

A STUDY OF GROUP PROCESSES IN DETERMINING  
ZOO ANIMAL IMAGES FOR INSTAGRAM

DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO  
THE DWIGHT SCHAR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
The Degree

Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies

Vincent P. Jeffries, B.A., M.B.A.

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

ASHLAND, OHIO

2020

© Copyright by  
Vincent P. Jeffries  
All rights reserved  
2020

A Dissertation  
entitled  
A Study of Group Processes in Determining Zoo Animal Images for Instagram  
by  
Vincent P. Jeffries  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
The Degree  
Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies

---

Judy A. Alston, Ph.D., Committee Chair	Date
--	------

---

Peter G. Ghazarian, Ed.D., Committee Member	Date
---	------

---

Sunny L. Munn, Ph.D., Committee Member	Date
--	------

---

Judy A. Alston, Ph.D., Director, Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies	Date
---	------

---

Donna Breault, Ph.D., Dean, Schar College of Education	Date
--	------

Ashland University

July 2020

A STUDY OF GROUP PROCESSES IN DETERMINING  
ZOO ANIMAL IMAGES FOR INSTAGRAM

By

Vincent P. Jeffries

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY, 2020

Judy A. Alston, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Abstract

This study examines group processes and leadership of a zoo executive team at a Midwestern zoo while determining what type of animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use in social media (Instagram). Using the four animal and human associations, this study examined how group processes are used to establish a mutually agreed-upon set of standards for what is ethically appropriate for social marketing imagery of zoos. The instrumentation used included one-on-one interviews, survey, a questionnaire and a focus group. The results of this study suggests that effective group processes include: behavior modification, cohesion, feedback, leadership, fostering perception change, and fostering learning. The results also suggest how zoo professionals navigate in reaching decisions for policy development and common goals for the organization more efficiently and effectively.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my daughters. Anything is possible with God and a strong will. I also thank my parents- especially dad for suggesting I go for it.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Judy A. Alston, Ph.D. for her insight into the human condition and what it means to be an authentic and transformative leader. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Sunny L. Munn, Ph.D. and Dr. Peter G. Ghazarian, Ed.D., for their humble nature in navigating me through this journey.

## Table of Contents

### CHAPTER

#### I.

Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	2
Research Question.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Nature of the Study.....	4
Theoretical Framework.....	5
Researcher's Lens.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations.....	9
Summary.....	10

#### II.

Review of the Literature.....	11
Human Perception of Other Animals.....	11
Biophilic.....	12
Phylogenetic.....	14
Anthropomorphic.....	15
Kinderschema.....	15
Eyes and Gaze Allocation.....	16

Social Media.....	17
Social Media Background.....	17
Human/Animal Associations.....	18
Ethical Representation of Animals and Leadership.....	19
Perception of Animals in Media.....	22
Empathic Leadership.....	25
Group Processes.....	27
Group Experience.....	27
Learning .....	28
Perception Change.....	28
Cohesion.....	30
Behavior Modification.....	31
Summary.....	31

### III.

Methodology.....	33
Research Design.....	33
Design Rationale.....	34
Research Questions.....	35
Setting.....	35
Participants.....	36
Data Collection.....	37
Data Analysis.....	41



Trustworthiness.....	45
Credibility.....	46
Transferability.....	47
Dependability.....	47
Confirmability.....	47
Limitations.....	48
Summary.....	48

#### IV.

Results Findings.....	49
Interview.....	49
Safety.....	50
Nature.....	50
Health.....	52
Empathy.....	52
Following the Rules.....	53
Honesty.....	54
Adornment.....	55
Questionnaire.....	56
Survey.....	57
Focus Group.....	59
Behavior Modification.....	60
Cohesion.....	61
Feedback.....	63

Leadership.....	64
Fostering Learning .....	66
Fostering Perception Change .....	67
Summary .....	69
V.	
Summary and Discussion.....	72
Overview of the Problem.....	72
Purpose Statement.....	73
Research Question.....	73
Review of Methodology.....	73
Summary of Findings.....	74
Behavior Modification .....	75
Cohesion.....	75
Feedback.....	76
Leadership.....	76
Fostering Learning .....	77
Fostering Perception change.....	77
Conclusions.....	78
Discussion.....	81
Implications.....	81
Suggestions for Future Research .....	83
Summary.....	85
REFERENCES.....	86

APPENDICES.....	100
Appendix A: Human Subject Resource Board Approval.....	100
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form.....	101
Appendix C: Interview Protocol.....	103
Appendix D: Codebook Sample Page.....	106

## List of Figures

### FIGURE

Figure 2.1. Image Promoting Mutual Gaze .....	17
Figure 2.2. Image Promoting Mutual Gaze .....	17

## List of Tables

### TABLE

Table 3.1. Sample Information.....	37
Table 3.2. Coding.....	44
Table 3.3. Coding Key.....	45
Table 3.4. Questionnaire Responses .....	57
Table 4.1. Survey Information.....	59

## CHAPTER I

### **Introduction**

The depiction of animal imagery is a loaded process where human beings often impose particular values or meanings on these images. As social media has grown, there is a notable inconsistency in how animals are portrayed throughout Association of Zoos and Aquarium (AZA) institutions. The AZA is a non-profit organization that supports the development of North American zoos, public aquariums in science, education, and recreation. This inconsistency has created the need for zoo leaders to set standards of appropriate animal representations. With that knowledge, how do the leaders of a Midwestern Zoo take their differing opinions, beliefs and judgments, commingling them to find commonalities that establish a collective perception of animal representation on the social media platform Instagram? In this study, zoo leaders are tasked with establishing a benchmark for ethical presentations of animals on Instagram, aligning with human/animal associations. Group processes and leadership are examined via the exposure to animal photographs.

### **Background of the Problem**

As group interactions are a vital component to the collaborative learning process, understanding the factors that contribute to effective individual and group learning (Cohen, 1994) is crucial. The Midwestern Zoo being studied works daily with animal related issues. Therefore, human/animal associations form a critical factor in the lens through which the research participants respond during their evaluations- affecting their individual perceptions throughout the group process. The AZA aims to create a cohesive goal for protecting wildlife. As a collective, all AZA member zoos reflect one another.

Therefore, without guidelines for the representation of animals in social media, we risk the proliferation of images that may detract from the strength of our mission and vision, thus weakening our goal to protect wildlife. Navigating a group process interaction on this topic aids in understanding how leaders take their differing opinions, beliefs and judgments, establishing collective perceptions for animal representation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study uses the absence of animal representation guidelines to examine group processes and leadership for the zoo executive team at a Midwestern Zoo. Although the AZA has well developed guidelines for apes in media and commercial performances, there are no suggestions on best practices for the representation of general animal collections in social media. Some zoos have opted for a naturalistic (appearing in a native-like habitat) approach to their depiction of animals. Other North American zoos have depicted animals in clothes, hats, and used ads promoting political or social causes. AZA zoos risk promulgating images that may detract from the strength of their mission and vision. With rapidly growing communication methods, administration will be tasked with working in groups to make marketing decisions that involve policy development internally and nationally through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Therefore, understanding group processes in this context is critical.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to (a) examine group processes and leadership while building “comraderies, cohesion and esprit de corps” (French & Bell, 1999, p. 162) and (b) determine what type of animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use in social media (Instagram). This study

examines how group processes are used to establish a mutually agreed upon set of regulations for what is ethically appropriate for social marketing imagery of zoos. This study examines group processes and leadership for a Midwestern Zoo executive team while determining what type of animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use in social media marketing. The data collected is valuable for understanding how zoo professionals go through a decision-making process with the perception of their values, ideals, and the behavior change process. This study provides needed guidance and benefits zoo administrators on deriving policies through group processes while furthering the understanding of leadership within AZA institutions. Establishing standards for the ethical depiction of animals aided in engaging the group process for the study.

### **Research Question**

The research questions for this study are:

1. Using the four animal/human associations, how do group processes and leadership play a role in deciding what animal images are:
  - a. Used/posted on Instagram
  - b. Ethically appropriate for use on Instagram
  - c. Ethically conflicted for use on Instagram
2. How do group processes and leadership aid in finding a set of standards?
3. What are the standards that were produced for ethically appropriate use of animal images via Instagram?



### **Significance of Study**

Evaluating group processes can provide critical insight into how groups can improve communication and human connectivity. This study contributed to scholarly research on group processes and leadership. This study provided needed guidance to zoo administrators on deriving policies through group processes, while furthering the understanding of leadership within AZA institutions. Ultimately, this study supports the organizational goal for the institution's use of social media, which is to connect people's lives to wildlife, while inspiring lifelong learning and conservation action.

### **Nature of the Study (methodology)**

I received human subject resource board approval (Appendix A) to conduct a qualitative, phenomenological research study. The participants in this study included ten employees in leadership positions at a Midwestern Zoo. The instrumentation used included one-on-one interviews, which consisted of (open-ended questions), a survey (collection of qualitative thoughts regarding each image), and a questionnaire (choosing on a Likert scale where an image falls from ethically conflicted to ethically appropriate). The instrumentation also included a focus group in which participants analyzed animal imagery. I provided the participants with semi-structured, open-ended questions that allowed for discussion. These questions supported the research question. Procedurally, I recorded the one-on-one interviews and focus group via audio recorder to transcribe later. I was cognizant of and recorded my observations during the interview, focus group, and transcription process. As the participants in this study met to discuss animal imagery, "the quality of interpersonal interaction [was] a key driver of emergent collective cognitive structures" (Curşeu, Janssen, & Raab, 2011, p. 622). How group members

process information is dependent on the individual's cognitive process and the interpersonal communications among group members (Curşeu & Schruijer 2008).

Communication behaviors initiate a sequence of actions (or interactions) that work together to make progress (or regress) in reaching conversational goals.

Thus, we assert that communication behaviors (a) are inherently social, (b) are used to engage in relationships with other members of the organization, and (c) link micro actions of individuals to macro communication patterns and collective structures. (Keyton, et al. 2013, p.153)

Communication between the research participants was paramount to uncovering the group process dynamics in this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I chose social constructivism as my theoretical framework. Social constructivists see that knowledge is culturally and socially constructed and therefore is a product of human actions (Gredler, 1997). Social constructivism provides a strong context for studying group processes, comparing sense-making among group members, and group formation (Brower, 1996). To that end, social constructivism is widely visible in group processes where members build a mutual understanding of their shared experiences (Llewelyn & Dunnett, 1987).

Human actions produce a social process that leads to learning. Therefore, learning takes place with more than one individual (McMahon, 1997). In social constructivism, knowledge is obtained, and social worlds are created when there is social interaction and processing. Knowledge evolves through individual interactions with others. It makes for a shared experience. In social constructivism, members of a group or society create the

building blocks of the world's reality. Social constructivists believe human activity is what constructs reality (Kukla, 2000). Group interactions and communications involve socially approved ideas, patterns, and rules about the world around us (Ernest, 1999). These interactions lead to inter-subjectivity (concepts or ideas shared between two minds), which is a cornerstone of constructing social meanings. Along with inter-subjectivity, knowledge grows via the process of communication and negotiation (Prawat & Floden, 1994). This joint connection is also referred to as shared intelligibility. Shared intelligibility is when people communicate together on a shared experience, and there is agreement that their mutual idea has validity (Gergen, 1985). In social constructivism, meaning is developed through connections with other humans. In this process, we rationalize our experiences by the social world we create via communication with others (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009).

Along with reality and meaning, culture is born out of human social connections. We are learning and constructing knowledge in social circles while we mediate through problem-solving. This process transforms our reality of culture (Vygotskij & Kozulin, 1986). Social constructivism looks at the background of those learning in the group process. The learners' backgrounds add to the formations of knowledge and truth as they learn with others (Wertsch, 1997).

“If something is socially constructed, then it has undergone a process of development in some way mediated by social structures, interactions, or values. That is, it has a history in which human sociality is implicated” (Fagan, 2010, p. 95). Social constructivism directs a socially consensual interpretation of reality, and it makes the ethical decision making an interactive, consensual process using negotiation and

arbitration versus an individual process (Cottone, 2001). Social constructivism was applied to advertising by Cottone (2001), which demonstrates social constructivism's applicability in product marketing. In using the example of two very similar objects marketed differently, he demonstrated how social constructions influence our choices. Dependent on how an item is marketed in a particular social construct, our perceptions through communication can change (Cottone, 2001). Concerning this study, images on Instagram come from various marketing lenses. These marketing lenses come in the form of different motivations for using the image such as a call to action (vote today) or an ask to purchase something (buy tickets for the event). The motivation could also be to instill a feeling in the viewer that aligns with a brand. Through social constructivism, study participants define a reality regarding the phenomenon presented (animal photographs) through steps such as negotiation and arbitrations that define for them, in the group process, what images are ethically appropriate for use on Instagram.

### **Researcher's Lens**

As a Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Midwestern Zoo studied, I am directly involved in managing a staff that communicates our marketing messages to the public. As part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) I have been exposed to the messaging techniques of other accredited institutions. In my work for the Midwestern Zoo, I have heard the strong, yet differing opinions of others on the interpretation of animals. Therefore, maintaining impartiality or an unbiased approach is not feasible. My life experiences have formed my personal view of the world. I do not want to see animals presented disrespectfully. I am open to the concept that what is perceived as disrespectful is subjective. Therefore, I respect the beliefs and opinions of

the study participants, and I am open to their interpretations of what is deemed disrespectful.

My interpretation of consumerism has led to my instinctual response that guidelines for this representation are needed. I lean towards a more naturalistic approach. However, I wanted to see how Midwestern Zoo professionals interpret this issue. I am intrinsically drawn to understanding how the group process guides group integration and how study participants develop a guideline that meets their social, professional, and internal gauge for how leaders set standards appropriate animal representation for the industry. Their process of getting to the truth is the critical component of the study. As a marketer by profession, I have studied, taught, and executed how to conduct focus groups without initiating bias. It is challenging, but I attempted to ask non-leading questions and avoided stating my opinions. Despite my emic approach, I wanted to remain as impartial and unbiased as possible to avoid influencing the individual and group process.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Biophilia:** In *Biophilia*, Wilson (1984) discussed our “innate tendency” to desire a connection with living things. The human spirit is aligned to this engagement, which causes one to have positive feelings about nature.

**Anthropomorphism:** Applying human behaviors and actions on animals, inanimate objects, or natural phenomena (Cullen, Kanai, Bahrami, & Rees, 2013).

**Phylogenic:** Kellert (1985) described phylogenetic relatedness to humans as “the closer the biological relation of the endangered animal to human beings, the greater the likelihood of public support for the species” (p.192).

Kinderschema: Lorenz and Martin (1971) described “kinderschema” or “baby schema” as an “innate releasing mechanism” with the following characteristics: “A relatively large head, predominance of the brain capsule, large and low-lying eyes, bulging cheek region, short and thick extremities, a springy elastic consistency, and clumsy movements” that give a child “a loveable or ‘cuddly’ appearance” (p. 53).

Ethically appropriate animal images: Images that frame animals to promote their status as ambassadors to their native counterparts and the positive effect on the viewer to engage cognitive empathy (defined by the researcher).

Ethically conflicted animal images: Images that frame animals to diminish, degrade or misrepresent their status as an ambassador to their native counterparts, and the effect on the viewer to engage cognitive empathy (defined by me).

Cognitive empathy: "An emotional response that stems from another's emotional state or condition and that is congruent with the other's emotional state or situation" (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987, p. 5).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

This study is delimited to animal images from one social media platform (Instagram). The sample of the animal images being analyzed as a part of this study is from 13 North American zoos. Staff from a single Midwestern Zoo were the participants studied for the group processes and leadership portion of the study. One individual interview consisting of open-ended questions, one survey, and one questionnaire occurred with each participant. The participants then participated in a focus group.

## **Summary**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides an introduction. Chapter II presents a literature review establishing the research behind human/animal associations, social media, group process, and leadership. Chapter III delineates the research methodology, sample selected for study, design rationale, data collection instruments, and data analysis. Chapter IV reveals the results of the study. Chapter V presents the conclusions, discussions, and future considerations for the research.

## CHAPTER II

### **Review of the Literature**

This review of the literature is structured into three sections. Section one contains the biophilic, phylogenic, anthropomorphic, and kinderschema principles of the human/animals' bond, eye and gaze allocations, and concepts in social media marketing. Section two contains the ethical representation of animals in social media and includes espousing leadership and human perceptions of animals in media. Section three includes learning, perception change, and behavior modification via exposure to group processes. The research questions posed in this study are:

1. Using the four animal/human associations, how do group processes and leadership play a role in deciding what animal images are:
  - a. Used or posted on Instagram
  - b. Ethically appropriate for use on Instagram
  - c. Ethically conflicted for use on Instagram
2. How do group processes and leadership aid in finding a set of standards?
3. What are the standards that were produced for ethically appropriate use of animal images via Instagram?

### **Human Perception of Other Animals (Animal Associations)**

According to anthrozoologist, Herzog (2010), "The ways that we think about animals are often determined by species characteristics-how attractive the creatures are, their size, the shape of their head, whether they are furry (good) or slimy (bad), and how closely they resemble humans" (p. 38). Preferential dispositions for eye size and gaze allocation are also examined in relation to photography for digital media. All



characteristics are aligned with the ethical representations of animals in digital media and one's perception of animal imagery. These associations include phylogenic, biophilic, kinderschema, and anthropomorphic associations with animals. As humans, we relate to animals with varying degrees. The more a particular animal replicates human behaviors (e.g. gorilla), the higher we rank that animal on a phylogenetic scale in our ability to relate to them (Batt, 2009). Their kinderschema is an ethnologic concept that defines cuteness, which is associated with juvenile features. As we associate these characteristics with babies, we are drawn to animals that have large eyes, prominent foreheads, round faces, short limbs, and a dopy gait (Lorenz & Martin, 1971).

Similarly, biophilia is an innate desire to be close to nature. Many people profess their love of pets and appreciation of wildlife in the natural world (Wilson, 1984). In anthropomorphism, humans create connections with animals when they impart human characteristics on them. By viewing animal behaviors through a human action lens, we find commonality with the animal (Archer, 1996).

### **Biophilic**

In *Biophilia*, Wilson (1984) discussed our “innate tendency” to desire a connection with living things. The human spirit is aligned to this engagement, which causes one to have positive feelings about nature. Kahn (1997) demonstrated that, from a very young age, children have a strong bond with the natural world. Even in our homes, research has indicated that the feelings associated with our bond to pets can be extreme (Archer, 1996). When bonds are severed, it is possible to feel the kind of intense grief that one might have when losing a close human connection.

This emotionality (Jacobs, 2009), which forms the human/animal bond is our reaction to animal expressions. Animals may serve many roles in our social environments, such as a substitute for a human child, companion, or a parental figure (Archer, 1996). Humans are instinctually attuned to the presence of animals. For example, test participants were better at detecting distant animal movement over the distant movement of vehicles, plants, or tools (New, Cosmides, & Tooby, 2007). In Western society, human relationships can be fraught with challenges. In contrast, an animal relationship can be less challenging and a substitute for, and be more regarded than a relationship with other humans (Archer, 1996).

This dispositional need to connect with nature, and our pets, translates to a zoo environment. Myers, Saunders, and Birjulin (2004) described that watching animals in a zoo created favorable conditions for the viewer, including positive affective response, peacefulness, and connectedness. According to Luebke and Matiassek (2013), when asked to rate their enjoyment of visiting a zoo, research respondents cited their emotional reactions to viewing zoo animals as the most impactful. Similarly, Luebke, Watters, Packer, Miller, and Powell (2016) stated that in addition to viewer emotional reactions, animal behaviors were responsible for an increased level of respondents' positive feelings of viewing animals. An up-close encounter with an animal elicited a more positive effect in participants over observation of animal behavior or making eye contact with the animal.

“The concept of nature relatedness encompasses one's appreciation for and understanding of our interconnectedness with all other living things on the earth” (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2008, p. 718). People who view themselves as not connected with

nature and independent from the natural world are considered egoists. They have reward-based concern for the world and desire to avoid personal harm. People that feel a connection with the natural world and feel a part of that natural world want rewards for all people as well as the avoidance of harm for everyone (Schultz, 2000). This emotional affinity toward nature is related to nature-protective behavior (Kals, Schumacher, & Montada, 1999). Likewise, there is a positive relationship with the connectedness to nature and environmentally friendly actions (Mayer & Frantz, 2005). Therefore, when people feel a connection to the natural world, they are less apt to harm nature. To harm nature would be harming the person (Mayer & Frantz, 2005).

### **Phylogenetic**

Kellert (1985) described phylogenetic relatedness to humans as “the closer the biological relation of the endangered animal to human beings, the greater the likelihood of public support for the species” (p.192). This hyper-preference is confirmed by Batt (2009), in that humans show less care for animals they don’t identify with such as invertebrates. The more one feels an animal is closely similar to us; the more one ascribes that animal with higher cognition (Eddy, Gallup, & Povinelli, 1993). Therefore, of the many thousands of species of animals on the earth, there are only a select few that humans favor, such as the giant panda, sparrow, and jaguar, compared to the giant salamander, vulture, and Dyak fruit bat (Herzog, 2010).

Our attitudes towards animals fluctuate based on the perceived similarity in biobehavioral relation to animals (Batt, 2009). Several characteristics perpetuate our like or dislike of animals. For example, the size of an animal compared to their level of intelligence is an important factor. According to Archer (1996), there is a strong

preference for mammals and a general dislike for invertebrates, including mollusks and arthropods.

### **Anthropomorphic**

“Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics or behavior to animals, non-living things or natural phenomena” (Cullen, Kanai, Bahrami, & Rees, 2013, p. 1276). According to Archer (1996), humans treat animals like humans and attempt to form human-like relationships. Because mammalian emotions appear human-like, it makes it easier for humans to treat animals as part of their human family. Thus, although there is a great disparity between animals and humans regarding language and thought processes, humans can fill the divide by attributing mental states, human emotions, and cognizance to the animal, forming a relationship.

Eddy et al. (1993) stated that anthropomorphism is generated by multiple variables, including human and animal associations and the perception of how closely animals are related to humans. Similarly, Archer (1996) stated to overcome the intellectual barriers of animals lacking intellect, humans behave as though animals can understand and communicate. Humans perceive animals as having human similarities. Generally, humans see animals as having human thought potential and tend to over attribute leading to anthropomorphism.

### **Kinderschema**

Lorenz and Martin (1971) described “kinderschema” or “baby schema” as an “innate releasing mechanism” with the following characteristics: “A relatively large head, predominance of the brain capsule, large and low-lying eyes, bulging cheek region, short and thick extremities, a springy elastic consistency, and clumsy movements” that give a

child “a loveable or ‘cuddly’ appearance”(p. 53). Glocker, Langleben, Ruparel, Loughhead Gur, and Sachser (2009) manipulated images of infants to increase their level of kinderschema. These images were rated cuter than unmanipulated or reduced-schema photos. These higher-schema images also elicited caretaking motivations.

According to Sanefugi, Ohgami, and Hashiya (2006), baby schema engages a positive response leading to a positive reaction from adults. Likewise, Kruger and Miller (2016) indicated that one is more likely to show compassion and conservation actions to species with kinderschema features. The positive emotions elicited by kinderschema were much more prevalent in test participants that viewed baby animals requiring parental care versus super precocial baby animals (not needing parental care).

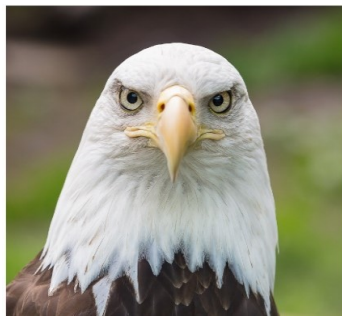
### **Eyes and Gaze Allocation**

Photos can communicate through reciprocity and gestural cues that consist of posture, body language, and appearance of movement (Daston & Mitman, 2005). Through photos, social engagement is increased exponentially when a face is present, increasing the opportunity of social media likes by 38% and comments by 32% (Bakhshi, Shamma, & Gilbert, 2014). As it pertains to eyes in photography, increased pupil size is correlated to positive attitudes toward others and influences attitudes toward the sender (King, 1972). In the animal world, the size of an animal’s eyes is a major factor that leads to giving through conservation donation (Herzog, 2010).

Similarly, “the most striking and obvious way in which Flach (animal photographer) achieves sensory identification is by highlighting the eyes. A flash of light invariably accentuates the eye of his animal model, a hint of consciousness, a dart of brightness that he likes to refer to as a ‘ping’” (Daston & Mitman, 2005, p.145). In

advertising, a participants' averted gaze at product information within an advertisement increases focus on ad information, engagement, and recollection (Hutton & Nolte, 2011). Mutual gaze causes extended gaze allocation. (Sajjacholapunt & Ball, 2014). In one test, "participants spent longer looking at the product region of the advertisement when the model's gaze was directed at this region, and were more likely to fixate the product having first fixated on the model's face" (Hutton & Nolte, 2011, p. 890). Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 demonstrate images promoting mutual gaze.

*Figure 2.1*



*Figure 2.2*



When a model's gaze is diverted to the product or message, it can heighten the viewer's focus on the product, and overall brand message (Sajjacholapunt & Ball, 2014).

## **Social Media**

### **Social Media Background (Instagram)**

Founded in 2010, Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social media platform (Frommer, 2010) and the fastest growing social media platform in the world (Wagner, 2015). Being a critical component of social media, Instagram should be viewed within the context of economic, business, and social structures (Fatanti & Suyadnya, 2015).

"Being mainly a photo-sharing application, Instagram has excelled as an effective communication and marketing tool to display products with visual descriptions. Hence, it

becomes a useful social networking platform instantly to individuals and companies” (Ting, Ming, Cyril de Run, & Choo, 2015). Instagram enables successful interactions for business purposes by bringing together digital and tangible realms (Abbott, Donaghey, Hare, & Hopkins, 2013).

### **Human and Animal Associations**

Within social media, informational, normative cues can lead people to make opinions about issues. Social media provides a ripe opportunity for these social cues due to the connection between users and the general sociality of the platforms (Spartz, Su, Griffin, Brossard, & Dunwoody 2017). “Zoos could consider an animal’s behavioral traits, as well as color or patterning, or morphology that is eye-catching and sparks interest, and therefore can be emphasized and explained in social media posts” (Rose, Hunt, & Riley, 2018, p. 61). Aligned with biophilic associations in marketing, when animal symbols are infused in marketing communications, consumers can make mental connections to the brand, and the cultural schema of the brand, which heightens product engagement and increases brand equity (Lloyd & Woodside, 2012). Aligned with phylogenic associations in marketing, characters that are more closely associated with human physicality aid in the positive efficacy of a product (Laksmidewi, Susianto & Afiff, 2017).

Anthropomorphic animals illicit attention focus, which heightens brand awareness and encourages consumers to purchase a product (Stone, 2014). Anthropomorphism is effective when used in advertising to help provide comprehension to an advertising message that can be difficult to understand, or conceptualize (Laksmidewi et al., 2017). There are different levels of anthropomorphism. For example, one could draw a horse

with eyes facing forward. An increased level of anthropomorphism would be a horse with eyes facing forward and standing on two feet. Finally, putting clothes on this horse would be the next layer of anthropomorphism (Root-Bernstein, Danlas, & Verissimo, 2013).

Aligned with kinderschema associations in marketing, when marketers show a product needing care, thus utilizing the principals of babyschema, it heightens consumer sensitivity to the product design. For example, along with baby faces, the headlights and grill on the front of an automobile can resemble a smiling face, triggering the zygomaticus major (smiling muscle) compared to non-smiling objects or baby faces. Thus, marketers can increase a product's affective value by infusing exaggerated features with cute design (Miesler, Herrmann, & Leder, 2011). Aligned with eye and gaze allocation associations in marketing, marketers can use cues of gaze allocation to focus viewers' attention on important messaging (Hutton & Nolte, 2011). The appeal and effectiveness of an advertisement can be increased with strategic focus on eye size and eye direction (King, 1972).

### **Ethical Representation of Animals and Leadership**

Ethics plays a vital role in the complex choices people are faced with in everyday decision making. When situations involve values (representing animals ethically in social media), the cognitive process of ethical thought is employed to reason. The ethical thought process allows us to examine ethical issues (Thompson, 2008). One of those ethical points is recognizing animals as personality-specific to prevents animal stereotyping, which reduces them to simplistic, one-dimensional objects with traits such as exotics or cutesy playthings when they are being associated with brands or advertisements (Merskin & Freeman, 2015).



In referencing the zoological setting, a leader must put the team's interests at the forefront of one's work and carry oneself in ways that benefit the group as a whole through servant leadership (Northouse, 2018). "Finally, good leaders are able to project a vision, to explain to the group the purpose, meaning, and significance of its key undertakings" (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005, p. 174). Ethical leadership (as it pertains to animal representation) requires setting aside personal feelings that serve to prejudice or alter fair and equal treatment (Northouse, 2018).

When situations involve values, people reason with the cognitive thought process of ethical thinking. This thinking is a systematic review of issues at a moment that defines when the acted on behavior is unethical or ethical (Thompson, 2008). As a response mechanism, ethics is not a complete solution. However, through this free will review of consequences, it provides for one's ability to use discernment (Langlois, 2011). Furthermore, it is noted that,

Seeking to practice ethical leadership can give the impression of swimming against the current of a society bent on a cult of performance and the logic of personal interest. To actualize ethical leadership requires repositioning ourselves towards a more positive conception of human nature. Ethical leadership challenges the conscience of the individual by inviting reflection on the actions to be taken and the commitment to an ethical perspective. Ethical leadership makes no noise, but it leaves its marks. (Langlois, 2011, p. 2)

Moral myopia is a skewed form of moral vision that falls along a spectrum that reflects one's perception of an ethical problem. This myopia prevents one from seeing moral issues clearly to the point of moral blindness. Ethical decision making cannot take

root in this condition (Drumwright & Murphy, 2004). Moral myopia and moral muteness share commonalities, but they are not the same. With moral muteness, one is cognizant of ethical issues but avoids dealing with them in any way. The individual does not express their ethical concerns (Bird, 2002). With moral myopia, one does not internalize ethical issues clearly. The degree to which one cannot see varies. This scale ranges from those not understanding the moral issue, to rationalization, or choosing not to focus on the issue (Drumwright & Murphy, 2004).

In ethics, one must make a statement of position. Ultimately, one must define what is wrong and right, but more importantly, defend these decisions to critics (Zinkhan, 1994). Professionals learn through interactions with each other. Employees look to leadership for guidance; therefore, leaders can instill ethics by being an ethical mentor. Ethical mentorship is achieved by maintaining virtuous character, and by indoctrinating staff in the mentoring process, so they understand right and wrong. Virtuous leaders surround themselves with staff that will support the moral character and integrity of the organization through ethical awareness (Schauster, 2015). To that end, the affiliative leadership style encourages friendly interactions (positive social media images/messages) and fosters harmony while promoting positive relationships (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013). According to Gray (2017) zoo ethics refers to how a zoo should approach its operations. Individual ethics describes how a person should best live their life. What is beautiful and just is open to interpretation, but zoos can be virtuous in their actions through their customs. For a zoo to operate virtuously, it must continually focus on testing the character of its operations.

## Perceptions of Animals in Media

Zoos use diverse frames that reflect the many facets of their institution through their advertisements, social marketing approaches, and even their mission statements. More research is needed to define what frames are preferred in communications outside the institution that do not fall under the auspice of the zoo (Yocco, Bruskotter, Wilson, & Heimlich, 2014). Also, social media framing takes a segment of reality and increases its salience to focus on a certain aspect, problem, condition, or evaluation of moral implications along with a suggestion for treatment. How a zoo is framed in media can impact attendance rates and negative sentiment through a change in public perception (Entman, 1993).

Animals have a set of core traits that we relate to from a young age. The first trait is *agency*, where an animal moves, can bite, etc. The second trait is *coherence*, where the animal is seen as a whole entity. The third trait is *affectivity*, where the animal is capable of showing a range of emotions. And lastly, the fourth trait is *continuity*, where after repeated interactions with an animal, they become a familiar individual (Myers, & Myers, 2007). Activities that remove a level of separation between humans and nature will increase a person's concern for nature. Activities that are perceived to remove us from nature will decrease our concern for nature, such as watching animals perform skits (Schultz, 2000). Gray (2017) pointed out that there is a lingering concern that zoos overexpose their animals and undermine respect for animals.

Bekoff and Louv (2014) talked about “rewilding,” a process where we become cognizant of our relationship with animals and nature. Bekoff suggested that we view the natural world in our image, believing what suits us at the moment. However, these beliefs

do not align with the realities of the lives of animals. Furthermore, the media represents a large section of our culture. Animals will either flourish or be deficient, depending on how media represents animals. Media representation can view things from the perspective of nature and “honor all beings and their homes” (Bekoff, & Louv, 2014).

If journalists uncritically perpetuate stereotypes and dominant perspectives about human superiority and other animal species, they are imposing their cultural values and anthropocentric biases on the public. This discrimination is so naturalized that routine animal exploitation or marginalization can masquerade as facts that are simply indicative of “the way it is” rather than being perceived as cultural construct for journalists to question. (Freeman, Bekoff, & Bexell, 2011, p. 592)

The media are obligated to show a healthy perspective of nonhuman animals. Animal representations should provide appropriate context and meaning. The media should have a vested interest in how animals are used while avoiding anthropocentric biases (Freeman et al., 2011). For example, a greeting card company could use two pandas to promote a card congratulating the birth of a new baby. The company could increase the social role of the pandas by having them hold hands and looking at their baby in a stroller. As the card company continues to remove the non-human behaviors and add human behaviors, the process of anthropomorphic creep increases (Root-Bernstein et al., 2013).

Regarding the presentation of animals, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (2018) has taken the position that animals should always be presented in adherence to the following core principles:

1. Animal and human health, safety, and welfare are never compromised.
2. Education and a meaningful conservation message are integral components of the presentation.
3. The individual animals involved are consistently maintained in a manner that meets their social, physical, behavioral, and nutritional needs. (p.92)

Anthropomorphism should not be a tool that is used to show preference to animals that are more closely related to humans but instead as a tool that helps us to be more cognizant of biodiversity conservation (Root-Bernstein et al., 2013). “Unfair, or inaccurate, negative criticism could be mitigated by a better, cleverer use of social media to promote more of the science and research undertaken by zoos that support the value of their collections” (Rose et al., 2018, p. 62). According to Martin (2017), a philosophical question emerges regarding how we can treat animals without causing harm. Therefore, with doubts about an animal’s ability to feel humiliation, it is best not to follow through with a potentially humiliating action.

There is a critical connection to animal representation and empathic leadership. Having empathy allows us to have feelings with others while understanding one’s motivations and emotional state. This is critical to understand the emotions, feelings, and intentions of others for effective decision making and positive social action to take place in a group (Batson, et al. 2003). Therefore, empathic leadership aids in eliciting the feelings and perceptions about animal representation. The following section addresses the empathic leadership connection.

### **Empathic Leadership**

Greater empathy that reflects on the consequences of an action increases insight that can be applied to a situation or decision process (Baker, 2017). Our level of empathy is affected by our environment and the variable within a group (Batt-Rawden, Chisolm, Anton, & Flickinger, 2013). Leading with empathy in a group setting provides insight into how people respond and fosters a competency to read group member behaviors. Empathy reveals the dynamic movement of power in the meeting providing insight to lead the group (McKee, 2015). “Empathy and social skills involve one’s ability to perceive others’ emotions, feelings, and needs and help others to regulate their emotions to achieve desirable goals” (Polychroniou, 2009, p. 345). Unfortunately, social skills, such as empathy, are not consistently developed in the workplace (Karnes, 2009). To that end, a busy and dynamic work environment requires leadership that demonstrates empathy and acknowledgment of staff development needs (Mill, 2010).

Effective leaders that display caring behaviors achieve high employee impact by showing “empathy, attunement, organizational awareness, influence, interest in developing others, inspiration, and teamwork” (McDonald, 2008, par. 3). The ability to read people through empathy aids in uncovering the unspoken conflicts in a group. In most circumstances, the conflicts are not related to the topic of the group meeting, but human dynamics outside the scope of the group. Engaging the use of empathy helps to uncover these power dynamics and manage them in the context of the group (McKee, 2015).

Borgulya and Somogyvári (2007) described empathic leadership as “the experience of what other people think, the competence to accept their perspectives, and

the willingness to contact and harmonize with a wide variety of people” (2007). This leadership allows one to sense the emotions of others. In regards to sensing emotions, anthropomorphism has a place in helping humans relate to non-humans. There is the possibility, however, that the anthropomorphized behavior can misrepresent actual animal behaviors, thus creating false expectations on the animal. For this reason, marketing professionals should avoid presenting animals as objects with stereotypical behaviors and instead focus on the accuracy of the animals personalities (Merskin & Freeman, 2015).

In response to an ethical approach, integrity, humility, and other spiritual values such as honesty are top components to success in leadership (Reave, 2005). In all, effective leadership embodies respect and places high value on unique attributes (Northouse, 2018). People that display strong empathy offered more moral arguments than people with low empathy. When the central figure of empathy was a vulture, the ecocentric moral arguments prevailed most (Berenguer, 2010). Similarly, when viewing images of animals being harmed by nature, participants instructed to take the animals perspective expressed significantly higher levels of biospheric environmental concerns than participants instructed to be objective (Schultz, 2000).

There is a positive correlation between one’s empathy for animals and the belief that animals have mental experiences (Hills, 1995). Empathy can be the initial basis for the intent to anthropomorphize. For this reason, when anthropomorphism shows a connection between human and animal conditions, it creates a commonality that encourages and promotes conservation action (Bernstein et al., 2013). Accurate empathy is based on a more precise understanding of the natural behaviors of animals through

observation, and it is validated through the prediction of future behaviors. Subsequently, this accurate empathy motivates attitudes that avoid objectifying animals (Hills, 1995).

### **Group Processes**

To this point, this review has outlined multiple principles of animals' bond, eye and gaze allocations, and photography as applied in effective digital marketing processes for a zoo. These components have been aligned with the ethical and empathic representations of animals and one's leadership accountability in this process. The following section explains components of group processes, including the group experience, learning, perception change, cohesion, and behavior modification.

### **Group Experience**

A group experiences effective group processes, with better performance, when there is a higher level of trust among members (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1988). Trust also enables group members to work better, together with increased performance and efficiency (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Similarly, when a group member is dependable and shows a vested interest in the group, it fosters a desire in other group members to express opportunities to improve group performance (Dirks, 1999). The success of the group depends on member interaction in accomplishing the work (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001).

Team members should consider the interactions and behaviors expressed by fellow group members. This way, each member is cognizant of the team's overall sentiment versus their own sentiment. This cognizance allows team members to make decisions based on a collective understanding of what they perceive as a group (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). The more a member likes and is engaged with the group's movement



and energy, the more he or she will be invested in the group's responsibility or task.

Engagement involves feeling positive, productive, and focused on the duties at hand (Costa, Passos, & Bakker, 2014).

### **Learning**

Feedback or the interpersonal interaction with team members initiates learning new data about oneself or the organization. This feedback grows from an awareness of objective, new data and can lead to change as long as the receiver doesn't interpret the feedback as a threat. Therefore, feedback works well for conditions that include: coaching and organizational mirroring (French & Bell, 1999, p. 149). In this learning process, Forsyth (2014) stated that groups arrive at a decision through complex processes. Initially, the group members define their first preference, followed by giving and receiving information regarding the preferences, and then the group combines the reviews forming one choice (Forsyth, 2014). Organizational learning occurs in three overlapping stages: cognitive, behavioral, and performance improvement. The cognitive stage includes exposure to new concepts, increased knowledge, and expanded thinking. Groups in the behavioral stage internalize new information and change their behavior. Improved results are noted in the final performance improvement stage (Garvin, 1993).

### **Perception Change**

This research study presents participants with a phenomenon that may encourage changing views and perceptions of how animals are represented in social media.

According to Buono and Subbiah (2014), the capacity for change depends on team members who have a level of familiarity with various approaches to change. It also depends if the team members have the capacity and skills to accept and lead the change.

“Resistance to change is a change-specific behavioral response of a change recipient (or a group of stakeholders) toward a change initiative that is usually proposed by a sponsor or a leader” (Bareil, 2013, p. 62). Large scale change necessitates that team members forgo entrenched notions and develop new assumptions. Large scale change is a long and difficult process (Coutu, 2002). According to Katsaros, Tsirikas and Bani (2014), during planned organizational change, employee perception can be altered. While they become better entrenched in the change process, they will become more supportive of the change (Katsaros, Tsirikas, & Bani, 2014). Rafferty and Griffin (2006) stated that strong leadership helps to make a positive impact on those perceptions through support.

Strong leadership creates an understanding that reduces uncertainty and increases the perception of planned change (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). “Differences in a person’s perceptions act as a course of motivation. New information leads to new perceptions that may conflict with old perceptions. In this way, new information becomes a force for changing perceptions and actions” (French & Bell, 1999, pg. 204).

According to Kotter and Schlesinger (1979), the most common reason people resist change is losing something valued. Not clearly understanding the change and its consequences, they do not feel the change is right for the institution, and they have a low threshold for change. At times, people resist change because their evaluation of the situation differs from that of the manager or change initiator. These people see the changes as costing more to themselves and the organization than the benefits it can provide (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

## **Cohesion**

According to Forsyth (2014), leadership emergence is when a person becomes formally or informally seen as the leader of a once leaderless group (Forsyth, 2014). Jaques and Clement (1994) described the leader as setting the tone and guidance to move people competently toward a path with support of the entire team. Inevitably, group dynamics are formed. One of those group dynamics, according to Forsyth (2014), occurs when one obeys the norms of reciprocity. With reciprocity, an insult follows an insult, or in this case, an altruistic statement follows an altruistic statement (Forsyth, 2014). Alternatively, healthy forms of interactions can occur, for example, Franz (2012) stated, “constructive confrontation is a form of feedback that is a basic part of a productive group, and also a very healthy relationship. A lack of confrontation can result in stagnation” (p. 250).

Ideally, the group dynamic will lead to a level of cohesion. Cohesion is about our social components, where members connect and find team identity. The process of cohesion improves performance while unifying member bonds. As groups achieve this level of agreement, they are more apt to provide honest feedback and feel free to do meaningful work. Cohesion is characterized by support and sharing experiences. Cohesion limits dissension and criticism and allows one to be open to the options and ideas of other members. Cohesion also helps to find common goals with a purpose to solve a problem while taking responsibility for the group. Tasks are shared, and high efficacy supports the formation of shared beliefs (Forsyth, 2014; Franz, 2012; Levi, 2007). Corey, Corey, and Corey (2011) stated that “groups are more cohesive when

people have similar personalities, and less cohesive when personalities are more diverse” (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2011, p 185).

### **Behavior modification**

Internal consultants can play a significant role in influencing and assisting the institution's ability to process change. This internal change agent is effective through its ability to environmentally scan their surroundings and influence strategic key members to choose the correct change process that will have the best chance for organizational success (Buono & Subbiah, 2014). Similarly, transformational learning is “the process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action” (Mezirow, 1994, p. 222).

People make modifications to their behaviors and values when there is a change or changes in the norms that influence the behaviors. When they become aware that the norms they follow are dysfunctional, it creates a motivation to change (French & Bell, 1999). Some people are unsuccessful with transformational learning because they don’t question their values and beliefs. Lack of questioning prevents them from acting in a significantly changed way (Coutu, 2002). Through behavioral change, the choices and decisions one makes should dovetail with a linkage of emotion and reason. A zoo that works virtuously fosters ethical behaviors within their operations that encourage smart and compassionate decision making (Gray, 2017).

### **Summary**

The literature review explores four animal and human associations, eye and gaze allocations, and concepts in social media marketing. The literature review examines the ethical representation of animals in social media. It includes perceptions of animals in

media and espousing leadership, learning, perception change, and behavior modification via exposure to group processes. The literature review adds insight into understanding collective perception within the group process. The literature review also added insight into human/animal associations and how they may relate to group processes, deriving policies, and the understanding of leadership within AZA institutions.

## CHAPTER III

### **Methodology**

This chapter details the methodology that is utilized for this study. The chapter addresses the design rationale and research questions, followed by setting, sample, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, limitations, and summary. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to (a) examine group processes and leadership while building “comraderies, cohesion and esprit de corps” (French & Bell, 1999, p. 162) and (b) determine what type of animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use in social media (Instagram). This study examined how group processes are used to establish a mutually agreed-upon set of regulations for what is ethically appropriate for social marketing imagery of zoos.

### **Research Design**

A qualitative, phenomenological research methodology was chosen using social constructivism for a theoretical framework. The selected methodology and approach aided in uncovering the collective composite experience or essence regarding the perception of equitable animal use in social media (Creswell, 2013). Social constructivism framed how research participants understood their environment in relation to their interpretations of, and subjective meanings of, their experience to animals in social media. As the researcher, I looked for complex views that emerged with research participants during focus group discussions (Creswell, 2007). The study included a single source of quantitative data to gauge individual views. However, this study remained a qualitative study in all other aspects.

### **Design Rationale**

The iteration of the phenomenology my study has taken is transcendental phenomenology, which focuses on how people construct knowledge based on their interpretation of experiences. According to Creswell (2013, p. 76), “Phenomenology describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept of phenomenon.” Creswell discussed that research participants’ experience of phenomenon is subjective. This subjectivity works well for this study as it influenced the rich perceptions within the group process and the individual portion of the data collection. I was able to collect robust data to study leadership and the group process experience. Phenomenology was appropriate in this study to present a phenomenon (exposure to animal photographs and the process of collective decision making) to the study group and then collect data on this exposure. As Moustakas stated, I examined what the participants’ experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994).

The phenomenon studied was how research participants experience the group process when presented with the task of defining an ethically appropriate presentation of animals in social media. Interactions unfolded organically while I recorded the participants’ responses. Through a phenomenological methodology and social constructivist framework, I understood that my life experiences formed the way I interpret the data from the study. However, I aimed to bracket interpretations sufficiently to encourage inductive interactions that formed a pattern of meaning from my participants. Emergent ideas developed through a new reality that was constructed by data from the participants. To that end, the phenomenological aspect of this study covers

commonalities shared by the participants from exposure to certain stimuli (various forms of animal photographs) (Creswell, 2007).

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are:

1. Using the four animal/human associations, how do group processes and leadership play a role in deciding what animal images are:
  - a. Used/posted on Instagram
  - b. Ethically appropriate for use on Instagram
  - c. Ethically conflicted for use on Instagram
2. How do group processes and leadership aid in finding a set of standards?
3. What are the standards that were produced for ethically appropriate use of animal images via Instagram?

### **Setting**

I chose the Midwestern Zoo located in the second largest city in its state region. It is the smallest of the zoos located in its state. The Midwestern Zoo is tucked away in the center of the city, surrounded by trees, providing a natural oasis from metropolitan surroundings. The Midwestern Zoo has been in operation for sixty-seven years and is an established piece of the city's infrastructure. It adheres to stringent regulations for high-quality animal care and is one of 237 institutions accredited in the nation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The zoo employs over 300 individuals, of whom roughly a third are full-time, two-thirds are part-time, and the remainder are seasonal. The Midwestern Zoo has 243 species and over 1000 animals. Two extinct species (in the



wild) call Midwestern Zoo home. The Zoo has been nationally recognized for its marketing and sensory inclusion initiatives.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study included individuals with leadership roles at the Midwestern Zoo. They provided commentary, feelings, and beliefs about the representation of animals in social media. My purposeful sampling informed the selection of these individuals as it helped me to understand the decision-making process of zoo professionals, my perceptions of their values, ideals, and the behavior change process.

Ten participants (three males and seven females), all college educated, and ranging in age from 30 to 56 were selected. Their pseudonym, age and years of experience are as follows: Dan (male, age 52, 30 years of professional animal husbandry experience), Lisa (female, age 50, 28 years of professional zoo experience), April (female, age 49, 22 years of professional education animal experience), Emily (female, age 30, 5 years of professional zoo experience, versed in social media usage), Ethan (male, age 55, 29 years of animal husbandry experience), Wallace (Female, 56, 17 years of professional zoo experience), Paula (female, age 50, 7 years professional zoo experience), Conner (male, age 47, 5 years professional zoo experience), Lorna (female, age 55, 10 years professional zoo experience), Barbara (female, age 34, veterinary degree, 8 years professional zoo experience).

Each participant held a leadership role and could suggest or authorize internal policy development and changes. Each participant has vast animal knowledge from diverse vantage points, including animal husbandry, animal behavior, animal healthcare

and habitat design spanning from 5 to 30 years. Each participant was provided a pseudonym to protect his or her identity. The sample information is detailed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1			
<i>Sample Information</i>			
<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Animal Experience</u>
Dan	M	52	30 years
Lisa	F	50	28 years
April	F	49	20 years
Emily	F	30	5 years
Ethan	M	55	29 years
Wallace	F	56	17 years
Paula	F	50	7 years
Connor	M	47	5 years
Lorna	F	55	10 years
Barbara	F	34	8 years

### **Data Collection**

Data collection included two phases, each with multiple parts. Data collection included a one-on-one interview with each participant and a focus group with all participants. In accordance with ethical research procedures, consent forms were obtained from all participants in the study (Appendix B: Participant Consent Form). The following section details the interview and focus group process.

#### **Interview**

I met with each participant in my office, one-on-one for 25 minutes. During this time, I recorded the participants and asked them to respond to two open-ended questions, a survey, and a questionnaire. The purpose of this meeting was to gather individual views on the topic of animal representation. I later transcribed the interviews.

### *Open-Ended Questions*

Each participant was asked two general, open-ended questions to encourage dialogue and familiarize participants with the issues being studied. These questions also provided an opportunity to gather individualized views on the topic of animal representation. The questions are as follows:

1. What are the differences between Instagram images that represent animals that are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted?
2. What guidelines for animal representation should be put into practice within AZA institutions?

### *Survey*

The purpose of the survey was to describe everyone's views by asking questions with a numerical or scaled response which can be quantified. The survey (Appendix C: Interview Protocol) provided an opportunity for each participant to choose where an image falls from ethically conflicted to ethically appropriate on a Likert scale. This survey is the single source of quantitative data to gauge individual views. However, this study predominantly remains a qualitative study in all other aspects.

Participants responded to a 10-question survey using a 4-point Likert scale to identify views of ethical representation. A 4-point Likert scale was used to avoid neutrality. Avoiding neutrality was important because it helped to establish a concrete basis for animal perception in preparation for the focus group discussion. The survey contained animal photographs curated from the Instagram platforms of ten North American zoos from August 2018 to February 2020 (Appendix C: Interview Protocol). The photos selected were either digitally altered, or had clothing affixed to the animal.

Look at the following photographs (10 will be displayed one at a time). Write down where you feel the photograph places on the Likert scale. (1= ethically conflicted, 2= slightly ethically conflicted 3= slightly ethically appropriate 4= ethically appropriate).

While the participants viewed actual images, I wanted to maintain the anonymity of the selected zoos for the readers of this study. I wanted to avoid the appearance of passing judgment on these institutions. Therefore, while the participants viewed the images for this study, I relied on text-based descriptions of the images within the study itself.

### ***Questionnaire***

The purpose of the questionnaire was to document the subjective variance in perceptions of animal imagery via a descriptive textual response and to provide a baseline for discussion in the focus group. The questionnaire (Appendix C: Interview Protocol) provided the participants an opportunity to write down their thoughts regarding three animal photographs that were selected from the Instagram accounts of three zoos. The photos were selected as they had been digitally altered, or had clothing affixed to the animal. Each participant was shown (via a computer screen) three photographs simultaneously and asked to respond to the following prompt:

Look at the following photographs. Write down keywords and phrases relating to the photos ethical appropriateness or inappropriateness for social media (Responses will be shared with the group without identifying the who said each statement).

## **Focus Group**

Unlike the interview, survey, and questionnaire that emphasizes individual perceptions, the focus group intends to bring everyone's perceptions together as a group for discussion. The focus group helped further establish a set of guidelines for ethical animal representation while also providing a glimpse into group processes. Enhancing group effectiveness is defined in how the meeting will be conducted and how the members will communicate with each other to understand the perspectives of each group member (Thompson, 2008). "The outcome of meetings is sensitive to the physical arrangements, the size of the group, lack of technique to stimulate dialogue and, above all, the culture within the unit" (Bergman, Dellve, & Skagert, 2016, p. 540). The focus group took place in the conference room of the Midwestern zoo. I set up my audio recording equipment and a PowerPoint screen at the front of the room to display the results of the questionnaire, survey, and the images that the participants would view and discuss. I asked the participants to choose any seat they felt comfortable in around a large conference table.

The leadership team is a close-knit group and accustomed to multiple meetings, so there were no outward potential power dynamics to address. The team culture of the zoo is linear in that all work roles are considered vital. Even the staff member with a non-director role is well-respected and seen as an equal among the other participants. I provided a brief reminder of the purpose of the focus group and encouraged everyone to share their thoughts with the group. Thompson (2008) stated that articulating defined roles and tasks for groups is a strategy for enhancing group effectiveness.

A one-hour focus group was conducted with all ten participants. During the first twenty minutes, the participants were asked the same two, open-ended questions from the interview to encourage group interaction, form the basis of the group interaction, and to look for similarities and differences in answers. Along with the audio recordings, I took detailed notes that were analyzed for commonalities based on statements that form the textural description and structural descriptions in the context in which the participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

The next forty minutes consisted of sharing the individual answers from the questionnaire to encourage discussion, and projecting the photographs onto a screen for the group to view together. Participants verbally analyzed online content through group discussion by exposure to the same series of Instagram animal photographs from the survey.

### **Data Analysis**

The one-on-one and focus group data collection were productive as I had sufficient data to create a thick description of the experience integral to qualitative research. I used content analysis, which evaluates communication to get at the core aspect of social interaction. It allows for analyzing interactions to provide insight into human thought and language use (Busch et al., 2012). Content analysis allowed me to understand the nuances of what was spoken within the group process to find correlations and themes on how thoughts are communicated. With content analysis, I summarized all of the content that I collected through the interview, survey, questionnaire, and focus group. I coded this content into categories for the presentations of my findings.

During the coding process, I looked for deviations in the collective context of group perceptions and combined data from the interview, survey, questionnaire, and focus group to form a collective essence of the group.

### **Transcription**

I transcribed the audio recording of the interview and focus group with Vocalmatic, an online audio to text converter. This resulted in seven pages of interview and 21 pages of focus group text. The converter was not fully accurate. Therefore, I replayed the audio multiple times and corrected any missed or misinterpreted transcription. As part of the content analysis process, I read and reread the transcription to become intimately aware of the content. Immersion into the transcript, “builds awareness to context and nuance” and to “begin to identify connections within the data and preliminary categories” (Drisko & Maschi, 2016, p. 12). During this review, I noticed some sections where participants did not speak in complete sentences or complete a thought sufficiently enough to understand its meaning. I engaged in member checking by reviewing the transcript with each participant face-to-face for approximately 15 minutes to clarify any areas of misconception as well as confirm that their comments were accurate.

### **Coding**

I used a combination of deductive and inductive coding. First, through the literature review, I identified a framework of categories likely to develop through the group process (deductive). After collecting my data, I started with this framework to further inductively code my data into more specific categories. I created categories from the text to best capture the meaning of the content (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). I started

with deductive coding by using a framework identified in the literature review. From there, I used inductive coding to further identify more descriptive codes that fit into those categories. Inductive coding allowed me to draw on the context and underlying meaning of the content (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). I created a spreadsheet to act as my codebook. I prefilled categories identified in the literature review with my categories from the data collection and blank columns for anything that did not fall within those categories. Although it is of secondary importance to the group process research, the human/animal associations were the mechanism for moving the participants through the group process experience. Therefore, I set up another four columns assigned to partial or full sentences that directly aligned with the four human/animal associations.

In my codebook (Appendix D), I listed each code, then the type of statement that met the requirements of that code, and how many times I identified that code. Therefore, I selected coding units for the group process analysis that was a mix of partial sentences and full sentences. Phrases such as, “I never thought of that.” were indicative of behavior modification. Phrases such as, “I agree with you” or, “That is a valid point” were indicative of cohesion. Phrases such as, “ I hear what you are saying, but...” or “I’ll be the opponent here...” were indicative of feedback (constructive confrontation). Fully executed statements that conveyed confidence and a non-threatening delivery of thoughts and ideas in an engaging way were indicative of leadership. Statements that progressed the knowledge of the discussion that were fact-based and free of opinion were indicative of fostering learning. Statements that proposed ideas or concepts and had the potential to alter perceptions of the group (either through compelling information or encouraging a different perspective) were indicative of fostering perception change.



The sample coding is detailed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2	
<i>Coding</i>	
<u>Phrase</u>	<u>Indicative of</u>
"I never thought of that"	Behavior modification
"I agree with you"	Cohesion
"That is a valid point"	Cohesion
"I hear what you are saying, but..."	Feedback
"I'll be the opponent here"	Feedback
Fully executed thoughts	Leadership
Fact based, opinion-free thoughts	Fostering learning
Statements that proposed concepts	Fostering perception change

I printed both the interview and focus group transcripts. Using seven colored pencils, I assigned a color to each category identified in the interview transcript. The categories were: safety (red), nature (orange), health (grey), empathy (green), rule following (purple), honesty (yellow), adornment (pink). Using six highlighters, I assigned a color to each category identified in the focus group transcript. The categories were: behavior modification (orange), cohesion (yellow), feedback (green), leadership (purple), fostering learning (pink), fostering perception change (blue), comments that tied to one of the four human and animal associations (grey). After this process, I cut out each color-coded statement and placed them under their respective categories. When I felt like the data were properly arranged, I entered them into the corresponding codebook categories. I noted there was no apparent overlap in the identified categories between the interview and the focus group. This lack of overlap was due to the brevity of my interview process. I feel an extended interview would have increased the propensity for category similarity. The coding key is detailed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 <i>Coding key</i>		
<u>Interview category</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Description</u>
Safety	Red	Concern for animal safety
Nature	Orange	Depicting animals in a natural state
Health	Grey	Concern for animal health
Empathy	Green	Showing care for an animal as an individual
Rule Following	Purple	Encouraging the following of policies
Honesty	Yellow	Being transparent with the public
Adornment	Pink	Placing clothes or foreign objects on animals
<u>Focus group category</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Description</u>
Behavior Modification	Orange	Seeing new perspectives
Cohesion	Yellow	Bonds linking group together
Feedback	Green	Statements that move the group dynamic forward
Leadership	Purple	Diplomatic, articulate statements
Fostering Learning	Pink	Statements that provide new information for group
Fostering Perception Change	Blue	Statements that encourage growth of new view points

The analysis I conducted involved concepts such as cohesion and feedback that are already known and studied. The analysis gauged if these previously known factors (of group interaction) appeared in this group that had not yet been studied (Patton, 2015). My study focused on the experiences and sense-making of the leadership team. The interview and focus group approach was phenomenological with the bias control of the traditional social science research interview. The phenomenological interview forms a personal description of lived experience (Patton, 2015).

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is defined as the level of confidence in the data from a study, the methods employed to ensure rigor in the research, and the quality level at which the data are interpreted and represented (Polit & Beck, 2014). This section describes how

trustworthiness was achieved through the use of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, thus establishing that the research findings were accurately presented.

### **Credibility**

To establish credibility, I looked at how well the study was conducted by utilizing research methods that have been established as effective in other qualitative research and prescribed to best practices (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Post data collection, I engaged in member checking and utilized the feedback from the participants to ensure that the results of my research were credible (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). To member check, each participant was given a copy of the transcript to allow them to confirm their statements. Because this process is subjective, I used reflexivity to understand how my background and values may have been integrated into the research results (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). By using reflexivity, I am disclosing that I acknowledge the individual perspective and approach I bring to the presentation of the information. I did not want to rely on my preconceived notions of how the study should play out, therefore my goal was to reflect on the research to allow the results of the data to provide guidance.

To control the quality of the study, I compared and contrasted data from the interviews and focus groups. I also looked for disconfirming evidence and alternative conclusions that better fit the research results (Patton, 2015). Controlling the quality of the study reduced my potential for confirmation bias by picking information that confirmed my existing ideas. The inclusion of the Likert scale contributed to the triangulation of the data by allowing participants to assign their set values to particular images rather than leaving full interpretation of their views to my observations. The data being triangulated included the open-ended questions, a survey, a questionnaire, and

focus group. Triangulation increased the validity of the research, as there were more data points to confirm.

### **Transferability**

To establish transferability, I showed that the results of the research could be transferred, or show applicability to other AZA institutions. I established transferability by writing detailed information about the process and phenomenon studied to help the reader conduct comparisons with the phenomenon in their own context (Shenton, 2004).

### **Dependability**

For dependability, I kept a detailed description of the research to allow readers to repeat the study and demonstrate that best research practices were followed. To ensure dependability, it was vital to document the design, operational, and data collection process in detail as well as a reflective review of the research's overall effectiveness (Shenton, 2004). Equally important to establish dependability was triangulation, using multiple data collection methods in the interview with the survey and questionnaire. Each participant was allowed to refuse participation to help ensure that contributing data is provided honestly. It was also vital to provide a rich description of the phenomenon being evaluated as it demonstrates the investigation and the context in which the phenomenon occurred (Shenton, 2004).

### **Confirmability**

For confirmability, I ensured that the results of the research reflected the views of the participants and not me as the researcher. Triangulation of data diminished the opportunity of research bias while reflecting the experience of the research participants. At the same time, it was important for me to admit to natural beliefs and assumptions as it

allowed for results to be evaluated for validity. Thoroughly documenting the research and data collection process through each step of the process was vital to demonstrating confirmability (Shenton, 2004). I kept accurate records to ensure that the data I presented matched the findings and outcomes (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

### **Limitations**

My researcher biases posed a limitation to the study. Funding limitations prevented me from traveling to various AZA locations to widen the scope of the study among multiple institutions. I used a sample of convenience, and therefore the results of my study can only be suggested for a larger population. The data collection only occurred over one-week. I was cognizant of these limitations and tried, as much as possible, to not let them affect the study outcome.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the methodology of the phenomenological study, which aimed to gain a deeper understanding of group processes and leadership as participants develop a consensual decision as to what type of animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use in social media marketing (Instagram). Chapter III reviewed design rationale, research questions, sample participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and study limitations. One individual interview consisting of open-ended questions, one survey, and one questionnaire as well as a focus group were conducted for data collection. Collected data was transcribed and coded. Chapter IV reveals the results of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Research Findings**

The primary focus of this content analysis was to understand how leadership and group processes play a role in deciding what animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use on Instagram. To gather the needed data, an interview (comprised of two open-ended questions, a survey, and questionnaire) and a focus group were conducted with ten members of a Midwestern Zoo leadership team at the Midwestern Zoo location. For confidentiality, each leadership member was given a pseudonym to protect his or her identity.

#### **Interview**

In the interview, the open-ended questions introduce the information to the participants before entering the focus group. The questions were designed to familiarize participants with the kind of issues being looked at in the study and to gather individualized views on the topic of animal representation. The interviews were transcribed, and codes were developed into categories, which were then formulated to become the following themes: (a) safety, (b) nature, (c) health, (d) empathy, (e) following rules, (f) honesty, and (g) adornment. The following questions were asked:

1. What are the differences between Instagram images that represent animals that are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted?
2. What guidelines for animal representation should be put into practice within AZA institutions?

The following sections detail the findings of the interviews. For each theme, I provide examples, followed by my commentary.

### Safety

Issues of safety were addressed by two participants. Although I initially anticipated that statements regarding health would emerge (as animal health is a priority in zoos), I did not expect that one would interpret safety as being aligned with ethical appropriateness.

Dan:

“An unethical depiction of an animal is having the animal placed in a situation that would be in some way shape or form detrimental to their welfare.”

April:

“I would think that the animal would be in some type of danger or unsafe situation.”

**Commentary:** As the participants entered the focus group experience, I was interested to see if safety or other unexpected topics arose in the overall discussions.

### Nature

The topic of nature or a natural state was mentioned by a majority of the participants. Wildlife is synonymous with wild places; it makes sense that depicting animals in native-like habitats would be aligned with ethical depictions and recommended guidelines for animal representation.

Conner:

“I’m thinking of two images one is an animal exhibiting natural behavior and a natural environment with natural lighting.”

Lorna:

“Ethically appropriate images are ones that represent the animal as they are naturally in their natural habitats.”

Lisa:

“Images that are ethical reflect animals either in their natural habitat or doing their natural behaviors.”

Emily:

“It’s anticipating what one might think is unethical such as putting clothes on the animals or showing them behind any meshing that seems unrealistic to their native habitat.”

Ethan:

“Water babbling Brooks flowers leaves foliage, you know, maybe other animals in the photo.”

Lorna:

“If we take pictures of animals in our collections, they should be represented as much as possible with how their species lives in the wild. That means no fences, anything that makes them look captive.”

Conner:

“I would think that encouraging depictions that are honoring the animal's natural behavior with more naturalistic settings or exhibiting natural behaviors.”

**Commentary:** The majority of comments directly involved showing a naturalistic scene. Lorna’s statement regarding nature dealt with presenting the image as naturalistic for the public. Emily’s statement dealt with not depicting what one might interpret as unethical.



## Health

Issues of health were mentioned by two participants. Nevertheless, they formed a theme. Although they are very similar to issues of safety. I wanted to group them separately in case issues of health arose in the focus group.

Barbara:

“Is the animal healthy, nourished, without injury? Does the animal appear calm and not distressed”?

Paula:

“If a sick animal is represented in a way that is exaggerated to gain sympathy for fundraising purposes that would be unethical.”

**Commentary:** I expected that Barbara, in her veterinary role, would align her interview comments in a clinical way. She does so, in an almost evaluation-based fashion. Paula too, based her comments on health from the perspective of her role in fundraising. She stated that using depictions of ill health as a means to fundraise would be objectionable. As the participants entered the focus group experience, I was interested in seeing how each person evaluated ethical appropriateness from various frames of reference highlighting the subjective nature of the topic.

## Empathy

I noted that statements of empathy were made by nearly half of the participants. The participants used words and phrases like “forging a bond”, appreciate, respects, individual, degrade, integrity, and majesty in referencing ethical portrayal and guidelines for animal images.

Wallace:

“The public loves seeing our animals and we are forging a bond between the animal and the public. We are doing this to have them appreciate the animal.”

April:

“It’s important that the image respects the individual animal.”

Lorna:

“I have an issue with images that degrade animals them in any way. For example, is the image showing them with wounds”?

Dan:

“Ethically appropriate animal images demonstrate a sense of Integrity to the animals true form.”

Conner:

“Guidelines that give the animal or more majesty and a moral position of strength.”

**Commentary:** It was promising to see individuals expressing commonalities. As participants entered the focus group experience, I was curious if the sharing of like thoughts and opinions would aid with the cohesiveness of the focus group.

### **Following the Rules**

Participants with positions that require a great deal of policy and regulation development (CEO, Sr. VP and Lead Veterinarian) raised comments that aligned with following established guidelines. These comments ranged from modeling guideline-compliant behaviors for others to using guidelines as a basis for future actions.

Wallace:

“I guess my thought would be is that we should show animal representation in the way AZA institutions work with animals. You are never feeding them by hand through the bars- you are using tongs. We need to model how other people should be working with animals.”

Dan:

“I think actually the same guidelines that we currently have for animal habitats are a logical place to look for animal depictions because the habitats are being built with the best interest of the animal from a mental emotional physical social standpoint and those very same considerations.”

Barbara:

“The guidelines should demonstrate how we care for the animals in appropriate ways following all rules and regulations.”

**Commentary:** As the participants entered the focus group experience, I was curious to see if statements made about the appropriateness of animal imagery were related to current zoo policies or if personal opinions drove the formation of new policies.

### **Honesty**

Two participants referenced that transparency is important in the ethical representation of animals and for the depiction of animal imagery. Both statements coupled honesty with public perception.

Paula:

“Whether the outcome is good or bad for an animal birth for example, we do need to be honest with the public.”

Lisa:

“So I guess my recommendation would be to go ahead like show pictures of animals having medical procedures and show pictures of animals that might have steel bars in front of them because that animal is in a protected contact situation where that animal has the choice to participate with the humans or not. We need to be transparent in our communications.”

**Commentary:** As the participants entered the focus group experience, I wanted to see if the importance of honesty and its link to ethics would be discussed. As a marketing and public relations professional, I understood the criticality of honesty in external communications. However, I was curious if the topic of honesty will be threaded into the group discussion.

### **Adornment**

Three of the participants addressed adorning an animal with clothing as misaligned to ethical animal imagery and policy. I noted that each statement was emphatically delivered which indicated these statements were potentially tied to strongly held convictions.

April:

“I guess more representing the animals as unique individuals.-not setting up false expectations and no clothing or hats.”

Emily:

“Drawing the line between the circus when you're dressing up animals to that of a zoo where you do not dress up animals.”

Eric:

“They should not be in clothes or performing an act of entertainment for the public.”

Conner:

“I still think if we're dressing these animals up it's inappropriate.”

**Commentary:** As the participants entered the focus group experience, I was curious to see if statements of conviction were spoken as freely or if participants subdued these types of statements because they were in the company of others.

### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire illustrated contrasting participant opinions before the focus group. For the questionnaire, the participants were shown three images (a lemur holding a digitally altered lightsaber, a Galapagos tortoise propped up on pumpkins wearing a witch's hat and shawl, and an otter with a bowtie). They were asked to write down a word or phrase in regards to the image being ethically appropriate or ethically conflicted. There was a noted dichotomy (positive or negative) in the responses for lemur and the tortoise. For the otter image, exactly half of the participants used the word “cute” in the description. The questionnaire results are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4			
<i>Questionnaire Responses</i>			
<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Lemur Response</u>	<u>Otter Response</u>	<u>Tortoise Response</u>
Dan	Cute- natural behavior	OK-cuteish	Comically cute but unnatural
Lisa	Kind of funny	Nerdie- suffering	Disrespectful
April	Cute	Bowtie? Really	No- Can he move?
Emily	Not appropriate	Cute animal but tie not appropriate	Gray area needs discussed
Ethan	Overall fine	Overall fine- I'm not into cute	Overall fine
Wallace	Lemur and Lasers- no	Political	No
Paula	Clever	Cute- eye catching	OK
Connor	No- looks like animal is trained to do tricks	No- anthropomorphic	No- anthropomorphic
Lorna	OK	Bowtie not necessary	OK
Barbara	OK	Cute- patriotic and kitschy	Animal welfare was not affected

## Survey

The survey served as a way of describing each individual's views as a part of their profile. In the survey, ten images were presented. The participants were asked to choose whether they felt an image was ethically conflicted, slightly ethically conflicted, slightly ethically appropriate, or ethically appropriate on a Likert scale. The first image, a lion with digitally altered bunny ears produced a response in which all but one of the participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted or ethically conflicted. The second image, a painted dog wearing a digitally altered helmet, produced a response in which all but one participant felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted or ethically conflicted. The third image, a snail with a Santa's hat secured to the top of its shell, produced a response in which all participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted or ethically conflicted.

The fourth image, three goats digitally altered onto the set of a TV show, produced relatively distributed mixed reactions. Three participants felt the image was ethically conflicted while three participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted. Three participants felt the image was slightly ethically appropriate, and all but one of the participants felt the image was ethically appropriate. The fifth image, a hippopotamus in its habitat, positioned strategically underneath a Santa hat that was painted on the exhibit glass, produced split reactions. Half of the participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted. Two of the participants felt the image was slightly ethically appropriate. Three of the participants felt the image was ethically appropriate.

The sixth image was a goat wearing a birthday hat eating a cupcake. Seven participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted or ethically conflicted, and three participants felt the image was slightly ethically appropriate and ethically appropriate. The seventh image, two seals digitally altered onto a football field with footballs balanced on their noses, produced split reactions. Half of the participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted or ethically conflicted. Half of the participants felt the image was slightly ethically appropriate or ethically appropriate. The eighth image was a bear laying on top of a foamed beer. Seven participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted or ethically conflicted and three participants felt the image was slightly ethically appropriate and ethically appropriate.

The ninth image, a bearded dragon with digitally altered fire breath, produced eight participants feeling the image was slightly ethically appropriate or ethically appropriate. Two participants felt the image was slightly ethically conflicted. The tenth

image, an elephant with a painted design applied to his forehead, produced the most disparity in the reactions. Six participants felt the image was slightly ethically appropriate and four participants felt the image was ethically conflicted. The purpose of the survey is to gauge what individuals, on their own, see as ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted. Table 4.1 shows the average survey response for each participant.

Table 4.1 <i>Survey Information</i>	
<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Perception</u>
Dan	SEC
Lisa	EC
April	SEA
Emily	SEA
Ethan	SEC
Wallace	SEC
Paula	SEA
Connor	EC
Lorna	SEC
Barbara	EA
EC= Ethically Conflicted SEC= Slightly Ethically Conflicted SEA= Slightly Ethically Appropriate EA= Ethically Appropriate	

### **Focus Group**

I wanted to ascertain what unfolds within the group process in determining the appropriateness of zoo animal images for Instagram. Therefore, I presented the results of the focus group via the group attributes that emerged and the quoted or paraphrased statement(s) followed by commentary on the statement(s). Through the focus group process, I looked for transitions between participants as an indicator of how the group process progressed. I looked for nuances of speech, implied meaning, and syntax. During the focus group, the participants went through self-presentation, which is the act of



expressing oneself, and behaving in ways designed to create a positive impression. This was noted by deliberate delivery, intense focus, and reflective responses. The focus group was transcribed, and codes were developed into categories, which were then formulated to become the following themes: (a) behavior modification, (b) cohesion, (c) feedback, (d) leadership, (e) fostering learning, and (f) fostering perception change. I noted that the themes built on one another, behavior modification aided in cohesion, and improved cohesion lead to more feedback. Feedback provided the opportunity for leadership statements to emerge. These leadership statements lead to the fostering of learning and then, ultimately, perception change. The complex navigation through these group processes helped the group shift and comingle perceptions to articulate standards. This was accomplished through modifying behaviors, self-evaluation, unifying through cohesion, learning from others, and setting examples through leadership.

### **Behavior Modification (conformity)**

Behavior Modification is simply modifying behavior. There is a noted change in prior behavior compared to current behavior. When people form an awareness that the norms they follow begin to appear dysfunctional, there is an increased motivation to adopt new behaviors (French & Bell, 1999). Behavior modification emerged in the focus group through self-disclosure of behavior change.

Wallace acknowledged that she had not thought analytically about animal imagery during the one-on-one interview. After having heard the opinions of others during the focus group, she said she felt differently.

When I first completed the questionnaire, I gave you some different responses than what I am giving now. I think I was all over the board. I started thinking later

about what role zoos and aquariums have. What should we be doing? That's where I kind of landed on, you know, we are professionals, and from a public relations standpoint we should act as such.

Barbara commented directly after Wallace's statement by saying that she had not thought of the images from a public relations and marketing standpoint. She said she originally was just looking at the images from an animal welfare perspective.

### **Commentary**

Wallace's acknowledgment of feeling differently toward the topic during the focus group experience demonstrated behavior modification. She changed her beliefs in the direction shown by others. Barbara displayed self-awareness by acknowledging she had not thought about this topic from a public relations standpoint. By viewing the images from a different public relations lens, she too demonstrated behavior modification.

### **Cohesion**

Cohesion is when a group is finding team identity through providing honest feedback, being open to ideas of other group members, sharing common goals to address a problem or issue, and the formations of shared beliefs (Forsyth, 2014; Franz, 2012; Levi, 2007). Cohesion emerged in the focus group through active declarations of agreement and acknowledging others as having made valid statements.

Barbara made a comment acknowledging a statement by Wallace that we should not show animals in unnatural circumstances whether digitally altered or real.

That is a very valid point Wallace, and I kind of am in the minority I think. In general, I felt the same way as Lorna, but personally, I see a difference between if

those were true bunny ears stuck on a lion, then I would be very ethically conflicted because the animal's welfare was compromised.

Wallace replied, "Good point Barbara, you are correct, one needs to look at the animal welfare in making these types of decisions." Regarding the elephant photo, Paula said she was conflicted because the elephant was painted. She was okay with it if it was digitally altered but it looked like it was not digitally altered. Lorna agreed and said that elephants go through this in Asia. She did not like seeing the image. Amy agreed. She recently heard stories of elephants that are painted to attract tourists and this does not represent the elephants' natural presentation. Barbara agreed and said she can't tell if the elephant enjoyed it or was forced. Emily talked to me directly after the focus group and said she did not want to openly disagree about some of the points made.

### **Commentary**

Barbara rewarded Wallace by stating she had a valid point. Wallace displayed reciprocity by rewarding Barbara with a kind action- acknowledging the validity of Barbara's comment and restating it. Regarding the elephant photo, in this moment in the focus group, there was a coalescing of feeling towards a particular image and a desire to state that each person agreed with the next person. Emily's behavior demonstrated self-monitoring. She was being attuned to the way she presented herself in the meeting and adjusting her performance to create the desired impression to maintain group cohesion and stated she "appreciated that the majority were in agreement."

### **Feedback (constructive confrontation)**

Constructive confrontation is a healthy form of interaction where feedback is provided productively and signals a healthy group relationship. Without constructive

confrontation, a group can become stagnant (Franz, 2012). Constructive confrontation emerged in the focus group through a willingness to publicly question a stream of thought from another group member in a respectful way.

Lorna:

As a counter to Emily's statement, that she puts a hat on her dog. Lorna looked directly at Emily and said a relationship with one's dog is different. Lorna said a dog tolerates behaviors because they are submissive to their owners and different with how one would interact with a lion.

Wallace:

In response to Emily's comment that social media needs humor, Wallace said:

I hear what you are saying about the humor, but do we then need to educate people or not, because I saw that cute little image and I thought it was hilarious. However, I didn't know that the animal was exhibiting natural behaviors as your caption didn't tell us that. I guess my question is, do we need to be more educational in our messaging?

Barbara:

In response to a statement from Dan, Barbara said:

I'll be the opponent here. I would almost be wondering if there could be a line but in a different way. We are dressing up an animal. I agree with you there is the clear line. We do not want to dress up a wild animal and represent it that way.

Paula:

Responding to Lorna who states that animals should not be dressed up, Paula said:

“I dress my dog up sometimes but this bothers me because I feel like they dressed up this tortoise and it's crossing the line.”

Ethan:

In responding to Paula’s statement that she dresses up her dog, Ethan said:

“Dressing up animals is silly. The silliness of some imagery is what usually puts me off because it's putting the animals in a weird context.”

### **Commentary**

Lorna, constructively confronted differing points of view by purposeful articulation. To get her counterpoint across, Wallace used a bridge-building opening statement “I hear what you are saying” she also turned her desire of more education with the posts as a question. Barbara gently stated that she was opting for a counter opinion by saying she was the opponent and using collaborative words like “wondering” and “maybe” that displayed openness to exchanging ideas. Both Paula and Ethan have made self-disclosing statements within a group.

### **Leadership**

Leadership, and empathic leadership, more specifically, is showing competence in being open to the perspectives and experiences of other people. It is also an openness to connect with and integrate with a diverse group (Borgulya & Somogyvári, 2007).

Effective leadership is being attuned to others, providing inspiration and positive

influence (McDonald 2008). Leaderships emerged in the focus group through confident and non-threatening delivery of ideas, well executed, complete, and engaging statements.

Lisa:

I think that the animals should only be shown in an ethical way exhibiting natural behaviors or in their natural habitat. I think the other thing is too, there's a certain level of anthropomorphism that helps people connect with animals, but then there's pushing it across or over the line. The image of the African painted dog in a helmet is a horrible image. It diminishes the significance, the majesty, the respect for the animal. If you are going to use animals in advertising or in a social media post, the presence of the animal being there needs to positively help tell your story.

Dan:

I was on the fence with showing an elephant with face paint only because of it being leveraged from the perspective that when you see an elephant that looks like this, it has been abused. That's a god-awful statement to make inside an accredited facility.

Amy:

As someone familiar with animal behavior, it's so outside the realm of reality. Not many would think a lemur holding a light saber is real. Stepping back from that, I have seen situations where people look at animals and not knowing the animal, might think it's true. Those that do know more about lemurs might think it's fun. I am sure there are those out there that actually think that the Lemur has a lightsaber.

Wallace:

“I think that a lot of what is ethically appropriate and conflicted depends on who you're talking to because ethics in one person's mind is very different than another. I really think it depends on your value system.”

### **Commentary**

Lisa spoke methodically and non-threatening in her explanation as to why she felt that there was consensus with the snail image being generally regarded as ethically conflicted. The hat being real versus a digitally altered hat was a deciding factor leading to it being ethically conflicted. Dan's comments displayed controlled processing as his statements were deliberate, reflective, and conscious. Amy reflected self-schema, beliefs about self that organize and guide the processing of self-relevant information. Both statements from Wallace and Lisa acknowledged how an audience of differing opinions might interpret animal imagery. They were not showing bias to any particular view, simply stating the potential interpretations of different viewpoints.

### **Fostering Learning**

Learning can come in the form of feedback and coaching (French & Bell, 1999). A core part of the process of learning is the giving and receiving of information (Forsyth, 2014). In the learning process, group members are exposed to new concepts (Garvin, 1993). Learning emerged in the focus group via participant comments that progressed the knowledge of the discussion with fact-based, opinion-free statements.

Barbara:

Images that are ethical and good are animals in their natural habitat in the wild or animals that are under human care, but are being treated with all of the animal

welfare concerns in mind. So, the animal is still having all of their needs mentally physically, nutritionally and the animal appears to be in a good state.

Emily:

A lot of [what is ethically appropriate or conflicted] is through interpretation of the viewer of the photo. Showing animals behind any meshing or putting clothes on them could be considered unethical by some people. There's also some people [that misinterpret] and construe as unethical animal training and interpret it as a circus type thing instead of a positive reinforcement training demonstration.

Ethan:

“[Appropriate images show] not necessarily a naturalistic setting all the time. But naturalistic behaviors and positive interactions should not be compromised in some way unless we are showing a veterinary procedure or something that is educational.”

### **Commentary:**

Barbara, Emily and Ethan's statements were void of opinion or bias. They provided unbiased data or information in that was generally accepted as factual statements.

### **Fostering Perception Change**

When group members experience new information, it creates the potential for altering perceptions (French & Bell, 1999). With perception change, group members release old notions and develop new ones (Coutu, 2002). Perception change emerged in the focus group by members who posed ideas and statements that had the potential to alter perceptions of the group, either through compelling information or encouraging looking at an issue with a different perspective.



Emily:

So when referring to the hippopotamus photograph, Emily started her comment by saying that she felt 100% positive about the image. Emily said, “It is a great way to introduce a topic of target training because that's my guess is how they got that. I think they got her right under the hat so perfectly aligned with it so it could open the topic to other conversations about training.”

Amy:

“The more an animal looks like us, the more we are likely to empathize with it. [It is important to] represent animals as unique individuals that should be respected as well as appreciated.”

Conner :

I'm thinking of images of animals exhibiting natural behavior in a natural environment. The lighting of the photos is natural and they are exhibiting a look of being calm and healthy looking. Even if people are not physically in the picture, the animals are clearly in the care of professionals in a space that is clean. I would think that encouraging depictions that are honoring the animal's natural behavior that depict the animal in a position of dignity is a good thing.

Wallace:

I agree with you (referring to Lisa), and my issue is we are a zoo and we are a professional organization. We represent a professional industry and I don't think we should be doing Photoshop and if the public does it I don't care. I just don't like it for a zoo to do it. I think it sends the wrong message and that is just my thought.

Paula:

When you see a zoo, it does represent kind of all of us. I feel that dressing up animals is something that accredited Zoos should not do and I mean to extremes, you know. I'm not too offended by the penguin walking down the aisle at a wedding. But, if you all the sudden put a top hat in the bow tie on that penguin, I think that is not correct.

**Commentary:**

Emily was emboldened to offer a different take on the discussion by saying that in her estimation, she was against digitally altered images. This stark division established Emily's place within the conversation. The concept of target training was new information that could affect the way that participants felt about certain images. In referencing animals, both Amy and Conner used words like "respectful," "elevated," "same level," "respected," "appreciated," "empathy," and "care." The concept of empathy could affect the way that participants perceive certain images. Ethan brought an animal welfare concern that could affect how participants perceive the tortoise image. Wallace raised the issue of aligning the images we presented with that of a professional institution. This framing could affect the perceptions of participants toward certain images. Paula's statement about how each zoo represents other zoos could have affected the perceptions of participants in how they view animal imagery.

**Summary**

This qualitative content analysis was conducted to gain understanding of how group processes play a role in deciding what animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use on Instagram. Data were collected through an interview

(comprised of two open-ended questions, a survey, and a questionnaire) and a focus group. The interview and focus group were transcribed and codes were developed into categories, which were then formulated to become themes. The themes that emerged from the focus group to examine group processes were: (a) behavior modification, (b) cohesion, (c) feedback, (d) leadership, (e) fostering learning, and (f) fostering perception change.

Behavior modification was especially noted with Wallace and Barbara. Wallace acknowledged that she broadened her thought process about the presented images. Barbara seemed to be the most malleable in her behavior modification by internalizing the points made by others and acknowledging that she had not viewed the images from a lens other than that of animal welfare.

Cohesion was noted on numerous occasions during the focus group. Barbara, Wallace, and Lisa, rewarded another through reciprocation. The acknowledgment of agreement with another was most saturated during the discussion of the elephant image. There was a feeling of bonding around the ethical concern of the elephant image. Emily did not want to disrupt the strides in cohesion that were made and waited until after the focus group to show dissension.

Feedback was expressed in mature and kind ways through diplomatically expressing a counterpoint, acknowledging that another member's comment has been heard, and by using non-threatening and collaborative words to express a thought. Both Paula and Ethan were transparent by disclosing personal opinions counter to the general disposition of the group. Leadership was witnessed through deliberate, well-chosen words with calm, yet authoritative tones. The comments reflecting leadership fell into

two categories- either expressing a well-defined view or expressing non-biased diplomacy. The fostering of learning was noted by Barbara, Emily, and Ethan all provided statements of fact, void of bias. These statements served as learning opportunities for the focus group participants. The fostering of perception change was noted by statements that had the potential to shift opinion toward another channel of thinking. These statements altered the framing of the discussion.

All six themes developed from the focus group were interrelated and built upon one another within the group process for exploring the issue of ethical portrayal of animals at zoos and aquariums. Statements that evoked leadership as well as participant feedback led to group cohesion. This cohesion fostered learning, which ultimately created behavior change towards altering perceptions of animal representation. The relatedness of the themes demonstrates that the group process is critical and beneficial to deciding which animal images are ethically appropriate or ethically conflicted for use on Instagram.

## CHAPTER V

### **Summary and Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to understand how leadership and group processes play a role in deciding what animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use on Instagram. This chapter summarizes the findings and provides further discussion with the intent of answering the research question. The data results are summarized according to the discussions in Chapter IV. This chapter presents an overview of the problem, purpose statement, research question, review of methodology, and summary of findings. It concludes with discussion of results, reflections, implications, and recommendations for future research.

### **Overview of the Problem**

This study used the absence of animal representation guidelines as a means to examine group processes and leadership for the zoo leadership team at a Midwestern Zoo. Some North American zoos have opted for a naturalistic (appearing in a native-like habitat) approach to their depiction of animals. Other zoos have depicted animals in clothes, hats, and used ads promoting political or social causes. As a collective, the zoos of AZA risk the proliferation of images that may detract from the strength of the mission and vision, thus weakening the goal to protect wildlife. With rapidly advancing communication methods, the administration will be faced with working interdepartmentally as a collective group to make marketing decisions that involve policy development internally and nationally through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to understand how leadership and group processes play a role in deciding what animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use on Instagram. Establishing standards for the ethical depiction of animals aided in engaging the group process for the study. This study examined how group processes are used to establish a mutually agreed upon set of regulations for what is ethically appropriate for social marketing imagery of zoos.

### **Research Question**

The research questions for this study were:

1. Using the four animal/human associations, how do group processes and leadership play a role in deciding what animal images are:
  - a. Used/posted on Instagram
  - b. Ethically appropriate for use on Instagram
  - c. Ethically conflicted for use on Instagram
2. How do group processes and leadership work in finding a set of standards?
3. What are the standards that were produced for ethically appropriate use of animal images via Instagram?

### **Review of Methodology**

This content analysis was conducted at a Midwestern Zoo. A qualitative, phenomenological research methodology was selected (Creswell 2013). Data collection included two phases, each with multiple parts. Data collection included the interview (comprised of two open-ended questions, a survey, and a questionnaire) with each participant and a focus group with all participants. In accordance with ethical research

procedures, consent forms were obtained from all participants in the study (Appendix B: Participant Consent Form). The participants in this study included a total of ten male and female zoo leadership team members. Pseudonyms were used for all participants in the study to protect identities. Codes were deductively and inductively developed from the interview transcription. Codes were developed into categories, which were then formulated to become the themes I discussed in Chapter IV.

### **Summary of Findings**

In this section, major findings are discussed according to the themes outlined in Chapter IV. The purpose of this summary is to interpret the data, connect it with literature, and identify how it connects with the research questions. The study included the interview (comprised of two open-ended questions, a survey, and a questionnaire) and a focus group. The interview uncovered seven themes from encouraging animal safety, showing the animal in a natural environment, displaying natural behaviors, encouraging animal health, showing empathy for the animals, following operational rules, being transparent with the public, and avoiding adornment such as clothing on animals. The survey (part of the interview) established that while the majority of participants felt ethically conflicted or slightly ethically conflicted about the animal photographs presented, there was still noted subjectivity. The questionnaire (part of the interview) demonstrated a noted dichotomy in the responses, showing that animal perception is subjective. Although these data points, collected separately from each participant, do not encapsulate the group process experience, they were helpful to gauge individual positionality/standing before the focus group. The following themes from the focus group are discussed to show how group processes progressed in the study: (a) behavior

modification, (b) cohesion, (c) feedback, (d) leadership, (e) fostering learning, and (f) fostering perception change. I noted there was no apparent overlap in the identified categories between the interview and the focus group. This lack of overlap was due to the brevity of my interview process. I feel an extended interview would have increased the propensity for category similarity.

### **Behavior Modification**

During the focus group, three participants (Barbara, Wallace, & Conner) displayed an outward form of behavior modification. Each participant internalized new information provided by other participants, articulating new thoughts and opinions. This response aligns with Mesirow (1994) describing the appropriate, revised interpretation of ones' experience to guide action. These behavior modifications were the result of a change in norms provided in the form of new information. This awareness creates the motivation to change (French & Bell, 1999).

### **Cohesion**

During the focus group, perception from the elephant photo generated a moment of cohesion among Paula, Lorna, Amy, and Barbara. This moment of cohesion reflects the research of Levi (2007) in that cohesion promotes establishing common goals to problem solve as a group. After the focus group, Emily shared with me that she did not want to disrupt [the cohesion] of the group. When I questioned her reasoning, she stated that she appreciated that the majority were in agreement and so she did not want to, in effect, spoil the moment. Her response reflected the work of Klein and Kozlowski (2000) in that team members should be cognizant of the interactions and behaviors of other members' overall sentiment versus their personal sentiment. When Barbara rewarded



Wallace by stating she had a valid point and Wallace rewarded Barbara by acknowledging the validity of Barbara's comment, it reinforced the research of Forsyth (2014) that when one obeys the norms of reciprocity, a kind statement is followed by a kind statement.

### **Feedback**

Lorna, Wallace, and Barbara were adept at providing feedback in the form of constructive confrontation, supporting the work of Franz (2012) in representing productivity and team health. Elena, Lisa, and Wallace were adept at responding to the constructive confrontation. The responsiveness is reflected by French and Bell (1999) in that feedback grows out of awareness and non-threatening data, which can lead to change.

### **Leadership**

Dan's comments displayed controlled processing as his statements were deliberate, reflective, and conscious. His remarks about the elephant image were passionate and firmly established. Dan's statements confirm the research of Jaques and Clement (1994) in which the leader sets the tonality and guides the group toward a certain path with the support of his/her team. Amy established herself as an expert in animal behavior. Her statements throughout the focus group felt authoritative. This reflects Forsyth (2014) in that she displayed some leadership emergence in having the potential to be seen as an informal leader of the group. When Lisa spoke at length on her views, her delivery was diplomatic, authoritative, educational, supportive, and influential. Her delivery was in alignment with Rafferty and Griffin (2006) in that strong leadership makes a positive impact on the perceptions of others.

### **Fostering learning**

Barbara, Emily, and Ethan made statements that were void of bias or with an intent to influence. Their statements were educational with an intent to inform. This reflects Forsyth (2014) notion that with groups, there is a giving and receiving of information. The group then forms their choices and opinions from that information. These fact-based statements align with Garvin (1993) in that group members go through a cognitive state of hearing new information, grow in their knowledge, and then think differently.

### **Fostering perception change**

Amy made several statements on empathy during the focus group, which aligns with Batson (2003) in that empathy is critical in the effective decision making and positive social action that takes place in a group. Conner also spoke of empathy in how we should frame animals from an elevated angle to show respect. This aligns with Hills (1995) in that empathy motivates attitudes that avoid objectifying animals. Emily provided a different take regarding her view on the image of the hippopotamus. Her approach aligned with the research of French and Bell (1999) in that she showed that new information that can lead to new perceptions may conflict with old perceptions held by the group. Therefore, her information becomes a force for changing perceptions and actions. Katsaros, Tsirikas, and Bani, (2014) discussed that employee perception can be altered when employees are entrenched in the change process.

Wallace brought up the issue of aligning the images we present with that of a professional institution, and Paula made a statement about how each zoo represents other zoos. These statements, that broaden the scope of group thought, can affect the

perceptions of participants. This aligns with Coutu (2002) in that change necessitates that team members forgo entrenched notions and develop new assumptions.

### **Conclusions**

The first research question intended to understand how photos are used or posted on Instagram, determined to be ethically appropriate, and ethically conflicted for use on Instagram, using the four animal associations. The findings indicate what is posted on Instagram, and considered ethically appropriate or conflicted for use on Instagram will depend not only on the interaction of the participants, but each individual's alignment with the human/animal associations.

The four human and animal associations are not regarded as optional. Biophilia and kinderschema responses are innate, adherence to the phylogenetic scale is biologically driven and anthropomorphism is a human need to fill in gaps of animal cognizance. Therefore, these associations are deeply rooted in how they inform the responses of the participants in response to animal imagery and the interactions of the participants with one another.

Biophilic associations demonstrate that people have an innate desire for things from nature. In alignment with biophilia, there was an innate interest and excitement among all participants to discuss animals. Four participants exclaimed that it was fun to look and talk about animal imagery. Phylogenetic associations demonstrate that we feel more engaged with animals that are more closely associated with us. There was far more discussion on the mega-fauna elephant (ranking higher on the phylogenetic scale) than there was of the snail (ranking lower on the phylogenetic scale). Robust discussion on feelings towards dressing up animals, demonstrates alignment with anthropomorphic

associations in which we attribute human behaviors and actions to animals.

Kinderschema associations show that we are drawn to features that resemble an infant. In alignment with Kinderschema, the image of an otter, which retains many of its juvenile features, produced a response in which half of the participants referred to the otter as “cute,” demonstrating kinderschema associations that make features that resemble an infant attractive. The innate desire of biophilia, genetic response to the phylogenetic scale, our need to attribute human behaviors to animals (anthropomorphism), and hard-wired response to the appearance of infants, play a significant role in how participants will react to group processes and leadership expressions.

### **How do group processes and leadership aid in finding a set of standards?**

The participants navigated these animal associations through six notable group processes that aided in finding a set of standards for animal imagery. The complex navigation through these group processes and expressions of leadership helped the group shift and come to perceptions to articulate standards.

Group processes and leadership aided in finding a set of standards by the participants' ability to modify behaviors, self-evaluate, unify through cohesion, learn from others, and set examples through leadership. The group experience is fundamentally required to establish collective perception. Participants go through negotiation, feedback, and rationalizing to enhance their position in the group. They provide feedback to establish knowledge. Some participants speak with an air of authority, clearly articulating their thoughts to garner leadership support. Some participants let go of previously held notions and their perception are modified based on the group interaction.

Other participants simply validate their held opinions. Ultimately, cohesion, the blending of concepts and agreement, forms the basis of collective perception.

**What are the standards that were produced for ethically appropriate use of animal images via Instagram?**

I initially thought that certain imagery could have a universal appeal or non-appeal. However, this was not the case. Responses from the interview components and focus group were across a spectrum of ethically appropriate to inappropriate. The reaction to images is inherently subjective due, in part, to each participants lived experience prior to the group experience and additional social constructs that are formed with in the group process. The standards that were produced for ethically appropriate use of animal images via Instagram are:

1. Presenting animals in their natural habitats

There was prevalent agreement that animals should be shown in their native or native-like habitats as a reflection of respect and care for the animal.

2. Avoiding the application of clothing or other non-natural items on an animal

There was a prevalent agreement that human clothing of any form placed on an animal was not natural, and therefore detracts from the animal's role as an ambassador for their native counterparts.

3. Avoiding digitally altered images that detract from telling the animal's natural story and the mission and vision for the institution

There was a prevalent agreement that digitally manipulating images in a manner that removes the 'natural' component of the image (aka. a digitally added hat), detracts from the mission of the zoo.

These standards closely mirrored the individual views from the interview process, which included presenting animals in a natural way and without forms of adornment.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to address the question of how leadership and group processes play a role in deciding what animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use on Instagram. The results of this study suggest that effective group processes include: behavior modification, cohesion, feedback, leadership, fostering perception change, and fostering learning. Additionally, this research may help with understanding how zoo professionals navigate in reaching decisions for policy development. Individual understanding of how one navigates through the group process can aid in how a team reaches common goals for the organization more efficiently and effectively.

### **Implications**

Given the findings from this study, I have identified the following implications for action which would be useful for zoo's to implement on a biannual basis.

*Implication for action #1: Encourage zoos to grow leadership capacity.*

Setting aside time to analyze group discussions on a bi-annual basis (with the assistance of a facilitator to develop each members' group process skills) has the potential to enable the growth of leadership capacity.

*Implication for action #2: Use the standards.*

These standards will be implemented as part of the identity standards of the Midwestern Zoo. Communication professionals at AZA zoos and aquariums will continue to be tasked with creating copious amounts of content for an ever-growing list

of social media platforms. My goal is that we can leverage the group process research behind social media imagery to support AZA institutions when planning important posts that necessitate strong engagement.

*Implication for action #3: Contribute to the conversation.*

I wrote an article entitled, *Unlocking the Power of the Like Button- Leveraging the Science of Social Media to Support WAZA Institutions*. The purpose of my article is to highlight the importance of understanding group process and perception of animal imagery as a means to further conservation initiatives. This article will be published in the December 2020 edition of “WAZA NEWS” which has a global readership base.

*Implication for action #4: Educate.*

I have been selected as a moderator and a conference presenter for The Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ 2020 annual conference. I am moderating the discussion *Social Motivations in Social Media*. I will be able to encourage the implementation and use of the guidelines that were produced in the study by presenting a compelling data-driven view of the use of animals in social media imagery.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study contributes to the larger body of research on leadership, group processes, and perceptions of animal imagery. Additional research on the perceptions of zoo professionals on animal imagery in social media is important to increase the understanding of group processes in a zoo. For future research studies, and to gain further insight, group processes should be further explored through more focus group testing at other zoos. Additional focus group testing would have the potential to determine the development of consistent group process attributes that emerge in all or most studies.

This study was completed in a short time frame. A longitudinal study at the Midwestern zoo is recommended to increase the breadth and depth of data collection for analyzation and to determine if the same group process attributes that arose on this study arise in future studies.

*Future direction #1: Duplicate this study in additional zoos.*

Other studies should be conducted in different zoo settings to provide for a larger quantity of data to compare, contrast and to derive conclusions. Differing cultures and organizational processes may result in the emerging of different groups process attributes.

*Future direction #2: Duplicate this study with other groups.*

Future studies that attempt to include a more diverse participant audience would provide additional attributes.

Adult general public- Conducting this study with general zoo visitors would provide additional insight in how average consumers interpret and perceive animal imagery on social media. This audience profile would also provide a mix of socio-economic backgrounds and a more racially and culturally diverse sample.

Children- Conducting this study with groups of children would provide a foundational comparison in how young minds perceive animal imagery in social media. It is possible that their interpretations could vary greatly from adults providing a level of consideration when choosing social media photos for younger audiences.

*Future direction #3: Conduct studies on group perceptions.*

As an extension of this study, I would like to become a zoo and aquarium industry expert on human perception of animal imagery as a means to support conservation



initiatives. Post dissertation, I want to engage in four specific studies regarding group perceptions:

1. Does higher color saturation improve the efficacy of animal images?
2. Does the absence of light reflection in the eyes reduce the efficacy of animal imagery?
3. Is a color from the RGB color wheel predominant over other RGB colors in image engagement?
4. Do images of keeper interaction with animals achieve higher engagement over similar photos without keeper interaction?

Ultimately, continued studies of animal imagery comparing and contrasting group processes and leadership would be beneficial to leadership groups within zoos and aquariums.

### **Summary**

This study aimed to examine how leadership and group processes play a role in deciding what animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use on Instagram. This chapter summarized the findings on each theme from the focus group and concluded that the following are prevalent components to the group process: (a) behavior modification, (b) cohesion, (c) feedback, (d) leadership, (e) fostering perception change, and (f) fostering learning.

## References

- Abbott, W., Donaghey, J., Hare, J., & Hopkins, P. (2013). An Instagram is worth a thousand words: An industry panel and audience Q&A. *Library Hi Tech News*, 30(7), 1–6. doi: 10.1108/lhtn-08-2013-0047
- Archer, J. (1996). Why do people love their pets? *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 18(4), 237-259. doi:10.1016/s0162-3095(99)80001-4
- Association of Zoos & Aquariums. (2018). 2018 *Accreditation standards & related policies*. Silver Springs, MD: Author.
- Baker, D. F. (2017). Teaching empathy and eEthical decision making in business schools. *Journal of Management Education*, 41(4), 575–598. doi: 10.1177/1052562917699028
- Bakhshi, S., Shamma, D. A., & Gilbert, E. (2014). Faces engage us. *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - CHI 14*. doi:10.1145/2556288.2557403
- Bareil, C. (2013). Two paradigms about resistance to change. *Organization Development Journal*, 31(3), 59-71.
- Batson, C. D., Lishner, D. A., Carpenter, A., Dulin, L., Harjusola-Webb, S., Stocks, E. L., & Sampat, B. (2003). “... As You Would Have Them Do Unto You”: Does imagining yourself in the others place stimulate moral action? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(9), 1190–1201. doi: 10.1177/0146167203254600
- Batt, S. (2009). Human attitudes towards animals in relation to species similarity to humans: A multivariate approach. *Bioscience Horizons*, 2(2), 180-190. doi:10.1093/biohorizons/hzp021

- Batt-Rawden, S. A., Chisolm, M. S., Anton, B., & Flickinger, T. E. (2013). Teaching empathy to medical students. *Academic Medicine*, 88(8), 1171–1177. doi: 10.1097/acm.0b013e318299f3e3
- Bekoff, M., & Louv, R. (2014). *Rewilding our hearts: Building pathways of compassion and coexistence*. San Francisco, CA: New World Library.
- Berenguer, J. (2010). The effect of empathy in environmental moral reasoning. *Environment and Behavior*, 42(1), 110-134. doi:10.1177/0013916508325892
- Bergman, C., Dellve, L., & Skagert, K. (2016). Exploring communication processes in workplace meetings: A mixed methods study in a Swedish healthcare organization. *Work*, 54(3), 533-541. doi:10.3233/wor-162366
- Borgulya, Á., & Somogyvári, M., (2007). *Kommunikáció az üzleti világban*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó
- Buono, A.F., & Subbiah, K. (2014). Internal consultants as change agents: Roles, responsibilities and organizational change capacity. *Organizational Development Journal*, 32(2), 35-53.
- Busch, C., De Maret, P., Flynn, T., Kellum, R., Le, S., Meyers, B., Saunders, M., White, R., & Palmquist, M. (2012). *Content analysis*. Writing@CSU. Boulder, Co: Colorado State University. Retrieved from <https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=61>
- Cohen, E. G. (1994). Restructuring the classroom: Conditions for productive small groups. *Review of Educational Research*, 64, 1–35.
- Coutu, D.L. (2002). The anxiety of learning. *The Harvard Business Review*, 80(3), 100-6.

- Corey, M. S., Corey, G., & Corey, C. (2010). *Groups: Process and practice*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Costa, P. L., Passos, A. M., & Bakker, A. B. (2014). Team work engagement: A model of emergence. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87(2), 414–436. doi: 10.1111/joop.12057
- Cottone, R. R. (2001). A social constructivism model of ethical decision making in counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 79(1), 39-45.  
doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.2001.tb01941.x
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Cullen, H., Kanai, R., Bahrami, B., & Rees, G. (2013). Individual differences in anthropomorphic attributions and human brain structure. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 9(9), 1276-1280. doi:10.1093/scan/nst109
- Curşeu, P. L., Janssen, S. E., & Raab, J. (2011). Connecting the dots: Social network structure, conflict, and group cognitive complexity. *Higher Education*, 63(5), 621-629. doi:10.1007/s10734-011-9462-7
- Curşeu, P. L., & Schruijer, S. G. L. (2008). The effects of framing on inter-group negotiations. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 17(4), 347–362.  
doi:10.1007/s10726-007-9098-2.
- Daston, L., & Mitman, G. (2005). *Thinking with animals: New perspectives on anthropomorphism*. Chichester, England: Columbia University Press.

- Dirks, K. T. (1999). The effects of interpersonal trust on work group performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(3), 445–455. doi: 10.1037//0021-9010.84.3.445
- Drisko, J. W., & Maschi, T. (2016). *Content analysis*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Drumwright, M. E., & Murphy, P. E. (2004). How advertising practitioners view ethics: Moral muteness, moral myopia, and moral imagination. *Journal of Advertising*, 33(2), 7-24. doi:10.1080/00913367.2004.10639158
- Eddy, T. J., Gallup, G. G., & Povinelli, D. J. (1993). Attribution of cognitive states to animals: Anthropomorphism in comparative perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, 49(1), 87-101. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.1993.tb00910.x
- Eisenberg, N., & Strayer, J. (1987). Critical issues in the study of empathy. *Empathy and Its Development*, 3- 13. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x
- Ernest, P. (1999). *Social constructivism as a philosophy of mathematics*. Boulder, CO: NetLibrary.
- Fagan, M. (2010). Social construction revisited: Epistemology and scientific practice. *Philosophy of Science*, 77(1), 92-116. doi:10.1086/650210
- Fatanti, M. N., & Suyadnya, I. W. (2015). Beyond user gaze: How instagram creates tourism destination brand? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 211, 1089–1095. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.145

- Franz, T. M. (2012). *Group dynamics and team interventions: Understanding and improving team performance*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Freeman, C. P., Bekoff, M., & Bexell, S. M. (2011). Giving voice to the “voiceless”. *Journalism Studies*, 12(5), 590-607.  
doi:10.1080/1461670x.2010.540136
- French, W. L., & Bell, C. (1999). *Organization development: Behavioral science interventions for organization improvement*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Frommer, D. (2010). Here's how to use Instagram. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessinsider.com/instagram-2010-11?op¼41>.
- Forsyth, D. R. (2014). *Group dynamics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Garvin, D.A. (1993) Building a learning organization. *Harvard Business Review*, 71, 78-91.
- Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40(3), 266-275. doi:10.1037//0003-066x.40.3.266
- Glocker, M. L., Langleben, D. D., Ruparel, K., Loughhead, J. W., Gur, R. C., & Sachser, N. (2009). Baby schema in infant faces induces cuteness perception and motivation for caretaking in adults. *Ethology*, 115(3), 257-263.  
doi:10.1111/j.1439-0310.2008.01603.x
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2013). *Primal leadership, with a new preface by the Authors unleashing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

- Golembiewski, R., & McConkie, M. (1988). The centrality of interpersonal trust in group process. In C. L. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of group process*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Gray, J. (2017). *Zoo ethics: The challenges of compassionate conservation*. Victoria: Csiro Publishing.
- Gredler, M. E. (1997). *Learning and instruction: Theory into practice (3rd ed)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Herzog, H. (2010). *Some we love, some we hate, some we eat: Why its so hard to think straight about animals*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2011). *The practice of qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hills, A. M. (1995). Empathy and belief in the mental experiences of animals. *Anthrozoös*, 8(3), 132–142. doi:10.2752/089279395787156347
- Hogan, R., & Kaiser, R. B. (2005). What we know about leadership. *Review of General Psychology*, 9(2), 169-180. doi:10.1037/1089-2680.9.2.169
- Hutton, S. B., & Nolte, S. (2011). The effect of gaze cues on attention to print advertisements. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 25(6), 887-892. doi:10.1002/acp.1763
- Jacobs, M. H. (2009). Why do we like or dislike animals? *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 14(1), 1-11. doi:10.1080/10871200802545765
- Jaques, E., & Clement, S. D. (1994). *Executive leadership a practical guide to managing complexity*. Arlington, VA: Cason Hall.

- Kahn, P. H. (1997). Developmental psychology and the biophilia hypothesis: Children's affiliation with nature. *Developmental Review, 17*(1), 1-61.  
doi:10.1006/drev.1996.0430
- Kals, E., Schumacher, D., & Montada, L. (1999). Emotional affinity toward nature as a motivational basis to protect nature. *Environment and Behavior, 31*(2), 178-202.  
doi:10.1177/00139169921972056
- Karnes, R. (2009). A change in business ethics: The impact on employer-employee relations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 87*(2), 189-197.
- Katsaros, K. K., Tsirikas, A. N., & Bani, S. N. (2014). Exploring employees' perceptions, job-related attitudes and characteristics during a planned organizational change. *International Journal of Business Science and Applied Management, 9*(1) 36-50.
- Kellert, S. R. (1985). American attitudes toward and knowledge of animals: An update. *Advances in Animal Welfare Science 1984*, 177-213. doi: 10.1007/978-94-009-4998-0\_11
- Keyton, J., Caputo, J. M., Ford, E. A., Fu, R., Leibowitz, S. A., Liu, T., & Wu, C. (2013). Investigating verbal workplace communication behaviors. *International Journal of Business Communication, 50*(2), 152-169.  
doi:10.1177/0021943612474990
- King, A. S. (1972). Pupil size, eye direction, and message appeal: Some preliminary findings. *Journal of Marketing, 36*(3), 55. doi:10.2307/1251041



- Klein, K. J., & Kozlowski, S. W. J. (2000). *Multilevel theory, research, and methods in organizations: foundations, extensions, and new directions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kotter, J., & Schlesinger, L. (1979). Choosing strategies for change. *Harvard Business Review*, 57(2), 106-114.
- Kruger, D. J., & Miller, S. A. (2016). Non-mammalian infants dependent on parental care elicit greater kindchenschema-related perceptions and motivations in humans. *Human Ethology Bulletin*, 31(3), 15-24. doi:10.22330/heh/311/015024
- Kukla, A. (2000). *Social constructivism and the philosophy of science*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Laksmidewi, D., Susianto, H., & Afiff, A. Z. (2017). Anthropomorphism in advertising: The effect of anthropomorphic product demonstration on consumer purchase intention. *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, 22(1), 1-25. doi:10.21315/aamj2017.22.1.1
- Langlois, L. (2011). *The anatomy of ethical leadership: To lead our organizations in a conscientious and authentic manner*. Edmonton, AB: AU Press.
- Larson, C., & LaFasto, F. (1989). *Teamwork*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (2009). Social construction of reality. *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. doi: 10.4135/9781412959384.n344
- Levi, D. (2007). *Group dynamics for teams*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Lloyd, S., & Woodside, A. G. (2012). Animals, archetypes, and advertising (A3): The theory and the practice of customer brand symbolism. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 29(1-2), 5-25. doi:10.1080/0267257x.2013.765498

- Lorenz, K., & Martin, R. D. (1971). *Studies in animal and human behaviour*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Luebke, J., & Matiasek, J. (2013). An exploratory study of zoo visitors' exhibit experiences and reactions. *Zoo Biology*, 32(4), 407-416. Doi:10.1002/zoo.21071
- Luebke, J., Watters, J., Packer, J., Miller, L., & Powell, D. (2016). Zoo visitors' affective responses to observing animal behaviors. *Visitor Studies*, 19(1), 60-76. doi:10.1080/10645578.2016.1144028
- Marks, M. A., Mathieu, J. E., & Zaccaro, S. J. (2001). A temporally based framework and taxonomy of team processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(3), 356–376. doi: 10.5465/amr.2001.4845785
- Martin, A. K. (2017). On respecting animals, or can animals be wronged without being harmed? *Res Publica*. doi:10.1007/s11158-017-9379-9
- Mayer, F., & Frantz, C. M. (2005). The connectedness to nature scale: A measure of individuals' feeling in community with nature. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(4), 503-515. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2004.10.001
- McDonald, T. (2008) Management matters: *Make love and work successful meetings*. Retrieved from <http://www.successfulmeetings.com/Event-Planning/Meeting-Planning/Articles/ManagementMatters-Make-Loveand-Work/>
- McKee, A. (2015). Empathy is key to a great meeting. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*. 3/23/2015, p2-4. 3p
- McMahon, M. (1997). *Social constructivism and the world wide web. A paradigm for learning*. Paper presented at the ASCILITE conference. Perth, Australia.

- Merskin, D., & Freeman, C. (2015, August) *Animals and media*. Retrieved from <http://www.animalsandmedia.org/main/>
- Miesler, L., Herrmann, A., & Leder, H. (2011). Isn't it cute: An evolutionary perspective of baby-schema effects in visual product designs. *International Journal of Design*, 5(3), 17-30.
- Mill, W. C. (2010). Training to survive the workplace of today. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 42(5), 270–273. doi: 10.1108/00197851011057573
- Mezirow, J. (1994). Understanding transformation theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(4), 222-232. doi:10.1177/074171369404400403
- Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Myers, G. (2007). *The significance of children and animals: Social development and our connections to other species*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.
- Myers Jr., O.E., Saunders, C.D., & Birjulin, A.A. (2004). Emotional dimensions of watching zoo animals: An experience sampling study building insights from psychology. *Curator*, 47(3), 299-321.
- New, J., Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. (2007). Category-specific attention for animals reflects ancestral priorities, not expertise. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104(42), 16598-16603. doi:10.1073/pnas.0703913104
- Nisbet, E. K., Zelenski, J. M., & Murphy, S. A. (2008). The nature relatedness scale. *Environment and Behavior*, 41(5), 715-740.  
doi:10.1177/0013916508318748

- Northouse, P. G. (2018). *Introduction to leadership: Concepts and practice*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polit, D.F., & Beck, C.T. (2014). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice (8th ed.)*. Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins
- Polychroniou, P. V. (2009). Relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership of supervisors: The impact on team effectiveness. *Team Performance Management*, 15(7/8), 343–356.
- Prawat, R. S. (1992). Teachers beliefs about teaching and learning: A constructivist perspective. *American Journal of Education*, 100(3), 354-395.  
doi:10.1086/444021
- Prawat, R. S., & Floden, R. E. (1994). Philosophical perspectives on constructivist views of learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 29(1), 37-48.
- Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, M. A. (2006). Perceptions of organizational change: A stress and coping perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 1154-1162.  
doi:10.1037/0021-9010.91.5.1154
- Reave, L. (2005). Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(5), 655-687. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.07.003

- Root-Bernstein, M., Danlas, L., Smith, A., & Veríssimo, D. (2013). Anthropomorphized species as tools for conservation: Utility beyond prosocial, intelligent and suffering species. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 22(8), 1577-1589. doi:10.1007/s10531-013-0494-4
- Rose, P., Hunt, H., & Riley, L. (2018) Animals in an online world: An evaluation of how zoological collections use social media. *Journal of Zoo and Aquarium Research*, 6(2), 57-62. doi:[10.19227/jzar.v6i2.324](https://doi.org/10.19227/jzar.v6i2.324)
- Sajjacholapunt, P., & Ball, L. J. (2014). The influence of banner advertisements on attention and memory: Human faces with averted gaze can enhance advertising effectiveness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 166. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00166
- Schauster, E. (2015). The relationship between organizational leaders and advertising ethics: An organizational ethnography. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 30(3), 150-167. doi:10.1080/23736992.2015.1050556
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schultz, P. W. (2000). New environmental theories: Empathizing with nature: The effects of perspective taking on concern for environmental issues. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 391-406. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00174
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63-75. doi:10.3233/efi-2004-2220
- Spartz, J. T., Su, L. Y., Griffin, R., Brossard, D., & Dunwoody, S. (2017). YouTube, social norms and perceived salience of climate change in the american mind. *Environmental Communication*, 11(1), 1-16. doi:10.1080/17524032.2015.1047887

- Stone, S.M. (2014). *The psychology of using animals in advertising*. Hawaii University International Conferences Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63-75. doi:10.3233/efi-2004-22201
- Thompson, L. L. (2008). *Organizational behavior today*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Ting, H., Ming, W.W.P., de Run, E.C., & Choo, S.L.Y. (2015), Beliefs about the use of Instagram: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Business and Innovation*, 2(2), 15-31.
- Vygotskij, L., & Kozulin, A. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Wagner, K. (2015). *Instagram is the fastest growing major social network*. Retrieved from <http://recode.net/2015/01/09/instagram-is-the-fastest-growing-major-social-network/>
- Wertsch, J. (1997). *Vygotsky and the formation of the mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wilson, E. O. (1984). *Biophilia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Yocco, V. S., Bruskotter, J., Wilson, R., & Heimlich, J. E. (2014). Why should I care? Exploring the use of environmental concern as a frame of communication in zoos. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 46(1), 56-71.  
doi:10.1080/00958964.2014.973352
- Zinkhan, G. M. (1994). Advertising ethics: Emerging methods and trends. *Journal of Advertising*, 23(3), 1-4. doi:10.1080/00913367.1994.10673445

## Appendices

### APPENDIX A:

#### HUMAN SUBJECT RESOURCE BOARD APPROVAL



**TO:** Vincent Jeffries

**FROM:** 1/22/2020

**SUBJECT:** HSRB Approval

**PROJECT TITLE:** Study Of Group Processes In Determining Zoo Animal Images For Instagram

**HSRB APPROVAL CODE:** 1-22-20-#5

The Human Subjects Review Board has approved your research study. You may proceed with the study as you have outlined in your proposal. The approval is granted for one calendar year. Research participant interaction and/or data collection is to cease at this time, unless application for extension has been submitted and approval for continuance is obtained.

The primary role of the HSRB is to ensure the protection of human research participants. As a result of this mandate, we ask that you adhere to the ethical principles of autonomy, justice, and beneficence. We would also like to remind you of your responsibility to report any violation to participant protections immediately upon discovery. Likewise, we would like to remind you that any alteration to the research proposal as it was approved cannot move forward. Any amendment to the application must be submitted for approval before the project can resume. We wish you success in your discoveries,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Mallik'.

Dr. Peter R. Mallik

Chair, Human Subjects Review Board

Ashland University

## APPENDIX B:

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**CONSENT FORM**  
**(Participant Consent)**

“A Study Of Group Processes In Determining  
 Zoo Animal Images For Instagram”

**A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

Vince Jeffries, a doctoral candidate in Ashland University’s Education Department is conducting a research study to examine group processes and leadership dynamics for the Akron Zoo leadership team while determining what type of animal images are ethically appropriate and ethically conflicted for use in social media marketing. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a member of the Akron Zoo leadership team.

**B. PROCEDURES**

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:

1. You will participate one-on-one interview for a period of 25 minutes. You will be asked two general, open-ended questions to encourage dialogue.
2. You will be asked to analyze online content by exposure to a series of animal photographs from the previous eighteen months and curated from the social media platforms of different zoos, including the Akron Zoo.
3. You will be given a second set of general, open-ended questions during the one-on-one interview.
4. You will participate in a focus for the duration of one hour that will consist of open-ended questions.
5. For the second half of the focus group (forty minutes) you and the group will analyze online content by exposure to the same series of animal photographs from the interviews. You will then be given the same second-set of general, open-ended questions and one Likert scale question.
6. Both the group interaction and on-on-one interviews will be recorded via video recorder. The interview will take place in your office and will take a total time of 25 minutes. The focus group will occur in the Akron Zoo boardroom and will take a total time of 1 hour.



### C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

1. You are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or to leave the group at any time.
3. Confidentiality: Participation in research will involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. The researcher, Vince Jeffries, will ask you and the other people in the focus group to use only first names during the group session. They will also ask group members not to tell anyone outside the group what any particular person said in the group. However, the researcher cannot guarantee that everyone will keep the discussion private. Only Vince Jeffries will have access to your study records and audiotapes. After the group discussion has been transcribed from the tapes, the tapes will be destroyed. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study.

### D. BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information that you provide may help this study to provide needed guidance and benefit zoo administrators on deriving policies through group processes and help further the understanding of emergent leadership through group processes within AZA institutions.

### E. COSTS

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study.

### F. PAYMENT

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

### G. QUESTIONS

You have talked to Vincent Jeffries about this study and have had your questions answered. If you have further questions, you may call him at (330) 575-2539.

If you have any comments or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with Vincent Jeffries. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the Human Subjects Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office by emailing [hsrb-au@ashland.edu](mailto:hsrb-au@ashland.edu)

### H. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

**PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.** You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status as an employee of the Akron Zoo.

If you agree to participate, you should sign below.

---

Date

---

Signature of Study Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

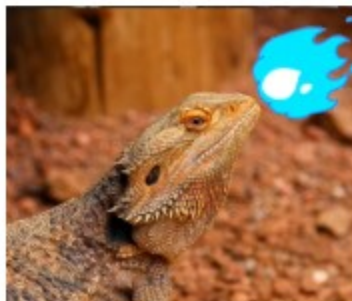
## APPENDIX C

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## Survey



For the survey, these images were presented separately via a computer screen.



## Survey Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

*Look at the following ten images. Please mark where you feel the photograph places on the Likert scale. (EC= ethically conflicted, SEC= slightly ethically conflicted, SEA= slightly ethically appropriate, EA= ethically appropriate).*

1. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

2. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

3. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

4. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

5. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

6. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

7. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

8. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

9. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

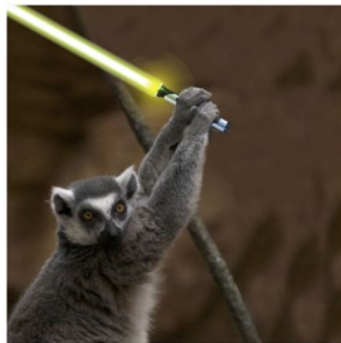
10. EC      SEC      SEA      EA

## Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

*Look at the following photographs two images. Please write down key words and phrases relating to the photo's ethical appropriateness or inappropriateness for social media.*

These images were shown one at a time via computer screen.



## APPENDIX D:

## CODEBOOK SAMPLE PAGE

Codebook			
Interview			
#	Category	Assigned color	Participant
	Safety	Red	Dan
2	Safety	Red	April
	Nature	Orange	Conner
	Nature	Orange	Lorna
	Nature	Orange	Lisa
	Nature	Orange	Emily
	Nature	Orange	Ethan
	Nature	Orange	Lorna
7	Nature	Orange	Conner
	Health	Grey	Barbara
2	Health	Grey	Paula
	Empathy	Green	Wallace
	Empathy	Green	April
	Empathy	Green	Lorna
	Empathy	Green	Dan
5	Empathy	Green	Conner
	Rule Following	Purple	Wallace
	Rule Following	Purple	Dan
3	Rule Following	Purple	Barbara
	Honesty	Yellow	Paula
2	Honesty	Yellow	Lisa
	Adornment	Pink	April
	Adornment	Pink	Emily
	Adornment	Pink	Eric
4	Adornment	Pink	Conner