

PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED OKLAHOMA
FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS AND
RANCHERS LEADERS TOWARD THE
OKLAHOMA COUNTRY MAGAZINE

By

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Abstract: Using the uses and gratifications theory as a guide, the researcher conducted a census study to determine the self-reported readership behaviors and perceptions of selected Oklahoma Farm Bureau (OFB) Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) leaders. The population included OFB YF&R leaders who attended two OFB YF&R summer leadership events ($N = 49$). A total of 42 individuals completed the instrument for a response rate of 85.7%. The researcher used a mixed method explanatory design with a quantitative priority to collect and analyze readers' perceptions regarding content, design, utility, and overall perception of the magazine. Data was collected using a printed instrument in July 2015. The typical respondent was a married 32-year-old male who receives the *Oklahoma Country* magazine and was highly active in OFB through state conventions and county meetings. Most respondents had a bachelor's degree, lived on a farm, and were involved with cattle, wheat, and hay commodities. They agreed the magazine has an excellent quality of writing, easily understood information, and a good variety of topics. Respondents also considered the quality of graphics, designs for the presentation of stories and general appearance to be excellent. They read the magazine to learn more about agricultural-related topics, to learn more about current legislation regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma, and to keep up-to-date with OFB activities. Respondents considered the information provided in the magazine to be useful and the magazine to be a credible information source. They did not want the magazine to be offered only via the Internet. Respondents indicated they were impressed overall with the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. Additional research should be conducted to assess the perceptions of the entire magazine audience and to evaluate the reasons behind their perceptions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first local Farm Bureau associations began forming across the nation in the early 1900s in an effort to enhance farm production and avoid farm abandonment in the New England agricultural areas (Berlage, 2001; Campbell, 1962). Many agricultural reformers believed farmers needed the ability to make “two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before” (Campbell, 1962, p. 4). With the help of the Cooperative Extension Service, Farm Bureau organizations focused on building a communication bridge between the scientist and farmer in which to demonstrate successful and efficient farming practices (Berlage, 2001; Campbell, 1962; Deering, 1980).

Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization of farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems, and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement and thereby, to promote the national well-being. (Oklahoma Farm Bureau [OFB], 2015c, “What is Farm Bureau,” para. 1)

In 1918, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) was formed to represent farmers nationally (Campbell, 1962). Although the new organization continued its vision of educating farmers, AFBF also began promoting political awareness and participating in congressional lobbying (Berlage, 2001). Farm Bureau organizations began to include legislative and economical discussions at local meetings (Campbell, 1962). With the organization’s new functions, Farm

Bureau became more independent of the Cooperative Extension Service, even though educational assistance was provided to members (Berlage, 2001; Campbell, 1962).

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau (OFB) was not organized as an independent farm organization until 1942. Soon after the association's creation, the organization was affiliated with AFBF (OFB, 2015c). The mission statement of OFB is "improving the lives of rural Oklahomans" (OFB, 2015a, "Mission Statement," para. 1). Both the national and local organizations serve as "the voice of agricultural producers at all levels" (OFB, 2015b, "Welcome," para. 1).

The AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) is a national program consisting of men and women ages 18 to 35 (American Farm Bureau Federation [AFBF], 2015b). The objective of the program "is to provide leadership in building a more effective Farm Bureau" by preserving members' individual freedoms and expanding agricultural opportunities (AFBF, 2015b, "What is the YF&R Program," para. 1). YF&R members have the opportunity to participate in the county, state, and national levels (AFBF, 2015b).

The OFB YF&R program encourages young members to "be involved in their local communities, to compete in contests to win valuable prizes and to develop long lasting friendships with people from across the state and country" (OFB, 2015d, "Young Farmers & Ranchers," para. 1). OFB YF&R members are involved in leadership positions to plan educational activities at the county, state, and national levels (OFB, 2015d).

OFB YF&R members are part of the Millennial Generation, which includes people born in the 1980s through the early 2000s (Deering, 1980; Ogbeide, Fenich, Halsell, & Kesterson, 2013). Considered the largest generation in history, the Millennial Generation includes more than 70 million people (Ogbeide et al., 2013). Although researchers have identified several characteristics of Millennials, the most consistent identification is their technological aptitude (Dalton, 2012; Goldgehn, 2004; Napoli & Ewing, 2000; Oblinger, Oblinger, & Lippincott, 2005; Ogbeide et al., 2013; Valentine & Powers, 2013; Vishnupriya, Kathiravan, & Sriram, 2014).

Therefore, a common misconception is that traditional media usage is currently declining (Vishnupriya et al., 2014). However, recent studies have found traditional media, including magazines, have continued to be a popular communication mode (Vishnupriya et al., 2014).

“Magazines, in a way, are the voice of the country” (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013, p. 4).

Throughout history, magazines have been used as a discussion medium for important topics, such as politics, society, and culture (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). In such a visual culture, “[m]agazines have always played a central role” (Leslie, 2003, p. 6). Magazines have been influential because of their ability to relate to readers individually (Sumner & Miller, 2013). According to Johnson and Prijatel (2013), magazines are set apart from other media by their diversity, “rich past,” and “limitless future” (p. 5). Unlike newspapers, television, radio, and other media, magazines create an in-depth and intimate relationship with readers (Sumner & Miller, 2013).

Magazines are published for a highly specialized target audience for specific reasons, such as to provide service, entertain, inform, advocate, or interpret (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). One specific type of magazine is an association publication (Sumner & Miller, 2013). The purpose of these magazines is to solidify the relationship between the organization and its members through this type of communication (Sumner & Miller, 2013).

The *Oklahoma Country* magazine (see Figure 1), an association magazine published by the OFB, was created to communicate information to OFB members about agricultural policy, educational opportunities, and upcoming social events (Deering, 1980; S. Knipp, personal communication, September 21, 2015). For the organization to serve its members, useful information should be communicated efficiently to members through the *Oklahoma Country* (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).



Figure 1. Cover from *Oklahoma Country*, July 2015.

Statement of the Problem

The OFB staff considers the *Oklahoma Country* magazine an essential communications link with its members and acknowledged the need for a readership study to evaluate the magazine's effectiveness (S. Knipp, personal communications, October 24, 2014). Publishing a magazine is a considerable financial investment that requires considerable deliberation (Cooper, 2006). Although OFB has published its association magazine, *Oklahoma Country*, since 2003, no research has assessed the preferences of OFB YF&R leaders toward the magazine. Furthermore, this study will provide additional research concerning the interaction of this study's population with print media that will benefit future magazine publishers and researchers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine selected OFB YF&R leaders' perceptions of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to enable the OFB staff to communicate more effectively with this segment of its audience.

Research Objectives

The objectives used to guide this study are as follows:

1. Describe selected characteristics (such as age, sex, education, location, marital status, interests, and OFB involvement) of OFB YF&R leaders who attended OFB YF&R summer leadership activities.
2. Describe the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the content of *Oklahoma Country*.
3. Describe the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the design of *Oklahoma Country*.
4. Describe the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the utility of *Oklahoma Country*.
5. Describe the overall perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning *Oklahoma Country*.

Scope

The scope of this study included OFB YF&R leaders who attended the OFB YF&R Golf Event and/or the OFB YF&R Leadership Conference.

Significance of the Study

To serve its members, the OFB should identify members' wants and needs. The OFB YF&R leaders represent the younger generation who will serve in leadership roles in the future of the OFB organization. This study will identify key characteristics that influence the communications efficiency of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to YF&R leaders. This study will help identify areas in need of improvement in the publication's utility, design, and content.

Equipped with the information provided in the study, the OFB magazine writers, editors, and staff will be able to improve the magazine to better serve current and future members.

This readership study will allow the OFB to communicate more effectively with its members through its association magazine. In addition, more effective communication with OFB YF&R members will allow the organization to communicate more effectively with policymakers through its lobbying efforts. This research will increase the understanding of delivery method preferences and effectiveness. Therefore, this research is directly tied to the American Association for Agricultural Education National Research Agenda's Priority 1: Public and Policy Maker Understanding of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Doefert, 2011). This priority is focused on increasing the agricultural members' ability to communicate effectively with policymakers of all levels (Doefert, 2011). It also aims to determine the ability to use the Internet as a new technological communication tool (Doefert, 2011).

Limitations

The following limitations were noted in this study:

1. The study cannot be generalized to other publications.
2. The study cannot be generalized to the same audience in the future.
3. The respondents were limited to anchored responses for six items.
4. Only OFB YF&R members who attended the OFB YF&R Golf Event and/or the OFB YF&R Leadership Conference could be reached through this study's methodology; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all OFB YF&R members.
5. No pilot study was conducted.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were present in this study:

1. Respondents were honest regarding their perceptions of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine while answering the questions.

2. The content, utility, and design of the magazine could be measured with a instrument.

Definitions

Content – words and images found in magazines (Leslie, 2013) arranged into three types: news, departments, and features (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006).

Design – “the integration of words and pictures – the use of titles, photos, cutlines, illustration, cartoons, and infographics” to help the reader navigate through the magazine (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013, p. 250).

YF&R Leaders – individuals “committed to engaging and educating [AFBF] members as advocates for agriculture,” particularly through participation in educational conferences and community activities (AFBF, 2015b, “What is the YF&R Program,” para. 2).

Readership – the number of people who buy a specific magazine on the newsstand or through a subscription and the people who receive the magazine through another person (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

Utility – magazines may be used to inform, interpret, entertain, advocate, or provide service (Johnson & Prijatel, 2007); to some readers, magazines can be “an integral part of the reader’s personal and professional life” (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006, p. 2).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is a review of appropriate literature, which provides a framework to this study. Topics include an overview of the history of Farm Bureau organizations, the characteristics Oklahoma Farm Bureau (OFB) Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) members, attributes of the Millennial Generation, general magazine production, agricultural magazine development, the history of *Oklahoma Country*, and the uses and gratification theory.

History of Farm Bureau Organizations

The first local Farm Bureau was established in 1911 as a county organization in Broome county, New York (Campbell, 1962; Deering, 1980). The purpose of this organization was to serve as “an educational agency to provide information to farmers about better crops and livestock and new farming methods” (Deering, 1980, p. 34). These local Farm Bureau organizations began forming across the nation during this time to help farmers adjust to new technological advances and provide an educational and beneficial community (Berlage, 2001). Leaders of these organizations looked for ways to rejuvenate rural life by using more economical and efficient practices developed by universities and governmental agencies (Berlage, 2001).

Local Farm Bureaus stressed the importance of scientific agriculture, and this emphasis helped diffuse agricultural knowledge to farmers, even through difficult times (Berlage, 2001). Farm Bureau members developed a “sense of rational control as a result of their use of scientific

techniques” (Berlage, 2001, p. 419). This science knowledge decreased farmers’ dependency on urban centers, a dependency created by industrialization (Berlage, 2001). Farmers began to rely on the Farm Bureau’s organizational ties with institutions dedicated to identifying more efficient and successful farming methods (Berlage, 2001). Advances in agricultural efficiency would have been much slower in this time period without the Farm Bureau organizations (Berlage, 2001). In addition, members planned several social events to encourage community involvement and cooperation (Berlage, 2001). The cooperation and sense of community helped develop strong roots with members (Berlage, 2001). By 1915, these local organizations began forming state federations (Campbell, 1962).

Collaboration with the Cooperative Extension Service

The Farm Bureau movement was accelerated in 1914 when the Cooperative Extension Service was established with the Smith-Lever Act (Berlage, 2001; Campbell, 1962). This federal act allotted federal funds for agricultural education to states through the Cooperative Extension Service (Campbell, 1962). Cooperative Extension Service agents encouraged the formation of Farm Bureaus and began using the organizations as a media channel for communicating efficient agricultural practices identified by state colleges (Berlage, 2001; Campbell, 1962). The number of Farm Bureaus increased with the availability of services provided by the Cooperative Extension Service (Berlage, 2011).

Farm Bureaus also helped develop programs in cooperation with the Cooperative Extension Service (Berlage, 2001). For example, early in the 20th century, Illinois Farm Bureau worked with H. C. M. Case, an agricultural economist from the state university, to develop a record-keeping system (Berlage, 2001). Later, Illinois Farm Bureau members created the Illinois Farm Bureau Farm Management Service to help farmers keep accurate records (Berlage, 2001).

American Farm Bureau Federation

In 1918, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) was formed when a group of farmers representing 30 states met in Chicago to form an organization through which they could

speak for those involved in agriculture (American Farm Bureau Federation [AFBF], 2015a; Campbell, 1962). AFBF members approved a statement defining the purpose of the organization that is still used today:

The purpose of Farm Bureau is to make the business of farming more profitable, and the community a better place to live. Farm Bureau should provide an organization in which members may secure the benefits of unified efforts in a way that could never be accomplished through individual effort. (AFBF, 2015a, "About Us," para. 4)

The mission statement for the organization is as follows: "AFBF is the unified national voice of agriculture, working through our grassroots organization to enhance and strengthen the lives of rural Americans and to build strong, prosperous agricultural communities" (AFBF, 2015a, "About Us," para. 1). AFBF was known for its "sense of alliance" and "sense of common cause" (Hanson, 1991, p. 83).

AFBF is primarily associated with political awareness and congressional lobbying (Berlage, 2001). As part of the purpose of the organization, AFBF describes the organization:

Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization of farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems, and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement and thereby, to promote the national well-being. (AFBF, 2015a, "About Us," para. 2)

During the creation of the national organization, Farm Bureaus began including business activities and legislation discussions at organizational meetings (Campbell, 1962). These new functions initiated a shift in the relationship between Farm Bureaus and the Cooperative Extension Service (Campbell, 1962). Farm Bureau organizations became less dependent on services provided by the Cooperative Extension Service and more independent on the organizational programs and functions (Campbell, 1962). With members interacting more in economic and political activities, AFBF signed an agreement preventing Cooperative Extension Service agents from participating in Farm Bureau promotional or business activities (Berlage,

2001). Nevertheless, agents could continue to provide educational materials and assistance to Farm Bureau members, and the organizations still worked closely together for a number of years (Berlage, 2001). Farm Bureau gradually became more independent and self-sustaining (Berlage, 2001; Campbell, 1962).

As AFBF became more involved in political circles, the organization developed a relationship with lawmakers as an interest group representing farmers from across the nation (Campbell, 1962; Hansen, 1991). Lawmakers prefer interest group access to information provided by political parties and national leaders (Hansen, 1991). The main two reasons for this preference are efficiency and effectiveness (Hansen, 1991). Interest groups can provide information cheaply and efficiently (Hansen, 1991). In the 1920s, Congress members from the Middle West and the South began to seeking information from interest groups regularly, specifically AFBF, instead of traditional information sources, such as individual reformers and political parties (Hansen, 1991). As the organization grew, AFBF “provided strong competition for political parties on agricultural issues that required technical knowledge – such as animal disease issues – and a feel for the needs of farmers at the local level” (Berlage, 2001, p. 434).

Farm Bureaus were the most influential farm organization in the development of national farm policy between 1933 and 1940 (Campbell, 1962). During this time period, farmers disagreed about national farm policy, making it difficult for Congress to adopt such policy (Campbell, 1962). According to Campbell (1962), overcoming this problem was the “most significant role played by the American Farm Bureau Federation” during that time period (p. 1).

Throughout the years, AFBF remained a popular farm organization (Hansen, 1991). In 1979, the *Successful Farming* magazine polled Capital Hill staffers to determine if AFBF was still an important voice for agriculture (Hansen, 1991). According to the results, 80% of participants said AFBF had a greater impact on agricultural policy than any other organization (Deering, 1980; Hansen, 1991).

Telg, Basford, and Irani (2005) conducted a study to assess political activity by Florida Farm Bureau leaders. Researchers found a majority of the study's respondents contacted local, state, and national officials about a specific policy or legislation piece (Telg et al., 2005). Participants also indicated communication with elected officials was important and expressed the desire to communicate with officials about negative agricultural policies (Telg et al., 2005).

Oklahoma Farm Bureau

On February 3, 1942, the OFB was created by 968 charter members (Deering, 1980; Oklahoma Farm Bureau [OFB], 2015c). "Oklahoma Farm Bureau was incorporated to conduct or promote cooperative enterprises, including insurance, marketing and purchasing cooperatives" (Deering, 1980, p. 28). During this time, farmers were facing the effects of the stock market crash of 1929, low farm prices, and the Dust Bowl (Deering, 1980). According to Deering (1980), "[u]ndoubtedly, many Oklahoma farmers felt the need for a means to unite their voices to influence legislation and agricultural policies, but effective channels did not seem to be available through existing farm organizations" (p. 7). The organization was not created to replace other farm organizations (Deering, 1980). In fact, 80% of farmers were not connected with any farm organization before the creation of OFB (Deering, 1980). At this time, farmers said they lacked the opportunity to have a voice in any organization (Deering, 1980). "OFB was organized to accomplish what farmers say through their organization that they want done and which they usually cannot accomplish individually or in small groups through the political processes available to them" (p. 160).

OFB was the first Farm Bureau organization to be created without an association with the Cooperative Extension Service (Deering, 1980). Chartered under Oklahoma state laws, the OFB was originally an independent farm organization, separate from AFBF (OFB, 2015c). However, on March 1, 1942, the first cooperative agreement between AFBF and OFB was signed (OFB, 2015c). AFBF "provided both encouragement and financial assistance to Oklahoma Farm Bureau, helping to pull the fledgling organization through some mighty tough times" (Deering,

1980, p. 14). County Farm Bureau organizations in Oklahoma are still considered individual entities, even though a Memorandum of Agreement is completed between OFB and each county organization (OFB, 2015c). “The basic unit of Farm Bureau is the county organization” (Deering, 1980, p. 118). County leadership sustains the state bureau by keeping it “alive and moving” (Deering, 1980, p. 119). To become a member in OFB, each person must become a member in the county organization first (Deering, 1980).

Characteristics

At the creation of OFB, the majority of members were farmers ages 30 to 50 (Deering, 1980). These farmers were anxious about past problems with the economy and environment (Deering, 1980). According to Deering (1980), farmers understood the financial difficulties associated with farming and wanted to pass their knowledge to the younger generations. They believed this knowledge would give future agriculturalists a better chance (Deering, 1980).

The majority of OFB leaders are males age 61 or older (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015). Most of the leaders hold at least a bachelor’s degree and primarily produce cattle and wheat, which are the top two Oklahoma commodities (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015; U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2014). Additional commodities leaders produce include canola, soybeans, corn, sunflowers, pecans, dairy, poultry, and hogs (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

Leaders in OFB use a wide variety of media communication sources when searching for information, including word of mouth, newspaper, magazine, radio, television and Internet (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015). While seeking information, this audience also uses a variety of communication tools, such as computers, mobile phones, and iPads (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015). Most leaders have Internet access and are comfortable with using new technology (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers

The creation of the OFB YF&R stemmed from the organization's involvement in youth clubs, such as FFA and 4-H (Deering, 1980). OFB has a history of supporting the younger generations (Deering, 1980). Most members felt the need to pass their knowledge to youth to encourage better practices in the future (Deering, 1980). The organization's resolve to educate youth is displayed in a resolution adopted during the OFB convention of 1944:

We recommend encouragement and cooperation with FFA and 4-H club organization in the development of the rural youth of Oklahoma; especially do we commend the farm-to-market (livestock) program of the Extension Service. We also recommend that the Farm Bureau use all necessary means to help education our rural youth in the interest and love of farm family life, also to encourage any sound credit facilities which make it possible for youth to start farming for themselves. (Deering, 1980, p. 142-143)

After this resolution, OFB sent a representative to study other state organizations in Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois (Deering, 1980). Upon his return, the representative recommended the development of an organization for youth ages 18 to 30 (Deering, 1980). OFB accepted the recommendation and created the youth organization in four counties: Canadian, Garfield, Kingfisher, and Kiowa (Deering, 1980). Thus, in 1947, the OFB Young Farmers & Ranchers organization was born (Deering, 1980). "Many OFB leaders consider development of young people to be essential to the future of the organization, because YF&R provides opportunities for training in leadership" (Deering, 1980, p. 148). Currently, OFB YF&R requires members to be ages 18 to 35 (OFB, 2015d), making most members part of the Millennial Generation (Ogbeide, Fenich, Scott-Halsell, & Kesterson, 2013).

In a study conducted by Bailey, Arnold, and Igo (2014), young and beginning farmers and ranchers (YBFR) in Montana identified four areas they believed needed more educational opportunities: communications skills, technological skills, legal knowledge, and business management. The study also suggested YBFR are more likely to adopt technological practices,

such as genetically modified crops (Bailey et al., 2014). Respondents also valued the ability to converse with older producers during educational programs and considered networking a key component to success (Bailey et al., 2014).

One study by Telg and Barnes (2012) identified select characteristics regarding communication preferences of Florida Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers members. The researchers found respondents thought social media and other Internet-based communications could be used to reach a wider audience and to prevent overlooking opportunities. Specifically, participants in this study wanted the opportunity to be proactive by using online resources to share their story (Telg & Barnes, 2012). However, participants did not want all communications to shift to Internet-based methods (Telg & Barnes, 2012). Some participants even said postal mail indicated importance or significance, and they would read mailed communications just because of the medium used (Telg & Barnes, 2012).

Telg et al. (2005) conducted a survey of Florida Farm Bureau members holding leadership positions in the organization. The study found participants frequently use communication technologies, are able to use technology effectively, and actively communicate with elected officials (Telg et al., 2005). However, when participants were asked to rank order communication methods, including telephone, postal mail, fax, or e-mail, postal mail was identified as the preferred method of communication (Telg et. al., 2005).

Millennial Generation Characteristics

The Millennial Generation, also referred to as Generation Y, Generation Next, Net Generation, and Echo Boomers, consists of more than 70 million people (Dalton, 2012; Ogbeide et al., 2013). Although some researchers identify different age ranges, most agree members of the generation were born in the 1980s through the early 2000s (Dalton, 2012). According to Ogbeide et al. (2013), this generation is the largest in history. Most researchers characterize the generation by their technological familiarity and their tendency to always be “connected” (Dalton, 2012; Goldgehn, 2004; Napoli & Ewing, 2000; Oblinger, Oblinger, & Lippincott, 2005; Ogbeide et al.,

2013; Valentine & Powers, 2013; Vishnupriya, Kathiravan, & Sriram, 2014). The Millennial Generation also has been described as multi-tasking, self-reliant, educated, well-traveled individuals who have a “sense of morality and civic duty” (Ogbeide et al., 2013, p. 333). Therefore, they tend to participate in community activities and focus more on contributions to society and families (Goldgehn, 2004; Ogbeide et al., 2013). In fact, researchers found the Millennial Generation is less concerned about income than work and life quality (Valentine & Powers, 2013). Many tend to walk away from anything that does not promise personal benefits, and in certain situations, they can be difficult to engage (Ogbeide et al., 2013). During meetings, events, and conventions, Millennials value a sense of purpose and expect Internet access, peer-to-peer feedback, and immediate feedback through audience polling (Ogbeide et al., 2013). Most believe they are capable of making a difference in their communities and rely on science and technology in response to problems (Oblinger, et al., 2005). Researchers also found they are independent, group-oriented, critical thinkers who frequently challenge ideas by asking “why” (Goldgehn, 2004; Napoli & Ewing, 2000; Valentine, 2013). In addition, many individuals classified as part of the Millennial Generation are visual readers who are more comfortable with environments rich in images rather than text (Oblinger et al., 2005).

With the generation’s aptitude for technology-based communication, many people think traditional communication methods will soon be in the past (Vishnupriya et al., 2014). However, this is a common misconception (Vishnupriya et al., 2014). Recent studies found the generation continues to rely on print media, such as newspapers and magazines, for information and entertainment (Vishnupriya et al., 2014). Many Millennials use Internet communications sources to complement rather than replace traditional media (Napoli & Ewing, 2000). Napoli and Ewing (2000) found teenagers in western Australia preferred advertisements in magazines and shopping catalogues. Participants also preferred advertisements that “use humor or irony and have an element of truth about them” (Napoli & Ewing, 2000, p. 23). Researchers also found respondents

acquired most of their information about a product or service from more traditional sources, such as magazine ads, television, and word-of-mouth communications (Napoli & Ewing, 2000).

Magazines

“Magazines have changed the world” (Moser, Moser, Wiesner, & Wilson, 2003, p. 7). Throughout history, magazines have been successful because of their unique role (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). Magazines provide consumers with more in-depth information in specialized areas than newspapers, and they can provide more up-to-date information more frequently than books (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). As the most intimate form of media, magazines create relationships with their readers (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). “The power of magazines has always been the personal identity that they convey as well as their color, design and editorial tone” (Sumner & Miller, 2013, p. vii). From the first American magazines established in 1741, magazines have influenced the country concerning social, political, and cultural debates through this medium (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). From that time, a few factors influenced and developed the current magazine industry, including content and appearance (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

As Leslie (2003) describes, “[m]agazines remain, at a basic level, a combination of text and image created in a process of collaboration between editors and designers” (p. 6). According to Johnson and Prijatel (2013), “A reader is drawn to a magazine’s content and appearance for a variety of reasons: aesthetic, pragmatic, whimsical, sensational, or ideological” (p. 78). Therefore, content and appearance are essential to reach the audience of any magazine effectively (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

Content

According to Sumner and Miller (2013), “Content remains king in any medium” (p. vii). Effective content creates a lasting relationship by providing the customer with valuable and trustworthy information (DeMers, 2013). Sumner and Rhoades (2006) said a successful magazine must contain sustainable content, described as “a steady flow of information, news, trends, and developments from within the field of interest that it serves” (p. 28). Most of the content is less

timely than a newspaper, but it provides a more in-depth discussion on issues and trends (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

Most magazines target a well-defined audience, and therefore, can focus on presenting specific content (Leslie, 2003). “Knowing about a publication’s audience is vital to the success of the publication” (Carter, 2013). Unlike the audiences of most newspapers, most magazines cater to a specific audience by including specialized content (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). “Magazines do not try to be all things to all people” (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013, p. 6). In addition, editors usually think of magazine audiences as a community instead of a large public (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Successful magazines correctly determine the desires of the audience that in turn dictate the content (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Some of the key characteristics of an audience are easily identified and quantified, such as age, income, and location (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). However, other characteristics that describe the psychographics of an audience can be much harder to define, such as beliefs, attitudes, and values (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

In most cases, people read magazine articles for one of three reasons: diversion, entertainment, or information (Sumner & Miller, 2013). Even though magazine readers want consistency and structure, editors also must provide interesting and new information to gratify the readers’ desires for freshness and originality (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

In many magazines, editorial content is much more than business news (Sumner & Miller, 2013). Other interesting topics include features on leaders, current events, trends, and issues (Sumner & Miller, 2013). One of the most important content pieces in a magazine is a feature story (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; Sumner & Miller, 2013). Sometimes referred to as “human-interest stories,” effective features capture the readers’ attention and enable the readers to remain tuned in to the story, even through distractions (Sumner & Miller, 2013). According to Johnson & Prijatel (2013), “Features are the bread and butter of a magazine” (p. 155). Features can help diversify magazines to allow readers with different backgrounds to connect to the stories (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

In addition, magazine content includes another important section: advertisements (Aynsley & Forde, 2007; Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; Leslie, 2003; Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). Advertising is essential to successful magazine economics (Leslie, 2003). “The ability to provide detailed information to specific groups of readers has always been the strength of magazines in their competition for advertising dollars” (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006, p. 60). However, advertisements also should be evaluated as part of how consumers interact with a magazine (Aynsley & Forde, 2007; Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; Leslie, 2003; Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). “Advertisements contribute an important element to the material character of the magazine” (Aynsley & Forde, 2007, p. 76). A good magazine includes advertisements that not only match demographics but also the magazine’s mission and brand (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Advertisements should be combined with editorial content to represent the magazine as a whole (Aynsley & Forde, 2007; Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; and Sumner & Rhoades, 2006).

The editorial content of a magazine attracts specific readers with whom advertisers want to communicate (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). The most common demographic group advertisers target is young readers, especially ages 18 to 25 (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). Advertisers focus on this group because young readers have not formed permanent habits yet (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006).

Design

“A magazine’s design can affect its readership and circulation more quickly than almost anything an editor can do directly, although the influence of words may be more important in the long term” (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012, p. 165). Multiple facets of design affect a reader’s experience (Conover, 2011). One such characteristic is the visual aspects, such as the typefaces, images, and layout (Conover, 2011). These aspects are usually what attract the attention of readers to a medium (Conover, 2011). According to Sumner and Miller (2013), magazines have been a consistent, successful form of communication because of the personal identity they express through color, design, and tone. Sumner and Rhoades (2006) identified four areas in

which strong design is essential: the cover, the contents page, the departments, and the features. “A well-designed cover entices the reader to pick up the magazine, while an attractive contents page helps the reader find the articles. Well designed features and departments sustain the reader’s involvement throughout the magazine” (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006, p. 38).

The first magazines were content-heavy without many artistic flairs or design (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). However, Johnson and Prijatel (2013) describe today’s magazines as “screeching peacocks” with colorful photographs and design (p. 79). In the 1930s and 1940s, art helped guide editors to include more photos and color, which satiated the increased visual literacy demands of the public (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). In today’s media world, photographs play a major role in the design of most magazines (Conover, 2011). Photograph selection is paramount to a magazine’s effectiveness and success (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012).

Pictures can draw in readers or repel them. They can say as much as the accompanying piece, or they can simply sit alongside it; a bad picture, which is to say a dull image or a technically incompetent bit of photography, can destroy an otherwise acceptable page. (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012, p. 171)

However, the elements of an effective design also must include one important characteristic: functionality (Conover, 2011). “Function is the driving force in any design project” (Conover, 2011, p. 1). Without the ability to satisfy a reader’s functional demands, the magazine will not be successful in its purpose (Conover, 2011). Magazine designs are supposed to be aesthetically appealing, but more importantly, they should also enhance a reader’s experience (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012). Designs should increase the readability of the magazine’s content and communicate the magazine’s central vision (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012). “In other words, design should be dictated by the needs of the audience, the style of the magazine, and what is being communicated” (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012, p. 163). A successful magazine also will have design unity throughout the publication (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). According to Sumner and

Rhoades (2006), a magazine should look “as if it were designed by one person with one editorial purpose and one particular type of reader in mind” (p. 39-40).

Magazine design also must consider the lasting ability of the medium (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). To encourage media consumers to save the publications, the format of most magazines are printed and bound, making magazines the most permanent medium (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Therefore, a magazine must have a design recognizable to consumers (Moser et al., 2003). “A magazine’s look is essential to its concept” (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013, p. 149). Similar to the way people dress represents who they are, a magazine’s design defines what it is (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013, p. 149). The image of a magazine “must be coherent and consistent to guarantee repeated recognition in the marketplace” (Moser et al., 2003, p. 40). However, a magazine’s design must adapt to current trends (Aynsley & Forde, 2007; Leslie, 2003; Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012). “This ability to continually develop and change without losing the central nature of the magazine is an essential part of good magazine design” (Leslie, 2003, p. 6).

Utility.

Magazines have several purposes, including informing, interpreting, entertaining, advocating, and providing service (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Most magazines have a combination of these functions (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Researchers at Northwestern University found the two following themes of why people read magazines: “It makes me smarter” and “It’s my personal recreation” (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). To some, a magazine can even become a friend that reflects an individual’s personal and professional life (Sumner & Miller, 2013). Aynsley and Forde (2007) wrote magazines have powerful persuasive power that affects consumers’ decisions.

Magazines are created differently than most media sources, and this structural difference has contributed to its continued success (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; Leslie, 2003). Some consider magazines a luxury item “to stack on a coffee table for a leisurely flick through” (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012, p. 2). Magazines are unique in several essential elements, such as tactility,

portability, and repetitiveness (Leslie, 2003). For example, newspapers are created to be read and then thrown away, and television media is usually only watched for a matter of seconds (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). “Magazines, however, are created to last” (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013, p. 9). Magazine content usually offers readers in-depth stories that can last through time (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). In fact, “[m]agazines have often been viewed as unique historical resources for the historian because they record the incredibly complicated flow of life in a breadth of detail that is unavailable in any other medium” (Aynsley & Forde, 2007, p. 2). In comparison with books, magazines have a more flexible design with the use of photography, typography and illustration (Moser et al., 2003). In addition, Johnson & Prijatel (2013) suggest most magazines issues are typically passed to a second reader.

According to the Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory, there were more than 300,000 worldwide publications in 2013 (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). According to Leslie (2003), the availability of technology has contributed to this increase. With the development of new technology, many predicted the downslide of magazines (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). However, the test of new technology has only strengthened the bond between magazines and readers (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). “Competition from television was probably the best thing that happened to the American magazine in the second half of the 20th century; it forced magazines to define themselves and to act on their strengths” (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013, p. 17, 20). Smaller firms and corporate publishing have created many new online magazines because of the lower production costs and the freedom from traditional design rules (Moser et al., 2003). “It is now theoretically possible to publish almost any kind of magazine, and this new status quo has allowed a lively publishing landscape to grow up across the world” (Moser et al., 2003, p. 52). Today, technology has enabled magazines to reach across the globe (Leslie, 2003). This increased accessibility has allowed users to read a magazine “without ever having to leave home” (Leslie, 2003, p. 18).

In response to more recent technological development, some people claimed online magazines would soon replace the printed versions (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). However, one

survey found only 22% of participants who read online magazines actually preferred reading Web publications (Schwartz, 2002). In addition, 73% of participants said they would not give up the print publications, even if the online versions were offered at half the price (Schwartz, 2002).

Another study by the Chief Marketing Officer Council found 92% of consumers plan to continue using print media (Vishnupriya, Kathiravan, & Sriram, 2014). Instead of replacing print magazines, online versions most likely will supplement this medium (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013).

Leslie (2003) described the reason behind this preference:

Print magazines work. They never crash, their batteries don't run out and they don't need plugins. They are portable, light (well, light-ish) and everyone knows how to use them.

Moreover, the mechanics of creating a magazine brand are tried and tested. (p. 18)

At the end of the 20th century, the average American contributed more time to magazines than at the beginning of the century (Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). In 2014, an average U.S. magazine consumer spent 19.6 minutes per day reading magazines (Statista, 2015). According to a study conducted by the Association of Magazine Media (2015), 59.0% of magazine readers ages 18 to 34 are female.

Agricultural Magazines

Before the 19th century, agricultural information was communicated simply by word of mouth (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2000). Although earlier publications came to the United States from Europe, the first agricultural periodical in America, the *Agricultural Museum*, was published in 1811 (Boone et al., 2000). The *American Farmer*, the first regularly-printed farm journal, was first published in 1819 (Irani & Doerfert, 2013). Early periodical content included “many society contributions as well as information on using manures, new crops and implements and improved livestock” (Boone et al., 2000, p. 7). “While total numbers of farm magazines and newspapers increased from 157 in 1880 to 400 by 1920, circulation numbers increased at an even greater rate, from about 1 million in 1880 to more than 17 million in 1920” (Boone et al., 2000, p. 14). Major newspapers hired writers with farming backgrounds to write agricultural-based

information (Irani & Doerfert, 2013). Even through the Great Depression, the agricultural publishing industry remained consistent (Boone et al., 2000). Boone et al. (2000) suggested the challenging economic condition during these times created more demand for valuable information among farmers. In the 1950s, monthly publications became even more popular (Boone et al., 2000). By this time, technological innovations contributed to the growth in publications by creating more economical and efficient printing and more reliable distribution (Boone et al., 2000). With the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and the development of the Cooperative Extension Service, agricultural colleges hired specialists to disseminate agricultural knowledge and research through farm periodicals (Boone et al., 2000; Irani & Doerfert, 2013). “With better educations and in need of information to support production demands, farmers became more reliant on farm publications for information on innovations” (Boone et al., 2000, p. 21). In 1970, the average farmer received seven agricultural periodicals (Boone et al., 2000). Content in agricultural magazines became more specialized and objective. In addition, with new printing advances, publication design became more appealing by including photographs, illustrations, and cartoons (Boone et al., 2000).

The introduction of new technologies created additional ways to communicate information to agriculturalists, such as radio, television, and Internet (Irani & Doerfert, 2013). However, according to Boone et al. (2000), farmers in the early 2000s continued to use farm publications as a key source of information. “Younger farmers tend to obtain information from publications more often than older farmers, and they have numerous choices of where to get their information” (Boone et al., 2000, p. 54).

Print media remain major sources of agricultural information, ranked higher than fellow farmers and television (Rehman, Muhammad, Ashraf, & Hassan, 2011). In addition, the major determinants of how effective print media disseminates information to farmers include quality of information, newness, farmers’ interest, and timeliness (Rehman et al., 2011). The study also

supported the idea print media has an impact of farmers' decisions, such as the adoption of technology to increase productivity (Rehman et al., 2011).

According to a study by Ruth-McSwain (2008), agricultural communication professionals suggest the number of traditional media channels have decreased. However, the study also suggested agricultural communications professionals prefer print media outlets (Ruth-McSwain, 2008). The researcher recommended professionals continue to use print media in addition to other media outlets, such as television broadcasts and Internet, to increase efficiency (Ruth-McSwain, 2008).

Oklahoma Country

“Magazines are essential components of an association” (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Sumner and Miller (2013) identify association magazines as a publication from sponsoring organizations and associations, usually provided free as a membership benefit. This type of magazine creates a communication link between members and the organization (Sumner & Miller, 2013). Many members of such associations only have contact with the association through the magazine (Sumner & Miller, 2013). These magazines rarely are offered in typical newsstands, as the goal of association magazines is usually service rather than profit (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013). Although it is difficult to determine the actual number of association magazines, Sumner and Miller (2013) estimated approximately 5,000 publications fit this category.

After the creation of the OFB organization, the first board of directors acknowledged the need for a print publication to enhance communication with members in 1945 (Deering, 1980). The first publication was a newsletter, *Oklahoma Farm Bureau News*, which was formatted as a four- to eight-page, three-column publication (Deering, 1980). In 1949, OFB began publishing *The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Farmer*, a 24-page magazine (Deering, 1980). In 1954, the magazine was changed again to *The Farm Bureau Journal*, formatted as a tabloid newspaper format to include more space for timely news and to reduce production costs (Deering, 1980). *The Farm Bureau Journal* was published until 2003 (S. Knipp, personal communication,

September 21, 2015). These early OFB publications included important news items, AFBF policies, legislative matters, and program information (Deering, 1980).

In 2003, the OFB began publishing the *Oklahoma Country* magazine, a 52-page, color magazine (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 21, 2015). The magazine is published four times per year in the months of January, April, July, and October (*Oklahoma Country*, 2014). The magazine's subscription rate for members is \$1 per year, which is included as part of membership dues (*Oklahoma Country*, 2014). Non-members also can choose to receive the magazine for \$15 per year (*Oklahoma Country*, 2014). The editorial team for the magazine includes John Collison, vice president of public policy; Sam Knipp, director of corporate communications; Dustin Mielke, director of corporate communications; and Samantha Smith, communications specialist (*Oklahoma Country*, 2014).

Content found in the magazine includes information on agricultural policies, discussions on upcoming elections, and feature stories about Farm Bureau members (*Oklahoma Country*, 2014). The magazine also has regular columns and sections, including "Presidentially Speaking," "Executive Outlook," "Insurance Matters," "Country Gardening," "All Around Oklahoma," "Country Classifieds," and "Country Kitchen" (*Oklahoma Country*, 2014). *Oklahoma Country* also includes agricultural advertisements for industry businesses and organizations, such as Farm Credit, Oklahoma Pork Council, and the Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation (*Oklahoma Country*, 2014).

OFB leaders use multiple media options when seeking information, including the *Oklahoma Country* magazine (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015). Leaders hold a high degree of trustworthiness in the *Oklahoma Country* magazine (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015). Farmers use the magazine to make agricultural decisions and recommend OFB use the organization magazine to communicate important information to OFB leaders (S. Knipp, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratifications

The uses and gratification model is considered a valued and helpful way to understand the motivation behind mass communication choices of the public (Luo & Remus, 2014). This approach presented the idea people use media to satisfy their needs, instead of focusing on how the media affected a passive audience (Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973; Ruggiero, 2009). Rosengren (1979) discussed the association of the theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, identifying three specific needs associated with uses and gratifications: belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and a need for self-actualization. However, these needs are not developed through isolated situations but rather the interaction of numerous variables (Rosengren, 1979). "The two concepts of uses and gratifications, although analytically distinct, are empirically so intimately intertwined that even when the research is explicitly setting out to measure one of them, elements of the other may slip in" (Rosengren, 1979, p. 281).

Katz et al. (1973) identified three types of needs from personal traits, including (a) strengthening or weakening; (b) a cognitive, affective, or integrative connection; and (c) with some referent, such as self, friends, family, and tradition, and social and political institutions. Although the typology of uses of this theory does not present a "refined theoretical perspective" desired in a theory by some scholars, uses and gratifications provides a base of data needed to analyze media use (Ruggiero, 2009, p. 12).

With the development of new technology, researchers have found more applications for the theory (Ruggiero, 2009; Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade, 2004). Stafford et al. (2004) describe the theory:

Uses and gratifications theory is robust and useful in the development of theoretical dimensions representative of consumer motivations for media use, and Internet-specific measures developed from the U&G framework are useful for assessing consumers' likely uses of the Internet and its e-commerce interfaces. (p. 280)

In addition, after mass media and digital technology united to provide additional communications options, the patterns of media consumers distinctly changed (Ruggiero, 2009).

History

The uses and gratifications approach was developed to better explain how people use mass communications (Blumler, 1979). Beginning in the 1940s, researchers sought to explain why audiences chose various media behavior (Ruggiero, 2009). Early studies using this theory were descriptive in form, only classifying audience responses into categories (Ruggiero, 2009). Some researchers describe the theory as a “how and why” approach to assist researchers to understanding media-use motivations (Stafford et al., 2004).

In earlier studies, media users were assumed to be a passive audience and research scholars attempted to determine what uses mass communication has for people, instead of the reverse (Blumler, 1979). As the idea of an active audience arose, researchers began to determine how and why people choose certain types of media (Blumler, 1979). In the 1950s and 1960s, researchers focused on developing social and psychological variables that could be used as predecessors of gratification consumption patterns to operationalize the uses and gratifications theory (Ruggiero, 2009).

In the 1970s, researchers saw society as information-oriented individuals seeking new ways to satisfy their media needs (Stafford et al., 2004). Some researchers in this time suggested people make media choices through the interaction of several variables, such as personal characteristics and social environment (Rosengren, 1974; Ruggiero, 2009).

Revival

Throughout history, the uses and gratifications theory has been used in the beginning stages of new communication methods, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and radio (Ruggiero, 2009). Even though the uses and gratification theory was criticized and abandoned for many decades by some mass communication researchers, new technology resurrected the interest in the theory (Ruggiero, 2009). Ruggiero (2009) identified one of the advantages of the uses and gratifications theory as its ability to develop into a more sophisticated and complex theoretical model. This development certainly has increased with new technology

(Ruggiero, 2009). In recent years, studies have shown the theory's usefulness in new Internet-based media, such as Twitter (Chen, 2011; Stafford et al., 2004). In a study by Stafford et al. (2004), researchers found evidence to support the validity of the use of the uses and gratifications theory to describe how the Internet gratifies online users (Stafford et al., 2004).

The uses and gratifications theory is commonly used as a way to evaluate magazine readership (Carter, 2013; Lawson, 2012, Payne, Severn, & Dozier, 1988; Trissel, 2014). One readership study conducted by Lawson (2012) surveyed alumni readers of the *Cowboy Journal*, a publication created in the capstone class for Oklahoma State University students pursuing bachelor's degrees in agricultural communications. In this study, the researcher used the uses and gratification framework to develop an instrument to assess the *Cowboy Journal's* ability to meet the needs of the audience and provide recommendations to improve the gratification of the reader (Lawson, 2012). Alumni read almost all articles in *Cowboy Journal* and indicated issues within their industry are the most interesting (Lawson, 2012). The researcher also found *Cowboy Journal* readers perceive the magazine to be accurate and objective (Lawson, 2012).

Carter (2013) researched the readers' perceptions of leisure travel magazines. The researcher used the uses and gratifications theory to study the motivations behind reading travel magazines (Carter, 2013). Carter (2013) found inspiration is most likely to be the primary motivation for people who travel to read travel magazines. In addition, the researcher found people who are highly interested in foreign travel are motivated to read for guidance and entertainment (Carter, 2013).

Another study conducted by Trissel (2014) surveyed readers of the *Take the Reins* magazine, a publication by the Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA). In this study, research was conducted to determine the characteristics of the audience to ensure the magazine's content, design, and utility met the needs of the readers (Trissel, 2014). Trissel (2014) found respondents preferred stories related to horses and rider/member stories. The researcher also found participants perceive the design of the magazine to be good and read the magazine

primarily to keep up-to-date with organizational events (Trissel, 2014). In addition, Trissel (2014) found readers preferred the print version of *Take the Reins* over the online version and did not want to receive the magazine only via the Internet.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methods used to conduct this study, including approval by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board, research design, instrumentation, validity, reliability, population, data collection, and data analysis.

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 (Oklahoma State University, 2015). 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 (Oklahoma State University, 2015). This research plan was review by the OSU IRB and received approval on March 17, 2015. The application number assigned to this study was AG1510 (see Appendix A). Three modifications to the IRB were submitted and approved on April 14, 2015, May 27, 2015, and July 1, 2015 (see Appendix B).

Research Design

This study used a mixed method explanatory design (Creswell, 2015a) with a quantitative priority, in which “a greater emphasis is placed on the quantitative methods and the qualitative methods are used in a secondary role” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The researcher chose this design to first use quantitative methods and then use qualitative methods to help clarify the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2015a). The researcher conducted the study using a survey

research design to collect information from the population. The study was designed to determine the perceptions of selected Oklahoma Farm Bureau (OFB) Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) leaders concerning the *Oklahoma Country* magazine.

Instrumentation

Designed to measure the self-reported perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders, the data-collection instrument was based on instruments used by Lawson (2012) and Trissel (2014) with edits made to reflect the focus of the study: *Oklahoma Country* magazine (see Appendix C). The instrument consisted of 23 questions, one of which included several multiple-part items. Data were collected by using a variety of six-point summated rating scales, dichotomous items, multiple-choice items, multiple-answer items, and open-ended questions.

The instrument specifically focused on the following five major areas: (a) 11 items regarding personal characteristics; (b) 22 items regarding content; (c) three items regarding design; (d) 15 items regarding utility; and (e) one item regarding overall perceptions. Not all participants were required to complete all questions; participants were instructed to skip specific questions depending on their answers to other specific questions.

The instrument contained demographic items on the members who chose to participate. The eight demographic questions were as follows: (a) *age*; (b) *sex*; (c) *level of education*; (d) *county of residence*; (e) *pertinent agricultural commodities*; (f) *primary residence type*; (g) *primary occupation*; and (h) *marital status*. The county of residence question was an open-ended qualitative question to allow respondents to supply the county of primary residence. The pertinent agricultural commodities question included 13 specific agricultural commodities and six extra blanks for commodities not listed. Respondents were asked to check all commodities that applied. The primary residence question was asked as a multiple-choice item with the following options: (a) *On a farm*; (b) *In a rural area*; (c) *In a small town (under 10,000)*; (d) *In a large town (10,000 to 50,000)*; (e) *In a suburb of a large city*; and (f) *In a large city (greater than 50,000)*. The

primary occupation question was open-ended qualitative question to allow respondents to supply their primary occupations.

The first question of the instrument asked respondents if they were members of OFB YF&R. For this study, the researcher only included respondents who answered (a) *Yes*. The second question asked participants how they received the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. If respondents selected (a) *In the mail* or (b) *Online*, they were prompted to the following questions. However, if the participant selected (c) *I do not receive the Oklahoma Country magazine*, they were instructed to complete only the classification questions.

One item in the instrument asked how much total time the respondent spends with the magazine. Anchored responses were as follows: (a) *60 minutes or more*; (b) *30 to 59 minutes*; (c) *10 to 29 minutes*; and (d) *0 to 9 minutes*.

The item asking how long the respondent keeps the magazine listed the following options: (a) *I keep it for less than a week*; (b) *I keep it for one to two weeks*; (c) *I keep it for three to four weeks*; (d) *I keep it for more than a month*; (e) *I keep it until the next issue is available*; and (f) *I save it as part of an Oklahoma Country magazine collection*.

One item in the instrument asked participants why they read the magazine. The item was a choose-all-that-apply question that listed the following options: (a) *To be entertained*; (b) *To pass the time*; (c) *To learn more about agricultural-related topics*; (d) *To learn more about current legislation regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma*; (e) *To keep up-to-date with Oklahoma Farm Bureau activities (i.e. conventions, tailgates, meetings, etc.)*; (f) *I do not or would not read Oklahoma Country magazine*; and (g) *Other*, which allowed respondents to list the “Other” item to supplement and further explain the quantitative responses. If the respondent chose *I do not or would not read Oklahoma Country magazine*, they were asked to skip the following question.

The item asking how much of the magazine the respondent typically reads included the following choices: (a) *I read it cover to cover*; (b) *I read most of the articles*; (c) *I only read one*

or two articles; (d) *I scan rather than read the articles*; and (e) *I just scan the headlines and photographs*. If the respondent chose *I read it cover to cover*, they were asked to skip the following question.

A choose-all-that-apply question asked the reason why respondents do not read all of the magazine articles. Choices included (a) *I do not have enough time*; (b) *The topics do not interest me*; (c) *The articles are too technical*; (d) *The articles are too basic*; and (e) *The articles are too long*.

One choose-all-that-apply item asked respondents to select which magazine columns or sections were familiar, including (a) *“Presidentially Speaking”*; (b) *“Executive Outlook”*; (c) *“Insurance Matters”*; (d) *“Country Gardening”*; (e) *“All Around Oklahoma”*; (f) *“Country Classifieds”*; and (g) *“Country Kitchen.”*

Respondents were asked to identify OFB events or activities in which they participate. Options included (a) *State Convention*; (b) *County Meetings*; and (c) *Other*. The instrument included four “Other” blanks to allow the participant to list any other events or activities to supplement the other quantitative responses.

The instrument contained one multi-part question that asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with 30 individual items using a six-point summated rating scale with the following anchors: (a) *Strongly Disagree*; (b) *Disagree*; (c) *Somewhat Disagree*; (d) *Somewhat Agree*; (e) *Agree*; and (f) *Strongly Agree*. The first seven items in this question concerned respondents’ regular readership of columns or sections in the magazine, including (a) *“Presidentially Speaking”*; (b) *“Executive Outlook”*; (c) *“Insurance Matters”*; (d) *“Country Gardening”*; (e) *“All Around Oklahoma”*; (f) *“Country Classifieds”*; and (g) *“Country Kitchen.”*

The next item asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: *The information provided in the Oklahoma Country magazine is useful.*

The following item asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a statement concerning their interest in events, updates, specific story topics, upcoming political elections, and policy regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

One item concerning respondents' level of activity in the OFB was reverse-coded; therefore, respondents who strongly agreed they were highly active in OFB ranked answers closer to *Strongly Disagree* versus *Strongly Agree*.

Respondents were asked to rate three content-related items. Two questions referenced the understandability and the quality of writing of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. The other question referenced the range of topics found in the *Oklahoma Country* and was reverse-coded. Therefore, respondents who strongly disagreed the range of topics was too narrow ranked answers closer to *Strongly Agree* versus *Strongly Disagree*. The instrument also included one item concerning the credibility of the information found in the magazine using a six-point summated rating scale.

Respondents indicated their agreement with three design-related items. These questions referenced the quality of graphics, designs for the presentation of stories, and the general appearance of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. One item asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with the overall impression of *Oklahoma Country*. Respondents also answered two items concerning the online version of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine using the six-point summated rating scale. One multiple-choice question asked respondents how much time they spend reading the online version of the magazine. Choices included (a) *60 minutes or more*; (b) *30 to 59 minutes*; (c) *10 to 29 minutes*; and (d) *0 to 9 minutes*.

A dichotomous item asked respondents if they ever gave the magazine to someone else. If the participant answered *Yes*, he or she answered a choose-all-that-apply question about to whom they passed the magazine. The choices included (a) *Co-workers*; (b) *Parents*; (c) *Children*; (d) *Other relatives*; and (e) *Other*. The "Other" option allowed respondents to list other people with whom they have shared the magazine to further explain the quantitative responses.

In addition, respondents were asked to complete two short-response questions. These qualitative questions were included to further explain the quantitative responses throughout the survey. One question asked the participants what changes they would like included in future issues. The other question asked participants to list story ideas they would like included in future issues.

Validity

According to Creswell (2015b), validity is measured to ensure an instrument's test interpretation is the same as its proposed use. If an instrument is not valid, the scores will not be meaningful (Creswell, 2015b).

Face and content validity were assessed using panels of experts. The content validity panel included two OFB communications staff members, one Oklahoma State University animal science faculty member, one OSU communications specialist, and three faculty members in the Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership. The face validity panel included five individuals associated with OFB and OSU who were similar in age and background to the OFB YF&R members.

Reliability

A reliable instrument collects stable and consistent scores (Creswell, 2015b). A Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency or reliability of a survey instrument (Santos, 1999). According to Santos (1999), instruments with a measured Cronbach's alpha of .70 or higher are acceptable, with a higher number preferred. According to Creswell (2015b), several elements can affect the reliability of an instrument, such as ambiguous or unclear questions and unstandardized procedures.

The study's instrument was based on two previous instruments (Lawson, 2012; Trissel, 2014). Lawson's (2012) instrument used to collect readers' perceptions had the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients from a pilot study: content construct ($\alpha = .88$), design construct ($\alpha = .94$), and overall perception construct ($\alpha = .86$). From a pilot study, Trissel's (2014) instrument

for readers' perceptions had the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: content construct ($\alpha = .84$) and design construct ($\alpha = .87$). Neither Lawson (2012) nor Trissel (2014) presented a utility construct coefficient as too few scaled items were included for calculation of such. Trissel (2014) had only one item for overall perception and, therefore, did not include a Cronbach's alpha for that construct.

Originally, the researcher planned to investigate the perceptions of all *Oklahoma Country* magazine recipients ($N > 80,000$, depending on the issue as everyone who purchases OFB insurance receives the *Oklahoma Country*) and attempted to conduct an emailed pilot study with OFB members. However, even with multiple reminders, the pilot study ($n = 60$) resulted in too few responses ($n = 1$) to calculate a reliability measure. Therefore, the researcher concluded the method of survey distribution did not fit the population. Consequently, the study's population was changed to the accessible population of attendees at the 2015 OFB YF&R summer leadership events because of the exceptionally low response rate for the pilot study.

With confidence in the instrument based on previous reliability measures, the researcher chose to proceed with data collection for the adapted population, and a post hoc analysis was conducted to evaluate the reliability of this study's instrument. For the content construct, 19 questions yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .90, which is slightly higher than either Lawson (2012) or Trissel (2014). For the design construct, three items containing questions regarding design yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .75, which is less than previous studies but within the minimum suggested by Santos (1999). The two items related to the utility, which concerned the credibility and usefulness of the magazine, resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .69. As this α is slightly below the recommended level suggested by Santos (1999), caution should be taken when interpreting the results related to utility. Two additional items related to the online publication of the magazine had a post hoc Cronbach's alpha of .79. This study included

one scaled item concerning respondents' overall perception; therefore, no calculation could be made.

The researcher used a set of single items in the instrument to define two constructs, content and design, in an effort to create a “more reliable composite measure of the construct,” as suggested by Warmbrod (2014, p. 32). Given the limitation of using this population ($N = 49$), the results cannot be generalized to all magazine recipients or to all OFB YF&R members.

Population

The population of this census study was OFB YF&R leaders who attended two specific leadership events — the OFB YF&R Golf Event on July 9, 2015, and the OFB YF&R Leadership Conference on July 10, 2015 — during the summer of 2015 ($N = 49$). The researcher was unable to isolate the responses into two populations because some respondents attended both events. None of the respondents completed the instrument twice. Any OFB member between the ages of 18 and 35 can become a member of YF&R (OFB, 2015d).

Data Collection

The researcher chose to use a self-administered survey design to allow the respondents more time to think about each answer, which allows the respondent to remember “more confirming or disconfirming information” (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014, p. 104). According to Boone et al. (2000), “[s]urvey research is a common task in both communications and marketing, particularly when there is a strong need to assess attitudes, preferences, interests or demographic characteristics of a large group of people” (p. 93).

The same research procedures were used during both OFB YF&R events. Attendees were asked to participate in the study during the golf event registration and during the first luncheon at the leadership conference.

For this census study, the researcher distributed the printed instrument (see Appendix C) to participants after reading a script containing instructions for completing the instrument (see Appendix D). A table tent (see Appendix E) was used at the leadership conference to encourage

respondents to participate. A sheet inserted inside the instrument gave written instructions and information about the research design and instrument completion. At the bottom of the information sheet, participants were given the option to supply their contact information as registration for two random drawings for \$50. The two drawings were conducted to serve as incentive to complete the instrument. The instrument and drawing registration were submitted in two separate boxes. Each participant had the option of completing the instrument on the given printed instrument or using a QR code to access the online version created through Qualtrics. All participants chose to complete the printed instrument.

For this study, the researcher included only the respondents who indicated they were OFB YF&R members on the instrument's first question. The researcher eliminated one respondent who indicated he or she was an OFB YF&R member because the respondent also indicated he or she was 60 years old. Of the 49 YF&R members who attended the events, 42 participated in the study for a response rate of 85.7%.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS/PSAW Statistics 18.0 for Macintosh™. Nominal data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. All ordinal data were analyzed using mode and range. According to Heinsen and Nolan (2012), "ordinal variable are observations that have rankings as their values" (p. 4). Thus, the range of scores was calculated, and the mode summarized OFB YF&R members' perceptions. One question yielded interval data concerning the respondent's age and was analyzed using means and standard deviations. According to Heinzen and Nolan (2012), "Interval variables are used for observations that have numbers as their values; the distance (or interval) between pairs of consecutive numbers is assumed to be equal" (p. 5).

Potential Threats to Validity

Shadish, Cook, and Campell (2002) identified four types of validity: (a) statistical conclusion validity; (b) construct validity; (c) internal validity; and (d) external validity.

According to Creswell (2015b), construct validity refers to the “validity of inferences about the constructs (or variables) in the study” (p. 304). In this study, the utility construct resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of .69, which is slightly below Santos’s (1999) recommended level. Therefore, a potential threat exists to construct validity in this study. In addition, the researcher recognized a potential threat in external validity. According to Creswell (2015b), threats to external validity include problems that may threaten the ability “to draw correct inferences from the sample data to other persons, settings, treatment variables, and measures” (p. 306). Data was collected at the 2015 OFB YF&R Golf Event, for which the cost to attend was a minimum of \$90 per individual or \$350 for a team of four. Additionally, data was collected at the 2015 OFB YF&R Leadership Conference, for which the cost to attend was \$150 per person for the conference and hotel room or \$25 per person for the conference only. Therefore, this study has restrictions of respondents’ income range, creating a possible threat to external validity. The research attempted to obtain additional information about OFB YF&R, including sex, marital status, education level and age, to compare to the results of this study but this information was not available.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter exhibits and describes the findings of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine research study.

Findings as Related to Objective 1

Objective 1 sought to describe selected characteristics of selected Oklahoma Farm Bureau (OFB) Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) leaders. The modal age of respondents ($n = 41$) was 32. The youngest respondent was 18 and the oldest was 40. The average age was 29.20 with a standard deviation of 5.33.

Regarding sex, 61.0% ($f = 25$) of respondents ($n = 41$) indicated they were *Male* and 39.0% ($f = 16$) indicated they were *Female*.

Of the respondents ($n = 41$), 61.0% ($f = 25$) indicated the highest level of education attained was *Bachelor's degree* (see Table 1).

Table 1

OFB YF&R Respondents' Highest Level of Education (n = 41)

Education Level	<i>f</i>	%
Bachelor's degree	25	61.0
High school	4	9.3
Associate's degree	3	7.3
Master's degree	3	7.3
Some post-secondary coursework	3	7.3
Doctoral degree	2	4.9
Chose not to respond	1	2.4
Less than high school	0	0.0
Professional degree (JD, DVM, etc.)	0	0.0

Twenty-three of the 77 Oklahoma counties were represented as primary county of residence among the respondents ($n = 38$); 13.2% ($f = 5$) indicated they lived in Noble, 10.5% ($f = 4$) lived in Dewey, and 7.9% ($f = 3$) lived in Garfield (see Table 2).

Table 2

OFB YF&R Respondents' Primary County of Residence (n = 38)

County	<i>f</i>	%
Noble	5	13.2
Dewey	4	10.5
Garfield	3	7.9
Alfalfa	2	5.3
Grady	2	5.3
Kiowa	2	5.3
Payne	2	5.3
Pittsburg	2	5.3
Tulsa	2	5.3
Canadian	1	2.6
Cimarron	1	2.6
Comanche	1	2.6
Cotton	1	2.6
Custer	1	2.6
Logan	1	2.6
Major	1	2.6
McIntosh	1	2.6
Murray	1	2.6
Nowata	1	2.6
Pottawatomie	1	2.6
Roger Mills	1	2.6
Stephens	1	2.6
Texas	1	2.6

Respondents were asked to list agricultural commodities pertinent to them. Of those who responded, 90.5% ($f = 38$) listed cattle, 78.6% ($f = 33$) listed wheat, and 69.0% ($f = 29$) listed hay (see Figure 2).

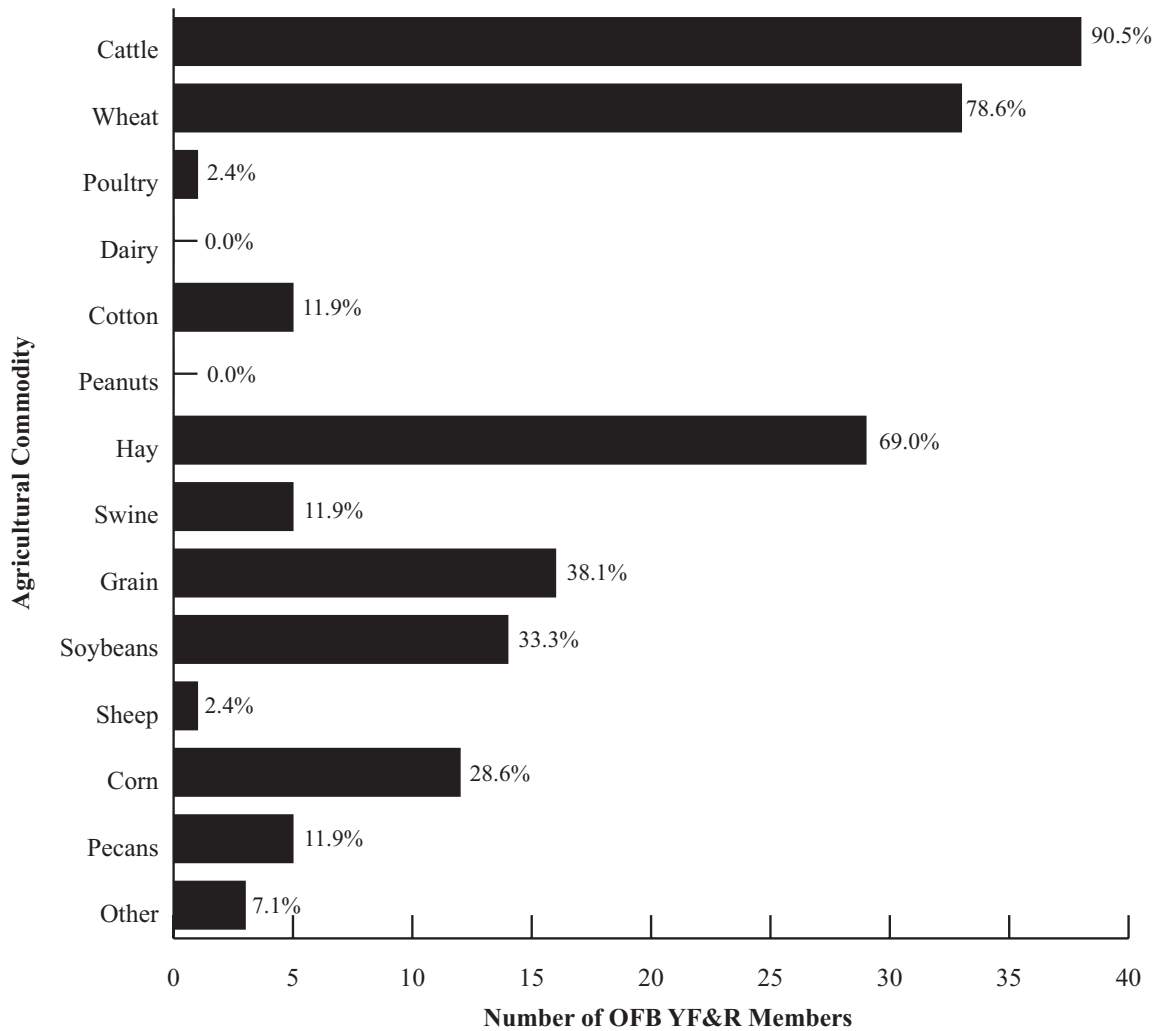


Figure 2. Agricultural commodities of OFB YF&R respondents.

The two *Other* options (7.1%) included the following agricultural commodities: sorghum ($f = 2$; 4.8%) and canola ($f = 1$; 2.4%).

Of those who responded to the question concerning primary type of residence ($n = 41$), 65.9% ($f = 27$) reported they lived on a farm, 26.8% ($f = 11$) reported they lived in a rural area, and 7.3% ($f = 3$) reported they lived in a small town (under 10,000) (see Figure 3). None of the respondents selected the following responses: (a) *In a large town (10,000 to 50,000)*, (b) *In a suburb of a large city*, or (c) *In a large city (greater than 50,000)*.

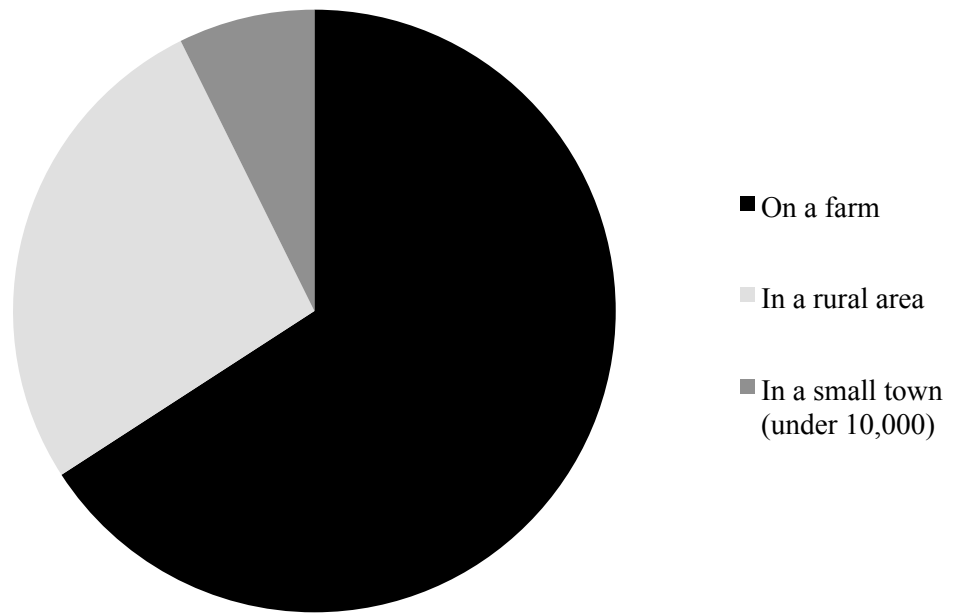


Figure 3. OFB YF&R respondents' primary type of residence.

Respondents were asked an open-ended question concerning their primary occupation. The researcher found six major themes from the respondents' answers to primary occupation: "educational professionals," "farm and ranch," "financial professionals," "medical professionals," "OFB employees," and "other." To support these found themes, the researcher established illustrative quotes (see Table 3).

Table 3

OFB YF&R Respondents' Self-Reported Occupation (n = 43)

Theme	<i>f</i>	%	Illustrative Quotes
Farm and Ranch	16	37.2	“Farming” “Farm/Ranch” “Farmer”
Other	9	18.6	“Agricultural Broadcaster” “Oil & Gas & Ranching” “Construction” “Highway Maintenance” “Stay-at-Home Mom” “Farm wife/FB worker” “Farm/Crop Ins Agent (not for F.B.)” “Non-profit exec” “College Student”
Financial Professionals	6	14.0	“Banking” “Loan Officer” “Banker”
Educational Professionals	5	11.6	“Ag Teacher” “Education” “Asst. Prof. of Agriculture” “OSU Extension”
OFB Employees	5	14.0	“Insurance Agent” “Director of Commodities OFB”
Medical Professionals	2	4.7	“Optometrist” “Dentistry”

Regarding marital status ($n = 41$), 65.9% ($f = 27$) reported they were married and 34.1% ($f = 14$) reported they were single.

Regarding participation in OFB events or activities, 90.5% ($f = 38$) indicated they participate in *State Convention*, 76.2% ($f = 32$) indicated they participate in *County Meetings*, and 81.0% ($f = 34$) indicated they participate in *Other* events and activities. Among the respondents' answers to the *Other* events and activities question, the researcher found two major themes. The first theme was “YF&R meetings/activities” ($f = 19$). The second theme was “other FB meeting/activities” ($f = 11$), which included the following selected illustrative quotes: “public

policy,” “national convention,” “D.C. action tour,” “commodity committee meeting,” and “annual meeting.”

Of the respondents ($n = 36$), 22 (61.1%) respondents selected *Strongly Disagree* when given the following statement: *I am not highly active in the Oklahoma Farm Bureau (such as participating in State Convention, county meetings, etc.)*. The next most frequent answer was *Disagree* ($f = 5$; 13.9%), followed by *Agree* ($f = 4$; 11.1%), then *Strongly Agree* ($f = 2$; 5.6%), then *Somewhat Disagree* ($f = 2$; 5.6%), and *Somewhat Agree* ($f = 1$; 2.8%).

Findings as Related to Objective 2

Objective 2 sought to determine the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the content of *Oklahoma Country*. Of those who responded to the question concerning columns and sections of the magazine, 66.7% ($f = 28$) reported they were familiar with the “All Around Oklahoma” section, 47.6% ($f = 20$) reported they were familiar with the “Presidentially Speaking” column, and 38.1% ($f = 16$) reported they were familiar with the “Executive Outlook” column (see Table 4).

Table 4

OFB YF&R Respondents’ Familiarity with Magazine Columns and Sections (n = 41)

	<i>f</i>	%
“All Around Oklahoma”	28	66.7
“Presidentially Speaking”	20	47.6
“Executive Outlook”	16	38.1
“Country Classifieds”	14	33.3
“Insurance Matters”	12	28.6
“Country Kitchen”	8	19.0
“Country Gardening”	5	11.9

Nine (25.7%) respondents selected *Disagree* when asked if they regularly read the “Presidentially Speaking” column. Nine (25.7%) respondents selected *Somewhat Agree* when

asked if they regularly read the “Insurance Matters” column. Twelve (35.3%) respondents chose *Disagree* when asked if they regularly read the “Country Gardening” column. Twelve (34.3%) respondents selected *Strongly Agree* when asked if they regularly read the “All Around Oklahoma” section ($f = 12$; 34.3%). An equal percentage of respondents ($f = 10$; 28.6%) selected *Agree* and *Somewhat Agree* when asked they regularly read the “Country Classifieds” section. In addition, an equal percentage of respondents ($f = 8$; 23.5%) chose *Disagree* and *Somewhat Agree* when asked if they regularly read the “Country Kitchen” section (see Table 5).

Table 5

OFB YF&R Respondents' Self-reported Regular Readership of Selected Columns and Sections of the Oklahoma Country Magazine

Topic Area	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>	%
“Presidentially Speaking” column (<i>n</i> = 35)	3	8.6	9	25.7	2	5.7	7	20.0	8	22.9	6	17.1
“Insurance Matters” column (<i>n</i> = 35)	5	14.3	8	22.9	3	8.6	9	25.7	6	17.1	4	11.4
“Country Gardening” column (<i>n</i> = 34)	5	14.7	12	35.3	6	17.6	7	20.6	1	2.9	3	8.8
“All Around Oklahoma” section (<i>n</i> = 42)	3	8.6	3	8.6	2	5.7	6	17.1	9	25.7	12	34.3
“Country Classifieds” section (<i>n</i> = 42)	2	5.7	5	14.3	3	8.6	10	28.6	10	28.6	5	14.3
“Country Kitchen” section (<i>n</i> = 42)	8	23.5	6	17.6	5	14.7	8	23.5	4	11.8	3	8.8

Note. Modal response in boldface.

When asked if they were interested in stories about Oklahoma production agriculture, the modal response was *Strongly Agree* ($f = 23, 63.9\%$). The modal response was *Strongly Agree* when respondents were asked if they were interested in OFB events (conventions, tailgates, area meetings, etc.) ($f = 19, 52.8\%$), updates about the OFB ($f = 16, 44.4\%$), and feature stories about OFB members ($f = 18, 50.0\%$). The modal response was *Strongly Agree* when respondents were asked if they were interested in information about upcoming state political elections ($f = 15, 41.7\%$), upcoming federal political elections ($f = 14, 38.9\%$), and policy regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma ($f = 17, 47.2\%$). Thirteen (36.1%) respondents chose *Agree* when asked if they were interested in stories about OFB staff. Fourteen (43.8%) respondents selected *Somewhat Agree* when asked if they were interested in how-to stories. Eleven respondents chose *Somewhat Disagree* when asked if they were interested in stories related to OFB insurance information (30.6%) (see Table 6).

Table 6

OFB YF&R Respondents' Self-reported Level of Interest in Selected Topic Areas

Topic Area	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>	%
OFB events (conventions, tailgates, area meetings, etc.) (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	2	5.6	1	2.8	5	13.9	9	25.0	19	52.8
Updates about the OFB. (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	0	0	3	8.3	7	19.4	10	27.8	16	44.4
Feature stories about OFB members. (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	1	2.8	2	5.6	4	11.1	11	30.6	18	50.0
Stories about the OFB staff. (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	1	2.8	5	13.9	9	25.0	13	36.1	8	22.2
Stories about Oklahoma production agriculture. (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	0	0	1	2.8	3	8.3	9	25.0	23	63.9
Stories related to OFB insurance information. (<i>n</i> = 36)	1	2.8	1	2.8	11	30.6	9	25.0	7	19.4	7	19.4
How-to stories. (<i>n</i> = 32)	2	6.3	1	3.1	6	18.8	14	43.8	6	18.8	3	9.4
Information about upcoming state political elections. (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	1	2.8	3	8.3	7	19.4	10	27.8	15	41.7
Information about upcoming federal political elections. (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	1	2.8	5	13.9	6	16.7	10	27.8	14	38.9
Information about policy regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma. (<i>n</i> = 36)	0	0	2	5.6	1	2.8	5	13.9	11	30.6	17	47.2

Note. Modal response in boldface.

Of those who responded to the question concerning the writing in the *Oklahoma Country* magazine, 36.1% ($f=13$) selected *Agree* when asked if they considered the quality to be excellent and thirteen respondents (33.3%) chose *Strongly Agree*.

Of those who responded to the question concerning the information provided in the *Oklahoma Country* magazine, 36.1% ($f=13$) selected *Agree* when asked if they considered it easily understood and 33.3% ($f=12$) selected *Strongly Agree*.

Thirteen (36.1%) respondents selected *Somewhat Disagree* to the following statement: *Oklahoma Country magazine's range of topics is too narrow* (see Table 7).

Table 7

OFB YF&R Respondents' Perceptions Regarding the Content of Oklahoma Country (n = 36)

Topic Area	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>	%
The quality of writing provided in the <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine is excellent.	1	2.8	1	2.8	2	5.6	7	19.4	13	36.1	12	33.3
The information provided in the <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine is easily understood.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.8	10	27.8	13	36.1	12	33.3
<i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine's range of topics is too narrow.	3	8.3	11	30.6	13	36.1	8	22.2	0	0.0	1	2.8

Note. Modal response in boldface.

Respondents were asked an open-ended question concerning changes the respondents would like to be included in future issues. The respondents' answers are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

Comments Concerning Changes to Future Issues of Oklahoma Country

"More bi-partisan pictures and articles. Give credit to both parties where credit is due."
"A little more on cattle/ranching."
"Young people."
"Industry production issues – financial aid stories (Ag banking articles)."
"More photography of Oklahoma agriculture."
"More features of members' success stories."
"More paper versions."
"More articles. If offered via Internet, send text or email reminder."

Respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding story topic ideas they would like included in future issues. The respondents' answers are listed in Table 9.

Table 9

Comments Concerning Story Topics in Future Issues of Oklahoma Country

"Diversity of ag operations."
"More about Farmers/Members."
"Right to farm."
Current ag issues/stories."
"Summer crops."
"Ranching and struggles facing ranchers."
"How people made it through challenging times."
"Ag finance."
"Ag policy in state and nation, Farm Bureau policy, Upcoming legislature."
"More in-depth about legislation and public policy."

Findings as Related to Objective 3

Objective 3 sought to determine the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the design of *Oklahoma Country*. Of the respondents, 25 (69.4%) selected *Strongly Agree* when presented with the following statement: *The quality of graphics (photos, illustrations, etc.) in the Oklahoma Country magazine is excellent*. Eighteen (50.0%) respondents selected *Strongly Agree* when presented with the following statement: *The designs for the presentation of stories in the Oklahoma Country magazine are excellent*. When asked about the general appearance of the magazine, 21 (58.3%) respondents selected the answer *Strongly Agree* (see Table 10).

Table 10

OFB YF&R Respondents' Perceptions Regarding the Design of Oklahoma Country (n = 36)

Topic Area	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
The quality of graphics (photos, illustrations, etc.) in the <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine is excellent.	1	2.8	0	0.0	1	2.8	3	8.3	6	16.7	25	69.4
The designs for the presentation of stories in the <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine are excellent.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.8	4	11.1	13	36.1	18	50.0
The general appearance of the <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine is excellent.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	16.7	9	25.0	21	58.3

Note. Modal response in boldface.

Findings as Related to Objective 4

Objective 4 sought to determine the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the utility of *Oklahoma Country*. When asked about the *Oklahoma Country* magazine format they received ($n = 42$), 73.8% ($f = 31$) responded *In the mail*, 7.1% ($f = 3$) responded *Online*, and 19.0% ($f = 8$) responded *I do not receive the Oklahoma Country magazine*.

Regarding how much total time they spent with a printed issue of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine ($n = 41$), 48.8% ($f = 20$) indicated they spent *10 to 29 minutes*. Fifteen respondents (36.6%) reported they spent *0 to 9 minutes*, and six (14.6%) reported they spent *30 to 59 minutes*. None of the respondents reported they spent *60 minutes or more* (see Figure 4).

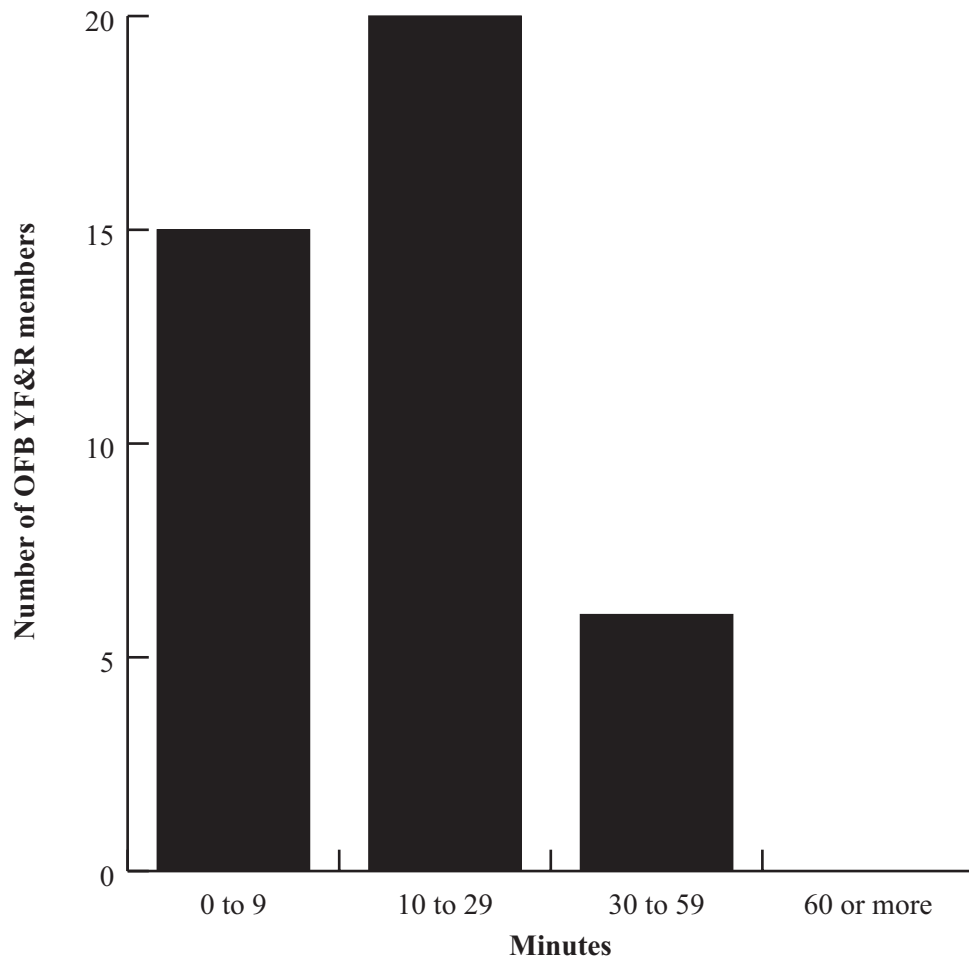


Figure 4. OFB YF&R respondents' perceived amount of time spent with a printed issue of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine.

When respondents were asked how long they kept the *Oklahoma Country* magazine

($n = 37$), 43.2% ($f = 16$) indicated they kept it for less than a week, 21.6% ($f = 8$) indicated they kept it for one to two weeks, and 16.2% ($f = 6$) indicated they kept it until the next issue is available. An equal percentage of respondents indicated they kept it for three to four weeks ($f = 3$, 8.1%) and for more than a month ($f = 3$, 8.1%). One respondent (2.7%) reported saving the magazine as part of an *Oklahoma Country* magazine collection (see Figure 5).

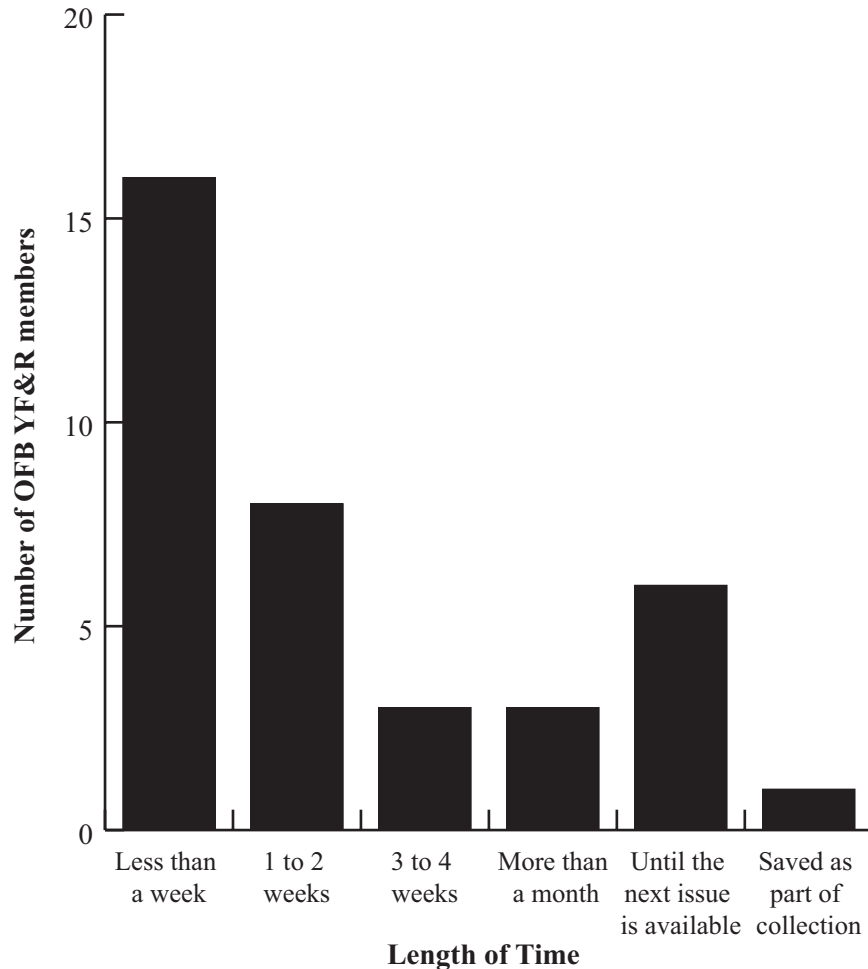


Figure 5. Amount of time OFB YF&R respondents keep the *Oklahoma Country* magazine.

Respondents were asked to answer a choose-all-that-apply question concerning why they would read the magazine. The modal response was *To learn more about agricultural-related topics* ($f = 33$, 78.6%), followed by *To learn more about current legislation regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma* ($f = 26$; 61.9%), and then *To keep up with Oklahoma Farm Bureau activities (i.e. conventions, tailgates, meetings, etc.)* ($f = 24$, 57.1%). Fourteen respondents indicated they

read the magazine *To be entertained* ($f = 33.3\%$), and 12 respondents indicated they read the magazine *To pass the time* (28.6%) (see Table 11).

Table 11

Reasons OFB YF&R Respondents Read Oklahoma Country

	<i>f</i>	%
To learn more about agricultural-related topics	33	78.6
To learn more about current legislation regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma	26	61.9
To keep up-to-date with Oklahoma Farm Bureau activities (i.e. conventions, tailgates, meetings, etc.)	24	57.1
To be entertained.	14	33.3
To pass the time.	12	28.6
Other.	4	9.5
I do not or would not read <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine.	0	0

Two respondents (4.8%) who chose the *Other* option did not give alternate reasons for reading the *Oklahoma Country*. The remaining two respondents who chose the *Other* option (4.8%) included the following reasons for reading *Oklahoma Country*: “to keep up with friends” and “to be updated with news.”

Of those who responded to the question regarding the amount of the magazine read ($n = 40$), 37.5% ($f = 15$) indicated they only read one or two articles, 22.5% ($f = 9$) indicated they scan rather than read the articles, and 20.0% ($f = 8$) indicated they read most of the articles. Six respondents (15.0%) indicated they read the magazine cover to cover and two respondents (5.0%) indicated they just scan the headlines and photographs (see Figure 6).

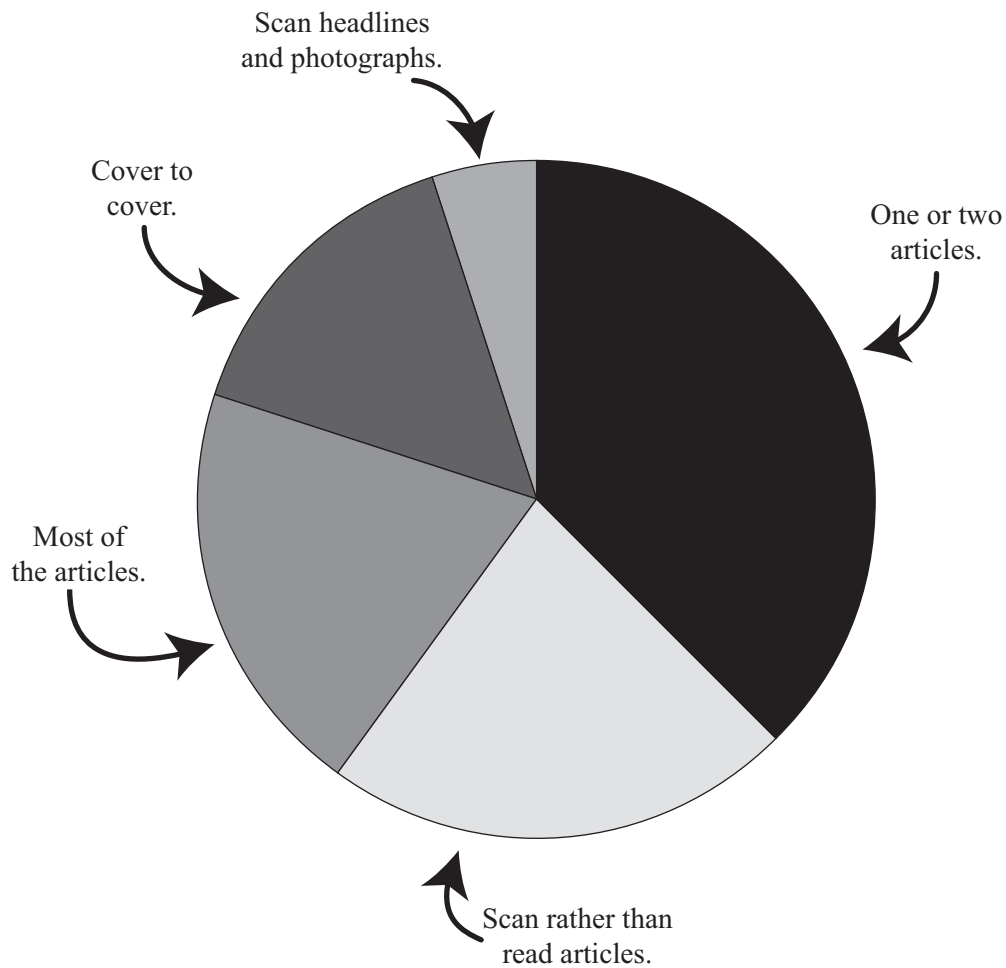


Figure 6. Amount of magazine read by OFB YF&R respondents.

Respondents were asked to choose all that apply when asked why they do not read all of the articles in the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. *I do not have enough time* was the most frequent response ($f = 22$, 52.4%), followed by *The topics do not interest me* ($f = 13$, 31.0%), and *The articles are too long* ($f = 4$, 9.5%). None of the respondents chose *The articles are too technical* or *The articles are too basic*.

Of the respondents ($n = 24$), 45.8% ($f = 11$) agreed the information provided in the *Oklahoma Country* magazine is useful. Additionally, 20.8% ($f = 5$) of the respondents signified they somewhat agreed, 16.7% ($f = 4$) of the respondents signified they strongly agreed, and 16.7% ($f = 4$) signified they somewhat disagreed.

When presented with the statement *I consider the Oklahoma Country magazine to be a credible source of information*, the modal response of the respondents ($n = 36$) was *Strongly Agree* ($f = 17$; 47.2%), followed by *Agree* ($f = 13$; 36.1%), then *Somewhat Agree* ($f = 3$; 8.3%), followed by *Somewhat Disagree* ($f = 2$; 5.6%), and finally *Disagree* ($f = 1$; 2.8%).

Of those who responded, 14 (38.9%) chose *Strongly Disagree* when asked if they had read the *Oklahoma Country* magazine on the OFB website ($f = 14$, 38.9%) (see Table 12).

Table 12

OFB YF&R Respondents' Perceived Readership and Support of the Online Version of Oklahoma Country (n = 36)

Topic Area	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>	%
I have read the <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine on Oklahoma Farm Bureau's website.	14	38.9	6	16.7	3	8.3	5	13.9	2	5.6	6	16.7
I would read the <i>Oklahoma Country</i> magazine if it was only offered via the Internet.	9	25.0	6	16.7	6	16.7	8	22.2	2	5.6	5	13.9

Note. Modal response in boldface.

Of the respondents ($n = 36$), 25.0% ($f = 9$) signified they strongly disagreed with the question concerning *Oklahoma Country* only being offered via the Internet. In addition, 22.2% ($f = 8$) of respondents indicated they somewhat agreed, 16.7% ($f = 6$) indicated they disagreed, and 16.7% ($f = 6$) indicated they somewhat disagreed (see Table 12).

When asked how much time respondents spent reading the online version of *Oklahoma Country* ($n = 36$), 0 to 9 minutes was the most frequent response ($f = 30$, 83.3%), followed by 10 to 29 minutes ($f = 5$, 13.9%), and then 30 to 59 minutes ($f = 1$, 2.8%). None of the respondents selected 60 minutes or more.

Of the respondents ($n = 35$), 57.1% ($f = 20$) indicated they gave the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to someone else to share an article. Additionally, 42.9% ($f = 15$) indicated they did not.

Respondents were asked to choose all that apply when signifying with whom they share the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. Eleven (26.2%) respondents indicated they shared the magazine with their *Parents*, 10 (23.8%) indicated *Other relatives*, nine (21.4%) indicated *Co-workers*, three (7.1%) indicated *Children*, and three (7.1%) indicated *Other*. Of the respondents' who selected the *Other* response, two (4.8%) indicated they share the magazine with friends and one (2.4%) indicated the respondent shares the magazine with clients.

Findings as Related to Objective 5

Objective 5 sought to determine the overall perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning *Oklahoma Country*. Of the respondents ($n = 36$), 15 (41.7%) indicated they strongly agreed when asked if they were impressed by the *Oklahoma Country* magazine (see Figure 7).

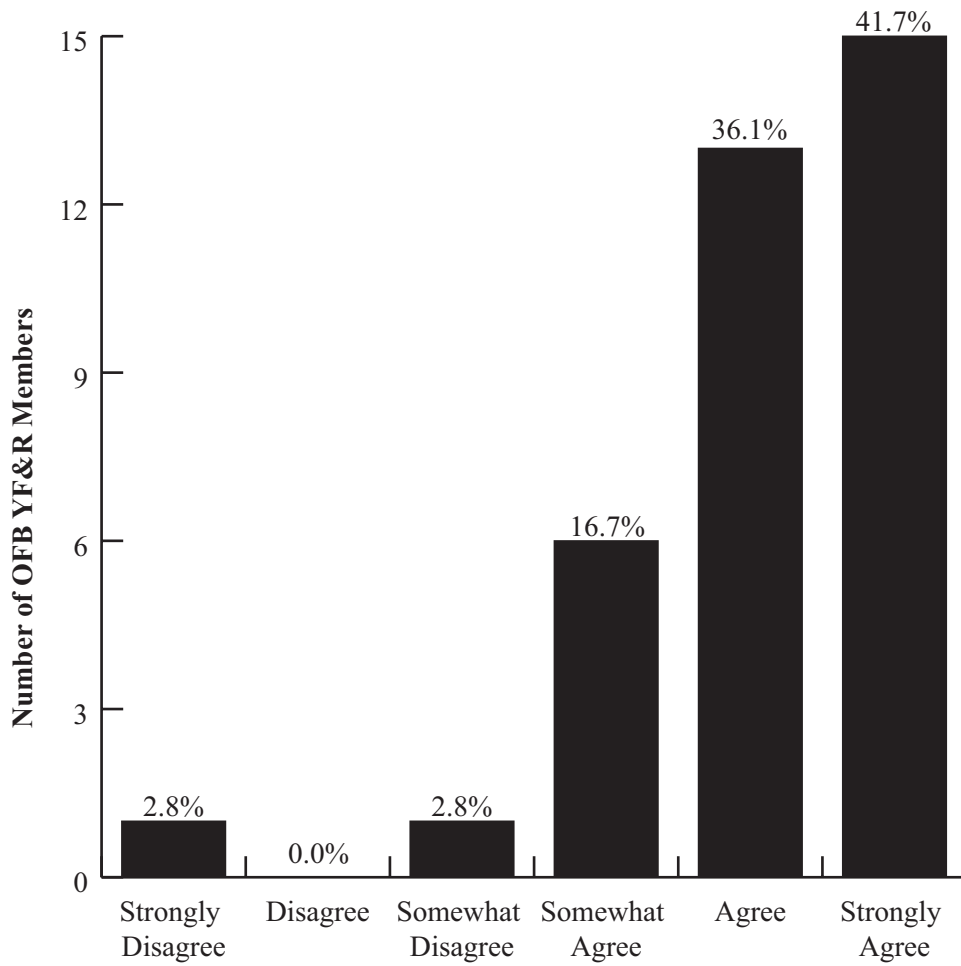


Figure 7. OFB YF&R respondents' level of agreement regarding overall impression of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides the conclusions of the researcher concerning the study as well as implications, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and a related-discussion section.

Conclusions for Objective 1

Objective 1 sought to describe selected characteristics of Oklahoma Farm Bureau (OFB) Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) leaders who attended OFB YF&R summer leadership activities. The typical respondent is a married 32-year-old male who receives the *Oklahoma Country* magazine and is active in OFB through state conventions and county meetings. He has a bachelor's degree, which is consistent with Ogbeide, Fenich, Scott-Halsell, and Kesterson's (2013) statement that most individuals in the Millennial Generation are educated. The typical respondent also lives on a farm and is involved with cattle, wheat, and hay commodities.

Conclusions for Objective 2

Objective 2 sought to determine the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the content of *Oklahoma Country*. Of all the special sections in *Oklahoma Country*, respondents are most familiar with the "All Around Oklahoma" section, which focuses on features about OFB members, and read this section regularly. This finding supports the concept that effective features with compelling stories attract readers (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; Sumner

& Miller, 2013). Respondents regularly read the “Presidentially Speaking” column, which includes comments from the OFB president, and the “Insurance Matters” column. Respondents regularly read the “Country Classifieds” section, which supports the concept that advertisements are an important part of a magazine and should be evaluated as part of the interactions between the consumer and the magazine (Aynsley & Forde, 2007; Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; Leslie, 2003; Sumner & Rhoades, 2006). Respondents are least familiar with and do not regularly read “Country Kitchen” and “Country Gardening.” As a whole, respondents were unfamiliar with other sections and do not read them on a regular basis.

Respondents are interested in a variety of topic areas, including information about OFB events, updates about OFB, feature stories about OFB members, stories about Oklahoma production agriculture, stories related to OFB insurance information, how-to stories, information about upcoming state and federal political elections, and policy regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma. This supports Sumner and Miller’s (2013) statement that magazine content should include a variety of interesting topics, such as features, current events, trends, and issues.

Those who responded perceive the quality of writing in the *Oklahoma Country* magazine as excellent and the information provided as easily understood. Respondents perceive the magazine as having a good range of topics, but they want to see more agricultural-related topics in future issues, supporting Lawson’s (2012) findings that readers are more interested in topics in their specific industry.

Conclusions for Objective 3

Objective 3 sought to describe the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders regarding the design of *Oklahoma Country* magazine. Respondents consider the quality of graphics in the magazine to be excellent. As most images in *Oklahoma Country* are large compared to the text, this finding supports the idea that many Millennials are visual readers who are comfortable in environments with several images and graphics (Oblinger, Oblinger, & Lippincott, 2005). Additionally, this conclusion supports the idea that photographs play a major role in the design of

magazines (Conover, 2011). Respondents also find the designs for the presentation of stories and the general appearance to be excellent. These conclusions support Sumner & Rhoades (2006) assertion that effective and functional design is essential for a successful magazine.

Conclusions for Objective 4

Objective 4 sought to determine the perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning the utility of *Oklahoma Country*. Respondents receive the magazine in the mail and usually spend less than 30 minutes with a printed issue. Additionally, most respondents keep the magazine for less than two weeks. The amount of magazine read by respondents varies. However, the reason why most respondents did not read the entire magazine is insufficient time.

Those who responded read *Oklahoma Country* to learn more about agricultural-related topics, to learn more about current legislation regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma, and to keep up-to-date with OFB activities, supporting research findings that people read magazine for two different themes: “It makes me smarter” and “It’s my personal recreation” (Sumner & Rhodes, 2006). These findings also lend support to Lawson’s (2012) conclusion that readers want to read about topics and issues within their industry. Respondents read the magazine for agricultural information, supporting research that print media and farm publications remain an important source for farmers (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2000; Rehman, Muhammad, Ashraf, & Hassan, 2011).

Respondents agree the information provided in the *Oklahoma Country* magazine is useful and the magazine is a credible source of information. These conclusions support the idea that magazines are an essential element of an association that creates a communication link to members (Johnson & Prijatel, 2013; Sumner & Miller, 2013).

Those who responded have not read the *Oklahoma Country* magazine on the OFB website. Furthermore, respondents would not read the magazine if only offered in an online format, indicating they view a tangible magazine as more valuable than an online version (Morrish & Bradshaw, 2012). Of those who have read *Oklahoma Country*, respondents only read

the online magazine for 0 to 9 minutes, supporting findings by Schwartz (2002) and Leslie (2003) that indicate most magazine readers would prefer to read a print magazine because of their unique structural design. However, the results do not match the Millennial Generation's characteristic preference for technology-based communication (Ogbeide et al., 2013). Nevertheless, Vishnupriya, Kathiravan, and Sriram (2014) support the idea that the generation continues to rely on print media for information and entertainment.

Respondents tend to share the *Oklahoma Country* magazine with others. This lends itself to Johnson and Prijatelj's (2013) statement that most magazines are typically passed to a second reader. However, respondents' share the magazine with a variety of people.

Conclusions for Objective 5

Objective 5 sought to determine the overall perceptions of selected OFB YF&R leaders concerning *Oklahoma Country*. Respondents are impressed overall with the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. However, given the amount of time they spend the magazine and how long they keep the magazine, respondents are not impressed enough to dedicate significant time to the magazine.

Recommendations for Practice

Considering the typical respondent to this study is a 32-year-old male, the OFB staff should consider this audience when selected magazine content and evaluate the readership of certain sections that respondents did not read, such as "County Kitchen" and "Country Gardening." To continue to reach this audience, the OFB staff should continue to publish print versions of the *Oklahoma Country* with stories related to agricultural production, agricultural policy, and features about OFB members. As respondents are most interested in the "All Around Oklahoma" section, the OFB staff should consider including more articles in the same format to feature more OFB members' stories. The OFB staff also should consider the magazine as a communication link between the organization and its members and include content that encourages participation in upcoming events. Although respondents indicated their interest in several magazine topics, the editor also should consider the main reason respondents did not read

the entire magazine: insufficient time. For this reason, shorter articles may result in higher readership.

The magazine should continue to seek clear, accurate, objective and high-quality writing. Respondents found the magazine to be a useful and credible source, indicating the OFB should continue to supply valuable information through the magazine. Additionally, the magazine also should continue to use large, high-quality graphics and excellent designs for the presentation of stories. OFB should continue to mail the magazine to members rather than offer it solely on the OFB website.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research should be conducted to assess the perceptions of the entire magazine audience of *Oklahoma Country*. In addition to survey research, the OFB staff should consider using focus groups to reveal any issues about the magazine that may not have surfaced through a questionnaire. Additional readership studies should be conducted on other agriculture-related publications as more research is needed to further explain magazine preferences and perceptions of the Millennial Generation.

Although respondents indicated they are impressed overall with the magazine, respondents are not impressed enough to dedicate significant time to read the magazine or to keep the magazine for longer than two weeks. OFB should conduct more research to identify potential magazine discontent to allow for future revisions.

Although respondents indicated they did not want the magazine solely offered online, the OFB staff should consider researching supplementary methods of complementing the magazine using technological communication to reach the Millennial Generation effectively, such as social media, blogs, etc. Since readers indicated they are interested in most of the topics listed in the questionnaire, research also should be conducted to further investigate which topics could be overlooked to satisfy the readers' desires for freshness and originality (Johnson & Prijatelj, 2013).

A factor analysis could be conducted on the questionnaire to determine which items most accurately measure content, design, utility, and overall quality. This procedure would assist in modifying the questionnaire to better measure the variables of interest.

Discussion and Implications

Respondents are most interested in the “All Around Oklahoma” section, perhaps implying readers enjoy reading stories that have the ability to connect with different backgrounds, as suggested by Johnson & Prijatel (2013). This ability could satisfy readers’ need for belongingness, one of the needs outline in Rosengren’s (1979) description of the uses and gratification approach. Additionally, the typical reader desires stories that provide an entertainment value (Sumner & Miller, 2013), which could be satisfied by the “All Around Oklahoma” section.

Respondents regularly read the “Presidentially Speaking” column, which could supply the communication link between OFB and its members that enables the reader to feel more connected with the organization (Sumner & Miller, 2013). According to a study conducted by the Association of Magazine Media (2015), 59% of magazine readers ages 18 to 34 are female, while the typical respondent to this study was a 32-year-old male. Perhaps this difference explains why respondents do not regularly read certain sections, such as “Country Kitchen” and “Country Gardening.” Furthermore, should these sections be removed from the printed issue, or are these sections frequently read by second-hand readers not included in the study, such as the respondent’s spouse or other family member?

The primary reason for only reading some of the magazine is because respondents do not have enough time. Could this be because individuals of the Millennial Generation are frequently connected to alternate sources of information and communication (Ogbeide et al., 2013)? It is interesting that respondents do not view the magazine online even though Millennials characteristically prefer technological communication. Is it possible respondents have little experience with online magazines because they are more familiar with more recent technological

advances? Respondents may prefer to access the magazine through applications on Smartphones and tablets, as suggested by Trissel (2014).

Respondents view a tangible magazine as more valuable than an online version. Perhaps, as indicated by Morrish and Bradshaw (2012), magazines uniqueness as a luxury item contributes to the success and perseverance of print magazines. Alternatively, respondents might prefer print magazines due to the ability to share a physical copy with others.

Even though respondents still prefer print magazines, they do not spend very much time reading the magazine. Perhaps they do not spend much time with magazines because of the plethora of other information sources available. Ogbeide et al. (2013) described Millennials as multi-tasking individuals. Maybe an alternative reason for spending little time with the magazine is because they must split their time with other tasks.

Although respondents indicated they were impressed with the magazine, other conclusions made in this study indicated the opposite, such as the amount of time spent with the magazine and how long the magazine is kept. In 2014, an average U.S. magazine consumer spent 19.6 minutes per day reading magazines (Statista, 2015), but respondents in this study only spent less than 30 minutes with an entire issue of *Oklahoma Country*. Perhaps respondents like the idea of the magazine as a communication tool to satisfy their need for a sense of belongingness illustrated in the uses and gratifications theory (Rosengren, 1979), but do not find the information applicable to their lives. Therefore, the respondents do not read the magazine on a regular basis.

Alternatively, perhaps the reason people are not truly impressed by the magazine is because in some ways they are a passive audience because they do not actively choose to receive the magazine. Unlike magazines that require a subscription to receive the publication, all members of OFB receive the magazine. Therefore, some of the respondents could be considered a passive audience because they did not specifically choose to receive the magazine. Perhaps respondents indicated they are impressed with the magazine simply because they receive it without paying a separate subscription cost.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Approval of Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2015
IRB Application No AG1510
Proposal Title: Perceptions of Oklahoma Farm Bureau Members Toward the Oklahoma Country Magazine: A Readership Study
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 3/16/2018

Principal Investigator(s):

Clarissa Fulton
701 S Wicklow Apt 706
Stillwater, OK 74074

Shelly Sitton
435 Ag Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

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 section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. 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 submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, 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 adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

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 Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Hugh Crethar, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma Country Readership Questionnaire

Greetings! My name is Clarissa Fulton, a master's student at Oklahoma State University. As the daughter of an active member and county officer of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, I have grown up as a loyal member of the organization; therefore, I am interested in conducting this research study of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. The purpose of this study is to improve future magazine issues by determining selected characteristics about those who read the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to improve future issues.

As a recipient of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, you have been selected to participate in a research project titled "Perceptions of *Oklahoma Country* Magazine Readers." You may have seen the announcement on page 42 of the most recent issue. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your experience with the *Oklahoma Country* magazine as well as selected personal characteristics to aid in research analysis.

By determining the self-reported readership behaviors and perceptions of readers, editors and writers of *Oklahoma Country* can coordinate an efficient and beneficial flow of information.

You have two options for completing the survey. One option is to complete the attached survey and return to _____ . The second option is to complete the survey online by using your Internet browser of choice and going to _____ .

The amount of time to complete either survey will be approximately 15 minutes or less. If you choose to provide an email address at the end of the online questionnaire or to submit this mailed questionnaire, you will be registered for a random drawing for a \$ 00 Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquiries from the researchers. By completing either the paper survey or the online survey, you give your consent to participate in this study.

Your timely response would be appreciated greatly.

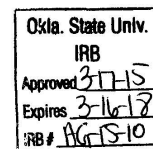
You may choose at any time to withdraw from the study without penalty. The risks associated with this project are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Your responses are voluntary and confidential. The researchers will never have direct access to your email address, unless you complete the online survey and provide it to register for the drawing. After the drawing, email addresses will be deleted unless you provide permission to share them with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

All answers will be stored or entered 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 for up to three years 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 me at 405-574-2742 or clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu or contact 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. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Fulton
Graduate Student, Oklahoma State University



Code: _____

Introductory email text:

Greetings! My name is Clarissa Fulton, a master's student at Oklahoma State University. As the daughter of an active member and county officer of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, I have grown up as a loyal member of the organization; therefore, I am interested in conducting this research study of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. The purpose of this study is to improve future magazine issues by determining selected characteristics about those who read the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to improve future issues.

As a recipient of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, you have been selected to participate in a research project titled "Perceptions of *Oklahoma Country* Magazine Readers." You may have seen the announcement on page 42 of the most recent issue. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your experience with the *Oklahoma Country* magazine as well as selected personal characteristics to aid in research analysis.

By determining the self-reported readership behaviors and perceptions of readers, editors and writers of *Oklahoma Country* can coordinate an efficient and beneficial flow of information.

By clicking on the link below, you give your consent to participate in this study. To complete the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to _____. You also may request a mailed questionnaire by calling _____.

The amount of time to complete the survey will be approximately 15 minutes or less. If you choose to provide an email address at the end of the online questionnaire or to submit a mailed questionnaire, you will be registered for a random drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquiries from the researchers.

Your immediate response would be appreciated greatly.

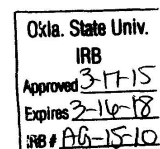
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Sincerely,

Clarissa Fulton
Graduate Student Oklahoma State University



Follow-up Email Text

Hello! Last week, you received a message from me asking for your opinions of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine. My name is Clarissa Fulton, a master’s student at Oklahoma State University. As the daughter of an active member and county officer of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, I have grown up as a loyal member of the organization; therefore, I am interested in conducted this research study of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. The purpose of this study is to improve future magazine issues by determining selected characteristics about those who read the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to improve future issues.

As a recipient of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, you have been selected to participate in a research project titled “Perceptions of *Oklahoma Country* Magazine Readers.” You may have seen the announcement on page 42 of the most recent issue. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your experience with the *Oklahoma Country* magazine as well as selected personal characteristics to aid in research analysis.

By determining the self-reported readership behaviors and perceptions of readers, editors and writers of *Oklahoma Country* can coordinate an efficient and beneficial flow of information.

By clicking on the link below, you give your consent to participate in this study. To complete the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to _____. You also may request a mailed questionnaire by calling _____.

The amount of time to complete the survey will be approximately 15 minutes or less. If you choose to provide an email address at the end of the online questionnaire or to submit a mailed questionnaire, you will be registered for a random drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquiries from the researchers.

Your immediate response would be appreciated greatly.

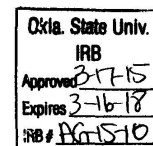
You may choose at any time to withdraw from the study without penalty. The risks associated with this project are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Your responses are voluntary and confidential. The researchers will never have direct access to your email address, unless you provide it to register for the drawing. After the drawing, email addresses will be deleted unless you provide permission to share them with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

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We would appreciate your assistance with this survey. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact me at 405-574-2742 or clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu or contact 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. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Fulton
Graduate Student Oklahoma State University



APPENDIX B

Institutional Review Board Modifications

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 Protocol Expires: 3/16/2018
IRB Application No: AG1510
Proposal Title: Perceptions of Oklahoma Farm Bureau Members Toward the Oklahoma Country Magazine: A Readership Study

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt
Modification

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s):

Clarissa Fulton Shelly Sitton
701 S Wicklow Apt 706 435 Ag Hall
Stillwater, OK 74074 Stillwater, OK 74078

The requested modification to this IRB protocol has been approved. Please note that the original expiration date of the protocol has not changed. The IRB office **MUST** be notified in writing when a project is complete. All approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

Modification to 1) add a pilot test, 2) add a link to the online magazine in the survey, 3) add a QR code to the printed version of the survey and 4) send a postcard reminder two times to those that have not participated.

Signature :



Huqfi Crethar, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Tuesday, April 14, 2015
Date



Hello!

Last week, you received a letter asking for your opinions of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau publication. As part of a random sample of Oklahoma Farm Bureau members, you have been chosen to complete a brief survey about *Oklahoma Country*. Upon completion of this survey, you will have the option to enter a random drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquiries from the researchers.

To complete the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to: https://okstatecasnr.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9YyqHqmh0mFPGRv, or use the QR code located at the bottom of this page. You also may request a mailed questionnaire by calling me at 405-574-2742 or sending an email to clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Clarissa Fulton at clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu or Dr. Shelly Peper Sitton at shelly.sitton@okstate.edu.

Your help is greatly appreciated!

Clarissa Fulton
Master of Science Student
Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership
Oklahoma State University



Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved 4-14-15
Expires 3-16-18
IRB # AG-15-10

Oklahoma Country Readership Questionnaire

Greetings! My name is Clarissa Fulton, a master's student at Oklahoma State University. As the daughter of an active member and county officer of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, I have grown up as a loyal member of the organization; therefore, I am interested in conducted this research study of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. The purpose of this study is to improve future magazine issues by determining selected characteristics about those who read the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to improve future issues.

As a recipient of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, you have been selected to participate in a research project titled "Perceptions of *Oklahoma Country* Magazine Readers." You may have seen the announcement on page 42 of the Fall 2014 issue. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your experience with the *Oklahoma Country* magazine as well as selected personal characteristics to aid in research analysis. If you would like to review the most current issue, please use the following link: http://www.okfarmbureau.org/assets/publications/OKCountry_Vol68No1_WEB.pdf.

By determining the self-reported readership behaviors and perceptions of readers, editors and writers of Oklahoma Country can coordinate an efficient and beneficial flow of information.

You have two options for completing the survey. One option is to complete the attached survey and return to 448 Agricultural Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078. The second option is to complete the survey online by using your Internet browser of choice and going to _____. You may also use the QR code located at the bottom of this page.

The amount of time to complete either survey will be approximately 15 minutes or less. If you choose to provide an email address at the end of the online questionnaire or to submit this mailed questionnaire, you will be registered for a random drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquires from the researchers. By completing either the paper survey or the online survey, you give your consent to participate in this study.

Your timely 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 confidential. The researchers will never have direct access to your email address, unless you complete the online survey and provide it to register for the drawing. After the drawing, email addresses will be deleted unless you provide permission to share them with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

All answers will be stored or entered 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 for up to three years 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 me at 405-574-2742 or clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu or contact 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. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you for your help.

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Clarissa Fulton
Graduate Student, Oklahoma State University



Code: _____

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We would appreciate your assistance with this survey. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact me at 405-574-2742 or clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu or contact 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. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Fulton
Graduate Student Oklahoma State University



OKFB YF&R RESEARCH SCRIPT

Read by chief researcher, Clarissa Fulton.

Hello, my name is Clarissa Fulton, and I am a graduate student in the department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership at Oklahoma State University. Today, I am asking you for your assistance in helping me collect data for my graduate research thesis about the *Oklahoma Country*, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau publication. Before I give you the instrument, I want to stress participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to complete the instrument, that is completely fine.

The first page is an information page about today's study and is yours to keep. It also includes my contact information and the other researcher on this study should you have any questions about the research. It also includes information about who to contact regarding your rights as a research volunteer. If you would like to review an issue of the *Oklahoma Country* before completing the questionnaire, we have copies available.

After reading the information sheet, if you choose to participate in the study, the next page is the beginning of the questionnaire. If you would prefer to complete the questionnaire online, you can use the QR code provided. Please follow the instructions carefully and do not write your name. Your names will remain anonymous and your answers will be kept confidential. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you.

When you complete and return your questionnaire, if you would like to register for a random drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card, please complete the form attached at the back of the questionnaire. After completed, return the form to the registration table. The information collected on this form will not be associated with your answers to the questionnaire.

Please complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. You may use pen or pencil. If you have any questions during the questionnaire, please ask me.

The amount of time to complete either questionnaire will be approximately 15 minutes or less. If you choose to provide your contact information at the end of the questionnaire, you will be registered for a random drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquiries from the researchers. By completing either the paper questionnaire or the online questionnaire, you give your consent to participate in this study.

Do you have any questions? When you are finished, please return the questionnaire to the box at the registration table.

I want to stress again this study is completely voluntary; however, if you wish to participate I greatly thank you for your participation in my study.



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, July 01, 2015 Protocol Expires: 3/16/2018
IRB Application No: AG1510
Proposal Title: Perceptions of Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Members Toward the Oklahoma Country Magazine: A Readership Study

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt
Modification

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s):

Clarissa Fulton Shelly Sitton
701 S Wicklow Apt 706 435 Ag Hall
Stillwater, OK 74074 Stillwater, OK 74078

The requested modification to this IRB protocol has been approved. Please note that the original expiration date of the protocol has not changed. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. All approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

Modification to 1) recruit at the Young Farmers and Ranchers conference July 10-11, 2015 2) modify the instructional information on the first page of the survey to clarify instructions, 3) add table tents to help with recruitment at the conference, 4) modify related consent and recruitment flyer and 5) put drawing entry at bottom of consent form.

Signature :



Hugh Grethar, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Wednesday, July 01, 2015
Date

Oklahoma Country Readership Questionnaire

Greetings! My name is Clarissa Fulton, a master's student at Oklahoma State University. As the daughter of an active member and county officer of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, I have grown up as a loyal member of the organization; therefore, I am interested in conducted this research study of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. The purpose of this study is to improve future magazine issues by determining selected characteristics about those who read the *Oklahoma Country* magazine to improve future issues.

As a recipient of the *Oklahoma Country* magazine published by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, you have been selected to participate in a research project titled "Perceptions of *Oklahoma Country* Magazine Readers." You may have seen the announcement on page 42 of the Fall 2014 issue. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions about your experience with the *Oklahoma Country* magazine as well as selected personal characteristics to aid in research analysis. By determining the self-reported readership behaviors and perceptions of readers, editors and writers of Oklahoma Country can coordinate an efficient and beneficial flow of information.

You have three options for completing the questionnaire. The best option for the researchers is to use the QR code or web address to complete the online questionnaire as soon as possible. The second option is to complete the attached questionnaire and return to the survey box. If you are not able to complete the questionnaire right now, you may complete the online questionnaire or mail the paper copy to 448 Agricultural Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078 by **July 17, 2015**. To complete the questionnaire online use your Internet browser of choice and go to <http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>. You may also use the QR code located at the bottom of this page.

The amount of time to complete either survey will be approximately 15 minutes or less. If you choose to provide your information, you will be registered for a random drawing for a Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquires from the researchers. By completing either the paper or online questionnaire, you give your consent to participate in this study. **Your timely 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 confidential. The researchers will never have direct access to your contact information, unless you provide it to register for the drawing. After the drawing, contact information will be deleted unless you provide permission to share them with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

All answers will be stored or entered online in a password-protected account until the questionnaire 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 for up to three years on a password-protected computer.

We would appreciate your assistance with this important research. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact me at 405-574-2742 or clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu or contact 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. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Fulton
Graduate Student, Oklahoma State University



Thank you for participating in this study. If you would like to register for a random drawing for a Visa gift card, please complete this form and return to the drawing box. The information collected on this form will not be associated with your answers to the survey.

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____



OKFB YF&R RESEARCH SCRIPT

Read by chief researcher, Clarissa Fulton.

Hello, my name is Clarissa Fulton, and I am a graduate student in the department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership at Oklahoma State University. Today, I am asking you for your assistance in helping me collect data for my graduate research thesis about the *Oklahoma Country*, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau publication. You will find the questionnaire on the tables. I want to stress participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, that is completely fine.

The insert found in the questionnaire is an information page about today's study. At the top is information you can keep; at the bottom is an optional form to register you for the Visa gift card drawing. The top also includes my contact information and the other researcher on this study should you have any questions about the research as well as information about who to contact regarding your rights as a research volunteer. If you would like to review an issue of the *Oklahoma Country* before completing the questionnaire, we have copies available.

After reading the information sheet, if you choose to participate in the study, you may begin the questionnaire. If you would prefer to complete the questions online, you can use the QR code provided to link you to the online questionnaire. Please follow the instructions carefully and do not write your name. Your names will remain anonymous and your answers will be kept confidential. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you.

When you complete your questionnaire, return it to the survey box. If you would like to register for a random drawing for a Visa gift card, please complete the form at the bottom of the information page and place in the drawing box. The information collected on this form will not be associated with your answers to the questionnaire.

Please complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. You may use pen or pencil. If you have any questions, please ask me.

It should take you 15 minutes or less to complete the questionnaire. If you choose to provide your contact information, you will not receive any additional inquiries from the researchers. By completing either the paper questionnaire or the online questionnaire, you give your consent to participate in this study.

Do you have any questions? When you are finished, please return the questionnaire to the survey box.

I want to stress again this study is completely voluntary; however, if you wish to participate I greatly thank you for your participation in my study.



<http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>



Don't forget to complete the Oklahoma Country Readership Questionnaire to be eligible to win a Visa gift card! You may use the QR code, the web address, or the paper questionnaire found on your table. Thank you so much for your assistance!



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Okl. State Univ.
IRB
Approved 7-1-15
Expires 3-16-18
IRB # AG-15-10



<http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>



Oklahoma Country
Readership Questionnaire



<http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>

Thank you so much
for your assistance!



Okla. State Univ
IRB
Approved 7-1-15
Expires 3-16-18
IRB # AG-15-10

APPENDIX C

Instrument



Oklahoma Country
Readership Questionnaire



<http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>

Thank you so much
for your assistance!



Oklahoma Country Readership Questionnaire

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You have three options for completing the questionnaire. The best option for the researchers is to use the QR code or web address to complete the online questionnaire as soon as possible. The second option is to complete the attached questionnaire and return to the survey box. If you are not able to complete the questionnaire right now, you may complete the online questionnaire or mail the paper copy to 448 Agricultural Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078 by **July 17, 2015**. To complete the questionnaire online use your Internet browser of choice and go to <http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>. You may also use the QR code located at the bottom of this page.

The amount of time to complete either survey will be approximately 15 minutes or less. If you choose to provide your information, you will be registered for a random drawing for a Visa gift card and will not receive any additional inquires from the researchers. By completing either the paper or online questionnaire, you give your consent to participate in this study. **Your timely response would be appreciated greatly.**

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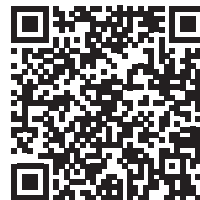
All answers will be stored or entered online in a password-protected account until the questionnaire is closed; then, they will be transferred to a password-protected computer to be analyzed. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not release any information that could possibly identify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

We would appreciate your assistance with this important research. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact me at 405-574-2742 or clarissa.m.fulton@okstate.edu or contact 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. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Fulton

Clarissa Fulton
Graduate Student, Oklahoma State University



Thank you for participating in this study. If you would like to register for a random drawing for a Visa gift card, please complete this form and return to the drawing box. The information collected on this form will not be associated with your answers to the survey.

Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Mailing Address: _____

Thank you for agreeing to share information about your use of the Oklahoma Country, a magazine published by Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

1. Are you a member of Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers?
 Yes. No.
2. How do you receive Oklahoma Country magazine?
 In the mail. Online. I do not receive the Oklahoma Country Magazine.
3. How much total time do you typically spend with a printed issue of the Oklahoma Country magazine?
 60 minutes or more. 10 to 29 minutes.
 30 to 59 minutes. 0 to 9 minutes.
4. How long do you keep the Oklahoma Country magazine?
 I keep it for less than a week. I keep it until the next issue is available.
 I keep it for one to two weeks. I save it as part of an Oklahoma Country
 I keep it for three to four weeks. magazine collection.
 I keep it for more than a month.
5. Why do you (or would you) read the Oklahoma Country magazine? Please select all that apply.
 To be entertained.
 To pass the time.
 To learn more about agricultural-related topics.
 To learn more about current legislation regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma.
 To keep up-to-date with Oklahoma Farm Bureau activities (i.e. conventions, tailgates, meetings, etc).
 I do not or would not read Oklahoma Country magazine. (Please skip to Question 6.)
 Other: _____
6. How much of the Oklahoma Country magazine do you typically read? Please choose only one.
 I read it cover to cover. (Please skip to 'Question 7.)
 I read most of the articles.
 I only read one or two articles.
 I scan rather than read the articles.
 I just scan the headlines and photographs.
7. Why do you not read all of the articles in the Oklahoma Country magazine? Please select all that apply.
 I do not have enough time. The articles are too basic.
 The topics do not interest me. The articles are too long.
 The articles are too technical.
8. With which of the following columns or sections in the Oklahoma Country magazine are you familiar?
Please select all that apply.
 "Presidentially Speaking" "All Around Oklahoma"
 "Executive Outlook" "Country Classifieds"
 "Insurance Matters" "Country Kitchen"
 "Country Gardening"
9. In which of the following OKFB events or activities do you participate?
 State Convention Other: _____
 County Meetings Other: _____
 Other: _____ Other: _____

10. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree

I read on a regular basis:	
the “Presidentially Speaking” column.	1 2 3 4 5 6
the “Insurance Matters” column.	1 2 3 4 5 6
the “Country Gardening” column.	1 2 3 4 5 6
the “All Around Oklahoma” section.	1 2 3 4 5 6
the “Country Classifieds” section.	1 2 3 4 5 6
the “Country Kitchen” section.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The information provided in the Oklahoma Country magazine is useful.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I am interested in:	
Oklahoma Farm Bureau events (conventions, tailgates, area meetings, etc).	1 2 3 4 5 6
updates about the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.	1 2 3 4 5 6
feature stories about Oklahoma Farm Bureau members.	1 2 3 4 5 6
stories about Oklahoma Farm Bureau staff.	1 2 3 4 5 6
stories about Oklahoma production agriculture.	1 2 3 4 5 6
stories related to Oklahoma Farm Bureau insurance information.	1 2 3 4 5 6
how-to stories, such as _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6
information about upcoming state political elections.	1 2 3 4 5 6
information about upcoming federal political elections.	1 2 3 4 5 6
information about policy regarding agriculture and rural Oklahoma.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I am not highly active in the Oklahoma Farm Bureau (such as participating in State Convention, county meetings, etc).	1 2 3 4 5 6
I consider the Oklahoma Country magazine to be a credible source of information.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Oklahoma Country magazine does not strengthen my personal connections with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I do not consider the advertisements in Oklahoma Country magazine before making a purchase.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I consider the quality of writing provided in Oklahoma Country magazine to be excellent.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The information provided in Oklahoma Country magazine is easily understood.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Oklahoma Country magazine’s range of topics is too narrow.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The quality of graphics (photos, illustrations, etc.) in the Oklahoma Country magazine is excellent.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The designs for the presentation of stories in the Oklahoma Country magazine are excellent.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The general appearance of the Oklahoma Country magazine is excellent.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I am impressed with the Oklahoma Country magazine.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I have read the Oklahoma Country magazine on Oklahoma Farm Bureau’s website.	1 2 3 4 5 6
I would read the Oklahoma Country magazine if it was only offered via the Internet.	1 2 3 4 5 6

11. How much time do you spend reading the online version of Oklahoma Country magazine on the Oklahoma Farm Bureau's website?

- 60 minutes or more. 30 to 59 minutes. 10 to 29 minutes. 0 to 9 minutes.

12. Do you ever give the Oklahoma Country magazine to someone else to share an article?

- Yes No

13. With whom do you share the Oklahoma Country magazine? Please choose all that apply.

- Co-workers Other relatives
 Parents Other _____
 Children

14. What changes would you like to see in future issues of the Oklahoma Country magazine?

15. What story types would you like to see in future issues of the Oklahoma Country magazine? Please specify exact topics.

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.

16. What is your age? _____

17. What is your sex?

- Female Male

18. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- Less than high school Associate's degree Professional degree
 High School Bachelor's degree (JD, DVM, etc.)
 Some post-secondary coursework Master's degree Choose not to respond
 Doctoral degree

19. What is your primary county of residence? _____

20. Which agricultural commodities pertain to you? Choose all that apply.

- cattle cotton grain pecans other: _____
 wheat peanuts soybeans other: _____ other: _____
 poultry hay sheep other: _____ other: _____
 dairy swine corn other: _____

21. Where do you live? Please choose the most appropriate response.

- On a farm In a large town In a large city
 In a rural area (10,000 to 50,000) (greater than 50,000)
 In a small town (under 10,000) In a suburb of a large city

22. What is your primary occupation? _____

23. What is your marital status?

- Single Divorced Choose not to respond
 Married Widow(er)

Thank you for participating in this study.

APPENDIX D

Script

OKFB YF&R RESEARCH SCRIPT

Read by chief researcher, Clarissa Fulton.

Hello, my name is Clarissa Fulton, and I am a graduate student in the department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership at Oklahoma State University. Today, I am asking you for your assistance in helping me collect data for my graduate research thesis about the *Oklahoma Country*, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau publication. You will find the questionnaire on the tables. I want to stress participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, that is completely fine.

The insert found in the questionnaire is an information page about today's study. At the top is information you can keep; at the bottom is an optional form to register you for the Visa gift card drawing. The top also includes my contact information and the other researcher on this study should you have any questions about the research as well as information about who to contact regarding your rights as a research volunteer. If you would like to review an issue of the *Oklahoma Country* before completing the questionnaire, we have copies available.

After reading the information sheet, if you choose to participate in the study, you may begin the questionnaire. If you would prefer to complete the questions online, you can use the QR code provided to link you to the online questionnaire. Please follow the instructions carefully and do not write your name. Your names will remain anonymous and your answers will be kept confidential. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you.

When you complete your questionnaire, return it to the survey box. If you would like to register for a random drawing for a Visa gift card, please complete the form at the bottom of the information page and place in the drawing box. The information collected on this form will not be associated with your answers to the questionnaire.

Please complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. You may use pen or pencil. If you have any questions, please ask me.

It should take you 15 minutes or less to complete the questionnaire. If you choose to provide your contact information, you will not receive any additional inquiries from the researchers. By completing either the paper questionnaire or the online questionnaire, you give your consent to participate in this study.

Do you have any questions? When you are finished, please return the questionnaire to the survey box.

I want to stress again this study is completely voluntary; however, if you wish to participate I greatly thank you for your participation in my study.

APPENDIX E

Table Tent

<http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>



Don't forget to complete the Oklahoma Country Readership Questionnaire to be eligible to win a Visa gift card! You may use the QR code, the web address, or the paper questionnaire found on your table. Thank you so much for your assistance!



Don't forget to complete the Oklahoma Country Readership Questionnaire to be eligible to win a Visa gift card! You may use the QR code, the web address, or the paper questionnaire found on your table. Thank you so much for your assistance!



<http://tinyurl.com/YFR15>

VITA

Clarissa May Fulton

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS AND RANCHERS LEADERS TOWARD THE *OKLAHOMA COUNTRY* MAGAZINE

Major Field: Agricultural Communications

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Agricultural Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in December, 2015.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Animal Science at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in 2013.

Graduated from Amber-Pocasset High School, Amber, Oklahoma, in May 2010.

Experience:

Employed as a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, from August 2014 – December 2015.

Professional Memberships:

Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, January 2014 – May 2015.

Graduate Students in Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership, August 2014 – May 2015.