluster—likely form a part of the motivation for ownership.

1.11.5 Human-Human Interaction Cluster

The human-human interaction cluster is a fairly small body of literature and encompasses the literature dealing solely with equestrian cultures. Arguably the human-human interaction cluster could be grouped with the human-horse interaction cluster; however, the focus of these studies is more on the equestrians and equestrian society with the horses as a catalyst for human-human interactions or activity. Many of these studies use ethnographic approaches (e.g. Cassidy, 2002; Fox, 2005; Dashper, 2012; Dashper, 2016; Dashper & St. John, 2016). Additionally, there are a number of unpublished theses in this area, which are cited here to support the peer-reviewed literature in illustrating equestrian human-human interactions (MacIntosh, 2011; Calamatta, 2012; Elliott, 2013; Smart, 2014).

These studies illustrate the social context in which horse ownership exists. One context is that equestrian participants share a specific knowledge and language, which new participants must learn. The language quickly differentiates those who are 'horsey' from those who are not (Cassidy, 2002). Equestrians pay special attention to dress, denoting it as respect for the sport, horse, and other participants (Dashper & St. John, 2016), and the retention of the historical look of the clothing demarcates equestrian sport from other sports. Fletcher and Dashper (2013) and Dashper and St. John (2016) noted that equestrian sport has a presumption of being elitist, and Coulter (2014) noted the different classes within the equestrian community and how the upper classes use horses to demonstrate their higher social status through

resourcing quality horses and winning competitions. Seemingly contrary to this, BETA (2015) figures show there are more horse owners in lower socio-economic classes compared to people identifying as riders (non-owning), adding a dimension to the distinction between rider and owner roles. The specific calculation of socio-economic status in the UK and limited additional information lead to broad conclusions that horse owners are not necessarily of the highest social class but that they operate in a culture viewed from the 'outside' as elitist because of the knowledge, language, dress, and relative cost. From the 'inside', the elitist perception is maintained by a smaller proportion of participants because of their ability to resource a higher quantity and quality of horses and fund trainers capable of winning more competitions. In relation to motivation, this literature cluster offers some suggestion in the form of social recognition in a sporting context by being seen to participate in an elitist sport or winning competitions parallel to motivations in the horse riding and performance literature cluster.

1.11.6 Literature Themes and Clusters Outside the Scope of This Research

Within the literature clusters there are emerging themes of interest such as the role of gender in equestrian culture and horse-human interaction, therapeutic and assisted learning interactions, tourism and veterinary medicine, and horse reproduction. The brief sections below outline where the themes and clusters focus, generally illustrating their concentration outside the horse ownership phenomenon. The exception is gender. Special attention is given to gender as there is some literature linking ownership, although limited.

1.11.6.1 Gender Theme

The demographic research reveals disparities in the gender balance of participants. Overall, female participants outnumber male participants; however, when focusing on competitive level, the gender balance shifts as the competitive level increases. By the time elite competitive status is reached, males outnumber females (Dumbell et al., 2010; Dumbell et al., 2018). This current demographic information is alongside historical gender shifts in participation and social perception of horses and horseback riding (Hedenborge & White, 2012; Adelman & Knijnik, 2013; Brown, 2016). Researchers' understanding of the gender phenomenon in equestrianism is still developing. The limited information about the gender of horse owners indicates, proportionally, men may own fewer horses, as elite participants are less likely to own their horses and there are more women overall. However, Dumbell et al. (2018) inferred that male participants actually own more horses at the elite level (p. 1347) (no statistical figure provided). The ambiguity in information means gender differences in horse

ownership motivation were deemed outside the scope of this thesis. This study uses what horse owners shared regardless of gender to build foundational knowledge on horse ownership motivation, which could be used to inform future research exploring gender differences.

1.11.6.2 Human-Horse Therapeutic and Assisted Learning Interactions Theme

There is a growing interest in the beneficial effects of human-animal interactions and an advancing body of knowledge of the horse as a therapeutic tool. The work concentrates on patient, client, or learner interactions with the horse and how these interactions affect the patient's diagnosed condition. The interactions between therapist, patient, and horse are facilitated as a timed, structured interaction and in a fixed or controlled environment similar to a riding lesson scenario. Additionally, participants are seeking treatment, and the horse is encountered specifically as an instrument for treating physical or emotional conditions. Patients do not own the horses, and potentially, neither do the therapists.

1.11.6.3 Horse Tourism Theme

This is an economic theme looking at horses when used as an attraction, whether it is people traveling to watch a specific horse competition or using horses to explore nature. The literature of this theme looks at the impact of horse tourism on natural environment, motivation and marketing of horse tourism, and the impact of horse tourism on the economy. Motivation for horse ownership is not considered.

1.11.6.4 Veterinary Medicine Cluster

This cluster is about the aetiology, pathology, treatment, pharmacology, genetics, management, and rehabilitation of horse illness, disease, and injury. The veterinary field has a strong economic and marketing interest in horse owners as their clients. Research looking at horse owners as clients is encompassed in the economic and marketing cluster. Veterinarians will use demographic, geographic, and behavioural information about horse owners and horse owner reports to gather information about horse owners and their horse health management behaviours. Horse owners act as one of the only viable data points for epidemiological studies about equine diseases and disorders.

1.11.6.5 Horse Reproduction Theme

This area is a sub-theme of the veterinary medicine cluster. The research deals with horse reproduction, sales, and genetics. In essence this work looks at the biologic mechanisms, technology, and management practices of breeding horses. As horse breeders are the

producers of the product (the horse) this theme does lead back to the economic and marketing cluster but from the seller's perspective, including market value of the horse. This thesis is concerned with the consumer and motivations to own, regardless of price or how the product was produced.

1.11.7 Horse Ownership Literature Summary

The outcomes of the literature review resulted in the following conclusions. Current information about horse ownership and equestrianism is fragmented, likely as a result of the fragmented industry, though some parallels exist between clusters. There is an overall focus on the horse or human-horse relationship (i.e. the product) rather than the horse owner (i.e. the consumer). Instead, researchers often use horse owners as 'gateways' to information about horses, and methodologies and methods vary drastically from positivistic positions of economic and behaviourism to interpretivist positions of symbolic interactionism and ethnography. Occasionally literature alludes to motivations but does not focus on consumption motivation specifically; human-horse relationships and horse riding and performance offer the most clues so far.

These conclusions are important in that the current literature does not support a single direction to investigate horse ownership motivation due to the multitude of available theories, their focus on riding, and the limited examples for each. To further explore options for investigating horse ownership, the broader animal and pet literature was explored—for clarity this literature body is referred to from this point forward as 'companion animal literature' but the literature body is potentially inclusive of agriculture, wild, feral, and zoo animals.

1.12 Ideas in the Companion Animal Relationship Literature

Relevant ownership concepts in companion animal literature include animals as family members, animals as toys, humans having power over animals, health benefits of animals, and guardianship of animals (Belk, 1996; Staats et al., 2008; Lustig & Cramer, 2015); these represent both objective and subjective value of animals, which at times may conflict (Belk, 1996). These concepts and the conflicts between the objective and subjective views of the animal are comparable to the concepts and ambiguity illustrated in the human-horse interaction cluster. This is reasonable as horses are animals and both groups are exploring the relationship between the human and the animal.

Companion animal literature has more extensively investigated the relationship between humans and animals than the equestrian-specific literature. Anderson (2007) collected a compendium of various surveys used to investigate human relationship, bond, and attachment to companion animals. The compendium is not exhaustive. Appendix A expands on Anderson (2007) illustrating the breadth and history of the available measures used in companion animal literature.

In addition to the extensive survey work, a great deal of attention is directed towards human relationships with animals as explained through Bowlby's trilogy of attachment theory (published in three volumes 1969/1997, 1973, 1980) and Ainsworth and Bell's (1970) seminal publication that tested Bowlby's ideas. Attachment theory theorises human emotional development over the life course. Originally conceptualised to explain child development, attachment theory now encompasses explanations for human relationship development over the life course, including adult relationships with family, friends, and intimate partners (Howe, 2011). Most companion animal researchers have looked at how humans are emotionally attached to their pets, with a few repeating Ainsworth and Bell's (1970) experiment to look at how dogs might be attached to their human companions (e.g. Topál et al., 1998; Gácsi et al., 2001; Mariti et al., 2013)

In terms of motivation, the human attachment to animals is potentially motivating in that humans receive emotional benefit from access to the animal. When humans are in a time of distress they seek the company of the animal whom they feel may be less judgemental than a human counterpart (Serpell, 2002; Dashper, 2017a). There are two papers that relate attachment theory to the human in human-horse relationships and one example of the horse's attachment to the human. Payne et al. (2016) theorised dog attachment differs to horse attachment, and DeAraugo et al. (2014) considered human attachment dimensions in relation to horse training style. Birke and Thompson (2018) theorised and provided a case study of the potential for the horse's attachment to the human (pp. 89–90).

1.12.1 Comparing Companion Animals and Horses.

In considering the horse within animal literature, it must be noted that at times horses are considered separate from companion animals. Examples persist where horses are included as companion animals or are named distinctly separate from other pets (e.g. Berny, 2010 versus Acar & Moulin, 2006) without any emergent pattern suggesting a reason (i.e. publications from the field of veterinary science versus sociology). Observable differences in the

interaction between different species is part of the reason Payne et al. (2016) concluded there is likely a difference between human attachment to dogs compared to horses. There is a range of observable and legal differences between the horse and more traditional companion animals that impacts how humans interact with horses. These differences start in the companion animal literature noted here; the propensity to exclude horses from the 'pets' title might be due to historical or cultural views of the horse.

1.12.1.1 Observable Differences Between Traditional Companion Animals and Horses

Horses are prey animals rather than predators (e.g. the dog and cat), weigh (on average) in excess of 500kg, and do not cuddle on the couch or ride in the car (Keaveny, 2008). Horses cost considerably more than the average domestic pet, as evidenced through sheer land space required for their well-being in addition to livery, feed, bedding, insurance, and equipment; plus, they live longer (BHS, 2014). Horses require constant access to forage rather than the meals of animal proteins typical for predatory animals. Additionally, horses are most often ridden, an activity impossible with the cat or dog. The ridden activity is unique, requiring more body-to-body contact and communication (Game, 2001; Brandt, 2004). The sheer size of the horse that allows for ridden activity also makes horses and horseback riding high-risk activities (Ball et al., 2007; CIEH, 2015; Camargo et al., 2018), with high-risk defined by the likelihood of serious injury or death (HSE, 2018). Horses require large spaces to move around for their musculoskeletal, digestive, and behavioural well-being, and so live outside the family home in agricultural environments. Therefore, interacting with the horse requires leaving the family home (even if the horses live on the property), which does not necessarily happen with other companion animals.

1.12.1.2 Legal Status

Horses straddle the agriculture livestock and companion animal boundary. When horses are used to farm land or graze pasture for agricultural purposes, or when they are reared for meat or hide, they are agricultural animals (UK Government, 2015). When horses are grazing as part of livery or in the pasture for exercise where grazing is a secondary activity, then the horse is a companion animal. Neither dogs nor cats share such legally recognised dual roles between agriculture and domestic pet.

1.12.1.3 Impact of Differences on Human-Animal Relationships

The observable and legal differences between horses and other companion animals impacts how humans relate to their pets through space, time, and resources. For example, various

authors have concluded companion animals can be an extension of the self (Hirshman, 1994; Belk, 1996; Dotson & Hyatt, 2008), but Keaveney (2008) concluded horses are more like mirrors of the self. Additionally, the unique use of the horse for riding means more bodily contact and communication with the horse, perhaps creating a different kind of relationship (Evans & Franklin, 2010; Maurstad et al., 2013; Dashper, 2016).

1.12.2 Summary of Companion Animal Literature

The evidence from companion animal literature supports the use of attachment theory in explaining human-animal relationships. As a theory of explaining human behaviour about relationships, it fits with the concepts of the human-horse literature cluster already discussed and the thesis investigation of motivation. The theorisation of attachment theory's application to horses by existing authors suggests it should be added to the motivational theories and concepts extracted from the specific equestrian literature clusters even though it has yet to be explored in horses in any comparable detail to other companion animals.

1.13 Summary of the Companion Animal and Equestrian Literature Clusters

The literature collectively demonstrates the complexity of the horse ownership experience Figure 2 collates potential motivational theories and concepts in one model from the perspective of consuming the horse as property (an object) and as a partner (a subject) and illustrates how concepts from the literature clusters coexist. The following theories were extracted from the literature clusters as potentially relevant for ownership motivation: flow theory (Csikszentmihyali, 1975), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982), achievement motivation (Weiner, 1972, 1985), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982), and theory of planned behaviour (Azjen, 1985). Furthermore, concepts deemed relevant from the economic, symbolic interactionism, and ethnography research include use of the horse, relationship, communication, and ambiguity between subject and object (Birke, 2008; Dashper, 2014; Coulter, 2014). The companion animal literature mirrors some concepts in the horse-specific literature supporting the inclusion of attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1970; Bowlby, 1969/1997, 1973, 1980) to help explain horse ownership motivation. In Chapter 2 the extracted theories and concepts are critically analysed in relation to horse ownership motivation, to continue addressing objective 1 of this thesis.

1.14 This Thesis's Structure

This thesis builds from the information extracted in this introductory chapter.

Chapter 2 presents the critical analysis of the theories and concepts drawn from the current equestrian, companion animal, and general motivation literature in relation to motivation for horse ownership.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and the method used to inductively investigate the horse ownership experience. The literature alludes to what motivations may exist in horse owners without providing sufficient evidence to support any one theoretical approach to address the research question. The research project thus adopts an inductive approach allowing motivations to emerge rather than relay on an *a priori* method, which may impose motivations that do not exist or potentially fail to capture motivations not alluded to in existing literature. Chapter 3 aims to address the following objectives:

2. To inductively explore the experiences of dressage horse owners for their motivations to own horses, and
3. To critically analyse the experiences of dressage horse owners for their motivations to own horses.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the inductive investigation explaining the themes emergent from the interviews. This chapter works in partnership with Chapter 4 to address objective 3.

Chapter 5 explains why the findings are motivational, discussing the results in relation to theories of motivation to address objective 4.

4. To critically analyse motivations of dressage horse owners emergent from the inductive investigation, in relation to existing theory, knowledge, and any relevant equine industry dressage horse owner-related activities.

Chapter 6 discusses the ways in which the findings contribute to the discourse of equestrianism, working in partnership with Chapter 5 to address objective 4.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusion of the study.

1.15 Chapter Conclusion

There is a clear appreciation for the horse as a species; groups of researchers and industry professionals are clearly concerned about them and about the impact of human interaction on them. This passion for the horse translates into a greater focus on the horse, riding the horse, and the phenomenon of the human-horse relationship. There is relatively little literature on the human side of the human-horse dynamic or on the motivations behind consumption of the horse and the human-horse relationship. This is likely due to the fact that

humans have to be involved in accessing information about horses as an anthropocentric activity and so people feel involved. What is known about the relationship comes from human observation of the horse, and human experience with the horse is anthropocentric (which is largely unavoidable).

Rather than look at how humans interact with horses through riding, how they socially construct the horse, or how they construct equestrian cultures, this thesis shifts the analysis lens beyond those things and focuses instead on what it is that motivates humans to own horses. Ownership is the activity at the very core from which the interactions arise. There are indeed allusions to motivation for ownership amongst what is known, but such scattered allusions cannot be used to draw any clear conclusions. Reiterating van Weeren (2008), Dumbell et al. (2010), and Thompson & Haigh's (2018) calls for better understanding of horse owners, research is needed that focuses upon the concepts and variances in motivation present in the horse ownership experience, to be able to connect existing literature through an explanation of the horse ownership phenomenon. There may be practical applications when this new knowledge of horse ownership motivation is effectively integrated into something such as a social marketing strategy or behavioural change programme as suggested by Thompson & Clarkson (2019).

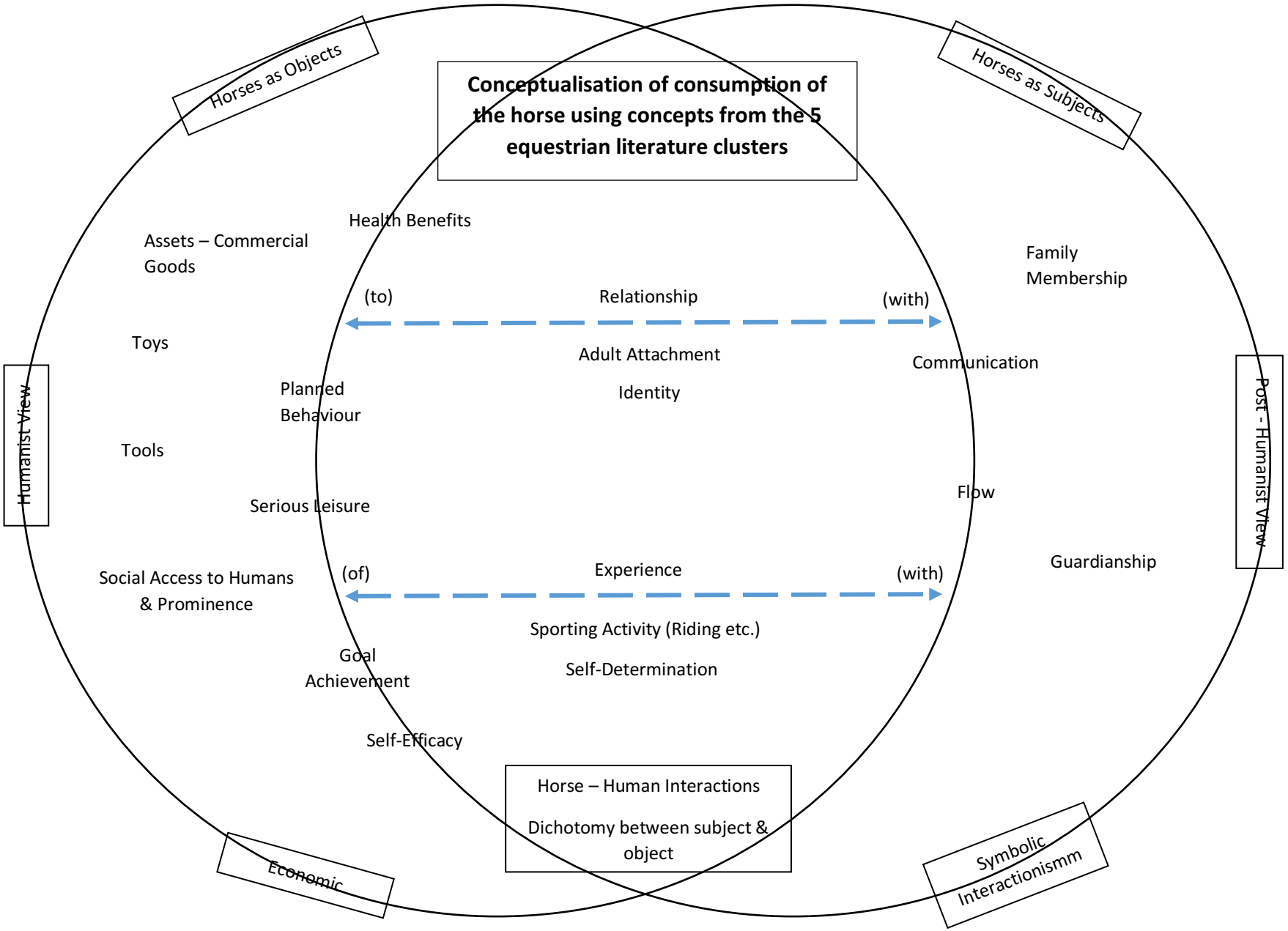


Figure 2 *Conceptualisation of consumption of the horse using concepts from the five equestrian literature clusters.*

Chapter 2: Critical Analysis of Motivation Theories and Concepts for Horse Ownership

2.1 Introduction to Chapter 2

The purpose of this chapter is to critically analyse the theories and concepts extracted from the specific equine literature clusters and companion animal literature to fulfil objective 1 of this thesis:

1. To critically analyse the theoretical concepts related to horse ownership.

The structure of the chapter starts with an overview of the concept of motivation. Next the ideas from each cluster are analysed, starting with the marketing and economic cluster, then the horse riding and performance cluster (integrated with the human-human interaction cluster), the human-horse interaction cluster, and the companion animal literature. Each extracted theory or concept is introduced and analysed for what it contributes towards constructing an understanding of horse ownership motivation. The conclusion draws the analysis of the four literature clusters together to make a case for how this thesis approaches investigating horse ownership motivation.

2.2 Motivation Overview

Motivation is an extensive topic that tries to explain or predict human behaviour. Although specific definitions vary between theories, they all share themes in seeking an explanation of human behaviour. Ryan and Deci's (2017) definition, which forms part of their self-determination theory, is the most comprehensive at this time. Motivation is both the energy and direction of behaviour. Energy deals with needs, both those that are innate to an organism and those acquired through interaction with the environment. Direction is the process and structures of the organism that give meaning to internal and external stimuli (p. 13).

Motivation research, as known today, has origins in the field of psychology, starting with Freud. However, philosophers have always pondered the reasons for the behaviour of both individuals and groups of humans. Since Freud, psychology has developed various branches to understand why individuals behave as they do through their psychological and biological functioning. Arguments over whether people are influenced by what occurs inside the body and mind or influenced by what occurs outside the body separated researchers into different groups. These separate groups followed different lines of enquiry, which sometimes re-converged; however, some groups retained practitioners fixed in their separate research

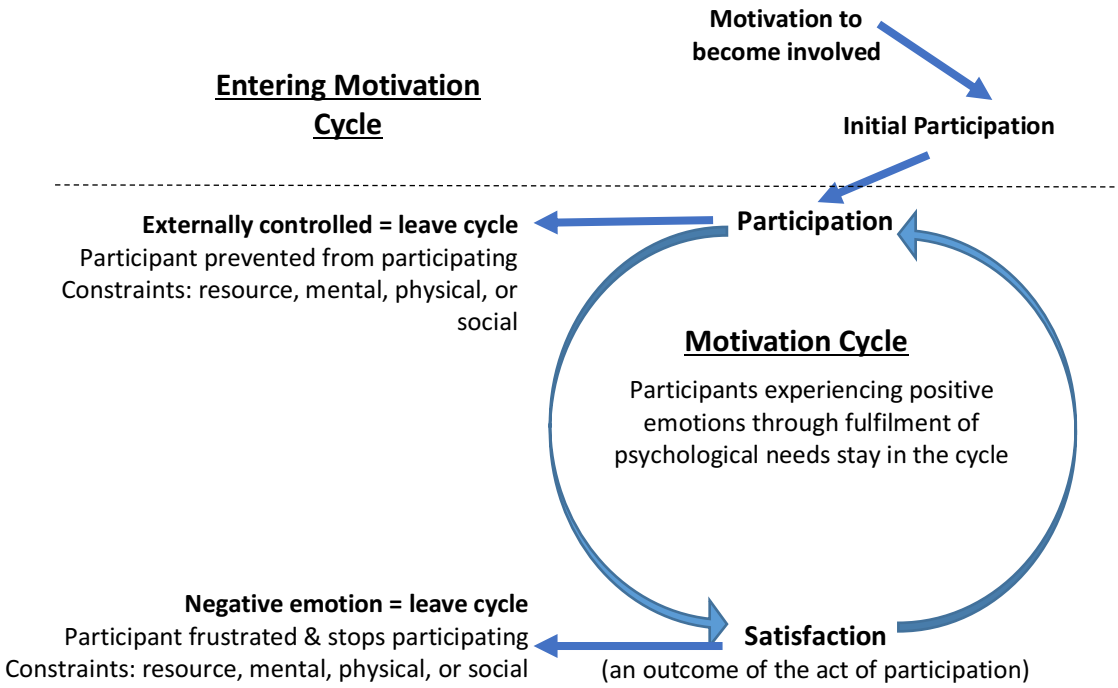
traditions. Widely accepted in the current understanding of motivation is that motivation is a result of both internal and external influences; however, debates remain over the biological mechanics of internal and external processing that produce behaviour—remnants of Descartes' mind verses body debate (see Sheldon et al., 2003 or Leudar & Costall, 2004).

Sociology and economics examine motivation of groups of people. Sociology looks at group behaviours, culture, organisations, and institutions using both subjective and objective measures. Economics uses objective measures of human consumption patterns and attitudes, focusing on people's mental orientations and behavioural intentions. Marketing and consumer behaviour research is a combination of economics, sociology, and psychology, focusing on people's consumption behaviour; it examines how and why individuals or groups consume specific goods or services, or engage with advertisements. As illustrated in Chapter 1, the equine-specific and companion animal literature have examples in each of these differing areas that collectively shape horse ownership as a consumption activity. Marketing, as an amalgamation of research fields, relies heavily on theories from external fields (e.g. psychology, sociology, and economics), making it necessary to analyse each literature cluster for how it shapes motivation for horse ownership.

Each field tends to address motivation specific to its own context. Although the different theories may seem in conflict, together they form a whole. The theories illustrate different aspects of the motivation concept from the individual to wider society. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) point out the theological parable of the elephant and blind men (see Appendix B) illustrates well how researchers understand motivation, where motivation is the elephant, theories are the elephant parts, and researchers are the blind men. While no motivational theory is comprehensive in explaining all human behaviour, some are more inclusive than others, such as self-determination theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985) and the revised version by Ryan and Deci (2017). In addition to SDT, various texts provide some overview of motivation perspectives: Elliot and Dweck (2005), Ryan (2012), and Reeve (2018). These texts tried to provide a macro view of individual human motivation but are still not comprehensive of all motivational theories.

The texts listed here deal with psychological needs rather than physical needs (i.e. food), and how one's behaviour links to psychological well-being. In general, these texts' explanations of motivation work on the principle that when a person's psychological needs are met, they experience positive emotions and are more likely to repeat behaviour than if they experience

negative emotions (Figure 3). Additionally, one's sense of emotions is related to whether a behaviour is driven by external, internal, or a mix of internal and external reasons. Horses, in the capacity dealt with in this thesis, are not required for physical survival and thus must fulfil psychological needs rather than any immediate physiological need.



2.3 Motivation of Horse Ownership – Economic and Marketing Cluster

The economic and marketing perspectives generally provide descriptions of horse owners, their behaviour, and perceptions on horse welfare. The larger studies include equine industry economic reports for various nations and regions within nations. These economic reports and marketing research rely on traditional marketing segmentation measures of demographics, geography, and behaviour gathering data using self-reporting surveys or telephone interviews (e.g. BETA, 2019, 2015, 2011). For example, questions include the number of horses owned, social class, money spent on horses, use of the horse, basic management, and more. The BETA reports are quadrennial national surveys, while regional UK reports and other research papers are 'one-off' reports (e.g. Wilson et al., 2011; NHRI, 2015). The information from the economic reports is key foundational knowledge for the industry to describe itself to others, consider economic impact, track trends, and develop strategic aims for development (e.g. BHIC, 2005; BEF, 2015).

2.3.1 Economic Perspective

The equine industry economic reports provide the UK with an ability to look at the changes in the industry over time and provides fairly current data on the number of horses, riders, and consumers in the UK as well as average price of goods, tracking increases, decreases, and overall economic output. Surveys provide a great deal of quantitative data, which feed any number of statistical analysis exercises for segmenting populations or determining correlations. The emphasis is put on consumption behaviour and the investigated population is viewed as a collective. The reports are good at identifying patterns and organising information but provide little reasoning for people's behaviour. This type of economic data traditionally assumes the peoples' reported actions are 'rational', driven by utility or function. For example, BETA's question on 'Why horses are kept' (p. 58) relates to use of the horse via owners' discipline choice (e.g. dressage, show jumping, eventing, etc.). However, there is ample evidence to suggest both rationality and emotions impact people's decision-making and behaviour (Epstein, 1994; Epstein et al., 1996; Haidt, 1995/2008; Thaler, 2016). Including both functional use and affective states would provide a more complete analysis of changes in trends over the course of time. The economic reports, as a description of industry trends and the equestrian population, provide a starting point to investigate the motivation to own horses. Equine industry reports indicate changes in horse ownership motivation through the changes in trends but offer little in the way of an explanation of trends.

2.3.2 Marketing Perspective

As an amalgamation of psychology, sociology, and economic approaches, marketing type literature can incorporate both functional and affective states. Most marketing-style research of horse owners focuses on horse behaviour (e.g. Hockenhull & Creighton, 2014; Parker et al., 2008; Luescher et al., 1998), participant perceptions of horse welfare (e.g. Visser & Van Wijk-Jansen, 2012; Thompson & Clarkson, 2019), and horse management practices (e.g. McBride & Long, 2001; Murray et al., 2015; Scantlebury et al., 2015; Morrison, et al., 2017). This research body often uses self-report surveys specific to horse management practices, horse health, and owner perceptions. Horse owner involvement is a gateway to information about the horse with minimal measures taken on the horse owner. The veterinary field often uses these studies to gauge an understanding of the distribution of knowledge amongst owners, as well as using epidemiological studies seeking the prevalence of some diseases and health care practices (e.g. Hotchkiss et al., 2007; Robin et al., 2011; Hockenhull & Creighton, 2013b). There

are a few research papers with greater emphasis on horse owners providing insights to their reasoning for horse ownership.

2.3.2.1 Horse Ownership May Incorporate a Variety of Reasons Beyond Discipline Choice

Scantlebury et al. (2014) represents a rare example of ownership motivation from the survey approach by focusing on the horse ownership role and including both utilitarian and affective states of horse ownership. The study took a mixed method approach to understanding horse owner decision-making for colic treatment—a potentially deadly condition in the horse—and wanted to type owners by their 'human-horse relationship'. The owners selected from predetermined categories, which are listed below. The affective terminology is underlined and functional use is in italics (emphasis added by author) (p. 7):

- "I consider my horse/pony to be a *pet*" (Pet)
- "I consider my horses/ponies to be *working animals*" (Working animal)
- "Working with horses is *part of my profession*" (Profession)
- "I keep my horse for a <u>sense of achievement</u> (e.g. bringing on a youngster, becoming an accomplished rider, etc.)" (Achiever)
- "I keep horses for the <u>satisfaction gained from the relationship</u> I have with my horse" (Relator)
- "I keep horses *in order to compete and win*" (Sport)

Five types of owners were identified and grouped into the two general equestrian classifications: 'professional' and 'amateur'. The typology descriptors include motivational related vocabulary such as 'achievement' and 'relationship' (Elliot & Dweck, 2005; Ryan, 2012) and correspond with work by Dashper (2014) that demonstrated horses can be a family member or a work object, and with work by Belk (1996) that demonstrated companion animals (including horses) can be toys or family members. Fox (2005) demonstrated horse owner variety in motivation in an anthropological study of horse racing industry people. Fox ceased trying to type owners because their observed behaviours varied too drastically with regard to their interaction with and care of the horse (p. 82). These comparative studies used qualitative inquiry more and demonstrated horse ownership is more complex than what a survey measure—such as that used in Scantlebury et al. (2014)—is able to capture.

2.3.2.2 Horse Ownership is About Participation Not Profits – Evidence From Horse Racing

Due to the explanatory limitations of pure survey approaches and some marketing researchers incorporate structured focus group sessions to seek further reasoning for survey responses (Stewart, 2010). The Racehorse Owners Association (ROA) commissioned a study in 2016 using a mixed method approach after observing a 15% drop of horse owners between 2009 and 2015. The national survey determined racehorse owners left because of poor experiences with the service provision by the trainers, the horses they owned, and the racetracks. The racehorse ownership role is traditionally perceived as an 'outside' owner (low involvement) (Case, 1989; Cassidy, 2002; Fox, 2005). Outside owners are implied to exist at the elite competitive levels of dressage (Dumbell et al., 2010).

Cassidy (2002) suggested racehorse owners have a special status within the racehorse community, but Fox (2005) and Case (1989) both noted horse owners were not treated with any special respect in the racehorse culture, which underpins the feelings of participants leaving horse ownership reported by the ROA survey. Brown (2012) illustrated the conflict between trainer and owner extends to performance of the horses. Brown determined that horses owned by the trainer out-perform horses owned by an outside owner. The implication is that trainers invest more in their own horses compared to other owners' horses. It has long been recognised that investing in racehorses is a negative financial return, so Gamrat and Sauer (2000) investigated economic motives for investing in ownership of a racehorse. Their conclusions imply a participation model wherein the money invested "*by owners when campaigning racehorses is driven, at least in part, by a desire to participate in the racing game, as opposed to a singular quest for the top prizes*" (p. 233). Gamrat and Sauer (2000) further supported the idea that horse ownership motivation is about the experience of participation. Although the research examined is about racehorse ownership, it prompts questions about the experiences that motivate horse owners to remain horse owners, not just what entices them to enter or leave.

2.3.2.3 Participation as a Horse Owner May Be About Experience, but Money Still Matters

Finances are also a powerful influence in the cessation of horse ownership due to insufficient funds, poor financial return (ROA, 2016), or offers of substantial sums of money (Dashper, 2014). For example, Cuckson (2012) reported horse owners faced pressure to sell by receiving offers of millions of pounds for their show jumping and dressage horses during the run-up to the 2012 Olympic Games. Curiously, for some owners the money was motivating enough to cease ownership of an individual horse while others it was not and they retained ownership.

Daspher (2014) indicated finances can indirectly instigate ownership. A respondent in Dashper's study commented on the pressures they faced as a professional rider because of the decision-making power of an 'outside' owner who financed the rider's horse-riding activities. The conflicts in decision-making influenced the rider's decision to own their own competition horses, despite the increased financial difficulty of self-funding (p. 363).

2.3.2.4 Horse Ownership Takes Time

Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011) considered the horse ownership experience though the consumption of time. Participants spoke about monitoring time while doing activities, sacrificing time, or giving time to the horse; they talked about the changing of the seasons, 'killing time' socially, and reflecting on past experiences—themes reflected in Dashper (2017a). The ways time is consumed (i.e. experienced) fluctuates depending on how the person is engaging with their horse or other horse people; there is no specific measured amount of time. Experience of time depends on how active a person is or how cognitive they are about the passing of time (Figure 4). Different experiences are balanced and occasionally converge creating new experiences of 'slow time' and 'flow' experience. Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011) concluded these are desirable experiences and horse businesses should aim for facilitating such experiences for clients consuming time with horses.

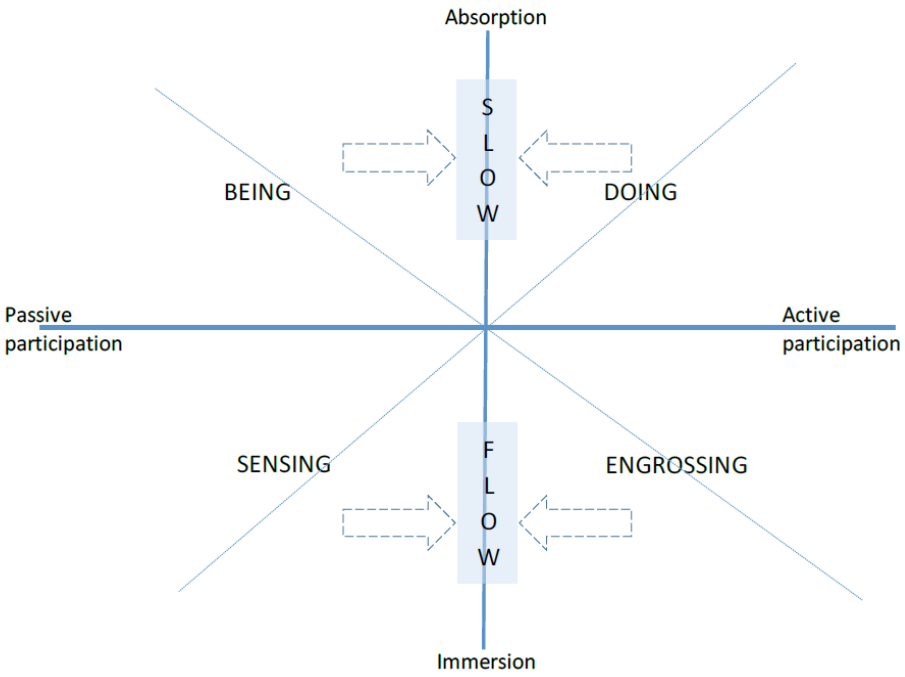


Figure 5 *The experiential time consumption of horse enthusiasts (Jyrinki and Laaksonen, 2011)*

What is evident is that horse enthusiasts need a great deal of time to facilitate 'slow time' or 'flow' when participating, even for those with busy lives who do not see their horse every day. When people do spend time with the horse, they need time to care for or to ride the horse,

time to socialise, and time to be with the horse in order to experience either the desirable slow-time or flow.

2.3.2.5 Horse Owner Attitudes Towards Horse Care and How Time Is Spent Matters

Hemsworth's (2012) doctoral thesis examined attitudes of horse owners and applied this to the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985). Similar to many horse owner survey studies, the research was concerned with horse welfare. However, it is one of a handful of examples where a theory is applied directly to horse owners. TPB uses attitudes, which are related to motivation and are often used in marketing for gaining information on consumers' preferences and decision-making (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011). Attitudes and motivation share the desire to explain behaviour, but attitude is an affective position on a topic (e.g. like or dislike) where motivation is the energy and direction of behaviour (e.g. to do or not do). Attitudes can shape motivation. Clear illustrations of this are in the employment and education literature looking at attitude towards a task and motivation to work or learn (e.g. Korman et al., 1977; Naff & Crum, 1999; Potvin & Hasni, 2014). Hemsworth (2012) observed and reported on horse owners' attitudes for horses themselves, interaction with the horse, and specified care behaviours (foot, dental, parasite control). The performance of horse care behaviour was predicted by favourable attitudes towards horses and management practices.

Hemsworth's (2012) attitude research also commented on the importance of time. Hemsworth suggested lack of time interacting with horses beyond care is related to horse mismanagement. Dashper (2017a) labelled this separate interaction as 'play'. Hemsworth's (2012) and Dashper's (2017a) findings connect to Jyrinki and Laaksonen's (2011). Hemsworth's care behaviours and Dashper's 'work' are like Jyrinki and Laaksonen's 'doing'. Hemsworth's 'interaction' and Daspher's 'play' are like Jyrinki and Laasksonen's 'being' (reference Figure 4). The studies together demonstrate there is something important about the way in which time is spent interacting with horses that directs human motivation in relation to horses and reciprocally affects horse welfare. Drawing further motivational conclusions is problematic as Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011) specifically considered experiences of time during horse interactions, Dashper (2017a) focused on the bodily experience, and Hemsworth concentrated on attitudes towards the horse and care tasks. As an economic and marketing perspective, TPB relies on the assumption that actions are rationally thought out in advance. Attitude, while influential to motivation direction does not explain the energy of motivation and thus not why people own horses.

2.3.3 Summarising the Motivations From the Economic and Marketing Cluster

The economic and marketing literature cluster demonstrates that horse ownership occurs for a variety of reasons, both affectively and functionally. At times participation is valued over financial gain while at other times money is valued more. There is evidence for the cessation of horse ownership by some outside owners related to inadequate service provision by industry professionals. Conversely, conflict between outside owners is incentive for professional trainer-riders to own horses despite the associated financial hardship. In addition to money, horse ownership requires the resource of time, and how time is spent in relation to the horse (e.g. providing care or just being with the horse) appears influential to the horse ownership experience and, thus, to motivation. The differing perspectives suggest an explanation of horse ownership is more complex than can be captured with traditional marketing methods.

2.4 Motivation for Horse Ownership – Horse Riding and Performance Cluster

Horse riding and performance literature is a much richer source of specific motivation theories (e.g. Beauchamp & Whinton, 2005; Wolframm, Froshag, & Kobbe, 2011; McGinn et al., 2018; Træen et al., 2019). It is important to note that riding does not require horse ownership. Riding lessons are available at riding schools around the UK. Ten lessons a month at average lesson prices would cost less than the average cost to feed, bed, and house a horse on do-it-yourself (DIY) livery (BHS, 2014). Wu et al. (2015) added to this argument, suggesting minimal differences in riding motivation between horse riders who owned and non-owning horse riders. Horse riding is also dangerous, yet people still participate (Hausberger et al., 2008; Hasler et al., 2011). Even taking the previous points into consideration, horse riding is considered a primary activity of horse ownership. The economic and marketing literature indicates the majority of owners in the studies ride (e.g. 98.2%) (Boden, 2013, p. 3), and the majority of horses owned are ridden (81%) (BETA, 2015, p. 59). Thus, this literature cluster likely contributes to an explanation of horse ownership motivation, which this study seeks.

In dressage there appears a mix of riding and non-riding owners, with the majority being active rider-owners (Dumbell et al., 2010). The activity of riding has been linked to ideas around self-efficacy (Beauchamp & Whinton, 2005), achievement (Lamperd et al., 2016), self-determination theory (Mitchell, 2013), serious leisure (Dashper, 2017a; Schuurman & Franklin, 2016), and flow in racehorse jockeys and dressage riders (Jackman et al., 2015; Jackman et al., 2019; Adamson, 2004). The ideas are briefly introduced alongside the specific

equestrian research associated with the idea and discussed in relation to their potential for explaining horse ownership.

2.4.1 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a belief in one's own ability to perform a task. Lamperd et al. (2016), McGrinn et al. (2018), and Træen et al. (2019) all concluded that equestrian competitors demonstrate self-efficacy. Beauchamp and Whinton (2005) showed self-efficacy related to unique performance outcomes in the dressage phase of a one-day event (not the show-jumping or cross-country phases). Additionally, riders' belief in their horses' ability was also related to performance outcomes independent of self-belief.

First proposed by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy remains an important feature in explaining human behaviour. A person's perception of their own ability to perform tasks impacts the way a person physically responds to stress, their behavioural response to failure, and their ability to emotionally self-regulate (Bandura, 1982; Schunk & Pajares, 2005). Self-efficacy beliefs have repeatedly been associated with higher levels of persistence, motivation, and positive performance outcomes (Schunk & Pajares, 2005). Self-efficacy is context-specific, differing with each task, and develops over time—decreasing or increasing when associated with the outcomes of action (Bandura, 2005). Normally, self-efficacy is measured with set scales adapted to the area of interest (Bandura, 2005), although general self-efficacy and 'other-efficacy' scales exist (Sherer & Adams, 1983). While self-efficacy helps explain equestrian sport performance, it has yet to be applied in other horse-related activities (e.g. care and management).

Self-efficacy is task oriented, presenting challenges to defining performance outcomes in the context of horse ownership. Using Hemsworth (2012), performance outcome may be the care and management behaviours linked to horse welfare. However, time participating in other important interactions with horses, such as 'play' or 'being' with, are seemingly task-less or goal-less and thus fall outside self-efficacy's measurement. Most care tasks are minimum requirements for keeping horses (DEFRA, 2017). As care tasks are directly associated with horse welfare, explaining ownership through self-efficacy alone would be inappropriate as it judges the quality and ability of owner care (i.e. good or bad, can or cannot) and is not inclusive of the other ways in which humans interact with horses.

2.4.2 Achievement Motivation and Competency

Achievement motivation incorporates self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2005) but is a broader explanation of human behaviour. For example, one's belief in one's own ability is associated with better performance, but a person still requires a specific skill set to accomplish the task: competency. Current conceptualisations of achievement are anchored in motivation theories such as McClelland's (1961; 1985) need for achievement, affiliation, and power (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 10). Evidence of achievement motivation in equestrian literature is within the sporting context where more recent publications on sport and education motivation reframe achievement as competency (although achievement terminology is still commonly used).

Elliot (1999) defined achievement motivation as the energy and direction of competence-based affect, cognition, and behaviour (p. 169). Elliot and Dweck (2005) further argued competence is a term that better encapsulates the essence of achievement motivation beyond traditional views of achievement as winning a competition or doing well on an exam. Elliot et al. (2017) continued to maintain competence as the core of achievement motivation. Competence terminology and ideas within achievement motivation conceptualisations align with Ryan and Deci's (2017) self-determination theory. In self-determination theory, competency is one of three basic needs related to psychological wellbeing, which are discussed more in section 2.4.3. In essence, competency is a need to feel capable (mastery) and the ability to explore and influence one's environment (effectance) (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 11).

2.4.2.1 Achievement Motivation in Horse Riding & Performance – Including the Human-Human Literature Cluster

Achievement motivation is discussed in relation to horse riding and performance by Lamperd et al. (2016) who applied an achievement goal theory to elite performance equestrians. As a theory, achievement motivation appears more promising for explaining horse ownership because some of the ideas from achievement goal theory also appear to explain some of the motivations from the human-human interaction literature. For example, participation in horse riding and ownership is participation in equestrian culture and to be accepted as an 'equestrian', participants must demonstrate their competency through adherence to specific equestrian dress codes, knowledge, and language (Dashper & St. John, 2016; Dashper, 2017a). Additionally, Coulter (2014) discussed how the upper classes in equestrian sport use their financial resources to source quality horses and win in competition, thus demonstrating competency through performance, and maintaining their social status.

2.4.2.2 Introduction to Achievement Goal Theory

Achievement goal theory's current iteration is a 3 x 2 model (Elliot et al., 2011) (Figure 5). However, Elliot and McGregor's (2001) older 2 x 2 model is still actively used (Figure 6). The 2 x 2 model compares people's desires (valance) through approaching success or avoiding failure, and how competence is defined either internally by oneself (mastery goals) or externally through social judgement (performance goals). Lamperd et al. (2016) applied two elements of the 2 x 2 model—task mastery and performance approach—concluding elite equestrians are motivated by task mastery. The continued use of the 2 x 2 model is likely a result of its proliferation in use and also the more intuitive use of language in 'task mastery'

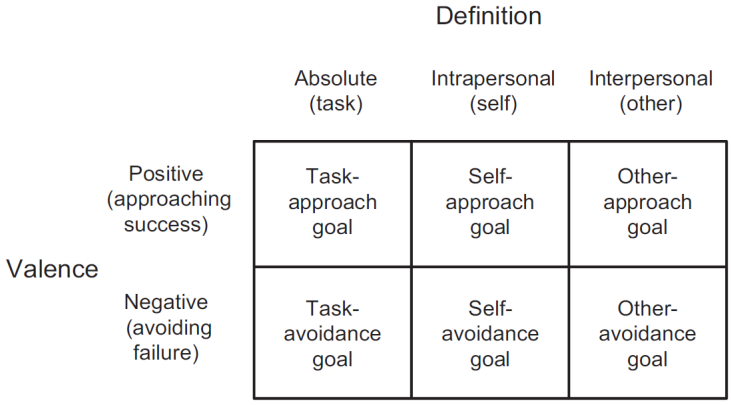


Figure 5 *The 3 x 2 achievement goal model. Definition and valence represent the two dimensions of competence. Absolute, intrapersonal, and interpersonal represent the three ways that competence may be defined; positive and negative represent the two ways that competence may be valenced (Elliot et al., 2011, p. 634).*

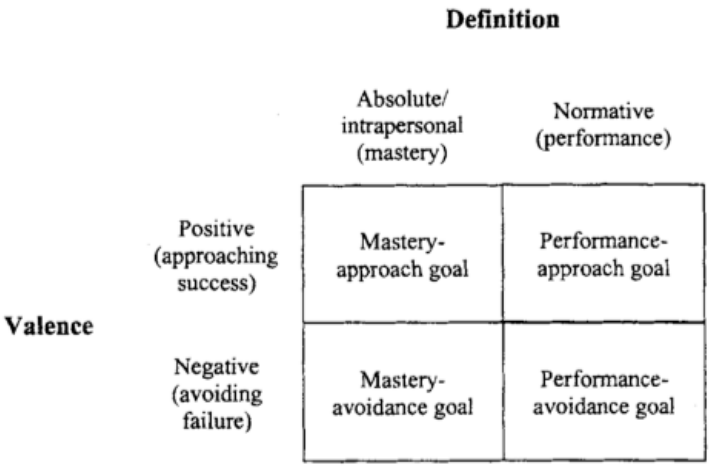


Figure 6 *The 2 x 2 achievement goal model as described in Elliot & McGregor (2001, p. 502)*

and 'performance'. The 3 x 2 model further breaks down sources of competency rather than a proposing something radically different. For example, Lampard's conclusion of task mastery in the 2 x 2 model would likely compare to self-approach in the 3 x 2 model. Performance

approach in the 2 x 2 model would compare with other-approach in the 3 x 2 model. For these reasons the 2 x 2 model is discussed in this thesis.

2.4.2.3 Performance Approach Goals Appear in Human-Human Interactions

Performance approach goals are socially judged by others, making them externally regulated. In the event of task-failure, there are more negative feelings and potentially reduced well-being or reduced interest in the activity (Dweck & Molden, 2005). Træen et al. (2019) suggested equestrians who are socially driven to satisfy others experienced less enjoyment in riding. Equestrians compare themselves to those inside (insiders) and outside (outsiders) equestrian culture. Dashper and St. John (2016) illustrated how competently dressing the part as an equestrian competitor leads to being socially judged as (and self-identifying as) an 'insider' equestrian. Fletcher and Dashper (2013) showed through media reports how a lack of competency in equestrian knowledge and language of horses and the sport of dressage highlights journalists as 'outsiders'. Consequently, journalists' lack of 'insider' knowledge and language entrenches the idea of there being 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. In the media reports highlighted by Fletcher and Dashper (2013), dressage is portrayed as a sport for the social upper class that is inaccessible and difficult to understand. These ideas support the behaviour of Coulter's (2014) participants who aimed to own multiple horses or buy and sell horses more capable of winning competitions to maintain a higher social status compared to other 'insiders'. Coulter (2014) continued, stating some equestrians "*have a life-long goal*" to participate as 'insiders' (p. 148). Despite the social judgement, horse owners are unlikely to give up participation in the face of failure or lost interest, suggesting other motivations prompt owners to maintain participation (Dashper, 2017a, pp. 56–57).

2.4.2.4 Task Mastery, Self-Regulation and Emotional Control

Lamperd et al.'s (2016) elite performance participants were determined to be motivated through task mastery approach goals. Task mastery requires high levels of self-regulation, meaning participants engage more strategies to foster future success in the event of failure. Therefore, mastery goals are more predictive of future success. Self-regulation consists of emotional regulation, behavioural regulation, cognitive regulation, and environmental regulation (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005). Both Lamperd et al. (2016) and McGinn et al. (2018) demonstrated how elite riders practice self-regulation for goal achievement. Through environmental self-regulation, participants controlled their external environment (i.e. support networks, business set-up), and managed internal states through emotional and cognitive self-regulation using reflection and self-analysis techniques (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005). Self-

regulation is linked not only to competency in one's skill set and knowledge to manage internal and external states but also to one's autonomy (choice) to control the internal or external environments (Ryan & Deci, 2017). A person's belief in their own ability to achieve their goals directs how they behave towards actually achieving the goals, and competency and autonomy facilitate the execution of that belief (Bandura, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

2.4.2.5 Insights Into Horse Ownership From Achievement Motivation

While Coulter (2014) cited ownership as a way to access and demonstrate social status as a competitor, Lamperd et al. (2016) referenced horse ownership as a role separate to the role held by the participants they interviewed. The horses the participants ride are implied to be owned by another although it is stated participants sold horses. It infers that for elite equestrians, ownership motivation is monetary. Horses are sold to support participants' businesses, which largely consist of riding other owners' horses. Lamperd et al. (2016) further illustrated ownership motivation is separate to riding motivation because ownership was not required to attain horse riding goals.

2.4.2.6 Applying Achievement Goal Theory to Horse Ownership

The evidence of achievement goal theory in equestrianism appears in participants' ability to ride, competitive performance outcomes, and their belief in their ability to achieve desired outcomes, whether externally driven or internally driven. As a theory, achievement goal theory offers more dimensions than self-efficacy alone; however, it has similar issues in defining the tasks or goals achieved in relation to horse ownership—limiting horse owners' motivation to their perception of accomplishing care task goals or social status goals. Adding to the dimensions of horse ownership, Dashper (2017a) demonstrated horse owners chose horse ownership despite social and personal difficulties, and Lamperd et al. (2016) demonstrated competitive goal attainment is plausible without horse ownership. There appears to be more to horse ownership motivation than simply performance or task mastery goal attainment related to horse riding and performance.

Achievement requires competence—the skill set and self-belief to achieve a goal—and the ability to manage one's internal and external environments (i.e. self-regulation and autonomy). Focusing on competence in horse ownership removes problematic judgements of sport performance, care tasks, or social status tasks. Mitchell (2013) investigated competence in horse riding using self-determination theory. Self-determination theory captures a person's

perceptions of internal and external regulation regarding activities rather than framing tasks as specific goals; it is thus useful for 'goal-less' interactions with horses.

2.4.3 Self-Determination Theory and Competency

Competency is one of three basic psychological needs that comprise the meta-theory self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The other two are autonomy and relatedness. Mitchell (2013) used modified Sport Motivation Scales (SMSs) derived from self-determination theory (Pelletier et al., 1995; Pelletier et al., 2013). The SMSs focused on competency and autonomy of riding, allowing Mitchell to investigate the horse riding without needing a specific goal or judgement of the quality of performance.

Self-determination theory practices consilience—agreement between academic approaches to a topic. It connects disparate theories together, functioning towards a more cohesive understanding of motivation. Referencing back to page 32 McClelland's (1961; 1995) needs for achievement, affiliation, and power can be comparable to Ryan and Deci's (2014) need for competency, relational, and autonomy (respectively). Such consilience is seen during the emergence of SDT when Deci and Ryan (1980) explicitly stated how their theory brings together the debates of external verses internal motivation (p. 33). SDT is thus organismic, a holistic perspective considering how an individual's motivations connect and develop. Legault (2017) summarised the complexity of SDT cohesively.

> *SDT rests on the notion that the individual is involved continuously in a dynamic interaction with the social world—at once striving for need satisfaction and also responding to the conditions of the environment that either support or thwart needs. As a consequence of this person-environment interplay, people become either engaged, curious, connected, and whole, or demotivated, ineffective, and detached.* (p. 1)

Self-determination theory consists of six mini-theories that address one or more of the basic psychological needs (Table 1). Competency, as already discussed, is the need to feel effective at tasks and able to influence one's environments. Autonomy is the need to experience one's actions as volitional (i.e. by choice) and 'self-endorsed' (e.g. morally agree with one's own actions). Relatedness is the need to feel connected, form close relationships with others, and feel cared for. Self-determination theory may be able to demonstrate how the different horse ownership motivations already identified are connected, making a horse owner either feel connected and whole (positive emotions) or demotivated and detached (negative emotions).

Table 1 *Six Mini-Theories of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000)*	
SDT Mini-Theories	**Brief description and function within SDT**
Cognitive Evaluation Theory	How events in the social environment impact intrinsic motivation (p. 123)
Organismic Integration Theory	Explains the concepts of internalisation and integration, which result in the four major types of motivational regulation: external, introjected, identified, and integrated (p. 179)
Causality Orientations Theory	Explains motivational styles of autonomous (intrinsic), controlled (extrinsic), or impersonal (a-motivated) (p. 216)
Basic Psychological Need Theory	The relation between basic psychological need satisfaction, well-being and ill-being (p. 239)
Goal Content Theory	The content of people goals—extrinsic reward or internal reward—and these relate differently to well-being; extrinsic related to lower well-being than intrinsic (p. 273)
Relationship Motivational Theory	Proposes that the relatedness need is intrinsic and inclines people to be volitionally engaged in close relationships (p. 293)

2.4.3.1 Internal to External Motivation

All mini-theories are anchored in the idea that the cause of human behaviour is either externally (extrinsic) or internally (intrinsic) regulated, referred to as the locus of causality (i.e. motivational energy). Self-determination theory further breaks down locus of causality into different types of external regulation. Extrinsic motivation results in behaviour done in compliance with regulations, under the control of another, or according to societal rules. These types of behaviours are seen in a work place where individuals perform tasks purely for a bonus (reward) or to avoid being fired (punishment). Intrinsic motivation is self-determined and is often seen in the pursuit of leisure activities like horse riding, which Mitchell (2013) concluded is intrinsically motivating.

Self-determination theorises the locus of causality can shift on a continuum between purely external to purely internal and illustrated in Figure 7. Where a person interprets their locus of causality to be can increase or decrease their psychological well-being over time. The more internal the locus of causality, the greater the sense of well-being which is represented by the right-hand side of Figure 7. The process of externally motivated behaviours 'shifting' on the continuum and transforming into internally motivated ones is called 'internalisation'. When something is purely internally motivated, it is self-determined or autonomous. Autonomy is important because the individual feels they can perform the behaviour without constraints; their actions become more satisfying, contributing to their sense of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 53). Conversely, people who feel completely constrained will demonstrate a-motivation and disengage from activities as described by the left-hand side of Figure 7.

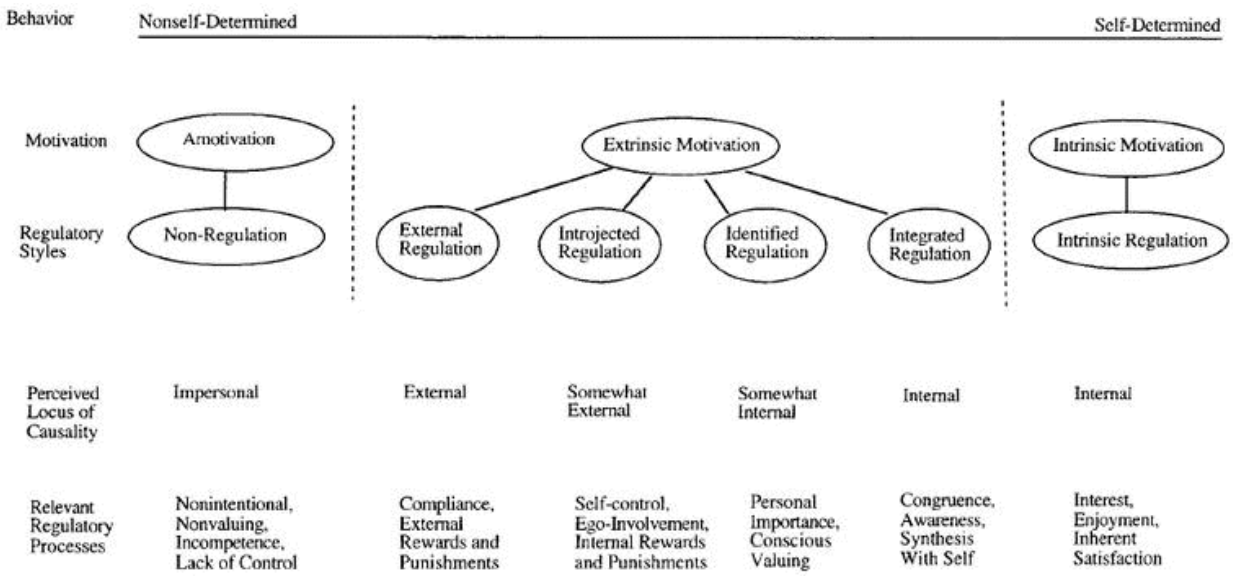


Figure 6 A taxonomy of human motivation – the self-determination continuum showing types of motivation with their regulatory styles, loci of causality, and corresponding processes (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61)

2.4.3.2 Applying Self-Determination Theory

Application of SDT is beneficial in the removal of judgement about good or bad horse ownership and clearly focuses on what causes an individual's behaviour. Its current application in equestrianism is limited to a single doctoral thesis and two applications in companion animal literature (Kurdek, 2008; Kanat-Maymon et al., 2016). Ryan and Deci (2017) stressed the use of empirical data in supporting their theory. Mitchell (2013) adapted an established SMSs to use for the sport of horse riding, and Kurdek (2008) and Kanate-Maymon et al. (2016) adapted La Guardia et al.'s (2000) Need Satisfaction Scale (NSS). Designed for humans in human social situations, the NSS is slightly out of context when used in animals and transforms relatedness measures from human social dynamics to that of a participant's individual pet. It thus excludes the human social context that still exists around the human element of human-animal relationships (Jyrinki & Laaksonen, 2011; Coulter, 2014; Dashper, 2017a).

Mitchell's (2013) adaptations fit the context of SMS's use in sport, clearly indicating there is something about horse riding activities that is increasingly, intrinsically rewarding to humans—so much so, in fact, that some turn their horse hobby into their profession (Schuurman & Franklin, 2016; Dashper, 2017a). The phenomena of turning one's hobby into one's profession is theorised through Stebbins's (1982) serious leisure. Professionals sell horses as indicated by Lamperd et al. (2016) and encounter horse owners. The transition from

amateur (where horse ownership is more likely) to professional (where ownership is less likely) may suggest something about horse ownership.

2.4.4 Intrinsic Motivation, Serious Leisure, and Equestrianism

Schuurman and Franklin (2016) and Dashper (2017a) theorised serious leisure as an explanation for engagement with horse activities. Serious leisure is defined as "*the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial and interesting in nature for the participant to find a career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience*" (Stebbins, 1992, p. 3); meaning one's hobby is so intrinsically rewarding they pursue a career in the hobby. To pursue the hobby professionally, the participant must develop expertise in order to sell their skills and be credible. Schuurman and Franklin (2016) and Dashper (2017a) questioned whether the unique nature of equestrian activities means Serious leisure is sufficient in explaining the phenomenon of horse activities.

2.4.4.1 Applying Serious Leisure

Both Dashper (2017a) and Schuurman and Franklin (2016) queried serious leisure's requirement of benefit to a participant. At times horse activity might be altruistic or use up valuable resources of money and time (Jyrinki & Laaksonen, 2011). Perhaps the horse is injured and no longer able to serve its intended function, or perhaps there is no intended 'end' to the activity (a requirement in serious leisure theory). Schuurman and Franklin (2016) highlighted serious leisure as individualistic and so question how it can apply when the activity requires cooperation with a non-human social actor (Maurstad et al., 2013; Thompson, 2011; Birke & Thompson, 2018).

All horses require the same instrumental care regardless of whether they live with a professional or amateur. Participants develop a great deal of knowledge and skill whether they are pursuing horses professionally or not. Specific expertise may be related for riding or training the horse, but amateurs and professionals frequently compete against each other, reiterating the overlap between the two groups and making serious leisure in equestrianism more difficult to distinguish.

2.4.4.2 Serious Leisure Applied in Other Animal-Related Sporting Activities

There is evidence of serious leisure used to explain dog agility (Baldwin & Norris, 1999; Gillespie et al., 2002; Hultsman, 2012). Parallels exist between dog agility and competitive horse sport with individuals in both groups competing with their 'pet'. The most prevalent similarity between the dog agility and horse activities is recognition of the time and energy

investment. Gillespie et al. (2002) called that investment a 'culture of commitment' in dog agility, while Dashper (2017a) and Birke, Hockenhull, and Creighton (2010) referred to it as a 'lifestyle' or an 'all-consuming compulsiveness', respectively.

2.4.4.3 In Equestrianism Serious Leisure Is an Outcome of Being Motivated, Not a Cause

The time consumption and the minimum level of expertise required just to participate explain the similarity to serious leisure for amateurs compared to professionals. It seems the major difference between professionals and amateurs in equestrianism is the effort to make a living from the activity rather than many of the other distinctions used to define serious leisure in non-animal activities. This observation aligns with Lamperd et al.'s (2016) participants' comments about selling horses. Any further conclusions about serious leisure for horse ownership are speculative. Overall, serious leisure is an explanation of a potential outcome of the process of being motivated rather than a complete motivational theory. It relies predominantly upon the activities being intrinsically motivating enough that a person pursues the activity full-time, but it doesn't necessarily explore what it is that is motivating about the activities. Specifically, serious leisure relies on a separate theory that does explain intrinsic motivation: Csikszentmihalyi's (1975, 1990) flow theory.

2.4.5 Intrinsic Motivation, Flow Theory, and Equestrianism

'Flow' is the phenomenon that occurs when a person experiences 'true', complete, all-engrossing intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) embraced flow in explaining intrinsic motivation in SDT, where it continues to persist (Deci and Ryan, 2017). Flow theory is relevant to both individuals and team sports (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2017), making it relevant to explaining horse riding and perhaps horse ownership. Four authors and six papers reference flow theory in the experience of riding and during other horse-related activities. Jackman et al. (2015) and Jackman et al. (2019) demonstrated that flow occurs in racehorse jockeys, and Adamson (2003) noted that flow increased as a result of dressage judge feedback. Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011) proposed it as an effect of time spent in horse-related activities, and Thompson and Nesci (2016) suggested it as a mitigating factor in safety of eventing.

2.4.5.1 Experiencing a Flow State

Flow theory explains the occurrence of flow but also explains experiences of anxiety or boredom, and it differentiates between other positive emotional states like relaxation, control, or arousal (Figure 8). Flow has nine factors, which seem to appear sequentially—three

antecedents and six outcomes (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2017) (Table 2). Flow is a very specific state of an optimal intrinsic experience, and its occurrence is unpredictable; a person can experience enjoyment of an activity but not necessarily flow (Csikzentmihalyi 1990; Csiksentmihalyi et al., 2017). By knowing the antecedents, one can regulate their behaviour and environment to create the opportunity for flow to occur, but one can never force flow.

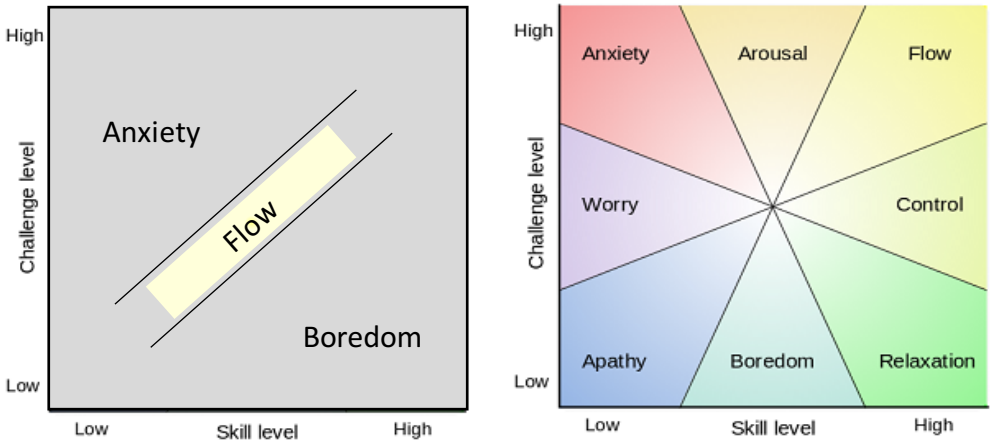


Figure 7 *An early conceptualisation of flow (left) and a later conceptualisation of flow (right) (Adapted from: Csizentmihalyi et al., 2000; Csikzentmihalyi et al., 2017)*

Table 2 *Antecedents and Outcomes of Flow (adapted from Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2017)*	
Flow antecedents	**Description**
Clear goal	Flow narrows focus to the task (goal). Long-term goals provide greater opportunity for flow to occur as they are often broken down into short-term goals.
Balance of challenge to skill	When one's skill set matches the challenge. Experiencing success in meeting goals builds self-efficacy. As skills improve, greater challenges can be adopted.
Unambiguous feedback	Feedback from the body through kinaesthetic awareness. Develop ability to listen to own body and alter goals or challenges in the moment for optimal performance.
Flow outcomes	**Description**
Focused attention	Focus narrows to the present moment and is comparable to 'mindfulness'—a non-judgemental ongoing stream of internal and external stimuli (thoughts).
Merging of action and awareness	Sense of effortlessness. 'Habit' occurs—the performance of an action is controlled by a less specialised part of the brain and implicit memory. Less thought and less physical energy diversion through change in attention and rhythmic motion.
Sense of control	Experience empowerment—the idea that one can control self and own actions. Implicit trust in one's own skills resulting in a sense of power, confidence, and calm.
Loss of self-consciousness	'Quieting of the ego'. Complete belief of self and loss of awareness of others and their opinions. A sense of 'being in the zone', unity, kinship with external environment.
Distortion of time	Time passes unnoticed but also presents as a distinct awareness of the details of a single moment. Time during flow is not a factor to consider and is not measured.
Intrinsic motivation (autotelism)	Flow facilitates a love of an activity, for the sake of the activity. Without intrinsic interest in an activity, flow is not possible—autotelic experience.

2.4.5.2 Measuring Flow

The horse-riding literature uses both interviews and scales to measure flow. A 'gold standard' measure of flow is elusive, likely because flow is unpredictable and a subjective experience.

Csikzentmihalyi (1975/2000) developed the Flow Questionnaire (FQ) from interviews, and Larson and Csikzentmihalyi (1983/2014) developed the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), whereby people create self-reports whilst participating in an activity. Moneta (2012) determined that FQ and ESM measures may impose flow on participants, but ESM is useful for determining emotional experience over time (Csikzentmihalyi & Larson, 1987/2014). Therefore, others seek flow using in-person interviews focused on the antecedents and outcomes of flow (Jackson, 1992; Jackman, 2015).

Finding ESM impractical for investigating flow during physical activity, Jackson and Marsh (1996) developed Flow State Scales (FSS), and Jackson and Eklund (2002) developed Flow State Scales-2 (FSS-2). Using FSS, Tenenbaum et al. (1999) determined that flow may occur on a continuum with losing track of time only experienced in 'deep flow' and the 'autotelic experience' occurring more readily (see Table 2). Additionally, Stavrou et al. (2007) established flow outcomes (e.g. sense of control, focused attention, and autotelic experience) are often experienced together. Not all outcomes have to be present for flow to occur; however, reports of five to six of the nine flow factors are common instead of just one (Csiksentmihalyi et al., 2017).

2.4.5.3 Flow and Everyday Horse Activities

Jyrinki & Laaksonen (2011) proposed that flow state occurred as participants lost track of time when spending time with horses—riding or otherwise. Losing track of time is associated with 'deep' flow experiences, suggesting there would be other antecedents and outcomes; but it is not clear whether they considered other flow antecedents or outcomes. Flow can occur in everyday activities, and so it is possible Jyrinki and Laaksonen's participants did experience flow, but uncertainty remains due to the limited available information; however, flow has been investigated more explicitly in horse riding.

2.4.5.4 Flow and Dressage

Adamson (2003) investigated flow in dressage competitors through FSS, post-competition and after receiving judges' feedback. The judges' feedback increased the flow experience responses of participants. Feedback is a part of the flow experience, but it is feedback of the body in the moment rather than external feedback from a judge. External judgement is an extrinsic motivator, and concern over judgement is considered an impediment to flow (Csikzentmihalyi et al., 2017). Perhaps while competing participants were distracted by knowing they were being judged, and receiving the feedback altered the dynamic. Relating

back to achievement goal theory, the dressage judge feedback is self-referential feedback, which is known to facilitate task mastery goals (Pekrun et al., 2014; Goetz et al., 2016) and potentially facilitate the change in flow response.

2.4.5.5 Flow and Eventing

Thompson and Nesci (2016) suggested flow outcomes occur during eventing. The study presumed flow's existence and focused on risk perception of the sport rather than antecedents or outcomes of flow. However, the study established a theme of control and explains riders' participation in a risky sport through their perceived balance of skill and challenge. To experience intrinsic motivation when riding, equestrians must have a skill set that allows them to feel competent enough to manage the technicalities of the sport and associated dangers. This also applies for non-riding interactions with the horse.

2.4.5.6 Flow and Horse Racing

Jackman (2015, 2017) and Jackman et al. (2019) provided the most thorough evidence of flow during horse riding and add that the horse itself is an additional factor to the experience of flow. Horse racing and dressage are effectively different sports, just as an 800m race is different to ballet (dressage) or a triathlon (eventing). The flow experience is suggested to differ between sports (Chavez, 2008). However, Jackson (2015) found additional 'facilitators' to flow—'*optimal relationship between horse and jockey*', '*favourable horse demeanour and performance*' and '*interaction with trainer/owner*'—that are likely shared amongst all professional riders (p. 213). Additionally, Jackman et al. (2019) associated flow with bodily experiences of 'lightness of touch' and 'perceptions of balance' during riding that cross discipline boundaries.

2.4.5.7 Summary of Flow in Equestrianism

Piecing together the evidence, horse riders experience both control and arousal, and they balance skill and challenge during competition where flow likely occurs. These occur in eventing and horse racing, but in dressage the flow experience may be diminished due to the inherent external judgement of the sport. Dressage motivation may come from goal achievement after competition rather than experiencing flow during competition. Maintaining control, and balancing skill and challenge, both require competency; they support the development of self-efficacy, which is shown to support successful dressage performance (Beauchamp & Whinton, 2005). Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011) suggested equestrians experience loss of time when spending time with horses. Whether on the ground or in the

saddle, the activities with horses require perceived competency and can be intrinsically motivating.

2.4.6 Summarising the Motivations From the Horse Riding and Performance Cluster

The horse riding and performance literature cluster demonstrates riding as an activity wherein people experience a sense of achievement, competency, and optimal intrinsic motivation. However, ownership is not a requirement for riding or for experiencing achievement on a horse, suggesting the evidence from this cluster is also only a part of the ownership experience.

Investigating horse ownership with goal-directed theories like self-efficacy and achievement goal theory is problematic as horse ownership goals or achievement would default to care tasks or performance goals. Some interactions with horses appear goal-less but motivating. Competency and self-determination theory remove the judgement, but as with previous theories, determining characteristics for an *a priori* measure is problematic with regard to relatedness. Horse riding is intrinsically motivating and is proposed to occur during non-riding activities through flow. Flow theory in equestrianism incorporates specific 'horse' factors that occur during horse-human interactions. The horse-human interaction literature cluster expands on why these 'horse' factors may be motivating and are applicable in both the riding and non-riding context.

2.5 Motivation for Horse Ownership – Human-Horse Interaction Cluster

The horse-human relationship literature focuses on the sociological or social psychological perspectives of the human-horse interactions. Three key concepts are raised and each is discussed independently although they are interconnected. Communication is discussed as a key mechanism of building a successful human-horse relationship, and the experience of intrinsic motivation through the flow experience is introduced in the horse riding and performance literature. Relationship is discussed as a motivating factor that fulfils innate human needs for relatedness. The relationship aspect illustrates the changes in view of the horse from a tool on which a person competes and experiences a sense of achievement to a 'partner' with whom they experience achievement. The dichotomy of the horse as an object and the horse as a subject becomes evident when speaking about horse-human relationships. At times the view of the horse as an object or a subject conflict, creating ambiguity (Belk, 1996; Dashper, 2014) and this ambiguity potentially impacts how experiences with the horse are motivating.

2.5.1 Communication and Flow in Human-Horse Interactions

Sociological based research supports the evidence of humans experiencing flow in horse-human interactions, although it is not directly stated. Horse riding is a rhythmic activity that requires the horse and rider bodies to sync in movement. Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) identified group flow when teams or groups participating in rhythmic activity sync (e.g. dance troupe), and communication is a key aspect. For example, riders give cues to their horses and experience bodily feedback from the horses (Jackman et al., 2019). Horse literature is littered with publications in which, if read in search of evidence of human-horse communication, one would find a language and description mirroring flow. Ideas of oneness (i.e. syncing or merging of action and awareness), feel (body feedback), and control exist in riding literature labelled as 'harmony' or 'centaur' and imply mutuality and cooperation (e.g. Game, 2001; Brandt, 2004, 2006; Smith & Fraser, 2011; Birke & Brandt, 2009; Thompson, 2011; Birke, 2017). Birke and Hockenhull (2016) called it 'gelling' and when a horse and human pair are 'gelling', then the opportunity for flow exists.

A 'disconnect' in communication between horse and rider will prevent 'gelling' (Birke & Hockenhull, 2016; Blokhuis and Lundgren, 2017); if the horse is communicating discomfort or displeasure, there is little chance the rider is experiencing a flow state. Birke and Hockenhull (2016) noted it may be obvious in observation that neither the horse nor human is enjoying the mutual encounter (i.e. riding). The feedback of displeasure from the horse would likely result in a disconnection that prevents the narrow focus or effortlessness characteristic of flow. Therefore, a person must be competent in their communication with the horse to facilitate intrinsic motivation.

2.5.1.1 Competent Communication Facilitates Intrinsic Motivation

Competency is an important aspect of experiencing flow, and part of the competence in horse riding is the ability to communicate with the horse. Communication between horse and human can occur either in the saddle or on the ground with the horse during routine care. Some believe that competent communication is the ability for the human to learn to 'speak horse' (Birke, 2007), while others propose it is the ability of the human and horse to create a shared 'third language' or develop mutual understanding (Brandt, 2004; Maurstad et al., 2013; Dashper, 2016). Still others argue competent communication occurs only through appropriate operant conditioning of the horse to human-given stimuli (McGreevy & Mclean, 2010).

Perspectives of competent communication are situated within specific training methodologies that are often pitted against each other, arguing one is more favourable than another. Natural horsemanship is a particular target, as are 'traditional' training methods, but all have their respective champions and adversaries. Savvides (2012) compared communication of 'traditional' competitive dressage and natural horsemanship, finding commonality between the two; both seek the same outcome of a human-horse relationship free from conflict, and this outcome is more important than the specific methods used. All perspectives advocate for competent communication, arguing that it results in a conflict-free relationship—the 'optimal relationship' required for 'gelling'. It means intrinsic motivation for horse-human interactions is likely universal to any encounters wherein conflict is abated through competent communication, regardless of training methodology. As indicated by flow and achievement goal theory, competency is indicative of the ability to self-regulate, allowing humans to make adjustments as required in their own behaviour to facilitate optimal communication.

2.5.2 The Horse-Human Relationship as Motivation

The sociological studies indicate the human-horse relationship is more than just the horse as a functional tool for performance; the horse is an active participant fulfilling a relationship role (Robinson, 1999; Birke et al., 2010; Dashper, 2014). The relationship with the horse is an antecedent to the human experiencing intrinsic motivation such as flow. To experience flow the human and horse must communicate effectively and to communicate effectively they must 'know' each other (Birke & Thompson, 2018). The human-horse relationship is also an outcome because competent communication develops the relationship (Dashper, 2016; Dashper, 2017b). Humans innately desire close relationships and speak of their horse as a person or partner (Dashper, 2017). The relationship with the horse is specifically referenced as a motivation by Jones (1983) and is cited by Robinson (1999), Scantlebury et al. (2014), and Lamperd et al. (2016) in their respective contexts.

2.5.2.1 Determining Motivation From Human-Horse Relationships

Perhaps the intrinsic motivation experienced during interactions with the horse is the fulfilment of the basic psychological need of relatedness through the competent communication-relationship dynamic. Relatedness as a basic psychological need stipulates humans have innate desires for close relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Whether horse-human relationships are capable of fulfilling the relatedness need or are equivalent to human relationships is a point of debate found in the broader human-animal literature. Interspecies relationship research falls under various titles of multi-species ethnography (e.g. Maurstad et

al., 2013), anthrozoology (e.g. Bradshaw, 2016), or human-animal bonds (e.g. Hosey & Melfi, 2014). All seek an understanding of the phenomenon of humans' ability to form relationships with animals and related topics (e.g. welfare of the animal, benefits to humans, etc.). None deny a type of relationship exists; the differences are in the nature of the relationship and what the relationship means for the human and animal. The relationships are often measured in terms of benefits. The American Veterinary Medical Association's (2019) definition is representative of how human-animal relationships are recognised.

> *The human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors essential to the health and wellbeing of both. This includes, among other things, emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, animals, and the environment.* (AVMA website)

2.5.2.2 Human Benefits From Horses

Examples of the benefits of horses to humans include owners speaking of their horses as therapeutic (Davis et al., 2014). However, this term is not to be confused with the formal, clinical use of horses for treating both physical and psychological conditions (DiGiacomo, 2016). Horses in clinical use are under sessional, laboratory-like conditions. Owners speaking of their horses as therapeutic are speaking of the sense of well-being gained from 'everyday' encounters in their interspecies relationship (Davis et al., 2014, p. 301). Horse-human partnerships are often long established rather than sessional encounters (Dashper, 2017; Birke & Thompson, 2018). The benefits of the horses include the use of the horse to fulfil human achievement in competition, the associated health benefits from the physical activity of riding and caring for horses, as well as positive emotional experiences, and even spiritual experiences (Davis et al., 2014; Finkel & Danby, 2017).

2.5.2.3 Horse Benefits From Humans

Benefits to the horse are acknowledged as access to food, water, shelter, and veterinary care, but any other benefits are debated (McCune et al., 2014). Researchers often consider good horse welfare to be the absence of poor welfare (e.g. McGreevy et al., 2018; Hockenhull & Whay, 2014). Few focus on indicators of positive welfare states such as Yeates and Main (2008) and Popescu et al. (2014). Humans hold more power in the human-horse relationship with the opportunity to exploit the more vulnerable position of the horse. However, the examples from literature cited throughout this thesis repeatedly show humans' efforts to be responsible with power over the horse. Humans aim for the horse to be unharmed when

encountering humans, to be a willing participant during interactions, and to potentially gain some benefit through looking to the human for protection from danger (Daspher, 2017, p. 164).

2.5.2.4 Fulfilment of Need Is About Caring and Being Cared For

SDT stipulates fulfilment of relatedness through close relationships is via feelings experienced caring for others and being cared for by others, rather than a focus on physical benefits. In determining motivation for horse ownership, relatedness directs the focus onto the action and perception of the human rather than the measurement of benefits or judgement of welfare of the horse. Horse welfare is clearly an important topic but has limited capacity to explain the human motivation for horse ownership, compared with the communication-relationship dynamic already argued as integral to intrinsic motivation.

While measuring the amount or method of the provision of food to a horse is a tangible way to measure care and management behaviour of humans, it provides little towards determining if the human feels like they are caring for another or being cared for by another. Research using qualitative methods exploring the human-horse relationship provides clearer examples of human feelings in relation to horses. Dashper (2017) stated participants felt satisfaction mucking out their horse's stable (p. 57). Maurstad et al. (2013) and Maurstad et al. (2016) observed that participants felt satisfaction just being with their horse (p. 333, p. 113, respectively). Birke and Thompson (2018) reported author Thompson felt bliss while transporting her horse (p. 103).

In these examples the human participants felt satisfaction not only from providing physical care but also from being in close proximity to their horses. In human relationships such as parenting, friendship, and romantic relationships, the caring can be physical care, but 'care' also refers to emotional support—a hug or other comfort in one's time of need. Humans often refer to their horses as children, friends, or partners. Bradshaw (2016) suggested humans lack a sufficient lexicon for describing human-animal relationships and thus use terms like parent, friend, or partner, even though the relationship is not completely comparable. Part of the lack of comparability, beyond the obvious species differences, is the unequal power dynamic along with the ambiguity between the horse as a subject in a relationship or an object of functional use (Belk, 1996; Dashper, 2014).

2.5.3 The Horse as a Subject and an Object

The perspective of the horse as a functional tool verses a subject in a relationship is a feature of all human-animal relationships. Living outside the family home, the unique capacity of the horse to be ridden, and its ability to have functional roles in a competitive sporting capacity do make the dichotomy more evident than in the case of the common house pet. This subject-object ambiguity appears linked with motivation as well. In the economic and marketing literature and the horse riding and performance literature, the horse is referenced more as an object with more achievement motivations evident, while in the horse-human interaction literature the horse is referenced more as a subject, and a greater sense of intrinsic motivation from a relatedness perspective.

2.5.3.1 Horses as Objects

As an object some horses have monetary value ranging from thousands to millions of pounds sterling, and their price fluctuates depending on the function they presumably can perform. Horses' athletic ability to fulfil human competitive ambitions or their docile personality traits in the case of a child's first pony positively impact the horses' value (Hennessy et al., 2008; Gilbert & Gillett, 2011; Coulter, 2014). If a horse becomes injured and can no longer serve an intended function, the monetary value of the horse decreases dramatically. Lamperd et al.'s (2016) participants cited the value of a horse's competitive ability as a reason for selling the horse to make a living. As objects, horses are tools, used as a source of achievement in the competitive arena through performance or task mastery, and a source of social status amongst other humans (Coulter, 2014).

2.5.3.2 Horses as Subjects

To use the horse to accomplish achievements in the competitive arena, one must be able to competently communicate with the horse, encountering it as a subject. It is in the crossover of not only having a horse but also engaging with (i.e. encountering) the horse, that the horse exists in a dual state of subject and object at a single point in time. Horses are deemed to have personalities (Lloyd et al., 2008; Lansade et al., 2017) and preferences (Hunter & Houpt, 1989; Müller & Udén, 2007). Mejdell et al. (2016) demonstrated that horses communicate their preferences. Therefore, a part of competent communication is 'listening to' and 'knowing' the horse as an individual (Dashper, 2017b; Birke & Thompson, 2018). Horses are thus perceived as active participants in the relationship, having agency, and can be 'willing' participants. The combination of perceived willingness and communication developed from knowing the horse

creates the sense of mutuality and cooperation that leads to 'gelling'. The horse as a subject is integral to intrinsic motivation.

2.5.3.3 Subject-Object Interactions

Even if the horse is a willing participant, the power of the human in the relationship is still evident in the choice of when and how to encounter the horse. Bradshaw (2016) reiterated that even through animals are compared to children, in grief, animals appear to be treated differently to human children. Deceased animals may be supplanted, unlike a human child. Additionally, horses are often sold. The average length a horse stays with an owner is approximately six years, even though horses live into their mid-20s (BETA, 2015). So although human-horse relationships exist, they may not be as fulfilling as human-human relationships. The subject-object ambiguity is evident when the relationship with the horse, desire to achieve, and monetary desires abut. The interaction of these sources of motivation occurs in individuals but also sustains the distinct dynamics of society's relationship with the horse species, evidenced in the variety of perceived reasons for horse ownership.

2.5.4 Summarising the Motivations From the Horse-Human Interaction Cluster

Competent communication facilitates the experience of flow during horse riding. It is also important for day-to-day interactions and is the mechanism that allows the development of the human-horse relationship. The relationship with the horse may be a source of motivation by fulfilling relatedness needs. However, the power dynamics and the subject-object ambiguity in relationships between humans and horses keep the question of horses' fulfilment of human relatedness needs open for debate. The debate is not unique to horses; researchers seek to understand the phenomenon of human-animal relationships in general.

2.6 Motivation for Horse Ownership – Ideas in Companion Animal Literature

Companion animal literature explores the phenomenon of human-animal relationships (HARs) more extensively than the human-horse relationship on its own. In addition to the collection of surveys regarding HARs in Appendix A, the literature gives much attention to applying aspects of attachment theory, specifically the attachment system. Attachment theory is a prominent theory in explaining how humans develop and behave in close relationships (Howe, 2011; Cassidy, 2016). There is limited application of attachment theory in equestrianism. Payne et al. (2016) concluded attachment between horse and human is unlikely, but not enough evidence exists to say for sure. DeAraugo et al. (2014) made a comparison of a human's attachment dimensions and their selected training methodology. Birke and

Hockenhull (2016) proposed that a horse demonstrated attachment behaviour in one case (p. 131). This section starts by providing an overview of attachment theory and continues by discussing its current application in HARs and its potential for explaining horse ownership motivation.

2.6.1 Attachment Theory Overview

Attachment theory is primarily considered a theory of human child development but functions to explain the emotional and physical connectedness between individuals, especially those in close relationships. Attachment theory's theoretical foundation is a combination of evolution through natural selection, evolutionary biology, object relations, control systems theory, and cognitive psychology (Simpson & Belsky, 2016). One of the benefits of attachment theory's ethological roots is its applicability across species (Bell & Richards, 2000).

Bowlby (1969/1997) proposed attachment theory to explain behavioural dysfunction as a product of disruption of emotional support in early childhood. Bowlby later extended attachment theory in 1973 and 1980. Ainsworth and Bell (1970) conducted seminal work testing Bowlby's theory and observed that children who received greater emotional comfort from their primary caregiver appeared more emotionally secure compared to children who were 'fussed' over and those who were ignored. Early work on attachment theory centred on infant attachment to parents (attachment bond) but has since evolved to include development from child to adult (Howe, 2011), parental attachment to children (caregiver bond) (e.g. George & Solomon, 1999), and adult relationships (pair bonds: friendships, romantic relationships, etc.) (e.g. Hanzan & Shaver, 1987; Feeney & Collins, 2001). The distinctions between relationship bonds are determined based on who is providing emotional support to whom and the figure a subject seeks for emotional support. For example, the child-to-parent bond (attachment bond) is recognised to result from a separate behavioural system to the parent-to-child bond (caregiving bond). Attachment theory is applied in HARs because humans report seeking emotional comfort from their animals (attachment bonds).

2.6.1.1 Attachment Styles and Dimensions

An individual's behavioural patterns of seeking attention (attachment system) and giving emotional comfort (caregiving system) are called a person's attachment style or dimensions (Table 3). Attachment styles develop in relation to the emotional comfort an individual receives throughout their life span from available social resources. Attachment styles are normally considered global representations while dimensions relate more to adult individual

relationships. Some measurement tools seek global representations (Adult Attachment Interview) while others seek differences between individual relationships (i.e. Experiences in Close Relationships-Relationship Structure) (Crowell, Fraley, & Roisman, 2016). Secure attachment is deemed a desirable attachment style or dimension, resulting from sufficient and quality emotional comfort. Avoidant and anxious styles indicate lack of or inconsistent emotional comforting, respectively. Disorganised attachment indicates child neglect or abuse.

Table 3 *Attachment Styles Approximate Alignment Between Measures (adapted from Ainsworth, 1979; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; George et al., 1996; Duschinsky, 2015)*

	Organised Attachments Styles			**Disorganised**	**Other**
Observed Child to Parent	Type A Avoidant	Type B Secure	Type C Ambivalent*	Type D Disorganised/ Disoriented	
Adult Attachment Interview	Dismissing	Secure – Autonomous or Free to Evaluate	Preoccupied – Entangled*	Unresolved – Disorganised	Cannot Classify Helpless-Hostile
	Organised Attachment Dimensions			**Disorganised Dimensions**	
Adult Self-Report	Fearful – Avoidant	Secure	Preoccupied*	Dismissive – Avoidant	

*'Anxious' is used in this thesis as short-hand for the ambivalent/preoccupied terms in line with some adult and pet attachment texts (e.g. Topál et al., 1998; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014)

2.6.1.2 Secure Attachment

Securely attached individuals develop better emotional self-regulation and are more likely to offer emotional comfort to others, practice tolerance, and volunteer (Mikulincer et al., 2005). Thus in stressful situations such individuals appear calmer, compared to avoidant or anxious individuals. Shaver and Mikulincer (2014) stated secure individuals' behavioural self-regulation promotes *"communication, compromise, and relationship maintenance*" (p. 240). Secure individuals have attachment figures acting as a 'secure base' whom they trust to be there for them in times of distress (i.e. a 'safe-haven'). It is proposed interactions with their attachment figures result in a sense of safety, which offers a psychological resource for dealing with adversities and for sustaining well-being (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

2.6.1.3 Avoidant Attachment

Avoidant individuals tend to deactivate emotions rather than regulate. Deactivation is characterised by inhibiting emotional reactions or by dismissing or avoiding emotionally distressing situations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Shaver and Mikulincer (2014) explained avoidant individuals' behaviours are efforts to keep *"the attachment system deactivated regardless of the deleterious effects this can have on a relationship. Deactivating strategies cause people to avoid noticing their own emotional reactions"* (p. 241). Furthermore, avoidant

individuals "…*view themselves as superior, autonomous, and properly unemotional".* This self-perception does not keep them from reacting with anger, frustration or hostility when experiencing distress and disproportionately focusing on their personal strengths and others' weaknesses (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014, p. 246).

2.6.1.4 Anxious Attachment

Anxious individuals up-regulate, intensifying their own negative emotions in stressful situations. The behaviour is characterised by demanding attention; by being 'needy', 'clingy', controlling, or coercive; by exaggerating stressful situations; and by making themselves a victim (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). In adult relationships anxious individuals, when faced with their partner's distress, will seek comfort for themselves rather than offer emotional support. It is proposed they received inconsistent comfort as a child and resort to intensifying their attachment behaviour in an effort to receive the comfort they need (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014).

In summary, during times of emotional discomfort or distress, an avoidant individual will ignore the situation, an anxious individual will exaggerate, and a secure individual will emotionally self-regulate.

2.6.1.5 Attachment Bonds Differ From Affectional Bonds

An individual's long-enduring relationships in society are classified as affectional bonds. Affectional bonds are characterised by 1) persistence across time, 2) a specific individual not interchangeable with someone else, 3) emotional significance, 4) an individual wishing to maintain proximity and contact with the other, and 5) involuntary separation from the other causes distress. Attachment is an affectional bond with a specific additional characteristic: 6) the individual seeks security and comfort in the relationship in times of stress (Ainsworth, 1989; Cassidy, 2016, pp. 12–13). The person sought is the 'secure base' or 'attachment figure'. Individuals have only a few attachment figures and they exist in a hierarchy.

2.6.2 Attachment in Human-Animal Relationships.

Attachment theory's applicability across species is a contributing factor for its use in explaining HARs. For example, evidence in Equidae species shows horses demonstrate some comparable parental caregiving behaviour and filial attachment behaviour to humans (Klingel, 1974; Houpt, 2002). This is not evidence of attachment in HARs in itself; however, it provides a common platform to speak about each species. Attachment in HARs is proposed possible through the biophilia hypothesis—human's innate attraction to animals and nature (Kellert &

Wilson, 1993; Borgi & Cirulli, 2016)—and that humans attach to things that aren't human (Rajecki et al., 1978; Keefer et al., 2012).

2.6.2.1 Secure Attachment in Human-Animal Relationships

Animals are shown to act as 'secure base' or 'attachment figure' for humans (Sable, 1995; Beck & Madresh, 2008; Zilcha-Mano et al., 2012). These secure human-to-animal attachment patterns positively impact human health and well-being (i.e. fulfil human relatedness needs) (Kanat-Maymon et al., 2016; Meehand et al., 2017; Solomon et al., 2018). Animals attach to humans as well. Researchers investigating dogs' attachment to humans repeated Ainsworth and Bell's (1970) 'strange situation', concluding dogs do indeed form attachment bonds to humans (Topál et al., 1998; Gácsi et al., 2001; Mariti et al., 2013). Similar attachment research in horses has yet to be conducted. Payne et al. (2016) hypothesised horses are unlikely to attach to humans. However, Birke and Hockenhull (2016) observed a case in which the horse appeared attached to the human, using the human as a 'safe haven', leaving open the possibility of attachment despite theoretical barriers.

2.6.2.2 Anxious and Avoidant Attachment in Human-Animal Relationships

Zilcha-Mano et al. (2011) defined characteristics for both pet-attachment related anxiety and pet-attachment related avoidance. Anxiety is associated with feelings of worry about harm befalling one's pet, frustration with the pet if the relationship is not perceived as close as the human would like, and intense desire for close proximity. Avoidance was characterised by not relying on the pet for comfort in times of distress and general discomfort with physical or emotional closeness with their animal.

In relation to horses, DeAraugo et al. (2014) measured participants' human attachment dimensions (specifically adult, non-romantic relationships) and compared the dimensions to participants' horse training methodologies. Their participants appeared to be fairly secure, scoring relatively low on both anxious and avoidant dimensions; however, they did find one training methodology (what they labelled 'behavioural') to have more avoidant-oriented individuals. DeAraugo et al. (2014) and Zilcha-Mano et al. (2011) both showed avoidant individuals do not rely on their animal for comfort in times of distress, the same as avoidant attachment in humans. DeAraugo et al. (2014) suggested avoidant characteristics were favourable in horse training for "not taking matters personally when training does not go according to plan" (p. 240). As avoidant individuals are less likely to recognise their own emotions and avoid rather than self-regulate, these avoidant findings seem at odds with the

self-regulation required for competent communication in horse-human interactions. Avoidant individuals tend to highlight weakness in others and so would likely blame the horse in training situations, contradicting DeAraugo et al.'s (2014) implication that participants employing the 'behavioural' training methodology blame themselves.

2.6.2.3 Animal (and Horse) Attachment Conclusions Require Refinement

Research into animal attachment is inconsistent from method choice to interpretation of attachment theory. Some research uses clearer derivatives of attachment theory (e.g. Topál et al., 1998; Zilcha-Mano et al., 2011) while others vary in definitions of bond, relationship, and interaction, causing confusion in determining human-animal attachment patterns (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Hosey & Melfi, 2014). So far the evidence shows dogs treat humans as attachment figures and humans form bonds that resemble attachment bonds and these positively impact human well-being. These are separate attachment directions, and one paper deals with either animal → human or human → animal attachment.

Specifically for horses, conclusions about human well-being and fulfilment of relatedness needs requires further investigation. Currently, the attachment literature conflicts with itself and with established attachment theory information. Considering the attachment direction more carefully will provide a fresh direction for investigating horse-human relationships and opportunities for further explaining how all human-animal relationships are capable of fulfilling human needs and are thus motivating.

2.6.3 Attachment Direction Matters

Whether the animal is attaching to the human or the human to the animal is an important distinction in defining the human-animal relationship. According to attachment theory, pair bonds consist of both participants providing care and seeking emotional comfort. So far, attachment research has examined the human-animal relationship as unidirectional—either the human has an attachment bond to the animal or the animal has an attachment bond to the human. If human-animal relationships are mutual, then as a pair humans and animals should both be demonstrating mutual caregiving. This is something not considered in the literature to date but which is important in distinguishing a mutual relationship (pair bond) from something like a child to parent relationship (attachment bond) or parent to child relationship (caregiving bond).

Self-determination theory suggests both receiving care (e.g. being the child) and caregiving (e.g. being the parent) are capable of fulfilling relatedness needs (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

However, Deci et al. (2006) stated caregiving may be more intrinsically rewarding than receiving care, especially when caregiving is autonomous, as would be the case with horse ownership. Experiencing positive feelings when receiving care is also conditional on the intention of the caregiver. Conditional affection is less fulfilling than affection perceived as unconditional (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Thus, attachment direction matters in assessing how humans are motivated by the human-animal relationship and fundamentally, how human-animal relationships are defined, whether it is an attachment, mutual, or caregiving relationship.

2.6.4 Caregiving Is as Important as Attachment

An attachment bond is one-way (care-seeker → caregiver), but the behaviours that result in an attachment bond take two individuals—one to care-give and the other to care-seek—resulting in two separate but intertwining behavioural patterns (Bowlby, 1969/1997; Solomon & George, 1996) (Table 4). For example, parents will care-give by soothing distress or encouraging pleasure, while children will care-seek by indicating their needs, either engaging with or avoiding their parent (Beebe et al., 2010). In adult attachment relationships (pair bonds), each individual performs both caregiving and care-seeking behaviours towards each other (Howe, 2011).

Table 4 *Attachment and Caregiving Behaviours (adapted from Howe, 2011; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Cassidy, 2016)*

Attachment Behaviours	**Caregiving Behaviours**
Following	Sensitive response
Crying	Touch (gentle)
Anxious face	Gazing into eyes
Feelings of fear	Rocking
Seeking proximity to attachment figure	Cuddles
Protesting caregiver's departure	Attentive face
Fidgeting	Calm voice
Greeting caregiver upon return	Offering familiarity (e.g. food, smells, experience)
Clinging/Reaching out	
Timing	**Timing**
At the time of stress	Respond promptly
In moments of distress	Continuously until distressed behaviour subsides
Memories of stress and distress	Consistently
Outcome Aim	**Outcome Aim**
Receive comfort and the reduction of stress	Reduced stress of self and other

The quality of caregiving impacts attachment type more than overall duration or who is providing care, and this extends into adult mutual relationships (Feeney & Woodhouse, 2016). Quality is derived from the sensitivity and responsiveness of the behaviours (Meins et al.,

2001). Some classify it as being 'mind-minded' rather than performing behaviours as purely instrumental care (Colonnesi et al., 2017; McMahon & Bernier, 2017).

2.6.4.1 Human Attachment → Animal Caregiver or Animal Object

If the animal is an attachment figure, the animal is put in the position of a caregiver during the interaction. In parenting, when a child is expressing emotional distress, the parent's caregiving system is activated and seeks to reduce the child's distress. In a pair bond, the animal would actively provide emotional comfort, not just passively exist. However, few examples seek information on the animal actively providing care (e.g. Custance & Mayer, 2012). The more powerful position of the human in the HAR means the human may perceive any attention from the animal as conditional, because the animal lacks complete autonomy over its environment, access to food, socialisation, and proximity with the owner.

Additionally, if the animal is not actively engaging with the human, it is more akin to an attachment object (i.e. the animal is just there). Attachment objects provide emotional comfort through their proximity to the individual but do not replace attachment figures (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). As an attachment object the animal loses agency, becoming an instrument of emotional comfort. The attachment is a result of possession—the endowment effect—and of being in an individual's control rather than as a result of any specific care received (Kogut & Kogut, 2011). The companion animal literature supports animals as attachment figures; however, ownership is clearly influential.

2.6.4.2 Animal Attachment → Human

If the animal is attached to the human, the human is the caregiver. The human's caregiving system is activated when their animal is in emotional or physical need. The pair bond is more evident when the human provides comfort and seeks comfort from the animal, syncing with people's comparison of themselves as friends or partners. If in a parent role, the human would not seek their animal in times of personal distress. Attachment theory deems a parental attachment bond to one's child as dysfunctional (Cassidy, 2016). Parents instead have other attachment figures, such as their own parents, romantic partners, or friends. Any 'attachment' parents experience is an emotional connection to their child through feeling affection, fondness, or empathy—it is not, however, a formal attachment bond.

2.6.5 Finding Parental Caregiving in Existing Attachment Animal Literature

Zilcha-Mano et al. (2011) claimed HARs are mutual—"*a two-way street involving mutual interdependence"*—but that they are also like a parent-child relationship—"*[the] owner plays*

an important role in socializing [pets] and structuring [their] behavior. Some of this training process may be similar to the process by which parents influence their children's attachment patterns" (p. 355). Kobak (2009) made a similar observation about parental caregiving in Kurdek's (2009) study on dog owner attachment, stating that "*these bonds are more likely to meet criteria for caregiving rather than attachment bonds*" (p. 447). Such observations suggest caregiving is occurring although not being focused upon.

2.6.5.1 Caregiving as Competent Communication

Birke et al. (2010) provided evidence of horse owners practicing the caregiving behaviour mind-mindedness. They observed owners talking for their horse, seeking to understand the individual needs or internal state of the other. Meins et al. (2012) established parents' appropriate mind-related comments were associated with secure attachment of infants. In the same way a parent learns to differentiate the signals of an infant, Birke et al.'s (2010) participants differentiated signals given by their horses to be able to engage in appropriate caregiving behaviours. It is through mind-mindedness that humans try to interpret and respond appropriately to a horse's visible behaviour and body-body signals to reduce stress and conflict. Thus, mind-mindedness is a key element of competent communication in the horse-human relationship.

2.6.6 Caregiving is Prosocial Behaviour

Caregiving is a form of prosocial behaviour and is proposed to be more intrinsically rewarding than receiving care (Deci et al., 2006). Prosocial behaviour is thought to be an evolutionary trait that positively supports social interactions and group living. The prosocial behaviour of caregiving is facilitated by empathy—the ability to perceive and be sensitive to another's feelings (i.e. mind-mindedness) (Roberts & Strayer, 1996; Decety et al., 2015)

Empathy is an emotion, and emotions are complex phenomena. Although an agreed-upon definition of emotion is elusive, there is consensus on some characteristics (see Bericat, 2016). Emotions are inherently social and are how an individual experiences life (Kirchherr, 1978; Lawler, 2001). They are associated with both physiological and psychological arousal (Gross & Levenson, 1997), are experienced as either positive or negative (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), and affect an individual's well-being (Fredrikson & Joiner, 2002). When emotions are cognitively interpreted—either internally by an individual or externally by another social actor—they provide meaning to experiences (Lawler, 2001; Burkitt, 2002). Emotions are thus a mechanism that allows humans to relate with other humans and are also the tools at hand

to relate with other species. Part of the complexity of emotions is their dual function as both a consequence of an experience and an influencer of behaviour.

For example, experiencing positive feelings during an activity is associated with the repetition of the activity in pursuit of those same positive feelings. The effect of social interactions means this is not a fixed rule. An individual's emotional experience and subsequent behaviour are dependent upon social context, an individual's perception of the situation, perception of themselves, and their ability to self-regulate (Bericat, 2016).

2.6.6.1 Emotional Self-Regulation Is a Mechanism in Prosocial Behaviour

Neurologically, empathy has been evidenced. When a person observes another individual's emotions there is activation of the same neural areas in the observer's brain as the observed. This results in 'affect sharing'—the observer experiencing similar emotions to the observed (Decety, 2011; Lamm et al., 2019). Both Franklin et al. (2013) and Levin et al. (2017) indicated that humans observing animal distress (i.e. pain, fear, or sadness) experience a similar or greater emotional response to observing human suffering.

The ability to regulate one's own emotional response to observed distress is a key factor in the ability to act prosocially (i.e. caregive) (Eisenberg, 1994; Lamm et al., 2019). When facing the distress of another, people either emotionally regulate and act to reduce the other's distress, or they act to resolve their own distress. Securely attached individuals are more likely to emotionally regulate and reach out to offer comfort (care-give), compared to anxious individuals (who seek comfort for themselves) or avoidant individuals (who ignore the distress).

Self-regulation (or not) is the result of the emotional experience being 'filtered' by social and individual factors to orient future conduct (Figure 9). In this way an individual's behaviour and emotion are inseparably connected. Barbalet (2002) explained it thus: a human experiences an emotion as a result of a situation and that emotion impacts future behaviour; it does not dictate the behaviour but acts as a source of energy and direction.

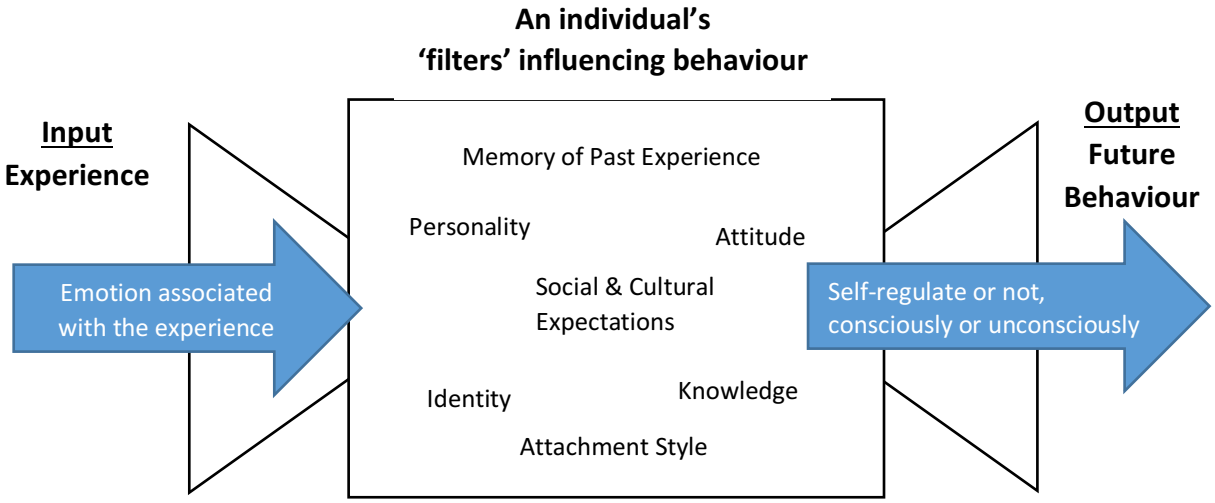


Figure 8 *Illustrating how emotional experience is processed through various 'filters' to influence future behaviours and whether that behaviour is self-regulated or not.*

2.6.6.2 Emotional Self-Regulation's Impact on the Relationship With Horses

An individual's expression of emotional self-regulation is their ability to behave in a socially acceptable way, despite the emotions they may be feeling (Eisenberg et al., 1994). Consider the case of an individual frustrated because a horse training session was not going as intended. Emotions associated with frustration, such as anger, are detrimental to relationship stability and are incompatible with prosocial behaviours (Bowlby, 1973). Adapting correlates from Eisenberg et al. (1994), behavioural signs of optimal self-regulation in horse training may include remaining calm, behaving sympathetically towards the horse, and actively planning a new goal. Indicators of poor self-regulation would be erratic behaviour, lack of flexibility in the training goal, and reactive aggression. These poor self-regulation behaviours would facilitate the 'disconnect' in communication (incompetent communication) cited by Birke and Hockenhull (2016).

Self-regulation is not a direct cause of competent communication because competent communication with horses requires practical skills along with practicing mind-mindedness. However, its absence results in incompetent communication with horses, erodes the human-horse relationship, and perpetuates negative emotions. Self-regulation nurtures the human-horse relationship by making competent communication and positive emotions possible.

2.6.7 Emotions and the Neurobiology of Relationships and Intrinsic Motivation

The anatomical location of self-regulation, positive emotional states, and processing of social interactions in humans (i.e. social cognition) is the prefrontal cortex and the nearby limbic system within the brain (Schore & Schore, 2007). The limbic system—a feature shared

amongst all mammals—is responsible for emotions, memory, and the autonomic nervous system. The prefrontal cortex is where the complex emotional and behavioural interaction takes place. As shown in Figure 9, experiences are perceived and assessed using memory, knowledge, and current physical state, and then any response behaviour is instigated either autonomically or cognitively. Neurotransmitters, such as the hormone oxytocin and some specific neural processes such as 'affect sharing', facilitate building social bonds (e.g. mutual relationships and caregiving)

2.6.7.1 Oxytocin – 'The Bonding Hormone'

Oxytocin is one of four hormones (alongside serotonin, beta-endorphins, and dopamine) associated with positive emotions and social bonds. In humans, administration of oxytocin is known to increase social cognition—the expression of prosocial behaviours (Scheele et al., 2015). Increases in oxytocin occur during positive social interactions such as tender physical contact and focused attentive social interaction in many mammalian species (Panksepp, 1998; Scheele et al., 2015). A few theorise humans and animals should be the same given the evident similarity of attachment bond and caregiving bond behaviour patterns (Bowlby, 1969/1997; Panksepp, 1998). For example, oxytocin levels rise in both humans and dogs after positive touch interactions (i.e. stroking) (Odendall & Meintjes, 2003).

However, no such oxytocin relationship has been established in human-horse relationships. Human oxytocin levels have not been investigated, and in horses there is no clear evidence of increased oxytocin production from tactile contact by humans (Sankey et al., 2010; Lansade et al., 2018). Furthermore, it is only theorised that oxytocin plays a role in positive touch interactions between horses (e.g. mutual grooming) due to evidence of reduced heart rate (Sankey et al., 2010). Panksepp (1998) suggested oxytocin may play different roles in different species. Knowing human-horse interactions require significant body-body communication, oxytocin remains a likely contributor to the human participant's experience of positive emotions and perception of a social bond but no evidence the horse is having a mutually similar experience.

2.6.7.2 Affect-Sharing

People relate affectively to lifelike elements and processes (Joye & Block, 2011). Humans use motion as a cue for behavioural intention and emotional attribution, separating the processing of objects and subjects (Grossman & Blake, 2002). Animate stimuli like animals instigate subject brain processing, activating the social cognition areas of the brain. In some

non-human animals 'mirror neurons' are present, which are active during performance of a behaviour and during observation of a behaviour (Mukamel et al., 2010; Heyes, 2010; Fabbri-Destro & Rizzolatti, 2008). Similarly, humans 'motor match' and 'emotion match' (i.e. empathy) via neural pathways called mirror systems (Ferrari & Coudé, 2018). Humans' mirror system is activated when watching animal behaviour, but only for those behaviours humans have in their own behavioural repertoire (Buccino et al., 2004). The function of mirror systems underpins the emotion empathy and anthropomorphism explaining humans experiencing 'affect sharing' when observing animal suffering (Iacoboni, 2009; Levin et al., 2017). Mirror neurons and systems add evidence to why some species are anthropomorphised more than others—humans relate more to animals with which they share more behavioural patterns.

Humans and horses do share many behavioural patterns both in social structure and individual behaviour patterns. For example, Equidae species demonstrate both parental bonds and filial attachment (Klingel, 1974; Houpt, 2002). In addition, Urquiza-Haas and Kotrschal (2015) argued that the social cognition utilised by humans to anthropomorphise is likely shared by other animals. Wathan et al. (2016) demonstrated horses discriminate facial expressions of other horses, while Smith et al. (2016) demonstrated horses differentiate and respond accordingly to human facial expressions. It may be argued that horses are more attuned to human behaviour than other humans. Clever Hans is a famous example of a horse's ability to respond to subtle, unconscious human signalling (Heinzen et al., 2015).

2.6.7.3 Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism is a contentious subject in the context of human-animal relationships and is often thoroughly discouraged (Serpell, 2002; McGreevy & McLean, 2010). As 'affect sharing' occurs between humans and non-human entities, this thesis looks at anthropomorphism as a phenomenon of human ethology and as the mechanism that facilitates human-horse relationships, potentially meeting relatedness needs. This varies slightly from Serpell's (2002) commonly used definition of anthropomorphism in human-animal relationships as "*attribution of human mental states (thoughts, feelings, motivations and beliefs) to nonhuman animals"* (p. 437). Serpell's definition implies a cognitive, intentional action when encountering animals. Indeed, there are cognitive aspects. Anthropomorphism is shown to occur during cognitive activities such as trying to explain other agents' behaviour and fulfilling competence needs (Eply et al., 2007). However, 'affect sharing' is autonomic. Furthermore, Scheele et al. (2015) indicated increases in oxytocin also facilitate anthropomorphism.

It is the recognition of lifelike behaviours that attracts humans to animals in the first place. By viewing anthropomorphism from the perspective of the implicit process of 'affect sharing' (i.e. passive recognition) rather than an active cognitive application, the phenomenon is positioned as a core, biological human function of prosocial behaviour that binds society together. Thus, anthropomorphism forms an important part of the behavioural expression of 'affect sharing' that facilitates human-human relationships and human-animal relationships. A person cannot cease anthropomorphising but may be able to self-regulate the experience.

2.6.8 Summarising the Motivations From Companion Animal Literature.

Attachment theory describes the types and behavioural characteristics of the different interpersonal bonds experienced by humans. Interpersonal bonds are an innate human need; thus, people are motivated to form relationships. Some relationships are with animals. Specifically, dog attachment to humans is strongly supported by multiple studies. In general, measurement methods and adherence to the tenants of attachment theory are inconsistent but demonstrate humans experience some form of affiliative bonds.

In horses, attachment theory evidence is inconclusive. Payne et al. (2016) questioned whether horses can attach to humans, while Birke and Hockenhull (2016) interpreted horse behaviour as attachment. DeArgaugo et al. (2014) suggested some humans have avoidant tendencies, which would impede rather than facilitate competent communication demonstrated as important for developing human-horse relationships.

Attachment studies rarely consider other behavioural systems such as the caregiving system, although it is alluded to in existing animal attachment literature. Caregiving is important as a form of prosocial behaviour that facilitates social cohesion; it requires mind-mindedness, empathy, and emotional self-regulation, which also supports competent communication.

Biological mechanisms, such as increases in oxytocin, facilitate the positive emotions associated with caregiving. In human-horse relationships there is scant research into oxytocin; however, the way in which humans encounter horses means the human participant likely experiences oxytocin increases. Furthermore, 'affect sharing' and the phenomenon of anthropomorphism provide an explanation why humans perceive a relationship. In fulfilling human relatedness needs, perception of a relationship by the human may be more relevant than mutual physiological evidence of one.

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter explains the evidence for psychological motivation for horse ownership. Critical analysis of the horse ownership-related literature reveals a patchwork of information about possible motivation.

The economic and marketing literature cluster describes the horse-owning population and some of their care and management behaviours. Reasons for horse ownership range from functional use (e.g. discipline choice, as working animal, part of one's profession) to affective experiences (i.e. achievement, satisfaction). There is also the suggestion that horse ownership is about the social experience associated with horse ownership rather than financial gain. Economic and marketing literature presents the scope of motivations, but the investigative methods are limited in explaining the motivations behind the suggested reasons for horse ownership.

The horse riding and performance literature cluster provides insights into the sense of achievement suggested in the economic and marketing cluster. Established motivation theories used within the equestrian performance context include self-efficacy and achievement goal theory, which rely heavily on the psychological need of competency. Competency in horse ownership is currently linked to the welfare state of the horse. Although important, *a priori* assumptions in the context of horse ownership motivation result in a judgement of one's horse caring ability. An individual does not have to own a horse to experience achievement or to provide care. Thus, the question remains as to what is specific about ownership that motivates individuals to own and not just ride or care.

Horse riding does provide some clues in that horse riding appears intrinsically motivating. When horse riding and performance literature is combined with human-horse interaction literature it establishes that the intrinsic motivation is likely a result of 'gelling'. 'Gelling' is a phenomenon that appears to result when the horse and human are able to competently communicate, free from conflict.

The combination of the literature also highlights a known ambiguity in perceptions of the horse as an object or as a subject. The perception potentially impacts how a human is motivated. When speaking about riding, the horse is of functional use, but the communication that facilitates the feeling of achievement from riding is from the ability to competently communicate with another living thing (i.e. a subject). Competent communication with the

horse is synonymous with positive human-horse relationships and may fulfil another basic psychological need: relatedness.

Competent communication is facilitated by emotions of empathy and caregiving behaviours. Empathy is 'affect-sharing', which is the implicit process of a human's motor and emotion matching when observing another's behaviour. Caregiving is the ability to self-regulate one's own experience during 'affect sharing' to offer emotional and physical care to another. This self-regulation may be called mind-mindedness, wherein an individual is trying to understand the mental state of another. In experiencing 'affect sharing' and trying to be mind-minded, humans anthropomorphise. 'Affect sharing' and thus anthropomorphism occur more when humans and animals share behavioural repertoires. Due to known similarities in the behavioural repertoire between the horse and the human, 'affect sharing' and anthropomorphism potentially explain humans' ability to competently communicate and their subsequent perception of a bond, thus potentially fulfilling competency and relatedness needs.

Collectively, the literature clusters are evidence that relatively little is known about the phenomenon of horse ownership—people own horses for a variety of reasons, horse riding is intrinsically motivating, and horse relationships are built through competent communication. There are motivating factors in each but none that can be isolated to ownership specifically.

An inductive approach to capture the suggested motivational concepts would provide a focused foundation to establish the phenomenon of horse ownership and help connect the existing ideas together, piecing together the metaphorical motivation 'elephant'. Examining humans' perception of their experience as horse owners should capture elements from the literature clusters discussed: the demographics of horse owners and the varied reasons from the economic and marketing literature, people's sense of achievement from the horse riding and performance literature, the way people speak about their horse as a subject or object from horse-human interaction, and the perceptions and emotions they experience as a horse owner (i.e. attachment theory). In this way the thesis captures the negative space around what currently exists in the same way an artist understands the negative space around an existing object to make a complete picture.

Chapter 3: Methodology & Method

3.1 Introduction to Chapter 3

This chapter discusses the methodology, data collection, and analysis methods used to meet the following objectives:

2. To inductively explore the experiences of dressage horse owners for their motivations to own horses, and
3. To critically analyse the experiences of dressage horse owners for their motivations to own horses.

The chapter is in two distinct parts. Part A covers the research framework including the ontological and epistemological position. Part B presents the research design, data collection, and data analysis methods.

Part A

3.2 Research Framework Introduction

The research framework provides a guide for how the study is conducted based on the researcher's philosophical views about reality (ontology) and knowledge creation (epistemology). These views link the choice of methods to the study's outcomes and ability to relate outcomes to existing knowledge. Views on reality exist on a continuum (Collis & Hussey, 2009). At one extreme is the positivistic orientation, holding that reality is fixed, external, and observable. There are underlying laws or grand theories that explain and predict phenomenon. Examples include the mathematical theorems and laws of physics. At the other extreme is the interpretivist orientation, holding that reality is subjective, internal, and constructed by individuals. From an interpretivist standpoint, there no single reality nor one theory or law to which all phenomena conform.

These positions affect the perception of acceptable or 'valid' knowledge (Grix, 2004; Baranov, 2012). Some ontological positions coincide with specific forms of knowledge creation, forming a methodology. Researchers positioned towards the positivistic side favour objective, quantitative measures, and deductive logic—testing existing theories. Those positioned more interpretivistically favour qualitative measures and inductive logic—creating theory. Due to the subjective nature of qualitative inquiry there is a greater emphasis on specifying how

knowledge is created. Many methodological positions on the interpretivist side specify data collection techniques and analysis methods. However, there is also great variation. For this reason, the philosophical position of this study is outlined below.

3.3 Ontological Position

This thesis ontologically accepts that there is a single reality; however, this reality is fluid and changing as a complex, adaptive system (Levin, 1998; Battram, 2002; Miller & Page, 2007). Systems can be a single individual or a group (Ransom, 2003). Understanding the components of the system does not equate to understanding the entire system (Levin, 1998; Miller & Page, 2007). A person only experiences a portion of the system at a time and only 'knows' a portion of reality, as experienced through their sensory systems. Thus, in groups, various perspectives exist, coming together to form socially shared concepts that adapt and change over time. Social groups create socially constructed structures such as language and social norms that influence individuals, in a cycle of interaction within the adaptive system, as implied by Bourdieu's *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) and object relations theory (Gomez, 1997, p. 2). Perspectives are experienced by an individual but 'known' when provided with meaning through interactions with the external environment, other social agents, and the individual's previous experiences (Kemper, 1978; Barbalet, 2002). Therefore, horse owners' motivations exist and adapt within the individual, and any adaptations are impacted by the external environment, other social agents, and the individual's previous experiences.

3.4 Epistemological Position

Epistemologically the thesis adopts a constructivist position. This approach incorporates methodological pluralism which allows for knowledge creation along the continua of different philosophical positions to be considered as valid forms of knowledge and thus facilitates the inclusion of research across the clusters of literature with their varying forms of positivistic and interpretivist traditions. This epistemological position enables an inductively derived explanation of horse ownership that connects theories together in one model and from which future investigations can be informed, deductively tested, and modified.

3.4.1 Constructivism

Construction is the non-causal generation of the social world through human thought, discourse, agreement, and concepts (Collin, 1997, p. 3). This means that constructivists do not seek causality of phenomena, they construct theory from the data collected (induction or abduction) rather than collecting data to test an existing theory (deduction) (Grix, 2004). Constructivists are against theorising in an effort to predict. Efforts in understanding a

phenomenon should only be in the context of when it occurred—that particular space and time (Grix, 2004; Baronov, 2012; Hughes & Sharrock, 2016). As realists use objective mapping to understand the mechanisms of external phenomena, constructivists expose social phenomena through context-specific, subjective mapping of individuals' perceptions. It is inappropriate to strictly impose unique social phenomena on other contexts or times. The understanding of horse ownership motivation is derived from the participants, their experiences, and their perceptions, and is not replicable (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). However, constructivist approaches can offer explanatory, middle-range theories of social phenomena. Charmaz (2006) viewed theory creation as *"offering plausible accounts".* Thus, this study's finding can be considered indicative of dressage horse ownership motivations beyond the participants included in this study.

3.4.1.1 Conceptual Mapping

The literature review in this thesis 'mapped' a personal understanding of the concepts and motivations associated with horse ownership. Information gathered from horse owners about their experiences during data collection combined with the concepts and motivation from the literature review permits a theory to be proposed explaining horse ownership motivations. It is this creation of theory that gives meaning to the horse ownership phenomena observed (Hughes & Sharrock, 2016).

Constructivists accept all knowledge is socially constructed and are open to including knowledge derived from the realist perspective in conceptual maps (Ransome, 2013). Some suggest knowledge of the social should be separated from knowledge of the physical (Collins, 1997). However, an individual is part of the physical, and the physical is required for the social (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Exposing the existence of the social world may be different to that of the physical world (Baronov, 2012), but the social and physical are not wholly separate in existence, so it is inappropriate to separate the knowledge. As an individual, I, the researcher, am part of the reality when conducting interviews and interpreting responses. Constructivism assigns credibility to my personal equestrian experiences and perceptions in the creation of knowledge (Gummesson, 2007, p. 104). Constructivists' main research aim, and therefore mine, is authentically understanding a social phenomenon, and the best person to understand the phenomenon is an authentic member.

3.4.1.2 My Researcher Membership as a Dressage Horse Owner

As a member of the equestrian community and dressage horse owner I have access to other dressage horse owners and share in the 'belief system' (Ransome, 2013). I am conscious of the "*specific meaning and relevant structure of the other human beings living, acting, and thinking therein*" (Schutz, 1963, p. 234 as cited in Hughes & Sharrock, 1990). Membership is normally a part of the ethnomethodology lexicon referring to the 'involvement' of the researcher with the social group or culture researched. In this study I am an 'opportunistic complete membership researcher' (OCMR), turning from a dressage horse owner and rider into a researcher (Alder & Alder, 1987). Sharing membership with participants makes them more at ease during interviews because they are speaking with 'one of their own'. Participants at ease are more likely to be truthful about issues and less likely to boast, brag, try to stand out, or bolster social position (Collis & Hussey, 2009). As an OCMR I am challenged to maintain the researcher role and engage with members with whom I would not normally socialise (Alder & Alder, 1987).

Therefore, I am well placed for selecting and mapping concepts relevant to the social phenomena of the dressage horse owner community. A classic grounded theorist would use the phrase 'theoretical sensitivities' to describe my experience and approach to conceptual mapping (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Charmaz, 2006). Theoretical sensitivity is a critical awareness that allows me to recognise concepts an individual expressed about their experiences and to be reflexive of how my views align with or differentiate from those of the participants, whether they are close personal contacts or strangers.

3.4.1.3 Agency Versus Structure in Constructivism

Consideration of the researcher's views is indicative of a constructivist's focus on participant's agency rather than social structure (Grix, 2004). As a result, speaking with people is central to a constructivist's work: "*reality construction is always the work of a plurality of social agents*" (Collin, 1997, p. 6). I sought how the individual experiences of horse owners exposed their motivations through their words and shared concepts. Individuals are influenced by external social structures, but these can be revealed through their individual experiences and how it may have impacted their motivation.

Agency and methodological choice are tied together in determining how to expose motivations. Analysis of the different aspects of agency may lead to different theory

outcomes, as theory depends on the chosen data collection and analysis techniques. For example, a phenomenologist would not apply their personal interpretation to a participant's words (Thompson et al., 1989). Conversely, pure anti-foundationalists argue that a participant does not have the sole right to their own meaning of a word. Words have historical and current meaning. The participant may use words based on personal, historical context, but they might do so in a social setting where the word meaning is different (Baronov, 2012, p. 187). This applies to this study in that two different approaches to the same horse owner responses could lead to two different theories about horse owner motivations. Using multiple analysis approaches that are accepting of participants' perceptions of their horse ownership experience and that seek their intended meaning creates more holistic and credible theory about horse ownership motivation, authentic of participants' experiences.

3.4.1.4 Methodological Pluralism

Methodological pluralism is a tolerance of the various methods available in sociological research (Payne et al., 2004, p. 153), wherein method choice is *"a function of the question to be answered rather than allegiance to metatheoretical dogma"* (Osborne, 1994, p. 186). As such, it provides the opportunity for analysis of participants' perception of their horse ownership experience as well as analysis of the discourse used in expressing their perceptions. For investigating horse ownership, methodological pluralism is best suited because it allows the study to balance methodological ideology with achieving the objectives, and permits cohesive explanatory themes to emerge, encompassing concepts and motivations from the existing literature clusters (Lamont & Swidler, 2014; Osbourne, 1994).

A qualitative mix of analysis methods is used to create an explanation of horse ownership. Often mixed methodology is linked to the combination of qualitative and quantitative data, but there are varying qualitative analysis approaches that yield various perspectives (Frost et al., 2011). Combining multiple analyses of the same data set offers the opportunity for "*collective findings*" only visible when different analysis techniques combine (Frost et al., 2011, p. 98) and supports the credibility of findings (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Actively viewing the horse ownership from various perspectives provides the opportunity for generating complementarity between the reasons for horse ownership, achievement experienced, and the objective and subjective dichotomies established in literature review.

3.4.1.5 Constructivist Language

Language is the medium from which knowledge of social phenomena is generated and is unique to the individual and culture (Baronov, 2012). The equestrian community's internal language is possibly more foreign to those outside the community than in other culture tribes (Fox, 2005); this internal language includes a 'third-language' created between the horse and human (Brant, 2004). Attention is paid to term definitions in conceptual mapping, theory construction, and communication of the findings (Hughes & Sharrock, 2016). By diligently defining language, this thesis gains credibility with improved ability to share meaning with the audience (Gustavsson, 2007).

For this study the language barrier is threefold. Firstly, the motivations and concepts required explanation. Secondly, there is the explanation of specific equestrian concepts. Thirdly, there is the anthropomorphic language used in discussing the horse as a social agent. A constructivist approach provides a natural platform to tackle the language of motivation, terms of the equestrian community, and how participants interpret their horse simultaneously. Through my experience as a professional and leisure equestrian and through my cultural equestrian experience in different countries, I am aware of what terms and concepts needed specific attention and have credibility in interpreting meaning, to be able to communicate these to you – the reader.

3.4.1.6 Anthropomorphic Language Is Inevitable and Acceptable

Due to the subjective aspects of the human-horse interactions, anthropomorphic language by participants is inevitable. As Horowitz and Bekoff (2007) noted, "*Among lay people, anthropomorphism is not only prevalent, it is the nearly exclusive method for describing, explaining, and predicting animal behavior—whether the animals are kept as pets, visited in the zoo, or observed in nature*" (p. 24).

Horse owners speak *about* their horse as an object but also about experiences *with* their horse as a subject. This includes emotive language because it is the lexicon available to them and a function of 'affect sharing'. When speaking about animals, anthropomorphism is normally discouraged. One argument asserts that the inappropriate use of terminology leads to confusion in assessing animal-specific behaviour, which compromises animal welfare through poor decisions made from the assessment (Serpell, 2002). This study seeks horse owner

motivations, not judgements of right or wrong in the way they characterise their experience. As the thesis deals with participants' motivation, the actual welfare state of the horse is less relevant than how the horse is perceived by participants. That does not mean horse welfare is unimportant, just that objective measurement of the horse's actual welfare state is not relevant to understanding why a participant owns them. Because anthropomorphism is inevitable, an implicit way in which empathy is operationalised and a key to prosocial interactions, anthropomorphic language is accepted as a genuine representation of how a participant interprets their horse's state—and any impact that has on their motivation.

Accepting participants' anthropomorphic views of their horse is indicative of a critical post-humanism position. A humanist stance would constrain the ability to interpret ownership experiences along a terminology of exceptionalism and disregard, minimalise, or reinterpret anthropomorphic statements about their human-animal relationship. It is inappropriate to impose terminology on participants, which is not theirs, to construct their experience. Their reports are their experience and their interpretation. Participants will best express their experience being allowed to talk freely rather than expected to confirm to a specific lexicon (Charmaz, 2006). My job is to interpret their conveyance of their experience. Additionally, variations in participants' anthropomorphic attribution to their experience may translate in different perspectives of horses' functional use or subjective nature; in other words, owners should speak freely to support credibility of their views one way or the other.

3.4.2 Summarising the Methodology

Part A demonstrates that horse owners' motivations exist and adapt within the individual, and therefore are part of an individual's reality. For a researcher to know about an individual's internal reality, that individual needs to share their experiences. Language is the medium by which participants express their experience, and it is inevitable they will be anthropomorphic if speaking about their horse. In the case where horses are spoken about as social agents, a position of constructivism supports the inclusion of participants' perceptions of their horse as part of their constructed reality, allowing participants interpretation of their horses' behaviour to be considered for analysis. Part B outlines the data collection and data analysis informed by the ontological and epistemological positions.

Part B

3.5 Research Design Introduction

This section presents the research design for data collection and data analysis coherent with the philosophical perspective.

3.6 Data Collection

The purpose of the data collection phase of the study was to gather information from horse owners about their horse ownership experience to analyse for their motivations. In line with the constructivist epistemology, this study used semi-structured interviews to allow participants to speak about their horse ownership experience openly and to allow for inductive data analysis methods. Sampling strategy, the pilot exercise, recording, and transcription are discussed, including the actions taken to support credibility. Participants were primarily recruited using a snowball sampling method starting with the researcher's personal contacts. Two pilot interviews were conducted and are included in the overall results. Interviews took place in neutral locations, private homes, and livery yards. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were determined as most appropriate for use in this study. Interviews capture rich, 'deep' data on participants' experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and feelings (Collis & Hussey, 2009), from which motivations can be analysed. Semi-structured interviews are planned conversations that go 'in depth' for the purpose of improving knowledge (Wengraf, 2001) and are suited for thematic analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Barnet-Page & Thomas, 2009; Collis & Hussey, 2009).

3.6.1.1 Comparing Semi-Structured Interviews to Other Available Methods

An inductive approach was ideal because more positivistic approaches tend to be theory-driven, deductive, and employ behavioural observation or scales. Behavioural observation can only really produce descriptions of people's actions through duration or frequency or produce data for behaviour prediction (Yampolskiy, 2008). Behaviour observations are not able to explore meaning of behaviour without speaking with participants.

Scales such as Involvement Profiles (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1985), attitude scales (Azjen, 2005), SMSs (Pelletier et al., 1995; Pelletier et al., 2013), or NSS (La Guardia et al., 2000) all involve communicating with participants but select constructs and themes *a*

priori. Designed as structured interviews, they are restricted to pre-determined questions, with no room for exploring the meaning of people's responses further. None of the scales or theories is all-inclusive of the themes expressed in literature clusters. For example, with the SMSs, the focus is just on horse riding and none of the scales cover the time element stressed by Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011). It is the exclusion of themes, and the assumption that the researcher is able to know all that should be found, before data collection, that is inappropriate for this study.

The information gleaned about horse ownership from the literature clusters is disparate, and many of the connections made are theoretical. The existing body of literature does not support one theme or construct as more explanatory or prominent over another in explaining horse ownership motivation. Although there are existing motivational theories, the volume of available theories, methods for investigating, and efforts to explain or predict behaviour, are further evidence for the need of an inclusive method like semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews explore participants' meanings and can be designed to avoid limiting themes through pre-selection, so as many concepts and themes as possible are captured.

Other constructivist approaches such as ethnography generally explore a culture in a broad or 'thick' perspective (Alder & Alder, 1987). This study sought a 'deep' perspective of one particular group in a larger equestrian culture—a task perfectly suited for semi-structured interviews (Wengraf, 2001).

Phenomenology and grounded theory approaches both use interviews to gather information, and both prescribe specific method design and analysis. Phenomenology limits the exploration of themes by limiting what is considered 'valuable' information. Osbourne (1994) noted that phenomenology tends to focus only on the 'lived experience' and excludes opinions, which inform peoples' attitudes (Azjen, 1985); phenomenology is therefore not appropriate for this study. Grounded theory seems a good fit through its inductive open approach, but in some iterations it seeks causality, like Strauss and Corbin (1990). Additionally, the extensive literature search for this thesis goes against a central tenet of grounded theory, so a pure grounded theory methodology is not adopted. However, Charmaz's (2006) work is inclusive of a constructive analysis approach. Both approaches seek a core theme through a process of reduction, from which one can 'hang' the rest of the findings (Charmaz, 2006; Frost et al., 2011). This study seeks an explanation rather than causality, and Charmaz's constructivism

analysis approach is ideal for inductive analysis. The semi-structured interviews used in this study collected data rich in experience and can be analysed using the grounded theory constructivist analysis approach to meet the objectives of this study.

3.6.1.2 Question Design

Asking the 'right' questions is crucial in collecting data relevant to the objectives (Gillham, 2005). This study used study-specific questions rather than a pre-set selection. Question design followed a variety of standard question types (Table 5), as collated by Collis and Hussey (2009). An interview guide was developed [Appendix C] with a core set of questions separated into two sections, using both closed and open, comparison, and hypothetical questions that encouraged conversation (Table 6).

Table 5 *Question Type Examples (Collis & Hussey, 2009, p. 145)*

Type of Question	**Useful For**	**Not Useful For**
Closed question	Gathering factual information like demographics	Encouraging conversation
Open question	Explore and gather broad information	Very talkative people
Hypothetical question	Encouraging broader thinking	Situations beyond int. scope
Comparison questions	Exploring needs and values	Unrealistic alternatives
Summary question	Avoiding ambiguity, validating & linking answers	Premature or frequent use

Table 6 *Interview Questions for Exploring Horse Ownership*

Section 1 – Demographics	**Section 2 – Horse Ownership Experience**
What is your name?	What does horse ownership mean to you?
How old are you?	What is your experience with loaning horses?
How many horses do you own?	How did you come to own your first horse?
What is your occupation?	What has been the most positive experience of horse ownership?
Do you consider yourself to be your horse's owner?	What has been the most negative experience of horse ownership?
Do you consider yourself to be your horse's manager?	Have you ever considered not owning horses?
Do you consider yourself to be your horse's groom?	Talk about horses you've sold, given away, or ceased to own.
Do you consider yourself to be your horse's trainer?	How would you judge yourself as a horse owner?
[redacted]	What are your thoughts on other horse owners?
	Do you have any pets?
	Compare your relationship with your horse to other animals.
	Why participate in dressage?
	What is the best/worst thing someone could say to you as a horse owner?
	What are your thoughts on the equine industry?
	Why do you think you own a horse?
	Do you have any other thoughts on horse ownership?

The first section used closed questions for collecting demographic information and what roles the participants felt they fulfilled in relation to their horse (owner, trainer, manager, and groom). Demographic and roles questions were drawn from literature in the economic and marketing cluster such as the Henley Center (2004), BETA (2015), and ROA (2016) reports as this type of data is prevalent when researching equestrians.

The demographic and role data help in establishing where participants in this study fit within the wider equestrian community as established in the economic and marketing literature cluster. As learned in the pilot interviews, participants were not given definitions and instead relied on a shared social understanding of the roles and participants' personal identification with them. The demographic and role information also served to help participants relax and establish a rapport, which Gill et al. (2008) argued encourages the generation of rich data.

The purpose of the second section of the interview was to capture participants' horse ownership experience. Questions in Table 6 were designed in Rubin and Rubin's (2012) responsive interviewing style that encouraged interviewees to share openly, mimicking unstructured interviews as closely as possible. Responsive interviewing is designed to start a conversational style discussion and the content of the questions elicit ownership experiences including expression of feelings, which allow the experiences to be analysed for motivation (as explained in Chapter 2, p. 22). Questions are derived from the activities cited in equestrianism literature such as becoming an owner, ceasing ownership (e.g. ROA 2016), and self-perception as a horse person, social perceptions of horsemanship, and human-horse relationships (e.g. Dashper, 2014; Birke & Hockenhull, 2016; Birke & Thompson 2018).

Table 7 provides examples of probes used during the interview, which Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested elicit further depth and clarity. In practice, question order varied except for the first and last questions. The first question was "What does horse ownership mean to you?" The last question was "Do you have any other thoughts about horse ownership?" By using open questions and flexibility in question order, the question guide minimised pre-selected themes by eliciting stories, actions, opinions, beliefs, and feelings, from which motivations could be analysed (Gillham, 2005).

Table 7 *Examples of Probes (adapted from Collis & Hussey, 2009, p. 146)*	
Characteristic	**Probe Question Example**
Clarity	Can you give me an example? In what way?
Relevance	How do you think that relates ownership? Is that important?
Depth	What do you mean by that? Can you give me examples?
Dimension	Is it possible to look at this another way? Do you think that is a commonly held opinion?
Significance	How do you feel about that? What do you think is the most important?
Bias	Why do you hold this opinion? What might happen that could change your opinion?

3.6.2 Sampling Strategy – Securing Interviews

The sampling strategy used was snowball sampling with some purposive sampling. The equestrian community is a relatively hard-to-reach population with its own hidden populations such as discipline-specific groups and non-riding owners within those. In reiterating the Henley Centre (2004) findings, there is great overlap between populations within the equestrian community. Despite the overlap, equestrians are commonly segmented in literature by competitive level or ambition, formal discipline affiliation, age, duration of ownership, duration of participation in dressage, or professional or leisure horse owner status. As argued in Chapter 1 (p. 7) ownership is a commonality between these groups, and overlaps the most. Therefore, the sampling approach aimed to be inclusive rather than exclusive which allowed for commonalities in motivation across segments to emerge.

Notably, segmentation of discipline was used coinciding with reasons for focusing on dressage in Chapter 1 (p. 4), and served to make the study practicable. Of the disciplines, dressage can be argued as inclusive as it is applicable across other disciplines. As British Dressage (BD) (2019) states, "*Dressage is all about learning to work with your horse and help him achieve greater suppleness, flexibility and obedience; enhance his natural movements and ability and improve his athleticism*". Dressage also has the highest and most growth in participation from grassroots to professional as measured through membership with governing bodies (British Dressage, British Eventing, British Showjumping). Consequently, the criterion for participant inclusion was to consider one's self to be a dressage horse owner, with dressage defined in its broadest sense of training (as above). In total, 21 interviewees were recruited from across the commonly used equine industry segmentations differing in age, profession, competitive ambition, and gender (Table 8).

Table 8 *Participants' Demographics and Self-Reported Involvement With Common Equestrian Roles**

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Occupation	Current # owned	Max # owned	Breaks in ownership	Other pets	Role Owner	Role Trainer	Role Groom	Role Manager
Abigail	44	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	3	3	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bethany	31	Female	University Lecturer	3	3	N	N	Y	P	Y	Y
Carly	49	Female	Professional Horse Trainer/Instructor	1	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Diana	50	Female	Eq. Business Proprietor/Consultant/Instructor	0	1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Evlynne	50	Female	Proprietor of a Soft Furnishing Business	1	1	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Freya	45	Female	Professional Consultant - Semi-Pro Dressage	4	6	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Graham	25	Male	Professional Dressage Trainer	4	4	N	Y	Y	Y	P	Y
Harry	30	Male	Professional Dressage Trainer	4	5	N	Y	Y	Y	P	Y
Isabelle	28	Female	Intending to be Full Time MA student Sept-19	2	2	N	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
Julia	47	Female	University Head of Department	1	2	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
Kelly	35	Female	Doctor	1	1	Y	N	Y	P	Y	N
Linda	53	Female	Professional Horse Trainer/Instructor	3	11	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mara	28	Female	Horse Nutrition and Sales	1	5	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nadia	21	Female	Full-time BSc Student	2	2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Olivia	60	Female	Proprietor of a Hair Dresser's Business	1	1	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N
Payton	51	Female	Hair Dresser & Dog Breeder	2	2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Roberta	48	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	1	3	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Samantha	49	Female	Professional Horse Trainer/Instructor	2	unknown	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Theresa	27	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	2	2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Victoria	47	Female	Full-Time Parent	6	8	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wendy	40	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	4	unknown	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

*The choice of demographic data collected and role titles were based on common practices in the economic and marketing literature cluster presented throughout Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

Where participant emails were provided, the research information sheet was sent in advance. This is the consent form without the signature box. I always had spare consent forms on my person, so those introduced on the day were provided with the research information. To ensure understanding, the research information was discussed verbally before the interview, either on the day of or in advance.

3.6.2.1 The Importance of Trust in Sampling Equestrians

Snowball sampling is identified as the sampling method suited for hard-to-reach populations (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). Sadler et al., (2010) noted an advantage of snowball sampling is *"the inherent trust it engenders among potential participants".* In other words, a potential participant is more likely to agree to an interview. The inherent trust imbued through my membership as a fellow dressage horse owner and rider was central for recruitment of participants and acceptance during the interviews (Alder & Alder, 1987, p. 81). When participants or my personal contacts made introductions to other horse owners, an element of trust was established between potential participants and me (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). Some participants introduced friends and colleagues on the day of an interview while others passed on contact information. The personal connection was key for accessing the insular equestrian community, but even some hidden populations were still inaccessible. For example, trainers hesitated to allow me (a stranger) open access to their horse-owning clientele and risk disrupting an income-generating relationship.

Purposive sampling occurred concurrently with the snowball sampling, and one participant was recruited using this sampling method (Samantha). Purposive sampling is used when a specific population is sought, such as dressage horse owners. Teddlie and Yu (2007) and Etikan et al. (2016) argue that purposive sampling offers a greater opportunity for controlling diversity (i.e. extreme views) and homogeneity of groups. This study sought a diversity of participants. To target dressage owners, I volunteered at dressage shows (CDI3* to unaffiliated), speaking with competitors, volunteers, and owners. Flyers were posted on public notice boards, stabling notice boards, and in restricted 'owners' areas. Additionally, a social media recruitment campaign was undertaken, including private messages to professional equestrians. The success of snowball sampling over the purposive sampling further evidenced snowball sampling as the appropriate sampling strategy for this study and reiterates the importance of the trust established through the personal network.

3.6.2.2 Credibility and Generalisability of Snowball Sampling Equestrians

Snowball sampling may affect credibility of the data in that the population consisted of the type of people willing to be interviewed and those normally of a higher socio-economic background (Sadler et al., 2010). Additionally, snowball sampled populations cannot be considered 'representative' and thus struggle with sufficient diversity. Aiming to increase diversity, Gile and Handcock (2010) proposed snowball sampling methods should incorporate a random selection of 'seeds'—the initial participants who start the snowball effect—and should then use statistical manipulation. However, convenience 'network' approach remains the most logistical and effective method of 'seed' recruitment for hard-to-reach populations and was thus used in this study.

Figure 10 illustrates the connection of participants back to the researcher. Note there were eight interviews of direct personal contacts, but most snowballing seeds were derived from acquaintances, personal friends, and professional contacts who were not interviewed. Kirchherr and Charles (2018) noted that, during snowball sampling, using one's personal and

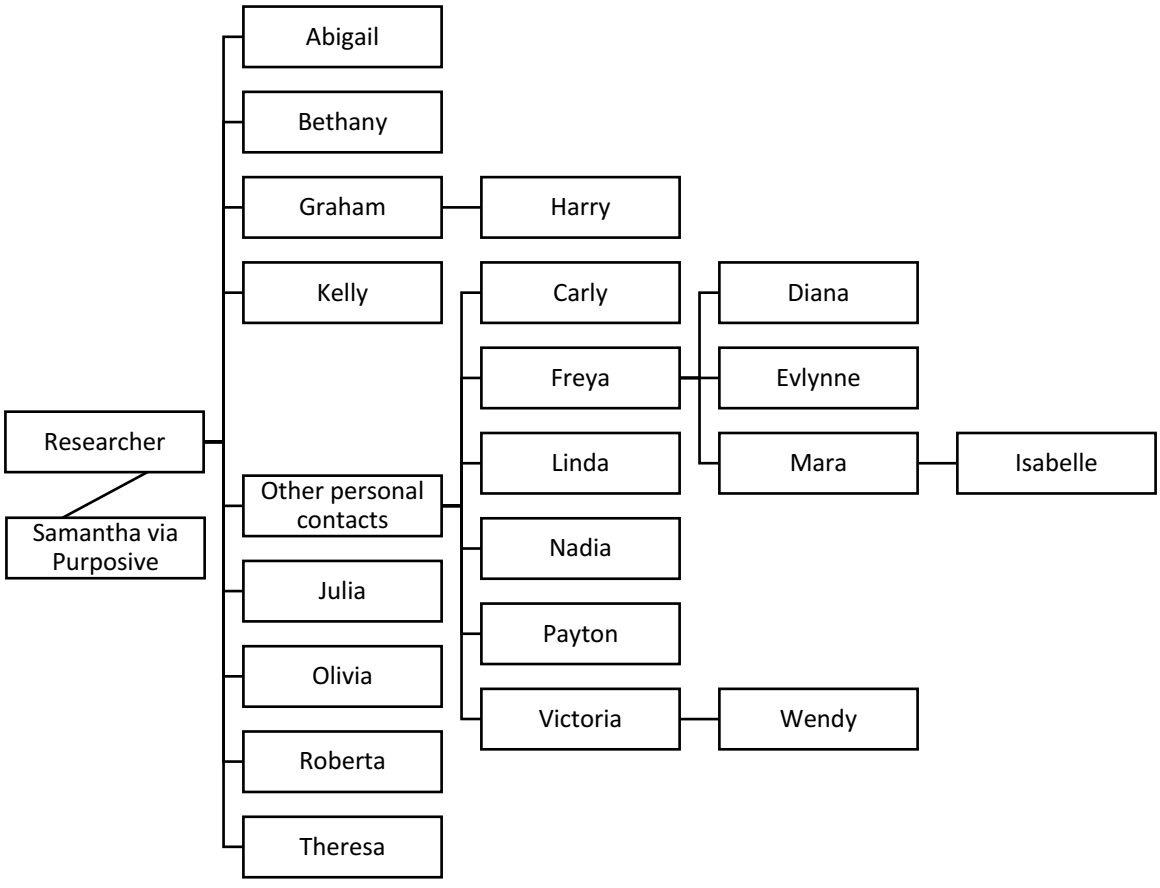


Figure 9 *Participant snowball sampling network and one purposive sampled participant. All names are pseudonyms.*

professional contacts helps enhance diversity and thus adds to credibility. Of the interviewees, 13 of the 21 (62%) were strangers. Additionally, only three of the eight interviewees who were direct personal contacts are considered close personal friends, meaning 86% of the interviewees were strangers, social acquaintances, or professional acquaintances.

While the population in this study cannot be considered representative, it is still diverse enough to be illustrative of the adult equestrian community. Participant ages ranged from 21 to 60; the sample was inclusive of more women than men; and the sample contained a mix of professional horse trainers, non-riding equestrian industry professionals who own horses, and leisure horse owners with non-equine careers [Appendix D]. Although a non-random sampling method was used, the participants recruited were horse owners and thus met the objective of the study to explore dressage horse owner motivations.

3.6.2.3 Challenges with Snowball Sampling

None of the participants had a pure dressage background, where dressage is the only discipline they have ever participated in. This is indicative of the observed overlap in groups in the equestrian community. Snowball sampling resulted in interviews with historical dressage horse ownership—Diana's horse had passed away, and Victoria had changed focus to a different discipline. The interviews collected information on historical horse ownership experiences for all participants, and so Diana's and Victoria's reflections on historical dressage ownership experience were considered no different to those of other participants. They both still considered themselves horse owners.

One person introduced on the day had tried dressage but in the end had not liked it (Isabelle). The interview was already underway when the information was discovered despite the research information being discussed prior to starting the interview. Rather than close the interview, the decision was made to continue. The participant had given freely of her time. Analysis revealed Isabelle's experiences and perceptions about ownership yielded no distinctly different codes compared to the other participants except about horse riding. As her experiences were so similar, it implied horse ownership motivations are likely similar regardless of discipline choice. Therefore, her interview made a valuable contribution to understanding horse ownership motivation and was thus included in the results.

3.6.2.4 Highly Involved Participants

This thesis only spoke with highly involved horse owners (refer to the definition in Chapter 1). All participants, no matter their leisure or professional status, fulfilled a minimum of three roles in relation to their horse (manager, trainer, owner, groom). Two professional trainers felt like their horse's groom but hired other people to help them in that role. This is indicated in Appendix E as 'P' for 'partially fulfilled role'. Five leisure riders felt like their horse's trainer but hired other people to help them in that role. Three participants did not feel like their horse's manager, keeping their horse on full livery or in the permanent care of another person. This did not impact their feeling of fulfilling the other roles.

3.6.3 Pilot Interviews Exercise – Testing the Method

The purpose of pilot interviews was to test the interview method and support credibility of the data. Kim (2010) argued the principal benefit of a pilot study is the opportunity to make adjustments and revisions before the main study. As snowball sampling was the strategy, pilot interviews were with people whom the researcher knew well and trusted to give critical feedback on the transcripts, offering opinions on the initial interpretations and providing an opportunity for the researcher to express personal feelings about the process (Creswell, 2007).

Two pilot interviewees were designated; one was a professional dressage trainer (Abigail), and one was a leisure horse owner (Bethany). The pilot interviews tested question design and the interviewer's technique. Interviewees were invited to discuss their thoughts on the interview after it was finished. However, Sampson (2004) observed that "*asking for interview feedback entailed a somewhat unreasonable set of expectations*" (p. 396). Although participants were willing and capable, at the time of interview it was difficult for them to separate themselves from the interview and offer objective analysis. The exercise was beneficial though; it was an opportunity for critical reflection through the process of eliciting an exchange on the interview experience with participants.

Changes from the pilot interviews were minimal and included an elimination of repetitive questions, a note to be prepared to record post-interview conversations (these tended to be more open conversations than the formal interview), and the decision to limit detailed term definitions as these impeded the development of rapport and were ultimately unnecessary. After reviewing question design, one pilot interviewee (Bethany) was re-interviewed. Her responses were similar to or the same as the first interview, suggesting credibility of the

interviewee's initial responses and confirming that the question order in Section 2 could be flexible, supporting a more conversational interview.

In quantitative analysis, formal pilot studies are more common and the data are infrequently used in reporting the main study's findings (Kim, 2010). However, qualitative methodology is often emergent—like this study—and changes in interview questions or focus form a part of the iterative analysis process (Charmaz, 2006). Sampson (2004) further argued that the most credible thing to do with pilot interviews is subject them to the coding and analysis of the research project and reveal potential omissions or extraneous data. Both Abigail and Bethany's interviews were coded and analysed as part of an emergent process and were thus included in the main analysis.

3.6.4 Recording Data

The recording and transcription of the interviews creates the raw data and is the first stage of data analysis (Silverman, 2014). A Sony ICDUX560BLK stereo digital voice recorder (SDVR) was used for recording, offering reliability of the data through quality digital recording. Perling and Bellamy (2017) ranked Sony's SDVR first amongst digital audio recorders for qualitative enquiry and this is supported by consumer reviews (Amazon, 2017). The sensitive microphone and high-quality recording allowed for accurate verbatim transcription. Recording in MP3 meant files were compatible with most playback software (Brain, 2017). Audio files were backed up on a password-protected computer as soon as possible following interviews to prevent data loss, ensure anonymity for participants, and comply with data protection regulations effective 2018 (Data Protection Act, 2018). Field notes were taken and later used by the researcher to review the interview process, reflect, and refine the interview technique.

3.6.5 Transcription – Preparing Data for Analysis

Most transcription was done by hand using a template that meant documents would be easily reviewed when uploaded into qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12. In total there were 26 transcripts for the 21 interviewees, with an average duration of approximately 50 minutes [Appendix H]. Bethany had three interviews—two formal pilot interviews and a post interview conversation. Other participants with post-interview conversations included Diana, Carly, and Evlynne. Post- interview conversations were transcribed separately, and the researcher confirmed with participants that the conversations could be used in the study.

3.6.5.1 Using Assistive Transcription Technology

For six transcripts, NVivo Transcription software was used in an effort to expedite the transcription process and avoid repetitive strain injury associated with typing. The technology was variable in accuracy, and each transcript was listened to and reviewed as if being typed from scratch. Two of the six NVivo transcriptions were abandoned for traditional transcription by hand (Mara and Nadia) because fixing the inaccuracies would have taken longer than typing the transcription from scratch.

3.6.5.2 Transcription Technique – Recording Demographics and Verbatim Transcription

Each transcript consisted of two parts that matched the interview design. The demographic section was placed under a separate heading to the horse ownership experience questions. The information was transcribed and recorded in a spreadsheet that collated all the participants' demographic information for descriptive statistical analysis. This study recognises that the transcripts of an audio recording are not perfect copies of conversations as argued by Poland (1995). Audio recordings miss emotional cues that give meaning to conversations and those that are picked up poorly translate into text. However, transcription is required for data analysis and thus Poland's (1995) suggestions for ensuring transcript quality were adopted. As already discussed quality recording equipment was used. The horse ownership experience transcription was verbatim as much as possible where text was word for word in an effort to produce a genuine copy of what participants said. In instances where the recording was inaudible this was transcribed as '[inaudible]'. Additionally, transcripts were sent to participants for 'member checking'. Thus, verbatim transcription was a suitable method to try and retain credibility of the data and retain participant meaning for analysis (MacLean et al., 2004).

3.6.5.3 Member Checking

Interviewees were given instructions on when to expect a transcript for review. Interviewee feedback acts as 'member checking' and provides reliability and credibility to the study (Whittemore et al., 2001; Creswell, 2007; Collis & Hussey, 2009). Participants were provided a copy of their full transcript by email and were offered the opportunity to check the transcript and offer comment. The more agreement from the members about data and interpretation, the more confident one can be that they are valid (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In the email correspondence, participants were given a deadline to respond by and notified that a lack of response would be interpreted as acceptance of the transcript [Appendix F]. No participants withdrew, altered, or commented on their transcript. A few did offer apologies for talking too

much, but they were reassured that their contributions were welcome and were thanked again for their participation.

3.6.5.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethically, the project abides by the University of Gloucestershire's ethical guidelines including but not limited to data protection and participant welfare. All participants were over the age of 18, participated voluntarily, with informed consent [Appendix G]. The interviews are about data collection only, not direct empowerment, assistance, or alteration of individuals (Wengraf, 2001). The study presented no animal welfare concerns, but interviews did take place on equine facilities to accommodate participants. In those situations, I wore appropriate PPE and am an expert in safety protocols around horses so was able to keep myself safe.

In the interest of participant welfare, a plan for participant preparation was developed and is outlined in the interview guide [Appendix C]. The interview guide included an introduction to the research and covered informed consent, strategies for closing the interview, and how participant information was to be used, stored, and destroyed. As interviews began, participants were reminded of their power to end the interview, their ability to review and give feedback on their interview transcript, and the researcher's membership role in the study. Interviews had a planned closing, which created a comfortable end point for the conversation (Gillham, 2005; Collis &Hussey, 2009).

These techniques empowered the participant and fostered trust (Gillham, 2005). For participants, sharing their feelings, beliefs, opinions, and experiences required them to expose their vulnerabilities (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Indeed, a couple participants cried or demonstrated discomfort on some topics. When this occurred the interview was paused, after which the interview either moved on or was closed. As a fellow horse owner I could respond appropriately to sensitive situations (e.g. death of a horse). I was able to ensure participants felt secure in opening up and being truthful, authentic, and willing to participate (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Gillham, 2005). As a result, the depth of data required to meet the objectives occurred (Alder & Alder, 1987).

Additionally, it became important for me to schedule time to be interviewed by the participants. This seemed to alleviate nerves of participants and facilitated sharing of

additional experiences or clarification of things discussed during the interview. Post- interview conversations were more difficult to end comfortably, as they were initiated by the interviewee. However, these situations likely facilitated the trust critical to the snowball sampling strategy. For some participants it helped build rapport if I shared an anecdote from my own experience before or at the start of interview. Tours of yards and meeting participants' horses occurred frequently and also seemed to help relieve participants' anxiety after their interview. Others provided updates on their horses after reviewing their transcripts.

3.7 Data Analysis

This section outlines the data analysis process to meet objective 4 of this study. The interview transcripts were analysed using three separate cycles as illustrated in Figure 11. Thematic analysis using a grounded theory approach from Charmaz (2006) was used to extract topics relevant to horse ownership, including emotions and horse ownership actions. As code names

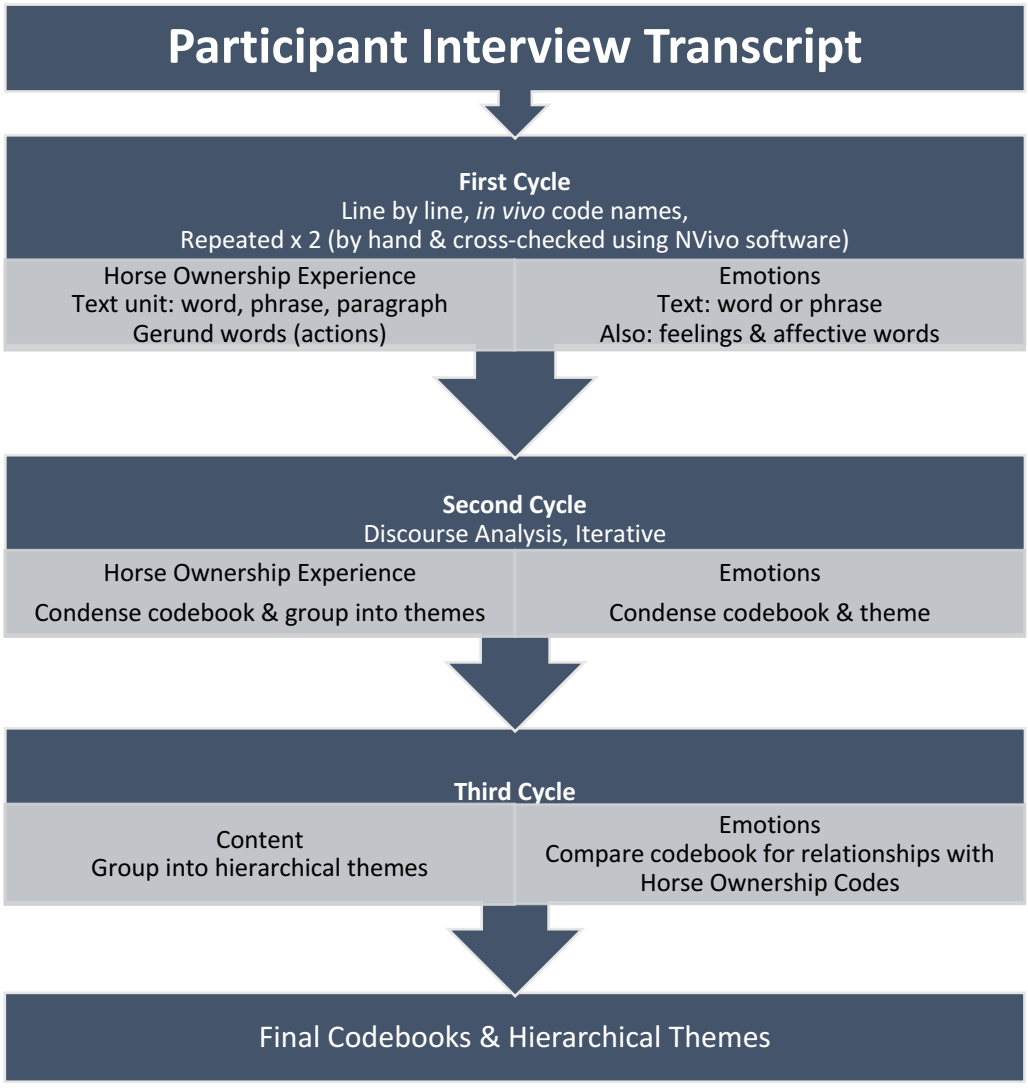


Figure 10 *The transcript analysis process*

were derived *in vivo,* discourse analysis tools from Gee (2014) were used to confirm meaning of codes during the iterative reduction exercise. The actions taken to retain credibility of the data are discussed.

Two separate codebooks were created. The horse ownership experience codebook captured the actions, intentions, and perceptions of horse owners, and the emotion codebook captured the emotions and opinions of horse owners. These were compared to determine horse ownership motivations.

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis Using a Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach

Thematic analysis was chosen for this study as a systematic process of categorising and connecting the interview content (Maxwell & Miller, 2008; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Dey, 1993). Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory was selected because of its open coding method. Open coding breaks down the interviews, text unit by text unit, into discrete pieces of information. Once interviews are broken down, patterns are sought in the data and grouped into themes.

Coded text units were 'cut and sorted', seeking pattern and shape between individuals' words and ideas (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Maxwell & Miller, 2008). Ryan and Bernard (2003) argued there is no required number of themes in open coding, but more themes are desirable whereby the researcher can analyse connections and decide the salient themes to include in the write-up (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Grounded theory uses a process of reduction and minimisation to create a hierarchy of themes (Charmaz, 2006). Once themes were created through 'cutting and sorting', analysis began investigating the connections within themes, between themes, and between the themes and existing literature to create the hierarchy. During this process, memoing was used to track ideas (Birks et al., 2008).

It is this process that creates data-driven, emergent themes, as opposed to placing text units into *a priori* themes (Dey, 2007). *A priori* themes are derived from existing literature, but themes found in equestrian literature are disparate and incomplete. Cresswell (2007) noted that open coding keeps the focus on what the data say as opposed to what the literature thinks the data might say, making an emergent theme approach most appropriate for uncovering the themes underpinning horse ownership motivation.

3.7.1.1 Memoing

An important part of the open coding technique is memoing. Glaser, a founder of grounded theory method, described memoing as a process whereby coding is periodically stopped and memos of ideas are made (1965, p.440). As stated by Birks et al. (2008), the exercise of memoing helps a researcher challenge personal assumptions and initial interpretation of the data, which in this case meant reorienting the analysis towards what the participants said, back to the objectives of the research. Memoing tracked my experience of analysing the data and created a record of idea development towards the final results, further supporting credibility of the analysis.

3.7.2 Discourse Analysis

The role of discourse analysis in this study was to assist in codebook reduction after thematic analysis. Multiple texts suggest coding data first for themes before looking specifically at the language structure (Gee, 2014; Coyle, 2015). During thematic analysis, *in vivo* codes were used. This means the code name is the word of the participant rather than a word derived from literature or the researcher (Saldaña, 2013). Consequently meaning needed to be established to guide theme creation. Participants would use the same word to mean different things. For example the term "*pig"* was used by two separate participants, one to describe a horse as ugly and the other to describe a horse as poorly behaved. Conversely, different terms or phrases were used to describe the same concept. Discourse analysis provided a mechanism to determine meaning and create themes using the participant's voice where possible (see Appendix J for examples) and was limited to this function within this thesis.

Discourse analysis looks at the detail in the use of language and requires sensitivity to the way in which language is used. Gee (2014) stipulated that discourse analysis requires the researcher to look at the data as if they were '*strange*' in an effort to see language use from a fresh perspective and challenge initial interpretations (p. 3). In this way, codes merged and themes formed using participants' meaning rather than relying solely on my interpretation, supporting credibility of the results.

Specifically, dietics and situated meaning of words were analysed in relation to the way participants spoke about their emotions, perceived their horses, and interpreted their horses actions as horse owners. Dietics is where reference is determined from context. For example,

people commonly use pronouns when they speak which may shift between references (Gee, 2014). For example, participants shifted between referring to their horses as 'it' and 'he/she'. Thus Gee's (2014) deixis tool was used to confirm the subject of the text unit of interest.

Situated meaning is similar to dietics as it uses context; but in this case it tends to use social structure and external situation to determine word meaning. Words have a range of potential meanings and a person's meaning can be interpreted by what others 'fill in' from social context. For example, participants talked about their horse being 'a pig'. This meant both being aesthetically ugly and poorly behaved and nothing to do with the species *Sus domesticus*. In using *in vivo* codes, analysis of situated meaning was imperative for grouping similar topics together and limiting misinterpretation.

3.7.3 Coding and Codebooks

Coding is the process of identifying text units of interest and applying a label to index them. Text units for this study included words, phrases, or paragraphs (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Text units of interest featured repetition of words, phrases, ideas, metaphors and analogies, transitions between topics, and similarities and differences (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Each text unit of interest is assigned a unique code, and each unique code has a systematically recorded definition (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 201), kept in a codebook for reference. Codebooks help track how codes change through the iterative process, illustrating consistency in coding for reliability and credibility of the analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The open coding technique with *in vivo* code labels produced 278 codes before the reduction process. Appendix I and Appendix J are the final code lists demonstrating theme names selected by the researcher, how codes are organised into hierarchies under theme names, and the clusters of *in vivo* codes. The clusters of *in vivo* codes specifically illustrate the use of discourse analysis to group different code labels together under one code.

Coding began after the first interview and followed an iterative process involving constant comparison and negative case analysis. The interview text was read line-by-line for meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2013). I used my experience and theoretical sensitivities to identify meaningful transcription text to codify (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Dey, 2007). As more interviews were completed, previously coded data were re-examined with any new codes. The process actively addressed

disconfirming evidence, and themes were restructured until there were no exceptions or outlying evidence, strengthening the credibility of the themes (Creswell, 2007).

3.7.3.1 Creating and Using the Horse Ownership Experience Codebook

The purpose of this codebook was to capture the actions, intentions, and perceptions of horse owners in relation to their horse ownership. The first analysis was by-hand hard copy, for content and gerund words (action words) about horse ownership, guided by Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory analysis method. Codes were derived 'in vivo', meaning the code is the word the participant used. This means the codes come directly from the participants, reducing researcher bias (Saldaña, 2013). The first cycle was repeated electronically using NVivo 12 and cross-checking with the hard copy analysis.

A second cycle of analysis involved reducing the code lists, and during this process themes were created. It was during the second cycle of analysis that discourse analysis was used to assess meaning of the *in vivo codes.* During theme creation, *in vivo* codes were retained as much as possible. A third cycle of analysis placed themes into a hierarchy involving further merging and reduction of the code list. High-level theme names are researcher-created, while lower-level themes often retained the *in vivo* designations.

3.7.3.2 Creating and Using the Emotions Codebook

The purpose of the emotion codebook was to capture the feelings and opinions of horse owners. The first cycle of analysis was partially done during the analysis for the horse ownership experience codebook. However, the focus at the time was on actions of the participants and so not all emotion codes were captured. Therefore, the first cycle of analysis that focused on emotions was after the creation of the horse ownership experience codebook. Emotion codes consisted of single words or phrases, in the instances of 'disliking' or 'not wanting'. Again, *in vivo* codes were used rather than interpreting meaning at the time of code labelling, similar to Richin's (1997) exploratory study of consumers' emotional experiences during consumption. Transcripts were electronically searched using the 'Text Query' function in NVivo 12. Emotion words and words associated with feelings were searched for as exact words, stem words, and synonyms.

Like the horse ownership experience codebook, the second cycle of analysis reduced the codebook using discourse analysis. Emotions were placed into two themes: negative or positive emotions. This decision was guided by the evidence that experiencing positive emotions tends to lead to a desire to repeat behaviour while experiencing negative emotions

tends to discourage repeat behaviour. Additionally, positive emotions are associated with better well-being while negative emotions are associated with poorer well-being. No further hierarchy of codes was needed.

A third cycle of analysis involved searching for relationships between the emotion codes and the horse ownership experience codes [Appendix K]. The purpose of the search was to determine how themes were associated with positive emotions and negative emotions, thus determining motivation of horse ownership and meeting the objectives of this study.

3.7.4 Data Saturation

Sample size in this study was determined through data saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 188), which is suited to purposive, theoretical sampling (Guest et al., 2006, p. 59). Data saturation is an efficacious method and the saturation is not affected by the order of interviews (Rowlands et al., 2015).

Sadler et al. (2010) argued saturation with snowball sampling cannot occur because the sample is not representative. However, saturation is used in conjunction with emergent methods associated with constructivist philosophy wherein a representative sample is not expected and research populations are unlikely to be representative because they are relatively small. Mason (2010) expressed concern for the 'large' sample sizes, implying data analysis beyond data saturation analysis offers no extra benefits and is highly impractical considering the labour-intensive nature of qualitative enquiry. However, Mason (2010) also stated that analysis beyond data saturation is unlikely to be detrimental.

Fusch and Ness (2015) identified the following alternative determinants of saturation: enough information to replicate the study; no new information is attainable; and no further coding is feasible. On the other hand, Guest et al. (2006) proposed pre-determining when data saturation is likely to occur. In seeking an understanding of horse ownership, replication of the exact information is not expected, and pre-determining sample size set a potential limit on findings; thus, neither option was a suitable determinant of data saturation for this research project. Saturation was determined in line with the guidance of Mason (2010); that is, analysis continued until there were no new relevant codes.

Near data saturation occurred with interview seven and a version of the hierarchy of themes was evident. Complete data saturation occurred with interview 15. Further analysis provided

corroboration of existing codes. Although new *in vivo* codes emerged, the discourse analysis demonstrated these codes could actually be grouped together with existing codes. It was this process of iteration and the established codebook that demonstrated Isabelle's interview as valuable and able to be included in the results.

All but one of Isabelle's answers fit within the existing codebook after independent open coding. The new code differed to others in the theme to do with horse riding. Isabelle's riding enjoyment came from exploring and adventures in the countryside—an idea not expressed by previous participants. As only 17 of the final 139 codes in the horse ownership codebook are about riding, this was interpreted as evidence horse ownership actions are shared regardless of discipline choice, which eventually led to the creation of one of the motivational themes presented in the results—*Using the Horse*.

3.7.5 Credibility and Reliability of the Data

For this study, the word credibility is used in place of validity, as there is no demonstration of validity equivalent to that found in quantitative analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Credibility is an accumulation of the choices made in the design, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of the findings. Ultimately, judgements of credibility lie with the community and are more likely when clarity is maximised and judgements are made explicit (Whittemore et al., 2001; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Reliability in interview research is commonly of concern when multiple coders code the same text (Creswell, 2007). For this project there was only one coder, so there was no conflict between multiple researchers coding the same passages. However, having only one researcher does reinforce the importance of using credibility techniques like recording in the codebook, negative case analysis, member checking, reflexivity, and detailed explanations of research decisions for a consensus on the interpretation of the data.

3.7.5.1 Summary of Credibility Choices for This Study

Table 8 summarises the choices made to support credibility of the data in this study. As already discussed, steps were taken in data collection to retain credibility. Semi-structured interviews gave participants the opportunity to talk openly about their experience rather than use researcher-selected themes. Pilot exercises tested the method. Inclusion criteria in the

sampling strategy adopted the broadest definition. Good quality data recording equipment and verbatim transcription kept the data set to be analysed as close to what the participants said as possible. During data analysis, participants' words were used for code labels, and discourse analysis was used to check participants' meaning rather than rely solely on my interpretation.

Table 9 *Strategies for Qualitative Credibility (adapted from Alder & Alder, 1987; Whittemore et al., 2001; Cutcliffe, 2003; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Creswell, 2007)*

Stage of Research	Technique	Impact on Credibility
Design	Sampling decisions	Clarifies who, how, and why participants are selected
Design	Declaring researcher biases (reflexivity)	Making the reader aware of potential biases or assumptions affecting the inquiry; comments on experiences, prejudices, interests that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study
Data Collection	Prolonged engagement in the field—allowing myself to be interviewed	Builds trust with the participants, knowing the culture, and checking for misinterpretation
Data Analysis/Data Collection	Data saturation	Demonstrating there are no new primary themes emerging that relate to answering the objectives
Data Analysis	Memoing	Makes the researcher aware of personal perceptions of the data to help challenge assumptions and biases; creates a record of results development
Data Analysis	Triangulation	Used different analysis methods and theories to provide corroborating evidence; information collected from different 'types' of horse owners
Data Analysis	Negative case analysis	Ideas redefined in light of disconfirming evidence as theory is developed; the process continues until all cases fit and outliers eliminated
Data Analysis	Member checking	Soliciting participants' views on the interview transcript, findings, and interpretations; most critical in establishing credibility
Presentation	Giving examples	Give examples to illustrate a point raised in the description; assists in transferability for the reader

3.7.5.2 Reflexivity – Supporting Credibility and Reliability of the Results

Reflexivity acknowledges the researcher's membership in the study and was considered during the design phase of the study. As discussed, membership affects the credibility not only of the data collection but also of data analysis. Interpretation of data occurs through my inherent biases formed from my experience, knowledge, and social background (Johnson, 1997; Brink, 1993). Membership is advantageous during coding and thematic analysis because expertise of the culture is required for language analysis through metaphors, linguistic connectors, and indigenous terminology (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). As an active horse owner, 'bracketing out' my perspective was not a realistic expectation, nor would it have been advantageous. The advantages of membership are also considered disadvantages because it is difficult to tell if results are an authentic representation of the participants' experience or what I 'wanted' to see. Cutcliffe (2003) suggestsed addressing the disadvantage of

membership by disclosing my background, my interest in the area, and how the study might have influenced me (p. 147); this is found as a preface to the thesis.

3.8 The Write-Up and Presentation of Data

The thesis write-up is aimed at academics for the purposes of fulfilling the doctoral programme requirements. Data presentation resembles a grounded theory rhetorical structure, discussing theory at an abstract level, including relationships between categories, and specifying variations and conditions in which the theory seems to hold (Creswell, 2007, p. 190). This is opposed to the more descriptive narrative of experiences and events in the phenomenological rhetorical approach (Creswell, 2007). Some grounded theory structure has an element of causality, which is not the aim of this study, and so the rhetorical structure will stop at explanations of phenomena as suggested by Charmaz (2006). Quotes are inserted as examples of perspectives, giving credibility to the researcher's findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Cresswell (2007) suggests using short embedded quotes to support a point or prepare a reader for a shift in emphasis, while long quotations help express complex understandings (p. 182–183).

3.9 Chapter Conclusion

This study explored the depth of experiences, feelings, opinions, and beliefs of horse owners in a qualitative approach from a constructivist, methodological pluralistic, and critical post-human perspective. Semi-structured interviews were open enough for the development of long, in-depth conversations and benefited from prepared questions to help develop the conversation. The snowball sampling strategy was most effective in recruiting participants due to the embedded trust in personal connections; it allowed access to the hard-to-reach equestrian community. Purposive sampling was less successful but did recruit one participant. Thematic analysis broke down data allowing them to be regrouped, generating a hierarchy of themes about horse ownership and horse owner emotions. The two codebooks were compared to establish why the themes of the horse ownership experience were motivating. Discourse analysis checked the meaning of participants' words to support credible theme development. The qualitative research community puts forward a list of common techniques as a quality guide, and these were employed within this study as much as possible. Acceptance of the results by the equestrian and research community is the ultimate 'stamp of approval' for the credibility of this study.

Chapter 4: Results – The Motivations of Horse Ownership

4.1 Introduction to Chapter 4

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results from the inductive inquiry and data analysis to address the research objective 3:

3. To critically analyse the experiences of dressage horse owners for their motivations to own horses.

The themes presented in this Chapter derived from interviews with 21 dressage horse owners (Table 8, p. 79). Participants ranged in age from 21 years to 60 years; two participants were male and nineteen were female. Participants' professions included ten professional horse trainers, three horse industry professionals (non-training), five non-horse professionals, two students (non-horse subjects), and one full-time parent. The model presented is derived from the participants as a collective, applicable to each despite their differing demographic profiles.

From the data two distinct higher order (core) themes emerged: *getting into horses* and *horse-human interaction*. Figure 12 illustrates the hierarchy of themes. The core themes consist of motivational themes and their sub-themes. These motivational themes create the product of the human-horse relationship. Below the hierarchy are influential themes. These themes influence the motivational themes above. The *human-horse relationship* is both a product of the core themes and acts to influence the motivation themes in a reciprocal dynamic. Figure 13 demonstrates that the different motivational themes work in synergy during the horse ownership experience, motivating people to become horse owners (*getting into horses*) and sustaining their continued horse ownership (*horse-human relationship*). Motivation themes are also influenced by two other themes: *human-human interactions* and *participant's circumstances.* For example, they impact people's decisions for *keeping or selling* a horse. This chapter is structured to explore each core theme through the four emergent motivational themes and their relative sub-themes. Quotes from the transcribed interviews are used throughout the chapter to help explain the themes or illustrate an idea, using the participants' words as much as possible.

The chapter is divided into parts by the core themes. Part A presents the findings for the core theme *getting into horses* and its motivation themes *always wanted* and *securing the horse.* Each sub-theme is presented within its respective section. The section discusses how the themes facilitate the development of, and opportunity for sustaining the horse-human

relationship. Additionally, the section covers how influencing themes impact the motivation themes for horse ownership. Each motivation theme is concluded with a brief summary. Part B is similarly structured, focusing on the core theme *horse-human interaction*. Motivation themes in this section each have two sub-themes, with Section 4.4 focusing on the motivation theme *caregiving* and Section 4.5 on *using the horse*. The findings of each sub-theme are discussed with theory and how they potentially perpetuate the horse-human relationship. The section ends by discussing how any influencing themes impact the motivation themes for horse ownership. The findings related to the sub-theme *using the horse* findings revealed motivations for the participation in dressage are separable from horse ownership. That is, the emergent themes are applicable to general horse ownership and inclusive of those who participant in dressage, but they are not limited to dressage horse ownership.

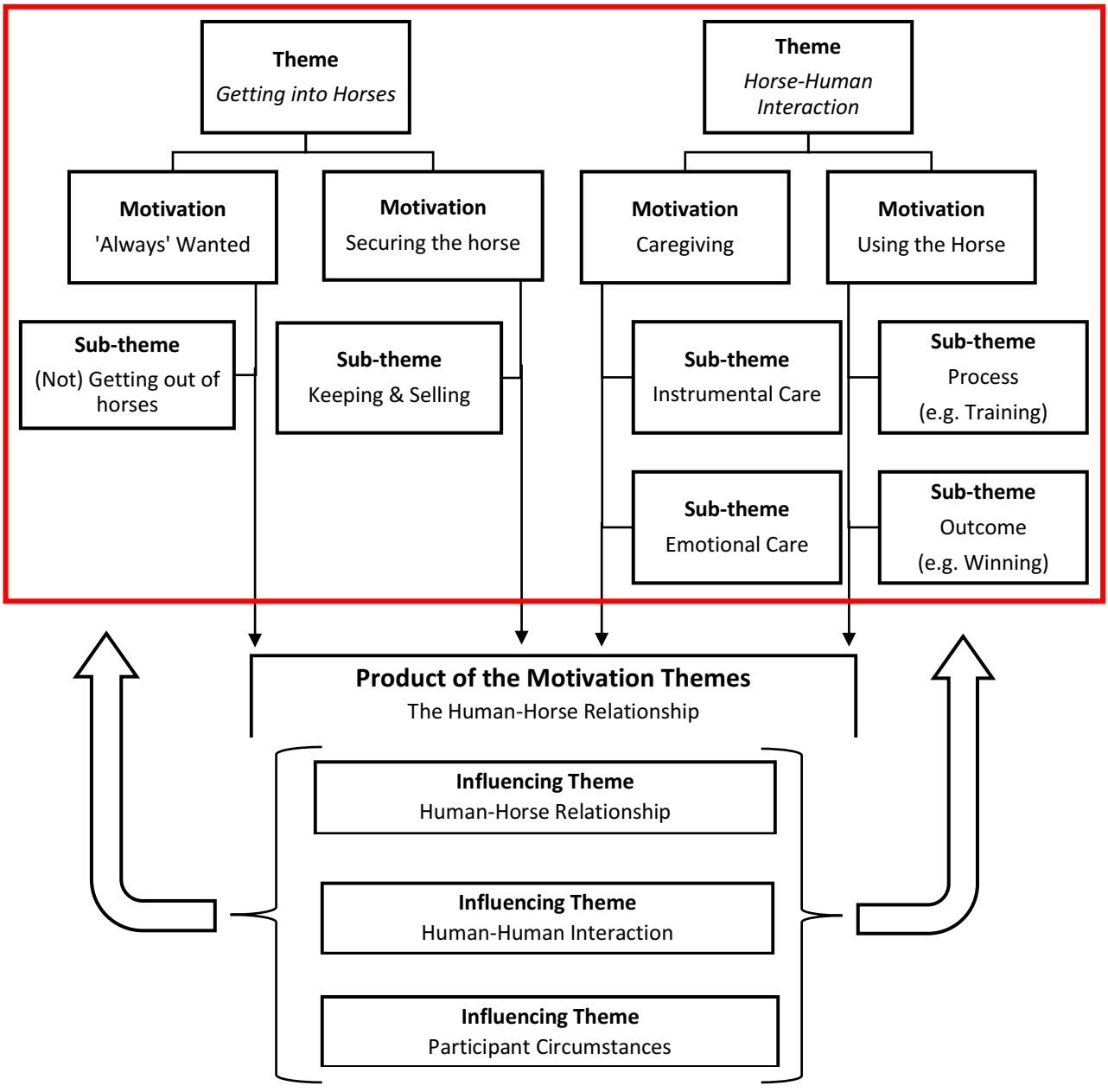


Figure 11 *A theoretical hierarchy of the motivations for dressage horse ownership. Themes, subordinate themes, and influencing themes of the motivation to own dressage horses.*

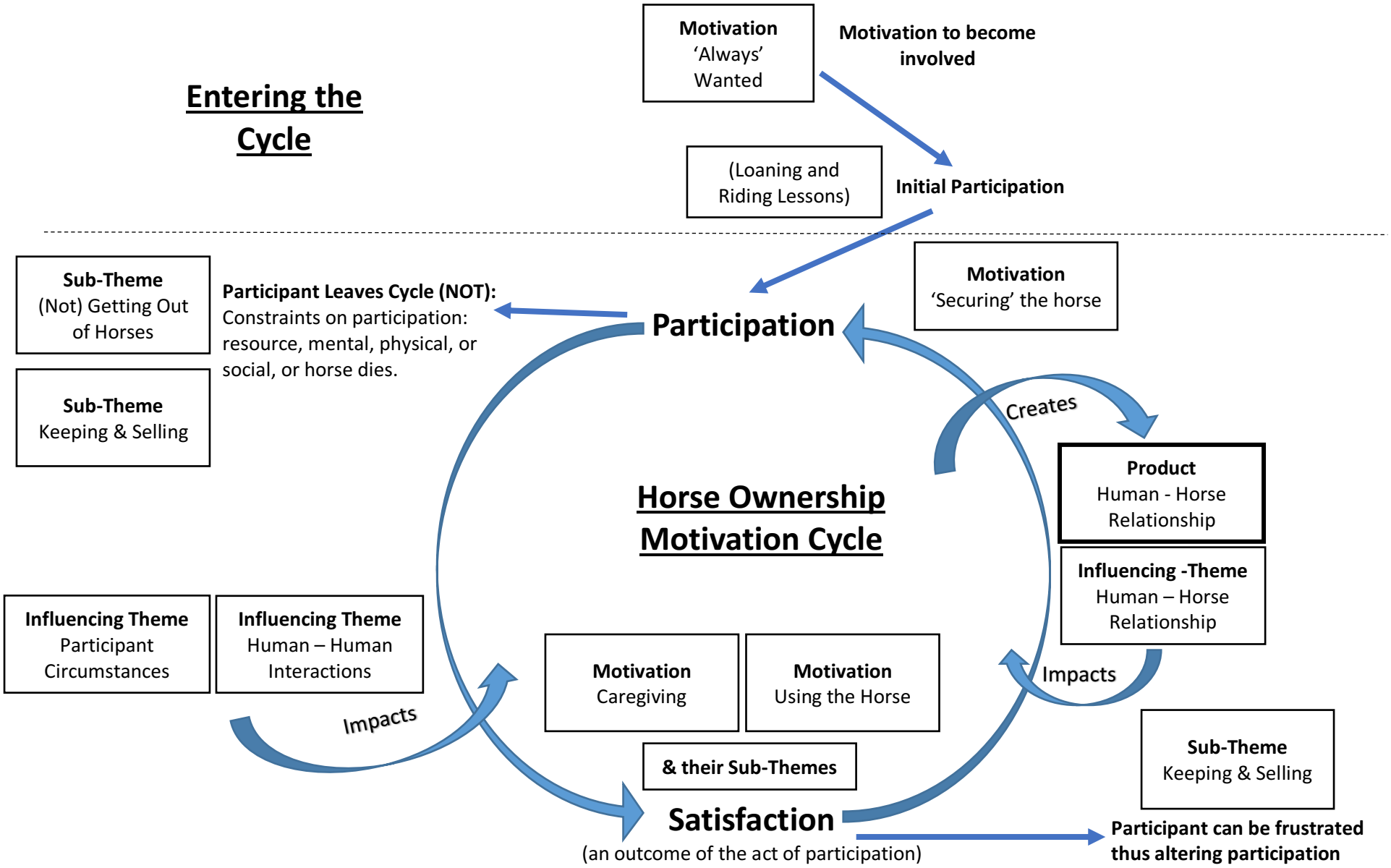


Figure 12 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners—incorporating the emergent motivation themes for horse ownership. Also represents the consumption of the product (horse-human relationship), creation of the product, and how the product influences its future consumption.*

Part A – Core Theme: Getting Into Horses

This section explains participants' motivations through inexplicable attraction to horses in *always wanted* and their more explicable reasoning in *securing the horse*. Participants described their first experiences with horses and horse ownership, which include riding lessons, loaning horses, being in a horsey family, and viewing from a distance. Their love of horses started at a young age and followed them through their life course. The sub-theme *(not) getting out of horses* serves to highlight how the attraction of 'getting into horses' prevails when participants contemplate giving up horse ownership. Fulfilling the ownership role occurs when the opportunity is right or in combination with perceived necessity or both. Ownership serves to secure the horse for the participant and provides the opportunity to control decisions like *keeping and selling* horses. At times this includes taking the opportunity to make some money.

4.2. Motivation Theme: Always Wanted

All participants discussed their lifelong interest in horses, and this did not differ between people who first became owners at age 50 or age 4. Participants described a deep attraction to horses, and what instigated the interest in horses was inexplicable for participants. Most explained that the interest was 'always' there. For example, Bethany (31, female, horse industry professional) commented:

> "*But I think it's something that I always, I'd always wanted and it never wavered, it was something I just always wanted*." – Bethany

Kelly (35, Female, non-horse professional) said:

> "*Uh, I always wanted to own a horse, I don't know why, I just did*." – Kelly

The feeling persisted through life for participants who first become owners in their late 40s and 50s. Evlynne (50, female, non-horse professional) remembered how her daughter had asked her why she had never purchased a horse earlier, knowing her mother was always interested. Similarly, Olivia (60, female, non-horse professional) explains how the desire for a horse persisted over time:

> "*It's something I always wanted as a child. Um, I had parents that couldn't afford lessons. Um, then I bought a shop and things moved on, children. And then my husband got MS and we couldn't do boating anymore and I thought it was my time to, to have a go at something I'd always wanted to do.*" – Olivia

Probing these responses led to stories of their first experiences with horses. Carly (49, female, professional horse trainer) related a variety of stories of herself as a child, including her parents' annoyance that she and her sister spent an entire family holiday watching donkeys at a holiday park.

Specifically, it is unclear why participants preferred horses over other animals. Participants' stories present little rhyme or reason for who is attracted to horses and who is not. Wendy's (40, female, professional horse trainer) family bred dressage horses and so she grew up around horses, as did her siblings. However, she is the only one with horses.

> *"I grew up with [horses]. I have five siblings. I'm the only one who has horses out of all of us so I can't even say it's environmental."*– Wendy

Fourteen participants came from non-horse-involved households, having encountered horses on vacation or via gifts of riding lessons or through extended family, friends, or neighbours. The others had immediate family members who rode, bred, or owned horses. Whether from a 'horsey' household or not, participants attributed their attraction to horses as being bitten by "*the bug"*. Horses, somehow, get "*in your blood"* or are "*a part of your DNA"*. Once in, horses are described as "*an addiction"* or "*like a drug".*

In this theme there is an element of inexplicability about what it is about horses that is compelling. Being from a horsey family meant horses were in the environment but not a guarantee that one becomes a horse owner. For these participants, once attracted to horses they develop a persistent desire to affiliate themselves with horses, even if consumption is delayed due to other life events.

4.2.1.1 Sub-Theme: (Not) Getting Out of Horses

This initial and persistent attraction to horses is the concept that keeps people involved even when they consider giving up. The desire to be involved with horses persists, even after an owner loses a horse due to death or due to changes in personal circumstances that determine horse ownership is neither in their best interest nor in the best interest of a horse. Those who had actively considered giving up horses completely said that, on reflection, they still needed horses. Abigail (44, female, professional horse trainer) had given it a lot of thought:

> *"Now, I know why I own horses and it is because I compete but also, originally because I loved horses. And I, I had to work that out, where a couple of years ago when I actually wanted to give up. Um, and I thought actually I like that interaction with me and the*

> *horse, and I like that training with me and the horse, and I like that, having that fondness for my horse and that, that is what, why I have a horse. Because, it I, I still, even though I whinge and moan, I still want to get out of bed and go and do something with that horse every day.*" – Abigail

It is Abigail's point of her original love and fondness of horses that stands out in contrast to her complaints. She indicated that the relationship with the horse is a crucial part of her continued participation with horses. Wendy also actively contemplated giving up horses, citing the associated stress of horse ownership.

> "*There've been points over the years where the stress of everything just gets to be a lot and you wonder whether you're missing out on the rest of life because horse ownership is so all consuming… like the cost-benefit where the cost just seems to weigh, you know, override any benefit you're getting from it.*" – Wendy

Wendy continued, revealing that even when one values one's human family more than the horse, the risks of personal injury or death do not seem to dissuade horse ownership.

> *"I was talking to my friend who had just had a baby and she said horses rule her life as well, and I said, 'You know the question does come up in your mind—if something had happened to you would it have been worth it?' She said, 'I don't think it would have'. And I said, 'I've come to the same conclusion. Is it going to stop me having horses? No.' So it's one of those, in some ways, I think it's slightly irrational*." – Wendy

Despite wanting to maintain horse ownership, at times, participants were horse-less. Horses passed away or participant circumstances hindered horse ownership for a time. When participants were horse-less, they did not enjoy the experience nor did they stop identifying as a horse-person. Six participants talked about their breaks in ownership. During these breaks participants remained involved with horses. Julia (47, female, horse industry professional) provided some insight for how she felt without a horse and how she stayed involved in the equestrian community.

> "*I wasn't a horse owner for a very short period of time after I lost the last one. And I didn't enjoy it at all. It really felt like there was something missing for me. It took me a long time to get over losing the last one and it took me a long time to find the right next one. And it was about two years where I didn't actually own anything myself. I was still involved with horses, still riding, but I didn't have one myself. Um, but no I don't think I would want to be in that position out of choice again.*" – Julia

Victoria (47, female, full-time parent) understands the financial commitment of horses and would make the choice to give up ownership if forced, but she maintains she would pursue other ways of being involved.

> "*If I was in dire straits and something with my children and we couldn't afford to have the horses anymore of course I would give them up but it would be taking a big, you know, chunk of who I am away. And I think I would find a way to still be around horses in some, some sense if it wasn't owning my own.*" – Victoria

Overall though, Victoria could not imagine not having horses and related the negative toll it would take on her.

> "*I just can't see myself from always wanting to have that as a child to then not having it, to then giving it up. That wouldn't make me a very happy person.*" – Victoria

Similarly, Linda (53, female, professional horse trainer) reported horse ownership improves her quality of life.

> "*It makes my quality of life a lot better. I'm a nicer person when I've got horses*." – Linda

Samantha (49, female, professional horse trainer), like Victoria, could not imagine a life without horses even though she stated she tried to get out of horses. Like Abigail, the relationship with the horses appears a crucial feature in maintaining horse ownership.

> "*I've tried but no, no. The longest break I've had is five weeks, [laughs] when I went to Africa… I could never, I can't imagine getting up in the morning and not having those snuggles*." – Samantha

Others were more specific about how they would maintain horse involvement. Examples included buying ponies for their children, like Payton (51, female, non-horse professional), or working in the equine industry, perhaps as a business owner like Diana or a horse trainer like Carly. With the exception of Nadia (21, female, student), all participants responded to the query of giving up horse ownership by choice with a definite 'no'. Despite Nadia's uncertainty in continued horse ownership, she maintained she will keep her riding equipment, and indicated that because her parents have horses, horse ownership is always an option.

> "*I'd never get rid of my riding boots because I'd always happily get back on a horse or have a horse. But I'd be okay not having one, I think. But until I officially don't, like if I didn't have one, I wouldn't know I guess. But because they'll always, they'll always live at home, at my parents' house. I've always got that option. So it's hard to say what it'd be like without one because they're always going to be in the family*." – Nadia

Freya (45, female, non-horse professional) contested that some people seem to get "*the bug*" out of their system if allowed horses at an early age.

> "*I look at all of my friends at primary school and secondary school who had horses, very few of them have horses now. I think they get the bug out of the system; but because I was never allowed, um, I never got that bug out of my system.*" – Freya

As the youngest participant, perhaps Nadia's system is clearing of "*the bug".* However, Nadia was not actively interested in ceasing with horses during the interview. Not ever having had a break from horse ownership, it is hard for Nadia to imagine life without horses. Horses are a constant in her family life, a shared activity between her and her mother. Additionally, there is no apparent threat to loss of the horse; even as a child when she was upset and threatened to give up riding, she was encouraged to continue.

Rather than cease ownership, many participants had actively considered how to maintain horse ownership or, at minimum, maintain involvement with horses through old age (60+). For example, Freya insists on maintaining ownership while Payton plans for a less hands-on-horse option as a dressage judge:

> "*I will be dead before I not have a horse. Even if I'm 90 odd I will have a doddery old something in the back garden. I, I can't imagine ever, way too much a part of my life.*" – Freya

> "'*God, if I get really old there's going to come a time when I'm not going to be able to physically ride. So what am I gonna do for my fix?' So I thought. 'I'll know what I'll do, I'll become a British dressage judge'. So I'm training at the moment to do my BD judging stuff*." – Payton

Collectively, participants felt that, as they aged, they may not be as physically able or still have the desire for the physical labour associated with being responsible for their horses' care. Participants' intensity of involvement may change from the number of horses they own, the type or temperament of the horse they own, or their involvement in day-to-day care.

4.2.1.2 Summarising the Motivation Theme: Always Wanted

In summary, participants are firm in their desire for horse ownership and do not give up horse ownership by choice. At times horses may pass away or be sold on, but this does not discourage participants from horse ownership. Participants seek ways to maintain involvement with horses, not only through breaks in ownership but also as they age and as their circumstances change. In preparation for continued horse ownership, participants consider how to manage the responsibility, time commitment, and physicality of participation as a horse owner. Horses will always make up a part of participants' lives through ownership or involvement in the equestrian community, demonstrating the persistence of the intrinsic

attraction to horses. However, Freya indicated some people lose interest in horses between adolescence and young adulthood. This adds an additional dynamic for considering how to interpret Nadia's thoughts on ceasing horse ownership as a young adult.

4.3 Motivation Theme: Securing the Horse

This section starts by talking about the autonomy that comes with *securing the horse* through ownership and continues with the sub-theme *keeping and selling*, which discusses the power that *securing the horse* provides in decisions to keep or sell a horse. Next, the influencing themes of *human to human interaction* details how other people influenced participants' desire for autonomy in ownership. Finally, the influencing theme *participants' circumstances* discusses the opportunities for *securing the horse*.

Ownership builds from the initial attraction to horses demonstrated in the motivation theme a*lways wanted*; participants found some way to become involved with horses and for most this included horse riding lessons. Riding lessons were followed by loaning a horse. Loaning a horse was followed by horse ownership. The journey to ownership is strongly influenced by the interaction with other humans. Participants like Isabelle (28, female, student) and Theresa (27, female, professional horse trainer) recognised their control over their horse as a possession.

> "*For me [ownership] was definitely the, I want more autonomy over, my, what I do with the horse and where I can take the horse and, um, what I buy for the horse.*" – Isabelle
>
> "*You've got more autonomy over what happens to that horse.*" – Theresa

In loan and riding school situations, the horses are owned by a third party—somebody other than the participant. The influence of this third party is associated with a lack of freedom to decision make, creating a point of frustration and fear for many participants, thereby making ownership more attractive. Interactions with the horse are not self-regulated—not autonomous. This is seen the most in riding lessons. Actions are performed because they are instructed. The lesson is a controlled environment and lacks the opportunity for complete self-regulation. Loaning offers more self-regulation opportunities in riding and caring for the horse, but it is still controlled. In Nadia and Isabelle's experiences there may be limitations on what actions they can take. Even the loan situations, in which the participant felt in control of

the day-to-day decisions and training, the owner's ability to take away the participant's horse and thus end the experience remained.

> "*I always felt like I'd get to a certain point in my riding and then the horses would be sold for whatever reason, so I bought [horse 1] to secure a horse for me that would always be mine.*" – Graham

The selling of horses contributed to Kelly and Graham's (25, male, professional horse trainer) feeling of being "*gutted*". The loan horse owner's actions were a stark reminder of the participants' lack of genuine autonomy and thus reduced their state of psychological well-being at the time. Indeed Graham consulted a sports psychologist to help deal with the occurrences of those types of scenarios.

> *"[T]hat just helps me look at different things and take the horses out. You know, take my emotional attachment out of the horses and the situation I'm in and I deal with it just in a professional way…"* – Graham

For Evlynne, ownership was about securing the decision-making in caretaking. For others like Julia and Abigail, securing the horse is a fulfilment of a desire to be responsible for the animal. An additional reason for Isabelle was securing the opportunity to practice her horsemanship skills. The development of a relationship, being responsible for care, decision-making, and opportunities to practice riding are intertwined within the horse ownership experience and produce feelings of satisfaction, a sub-topic which is discussed separately in subsequent sections. Here they are grouped for the context of how the ownership provides autonomy and thus motivation in ownership detailed in the influencing theme *human-human interaction* in Section 4.3.2.

Securing the horse puts participants in a position of power over all aspects of the horse so that they can enjoy the activities without worry the experience will be taken away. Regardless of whether the participant is a professional or leisure rider, ownership provides the opportunity for pure self-regulation and better well-being, which according to SDT, humans strive to achieve.

4.3.1 Sub-Theme: Keeping and Selling

With the autonomy of ownership comes the ability to control the comings and goings of horses. Ownership of more than one is often associated with the intent to purchase some horses, produce them, and sell them on with the aim to make money. There was varied

success in achieving this aim across the participants with no seeming relationship to whether they were professionals or leisure horse owners. One professional, Abigail, suggested buying to sell on never resulted in a profit for her, while another, Harry (30, male, professional horse trainer), casually spoke of a multitude of horses he'd purchased, produced, and sold on, describing them as "*a good little turn over"*.

There are examples of both leisure owners and professional trainers purchasing a horse to *"produce and sell",* but the horse does not leave. Carly, a professional trainer, reports her horse does not like anyone else riding him. She stated, "*who would buy him*?" For Freya, one of her 'project' horses "*makes her smile*" and *"weaselled his way into [her] heart"* and is now "*not going anywhere*". In fact, the horse she purchased with the intention of keeping was the first one she sold when she was downsizing from six. To paraphrase her words, he was so good he was boring. She is pleased where she rehomed him and expresses pride in how well behaved he is with his new owners.

Some participants use horse ownership as an opportunity to breed the horse they want. Three participants talked about breeding horses to keep. All owned the mare that was going to produce the desired foal, but they were all at different stages of the experience. For Roberta (48, Female, professional horse trainer), the horse she bred and the foal she kept had long passed away, but the foal was described as her "*horse of a lifetime".* The memory overwhelmed her, resulting in a short break in the interview. Another foal from the same mare, she sold on because it grew too big for her. For Linda, her horse is currently competing with her and is *"everything she wanted"*. For Bethany, it is still a hope for the future with her mare. These participants chose to breed because they wanted to breed something of a quality they didn't feel they could afford to purchase. Mare ownership affords this extra opportunity to create a second horse from initial ownership of one.

The autonomy of ownership means the human can make the choice to breed the horse and then has control over the foal produced to keep or to sell on. In understanding these participants' motivation, it should be noted that they take a risk in breeding. It is at minimum a 4–5 year wait including gestation, foaling, weaning, and the start of training the horse to determine if the foal produced will meet the needs of the owner. However, the owners have control over genetic selection via the stallion and dam, and over the foal's life experience and

early training, which might factor into whether the foal will indeed meet the future expectations of the owner.

In talking about securing a horse, the decisions on the purchase or breeding of individual horses came up in context. The decisions about which horses are initially selected for purchase remain fairly ambiguous. However, the decision to keep a horse or sell a horse, no matter the reason for its initial purchase, is clearly related to the perceived traits of the horse in combination with the relationship that develops through the subsequent human-horse interaction. Roberta illustrated the importance of traits by selling one horse for its size. Harry and Abigail are concerned with the horse's capabilities in the competition arena stating relatively:

> *"…having talented horses that just can't mentally do it. That's a real downer. As a trainer, the rider, sitting on something that's so talented but it's just, can't cope mentally. That's a shame, that's like you just feel like 'Oh God, this horse could be amazing but it just can't mentally cope.'"* – Harry
>
> "*Because I can't keep horses. I can love them all. I can't keep all these ones that don't do the job anymore*." – Abigail

Julia is quite clear that in addition to potential to compete it has to be the "*right horse for me and I'm the right person for that horse. So, if that doesn't work out then I would, um, seek to find it a new home."* Similarly, Wendy stipulates that the perceived benefit of horse ownership (i.e. enjoyment, relationship) must outweigh the overall cost of ownership (i.e. monetary expense, stress, danger). Wendy further observes a social stigma hindering humans selling a horse in a mismatched horse-human relationship, when the cost outweighs the benefits; she suggests ending the relationship feels like failure and is "*not a nice experience"*.

> "W*here the horse is concerned, saying goodbye to something that you've become attached to is always hard. A lot of times you sell horses because something's not working, you've had a lot of bad experiences in a row, etc., etc. So in that case people feel a little bit like they've failed…you've failed to make them sound again, you failed to get on the other side of a problem you were having.*" – Wendy

Some participants in the study stated their perseverance with *"difficult"* horses, labelling them as a "*nightmare*" or stating they "*hate*" their horse. In a preceding or subsequent statement participants "*love*" the same horse, or would want to own the horse again. Participants like Roberta (48, female, professional horse trainer) speak of their personal stubbornness and persistence with a horse.

> "*I stuck with it, cause I'm quite stubborn I will say and I don't like to be defeated, which is probably why I've still got [horse 4].*" – Roberta

Nadia's recollection of her parents' statements to her about how her experience wouldn't be as good if they bought her a horse that was good, highlights the social view that difficult horses are learning opportunities. The ability to overcome or work through the difficulties is the goal, adding to participants' reluctance to sell horses. Wendy too spent time working through difficulties with a horse but chose to sell the horse on after a couple years where participants like Freya, Roberta, Carly, and Diana (50, female, horse industry professional) continued to persevere with their difficult horses for the duration of the horse's life.

In summary, the perception of the horse and the relationship that develops as a product of ownership (whether positive or negative) go beyond autonomy of ownership. Ownership provides the opportunity for the participant to be in control of the comings and goings of the horse, whether for financial gain or personal satisfaction. However, the decision of what to do with the horse once it has been obtained is influenced by other factors like the horse's traits, the subsequent relationship with the horse, and social pressure to learn from or overcome difficulties.

4.3.2 Influencing Theme: Human-Human Interaction on Securing the Horse

Human to human interactions significantly shaped participants' motivation to *secure a horse* because a non-owning human can only interact with a horse through finding another human who has one, and is willing to share. All horses are inherently linked to another human. Riding lessons are the least autonomous interaction, while ownership is the most autonomous. Loaning varies depending on how much control the loan horse owner wants to retain in addition to their ownership title.

Many participants spoke of riding lessons being a gift from an extended family member or of their parents purchasing a few lessons for them to try. Graham speaks of his mother giving up her lessons so that he could have more and his attraction to the horse activity being more intense than it was for his sisters, who also had lessons. Older participants, like Olivia, had riding lessons before purchasing her first horse. In riding school situations, participants learn to ride but perceive limitations on when and for how long they can ride and the interaction with horses. Bethany perceived it thusly:

> "*[P]reviously to [ownership] I had only ridden at riding schools, so I could only ride when I paid for a lesson, whereas when I had my own horse I could ride whenever I liked*." – Bethany

Isabelle determined horse ownership provided the ability to practice her riding skills more frequently and improve her ability:

> "*I'd never put a horse on-the-bit because no one, no one in the riding school, no one taught me that. No one made an emphasis on that. No one, it just wasn't, you know. And I've never ever done cross-country and that's something I'd really like to [do]… by having a horse it would open up more doors training wise."* – Isabelle

Olivia prefers the experience of riding horses not associated with a riding school, finding riding school horses an unsatisfying experience:

> *"…[the horses are] fairly, what's the word, docile, been used to riding school, so I found it wasn't the same as riding a horse that's not used to being in a riding school environment...[the horses are] almost, no disrespect to riding schools, slightly comatose."* – Olivia

In a loan situation, participants find more autonomy because the owner is less likely to be involved with the day-to-day care. However, the owner retains ultimate decision-making responsibility and can take the horse back or make changes at any time, limiting participants' autonomy. For participants, their feelings of responsibility towards loan horses were the same as for any horse they owned. Bethany had a horse on loan at the time of the interview, and she explained how her feelings do not differ between loaning and ownership of her other four horses:

> "*…like completely from day one I feel like he's mine. I don't think it, it's just paperwork. I think you still treat them the same, I feel the same about them. I honestly don't feel like the name on the bottom of a piece of paper determines that.*" – Bethany

Because loaning provides the illusion of autonomy, interactions with loan horse owners result in feelings of fear and frustration. This extends beyond loaning to professional trainer scenarios wherein the trainer is being paid to be responsible for another person's horse. Nadia remembers the fear she felt thinking about what an owner would say after she (Nadia) cut a loan horse's mane too short, and Bethany remembers the power of her parents' threat to send her childhood loan horse back if she didn't keep up with her schoolwork. Evlynne "*fell out"* with owners of a horse she had taken care of for four years, partly because she was frustrated they would not allow her to provide care she felt was necessary, like changes to feed and treatment for musculoskeletal injuries. Evlynne felt so strongly that at times she had

the horse treated when the owners were away for extended periods. Isabelle also wanted to make care changes, but she lacked opportunity like Evlynne:

> "*I was like if this is my horse … I'd look at all the aspects of her care to see what was causing her [the horse] to act in such a constantly stressed and, and defensive manner. But I couldn't do any of that because it's not my horse…I didn't have the, the control there to look into that, so that frustrated me*." – Isabelle

Kelly (with a loan horse) and Graham (with a client's horse) both lamented the experience of other people selling horses "*out from under*" them. Kelly was particularly concerned that she had no say in what happened to the horse after it left her care, reiterating the power of autonomy of ownership:

> *"[They] didn't give me any opportunity to buy it or the opportunity to keep it or have a say in where it went, um, so that was a bad experience I suppose from loaning. At least with owning you have complete control of what happens to that, that horse, where it goes, what it does, who rides it. All those things.*" – Kelly

These participants felt emotions of sadness and frustration; both used the term "*gutted*". Graham's added his comments on his overall opinion of loaning horses:

> "…*for the person that owns that loan horse they're obviously in a position they don't want it, or they can't finance it or they don't have a use for it. So, I don't see why they then don't let it go anyway. But I think it's, for me, experiences I've heard of and I dealt with, it's never good, it's never smooth ever, with contracts or not, it's just never a good thing really…"* – Graham

Despite Grahams views, loaning seems to serve an important purpose in the journey towards ownership in the form of practicing the skills of horse ownership and trying out specific horses before making the decision to take on the responsibility of a horse. Kelly implied that the idea one could just give the horse back is a favourable idea. For example, with Bethany, if her parents felt she could not manage the responsibility of the horse alongside her other responsibilities, then the ability of the horse to leave immediately was desirable. Carly spoke of returning her childhood loan pony; Carly's family had considered buying, but the horse didn't behave as the owner described:

> "*[B]efore I had [horse 2] we had a horse on loan called [horse 5], she was a nightmare…her owner said she was amazing but she just bolted. The whole time she bolted…fortunately, thank god, she failed the vet so we sent her back.*" – Carly

Purchasing horses can result in serious consequences, making previous experience very desirable. Both Olivia and Kelly reported serious injuries from falls off the first horses they

purchased, including a life-changing broken back for Kelly. Both participants had previous riding experience but had not owned a horse prior to that point. Ownership presented a problem with what to do with the horse while they recovered from injury. Neither could ride, nor were they mobile enough to take care of the horse, so they engaged in other human-to-human interactions, paying others to care for and exercise their horses. This presented an undesirable financial expense and feelings of 'buyer's remorse'. Both sold on these first horses. Kelly's horse's dangerous behaviour—that led to her injury—added additional concern over the ethics of where the horse could go:

> "*When I was in hospital he went on loan to a dealer, well not a dealer but someone who could sell him for me. In the end we decided that, he should go to a guy that already knew that he reared, and know him quite well, so basically gave him away."* – Kelly

Kelly didn't want to put another human in the same position she was put in when she purchased the horse. She expressed the dishonest human-human interaction at the point of purchase was a contributing factor to her injury:

> *"I didn't pursue it, but that person knew that that horse had a problem and they didn't pass that information on and if they had passed that information on I might not have had my accident um, but they wanted to get rid of the horse."* – Kelly

Ownership required extra time and expense compared to a participant telling a loan owner they are terminating the loan and relinquishing responsibility. Both Kelly and Olivia went on to purchase a second horse, the desire to be involved with horses and the autonomy of ownership overriding their harrowing experiences.

In summary, loaning is exactly the same as ownership with regard to the responsibility participants felt toward the horse. Importantly, loaning differs in the control over what happens to the horse (e.g. regarding decisions about its care or whether it is sold). This can influence the relationship with the horse, and a participant may choose to do something different or avoid doing something because of what the loan horse owner might say, do, or think. Ownership resolves these issues.

4.3.3 Influencing Theme: Participant's Circumstances on Securing the Horse

Ownership provides autonomy in relation to the horse, but the logistics of purchasing the horse requires the human to be in a position that they feel they can afford the horse and be in a position to take care of it. If their parents did not purchase a horse for them, most

participants took the first opportunity that presented itself to buy their first horse. Freya took out a car loan and used that to secure her first horse after she finished university. Mara (28, female, horse industry professional), on the same day as buying her first car, immediately went out and bought a horse. Both Isabelle and Carly used money that had been left to them by relatives to get their first horses. Participants like Harry and Victoria asked relatives for money. Others waited until they had a good job and felt they could be financially responsible for the horse.

Getting the second, third, fourth, etc. horse shares the same mix of impulse and considered decision-making as purchasing the first horse. Some participants like Mara, Olivia, and Kelly shared stories of lessons learned from what they deemed to be poor first choices, while others, like Bethany, purchased a horse on impulse because it was related to a horse they already owned. What is apparent is the consideration of the humans' own circumstances and ability to provide sufficient care in purchasing a second horse. This horse could be the second in succession or second in congruence with ownership of an existing horse. Many of the comments about circumstances were about the facilities available to keep another horse. Bethany's move to her own yard provided the space and the necessity of a second horse. Her first horse needed a companion after they moved in. Carly, on the other hand, waited many years and until she had purchased a house before purchasing her second horse. Olivia's second horse was purchased after Olivia found a yard that she felt could support her in upskilling her own abilities in horse care and handling, could provide care for her horse, and could supply additional riding instruction.

> *"But I'd also been helping out here [the yard where the horse is currently kept] um, and I decided to do my NVQ to gain more knowledge on the ground and with [yard owner's name] help we then found [horse name 1]."* – Olivia

Securing one's first horse appears to be the minimum to meet the need for autonomy in having a horse. It is the additional human circumstances that influence the need or ability for more. For these participants there appears to be a maximum, and the limitations are around the amount of time the participant can devote to the horses rather than any fixed number. For Freya, her maximum was six horses.

> *"[T]he more time I spend with the foal and the more I do, the quicker he comes on. Um, and that's the same with all of them. So, yeah, it is, and that's, when I had six that's*

> *when I got really stressed. Cause I just couldn't be putting the time and energy that each of them needed at the right amount."* – Freya

Linda's maximum was 11 horses. She is now down to three. She stated that keeping 11 was "*hard work*":

> "*You're constantly working to keep them. Um, which is why we, we sort of like stopped breeding at a certain point and said 'Look this is getting ridiculous. We need to sort of filter down and get rid of a few.' Um, so we sold the four-year-olds and then I just kept a few out until we've got down to now three."* – Linda

At one time Mara owned five horses, but she is now firmly a one-horse owner, citing the time she now has:

> "*I've become a one-horse owner. It's so much better, you know people should do it. Like, because I had five at one stage. And I'm like 'oh my god, that's terrible'. I had two, 'oh my god how do you get…' One horse, it's absolutely amazing, people should do it. Like you've got all this spare time, you've still got the horse and it's much cheaper. Gotta love it.*" – Mara

Julia also sees herself as a one-horse owner, noting two was one too many. In these instances of time, the responsibility of horse ownership demotivates. The horse's requirements act as an external regulator, and the tasks become extrinsically motivated. The horse's well-being demands that the human perform specific tasks or pay others to complete those tasks. When participants feel they are not meeting these demands, they feel guilty, something also discussed in section 4.4. Participants will then rehome or sell horses, in some cases from a perspective that the horse will be better off with someone else. Reducing the number of horses relieves the demand on their time, and as experienced by Mara, Linda, and Freya, the ownership experience feels more satisfying.

4.3.4 Summarising the Motivational Theme: Securing the Horse

In summary, ownership is a progression from participants' first encounters with horses. The experiences of the first encounters fosters a desire for participants to have more control over the decision making of the horse. Loaning a horse provides participants with a feeling of ownership through responsibility for the horse but also frustration because they still lack full autonomy for decision making. Although frustrating, the lack of ownership with loaning is beneficial for those with less horse experience because they can cease ownership relatively easily by returning an unsuitable horse to the owner.

While ownership secures control over the horse itself, the circumstances of the human outside of the human-horse interactions also influences the motivation to own a horse. Initial horse ownership for many was at the time they first perceived it was possible through injection of cash via inheritance, generosity of relatives, a well-paid job, or securing a loan. Second horse selection involved greater consideration of the human's circumstances in being able to manage a second horse. As more horses are acquired the maximum number of horses a person secures appears to be limited by their perception of available time to devote to the horse because the demands of ownership become too externally regulated and less enjoyable. One horse is a consistent minimum.

Part B – Core Theme: Horse-Human Interaction

> *"I think there's two type of bond. There's the one on the ground where he's happy to see you and he knows that perhaps you're his owner. And then there's the riding one where you're trying to become one unit, not ride a horse but together, and that gives you a different feeling altogether."* – Olivia

Olivia's opening quote harnesses the essence of this core theme. There were two seemingly separate sources of motivation: c*aregiving* and *using the horse*. This section explains participants' interactions with their horses and how these facilitated different motivations for horse ownership. The *caregiving* motivation theme draws heavily from the attachment theory literature and consists of two sub-themes: *instrumental care* and *emotional care*. Participants discussed the *instrumental care* they provide that keeps the horse physically healthy (e.g. food, shelter, and veterinary care), but as with effective caregiving, it is not just providing physical needs but the way in which care is provided that contributes to *emotional care.* Participants discussed how the *emotional care* they provide to the horse results in a sense of pleasure and satisfaction for them. Seemingly separately, motivation resulted from *using the horse.* Within this motivation are two sub-themes derived from participants' expressed emotions relating to the *process* of *using the horse* (e.g. training the horse) and the *outcomes* that the training was intended to produce (e.g. winning a competition).

Both c*aregiving* and *using the horse* and their subsequent sub-themes contributed to the development of the human-horse relationship. The relationship participants perceived with the horse acted as a reciprocal mechanism in motivating horse ownership. For example, the human-horse relationship acts as an influencing theme on future decisions like *keeping and*

selling a horse, discussed previously. Both motivation themes were influenced by *human-human interactions* as well as *participant's circumstances.*

4.4 Motivation Theme: Caregiving

For all participants, *caregiving* was an important part of their human-horse interaction, whether through providing *instrumental care* like food, water, and making decisions about injury or illness, or working to promote a horse's emotional well-being. For participants, both sub-themes worked together. A horse must have its basic requirements met for it to achieve a state of emotional well-being. However, a horse could have its basic requirements met and still be in a poor state of emotional well-being. For example, Freya spoke of one of her young horses as being "*depressed"*, despite Freya's thorough care efforts.

For participants, establishing emotional well-being was about how *instrumental care* was delivered. Learning how to deliver *instrumental care* occurred over time and through quality contact time with the horse. Participants learned, through trial and error, the ways in which to deliver basic requirements, resulting in participants "*knowing"* their horse. Harry explains:

> "*You can over care for them or under care for them. So, it's just getting a balance and knowing the horse…they're all individual and you have to treat them like how, you have to work out what they like and what they don't like and go with that."* – Harry

However, knowing the horse was perceived as more than just instrumental likes and dislikes but as being able to read the horse's emotional states. The examples below illustrate this point:

> "*I learnt to understand when he was feeling well and when he wasn't feeling well…we knew each other so well and I didn't need to put a lead rope on him and he knew where he was going and I knew, he knew where he was going and what we were doing.*" – Diana

> "*So I know like [horse 1] inside out. I've had him for six years. So I know when he's in a bad mood. I know when he's in a good mood. I know when he needs his own space. I have that almost like telepathic sort of thing with him*." – Theresa

Victoria builds on the idea of knowing the horse and implies, to know the horse is to have established a relationship with the horse.

> "*You know, to lose that. He was the first one I truly made a relationship with. I knew him. I knew exactly what he was going to do*." – Victoria

Consequently, *caregiving* contributes to creating the product—the human-horse relationship. The human-horse relationship could develop further into what participants labelled "*a bond",* characterised by participants perceiving the horse to know them, the horse distinguishing the participant from other people and displaying attachment-like behaviours towards the participant, such as calling to the participant and seeking proximity. The human-horse relationship (and bond) is discussed as a theme in Section 4.4.3.

4.4.1 Sub-Theme: Instrumental Care

Participants talk of having "*standards"* of care which involve feeding enough food, feeding the right quality of food, calling the vet in the event of injury or illness, and making sure the horses are in the appropriate location, whether that is in their stable or in the field. Monitoring a horse's temperature (i.e. too hot or too cold with the rug they were wearing), their cleanliness, and the cleanliness of their living space (i.e. their stable or field) are all part of the basics of caring for a horse.

Some participants expressed stories of their horses' limited tolerance for being in a stable, and others described their horses' limited tolerance for being in a field. Freya's horse jumps up and down at the door if frustrated by being inside. Bethany's horse struggles with changes of environment; Bethany stated that she almost got sent home from pony club camp as a child because her horse would not drink anything. The same horse is now much older, and living at Bethany's home with three other horses dictates "*the order that you feed them, or the order you might turn them out, or stable them*" because it keeps him quiet and content. "*The world revolves around him and everyone else slots in*". Abigail hates when her horse behaves anxiously in the field, not fearing for herself but rather that the horse may become injured or injure someone when Abigail is not there:

> "*I hate it when the horses are stressed…if they're stressed in the stable neighing or running around the stable. I also hate it when they're like that in the field. Mainly, because the next thing that happens is they're going to injure themselves, or if they don't they're very neurotic to bring in and they can be quite a handful and then I don't worry for myself...if I'm not here will somebody else manage them?*" – Abigail

In summary, participants' stories demonstrate how during the provision of even basic care like shelter or the act of feeding results in the horse expressing behaviour that signals to the participant that horse is experiencing negative emotions or that the horse wants something. Participants have had to learn to identify the appropriate response to reduce their horse's

anxious behaviour, which might be changing the order of operations on the yard or altering their horse's living environment (i.e. bring in or turn out). Through providing *instrumental care* participants provide *emotional care*. Additionally, through the discovery of the appropriate responses that resulted in the reduction of a horse's anxious behaviour, participants come to 'know their horse'.

4.4.2 Sub-Theme: Emotional Caregiving

Participants demonstrated knowing their horse or efforts to come to know their horse through frequently and consistently shared examples of being mind-minded, being sensitive to their horse's needs, and expressing their desire to respond promptly and appropriately. These efforts in mind-mindedness are efforts in emotional caregiving. In the below examples, participants Roberta, Graham, and Freya, interpret and empathise with a horse's emotional state. They express desires for the horse to feel positive emotions and indicate actions to resolve negative emotional states.

> "*I felt sorry for him, and I thought it was a bit sad because he was a nice pony that nobody wanted him, and that he was nervous, he'd been ill-treated and I thought I could probably help him I suppose and you know, and I wanted to kind of make, make a difference if that makes sense*." – Roberta

> "*I pick up on that energy, nervous energy and stuff and I guess I used to have anxiety and stuff and think god I know how it feels,…And I'm like 'No, I don't want you to feel that way.'*" – Graham

> "*[U]ntil recently, his eye was very dead and seriously a bomb could go off underneath him and he just wouldn't move, he just, you know, he's just not interested in the world. And now, the last month or so, when I arrive, you can see that he wants to go 'hi' [excitedly] but he's still too scared to do that. He's like 'ooh I'm not sure' [wary body language], but he kind of stands there, and there's a nice softening of his eye now and he's like 'hi' [tentatively]…you can just start to pull out, and tease out a little bit of personality*." – Freya

Julia reiterates that deciding on the actions to take to respond to the horse's emotional state is a process of trial and error but adds that deciding on what to try is not a straight forward choice. It is dependent on the horse and the situation in the moment.

> "*But there's no wrong or right; it's not that black and white. You kinda have to go with your instincts a lot and your gut. And think, you know, what's the right thing to do with this horse at this time? Sometimes it's turn it away for a week sometimes it's 'I need to keep doing this so he understands what I'm asking*.'" – Julia

Being able to effectively respond to their horses' needs results in positive emotions for

participants. Knowing the horses are okay results in "*well-being"* for Julia, and "*pleasure"* for Freya. For Bethany she gets "*a sense of inner peace".* Mind-mindedness allows participants to perceive their horses are in a state of well-being. Participants like Freya talked about the expression in their horse's face of being "*soft*" and others about their horse's behaviour being "*relaxed*" and "*calm*".

For Graham, the greatest sign of horses' happiness is when they continue to lay down in the middle of the day even with all the activity on the yard. This claim was observed during a post interview tour of Graham's yard with a horse slumbering in a stable as we walked around and met the horses.

Multiple participants phrased their desire as wanting to "*do the best by their horses*", from basic care to the horses' emotional well-being. However, the execution of doing one's best, even with participants' perceived high standards of care and being mind-minded, is a source of frustration and guilt for participants. This is highlighted poignantly when things go wrong with the horses. For participants, injury or illness is one of the worst experiences of horse ownership. Participants express feelings of powerlessness and lack of control. Bethany summed it up well:

> "*[K]now[ing] the horses are okay that is life priority number one, and everything else will. You know, nothing could be as bad as something going wrong with the horses*." – Bethany

Freya's story of the death of her first horse, aged 28, illustrates Bethany's emotion:

> "*I just feel so powerless. I always want to do right by the ponies…. for me it's the frustration of not knowing how to help… if a horse isn't going quite right. … [you] will go and get the back checked, the teeth check and you know the feet, …If they're not quite right then, you know, 'well have you got flu?', 'which leg's hurting?'…and they can't just say. At least with a kid they can kinda go 'awww ya know, my arm hurts or my shoulder hurts'. And you can, you can kind of pin it down a bit more. I think yeah, it's the, the not knowing is the frustration bit. 'Cause all I want to do, you know, is do good by them and sometimes you feel you're not, you can't, because you don't know what the answer is. And it can be a long and frustrating process to find the right answer sometimes*." – Freya

In reference to injury, Graham too wishes that he could *"talk to them a bit more about it".* Participants struggle to discover what the appropriate response is and are thereby limited in the appropriateness and promptness of their response. Knowing their horse is demonstrating discomfort through lameness or illness, specialised horse health professionals like

veterinarians (vets) are consulted in hopes the vet will be able to diagnose and prescribe treatment. However, as was the case with Freya's horse, a treatment may not resolve the issue, and the horse is put down. One of Roberta's horses suffered with severe head shaking syndrome, and surgery options at the time had limited success rates. In another case, one of Victoria's horses suffered from chronic foot pain. In these instances the participant's decision to put the horse down was an effort to remove the suffering of the animal, in an act of emotional care, knowing the horse was in unmanageable discomfort.

Some participants' responses illustrated the frustration of a horse's injury or illness as multi-dimensional and included the subsequent loss of time in training, competition opportunity, and expense. Abigail, Harry, and Kelly see injury as a waste of time, money, hard work, and delay in competitive progression. For other participants, the expense and disappointment of injury is noted as a hardship, but the focus of discussion is on how treatment is money well spent. Kelly displays both attitudes in that she also contemplates calling the vet out more to see if she can help her horse perform better. Payton continued expensive weekly rehabilitation sessions and purchased experimental treatment equipment for her injured horse beyond what the insurance claim covered because she felt that it was what her horse needed. Three years after her horse's colic surgery and rehabilitation, Isabelle is still paying off the credit card debt she accrued.

Guilt is also a prominent emotion participants felt in relation to their horse, especially when a horse is injured. All participants talked about responsibility of ownership, and this translates to "*making every decision*" for the horse in their efforts to keep the horse "*happy and healthy*". When a horse becomes injured or ill, participants feel the pressure of responsibility and question their own decisions ranging from what decisions might have led to an injury or choices about treatment. Interestingly, this is despite acceptance that things do happen beyond participants' control. Bethany shared her feeling about her horse's surgery questioning her choices:

> "*There were certain decisions that I had to make in consultation with the vet about the extent of the surgery. I just kept thinking, 'What if I've done the wrong thing?' You know, 'What if I've chosen the wrong procedure, what if should have never put him through the risk of the anaesthetic?'"* – Bethany

She continued by indicating a difference between emergency decisions and more elective procedures:

> *"I think if it had been an emergency surgery I probably would have dealt with it quite well, because you know you are doing the best thing for the horse, because it has to have this surgery, but because it wasn't necessarily, um, immediate life or death situation. I was, I think I was just so, I felt like I had let him down, which is weird because I went to the best vets I possibly could. But it was really stressful, wondering if I had made the right decisions.*"– Bethany

The frustration of not being able to respond appropriately and, when taking action, questioning if those decisions are right, illustrate a feeling of incompetence in the moment. This leads to emotional extremes for participants. As Linda stated, horses either "*put you in a wonderful mood or they can make you feel really low".* Participants described this emotional experience of horse ownership as "*quite up and down" or* "*a roller coaster. The highs are very high and the lows are very low"*. Isabelle spoke of the emotional roller coaster in relation to her horse's surgery, recounting from earlier in the conversation how the colic episode and post-surgery experience were stressful:

> "*When it's going good though it's brilliant and it's wonderful and I wouldn't change it for the world but like when he had his colic and he had the surgery and all the expense and the time and everything that went after it… I was forever paranoid…my distress hobby had become the most stressful element of my life." – Isabelle*

Participants experience positive feeling when they perceive they are able to meet their horse's emotional needs through appropriate responses that are individual to their horse, and, in the case of Graham, through providing a calm environment. Participants spoke more in depth of their experiences of things going wrong with their horses and the ways that it can make them question their decisions and feel a sense of incompetence. Competence in emotional caregiving is thus the ability to create horses that appear "*happy and healthy*". Any time horses were either upset or ill, participants went through a process of trying to determine the problem to respond appropriately. The process is not always direct, and correct answers not always clear, creating a delay in response and uncertainty in the appropriateness, thereby creating extreme emotional shifts for participants.

In contrast to the emotional roller coaster that horses create, horses appear to help humans emotionally regulate. The same participants also referred to horses as "*great levellers*". Emotional regulation is an important part of the ability to be mind-minded, thus providing

prompt and appropriate care. There were two scenarios of emotional regulation, one an acute state trying to care-give and the other a general state of being when encountering the horse.

In the former scenario, Abigail stipulated that calm is needed to "*delegate*" and "*manage crises*", referring to horse management as "*crisis management on a daily basis*". In the latter scenario, participants talked about how horses make a person self-aware and about the necessity of emotional regulation. They implied that one must already be in a calm place before encountering horses. In the examples below participants pair their self-awareness with emotional regulation:

> "*Actually, it makes me quite self-aware as well I think. Particularly with, yeah, you can't just come home stressed and take it out on the horse, you have to learn to moderate and manage emotions*." – Bethany

> "*I think having horses, they're great teachers. Because they teach you about yourself and what you, and how you react in situations and how you are, how you're going. You have to be calm. You can't, you cannot be a crazy stressed person around horses. It just doesn't work*." – Isabelle

> "*If I've come home and I'm tired and I might a bit short tempered I won't ride them because I know if they breathe wrong they might get told off. And I've, I've learned to recognise that in myself.*" – Freya

As with Freya, such self-awareness has led participants to alter their behaviour before and during interactions with their horses. Most examples of participants' self-regulation during horse-human interactions appeared in instances of training or using the horse for riding.

> "*She [the horse] sort of responds to the way I am and so over the last year I've been working hard to not respond unless I need to.*" – Evlynne

> "*I'll do something else that doesn't involve me getting on, and then feeling irrational.*" – Carly

> "*What I'm trying to say is if you're not having a good day and it's not going right, maybe sometimes just leave it.*" – Nadia

As Isabelle and Freya indicated, the process is learned. Like learning how to care for the horse, participants learned how to regulate their emotions and behaviour around their horses, often through negative emotional experience. Carly shared openly about her learning experience:

> *"Knowing that I'm getting on a baby horse in a foul mood. And then beating it up and that will make me feel really rubbish. But I just don't do it now. You know, like, I've done that. I've lived that experience. It was rubbish."* – Carly

Emotional caregiving is through instrumental caregiving. Participants are concerned for their horses' emotional states alongside their physical states. When they perceive their horses as both happy and healthy, they feel pleasant emotions. When they perceive their horses' pain or distress, it is unpleasant. In caring for horses, participants shift between positive and negative emotional extremes.

Horses are both a source of emotional extremes and a catalyst for managing the emotional extremes. Participants' positive emotions are countered by negative emotions in the event they are unable to appropriately respond to and resolve their horses' stress or ailment. In the event of negative emotions, there is an acute emotional regulation to manage the horses' situation. However, a more systemic emotional regulation process is evidenced through participants developing an emotional self-awareness, learned through experience. Participants appear to manage their emotional state and make specific behavioural choices before encountering their horses, in order to foster positive emotional experiences.

4.4.3 The Product: Horse-Human Relationship – First Type of Bond – Caregiving

To this point, the motivation for horse ownership is contributed to by an innate attraction to horses, the autonomy of ownership, and the ability to feel like a competent caregiving owner. All three contribute to consuming the horse as a product and to the creation of the subsequent horse-human relationship that develops. The mechanism that creates the relationship develops through participants' actions of caregiving: mind-mindedness. The relationship as a product is introduced here as the first type of bond from Olivia's opening quote.

Ownership secures the opportunity for a relationship and protects any relationship that develops. An innate attraction underpins the desire to be involved with horses. Through caregiving, participants come to know their horses, thus creating the human-horse relationship. In other words, the relationship with the horse is a direct result of taking care of the object—the horse. In consuming the horse as a product, participants are simultaneously creating and consuming the human-horse relationship.

Participants' horse-human relationship can develop into a bond with their horse. Knowing the horse and having a bond are differentiated because a participant may know the horse (i.e. have a relationship) but not experience a bond (as discussed below). Evidence of a bond

appears when the participants express some sort of interaction instigated by the horse, and when the horse discriminates between the participant and other people. Participants describe how their horses instigate interaction with them by seeking their company, calling to them, and acting differently towards them compared to other people. These interactions are described as volitional and unconditional choices of the horse and appear to be attachment-like behaviours. For example, Mara describes how her horse maintains close proximity to her and for longer than with other people. While Bethany describes how her horse becomes anxious when she is not in proximity to him.

> "*He'd rather hang out with you than another horse. He'd rather be with, if you put him in the field he'll graze next to you instead of going off. Or, he'll wait for you. Or, he just wants to be where you are…he's more cuddly when it comes to me but he's just as people-y with others. Like, but with me he'll stay in the field and stand with me but if you were in the field he might come over and pester you for a few minutes but then he'll wander off again*." – Mara

> "*He'll always stand still when I'm there, but if I move away or go to get something which I need or anything else, he gets fractious and quite angsty. Even if I get someone else to go and stand with him as soon as I leave he gets fractious and quite angsty*." – Bethany

Others, like Abigail, Carly, and Evlynne, described volitional and unconditional attachment like behaviour of their horses alongside how that behaviour made them feel good. The examples below include the participants' interpretation of the volitional behaviour of their horse and the associated positive emotions they (the participants) experienced during these interactions. Participants used examples like these to evidence the bond they have with their horse.

> "*And he always chats to me and he doesn't chat to anybody else. So, that's, that's, you know, that brings you great joy when you walk down the barn and that one horse neighs at you and he doesn't neigh at anybody else…because you feel you get some love back from the thing you're paying a fortune for*." – Abigail

> "*Anyway, so he saw me come through the gate and he was like [imitates horse] "neeeiggggghhh". And like screamed at me …And half of me was like really touched that he was grateful to see me. You know he did look grateful to see me, he properly yelled in my direction…*" – Carly (the other half was annoyed due to what turned out to be an unnecessary veterinary call out fee)

> "*When I go up to the field to, to get her more often than not, her head or go up she'll be the one out of them responds and she'll neigh and then she'll come down to find me and I don't need to have a bucket of feed for that to happen. It's just mum's here sort of thing and you know what, that is the most heart-warming thing*." – Evlynne

As a counter example, Kelly's experiences illustrate a relationship is not an assurance of a bond. Kelly doesn't feel connected to her horse, even though he approaches her in the field. She observes and envies interaction between her horse and her trainer even though she adds a disclaimer that wanting a bond is "*silly"*. Despite her efforts, she feels like her horse's attention is conditional upon food. It makes her feel like she doesn't know what she is doing. Below is the exchange between Kelly and myself:

> "*And sometimes I don't feel like I have any connection with him because he just ignores me. But he hears my crutch and his ears go forward in the field and he'll come and say hi. So he knows who I am and that means he does kind of get who I am and that I am his person. But he probably does that with everybody."* – Kelly
>
> **Interviewer:** "*Is it important to you, that he thinks about you as his person?"*
>
> *"Yes, [laughs], isn't that silly, it's really silly. Cause I think he has really good attachment with my instructor but I think he's like, he's always pleased to see her and then me he just ignores me or he's like 'where's my apple, why haven't you brought me my apple today, this is ridiculous I'm not going to talk to you'…I try quite hard to come up if I can, when I can't ride, like I still come up and see him so that he does know that I'm around…they like who feeds them. So I like to be, I like to give him his food, his dinner [laughs] sometimes cause then I think he's like, he'll, he'll like me more cause I fed him. Yeah, no I think he thinks I'm just an irritation probably but then, yeah, I sometimes feel like I don't know what I'm doing*." – Kelly

Consumption of the human-horse relationship is more satisfying for participants when they experience it as a bond wherein the horse is perceived to demonstrate attachment-like behaviours and instigate volitional and unconditional interaction with the participant. Participants who felt their horses were happier near to them or instigated interaction without conditions like food, received positive feelings like joy. Conversely, Kelly, who felt her horse's attention was conditional on the expectation of food, felt disappointed.

4.4.4. Influencing Theme: Horse-Human Relationship – Connection to Keeping and Selling

As illustrated by the differentiation of Kelly to the other examples, interaction with a horse does not guarantee a bond, and this is reinforced by participants' differentiation between horses they keep and horses they sell. The relationship bond impacts the motivation to sell or keep a horse. When discussing the horses they own or have owned, participants focused on the horses that they kept. Samantha in particular distinguished them as her "*personal*

horses". Her personal horses had a forever home while her "*rescue horses*" were brought in to rehabilitate and then rehome. Bethany shares this distinction with Samantha:

> *"There are horses that have a home for life with me and those I am gonna do my best by and then sell them on."* – Bethany

Some horses appeared to hold a higher status than other horses, as demonstrated through the way participants talked about them. Bethany used the term *"favourite"* or *"rank".* Abigail's favourites were "*weighed above"* others, as in ranking.

> "*I've had horses owned by other people that I would have weighed above my horse. And partly that had to do with the horses' character and partly that was to do with the horse's capability."* – Abigail

Other participants denote a horse's special status through actions, like Graham, Mara, and Freya. Each of these had horses for sale that they couldn't bring themselves to sell because of their fondness for the horses. For Graham it was his competitive eventing horse that he no longer needed as he transitioned to focusing on dressage. After a few people tried the horse, he couldn't bring himself to let her go. For Mara it was one of five foals she purchased with the intention of selling. Even though "*everyone wanted him*", referring to her current horse, she recounts not actually wanting to sell him despite the offers. In the end she "*kept him and sold the other one*". Freya's previous example from Section 4.3 fits here as well.

The distinction, in part, is determined by how bonded the participant feels towards the horse. This comes in large part from the participant's perception of the horse's behaviour towards them. In general, participants spoke more fondly of the horses they perceived to interact in an affiliative or safe way and more negatively of horses they perceived as "*aloof*" or "*dangerous*". Freya (regarding her two-year-old horse) and Abigail commented on the impact of dangerous behavioural interactions with the horse (e.g. biting and bucking), as well as the lack of perceived affiliative interaction.

> *"He can be quite bitey and he is definitely a recluse at the moment. So it will really depend over the next year how he comes out of himself and if he intends to argue a lot and bite me a lot then I'll just ship him somewhere else." – Freya*

> "*I didn't like her to start with because she was very nervous and she wasn't, she's not bothered about being friends with people…She was quite aloof,…she was friendly enough but she wouldn't be demanding of your attention...she was very stupid she would buck and spin around and shoot off and all sorts of things*." – Abigail

However, some participants reported their negative relationships with some horses evolved into important relationships. Speaking of her first horse, Freya said, "*I spent the first 18 months hating it"* but after the 18 months "*we really got to know each other",* resulting in the label of "*amazing".* Freya wishes the horse was still around so she could start over "*knowing what [she] knows now*". Speaking about her "*aloof"* horse, Abigail described the horse after years as "*more trusting*" and demonstrating more affiliative behaviours; "*she also chats to me which she never used to years ago*". Bethany and Nadia both described difficult starts with their first horses—falling off and refusals. Bethany explained that, as a "*kid it seems like the end of the world"*, but both grew to bond with their horses and still have them many years later at the time of interview.

Alternatively, participants gave examples of instant bonds. Harry described finding his main competition horse and his first ride on it: "*I just rode him and I knew he was for me*". Abigail described one of her favourite horses (now deceased): "*I just connected with it, I just clicked with it*". She went on to say, "*I felt like I had been born on its back*". Isabelle didn't have to get on the horse she was viewing to buy before she knew it was the right horse for her.

> "*I went to lead him and straight away he put his head down, on my level, walked nicely with me. And, um, I kind of fell in love.*" – Isabelle

Samantha and Theresa knew the minute they saw their horses that they would connect with and subsequently develop a bond. Participants express the variations in bonding, especially by those with multiple horses, that each horse is individual and that in addition to knowing the horse, part of the reason a person gets on with one horse but not another is down to personality. Julia says her relationship with her horses differ because of their different personalities:

> "*So my relationship with the horse I've got now is different I guess to the relationship I had when I first had my last horse, um, because they're different personalities.*" – Julia

In some of the examples above, the horse was either the participant's first horse or they were not prepared to sell the horse at the time (or both). For first-time owners like Freya and Diana, the attraction to horses and autonomy over ownership acted as a more powerful motivator to keep a horse, even if the participant and horse did not get along. This is in addition to the social stigma of selling horses one does not get on with observed by Wendy in Section 4.5.4.

Persevering through difficulties with horses 'forced' participants to get to know their horses, thus improving their relationship to the point where a bond was developed and they no longer wished to sell. For participants, horses they perceived a bond with were far more likely to remain with the participant for the rest of the horse's life and never be for sale. This is reflected in participants talking more about horses they developed a bond and kept, than about horses they didn't get on with, sold, or purchased with the intent of selling. Even Wendy, who confirmed all her horses were potentially for sale, keeps a retired mare because she fears that other people would take advantage of the horse's 'good' nature and push the horse too hard despite its history of injury—keeping this mare is an act of protection.

Participants own horses to keep but also own horses for the express purpose of selling them. The development of the human-horse relationship while a horse is in a participant's care influences whether a horse is actually sold or kept in many instances. The presence of a bond or the perceived potential for a bond to develop means the horse is more likely to be kept. Each bond is unique to the individual partnership of human and horse and can be instantaneous or developed over time. When participants do not get along with a horse it is more likely to be sold or 'rehomed'. However, in the cases of a first horse, a participant may be reluctant to relinquish autonomy of ownership and favour persevering over being horse-less; this is in addition to the social stigma of ending human-horse relationships that might not be going well.

4.4.5 Influencing Theme: Human-Human Interaction – Connection to Caregiving and Horse-Human Relationship

Horse-human relationships exist within a larger human and horse-owning community that can influence the wellbeing people experience from caregiving and which may impact the development of the bond. Human-human interactions and the social relationships people developed were also cited as some of the most positive things about horse ownership. Participants like the shared identity and community of like-minded people. Carly specified she liked the "*social scene*" despite the "*catty infighting*". Bethany, Isabelle, and Payton all specified the lifelong friendships they developed through the horse community—inclusive of the interaction at horse shows and participation within British Riding Clubs. Isabelle in particular liked the mix of people she met.

> "*I was alongside people who were students…but also people who were like managing directors of companies. And suddenly you were mixing with people from all different like backgrounds, walks of life, everything and it was like, 'this is kind of cool' … I might not necessarily have made those friendship groups if it hadn't been for horses*." – Isabelle

Diana quite liked the yard because she worked on her own.

> "*Certainly working on my own having the social scene down the yard. Just being able to rock up, you know, find out the world existed and other people had problems and not just you it was quite nice*." – Diana

These human-human interactions are a social by-product of horse ownership. While participants make friends amongst other horse owners, the same social environment appears to impact participants' ownership motivation. Because competence in caregiving appears closely tied to the development of a relationship bond, unexpected comments from others appear to be both discouraging and encouraging to participants. All participants' responses featured descriptions of the propensity of other people to comment on one's caregiving and these were mostly negative.

No participant stated the horse was the worst thing about horse ownership. In fact, some stated they couldn't think of anything negative about the horse aspect of ownership—just the other people. Evlynne commented how, unlike in social norms in human society, where it is taboo to comment on another's parenting to their face, horse owners directly comment on other horse owners' behaviour.

> "*When you have children, not many people tell you how to do your children. They'll think and talk about it outside but they don't vocalize it to you. With horses everyone seems to be quite keen to tell you how to do it.*" – Evlynne

This behaviour appears especially prominent on livery yards. For many respondents this behaviour made 'other horse people' one of the worst parts of horse ownership. Livery yards in particular were mentioned because some host a large number of horses and owners. Bethany spoke of incidences at a yard with 40-plus horses that she was at for 14 years.

> *"…we had incidences of break-ins, owners stealing each other's trailers, people being assaulted. Like it was a really quite a, it was quite a bad environment to be in, and sometimes the issues weren't even anything to do with horses."* – Bethany

Nadia doesn't like the judgement on livery yards.

> "*I think it is just the, the judgement of riding, isn't it, on a livery yard. There's always someone, especially when, when I was younger, there'd always be someone that complained about the way you mucked out, or could you not turn your horses out at a different time, or your horse is doing this to my horse. And like really petty things that really shouldn't have mattered*." – Nadia

The general consensus is these spaces are largely unregulated, which leaves the individual horse owners to interact. An experienced professional, Carly, explained how the regulatory void is filled.

> "*I think livery yards, by in large, especially DIY yards, aren't managed, so there's no obvious source of advice. Instead it's left to whoever shouts the loudest and comes across as the most knowledgeable, or maybe jumps the biggest fence or whatever*." – Carly

New horse owners in particular found livery or DIY yards to be overwhelming because of receiving advice from many different people or being told they should do something differently. Evlynne, Freya, and Olivia recounted their experiences on livery yards and their dislike for the unsolicited advice.

> "*Where I find I have problems is negativity that comes with being around people and horses. And everyone thinking that they can give you advice. They know better than you. So you have to sort of shut yourself off a bit to that*." – Evlynne

> *"…if I asked someone one thing, I did it and then someone else would say it was wrong. Um, and it was a totally different environment, it was bitchy, it was horrible, to be honest.*" – Olivia

> "*I'd never owned a horse before and I was on a really busy yard and the, the big issues I had were there were 20 people telling me 20 different ways to manage my horse."* – Freya

As a new horse owner (for approximately 1 year), this is something Evlynne currently experiences. For her, the persistent comments and suggestions she should do things differently make her feel incompetent and interfere with her relationship with her horse. She likes when her husband joins her at the yard because he acts as a buffer.

> *"I took my husband over not really to do anything. I just wanted him to be my, my, guardian. I wanted him to be my barrier, so nobody came near me, to give me time to do her [the horse] on my own."* – Evlynne

Others, like Freya, coped with the environment by trying everything people said and making their own mind up about what worked. Still others moved yards to a professional yard like Olivia or a smaller, more private yard like Carly and Bethany.

Carly offered an unconventional perspective on these human-human interactions of horse owners. She finds the encounters funny.

> *"…on big livery yards I've loved the whole social scene there. And, you know, even the catty infighting, I love all that. It makes me laugh. I find a lot of people hate that but for me…[I find it hysterical] the fact that people take things so seriously. Like 'did you know that so-and-so's horse only had half a hay net last night'. That sort of thing. I mean, like the small-minded petty, oh it just makes me laugh. That people have got nothing else in their life other than that*." – Carly

As a professional horse trainer, Carly's experience in caregiving for horses provides her the ability to counter the interference of others and demonstrates that restraint in giving advice results in a more pleasurable livery yard environment.

> "*…the [DIY] yard that I stayed at the longest, when I arrived there, there were some pretty horrible people lurking around but…because I actually had what it took to back up whatever it was I said…people stopped paying attention [to the horrible people]...it actually became a really nice place because I don't throw my opinions down people's throats…"* – Carly

Carly's stories contain multiple examples of comments of underfeeding or over-rugging that, as implied by Carly, amount to accusations of poor caregiving. It is exactly the type of comments like "'*you know so-and-so's horse only had half a hay net last night*'", that make people feel judged as poor caregivers and create the negative feelings associated with the livery or DIY yard environment.

For participants, the worst thing a person could think or say to them would be that they were poor caregivers, which they stated directly:

> *"I'd be heartbroken if anybody thought that my horses were being neglected or anything like that."* – Freya
>
> *"I was being cruel. That I didn't care. That I should be doing more." – Samantha*
>
> *"You don't look after your horse properly…you're not looking after them properly or you're obviously not committed to looking after your horses properly." – Theresa*

Conversely, the best thing people could say about a participant was how well their horse looked.

> *"I just love seeing them perform well I think and seeing them look well and that's a reflection of me…When someone comes up to you and goes 'God, your horse looks amazing'. For me that's like I've done my job well, I'm pleased about that."* – Harry

"[W]hat a difference they can see in the horse since I've had him… Because it means I've fed it correctly, looked after it correctly, and trained it correctly." – Payton

"…that I loved and took care of my horses." – Victoria

Overall, participants had more negative emotions than positive emotions regarding the propensity of other horse people to comment. Those that could avoid the experience, like Nadia, were grateful to have their horses at home or on a small, friendly yard.

In summary, participants view others' comments on their horses as a direct reflection of their abilities as caregivers. Although unsolicited advice and comments influenced participants' feelings as caregivers, it seems the human-human interaction is not able to undermine the initial attraction to horses that motivated people to *get into horses* in the first place. Instead of getting out of horses, participants sourced different people to be around by moving yards or developed coping strategies to receive comments and advice on their own terms. First-time horse owners appear more affected by comments than experienced horse owners, although positive or negative comments on caregiving continued to have an emotional impact. As participants gained experience they were able counter, as opposed to just coping with, the unsolicited advice, like Carly.

4.4.6 Summarising the Motivation Theme: Caregiving

Through instrumental caregiving, participants are emotionally caregiving. Through emotional caregiving, participants are able to build a relationship and potentially a bond with their horse, where the horse instigates interaction and demonstrates attachment-like behaviours. This relationship is a product of their interaction with the horse and reciprocally influences which horses a participant chose to sell or keep. Other important factors include the horse's personality, if it is a participant's first horse, and whether a participant perceives a connection with a horse despite any emotional caregiving.

Other humans are viewed by participants to judge and interfere with the development of a relationship by directing participants' caregiving behaviour. This makes other participants develop coping strategies to filter unsolicited advice until they have sufficient experience to counter the advice. Although participants are able to find positive social experiences, many experiences with other horse owners are viewed negatively, especially the comments people make. When other humans comment on how participants' horses look or on a participant's

caregiving behaviour, it can have both a positive and negative impact on how participants feel and on whether they perceive themselves as competent caregivers.

4.5 Motivation Theme: Using the Horse

> "*I think every horse owner has some dreams or something they want to achieve with their horses.*" – Kelly

Two sub-themes emerged with regard to *using the horse*: *process (e.g. training)* and *outcome (e.g. performance)*. *Process* covers participants' experience of training the horse, how this creates a horse-human relationship, and how that relationship reciprocally influences the *process* and *keeping and selling* the horse. *Outcome* is derived from participants' competition experience and the motivation derived from performance. The specific motivation for the dressage discipline is covered in the sub-theme *outcome*.

However, in both sub-themes, the motivation for the discipline of dressage is evident. Actively participating dressage participants talked about the technical aspect of dressage, mastery, as well as being impressed by watching others training. Freya characterised this when she said, *"I think dressage very quickly becomes a competition against yourself."* These ideas are inherently encompassed in dressage—a French word for training. However, not all training is classified as dressage when speaking about the competitive discipline. Thus, the *process* sub-theme includes training in the sense of teaching the horse anything, which includes the aspects of dressage. In the *outcome* sub-theme, participants spoke specifically of their competitive dressage experiences.

4.5.1 Sub-Theme: Process (e.g. Training)

Many participants expressed a desire to be "*better*" or a desire to "*learn*". They explicitly expressed their enjoyment of the task of riding, teaching the horse something, or task completion. Roberta summed up these points well by talking about why experiencing improvement for her is preferable over winning.

> "*I think it's about being better than I was yesterday, [laughs] that's achievement. You know, taking something and, and doing, making an improvement, a small improvement and everything else. That's an achievement, that's achievement for me. It's not necessarily about riding horses to go out to competitions and winning things. Because some people don't work very hard to achieve that...You can have a very talented horse and not very talented rider and wipe the floor with the competition. They may feel a sense of achievement but it's not the same as taking something that's, you know, difficult or from the very beginning and building a relationship and then*

> *doing it. I think, you know, and it might not be the winner but you probably achieved perhaps a little bit more."* – Roberta

Roberta's statement provides multiple examples of task achievement, including progress over time, *human-horse relationship*, and the challenge of training a specific horse (what she was referring to with the term *"difficult"* or *"from the very beginning*"). For example, if a horse is to be ridden it must be trained to be ridden; it is not born knowing. Participants purchase horses that do not have the training (i.e. skills) to be competitive. Freya has started teaching horses how to be ridden, and she stated, "*There's a lot of reward in seeing them grow up and progress".* Specifically, her reward is a sense of "*pleasure*". With other horses Freya owns and competes with, she described "*a good sense of achievement when you finally...master stuff*".

With regard to time, both Graham and Julia noted the importance of understanding the "*process"* of horse training. Participants described the operationalisation of "*a journey*", consisting of daily interactions and small changes that, over time, result in a horse that can do more than it did before. Julia and Freya both commented on the different ends of the process. Julia spoke about enjoying the speed at which her young three-year-old horse learns and how that changes over time:

> "*The small steps they make, they learn things so quickly at that age, whereas when you get to the other end you're making refinements, they're not learning things as the same speed…you kind of forget that, if you haven't had a three-year-old for a while*." – Julia

Freya shared stories about the foal she has at the moment, mirroring Julia's characterisation of stages of the journey separated by years. Freya's use of the term 'taking for granted' is the same as Julia's 'forgetting':

> "*In a few years' time you completely take for granted that, you know, they'll stand and they'll be tied up and they'll have their feet picked out. But at the moment those are all big achievements for us.*" – Freya

It does not matter whether training happens on the ground or in the saddle. Both Julia and Freya referred to their young horses still learning to be handled on the ground, while Graham shared his excitement of horses he's been riding for three or four years progressing to the next stages of their journey as dressage competition horses:

> "*One or two that I've had from three years old and their going to be six, seven now and they're coming to the next stage and it's amazing.*" – Graham

The process is a result of the day-to-day task of training that makes the process rewarding. Abigail spoke about how the day-to-day practicing provides her with technical knowledge and ability to practice her competency as a dressage rider:

> *"Once I'm riding and I'm getting that technical knowledge and practicing that technical knowledge—that's what keeps me doing it every day."* – Abigail

Kelly provided insight into why the day-to-day training process is satisfying, suggesting a sense of control in the training process:

> "*You're having a direct effect on the horse and nobody else is doing that, that's not, he's not learning that in the field, and he's not being ridden by anyone else. Those things are, that's me and my instructor that are managing to do that, so I suppose that's part of the satisfaction in it*." – Kelly

In summary, the process of training is a journey in teaching the horse skills and practicing personal competencies. The process is rewarding in a variety of ways, from accomplishment of a task on a day, to the achievement felt from the accumulation of small daily improvements over time—over years. The task could be training a basic skill to horses, such as wearing a halter or having its feet picked out, to progressing through the competitive levels. The task could be a new skill or refinement of an existing one. Participants mixed their references of who is achieving. They often spoke of their achievements through or in reference to their horses' achievements, indicating the achievement of the horse is a direct reflection of their own achievement.

4.5.2 The Product: Horse-Human Relationship – Second Type of Bond

In the theme of using the horse, the discussion around the horse as a product is more evident. However, the process of training also offers the opportunity to create a bond, the second type of bond referenced in Olivia's opening quote.

As an object to be used, the horse offers a great deal of activity variety, including day to day tasks, changes to management regimes as seasons change, the different equestrian disciplines requiring different skill sets, and the horse itself as it progresses through the training journey. The ability to use the horse differently on different days was a valued dynamic of horse ownership for some participants. Participants spoke about riding for either competition or leisure. Bethany explained riding is adaptable to how an individual feels on a

day; a leisurely walk in the countryside or training towards a competition can both elicit positive feelings.

> "*…it's quite diverse riding…you can adapt riding to suit, to suit the mood that you're in. If you're feeling super productive, you can have a super productive schooling session, feel really good about what you've achieved. Or if you're a little bit tired you can go for a little plod and enjoy the country side, enjoy the scenery*." – Bethany

Freya too recounted how her most decorated competition horse is a "*sofa pony";* in other words, although he is competitive, he can also provide a relaxing activity of walking down the road together, with the horse on long reins (i.e. buckle end). She emphasises the length of rein in combination with the noisy objects to indicate the safety of the horse and thus the opportunity for relaxation.

> "*[I]f I've had a really crap day, and I'm tired or I might be grumpy or I just want some fresh air, I can sit on [him], buckle end, go down the lane, the fire engines could come past, the world could explode, and we'd still be pottering along buckle end, the sun on our face, the dog on the lead next to us, just, enjoying life and being able to relax and just be with him."* – Freya

As in the *caregiving* theme, *using the horse* is characterised by participants appearing to practice mind-mindedness about their horses. Freya continued her story and demonstrated mind-mindedness about interactions when using the horse. She recounted a conversation with her friend about how sometimes horse owners can get caught up in the activity of competing but that perhaps the horses don't really care about competing—"*[A]ctually they don't give a shit whether they're competing or not"*—an opinion shared by both Kelly and Roberta. Freya continued, noting her horse "*takes as much enjoyment and pleasure as I do going buckle end for a potter down the road*". For Julia it is important that her horse is happy engaging in the activity, and she interprets body cues from the horse as willingness to participate.

> "*Having a happy horse that wants to be trained and wants to work with you and actually looks forward to doing its work and it shows that sign because its, you know, got a swingy tail and swingy back and it's got its ears forward and quite keen to go forward, offering you different options. That's probably one of the most positive experiences."* – Julia

Using the horse requires a behavioural interaction between horse and human that can lead to the creation of a relationship. The *process* of training the horse, as with *caregiving,* results in a relationship. Like in caregiving, any bond seems related to the horses' participation. In

using the horse it is the perceived willingness of the horse, which is fundamental to the bond created. Wendy stressed the human's role in competently communicating, in creating a willing horse, pointing out that 'bad behaviours' can be interpreted as unwillingness.

> "*If, you know, you're throwing lots of input at them and they don't ever get to the point where they're understanding what you want, it, a lot of them get really stressed… and that can branch out into bad behaviours...usually the root of that is because someone hasn't bothered to explain it to them in a way they can understand in the beginning.*" – Wendy

The idea of human responsibility for competently communicating sits simultaneously alongside a sense of human entitlement in *using the horse*. Carly made a playful but poignant statement that demonstrates the connection between *caregiving* (i.e. being the horse's personal slave) and human expectations of the horse during the activity of riding.

> "*The horse is very much his own person. I am his personal slave. And as payment for that I expect to sit on his back every so often and not get thrown on the floor.*" – Carly

Wendy mirrored Carly's sentiment.

> *"They each have sort of their individual needs and you need to work out what that is and do your best to meet that but at the same time I think horses have a job to do."* – Wendy

Freya incorporated the notion of time from the *process* theme in developing competency of training; she reiterates the individualism of the horse. Like with caregiving, there is an element of trial and error and knowing the horse. To get the horse to participate seemingly willingly in an activity requires a different skill set than caregiving, which has to be equally adaptable to the individual horse.

> "*I have the 25 years more knowledge so I can work through problems. You know, some horses are carrot and some horses are stick as far as I'm concerned and, you know, a combination of. So, it's just finding what's the right motivator to kind of get that partnership working, and building that element of trust*." – Freya

It is the difference in participant activity—caregiving and using the horse—that results in the two types of bonds, and both are motivating for horse ownership. Both bonds are created through similar mechanisms of thinking about the horse's mental state and responding to the horse's behaviour, but in different capacities. It is plausible that this is why professional riders claim bonds with their competition horses even though they pay others to do the day-to-day care. While Harry and Graham both acknowledged the bond developed in day-to-day care,

they still identified as their horses' caregivers even though others did the manual labour. Their stated job was to ride, and that was limited if they had to do the day-to-day care as well. Both Graham and Harry stated they missed the day-to-day care and developing that type of bond, but that did not stop them from being satisfied with the bond created through the using the horse.

In summary, when speaking about *using the horse,* its role as an object of enjoyment is more evident. The horse offers a variety of activities to participate in; as owners, participants can chose which activity on which day. The day-to-day activities include training the horse, and through this activity participants create another type of bond with their horse using mind-mindedness, like in the *caregiving* theme. Although both bonds require the participant to be mindful of the horse's state, *caregiving* and *using the horse* require different skill sets. The *using the horse* bond is characterised by the perceived willingness of the horse to participate, which is a direct result of the competency of the participant in training the horse for a specific task. In *caregiving*, the communication is about needs and desires with limited expectations of the horse to perform. In creating the product to be consumed, participants' expectation to use the horse as an object exists simultaneously with their view of the horse as a subject—an individual that they need to know.

4.5.3 Influencing Theme: Horse-Human Relationship – Connection to Process (e.g. Training)

The relationship with the horse when *using the horse*—specifically in training—influences participants' motivation for participation in equestrianism and ownership of a particular horse. Encounters with horses described as willing, easy, or generous are perceived as more pleasurable than encounters with argumentative, distrustful, or difficult horses. Abigail compared how the different perceptions of horses made her feel about the horses.

> "*When they become easier to ride, and then, then actually life is a whole lot easier you like them a whole lot more. When they're difficult to ride it is, it is hard to like them as much, you don't feel safe with them, you're frustrated by them, they're upset, they're unhappy, and they're not, they're not so easy to work with.*" – Abigail

Freya provided a specific example of the difficulty of her first horse. Although Freya kept the horse for the rest of its life, the first years of the relationship were tumultuous because the horse would not cooperate and it put Freya in dangerous situations:

> "*I spent the first 18 months hating it…she would just tank me everywhere, she used to bolt, and, you know, bolt me across main roads.*" – Freya

Bethany provided a counter example of how her first horse was the opposite of the situation Freya described, and for that reason she perceived that she and her horse had an enjoyable relationship (i.e. get on).

> "*…at the yard I was on at the time. People's horses would rear all the time 'cause they didn't want to leave the yard. Peoples' horses would gallop off with them. And I thought, 'well actually my horse isn't really like that, he's quite nice'. So, the important things like not throwing me on the floor I felt were really, for me, that's what made us get on really."* – Bethany

As these polar examples illustrate, the horse's behaviour has a direct impact on how participants feel about their horse and their relationship with the horse. Harry, a professional dressage trainer, compared his riding experiences with two different horses he owns. His main competition horse has "*a heart of gold"*, "*is so willing",* and "*you have his mind all the time".* However, regarding his second horse, he said, "*you don't [have his mind] and when you don't, you don't feel so connected with the horse. You only have [his] mind for like half the session*". Harry described the horses' different tendencies when they are nervous. His main competition horse becomes tense but does not jump and spook, whereas the second horse he doesn't trust not to be dangerous and run across the arena.

Harry, talking about his main competition horse, is "*grateful"* for the horse's willingness and expressed how "*lucky*" he is that he found him. Harry's sentiments are shared by participants regardless of competitive ambitions:

> "*You know, every time I sit on [him], I think 'Oh, how lucky I am, how lucky I am'. Yeah, I think that's how it makes me feel. It always makes me smile*." – Olivia
>
> "*I really like all the horses I've got right now. I feel very lucky. I've trained them all. I like how they go. I like the responsiveness*." – Abigail
>
> "*I expect an awful lot from him and he'll always deliver pretty much.*" – Freya
> **Interviewer:** "*How's that make you feel?*"
> "*Very, lucky, very, very lucky to have such a lovely pony."* – Freya

In agreement with Wendy, Julia and Freya remarked that it is more than just the nature of the horse but the owners' competence in training that develops the relationship, adding that competent communication is integral to building an emotionally satisfying relationship. Julia

spoke about the pleasure she receives from training horses and the perception of progress in the horse through the training techniques applied; this sense of progress leads to the perception of a relationship with the horse because progress implies the horse is responding favourably.

> "*The relationship you can build with them and the rewards you can get from training them and um, having an understanding of them as an individual…I think if you get an enjoyment out of working with that horse and that horse is clearly making progress with the training techniques you use and the way you manage it then I think that's a positive relationship."* – Julia

For Kelly and Julia, their influence on the horse occasionally resulted in worry. Their statements appear indicative of mastery-avoidance goals. These participants wanted to avoid doing something wrong with their horse.

> "*You think is that my fault, have I done something wrong and I probably feel to a certain extent some pressure with the new one because you think you don't want to get it wrong*." – Julia

> "*[Horse 1] was a really nice horse and the thought, I just had this thought that I might ruin him and I didn't want to ruin him, 'cause he was already a nice horse. Um, and well-schooled and disciplined and had some decent training and I just, cause I didn't, I'm not that confident in my ability to ride. I was worried that I was going to, you know, mess him up."* – Kelly

Some participants—including Julia—view training as an important life skill for the horse. Thus, training horses to be safe and skilful is good *caregiving*. Subsequently these examples can be interpreted as worry about the horse's current and future well-being (for Julia) or impacting on safety if the horse becomes less easy to ride (for Kelly). Although these seem different because Julia is focused on the horse's well-being while Kelly on her ability to handle her horse, the concepts actually intertwine.

Harry talked about his sense of achievement from helping one of his horses feel less frightened about being ridden. Harry described how the horse would bolt quite frequently. He concluded that his ability to help the horse was a sign of his competency in training.

> "*I've helped it. I don't want it to be scared, and scared of being ridden and bolt for the rest of its life. I want it to know that it's okay, we're only there to try and help it. It's obviously had a bad experience. I just think it needs a bit of a help... it was just an achievement and I suppose a bit of like 'okay, I'm doing my job well and it wasn't a wrong career choice'*." – Harry

Julia talked about the importance of teaching the horse to "*cope*" so that if the horse went to

a different home it had skills that would help it deal with the new situation. The idea is that the horse's ability to cope helps it stay in new home longer and avoid being "*passed down the line*"—a fate feared by Graham and Freya. Carly too feels "*an education*" is one of the best things you can give a horse. "*It does set them up for life, if they're good to do everything with, then people always have them*". Both Freya and Graham talked about training horses as developing them into "*good people*", implying that the horses have perceived good manners and behave safely both on the ground and under saddle. Kelly detailed her previous concerns, referencing her horse developing 'bad habits' on the ground and under saddle.

> "*I didn't want him to get bad habits on the ground or when I'm riding him, um, I suppose letting him get away with stuff when he's ridden so forming bad habits when he's being ridden*." – Kelly

In summary, participants' motivation for using their horse is positively influenced by the relationship they develop with their horse when they perceive the horse as a willing participant. If they perceive the horse as unwilling or difficult, then they like the horse less and perceive less of a bond. The personal satisfaction from the relationship with the horse is experienced as gratitude and good fortune. Furthermore, the development of willingness, and thus a relationship, is viewed as a sign of competency in training. Participants worry about doing things wrong and messing up the horse, which seems to stem from an idea that proper training is a form of caregiving. By giving a horse an education, participants can help the horse cope with different situations, which results in further perception of competence for participants.

4.5.4 Influencing Theme: Horse-Human Relationship Connection With Process and Keeping and Selling

This perspective of training as *caregiving* complicates the view of *keeping and selling* horses. For Carly, her future vision of her life with horses would be to only keep a horse for a couple of years give it an education, sell it, and get another. This is the thinking behind purchasing horses to sell them on—the participant adds value to the horse through an education. The development of the relationship through *using the horse* and *caregiving* makes the horse more difficult to sell on.

Graham struggled with the idea of selling a young horse he purchased with the intention of selling. He feared the horse would just be "*passed down the line*" from home to home. He

had a personal contact looking at the horse, which he found much more comfortable, but he added that even if the horse did end up moving on after, for him (Graham), it was better because he found the horse a "*good home*". Many participants shared stories of needing to find horses a "*good home*". Wendy thinks it "*softens the blow"* of ending a relationship, especially in the face of a relationship failure.

Conversely, Abigail has a horse she feels she has to keep, even though she finds the horse difficult, perceiving it as dangerous; selling isn't an option because Abigail fears what might happen to it outside of her care and expertise.

> "*I liked her, then I started breaking her in and it turned out she's a complete nightmare…And she was so difficult. And I knew that if I sent her to anyone else that she would end up being worse."* – Abigail

Whether or not participants like the horses they are selling, their actions to keep their horses are motivated through fear of an outcome outside their control. It further demonstrates the impact of autonomy of ownership, rather than the motivation of keeping being internally motivated through enjoyment of the individual horse relationship. These examples demonstrate how the relationship developed through the process of using the horse, whether desirable or undesirable, influences the other motivation theme of *keeping and selling* a horse.

4.5.5 Summarising the Sub-Theme: Process (e.g. Training)

The process of using the horse is characterised by training the horse, with desires to learn, improve, and be better than the day before. The act of training the horse generally results in positive feelings for participants. For some, training produces more rewards than winning a competition. The *process* of *using the horse* requires the same mechanisms of being mind-minded of the horse and knowing the horse but with a different skill set for actively training the horse rather than responding to the horse's care needs. Thus, the bond created when using the horse is different than the bond developed when caring for the horse. There is no judgement about which bond is best—there is only the observation that the two bonds are capable of developing independently of each other. However, for some participants, training is caregiving. Thus, through the *process* of *using the horse,* it is observable how the different motivational themes work synergistically; in the most complex cases, the *process* of *using the horse* is being perceived as *caregiving,* impacting people's decisions for *keeping or selling* a

horse, but those decisions are further influenced by reluctance to relinquish their control over the horse's situation gained through the autonomy of *securing the horse*. So although participants did not like the idea of horses being passed down the line, they still actively engaged in providing a short-term home for some horses—intentionally passing horses down the line. In their view, providing the horse with something they did not feel the horse had—such as training—would ensure that the next home it had was better and that the horse would be more likely to stay there.

The *process* of *using the horse* is also influenced by the same participant circumstances of available time and perceived knowledge. As with caregiving, people feel worry if they feel they lack the skills they think they need, thus creating some external motivation rather than operating purely from a place of intrinsic motivation. The *process* of *using the horse* is also influenced by human-human interactions, a topic which is encompassed within the next subordinate theme of *outcome* of *using the horse.*

4.5.6 Sub-Theme: Outcome (e.g. Winning)

Many participants emphasised the enjoyment they received from the outcome of their training, such as winning at a competition. For professional dressage trainers, winning is important for attracting clients to their business.

> "*I think winning of things promotes the other part happening because if you win people think you know something they don't [laughs]. And so they come to you for training or advice*." – Wendy

However, the importance of winning was intermingled with the enjoyment of the *process* of *using the horse* (what Wendy described as "*the other part"*); the concepts existing simultaneously for participants. Graham claimed to be competitive but is more satisfied with a good test that placed below the top than with having a poor test that wins.

> "*The training for me, I love competing and I want to win, I'm a real competitor. I'd sooner have a good test and come second or third than have a bad test and win it. It's all about what it feels like and the training for me*." – Graham

Harry, in discussing achievement, started by talking about winning but transitioned to the achievement he felt in training "*tricky*" horses.

> "*I put a lot of pressure on myself, you know, I want to be the best. That's why I'm a dressage rider, I'm a perfectionist…So every time [the horses] do well and win at competitions, that's massive, that's always a positive experience. I suppose*

> *overcoming the horses that have been tricky…Last year we had a few tricky horses in and one bolted … and we got over that and I got him riding loose in the outdoor and, um, that was like a massive achievement for me."* – Harry

Mara too feels strongly that the outcome of winning is important but follows up about how much she likes the transformations that occur through the process of training.

> "*I am more about the ribbons. So I don't want to go to a show and come second. I want to go and come first. So for me it's positive when I win something… But then I like, I like the transformations as well, so from what they were, to what they are now and all the hard work that you put in*." – Mara

Participants have performance goals and want to win; however, the achievement experienced with winning is equivalent to the *process* of training the horse. For professionals, winning serves a utilitarian function of attracting clients for their business, as others perceive winners as competent. Furthermore, comments from judges are used as validation of participant's competency in training their horse.

4.5.7 Influencing Theme: Horse-Human Relationships Connection to Outcome (e.g. Winning)

The process of training helps develop the horse-human relationship, which functions to help participants work towards their performance goals. Mara suggested that it is the relationship between the human and the horse (as discussed in the sub-theme *process*) that offers "*a little something that just makes the difference*" when talking about what makes a winning combination. Abigail noted how horses are trained for a specific goal but it is through the personal interaction.

> "*I'm training them for a specific goal but your training that personal interaction. That this great big enormous thing that can just buck you off and trample over you or just not do anything you want, starts to become easy."* – Abigail

Other examples already mentioned include Harry's comparison of his relationship between two of his horses' responses to nervousness. The examples were set in the competitive arena illustrating how Harry's relationship with his horses impacts performance. Harry cannot trust the one with the propensity to run across the arena to perform as reliably as the one he trusts not to bolt. He perceives a better relationship with the more trustworthy of the two, who is subsequently his main competition horse. Additionally, Roberta implied that competing with something that one had to build a relationship with is a performance outcome in itself.

As the *process* of training and *outcome* are connected, the subsequent relationship with the horse and performance outcome are also related. A good relationship is perceived as an important factor in performance success, but even if a horse-human combination is not the winner of a competition, there are instances where competing a horse one has built a relationship with is a performance outcome on its own.

4.5.8 Influencing Theme: Human-Human Interaction Connection to Outcome (e.g. Winning)

As presented in *caregiving,* other people can influence participants' motivation when *using the horse,* either through *process* or *outcome.* Participants gave examples of receiving feedback from others and discussed how this made them feel (either positive or negative). Abigail and Julia spoke about the informal feedback a competitor might receive from other people being impressed or jealous by their horse's performance:

> "*[Y]ou do a small thing that no one can see and [the horse] does something amazing that everyone thinks is brilliant…your desire should be that you go to a show and everyone is 'well that bloody girl, her horse does it all for her'. Yes, brilliant, you've trained it properly because it does look like [the horse] does it all for you."* – Abigail

> "*[Dressage] is about image isn't it and portraying this perfection so that harmony, and that actually it's all really easy and it's not easy, its really not easy… some people might feel...it's a negative experience because you worry about that feedback you worry about what some people think so then maybe they don't participate."* – Julia

Wendy too observed that some people do not compete for fear of judgement by others.

> "*Plenty of people who just ride to ride and they don't um, like to compete…being out in front of people who are watching them, it's scary for them and they don't like to do that*." – Wendy

The response to what other people say is also reflected in how participants interact with others. Graham experienced this with clients, describing their behaviour as a 'guard' whereby they try to set others' expectations of themselves and their horse.

> "*I really find they always put themselves down and they put their horse down as well. They're like 'oh he's only this or that' and I think it's, it's this guard to be like 'I don't think he's amazing'." – Graham*

However, for many participants judgement is sought as a validation of their competency as a horse trainer. Participants experience the judgement received in competition as equally valuable as their ranking amongst other competitors.

> "*The marking is the endorsement of the training and you're like, 'yeah, I must be doing something right…'. To me that's, the reward would be very much what the dressage judge ultimately says."* – Freya

> "*It's nice to be rewarded for the work I've put into that horse. It's nice for them to actually acknowledge something that I've done*." – Payton

Wendy indicated comments from a judge are "*neutral*" compared to that of a trainer or other person in the community. Participants thus value a dressage judge's feedback differently to other people's feedback. In the above example from Abigail, she inferred other's comments stemmed from envy. Roberta spoke about this trait of horse people at length.

> "*There is something about horses that brings out the best and the worst in people…people behave in a manner that they would never do if they were in an office…they say things to people that they think are acceptable but you wouldn't say that in the normal scheme of life generally*." – Roberta

Roberta related a back-handed complement she received from another observer of her dressage test.

> "*I'll never forget and she said, 'oh, I can't believe you've done so well with that horse, I mean you must be so proud…Cause, it must be so demoralising for you coming down the centre line with all these other fantastic horses'…. I mean, what a thing to say instead of like just leaving it but that's the horsey world for you…"* – Roberta

She discussed how the comments impact others, and she related how competing at the lowest level (Preliminary level, Prelim for short) of competition might be an achievement for an individual.

> "*I think it's very easy to be, um, negative about people and about the horses and about their abilities but ultimately, it's like somebody doing a prelim, to them, that could be their Olympic games, you know, and if you're rude about them or you say your horse is basically a donkey, that's a personal affront that's a really upsetting thing to do…I don't think it's fair. You know, I wouldn't go up to someone say 'oh god, you're really fat and ugly', you just wouldn't, but it seems acceptable to go up to someone and say, 'oh god your horse is a bit of donkey' or 'oh god that wasn't very good as a test'."* – Roberta

Indeed, Olivia in this study aspired to be able to compete at Prelim (i.e. Preliminary level):

> "*[M]y ambition is to actually do a few dressage tests but, ah, it's taken me longer than perhaps the average person because of starting so late*." – Olivia

In summary, human-human interactions influence participants' experience of both the *process* and *outcome* of *using the horse*. Like in *caregiving,* unwanted comments from others about *using the horse* are common and generally viewed as a negative experience.

Participants also indicated that negative comments are discouraging for participation. This is further reflected in how participants present themselves to others, guarding themselves from judgement. However, judgement in the form of formal feedback from dressage judges is sought by participants as a validation of their competency. Judges' feedback is considered more objective than other people's comments. Some value the feedback as much as their performance in comparison to others in the competition.

4.5.9 Summarising the Motivational Theme: Using the Horse

Motivations of *using the horse* are derived from the *process* of training the horse and the *outcomes* of competition. The *process* of training the horse creates a second type of bond that can be independent of a caregiving bond. However, they share the requirement for participants to be mind-minded and know the horse. *Caregiving* and *process* use different skill sets and competencies when creating the relationship. *Caregiving* is characterised by the horse instigating interaction and demonstrating attachment-like behaviours. In *process,* the horse's role is less volitional by definition—horses don't have the choice about when or how they are used. However, when participants experience a likeness of volition during training — perceiving the horse as willing, easy, or obedient—they perceive a bond.

The relationship with the horse impacts participants' decision to keep or sell horses and, if sold, where the horse goes. Participants seek "*good homes"* which likely eases participants' worry over what happens to the horse. This is evident in situations where the relationship with the horse is poor and the horse deemed "*difficult".* Concern for the horse being with someone else can prevent the participant from selling the horse, making participants' worry persist.

The relationship with the horse also impacts performance outcomes. Achievement in the performance arena is important to many participants, but each one also found achievement in the *process* of training. Some participants identified the horse-human relationship as being an advantage over other competitors, and indeed participants described better relationships with their main competition horses compared to other horses.

In both the *process* and *outcome* of performance, participants' experiences are influenced by comments made by other humans. In general, the comments are unwelcome, even in the form of compliments. Participants sense fear of judgement in others' desires not to

participate in competition and in how others guard themselves from judgement. However, judgement from dressage judges is generally welcome. Participants view comments from judges as validation of their training and value these comments as much as their performance in comparison to other competitors. Neither poor horse relationships nor negative comments from others deterred participants' overall desires for horse ownership, but it did influence their desire to own a specific horse, as well as the ways in which they experienced satisfaction when using their horse.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the four motivation themes that comprise the motivation for horse ownership as illustrated in Figure 12 at the beginning of this chapter. Firstly, overall horse ownership is motivated by an inexplicable, innate attraction to horses. This instigates desires to encounter horses through riding lessons, borrow other people's horses, or just watch horses (i.e. *getting into horses)*. Secondly, these experiences feed a desire for more autonomy in decision-making about the horse, leading participants to *secure* a horse for themselves. Once a horse is secured, participants are unlikely to cease being horse owners. The relationships participants create with their horses (i.e. the product that is consumed) perpetuate continued horse ownership through the positive emotions they experience. If participants experience a poor relationship, it does not deter overall horse ownership; if anything, it only deters horse ownership of a specific horse. This is still not a guarantee that ownership of a specific horse will cease, as participants will retain ownership if they fear for the well-being of the horse. Thirdly, and fourthly, participants create relationships either through *caregiving* or *using their horse*. Both require participants to try and understand their horse's state of being and respond appropriately.

Horse ownership is influenced by other humans' comments which impact on participants' perception of competency, either when using the horse or when caregiving. Participants view the comments as negative experiences, but the comments do not thwart their desire to own horses. Participants instead find ways to cope with the comments and alter the ways in which they participate in activities and thus alter the environments in which they experience satisfaction as horse owners.

These themes fit within the cycle of motivation model as illustrated by Figure 13 at the start of this chapter. The theme *getting into horses* is the process by which participants enter the

horse ownership motivation cycle and *securing the horse* is where they begin participating as horse owners. Satisfaction is obtained through the themes *caregiving* and *using the horse,* which motivates continued participation as a horse owner. Leaving the cycle of motivation is unlikely, however participants may cease ownership of a specific horse but not motivation for owning horses. Chapter 5 discusses the results of the study in relation to the motivational literature to explain why these themes are motivating.

Chapter 5: A Theory of Horse Ownership for Highly Involved Horse Owners

5.1 Introduction to Chapter 5

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results in relation to relevant motivational research, meeting research objective 4:

4. To critically analyse motivations of dressage horse owners emergent from the inductive investigation, in relation to existing theory, knowledge, and any relevant equine industry dressage horse owner-related activities.

The critical analysis of the emergent motivational themes, using relevant research, proposes an explanation for the motivation model shown in Figure 13 (Chapter 4, p. 38), forming an explanatory theory of horse ownership. The emergent themes work in synergy and this chapter explains why each theme is motivational starting with *always wanted,* then *securing the horse, caregiving,* and then *using the horse*.

Always wanted and *securing the horse* are related to the actions related to becoming involved with horses. Participants mainly talked about their horses as objects in these themes. *Caregiving* and *using the horse* are related to participants' interactions with the horse. Participants mainly talked about their horses as subjects in *caregiving* but shifted between a subject and object in *using the horse.* These are important distinctions for understanding how participants find different aspects of horse ownership motivating,

Figure 14 builds on Figure 13 from Chapter 4 (p.98) by layering theories of motivation (grey boxes) on top of emergent motivational themes in the horse ownership motivation cycle; thus, signifying which motivational theories (or part of a theory) help explain which horse ownership motivation theme. Participants talked about autonomy, competency, achievement, their relationship with their horse, and relationship with other horse people. These results fit with Ryan and Deci's (2017) self-determination theory (SDT) as well as with achievement goal theory (Elliot & McGregor, 2001) and attachment theory (Bowlby 1669/1997, 1973, 1980; Ainsworth, 1970). These three theories offer explanations for why being a hose owner is motivating and an additional finding of why the discipline of dressage is motivating. The biophilia hypothesis offers some explanation for the initial attraction to horses, though some elements of attraction remain enigmatic.

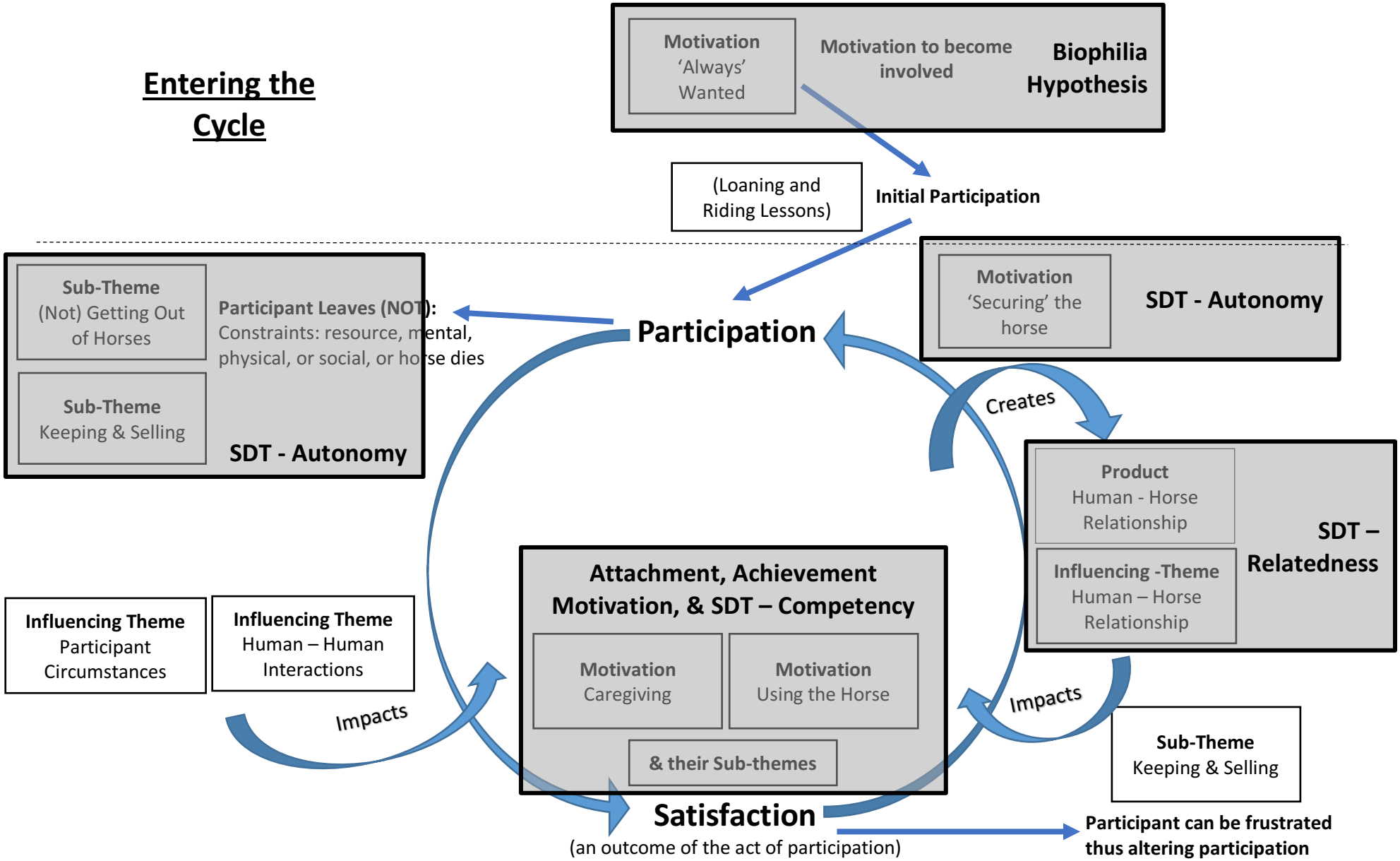


Figure 13 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners - incorporating explanatory theories with the emergent theme*

Lampard et al. (2016) proposed equestrianism is not explained through one theory (p. 114), which is evident with these results. Like in the parable of the elephant and the blind men (see Appendix B), each motivation theme tries to explain a different part of the same phenomenon—horse ownership. Drawing connections between the emergent motivation themes and established theories, contextualises the results and demonstrates the connection between themes. Due to the emergent nature of the findings and largely theoretical postulations from the literature review, at times additional literature to that found in the literature review is used to explain the results.

5.2 Getting Into Horses – Always Wanted

Wanting to be involved with horses is internally motivated. Participants' inability to articulate their attraction to horses fits with Kellert and Wilson's (1993) biophilia hypothesis—humans have an innate attraction to life and life-like processes. Kahn (1997) underpins this empirically, noting children especially are attracted to nature, no matter their culture or community. The mechanisms of the biophilia hypothesis as originally proposed are contested (Joye & Block, 2011). However, the principal position of the biophilia hypothesis is supported by other evolutionary theories such as attachment theory (Beck, 2014). Further evidence exists from neurobiological mechanisms such as the production of oxytocin in mutual dog-human relationships (Odendall & Meintjes, 2003) and the propensity for animate objects to trigger subjective processing in the human brain (Grossman & Blake, 2002). The propensity to recognise human-like subjective-ness in objects—anthropomorphism—is evidence towards an evolutionary mechanism in the participants that underpins the attraction to horses and subsequent horse ownership.

For participants, the desire to explore and master horses did not fade over time; this is especially evident in those who became involved with horses in their late 40s and early 50s. Participants' experiences are indicative of what Ryan and Deci (2017) labelled intrinsic aspirations or what Kasser and Ryan (1996) called intrinsic goals—where horses fit an aspiration for personal growth or affiliation. Personal growth is inclusive of pursuing one's own interests and callings (Kasser, 2005, p. 34), where affiliation is the pursuit of relatedness (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Participants pursued involvement with horses in fulfilment of a personal desire rather than to fulfil social expectation or another extrinsically oriented source of motivation. Kasser and Ryan's (1996) work demonstrates that pursuit of intrinsic aspirations is positively correlated with psychological well-being.

Intrinsic aspirations are different to achievement goals (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). However, achievement or competency motivation assisted participants' fulfilment of their persistent love of horses. The desire to explore and master the environment is proposed to be present from birth (White, 1959), meaning even those who became involved as children had some innate desire to be competent in their chosen activity. Whether participants started at an early age or later in life, their initial attraction was fostered through their early encounters with horses, like riding lessons and loaning horses. Self-determination theory suggests that participants' continued involvement meant early experiences were autonomously supported by participants' close social circle (i.e. parents, partners, family) (Ryan & Deci, 2017). That is, parents or a romantic partner supported a participant with time and freedom to pursue involvement with horses.

In this theme the horse is spoken about as an object even when a participant is speaking about the horse as a pet. Within the specific context of early experiences like starting to ride or purchasing a horse, the horse is viewed for its potential to fulfil the participants' desires for personal growth or affiliation and their desire to compete, ride, or interact with the animal. Horses, in this context, are a possession to be acquired and used.

5.2.1 (Not) Getting Out of Horses

Further evidence of the intrinsic nature of participants' attraction to horses is their insistence on continuing to be horse owners or at least remaining involved with horses throughout their life course. Some participants even actively planned how to persist with horses as they become less physically able to participate in activities like riding (Section 4.2.1.1). However, one participant (Nadia) had aspirations for ownership and involvement that were more tentative compared to the others.

Nadia, like all participants, stated she always wanted a horse as a child. However, for her, horse ownership may not be as entirely self-determined as it is for other participants and therefore may be less satisfying (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Her recollection of times when she threatened to give up because she was frustrated with her horse demonstrates that her involvement was partially extrinsically motivated by her parents' encouragement to persist through the difficult times. As her horses remain living at her parents' home, this extrinsic motivation perhaps continues for Nadia in her early 20s and may be why the idea of giving up horses is more acceptable for Nadia than it is for other

participants. However, Nadia's initial desire still seems evident, as she chooses to spend her leisure time with horses.

All other participants' insistence on ownership and involvement with horses was firm. The desire persisted through breaks in ownership, active contemplation of giving up horses during difficult times, and self-assessment that in the event of serious injury their involvement with horses might not be worth it. An inability to financially support a horse or the death of a horse were the two reasons for breaks in horse ownership. Some participants shared that if they had to make a choice between their family and their horse, their family came first. This was shared by participants in Graham (2012) speaking of divorces and horses (p. 46). None of the participants in this study took breaks because of divorce, but Graham (2012) focused on how divorce is a source of financial disruption, and selling horses is often a consequence.

In the divorce's scenario, the former spouse, who may have supported their partner's horse involvement may now become part of the reason their partner will have to limit horse involvement through selling their horse. Dashper et al. (2019) explored the support and resentment experienced by partners of horse owners and suggested participants in the study challenge social norms where women can commit to family and be involved in leisure. Participants in Dashper et al.'s (2019) study and Graham's (2012) article noted that taking a break from horses was specifically due to financial resource issues rather than time issues or social stigma. If participants felt they could not take care of their horse properly or had to choose between resources for children and resources for a horse, family and better personal circumstances were prioritised.

None of the participants in this study, Graham's (2012) article, or Dashper et al.'s (2019) study actually wanted to stop being horse owners or cease being involved with horses. Participants did not end horse ownership due to lack of interest; rather, the choice was forced on them. In these instances, the horse owner is on a break rather than no longer desiring horse ownership. During breaks, participants continued to find ways to fulfil their desire by being involved with horses by riding or working in the equestrian industry.

5.2.2 Summary of Always Wanted

Knowing that humans have an innate attraction to nature and have evolutionary processes whereby they recognise human-like traits in others explains broadly why participants have personal growth and affiliative intrinsic aspirations towards horses. What exactly it is about horses as opposed to other animals or activities is inexplicable. Once involved with horses,

involvement persists throughout the life course. Early involvement with horses is supported through close social support but conversely is also a source of pressure on the supportive close relationships through resource availability. Breaks in horse ownership are due to changes in personal circumstances or death of a horse and are not by choice or lack of desire.

5.3 Securing the Horse

In the *securing the horse* theme, participants speak about the horse as an object; horses are possessions or property. These concepts infer ownership and that the owner is the only person permitted to use the object, give permission for others to use the object, and permanently transfer ownership rights to another person through mutual consent (i.e. selling) (Snare, 1972). Other humans' control over participants' interactions with horses intensified participants' desire for the autonomy of horse ownership compared with other available interactions like horse riding lessons or loaning.

Securing the horse provided autonomy over decision-making with the horse. Horse riding lessons and loan horses lacked complete autonomy, which was frustrating for participants. Autonomous decision-making and perceiving action to be self-directed is imperative to persistent participation. Those perceiving more external control experience more physical and emotional exhaustion and are more likely to quit (e.g. Pelletier et al., 2001; Adie et al., 2008). In the case of this study, participants pursued horse ownership as preferable over continuing riding lessons and loaning horses.

The continuum sections are distinguished by the origins of the behaviour regulation (e.g. self-regulated) and the purpose of the act (e.g. reduce internal anxiety). Motivation can shift along the continuum—extrinsically motivated behaviour can become intrinsically motivated and intrinsically motivated behaviours can become extrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This occurs as people internalise extrinsically motivated behaviour to function socially, even if they are not inherently interested in the task.

5.3.1 Human-Human Interaction

As an innate psychological need, people pursue autonomous experiences, wherein a person behaves with a sense of volition, willingness, and in congruence with personal values (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 10). When participants interacted with horses they did not own, their actions were controlled; participants like Isabelle and Evlynne gave examples of acting against their personal values in loan horse situations. Referring back to Figure 7 (p. 37) , a person's degree of autonomy in any action exists on a continuum of whether their

behaviour is perceived as internally regulated (intrinsic) or externally regulated (extrinsic) (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Intrinsically motivated individuals perform tasks because they find the task inherently satisfying, while extrinsically motivated people perform tasks for reasons external to themselves, such as manipulation via reward or punishment or social expectations (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For Isabelle and Evlynne, the external regulation placed on them by loan horse owners resulted in negative emotions.

5.3.1.1 Riding Lessons Are Least Autonomous

Horse riding lessons are the most externally controlled form of interaction with horses. Lessons are dictated by people in a riding school. Riding lessons are at a specific time, date, location, and on an assigned horse. Behaviours when riding the horse are extrinsically regulated—the participant does them because they are told to by an instructor. Ryan and Deci (2017) suggest as participants develop competency they may internalise the instruction, accepting it and consciously valuing what the instruction means; but it is still external regulation (Pelletier et al., 2001). However, as their competency interacting with horses improves so does their desire for more autonomous interactions. As further noted by Ryan and Deci (2017), "*competent activity…that results from controls, does not have the important positive effects that accrue from feeling efficacious at an activity that is autonomously initiated or endorsed* (p. 96)". In horse riding lessons there are no opportunities for complete autonomous interaction, which further explains the appeal of the autonomy of horse ownership and control over the interactions.

5.3.1.2 Loaning Horses Provides More Autonomy but Is Ultimately Externally Controlled.

Loaning a horse can offer more opportunity for autonomy than horse riding lessons and can serve as an opportunity to practice horse ownership. Participants experience loaning a horse as similar to horse ownership; like Bethany stated, ownership is really "*just paperwork"* (p. 109). Loaning's likeness to ownership was disadvantageous as it produced a false sense of complete autonomy. Participants Graham, Isabelle, and Kelly discussed in Section 4.3.2 they have the responsibility of ownership regarding *caregiving* and *using the horse* but lack ultimate decision-making power; this remains with the horse's owner. Through *caregiving* and *using the horse,* those borrowing the horse developed a relationship or bond with the horse fulfilling relatedness needs.

The false sense of autonomy in the loaning experience contributed to the negative feelings when loan horse owners exercised their rights of possession (e.g. Snare, 1972; Belk, 2010) in

restricting participants' decision-making, interaction, or in selling the horse. It was not only frustrating to the participant but also a source of grief over the loss of the relationship they had developed with the horse. Frustration is defined when a potentially rewarding, desired, or goal-directed behaviour or sequence of behaviours are blocked (Lewis et al. 1990; Stauss et al., 2005). Consequently, the loan horse experience contributed to the motivation for ownership as participants sought complete autonomy and control over decision making. In these instances the participants experienced a threat to their basic psychological needs of autonomy and relatedness. Both Sheldon and Kasser (2008) and Deci and Ryan (2017) note more detailed research on the consequences of threats to basic psychological needs of competency, autonomy, and relatedness still need to be conducted, which limits further discussion here.

Conversely, loaning's lack of complete autonomy was advantageous in that horses could be returned to their owners if not suitable or when personal circumstances changed. The thought that horses have to be returned or the concern over owners' desires influenced the decisions participants made while using a loaned horse. Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2017) reiterates concern over social judgment can hinder the experience of intrinsic motivation (i.e. flow). As participants spent time with their horses as described by Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011), the external judgement or external control of owners made participants' actions externally motivated and the loan horse experience less satisfying. Overall, the power of the owner acts as an external motivator or can cause frustration and grief, undermining a sense of autonomy and further illustrating the appeal of horse ownership.

5.3.2 Participant Circumstances

Participants waited for the opportunity to own horses when they felt their circumstances allowed for it. What constituted an opportunity differed between individuals. In the case of Evlynne and Olivia it was after they had a family, while for Carly and Mara it was in their late teens. Even those who had horses as a child, supported by their parents, took the opportunity for ownership when they felt they could handle the responsibility themselves, like Samantha and Julia. Although different, participants' stories are indicative that determining an opportunity for horse ownership was multi-factorial (e.g. social support, life stage, perception of knowledge) and resource-dependent.

5.3.2.1 Knowing Enough

Ownership followed from riding lessons and loan horse situations. No participant purchased a horse without having some horse experience first. Both Dashper (2017a) and Birke and Thompson (2018) discussed the theme of 'knowledge' engrained within horse-human relationships. Schuurman and Franklin (2016) outlined having knowledge as "*responsible horse ownership"* and Birke (2008) questioned the ability of riding school experiences to provide sufficient knowledge. All authors discussed the development of knowledge over time and its importance.

None of the participants entered horse ownership perceiving they had insufficiently prepared, countering Schuurman and Franklin's (2016) assertion that people disregard an absence of knowledge when becoming horse owners. Participants reflecting on what they knew now verses then, highlighted their lack of knowledge at the start. However, differentiating this from the development of knowledge that comes with normal life experience is difficult. What is 'enough' knowledge? Participants used the available avenues to educate themselves in advance of horse ownership and continued to seek development of their skills even after decades of experience. Participants spoke of 'upskilling' themselves and of a constant pursuit of knowledge. Whether participants actually had enough knowledge for horse ownership is unknown.

5.3.2.2 Having Enough

Resources participants considered when determining whether to become horse owners included having enough money, time, and stability in living arrangements. First horses were purchased with the help of others through inheritance, loans, and gifts—even seemingly impulsive purchases. Having resources in place allowed participants to feel they had the capability to purchase a horse as well as keep the horse. Any 'buyer's remorse' the participants felt was related to selecting the *wrong* horse, rather than purchasing *a* horse. Rosenzweig and Gilovich (2012) contended such regrets are typical of interchangeable, 'material' purchases, reiterating the horse's stance as a possession when viewing ownership from the perspective of a participant's circumstances. As evidenced by Julia keeping or selling the purchased horse, even when a participant has sufficient resources, is about whether the horse, is the "*right horse".*

5.3.3 Keeping and Selling

The theme *keeping and selling* illustrates how in practice ownership allows participants to act ambiguously, treating their horse as both a subject and an object. Participants seek ownership for the power to control decisions about the lives of horses in their care but also to relinquish that responsibility at will. Some participants like Samantha prefer the term 'guardian', and have moral objections to the term ownership because of its association with power and control, but then exercise their power and control in managing, keeping, and selling horses. The results from this study offer a contradiction (at least in horses) to Carlisle-Frank and Frank (2006) who suggested different attitudes between people who consider themselves owners versus guardians. The very concept of ownership that participants use to gain control over care decisions for a horse is exercised in selling horses on, effectively acting to pass a horse down the line of ownership—something participants (e.g. Graham and Freya) fear happening to the horses they come to know. This also includes Samantha who has 'personal horses' who remain permanently in her care, but then 'rescue horses' whom she actively acquires and rehomes.

Terminology about keeping and selling was important in this theme. Rehoming, getting rid of, passing down the line, and selling on, are all terms that mean the participant moved the horse from their care to another's, but each appears indicative of how one feels about the horse. 'Rehoming' is associated with situations in which participants like the horse but want the horse to have a different home. 'Getting rid of' implies that participants experienced behavioural problems with the horse, and 'passing down the line' suggests a lack of care about the horse. 'Selling on' connotes a more neutral position—the horse was moved on as an asset with the intention of a profit, much like the description of sold horses in Lamperd et al. (2016).

Some horses are purchased with the intent of selling them on, which is an accepted practice and probably explains the more neutral position of participants. Not all participants engaged in this, but those who did, such as Linda, all spoke of the importance of finding a good home for the horse.

5.3.3.1 Ownership, Selling, and Caregiving

The narrative of 'rescuing' horses, as provided by Samantha, also occurred in Birke et al. (2010), wherein the researchers observed their participants perceiving their horses' lives as better in their care. This appeared consistent with most participants in this study (even those worried about how well they care); however, participants such as Julia and Carly also spoke

about giving the horse an education to help it 'cope' in future homes. The same participants whose horses are better in their care are also passing horses into the care of others, for example Samantha and Freya. Part of participants justification for this behaviour is that they are improving a horse's life through training (e.g. Carly, Julia, and Harry), offering a good home (e.g. Freya), doing the best for it while it is with them (e.g. Bethany), and feeling like they are securing a 'good' future home for the horse (e.g. Samantha). Passing a horse down the line is perceived as something other people do, indicating participants' attempts at finding a good home are different from other people. Birke et al. (2010) suggested this perspective bolsters a participant's sense of personal moral worth.

The responsibility of ownership meant participants were concerned about where the horse went and did not want the horse to continue to change homes after it left their care. A common reason for buying with the intention of selling was to provide the horse care in the form of an education that meant the horse would be more likely to stay wherever it went next.

Somehow the idea of rescuing, finding a good home for, caring for, or educating the horse through training shifts participants' perspectives away from their own role, as an owner in a horse's chain of ownership, as it passes down the line. This is in contrast to participants' personal horses that will stay with them for life, while other horses come and go.

There are then two dimensions of ambiguity, one demonstrated through taking on horses to care and protect but forming part of a chain of ownership which participants dislike for horses to experience. Secondly, having horses that are permanent fixtures while other horses are acquired with the intention of selling on.

5.3.3.2 Ownership, Keeping, and Horse-Human Relationship

One constant with the concept of selling is that at least one horse is kept. What distinguishes a horse that persists in a participant's care verses a horse that is sold is the relationship that a participant builds with the horse while it is in their care. The relationship is developed through *caregiving* and *using the horse*. If it is the participant's first horse, the relationship may not be very good at the beginning; but because of the participant's innate attraction to horses and need for autonomy of ownership, they won't get rid of the horse. In these instances, Birke et al. (2010) suggested participants might engage in a blame-management strategy to try and find reasons for the relationship disconnect. Dedeoğlu and Kazançoğlu (2011) suggested such strategies help people avoid negative emotions such as guilt and buyer's remorse. The only

exception appears to be in the cases where the horse seriously injured the participant; those horses were sold and another, more suitable horse was found.

A minimum of one horse was necessary for all horse owners in this study and for some, is the maximum number they desired, for example Mara and Julia. When acquiring second, third, fourth horses, and so on, selling and rehoming other horses becomes more likely. This is because horses require a great deal of resource investment in terms of time and money as exemplified by Freya, Linda, and Mara in Section 4.3.3.

By *securing the horse,* participants gained the ability to care for them to a specific standard of their choice, which is what they perceived to be in the best interest of their horse. One of the reasons to sell off some horses is that participants feel they can no longer keep horses to their desired standard, including no longer spending 'quality' time with the horses. In terms of Jyrinki and Laaksonen's (2011) descriptions of time with horses, participants find themselves spending a lot of time 'doing' and not as much time 'being' with their horses. They therefore find the horse ownership experience less satisfying. The maximum amount of horses to reach this point of diminished satisfaction varies by individual; for Linda it was eleven, while for Julia it was two. When determining which horses to sell or rehome, the horses that are picked to keep are the horses that the participant has a better relationship with and those that bring the participant a sense of achievement when using the horse, even if the horse was originally acquired with the intention of selling.

5.3.4 Summary of Securing the Horse

The theme of *securing the hors*e explains how people's initial interest in horses develops into their desire for horse ownership. As participants seek interactions with horses they discover that the activity is extrinsically controlled by those who own horses, especially horseback riding lessons. In pursuit of autonomous experiences, participants become horse owners themselves. All participants exploited avenues into horse ownership reliant on their personal circumstances affording them the opportunity, such as securing employment, having the ability to borrow money, receiving inheritance, or having horses as a part of their family. Continuing horse ownership and the number of horses owned is reliant on the ability to continue to afford the time and money to keep horses to participants' standards. Once a horse owner, participants try to maintain ownership of at least one horse. Through ownership the horse is secured, and in *securing the horse* participants know they have complete autonomy through possession, autonomy over decision-making, and their human-horse relationship is

protected. This complete autonomy thus contributes to the motivation for horse ownership through the opportunity for sustained satisfaction from the decision-making about *caregiving* and *using the horse* which also build the horse-human relationship that needs protecting (another motivating factor discussed in Section 5.4.3).

5.4 Caregiving

In comparing the results with literature, *caregiving* was selected as the title for the motivation theme because participants' experiences and efforts to be mind-minded aligned with the caregiving behavioural system of attachment theory. Feeney and Woodhouse (2016) citing Bowlby (1988) explained caregiving traits as follows:

> "*A sensitive and responsive caregiver is one who regulates his or her behavior so that it meshes with that of the person who is being cared for, takes his or her cues from and allows his or her interventions to be paced by the recipient, is attuned to the recipient's non-verbal signals, attends to the details of the recipient's behavior, interprets the recipient's signals and behaviors correctly, discovers what response is most appropriate for the individual recipient, responds promptly and appropriately, and monitors and modifies it accordingly."* (p. 828)

Collectively, participants gave examples of each of the above characterisations. They actively emotionally regulated, paid attention to their horses' signals, and tried to interpret them correctly and respond appropriately to their needs. When they achieved this, participants felt satisfaction and like competent caregivers. When participants struggled to respond appropriately in the cases of injury and illness, they experienced negative emotions and questioned their decisions.

As evidenced in the literature review, attachment theory is commonly used to explain human-animal relationships but has thus far focused on the attachment behavioural system (e.g. Sable, 1995; Beck & Madresh, 2008; Zilcha-Mano et al., 2012). The results of this study are in stark contrast to the companion animal literature. Participants' examples demonstrate the relationship of a caregiver, with only a handful of their examples resembling attachment-like behaviour towards their horse or indeed, their horse offering any caregiving behaviour. Similarity in participant examples can be found in other horse-related research such as Birke et al. (2010), who reported on owners' desires to provide 'good' care (p. 344).

Additionally, the results diverge from the AVMA definition of the human-animal bond as mutual, at least within the established confines of attachment theory. Mutual relationships consist of both parties in the relationship being attached to the other but also mutual caregiving. In horse ownership there is a clear imbalance; humans primarily care-give.

Although participants used the term 'attached' in reference to their animals, their examples point to colloquial use of the term rather than the attachment behaviour system of attachment theory. In such a caregiving relationship, participants experience an emotional connection and love akin to parenting—what Ryan and Deci (2017) described as "*parents' receptiveness to and interest in the children*" (p. 349). Bradshaw (2016) suggested people use the analogy of parenting for animals as a filler where there is a gap in the lexicon. Mayseless (2016) countered this, suggesting animals act as surrogate children offering the opportunity to nurture. This thesis's analysis shows the human-horse relationship is like a parent-child relationship offering the participants an opportunity to nurture—fulfilling an innate desire and, potentially, an individual's relatedness need to provide care as proposed by self-determination theory.

Participants stated they do feel their animals give something back, are therapeutic, or offer some relief from a bad day, as seen in example quotes from Sections 4.4.3 and 4.5.2, but the context within the interviews suggests these equate to engaging with *using the horse* such as riding, or attachment-like behaviours directed from the horse to the participant, such as the horse paying attention to the participant (see table 4). These instances of 'giving' by the horse were not the horse actively directing caregiving behaviours towards the participant. This does not diminish the emotional importance of the examples but is further evidence that the relationship is not mutual in the context of attachment theory. Instead, the mutuality of the human-horse relationship comes from participants acting as caregivers both instrumentally and emotionally. In exchange, participants experience competency and *use the horse* as opportunities for achievement. As a result, both caregiving and achievement have powerful motivational capacity to explain horse ownership

5.4.1 Instrumental Care as Emotional Care

There were two sub-themes for caregiving: *instrumental care* and *emotional care*. Instrumental care is the care standards of providing the horse with the basic physiological requirements to survive, such as food, water, shelter, social contact, and protection from disease and injury, which by law an owner must provide directly or indirectly (Animal Welfare Act, 2006). DEFRA (2017) set out a code of practice for delivery of the minimum standards of care in the UK. Participants spoke about their provision of instrumental care and its role in managing their horse's emotional well-being.

5.4.1.1 The Process of Coming to Know the Horse

Participants spoke of a process of trial and error in determining the way to provide instrumental care (e.g. Section 4.4 and 4.4.1) including how to operationalise a yard, how to rug a horse, where to shelter a horse, and how to assess a horse's likes and dislikes. Participants aimed to be mind-minded and provided care in the way that reduced their horse's anxious or fearful behaviours and perpetuated calm, quiet, and contented behaviour. Over time, this process allowed participants to respond promptly and appropriately to a horse's perceived needs, resulting in a sense of satisfaction such as "*joy"* (Abigail), being "*touched*" (Carly), or a "*heart-warming"* feeling (Evlynne). The satisfaction is likely from a sense of competency as suggested by self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Participants autonomy through ownership is key in the process of coming to know the horse because they have control over decision-making of what to try, in the trial and error process.

The process of trial and error was detrimental in times of illness and injury when it was difficult for participants to respond promptly, and the appropriateness of their actions was unclear to them. Participants such as Freya felt "*powerless"* and, like Bethany, they questioned their decisions, demonstrating a sense of incompetency. Sustained incompetency leads to reduced intrinsic motivation and reduced psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Overall, the process of coming to know the horse resulted in some of the most positive and most negative emotional experiences for horse owners. Moments when the horse was happy and content were some of the best experiences because participants felt satisfied and competent in the decisions they were making. Conversely, illness and injury were described as "*stressful*" (Isabelle) and some of the worst experiences because participants felt less competent, finding it difficult to determine what Bethany described as the "*right"* decision.

5.4.2 Caregiving Creates Human-Horse Relationship Bonds

The results confirm the assertion of Schuurman and Franklin (2016), that to know the horse is to have established a relationship with the horse (p. 42). It is through mind-mindedness that participants come to know their horse, and practicing mind-mindedness is caregiving. Thus, it is through the act of caregiving that participants build a relationship with the horse. In explaining the motivation of caregiving, Mayseless (2016) argued pet ownership is first and foremost a caregiving act (p. 164). Other authors like Warkentine (2010) and Donovan (2006) agreed, emphasising the importance of listening to and being sensitive to animal signalling in building relationships with animals. Mayseless (2016) continued that giving care to animals

can fulfil human psychological needs. In this study, caregiving provided two motivations: competency in caregiving and relatedness through the subsequent relationship. Referring back to securing the horse, the desire to make the caregiving decisions is one of the main reasons for seeking the autonomy of ownership. The results coincide with Ryan and Deci's (2017) explanation that autonomy and competency are integrated, and autonomy in decision-making is integral to feeling competent.

5.4.2.1 Competent Caregiving

Competency is one of the three basic psychological needs presented in SDT. Schultheiss and Brunstein (2005) succinctly depicted competency as a multifaceted phenomenon inclusive of the skills and abilities people possess or develop, their effectiveness during interactions with the environment, and a person's success or performance (p. 42). To relate this to competency in horse care, various authors outline how the ability to provide care and to know the horse is learned through experience (Schuurman & Franklin, 2016; Dashper, 2017a; Birke & Thompson, 2018). Participants frequently discussed their learning through experience of how to care for their horse and manage their emotions. Schuurman and Franklin (2106) suggested "*proficiency in horsemanship"* is not a core motivation for ownership. However, this research demonstrates competency in caregiving (i.e. horsemanship) is a core contributor to the motivation for horse ownership and to the development of the "*emotional relationship"* that Schuurman and Franklin (2016) emphasised as important (p. 42).

When participants perceive their horses in discomfort or distress, their innate prosocial mechanisms mean the participants experience negative emotions. Emotional relief comes from finding the appropriate solution to bring their horse back to a state of 'happy and healthy'. During injury and illness, participants are hindered in effecting prompt and appropriate change, which challenges their perception of competency in caregiving and induces additional worry, guilt, and frustration perhaps similar to parents of human children. Comparisons can be drawn to the parents of children with multiple sclerosis (MS) in Uccelli et al. (2013) study. Uccelli et al. (2013) proposed parents felt less competent because they could not actively improve their child's condition (p. 104). Participants in this study struggled at times to actively improve their horses' condition because they were hindered in effecting prompt and appropriate change. Although participants' competency is challenged, it does not thwart their desire for ownership. Being able to resolve the illness or injury results in a feeling of accomplishment, albeit somewhat delayed. If injury or illness cannot be resolved, the horse

may be euthanized (a choice not open to parents of human children); but this, too, is considered an act of caregiving by participants.

For a behaviour to be intrinsic and self-regulated, both competency and autonomy need to be present. Horse ownership provides autonomy and, in combination with feeling competent as a caregiver, creates the opportunity for intrinsic self-regulation and thus persistence in the horse ownership.

5.4.2.2 Human-Human Interaction Influence on Competence of Caregiving

There are external social expectations of care. Horses have specific requirements for survival, including food, water, shelter, social contact, and protection from disease and injury, which by law an owner must provide directly or indirectly (Animal Welfare Act, 2006). DEFRA (2017) set out a code of practice for delivery of the minimum standards of care in the UK. In general the law and code of practice deal with instrumental care, but as argued here, providing instrumental care is also providing emotional care to horses. Birke et al. (2010) discussed how caring for a horse is both a personal choice and public business. This is why participants' feelings of competency in caregiving are impacted by other humans. Participants find coping strategies to deal with other humans and confine themselves to behavioural patterns (e.g. a training system, care behaviours, social group) in which they can maintain their sense of competency. They also try to manage others' expectations by 'guarding' themselves from judgement.

Participants appreciated comments on how well their horses looked—interpreting them as comments on their caregiving ability. Investigations on the impacts of rewards on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation found that if praise was spontaneous, authentic, and with no conditions attached, it facilitated internalised, self-regulated behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2017). When rewards are focused on effective performance, they enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1980). Similar to competence-focused praise from another human, participants' perception of content behaviour by their horses acted as a reward, signalling participants' competency in caregiving, to the participants and to others. This study assumes a horse's behaviour is authentic of their state of well-being.

Negative emotions are experienced when others suggest participants are incompetent in caregiving, and these comments are experienced as personal attacks. Deci (1971) demonstrated receiving a discomforting experience when getting a task wrong reduces intrinsic motivation to complete the task. Hurtful comments or unsolicited advice related to a

participant's competency in caregiving did not thwart the desire for horse ownership nor the motivation to be a quality caregiver. Instead, participants developed mechanisms to cope with the negative feedback or altered their situation to avoid the negative experiences.

5.4.2.3 Competence in Creating the Caregiving Environment

Competent caregiving is also about creating the environment in which one care-gives. One clear example from the results was Graham's yard. Calm environments allow for caregivers to be optimal in emotional regulation (Feeney & Woodhouse, 2016), something that Graham desires and appears to have achieved. Graham perceived his animals lying down during the day as a sign of their contentedness. Horses as flight animals will only lie down if they feel secure and only require 3–5 hours of sleep per day (Belling, 1990). Stabled horses such as Graham's usually choose to do this during quiet times on the yard, such as overnight (Belling, 1990). To observe this recumbent behaviour during the middle of the day when taking a post-interview tour, surrounded by yard activity, is an indication of the horses' content emotional state and adds credibility to Graham's perception of his experiences as a caregiver. As a case, it exemplifies that horse owners (at least some like Graham) are cognisant of the importance of the environment in which they care-give, as well as their direct actions towards their horses.

5.4.2.4 Emotional Regulation as a Competency in Effective Caregiving

The act of caregiving requires emotional regulation (Decety et al., 2015). The ability to empathise and then act to comfort another's distress is an important feature of caregiving and one of the core functions differentiating it from the attachment system (Feeney & Woodhouse, 2016). Participants emphasised the importance of emotional regulation in times of distress of the horse but also adopting an emotionally regulated state in advance of encountering the horse.

Relating participants' emotion regulation in this study to the literature is challenging because it is tied directly to specific training methods. Participants in this study spoke about emotional regulation in relation to their day-to-day interactions with their horses, including general care. How attachment dimensions relate to emotional regulation in relationships provides a common platform to discuss the literature against the results of this research. DeAraugo et al.'s (2014) results suggested that most horse people are securely attached individuals, with a group that has avoidant tendencies; they further suggested this is desirable and associated with 'behaviour' training. Birke (2008) suggested 'traditional' training methods train for emotional suppression (a trait of avoidant individuals), but natural horsemanship seeks an

expression of emotions that are prosocial (a trait of secure individuals). Savvides (2012) suggested that different training methods effectively seek the same conflict-free communication that would result from secure individuals' emotional regulation.

While mostly disparate, there are a few commonalities to draw between the literature and the research results. In general, horse people are securely attached individuals, and encountering horses is clearly an emotional experience. The training method is given too much credit in the ability of an owner to emotionally regulate. A person comes to horse ownership (at least an adult) with a basal capacity to emotionally regulate, which is changeable and context-specific (Crowell et al., 2016; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Discussion on which emotions are being managed and how one learns to manage them is limited. Birke (2008) discussed the process in which equestrians are socially trained to suppress fear (p. 123). However, participants in this study implied they managed their anger or generalised emotional states of arousal, while emphasising the importance of 'being calm'. 'Being calm' is more in line with secure emotional regulation where suppression is indicative of emotional avoidance—appearing calm but not actually being calm (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

For participants, emotional regulation leads to behaviour regulation. These participants expressed a self-awareness that Roberton et al. (2012) argued underpins emotional regulation. Participants gave examples of altering goals or tasks depending on their emotional state, rather than pursuing the original planned task while angry, frustrated, or tired, which they feared would result in horse-human conflict. Even Nadia, whose stories of her childhood align with Birke's (2008) description of fear suppression, gave examples fitting effective emotional regulation. Indeed, horse owners in this study self-regulated or perceived themselves to self-regulate, regardless of their training method affiliations. However, many told stories of or made reference to unpleasant times when they had not successfully emotionally regulated and were in conflict with their horses. Participants indicated these experiences were to be avoided.

Consequently, the human capacity to self-regulate is an important caregiving skill (i.e. a competency) that builds the human-horse relationship. Conflict is an unavoidable part of the trial-and-error process used when learning about an individual horse (i.e. knowing the horse), but as participants learn about themselves and their horses, they desire and act (through self-regulation) to avoid such unpleasant, conflict situations.

5.4.3 Horse-Human Relationship Bonds and Fulfilment of Human Relatedness Needs

The development of the relationship is a signal of competence in caregiving for participants. Within the relationship, the instigation of interaction by the horse is interpreted by participants as a signal that they have developed a bond with their horse. This is especially true when they perceive the horse's behaviour to be unconditional and volitional, and if the horse differentiates between the participant and other people. Birke and Thompson (2018) described this as horses and humans attuning themselves to each other; it is how they defined mutuality in the human-horse relationship—as a two-way contribution to the interaction. Birke and Hockenhull (2015) demonstrated that human-horse pairs that knew each other demonstrated a sense of working together in a task, compared to unfamiliar pairings of humans and horses.

5.4.3.1 Horses Fulfil Relatedness Needs

Participants desire a horse-human bond even if they cannot rationalise it, indicating a desire to fulfil the psychological need of relatedness within the horse-human relationship. The interaction instigated by the horse impacts people's perception of their relationship with the horse, just like in humans. Ryan and Deci (2017) stated relationships in which the other's interest is perceived as unconditional and authentic are the ones that are most satisfying. Other forms of connection, such as conditional love, thwart autonomy and promote inauthenticity, degrading the relatedness experience and the benefits it typically yields (p. 296). Thus, the participants who felt their horses' instigated interaction or greeted them without conditions (e.g. food) received positive feelings such as joy, while Kelly—who felt her horse's attention was conditional on the expectation of food—felt disappointed.

Horse-human relationships formed through caregiving are fulfilling of relatedness needs for humans. In seminal work, Baumeister and Leary (1995) argued that the desire for connectedness and acceptance by others is a fundamental human motivation. Like Ryan and Deci (2017), they reported that loving adult mutual relationships are highly satisfying but only if genuinely mutual. However, the parent-child bond seems an exception because it is asymmetrical. Baumeister and Leary's discussion left open the question about whether the act of caring is satisfying for one's own needs.

Deci et al. (2006) provided an answer; they indicated caregiving in mutual relationships in university student friendships had a stronger positive influence on a person's well-being compared to receiving care. Brown and Brown (2014) and Panksepp (1998) discussed caring

as something a human innately performs. Panksepp (1998) described 'CARE circuits' as intrinsic brain systems that have evolved to promote the performance of nurturing behaviours, which are then supported or replaced by learned behaviours (p. 249). Brown and Brown (2014) described how these neurobiological systems facilitate the well-being described by Deci et al. (2006). These points underpin human ethology theorists' agreement that caregiving is a fundamental evolutionary survival trait that assists the survival of kin and keeps social groups together for safety.

It may be that participants recognise the attention, proximity-seeking, and vocalisation behaviours of the horse as attachment behaviours triggering their caregiving systems. Although the behaviours are demonstrated by another species, the phenomenon of anthropomorphism suggests the human brain will interpret them as human-like behaviours and react with the associated emotional experience (Buccino et al., 2004). Participants' social cognition areas of the brain linked to caregiving are activated, and participants respond as human evolution predisposed them. It is in the experience of a bond with a horse that the horse shifts from an object of possession to a subjective being in a relationship.

5.4.4 Summary of Caregiving

Just caring for the horse one owns fulfils all three basic psychological needs. Autonomy through possession allows for autonomous decision-making in care. Horse owners aim to be competent caregivers; they experience positive emotions when perceiving their actions as making their horses happy and healthy. Competency in caregiving is a combination of knowledge of instrumental care and continuing trial-and-error approach to be able to respond appropriately to a horse's needs, resulting in some of the most positive emotional experiences. Desire to competently care-give is not thwarted by negative emotional experiences associated with other humans' comments. Instead, struggling to respond promptly and appropriately during illness and injury challenges participants' feelings of competence. However, overcoming this challenge reinforces participants' competency, even if the result was death of the horse—they perceive they are acting in the best interest of the horse.

Through the trial and error of caregiving, participants come to know their individual horse(s) and develop a relationship. Knowing the horse and managing one's emotional state establishes the horse-human relationship. The relationship can develop into a bond. Humans

find this interaction pleasurable and a further sign of competence in their caregiving ability. The development of a relationship bond with a horse is fulfilling of human relatedness needs.

The fulfilment of all three psychological needs explains the persistence of humans in pursuing ownership. It explains why horse-human relationships that do not employ a formal training methodology or involve riding can be wholly satisfying. The relationship with the horse increases the importance of autonomy in horse ownership because of the satisfaction and well-being experienced through perceiving one's self as a competent caregiver and because of the fulfilment of the relatedness needs through the relationship bond that can develop.

5.5 Using the Horse

Using the horse is an additional source of motivation for horse ownership and works in conjunction with the *caregiving* theme. Both emergent sub-themes of *using the horse—process (e.g. training)* and *outcome (e.g. winning)* (see Figure 12)—fit the 2 x 2 achievement goal model (Figure 6) as used in Lamperd et al. (2016). Accordingly it is employed here to discuss the motivation for horse ownership derived from *using the horse*.

The 2 x 2 achievement goal model matches participants' responses by comparing people's desires (valance) through approaching success or avoiding failure, and how feelings of competence are derived either internally (mastery goals) or externally through social judgement (performance goals). Throughout Section 4.5 participants spoke about what they perceived as achievement during their experience of *using the horse* and what they found most rewarding, important, or enjoyable. The results demonstrate that the majority had mastery-approach goals as discussed in Section 4.5.1; they were seeking to learn and ambitious to improve. Subsequently, they found satisfaction in the *process* of training the horse. A smaller proportion—a mix between professionals and amateurs—had performance-approach goals. These participants put emphasis on the *outcome* of competition as exemplified in Section 4.5.6. A couple of participants (Julia and Kelly) provided examples of mastery-avoidance goals. These participants did not want to get the process wrong and were impacted by their *circumstances* of available time, skill, or knowledge.

Achievement goals indicate motivations because the goals represent whether the activity of using the horse is more intrinsically self-regulated (mastery) or externally regulated (performance). In achievement goal literature, those with mastery-approach goals are proposed to better emotionally regulate in the event of failure and engage in more strategies to foster future success, making mastery goals more predictive of persistence in the activity.

Performance goals are socially judged by others, making them externally regulated; in the event of failure there are more negative feelings and potentially reduced well-being or reduced interest in the activity (Dweck & Molden, 2005). Therefore *human-human interactions* impact motivations for *using the horse*.

Because achievement has an external goal, it extends beyond competency to be associated with the need for human relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2017). In comparison to the achievement goals in other activities, *using the horse* offers an additional, non-human source of relatedness: the horse. To achieve with the horse, the participant must know the horse, and thus *using the horse* also results in the development of a human-horse relationship, which, as argued in the caregiving theme, can fulfil relatedness needs.

5.5.1 Process (e.g. Training) Creates Horse-Human Relationship Bonds Through Task Mastery

All participants expressed a desire to be "*better*" or a desire to "*learn*", even if they had prominent performance-approach goals. For most, learning was better than winning. Thus, participants' responses are indicative of mastery-approach goals. Mastery-approach is characterised by a desire to be competent in a task, where satisfaction is gained through one's experience of partaking in the task, completing the task, and improving through one's learning or development (Dweck & Molden, 2005). Goetz et al. (2016) stated that mastery goals positively predict enjoyment of an activity. Participants in this study support this, as they explicitly expressed their enjoyment of the process or journey of teaching the horse; this included developing skills when riding, teaching the horse something new, or observing improved behaviour under-saddle. The process of training the horse (i.e. teaching the horse) was intrinsically rewarding.

Moneta and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) observed students who focused on the activity and not on outcomes experienced more joy and flow. Sheldon et al., (2013) agreed, suggesting that focusing on activities in one's life positions one to sustainably increase one's subjective well-being. Sheldon et al. further suggested that the dynamic and changeable nature of activities resists the occurrence of hedonic adaption (i.e. the reduction of perceived enjoyment of something over time). Participants, such as Bethany, spoke both of the variety of activities they could do with the horse, as well as their ability to autonomously choose which activity to partake in based on their mood. Thus, horse ownership resists hedonic adaptation and is an opportunity for achievement through task mastery.

5.5.1.1 Competent Communication Creates the Human-Horse Relationship

Feelings of competency in training are derived from competent communication with the horse. Competent communication is the mechanism for creating a positive human-horse relationship and is imperative to achievement when using the horse. This section builds on the concept of volitional participation of the horse discussed in Section 5.4.3 in creating the human-horse relationship (or bond) and how communication specifically when *using the horse* results in a similar sense of volition, and thus sense of relatedness (discussed in Section 5.5.1.5), through the humans' competency in communicating.

Brandt (2004) described horse-human communication as a complicated system of body language that functions in a cyclic and dynamic process, and only when effectively communicating can the horse and human work in a goal-oriented way. As with mind-mindedness in the *caregiving* theme, there is a process of trial and error, learning, and refinement when *using the horse* (i.e. communicating) aimed to reduce conflict so the human and horse can complete a task together. Thus, communication with the horse is a task to be mastered (by the human) in addition to any other activity a horse and human partake in together (e.g. a competition).

Both horse and rider are involved in developing the communication. For participants such as Abigail and Carly, part of the enjoyment of teaching the horse is recognising the horse's obedience despite the horse's greater physical strength. When *using the horse,* the interaction is always human-instigated, so task completion is reliant on the horse's compliance with the human's desires. Compliance by the horse is interpreted as willingness, and obedience is perceived to reveal an absence of conflict between the two. Participants extend the idea of willingness and obedience beyond mere responses to human communication, suggesting horses work hard for them and offer behaviours they think the participant wants, as in the example quote from Julia (Section 4.5.2).

Participants, including Graham, Freya, and Julia, experienced positive emotions reflecting on their horses' compliance and cited learning and improvements over time. They further suggested a horse's desire to respond appropriately or offer behaviours is indicative of the horse enjoying the experience. Perceiving the horse to enjoy the experience was important to the participants. As in the caregiving theme wherein participants wanted horses to be happy and healthy in life, when using the horse, they wanted their horses to be happy. Achieving happiness of the horse in work seemed equally important to achievement of a task. When

speaking of achievements, participants mixed their references of who was achieving between themselves and their horse. They spoke of their personal achievements through or in reference to their horse's responses or learning, indicating they perceived the achievement of the horse as a direct reflection of their achievement and thus their competence. Harry in particular talks about when the horse does well and wins it is "*a massive achievement*" for him.

The achievement of competent communication (a happy and willing horse) is described as being 'in tune' (Birke, 2008, p. 115) or 'gelling' (Birke & Hockenhull, 2016). Jackman et al. (2019) related effective communication to the concept of flow in jockeys. In this study, participants discussed their positive emotions in reference to the process of day-to-day progress more than they offered discussion on moments of 'gelling'. Both are positive experiences, but participants' responses evidenced their enjoyment of observing improvement rather than how they sought experiences to be absorbed in the moment. Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2017) reiterated that experiencing flow should not be the goal—an athlete should focus on mastery of the task, and flow will follow. Participants focus on teaching their horse and on finding satisfaction in the observed changes over time, likely resulting in flow-like experiences. This is further evidence of participants' mastery-approach goals and experiencing the process of horse training as intrinsically motivating.

The changes in horses over time serve as evidence of participants' competency as trainers. Such competency has important implications for horse ownership. Being the horse owner provides participants the autonomy to practice their training skills and make choices on what to teach the horse and when to teach the horse. To develop competent communication also requires the participant to know their horse and, as in *caregiving*, underpins the motivation for securing the horse because knowing the horse is to have a relationship with the horse. Thus, a person can develop a relationship with a horse just through riding or training. Furthermore, competent communication supports the link between the riding school experiences and a desire to become a horse owner and have autonomy over the horse-human interaction.

5.5.1.2 Mastery-Avoidance Tendencies Exist but Are Moderated

When horse and human were in conflict, participants felt displeasure and perceived their horse was unhappy in the experience; they indicated these experiences should be avoided. In trying to avoid conflict, a few participants such as Kelly gave examples of mastery-avoidance

orientations—they did not want to 'mess up' their horse or teach their horse bad habits. Mastery-avoidance impedes self-regulation in achievement situations and is associated with anxious individuals (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Mastery-avoidance goals are therefore likely to hinder resolution of conflict with the horse.

As these same participants spoke about improvements in their horses, it is likely mastery-avoidance is not the prevailing goal type. Furthermore, these participants also enlisted professional horse trainers. Humborstad and Dysvik (2016) demonstrated those who receive psychological empowerment demonstrate fewer mastery-avoidance tendencies. Thus, trainers may help empower participants, support task mastery goals, and moderate their mastery-avoidance tendencies.

The act of hiring a trainer is a sign of self-awareness and behavioural regulation—recognising one's own limitations and then seeking help. The participant's desire is fundamentally task mastery—they seek to improve, learn, and achieve. Perhaps another explanation is these participants' personalities engender them with what Elliot and Thrash (2002) described as an 'avoidance temperament', which participants must manage to achieve their goals when using the horse.

5.5.1.3 The Process's Influence on Keeping and Selling

The perceived quality of the horse-human relationship is influenced by whether the horse's behaviour is perceived as safe. The ability to change the quality of the relationship is seemingly dependent on the competency of the participant in training the horse. Safety and willingness coincide. As participants observed their horses behaving more safely over time or responding willingly, they experienced positive emotions such as pleasure; however, dangerous, unpredictable, or disobedient behaviour resulted in them not liking their horses as much. Birke et al. (2010) made similar observations when exploring narratives of horse owners.

Persistent disconnects in communication not only prompted participants to consider rehoming horses—relinquishing ownership of that individual horse—but also inspired participants to keep horses, fearing for the future of such ill-behaved, difficult-to-train animals outside their care. This appears to be a blame-management strategy in addition to those in the *caregiving* theme (Section 5.3.3.2) that preserves participants' sense of competence in a situation of relationship breakdown.

In some instances, as discussed by Wendy in Section 4.5.4, selling or rehoming a horse is interpreted as failure—failure of a relationship. This is different to caregiving where failure to

improve an illness or injury results in the death of a horse, wherein a participant ultimately feels competent because they've still acted in the best interests of the horse. When using the horse, failure at competent communication appears more psychologically challenging to manage. If the horse is healthy but a source of unpleasant experiences, participants feel incompetent; but to give up the horse is to relinquish autonomy of care as evidenced by Abigail's hesitation in getting rid of a "*difficult*" horse.

In these conflict situations, participants continued horse ownership likely motivated by what Ryan and Deci (2017) labelled introjected motivation for horse ownership (i.e. put pressure on themselves) and how Conroy et al. (2002) describe fear of failure. It appears this is especially evident if it is a participant's first or only horse; they may not be able to cope with the idea of being horseless (i.e. relinquishing autonomy of ownership) or with the idea of perceiving themselves as incapable (i.e. incompetent). The participants, therefore keep the horse despite the conflict in communication, assuming the horse has not caused them serious physical harm. As noted by Wendy, for professional trainers there is an expectation of being so competent that others will pay them to train a horse. The perceived failure of competent communication for them has further social and economic consequences making relinquishing ownership of the horse that much more difficult.

Fear of failure includes the fear of being socially judged as incompetent (Conroy, 2002). There is evidence in literature that participants' fear of social judgement is founded. The culture of equestrianism described by Birke (2008) and Birke and Brandt (2009) is one where participants are expected to 'get on with it' or be 'tough'. As a result, participants continue through difficult relationships with horses, avoiding the social stigma associated with failure. In summary, the motivation for a participant keeping horse they are persistently in conflict with is both internally, and externally driven but not emotionally satisfying. Consequently, horse ownership is no longer a purely intrinsic, self-determined endeavour.

5.5.1.4 Process and the Influence of Participant Circumstances

The *process* of *using the horse* is also influenced by the same participant circumstances of available time and perceived knowledge. As with the theme *caregiving*, people worry if they feel they lack the skills they think they need. Their perceived lack of skill in developing competent communication and repeated poor behaviour of horses is not only a psychological threat but also a physical threat. As Thompson and Nesci (2016) proposed, the relationship with the horse helps participants manage the risks associated with training horses. Therefore,

a participant's lack of skill and knowledge to competently communicate when using the horse makes them feel unsafe and less able to manage the risks.

Learning to communicate with horses is accepted by participants and academics as a bodily experience and as something that must be learned through experience over a great deal of time (e.g. Brandt, 2004; Brandt, 2006; Birke & Brandt, 2009; Dashper, 2016; Jackman et al., 2019). Consequently, trainers are employed to help participants, but these entail additional costs, adding to the strain on personal resources. As such, participant circumstances of time and money influence participants' ability to develop their communication skills, impacting horse ownership decisions to keep or sell an individual horse.

5.5.1.5 Process Fulfils Relatedness Needs Through a Horse-Human Bond and Caregiving

Reflecting on how they feel about their horses, participants felt 'lucky'. Luck was not in reference to every horse but in relation to specific horses—horses that demonstrated more willingness and cooperation. Perception of the horse as a consistently, reliable, willing partner—including offering behaviours a participant desires without being asked—transforms the horse-human relationship into a bond.

Perceived willingness of the horses to participate (i.e. not throwing the participant on the floor) fits with what Ryan and Deci (2017) described as autonomous engagement. Relatedness need satisfaction relies on perceiving the 'other' as autonomously and willingly engaged and on being autonomous oneself (p. 294). In *caregiving,* the autonomous perception is when the horse appears to interact with the participant unconditionally and of its own volition. In *using the horse,* interactions are always instigated by the participant. In this sense power is asymmetrical in favour of the human. As participants in this study acknowledge, their horses do not choose to be trained or to perform. Participants experience the willingness of the horse as volitional because they perceive the horse capable of not doing as it is asked. The balance of physical power in the horse-human relationship is in favour of the horse. As a result, even though participation by the horse is not technically volitional or unconditional, participants experience fulfilment of relatedness needs.

Luck is normally associated with chance rather than achievement. Thus, the existence of a horse-human bond was not attributed by participants to their competence but rather to a serendipitous occurrence. Indeed, some participants reported instantaneous attraction or bonds with specific horses. The idea of luck also factored in participants' personal circumstances (e.g. time, money, knowing enough), finding a horse with a willing personality,

and the horse's physical attributes (e.g. athleticism, aesthetics).

Even in the event of a desirable experience such as a horse-human bond, participants absolved themselves of responsibility. Participants mystify their role in the creation of the bond, mirroring the way they employ blame-management in situations of horse-human relationship failure (Section 5.3.3.2). Birke and Thompson (2018) argue it is largely the human's understanding of the human-horse relationship that determines stability of the bond and with this responsibility, the blame-management strategy may absolve the discomfort for the less stable or unsuccessful human-horse relationships a participant experienced. Mystifying the relationship is further used to support positive relationships. Participants noted being the only person able to ride or handle a specific horse and this was a choice by the horse, as opposed to attributing the relationship their own communication skills. Being the sole person to ride or interact with the horse was considered evidence of the horse-human bond. These ideas of separation between the participant, their own competency, and others are used as evidence of attachment of their horse to them. Furthermore, these ideas fuel participants' desire to continue autonomy of horse ownership, to control care decisions and use of the horse, which protects their human-horse relationships and subsequent psychological well-being.

5.5.2 Outcome (e.g. Winning) Dressage Is Performance of the Process

Participants like Mara and Harry discussed winning competitions and obtaining enjoyment from the outcome of the performance. These participants wanted to be judged as better or more masterful at training than their competition peers. By definition, competitive dressage is a subjective judgement on the training of the horse; thus, the process of training and the horse-human relationship are imperative to a successful performance and outcome. Performance goals have an externally motivated element, as performance is about the individual in comparison to others rather than just the individual to themselves (Dweck & Molden, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

5.5.2.1 Professional Trainers and Pursuing Achievement

For professional trainers, success in the competitive arena is an important selling point for their business. Success in dressage competition demonstrates their competency in training, meaning others will hire them to help train them and their horse. As a result, success in the competition arena for professionals is externally motivated by access to resources such as money, based on social judgement of their competency. This may be why professional trainers

had more frequently considered getting out of horses. External pressures negatively impacted their motivation to participate. However, their reasons for staying involved revolved around the enjoyment of the process of training and caring for the horses.

Lamperd et al. (2016) investigated what makes an elite equestrian, defining 'elite' as professional trainers who actively coached, had at least a decade of experience, and held at least one title at international championship competition. They concluded that their elite equestrians had mastery-approach goals focusing on the development of the horse while below elite level had more performance-focused tendencies. Lamperd et al. (2016) proposed that once the elite level is achieved, the performance-approach goals diminish and riders are more intrinsically motivated like those observed in mastery-approach goals. No participants in this study met Lamperd et al.'s (2016) criteria for elite riders; however, of the professionals three did compete at international level, all had success at a national level, and all but one held ambitions of meeting Lamperd et al.'s elite criteria. Importantly, this study demonstrates mastery goals are prominent at below elite levels, but for professional trainers, performance goals are important for sustaining their business. Additionally, both mastery-approach and performance-approach goals exist simultaneously for both professionals and non-professional participants.

Demonstrating participants to have both mastery-approach and performance-approach simultaneously is an infrequent occurrence in achievement literature. Often, multiple goals are represented as having multiple targets or aims to achieve (e.g. run the fastest, and furthest) rather than demonstrating multiple goal types, such as mastery and performance (e.g. Ballard et al., 2016). Elliot and Murayama (2008) maintained that multiple achievement goal types (e.g. mastery and performance) can be pursued at the same time, but they proposed it is best to measure them separately. This can mean goal types are inadvertently pitted against each other in efforts to separate them in questionnaires, resulting in much of the literature speaking about goal types in the singular (i.e. mastery or performance). As this study used a semi-structured interview method with open coding, participants' goal types could be displayed without conflict.

5.5.2.2 Human-Horse Relationship and Outcome

Competent communication is imperative for conflict-free communication, which is a foundation of a successful performance in competition. Competition communication is one foundation of a horse-human relationship. Therefore a relationship underpins successful

performance. There are other factors that influence performance in the ring, such as the aptitude of a horse through its physical characteristics, personality, or age. The combination of physical characteristics, personality, and knowing the horse through the bond helps explain Beauchamp and Whinton's (2005) self-efficacy and other-efficacy results. Knowing the horse allows the owner to have faith in their horse's capabilities and confidence in how to communicate with the horse to elicit a successful performance. Knowing the horse also results in an owner's ability to recognise their horse's training or physical limitations that hinder successful performance.

Returning to Roberta's opening quote to Section 4.5.1, performance may not be winning the class. Those participants who have mastered their activity enough to compete and demonstrate a positive horse-human relationship with a particularly difficult horse will have experienced achievement through the process. For the purposes of this discussion around performance, it is accepted that the horses referred to by participants had sufficient aptitude to successfully compete at the level in which participants participated. However, participants discussed how the horse's attributes and ability to progress or continue to perform impacted decisions for *keeping or selling* horses as discussed in securing the horse.

5.5.3 Why Participants Participate in Dressage

The theme of *using the horse* highlights participants' experience of the discipline of dressage. While the thesis seeks to understand horse ownership, part of the theme of *using the horse* highlights the attraction to dressage discipline and thus why participants engage in dressage. These are additional findings that emerged when analysing the results in association with the achievement motivation literature rather than the interviews alone and is therefore included here. This section further suggests that motivation for equestrian discipline choice is separable from the motivation for horse ownership.

Dressage by definition means 'to train', and so whatever horse a participant competed with, or was training towards the goal of competing with, was inevitably labelled a dressage horse, even if it was not bred specifically under the label 'dressage'. The format of dressage competition itself may foster an environment of dual goal pursuits and intrinsic motivation beyond the aesthetics as proposed by Wolframm et al. (2015). Viewing the results through the achievement goal concept provides additional insights into the appeal of the dressage discipline. Progressing through the levels of dressage competition or seeking to develop a more willing horse is about mastery of training of the horse (BD, 2019). Participants'

enjoyment of the *process* of training even in the competitive arena is indicative of intrinsic motivation associated with task mastery. The task mastery is reinforced by the design of the dressage competition.

Unlike in most sports, dressage competitors receive written, self-referential feedback on their achievement in dressage tests. The scores for individuals are averaged into an overall percentage. The percentage is compared against others' percentages in the same test class, providing normative feedback (comparison amongst peers). Feedback influences achievement goals. Pekrun et al. (2014) discussed the outcome of anticipated feedback, and Goetz et al. (2016) commented on how feedback, once received, impacts emotions associated with achievement goals. Pekrun et al.'s (2014) findings indicate anticipated self-referential feedback fostered mastery goals, while normative feedback fostered performance-approach goals. When participants enter a competition, they anticipate both types of feedback as these form the format of the equestrian dressage discipline.

Goetz et al. (2016) concluded that positive feedback has the ability to impact both mastery-approach and performance-approach goals, which can increase positive emotions like hope for success and enjoyment of developing skills, respectively. Stephen Clarke, Dressage Judge General for the FEI, stated in 2016 that dressage judges are guided to provide constructive and encouraging feedback on how the horse-human partnership performed (Reaseheath College, 2019). Indeed, participants perceived dressage judge feedback as validation of their competency, even more so than placing. Feedback from competitive dressage tests likely provided enjoyment of the skill areas in which participants performed well, subsequently fostering hope of performing like that again. It is possible the nature of the self-referential feedback mediates any negative consequences of failure of normatively measured performance-approach goals (Goetz et al., 2016).

5.5.4 Human-Human Interaction and Using the Horse

Dressage judge feedback was deemed different to feedback of social peers. Participants commented that negative feedback or the anticipation of negative feedback dissuaded people from participating in competition. Ryan and Deci (2017) proposed that the style of administration of negative feedback may play a role in how it affects intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Specifically, if the feedback implies incompetence, it can produce personal helplessness, which can lead to amotivation.

Dressage judge feedback was perceived as competency-enhancing, which can positively impact intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 155). The feedback from judges is often about improvements that need to be made rather than complimentary feedback. This negative feedback can be classed as constructive feedback. Carpentier and Mageau (2013) demonstrated that when feedback was clearly intended to improve and aid athletes, it enhanced rather than diminished motivation. Thus, dressage feedback obtained from participation in a competition supports intrinsic mastery motivation, whereas comments from other competitors or other horse owners diminish motivation for using the horse.

Participants described that what may appear to be competence-enhancing feedback from social peers is actually disingenuous or backhanded compliments. Conversely, when people receive negative feedback, their intrinsic motivation diminishes. Instead of *getting out of horses,* participants seek ways to reduce the incoming feedback. Graham in particular described participants pre-emptively guarding themselves from judgement by setting others' expectations low or by avoiding riding in front of others. (I observed participants similarly pre-empting judgement by downplaying their achievements or competency when I recruited them and during the interviews.) The negative feedback experiences—although resulting in negative emotions—do not appear to be enough to dissuade horse ownership, nor do participants' recounted experiences mean that all encounters with other horse people are negative, as discussed previously. However, the comments do impact how participants use their horses and the extent to which they want to participate in competitive dressage.

Participants are not discouraged from horse ownership because their competency (i.e. ability to care-give or ride) is likely perceived as a learned rather than a fixed attribute. Competency theories suggest a person's belief in their trait's malleable or fixed nature impacts the intensity of negative feelings and goal orientations (Dweck & Molden, 2005). Those who believe in the malleable nature of their ability will suffer less reduction in self-esteem from negative feedback they receive. Their belief their trait can be improved through learning means the feedback is not representative of something that is fixed about them but something they have the power to alter (Dweck & Molden, 2005). In research examining goals related to learning (competence acquisitions) and performance (competence validation), Grant and Dweck (2003) found that those who have learning goals tend to engage in motivational strategies and self-regulatory behaviours that supported improved performance; those seeking validation did not engage in such self-regulatory behaviours. Participants' responses in this study

indicate they engaged in self-regulatory behaviours that fostered their continued learning rather than quit or lose interest in horses.

While the comments from peers in the horse community across the motivation themes are frequently negative, these comments do not appear to diminish the motivation to own horses because of the combination of motivation themes. Instead, the comments of others result in participants seeking to control incoming feedback and to mediate opportunities for negative experiences. The negative feedback experience is accepted as an established—although disliked—part of the horse environment which participants have to manage as horse owners. Formal, constructive feedback from the performance of dressage is likely to promote mastery goals and thus intrinsic motivation.

5.5.5 Summary of Using the Horse

Competency in the *process* of using the horse promotes successful performance *outcomes* of using the horse. Competency in the *process* of training the horse can develop a horse-human bond independently of a bond developed in *caregiving*. Overall, participants demonstrated mastery goals indicating a desire to learn and improve rather than win competitions. The format of the competitive dressage discipline nurtures mastery-approach goals. In social situations such as a competition, participants indicated attempts to lower others' expectations, avoiding social judgement other than that of the dressage judge. Autonomy of horse ownership allows participants to have free choice in developing their competence in communication (i.e. horse-human relationship) and to pursue their mastery-approach goals. Autonomy also serves to protect any relationship bond developed during the *process* of training.

The discussion so far has explained how the results of each theme demonstrated motivation or influenced motivation for horse ownership. The following section covers the effects of the study's limitations to the results and discussion.

5.6 Methodological Limitations

This section recognises the limitations of the methodology and discusses how this informs the boundaries and potential scope for the horse ownership motivation theory.

5.6.1 Only People Who Perceived Themselves as Horse Owners

For this study the researcher only spoke with people who considered themselves to be horse owners—even when they were in a break between horses. Therefore, those who decided to cease ownership and involvement with horses (should they exist) have not been considered

in this discussion. Horse owners were a suitable population because the thesis focused on the motivations for horse ownership. Potentially demotivating experiences were examined and included for the purposes of illustrating participants' coping strategies for their negative experiences. However, all participants continued horse ownership despite unpleasant experiences and even after actively contemplating the cessation of horse ownership. As this study did not include experiences of ceasing horse ownership, no firm conclusions can be made about why people cease horse ownership or involvement with horses.

5.6.2 Only Highly Involved Horse Owners

The thesis initially aimed to speak with both low-involvement and high-involvement horse owners. As a hidden population within the equestrian community, low-involvement horse owners are accessible only through personal connections or via gatekeepers (e.g. professional trainers). In the end, neither purposive nor snowball sampling resulted in the recruitment of a low-involved participant. The interview guide was designed to help distinguish participants by their roles, adopting assumptions about how roles in the equestrian community are defined. For example, a professional trainer may hire a yard manager or grooms. Participants in this study considered themselves highly involved in decision-making for their horses regardless of their traditional classification or whether they paid others to assist them in the workload or decision-making. This strengthens the findings because participants had common experiences despite the demographically observable differences normally used to group equestrians.

5.6.3 Only People Who Cared About Their Animals

As only highly involved horse owners were interviewed, they all were actively involved in making decisions about their horses. Consequently they all demonstrated concern for the welfare of their horses, which drove their motivation for horse ownership. This study can offer no comment on motivations of horse owners who purposefully neglect their horses nor on people who do not like horses.

5.6.4 Anthropocentric

This study is anthropocentric, focusing on the perspectives of the participants. No effort was made to assess horses or the motivation from the horses' perspectives. Any comments referring to a horse's perspective were participant perceptions of their individual horse or their perceptions of horses in general.

5.6.4.1 Verification of Participants' Claims to Happy and Healthy Horses

The study neither verified nor deemed it appropriate to verify participants' claims of their horses' happiness or health. How the participant feels is separable from the actual welfare state of the horse. Participants' perception of their horses' happiness and health underpinned their motivation no matter how the horses' assessed emotional or physical state stood up against a common standard. An assessment of participants' horses' welfare would compare assessed welfare to participants' perceived welfare, resulting in a judgement on care rather than a judgement on the participants' motivations. Assessing horse welfare would have added fear of judgement, which would have negatively impacted recruitment, diminished participants' willingness to share vulnerabilities, and fostered exaggeration of their care efforts. Social judgement challenges their moral stance and identity as competent caregivers or competent communicators. Such psychological threats will be resisted with things like blame-management strategies to manage the negative emotional experience.

Importantly the study demonstrates how horse ownership meets basic psychological needs that support a person's subjective well-being; anyone inferring poor care presents a psychological threat. The population in this study is fairly reflective of the wider UK equestrian population. Those disseminating information (i.e. academics or lay press), assessing animal welfare, or seeking horse owner behavioural changes should approach horse owners in a psychologically supportive manner.

5.6.4.2 Verifying a Horse-Human Relationship or Bond

The study neither aimed to verify nor deemed it appropriate to verify the participants' perception of a bond. It is participants' perception of the bond that fosters the feelings of satisfaction that perpetuate their continued ownership of a specific horse. As with assessing welfare, assessing the relationship would create social judgement and pose a potential psychological threat. The research accepts relationships and bonds exist based on self-reports of these participants and those within the literature body and is thus able to discuss the development of those based on participants' responses.

5.6.5 Performance Avoidance

Performance-avoidance goals are rarely mentioned in open-ended research measures (Murayama et al., 2014, p. 199). No participant spoke about how they wanted to avoid failure in the competitive environment.

5.6.6 People Avoided Social Judgement During Interviews

Participants' concern for social judgement was evident within the interviews. Participants may have limited their stories to ones that demonstrated their competency in caregiving. For example, some employed blame-management techniques as described by Birke et al. (2010), explaining how they 'rescued' horses or sought good homes for horses. With regard to riding ability, participants acted to lower the interviewer's expectations. More generally during interviews, participants would qualify statements, implying an emotional experience as 'silly' or describing a difficult or dangerous horse as also being very sweet.

This 'guard' against social judgement also affected recruitment. While people expressed interest in the study, some people would immediately deflect saying they did not compete at a high enough level or have enough experience. There was a general sense of wariness at the start of most interviews, though tensions eased as an interview progressed. The study thus captures those who were willing to face potential judgement and share their experiences.

5.6.7 Modelling Complexity

The model of horse ownership presented in this thesis is the result of a culmination of participants' experiences—participants who feel responsible for the everyday decisions about their horse. It is not intended to conform to an individual's path to horse ownership but instead represents a psychological process imbedded within their experience of horse ownership that motivates them to continue to own horses.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter used theories of motivation to explain why the emergent themes are motivating for horse ownership. In Figure 14, each theory was layered onto the emergent themes in the horse ownership motivation cycle model providing the explanation the process of horse-ownership motivation. A summarised model is included here in Figure 15. Horse ownership begins with an innate attraction to horses that develops through participants' first encounters with horses. In summary, participants wanted control over decision-making regarding appropriate care choices and using the horse, and these choices construct the human-horse relationship (Figure 15).

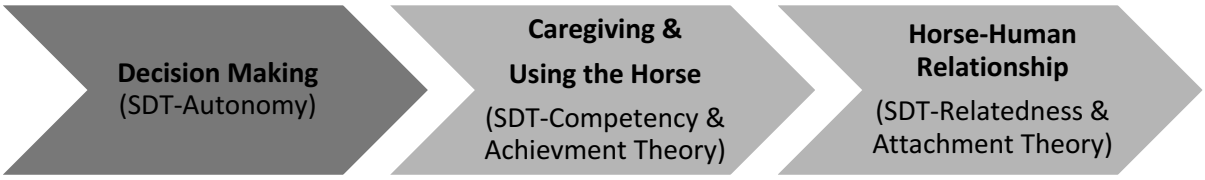


Figure 14 *Summarised linear model of horse ownership motivation including motivational theories*

Figure 15 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners – illustrating the relationship between the emergent motivation themes and equestrian literature clusters.****Figure 16*** *Summarised linear model of horse ownership motivation including motivational theories*

Figure 17 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners – illustrating the relationship between the emergent motivation themes and equestrian literature clusters.*

Figure 18 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners – illustrating the relationship between the emergent motivation themes and equestrian literature clusters.****Figure 19*** *Summarised linear model of horse ownership motivation including motivational theories*

Figure 20 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners – illustrating the relationship between the emergent motivation themes and equestrian literature clusters.****Figure 21*** *Summarised linear model of horse ownership motivation including motivational theories*

Self-determination theory provides the explanation for why horse ownership is fulfilling through psychological needs of competency, autonomy, and relatedness. The need to have autonomy over decisions and freedom to practice competency drives the desire to become an owner. Autonomy of ownership provides the protection of the human-horse relationship that can develop. Competency is experienced in two main areas: *caregiving* and *the process of using the horse*; both can result in building a bond with the horse independent of each other. The quality of a participant's relationship with an individual horse is determined by the

participant's competency in communicating and caregiving. The quality of the relationship in turn impacts their decision to continue ownership (i.e. keep it or sell it). When human-horse relationships are in persistent conflict horse ownership is motivated by introjected motivation or fear of failure, especially if the participant only has one horse.

The psychological need of relatedness explains why the human-horse relationship is motivating. Attachment theory explains that this relationship is characterised by the caregiving behavioural system rather than the attachment behavioural system most often used to explain human-animal relationships. As a caregiving relationship, it mirrors a parent-child relationship where the emotionally satisfying experiences are from providing care and knowing that the horse is 'happy and healthy'. Caregiving is potentially more intrinsically rewarding than receiving care and as a prosocial behaviour it requires the participants to emotionally and behaviourally self-regulate which further facilitates conflict free communication and thus competent communication.

Conflict free communication is imperative when *using the horse* to build relationships with horses and achieve competitive goals. Both mastery approach and performance approach achievement motivations were present in the participant sample. For participants who specifically expressed *outcome* (performance) oriented goals their *process* (mastery) oriented goals existed simultaneously. Participants both wanted to master the competitive task and do the task better than their peers. As a competitive discipline, dressage offers feedback that supports motivation through two goal types and provides an explanation for why the discipline of dressage is motivating as an activity separable from the motivation for horse ownership.

The next chapter discusses how the findings contribute to the existing equestrian literature. Ideas for future research are also considered.

Chapter 6: Horse Ownership Motivation and Contributions to Equestrianism Discourse

6.1 Introduction to Chapter 6

The results from this study demonstrate motivation for horse ownership is about the control over decision making related to caring for and using the horse and which ultimately protects the human-horse relationship. Whereas the previous chapter explained the motivation for horse ownership, this chapter explains the how the findings from this study discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 inform the wider discourse of equestrianism. The findings of this study are discussed in relation to the equestrian literature clusters introduced in Chapter 1, meeting objective 4:

4. To critically analyse motivations of dressage horse owners emergent from the inductive investigation, in relation to existing theory, knowledge, and any relevant equine industry dressage horse owner-related activities.

This chapter is structured by each of the five literature clusters in the same order as presented Chapter 1. Building on Figure 13 and Figure 14, Figure 16 layers the literature clusters over the horse ownership motivation model, thus showing how the horse ownership motivation cycle uses and connects the literature clusters. The motivational model harnesses these sometimes disparate literature bodies together, forming them into a team to drive the discourse of equestrianism forward. The economic and marketing cluster deals with the people who participate and thus fits with describing who 'enters' the horse ownership motivation cycle. The literature clusters horse behaviour and horse-human interaction are connected with the themes *caregiving, using the horse,* and the product of the *human-horse relationship*. The horse riding and performance literature cluster relates specifically to using the horse nesting inside the horse behaviour and human-horse interaction literature. Connecting with the influencing theme human-human interaction is the human-human interaction literature. Additionally, the findings of this study, at times, contributes new perspectives to each literature cluster.

As with Chapter 5, the introduction of some additional references to those found in the literature review is required to support the discussion of this study's emergent findings. The chapter ends by proposing how the developments in discourse construct a future research agenda for equestrianism.

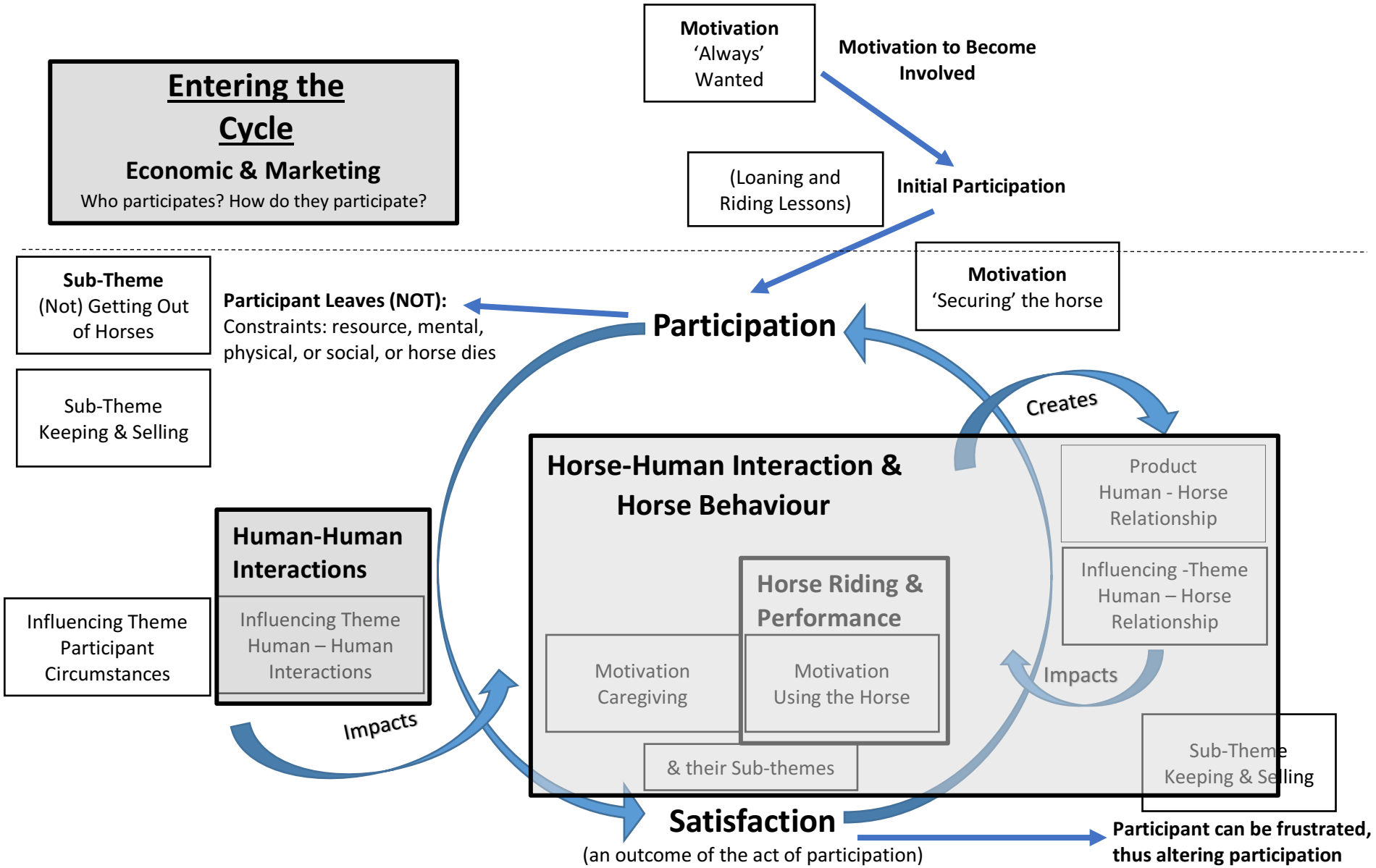


Figure 22 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners – illustrating the relationship between the emergent motivation themes and equestrian literature clusters*

6.2 Economic and Marketing Discourse

As horse ownership is the core of the equestrian industry (Henley Centre, 2004), the study on motivations for horse ownership informs discussion on how 'horse owner' is defined and on the overlap of equestrian roles within individuals. The findings synchronise with marketing literature, explaining horse ownership and offering evidence of a connection between riding school participation and horse ownership.

6.2.1 Defining 'Horse Owner'

The study takes a novel approach in describing horse owners as high- or low-involvement consumers and in actively capturing multiple roles a person perceives to fill in relation to their horse. Categorizing the level of involvement provides an additional dynamic to the definition of horse owner as being a person in possession of a horse. Thus, the description through an involvement level is inclusive of a horse owner's social identity as they may fulfil more than one role. Additionally, it describes equestrians by their decision-making responsibilities and allows these decision-making roles to be distinct but able to be held by one person at the same time. This perspective helps incorporate the overlap and drift between equestrians' roles observed in the Henley Report (2004), meaning the label allocated to a group is more reflective of their decision-making involvement. Involvement adds an adjective before the horse owner label: 'highly involved' horse owners or 'low involved' horse owners.

6.2.2 Equestrian Roles

Different roles within equestrianism are often isolated from each other or used as a basis for traditional industry surveys. This study reiterates the overlap between equestrian role groups observed by the Henley Centre (2004): "*[T]hough the industry can be broadly divided into professional and leisure activities, in reality the industry participants cannot be exclusively divided into these camps. There are strong linkages, and significant overlaps, between sectors that cannot be ignored*" (p. 2). The Henley Centre (2004) continued, "*[T]here are many complicated dynamics and overlaps between sectors. These are most pronounced when thinking about the nature of involvement in the industry from labour, entrepreneurs and horses*" (p. 16).

Some roles are stereotypically attributed to caregiving, like groom or yard manager, while trainer and professional rider are attributed to using the horse. Each participant in this study, regardless of their sector, felt like they fulfilled roles associated with both caregiving and using their horse. Because different interactions with the horse are independently motivating for

horse ownership, participating in any one role associated with caregiving or using the horse can be motivating for horse ownership. At times, horse owners pay others to help them in a particular role but do not relinquish their identity with whatever role they are being helped with. The decision to hire others does not denote a participant's disdain for the role. Rather, hiring someone else is a necessity to help a participant use the horse and experience a sense of achievement. Professional riders hire grooms so they can focus on riding. Leisure riders pay a yard manager so they can spend their time in what Jyrinki and Laaksonen (2011) described as 'being with' their horse. Trainers are hired by professional riders and leisure riders alike to help riders develop competencies when using the horse.

6.2.3 Marketing Explanations for Horse Ownership

Participants perceived there to be multiple avenues for enjoyment with their horses like they perceived themselves to fulfil differing roles in relation to their horse. The findings from this study support Scantlebury et al.'s (2014) approach to investigating owner typologies because it incorporates the multiple ways participants experience their horse. Additionally, as with racehorse owners in the ROA survey (2016) and Gamrat and Sauer (2016), horse ownership for participants in this study was about the experience of horse ownership. However, the experiences were different for participants in this study compared the more 'social' experience proposed by the ROA survey (2016) and Gamrat and Sauer (2016). In this study participants were motivated by the autonomy of ownership, the competency from their decision making and communication with the horse, and the subsequent relationship they developed with the horse. Furthermore, this study's findings suggested the overall social experience was largely negative except for reference to specific friendship groups by Isabelle, Payton, and Bethany. Additionally, winning or even participating in a competition was often an enjoyable bonus to the horse ownership experience and separable from the motivation to fulfil the ownership role in the first place as discussed in Section 5.5.2 and 5.5.3.

6.2.4 Link Between Riding Schools and Horse Ownership

The findings highlight the role of riding schools in preparing individuals for horse ownership. The most recent BETA survey (2019) notes a downward trend in horse-owning households but an upward trend in riding, indicating a desire to ride. There are two insights this thesis offers in addition to BETA's own analysis and conclusions (yet to be fully published). Firstly, this study connects the 2019 BETA findings between horse ownership and riding (as of 24 October 2019) by demonstrating riding lessons foster the motivation for horse ownership by providing opportunities to develop competency in communicating with horses. However, as their

competencies developed participants desire more autonomy over the opportunities to communicate with the horse and make decisions about the care of the horse to sustain their satisfaction. As horse riding is a gateway to horse ownership. BETA's data showing an increase in horse riding may be a signal that the next survey may show in an increase in horse ownership. There are certainly other factors that influence this; however, this study finds a commonality that cannot be ignored.

Secondly, former horse owners may make up a portion of those who took up riding lessons. Former horse owners who gave up ownership did so for various reasons, but a diminished interest in horses was unlikely to be one of them. They likely ceased ownership due to the death of their horse or due to a change in circumstances that reduced the available resources that enabled horse ownership. As discussed by participants in Section 4.2.1.1, when horse owners stop being a horse owner, they continue to seek ways to be involved with horses. There is an opportunity to establish whether the increase in the number of people riding in the BETA (2019) survey were actually new industry participants or whether the riders are former horse owners continuing their 'horsey' involvement without horse ownership.

6.3 Horse Behaviour Discourse

This study highlights the way participants speak about their horses and contributes to the discussion of horse owner perceptions of horse behaviour and subsequent assessments of horse welfare. As noted in Section 1.9.2 horses' owners are used as gateways to information about the horses they own (e.g. Lee et al., 2001; Albright et al., 2009; Hockenhull & Creighton, 2013b) and often the information is collected through *a priori* survey methods (e.g. McBride & Long, 2001; Litva et al., 2010; Hötzel et al., 2019; Fenner et al., 2019). Consequently, the way horse owners speak about their horse's behaviour is important, as well as understanding the way in which horse owners interpret the *a priori* choices they are faced with in surveys.

6.3.1 Horse Owner Discourse

Discourse analysis in this study revealed that word choice varies widely when describing similar states in different horses [see Appendix J, code: Horse-Human Interaction (yellow)]. All participants gave their horses agency by perceiving them as having particular characteristics or being in particular emotional states. Participants' varied attempts at expressing a horse's state of being is perhaps greater evidence of 'gaps' in the human-animal relationship lexicon than Bradshaw's (2016) suggestion that people lack sufficient word choices to describe the relationship between humans and animals. Bradshaw (2016) argues people refer to their

animals as children because of this lack of word choice. However, the words of participants in this study, as explained by attachment theory, strongly suggest the human horse relationship is a parent to child relationship when considering peoples' emotional experience with their horse, their reported behaviour towards the horse, and the reported behaviour of the horse towards them. What appears difficult is translating and organising this discourse which is discussed more in 6.6.2.2.1 as a behaviour that happens in human-human interactions.

6.3.2 Language Use and the Perception of Welfare

Participants' expression of their horse's characteristics and emotional states is evidence of prosocial behaviour toward their horse as an act of anthropomorphism, which is an innate phenomenon in human behaviour. However, it is also a phenomenon heavily argued as detrimental to animal welfare (Serpell, 2002). The legacy of an anti-anthropomorphism approach in equestrianism is a community that battles with articulating the subjective aspects of the horse experience, which this study demonstrates are integral to developing the human-horse relationship and subsequent motivation for horse ownership.

One's equestrian discourse signals to other equestrians one's allegiances to different training methodologies (Birke, 2008) and subsequent judgement as an insider or outsider to the group. It also leads to researchers discounting or accepting participants' reported perceptions in relation to scientific literature (e.g. Horseman et al., 2017; Hötzel et al., 2019). This study, in agreement with Savvides (2012), shows that participants seek the same outcome of a happy and content horse regardless of training methodology or use of technical scientific language—and it is an outcome each participant perceived to have achieved.

Bradshaw and Casey (2007) posited, "*[A]nthropomorphic owners are poor proxies for reporting their animals' [quality of life]*" (p. 149). There indeed may be conflict of interest when owners self-report, wanting to be socially perceived as taking care of their animals (Birke et al., 2010; Horseman et al., 2017). However, Butterfield et al. (2012) demonstrated that anthropomorphism promotes animal welfare—the concept by which quality of life is measured. Through participants' discourse this study found participants' anthropomorphic tendencies to be central to the trial and error process in both the *caregiving* and *using the horse* themes (Sections 5.4 and 5.5 respectively). The anthropomorphic tendencies were participants' expressions of being mind-minded about their horse in efforts to make decisions and take actions that bring their horse to states of being happy and healthy or perceived as feedback from the horse informing participants of their competency in communicating.

Undoubtedly, there is a conceptual divide between the desire to provide good welfare and the achievement of good welfare. This discourse of this study's participants demonstrates the former, while inferring the latter based on self-reports of human-horse relationships or bonds. The relationship requires the human to know the horse and the horse the human. In such an intimate relationship, owners are best placed for knowing their horses' quality of life. When participants' horses' quality of life was in jeopardy, the participants (all of them) experienced negative emotions reducing their own perceived quality of life.

6.4 Horse Riding and Performance Discourse

Using the horse for leisurely riding and competitive sport performance is a common practice in the equestrian community. This study demonstrated that no matter the competitive level, *using the horse* offers an incentive for horse ownership as a source of achievement and subsequently offers connections between the horse riding and performance literature: Weiner's (1972, 1985) achievement motivation (Lamperd et al., 2016), Bandura's (1982) self-efficacy (Beauchamp & Whinton, 2005), Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) flow theory (Jackman et al., 2015), and Deci & Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (Mitchell, 2013).

As stated in the introduction (Section 1.9.3), this literature cluster has strong parallels with human-horse interaction clusters due to the physical interaction between the horse and human, but the horse is normally regarded as a 'tool', necessary equipment to participate in the activity or achieve a goal (Dashper, 2014; Dumbell et al., 2018). This study provides further evidence that connects the horse riding and performance cluster to the human-horse interaction cluster. The findings suggest participants experience human-horse relationships when *using the horse* that are equal to, or similar to, those developed when providing day-to-day care. Part of their sense of achievement came from the *process (e.g. training)* of *using the horse* as discussed in Section 5.5.1. Through the *process,* human-horse relationships are developed as a result of competent communication which is evidenced through an absence of conflict. Through competent communication, the application of Stebbin's (1982) concept of serious leisure to equestrianism (see Dashper, 2017a; Schuurman & Franklin, 2016) is also further clarified. Additionally, this study provided an unexpected explanation for why people enjoy the discipline of dressage.

6.4.1 Achievement Motivation

The emergent themes support the use of the 2 x 2 achievement goal model to explain achievement motivation in equestrian sport. The findings of this study concur with Lamperd

et al.'s (2016) conclusions by demonstrating the existence of both achievement and outcome motivations in equestrian sport. Additionally, the findings build on Lamperd et al. (2016) by demonstrating that mastery-approach goals are prominent below elite level in equestrianism, suggesting participants at any competitive level in dressage (at least) have a dual-goal type approach. Dual-goal type approaches are suggested as plausible but rarely spoken about in literature due to the difficulty in measuring them with *a priori* methods simultaneously as discussed in 5.5.2.

Furthermore, the application of the achievement goal model to the results is consistent with the intrinsic motivation Mitchell (2013) outlined using self-determination theory, through sport motivation scales. Mitchell (2013) was able to establish an intrinsic motivation but not able to identify what was so motivating. This study suggests the intrinsic motivation is a result of competency experienced through a task mastery approach to the sport and the mastery of the competent communication that facilitates participation in the sport. These findings of competent communication mirror arguments by Jackman (2019) who integrates the idea of embodied communication between horse and human to explain the concept of flow in race horse jockeys. Participants in this study did not speak specifically about the riding experience enough to make conclusions about whether they experienced flow; however, the existence of competent communication makes flow possible in the context of horse riding and performance.

6.4.2 Competent Communication

The work builds on previous research on the communication of the horse-human interaction (e.g. Brandt, 2004; Brandt, 2006; Birke & Hockenhull, 2015; Jackman et al., 2019). This study uses the concept of competent communication, resulting in a human-horse relationship inherently linked to one's sense of achievement when using the horse. Competence encapsulates the ideas of skill, knowledge, and practice required for producing conflict-free communication that is emotionally satisfying and an outward sign of competence to others. Competent communication is similar to what Blokhuis and Lundgren (2017) defined as equestrian communication. However, competent communication encapsulates all training activity, not just communication that occurs when riding.

6.4.2.1 Serious Leisure

Competent communication explains equestrianism in the context of serious leisure. An important feature of serious leisure is expertise. Equestrianism is serious leisure in developing

expertise in competent communication. The issue of relationship raised by Schuurman & Franklin (2016) occurs as a result of competent communication and the idea of altruism with the animal encapsulated with competency in caregiving. The human-horse relationship resulting from competent communication is what extends equestrianism beyond serious leisure.

Dashper (2017a) argued that the equestrian way of life and the equestrian identity separate participants in horse activities from serious leisure. However, serious leisure hobbyists in dog agility (Gillespie et al., 2002) and triathlons (Kennelly et al., 2013) experience similar phenomena to those Dashper (2017a) described. The separation comes from the animal aspect. In horse ownership (and dog agility), the object used in the hobby is able to instigate interaction, express preferences, and learn. The relationship with the animal object is a powerful motivator for securing the autonomy of horse ownership and developing communication competencies. With horses, the logistics of caring for a dependent that lives outside the family home, and practicing competencies to gain the satisfaction of the relationship, result in the way-of-life for horse owners. In short, in the same way parenting is not a hobby, horse ownership for highly involved horse owners is not a hobby. However, in isolation, using the horse for a specific equestrian activity can be serious leisure.

6.4.3 Why Dressage and Performance Motivation

In addition to motivation for horse ownership, the findings demonstrate why participants enjoy the discipline of dressage. As a structured discipline, dressage fosters both mastery and outcome motivations. It is often suggested the aesthetics are the attraction to the dressage discipline (e.g. Wolframm et al., 2015). This study did not find this to be the case. For participants, the act of performing at competition and winning is a validation of their mastery of their sport and quality of their caregiving abilities. Although winning is a strong motivation for some participants (especially professional riders), their most emotionally satisfying experiences come from the day-to-day mastery experience. Participants such as Wendy and Julia commented on how some equestrians actively avoid riding in front of others because they worry about judgement from others. As such, aesthetics may have some impact on participation but is not the motivation for participation, instead motivation is about competency. The findings demonstrate achievement motivation for dressage is derived from mastery goals tied to human-horse interactions associated with dressage, rather than goals to portray a specific image (see Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2).

Furthermore, dressage fosters motivation through its competition design. Beauchamp and Whinton (2005) suggested to improve performance competitors should "*foster confidence in one's own performance abilities, but also confidence in the abilities of the dyadic partner (in this case the rider's horse) with whom one competes*". This study suggests that the format of the dressage competition inherently does this through self-referential (individual feedback sheet) and normative feedback (publicly posted score), and thus fosters motivation and continued participation.

6.5 Human-Horse Interaction

The horse-human relationship is the product of horse-human interaction and forms part of the cycle of horse ownership motivation. Competent caregiving and competent communication facilitate relationships developing into bonds fulfilling human relatedness needs. These bonds are explained through attachment theory and the innate human neuro-biological mechanism that is anthropomorphism. This study's finding differs to the human-animal relationship literature that focuses on attachment. Horse owners receive emotional satisfaction from caring for their horses rather than emotional comfort the animal actively provides the human. The protection of relationships and bonds, the ability to have control over decision-making for care, and opportunities to develop communication competencies are important catalysts for securing the autonomy of horse ownership.

6.5.1 Caregiving, Not Attachment

As defined by attachment theory, horse-human relationships are not mutual; they are akin to a parent-child relationship. The emotional satisfaction of horse ownership is derived from a human's capacity for empathy—the caregiving system—enabled by the neurobiological mechanism of anthropomorphism, and how this informed participants' perception of their horses' attachment to them (if any). Participants' caregiving activities were prominent and perceived as important and rewarding. The majority of human-animal relationship literature focuses on how humans use animals as attachment figures or attachment objects, arguing animals provide emotional comfort to their human (e.g. Sable, 1995; Beck & Madresh, 2008; Zilcha-Mano et al., 2012). In horse-human relationships, the emotional comfort is derived from knowing horses are happy and healthy as a result of the care provided and from seeing horses instigate unconditional interactions with their owners. The way horses are kept may limit horses' expression of attachment-like behaviours rather than prevent horses from developing attachment bonds, as suggested by Payne et al. (2016).

None of the participants demonstrated attachment to their horses as defined in attachment theory. Emotional discomfort as a result of their horses' discomfort was relieved through finding appropriate solutions to relieve their horses' discomfort (see Section 4.4.2). Seeking their horse after a bad day resulted in their emotional regulation before engaging with the horse and in satisfaction from using the horse rather than from any active comfort provided by the horse.

Thus, caregiving explains Dashper's (2017a) participants' satisfaction from mucking out (p. 57) because they were providing necessary instrumental care. In the case of Maurstad et al.'s (2013) the participant's satisfaction was from being with their horse (p. 333); time spent being with the horse provided the human time to observe their competency in making their horse happy and healthy, as well as being an opportunity for the horse to instigate interaction.

6.5.1.1 Keeping and Selling Horses

Building on the idea of spending time with horses integrated with idea of competency in caregiving further explains decisions about keeping and selling horses, especially in the cases of where participants owned multiple horses at one. Combining competency in caregiving with Jyrinki and Laaksonen's (2011) conceptualisation of how time is spent with horses, shows how when the 'doing' of instrumental care (i.e. mucking out) prevents 'being with' horses, the number of horses owned is reduced. As exemplified by multiple horse, horse owners in Section 4.3.3 the 'doing' of instrumental care takes up all of their time, they feel externally motivated by the horse's needs, or worry they are not providing quality of care. Horses that are kept are horses with whom the participants perceived a better relationship or who provided opportunities for achievement.

6.5.2 Horses and Subject-Object Duality

Birke (2008), Dashper (2014), and Coulter (2014) discussed the ambiguity of the horses being perceived as an object (i.e. tool) and a subject (i.e. family member). Participants in this study also switched between speaking of their horse as an object and a subject. Investigating the motivations for horse ownership revealed similar mechanisms between caregiving and using the horse. For example, looking directly above at Section 6.5.1.1 about keeping and selling horses, the ability to sell the horse as a possession is influenced by the subjective relationship. Both caregiving and using the horse required being mind-minded and competent, and both required the perception of the horse's unconditional compliance (whether actual or not).

To be able to use horses as what Dashper (2014) labelled 'tool of the trade', humans adopt them (at least in part) into the family. The act of being mind-minded inherently acknowledges a horse's agency and builds on Gilbert and Gillett's (2011) observation of the horse's dual capacity (as product and agent) in equestrian sport. For humans, horses exist simultaneously as an object and a subject during all human-horse interactions, even in the act of relinquishing ownership. Objective and subjective often exist as opposing, binary concepts (Letherby et al., 2013), which explains why participants' discourse alternated between the two when they described their experiences. Thus, here is a gap in the lexicon for explaining a tertiary, non-binary conceptualisation. For highly involved horse owners, the horse is neither just an object nor just a subject but is instead a subject-object. The inability to separate the subject from the object lends credence to arguments about safeguarding the horse physically and mentally whilst in use (Dashper, 2014), which is a shared aim of differing training methodologies (Savvides, 2012).

The idea of subject-object is not new, Darwin (1872/1897) observed similar attributes in both animals and humans that make humans more animal and animals more human—such a conceptualisation of human and animal expression contends that humans and animals are both subject-objects. At the time, Darwin's observations challenged a theologically driven philosophy of human exceptionalism that still exists today. One core argument for human exceptionalism is the power differential between humans and non-human things.

The power differential in the horse-human relationship is in favour of the human despite the physical power of the horse. Something participants are acutely aware of and helps form their perception of a relationship. However, a horse is, by default, an object of human use. Consequently, the debate of subject-object becomes a moral argument regarding socially acceptable uses of human power towards the horse and socially acceptable expressions (by human standards) of a horse's power. This is where the argument of a horse's agency impacts the moral argument; it colours perceptions on acceptable social use.

6.5.2.1 Subject-object duality means accepting human ethology in horse-human interactions

Considering acceptable social use of horses returns this discussion to the ideas of welfare and the anti-anthropomorphic position as a socially acceptable way to not only speak about the horse but interact and interpret the horse. The findings of this study challenge a pure anti-anthropomorphic approach because anti-anthropomorphism keeps horses as objects. It strips away a powerful human moral motivator of empathy, which this study finds is integral to positive horse-human interactions. Anti-anthropomorphism intentions of improving animals'

welfare are antithetical to its own approach. The very feeling of wanting to alleviate perceived distress in animals is an anthropomorphic act—an empathetic recognition with an intended prosocial outcome. To improve animals' lives, the anti-anthropomorphic approach directs people to interact with horses using knowledge of an animal's species-specific ethology (e.g. McLean & McBride, 2010), which can be extended to 'naturalness' of the animal.

Naturalness as applied to horse-human interactions exists on a spectrum and is horse-focused. At one extreme, naturalness is viewed as animals completely detached from human interaction (Yeates, 2018). At the other is natural horsemanship interactions where humans aim 'speak horse' and train and manage horses as if they were detached from the human environment. Natural horsemanship, consequently, uses an interpretation of horses' ethology but also a reliance on horses' agency (Fureix et al., 2009; Birke, 2008). However, horses are not detached from humans, and thus interactions occur. For example, human-horse relationship-bonds are perceived by the human through volitional acts of the horse (see Sections 4.4.3 and 4.5.3) and humans have control by providing the opportunity through available space and time for these interactions to occur. Horses by default are objects of human society, and to successfully use them requires a subjective exchange. To do this requires both knowledge of horse ethology and anthropomorphism—a naturalness of human evolution. This study argues both horse ethology and human ethology are engaged to form a relationship that is motivating for humans and promotes psychological well-being. Thusly, both perspectives should be actively included in human-animal relationship discourse.

Furthermore, considering human ethology alongside horse ethology addresses a call by Thompson and Clarkson (2019), who also commented extreme avoidance of anthropomorphism is problematic (p. 132). This study beings to answer the same paper's query about how anthropomorphism functions within the human-horse relationship., this study argues anthropomorphism is firstly an innate emotional process and secondly a cognitive recognition of species differences. Rather than a factual like us/not like us as Thompson and Clarkson (2019) proposed (although important), the solution may be more time-consuming, involving coaching to build a reflective process about the participants' experience in relation to the horse. It would need to avoid direct dismissal of a participant's interpretation because it may be threatening to the participants psychological well-being. Such psychological threats where reported by participants in this study (e.g. Section 4.4.5 and 4.5.8) and the reason they found human-human interactions with other horse owners

unpleasant. The participants felt social judged about their competency and thus their human-horse relationship.

6.6 Human-Human Interactions

This thesis contributes new knowledge on the interaction of members of the equestrian community, and how they facilitate or impact motivation for horse ownership. Negative experiences interacting with horse owners either through loaning, borrowing, or riding lessons, made participants want to become horse owners themselves. The thesis also provides insights into participants' initial learning experiences as horse owners.

The behaviour of other horse people was cited by a few participants as some of their most negative equestrian experiences. For a smaller number, horse people are a positive experience as noted by Bethany, Isabelle, and Payton. Human-human interactions influence horse ownership by contributing to the desire to control the decision-making for caretaking and to control using the horse. Horses—even feral herds—are owned by somebody. A person wishing to become involved with horses gains access via another human being. Once interacting with the horse, the development of communication and caregiving begins and thus some sense of a relationship. Human-human interactions then impact horse owners' competency.

6.6.1 Autonomy

When participants interact with other people's horses, the social dynamic of the interaction is triadic, similar to the professional trainer-horse owner-horse dynamic identified by Dashper (2014, 2016). The participants in this study, like those in Dashper (2014) experienced conflict with horse owners about what they felt were appropriate decisions regarding a horse's well-being. Owners have the exclusive rights to use the object and the ability to give permission for others to use the object (Snare, 1972). Participants were prevented (in their eyes) from relieving or preventing some distress in the horse, resulting in a negative emotional experience. The actions they could take were externally regulated by the horse owner, and thus the experience of the horse-human interaction was less satisfying. Horse ownership provides the autonomy of decision-making, but it comes with judgement of others on one's decisions.

6.6.2 Competency

Once a horse owner, encounters with other horse people facilitate a negative or positive ownership experience, but such encounters are unlikely to dissuade a horse owner from giving

up the autonomy of horse ownership. Smart (2014) investigated social interactions on livery yards. The research suggests horse owners demonstrate competence by avoiding being influenced by others and by actively avoiding being influencers. Participants in this study spoke of avoidance coping strategies (e.g. Section 4.4.5). They spoke of 'influencers' unfavourably, regarding their advice as unsolicited and interfering with their horse-human relationship.

6.6.2.1 Developing Competency

Participants' avoidance of unsolicited advice developed over time. Stories of early horse ownership experiences demonstrate an effort to take on board advice as influencers suggested training techniques or criticised actions. The overall consensus is that taking on board all the advice resulted in confusion and ultimate conflict with the horse. There was frustration in not being able to filter the incoming advice. The solution was participants developing their own filters through trial and error or by selecting a defined training methodology and then avoiding being influenced.

This study suggests horse owners are resistant to advice from peers because their early experiences are of advice overload and once they had determined what works for them and their horse they pursued avenues independently. Environments where peers are perceived to avoid giving advice are viewed positively. Horse & Hound (2010) report the most common reason for changing livery yards was yard politics—of which advice giving is a part (Smart, 2014). This does not mean horse owners avoid learning. Participants were continually seeking to develop their skill sets and competency in their quest to be competent caregivers and competent communicators. This position coincides with participants' task mastery goals and is illustrated by horse owners' information-seeking behaviour (Hockenhull & Creighton, 2013).

6.6.2.2 Language, Dress, and Class

Part of the competency of horse ownership is the language used to convey one's competency (Cassidy, 2002), while dress can demarcate one's social class within and outside the equestrian community. Participants did not speak specifically about learning the human language of equestrianism, dress, or having a specific social class. One participant (Isabelle) even noted how equestrianism 'levelled' social class and perceived this as a positive experience. The lack of discussion around these social differences in favour of expressing competency in communicating or caring for one's horse, demonstrated a value of these concepts over the others. The language of horse owners is largely about developing competency in their horses'

language something shared by a respondent in Coulter (2014) who spoke of learning the horses' language and the focus of research by authors such as Brandt (2004) and Birke (2007, 2008).

6.6.2.2.1 Translating Horse to Other Humans

The discourse analysis in this study to connect human emotions with perceived horse states of being (i.e. emotions) revealed an eclectic collection of words. Many participants acted or tried to mimic their horses' behaviour, putting the researcher in a position to interpret their human interpretation of their horses. The ability (or inability) to express an animal's state demonstrates the attempts of humans to do more than describe their horses or 'speak horse' with their horses. It is an effort to translate their horse's 'horse language' to other humans, to relay their horse-human conversations that took place in a 'third language' unique to the partnership. Herein lies another avenue for miscommunication between humans about horses—a scenario of lost in translation.

6.7 Companion Animal Literature

As in other companion animal literature, attachment theory is applicable to horse-human relationships; however, this thesis shows the horse-human relationship is one of caregiving, like a parent to a child. Attachment of the human to the horse was not evident, with more examples of horses' attachment to humans. This study demonstrates a distinct difference between horses and other companion animal research establishing an attachment of humans to animals. There are relatively fewer studies examining animal attachment to humans and the findings show horses may be similar in this respect.

Furthermore, horse-human relationships are not mutual as defined by attachment theory. The horse receives both instrumental care and emotional care, but in exchange, the horse is used for the purposes of human achievement. Humans' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness are fulfilled in the process, motivating the continued phenomenon of horse ownership.

6.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter discussed how the findings of this research integrate with the wider equestrian discourse. It demonstrated how various clusters of equestrian discourse are impacted by participants' motivation for horse ownership. Reciprocally, the equestrian discourses contribute to contextualising the phenomenon of horse ownership. Consequently, the disparate clusters can be more firmly harnessed together and work in synchrony. This is done

by looking more intently at the human element of the human-horse relationship. Through this approach this study contributes a new definition of horse ownership to the economic and marking literature based on involvement with the horse, because this links to how humans interact with the horse. The definition helps the economic and marketing cluster better define the roles equestrians fulfil within the industry. This new definition ties into human-horse interaction literature because the interactions are directly responsible for the relationship which this literature cluster focuses on. Interactions are either through caregiving or using the horse and thus ties to the horse behaviour and horse riding and performance literature. Horse ownership is a social activity and horse owners protect their interactions with their horses from interference and social judgement by other humans.

A barrier to building a more cohesive literature base is challenges with shared language in the discourse. The challenges include what words are available in a language's lexicon, the 'technical' language that defines allegiances to differing training methodologies, and participants' use of language to describe or translate for their horse. This study does not solve the language barrier but was able to navigate it by focusing on the individual's motivation and anchoring participants' words in multiple existing theories rather starting from within a single literature cluster. Thusly, this study used participants' language to determine their motivation for horse ownership and as such determined that the language itself is evidence of their innate human process of anthropomorphism which is central to their perception of a relationship, which is subsequently the thing that motivates their continued horse ownership, and horses continued existence in human society.

The next and final chapter describes how the aim of the research is met through a novel explanatory theory of horse ownership motivation. The theory explains the phenomenon for highly involved horse owners. The contributions of this research to knowledge and theory are considered as well as recommendations for practice.

Chapter 7: Thesis Conclusion

7.1 Introduction to Chapter 7

Horse ownership is a complex phenomenon encompassing a relationship between an animal (a horse) and a human. The equestrian community focuses on understanding the horse with limited attention on the human, yet wants to influence change in the human. Humans are viewed as gateways to information about the horse rather than the core focus—some allow researchers to investigate the human-horse relationship while others direct the focus onto the sport performance aspect. As such, there exists a lack of understanding of horse ownership motivation across equestrianism literature, companion animal literature, and motivation literature. Understanding what motivates people helps clarify their decision-making process and how it can be subsequently influenced (e.g. facilitating positive attitudes towards specific practices).

This study adopted an inductive qualitative method to enable human motivations for horse ownership to emerge, leading to the development of a theory for horse ownership. This study demonstrates how existing concepts from equestrian literature, companion animal literature, and motivation literature work in synergy. It also provides a strong, novel argument for why the experiences described in this research (and shared with other research) are motivating.

This chapter articulates this study's contributions to theory, which raises interesting philosophical points regarding humans and animals. The chapter concludes with recommendations for academics and practitioners. It begins, however, with a summary of how the study met the research aims and objectives.

7.2 Meeting the Aims and Objectives

This study identified a research problem revolving around a lack of understanding about horse ownership and a desire to influence horse owner behaviour. Thus, this study sought to establish a foundational understanding of the motivations of horse owners that did not exist before. There were two research questions: what motivated people to become horse owners and what motivated people to continue horse ownership. The aim of the study was to investigate experiences of horse owners in the dressage discipline for their motivations to own horses, for the purpose of providing a novel explanation of dressage horse ownership that contributes to the understanding of the consumption of horses and horse owner-related activities of the equine industry in the United Kingdom.

The four objectives of the study met the research questions, allowing the thesis to meet its aim. Chapters 1 and 2 critically analysed the theoretical concepts related to horse ownership and motivation addressing objective 1. Firstly, Chapter 1 presented the equestrian literature as clusters with their core themes introduced arguing that, as a collective, horse owners and their motivations were not the focus of the research despite horse owners core role within the industry. Chapter 2 critically analysed the specific motivational concepts that were present in the equestrian, companion animal, and motivation literature demonstrating there is no observable consensus to explain the motivation for horse ownership. Thus, Chapter 1 and 2 underpin the inductive method approach discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 met objective 2 by discussing the researcher's philosophical perspective and how the research design retained credibility of the participants' words while exploring their horse owner motivations. Chapter 4 presented the results which emerged from the inductive investigation as two core themes, each with two motivational themes, and subsequent sub-themes, meeting objective 3. The themes were inserted into the model of the cycle of motivation illustrating a cycle of horse ownership motivation. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 worked in conjunction to meet objective 4. Chapter 5 applied existing theories to the cycle of horse ownership motivation creating an explanatory theory of horse ownership. Chapter 6 drew connections between the findings of this study and the existing literature clusters.

The emergent theory created from the findings in relation to existing theory and concepts is able to answer the research questions, explaining why people become horse owners and why they continue to be horse owners.

7.3 Contribution to Theory

This research contributes a new theory of horse ownership and also adds to the four existing theories used within the cycle of the horse ownership model—biophilia, self-determination theory, achievement motivation, and attachment theory. Whetten (1989) framed theory through the questions 'what,' 'how,' 'when,' 'where,' 'who,' and 'why'; these are used here to illustrate this study's contribution of a new theory of horse ownership motivation. Conceptually, theoretical models are constructed from the 'what' and the 'how' and explained by the 'why'. The 'what' are the factors to be considered in the theory; in this research it was the phenomenon of ownership—the possessing of a horse. The sections below articulate how the theory of horse ownership motivation fits in the framework of a theory, its constraints, and potential applications.

7.3.1 A New Theory of Horse Ownership

This thesis offers an explanatory theory of horse ownership for highly involved horse owners that connects existing literature clusters together. Through Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the horse ownership theory was developed using the emergent themes and then layered with the explanatory theories and existing literature clusters to illustrate how the horse ownership motivation theory brings them together. Included here, is the horse ownership motivation cycle from Chapter 4 (Figure 17) and Figure 18, which is the horse ownership model, with both the explanatory theories and the literature clusters included.

7.3.1.1 Theory Framework

Through the theory of horse ownership motivation this study developed an answer to the question 'why', offering a psychological explanation for the phenomenon of horse ownership. Whetten (1989) explained 'why' as the "*glue that welds the [theory] together*" (p. 491). In gaining an understanding of 'why,' two descriptions of 'how' emerged—how people became horse owners and how they continued to be horse owners. Understanding the 'how' allowed for the development of the Cycle of Horse Ownership model in conjunction with the 'what' (horse ownership).

'Who,' 'when,' and 'where' represent the constraints of the theory. The theory horse owner motivation was created using highly involved horse owners, in the UK, in 2019 and reconceptualises how the people the theory is applied to (horse owners) are defined. The theory prioritises horse owners decision-making attributes over their descriptive features of socio-economic status, age, or gender. The inclusion of a range of participants within the traditional equestrian demographic demonstrates that the theory is applicable across a range of segmentations in the equestrian population such as professionals and leisure horse owners.

The use of self-determination theory, attachment theory, and achievement motivation to explain the 'why' means the theory likely transcends the 'where' constraint, as each motivational theory used within the theory of horse ownership motivation transcends cultural boundaries independently. The persistence of each motivational theory in explaining human behaviour over time, and through the life course also suggests this theory of horse ownership motivation transcends the 'when' constraint.

In summary, this thesis contributes a novel theory of horse ownership which explains the horse owner behaviour of participants in this study and which is highly likely to explain the behaviour of horse owners not in this study.

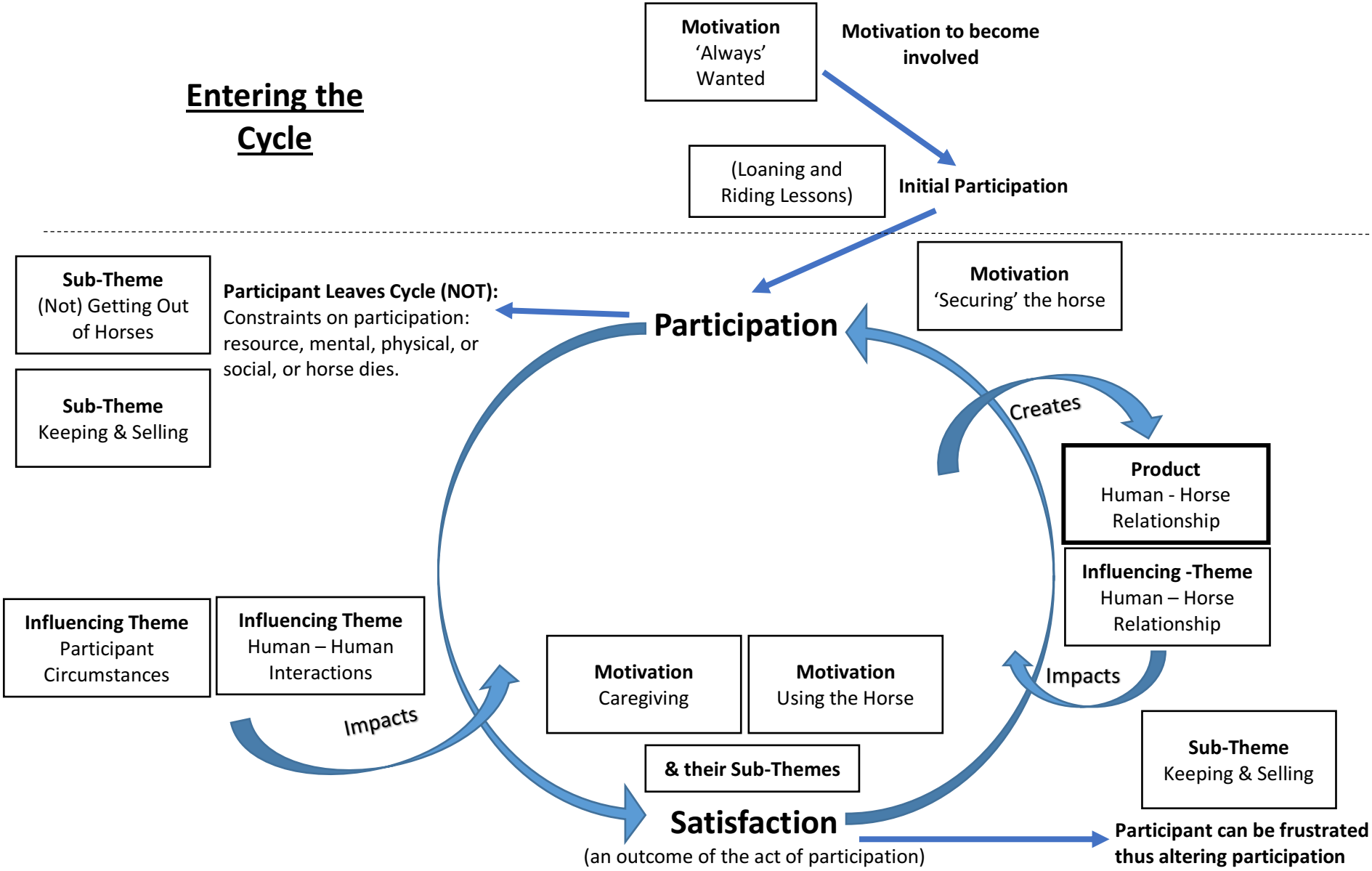


Figure 23 *Cycle of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners—incorporating the emergent motivation themes for horse ownership. This also represents the consumption of the product (horse-human relationship), creation of the product, and how the product influences its future consumption (Repeat of Figure 13)*

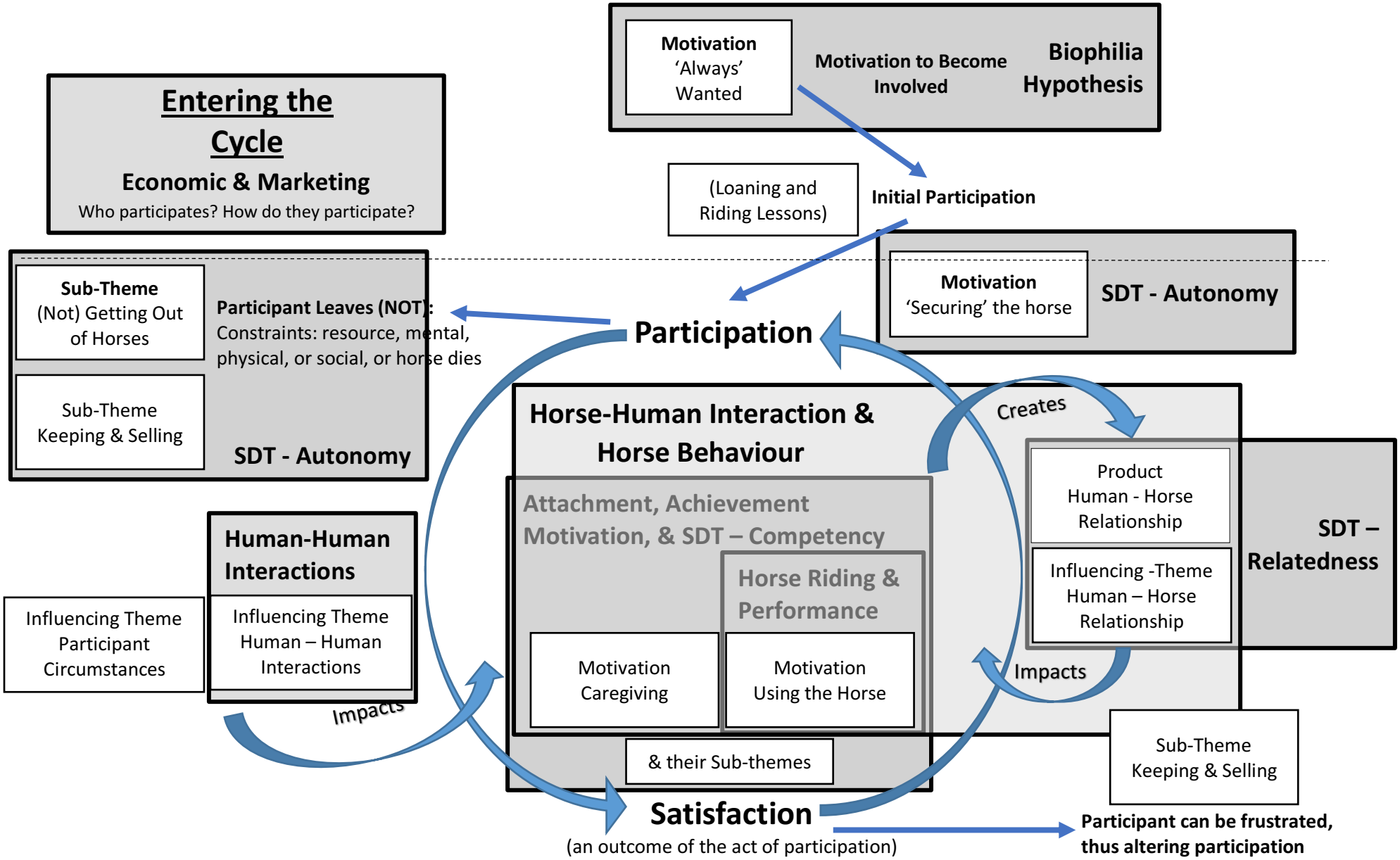


Figure 24 *Theory of horse ownership motivation for highly involved horse owners -illustrating the integration of both the motivational theories and literature clusters in the cycle of horse ownership motivation*

7.3.1.2 Separating Discipline From Horse Ownership

The theory of horse ownership motivation separates participants' motivation for horse ownership from discipline choice (i.e. dressage), finding the discipline choice related specifically to goal choices and perceptions of achievement when using the horse and not to the underlying attraction to horses. Thus, the theory is likely applicable to highly involved horse owners across different equestrian disciplines. Equestrians' achievement goals and how they experience each discipline may offer explanations for participation in different disciplines.

7.3.1.3 Connecting Clusters Together

For this study the definition of 'horse owners' is revised to focus on involvement which is related to how much decision-making horse owners do, which differs to the traditional professional and leisure distinction seen in the economic and marketing perspective. Decision-making is part of caregiving (i.e. management) and forms perceptions of that caregiving, which concerns horse behaviour research. The ability to competently make decisions in caregiving and in communication with the horse cultivates the horse-human relationship. This also reconceptualises the nature of the horse-human relationship in attachment theory to a caregiving dynamic rather than attachment. The communication research from horse-human relationships is integral to a sense of achievement in motivation to participate in horse riding and performance. The achievement experienced when caregiving and using a horse results in continued ownership of that individual horse. In a return to marketing and economic literature, selling specific horses was related to specific participants' circumstances of time and their perceived relationship with the horse.

7.3.2 Achievement Motivation

This study demonstrates that achievement motivation in horse riding and performance extends to the day-to-day interactions such as caregiving; it is not limited to the competitive arena. As such, this study demonstrates a novel application of achievement motivation to horse-human interactions. Additionally, the inductive qualitative approach demonstrates another way to gather information on dual-goal type pursuits, which is proposed occurs but not investigated. The findings of this study demonstrate that horse owners experience both performance and mastery approach goals simultaneously building on the findings of Lampard et al. (2016).

7.3.3 Self-Determination Theory

This is a novel application of self-determination theory to the phenomenon of animal ownership. The study extends the boundary conditions of the SDT mini theory 'Relationship Motivational Theory' to include horse-human relationships.

This study conceptualises the horse-human relationship as competent communication and competent caregiving. Any horse-human interaction forms a relationship, whether satisfying or unsatisfying. It is through competent caregiving that humans experience the satisfaction of nurturing—feeling achievement at creating a happy and healthy horse. Through competent communication, humans experience a sense of achievement in being able to use their horse. Both can result in a horse-human bond. This study adds that horse-human bonds are powerful positive relationships and that they are conditional upon the perception of unconditional volitional engagement by the horse, whether that is the horse instigating interaction or suppressing their greater physical power and complying with human desires (i.e. responsiveness, willingness, or 'trying hard' in training situations).

7.3.4 Attachment Theory

This research is the first to qualitatively investigate horse-human relationships using attachment theory. The study is also the only example in either companion animal or specifically horse literature to conclude a caregiving relationship dynamic rather than an attachment dynamic. These are important considerations for explaining why the human-horse relationship is motivating. As a caregiving relationship the human experiences emotional satisfaction from providing care rather than receiving emotional comfort directly from the animal when the human is in distress. The participants reported no clear caregiving behaviours from their horses but rather a sense of well-being from seeing their horses in a state of happy and healthy.

As human-animal relationships are framed within attachment theory, this study challenges the assertion of mutuality in human-animal relationships. The dynamics of the horse-human relationship revolve around providing the horse with both instrumental and emotional care, and in exchange, the human gets to use the horse to experience achievement. This study questions if human-animal studies impose an attachment relationship while ignoring the caregiving role.

7.4 Philosophical Considerations

Conceptualising the horse-human relationship from a caregiving role advocates for integrating human ethology into the horse-human relationship by recognising the requisite role of anthropomorphism in facilitating horse-human relationships and bonds. This perspective challenges the equestrian community to more deeply consider its position on human-exceptionalism (if it indeed declares one). There is a need for a theoretical resolution for 'what is human' and 'what is animal' and the relationship between the two. These considerations impact how equestrian research (and all animal research) is interpreted and applied and how humans interpret interaction with horses, other humans, and even artificial intelligence entities.

The need for a theoretical resolution is something this thesis exposes rather than answers itself. However, the results of this study in conjunction with the motivation themes suggests humans find something fundamentally human about horses, enough to fulfil humans' fundamental psychological needs and thus horses must be similar at least in the ways that matter emotionally and socially to humans' well-being. As humans' well-being is integrally tied to their perception of their horse's state of well-being, as the horse's perceived well-being improves so does the humans.

7.4.1 Anthropomorphism Is Necessary for Horse-Human Bonds

The findings of this study challenge the anti-anthropomorphism position because caregiving requires empathy and empathy requires anthropomorphism—recognition of human in another. Anthropomorphism is integral to horse-human relationships and bonds; without it, humans would struggle to competently communicate or competently care-give (i.e. be mind-minded). This thesis argues anthropomorphism is an innate human behaviour—not something that can be switched off—and acts in favour of social interaction (i.e. is prosocial).

This argument does not mean horses should always be treated as human nor does it suggest that horses are human. Competent communication and caregiving is about responding appropriately to the horse, which requires a combination of the desire to care for (i.e. empathy via anthropomorphism) and knowledge of what is an appropriate action to take (i.e. knowledge of horse ethology). Thus, this thesis advocates for the education of humans in horse ethology and training methods to allow this to occur. It further argues that such education and training cannot occur in the absence of anthropomorphism.

7.4.2 Subject-Object and Post-Humanism

Acting as part of the motivational mechanism of caregiving, anthropomorphism underpins the perception of horses' agency or subjectivity. As subjectivity is required for the use of the horse, the horse exists simultaneously as an object of use and as a subjective being. This study is novel in arguing that subjectivity is required for the objective and the ambiguity observed in discourse is from an inability to articulate both simultaneously. The two are not binary in conflict but work simultaneously. Any conflict arises from cultural conceptualisations of objective and subjective.

7.4.2.1 Post-Humanism

Conceptualising the horse as a subject-object and the inability to separate these concepts reflects humans' inability to separate the subject and object in ourselves. The subject-object concept can be reflected in humans' use of other humans. Perhaps the non-binary word that best expresses the subject-object concept is 'animal'.

'Animal' in this context aligns with those who seek recognition of what humans and other beings share besides biology and biochemistry—what Darwin (1897) wrote about human and animal expression. Indeed, this idea of subject-object points away from human-exceptionalism towards a philosophical post-humanism position. However, humans and horses are distinct species, and humans are more socially powerful. Without humans, horses are in danger of having nowhere to exist.

Owning a horse straddles the theoretical boundary between human exceptionalism and post-humanism animal agency. A daily negotiation occurs between the physical power of the horse, the social power of the human to control the horse's existence and use, and the social pressure on humans to perform the negotiation in a socially acceptable way. The mechanism of negotiation between horse and human is the development of competent communication and caregiving that underpins people's desires for horse ownership. Thus, the horse ownership motivation model is post-humanist in nature. Although it is constructed to explain human motivation, the model is only functional with an understanding of the horse as a subject-object.

7.4.2.2 Connection Between Agency in Horses (i.e. Animals) and Artificial Intelligence

Post-humanism also refers to the debates of agency of human-created, human-like entities with artificial intelligence (e.g. robots). Looking forward into the near future, understanding the motivation to own horses forms part of a larger need to understand humans' relationship

with animals. Research such as this is important to advance humans' understanding of non-human entities like animals to act as a social anchor for the debate of humans' relationship with AI entities. The same anthropomorphism that acts as the mechanism for humans to build a relationship with horses (i.e. animals) acts to allow the recognition of human agency in constructed, non-human entities.

7.5 Recommendations to Future Research and Practice

This study's contribution to discourse and theory creates a foundation from which a number of recommendations for practice can be taken forward. While many of the recommendations are for future investigations into horse ownership, there are also recommendations for practice.

7.5.1 Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study in relation to the discussion of discourse and theory emphasised important considerations for researchers when designing and interpreting future research about horse owners, their motivations, and their perceptions.

7.5.1.1 Involvement Profiles and Equestrian Roles

Involvement profiles help define individual products by how people make decisions about them. The description of horse owners through their involvement can be used to expand the understanding of horse owners' decision-making. This thesis proposes a future agenda that would be compatible with the reconceptualization of the horse owner definition using involvement profiles. Involvement profiles will expand the current research approach to describing and understanding horse owner decision-making beyond Hennessy et al.'s (2008) or Górecka-Bruzda et al.'s (2011) characteristics of the horse. As an accepted method for researching consumers, involvement profiles can differentiate between users of a product—as proposed here—but also develop an understanding of how a variety of products are perceived. The purpose of the research agenda is to seed a more cohesive literature body regarding equestrian consumers.

7.5.1.1.1 Involvement with Equestrian Products

With the previous suggested use of involvement profiles, only one product is looked at: the horse. In this suggested use, a variety of products are examined, and these could be products participants use on themselves or products intended for the horse. Involvement profiles are a traditional marketing method in an environment wherein research on the cultural significance of products is currently more evident (e.g. Goodrum & Hunt, 2013; Dashper & St. John, 2016;

Maurstad et al., 2016). A traditional marketing approach adds a structural dimension to the cultural discourse, helping to further contextualise cultural significance of the products and the people consuming those products.

Involvement research methods' use of surveys and quantitative analysis offers a similar approach to the established economic and marketing literature and horse behaviour literature. Therefore, the methods are more likely to be acceptable and understood in relation to the extant knowledge. Decision-making is an area of interest in the economic and marketing and horse behaviour cluster who ultimately want individuals to make decisions in the best interest of their horse. Involvement profiles offer a logical progression from current descriptions of practices adding dimensions of participants' perceived interest, risk, and importance. Additionally, an involvement perspective provides a foundation for further consumer motivation investigations about why participants responded as they did.

7.5.1.1.2 Ownership Typologies and Role Ranking

There are opportunities to consider the typologies and motivation. Combining the Scantlebury et al. (2014) rating scales of participants' human-horse relationship with the motivations from this research could further refine the understanding of how differing ownership typologies use the horse and derive motivation for ownership.

Involvement profiles and typologies are useful, but much of the industry research may find them excessive for their survey design. As a compromise, future surveys are recommended to use ranking questions rather than a single answer multiple choice when collecting information on participants' roles within the industry.

7.5.1.1.3 Sport Involvement and Ranking Achievement

Finally, involvement profiles have an established procedure with successful adaptations utilised in sport participation. Therefore, opportunities exist to understand the consumption of horseback riding, including comparisons between disciplines and with other activities.

The dual achievement goal perspective further evidences the need for ranking questions in surveys when asking questions about participants' reasons for horse ownership or using the horse because goals exist simultaneously. Van Yperen (2006) provided an example of ranking achievement goals rather than measuring them individually. As dressage competition is about demonstrating who has mastered the training task, it may be difficult to see the differences between mastery-approach and performance-approach goals just by observation because

participants measure successful performance from self-referential feedback and normative feedback (i.e. placing).

7.5.1.2 Riding Schools

Knowing that riding lessons are connected to horse ownership, there is an opportunity to establish whether the increase in horse-riding lessons is a result of new industry participants or established participants continuing their involvement in the absence of horse ownership. Avenues for further research include investigating patterns in duration of lessons before horse ownership, opportunities for horse ownership, and reasons why people ceased ownership. Arguably, the most important question arising from these findings is how riding schools perceive their role in preparing people for horse ownership.

7.5.1.3 Facilitating Prosocial Socialisation of Equestrians

This work provides a platform for extending avenues of research into how equestrians socialise and techniques that foster interactions leading to cohesive social behaviour, as this appears directly related to attitudes towards advice and stability of yard politics and thus consumer loyalty to a yard.

7.5.1.3.1 Developing Competency

Competency was demonstrated in this study as central to the motivation for horse ownership. Furthermore, the way in which information was communicated by other horse owners threatened participants sense of competency. Therefore, this study highlights a need for research on equestrian socialisation and ways to develop positive learning experiences, especially for early stage horse owners. The attitudes of horse owners towards unsolicited advice may have important implications about their attitudes towards the information they seek—beyond just what and where—and how they respond to unsolicited advice regardless of the quality of the information. This study calls for the research of novel or the application of known effective approaches (see education and sport coaching literature) to support horse owners developing competencies without threatening their existing sense of competency.

7.5.1.3.2 Examine Coping Strategies for Human-Human Interactions

Examining those who have lost motivation for horse ownership and involvement presents an interesting area of research that could shed light on the challenges of coping with negative experiences and determine whether former owners experience a genuine loss of interest in horses.

Similarly, there is an opportunity to investigate social coping strategies employed by active horse owners to manage their negative experiences and the wider implication of these coping strategies on the way people assimilate information, their attitudes towards advice, and the formulation of ideologies around specific training methods.

7.5.1.4 Map the Language of Horse Owners

The discourse analysis in this study revealed an eclectic collection of words humans used to articulate their horses' state of being (i.e. emotions). Additionally, many participants tried to mimic their horses' behaviour, putting the researcher in a position to interpret their human interpretation of their horse. The varied choice of language attributed to perceptions of horses in this study demonstrates the greater need to understand the equestrian language used to perceived and translate their horse interactions to other humans.

Richin's (1997) method of determining emotional descriptors is recommended for conceptualising horse owners' perceptions of their horses. Richin (1997) excluded non-valenced cognitions (e.g. interest, surprise), bodily states (e.g. sleepy), and subjective evaluations (e.g. self-confident), but for horses. Richin's (1997) method could be expanded to assess these separately using the same data set, thus capturing not just perceived horse emotion but also a wider understanding of people's perceptions of horses and the language they use to convey their perceptions.

Studies often limit respondents' choices to describe their horses' emotional and behaviour expression (e.g. Hötzel et al., 2019; Fenner et al., 2019). These are usually equine behaviour studies where common language is an important tenant (Meehl, 1992) and negative emotional states are frequently prominent (Horseman et al., 2016). This study recommends open dialogue options in these types of studies, like Birke et al. (2010), Litva and Archer (2010), and Hötzel et al. (2019), to capture the broader perception of horses' attributes and emotional capacity, both positive and negative. This offers opportunities for participants to 'translate' for their horse and relate horse behaviours with participant word choices.

The final recommendation for researchers regarding language is to use discourse analysis such as situated meaning to be sensitive to participants' word usage. With regard to describing their interaction with their horse, participants may be translating an embodied communication for which a concise human expression may not exist. The approach avoids experiences being dismissed for lack of scientific accuracy in language use.

7.5.1.5 Consider Achievement Goals for Participants in Other Disciplines

This study recommends investigations to determine motivations for specific discipline participation to shift towards the specific discipline format and achievement goals. Coulter's (2014) study based in Canada with hunter and show jumpers implies a greater emphasis on external motivation such as social status and performance motivation for horse owners compared to those in this research.

7.5.1.6 Measure Caregiving

The findings of this thesis argued for a caregiving relationship. This study recommends measuring for caregiving in human-animal relationships. Human-animal research currently seeks attachment using survey methods. This method may impose attachment by design. As discussed, DeAraugo et al. (2014) used measures of adult attachment to measure horse-human relationships, which presumed mutuality. Researchers should validate caregiving measures separately from attachment. Populations should be assessed for the extent of attachment and caregiving, which can then be used to determine the extent to which the relationship is mutual, as defined by attachment theory. Thus, a more detailed and deep understanding of human relationships with animals can be described and differences between species assessed.

7.5.1.7 Model Prosocial Behaviour When Speaking About Horse Owners

This study recommends addressing the challenges of owner behaviour more sensitively to avoid psychologically threatening the people whom one wishes to address. Statements like "*the paradoxical fact that people that profess love for their horses often use feeding, housing, and exercise practices that reduce their welfare"* (Hötzel et al., 2019) are misleading. Such statements mean that to make a mistake in caring for one's horse is evidence of not loving one's horse. Participants experience 'love' for their animal through providing care. Participants' ability to take care of their horses is linked directly to their sense of competency. Thus, the above statements are psychologically threatening to one's sense of competency.

In conjunction with horse owner's avoidance of unsolicited advice, horse owners are culturally primed for scepticism. In response to statements such as the one above, horse owners will either use information to impose judgement about another's 'love' for their horse or cause one to feel judged and avoid the information being conveyed. Researchers should use positively framed messages promoting practices they wish to see for three reasons. Firstly, it models prosocial behaviour for the community without attacking horse owners' sense of

competency. Secondly, positively framed messages focus on actions to take rather than things to avoid and will appeal to those with task mastery goals. Thirdly, positively framed messages are more likely to be effective for influencing horse owner care choices (Shiv et al., 1997) because there is likely cognitive processing time between when the participant assimilates care recommendations and then choses to apply them.

7.5.2 Recommendations for Practitioners

The recommendations stated here are aimed at equestrian practitioners in the United Kingdom and are suggestions for improving the horse owner experience. Horse ownership continues despite negative social experiences. These recommendations are relevant for anyone interacting with horse owners commercially or privately.

Positively Framing Messages and the Livery Yard Social Experience

Livery yards are a core of the equestrian community and a social space. Horse owners develop scepticism and avoidance strategies—including moving yards—as a coping mechanism to livery yard culture. To support positive social experiences, this study recommends livery yards appoint a designated source of advice. Ideally this person is experienced and practices a non-interfering approach.

Those designated sources of advice should also engage with prosocial message framing. In a direct human-human interaction, communications framed negatively or in a way that challenges horse owners' competency are likely to be interpreted as a psychological threat, not only to the horse owners' knowledge but also as an interference with their relationship with their horses. Messages should be task-focused to limit degrading practices. Positively framed messages will also model prosocial communication behaviour for other livery yard clients.

Other recommendations include developing industry standards for social codes of conduct for equestrian environments dealing with conflict in human-human interactions and horse-human interactions. Furthermore, livery yards should create a 'pre-filtered' database of information sources (with industry-wide participation) that horse owners can use to support their own learning and conflict resolution. It would be a platform where different methodologies share space and the industry could positively promote good practices it wishes to see from a variety of places.

Riding Schools as New Horse Owner Training Facilities

All horse owners took riding lessons or received riding instruction on their journey towards horse ownership. Arguably the most important recommendation is for riding schools is to adopt or develop a programme that trains horse ownership skills alongside learning how to ride. For example, the BHS offers such a programme, but it is contingent upon BHS instructors and BHS membership, which many riding schools do not have.

There are two recommendations for both the BHS programme and any programme developed by an independent riding school. The first recommendation is to include competencies about resolving horse-human communication conflict. The second is to include competencies on dealing with unsolicited advice and where to source reliable information (i.e. veterinarians, qualified instructors, and published press).

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

This research presents a theory of horse ownership motivation which is explained through a combination of existing theories including biophilia, self-determination theory, attachment theory, and achievement motivation theory. The theory developed by this study is novel and demonstrates the motivation of horse ownership is a complex synergy of different motivational factors that produce a cycle of continued horse ownership that is difficult to break. In summary, the theory contends the status of horses as possessions is imbued with important social privileges about the control of decision-making for the horse. People own horses because ownership provides the autonomy to interact with a horse, which stems from an inexplicable innate attraction to horses, and ownership protects the sense of achievement, the ability to nurture, and the horse-human relationship associated with the interaction.

Interaction with horses leads to interactions with humans. Human-human interactions impact participants' experience as horse owners negatively more often than positively. The most positive experiences of horse ownership occur when interacting with the horse itself. Desire to maintain autonomy over decision-making prevents negative human-human interactions from thwarting the desire for horse ownership. The desire for decision-making also means highly involved horse owners are highly involved consumers and view themselves as fulfilling multiple equestrian roles.

The theory offers a new definition of horse owners through their involvement (amount of decision-making they do) with their horse and this new perspective on conceptualising the horse ownership experience brings some of the disparate literature clusters together. This led

to recommendations for more in-depth investigation of horse owners as consumers through involvement profiles, which have further applications for segmenting the equestrian population in more meaningful ways, as well as opportunities to conceptualise involvement in equestrian sport. Furthermore, this studies approach to the definition of horse owner through involvement rather than profession, revealed commonalities in the journey to becoming a horse owner and highlights opportunities to develop riding schools' role in the horse ownership journey.

The theory of horse ownership motivation also adds perspective on how horses are defined and perceived, proposing the horse exists in a dual stat as a subject-object. Even as humans 'use' the horse for their own sense of achievement this use requires a subjective interaction with another living thing. The subjective interactions that produce a sense achievement and competency, and which are consequently motivating, require human empathy facilitated through a neurobiological mechanism of anthropomorphism. As such, the theory contends that anthropomorphism serves a central function in developing the human-horse relationship which is also subsequently motivating.

Through developing the theory of horse ownership motivation, this study proposes that the culture of equestrianism develops scepticism in horse owners as a coping mechanism to manage unsolicited advice and comments which threaten their sense of competency. Consequently, a key recommendation of the study is to investigate and implement prosocial behaviour and communication tools that use positive message framing.

In summary, the key contributions of the theory of horse ownership motivation include reconceptualising how horse owners and horses are defined, and the nature of the horse-human relationship as caregiving. The later point of caregiving has implications for humanity's position on agency in animals and, perhaps extending to, the continued advancement of non-human entities with artificial intelligence.

Afterword: Reflection on the Research Journey and Personal Transformation

I hope you enjoyed reading the thesis, and that you also gleaned an insight into the reasoning for horse ownership behaviour. The research journey, starting from the point of becoming curious about horse owners (see the Preface) was combined with a desire to be respectful, genuine, and authentic to them as individuals. These are not easy concepts to define, but I took them to mean that I act and conduct the research in a way that remines 'faithful' to the original, is sincere and responsible. The approach, while being morally important to me, also benefited the study by keeping the attention on the participants and thus reducing bias and supporting the credibility of the work. This personal position influenced the choice for the inductive approach, open-ended question design, and *invivo* word coding. These codes, when grouped became the emergent themes, which were explainable through existing motivational theories and thus became the theory of horse ownership motivation.

My desire for authenticity also meant I could not claim this as a true work of grounded theory as I interpreted it from various texts. I could not, in good conscious, claim I hold firm to any specific philosophical perspective either. Fortunately, as the modern saying goes "there's an app for that" so too is there a philosophical position for me: pluralism. As such, the pluralistic approach helped me group the literature clusters, stay focused on different ways motivation was expressed in these and balance the dualities and ambiguities found.

I certainly cannot claim I have taken the smoothest road to anchoring my research or analysing my findings but I do know I can be proud of what I produced, as I have, with whole-hearted effort, been as authentic about my participants and myself as I could conceive. People may still find fault, or suggest there were other ways but at the time, and in the moment the decisions were made it was deemed the best choice. Each choice was made with care and concern for the consequences to the outcome you have just finished reading demonstrating my 'duty of care' to myself, my participants and this study as an entity.

Perhaps my aversion to research in the past was because I could not delve in with such fervour, sincerity, and authenticity; perhaps there was no 'space' for it. This project has revealed just how important it is to my sense of psychological well-being that my relationship with my work is authentic, that I set time aside to explore my curiosities, connect with people on a philosophical level, and have academic debate. Much of my reflective process is talking with other people and fulfilling my curiosities; it is in these moments that I make connections, and

my perspectives are refreshed. Just the other day I listened to a pod cast about conspiracy theories and thought “hmmm, that sounds like a problem horse people have”.

My own understandings about horse ownership, equestrianism, horse people, and my own-human horse relationships have shifted in such fundamentally, substantial ways that they are difficult to articulate, but I will highlight some key thoughts. Firstly, through the process I am no longer frustrated by ‘traditionalism’, that does not mean I have to agree with what people do but I accept that it is somehow part of a larger framework of equestrian social interactions. One that I do not think is changeable by providing more facts. Facts are essential and important but facts (at least at the moment), are weapons with which equestrians throw at each other when they see a practice they disagree with. It’s a war of competency that no one is going to convincingly win and only perpetuates the ‘traditionalism’ by making people feel incompetent when they don’t observe themselves implementing the facts.

Additionally, traditionalism is perpetuated by individuals slowly learning directly from each other over time. It is through family, long established liveries, riding schools, racing stables, and even established bodies like the BHS, and Pony Club. Not to stray to far from this thesis but there are human psychological and pedological reasonings that those learning pathways are going to be more powerful than mass distribution of facts. Those pathways are facilitated by people. It makes me think about product ‘pain points’ because those who are supposedly ‘educated’ in the facts charge money. Quality education for a decent price is difficult and even then, my feelings are there is a sense of naivety that changes from facts will be substantial, quick or wide spread.

Furthermore, the facts in isolation cannot take into account the constraints facility design has on practice at each facility. Horse management is 24/7 but facts often deal with discrete management activities or moments in the day. On top of that horse owners are likely at a livery yard which controls a lot of their management choices anyway. So even if they have facts they have little autonomy. Which leads me to my second key thought: considering all of this I love horse people, even the ones with whom I have had unpleasant experiences.

Horses are hard work, other horse people can be hard work, managing our non-horsey life can be hard work, the education environment can be hostile, and I love horse people because they still love horses and still preserver to do their level best (obviously not a blanket rule but hopefully you get the idea). Through the three years just watching other horse people with a sense of sympathy and empathy has just changed my philosophy of equestrianism. Horse

people need to be listened to and helped in translating their own horse. Putting out facts is cheaper and easier than helping people individually but it is (in my view) the way forward. The answer is not in a lecture hall but in the field and not just in empowering people with facts about horses but empowering them with facts about their own human emotions to help them regulate themselves. As it is a genuine relationship (at least for the human), equestrian educators really need both horse facts and essentially relationship counselling skills. I am now more frustrated by equestrian educators and academics than by equestrians because I think they are working harder to help their individual horse than I ever was as an academic. I hope this thesis helps horse owners, by helping us educators recognise their humanity and explicitly model prosocial behaviour in the way we approach them, the powerful possessors of horses.

It is probably ambitious to think something as large as the tendencies of engrained equestrian culture will change, but if I can be authentic to a vision of a more prosocial equestrian community and model the behaviour myself then I have done something. I hope for wider change and have developed through the journey (and associated personal circumstances) a steadfast trust in “the process”. So, while ambitious, I hold on to hope.

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Appendix A – Surveys from Animal Pet Literature

Adapted from Anderson 2007		
Measure	**Author(s)/Creator(s)**	**Year**
Pet Attitude Scale (PAS)	Templer, D.I, Salter, C.A., Dickey, S., Baldwin R., Veleber, D.M.	1981
Scale of Attitudes towards the Treatment of Animals	Bowd, A.D.	1984
CENSHARE Pet Attachment Scale (PAS)	Holcomb, R. Williams, R.C. & Richards, P.S.	1985
Companion Animal Bonding Scale (CABS)	Poresky, R.H., Hendrix, C., Mosier, J., & Samuelson, M.	1987
Pet Attitude Inventory (PAI)	Wilson, C.C., Netting, F.E., & New, J.C.	1987
Companion Animal Semantic Differential (CAS) – Long & Short	Poresky, R.H., Hendrix, C., Mosier, J., & Samuelson, M.	1988
Human/Pet Relationships Measure	Siegel, J.M.	1990
Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale	Johnson, T. P., Garrity, T.F., & Stallones L.	1992
Pet Expectations Inventory	Kidd, A.H, Kidd, R.M., & George C.C.	1992
Pet Relationship Scale (PRS)	Kafer, R., Lago, D., Wamboldt, P., & Harrington, F.	1992
Childhood Pet Ownership Questionnaire	Paul, E.S., & Serpell, J.A.	1993
Pet Friendship Scale (PFS)	Davis, J.H., & Juhasz, A.M.	1995
Comfort from Companion Animals Scale (CCAS)	Zasloff, R.L.	1996
Miller-Rada Commitment to Pets Scale	Staats S., Miller, D., Carnot, M.J., Rada, K., & Turnes, J.	1996
Peoples Experiences Following the Death of a Pet	Adams, C.L.	1996
Children's Attitudes and Behaviors towards Animals (CABTA)	Guymer, E.C., Mellor, D., Luk, E.S., Pearse, V.	2001
Measurement of Pet Intervention (MOPI)	Schiro-Geist, C.	2001
Centre for the Study of Animal Wellness Pet Boding Scale, (CSAWPBS)	Johnson, R.A. & Meadows, R.L.	2003
Children's Treatment of Animals Questionnaire (CTAQ)	Thompson, K.L, & Gullone, E.	2003
Pet Attitude Scale – Modified (PAS - M)	Munsell, K.L., Canfield, M., Templer, D.I., Tangan, K., & Arikawa, H.	2004
Monash Dog Owner Relationship Scale (MDORS)	Dwyer, F., Bennett, P.C., & Coleman, G.J.	2006
Pet Attachment Questionnaire	Zilcha-Mano, S., Milulincer, M., & Shaver, P.R.	2011
Emotional and Supportive Attachment to Companion Animals Scale (ESACA)	Meehan, M, Massavelli, B., & Pachana, N.	2017

Appendix B – Elephant and the Blind Men

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

By Saxe (1921)

A Hindoo Fable.

I.

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

II.

The *First* approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me!—but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

III.

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,
Cried: "Ho!—what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 't is mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

IV.

The *Third* approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

V.

The *Fourth* reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'T is clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

VI.

The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

VII.

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

VIII.

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL.

So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

Appendix C - Interview Guide

Pre-arrival

Make contact with seeds and snowball connections – contact no more than 3 times. Assume no response is a wish not to participate.

Obtain email to pre-send research information sheet and university GDPR policy

Obtain mobile for contact on the day

Arrange time, date, and location. Offer to travel and suggest neutral location

Arrival

Equipment list – interview folder with questions, consent forms, Dictaphone, and notebook.

Attire – equestrian smart casual. Suitable for yard if required but also public spaces like coffee house. Have wellington boots in the car.

Arrive 10-15 minutes early - Text arrival and description of specific location and attire.

Introduction

Thank participant and introduce self – explain what is on the research form and consent letter verbally.

Explain the recorder and outline the order of questions. Confirm they can cease to speak at any time and if there is an uncomfortable topic they do not have to discuss it.

If agreed, press record and begin interview.

Interview

Start with demographic questions

Section 1 – Demographics

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- How many horses do you own?
- What is your occupation?
- Do you consider yourself to be your horse's owner?
- Do you consider yourself to be your horse's manager?
- Do you consider yourself to be your horse's groom?
- Do you consider yourself to be your horse's trainer?

Continue with open questions about horse ownership – always start with

- What does horse ownership mean to you?

Always end with

- Do you have any other thoughts on horse ownership?

All other questions may be answered as occurs naturally and includes but not limited to

- What is your experience with loaning horses?
- How did you come to own your first horse?
- What has been the most positive experience of horse ownership?
- What has been the most negative experience of horse ownership?
- Have you ever considered not owning horses?
- Talk about horses you've sold, given away, or ceased to own?
- How would you judge yourself as a horse owner?
- What are your thoughts on other horse owners?
- Do you have any pets?
- Compare your relationship with your horse to other animals.
- Why participate in dressage?
- What is the best/worst thing someone could say to you as a horse owner?
- What are your thoughts on the equine industry?
- Why do you think you own a horse?

Use prompts as required.

Ending the interview

Inform participants as end question approaches to prepare them to finish. Pay attention to body language to read for signs of annoyance or signalling to leave. – e.g. clock watching or References to things they still need to do that day.

Accept any offers to meet horses or take a tour.

Answer questions they ask you about your horse experience and research

Thank them for their time and participation. Provide a time line for when they should expect a transcription to arrive.

Post interview

Transcribe and email PDF copy of transcript to applicants. Offer the opportunity to comment and provide a time line for an email response – 2 weeks.

Appendix D – Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Occupation	Location
Abigail	44	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	Gloucestershire
Bethany	31	Female	University Lecturer	Gloucestershire
Carly	49	Female	Professional Horse Trainer/Instructor	Oxfordshire
Diana	50	Female	Eq. Business Proprietor/Consultant/Instructor	Wiltshire
Evlynne	50	Female	Proprietor of a Soft Furnishing Business	Wiltshire
Freya	45	Female	Professional Consultant - Semi-Pro Dressage	Wiltshire
Graham	25	Male	Professional Dressage Trainer	Gloucestershire
Harry	30	Male	Professional Dressage Trainer	Gloucestershire
Isabelle	28	Female	Intending to be Full Time MA student Sept-19	Wiltshire
Julia	47	Female	University Head of Department	Gloucestershire
Kelly	35	Female	Doctor	Gloucestershire
Linda	53	Female	Professional Horse Trainer/Instructor	Lancashire
Mara	28	Female	Horse Nutrition and Sales	Wiltshire
Nadia	21	Female	Full-time BSc Student	Wiltshire
Olivia	60	Female	Proprietor of a Hair Dresser's Business	Gloucestershire
Payton	51	Female	Hair Dresser & Dog Breeder	Gloucestershire
Roberta	48	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	Gloucestershire
Samantha	49	Female	Professional Horse Trainer/Instructor	Suffolk
Theresa	27	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	Southampton
Victoria	47	Female	Full-Time Parent	Hampshire
Wendy	40	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	Hampshire
Total	21	N/A	N/A	21
Average	41	N/A	N/A	N/A
Distribution	5-20	2-Male	6 Professional Dressage Trainers	9 - Gloucestershire
	3-30	19-Female	4 Professional Horse Trainers	6 - Wiltshire
	8-40		3 Horse industry professionals - non-training	2- Hampshire
	4-50		2 Students - non- horse subjects	1 - Lancashire
	1-60		5 Non- horse professionals	1 - Oxfordshire
			1 Full-Time Parent	1 - Southampton
				1 - Suffolk
Median	45	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mode	47/49/50	Female	Professional Dressage Trainer	Gloucestershire

Appendix E – Participant Horse Ownership Role Information

Pseudonym	Current # owned	Max # owned	Breaks in ownership	Other pets	Owner	Trainer	Groom	Manager
Abigail	3	3	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bethany	3	3	N	N	Y	P	Y	Y
Carly	1	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Diana	0	1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Evlynne	1	1	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Freya	4	6	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Graham	4	4	N	Y	Y	Y	P	Y
Harry	4	5	N	Y	Y	Y	P	Y
Isabelle	2	2	N	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
Julia	1	2	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
Kelly	1	1	Y	N	Y	P	Y	N
Linda	3	11	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mara	1	5	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nadia	2	2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Olivia	1	1	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N
Payton	2	2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Roberta	1	3	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Samantha	2	unknown	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Theresa	2	2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Victoria	6	8	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wendy	4	unknown	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	48	64	21	21	21	21	21	21
	2.3	3.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	3-4	2-7+	6-Y	19-Y	21-Y	16-Y	19-Y	18-Y
	3-3	1-6	15-N	2-N		5-P	2-P	3-N
	5-2	2-5						
	7-1	1-4						
	1-0	4-3						
		5-2						
		4-1						
		2-unknown						
	2	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	1	2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Appendix F – Sample transcript email

From: Murphy, Darcy

To:

Subject: Doctoral Transcripts

Date: 30 April 2019 16:28:01

Attachments: Carly 1 Transcription 190104.pdf

Carly 2 Transcription 190104.pdf

Hello,

I hope you are well. Thank you for your patience in receiving these and for your time and comments. They were really helpful. If you want to add anything or make a comment please feel free. I will assume all is well if I don't hear from you in a couple of weeks.

They are transcribed as spoken so be advised the grammar and sentence structure does not conform to the standard writing rules.

As you were curious. These are some preliminary ideas so far about the outcome of the work. They are still ideas in development but we're getting there.

So far it seems there are 3 sources of motivation. The initial one to own because it allows us control over the circumstances with the horse. These circumstances differ between people but it is about control for all of them because we value the relationship and in loan situations it is upsetting that someone else can alter that. The other two are in relation to the interactions with our horses. Firstly we gain motivation through the act of caregiving.
We feel the happiest knowing that our horses are content and happy. The recognition from our horses (e.g. neighing on arrival or leaving horse friends in a field to come over) is a reward as it indicates their well-being or that their interaction signals to us that we can bring them well-being. That makes us feel good and in human social circles, one of the things that helps bind society together. Secondly with horse human interaction it is about the process of training and more standard achievement. The vast majority find the training and the day to day improvements more pleasurable than a ribbon at a show. This seems to be discipline specific but as I didn't get to much into this it is speculation.

Thank you again, genuinely appreciated all of your time. Hope you, xxxx, and the dogs are enjoying the nicer weather.

Kind Regards
Darcy Murphy

Appendix G – Informed Consent Letter

Dear Dressage Horse Owner/s**,**

RE: An investigation of horse ownership.

My name is Darcy Murphy and I am a doctoral research student at the University of Gloucestershire. You are invited to participate in my study investigating the experiences, feelings, opinions, and beliefs of dressage horse owners. This invitation has two parts:

1. Information about the study
2. Certificate of Consent to sign should you wish to participate.

(You will be given a copy of the full Consent Form)

Introduction and Research Purpose

I am a horse owner and have experience as a dressage competitor, professional groom, trainer, instructor, and professional educator. I have taken this moment in my life to pursue a doctorate and, as it turns out, I am most curious about us as horse owners. What motivates us and what do we value? The aim of the project is to try and explain horse ownership in all its forms and illustrate a picture of who we are without judgement. As most of my experience is in the dressage discipline is makes sense to stick close to my own passion and speak with other dressage horse owners. That is where you come in fellow horse owner. I want to hear your stories.

What is involved?

Sit down with me for 1 – 1.5 hours (shorter or longer if you wish) and have a conversation sharing your horse ownership experiences, feelings, opinions, and beliefs.

Participation and Right to Withdraw

Participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time before transcripts are analysed, including during the conversation and request your experiences not form part of the study. You WILL have the opportunity to review the verbatim transcript and my initial summary from the conversation, to offer feedback.

Procedural details

- Participate in an interview (formal name for the conversation)
- Sit down in an agreed comfortable space: quiet coffee shop, a tack room, a home or other.
- Interviews will be recorded with a digital Dictaphone. You can request to not be recorded. You also have the opportunity to stop the recording at any point. Names will be recorded on the Dictaphone for identification during transcription only. Data analysis and reporting will be done anonymously, all human and animal names will be

coded and changed. Only the research will know which codes match with which person and this information will be kept secure.

- I will ask some basic information questions: like gender, age, length of horse experience, how often you interact with your horse. I will ask open questions like: Tell me about the first horse you owned? What benefits do you experience from horse ownership? What are the challenges of horse ownership?
- If you do not wish to answer a questions, you may say so and the interviewer will move on.
- Information recorded is confidential and no one else (except you) will have access to the information recorded during your interview. Recordings will be stored on a securely stored, password protected computer.

Risks

You may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. I do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Contact

You are welcome to ask any questions about the research.

Email: [redacted]

Certification of Consent:

I have read the information sheet, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked were answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Email Address_____

Date _____
Day/month/year

Appendix H – Participant Transcript Information

Pseudonym	Total Int. Duration	Transcript word count	NVIVO Transcribe
Abigail	00:59:55	9214	N
Bethany	01:28:57	14933	N
Carly	01:15:40	14489	N
Diana	01:03:21	10408	N
Evlynne	01:34:59	15578	Y
Freya	01:11:38	12032	N
Graham	00:36:51	7170	N
Harry	00:51:02	8106	N
Isabelle	00:42:56	7921	Y
Julia	00:26:30	4033	N
Kelly	00:42:50	6625	N
Linda	00:38:14	6292	Y
Mara	00:27:09	5236	Y
Nadia	00:44:10	9112	N
Olivia	00:22:51	3222	N
Payton	00:36:28	5961	Y
Roberta	00:49:01	9689	N
Samantha	00:37:38	5642	Y
Theresa	00:28:43	4041	N
Victoria	00:59:24	9650	N
Wendy	00:49:33	8698	N
	17:27:50	178052	N/A
	00:49:54	8478.666667	N/A
	4-20	5-10000+	6 - Y
	4-30	4-9000	15 -N
	6-40	2-8000	
	3-50	2-7000	
	1-60	2-6000	
	2-70	3- 5000	
	1-80	2-4000	
	1-90	1-3000	
	00:44:10	8106	N/A
	no mode	no mode	N

Appendix I – Emotions Code List

Legend for Code List Table.
Nest 1
Nest 2 (Aggregated child nodes)
Nest 3

29 emotions/feelings/behavioural descriptors codes

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
------- Emotion Codes -------	---	---
Emotions [human]	0	0
Negative (Aggregated child nodes)	26	572
'aggressive' ['angry']['bully']['spiteful']	9	11
'anxiety' ['nervous']['wary']['fear']['scared']['petrified']['terrified']['anxious']['can't trust']['don't feel safe']['stressed'][timid']['insecure']['frightening']	18	57
displeasure ['miserable' (not enjoying)]['don't enjoy']['irritation']['tedious']['bad mood']['negative feelings']['grumpy']['annoyed']['grating'] (Disliking)	20	62
'don't want'	22	64
'frustrated' ['pain']['powerless']['stuck']	11	24
'hate'	12	23
'not interested' [doesn't appeal]['weren't excited about']['didn't care']['not desperate'][not worried]	10	18
pain ['everything hurts'] (physical)	3	4
'pressure'	7	13
'respect'	8	11

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
Negative continued….	---	---
'sad' [disappointment] ['gutted'] ['upset']['devastated']['shame']['guilty']['feel bad']['grief'][regret']['miserable' (sad)]['depressed']['unhappy']	21	58
'want' ['desire']['desperate']	25	203
'worry'	12	24
Positive (Aggregated child nodes)	26	652
'amazing' ['lovely']	15	30
'confident' ['not confident'] ['lost confidence'] ['brave']	12	27
'content' ['relaxing']['wellbeing']['inner peace']['quietness']['peacefulness']['calming']['chilled']	17	25
'enjoyment' ['joy']['pleasure']['fun']	20	85
'excited'	10	12
'grateful'	4	4
'happy' ['pleased']['glad']	13	42
'hope'	13	30
'interest' ['intrigued']	9	13
'like'	22	121
'love' ['adore']['affection']['admire']['obsessed']	22	166
'lucky' ['privileged'] ['charmed life']['honour']	18	32
'protective'	3	5
'relieved' ['relief']	4	5
'satisfying' ['reward']['good'][fulfils']['proud']	14	41
'trust' ['safe']	9	14

Appendix J – Horse Ownership Content Code List

Legend for Code List Table
Nest 1 (Primary & Influencing)
Nest 2
Nest 3
Nest 4
Nest 5

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
------- Horse Ownership Content Codes -------	---	---
Getting into horses (Core)	0	0
Initial interest in horses [‘always wanted’] (Motivation)	22	52
Family influence	8	17
Getting out of horses (Not) ['wanting to give up']['becomes a chore']	16	37
'like a drug' ['in your blood']	8	11
loaning	10	13
gaining experience [proving capabilities][same responsibility as ownership]	8	20
other people controlling actions [loan horse owners]	10	23
threats to keeping [going back to owner] [sold out from under]	6	15
riding school [lessons] [learning to ride]	15	33
'securing' horse for self (Motivation)	4	7
'freedom' [Autonomy] ['complete control']	8	15
Getting more horses [number of horses]	6	13

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
'securing' horse for self continued…	---	---
Horses to keep [compatibility]	6	7
Breeding for riding	7	14
family relation to previous horse	3	3
instant decision ['just knew']['impulse']['whim']	8	11
making bad judgements	5	7
'potential' ['ability']['safe']['happy hacker']['pet']['friend pony']['temperament']	17	39
rescue horse [pony]	3	7
Horses to sell on	19	80
Opportunity	19	28
recommendations from friends [help from others]	12	22
Human & Horse Interaction (Core)	0	0
'emotional'	13	23
Horses as perceived by Humans	0	0
Attachment ['into' owner] ['pleased to see trainer']	14	28
Caregiving [avoids stepping on]['protects']['look after']	6	8
'coping' [emotional regulation]	8	14
Horse characteristics [traits] [personality][character]['they're all different']['individuals']	11	18
'affection' ['grateful']	4	6
'aggressive' ['angry']['malicious'] ['bully']['evil']['savage']['vicious']['horrible']['grumpy' (aggressive)]['pig' (a real ass) (behaviour)][not nice]	11	21
'aloof' ['not bothered about being friends']['ignores you']['bad mood']['self-sufficient'][irritated by owner]['won't show affection']['independent']	8	15
'amazing' ['cool']['great']	11	24

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
Horse characteristics *[traits] [personality][character]['they're all different']['individuals']* continued…	---	---
anxious ['fractious']['stressed']['neurotic']['unhappy']['upset'(grumpy)]['nervous']['timid']['insecure']['wary'] ['uncomfortable']['excited' (nervous)]['confused']	17	53
'beautiful' ['magnificent'] ['pretty'] ['cute']['stunning']['gorgeous']['smart' (appearance)]	15	29
'content' ['relaxed']['chilled']['mellow']['calm']['good mood']['comfortable']['not spooked']	14	30
'depressed' ['miserable']['closed down']['closed off']['dead in the eye']['not interested']	6	7
'difficult' ['not easy']['argumentative']['naughty']['a pain']['dodgy'][mischievous']['bad behaviour']['cheeky']['belligerent']['nightmare']	13	43
'don't want' ['dislike'] ['hate'][displeasure]['don't love']['no desire']['don't care']	17	50
'enjoyment' ['pleasure']['likes]	13	31
fear [being 'frightened'] ['scared']['spooked'][mistrustful']	14	23
'happy' [not stressed]['pleased']	18	48
'high maintenance' ['needy']['tricky']['temperamental']['quirky']['sensitive']	9	15
'intelligent'['smart']	2	2
'love' ['adored']	9	17
'pain' ['no longer comfortable']['not comfortable']	4	8
protective ['looks after'] ['defensive'](Caregiving of human)	6	9
'psychotic' ['insane']['crazy']['neurotic(2)']['nutcase']	4	12
'sharp' ['hot']['feisty']['excited'(energy levels)]['exuberant']['wild']	10	16
'tolerant' ['forgiving']['resilient']['patient']['safe']	7	15
'trusting' ['confident']	9	23
'ugly' ['pig']['scraggy']['straggly]	5	6
'very sweet' ['kind']['gentle']['nice']['lovely-nice-beautiful temperament' (on the ground)]['lovely character']	19	34
'wanted'	16	33

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
Horse characteristics *[traits] [personality][character]['they're all different']['individuals']* continued…	---	---
'willing' ['easy'] ['straight forward'] ['obliging']['submissive']['giving']['generous']['like servants']['wonderful-delightful temperament' (riding)]['respects']	13	34
horses are more powerful than humans	13	18
they communicate ['responsive'] ['interactive']['seek attention'][knows human]['has agenda']['read my mind']['expressing']['interested']['intuitive']	19	54
'worked hard for me' [tries to please]	12	23
Human Caregiving (Motivation)	9	19
Emotional Care	24	118
contact time [quality time]	13	21
emotional regulation ['calm']['leveller']	13	26
empathising [mind-mindedness]['know...what he's thinking']	15	32
'helping them be happy' ['nice peaceful life'][keeping them safe]	18	39
Instrumental Care	23	171
buying things	10	12
cost of keeping [financially responsible] ['burden'] [expensive]['money bin']	16	30
exercise	5	5
feeding it	10	11
Grooming	10	13
Horses being injured or ill	22	73
takes time & money ['wasting']	8	10
seeing the vet [farrier]	9	12
shelter (stable or turnout)	7	15
lifestyle ['habit'] ['normality'] ['live for'] ['my world'] ['way of life']['commitment']	16	36
defines me ['shapes who I am']['part of your DNA']['feel complete']['sense of purpose']	5	9

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
lifestyle ['habit'] ['normality'] ['live for'] ['my world'] ['way of life']['commitment'] continued…	---	---
'hard work'	11	14
leisure time [spare time][hobby]	11	19
making 'every decision for what happens to them' ['responsibility']['sole carer']['in charge']['nurturing']	18	45
'good owner' ['nice horse owner']	6	8
others managing them [being away]	6	12
questioning own decisions [feeling like a bad owner]	8	13
'responsibility for peaceful death' [losing horses]	11	31
Relationship [knowing the horse]['takes time to know them'] (Influencing)	15	23
'communication'	8	14
favouritism [ranking]['horse of a life time']	11	28
ownership duration	15	21
'relationship' ['bond']	13	23
Change in the Horse or Relationship [Now vs Then]	8	19
'gelling' ['clicked'] ['right fit'] ['born on its back']	7	16
Human Attachment to Horse	6	8
imbalance of autonomy	7	14
one-to-one experience	3	6
relationship type ['friendship']['family member']['extension of self']['child']	16	43
Trust ['safety']['respect']['connection']	12	22
wanting a bond	3	4
Using the horse (Motivation)	0	0
Achievement is Outcome [horse becoming 'easy'] [a unit] [winning][being the best]	8	23
Achievement is staying safe	7	9
Competing [performing]	11	37

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
Achievement is Outcome [horse becoming 'easy'] [a unit] [winning][being the best] continued…	---	---
winning ['pot hunting']	9	13
Achievement is Process ['progress'][training] [practicing]	16	72
Desire to be 'better' [learning]['seeking challenges']['dreams']['goals']	15	45
getting it right	5	8
Horse teaching Human	8	12
'knowing the process' ['journey'][Now vs Then]	10	17
persistence ['stubborn'][not being 'defeated']['keep trying']	6	9
Change in use [retiring][stop using the horse]	7	14
DRESSAGE	18	45
'hard work' ['difficult']	6	10
'technical'	3	4
Riding for fun ['riding as a goal'] ['makes me smile']['good at it']	16	50
Riding 'absorbs me' ['keeps me going'] ['zone out']['forget everything else']	7	10
Riding an unhappy horse is a terrible experience	5	9
Human circumstance [individual] (Influencing)	0	0
'afford' ['loads of money'] ['enough']	7	9
'being injured'	9	16
having enough time	14	28
Health - physical & mental ['therapeutic']	5	8
Human Support Network ['selfish']	2	4
'knowing enough' [having knowledge] [experience]['upskilled']['different perspectives']	13	33
'too poor' [skint] ['can't afford']	6	10
Where horses kept	7	12

Code Name	# of Transcripts	# of Examples
Human to Human [Industry] (Influencing)	0	0
Being watched [others judging] [endorsement of training]	16	60
Social media	7	10
Dishonesty	8	18
encountering horse people [judging others]	20	58
'exploits'	3	5
Horses as assets ['racing'] ['industrial selling']['invest']['business']	8	22
Livery yards	15	29
Non-horse people [outsiders] [owners] [parents] [friends]	6	14
positive socialising with 'horsey' people ['robust community']['like-minded']['innovative']['dedicated']	16	68
Professional vs Amateur	6	35
Riding other's horses [non-riding owners][the 'right' people]	7	25

Appendix K – Sample Relationship Codes

From Name (Emotion codes)	Type	To Name (Horse Ownership Experience Codes)
Emotions [human]\negative	Associated	Human to Human [Industry] (Influencing)\Livery yards
Emotions [human]\negative	Associated	Human & Horse Interaction (Primary)\Human Caregiving \Instrumental Care\Horses being injured or ill
Emotions [human]\negative	Associated	Human to Human [Industry] (Influencing)\Being watched [others judging] [endorsement of training]
Emotions [human]\negative\'sad' [disappointment] ['gutted'] ['upset']['devastated']['shame']['guilty']['feel bad']['grief'][regret']['miserable' (sad)]['depressed']['unhappy']	Associated	Human & Horse Interaction (Primary)\Human Caregiving \making 'every decision for what happens to them' ['responsibility']['sole carer']['in charge']['nurturing']\'responsibility for peaceful death' [losing horses]
Emotions [human]\positive	Associated	Human & Horse Interaction (Primary)\Using the horse\Achievement is Process ['progress'][training] [practicing]
Emotions [human]\positive	Associated	Human & Horse Interaction (Primary)\Using the horse\Achievement is Outcome [horse becoming 'easy'] [a unit] [winning][being the best]
Emotions [human]\positive	Associated	Human to Human [Industry] (Influencing)\positive socialising with 'horsey' people ['robust community']['like minded']['innovative']['dedicated']
Emotions [human]\positive\'content' ['relaxing']['wellbeing']['inner peace']['quietness']['peacefulness']['calming']['chilled ']	Associated	Human & Horse Interaction (Primary)\Human Caregiving \Emotional Care\'helping them be happy' ['nice peaceful life'][keeping them safe]
Emotions [human]\positive\'excited'	Associated	Getting into horses (Primary)\Initial interest in horses [always wanted]
Emotions [human]\positive\'lucky' ['privileged'] ['charmed life']['honour']	Associated	Getting into horses (Primary)\'securing' horse for self