



Content Analysis of Agricultural Information in Selected Nigerian Dailies: 2010 – 2014

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article No.: 080118109 Type: Research DOI: 10.15580/GJAS.2018.8.080118109</p>	<p>This study was carried out to analyze the agricultural content of some selected newspapers in Nigeria between 2010 and 2014. The selected newspapers were National Mirror, Nigerian Tribune, The Nation, The Sun and Vanguard. Research findings revealed that the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues was highest (44) in The Sun newspaper. The Sun allocated more space (16,869.70 cm²) to agricultural issues. It was found that 95.14% of agricultural news were reported on other pages of newspapers beside the prominent pages, with only 4.32 % appearing on the front page and 0.54 % appearing on the back page. There was no significant difference in the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues across the selected newspapers ($\chi^2 = 1.379$), and there was also no significant difference in the volume of space allocated to agricultural issues by the newspapers ($\chi^2 = 1.189$). Based on the findings of the research, it was recommended that the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues be increased by publishers of newspapers, and the volume of space allocated to agricultural issues should also be increased. Agricultural issues should also be reported on the prominent pages of Nigerian newspapers.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture still plays its part in Nigeria's economy, providing basic raw materials, food, and employment of Nigerians (Fakayode *et al.*, 2008). However, this role will be played well if the farmers are in touch with the latest and efficient production methods that will enhance production and profitability. The existence of several agricultural research institutes, specialized universities and agricultural development projects scattered all over the country show that efforts are being made to improve agriculture in Nigeria (Okorie and Oyedepo, 2011). These efforts have led to the development of improved species of crops and breeds of animals, better management of these crops and animals, and the mechanization of most aspects of agricultural production. While these efforts are commendable, it will be of no use to the farmers if they have no access to the information regarding the innovations (Oladeji, 2011).

Agriculture is becoming increasingly dependent on information (Padre and Tripp, 2003), hence, access to agricultural information has become a pre-requisite and a valuable resource for agricultural development. The newspaper is one of the various communication media that are at the disposal of agricultural extension agencies, and are also available to farmers. According to Awojobi and Adeokun (2012), newspapers remain a key player in the conveyance of information to farmers, as it tends to reach more educated and elitist audiences in many developing countries. Newspapers have the advantage of being more permanent, meaning that it can be read and re-read, carries more information, and often more authoritative than other media (Awojobi and Adeokun, 2012). This however does not sideline the disadvantage of it reaching audiences that are literate enough to be able to read.

Considering the advantages of newspapers as compared to other sources of information, it is expected that it should be used frequently to disseminate agricultural information to farmers. It is still arguable, however, that newspapers have not been exploited to the optimum by agricultural research agencies (Apata, 2010). This could be because of the competition from several other issues contesting for space on the pages of Nigerian dailies.

Content analysis is a technique used to describe what is said on a given subject in a given place at a given time (Macnamara, 2005). It is an analytical technique often used by researchers on newspapers and other print media to measure the information presented in these media with respect to the frequency with which particular subject matters are reported and the volume of space allocated to the issues in the media. It provides a measure of the commitment of the media sources to different subject matters, as issues that are accorded preeminence are reported more often, and provided larger volumes of space (Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu, 2014). This research therefore intends to analyze the content of Nigeria's dailies, and to affirm if they have accorded

agricultural issues the needed attention. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. compare the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues by Nigerian dailies;
- ii. assess the volume of space allocated to agricultural issues on Nigerian dailies; and
- iii. ascertain the nature of placement of agricultural issues on the pages of Nigerian dailies.

The following hypotheses were stated and tested:

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues across the selected dailies.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the area of space allocated to agricultural issues across the selected dailies.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

The study area for this research is the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria is a term coined out by a British reporter, Flora Shaw, which she took from the Niger River to apply to the region during the era of colonial rule. The capital city of Nigeria is Abuja. Nigeria comprises 36 States.

Nigeria occupies a landmass of about 923,000km², and runs from latitudes 2°40' N to 15°45' N and Longitudes 4°15' E and 13°55' E. The population of Nigeria is estimated at 140 million (NPC, 2006). It is the most populous country in Africa, and the seventh most populous in the world. Nigeria shares boundary with the Gulf of Guinea in the south, Cameroon and Chad in the east, Niger in the north and Benin in the west. The Atlantic Ocean bounds Nigeria in the south.

Nigeria is found in the tropics, where the climate is seasonally damp and very humid, and experiences two distinct weather conditions; the wet and dry seasons. The wet season spans from April to October, while the dry season covers the months from November to March. Average rainfall along the coast of Nigeria varies from about 180cm in the west to about 430cm in the east, and only 50cm in the extreme north.

A multiplicity of media voices can be found in Nigeria, largely due to the diversity of the population and the history preceding its independence. English is the official language in Nigeria, though the dominant local languages are Hausa in the north, Yourba in the south-west and Igbo in the south-east.

The literacy rate in Nigeria stands at 57.1 percent (www.allafrica.com), with majority of this figure dwelling in the urban cities. It is worth noting that among both urban and rural dwellers, agricultural practitioners stand at about 70 percent of the population (www.allafrica.com).

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected from hard copies of the publications of the selected dailies covering the period of the research, and used for this study. The papers were sought from libraries and vendors of these papers, and the agricultural issues contained therein were analyzed.

Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The population for this study are all the daily newspapers published in Nigeria between 2010 and 2014. Considering the fact that there are several of these newspapers and several publications from them, a sample of 5 newspapers were selected for content analysis of their agricultural information. The newspapers were selected based on their popularity and relatively wide coverage across the country. The selected newspapers were Vanguard newspaper, The Nation, The Sun, Nigerian Tribune and National Mirror.

Eight publications were randomly selected from each of the dailies per year (two publications were selected from each quarter of the year). This means that across the 5 years, 40 publications were selected from each of the dailies. This makes a sample size of 200 publications from the 5 selected dailies. 185 out of the 200 proposed for the study were available at the time of data collection, and used for the analysis.

Analytical Techniques

The data obtained for this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4. Kruskal-Wallis analysis was used to test the two hypotheses.

Kruskal-Wallis for the hypotheses

Kruskal-Wallis (H) test is a non-parametric equivalent of the analysis of variance test. It is used to test for significant difference between three or more groups of independent samples. The formula for Kruskal-Wallis (H) test is stated as follows:

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \times \frac{\sum R_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\sum R_2^2}{n_2} + \frac{\sum R_3^2}{n_3} + \frac{\sum R_4^2}{n_4} + \frac{\sum R_5^2}{n_5} - 3(N+1)$$

Where:

H = Kruskal-Wallis Statistic

N = Total number of newspapers selected (185 editions)

$\sum R_1^2 - \sum R_5^2$ = Sum of squares of the ranks for the newspapers

$n_1 - n_5$ = sample size of the individual newspapers selected

Measurement of Variables

1. Frequency of coverage of agricultural news: This was measured by counting the number of times

agriculture related news were covered by the five selected newspapers, and during the time frame for the research.

2. Area of space allocated to agricultural news: This was measured by mapping out the area covered by agricultural news in the newspapers, and obtaining the area occupied by the news in square centimetres. The dimensions of the agricultural news was measured with a tape and multiplied to give the area of space allocated to the news items.

3. Nature of placement of agricultural issues in newspapers: It was measured by counting the number of times that agricultural issues feature on the front, middle and back pages of newspapers. These pages are referred to as the prominent pages of the newspapers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency of Reportage of Agricultural Issues by Nigerian Dailies

The frequency of reportage of agricultural issues in the selected newspapers between 2010 and 2014 is presented in Table 2. Vanguard newspaper reported nine agricultural issues in 2010, making it the highest in that year. The Sun newspaper reported nine issues in 2011 and thirteen in 2012, the highest in the two years. Vanguard occupied the position of the highest reporter of agricultural issues in 2013 with twelve issues, while the Sun reclaimed the position of the highest reporter of agricultural issues in 2014 with the reportage of ten issues. The frequency of reportage of agricultural issues in the individual years under study is therefore highest between the Sun and Vanguard newspapers.

Analysis of reportage of agricultural issues across the five years reveals that the Sun reported Forty four (44) agricultural issues, making it the newspaper with the highest reportage of agricultural issues. Next to the Sun is the Nation with thirty seven (37) issues, Vanguard with thirty six (36) issues, and National Mirror and Nigerian Tribune both reported thirty four (34) issues across the five years. Judging by year however, 2012 had the highest frequency of publication of agricultural issues with 51 publications.

The Sun newspaper therefore paid more attention to agricultural issues, compared to the other newspapers under study. This implies that the Sun newspaper is more inclined to publish agricultural news than the other newspapers. Okorie and Oyedepo (2011), however, found Punch newspaper to report more agricultural issues between January and December 2007, while Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu (2014) reported that Nigerian Tribune had the highest reportage of agricultural issues between January 2010 and July 2012.

Comparison of the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues across the selected newspapers in the period under review was done using Kruskal-Wallis analysis. Research findings revealed that the newspapers do not differ significantly in their frequency of reportage of agricultural issues (sig. = 0.848), and

the chi-square of the analysis was 1.379. This implies that none of the papers significantly differ in their frequency of reportage of agricultural issues, in spite of some papers reporting more agricultural issues than others. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis of the study which states that there is no significant difference in the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues across the selected newspapers is accepted. Okorie and Oyedepo (2011) found a significant difference in the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues between Punch, Guardian and Tribune newspapers in Nigeria.

Area of Space Allocated to Agricultural Issues by Nigerian Newspapers

The result of the analysis of the area of space allocated to agricultural issues in the selected newspapers across the five years under study is presented in Table 3. It was found that the area of space allocated to agricultural issues in National newspaper in 2010 was 3661.80 cm², the largest in the year. The smallest in the year was The Nation with a volume of 725.40 cm². In 2011, the newspaper with the largest area of reportage of agricultural issues was The Sun, with an area of 7,220.40 cm². The Nation newspaper had the largest area of 3,953.86 cm² in 2012. Vanguard newspaper allocated more space (4,773.10 cm²) to agricultural issues in 2013, while National mirror had the largest area of 2,162.20 cm² in 2014.

Analysis of the total area of space allocated to agricultural issues across the five years revealed that The Sun newspaper allocated the largest area of space to agricultural issues (16, 869.70 cm²) compared to the other newspapers studied. This was closely followed by Vanguard newspaper, with the area of 15, 097.30 cm². The Sun newspaper is therefore rated as having the largest space. Further analysis using Kruskal-Wallis, however revealed that there was no significant difference in the area of space allocated to agricultural issues across the selected newspapers (sig.= 0.880). The Kruskal-Wallis analysis had a chi-square of 1.189. The implication of this finding is that the newspapers do not differ significantly in the area of space they have allocated to agricultural issues.

The null hypothesis which states that the selected newspapers do not differ significantly in the volume of space they allocate to agricultural issues is therefore accepted. Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu (2014) also reported that there was no significant difference in the coverage of organic agricultural news in some selected Nigerian newspapers between January 2010 and July 2012.

Location of Agricultural News Items in Newspapers

The nature of placement of agricultural issues on the pages on the selected newspapers across the time frame of the research is presented in Table 4. It was found that National Mirror and The Sun reported only one issue on their front pages, Nigerian Tribune, The Nation and Vanguard reported two issues each on their front pages. There was no reportage of agricultural issues in the middle pages of all the newspapers. Only The Nation reported agricultural issue on its back page, and it reported only one issue.

With respect to all the papers studied, research findings reveal that agricultural issues were not reported on the centre pages of all the newspapers selected for the study in the five years. While only one agricultural issue was reported on the back page of the selected papers, eight issues were reported on the front pages of the newspapers. Almost all the agricultural news (176) were reported on the other pages of the newspapers.

This result is an indication of the prominence and importance of agricultural issues on the pages of newspapers, as it is expected that issues of importance would occupy the prominent pages (front, centre and back pages) of newspapers in a bid to get the attention of readers. Agricultural issues are therefore of less importance to publishers of newspapers. Oloruntoba, Oladeji and Odedele (2013) found a slightly better result from their research, with 3.0% of agricultural issues reported on the front page newspapers, 9.0% on the back page, 2.5% on the centre page, 4.5% were reserved as special pages, and 81.1% reported on the other pages between 2001 and 2005 in Nigeria.

TABLE 2: Frequency of Reportage of Agricultural Issues

Year	FREQUENCY OF REPORTAGE					Total	Ranking	Chi square	df	Sig.
	National Mirror	Nigerian Tribune	The Nation	The Sun	Vanguard					
2010	7	7	6	6	9	35	3	1.379	4	0.848
2011	6	8	6	9	6	35	3			
2012	10	8	12	13	8	51	1			
2013	4	5	10	6	12	37	2			
2014	7	6	3	10	1	27	5			
TOTAL	34	34	37	44	36	185				
Ranking	4	4	2	1	3					

TABLE 3: Area of Space Allocated to Agricultural Issues

Year	AREA OF SPACE (CM ²)					Total	Ranking	Chi square	df	Sig.
	National Mirror	Nigerian Tribune	The Nation	The sun	Vanguard					
2010	3661.80	2561.10	725.40	1670.20	2563.60	11182.1	4	1.189	4	0.880
2011	2990.70	3012.30	2604.00	7220.40	5286.00	21113.4	1			
2012	1731.50	3017.80	3953.86	3551.50	2286.10	14540.66	2			
2013	1830.00	1884.10	2160.50	2637.80	4773.10	13285.5	3			
2014	2162.20	1475.10	1475.00	1789.80	188.50	7090.6	5			
TOTAL	12376.20	11950.40	10918.76	16869.70	15097.30	67212.36				
Ranking	3	4	5	1	2					

TABLE 4: Location of Agricultural Issues in Newspapers

PLACEMENT	NATIONAL MIRROR (Freq.)	NIGERIAN TRIBUNE (Freq.)	THE NATION (Freq.)	THE SUN (Freq.)	VANGUARD (Freq.)	Pooled Frequency	Percentage
Front Page	1	2	2	1	2	8.0	4.32
Centre Page	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.00
Back Page	0	0	1	0	0	1.0	0.54
Others	33	32	34	44	34	176.0	95.14
TOTAL	34	34	37	45	36	185.0	100.0

CONCLUSION

This research was carried out to analyze the agricultural content of some selected newspapers in Nigeria between 2010 and 2014. The papers selected were National Mirror, Nigerian Tribune, The Nation, The Sun and Vanguard. Research findings revealed that The Sun newspaper had the highest frequency of reportage of agricultural issues across the five years. The year that had the highest frequency of reportage of agricultural issues was 2012. There was no significant difference in the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues across the selected newspapers.

The study revealed that The Sun allocated more space to agricultural issues across the five years. The highest area of space was allocated to agricultural issues in 2011. There was no significant difference in the area of space allocated to agricultural issues across the selected newspapers. Most of the agricultural issues were not reported on the prominent (front, centre and back) pages of the selected newspapers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations were made:

1. Publishers of newspapers should increase the frequency of reportage of agricultural issues on their papers, considering the importance of agricultural information to farmers. Reduction in the cost of publication of agricultural news could influence the increase in publication frequency.
2. The volume of space allocated to agricultural issues should be increased by the publishers of newspapers. A law that stipulates a minimum volume of space to be allocated to agricultural issues by newspapers could be promulgated to ensure increased space for agricultural issues.
3. Agricultural issues, considering their importance should be reported more often on the prominent pages of newspapers. This will attract readers to the

agricultural news, with a positive impact on agricultural production.

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