Press Coverage of Agricultural News:
A Content Analysis of Selected Newspapers

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Abstract

Agricultural input towards national development dropped to an abysmal level on account of the oil boom and other problems besieging the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, the importance of agriculture to national development cannot be over-emphasized especially now that Nigeria is struggling to get out of the economic recession caused by declining oil prices, massive unemployment, hunger, etc. Within this context, this study examined press coverage of agricultural news. The study adopted quantitative and qualitative content analysis as its research methodology. Framing and development theories were considered as theoretical discourse. The population of the study consists of 310 newspapers, and the four papers under investigation constitute the sample size of the study. The four papers were purposively selected due to their circulation strength, and wide coverage of issues. The study found that 70.2% of stories studied covered agriculture positively. However, the findings also revealed that only 4.4% of agricultural news was seen on the front pages, 0.9% on the back page and 6.8% centre spread pages while 87.10% used in the inside pages in the four newspapers, which indicate lack of prominence. The study concluded

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that newspapers' coverage of agriculture in the development of a world needs to be given prominence bearing in mind the potentials of agriculture in the development of a world-class economy.

Keywords: Agriculture, content analysis, framing theory, media coverage, and prominence.

Introduction

The evolution of human history is amply with the economic development which could be traced to agriculture. All over the world, the development of an enduring economy goes hand in hand with agricultural development. Within this context, agriculture is considered a catalyst for the overall development of any nation. According to Ogbalubi and Wokocha (2013), agriculture is a critical sector that drives the economic development and industrialization of any developing nation, and also holds the ace for reducing unemployment. Its development is important for ensuring food and nutritional security, income, and employment generation and for stimulating industrialization and the overall economic development of the country.

Development economists have assigned agricultural sector a central place in the development process of any nation (Chunxiang et al., 2022). Romney (2016) observed that the Nigerian economy has officially gone into recession after figures published in August 2016 showed a 2.06% contraction in the second quarter of 2016. Agriculture is becoming increasingly information sensitive (Padre *et al.,* 2003), hence access to it is imperative. In this context, information is needed to exploit opportunities and to raise the awareness level about the potential impact of agriculture for proper maximization (LEISA, 2002).

The mass media being the watchdog of the society as described by Harold Lasswell cited in (Ndolo, 2005), had the responsibility of informing the citizens on issues of national interest, government policies on agriculture from time to time. Considering the elements that are used by the media in determining what news is, government economic and national development policies attract media as a self-governing and checking function. Okoro (2011) observed that government policies gain prominence when the news media adequately publicized them. As such, without the media, the economic and agricultural policies by government would make no impact.

In line with this, it could be said that newspapers tend to reach more educated, elitist audiences in many developing countries. This may not be compared to radio and TV in terms of the quickest way of reach to mass audience. However, newspapers and magazines do have the advantages of being more permanent, carrying more information, and often being more authoritative than other media. Writing and issuing a straightforward press release remains the most effective and economic tool for mass communication. The other branches of the mass media tend to feed on what they have read in the press. Newspapers can also be used to reach key groups or extension workers (IMAS, 2005). It is on the above premise that this study seeks to analyze how four Nigerian daily newspapers namely, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Guardian*, and *The Nation* newspapers reported agricultural news.

Problem Statement

Agriculture plays an important role in the provision of food, employment, industrial raw materials, income, and foreign exchange for national development. Hence, it is a veritable tool that can be used to

take Nigeria out of the economic recession currently being experienced. However, the nature of prominence and frequency given to certain sector of the economy tends to draw the attention of the public and course those in the position of authority. Thus, Romney (2016) in his study established that despite the importance of agriculture to the Nigerian economy, it's still receiving a low coverage in Nigerian newspapers. Based on this postulation, one will like to know the current profile of the print media in reporting agricultural news, which has created an important knowledge vacuum in the literature for this study to conceive.

Research Questions

Research questions serve as a guide to the researcher in the quest to gather answers to problems being investigated. The research questions for this study are:

1. How frequently do the selected newspapers cover agricultural issues?
2. What is the direction of the newspaper's coverage of agricultural news in Nigeria?
3. To What extent do the selected newspapers give prominence to the agricultural news?
4. What are the frames used by the selected newspapers in covering agricultural news?

Prior Related Studies

Nwogbo (2015) discovered that despite the growing rate of global concern for agriculture in recent times, Nigerian newspapers are yet to give adequate coverage to agricultural news. The study found out that agricultural news recorded only 8.5% in terms of frequency of

coverage. Boko Haram report was 25.8%, Ebola Virus news recorded 19.3% while political activities had the highest percentage of 46.4%. This result shows that compared to other issues in the country, agriculture is poorly covered or reported by Nigerian newspapers.

Okorie and Tunji (2010) in a research conducted on some selected newspapers, out of 4,220 news reports during the period of the study, 750 news items were reported about agriculture. This represents (17.7%) of the entire news report. Based on the data, the agricultural sector was underreported by the Nigerian press. Similarly, cash crop farming, a sub-sector of agriculture received the highest press attention with about 170 news items (representing 22.6%), the forestry received the least with 10 news items (representing 1.3%). This indicates that agricultural news is not adequately reported by the print media.

Similarly, a study on Content Analysis of Agricultural Issues Reported in Two Nigerian Daily Newspapers (*Punch and Guardian*) by Adebowale (2010) reveals that in 2007, out of the 24 editions of newspapers that reported on agriculture, 21.3% reported one or two stories a day, 7.6% reported 3-4 stories while only 1.3% reported up to 5-6 agricultural news items. In 2008, out of the 17 editions of papers that reported on agricultural issues, 28.8% of them reported once or twice daily, 2.6% of the newspapers reported 3-4 times. In 2009, 27editions of newspapers reported on agricultural issues and out of which 25% reported once or twice and 8.8% reported 3-4 times. In 2010, out of the 32 editions of newspapers that reported on agriculture, 36% reported once or twice and 3.8% reported 3-4 times. This shows that agriculture was not given proper coverage, and the study has direct bearing to the current study.

Iyorkyaa (2000) accused the mass media of not playing an active role in agriculture service. Rather Adebowale (2010) alleged that the press revels in publishing negative aspects of life such as murder, adultery, rape than publishing agriculture. Tarigan et al (2022) analyzed the quality of work life and work achievement in the department of agriculture Simalungun Regency. They discovered that the application of principles that pay attention to the quality of work life in the area of agriculture can provide several benefits in ensuring the welfare, good working climate condition of farmers (Evalina et al., 2021). Thus, the preceding studies are significant to the current study within which a well-articulated gap was established.

Therefore, it is safe to argue that agricultural development is a huge investment comprising human and material resources. It is important to inform, educate and enlighten the people involved through the mass media to improve and make agricultural development a moving success. This is of the great necessity, because the basic needs of man such as clothing, shelter and others would not be complete if food is not available for him to eat. Agriculture is therefore cardinal to the existence of man and the growth of any state or nation.

Theoretical Framework

The theories guiding this study are Framing and Development Theories. The Agenda Framing Model was propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974. Agenda framing is an offshoot of Agenda-Setting Theory. In this regard, McCombs *et al.,* (1997) argue that "not only are agenda-setting and framing had effects related, but framing is also, in fact, an extension of agenda-setting." Therefore, framing of news entails "giving specific interpretations using words in news

presentation such that the audience does not just read about an issue but view it from a particular perspective" (Nwabueze & Edegoh, 2010).

The media draw the public's attention to certain topics. The media decide what people think about it. This is the original of Agenda-Setting 'thought'. However, news items usually do more than only bring up certain topics. How the news is brought, the frame in which the news is presented is also a choice made by journalists. Thus, Framing Theory is the way the media organize and present the events and issues they cover. McQuail (2005, p.379) posits that framing consists of "using certain words or phrases, making certain contextual references, choosing certain pictures or films, giving examples as typical, referring to certain sources and so on."

The above theoretical analysis of framing shows that news coverage and presentation are a function of certain knowledge structures and socio-cultural maps of journalists. The theory is relevant to the study because, through the use of appropriate frames, newspapers can return agriculture to its former glory as an economic driver that can remove Nigeria from the economic recession.

On the other hand, Development Media Theory as propounded by McQuail (2005) explains the idea that media needs to give enough support for an existing government and its efforts to bring about socio-economic development. He argued that until a nation is well established and its economic development well underway, media must be supportive rather than critical of the government but assist the government in implementing their policies. As the name implies, the theory relates to media in third-world nations. It favours journalism that seeks out good news, requires that bad news stories are treated with

caution, for such stories could be economically damaging to a nation in the delicate throes of growth and change.

According to McQuail (2005), the media must accept and carry out positive development tasks that are in line with the policies formulated by the political leadership and freedom of the press should not be at variance with the economic priorities of the government and the development needs of the citizenry. Also, the media should give priority to the coverage of those areas that touch on the lives of the people. Content should be development-driven and should centre on the socio-economic and political lives of the people.

The Development Media Theory is relevant to this topic in the sense that part of the responsibility of the media is to give adequate attention to areas that will ensure socio-economic development in society. Therefore, if the media report the agricultural sector effectively, it will mean it is playing its role as a development media. Communication scholars do not seem to agree on one of the assumptions of the theory, which says, "in the interest of development, the state has a right to intervene in or restrict media operation, and devices and direct control can be justified". They argue that it goes against the working of press freedom and makes nonsense of the idea of development. Notwithstanding, despite the shortcomings of the Development Media Theory, the researchers still find the theory to be very imperative in this study.

Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this study, quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods were used. The population of the study consists of the 310 newspapers operating in Nigeria (Msughter,

2018).The four newspapers under investigation constitute the sample size of the study. The four newspapers were purposively selected due to their circulation strength, wide coverage of issues, and popularity (Msughter & Phillips, 2020). The newspapers were studied for a period of six (6) months (July to December 2016). Deductively, the study replicates the research instruments from a similar study that was conducted at University of Nigeria, Nsukka to validate the findings of the current study.

Sampled Editions

	Daily Trust	*Guardian*	*Leadership*	*Nation*	Total
July	3 issue/ weeks x 4 Wks =12	3 issue/week x 4 Wks = 12	3 issue/Wks x 4 = 12	3 issue/Wks x 4 = 12	48
Aug.	12	12	12	12	48
Sept.	12	12	12	12	48
Oct.	12	12	12	12	48
Nov.	12	12	12	12	48
Dec.	12	12	12	12	48
Total	72	72	72	72	288

The unit of analysis for this study is an individual news story. The content categories include direction of coverage: this content category sought to find out the slant of agricultural news reportage in Nigerian newspapers. It checks whether it is positive, negative, or neutral.

Negative: involves stories that do not incline to the interest of the public on agricultural issues as covered and reported in *Daily Trust, The Guardian, Leadership* and *The Nation*. Rather, such reports take sides with bias in both language and content. Subjective stories are negative in perspective

Neutral: these are stories that do not betray their stance or take any position on agricultural issues in both content and language of the presentation in *Daily Trust, The Guardian, Leadership* and *The Nation*.

Positive: this indicates stories which present on agricultural news in *Daily Trust, The Guardian, Leadership* and *The Nation*. Both in language and content, objective reports are positive oriented towards the public interest.

Frequency: this means the number of times the issue appeared in the publications within the study period. Here, it is concerned with how many times the newspapers under study covered stories or issues concerning agriculture as classified below: government policy on agriculture, agriculture business/marketing/financing, agriculture-based NGOs/cooperative organizations, farm input supply and machinery, crops, and animal husbandry, and agriculture extension/research are deductive in nature. Similarly, placement (prominence): this content category is basically to find out the level of prominence that was given to agricultural news in Nigerian newspapers. This is done through news placement, whether the story is placed on: front page,

back page, inside page, or centre spread. For the qualitative content category, the following frames were used: responsibility frame, urgency frame, challenge frame, and importance frame (Adopted from Nwogbo, 2015). The instrument for data collection in this study is a coding sheet which is the most appropriate tool for analyzing manifest contents of messages and information. To verify the validity of the research instrument, the instrument (Code Sheet) was given to communication scholars in the Department of Mass Communication, of Bayero University, Kano for assessment. In checking for the reliability of the study instrument, the researchers conducted an inter-coder reliability test of the whole sampled editions of the news stories. The researcher and the trained coders engaged in a series of training sessions for one week, where copies of the editions were constantly reviewed in line with the content categories identified. Poindexter and McCombs (2000, p. 205) posit that "good coder training and valid coding categories with explicit descriptions will help improve coder agreement".

The formula used in calculating the inter-coder reliability is Holsti's (1969) formula. This formula states thus:

R = 2M

N1+ N2

Where:

R = reliability

M = Number of Coding Decisions agreed on

N = Total Number of Coding Decisions Made by Each Coder. A rule of thumb for acceptable coefficient reliability is 80 percent or above (Poindexter & McCombs 2000). All data collected were analyzed within the context of the research questions using a simple frequency

distribution table, percentages, and numbers, for easy interpretation.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Stories Coverage on Agriculture

Table 1.1: Coder 1 (Master coder)

Source: content analysis (master coder, 2021).

Content Categories	Daily Trust		Guardian		Leadership		The Nation		Total	
Government Policy on Agriculture	59	43.7	47	31.9	31	52.5	43	31.4	180	37.6
Agricultural Business	27	20	52	35.4	14	23.7	62	45.3	155	32.4
Agricultural Based NGO/Cooperative organizations	15	11.1	13	8.8	3	5.1	6	4.4	37	7.7
Mechanical/farm input Supply	11	8.1	8	5.4	0	0	4	2.9	23	4.8
Crop/Animal Husbandry	13	9.6	10	6.8	4	6.8	8	5.8	35	7.3
Agric Extension/Research	10	7.4	17	11.6	7	11.9	14	10.2	48	10.0
Total	135	100	147	100	59	100	137	100	478	100

Table 1.2: Coder 2 (Trained coder)

Source: content analysis (trained coder, 2021).

Content Categories	Daily Trust		Guardian		Leadership		The Nation		Total	
Government P olicy on Agriculture	58	43.3	47	31.9	31	52.5	43	31.6	179	37.6
Agricultural Business	27	20.1	52	35.4	14	23.7	62	45.6	155	32.4
Agricultural Based NGO/Cooperative organizations	15	11.2	13	8.8	3	5.1	6	4.4	37	7.7
Mechanical/input Supply	11	8.2	8	5.4	0	0	4	2.9	23	4.8
Crop/Animal Husbandry	13	9.7	10	6.8	4	6.8	7	5.2	34	7.3
Agric Extension/Research	10	7.5	17	11.6	7	11.9	14	10.3	48	10.0
Total	134	100	147	100	59	100	136	100	476	100

Inter-coder reliability

The formula to calculate the inter-coder reliability according to Poindexter and McCombs (2000) in Holsti's (1969) formula:

$$R = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

Where:

R = reliability

M = Number of coding decisions agreed on

N = Total number of coding decision made by each coder.

$$R = \frac{2\ (476)}{478+476}$$

$$\frac{952}{}$$

$$R = 954$$

$$R = 0.99$$

Inter-coder reliability measures the consistency of coders in coding the content. Hence, the test result above shows coefficient reliability of 0.99. This means that the coding of data was correct and reliable.

Table (2) above shows the frequency and percentages of issues reported by *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *Leadership*, and *The Nation* newspapers between the periods of July to December 2021. It presents issues within the period of study ranging from government policy on agriculture, agricultural business, agricultural base NGOs/cooperative, mechanical input supply, crop/animal husbandry, and agricultural extension/research.

The data indicate that government policy on agriculture and agricultural business recorded the highest frequency in terms of reportage in the *Daily Trust, The Guardian, Leadership*, and *The Nation* newspapers within the period under study. This is in line with the submission of Okorie, and Tunji (2010) in their research conducted on some selected newspapers, out of 4,220 news reports during the period under study, 750 news items were reported about agriculture. This represents (17.7%) of the entire news reported. Based on the data, the agricultural sector was under reported by the Nigerian pres

s. Based on the research question, frequency distribution of stories on other aspects of agriculture is given paucity coverage. This also underscores the theoretical postulation of the Framing Theory that media frame stories to the public by constant reportage of such stories.

Table 1.3: Relationships between the Four Categories Variables

Daily Trust		The Guardian		Leadership		The Nation		XY
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	1
2	4	2	4	2	4	1	1	4

Source: content analysis (2021).

Table 1.3 is about the statistical process of establishing a

3	9	4	16	5	25	6	36	12
4	16	3	9	4	16	5	25	12
5	25	5	25	4	16	4	16	25
6	36	6	36	3	9	3	9	36
...	$\Sigma x^2 = 91$	$\Sigma x = 21$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 91$	$\Sigma x = 21$	$\Sigma x^2 = 71$	$\Sigma x = 21$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 91$	$\Sigma XY = 90$

relationship of the pattern of agricultural news coverage of the variables for this study. Therefore, using Pearson's coefficient which is used for bivariate correlation, table 1.3 presented correlation data between *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *Leadership*, and *The Nation* newspapers.

Where:

        $X\,21$ =means summation of X (stands for *Daily Trust*)

        $X^2\,91$ = means summation of X square in *Daily Trust*

        $Y\,21$ = Summation of Y (stands for *The Guardian)*

        $Y^2\,91$ = Summation of Y square *in The Guardian)*

        $X\,21$ =means summation of X (stands for *Leadership*)

        $X^2\,71$ = means summation of X square in *Leadership*

        $Y\,21$ = Summation of Y (stands for *The Nation*)

        $Y^2\,91$ = Summation of Y square in *The Nation*

        $XY\,90$ = Summation of X and Y (Addition of numbers in newspaper A and B)

$$??= \frac{??? \ ????? \ \ ? \ ??? \ ??}{? \ \overline{[??? \ ??2 \ - \ \ ?? \ ???2][??? \ ??2 \ - \ \ (? \ ??)2}}$$

$$\frac{6?90? - \ ?21?(21)}{? \ ?6?91? - \ ?441?2?[6?71? - \ ?441?2}$$

$$\frac{141}{? \ ?540??15?}$$

$$\frac{141}{?23.2?(3.9)}$$

$$r \ \frac{6(? \ \dfrac{141}{141} \ ?1)}{\sqrt{[6(91) - ((2?90.48.9)1) - (441)2}2}$$

= 1.5585

$$r= 1.56$$

Where

R = relationship

N= the total number

? = Summation

Thus, the above result shows that the correlation between *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *Leadership*, and *The Nation* is significant at 1.56 which means there is a perfect positive relationship between *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *Leadership*, and *The Nation* newspapers. This indicates that there is a high possibility of an increase on the variable X as variable Y increases.

Table 2: **The direction of the newspapers coverage of agricultural news in Nigeria**

This research question seeks to find out the direction of news reports on agriculture. This was done by checking whether the news stories were positive, negative, or neutral.

Coder 1 (Master coder)

	Daily Trust		*Guardian*		*Leadership*		*The Nation*		Total	
Variables	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Positive	68	66.7	122	68.5	49	76.6	102	71.8	341	70.2
Negative	25	24.5	22	12.3	8	12.5	16	11.3	71	14.6
Neutral	9	8.8	34	19.1	7	10.9	24	16.9	74	15.2
Total	102	100	178	100	64	100	142	100	486	100

Source: content analysis (2021).

Table 2.1: Coder 2 (Trained coder)

	Daily Trust		*Guardian*		*Leadership*		*The Nation*		Total	
Variables	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Positive	68	66.7	122	68.5	49	76.6	102	71.8	341	70.2
Negative	25	24.5	22	12.3	8	12.5	16	11.3	71	14.6
Neutral	9	8.8	34	19.1	7	10.9	24	16.9	74	15.2
Total	102	100	178	100	64	100	142	100	486	100

From the above tables (Master coder) &(Trained coder) which analyzed the *direction* of the newspapers' coverage of agricultural news in Nigeria, it was clear that 341 news stories amounting to (70.2%) of the total stories analyzed were positively reported, while 71 (14.6%) news stories were negative and 74 news stories neutral level representing 15.2% within the period under investigation. Therefore, there was no difference in the coded data between the researcher and the trained coder. The trained coder agreed with the researcher on all the coded items in the editions selected for review. The inter-coder reliability is presented below.

Inter-coder reliability;

$$R = 2M$$
$$N1 + N2$$
$$R = 2(486)$$
$$486+486$$
$$R = 1$$

Wimmer and Dominick (2011, P. 175) advise that "as a rule of thumb, most published content analyses typically report a minimum reliability coefficient of about 90% or above using Holsti's formula." Since the test result shows coefficient reliability of (1), it means that the inter-coder reliability between the two coders is (very high). As inter-coder reliability cannot be more than (1), it means here that the reliability is perfect. Within the context of the research question two, news on agriculture was given positive coverage within the period of the study. This also validates the assumption of the Framing Theory.

Table 3: The extent to which the selected newspapers gave prominence to the agricultural news

This research question aimed to ascertain the level of prominence that was given to agricultural news during the period under review. It sought to find out whether the newspapers in the country saw agriculture as very important to national development. Nwogbo (2015) findings on the issue of frequency of reportage given to agriculture, it was discovered that despite the growing rate of global concern for agriculture in recent time, Nigerian newspapers are yet to give adequate coverage to agricultural news. The prominence given to Agricultural news according to the master coder is as follow:

Coder 1 (Master coder)

	Daily Trust		Guardian		Leadership		The Nation		Total	
Variables	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
Front Page	0	0	11	6.5	9	13.0	0	0	20	4.4
Back Page	4	4.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.9
Inside Page	85	92.4	141	83.4	54	78.3	123	96.1	403	87.10
Central Spread	3	3.3	17	10.0	6	8.7	5	3.9	31	6.8
Total	92	100	169	100	69	100	128	100	458	100

Source: *(content analysis, 2021).*

Table 3.1: Coder 2 (Trained coder)

Variables	Daily Trust		Guardian		Leadership		The Nation		Total	
	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
Front Page	0	0	11	6.5	9	13.0	0	0	20	4.4
Back Page	4	4.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.9
Inside Page	85	92.4	141	83.4	54	78.3	123	96.1	403	87.10
Central Spread	3	3.3	17	10.0	6	8.7	5	3.9	31	6.8
Total	92	100	169	100	69	100	128	100	458	100

Source: *(content analysis, 2021).*

There was no difference recorded between the researcher and the trained coder. They agreed on all the coded items. Therefore, the above table presents the level of prominence given to agricultural news in Nigerian newspapers. The result shows that all the news stories analyzed were published in the inside pages of newspapers amounting to 403 (87.10%) while the front page recorded 4.4%; the back page constitutes 0.9% and centre spread got 6.8% within the period under study. Based on the data, the selected newspapers did not attach importance to agricultural issues because only a few stories (were placed on the front page. The inter-coder reliability is presented below.

Inter-coder reliability;

R = 2M

N1 + N2

R = 2 (467)

458+458

R = 1

From the above analysis, it means that at a reliability coefficient of 1, the inter-coder reliability check is strong and perfect. Within the framework of the research question, news stories on agriculture appears in the inside pages than front and back pages. This shows that the print media report agricultural news in the inside pages, and stories in the inside pages attract less attention.

The frames used by the selected newspapers in covering agricultural news

(i)   Responsibility Frame

The essence of using this frame is for the reader to interpret the agricultural issue reported as the responsibility of either government or private sector which they fulfilled or ought to fulfill. The four Nigerian newspapers under study construct agricultural issues in this angle. The commonest words and phrases used for framing responsibility include condemning, support, surplus, etc.

The leadership of November 16th, 2016 on its news stories page through interview analysis by the Minister of agriculture and rural development, Chief Audu Ogbeh while speaking at the 2016 Annual Conference of the Business and Professional Women (BPW) condemned the lending rate currently being charged by banks in the country. The headline reads "Minister Condemns Bank's Lending Rate".

The Guardian of July 6th, 2016 on the news stories of two

governors, Mr. Willie Oblano (Anambra) and Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode (Lagos), have reaffirmed their commitment to the FADAMA III Additional Finance (AF) project of the World Bank in their states. As the headline reads: "Governors support World Bank on FADAMA Project"

Daily Trust of August 10th, 2016 also captured in the news on agriculture thus: "Access to land will revolutionise agric in Nigeria – BOA MD". Also in *The Nation* newspaper, another headline reads: "Ban Ponmo to Nurture Leather Industry"… *The Nation,* Aug. 19th, 2016. Page13.

Farmer Tasks FG on Opening of Dams to Boost Fish Production

Here, the study sought to find out how words are used and the meanings there, while reporting farmers in the agricultural sector. Therefore, the federal government of Nigeria is playing the leading role in the agricultural development of the country. This is done through its ministry of agriculture and other relevant agencies and bodies. Numerous government initiatives and programmes in the agricultural sector were observed in the course of this research. Some of those dominant frames or lines pointing towards this fact include:

a) 10.3bn Annual Egg Production Not Enough – PAN. This was seen in *Leadership* newspaper of Nov. 23rd, 2016. Page 32

b) Tackling Food Shortage, Unemployment in Southwest… *The Nation,* Dec. 16th, 2016. Page 36

c) Niger Rice Mill to create over 10,000 jobs… *The Nation,* Dec. 16th, 2016. Page 36

d) World Bank Tasks Farmers on How to Boost Agriculture… *The Guardian,* Dec. 18th, 2016. Page 39

e) Accesses to Land will Revolutionse Agric in Nigeria… *Daily*

Trust, Aug. 10ᵗʰ, 2016. Page 15

However, other farmers and bodies are partnering with government in agricultural development in Nigeria. This study found that besides federal government, private sector is the next player. The following are some the frames used in presenting them in the newspapers:

1. Ban Ponmo to Nurture Leather Industry'… *The Nation,* Aug. 19ᵗʰ, 2016. Page 13

2. Women Sign MOU With Investors On Pepper Paste Production… *Leadership,* Aug. 3ʳᵈ, 2016. Page 31

3. CADP Implements 73 Per cent of Project Funding… *The Guardian,* Dec. 25ᵗʰ, 2016. Page 4

4. How Argungu Women Make Money from Rice Chaff… *Daily Trust,* July, 10ᵗʰ, 2016. Page 52

(ii)   Urgency frames

Here, the research sought to find out the phrase and tone of agriculture reportage in Nigerian newspapers that depict urgency. The study found out that most of the stories analysed were couched in such frames. For example:

a) **Farmer Tasks FG On Opening of Dams To Boost Fish Production.** This was reported in *The Guardian,* Dec. 25ᵗʰ, 2016.

b) Addressing Quality Control Issues in Nigeria's Agricultural Exports… *The Guardian,* Sept. 2ⁿᵈ, 2016. Page 49.

c) Accessing FG's Intervention in National Milk Production… *Leadership,* Aug. 10ᵗʰ, 2016. Page 34

d) Tackling Food Shortage, Unemployment in Southwest… *The*

Nation, Dec. 16ᵗʰ, 2016. Page 36

(iii)   Challenges frames

Challenges frames here are those dominant tone or phrases used by Nigerian newspapers in reporting existing challenges in their reportage of agriculture news.

Daily Trust newspaper of July16th, 2016 identified some of the challenges encountered by Nigerian farmers as; World Food Day: the many obstacles to Nigeria's food scanty.

The Guardian newspaper of November, 20th, 2016 identified some of the challenges encountered by Nigerian farmers as; Importation Threatens Govt's Agriculture Policy.

Similarly, *Leadership* newspapers of 23th, 2016 also reported that "10.3bn Annual Egg Production Not Enough – PAN".

The Nation of September 23ʳᵈ, 2016 saw how agric can rescue economy, by experts as one of the challenges in Nigerian agriculture sector.

(iv)   Importance Frames

This research category aimed to identify those frames that highlighted or emphasised the needs or importance of agriculture. Most of the stories studied used such frames extensively. For example, in *The Guardian* newspaper of July 29th, 2016, agriculture was reported as; "making the case for urban agriculture", "on agriculture for survival", etc.

"How Argungu Women Make Money from Rice Chaff" *Daily Trust* of July 10th, 2016.

Not many have imagined that there is money in gathering rice chaff at the mills. It is generally considered a waste product that letters the mills and their surroundings. Within the context of the Development Theory, the

media suppose to champion developmental issues to the public domain by given proper coverage of agricultural news.

Conclusion

It is generally acknowledged that agricultural development contributes so much in reducing unemployment and the economic growth of any nation. Nigeria has enormous agricultural potential and successive governments at various levels have pursued several policy frameworks and programs to turn the fortunes of the nation's agricultural sector around. Thus, the conclusion part aims at putting into a nutshell the role agriculture play in economic development in Nigeria. The study adopts content analysis as its research design. Based on the findings of this research, agricultural news is somewhat reported in Nigerian newspapers, but more still needs to be done; this is because much prominence was not given to agricultural news in the four selected newspapers. By implication, agricultural news was not considered to be important by the Nigerian newspapers and consequently, did not receive due attention from them. Therefore, Nigerian newspapers should give the desired attention to agricultural news bearing in mind its potential in the development of a world-class economy

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