AN EVALUATION OF BRAND EQUITY IN THE ZIMBABWEAN SEED INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF AGRISEEDS (PVT) LTD (2009 -2012)

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DECLARATION

I, ........................................................., do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the Acknowledgements, References and comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

.........................................................  ........................................
Student Signature  Date

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Supervisor Signature  Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks goes to my supervisor, Dr D. Maravanyika who through his patience, guidance, support and encouragement, not only motivated me but inspired me to enrich and complete this arduous study timeously.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to all those busy individuals who sacrificed some of their precious time in order to allow me to interview them and for the great insights they shared with me.

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Words cannot express enough my appreciation to my family, in particular my lovely wife, Tariro, my special daughter, Atipa (Angie) and son, Tadana, who were very supportive throughout this journey. Lastly this journey would not have been the same without the support and encouragement from my friends and fellow MBA students. Above all, I glorify the Almighty God for the strength, courage, wisdom and inspiration throughout the period of my studies.
ABSTRACT

Brand equity has received tremendous attention from both academics and practitioners owing to the several advantages it brings to firms. Brand equity provides an opportunity for successful extensions, resilience against competitors, and creation of barriers to entry and ultimately can be used to sustain competitive advantage. There are several ways to build brand equity and these include advertising, enhancing product portfolio, public relations, warranties, slogans, jingles. Despite Agriseeds adopting some of these strategies to build brand equity like rebranding in 2009, its market share did not improve instead it dropped significantly the same year. The main objective of the study was to assess the level of Agriseeds brand equity and check whether it explains the lack of growth experienced by the business.

A qualitative approach was adopted for the study as it gave the researcher an in-depth understanding of the Agriseeds brand equity. A total of eighteen buyers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The research found that customers were not aware of Agriseeds products but instead were aware of Seed Co, Pioneer and Pannar. The study also found that although customers continue to order seed from Agriseeds, they were not necessarily loyal to Agriseeds. The study also found that customers associated Agriseeds with inferior products and weak marketing activities. The study found that Agriseeds brand equity is very low and this could be the explanation for the poor growth in sales and revenue experienced by the business. The study recommended that Agriseeds revisits its product awareness strategy, pricing policy, deal with customer complaints effectively and treat its customers as special and valued customers in order to benefit from strong brand equity.
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AWCG</td>
<td>Agricultural Coordination Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBBE</td>
<td>Consumer Based Brand Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBBE</td>
<td>Financial Based Brand Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPV</td>
<td>Open Pollinated Variety</td>
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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Brand equity has received tremendous attention from researchers in the past decade or so due to the several advantages it brings to a firm. As a measure of marketing performance, it provides a richer understanding of marketing performance, reconciling short- and long-term performance (Ambler, 2003). Tangible (financial) measures, such as sales and profit, which have been traditionally used, only provide partial indicators of marketing performance due to their historical orientation and typically short-term horizon (Mizik and Jacobson, 2008).

Brand equity has gained popularity due to its strategic role and importance in creating sustainable competitive advantage (Atliganet al, 2005, p. 237). Positive brand equity leads to greater revenue, lower costs, and higher profits and has direct implications for the firm’s ability to command higher prices and the success of brand extensions and licensing opportunities (Keller, 2003).

Brand equity also creates barriers to competitive entry and allows for resilience against competitors’ promotional pressures, (Farquhar, as cited in Fayrene and Lee, 2011). High brand equity is associated with greater customer loyalty, better customer response to communications, and more cooperation from trade and other intermediaries (Gill and Dawra, 2010, p. 189). High brand equity also leads to higher consumer preferences and purchase intentions, as well as higher stock returns (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p 34). Successful brand building could strengthen a producer’s competitive position to withstand the increasing power of retailers (Park and Srinivasan, as cited in Pappu et al, 2005, p. 143).

Due to its importance in today’s marketplace, brand equity has attracted adherence from both academics and practitioners. Several studies have been done in an attempt to understand this concept and use it for creating
sustainable competitive advantage. However, most of these studies have been in the US and the developed world with limited work in the developing world in general and Zimbabwe in particular. In addition very few studies were also done in the seed industry. It is against this background that, this study hopes to contribute to this important concept with specific reference to the Zimbabwean seed industry.

### 1.1.1 Industry Analysis

The maize seed industry is one of the most important sub-sectors in the agricultural sector of Zimbabwe. It consists of nine seed companies namely, Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Agriseeds, Progene Seeds, Prime Seeds, ARDA Seeds, Pristine, National Tested Seeds and Agpy Seeds.

Seed Co, which started operations in 1940, is the leading producer and marketer of seed in Zimbabwe taking a 44% share of the 2011 commercial sales market (Figure 1). Pioneer, a global seed company and the second largest player started operations in Zimbabwe in 1992. Pannar, a South African based seed company has also gone international. Agriseeds and the rest of the other seed companies are indigenous seed companies based in Zimbabwe.
Prior to dollarization seed was mainly sold through government and NGO tenders due to reduced seed output during the period 2000 – 2009. Structural changes in the agricultural sector (fast track land reform program in 2000-2004 which ushered in more smallholder farmers who generally operate under resource-constrained conditions), successive droughts, and an inimical macroeconomic environment (inflationary pressure 2004-2008) were some of the causes of the reduced seed output. Given the importance of the sector to the national economy, government and NGOs intervened by buying the limited seed that was available and distributing directly to farmers leading to the collapse of the normal seed delivery channel.

The advent of the multi-currency regime (dollarization) saw a huge improvement in seed output, which has led to the withdrawal of the government and NGOs in seed distribution and the revival of traditional seed marketing channels. The market requires between 35,000 – 40,000 metric tonnes of seed annually but has over 84,000 metric tonnes (AWCG, 2011). This implies that there is serious competition on the market and therefore seed companies have to adopt strategies to survive and grow in this market, which is characterized by flattening or slow growth. As a result, building brand equity has become increasingly important for seed companies in order to maintain or improve their economic performance.

1.1.2 Background to the Case Study Organisation: Agriseeds (Pvt) Ltd

Agriseeds (Pvt) Ltd was established in 1988, focusing mainly on exporting oil seeds (sunflower), legumes (field bean and cowpea) and small grain seed crops (sorghum, millet). It then diversified into maize seed production in 2006, following the banning of seed exports. Currently, it now deals with production and marketing of maize, sorghum, millet, field bean and cowpea seed for local consumption.

Prior to 2009 all the maize seed that was produced by Agriseedswas bought by both the government and NGOs for onward distribution to farmers. Given the
performance of the industry, Agriseeds adopted an ambitious plan of doubling its production from about 4,000 metric tonnes to about 8,400 metric tonnes (Figure 1.2). This is the same year other seed companies also doubled their production which led to the availability of more than double the annual seed requirements of the country. In order to compete in this highly competitive market Agriseeds adopted several general brand building strategies:

a. exclusive distributorship with Wiruma (Pvt) Ltd. However, this has since been reversed following the acquisition of Wiruma by Castrol Zimbabwe in February 2012. Wiruma has now opened up to Pioneer and Pannar implying stiffer competition for Agriseeds,

b. merchandising and ambassadorial activities in retail outlets,

c. participation in agricultural shows, Agritex field days and dry shows,

d. conducting road shows to promote awareness of the brand and products

e. distribution of flyers and brochures at field days, and shows,

f. selling both hybrids and open pollinated varieties (OPVs). Hybrids outyield OPVs by 30% under high potential environments and 18% under low potential environments (Pixley and Banziger, 2001). However, OPVs are cheaper to produce (they do not require detasselling when

Figure 1.2 Agriseeds seed production and sales trends (2006 – 2012)
producing seed hence the low cost of seed) and can be recycled (that is, if farmers fail to buy seed, they can take seed for the next season from what they harvest without losing yields significantly).

g. charging prices that are on average 22% (hybrids) and 83% (OPVs) lower than major players Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar.

In addition to these general brand building strategies, Agriseeds increased its marketing budget from about 27% to 40%. Agriseeds changed its name from Agricultural Seeds & Services (Pvt) Ltd to Agriseeds (Pvt) Ltd, rebranded its logo in 2010 and changed its packaging to try and appeal to customers (Table 1.1 and Figure 1.2; 1.3).

Table 1.1 Changes to the Agriseeds logo and name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old logo</th>
<th>New Logo</th>
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<td></td>
<td>[Image]</td>
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In addition, strong and positive brand equity leads to greater revenue, lower costs and higher profits and has direct implications on a firm’s ability to command higher prices. In addition, strong

1.2 Problem Statement
As cited in section 1.1 above, literature indicates that strong and positive brand equity leads to greater revenue, lower costs and higher profits and has direct implications on a firm’s ability to command higher prices.
brand equity also creates barriers to entry, leads to higher consumer preferences and greater customer loyalty.

The background to Agriseeds, shows that Agriseeds adopted various marketing strategies to improve its performance given the intensity of the competition on the Zimbabwean seed market. However, contrary to literature, Agriseeds does not seem to be enjoying the brand building initiatives it has embarked on. In fact, the growth is very insignificant, if any.

Consequently, this might result in Agriseeds being pushed out of business by its competitors. Therefore there is need to assess what level of brand equity Agriseeds commands, so as to correct any brand equity deficiencies if there are any. There is need to ask such questions as, what is the level of awareness of the Agriseeds brand, which customers are loyal to Agriseeds, what is the perceived quality of Agriseeds among customers, what is the Agriseeds brand associated with in front of customers. The research problem is to evaluate the level of Agriseeds brand equity and assess how it can benefit from a strong brand equity.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION
Brand equity has become an increasingly important topic in recent years. This is mainly because positive brand equity establishes all sorts of benefits to a firm (customer loyalty, higher margins, brand extension opportunities, more powerful communication opportunities). However, despite the interest in brand equity, there is very little consensus on its meaning, content and measurement. Several studies have been done to try and conceptualize, measure and manage this concept. However, most of these studies were mainly done in the US and a few developed countries. Very few, studies if any have been conducted in Zimbabwe. In addition these studies were done on groceries, clothing, footwear, and very few if any were done in a seed industry. It is therefore envisaged that this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on brand equity especially in seed industry contexts. The study attempts to empirically expand existing knowledge on consumer based brand equity by applying dimensions available in literature.
This study endeavors to evaluate the level of Agriseeds brand equity on the market. It is envisaged that this study will at least benefit marketing and brand managers who seem to be battling to justify marketing expenditure in these tough economic times. It will allow them to use brand equity to drive growth and create shareholder value. If marketing managers start focusing on strategies that will not only drive short term sales but strengthen brand equity whilst creating shareholder value, the brand building initiatives will become part of business strategy to drive business growth. It is also envisaged that this study will help marketing managers especially in a seed industry to focus on brand investments that will drive business profitability.

Considering the unique nature of the seed industry, it is inappropriate to assert that a generic consumer based brand equity model can provide a reliable and valid measuring mechanism. Thus the development of industry specific models becomes a necessary step forward. Several studies have been done to try and develop industry specific models. It is therefore envisaged that this study will contribute to the development of consumer based brand equity model that is applicable to a seed industry.

1.4 OBJECTIVES
The main aim of the study is to assess the level of Agriseeds’ brand equity. The study specifically aims:

- To assess the level of Agriseeds brand awareness among its customers.
- To assess the level of Agriseeds brand loyalty among customers.
- To assess the level of perceived quality of Agriseeds brands among its customers.
- To assess the level of Agriseeds brand associations among customers.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Which Agriseeds customers are aware of the products the company sells?
- Which group of customers is loyal to Agriseeds and its products?
• What is the perceived quality of Agriseeds products amongst its customers?
• What is the image of Agriseeds in the face of its customers?
• What is the Agriseeds brand associated with?

1.6 RESEARCH PROPOSITION
• The performance of Agriseeds (Pvt) Ltd. is largely influenced by the level of brand equity it commands in the market.

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS
• It is an assumption that decisions made by buyers from the different customers represent the interests of their respective companies and those of their customers (farmers).
• It is also an assumption that Agriseeds executives do not review the performance of the main marketing asset and how it has changed but tend to focus more on financial metrics.
• Although marketing is seen as an important function to drive business objectives, Agriseeds does not use its brands effectively as important drivers of future business growth.

1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY
• The sample will be purposively (judgmental) generated and therefore the results can not be statistically inferred to the general population.
• The sample was drawn in Harare only. Although most head offices are located in Harare, the sample excludes unique cases typical of other areas outside Harare.
• Agriseeds (Pvt) Ltd is not listed therefore annual report information cannot be made public.
• The last limitation concerns the context of the study (Zimbabwe) which put constraints on the generalisability of the results to other companies and other national contexts.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter 1.0
This chapter covers the introduction of the research. It gives the background of the study, the problem statement and the background of the organization being used as the case study. The objectives and justifications of the research are also indicated in this chapter.

Chapter 2.0
This chapter focuses on the literature review. It outlines some of the work that has been carried out by other researchers and the theory on the subject matter.

Chapter 3.0
The methodology that will be used in carrying out the research is outlined in this chapter. This chapter outlines the analytical framework of the research design chosen, the justification for a single case study approach, the preparation for data collection, the main sources of data, and the data collection process and data analysis.

Chapter 4.0
The chapter looks at data analysis and discusses the findings. This chapter will apply the theoretical framework from Chapter 2 to the case study, and will see how the selected theory can explain the results obtained from the case study. Within this chapter, the posed research questions in chapter 1 will be answered. The findings from the case study are discussed in this chapter as well.

Chapter 5.0
This chapter will conclude the report by looking at the theory, its application and recommendations.
CHAPTER 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION
Reviewing knowledge accumulated about a question or topic is an essential step in the research process. The assumption is that knowledge accumulates and people learn and build from what others have done. Literature review is a means to an end and not an end in itself, because the purpose of literature review is not to determine the answers about what is known on a topic, but rather to develop sharper and more insightful questions about the topic (Yin, 2003, p. 9). The purpose of this literature review is to demonstrate familiarity with the brand equity body of knowledge and establish credibility, show the path of prior brand equity research and how this study is linked to it, integrate and summarize what is known in brand equity, and learn from others and stimulate new ideas (Neuman, 2006, p. 111).

This chapter critically reviews literature pertaining to brand equity conceptualization and measurement. The literature review initially gives an overview of branding and the role of brands both to consumers and the firm. It then defines brand equity before looking at brand equity perspectives, brand equity constructs and finally brand equity measurement. The chapter discusses in detail, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand image, brand associations and proprietary brand assets. Finally this review gives a brief discussion of brand building before giving the conceptual framework for the study.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF BRANDING
Branding is endowing products and services with the power of a brand. Branding has evolved over time and has now become a common term used in marketing. It is essentially about building a conceptual identity that will reflect a
key message with the objective of developing a name that is strategically sound and makes sense to the company and target audiences over time.

2.2.1 What is a brand?
A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of them, or any other feature, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Kotler, 1991, p. 442; Wood, 2000, p. 664). Keller (1993) called these individual brand components brand identities and their totality the brand. A brand is not just a product but rather the sum total of everything a company does, the good, the bad and even the off strategy, that creates a large context or an identity in the consumer’s mind (Bedbury, 2000). According to de Chernatony et al. (2004) it is a cluster of functional and emotional values which are unique and can provide customers with favorable experience.

A brand is a trademark that communicates a promise, which is a set of symbolic and functional attributes that the marketplace associates with the brand (Phillips, 1998). Symbolic attributes are those that fulfill internally generated needs for self-enhancement, role position, group membership or ego identification (Park et al., 1986) whereas functional brand attributes solve an externally generated consumption related problem.

A successful brand is valuable, since it can enable marketers to gain competitive advantage by facilitating potential brand extensions, developing resilience against competitors’ promotional pressures, and creating entry barriers to competitors (Kim et al, 2003; Rangaswamy et al, 1993). In order to be successful, images and symbols must relate to and indeed exploit the needs, values and lifestyles of consumers in such a way that the meanings involved give added values, and differentiate the brand from other brands (Broadbent and Cooper, 1987).

2.2.2 The role of brands
The primary function of a brand is to provide convenience and clarity in decision making by providing a guarantee of performance and communicating a set of expectations thereby offering certainty and facilitating the buying
process (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p. 275). On the emotional side, the function of a brand is to evoke a set of associations and furthermore symbolize the consumer’s persona through brand imagery. A brand is an important tool in marketing as it is used as a cue by customers to infer product quality. According to Kotler and Keller (2006) brands assist both customers and firms.

For customers brands:

a. identify the source of a product or service which allows customers to assign responsibility to a particular manufacturer, distributor or service provider,

b. brands simplify consumer decision making and reduce risk. Customers learn about brands from past experiences and therefore identify which brands satisfy their needs and which ones do not.

For firms brands:

a. simplify product handling or tracing,

b. help organize inventory and accounting records,

c. offer legal protection. The brand name can be protected through registered trademarks, manufacturing processes and products from research can be protected through patents, packaging can be protected through copyrights and designs. Thus through these intellectual property rights a firm can safely benefit from the brand and reap benefits of a valuable asset,

d. can signal a certain level of quality which can result in satisfied customers choosing the brand again (loyalty). Loyalty can translate into willingness to pay a higher price (price premium).

2.3 BRAND EQUITY

2.3.1 What is brand equity?

The content and meaning of brand equity have been debated in different ways for different purposes (Atligan et al, 2005, p. 238). Reviewing extant literature on brand equity shows that there is a plethora of brand equity definitions (Table 2.1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leuthesser, (as cited in Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 34)</td>
<td>The set of associations and behaviors on the part of the brand's consumers, channel members, and parent corporation that permits the brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it would without the brand name and that gives the brand a strong, sustainable and differentiated advantage over competitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaker (as cited in Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 34)</td>
<td>The value consumers associate with a brand, as reflected in the dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park and Srinivasan, 1994; (Yoo, Donthu, and Lee, 2000)</td>
<td>Brand equity is the incremental utility gained by a product or service by virtue of its brand name. Brands high in equity such as Microsoft, Wal-Mart, Lexus, and Citibank have been known to command high degrees of recognition and resulting success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoo and Donthu (2001, p. 1)</td>
<td>Consumers’ different response between a focal brand and an unbranded product when both have the same level of marketing stimuli and product attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride and Ferrell (2003, p 299)</td>
<td>The marketing and financial value associated with a brand’s strength in the market, including actual proprietary brand assets, brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, and brand associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srinivasan et al, 2005</td>
<td>The incremental contribution ($) per year obtained by the brand in comparison to the underlying product (or service) with no brand building efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010, p. 48)</td>
<td>Brand equity is a set of perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours on the part of consumers that result in increased utility and allows a brand to earn a greater volume</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
or greater margins than it could without the brand name.

Source: The authors

Clearly, over the years the concept of brand equity has proliferated into different meanings, with accountants defining it differently from marketers (Wood, 2000, p. 662). A closer look at the definitions shows that early research centered on financial terms while extant literature is increasingly defining brand equity in customer-based contexts (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 34).

Although there is no universally accepted definition of brand equity, one important consensus among the definitions is that brand equity is defined as the marketing effects that accrue to a product with its brand name compared to those that would accrue if the same product did not have the brand name (Ailiwadi et al, 2003, p. 1). The specific effects can either be consumer level constructs such as attitudes, awareness, image and knowledge, or firm level outcomes such as price, share price, market share revenue, and cashflow.

Brand equity is an important concept in brand management for both theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, it is relevant to understand what key elements make up brand equity (Punj and Hillyer, 2004). From a practical perspective, it is important to figure out how brand equity can be reinforced in order to enhance the overall brand experience.

Brand equity can be built through marketing communications, borrowed through brand extensions or bought through licensing or purchase of brand names (Kotler and Keller, 2006). Basically, brand equity stems from the greater confidence that consumers place in a brand than they do in its competitors. This confidence translates into consumers’ loyalty and their willingness to pay a premium price for the brand.

2.3.2 Motivations for studying brand equity

According to Keller (1993, p.1) there are mainly two motivations for studying brand equity and these are:
a. financially based: brand equity is studied to estimate the value of a brand more precisely for accounting purposes (asset valuation, for the balance sheet) or for merger, acquisition, or divestiture purposes,

b. strategy-based: to improve marketing productivity. Given higher costs, greater competition and flattening demand in many markets, firms seek to increase the efficiency of their marketing expenses.

2.4 BRAND EQUITY PERSPECTIVES

Although there has been no consensus on the definition and measurement of brand equity, past research has broadly divided brand equity into financial and customer-based brand equity (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 2). The first perspective generally referred to as firm-based brand equity (FBBE) stresses the value of a brand to the firm (Simon and Sullivan, 1993; Farquhar et al. 1991). The second perspective generally referred to as consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) defines brand equity as the value of a brand to the consumer (Kamakura and Russell, 1993; Keller, 1993; Yoo and Donthu 2001; Vazquez et al. 2002; de Chernatony et al. 2004; Pappu et al. 2005, p. 144; Christodoulides et al. 2006). Kim et al (2003) adds a third perspective, the combined perspective, which incorporates both the CBBE and FBBE (Dyson et al., 1996; Motameni and Sharhrokhi, 1998). Although the two perspectives might seem different, they are linked because firm-level outcomes (incremental volume, revenue, price commanded, cash flow, and profit) are the aggregated consequence of consumer-level effects (positive image, attitude, knowledge, and loyalty) (Ailiwadi et al, 2003, p. 1).

2.4.1 Firm-based brand equity (FBBE)

The financial perspective discusses the financial value brand equity creates to the business (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 46). It views brand equity as the financial asset value created by brands (Bailey and Ball, 2006), which may be manifested as ‘the additional cashflow created by a brand’ (Biel, 1992). In other words, it views brand equity in terms of discounted incremental future cash flows that result from a branded product in comparison to cash flows that would occur if the same product did not have the brand name. FBBE looks at the incremental cash flows which accrue to branded products over unbranded products. Financial brand equity refers mostly to the value of a
brand for accounting purposes (Keller, 1993).

Researchers have developed and effectively tested accounting methods for appraisal of the asset value of a brand name (Simon and Sullivan, 1993). The brand equity’s value is extracted from the value of the firm’s assets. The methodology separates the value of the firm’s securities into tangible and intangible assets, and then carves brand equity out from the intangible assets (Kim et al, 2003, p. 338). However, the financial value of brand equity is only the outcome of consumer response to a brand name (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 46). Therefore the FBBE method measures the outcome of customer-based brand equity.

2.4.2 Customer-based brand equity (CBBE)

Consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) views brand equity in the context of marketing decision-making, which is concerned with how product or service brands are perceived by customers (Kim et al, 2003, p. 336). CBBE is based on the premise that the power of the brand lies in what customers have learnt, felt, seen and heard about the brand as a result of their experiences over time (Keller, 1993). In other words, the power of a brand lies in the minds of existing or potential customers and what they have experienced directly or indirectly about the brand (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p. 276). CBBE is considered the driving force of increased market share and profitability of the brand, (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 44).

Within the literature, operationalization of CBBE usually falls into two groups: consumer perception (brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality) and consumer behavior (brand loyalty, willingness to pay a high price) (Kim et al, 2003, p. 336). Aaker’s (1991) key sources of brand equity incorporate both perceptual and behavioral dimensions in the definition whereas Lassar et al (1995) strictly distinguish the perceptual dimension from the behavioral dimension so that behavior is a consequence of brand equity rather than brand equity itself.

The conceptualizations of CBBE have mainly been derived from cognitive
psychology and information economics, with the dominant stream being grounded on cognitive psychology focusing on memory structure (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 44).

Researchers such as Farquhar, (1989) have argued in favour of a consumer-based measurement of brand equity (Pappu et al, 2005, p. 144). There is value to the investor, the manufacturer and the retailer only if there is value for the consumer (Cobb-Walgren et al., as cited in Pappu et al, 2005, p. 144). It is from this background that this study will adopt the CBBE approach.

2.4.3 Combined perspective
The combined perspective incorporates both CBBE and FBBE to make up for the insufficiencies that may arise when only one of the two perspectives is emphasized (Kim et al, 2003, p. 338). There are mainly two studies to the best of the researcher’s knowledge that have combined the two perspectives, Dyson et al, (1996) and Montameni and Shahrokhi (1998). Dyson et al, (1996) described a survey research system designed to place a financially related value on the consumer-based equity of brand images and associations. Montameni and Shahrokhi (1998) proposed global brand equity valuations, which combine brand equity from the marketing perspective and brand equity from the financial perspective.

2.5 BRAND EQUITY CONSTRUCTS
Understanding, building and measuring brand equity are the most critical aspects of a brand management process. Brand building initiatives will only yield positive results if sources of brand equity are identified and measured correctly as wrongful inclusion/exclusion would only jeopardize the whole process (Ahmad and Butt, 2011, p. 9). It is therefore paramount to identify sources of brand equity before initiating any brand building exercise.

Extant research is replete with various ways of conceptualizing and measuring this multi-dimensional construct. Two frameworks that encompass the facets espoused in most CBBE conceptualizations are those of Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993). Aaker (1996, p. 15) views brand equity as a set of assets (or liabilities) linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from)
the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers. Keller (1993, p. 2) views CBBE as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. Table 2.2 shows some of the sources of brand equity as suggested by various researchers.

**Table 2.2 Consumer based brand equity constructs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Dimensions of CBBE</th>
</tr>
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                                      Brand associations  
                                      Perceived quality  
                                      Brand loyalty |
| Blackston (1992)  | Brand relationship (trust, customer satisfaction with the brand)                   |
| Keller (1993)     | Brand knowledge (brand awareness and brand associations)                            |
| Sharp (1995)      | Company/brand awareness  
                                      Brand image  
                                      Relationships with customers/existing customer franchise |
| Berry (2000)      | Brand awareness  
                                      Brand meaning |
| Burmann et al (2009) | Brand benefit clarity  
                                      Perceived brand quality  
                                      Brand benefit uniqueness  
                                      Brand sympathy  
                                      Brand trust |

Source: Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010, p.48)

Considering the various suggestions presented in the literature, it is concluded that brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty are the most cited and researched in literature (Aaker, 1996; Yoo et al., 2000). This study will therefore use these constructs in trying to answer the research questions.
2.5.1 Brand awareness

Brand awareness refers to the ability of a consumer to recognize or recall a brand in its product category (Keller, 2003, p.76; Pappu et al, 2005, p. 145). Brand awareness creates value for a firm and its customers by developing positive attitudes and reasons to buy that brand (Aaker, 1991). The focus of a marketer in creating awareness should be to draw favourable purchase intentions (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10).

Brand awareness is related to the strength of a brand’s presence in consumers’ minds and is measured through brand recognition and recall under different conditions (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). Brand awareness links the brand name, logo, symbol to certain associations in memory (Keller, 1993).

Consumers feel more comfortable in purchasing products from brands they already know. Consumers are not willing to buy an unknown brand. Therefore brands for which customers have a strong recall or top of the mind awareness possess a competitive superiority over unknown brands as consumers tend to purchase brands they are familiar and confident with.

Brand awareness becomes the core asset as it is the basis on which loyalty, associations and perceived quality are grounded. A well-known brand has a good opportunity, as and when a consumer decides to make purchasing decisions of the same product category. Given the limited time consumers have in making buying decisions, well-known brands always have an edge over unknown brands in the market. Potential consumers also usually deal with brands that they might have heard of.

Three classical measures of brand awareness exist and these include aided awareness, spontaneous awareness and top of the mind awareness. Top of the mind awareness represents the first brand that comes to the mind of a potential buyer when need arises, among many alternatives that can meet the same need. For example, if a consumer thinks of buying toothpaste, if Colgate, is the first brand that comes to their minds, then Colgate has a high top of the mind awareness among consumers.
2.5.2 Brand loyalty

Aaker (as cited in Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 39) defines brand loyalty as the attachment that a consumer has to a brand. According to Yoo and Donthu (2001, p.3) brand loyalty is the tendency to be loyal to a focal brand, which is demonstrated by the intention to buy the brand as a primary choice. Oliver’s (1999, p. 34) defines brand loyalty as a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior. Thus brand loyalty adds to the value of the brand by ensuring habitual and repeated purchases over along period of time (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10).

Yoo and Donthu (2001) and Oliver’s (1999) definitions emphasize both behavioral and attitudinal (cognitive loyalty) perspectives. Behavioral loyalty refers to the behavior of consumers in the marketplace as indicated by the number of repeated purchases or commitment to rebuy the brand as a primary choice (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10; Gill and Dawra, 2010, p. 192; Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 39). On the hand attitudinal (cognitive) loyalty means the attitude, beliefs and intentions of the customer towards the brand (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10; Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 39). In other words, cognitive loyalty refers to a situation where a brand comes up first in a consumer’s mind, when the need to make a purchase decision arises (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 39). For example, when a consumer intents to buy pizza, if Pizza Inn comes up in their mind as soon as that need arises, then that customer has cognitive loyalty to Pizza Inn. A brand should become a consumer’s first choice (cognitive loyalty) and therefore be purchased repeatedly (behavioral loyalty).

Brand loyalty is linked to price premiums, the amount a customer is willing to pay for the brand in comparison to another brand offering similar benefits (Aaker, 1996). For example, if a customer is willing to pay 10% more for Nugget shoe polish than for Kiwi, then it implies that they are loyal to Nugget.
Brand loyalty is considered a core dimension of brand equity, as it is key for building entry barriers, forming a price premium and avoiding deleterious price competition, and gaining strategic advantages in response to the actions of competitors (Aaker, 1996). Brand loyalty is the pillar on which the idea of brand equity stands because it is impossible to build and sustain long term consumer based brand equity without investing in loyal customers (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10). Brand loyalty leads to greater and continual sales since it’s the same brand being purchased repeatedly irrespective of situational constraints (Chaudhuri, 1995, p. 28).

According to the “double jeopardy” theory advanced by Chaudhuri (1995), small market share brands are at a disadvantage relative to large market share brands in two ways. Firstly, small market share brands have few buyers and secondly they are purchased less frequently by these buyers while large market share brands have more buyers and are purchased more by the same buyers. The principal reason is that there is greater awareness and distribution support for higher market share brands. For example, a high market share brand may be the only available brand in certain stores, and thus distribution patterns may favour habitual buying of high market share brands. In other words, higher market share brands may demonstrate greater levels of repeat purchasing behavior among their buyers. Attitudinally as well, some people like popular (high market share brands) products more than less popular ones (Chaudhuri, 1995, p. 27).

According to Aaker (1996) brand loyalty can be measured through price premium and customer satisfaction. Price premium is the amount customers are willing to pay for the brand in comparison with another brand (or set of brands) offering the same benefits. When measuring price premium, it is useful to segment the market by loyalty (brand buyers, switchers, and non customers) because aggregating over loyalty groups can provide a less sensitive measurement (Aaker, 1996, p. 106). Price premium is defined with respect to a competitor or a set of competitors who must be clearly specified. Alternatively, price premium can be measured through conjoint analysis or trade-off analysis.
Customer satisfaction is a measure that can be applied to existing customers who at least have used the product or service within a defined period of time (Aaker 1996, p. 108). Satisfaction is defined as the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with prior feelings about the consumer experience (Oliver 1999, p. 28). Satisfaction has been conceptualized differently in marketing literature. Some researchers have argued that satisfaction is a transaction-specific measure, others view it as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase consumption and experience (Pappu and Quester, 2006, p. 5). Generally, satisfaction has been conceptualized as whether a product or service meets the customer needs and expectations. In a seed retail industry, context, satisfaction can be defined by the sales volumes achieved, level of support offered by the seed company and ability of the seed to meet the expectations and needs of farmers.

2.5.3 Perceived quality
Perceived quality refers to the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority (Yoo and Donthu, 2001, p. 3). It is related to a consumer’s opinion on the extent to which a particular product will be able to meet his expectations (Gill and Dawra, 2010, p. 193). There is always uncertainty in the minds of the customers with regards product quality due to information asymmetry between buyers and sellers (Kirmani and Rao, 2000). Buyers will make inference based on information provided by sellers. Therefore brand name, product design, packaging, advertisements and other brand identities are the types of information that communicate unobservable quality (Gill and Dawra, 2010, p. 194).

Perceived quality differs from objective quality in that, objective quality refers to the technical, measurable and verifiable nature of products/services, processes and quality controls (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 38). However, objective quality does not necessarily contribute to brand equity since it is impossible for consumers to make complete and correct judgments of objective quality (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 38). Hence perceived quality is used to
judge the overall quality of a product or service. Consumers tend to use quality attributes to infer quality of an unfamiliar product.

Perceived quality gives value and reason to buy the brand, allows differentiation, and provides a strong base for extension (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 11). Perceived quality has been shown to be associated with price premiums, price elasticities, brand usage and remarkably stock return (Aaker, 1996, p.109).

Perceived quality can be subdivided into intrinsic and extrinsic attributes. Intrinsic attributes relate to the physical aspects of a product (such as colour, flavour, form and appearance) while extrinsic attributes relate to the non-physical aspects of a product (such as brand name, stamp of quality, price, store, packaging and product information (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 38).

Consumers generally use price as an important extrinsic cue and indicator of product quality or benefits (Yoo et al, 2000, p. 198). In other words, customers infer quality from price, that is, they compare the price of the current product to the price of either another product or a price in memory (Hilgenkamp and Shanteau, 2010, p. 563). If the current price is higher than the comparison price, then the current product is perceived as higher quality. A product that is least expensive is looked at as having lower quality than a product of a higher price. Price is therefore positively related to perceived quality. A low-priced product gives customers transaction utility (paying less than the consumer’s internal reference price) whereas a high priced product gives high quality image or acquisition utility, leading to reduced consumer risk (Yoo et al, 2000, p. 199).

It is also important to note that brand-loyal customers are willing to pay the full price for their favourite brand because they are less price sensitive than non-brand loyal customers, implying that changing that price level does not affect brand loyalty (Yoo et al, 2000, p. 199).
Perceived quality measurement involves competitor reference. For example, respondents can be asked which vehicle brand has high quality, average quality, or inferior quality when they compare Ford, Nissan and Toyota. However, the interpretation of perceived quality reported among loyal customer, switchers and loyal customers to another brand will usually be different (Aaker, 1996, p.109).

2.5.4 Brand image
Brand image is composed of consumers’ perceptions about a brand as reflected by a set of meaningful associations in their memories (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993), and thus can be appropriately represented by brand associations. It comprises the attributes and benefits associated with a brand that make the brand distinctive, thereby distinguishing the firm’s offer from competition (Webster and Keller, 2004).

2.5.5 Brand associations
Brand associations help consumers in arranging and retrieving brand related information for facilitating purchase decisions (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10). Brand associations consist of all brand-related thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images experiences, beliefs, attitudes and is anything linked in memory to a brand (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 34). Keller (1993) depicts attitudes as the most abstract and highest level of brand association.

Brand associations are consumer memory structures linked with a brand and considered an important antecedent for a consumer’s purchasing behavior (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10). According to the associative network model, human memory consists of associative networks believed to consist of several nodes (Pappu and Quester, 2006, p. 6). For example, if Econet is a node then attributes such as “widest voice and data coverage” and “good customer care” could be the other important nodes linked to the Econet node. These attributes, ‘widest voice and data coverage” and “good customer care” serve as associations to the telecommunications service provider, Econet.

This notion of cognitive psychology is popular in marketing, because consumers associate product categories with brands, countries or even
retailers. For example, generally in Zimbabwe products that come from China
are associated with poor quality, and are commonly referred to as “zhingzhong”.
Topics, Greatermans and Meikles stores are generally associated with good
quality clothing, kitchenware and other cosmetics in Zimbabwe.

Consumers’ memory based associations have both direction and strength with
some researchers arguing that brand-product category associations are bi-
directional (Pappu and Quester, 2006, p. 6). For example, when the product
category “cinemas” is mentioned, the brand name “Rainbow” is mentioned and
whenever the brand name “Rainbow” is mentioned consumers recall the
product category “cinemas”. Furthermore, activating one node in memory leads
to the activation of other linked nodes. For example when a customer thinks of
TN Holdings, other liked nodes such as “convenience stores” and a “variety of
products” might be activated in the mind of the customer. The possibility of
retrieval/activation of the related node depends on the strength of association
between the nodes (Keller, 1993). The strength of the association between the
two nodes depends on the number of times the two nodes have been
associated with each other in the past (Pappu and Quester, 2006, p. 6). Atilgan
et al (2005, p. 241) categorized brand associations into - product associations,
and organizational associations.

Product associations

Product associations can be subdivided into functional attribute associations
and non-functional associations. Functional attributes are the tangible features
of a product while the non-functional attributes include symbolic attributes
(intangible features that meet customer’s needs for social approval, personal
expression or self-esteem) (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 36). When customers
are evaluating a brand they link the performance of the functional attributes to
the brand, that is, if a brand does not perform the functions for which it is
designed, it will have a low level of brand equity (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p.
36). With regards symbolic attributes (intangible features) customers link social
image, perceived value, trustworthiness, differentiation and country of origin to
a brand.
There are four factors that combine in the mind of the consumer to determine the perceived value of the brand: brand awareness, the level of perceived quality compared to competitors, the level of confidence, of significance, of empathy, of liking and the richness and attractiveness of the images conjured up by the brand (Kapferer, 1997).

**Organizational associations**

Organizational associations are those associations related to the company’s expertise in producing and delivering its outputs and corporate social responsibility associations (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 36). According to Aaker (1996, p. 113) the organizational association perspective considers the organization as the people, values and programs that lie behind the brand.

**2.5.6 Proprietary brand assets**

This focuses on assets like trademarks and channel relationships. The most valuable proprietary assets for a company are in the form of trademarks, that are legally bound and cannot be easily copied. A trademark is the brand’s identity consisting of three components namely the name, logo and slogan. A logo is a graphic design that a firm uses, with or without its name to identify itself or its products (Henderson and Cote, 1998). Logos help to reduce search costs for consumers by providing them with the sense of reassurance about the quality of the product (Kohil and Suri, 2002).

Although in his original work Aaker (1991, 1996) proposed other proprietary brand assets as the fifth dimension of CBBE, this dimension is normally omitted because it falls outside the consumer perceptual domain (Buil et al, 2008, p. 385).

**2.6 BRAND EQUITY MEASUREMENT**

Although Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) conceptualized customer-based brand equity, they never operationalized a scale for its measurement, spawning a number of methodologies to quantify it (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010). Some researchers (Park and Srinivasan, 1994; Leuthesser et al, 1995) employed complex statistical procedures, which have proved difficult to comprehend and use among practicing marketers. Empirical
endeavors to operationalize brand equity have classified customer-based brand equity into direct and indirect approaches (Figure 2.1). Direct approaches attempt to measure the phenomenon directly by focusing on consumer preferences or utilities while the indirect approaches measure brand equity through its demonstrable manifestations (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 48). While both approaches have merit, Keller (1993)

![Brand Equity Diagram]

**Figure 2.1 Brand equity measurement methodologies.** Source: Christodoulides and de Chernatony, (2010, p. 45)

argues that the direct and indirect approaches are complimentary and should be used together.

### 2.6.1 Direct approach

The direct approach measures brand equity directly by assessing the impact of brand knowledge on consumers’ response to a marketing program. It requires experiments in which one group of customers responds to an element of the marketing program when it is attributed to the brand and another group of customers responds to that same element when it is attributed to a fictitiously named or unnamed version of the product or service (Kim et al, 2003, p. 337). The blind test by Kamakura and Russell (1993) is an example of the direct approach.

Direct approach studies attempt to separate the value of the brand from the
value of the product (e.g. by using the multi-attribute model), although this has proved to be conceptually and methodologically problematic as brands supervene on products (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 50).

As the indirect measure is unable to capture the strength and favorability of associations, direct measures are employed.

**Multi-attribute approaches**

Srinivasan (as cited in Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 51) measures brand equity by comparing observed preferences based on actual choice with consumer preferences derived from a multi-attribute conjoint analysis. The difference between the overall preference and the preference estimated by the multi-attribute model is subsequently quantified by means of a monetary scale (dollar-metric scale). Similar to other attempts that attempt to measure brand equity directly, this approach does not shed light on the sources of brand value (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 51).

Park and Srinivasan (1994) divided brand equity into two components: an attribute-based component (based on consumers’ evaluations of the physical characteristics) and a non-attribute-based component (based on symbolic associations attached to the brand). They defined brand equity as the sum of the attribute-based component and the non-attribute-based component. The attribute-based component being the difference between subjectively measured attribute preference and objectively measured attribute preference, and the non-attribute-based component the difference between the preference of an individual towards a brand and his subjective attribute-based preference. Objective preferences can be obtained by laboratory tests, blind tests or surveys with experts (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 51). Although this method provides insights into the perceptual distortions caused by a specific product attribute, this method does not break down the non-attribute based component of brand equity (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 51). The other challenge is that acquiring an objective attribute rating from experts is not only tedious but the objective attribute ratings provided by the experts are not really objective, as they may be influenced by
their own biases (Gill and Dawra, 2010, p. 191).

**Other direct approaches**

Without significantly deviating from the underlying logic in multi-attribute models, Leuthesser et al. (1995), developed a method that assumes that personal evaluation of a given brand on a number of attributes is biased. This bias is caused by the fact that consumers are exposed to brands they know. Unlike previous studies, which focus on preference, Kamakura and Russell (1993) proposed a method to measure brand value using the actual purchase behavior of consumers by means of a segmentwiselogit model. Using scanner panel data to capture actual purchase behavior (under regular market conditions under which brands are purchased), they measured brand equity as the ‘implied utility or value assigned to a brand by consumers’ (Kamakura and Russell, 1993, p.10). The brand value was thought of as the value attached by the consumers to the brand ‘after removing the effects of short-term advertising and price promotions’. The authors came up with a proxy of brand value which consist of two components, namely brand intangible value and brand tangible value. Brand tangible value was considered as a function of physical attributes, and the value not arising from physical attributes was termed brand intangible value. Brand intangible value consisted of the value derived by the consumer from brand name associations and perceptual distortions. Although the method offers advantages of reflecting actual purchase behavior it is only confined to contexts where scanner data is available. Therefore this method cannot be used in countries where the presence of organized retail is meager. Similar to Srinivasan (1979), this method does not allow evaluating consumer-based brand equity at the individual consumer level. The other challenge of this method is that a particular brand could have been purchased as a competing brand was not available or a particular brand was purchased from a retail outlet with a limited range, as it did not stock the brand of choice.

Building on the information economics paradigm, Swait et al, (as cited in Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 53) adopted an approach, which uses the entire utility value attached to a brand rather than isolating specific parameters thereof. The authors proposed a new measure ‘Equalisation Price’
which encompasses the monetary expression of the utility a consumer attributes to a bundle consisting of a brand name, product attributes and price (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 53). This instrument allows the identification of sources of brand associations and determines important weights in the function of consumer utility (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 53).

Shankar et al, (2008) developed a model that combines financial and consumer survey data. Although this method has an advantage in that it allows estimation of brand equity in multi-category brands it makes comparisons with rival brands difficult due to competitor financial measures unavailability at the brand level (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 54).

2.6.2 Indirect approach
Compared to direct approaches, indirect approaches adopt a more holistic view of the brand and seek to measure brand equity either through its manifest dimensions or through an outcome variable such as a price premium (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 54). Indirect approaches require measuring brand awareness and the characteristics and relationships among brand associations (Kim et al, 2003, p. 337). Indirect approaches can be divided into intermediate and outcome.

Intermediate approaches
Understanding the complexity of direct approaches to brand equity measurement, Lassar et al (1995) paved the way for a simple paper-and-pencil instrument that enables managers to easily monitor their brand equity through its constituent dimensions. The authors suggested five CBBE dimensions, namely performance, value, social image, trustworthiness and commitment. Despite its merits, the scale focuses solely on associations and excludes significant behavioral components of brand equity (such as behavioral loyalty) (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 55).

Vazquez et al, (2002, p. 28) defined brand equity as the overall utility that the consumer associates to the use and consumption of the brand, including
associations expressing both functional and symbolic utilities. This definition highlights ex-post (utilities obtained by consumers following a brand’s purchase) as opposed to ex-ante (utilities obtained prior to purchase), the latter being the focus of investigation under the information economics paradigm (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 55). Their scale offers several advantages over preceding methods of brand equity measurement. Unlike previous methods, which involve complex statistical modeling, the method is relatively easy, the scale sheds light on the sources of brand equity and it allows measurement at the individual level. However, the scale was calibrated solely in the context of athletic shoes and therefore requires adaptation to other contexts. In addition, Kocak et al (2007) conclude that it may also require adaptation in different cultural context albeit being used in the same athletic industry.

Yoo and Donthu (2001) sought to develop an individual-level measure of CBBE, that is reliable, valid, parsimonious and draws on the theoretical dimensions put forward by Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993)(Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 56). Among the indirect approaches to CBBE measurement, this scale has the most strengths and fewer weaknesses (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 56). The scale is culturally valid, it is applicable to various product categories without requiring further adjustments as in the case of Vazquez et al, (2002). The instrument is parsimonious and easy to administer, making it simple for brand managers to regularly assess the equity of their brands, measurement is made at individual level(Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 56). However, brand awareness and brand associations, two theoretically distinct underlying constructs of brand equity collapsed into one dimension. Although the two are clearly correlated (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993), the two dimensions are not synonymous since one can be aware of a brand without having a strong set of associations linked in memory(Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 57). According to Aaker’s (1991) conceptualization, brand awareness must precede brand associations.

Outcome approaches
Price premium is an outcome variable that can be used to indirectly measure CBBE. This method calculates the additional income or profit that is generated as a result of the differential selling price between a branded product and a generic (non-branded) product (Barwise as cited in Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 56). Revenue premium is another outcome variable proposed by Ailiwadi et al (2003). Although this method is relatively easy and relies on actual data (not subjective judgments) it does not provide insights into sources of brand equity (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010, p. 58).

2.7 BUILDING BRAND EQUITY
Brand equity can be created, maintained and expanded by strengthening the dimensions of brand equity (Yoo et al, 2000, p. 196). There are several antecedents of brand equity, for example any marketing activity can potentially affect brand equity, since it represents the effect of accumulated marketing investments into the brand. Brand equity should therefore be managed over time by maintaining the brand consistency, protecting sources of brand equity, making appropriate decisions between fortifying and leveraging the brand, and fine-tuning the supporting marketing program (Yoo et al, 2000, p. 197).

For branding strategies to be successful and brand value to be created, consumers must be convinced that there are meaningful differences among brands in the product or service category (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p. 276). Customers must not think that all brands in the same product or service category are the same.

Simon and Sullivan (1993) have listed advertising expenditures, sales force and marketing research expenditures, age of the brand, advertising share, order of entry, and product portfolio as sources of brand equity. Other marketing activities that can be listed as sources of brand equity include, the use of public relations, warranties, slogans or jingles, symbols and packages, company image, country of origin, promotional events and brand-naming strategies (Yoo et al, 2000, p. 197).
Farquhar (1989) outlined the following three stages that are required in order to build a strong brand:

1. **Introduction**: introduce a quality product with the strategy of using the brand as a platform from which to launch future products.
2. **Elaboration**: makes the brand easy to remember and develop repeat usage.
3. **Fortification**: the brand should carry a consistent message over time to reinforce its place in the consumer’s mind and develop a special relationship with the consumer.

### 2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is one of the key components of a research design. Developing and describing a conceptual framework helps clarify research questions (Punch, 2005, p. 67). A conceptual framework uses mental images or perceptions to clarify research questions and can be developed ahead of the study or it may emerge as the study progresses.

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<th>Cause</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Brand awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand equity</td>
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<td>Brand loyalty</td>
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<td>(Increased sales, Increased market share, higher profits)</td>
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<td>Perceived quality</td>
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<td>Brand associations</td>
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**Exogenous variables**

- Financial resources
- Marketing expertise
- Availability of good varieties

**Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework**

The model is divided into three parts, (i) the causal variables, (ii) the response variables and the exogenous variables. Strong brand equity (the desired
marketing consequence) is dependent on high brand awareness, positive brand associations, high perceived quality and high brand loyalty. However, there are variables that affect the achievement of the desired marketing state (strong brand equity) and these include, resources available to launch a strong marketing campaign, expertise within the organization, the availability of good varieties.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

From the above analysis, it can be noted that brands are very important for organisations. Brands are beneficial to both firms and customers. They provide convenience and clarity in decision making and provide a guarantee of performance. Brands can be used by firms to create and sustain competitive advantage as they cannot be easily imitated by competitors.

From the review, it can also be noted that brand equity has received tremendous attention from both academics and practitioners owing to the several benefits it provides to firms. Positive brand equity gives greater customer loyalty, higher margins, brand extension opportunities and higher stock returns.

The literature review has also shown that, despite this considerable interest among researchers and practitioners, there is no agreement regarding what brand equity is and more importantly how it is measured. Generally researchers have defined and conceptualized it differently, although the definitions can be classified into two categories, a financial perspective and a customer perspective. The financial perspective discusses the financial value brand equity brings to the business. On the other hand, the customer perspective looks at the value consumers associate with a brand. It looks at the perceptions, attitudes, knowledge and behavior on the part of consumers that result in increased utility. Some authors combined the two perspectives to make up for deficiencies that may arise when only one perspective is emphasized. This study is based on the customer perspective because of the benefits it brings to a firm.
From the review it can be noted that understanding, building and measuring brand equity are the most critical aspects of brand equity. Several studies have been done in an attempt to conceptualize, measure and manage brand equity. Two frameworks that encompass facets espoused in most CBBE conceptualizations are those of Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993). Considering various suggestions as presented in literature, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty are the most common brand equity constructs. This study adopted these brand equity constructs to answer the research questions.

The review has also shown that, although, Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) conceptualized CBBE, they did not operationalize a scale of measurement and leading to a number of methodologies being developed. CBBE measurement can be classified into two approaches of measurement, direct and indirect. Direct approaches attempt to measure the phenomenon directly by focusing on consumer preferences or utilities while the indirect approaches measure brand equity through its demonstrable manifestations. Although several studies have been done to come up with measurement scales, most of these studies have largely been done in the US and other developed countries with very few if any, in Zimbabwe. In addition the studies largely focused on health care, clothing, television sets, insurance, cars, food and electronics with very few if any focusing on a seed industry. Several studies have been done to try and replicate scales in different countries and cultures and have been seen to be failing when replicated in other cultures and countries. This study therefore attempts to apply some of these scales in a seed industry context.

Brand equity can be created, maintained and expanded by strengthening the dimensions or constructs of brand equity. Advertising expenditures, sales force and marketing research expenditures, age of the brand, advertising share, order of entry, product portfolio, slogans, jingles, symbols and packaging, and promotional events can be sources of brand equity. There are three stages that are required to build brand equity and these are, introduction, elaboration and fortification.
To be to clarify the research questions, a conceptual framework was developed. The framework has three parts, (i) the causal variables, (ii) the response variable and (iii) the exogenous variables. Strong brand equity (dependent variable) is dependent on brand awareness, positive brand associations, high perceived quality and high brand loyalty. However, these variables are dependent on other factors such as the availability of financial resources.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter discusses the research design, philosophy and strategy applied in this study. With regards, the research design, the researcher initially discusses in detail the case study research strategy, looking at its applicability, prejudices and finally why it was chosen for this study. The researcher then discusses sampling techniques, population, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN
A research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and ultimately to its conclusions (Yin, 2003. p. 20). In general it involves all issues involved in planning and executing a research project, that is, from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results (Punch, 2005, p. 66). Specifically research design looks at how a researcher should guard against and tries to rule out, alternative interpretations of results.

Research design includes four main ideas: (a) strategy, (b) conceptual framework (c), who or what will be studied, and (d) tools and procedures for collecting and analyzing the data (Punch, 2005 p. 66). The research strategy for this study is given in detail in section 3.4. The conceptual framework for this study is given in section 2.8. The other elements of the research design for this
study are given in sections 3.4 to 3.9.

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY
Research involves the use of theory, which can either be made explicit in the design of the research or the presentation of findings or conclusions (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 70). There are three distinct approaches to research: quantitative, qualitative and what is variously called multi-method, multi-strategy, mixed methods, or mixed methodology (Bryman, 2006, p. 97).

3.2.1 Quantitative (positivist) approach
Quantitative research is based on positivist theory and is a systematic, objective investigation of phenomena and their relationships (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Quantitative research, which is normally characterized by quantification and mathematical model development involves hypothesis deduction, operationalizing the hypothesis, testing the operational hypothesis, examining the specific outcome of the enquiry, modifying theory in line with findings and verifying the revised theory by repeating the procedure (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 71).

3.2.2 Qualitative (phenomenological) approach
Qualitative approach is an unstructured research methodology that is carried out using a small number of carefully selected individuals to produce non-quantifiable insights into behaviour, motivations and attitudes (Wilson, 2006). It is based on interpretive theory and involves an in-depth understanding within a context and is characterized by rich, complete and detailed descriptions.

Qualitative methods are more flexible compared to quantitative methods because they allow more spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the respondent (Mark et al, 2005). Qualitative methods use open-ended interviews to explore opinions, behaviours and attitudes of individuals or groups of individuals (White, 2000). The data collected using such methods is usually in the form of descriptions. The advantage of this approach is that it provides a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data (Silverman, 2000).
3.2.3 The suitable approach

Usually, the research problem defines how the research will be conducted and the researcher selects the research approach based on the purpose of the research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). If the purpose is to explain, predict, confirm, validate or test a theory, then quantitative method is selected. However if the purpose of the research is to describe, explain, explore, interpret or build a theory then qualitative research method is recommended. In addition qualitative methods allow flexibility in that they allow the researcher to probe the respondents by further asking “how” and “why” questions (Mark et al, 2005).

This study attempts to explain why, after adopting various brand building initiatives, Agriseeds is failing to benefit from such efforts. In other words, the study is looking for the presumed link between brand equity constructs and performance of Agriseeds. Qualitative research will give the researcher an in-depth understanding Agriseeds brand equity deficiencies through probing respondents on issues that require explanation.

3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

A research strategy is the reasoning, or the set of ideas by which the study intends to proceed in order to answer its research questions (Punch, 2005, p. 66). There are several strategies that can be used in conducting research and these include, case studies, experiments, history, surveys and the analysis of archival information. The choice of the research strategy will depend on (a) the research question, (b), the control the researcher has over actual behavioral events and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena (Yin, 2003, p. 5).

An experiment is a classical form of research which owes much to the naturals sciences, although it features strongly in social science research, particularly psychology (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 75). A survey is a research method where information is typically gathered using a well defined and standardized data collection procedure, by asking a subset of people questions on a specific topic and generalizing the results to a larger population (Groves et al, 2004). A case
study involves the development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single case or a small number of related cases (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 76). Contrary to most researchers’ beliefs, case studies are not only confined to exploratory studies, but rather they can be used in explanatory and descriptive studies (Yin, 2003, p. 3). This study will involve the use of a case study because the researcher specifically wants to assess the level of Agriseeds brand equity.

3.4 CASE STUDY STRATEGY

Case studies answer “how” and “why” questions about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 2003). The focus of this study was to answer “why” questions about brand equity at Agriseeds. According to Yin (2003, p. 6) “how” and “why” questions are more explanatory and likely lead to the use of case studies, histories and experiments as the preferred research strategies. He further indicated that histories are more applicable when dealing with the “dead” past, that is when there are no relevant persons to report, even retrospectively. On the other hand case studies deal with contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated. Yin (2003) emphasizes that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Although experiments can be used in contemporary studies, they are done when an investigator can manipulate behavior directly, precisely and systematically. For example, exposing a certain group of customers to a certain marketing program or activity then comparing their behavior with an unexposed group.

The case study research strategy enabled the researcher to obtain an in-depth knowledge (Silverman, 2000) on the level of Agriseeds brand equity. The researcher also selected the case study strategy because of the limited time to carry out the research and accessibility to research information (Anderson, 1993).
3.5 DATA COLLECTION

3.5.1 Population
A population is a set of units (usually people, objects, transactions, or events) that one is interested in studying (Salant and Dillman, 1994). In this study, population referred to all customer (retailers, hardwares) that were selling Agriseeds products in the previous four to five years. The sample used in this study constituted buyers from the large hardware and farm supply outlets such as Farm and City, N. Richards, smaller hardwares, mostly individually owned, large retail outlets such as Oks, TMs and Spars and small retail outlets, which are mostly owned by individuals. A total of 18 buyers from the different retail categories were interviewed face to face (Table 3.1). The sample selected ensured that varied views were captured amongst the different profiles of customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Total interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Hardwares (Individually owned)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retail Outlets (Oks, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retail Outlets (Individually owned)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.2 Sampling procedures
To be able to answer research questions data needs to be collected. When data is collected and analyzed from every possible case or group member it is called a census. However due to limitations of time, labour, or access, it may be impossible to collect data from each possible case or group member leading to sampling. There are two types of sampling techniques, (a) probability or random sampling and (b) non-probability or non-random sampling (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 126). Probability sampling involves choosing a sample in such a manner that the chance or probability of each
case being selected is known and is usually equal for all cases. For non-probability sampling the probability of each case being selected from the total population is unknown. Although generalizations can be made about a population for both techniques, it is not possible to make statistical inferences about a population when non-probability sampling has been used. It is for this reason that non-probability sampling is often used in case studies. This study is going to use non-probability sampling.

There are a range of non-probability sampling techniques and these include, quota sampling, purposive, snowball, self-selection and convenience sampling. Quota sampling is a type of stratified sampling technique in which selection of cases within strata is entirely non-random (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 142). Snowball sampling is used when it is difficult to identify members of a population, for example, individuals working but claiming unemployment benefits (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 147). Self-selection sampling occurs when a case, usually an individual, is allowed to identify their desire to participate in research, through publicizing in the media or asking them to participate (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 147). Convenience sampling involves selecting those cases that are easiest to obtain for a sample. Purposive or judgmental sampling involves the use of judgment by the researcher in the selection of cases which will best enable one to answer research questions and meet objectives (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 145). It is often used when one is working with very small samples, such as in the case of case studies and when one wishes to select cases that are particularly informative. This study employed the purposive sampling technique as it seeks to focus on key issues that buyers for retail outlets focus on.

3.6 DATA SOURCES
There are two types of data sources that can be used to answer research questions primary and secondary data. Primary data is data which is gathered directly from the elements of the population while secondary data is data that had already been collected for some other purpose (Salant and Dillman, 1994). Secondary data may either be raw data or published summaries (or complied data) (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 159). This study used both primary
and secondary data though the emphasis was mainly on primary data. Primary data was collected through interviews and the secondary data was obtained from annual reports. There are various instruments or methods that can be used to collect primary data and these include observations, questionnaires and interviews.

3.6.1 Observation
An observation is a purposeful, systematic way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place (Kumar, 1996, p. 105). It can either be participant or non-participant. Participant is where the researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and thus becomes a member of their group, organization or community (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 187). On the other hand non-participative, the researcher does not get involved in the activities of the group but remains a passive observer.

3.6.2 Questionnaire
A questionnaire is a data collection technique where each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a pre-determined order. A questionnaire offers advantages in that it is versatile, quick and cost-effective and can cover a wider geographic area (Boyd et al., 2004). A questionnaire is more appropriate when the study involves issues respondents may feel reluctant to discuss with the researcher (Kumar, 1996, p. 111). However, it has disadvantages which include, limited application (applicable to a population that can read and write), low response rate, self-selecting bias (not all questionnaires are filled by the desired respondents), lack of opportunity to clarify issues, no room for spontaneous responses, and responses may be influenced by responses to other questions (Kumar, 1996, p. 114).

3.6.3 Interviews
An interview is a person-to-person interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind (Kumar, 1996, p. 109). Interviews can be structured or unstructured depending on the degree of flexibility. Structured interviews use questionnaires based on a predetermined and standardized order or identical set of questions asked in the same order as specified in the interview schedule (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 211). An interview schedule is a
written list of questions, open or close-ended, prepared for use by an interviewer, in a person-to-person interaction (which may be face-to-face, by telephone or other electronic media) (Kumar, 1996, p. 109). An unstructured interview, also known as an in-depth interview, involves the use of an interview guide, a framework within which to conduct the interview, by the researcher. Using this structure the interviewer formulates questions spontaneously during an interview. An interview is more appropriate if the study population is illiterate, very young or very old. However, interviews are time-consuming and expensive, the quality of the data depends on the quality of the interaction and may vary when many interviewers are used, and there might be interviewer-interviewee bias (Kumar, 1996, p. 115).

Although the study involved sensitive issues that respondents could have felt reluctant to discuss with the researcher, interviews were used as the research instrument, due to the weakness associated with questionnaires as cited above.

The interview schedule consisted both open and close-ended questions although the bulk were open-ended. In an open-ended question the possible answers are not given while in a close-ended question the possible answers are set out in the questionnaire or schedule and the respondent or the investigator ticks that best describes the respondent’s answer (Kumar, 1996, p. 116). Open-ended questions provide in-depth information if used by an experienced interviewer and allows respondents to express themselves freely, though it might lead to interviewer-interviewee bias. The interview schedule consisted of sections covering demographic characteristics, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations, and overall brand equity.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS
There is no standard format in data analysis in qualitative research (Neuman, 2006). However, data analysis can be approached from two perspectives, a deductive approach or an inductive approach (Saunders et al, 1997, p. 348). The deductive approach is used when one seeks to use existing theory to shape the approach which will be adopted to the qualitative research process.
and to aspects of data analysis. On the other hand, the inductive approach is used when one seeks to build up theory which is relatively grounded in a number of relevant cases. This study adopted the deductive approach where it seeks to advance brand equity theory to answer research questions. According to Yin (1994) when one uses existing theory they should use theoretical propositions to devise a framework to help organize and direct data analysis. This study used a study proposition to devise a conceptual framework that was used to direct data analysis.

The data obtained from the research was therefore analysed through the use of data displays. Data analysis entails deciding what and which meanings can be attributed to the words and what are the implications to that effect and how does it relate to the topic under investigation (Miles and Hubberman, 1994). The data was analysed by going through all the questions and establishing common themes, patterns and relationships (Miles and Hubberman, 1994). All the information gathered was analysed against theory cited in the literature review and the appropriate inferences were made.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings from the analyses of in-depth interviews through the use of content analytic tables. This chapter reveals the demographic profile of the respondents and provides aggregate information about responses. The aggregate information was presented in tables which were explained followed by a discussion of the implications and the link to literature.

The main objective of the study as highlighted in the introduction of this report was to assess the level of Agriseeds brand equity on the Zimbabwean maize
seed market. As highlighted in the introduction, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

- Which Agriseeds customers are aware of the products the company sells?
- Which group of customers is loyal to Agriseeds and its products?
- What is the perceived quality of Agriseeds products amongst its customers?
- What is the image of Agriseeds in the face of its customers?
- What is the Agriseeds brand associated with?

4.2 INTERVIEWS

Face-to-face interviews were carried out with buyers of larger hardware and farming input suppliers such as Farm & City Suppliers, N. Richards, smaller hardware suppliers such as Ranchlite Agrisuppliers and Spacey Cycle Hardware, major retailers such as OK and TM, Spars and Food World Supermarkets, and smaller retail outlets such as Octopus trading. All respondents have been involved in maize seed retailing for the past five years. Questions posed to these respondents were divided into 6 sections.

A. Demographic information
B. Brand awareness
C. Brand loyalty
D. Perceived Quality
E. Brand image
F. Brand equity

4.2.1 Section A: Demographic information

Table 4.2 summarises the demographic information of the respondents that were interviewed.

Table 4.2: Demographic information of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Number of Shops/branches</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Period selling maize</th>
<th>Seed business contribution to overall business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Across Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Over 15 years</td>
<td>Over 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 gives a summary of the demographic information for the respondents used in this study. The figures given are an average per each category. All the respondents were drawn from an Agriseeds customer list that is kept with the Marketing Department. The respondents have all been involved in maize seed sales for at least five years. This implies that the respondents were both experienced and had a strong understanding of the operations of the seed industry during the period covered by the case study (2009 – 2012). The diversity of their operations which encompass major and smaller hardwares, major and smaller retail outlets, enabled the researcher to obtain rich information from the perspectives of businesses with very different backgrounds, vision and operations. The major outlets, both retail and hardwares are owned by groups of shareholders and have different visions, mission statements from smaller outlets, which in most cases are individually owned.

### 4.2.2 Section B: Brand awareness

Table 4.3 Level of brand and product awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed companies are you aware of?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Agriseeds, Progene, ARDA, Agpy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which companies come first before ordering seed?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which varieties are you aware of?</td>
<td>SC501, SC513, SC506, SC403, Pan 6777, Pan695, PHB3043, PHB30G97, PHB30G19, tsoko, mbizi, nzou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly Individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed companies are you aware of?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Agriseeds, Progene, ARDA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Which companies come first before ordering seed? | Seed Co,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)</th>
<th>Which varieties are you aware of?</th>
<th>SC513, SC403, SC635, Pan 413, Pan53, ZM521, ZM421, R201, tsoko, mbizi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed companies are you aware of?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Agriseeds,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which companies come first before ordering seed?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Agriseeds,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which varieties are you aware of?</td>
<td>SC513, SC403, SC625, Pan413, Pan6777, tsoko, mbizi, nzou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smaller Retailers (mostly Individually owned)</th>
<th>Which seed companies are you aware of?</th>
<th>Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Agriseeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which companies come first before ordering seed?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which varieties are you aware of?</td>
<td>SC513, SC403, SC635, Pan 413, Pan53, ZM521, ZM421, R201, R215, tsoko, mbizi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses in Table 4.3 show that all respondents were aware of Agriseeds, Seed Co, Pioneer and Pannar. Smaller retail outlets were not aware of Progene Seeds which they only see along roadsides. All respondents were aware of Agriseeds because as mentioned previously they were all drawn from a list of Agriseeds customers. The table also shows that, although all respondents were aware of Agriseeds as a brand, none of the respondents could think of Agriseeds as a first choice whenever they make decisions to order maize seed opting for Seed Co and Pioneer instead. In terms of product awareness, Table 4.3 shows that only respondents from smaller hardwares and smaller retail outlets could recall Agriseeds products (ZM521, R201). The other categories were not aware of the names of the maize varieties sold by Agriseeds, but could recall products from competitors Seed Co, Pioneer and Pannar.

This study is consistent with literature in that, brands which customers have strong recall or top of the mind awareness, such as Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar seem to possess competitive superiority over unknown brands as evidenced by the huge market shares commanded by these brands. Customers do not prefer to buy an unknown brand but rather tend to purchase brands that they are familiar and confident with.
4.2.3 Section C: Brand loyalty

Table 4.4 Seed companies customers ordered from previously

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed companies have you ordered from in the past?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pannar, Pioneer, Agriseeds, Agpy, ARDA, Progene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed companies have you ordered from in the past?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pannar, Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (Oks, TM, Spars)</td>
<td>Which seed companies have you ordered from in the past?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed companies have you ordered from in the past?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pannar, Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All respondents have previously ordered seed from Agriseeds, Seed Co and Pannar (Table 4.4). Pioneer is mainly sold through major hardwares and retail outlets.

Table 4.5 Seed companies customers would want to continue/discontinue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which ones do you want to continue with?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pannar, Pioneer, Agriseeds, ARDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which ones do you want to discontinue?</td>
<td>Agpy Reports that the company closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which ones do you want to continue with?</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which ones do you want to discontinue?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)  |  Which ones do you want to continue with?  |  All  
|  |  Which ones do you want to discontinue  |  None  
Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)  |  Which ones do you want to continue with?  |  All  
|  |  Which ones do you want to discontinue  |  None  

Although all respondents confirmed that they would continue dealing with the seed companies that they were dealing with previously, the major hardwares will not continue with Agpy, which is believed to have been closed (Table 4.5).

Table 4.6 Level of customer satisfaction with seed companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed companies were you satisfied with?</td>
<td>Pioneer, Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed companies were you satisfied with?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>Which seed companies were you satisfied with?</td>
<td>Pioneer and Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed companies were you satisfied with?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the respondents named Agriseeds as a company that satisfied them during that past seasons, instead they named Pioneer and Seed Co as the companies that satisfied them (Table 4.6).

Table 4.7 Reasons for satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Larger Hardwares (Farm & City, N. Richards) | Please explain why you were satisfied? | Pioneer  
Has good quality seed which gives high yields  
Seed Co  
Farmers trust the seed company  
It has good harvests, big grains  
It is suitable for most regions  
Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned) | Please explain why you were satisfied? | Seed Co  
Has good quality seed  
Markets their seed well  
Farmers trust the seed company  
It has a long history  
It has no germination problems  
Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars) | Please explain why you were satisfied? | Pioneer  
Has very good varieties which are on demand by farmers  
It is a known brand  
Seed Co  
Farmers trust the seed company  
It markets its varieties very well  
Always germinates  
Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned) | Please explain why you were satisfied? | Seed Co  
Markets its seed very well  
It has good varieties and good quality seed  
The seed germinates well without problems

The reasons for naming Pioneer and Seed Co were that these companies commanded huge sales volumes because they felt that farmers have known these companies for a long time, they market their varieties very well, they have high yielding varieties, their seed germinates well so they do not receive complaints from farmers all the time (Table 4.7).

Table 4.8 Level of seed company dissatisfaction among customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed companies were you dissatisfied with?</td>
<td>Agriseeds and Progene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed companies were you dissatisfied with?</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain why you were dissatisfied?</td>
<td>The marketing is very weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)</th>
<th>Which seed companies were you dissatisfied with?</th>
<th>Agriseeds, Pannar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain why you were dissatisfied?</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor marketing activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The seed produces very small cobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pannar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Only two varieties known by farmers Pan 413 and Pan53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pan413 is easily weeviled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of product information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smaller retailers (mostly individually owned)</th>
<th>Which seed companies were you dissatisfied with?</th>
<th>Agriseeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain why you were dissatisfied?</td>
<td>The marketing is very weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They good for horticultural crops not maize seed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All respondents were not pleased with the way Agriseeds markets its products (Table 4.8). The customers felt that Agriseeds sells varieties that are low yielding and that produce very small cobs with very small kernels.

**4.2.4 Section D: Perceived quality**

Table 4.9 The leading brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think is the leading brand?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Please explain why you think its leading?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The first company to produce seed in Zimbabwe and has been there</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It has the best seed varieties on the market
Their seed quality is very good

Pioneer

Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)

Which seed company do you think is the leading brand?
Seed Co

Please explain why you think its leading?
The first company to produce seed in Zimbabwe and has been there for years

Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)

Which seed company do you think is the leading brand?
Seed Co, Pioneer

Please explain why you think its leading?

Seed Co

The first company to produce seed in Zimbabwe and has been there for years

Pioneer

Has very good varieties

Smaller retailers (mostly individually owned)

Which seed company do you think is the leading brand?
Seed Co

Please explain why you think its leading?
The first company to produce seed in Zimbabwe and has been there for years

None of the respondents named Agriseeds as the leading brand in Zimbabwe, instead opting to name Seed Co as the leading brand (Table 4.9). The main reason was that respondents felt that Seed Co was the first seed company to operate in Zimbabwe and it has endured the test of time.

Table 4.10The most innovative seed company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think is innovative?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Please explain why you think its innovative?</td>
<td>They continually come up with new varieties suitable for different regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52
The responses in Table 4.10, show that none of the respondents named Agriseeds as an innovative seed company, but instead named Seed Co. The main reason for naming Seed Co was that it continuously develops new varieties that are adapted to different farming environments. The respondents also felt that Seed Co generally has innovative marketing strategies that assist in the marketing of their varieties.

Table 4.11 General perceived quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed companies do you think has the best varieties?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which companies have the worst varieties?</td>
<td>Agriseeds, Progene, ARDA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned) | Which seed company do you think is innovative? | Seed Co |
| | Please explain why you think its innovative? | They continually come up with new varieties suitable for different regions They lead in marketing strategies |

| Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars) | Which seed company do you think is innovative? | Seed Co |
| | Please explain why you think its innovative? | They continually come up with new varieties suitable for different regions They lead in marketing strategies |

| Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned) | Which seed company do you think is innovative? | Seed Co |
| | Please explain why you think its innovative? | They continually come up with new varieties suitable for different regions They lead in marketing strategies |
Which seed company treats you as a special valued customer? Pioneer, Seed Co, Pannar
Which seed company handles your complaints effectively Seed Co, Pannar

Which seed companies do you think has the best varieties? Seed Co
Which companies have the worst varieties? Agriseeds
Which seed company treats you as a special valued customer? Seed Co
Which seed company handles your complaints effectively Seed Co

Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)

Which seed companies do you think has the best varieties? Seed Co
Which companies have the worst varieties? Agriseeds
Which seed company treats you as a special valued customer? Seed Co
Which seed company handles your complaints effectively Seed Co

Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)

Which seed companies do you think has the best varieties? Pioneer, Seed Co
Which companies have the worst varieties? Agriseeds, Pannar
Which seed company treats you as a special valued customer? Pioneer, Seed Co, Pannar
Which seed company handles your complaints effectively Seed Co, Pannar

Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)

Which seed companies do you think has the best varieties? Seed Co
Which companies have the worst varieties? Agriseeds
Which seed company treats you as a special valued customer? Seed Co
Which seed company handles your complaints effectively Seed Co

The responses in Table 4.11 show that, there is a general perception among customers that Seed Co and Pioneer have the best varieties while Agriseeds and Progene have the worst varieties. With regards treatment as a valued customer, there were no respondents that named Agriseeds as a company that treats them as a special and valued customer, but instead named Seed Co, Pioneer and Pannar. In terms of dealing with customer complaints, none of the respondents named Agriseeds as a company that deals with their complaints effectively, but instead named Seed Co and Pannar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</th>
<th>Which seed has the most expensive seed?</th>
<th>Pioneer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think the seed provides value for money</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>When you grow the varieties they give high yields if all the procedures are followed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed has the most expensive seed?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think the seed provides value for money</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>Farmers believe that Seed Co varieties yield well and they germinate well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>Which seed has the most expensive seed?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think the seed provides value for money</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>When you grow the varieties they give high yields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed has the most expensive seed?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think the seed provides value for money</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>Farmers say that they get good yields with Seed Co varieties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 shows that, none of the respondents named Agriseeds as a supplier of the most expensive seed on the market, but instead naming Pioneer and Seed Co. However, all respondents felt that although Pioneer and Seed Co have the most expensive seed on the market, the seed provides value for money as it gives high yields, the seed of high quality and farmers prefer their varieties.

Table 4.13 Perception on seed cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

55
Larger Hardwares (Farm & City, N. Richards) | Which seed company has the least expensive seed? | Agriseeds, Progene, ARDA
---|---|---
Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned) | Which seed company has the least expensive seed? | Agriseeds
Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars) | Which seed company has the least expensive seed? | Agriseeds
Smaller retailers (mostly individually owned) | Which seed company has the least expensive seed? | Agriseeds

The responses in Table 4.13 show that all respondents named Agriseeds as the supplier of the least expensive seed on the market. This is true mainly because Agriseeds prices its products at on average 22% (hybrids) lower than its major competitors, Seed Co, Pannar, Pioneer. Agriseeds also sells OPVs, which are priced at 83% lower than the cost of hybrid seeds, the only varieties sold by its major competitors, Seed Co, Pioneer and Pannar.

Table 4.14 Role of seed packaging in seed marketing and sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Larger Hardwares (Farm & City, N. Richards) | Do you think packaging plays an important role in seed marketing? | Yes
It appeals to customers
It communicates very important information |
| Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned) | Do you think packaging plays an important role in seed marketing? | Yes
It appeals to customers
Makes seed handling easy |
| Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars) | Do you think packaging plays an important role in seed marketing? | Yes
It appeals to customers
Communicates information |
| Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned) | Do you think packaging plays an important role in seed marketing? | Yes
Good for handling seed |

Table 4.14 shows that, all respondents felt that seed packaging has a role to play in the marketing of seed in Zimbabwe. The main reason being that it can be used to appeal to customers and that it communicates very important information to customers and that it allows easy seed handling. All respondents named Agriseeds as the company with the best packaging. The main reason
being that in addition to appealing to customers, it has a handle that allows customers to carry the seed.

Table 4.15 Seed companies with the best and worst packaging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best packaging?</td>
<td>Agriseeds It is appealing and has got a handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company worst packaging</td>
<td>Progene It does not appeal at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best packaging?</td>
<td>Agriseeds It is appealing and has got a handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pioneer They have one type of packaging which is not appealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best packaging?</td>
<td>Agriseeds It is appealing and has got a handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company worst packaging</td>
<td>Progene It does not appeal at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best packaging?</td>
<td>Agriseeds It is appealing and has got a handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seed Co Has different types of packaging that serve different purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company worst packaging</td>
<td>Pioneer It does not appeal at all and is not informative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15 shows that Agriseeds packaging was regarded as the best packaging by all customers mainly because it is unique and has a handle.
Table 4.16 In-store displays and friendliness of the marketing team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best in-store display?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the worst in-store display?</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company has the most friendly marketing team?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company least friendly marketing team</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best in-store display?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the worst in-store display?</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company has the most friendly marketing team?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company least friendly marketing team</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (Oks, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best in-store display?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company has the worst in-store display?</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company has the most friendly marketing team?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company least friendly marketing team</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller retailers</td>
<td>Which seed company has the best in-store display?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company has the worst in-store display?</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company has the most friendly marketing team?</td>
<td>Seed Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which seed company least friendly marketing team</td>
<td>Agriseeds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All respondents named Agriseeds as the company with the worst in-store displays, and Seed Co as the company with the best in-store displays (Table 4.16). In-terms of marketing team friendliness, all respondents named Agriseeds as having the worst marketing team and Seed the best marketing team.

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### 4.2.5 Section E: Brand associations

#### Table 4.17 Brand uniqueness (differentiation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think differs from other seed companies?</td>
<td>Agriseeds, Progene, Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>Agriseeds and Progene. They do not market their varieties, they are very quiet in the market. They sell OPV varieties. Pioneer. It is the only company that sells seed in kernels not kgs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think differs from other seed companies?</td>
<td>Agriseeds, Progene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>They do not market their varieties, they are very quiet in the market. They sell OPV varieties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (OKs, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think differs from other seed companies?</td>
<td>Agriseeds, Progene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>Agriseeds and Progene. They do not market their varieties, they are very quiet in the market. They sell OPV varieties. Pioneer. Sells seed in kernels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think differs from other seed companies?</td>
<td>Agriseeds, Progene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>They do not market their varieties, they are very quiet in the market. They sell OPV varieties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regards seed company differentiation, all respondents named Agriseeds as a company that is different from other seed companies (Table 4.17). The larger hardwares and the larger retailer categories also named Pioneer as a company different from other seed companies.
Table 4.18 Organizational associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think serves the community?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>They conduct field days, where they reward farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They run competitions every selling season where they reward farmers, agronomists and retailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think serves the community?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>They conduct field days, where they reward farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They run competitions every selling season where they reward farmers, agronomists and retailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (OKs, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think serves the community?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>They conduct field days, where they reward farmers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>Which seed company do you think serves the community?</td>
<td>Seed Co, Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>They conduct field days, where they reward farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They run competitions every selling season where they reward farmers, agronomists and retailers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the respondents named Agriseeds as a company that best serves its community (Table 4.18). Instead the respondents named Seed Co and Pioneer as companies that serve their communities well. The reasons being that both Seed Co and Pioneer conduct field days, run competitions annually which reward farmers, agronomists, extensionists and retailers. In addition, Seed Co sells seed in smaller packages like 2kg packs which allow poor farmers to access improved seed at an affordable rate.
4.2.6 Section F: Brand equity

Table 4.19 Overall brand equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>If all seed companies were offering the same mark-up (5 or 10%, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has high yielding varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>If all seed companies were offering the same mark-up (5 or 10%, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has high yielding varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Retailers (OKs, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>If all seed companies were offering the same mark-up (5 or 10%, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has high yielding varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>If all seed companies were offering the same mark-up (5 or 10%, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has high yielding varieties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The larger hardware category is willing to pay more to acquire Pioneer seeds than any other company products (Table 4.19). It shows that there is a 5-10% premium that Pioneer seeds can get due to the perception that it has high yielding and good quality seeds compared to other seed companies.
### Table 4.20 Overall brand equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger Hardwares (Farm &amp; City, N. Richards)</td>
<td>If all seed companies had the same varieties, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has good quality seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller hardwares (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>If all seed companies had the same varieties, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has good quality seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major retailers (OKs, TMs, Spars)</td>
<td>If all seed companies had the same varieties, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has good quality seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Retailers (mostly individually owned)</td>
<td>If all seed companies had the same varieties, which seed company would you choose?</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain?</td>
<td>It has good quality seed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the respondents indicated that they would choose Agriseeds, if all seed companies were selling the same varieties (Table 4.20). Instead they named Pioneer as their choice in such a scenario. The main reason being that Pioneer produces good quality seed which is uniform and pure.

### 4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

#### 4.3.1 Brand awareness

According to Aaker (as cited in Yoo and Donthu, 2001, p. 3) brand awareness is the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category. Brand awareness creates value for a firm and its customers by developing positive attitudes and reasons to buy that brand (Aaker, 1991). Consumers have been shown to adopt a decision rule to buy only familiar, well-established brands (Keller, 1993). Hence, brand awareness is the foundation for loyalty, associations and perceived quality. Although customers were aware of the brand name Agriseeds, the major retailers and hardwares were not aware of the products sold by Agriseeds. However, they
could recall products from Agriseeds competitors such as Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar. The customers that recalled Agriseeds products recalled only R201, ZM521 and OPVs as varieties sold by Agriseeds. This shows that customers are not aware of new varieties registered by Agriseeds such as ZAP51, ZAP61 and AGS41 that are as high yielding as products from the major competitors, Seed Co and Pioneer (ART Farm, 2012).

Kotler and Keller (2006, p. 278) found that it is possible to “overspend” on brand building if money is not spent wisely as in the case of beverage companies such as Michelob, Miller and Lite. Their sales declined in the 1990s despite sizeable marketing support because of poorly targeted and delivered marketing campaigns. Despite increasing the marketing budget from 27% to about 35%, having ambassadors and merchandisers in shops, changing packing to appeal customers cannot recall Agriseeds product names. Through a well executed “Got Milk” campaign, California Milk Processor Board managed to increase milk consumption despite being outspent by beverage brands such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Budweiser (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p. 278). It is therefore not the quantity of investment in brand building that is a critical factor but rather the quality. The objective of increasing awareness is therefore to generate brand recall and recognition attitudes that generate favourable intentions.

Customers that could not recall the names of Seed Co varieties, they recalled “tsoko” “mbizi”, “nzou” which are Seed Co brand names for their maize products. Given the fact that there are lot of varietal names on the market, Seed Co adopted an “animal concept” to name its varieties according to maturity. This was done to simplify decision making at the time of purchase and allow farmers to recall products that they had experienced previously or what their colleagues had experienced previously. According to Keller (1993, p. 3) brand awareness relates to the likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so. He also defined brand recognition as consumers ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue. Given the fact that there are more than eighty-five registered varieties in Zimbabwe and farmers have to choose varieties and decisions are
made in-store at times, such innovation assist farmers select their favourite varieties.

According to Hilgenkamp and Shanteau (2010), knowledge of a brand name helps to increase perceptions of quality as long as it is a brand with a higher brand value. This implies that knowledge of the brand alone does not imply high brand equity, but it should be associated with higher brand value for it to generate favourable purchase intentions. According to Pappu and Quester (2006), customers highly satisfied with a firm, may recall the name of the brand readily, compared to customers who are less satisfied. However, they further pointed that customers who are strongly dissatisfied may in fact exhibit higher brand awareness quite possibly because of the dissatisfaction. At some point Pannar became popular for selling varieties that are easily weeviled. This implies that farmers that were dissatisfied with varieties from this company exhibited high brand awareness.

This study also found that Seed Co and Pioneer are top of the mind brands for customers implying that at any given opportunity customers feel more comfortable in ordering from these seed companies. These findings confirm the relative market shares found in the Zimbabwean seed industry as depicted in Figure 1 above.

4.3.2 Brand loyalty
Brand loyalty looks at what makes customers consistently purchase one brand over another. Aaker (1991) defined brand loyalty as a situation which reflects how likely a customer would switch to another brand, especially when that brand has made a change either in price or other product features. For example, if a seed company develops a variety which is better than what the customer is currently growing, what is the likelihood that the customer would switch. Aaker (1996) proposed that brand loyalty can be measured through price premium and satisfaction. Price premium is the amount a customer is willing to pay for the brand in comparison with another brand offering similar benefits (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 39). Satisfaction was best defined by Oliver (1999, p. 28) as the summary psychological state resulting when the
emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectation is coupled with prior feelings about the consumer experience.

The results showed that, if all seed companies had the same variety, or were selling at the same price, none of the customer groups named Agriseeds as their choice. However, some customers indicated that they would choose Pioneer because it produces good quality seed (uniform and less chaff). Others indicated that they would choose Seed Co because it has a long history and they trust the company. This shows that customers are more loyal to Pioneer and Seed Co and are therefore willing to pay a premium to acquire seed from these seed companies.

The results showed that customers were satisfied with seed companies that had high sales volumes. They attributed this to good marketing teams, trust of the companies by farmers, good seed germination (no complaints from farmers). Customer satisfaction is an antecedent of brand loyalty because if customers are not satisfied with a brand, they will not be loyal to the brand but search for another brand (Kim et al, 2003, p. 339). Customer satisfaction is known to lead to customer retention, and is believed to influence consumer purchase intentions, repeat purchase behavior and willingness to pay a higher price (Pappu and Quester, 2006, p. 5). Thus creating customer satisfaction improves a firm’s economic performance.

Although all respondents indicated that they would want to continue ordering seed from Agriseeds, it does not necessarily imply that they are loyal to Agriseeds. This implies that in the event that another seed company comes on board, or Agriseeds increases its price, customers might easily switch to the new customer or other customers. However, customers are more loyal to Pioneer and Seed Co, implying that they will be willing to pay a premium to secure seed from these seed companies.

However, one needs to be careful in concluding that customers are loyal to Seed Co and Pioneer, due to the “double jeopardy” theory. According to Chaudhuri (1995), small market share brands are at a disadvantage relative to

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large market share brands in two ways. This is because small market share brands have fewer buyers and are purchased less frequently by these buyers while large market share brands have more buyers and are purchased more frequently by the same buyers. Higher market share brands tend to have greater awareness and distribution support and therefore tend to demonstrate greater levels of repeat purchasing behavior among their buyers. Attitudinally as well, some people like popular (high market share brands) products more than less popular ones (Chaudhuri, 1995, p. 27). Since, Seed Co and Pioneer command higher markets shares (Figure 1.) than other seed companies they might tend to be behaviorally or attitudinally advantaged over their competitors.

4.3.3 Perceived quality

According to Aaker (1996) perceived quality is one of the key dimensions of brand equity because it has been shown to be associated with price premiums, price elasticities, brand usage, and remarkably stock return. Perceived quality can be divided into two factors, intrinsic attributes and extrinsic attributes (Fayrene and Lee, 2011, p. 38). Intrinsic attributes look at the physical aspects of a product (grain colour, grain yield, disease resistance and maturity) while extrinsic attributes relate to the product but not the physical part (brand name, price, and packaging).

The results showed that customers felt that Pioneer and Seed Co have high yielding varieties, that are resistant to diseases, while Agriseeds and Pannar have low yielding varieties, that produce small cobs, and are easily weeviled. The results further showed that Pioneer has the most expensive seed and is associated with high quality attributes while Agriseeds has the least expensive seed but it is associated with low quality attributes. These results show that customers in a seed industry generally assume that price and quality are highly correlated and that as the price of a product increases, its quality increases commensurately. According to Hilgenkamp and Shanteau, (2010, p. 563), customers infer quality from price, that is, they compare the price of the current product to the price of either another product or a price in memory. If the current price is higher than the comparison price, then the current product is perceived as higher quality. A product that is least expensive is looked at as
having lower quality than a product of a higher price. This implies that pricing strategies have a bearing on the overall brand equity of a seed company.

To counter the lack of sensitivity that might come with perceived quality as a measure of brand equity, Aaker (1996, p. 110) introduced a brand leadership (or popularity) measure. Leadership captures the dynamic nature of markets. The results showed that there were no customers that named Agriseeds as either a leading or most innovative company in Zimbabwe. Instead customers named Seed Co as the leading and most innovative brand in Zimbabwean. This is because it was the first company to sell seed and has been there for many years. This shows that Seed Co has a resource that cannot be imitated by competitors, “path dependency”. There are resources that firms can have because of what happened along the path of their development. Seed Co was established by farmers in Zimbabwe and had long term partnerships with the government. Neither, Agriseeds, Pioneer, Pannar nor any other seed company can buy or create this resource easily or quickly even with expensive marketing programs. Seed Co was also named the most innovative because of the new varieties and innovative marketing strategies that it continuously brings on to the market.

4.3.4 Brand associations
Brand associations are consumer memory structures linked with a brand and considered an important antecedent for a consumer’s purchasing behavior (Ahmad and Butt, 2012, p. 10). According to the associative network model, human memory consists of associative networks believed to consist of several nodes (Pappu and Quester, 2006, p. 6). The results show that Seed Co and Pioneer are nodes that are associated in the minds of customers with nodes such as good seed quality, good varieties that yield very well, good marketing campaigns and serving communities. In contrast, Agriseeds and Pannar are associated with poor marketing, limited product information, poor varieties. In order to win the minds of customers, seed companies need to generate positive associations with their brands.
Uniqueness is defined as the degree to which customers feel the brand is different from competing brands (Netemeyer et al, 2004, p. 211). If the brand is not perceived to be unique from competitors, it will have a difficult time in supporting a premium price relative to other brands. Agriseeds and Progenewere named as companies which differ from other companies because they sell both hybrids and OPVs while their major competitors Seed Co, Pioneer and Pannar sell hybrids only. On the other hand, Pioneer was also considered to be different from other seed companies because it sells seed in kernels and not in kilograms as other seed companies. This is a key differentiator for large scale farmers because they can calculate their seed requirements based on the actual number of kernels. Since the size of kernels differs some kilograms may have fewer or more kernels than others which may complicate planting by commercial farmers. However, uniqueness can also result in a company being associated with certain characteristics. Agriseeds was named as unique brand because it sells OPVs, which are perceived by customers to be of poor quality.

The results further show that Seed Co is associated with serving the community well because it sells seed in small packs such as 2kg. This shows that customers are not aware of Agriseeds also introduced small pack sizes in 2010.

4.6 CONCLUSIONS

The chapter was mainly concerned with reporting and discussing research findings, looking at their implications and link to literature. The findings above show that customers are not aware of Agriseeds products, and if they recall they only recall inferior products. However, the same customers are aware of products from Agriseeds competitors. The findings also show that customers who could not recall Seed Co varieties recalled the Seed Co brand names “tsoko”, “mbizi” and “nzou”. The findings also show that customers were satisfied and were more loyal to Pioneer and Seed and thus were willing to pay more for these brands. The findings further show that customers were not satisfied with Agriseeds, Progene and Pannar because of their poor marketing activities, and poor varieties which produce small cobs and are easily weeviled.
CHAPTER 5

5.0 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter the researcher makes inferences and conclusions of the research using the information obtained from the findings as discussed in the previous chapter. Recommendations and areas of further study will also be given in this chapter.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 Brand awareness
The first objective of the study was to assess the level of Agriseeds brand awareness amongst its customers. The first major finding from this study was that although customers were aware of the Agriseeds brand, they could not recall the names of varieties sold by Agriseeds. The other finding is that customers that could not recall Seed Co varieties by name, could recall brand names such as “tsoko”, “mbizi” and “nzou”. This shows that the animal concept has allowed customers to recall and recognize Seed Co products.

5.2.2 Brand loyalty
The second objective of this study was to assess the level of Agriseeds brand loyalty among customers. Another significant finding from this study was that although customers were willing to continue ordering seed from Agriseeds, they were not necessarily loyal to Agriseeds. They were in fact loyal to Pioneer and Seed Co.

5.2.3 Perceived quality
The third objective of the study was to assess the level of perceived quality of Agriseeds brands among customers. The finding from this study is that the Agriseeds brand has very low perceived quality. It has the least expensive seed but has the worst varieties. Brands with high perceived quality were Seed Co and Pioneer.
The study also found that customers infer product quality from the price. They believe that price is positively correlated with quality, that is, as price of a product increases its quality increases commensurately.

The study also found that customers generally felt Agriseeds does not have any attributes that characterize a leading and innovative brand. Customers felt that Seed Co and Pioneer were the leading and innovative brands.

5.2.4 Brand associations
Generally customers associate Agriseeds with poor quality products and poor marketing activities. Whenever they hear of Agriseeds they have these negative associations with Agriseeds. However, the same customers associate Seed Co, and Pioneer with good seed varieties, good marketing strategies and good seed quality. This could explain some of the reasons why Agriseeds products are not sold enough as the company could expect.

5.2.5 Test of the Research proposition
The research proposition is restated as follows:

The performance of Agriseeds is largely influenced by the level of brand equity it commands on the market.

To a large extent the study confirms that the lack of growth in sales and revenue is largely due to low levels of brand equity Agriseeds commands on the market.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Brand awareness
Agriseeds needs to design their marketing strategy in a manner that gets the brand into the prospect’s awareness set, which is finally transferred to the choice set. The seed company must also learn which other brands remain in the consumer choice set, so that it knows its competition and can plan its appeals strategy.
Agriseeds needs to revisit its product awareness strategy to improve its performance. Agriseeds needs to invite its customers (retailers) to its field days so that they are aware of varieties being sold by Agriseeds. Agriseeds also needs to identify a branding concept similar to Seed Co’s “animal concept” which will simplify decision making at the time of purchase. This is mainly crucial when the customer’s best variety is not available or the customer has forgotten the variety name that they want.

5.3.2 Brand loyalty
Given the importance of customer satisfaction in generating brand loyalty which in turn creates opportunities for price premiums, it is important for Agriseeds marketing managers to develop an understanding of the outcomes of customer satisfaction. Some of the reasons for dissatisfaction amongst key Agriseeds customers were that they were not invited to field days conducted by Agriseeds. It is therefore important for Agriseeds to invite such key customers so that they generate positive associations with the company.

There is also need to reassess the level of brand loyalty of Seed Co and Pioneer brands as this might be affected by the “double jeopardy theory”.

5.3.3 Perceived quality
Given that customers in the Zimbabwean seed industry use price to infer quality, Agriseeds management should adopt pricing policies that do not hurt but instead build brand equity. Although there might be a need to balance between several strategies, like use of penetration pricing to lure customers, it might have a negative effect on the perception of customers and their overall purchasing behavior.

Most customers did not name Agriseeds as a company that treats them as a valued and special customer or deals with their customer complaints effectively. It is therefore important for Agriseeds marketing team to identify issues that will make customers feel that they are special and valued. Addressing these issues will generate positive brand associations with the Agriseeds brand. Agriseeds should also be at the forefront of dealing with customer complaints effectively. These issues should be dealt with in such a
manner that when the node Agriseeds is activated in consumers memory, positive association nodes are also reactivated.

5.3.3 Brand associations
Agriseeds has to come up with marketing strategies that generate positive associations in the minds of customers if it is to improve performance.

5.4 STUDY LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
The research was based on a single case study which only focused on Agriseeds customers. The results may be inconclusive since more solid inferences can be made by looking at a broad spectrum of retailers and hardwares involved in the retail of maize seed.

This study was conducted only in Harare despite the fact that seed is sold across the country. Although most head offices are located in Harare, there are some unique characteristics that can come from customers outside Harare where most of the seed is grown.

This study did not look at the antecedents of brand equity such as marketing mix elements, price, distribution, product on brand equity. This field has very limited literature especially in the seed industry. Further research is therefore required to look at the impact of marketing mix elements such as price, distribution intensity, promotion, store on brand equity in a seed industry.
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APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS

Section A
1. How many shops/branches do you operate

2. Where are your shops/branches located

3. How long have you been selling maize seed?
   - less than 5 years □
   - 5-10 years □
   - 10-15 years □
   - above 15 years □

4. What percentage is the seed business to your overall business
   - less than 5% □
   - 5-10% □
   - 10-20% □
   - above 20% □

Section B Brand awareness
1. Which seed companies are you aware of?

2. Which seed companies come first to your mind when you think of ordering maize seed?

3. Which maize varieties are you aware of?

Section C Brand loyalty
4. Which seed companies have you ordered seed from in the past (2009-2012?)
5. Of the seed companies you have ordered from, which seed companies would you continue ordering seed from?

6. Of the seed companies you have ordered from, which seed companies would you discontinue ordering seed from?

7. Please explain, why you would discontinue ordering seed from this/these seed companies?

8. Which seed companies were you satisfied with?

9. Please explain, why you were satisfied?

10. Which seed companies were you dissatisfied with?

11. Please explain, why you were dissatisfied?
12. In your opinion, which seed company do you think is the leading brand?

13. Please explain, why you think its leading?

14. In your opinion, which seed company do you think is innovative?

15. Please explain, why you think its innovative?

Section D Perceived Quality

16. Which seed company do you think has the best maize varieties?

17. Which seed company do you think has the worst maize varieties?

18. Which seed company (or companies) treats you as a special valued customer?

19. Which seed company (or companies) handles your complaints effectively?
Section E Brand Associations

20. Which seed company has the most expensive seed?

21. Do you think the seed provides value for money? yes □ no □
   please explain

22. Which seed company has the least expensive seed?

23. Do you think packaging plays an important role in seed marketing? yes □ no □
   please explain

24. Which seed company has the best packaging?

25. Which seed company has the worst packaging?

26. Which seed company had the best in-store display?

27. Which seed company had the worst in-store display?

28. Which seed company has the most friendly marketing team?
29. Which seed company has the least friendly marketing team?

Section F Brand equity

30. If all seed companies were offering a 5% mark-up on their seed which seed company would you choose, and why?

31. If all seed companies had the same varieties, which seed company would you choose, and why?

32. Which seed company do you think differs from other seed companies?

please explain

33. Which seed company (or companies) do you think serves the community?

please explain