

ALUMNI ATTITUDES TOWARD A STUDENT-
PRODUCED MAGAZINE: A LOOK
AT BRAND EQUITY

By

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This is more than a finished thesis. This is close to an eighteen-year-long chapter of my life. Eighteen straight years of formal education is demonstrated in a 120-page paper collecting dust on a shelf at the Oklahoma State University library.

If you are reading this, I hope you notice the amount of work and dedication put into making this paper. I can only take partial responsibility for the content of the paper. Though put on paper over the course of the last few months, this paper contains a lifetime of education and mentorship that cannot be credited to one individual.

This one is for you, mom and dad. I would never have made it this far without your endless love, support and trust. You both have pushed me to be the best version of myself from the very beginning. You have made me strong, and I will be forever grateful.

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Abstract: Every organization and product represents a brand in the eyes of the consumers. Brands are existent only in the minds of consumers. Consumer perceptions of brands influence an organization and how they perform. Brand equity is an aspect of branding that can be measured to determine a consumer's perception of a brand. You must go directly to the consumer to assess perceptions of brand equity. This study looks at the attitudes of alumni member toward a student-produced publication and aspects of its brand equity; specifically, brand awareness, brand association, perceived value and quality. This study also looks at alumni use of the publication and their self-reported demographics. This study consists of 432 Oklahoma State University College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources alumni. Attitudes toward the brand equity of the student-publication were found to be positive, revealing overall positive brand equity in the minds of respondents. Respondents reported using a printed copy of the publication and reading the many of the articles before throwing the publication away. The average respondent was a 48-year-old, white male who lives in Oklahoma and graduated with a bachelor's degree in animal science/animal husbandry from OSU. The average respondent currently has a career related to agriculture and natural resources.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been on a road trip, driving through an unfamiliar town, when you start to look for a place to eat? Your stomach is growling, and you will to eat anything just to satisfy your hunger. As you scope out the restaurants within your view, you see two giant yellow arches just a few miles ahead of you. Finally, a place you recognize.

McDonald's is one of the most well-known restaurants in the world (Robinson, Borzekowski, Matheson & Kraemer, 2007). The restaurant has more than 36,000 locations in more than 100 countries (History, n.d.). The golden arches have been a staple in McDonald's marketing since the opening of the first McDonald's Red and White restaurant in 1953 (History, n.d.). People all around the world know of McDonald's, even children who are unable to read or write (Robinson, et al. 2007).

Now, you look for a place to get dessert. You are traveling through North Texas when you see your favorite ice cream company; Blue Bell Creameries. Blue Bell Creameries was founded in 1907 as a small family dairy (The Little Creamery, n.d.). What started as a home town creamery in Brenham, Texas is now one of the top selling ice cream companies in the United States (The Little Creamery, n.d.). Blue Bell Creameries prides themselves on employee and customer loyalty which has helped them through tough times in the company's history (The Little Creamery, n.d.).

What do these companies have in common? Each of these companies represent a brand and they all have strong brand equity in the minds of their consumers. A brand creates a symbol or image in the minds of consumers which can influence buying decisions (Batey, 2008). Brand equity is “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand...that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1997, p. 15). Simply, brand equity is how you perceive a brand and those perceptions can either help or hurt a company and its overall brand.

Organizations thrive when they have a successful brand in the eyes of the consumer (Aaker, 1997; Feldwick, 2002; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). McDonald’s has become a power house in the fast-food industry because of their effective branding (Robinson, et al. 2007). Franzen and Moriarty (2009) define a brand as “a complex, interrelated system of management decisions and consumer reactions that identifies a product (goods, services, or ideas), builds awareness of it, and creates meaning for it” (p. 6). While organizations, like McDonald’s and Bell Blue Creameries, may assume they control their brand, the thoughts of customers actually determine the brand (Franzen& Moriarty, 2009).

Branding consists of product design, marketing strategies, and, most importantly, consumer perception (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). To evaluate a company’s brand, the brand equity can be researched, specifically a consumer’s awareness of a brand, the associations made with the brand, the consumers perceived quality, and perceived value of a brand (Feldwick, 2002). Since branding is a perception of the consumer, we have to go to the consumer to accurately evaluate the brand (Aaker, 1997; Clifton & Ahmad, 2009; Feldwick, 2002). Evaluations of brand equity can be used for any product, service or organization (Aaker, 1992). For this study, brand equity was evaluated for the *Cowboy Journal* magazine at Oklahoma State University (OSU).

The *Cowboy Journal* (see Figure 1) is a student-produced publication created to communicate information about OSU's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (DASNR) (Lawson, 2012). DASNR consist of three entities; Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Stations, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) (General settings registry, n.d.). The *Cowboy Journal* is produced in a capstone class and is used as a teaching tool for students studying agricultural communications in the CASNR at OSU (Lawson, 2012). The *Cowboy Journal* is published twice a year (Lawson, 2012), totaling 41 issues since the establishment of the magazine in 1999. After publication, the *Cowboy Journal* is distributed to alumni, current students, and prospective students of the CASNR at OSU (Lawson, 2012).



Figure 1. Cover of the Volume 21 Number 1 of the *Cowboy Journal*.

Statement of the Problem

Although one study of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine has been conducted since its establishment in 1999 (Lawson, 2012), no information is available about how or if the *Cowboy Journal* is establishing effective brand equity with the audience. Understanding the brand equity of the publication will help with future production, distribution, and marketing of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the self-reported attitudes of OSU CASNR alumni toward the *Cowboy Journal* and its brand equity. The study also will look into the audience's use of the *Cowboy Journal* and the audience's self-reported demographics.

Research Objectives

The research objectives guiding the study were to:

1. Determine the brand equity (awareness, association, perceived value, and quality) of the *Cowboy Journal*.
2. Describe the audience's use of the *Cowboy Journal*.
3. Describe selected characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, education level, area of study, residency in high school, current primary residency, and current work-related connection to agriculture) of the *Cowboy Journal* audience.

Significance of the Study

Limited information is available on the audience's understanding of the *Cowboy Journal* and how or why it is produced. Only two identified research studies have included the *Cowboy Journal* (Hall, Rhoades, & Agunga, 2009; Lawson, 2012) and no research has been conducted

on the audience's perceptions of the *Cowboy Journal* brand as related to the brand equity. Therefore, this study is an opportunity to understand the audience's connection to *Cowboy Journal* and its brand equity.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study included email-accessible members of the CASNR Alumni Association who had provided accurate email addresses by January 2019.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were present in this study:

1. CASNR Alumni Association members' email addresses as provided by the association were individuals who receive the *Cowboy Journal*.
2. The email addresses provided by the OSU Alumni Association were current.
3. The CASNR Alumni Association members who provide their email addresses to the association are no different in their perceptions of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine than those who do not.
4. Respondents were honest regarding their perceptions of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine while answering questions.

Limitations

The following limitations are noted in this study:

1. Only CASNR Alumni Association members with valid email addresses could be reached through this study's methodology.
2. The study cannot be generalized to other publications.
3. The study cannot be generalized to the same audience in the future.

4. In some questions, respondents were limited to anchored responses.

Definitions

Brand	“a complex, interrelated system of management decisions and consumer reactions that identifies a product (goods, services, or ideas), builds awareness of it, and creates meaning for it” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 6).
Brand Equity	“A set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand...that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1997, p. 15).
Brand Awareness	“The presence of a brand in the mind of consumers” (Aaker, 1996, p. 15).
Brand Association	Anything that can be linked to a brand in the mind of the consumer (Aaker, 1997; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).
Perceived Value	“assessment of consumers’ perception of benefits and sacrifices, including quality and price” (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011, p. 233).
Perceived Quality	“a form of overall evaluation of a product” (Olshavsky, 1985, in Rowley, 1998, p. 325).
Capstone	“a culminating experience in which students are expected to integrate, extend, critique, and apply the knowledge gained in the major they are pursuing” (Wagenaar, 1993, p. 209).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the literature used for the framework of this study. Reviewed topics include an overview of branding, brand equity and its components (brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and value), which were used as the theoretical framework for this study, consumer decisions, successful branding, history of the agricultural communications discipline, agricultural communications in the United States, agricultural communications at OSU, history of the *Cowboy Journal*, past research on the *Cowboy Journal*, past research on the student publications, history alumni associations, and the alumni association at OSU.

Theoretical Framework

Branding was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Brand awareness, association, perceived value, and quality were used to evaluate brand equity as a part of the branding theory.

Branding

The word *brand* has changed meanings throughout the years. The word brand came from the Old Norse word *brandr*, which means “to burn” (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 13). The early dictionary definition of brand is “an identifying mark burned on livestock or (especially in former

times) criminals or slaves with a branding iron” (Brand, 2019, n.p.). Brands were originally physical marks used to show ownership, especially in the livestock industry (Clifton et al., 2009). A brand also was traditionally considered “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (De Chernatony & Riley, 1997, p. 90).

Today, brand still has more than one definition. A brand cannot be defined as one simple idea; rather, it is a combination of ideas and physical materials creating an image in the minds of consumers (Batey, 2008). The first definition found in the Oxford dictionary (2019) is “a type of product manufactured by a particular company under a particular name” (Brand, 2019, n.p.). Brands can consist of physical products representing and promoting a good or service (Batey, 2008). According to Franzen and Moriarty (2009), “a brand is a complex, interrelated system of management decisions and consumer reactions that identifies a product (good, services, or ideas), builds awareness of it, and creates meaning for it” (p. 6). A brand is the unified perception of a company’s many interacting components (Pegasus, 2005).

Brand “has always meant, in its passive form, the object by which an impression is formed, and in its active form the process of forming this impression” (Clifton et al., p. 13). Brands are more than the physical product they represent; in fact, they are a system of ideas in the mind of the consumers (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The cognition a person develops about a product can be considered the brand (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2009). A brand can be different for different people, and both producers and consumers have influence on the overall perception of a brand (Tybout & Calkins, 2005).

Brands are used to differentiate goods and services from each other (Aaker, 1997). Brands can, and most times do, consist of more than one good or service provided by a company or organization (Batey, 2008). For a consumer, a brand is “a set of associations, perceptions and

expectations” he or she has for an organization providing that good or service (Batey, 2008, p. 4). Decisions are made based on consumers’ perceptions of the company brand (Aaker, 1997).

For marketing a company, the brand is a promise made to customers (Batey, 2008). Brands protect consumers and producers by giving an identity to a good or service (Aaker, 1997). This identity helps consumers distinguish between goods and services that may try to mimic the originals (Aaker, 1997). What customers see as the brand for an entity can consist of names, symbols, shapes, typefaces, colors, slogans, packaging, etc. (Clifton et al., 2009). “A brand is an associative network, a system in which everything connects” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 265). According to Clifton et al. (2009), the name is the most important part of a brand, and therefore, the name should never change. However, different elements of a brand can change without hurting the brand depending on consumer awareness (Clifton et al., 2009).

Brand Equity

“Much of the skill of marketing and branding nowadays is concerned with building ‘equity’ for products whose characteristics, pricing, distribution and availability are really quite close to each other” (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 17). Developing strong equity for your brand will help to draw consumers to a product or service (Aaker, 1997). “Brands with strong equity embed themselves deeply in the hearts and minds of consumers” (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 18).

According to Aaker (1997), “brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand ... that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (p. 15). In brand equity, assets and liabilities must be connected to the name or symbol of a brand (Aaker, 1997). If the name or symbol associated with the brand changes, assets and liabilities can be affected or lost all together (Aaker, 1997).

Assets and liabilities can differ depending on the context, but they are generally grouped in the following categories (Aaker, 1997): brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality,

brand association and other proprietary brand assets (patents, trademarks, channel relationships, etc.). Brand equity can be summarized by the model adapted from Aaker’s 1997 model presented in Figure 2 below.

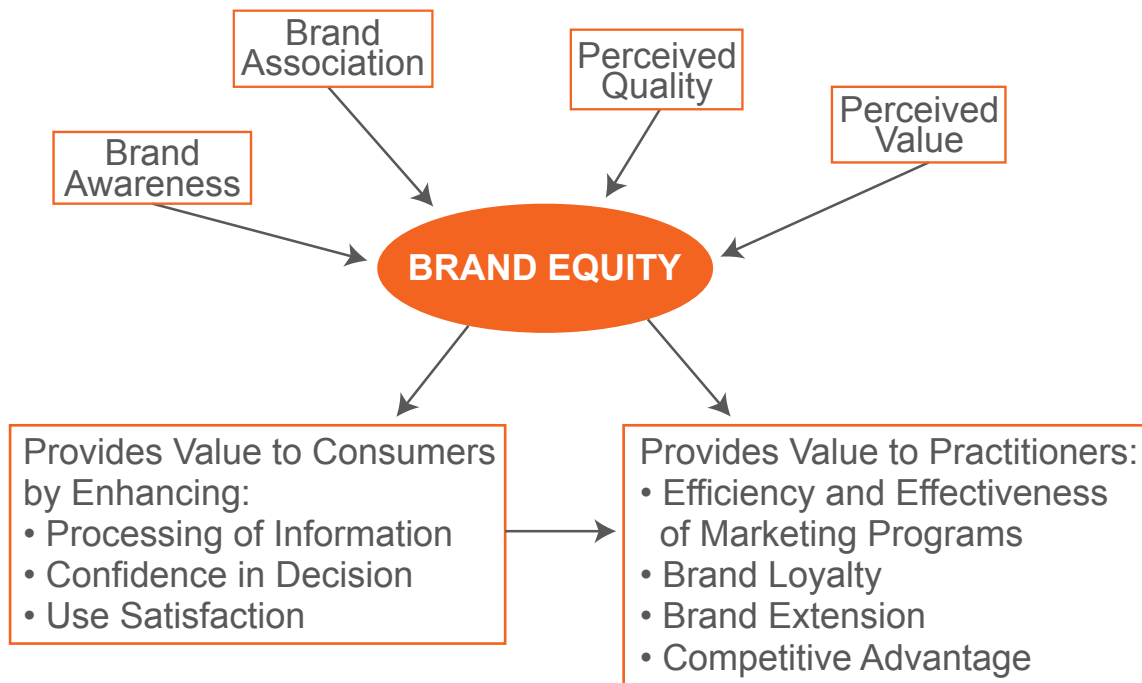


Figure 2. Brand equity model adapted from Aaker (1997).

To understand the brand equity of a company, researchers can measure equity from the consumer level (Aaker, 1991; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Baker et al, 2005; Bendixen et al, 2003; Berry, 2000; Chen, 2001; Christodoulides et al, 2012; Keller, 1993; Lassar et al, 1995; Shocker et al, 1994; Srinivasan et al, 2005; Tong & Hawley, 2009). Brand equity at the consumer level can be measured by both directly and indirectly (Aaker 1991; Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016; Keller, 1993). The indirect approach to measuring brand equity “attempts to assess potential sources of customer-based brand equity by measuring brand knowledge” (Keller, 1993). Indirect measures include measuring consumers’ brand awareness and brand associations (Keller, 1993).

Direct measures of brand equity take the consumer knowledge and assess “the impact of brand knowledge on consumer response to different elements of the firm's marketing program” (Keller, 1993). Testing brand knowledge through consumer response can directly measure brand equity (Keller, 1993). Another direct measure of brand equity is conjoint or trade off analysis which look at the connections between brand name and other marketing elements (Green & Srinivasan 1978, 1990; Green & Wind 1975). Scales have been developed to measure consumer-based brand equity; however, these cannot be applied to all populations based on the “relevance to consumers” (Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016, p. 234).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the consumer’s ability to recognize that a brand is a part of a certain category (Aaker, 1997). The perception or image of a brand can be connected to its awareness (Baisya, 2013). Brand awareness relates to esteem and knowledge of a brand (Baisya, 2013). Individuals with a high level of brand awareness tend to have positive feelings toward the brand as a whole (Feldwick, 2002). Different levels of awareness can be reached by a consumer, and each level has a different effect on overall brand equity (Aaker, 1997). The different levels of awareness are represented on Aaker’s awareness pyramid presented in Figure 3 below (1997, p. 62).

Brand awareness assists in brand equity when different levels of awareness are achieved (Aaker, 1997). It is easy to measure individuals’ brand awareness, but not always easy to make assumptions based off awareness alone (Feldwick, 2002). Brand recognition is the first, and arguably the most important, step to achieving brand awareness (Aaker, 1997). Consumers must recognize the name of an organization before they can connect the organization to a good or service (Aaker, 1997). Franzen and Moriarty (2009) explained the “presence of a brand and its

related identification features in long-term memory and the ability to recall this information into working memory” is an important step to brand awareness (p. 263).

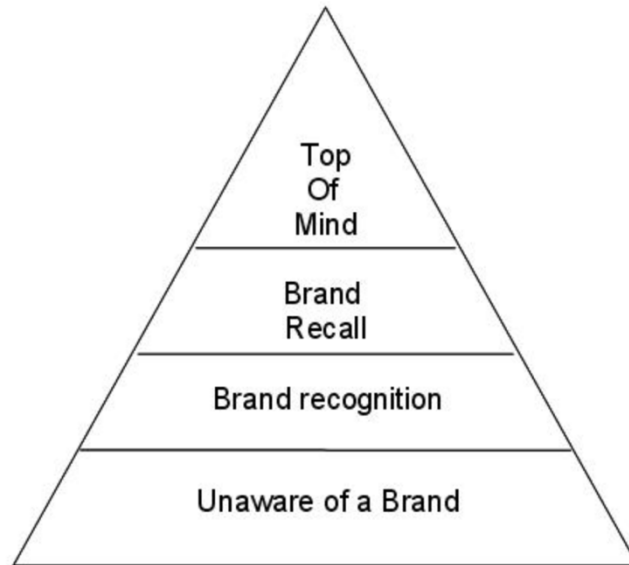


Figure 3. Brand awareness pyramid by Aaker (1997).

Brand awareness is important for an organization’s brand equity, but awareness cannot by itself create that equity (Aaker, 1997). Overall brand awareness can be connected with either positive feelings toward the brand itself or negative feelings depending on consumer experience (Feldwick, 2002). Consumers must have other positive connections to the brand to create overall brand equity (Aaker, 1997).

“Brand awareness can be assessed effectively through a variety of aided and unaided memory measures that can be applied to test brand recall and recognition” (Keller, 1993). Using different cues, such as product categories, can be used to measure a consumer’s brand recall (Keller, 1993). The order to which a brand is recognized can be connected to a consumer’s awareness of the brand (Fazio 1987). Brands that are recognized first, without aid, have strong brand awareness with the consumers (Keller, 1993).

Brand Association

“The underlying value of a brand name often is based upon specific associations linked to it” (Aaker, 1997, p. 20). A brand association is anything that can be linked to a brand in the mind of the consumer (Aaker, 1997; Feldwick, 2002; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Evaluating brand association can be done through a wide variety of questions regarding consumer knowledge, product or service performance, or general descriptions and associations (Feldwick, 2002). Brand association will be strengthened when consumers are exposed to many experiences and support comes from a network of other links (Aaker, 1997). Consumers use connections in their memories to associate a brand with an experience or with another good or service (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Brands with positive associations can often create a reason-to-buy for consumers, while brands with negative associations can create the opposite (Aaker, 1997).

Positive brand association is an important part of gaining acceptance for a product or service (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). A strong-positive association can be a barrier for competitors attempting to market similar goods or services (Aaker, 1997). Franzen and Moriarty (2009) explained associations as “the tendency, embedded in memory, to keep buying a brand” (p. 264). Value and perceptions of a brand can be a result of the core associations consumers have with the brand itself (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Brands with strong core associations tend to become stronger brands in the minds of consumers (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Brand association can be measured in several different ways (Aaker & Day, 1986; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Keller, 1993; Levy, 1978, 1981, 1985). Brand association can be measured qualitatively through free response questions about how a brand makes a consumer feel (Keller, 1993). If consumers are unwilling or unable to express their feeling toward a brand, sentence completion or picture interpretation can be used (Levy 1978, 1981, 1985). These measures can be considered indirect and are not always an accurate measure for brand association (Keller, 1993).

It could be necessary to find more direct measures for brand associations, such as comparing elements of brand associations and directly asking consumers about elements of association (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Perceived Value and Quality

A brand has no exact value, only a value set by the interests of the consumer (Feldwick, 2002). Perceived value and quality are perceptions of the consumers (Aaker, 1997). Consumer perceptions of value and quality influence the overall consumer perception of brand equity (Rodrigues & Martins, 2016). A brand must stand for something the consumer values for it to have positive brand equity (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Every brand will have an overall perceived quality and value based on consumer interest at that time (Aaker, 1997). These perceived qualities will not always be based on consumer knowledge of detailed specifications; rather, they are often based on consumer opinions (Aaker, 1997). The value of a brand is based on “the brand’s function and position, both as determined by the management and as perceived by the customer” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 204). The combination of perceived value and quality help to form the brand equity of a product or service (Rodrigues & Martins, 2016). Depending on the organization, perceived quality can be determined in a variety of ways (Aaker, 1997). Although perceived quality does not always mean the same thing for different companies, Aaker (1997) states “it will always be a measurable, important brand characteristic” (p. 19).

Aaker (1997) explains the effect perceived quality has on all contexts of an organization. Perceived quality can be defined as “the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority” (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 3). To increase brand equity in the minds of the consumers, “a brand must identify the unique value that it alone can deliver to a chosen market or segment” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 204). Brands with high perceived quality in one context will likely have high perceived quality in other contexts (Aaker, 1997). However, brand quality

cannot be objectively determined because it is a perception by consumers (Aaker, 1997; Feldwick, 2002; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). When providing a good or service, the value of a brand must be assessed by both the producer and consumer (Aaker, 1997). “Perceived quality will directly influence purchase decisions and brand loyalty” (Aaker, 1997, p. 19). Perceived value and quality are an important aspect in brand equity since they provide the feeling of reduced risk in the eyes of the consumers (Rodrigues & Martins, 2016).

When measuring perceived brand quality and value it is important to look directly at the perceptions and evaluation of consumers (Kamakura & Russell, 1993). Brand quality can be a result of “consumer evaluations of physical features of the brand” (Kamakura & Russell, 1993). High satisfaction with physical features can lead to high satisfaction of overall quality (Kamakura & Russell, 1993). Brand quality can be measured by testing consumers’ judgments of a brand’s excellence (Zeithaml, 1988).

Consumer Decisions

Branding affects every aspect of an organization’s business, including how consumers make decisions (Aaker, 1997). According to Clifton et al. (2009), cattle brands not only allowed for distinguishing cattle among the owners but also let community members know which animals come from which farm. Being able to distinguish among farms meant people could pick and choose cattle based on the farm or the brand (Clifton et al., 2009). Farms with higher quality cattle were recognized by the brand they used. This was the start of using the utility of the brand as a guide to make purchasing choices (Clifton et al., 2009). Brands give consumers a promise of “authenticity” and “replicability” (Feldwick, 2002, p. 6). Without this promise “consumer decision-making would become a lottery and, probably, a nightmare” (Feldwick, 2002, p. 6).

This same kind of consumer decision happens today based on consumer perceptions of an organization’s brand (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Consumers look at every aspect of an

organization and compare them to competitors to draw conclusions about organizations' brands (Franklin, 2003). Consumers use information they have gathered to establish a perception of a company and those perceptions affect decision making associated with that organization (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Organizations with a positive association generally have a higher success rate than companies with negative or no associations (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Consumers today have “an astonishing – often bewildering – array of choice” (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 17). The surplus of choices allows customers to make decisions based on their perceptions of an organization's brand equity (Cuneo, Lopez & Yagüe, 2012). Organizations have to work to make their good or service stand out for consumers (Clifton et al., 2009). The number of choices a consumer has also puts pressure on organizations to find more ways to make themselves different to stay competitive (Clifton et al., 2009). “This diversity of choice puts pressure on those making or selling products or services to offer high quality, excellent value and wide variety” (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 17). Organizations have to work to provide a quality of good or service to improve their brand in the mind of consumers (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Every brand gives a consumer another opportunity to choose what they want in a product or service (Cuneo et al., 2012). “Brands allow customers to shop with confidence, and they provide a route map through a bewildering variety of choices” (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 17). Consumers are more apt to use an organization if they have a positive perception of their brand (Aaker, 1997; Clifton et al., 2009; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). For consumers, brands represent a “promise kept” and consumers count on that promise for purchasing decisions (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 18). “Brands have promised quality – the quality of the product, service or experience” (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 45). Research has found brands ultimately drive consumer decisions (Aaker, 1997; Clifton et al., 2009; Cuneo et al., 2012; Feldwick, 2002; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Successful Branding

Successful branding can save an organization when things happen that may hurt the organization in the eyes of the consumers (Feldwick, 2002). Companies, such as Martha Stewart Living, used their success in branding to save the company when allegations came to light against Martha Stewart herself (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The marketing strategies used to build the Martha Stewart Living brand helped to save that same brand after Martha's criminal allegations put the company in trouble (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Coca-Cola ran into a brand betrayal when they introduced a new formula called "New Coke" (Feldwick, 2002). A new variation of the Coke recipe created New Coke, which consumers did not accept as an alternative to the original (Feldwick, 2002). The New Coke recipe hurt the company at first but was readjusted to the original recipe based on consumer feedback (Feldwick, 2002). The Coca-Cola company listened to consumer feedback and was able to continue the production of original Coke with full support from consumers (Feldwick, 2002). In 2015, Blue Bell Creameries, one of America's top ice cream brands, faced a crisis when some of their products were connected with a *Listeria* outbreak (Barrett & Haynes, 2016). Blue Bell was forced to stop sales temporarily while resolving the outbreak (Barrett & Haynes, 2016). After resolving the *Listeria* outbreak Blue Bell resumed sales with support from their customers (Barrett & Haynes, 2016). Blue Bell's reputation and brand equity with their customers allowed the company to regain full operation shortly after the outbreak (Barrett & Haynes, 2016).

Successful branding efforts are responsible for the positive reputations of an organization, especially when that organization is presented with a setback (Barrett & Haynes, 2016; Feldrick, 2002; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Two factors affecting branding are brand management and consumer perspectives (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The combination of these two aspects of a brand contribute to the organization's brand equity (Aaker, 1997). A brand manager cannot

control the brand, but he or she can make appropriate communication efforts to influence the perception of the consumer (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

History of Agricultural Communications

Although communications within agriculture was practiced from the beginning of agriculture practices (Burnett & Tucker, 2001), mediated communications about agriculture only has been around since the 19th century (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2003). Following many of the patterns and practices of Europe, the United States started to make advances in the agricultural industry and thus began the push for communications within agriculture (Boone et al., 2003). After establishing the need for communications within the agricultural industry, the United States started to produce agriculture-related books in the 1700s (Telg & Iran, 2012). At the beginning of agricultural journalism, agricultural societies created publications to tell their own story, but these often were not published in general media outlets (Boone et al., 2003). Without the help of large media outlets, agricultural societies had a difficult time distributing agricultural information to the public (Boone et al., 2003).

Agricultural Communications in the United States

In 1862, the first U.S. Land-grant Act passed, providing states with land for the establishment of colleges focused on agriculture and mechanics (*Colleges of agriculture at the land grant universities: a profile*, 1995). Boone et al. (2003) suggest the establishment of land-grant colleges formed what is now the agricultural communications discipline. In 1905, Iowa State University offered the first agricultural journal course (Duncan, 1957). The agricultural communications discipline has courses influenced by industry, academia, and mass communications practices (Tucker et al., 2003). While agriculture knowledge is important, “practitioners agreed that agricultural communicators are not agriculturalists primarily, but communicators who have a specialty” (Sprecker & Rudd, 1998, p. 40).

Advances in technology have continued to shape the agricultural communications discipline (Boone et al., 2003). When acquiring information, farmers prefer TV, radio, and print media (Irfan, Muhammad, Khan & Khan, 2006). The agricultural communications discipline has become “the exchange of information about the agricultural and natural resources industries through effective and efficient media, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and the web, to research appropriate audiences” (Telg & Irani, 2012, p. 4). With the public becoming further removed from agriculture, the agricultural communications discipline has become critical for the communication of agriculture and natural resources (Baily-Evans, 1994).

Agricultural Communications at OSU

Agricultural communications first appeared at OSU as an agricultural journalism course in 1909, but was only available for two years (Heath, 1992). Agricultural journalism was added to the Oklahoma A&M course catalog as a service course in 1921 and as a major in the 1927-28 catalog (Heath, 1992). In 1931, the first student graduated with a degree in agricultural journalism from Oklahoma A&M (Heath, 1992). Agricultural journalism eventually changed to what is now agricultural communications in the mid 1970s (Lawson, 2012).

History of the *Cowboy Journal*

In 1998, OSU partnered with Texas Tech University to develop a capstone course focusing on the collective skills a student in agricultural communications should have before graduating with a bachelor’s degree in agricultural communications (Lawson, 2012). Students pursuing bachelor’s degrees in agricultural communications are required to take AGCM 4413: Agricultural Communications Capstone, the course that produces the *Cowboy Journal* magazine each semester (Lawson, 2012).

The first issue of the *Cowboy Journal* was created in January 1999 after the competition of the first capstone course for agricultural communications offered in the fall of 1998 (Lawson,

2012). The *Cowboy Journal* started as a teaching tool used to assess student knowledge of agricultural communications course materials, but it now has become a published magazine distributed each semester to all OSU agricultural communications alumni and CASNR alumni who are dues-paying members of the OSU Alumni Association (Lawson, 2012). With agricultural communications and CASNR alumni, individuals featured in stories also receive a mailed copy of the *Cowboy Journal* (Lawson, 2012).

This capstone course is taught twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring, and produces two issues of the *Cowboy Journal* each year (Lawson, 2012). Students in the course are responsible for every part of pre-press production for the *Cowboy Journal* (Lawson, 2012). This includes selling and designing sponsorships, searching for story topics, conducting interviews and writing feature stories, taking photos, designing pages, proofing and editing, conducting social media promotions, and ensuring campus circulation (Lawson, 2012).

Students in the capstone course have the opportunity to submit applications for leadership positions during the semester (Lawson, 2012). The course instructor, with the help of fellow faculty members, appoints leadership team members based on applications, interviews, and skill levels associated with the position for which the student applies (Lawson, 2012). Leadership team positions consist of editor(s), fact checker(s), photo and graphic coordinator(s), sponsorship coordinator(s), media coordinator(s), and circulation coordinator(s) (S. Sitton, personal communications, 2019).

Magazines also are distributed in campus buildings, including Agricultural Hall, Animal Science Building, and the Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center (Lawson, 2012). The *Cowboy Journal* represents OSU DASNR, the OSU CASNR, the OSU Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership (AECL), and the OSU agricultural communications major (Lawson, 2012).

Past Research on Student Publications

Student-produced publications are used at several universities across the United States (Frangoulis, 1993; Hall et al., 2009; Lawson, 2012; Wheeler, 1994). Little research regarding student-produced publications created at agricultural colleges has been conducted (Hall et al., 2009). While one study evaluated student publications' place in agricultural communications curriculum (Hall et al., 2009), there is no published research regarding audience evaluation of these student-produced publications.

Frangoulis (1993) and Wheeler (1994) looked at the overall structure of student publications, ethical issues, and the role of faculty advisors. Frangoulis (1993) found student publications were being produced between one and 52 times a year, while Wheeler (1994) found publications being produced one to two times a year. Student publications are produced across the country, some through required courses and others as an extracurricular activity (Wheeler, 1994).

The researcher gathered information about *Cowboy Journal* from an unpublished thesis looking at overall perception of the *Cowboy Journal* audience (Lawson, 2012). Lawson (2012) analyzed the readership of the *Cowboy Journal* and found OSU CASNR alumni who received the *Cowboy Journal* were predominantly white males with an average age of 45.69. In 2012, alumni perceptions on the content and style of the *Cowboy Journal* were determined to be positive “regarding the range and variety of topics, understandability of information, and quality of writing” (Lawson, 2012, p. 47). CASNR alumni believed the *Cowboy Journal* portrays OSU accurately and objectively (Lawson, 2012). Alumni also believed the quality of illustrations and stories were good and they read the majority of the stories in the magazine (Lawson, 2012). *Cowboy Journal* also strengthened alumnus connections to the college and university (Lawson, 2012). Further research was suggested by Lawson (2012), including a repeat of the readership

study, conducting focus groups with audience members, and readership studies of other college publications.

History of Alumni Associations

America's first alumni association was started in 1821 by graduates of Williams College (Mission & Purpose, n.d.). Alumni gathered to assist the college when it was struggling financially (Dollar, 1992). After the creation of the Williams College Alumni Association, many other colleges and universities established their own alumni associations (Dollar, 1992).

From the beginning, alumni associations were created to assist colleges and universities by allowing alumni to promote literature and fellowship and to donate to their alma maters (Dollar, 1992; Mission & Purpose, n.d.). Gifts and donations were small in the beginning, but today, many alumni donate large quantities to help improve colleges and universities (Dollar, 1992). Since alumni contribute to the financial stability of colleges and universities, they often want to have a say in the operation of their alma mater (Dollar, 1992).

Alumni Association at Oklahoma State University

The first efforts made to establish an alumni association at Oklahoma State University (OSU), then Oklahoma A&M, were in the summer of 1896 by the first six graduates of the university (Dollar, 1992). Although the alumni association at OSU had a slow start, in 1928 President Henry G. Bennett took steps to ensure the success of the association (Dollar, 1992). The OSU Alumni Association strives to “engage alumni, students and friends to experience lifelong connections to the Alumni Association, Cowboy Family and Oklahoma State University” (About the Alumni Association, n.d.). Today, the OSU Alumni Association represents alumni and students by providing alumni and student news, assisting with OSU initiatives, and spreading OSU pride across the country and world (About the Alumni Association, n.d.).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the chapter is to explain the methods used in this study, including Institutional Review Board approval, research design, instrumentation, data collection, validity and reliability, data analysis, and population.

Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University policy and federal regulations require approval of all research related to human subjects before the researchers can begin investigation. The Oklahoma State University Office of University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review research methods to protect the welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. The study was reviewed by the OSU IRB and sent for approval on February 25, 2019. Modifications were made to the IRB application, and it was approved March 7, 2019. The application number assigned to this study was AG-19-7 (see Appendix A).

Research Design

This study was designed using descriptive survey research design concerning how CASNR alumni connect the *Cowboy Journal* with aspects of brand equity (awareness, association, perceived value, and quality), their use of the *Cowboy Journal*, and their self-reported demographics.

Instrumentation

Although other measures for brand equity exist (Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016), the brand being analyzed did not fit into an existing measure. Since the *Cowboy Journal* is a produce provided to its consumers free of charge, instruments using price and purchasing decision as measures for brand equity were not applicable. Baalbaki and Guzmán (2016) explain instruments measuring brand equity apply to a population only if they are “relevance to consumers” (p.234). To evaluate the brand equity of the target population the research created a web-based questionnaire adapted from concepts in past studies (Aaker, 1997; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016; Brubaker, 2017; Kamakura & Russell, 1993; Keller, 1993; Lawson, 2012; Metzger, 2017).

The web-based questionnaire hosted in www.qualtrics.com and consisted of both researcher-developed questions and questions adapted from previous branding and readership studies (Aaker, 1997; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016; Brubaker, 2017; Kamakura & Russell, 1993; Keller, 1993; Lawson, 2012; Metzger, 2017). The questionnaire consisted of a variety of questions including open response, yes or no, check-all-that-apply, and scaled items. Recommendations for online survey research were followed when developing this questionnaire (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). The questionnaire did not require answers for any of the questions and did not provide respondents with a progress bar due to its length (Dillman et al., 2014). The questionnaire asked participants demographic questions along with questions regarding their use and the brand equity, including seven brand awareness, three brand association, and two perceived value and quality questions.

Qualifier

Participants were asked if they had heard of the *Cowboy Journal* to determine if they were able to respond to the rest of the questionnaire. If participants answered “no,” they were directed to the demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire.

Demographics

The end of the questionnaire included demographic questions about the respondents who chose to participate. One to six demographic questions were asked based on the academic degree(s) each alumnus completed at OSU. Demographic questions included age, sex, degree(s) completed at OSU, major(s) while attending OSU, location of high school degree, and location of their current primary residence. Questions regarding major(s) was asked up to four times, depending on how alumni answered the choose-all-that-apply question regarding degree(s) pursued at OSU (*bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and/or professional*).

Brand Awareness

An item on the questionnaire asked participants to rank on a scale of one (not familiar) to 10 (very familiar) how familiar they were with the *Cowboy Journal*.

Participants were then asked if they receive the *Cowboy Journal*. This question was a *yes* or *no* question connected to a display logic displaying three additional questions if the participant responded with “yes.” These additional questions were directed to participants who receive the *Cowboy Journal*. With the chosen population, it was assumed every person receives the *Cowboy Journal*, but this question was used to account for population error, including false emails, incorrect mailing addresses, and errors in magazine distribution.

Participants who received the *Cowboy Journal* were asked how many *Cowboy Journals* they receive each year. A drop-down menu was provided to give the participant a choice of one

through 12. This question was used to determine the participants' awareness of the *Cowboy Journal*.

All participants were asked a *yes* or *no* question to determine if they knew the *Cowboy Journal* was produced by students. This was followed by another *yes* or *no* question asking if they knew the *Cowboy Journal* was produced in an agricultural communications course. The question was intended to determine the participants' awareness of the production of the *Cowboy Journal*.

An item asked participants where they have seen the *Cowboy Journal* mentioned in a check-all-that-apply question anchored: (a) *Online on a website*; (b) *Instagram*; (c) *Facebook*; (d) *Twitter*; (e) *Pinterest*; (f) *Snapchat*; (g) *YouTube*; and (h) *Email*.

Participants were asked if they, or someone they work for, sponsor the *Cowboy Journal*. Participants could answer (a) *yes*, (b) *no*, or (c) *I am not sure*.

Brand Association

Participants who received the *Cowboy Journal* also were asked an open-response question about why they receive the *Cowboy Journal*. The question was intended to determine the participants' association of the *Cowboy Journal*.

Participants were asked an open-response question about who produces the *Cowboy Journal* to gauge brand association participants have with the magazine.

Another open-response question was asked about what comes to participants' minds when they think about publications produced by Oklahoma State University to test brand association participants have with publications and the university.

Perceived Quality and Value

A question was developed using Osgood's semantic differential scale (1957) and asked participants to rate the concept "The *Cowboy Journal* is ..." by selecting a point on the seven-point scale between each word pairing (see Figure 4).

Negative ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Positive

Figure 4. Example of a word pairing adapted from Osgood's semantic differential scale (Osgood, 1957).

Semantic differentials "can be applied to any investigation where people's opinion on any subject are sought, and are very adaptable" (p.116) and are a reliable way to measure attitudes (Shields, 2006). Osgood's semantic differentials measure three constructs; evaluative, potency and activity (1957). This question was developed to measure the attitudes of participants using the evaluative construct to measure the attitudes of audience members toward the *Cowboy Journal*. The question was modeled after evaluative questions used in previous studies (Brubaker, Settle, Downey & Hardman, 2017; Metzger, 2014; Osgood, 1957). For this question, the research reverse coded six of the word pairings to account respondents running through the list without making a conscious choice (Shields, 2006).

Evaluative word pairings used in this instrument included *negative/positive*, *unimportant/important*, *bad/good*, *true/false*, and *honest/dishonest*.

Additional word pairing, not connected to the evaluative construct, were included in the question to see how the participants would respond. These additional word pairings included *complex/simple*, *humorous/serious*, *cheap/expensive*, *conservative/innovative*, *necessary/unnecessary*, *low quality/high quality*, *uneducational/educational*, *purposeless/beneficial*, *confusing/clear*, *up-to-date/outdated*, and *creative/uncreative*.

Participants were asked if they would recommend the *Cowboy Journal* to others on an anchored scale: (a) *strongly disagree*; (b) *disagree*; (c) *somewhat disagree*; (d) *somewhat agree*; (e) *agree*; and (f) *strongly agree*.

If participants marked (a) *strongly disagree*, (b) *disagree*, or (c) *somewhat disagree* on if they would recommend the *Cowboy Journal*, they were asked an open-response question on why they do not recommend the *Cowboy Journal* to others.

Audience Use

If participants receive the *Cowboy Journal* they were asked how long they keep the *Cowboy Journal*. The question was anchored as follows: (a) *I do not keep it*; (b) *I keep it for less than a week*; (c) *I keep it for one to two weeks*; (d) *I keep it for three to four weeks*; (e) *I keep it for more than a month*; (f) *I keep it until the next issue is available*; (g) *I save it if an article is of interest to me*; and (h) *I save it as part of the Cowboy Journal collection*.

One item asked participants how much of the *Cowboy Journal* they typically read. The question was anchored as follows: (a) *I read every article*; (b) *I read most of the articles*; (c) *I only read some of the articles*; (d) *I just scan the headlines and photographs*; and (e) *I don't read it at all*.

If participants marked they read any of the *Cowboy Journal*, they were directed to three questions determining how and why they read. The first question asked of participants who read the *Cowboy Journal* was anchored with the three options: (a) *online*; (b) *printed copy*; or (c) *both*.

The next question asked participants to rate each phrase related to their reasons for reading the *Cowboy Journal*. The prompts were *I read the Cowboy Journal*: (a) *for entertainment*; (b) *to gain knowledge or skills*; (c) *to pass time*; (d) *to escape or distract myself*;

(e) to connect better with my peers; (f) to stay connected to the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources; and (g) to stay connected to Oklahoma State University. These prompts were anchored on a six-point scale as follows: (a) strongly disagree; (b) disagree; (c) somewhat disagree; (d) somewhat agree; (e) agree; and (f) strongly agree.

The third question, displayed if the participants read any of the *Cowboy Journal*, asked what participants do with their copies of the *Cowboy Journal* after they are finished reading. This question was multiple choice, giving participants four options: (a) throw it away/recycle; (b) pass it along to a friend/family member; (c) keep it; and (d) other. The (d) other option gave the participants an open-response box to fill in if they wanted to provide their own answers.

Additional Questions

All participants were then asked two open-response questions to determine what they like and what they do not like about *Cowboy Journal*. These questions were followed by an open-response question asking if they had any story ideas for future issues of *Cowboy Journal*.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is the level to which a question is answered in the way it was intended (Creswell, 2012). Face and content validity were assessed by a panel of experts consisting of agricultural communications faculty members, agricultural communications services professionals, professional degree students, and CASNR administration members (Leeuw, Hox, & Dillman, 2008). The panel of experts helped to “uncover a wide range of potential problems from typos and skip pattern logic errors to problems with how concepts have been operationalized” (Leeuw et al., 2008, p. 199). Each expert critiqued a copy of the questionnaire and provided feedback before the questionnaire was pilot tested. Primary edits included grammatical changes, word choice selection, and question ordering.

Reliability is the test for stable and consistent scores from an instrument (Creswell, 2012). Reliability also can be considered a measure of how well a questionnaire performs (Leeuw et al., 2008). To test reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot test using students who were underclassman in the agricultural communications major. The research chose to use these students for the pilot test because they closely related to the population being tested. Of the students ($n = 45$) who participated, 45 (100%) completed the questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for the pilot test to gauge the reliability of anchored questions asked throughout the questionnaire (Field, 2009; Santos, 1999). Questions must yield a Cronbach's alpha coefficient no lower than .70 to be considered reliable (Field, 2009; Santos, 1999). Questions with anchored responses were tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, including the semantic differential question. The semantic differential question yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .758, which proved to be reliable. All other anchored questions proved to be reliable with a .863 Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha coefficients could not be calculated for the unanchored questions throughout the questionnaire.

Population

The full population would consist of everyone who has looked at the *Cowboy Journal* magazine. For this study a population frame was used which included all dues-paying members of the OSU CASNR Alumni Association and agricultural communications alumni who provided email addresses as of January 2019 ($N = 3,648$). OSU Alumni Association memberships are open to anyone interested, including alumni, students and friends of OSU (About the Alumni Association, n.d.). The researcher conducted a census ($N = 3,648$) of this population frame in the study to account for frame error, including bad, inactive and unmaintained email addresses, emails filtered to spam or junk, and bad physical addresses to where the *Cowboy Journal* is sent.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained a list of email addresses from the OSU Alumni Association in January 2019. The researcher emailed CASNR alumni with a Qualtrics.com link to the questionnaire and a short description (see Appendix D) of the study March 11, 2019. The email stated that by clicking the link provided alumni were giving consent for the study. The email provided the purpose of the study, the link to the questionnaire, and the researcher's contact information.

Dillman et al. (2014) suggest sending out online questionnaires early in the morning and toward the beginning of the work week. The introductory email was sent out on a Monday morning with follow-up emails sent every three work days for a two-week period. Emails were sent approximately 7:30 a.m. to ensure the email was received before normal work hours (Dillman et al., 2014).

The first follow-up email (see Appendix D) including a short reminder and the questionnaire link was sent March 14, 2019. A second follow-up email was sent again March 18, 2019. The final follow-up email was sent March 20, 2019, with a final deadline of March 26, 2019. Responses collected after noon March 26, 2019, were categorized as non-respondents.

This study was incentivized with three OSU-themed gifts valued at \$50 apiece randomly given to three participants who submitted an email address after completing the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21 for Macintosh. Data was moved from Qualtrics.com to SPSS to analyze.

For the semantic differential question (see Appendix C), frequencies and modal values were calculated for each word pairing. The six word pairings that were reverse were recoded so all negative responses were on the left side for ease of analyzing data.

Anchored items were analyzed using means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. Scaled questions were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Open-response questions were analyzed by categorizing responses and reporting frequencies and percentages for each category.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Chapter IV describes the findings of this study based upon the purpose and objectives. Response rates are presented and findings, which are presented in order of the research objectives.

Response

Out of the 3,648 individuals in the population, the questionnaire yielded 432 responses with a response rate of 11.8%. An independent statistic t-test was conducted on the final data set to determine if a significant difference existed between early and late respondents (Linder, Murphy & Briers, 2001). No significant difference was determined.

Findings Related to Objective 1

Objective one sought to determine the brand equity (awareness, association, perceived value, and quality) of the *Cowboy Journal*. Findings are presented by their brand equity category.

Awareness

There were 420 participants who reported their familiarity with the *Cowboy Journal*. Responses were reported on a scale of one to 10 with one being not familiar at all and 10 being extremely familiar. Respondents had a median response of nine with a standard deviation of 2.043.

With the assumption participants receiving the questionnaire are receiving the magazine, participants were asked if they receive the *Cowboy Journal*. This question was used to eliminate possible respondents who have no knowledge of the *Cowboy Journal* as well as a test of their awareness of receiving the *Cowboy Journal*. There were 362 respondents (92.1%) who reported they receive the *Cowboy Journal* while 31 respondents (7.9%) reported they do not receive the *Cowboy Journal*.

Participants were asked the number of *Cowboy Journals* they receive in one year to gauge their awareness of the number of issues received (see Figure 5). Participants were given a choice of one through 12 issues per a year. The majority ($f = 179$, 56.6%) of respondents reported they receive two issues per a year, while 81 respondents (25%) reported receiving four issues per a year. There were 21 respondents (6.6%) who reported receiving one issue per year, 14 respondents (4.4%) who reported receiving three issues per year, two respondents (.6%) who reported receiving five issues per year, 14 respondents (4.4%) reported receiving six issues per year, and five respondents (1.6%) reported receiving 12 issues per year. No respondents reported receiving between seven and 11 issues per year.

Participants were asked if they were aware the *Cowboy Journal* was student-produced (see Figure 6). Of the 386 respondents to this question, 313 (81.1%) reported they were aware the *Cowboy Journal* is student-produced. The remaining 73 respondents (18.9%) were unaware the *Cowboy Journal* was student-produced.

Participants were asked if they were aware the *Cowboy Journal* was produced in an agricultural communications course (see Figure 7). Of the 388 respondents, 260 (67%) were aware of the *Cowboy Journal* being produced in an agricultural communications course while 128 respondents (33%) were unaware.

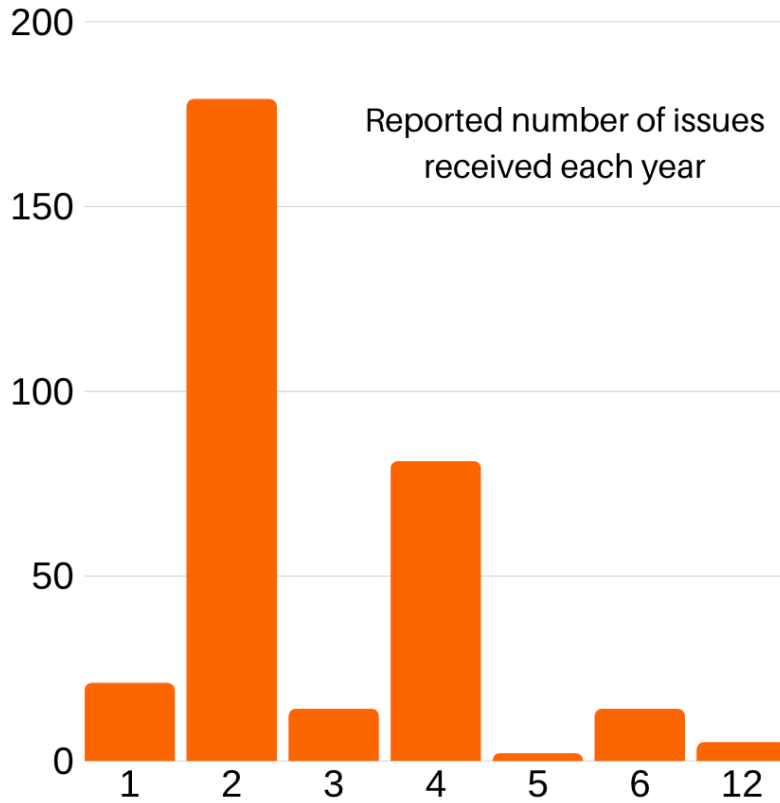


Figure 5. Reported number of issues received each year.

Did you know the *Cowboy Journal* was student-produced?

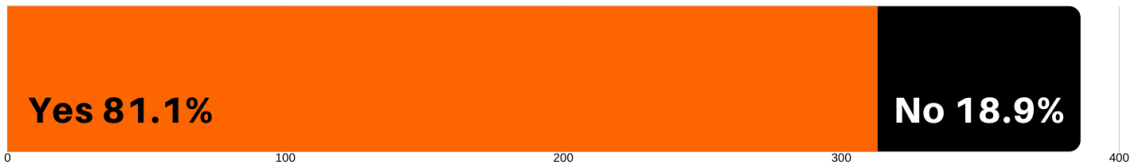


Figure 6. Respondents awareness of the student production of *Cowboy Journal*.

Did you know the *Cowboy Journal* was produced in an AGCM course?

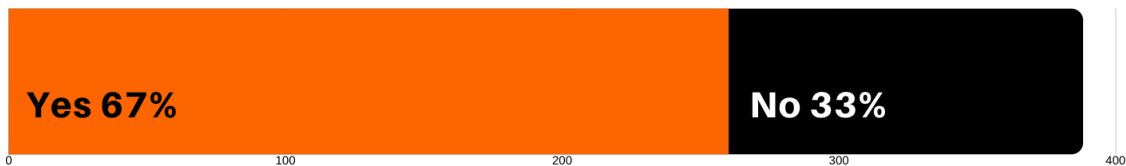


Figure 7. Respondents awareness of the class production of *Cowboy Journal*.

Participant awareness of the *Cowboy Journal* was gauged by evaluating where respondents saw the magazine mentioned (see Figure 8). The outlet noticed by respondents most

was email with 186 respondents (42.9%). Facebook was the second most popular outlet with 130 respondents (30%) saying they have seen the *Cowboy Journal* mentioned.

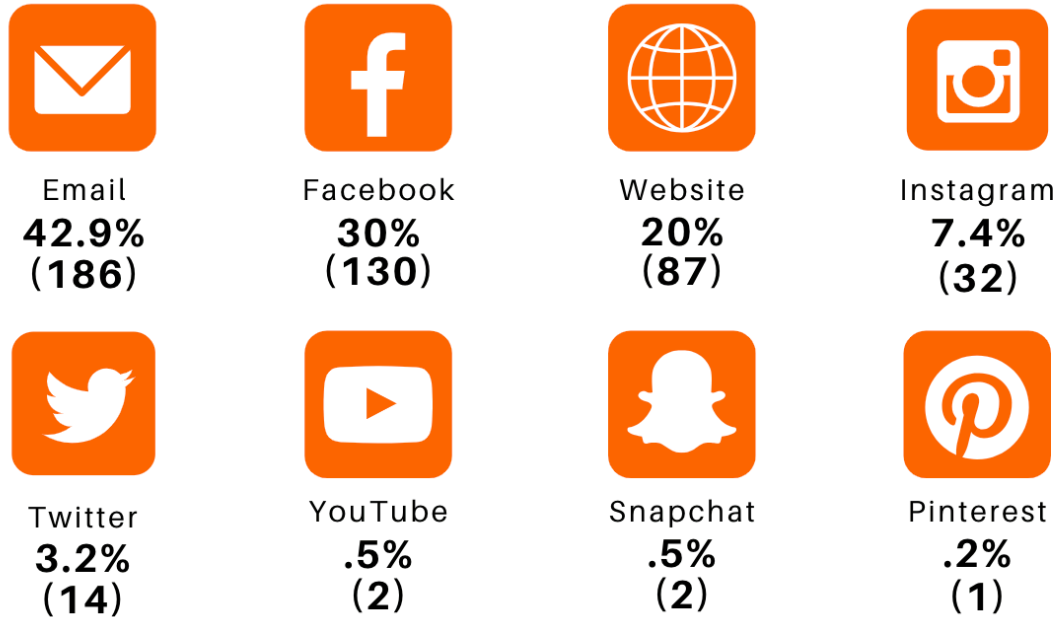


Figure 8. Where the *Cowboy Journal* has been mentioned in the past three months.

Participants were asked whether they were sponsoring the *Cowboy Journal* or working for someone who does. Of the 378 respondents, the majority ($f = 349$; 92.3%) were not sponsoring or working for someone who does and 16 respondents (4.2%) were. There were 13 respondents (3.5%) who were unsure if they or someone they worked for was sponsoring the *Cowboy Journal*.

Association

Audience association was gauged with a series of questions about OSU publications, the production of *Cowboy Journal*, and why they receive the *Cowboy Journal*.

Participants were first asked who they thought produced the *Cowboy Journal*. There were 284 respondents to this open-response question. Answers were categorized into 10 groups based on participants' responses (see Figure 9). There were 153 respondents (39.8%) who identified

agricultural communications students as the producers of the *Cowboy Journal*, while 114 respondents (29.7%) identified CASNR.

When asked about what publications they think of when they think of OSU, respondents reported publications that were organized into 15 categories (see Table 1). There were 257 respondents (40%) who reported the *Cowboy Journal* as an OSU publication. STATE magazine was the second most frequently reported publication with 123 respondents (19.1%).

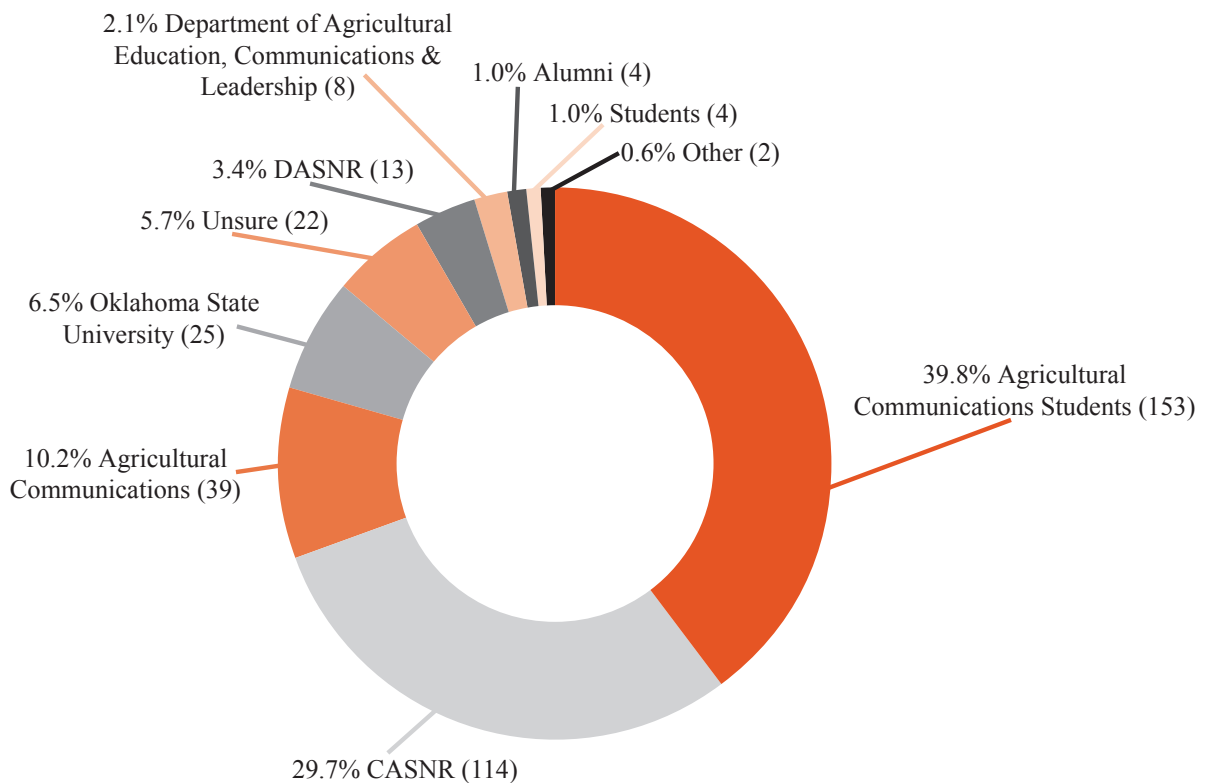


Figure 9. Who respondents believe produced the *Cowboy Journal*.

Participants were asked in an open-response question if they knew why they were selected to receive the *Cowboy Journal* (see Figure 10). Answers to this question were placed into four categories based on responses. More than 69% ($f = 233$) of respondents reported they receive the *Cowboy Journal* because they are alumni of the CASNR or OSU.

Table 1

Publication(s) Participants Connect with Oklahoma State University

Publications	<i>f</i>	%
Cowboy Journal	257	40
STATE (magazine)	123	19.1
Posse	53	8.2
Alumni	49	7.6
O'Colly	48	7.5
Other	32	5
Triangle	17	2.6
None	14	2.2
Vet Cetera	13	2
Animal Science	11	1.7
DASNR	8	1.2
Fact Sheets	6	0.9
Extension	5	0.8
CASNR	4	0.6
Foundation	3	0.5
Total	643	100

Note: Modal response is bold

Perceived Value & Quality

A total of 16 semantic differential word pairings were included in the questionnaire, and between 371 and 374 participants responded to the different word pairings. Of the 16 word pairings, four produced a mode of four, or the neutral point. Ten word pairings had a mode of seven, the most positive point. Full results are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Evaluative word pairings. For every evaluative word pairing the majority of respondents reported right of the center point, or the positive end of the word pairings. For the *negative/positive* word pair, 236 respondents (61.1%) chose the space to the far right, the most positive answer. For the *unimportant/important* word pairing, 132 respondents (35.3%) chose the

point two right of the neutral point, closer to the positive end of the word pairing. There were 108 respondents (28.9%) who chose the point three to the right of the neutral point, the most positive answer. For the *bad/good* word pairing, 200 respondents (53.8%) marked the point three to the right of the neutral point, the most positive answer. For the *false/true* word pairing, 204 respondents (55%) marked the point closest to the positive point, or the word *true*. For the *honest/dishonest* word pairing, 197 respondents (52.4%) marked closest to the positive word, which was *honest*.

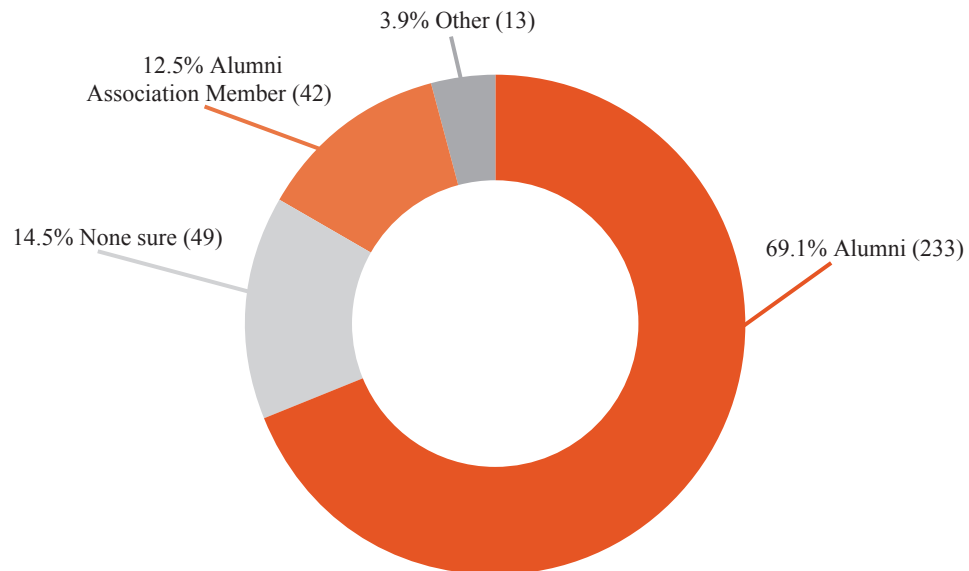


Figure 10. Why respondents think they were selected to receive the *Cowboy Journal*.

Other word pairings. For the other word pairings used in this question the majority of respondents reported right of center, or the positive end of the word pairing, for every word pairing except for *simple/complex*. For the *simple/complex* word pair the majority of respondents reported left of the center point, or the negative side of the word pairing. For this pairing 136 respondents (36.6%) chose the neutral point in the center. For the *humorous/serious* word pairing, 152 respondents (40.8%) marked the neutral point. Additionally, 112 respondents (30%) marked

the point one right of the neutral point, closer to the word *serious*. For the *cheap/expensive* word pairing, 161 respondents (43.4%) marked the neutral point and 68 (18.3%) marked the point one right of the neutral point closer to the positive word, which was *expensive*. For the *conservative/innovative* word pairing, 124 respondents (33.3%) marked the neutral point with 100 respondents (26.9%) marked one right of the neutral point closer to the word *innovative*. For the *unnecessary/necessary* word pairing, 105 respondents (28%) marked two right of the neutral point closer to the positive end of the word pairing. There were 87 respondents (23.3%) who marked the neutral point. For the *low quality/high quality* word pairing, 185 respondents (49.6%) marked the most positive point closest to the word *high quality*. For the *uneducational/educational* word pairing, 182 respondents (48.7%) marked the far right, most positive point. For the *purposeless/beneficial* word pairing, 150 respondents (40.1%) marked the far point closest to *beneficial*. For the *confusing/clear* word pairing, 154 respondents (41.2%) marked the most positive point closest to *clear*. For the *outdated/up-to-date* word pairing, 144 respondents (38.6%) marked the point closest to *up-to-date*. For the *uncreative/creative* word pairing, 136 respondents (36.4%) marked the most positive point closest to *creative*.

Participants were asked to rate the phrase *I would recommend the Cowboy Journal to others* on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree). Of the 376 respondents, 161 (42.8%) reported they agree with the statement while 149 respondents (39.6%) strongly agree. There were 20 respondents (5.3%) who reported in the range of somewhat disagree to strongly disagree. Respondents reporting on the negative side of the scale were presented with a follow-up question about why they would not recommend the *Cowboy Journal*. A full list of responses is presented in Table 4.

Table 2

Evaluative Word Pairings

Negative Item	1 <i>f</i> %	2 <i>f</i> %	3 <i>f</i> %	4 <i>f</i> %	5 <i>f</i> %	6 <i>f</i> %	7 <i>f</i> %	Positive Item
Negative (<i>n</i> =374)	3 .8%	2 .5%	3 .8%	10 2.7%	17 4.5%	103 27.5%	236 63.1%	Positive
Unimportant (<i>n</i> =374)	4 1.1%	9 2.4%	8 2.1%	38 10.2%	75 20.1%	132 35.3%	108 28.9%	Important
Bad (<i>n</i> =372)	3 .8%	2 .5%	3 .8%	14 3.8%	30 8.1%	120 32.3%	200 53.8%	Good
False (<i>n</i> =371)	6 1.6%	15 4.0%	6 1.6%	18 4.9%	19 5.1%	103 27.8%	204 55%	True
Dishonest (<i>n</i> =374)	8 2.1%	11 2.9%	8 2.1%	18 4.8%	21 5.6%	112 29.9%	196 52.4%	Honest

Table 3

Other Word Pairings

Negative Item	1 <i>f</i> %	2 <i>f</i> %	3 <i>f</i> %	4 <i>f</i> %	5 <i>f</i> %	6 <i>f</i> %	7 <i>f</i> %	Positive Item
Simple (<i>n</i> =374)	32 8.6%	52 13.9%	75 20.1%	136 36.6%	52 13.9%	22 5.9%	5 1.3%	Complex
Humorous (<i>n</i> =373)	1 .3%	3 .8%	13 3.5%	152 40.8%	112 30.0%	70 18.8%	22 5.9%	Serious
Cheap (<i>n</i> =371)	37 10%	18 4.9%	17 4.6%	161 43.4%	68 18.3%	50 13.5%	20 5.4%	Expensive
Conservative (<i>n</i> =372)	9 2.4%	17 4.6%	24 6.5%	124 33.3%	100 26.9%	65 17.5%	33 8.9%	Innovative
Unnecessary (<i>n</i> =375)	3 .8%	14 3.7%	15 4.0%	87 23.2%	69 18.4%	105 28.0%	82 21.9%	Necessary
Low Quality (<i>n</i> =374)	1 .3%	2 .5%	5 1.3%	15 4.0%	51 13.7%	114 30.6%	185 49.6%	High Quality
Uneducational (<i>n</i> =374)	2 .5%	2 .5%	3 .8%	14 3.7%	46 12.3%	125 33.4%	182 48.7%	Educational
Purposeless (<i>n</i> =374)	5 1.3%	2 .5%	4 .9%	17 4.5%	55 14.7%	141 37.7%	150 40.1%	Beneficial
Confusing (<i>n</i> =374)	4 1.1%	1 .3%	3 .8%	23 6.1%	38 10.2%	151 40.4%	154 41.2%	Clear
Outdated (<i>n</i> =373)	7 1.9%	16 4.3%	8 2.1%	23 6.2%	39 10.5%	136 36.5%	144 38.6%	Up-to-date
Uncreative (<i>n</i> =374)	4 1.1%	7 1.9%	7 1.9%	27 7.2%	67 17.9%	126 33.7%	136 36.4%	Creative

Note: Modal responses are bold

Table 4

Reason to Not Recommend the Cowboy Journal

Add research work. Add what ag college is working on. Cutting-edge research and expected results

Everyone has enough to read as it is.

I don't see that it adds value to my life/family

I don't see the real benefit of the magazine.

I hardly read it myself...

I know nothing about it; I could not even fill out the word associations because I knew I would skew your data if I did

I live in Oregon and don't have much contact with Oklahoma

I see the magazine for CASNR alum/students/faculty only. I have no need or desire to talk to anyone about the magazine. It's just not relevant to me. It's nice to receive, but it does not impact my life.

It is a great magazine that highlights agricultural. [sic]

It's just not something the people in my circle would be interested in.

Not interested. Do not know anything about it.

Not really necessary.

Nothing really pertains to me. I transferred to OSU from Panhandle A@M to attend Veterinary School; though I could have received a degree in Chemistry and Biology from Panhandle A@M with a minor in math and had only one 3 hour course in Agriculture; the Agriculture Department at OSU, without consulting me, awarded me a BS degree in Agriculture at the end of my first year of Veterinary School. Quite frankly, I would have rather had my BS degree from Panhandle A@M. [sic]

they may not be interested in the articles. The articles are OSU and AG related

Unless you are an alumni, doesn't seem you would have an interest.

Findings Related to Objective 2

Objective two sought to describe the audience's use of the *Cowboy Journal*. Participants were asked five questions about their overall use of the *Cowboy Journal*. Participants reported how long they keep the magazine, how much of the magazine they read, where they read the magazine, what they do with the magazine when they are finished reading, and why they read (see Table 5).

When asked about the length of time they keep the *Cowboy Journal*, 64 (14.7%) of the 355 respondents reported they keep the magazine if an article interests them. There were 55 respondents (12.7%) who reported keeping the *Cowboy Journal* until the next issue is available; however, 19 respondents (4.4%) do not keep the magazine.

Of the 388 respondents who reported how much of *Cowboy Journal* they typically read, 173 (44.6%) reported they read most of the articles in the *Cowboy Journal*, and 129 (33.2%) read some of the articles.

Participants were asked where they read the *Cowboy Journal* – online, printed copy or both. Of the 362 respondents, 319 (88.1%) reported they read the *Cowboy Journal* in print while eight (2.2%) read online and 35 (9.7%) read both in print and online.

Finally, participants were asked what they do with the *Cowboy Journal* when they are finished reading. The majority of respondents ($f = 210$, 57.1%) throw away or recycle the magazine. There were 68 respondents (18.5%) who keep the magazine, and 66 respondents (17.9%) who pass it along to a friend or family member.

Frequencies and percentages were calculated to describe the respondents' reasons for reading the *Cowboy Journal* (see Table 6). The scale for this question ranged from strongly disagree (one) to strongly agree (six). There were 166 participants (46%) who reported they read the *Cowboy Journal to stay connected to CASNR* by selecting the strongly agree category. Three categories had the highest percentage of respondents select they agree with the statement; *for entertainment* ($f = 166$, 45.9%), *to pass time* ($f = 112$, 30.9%), and *to stay connected to OSU* ($f = 152$, 41.9%).

Table 5
Participant Use of the Cowboy Journal

Use	<i>f</i>	%
<i>Time Cowboy Journal is kept</i>		
I do not keep it	19	4.4
I keep it for less than a week	35	8.1
I keep it for one to two weeks	49	11.3
I keep it for three to four weeks	41	9.4
I keep it for more than a month	52	12
I keep it until the next issue is available	55	12.7
I save it as part of the Cowboy Journal collection	40	9.2
I save it if an article is of interest to me	64	14.7
Total	355	100
<i>Amount of Cowboy Journal read</i>		
I read every article	43	11.1
I read most of the articles	173	44.6
I only read some of the articles	129	33.2
I just scan the headlines and photographs	27	7
I don't read it at all	16	4.1
Total	388	100
<i>Where Cowboy Journal is read</i>		
Online	8	2.2
Printed copy	319	88.1
Both	35	9.7
Total	362	100
<i>What is done with Cowboy Journal after reading</i>		
Throw it away/recycle	210	57.1
Pass it along to a friend/family member	66	17.9
Keep it	68	18.5
Other	24	6.5
Total	368	100

Note: Modal response is bold

Table 6

Reasons Respondents Read the Cowboy Journal

<i>I read the Cowboy Journal...</i>	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
For entertainment (<i>n</i> =362)	9	2.5%	21	5.8%	26	7.2%	94	26%	166	45.9%	46	12.7%
To gain knowledge or skills (<i>n</i> =362)	10	2.8%	29	8%	34	9.4%	126	34.8%	114	31.5%	49	13.5%
To pass time (<i>n</i> =362)	27	7.5%	58	16%	44	12.2%	95	26.2%	112	30.9%	26	7.2%
To escape or distract myself (<i>n</i> =362)	55	15.2%	100	27.6%	66	18.2%	82	22.7%	41	11.3%	18	5%
To connect better with my peers (<i>n</i> =360)	21	5.8%	37	10.3%	54	15%	128	35.6%	88	24.4%	32	8.9%
To stay connected to CASNR (<i>n</i> =361)	1	.3%	3	.8%	5	1.4%	39	10.8%	147	40.7%	166	46%
To stay connected to OSU (<i>n</i> =363)	1	.3%	7	1.9%	6	1.7%	47	12.9%	152	41.9%	150	41.3%

Note: Modal response is bold

Findings Related to Objective 3

Objective three sought to describe selected characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, education level, etc.) of the *Cowboy Journal* audience. Findings from this objective are reported in the order respondents answered questions.

Frequencies were calculated to describe the selected demographic characteristics of the respondents. Demographic questions were developed using past studies (Lawson, 2012; Metzger,

2014). Demographic information was collected from participants who have heard of the *Cowboy Journal* (*Cowboy Journal Knowledge*). Sex, age, ethnicity, education level, area of study, and current connection to the agricultural and natural resources industries were reported to evaluate the current audience of the *Cowboy Journal*.

There were 363 participants who reported they had heard of the *Cowboy Journal*. Of the 363 respondents who reported their sex, 195 (53.7%) were male (see Figure 11). There were 375 participants who reported their race: 333 (76.7%) were Caucasian/White and 28 (6.5%) were Native American or Alaskan Natives (see Figure 12). There were also five respondents (1.2%) who reported being Latino/Hispanic of the 359 respondents to the Latino/Hispanic question (see Figure 13).

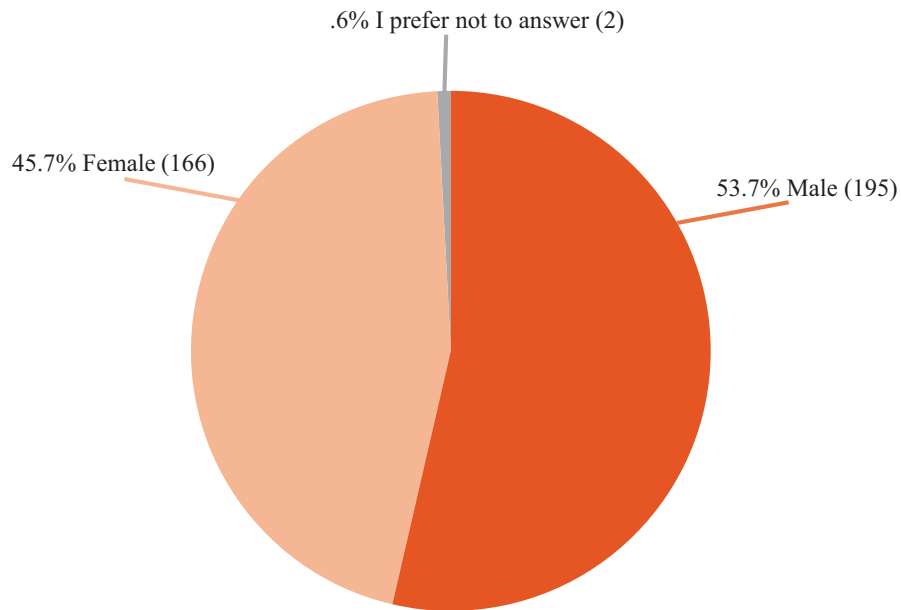


Figure 11. Respondents reported sex.

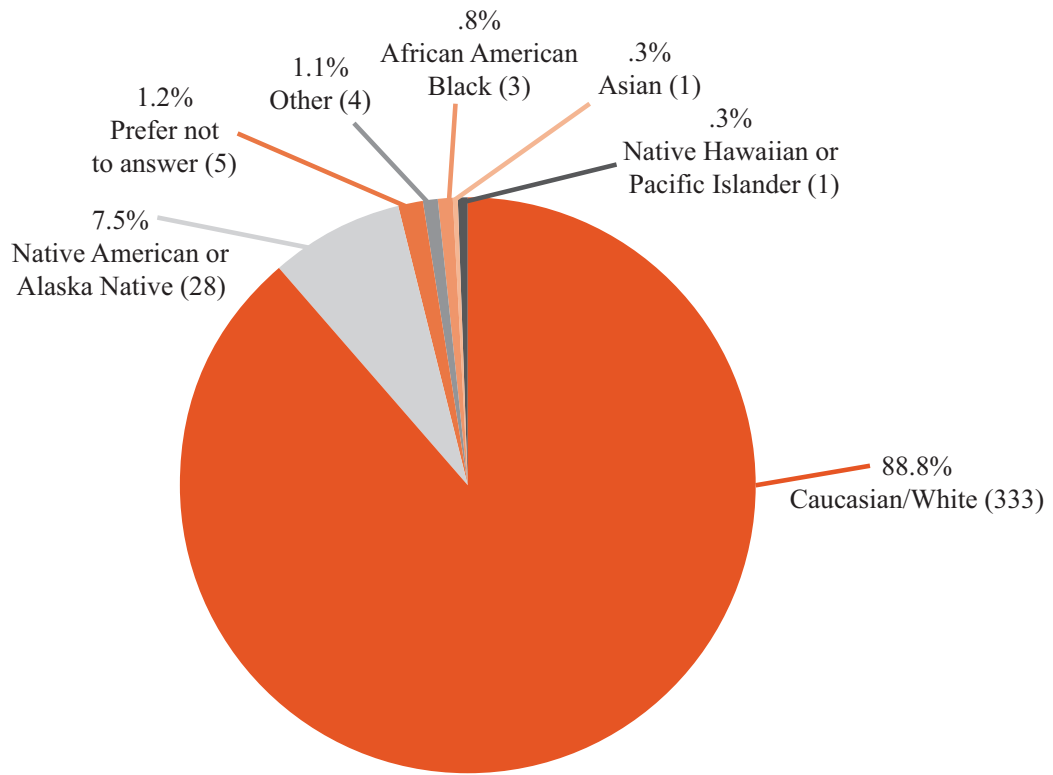


Figure 12. Respondents reported race.

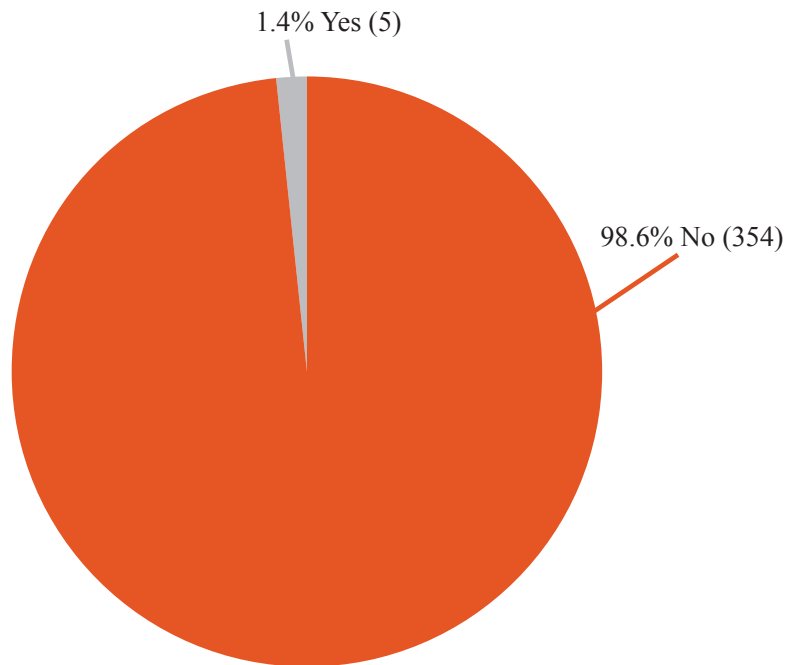


Figure 13. Percentage of Latino/Hispanic respondents.

Respondents' age ranged from 20 to 87 with the median age being 48.06 with a standard deviation of 17.357 (see Table 7).

Table 7

Age of CASNR Alumni: Cowboy Journal Knowledge

Variable	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	20	87	45.5	48.06	17.357

Of the 434 participants who reported educational information, 332 (76.5%) completed a bachelor's degree at OSU, 133 (30.6%) completed a master's degree at OSU, 26 (6%) completed a doctoral degree at OSU, and 19 (4.4%) completed a professional degree at OSU.

There were 316 participants who reported their area of study during their bachelor's degree. Of the 18 different areas of study reported, Animal Science/Animal Husbandry ($f = 78$, 24.7%), Agricultural Communications ($f = 77$, 24.4%), and Agricultural Economics/Agribusiness ($f = 67$, 21.2%) were the most reported areas. There were 131 (26.6%) participants who reported their area of study for their master's degree. Of the 14 different areas of study reported, Agricultural Economics ($f = 25$, 19.1%), Agricultural Education ($f = 25$, 19.1%), and Agricultural Communications ($f = 18$, 13.7%) were the most reported areas of study. There were 26 (5.3%) participants who reported their area of study for their doctoral degree. Of the seven areas reported, Agricultural Education ($f = 10$, 38.5%), Agricultural Economics ($f = 6$, 23.1%), and Entomology/Plant Pathology ($f = 3$, 11.5%) were most reported. There were 19 (3.9%) participants who reported their areas of study for their professional degrees. Of the four areas reported, Veterinary Medicine ($f = 16$, 84.2%) was the most reported area of study. A full list of areas of study is reported on Table 8 below.

Table 8

Degrees of CASNR Alumni: Cowboy Journal Knowledge

Degree Type	<i>f</i>	%
Bachelor's Major		
Animal Science/Animal Husbandry	78	24.7
Agricultural Communications	77	24.4
Agricultural Economics/Business	67	21.2
Agricultural Education	27	8.5
Plant & Soil Sciences/Agronomy	14	4.4
Agricultural Communications/Animal Sciences	12	3.8
Agricultural Communications/Agricultural Economics	6	1.9
General Agriculture	5	1.6
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology	4	1.3
None CASNR Majors	4	1.3
Horticulture	4	1.3
Landscape Architecture	4	1.3
Agricultural Leadership	4	1.3
Entomology	3	0.9
Mechanized Agriculture (not currently offered)	2	0.6
Agricultural Communications/Agricultural Education	2	0.6
Animal Science/Agricultural Education	2	0.6
Natural Resources Ecology and Management	1	0.3
Total	316	100
Master's Major		
Agricultural Economics	25	19.1
Agricultural Education	25	19.1
Agricultural Communications	18	13.7
Animal Science	13	9.9
None CASNR Majors	13	9.9
Plant & Soil Sciences/Agronomy	9	6.9
Entomology/Plant Pathology	6	4.6
MBA	5	3.8
None CASNR Majors	4	3.1

(continued)

	General Agriculture	3	2.3
	Horticulture	3	2.3
	Natural Resources Ecology and Management	3	2.3
	Food Science	2	1.5
	International Agriculture	2	1.5
	Total	131	100
Doctorate Major			
	Agricultural Education	10	38.5
	Agricultural Economics	6	23.1
	Entomology/Plant Pathology	3	11.5
	Animal Science	2	7.7
	None CASNR Majors	2	7.7
	Plant & Soil Sciences/Agronomy	2	7.7
	Agricultural Communications	1	3.8
	Total	26	100
Professional Major			
	Veterinary Medicine	16	84.2
	Environmental Science	1	5.3
	Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine	1	5.3
	Landscape Architecture	1	5.3
	Total	19	100

Note: Modal response is bold

There were 366 respondents who reported the place in which they graduated high school and 368 respondents reported the place in which they consider their primary residence now. There were 28 states reported by the participants for places they graduated high school. The majority ($f = 273, 62.9\%$) of respondents reported they graduated high school in Oklahoma with the next closest state being Kansas with 17 respondents (3.9%). There were 38 different places reported for respondents' primary resident today. Of the 368 participants who reported their primary residents today, 215 (49.5%) reported Oklahoma with the next closest being Texas with 33 (7.6%). The full list of respondents' locations for high school graduation and primary residence now is provided in Figure 14 and 15 below.

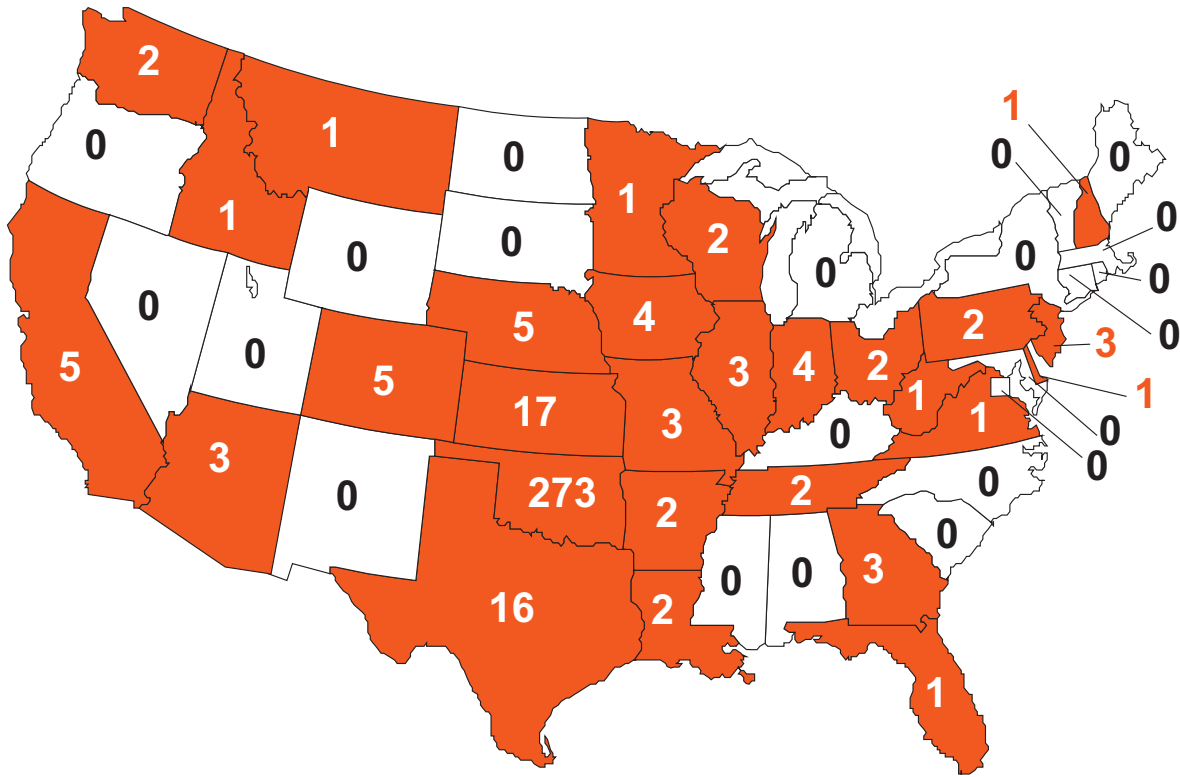


Figure 14. Where respondents graduated from High School.

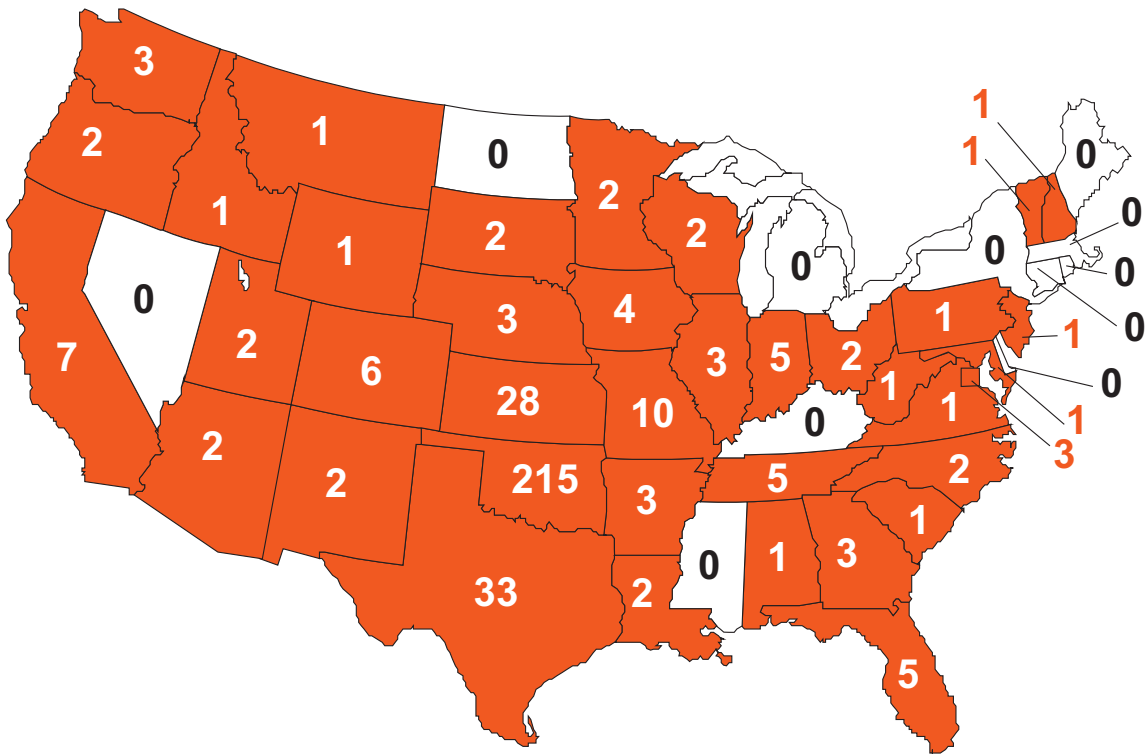


Figure 15. Respondents current primary residence.

There were 258 (59.4%) of the 364 respondents who reported being in a career field connected to agriculture and natural resources industries (see Figure 16).

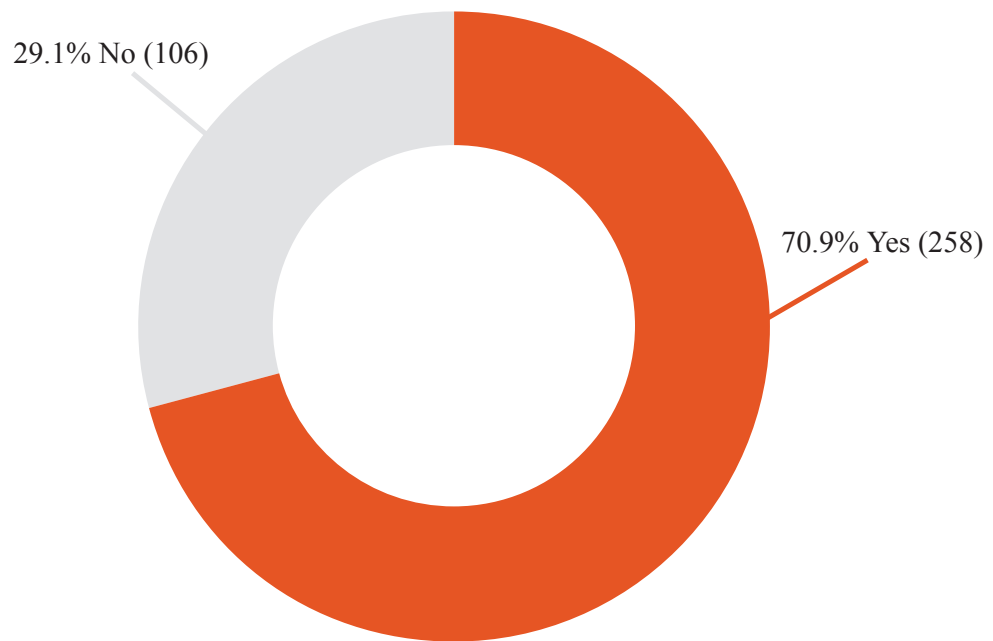


Figure 16. Respondents career indirectly/directly related to agriculture and natural resources.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter V describes the research conclusions based on the findings of this study as well as recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and a final discussion. Conclusions are discussed by objective.

Conclusions for Objective 1

The purpose of objective one was to analyze the brand equity of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine. This objective was used to determine the overall brand equity of the *Cowboy Journal* by testing the respondent's awareness, association, perceived value and quality of the magazine. Awareness, association, perceived value and quality are all aspects that can be evaluated for an organization's brand equity (Aaker, 1997).

By understanding the respondent's knowledge of the *Cowboy Journal*, a stronger brand can start to be developed. With a stronger brand, the *Cowboy Journal* will be able to connect better with its audience. This study found the respondents have a basic understanding of the production of *Cowboy Journal*, but they are unaware of why they receive the magazine.

Awareness

Consumer brand knowledge was evaluated (Keller, 1993) and it is concluded respondents have an overall awareness of the *Cowboy Journal*. The respondents were aware of who produces

the *Cowboy Journal*, the amount of *Cowboy Journals* they receive, where the *Cowboy Journal* is mentioned, and if they are involved in sponsoring the *Cowboy Journal*. Respondents had a general awareness of the *Cowboy Journal* and its presence in their lives.

Respondents were confident in their familiarity of the *Cowboy Journal*. Overall, respondents reported an average of nine out of 10 on a scale gauging their familiarity. Many respondents correctly identified they receive two issues of the *Cowboy Journal* each year, but a number of respondents thought they received twice as many issues of the *Cowboy Journal* as are produced each year. Respondents who reported receiving more magazines than are produced may be confusing other publications they receive with the *Cowboy Journal*. They may also be living in a household with multiple alumni who receive the *Cowboy Journal* each semester.

Respondents were generally aware the *Cowboy Journal* was student produced and that it was created in an agricultural communications course. The majority of respondents answered *yes* to knowing the *Cowboy Journal* was student produced and that it was produced in an agricultural communications course.

Respondents were able to identify different outlets they have seen the *Cowboy Journal* mentioned in the past three months. Many respondents reported seeing the *Cowboy Journal* mentioned on Facebook or online on a website. A majority of respondents reported seeing the *Cowboy Journal* mentioned on Facebook, but specific pages mentioning the *Cowboy Journal* or the number of times *Cowboy Journal* was mentioned were not identified.

The majority of respondents were able to identify whether or not they were sponsoring the magazine or working for someone who does. There was a small portion of respondents who were unaware if they were involved in sponsoring the *Cowboy Journal*. Respondents in this study were able to identify their contributions to the magazine.

Association

This study tested the respondents' associations with the *Cowboy Journal*. Respondents were asked specific questions regarding the associations they make with the *Cowboy Journal*. Directly asking respondents associations they make with the *Cowboy Journal* is a direct measure of overall brand association (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

When presented with unaided questions, the respondents had a high percentage of brand recall and generally associated the magazine with the correct entities. Respondents associated the production of the *Cowboy Journal* with the agricultural communications major and more specifically students. There was a proportion of respondents who associated the *Cowboy Journal* with CASNR instead of the agricultural communications major or students.

There were a wide variety of answers when participants were asked about OSU publications. This variety of responses could be due to the unaided open response question they were provided. The *Cowboy Journal* was one of the top responses when asked about OSU publications followed closely by *STATE* magazine. When presented with an unaided question, respondents were able to identify *Cowboy Journal* as an OSU publication. An organization with a positive association can have a higher success rate than an organization with no associations (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Even with respondents reporting they were very familiar with the magazine, many respondents were unfamiliar with why they were selected to receive the *Cowboy Journal*. A majority of respondents reported being selected to receive the *Cowboy Journal* because they were alumni. Technically this answer is not incorrect, recipients in this study are alumni, but they are receiving the magazine because of their memberships in the alumni association. Many reported they receive the *Cowboy Journal* because they are alums of the CASNR, but few were able to correctly identify the connection between their alumni association membership and the *Cowboy*

Journal. Respondents do not associate the *Cowboy Journal* with their memberships in the OSU Alumni Association.

Perceived Value and Quality

Respondent attitudes were used to measure overall perceived value and quality (Shields, 2006). Through the evaluative construct of Osgood's semantic differentials (1957), respondents reported overall positive evaluations of the *Cowboy Journal*. Positive evaluations correlate with positive attitudes toward the magazine as a whole (Osgood et al., 1957).

Respondents reported positive feelings when asked to evaluate the *Cowboy Journal* through word pairings. All five of the evaluative word pairings yielded positive responses. Respondents think of the *Cowboy Journal* as *positive, important, good, true, and honest*. Positive perceptions of the value of a product is directly related to positive brand equity (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). With the amount of positive responses reported for evaluative word pairings, we can assume the *Cowboy Journal* has positive brand equity associated to its value and quality.

Respondents also reported positive responses for seven out of the 11 other word pairings tested. Respondents think of the *Cowboy Journal* as *necessary, high quality, educational, beneficial, clear, up-to-date, and creative*. The remaining four word pairings yielded neutral modal responses from the respondents. Respondents had modal responses at the neutral point of the word pairings *simple or complex, humorous or serious, cheap or expensive, and conservative or innovative*. Although modal responses were neutral, the majority of respondents marked right of the center point, or on the positive end, for all of these word pairings except *simple or complex*. The majority of respondents reported toward the the word *simple*. For this question, *simple* was associated with the negative end and *complex* was associated with the positive end of the word pairing. Depending on the researcher and the product being evaluated this word pairing could

easily be flipped. From the results it cannot be concluded whether the respondents associated this word pairing the way the researcher intended.

Brand Equity

After analyzing the four areas involved in brand equity for this study (see Figure 2), the *Cowboy Journal* has overall positive brand equity in the minds of the respondents. The brand equity of *Cowboy Journal* could be improved by increasing the respondent knowledge, specifically with associations made with the magazine. The brand equity present in the minds of the respondents can help to increase information processing, confidence in consumer decisions to use the magazine, and consumer satisfaction with the magazine (Aaker, 1997).

Conclusions for Objective 2

Objective two analyzed the respondent's use of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine. This study found the respondents tend to read the majority of the articles in the *Cowboy Journal* in a printed copy of the magazine. Readers tend to save the magazine if an article is of interest to them and when they are done reading the *Cowboy Journal* they tend to throw it away or recycle it. Although the respondents read the *Cowboy Journal* for several different reasons, the main reason they read the magazine is to stay connected to the CASNR and OSU. Few respondents reported using the online version of the *Cowboy Journal*.

When analyzing results from how long respondents keep the *Cowboy Journal*, there was a close split between all answer options. The modal answer was to keep the magazine if an article as of interest to them, but respondents tend to keep the *Cowboy Journal* for a variety a reasons and different amounts of time. Respondents reported anything from not keeping the magazine to keeping it as part of the *Cowboy Journal* collection. The majority of respondents reported reading some or most of the articles. With most respondents reading some or most of the articles in the

Cowboy Journal we can assume the magazine has a high percentage of respondents engaging with the magazine.

A majority of respondents reported only reading the *Cowboy Journal* as a printed copy of the magazine. A small percentage reported interacting with the online version of the magazine. The question arises if the respondents are aware of the online version or if the online version is user friendly and accessible for respondents.

Conclusions for Objective 3

Objective three analyzed the demographics of the respondents who both are familiar with the *Cowboy Journal*. This study found the typical respondent who is familiar with the *Cowboy Journal* is a 48-year-old, white male with a bachelor's degree from OSU in animal science/animal husbandry who resides in Oklahoma and has a career involved with the agricultural and natural resources industries. Compared to the last study analyzing the audience of *Cowboy Journal* (Lawson, 2012), respondents in this study were the same sex and race, but had an older average age.

Recommendations for Practice

After analyzing the results of this study, there are several recommendations for all people involved in the production and marketing of *Cowboy Journal*.

The first recommendation is for faculty in agricultural communications to evaluate and determine the actual target audience of the *Cowboy Journal*. Though this research study described the respondents receiving the magazine, there is no information about the full audience of the *Cowboy Journal*. Faculty members in agricultural communications should develop a document outlining not only the purpose and objectives of the capstone course, but also describing the intended audience and message of the *Cowboy Journal* itself. For a brand to be successful there

must be a unique value being provided to its consumers (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009) and this value must be identified by the producers of the *Cowboy Journal* to increase its brand equity.

The *Cowboy Journal* is in need of an extensive marketing plan. Many respondents were aware of who produced the magazine, but the majority of respondents were unaware of the magazine's connection with agricultural communications students. Another recommendation is for the *Cowboy Journal* staff to work with the Alumni Association to produce an informational marketing plan to both promote the magazine and inform the audience of the purpose of the publication. A social marketing plan should also be developed to create consistency in the *Cowboy Journal's* social presence. There should be more emphasis put on brand awareness through social networks to reach more audience members (Sasmita & Suki, 2015).

Member of the *Cowboy Journal* should make an effort to promote the online version of the magazine. Adjusting the formatting of the online version of the *Cowboy Journal* to ensure it is user friendly and accessible could increase the number of respondents using the online version. Giving consumers an easy way to access the magazine will help to increase its circulation. Consumers need to know they have free access to the *Cowboy Journal* wherever internet access is available. Innovation in brand experience can have an effect on the consumer's overall brand equity (Lin, 2015).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study helped to identify several areas for future research. One area for future research should look at the audience of the *Cowboy Journal* using different techniques to reach more members. I would suggest adding a blow-in card or a survey link within the actual magazine to reach readers who may not receive emails from the OSU Alumni Association.

Research should be conducted on the agricultural communications' student's knowledge of the purpose of the *Cowboy Journal* and its audience. Understanding your audience is the first step to producing any type of communications material.

Research should be conducted on if the appearance of the *Cowboy Journal* each semester effects the overall brand equity. Although the name of the magazine has not changed since its creation, many aspects of the magazine change each semester. The name associated with a brand is the most important aspect of the brand (Aaker, 1997), but does the style of the magazine influence its brand equity?

A study should be conducted to evaluate the use of the online version of the *Cowboy Journal*. After conducting a marketing push for the online version of the magazine a study should look at the percentage of use before and after marketing. Further, researcher should be conducted on the effect an updated web format has on the printed version of the magazine. If adjustments are made to the formatting of the online version, a study should look at interactions before and after the format update. Analytics about the use of the online version

Discussion

After analyzing the data from this study, there can be no assumption the results are generalizable to the population beyond the respondents. Although the results of this study cannot be generalized to the population, the information gathered gives us an idea of the brand equity of the *Cowboy Journal*, how audience members might use the *Cowboy Journal*, and a general description of a portion of the audience. Information gathered can assist in the creation of a marketing campaign to further promote the *Cowboy Journal* brand. It is becoming more important to have an up-to-date brand management strategy (Budiarti, Surachman, Hawidjojo & Djumahir, 2013) and consumer experience has a big effect on the overall brand equity of a product or organization (Romaniuk, & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 03/07/2019
Application Number: AG-19-7
Proposal Title: Alumni Perceptions of the Cowboy Journal: A Look at Brand Association

Principal Investigator: Erica Summerfield
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: Shelly Sitton
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt
Exempt Category:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PILOT STUDY

CJ Branding Study Pilot

Start of Block: CJ Branding Study Pilot

The purpose of this web-based questionnaire research study is to determine selected characteristics about alumni who read university publications to improve future issues. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your experience with university publications as well as selected academic and personal characteristics to aid in research analysis.

The amount of time to complete the survey will be approximately 10 minutes. If you choose to provide an email address at the end of the questionnaire you will be registered for one of three OSU theme gifts, you will not receive any additional information from the researchers. Additionally, that email address will be extracted from the data to ensure anonymity.

By clicking on the arrow below, you are giving your consent to participate in this study.

Your immediate response would be appreciated greatly. You may choose at any time to withdraw from the study without penalty. The risks associated with this project are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Your responses are voluntary and anonymous, and they will be treated with confidentiality. Your e-mail address was included via the Oklahoma State University College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources alumni e-mail database.

All answers will be stored online in a password-protected account until the survey is closed; then, they will be transferred to a password-protected computer to be analyzed. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not release any information that could possibly identify you as an individual. The data will be kept on a password-protected computer.

We would appreciate your assistance with this survey. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Erica Summerfield, M.S. Student, at 405-744-3690 or erica.summerfield@okstate.edu or Shelly Sitton, Professor, at 405-744-3690 or

shelly.sitton@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Q1 Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the following questions based on your personal experiences.

Q2 Have you heard of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Skip To: Q22 If Have you heard of the Cowboy Journal magazine? = No

Q3 Who produces the *Cowboy Journal*?

Q4 What publication(s) do you think of when asked about the Oklahoma State University?

Q5 When you think of the *Cowboy Journal*, what comes to mind?

Q6 How familiar are you with the *Cowboy Journal*?

- 0 (0)
 - 1 (1)
 - 2 (2)
 - 3 (3)
 - 4 (4)
 - 5 (5)
 - 6 (6)
 - 7 (7)
 - 8 (8)
 - 9 (9)
 - 10 (10)
-

Q7 Do you receive the *Cowboy Journal*?

- Yes (9)
- No (10)

Skip To: Q11 If Do you receive the Cowboy Journal? = No

Q8 How many issues of the *Cowboy Journal* do you receive each year?

▼1 (1) ... 12 (12)

Q9 Why do you receive the *Cowboy Journal*?

Q10 How long do you keep the *Cowboy Journal* magazine?

- I do not keep it. (1)
- I keep it for less than a week. (2)
- I keep it for one to two weeks. (3)
- I keep it for three to four weeks. (4)
- I keep it for more than a month. (5)
- I keeps it until the next issue is available. (6)
- I save it as part of a Cowboy Journal collection. (7)

Q11 Did you know the *Cowboy Journal* was student-produced?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q12 Did you know the *Cowboy Journal* is produced in an agricultural communications course?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Q13 How much of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine do you typically read? Please choose only one.

- I read it cover to cover. (1)
- I read most of the articles. (2)
- I only read some of the articles. (3)
- I just scan the headlines and photographs. (4)
- I don't read it at all. (5)

Skip To: Q17 If How much of the Cowboy Journal magazine do you typically read? Please choose only one. = I don't read it at all.

Q14 Where do you read the *Cowboy Journal*?

- Online (1)
 - Printed copy (2)
-

Q15 What do you do with your copy of the *Cowboy Journal* when you are done reading it?

- Throw it away/recycle (1)
- Pass it along to a friend/family member (2)
- Keep it (3)
- Other (4) _____

Q16 I read the *Cowboy Journal*:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
For entertainment (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To gain knowledge or skills (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To pass time (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To escape or distract myself (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To connect better with my peers (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To stayed connected to CASNR (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 In the past 3 months, have you seen Cowboy Journal mentioned on the following outlets?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Online on CASNR's website (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On CASNR's social media accounts (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instagram (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pinterest (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snapchat (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q18 What is your overall opinion of the *Cowboy Journal*?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positive
Complex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Simple
Unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Important
Humorous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Serious
Bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
True	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	False
Cheap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Expensive
Conservative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Innovative
Necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unnecessary
Low Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	High Quality
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Dishonest
Uneducational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Educational
Purposeless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Beneficial
Confusing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Clear
Up-to-date	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Outdated

Creative

Uncreative

Q19 Please choose one response for the following statement:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
I would recommend the Cowboy Journal to friends, family, and/or co-workers. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20 Are you sponsoring (or working for someone who sponsors) the *Cowboy Journal*?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q21 What changes would you like to see in future issues of the *Cowboy Journal*?

Q62 What story ideas do you have for future issues of the *Cowboy Journal*?

Q22 The following questions are for classification purposes only. Your responses will allow the researchers to group the answers of all respondents and will never be associated with you as an individual.

Q61 In what state did you graduate high school?

▼Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

Q62 In what state do you consider your primary residence now?

▼Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

Q25 What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University?

- Bachelor's degree (3)
- Master's degree (4)
- Doctoral degree (5)
- None (6)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? = Bachelor's degree

Q26 Please answer the following regarding your **bachelor's** degree.

What was your major? (1)

What was your minor? (10)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? = Master's degree

Q27 Please answer the following regarding your **master's** degree.

What was your major? (1)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? = Doctoral degree

Q28 Please answer the following regarding your **doctoral** degree.

What was your major? (1)

Q29 What is your age?

▼18 (1) ... 105 (88)

Q30 What is your sex?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - I prefer not to answer (3)
-

Q32 Please specify your race:

- Caucasian/White (1)
 - African American/Black (2)
 - Latino/Hispanic (3)
 - Asian American (4)
 - Native American or Alaska Native (5)
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)
 - International (7)
 - Two or more races (8)
 - Other (9) _____
 - I prefer not to answer (10)
-

Q66 Do you have a career directly or indirectly related to the agriculture and/or natural resources industries?

Yes (1)

No (2)



Q33 Thank you for participating in this study.

Please enter your e-mail address in the box below to allow the researchers to record your response and reduce additional contacts regarding this study. Your email address will not be associated with your responses. Additionally, you be entered into a drawing for one of three OSU prizes.

End of Block: CJ Branding Study Pilot

APPENDIX C
FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

CJ Branding Study

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1 You are invited to be in a research study about the use of university publications conducted by Erica Summerfield, M.S. student, Oklahoma State University, under the direction of Dr. Shelly Sitton, Professor, Oklahoma State University. **Your participation in this research is voluntary.** There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: Complete an online survey that will take 10 minutes.

Compensation: You will receive no payment for participating in this study. However, if you choose to, you can provide your email at the end of the survey to be entered in a drawing for one of three OSU themed prizes.

Confidentiality: The information you give in the study will be anonymous. This means your name will not be collected or linked to the data in any way. The researchers will not be able to remove your data from the dataset once your participation is complete. This data will be stored in a password protected computer indefinitely. The research team will ensure anonymity to the degree permitted by technology. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the internet. If you have concerns, you should consult the survey provider privacy policy at <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>.

Contacts and Questions: If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact Erica Summerfield at 937-207-9755, erica.summerfield@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the OSU IRB at (405) 744-3377 or

irb@okstate.edu. If you agree to participate in this research, please click the arrow below to continue.

Page Break

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Q2 Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the following questions based on your personal experiences. Have you heard of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question:

*If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi...
= No*

Q3 Where did you graduate high school?

▼Alabama (1) ... I do not graduate high school in the United States (53)

Display This Question:

*If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi...
= No*

Q4 Where do you consider your primary residence now?

▼Alabama (1) ... I do not graduate high school in the United States (53)

Display This Question:

*If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi...
= No*

Q5 What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? (Check all that apply)

- Bachelor's degree (3)
- Master's degree (4)
- Doctoral degree (5)
- Professional(DVM,MD,etc.) (7)
- None (6)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? (Check all that apply) = Bachelor's degree

Q6 Please answer the following regarding your **bachelor's** degree.

What was your major? (1)

What was your minor? (10)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? (Check all that apply) = Master's degree

Q7 Please answer the following regarding your **master's** degree.

What was your major? (1)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? (Check all that apply) = Doctoral degree

Q8 Please answer the following regarding you **professional** degree.

What was your professional program? (1)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? (Check all that apply) = Professional(DVM,MD,etc.)

Q9 Please answer the following regarding your **doctoral** degree.

What was your major? (1)

Display This Question:

If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi... = No

Q10 What is your age?

▼18 (1) ... 105 (88)

Display This Question:

*If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi...
= No*

Q11 What is your sex?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - I prefer not to answer (3)
-

Display This Question:

*If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi...
= No*

Q12 Are you Latino/Hispanic?

- Yes (25)
 - No (26)
 - I prefer not to answer. (27)
-

Display This Question:

*If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi...
= No*

Q13 Please specify your race: (check all that apply)

- Caucasian/White (1)
- African American/Black (2)
- Asian (4)
- Native American or Alaska Native (5)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)
- Other (9) _____
- I prefer not to answer. (10)

Display This Question:

*If Thank you for agreeing to share your perceptions of OSU publications. Please complete the followi...
= No*

Q14 Do you have a career directly or indirectly related to the agricultural and/or natural resources industries?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you have a career directly or indirectly related to the agricultural and/or natural resources... = Yes

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you have a career directly or indirectly related to the agricultural and/or natural resources... = No

Page Break

End of Block: Block 2

Start of Block: Block 4

Q15 How familiar are you with the *Cowboy Journal*?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 3

Q16 Who produces the *Cowboy Journal*?

Page Break

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 5

Q17 What publication(s) do you think of when asked about Oklahoma State University?

Page Break

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 6

Q18 When you think of the *Cowboy Journal*, what comes to mind?

Q19 Do you receive the *Cowboy Journal*?

Yes (9)

No (10)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 7

Display This Question:

If Do you receive the Cowboy Journal? = Yes

Q20 How many issues of the *Cowboy Journal* do you receive each year?

▼1 (1) ... 12 (12)

Display This Question:

If Do you receive the Cowboy Journal? = Yes

Q21 Why were you selected to receive the *Cowboy Journal*?

Display This Question:

If Do you receive the Cowboy Journal? = Yes

Q22 How long do you keep the *Cowboy Journal* magazine?

- I do not keep it. (1)
- I keep it for less than a week. (2)
- I keep it for one to two weeks. (3)
- I keep it for three to four weeks. (4)
- I keep it for more than a month. (5)
- I keep it until the next issue is available. (6)
- I save it if an article is of interest to me. (8)
- I save it as part of a Cowboy Journal collection. (7)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 7

Start of Block: Block 8

Q23 Did you know the *Cowboy Journal* is student-produced?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Q24 Did you know the *Cowboy Journal* is produced in an agricultural communications course?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Q25 How much of the *Cowboy Journal* magazine do you typically read? Please choose only one.

- I read every article. (1)
 - I read most of the articles. (2)
 - I only read some of the articles. (3)
 - I just scan the headlines and photographs. (4)
 - I don't read it at all. (5)
-

Page Break

End of Block: Block 8

Start of Block: Block 9

Display This Question:

If How much of the Cowboy Journal magazine do you typically read? Please choose only one. != I don't read it at all.

Q26 Where do you read the *Cowboy Journal*?

- Online (1)
 - Printed copy (2)
 - Both (3)
-

Display This Question:

If How much of the Cowboy Journal magazine do you typically read? Please choose only one. != I don't read it at all.

Q27 I read the *Cowboy Journal*:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
For entertainment (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To gain knowledge or skills (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To pass time (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To escape or distract myself (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To connect better with my peers (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To stay connected to the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To stay connected to Oklahoma State University (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If How much of the Cowboy Journal magazine do you typically read? Please choose only one. != I don't read it at all.

Q28 What do you do with your copy of the *Cowboy Journal* when you are done reading it?

- Throw it away/recycle (1)
- Pass it along to a friend/family member (2)
- Keep it (3)
- Other (4) _____

Page Break

End of Block: Block 9

Start of Block: Block 10

Q29 In the past three months, where have you seen *Cowboy Journal* or seen it mentioned?
Please check all that apply.

- Online on a website (1)
- Instagram (3)
- Facebook (4)
- Twitter (5)
- Pinterest (6)
- Snapchat (7)
- YouTube (8)
- Email (2)

Page Break

Q30 Please rate the concept "*Cowboy Journal* is ..." according to how you feel about *Cowboy Journal* by selecting a dot along the scale for each word pair:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positive
Complex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Simple
Unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Important
Humorous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Serious
Bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
True	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	False
Cheap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Expensive
Conservative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Innovative
Necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unnecessary
Low Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	High Quality
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Dishonest
Uneducational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Educational
Purposeless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Beneficial
Confusing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Clear
Up-to-date	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Outdated

Creative

Uncreative

Page Break

End of Block: Block 11

Start of Block: Block 15

Q31 Are you sponsoring (or working for someone who sponsors) the *Cowboy Journal*?
Sponsorships strongly resemble advertisements in the magazine.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I am not sure. (3)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 15

Start of Block: Block 14

Q32 Please choose one response for the following statement:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
I would recommend the Cowboy Journal to others. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Skip To: End of Block If Click to write the question text =
Skip To: End of Block If Click to write the question text =
Skip To: End of Block If Click to write the question text =

Q33 Why do you not recommend *Cowboy Journal* to others?

Page Break

End of Block: Block 14

Start of Block: CJ Branding Study Pilot

Q34 What do you like about *Cowboy Journal*?

Q35 What changes would you like to see in future issues of the *Cowboy Journal*?

Q36 What story ideas do you have for future issues of the *Cowboy Journal*?

Page Break

Q37 The following questions are for classification purposes only. Your responses will allow the researchers to group the answers of all respondents and will never be associated with you as an individual. Where did you graduate high school?

▼Alabama (1) ... I do not graduate high school in the United States (53)

Q38 Where do you consider your primary residence now?

▼Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

Q39 What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? Please check all that apply.

- Bachelor's degree (3)
 - Master's degree (4)
 - Doctoral degree (5)
 - Professional (DVM, MD, etc.) (7)
 - None (6)
-

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? Please check all that apply. = Bachelor's degree

Q40 Please answer the following regarding your **bachelor's** degree.

What was your major? (1)

What was your minor? (10)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? Please check all that apply. = Master's degree

Q41 Please answer the following regarding your **master's** degree.

What was your major? (1)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? Please check all that apply. = Doctoral degree

Q42 Please answer the following regarding your **doctoral** degree.

What was your major? (1)

Display This Question:

If What degrees did you pursue at Oklahoma State University? Please check all that apply. = Professional (DVM, MD, etc.)

Q43 Please answer the following regarding you **professional** degree.

What was your professional program? (1)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 13

Start of Block: Block 12

Q44 What is your age?

▼18 (1) ... 105 (88)

Q45 What is your sex?

Male (1)

Female (2)

I prefer not to answer. (3)

Q46 Are you Latino/Hispanic?

Yes (25)

No (26)

I prefer not to answer. (27)

Q47 Please specify your race: (check all that apply)

- Caucasian/White (1)
- African American/Black (2)
- Asian (4)
- Native American or Alaska Native (5)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)
- Other (9) _____
- I prefer not to answer. (10)

Q48 Do you have a career directly or indirectly related to the agricultural and/or natural resources industries?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Page Break _____

End of Block: Block 12

CJ Branding Study — Actual Respondent email addresses

Start of Block: Default Question Block



Q1

Thank you for participating in this study.

If you choose, please enter your e-mail address in the box below to allow the researchers to record your response and reduce additional contacts regarding this study. Additionally, you will be entered into a drawing for one of three OSU prizes.

Your email address will not be associated in any way with your responses.

Enter your email address here. (1)

End of Block: Default Question Block

APPENDIX D

RECRUITMENT EMAIL/ CONSENT FORM

Initial Email

Greetings! As an alumnus of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, you are invited to be in a research study about the use of university publications conducted by Erica Summerfield, M.S. student, Oklahoma State University, under the direction of Dr. Shelly Sitton, Professor, Oklahoma State University. **Your participation in this research is voluntary.** There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

By clicking on the link below, you are giving your consent to participate in this study. To access the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to this link: [Take the Survey](#).

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: Complete an online survey that will take about 10 minutes.

Compensation: You will receive no payment for participating in this study. However, if you choose to, you can provide your email at the end of the survey to be entered in a drawing for one of three OSU prizes. All email addresses collected for the prizes will be stored separately from survey responses.

Confidentiality: The information you give in the study will be anonymous. This means your name will not be collected or linked to the data in any way. The researchers will not be able to remove your data from the dataset once your participation is complete. This data will be stored in a password protected computer indefinitely. The research team will ensure anonymity to the degree permitted by technology. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the internet. If you have concerns, you should consult the survey provider privacy policy at <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>.

Contacts and Questions: If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact Erica Summerfield at 937-207-9755, erica.summerfield@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the OSU IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. If you agree to participate in this research, please click the arrow below to continue.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://okstatecasnr.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_09t9HckapL2b16B?Q_DL=8x0pUzwJsA1TSiV_09t9HckapL2b16B_MLRP_bNn3bTtqA2d6b0V&Q_CHL=email

Follow-up Email One

Hello! Earlier this week, you received a message asking for your opinions of the OSU publications.

As an alumnus of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, you are invited to be in a research study about the use of university publications conducted by Erica Summerfield, M.S. student, Oklahoma State University, under the direction of Dr. Shelly Sitton, Professor, Oklahoma State University. **Your participation in this research is voluntary.** There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

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Contacts and Questions: If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact Erica Summerfield at 937-207-9755, erica.summerfield@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the OSU IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. If you agree to participate in this research, please click the arrow below to continue.

Follow this link to the Survey:
[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://okstatecasnr.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_09t9HckapL2b16B?Q_DL=8x0pUzwJsA1TSiV_09t9HckapL2b16B_MLRP_bNn3bTtqA2d6b0V&Q_CHL=email

Follow-up Email Two

Hello! Last week, you received a message asking for your opinions of the OSU publications.

As an alumnus of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, you are invited to be in a research study about the use of university publications conducted by Erica Summerfield, M.S. student, Oklahoma State University, under the direction of Dr. Shelly Sitton, Professor, Oklahoma State University. **Your participation in this research is voluntary.** There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

By clicking on the link below, you are giving your consent to participate in this study. To access the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to [Take the Survey](#).

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: Complete an online survey that will take about 10 minutes.

Compensation: You will receive no payment for participating in this study. However, if you choose to, you can provide your email at the end of the survey to be entered in a drawing for one of three OSU prizes. All email addresses collected for the prizes will be stored separately from survey responses.

Confidentiality: The information you give in the study will be anonymous. This means your name will not be collected or linked to the data in any way. The researchers will not be able to remove your data from the dataset once your participation is complete. This data will be stored in a password protected computer indefinitely. The research team will ensure anonymity to the degree permitted by technology. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the internet. If you have concerns, you should consult the survey provider privacy policy at

<https://proxy.qualtrics.com/proxy/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.qualtrics.com%2Fprivacy-statement%2F.%26nbsp&token=qGXP3JNz9Fm7voNnyg7vSGqpb4oIvdGVfK7GongMxdA%3D>;

Contacts and Questions: If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact Erica Summerfield at 937-207-9755, erica.summerfield@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the OSU IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. If you agree to participate in this research, please click the arrow below to continue.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://okstatecasnr.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_09t9HckapL2b16B?Q_DL=8x0pUzwJsA1TSiV_09t9HckapL2b16B_MLRP_bNn3bTtqA2d6b0V&Q_CHL=email

Follow-up Email Final

Hello! Last week, you received a message asking for your opinions of the OSU publications.

As an alumnus of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, you are invited to be in a research study about the use of university publications conducted by Erica Summerfield, M.S. student, Oklahoma State University, under the direction of Dr. Shelly Sitton, Professor, Oklahoma State University. **Your participation in this research is voluntary.** There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

By clicking on the link below, you are giving your consent to participate in this study. To access the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to [Take the Survey](#).

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: Complete an online survey that will take about 10 minutes.

Compensation: You will receive no payment for participating in this study. However, if you choose to, you can provide your email at the end of the survey to be entered in a drawing for one of three OSU prizes. All email addresses collected for the prizes will be stored separately from survey responses.

Confidentiality: The information you give in the study will be anonymous. This means your name will not be collected or linked to the data in any way. The researchers will not be able to remove your data from the dataset once your participation is complete. This data will be stored in a password protected computer indefinitely. The research team will ensure anonymity to the degree permitted by technology. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the internet. If you have concerns, you should consult the survey provider privacy policy at

<https://proxy.qualtrics.com/proxy/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.qualtrics.com%2Fprivacy-statement%2F.%26nbsp&token=qGXP3JNz9Fm7voNnyg7vSGqpb4oIvdGVfK7GongMxD%3D>;

Contacts and Questions: If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact Erica Summerfield at 937-207-9755, erica.summerfield@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the OSU IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. If you agree to participate in this research, please click the arrow below to continue.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://okstatecasnr.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_09t9HckapL2b16B?Q_DL=8x0pUzwJsA1TSiV_09t9HckapL2b16B_MLRP_bNn3bTtqA2d6b0V&Q_CHL=email

Email to Respondents

Thank you for participating in the research project to help improve the Cowboy Journal magazine. Go Pokes!

VITA

Erica Danielle Summerfield

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: ALUMNI PERCEPTIONS OF THE *COWBOY JOURNAL*: A LOOK AT BRAND EQUITY

Major Field: Agricultural Communications

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Agricultural Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2019.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Leadership at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2016.

Professional Memberships:

Member of North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture.

Member of Phi Kappa Phi honorary society.