

**CONTENT ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION COVERAGE
BY THE GHANAIAN NATIONAL NEWSPAPER, DAILY- GRAPHIC FROM
JANUARY 2014 - DECEMBER 2015.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I Yao Francis Vinyo, author of this dissertation, do hereby declare that, the work presented in this dissertation, with the exception of the identified quotations, is a product of my own research, written entirely by me under supervision in the Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Basic and Applied Science, University of Ghana. None of the materials contained herein, have been presented either in whole or in part for any other degree in this university or elsewhere.

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ABSTRACT

Following reports on poor accessibility of agricultural information and its consequential declining in agricultural growth in the country, this study sought to investigate the role played by the state-owned newspaper (Daily Graphic) to improving access to agricultural information in the country. Content analysis was used as the research design of this study. Secondary data was collected from the Daily Graphic newspaper for the analysis of this study between the period of January 2014 and December 2015. A sample size of 192 editions out of a total population of 576 editions of the newspaper was analysed during the period. The study revealed that only 3% of the total news published by the newspaper during the period was agricultural news. Agricultural news published in the newspaper during the period under study was in six categories namely; hard news, editorial, opinion, advertisement, letter to editor and feature. The highest frequency of agricultural news covered were found in the categories of Advertisements and Hard news, thus 61% and 31% respectively followed by 2% in the editorial category, 4% in the Opinion category and 1% in both the Feature and Letter to the Editor categories each. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the agricultural news published were reported at the less read pages of the newspaper, while agricultural news items reported at the front pages, back pages and the centre spread pages of the newspaper were also 1%, 3% and 1% respectively. The study recommended amongst other things that managers of the state newspaper must engage line reporters or journalists purposely for reporting agricultural sensitive news in the country in order to improve upon its agricultural information coverage.

DEDICATION

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my father, Mr. Raymond Avinu and my Uncles, Mr. Atsu Amengor and Mr. Albert Avinu, for their unflinching financial support throughout my academic studies.



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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is a prelude of the study. It discussed the role of agricultural information in economic growth and provides detailed problem statement of the researcher. It also entails the research questions and objectives of the study as well as definitions of key terms used in the write-up.

1.1. Agricultural Information and economic growth

Access to agricultural information is a key component in improving small-scale agricultural production and linking increased production to markets, thus leading to improved rural livelihoods, improving quality and yield, food security and national economies. Asaba et al., (2008) reports that there is a positive relationship between increase flow of information and agricultural development. In Ghana, many efforts are being made to improve access to agricultural information using agricultural extension workers, radio, television, farmer groups, newsletters and newspapers. The use of the mass media method of communication has been of great help to agricultural extension workers in reaching out to other stakeholders over the years. It is said to be a very powerful tool, which helps in influencing what the public hears and discuss, as well as in the formation of people's opinions on issues (Kosho, 2016; Young, Norman & Humphreys, 2008).

Apart from the fact that mass media require certain audience skills and does not allow much insight into audience, it has the potential to disseminate information quickly and reach out to relatively larger audiences directly or indirectly at relatively cheaper costs compared to other methods of communication (Leeuwis and Ban, 2004). In many developed countries, newspapers are mostly used to reach more educated and elitist audiences and; published messages have the advantages of being more permanent and considered more authoritative compared to other media (Awojobi &

Adeokun, 2012). In Ghana, the role of newspapers in dissemination of information is very crucial as other types of mass media sometimes tend to feed on information published in the newspapers. In view of the many identified potentials of newspapers, it is believed that, if properly utilized, it can help to significantly improve upon the accessibility of agricultural information in the country.

1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Content Analysis

Kerlinger (as cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011), defined the term **Content analysis** as a method of studying and analysing communication in an orderly, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

Agricultural News

The term **Agricultural news** as referred to by Oladele and Boago (2011) and used in this study, refers to information on formal and non-formal training and educational activities related to agriculture.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Report from the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research [ISSER], (2015) indicated that agricultural growth is currently on decline in the country. The agricultural sector has for the past years been faced with many challenges, some of which are land degradation, financial constraints, and land acquisition challenges (Korboe, 2016). Lack of access to agricultural

information by farmers and other agricultural stakeholders have also been stated as one of the key challenges confronting the agricultural sector in the country (Martey, 2014). In Ghana, several information sources are available for use by farmers and other agricultural stakeholders. Some of the information sources available in the country are; agricultural extension workers, radio stations, seminars or workshops, friends, farmers and personal assessments and judgments.

The print media (newspapers, newsletters and journals) have also been noted as a more permanent source of agricultural information to farmers and other agricultural stakeholders. It is also considered to be more authoritative compared to other media. Despite the much potential of the various media sources, especially the print media in making information available to the various stakeholders, access to agricultural information in the country is still reported to be very low (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2016). Unlike other private newspapers, the State-owned Daily Graphic has a basic responsibility of using its platform as a tool for national development. Following reports on the poor accessibility of agricultural information in the country (e.g. FAO, 2016; Martey, 2014), an analysis of the role played by the state-owned newspaper (Daily Graphic) to improving access to agricultural information in the country is critical.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main Research Question

What was the role played by the State-owned newspaper (Daily Graphic) in improving access to agricultural information in the country between the periods January 2014 and December 2015?

The study sought to answer the following questions;

- i. What was the frequency of agriculture news coverage by the Daily Graphic in the country from January 2014 to December 2015?
- ii. How many different categories of agricultural information did the selected newspaper in the country cover during the same periods?
- iii. How much prominence did the Daily Graphic give to agricultural news during the period under study?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main Objectives

The main objective of the study was to content analyse the national newspaper publications on agricultural issues between January 2014 to December 2015.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives;

- i. To categorize the types of agricultural articles published by the selected newspaper.
- ii. To establish the frequency of appearance of agricultural information under different categories of articles during the period of study
- iii. To assess the level of prominence given to agricultural news by the newspaper during the period under study.

1.6 STUDY JUSTIFICATION

In Ghana, newspapers have the potential of disseminating agricultural information to various stakeholders involved in the agricultural sector. This is so because, other branches of mass media sometimes tend to feed on information published in the newspapers. Following reports on the low access to agricultural information in the country and knowledge about the huge potentials of the print media in making agricultural information available, content analysis of the Ghanaian national newspaper will help to examine the role of the newspaper in ensuring access to the agricultural information in the country. The results of the study will serve as reference point for academicians and other researchers. It would also prompt researchers to investigate into other areas of agricultural news coverage by other media platforms. The outcome of the study may be incorporated into the work of the national newspaper organization. Agricultural policy makers may also find the results of the study useful in the formation of sound intervention strategies. The study has also helped in making useful recommendations to assist in improving access to agricultural information in the country.

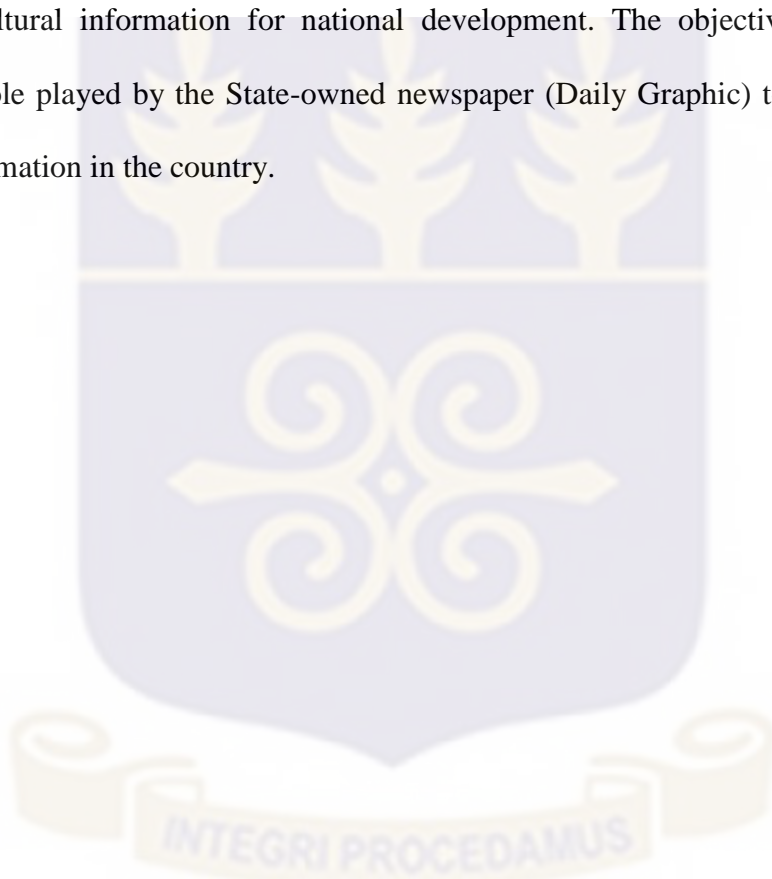
1.7 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

This study is in five Chapters; the first Chapter is an introduction to the study, which entails a brief discussion on the role of agricultural information accessibility in economic development. It also entails the problem statement, research questions and the objectives of the study. This is followed by the Chapter Two, which discussed the theories underpinning the study. It also reviewed several related works that are relevant to this study. The Chapter Three detailed the procedures used in conducting the study. The Chapter Four discussed the findings of the study in accordance to the objectives set in the Chapter One. The Chapter Five presents a summary of the findings of the

study. It also entails conclusions on the findings, recommendations as well as suggestions for consideration in further research works.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the role played by agricultural information in promoting economic growth in the world. It also looked at the potentials of the mass media and the role it can play to providing access to agricultural information for national development. The objective of the study is to investigate the role played by the State-owned newspaper (Daily Graphic) to improving access to agricultural information in the country.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theories on which the research was based and to review several related works that have been done on this subject in order to bring to light the existing knowledge in the area and sharpen the focus of this research.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to Smyth (2004), Conceptual Framework is a set of general ideas and principles taken from necessary fields of investigation and used to structure a subsequent presentation. It illustrates how independent variables relate to dependent variable(s). The conceptual framework underpinning this study explains that; the frequency of agricultural news reported in the newspaper, coupled with the level of prominence given the agricultural stories as well as the categories in which the stories were reported determines the totality of agricultural news coverage in the newspaper. It further explains that the agricultural information coverage by the newspapers as determined by the above mentioned indicators influences the opinions, perceptions and reactions of agricultural information users. Thus, the independent variables in this study are the frequency of agricultural news coverage, the level of prominence given to agricultural news by the newspaper and the different categories of agricultural news covered in the Daily Graphic newspaper.

The frequency of agricultural news coverage is determined by taking counts of the agricultural news reported in the newspaper. The non-agricultural news reported in the newspaper is also counted. This is to allow for meaningful comparison between agricultural and non-agricultural news

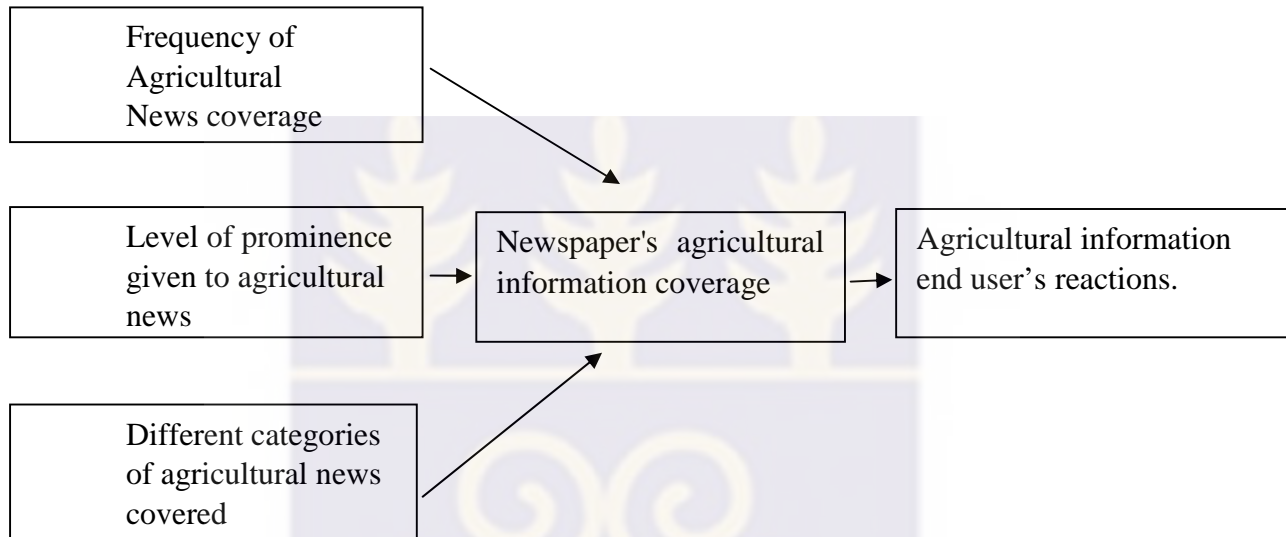
reportage in the newspaper. The categories in which agricultural news were reported were also determined by examining whether agricultural news covered were reported as "Hard" news, editorial, advert, opinion, letter to the editor or feature columns of the newspaper. The determination of the categories in which agricultural news are reported play essential roles in determining the total agricultural news coverage by the newspapers. For instance, agricultural stories published in the feature columns of the newspaper allow for deeper reportage on the issues reported. Stories published in the opinion columns of the newspapers also allows for detailed discussions or dialogue among the newspaper audience. The level of prominence given to agricultural news by the newspaper is also determined by examining the page locations on which agricultural news were reported and assessed based on whether they are reported in the front pages, back pages, centre spread pages or the less read pages of the newspaper. Stories published in the front pages are considered to be most prioritized by the newspapers since they are reported to make the most impact in terms of readership. Stories published at the back pages are considered to be second most prioritized stories after stories published at the front pages. Stories published in the centre spread pages of the newspapers are also considered to be the most impactful among stories published in the inside pages of the newspaper. Njoroge (2012), had shown that media presentations affect public perceptions not only about what is important but which aspect is more important.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Malmi and Granlund (2009), a theory is a general statement subsuming a series of phenomenon. This study was fundamentally based on the Agenda Setting Theory. Agenda setting basically has to do with the role played by the mass media in shaping and forming opinions of the public on issues. It further explains that, in most cases, the public's views and discussions on a particular issue is influenced by what the media reports. Several studies (e.g., Bubela & Caulfield,

2004; Kosho, 2016; Young et al., 2008) conducted continue to establish the influence of the mass media in determining and/or shaping the viewpoints or opinions of the public on particular issues. The media is thus said to be the determiner of the issues that are discussed and considered most important by the public.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing relationship of study variables.



Source: (Njoroge, 2012).

The theory on which the research was established is based on an Agenda-setting study conducted by The Freedom Forum Organization in alliance with the Faculty of Communication Science at Austral University in Buenos Aires, Argentina in September and October 1997. The objective of the study was to determine which of the parliamentary candidates had the best chance of winning the parliamentary elections. This was done by examining what the media and the public reported as the most important problems facing the country. The study content analysed three national newspapers, *Clarín*, *La Nación* and *Página 12* and two main economic newspapers *Ambito Financiero* and *El Cronista* in order to investigate the newspapers reportage on the problems confronting the country. The study revealed that the most important problems facing the country as

reported by the newspapers were; corruption, education, elderly pensions, unemployment, justice system and poverty in descending order. The public interview also revealed that the most important problems facing the country as perceived by the public were; unemployment, corruption, education, poverty, elderly people's pensions, justice system. The study revealed a significant agenda-setting effect on the Buenos Aires's voters during the 1997 legislative elections (Eberle-Blaylock, 2005).

The examination of agricultural news coverage by the Ghanaian national newspaper (Daily Graphic) is based on this study and several other studies that demonstrated the influence of newspapers' reportage on setting the public agenda. The frequency of agricultural news published, the level of prominence given to agricultural news by the newspaper and the different categories of agricultural news published by the Daily Graphic determines the agricultural news coverage in the newspaper. Assessing the newspaper's role in covering agriculture information in the country is critical, as it helps to influence perceptions about agricultural issues in the country as well as form and change public opinions.

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION ACCESS

Kacharo (2007) defined Agricultural information as any agricultural related message contained in agricultural technologies or extension and are transferred between the actors involved in the agricultural extension system. Aikins (2014) identified information on; agronomic practices, credit facilities, diversification of livelihoods, pest and disease control and post-harvest practices as some of the types of agricultural information needed by various agricultural stakeholders. Ngulube and Lwoga (2009) also classified agricultural knowledge into two main categories, namely; indigenous and exogenous knowledge. (Fien, 2002) referred to indigenous knowledge as the local knowledge

that is unique to a culture or society. Indigenous knowledge serves as the basis upon which any other knowledge is built. Mchombu (as cited in Ngulube and Lwoga, 2009) defined Exogenous knowledge as knowledge made accessible to the rural community from external institutions and non-local people. Knowledge acquired via newspapers, radios, televisions, extension workers and formal education can thus be said to be exogenous knowledge.

Having access to both types of knowledge is a key component to improving small scale agricultural production and linking increased production to markets, thus leading to improved rural livelihoods, improving quality and yield, food security and national economies (Asaba et al., 2006). Anderson (as cited in Aikins, 2014) also stated that access to agricultural information plays a very important role in agricultural development and contribute to improving the welfare of farmers and other rural dwellers.

2.4 SOURCES OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

Various studies (e.g., Opara, 2008; Aikins, 2014; Koyenikan, 2011) have revealed several sources of agricultural information. Opara (2008) identified extension agents, fellow farmers, radio, television, friends and relatives as some of the sources where agricultural information are accessed. Extension workers, Radio, Television, Family, Extension workers, input dealers, farmer's groups Non-Governmental Organisations and Newspapers were identified as some of the information sources of farmers (Aikins, 2014). Koyenikan (2011) also classified agricultural information sources into two categories; formal and informal. Radio stations, print media (newspapers, newsletters and journals etc.), seminars or workshops, were classified under formal sources, while family, friends, farmers and personal assessments and judgments were classified under informal sources. Agricultural information sources available for agricultural extension workers have also

been identified to include organisations, individual associates, seminars, training programs, internet media as well as the print and electronic media amongst others (Alfred & Odefadehan, 2007).

2.5 CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION ACCESS

Rural farmers face several challenges in accessing agricultural information via the various media sources. The traditional print and library based means of making available agricultural information to rural farmers have been identified to have limitations since majority of rural farmers are illiterate and somewhat secluded from formal sources of information (Crowder & Fortier, 2000). Lack of information centres situated in rural areas is also one of the challenges facing agricultural information access in the rural areas. Aina (2007) noted that if information centres are situated in rural areas and are furnished with all information and communication gadgets, the challenges with agricultural information access can be minimized. Even in instances where information centres are located in rural areas, Ozowa (as cited in Akpabio, Solomon & Godwin, 2006) reports show that poor reception quality and little area coverage still serve as a limitation to information access. Galadima (2014) also noted that language barriers between communication parties and untimely delivery of agricultural information have been a major constraint in agricultural information access. However, Ozowa (as cited in Akpabio, Solomon & Godwin, 2006) explains that even when both communication parties speak the same language, the use of technical language in communication as well as the delivery of messages that are irrelevant to the needs of farmers thwart information accessibility. Galadima (2014) also identified lack of feedback in communication as one of the issues limiting agricultural information access. The lack of feedback in communication prevents farmers from seeking clarifications and asking relevant questions which helps them to gather information that is relevant to their needs.

2.6 Related Literature

This section reviews several related studies conducted by various researchers within and outside Africa.

2.6.1 The frequency of agricultural news coverage and users reactions.

Atoma (2008), conducted a comparative study among three Nigerian newspapers to examine the print media's coverage of agricultural news in the country. The Newspapers studied were the *Pointer*, *Vanguard* and the *New Nigerian newspaper*. Simple frequency counts, Percentages and Analysis of Variance were used in analysing the data collected. Results from the study revealed that agricultural news coverage among the three newspapers were low. The study of the Vanguard newspaper revealed that out of the total 4850 news items published, only 107 of them were agricultural news, representing 2.2% of the total news covered. The Pointer Newspaper also revealed that out of the total of 2456 news items covered, only 164 were agricultural news items, representing 6.7% of the total news reported. Analysis of the New Nigerian Newspaper also revealed that out of the total of 4824 news items covered, only 96 agricultural news items were covered, representing only 1.10% of the total news reported in the newspaper. Results from the study revealed that the agricultural news reported in the newspapers were relatively higher in the Pointer Newspaper compared to the Vanguard and The New Nigerian Newspapers. However, agricultural news reportage by the three newspapers were reported to be generally low.

Balarubini and Karthikeyan (2014) also conducted a study to investigate newspaper publications about the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TANU) between the periods, January 2008 and December 2012. Content analysis technique was used to analyse news reports in both English and Tamil daily newspapers. A total of four newspapers consisting of two well-known English

newspapers (The Hindu and New Express) and two well-known Tamil newspapers (Dinamalar and Dinathanthi) were purposively selected for the study based on their prominence, as evident in their circulation and regional presence or availability. A total of 1359 newspaper editions were analysed. Statistical analysis of the data collected revealed that 92.39%, 91.04% and 90.31% of the total newspaper sample size studied in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively reported only one or two stories a day. The study also revealed that 7.20%, 8.76% and 9.42% of the total newspaper sample size studied in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively reported three to four stories a day. However, only 0.41%, 0.20% and 0.26% of the total newspaper sample size studied in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively reported five to six stories a day. The study concluded that the newspapers are not likely to make any meaningful impact in terms of promoting agricultural growth based on the low agricultural news stories covered during the period under study.

Usharani and Suresh (2009) also conducted a study in Karnataka State, where they content analysed agricultural news coverage in leading language Dailies in India. The essence of the study was to find out the importance given to agricultural news coverage among the leading language dailies of India. The study was conducted from April 2001 to March 2002. A sample size of 260 issues was selected from each of the five daily newspapers for the study. This amounted to a total of 1300 issues. The study found out that, agricultural news coverage was comparatively low. The study showed that much space was allocated to reporting political news, compared to agricultural news. Results from the study of all the 1300 issues revealed that the highest percentage coverage for both political and agricultural news in the dailies was 27.3 percent and 4.61 percent respectively. Percentage figures of 23.76 and 1.53 were also recorded as the lowest percentage coverage for both political news and agricultural news respectively.

Oladele and Boago (2011) also conducted a study from January 2006 to June 2008 to content analyse Agricultural news in Botswana newspapers. Two newspapers were selected out of the 10 active newspapers in the country using Stratified random sampling. Data were collected from the Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday editions of the newspapers. SPSS Version 16 was used to analyse data collected from the sampled newspapers using frequency counts percentages and one-way analysis of variance. The research revealed that the percentage coverage of agricultural news in Setswana language between the privately owned and state-owned newspapers are 17.4 percent and 6.1 percent respectively. The study also revealed that the percentage coverage of agricultural news in English language between the privately owned and state-owned newspapers are 57.6 percent and 60.2 percent respectively. The study concluded that agricultural news coverage in the public newspaper was low compared to the privately owned newspapers. The study recommended that agricultural news coverage must be improved in the state-owned newspaper.

Azanku (2015), also conducted a study to investigate newspaper reportage of agricultural biotechnology news in Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to determine the dominant frames employed by the newspapers in reporting agricultural biotechnology issues, the sources most cited in agricultural biotechnology news reportage by the newspapers and the major tones used in the coverage of agricultural biotechnology by the newspapers. Content analysis technique was used to assess the newspapers. The Daily Graphic newspaper and the Public Agenda newspaper were purposively selected for study due to their wide circulation and status. The study was conducted between the year 2013 and 2014. All editions of the Daily Graphic and the Public Agenda newspapers were considered during the period under study. The findings of the study revealed that, a total of 96 news items on agricultural biotechnology were reported during the period under study. 58 and 38 agricultural biotechnology news items were covered in the Daily Graphic and Public

Agenda newspaper respectively. In relation to the frequency of agricultural biotechnology news reportage in the newspapers, the study concluded that agricultural news coverage in the newspapers were low.

Tuurosong and Kendie (2014), also conducted a study to investigate the contribution of the Ghanaian media towards poverty reduction in Northern Ghana. The mixed method approach was used to help the author effectively investigate the media. Data from the radio and television and the print media were collected and analysed. Data was also collected and analysed from newspaper readers and editors. Content analysis was used to analyse selected radio, television and newspaper publications. Purposive sampling method was employed to select 7 public and private media organizations (Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, Chronicle, Public Agenda, GBC Radio, Ghana Television (GTV) and Metro Television) and 7 editors of public and private media organizations. Editors' views on the media's role in reducing poverty in Northern Ghana were also sought. A total of 100 newspaper readers were also interviewed to seek their views on the media's role in reducing poverty. Results from the study showed that the percentage coverage of development oriented stories by the newspaper articles which focused on Northern Ghana were 44.7% against 55.3% for non-development stories. Out of this number (44.7%), agriculture news constituted a total of 25.4% against other development oriented stories, thus economics issues (27%), education (26%) and health (21.6%). The study concluded that although one-half of the media stories were development oriented, the role of the media in reducing poverty in Northern Ghana was insignificant. This was attributed to the media's failure to comply to the set of guidelines of development journalism.

Okorie and Oyedepo (2011) also conducted a study to assess newspaper reportage and its effects towards promoting agricultural development in Nigeria. The study analysed three newspapers namely, The Punch, Guardian and the Nigerian Tribune newspapers between the periods of January

and December 2007. The newspapers were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Their selection was based on their popularity as well as high readership in the country amongst others. The study revealed that out of the total of 4220 news items reported by the newspapers, only 750 were agricultural news, representing 17.7 percent. However, a total of 1450 news items, representing 34.3% of the total news reported were on political issues, followed by 1120 news items, representing 26.50% reportage on commerce and industries. A total of 900 news items representing 21.3% of the total news coverage were reported on oil and gas issues. The study further revealed that the highest agricultural news reportage was on crop farming, a sub-sector of agriculture with about 170 news items, representing 22.6 % of the total agricultural news covered by the newspapers while the least agriculture news reportage was on forestry, a sub-sector of agriculture with only 10 news items, representing 1.3% of the total agricultural news covered in the newspapers. The study concluded that agriculture news reportage in the newspaper were low.

Akpabio et al., (2006) also conducted a similar research to study the reportage of agricultural news in the Pioneer Newspaper between January and December 2001. Data was collected from all the 144 editions of the Pioneer newspaper publications during the period under study using content analysis technique. Data was collected from 26 out of a total of 32 journalist employed by the Pioneer newspaper using interviews and structured questionnaires. Data collected from the newspaper were analysed to determine the prominence and frequency of agricultural news coverage in the newspaper in comparison with other news items. Data collected from the journalist were analysed to assess their reportage agricultural news. Results from the study revealed that agricultural news frequency covered in the newspaper were 8.12% of the total news reported in the newspaper. Agricultural news frequency covered ranked 7th against other news items such as

Political news which ranked 1st and Tourism news which ranked 9th (last position) with a 0.78% frequency of reportage.

Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu (2014), also conducted a study in Nigeria to content analyse organic agricultural news coverage in Nigerian newspapers. The Punch, The Nigerian Tribune and the Guardian daily Newspapers were selected purposively due to their wide coverage in the country. The study was conducted between the periods January 2010 and July 2012. The highest number of reportage was recorded in the Tribune newspaper while the least recorded was in the Punch newspaper. Results showed that 66.7 percent of the agricultural issues reported by the newspapers were general agricultural issues while 19 percent of their coverage was on food safety, 9.5 percent were on economic concentration and 4.8 percent were on environmental news. The study also revealed that the Tribune newspaper allocated the most space (76.8 %) into reporting organic agricultural news compared to 15.2 percent and 8.1 percent in the Guardian and Punch newspapers. The study concluded that there was no significant difference among the newspapers in reporting organic agricultural news in the country. The study recommended that the newspapers in the country pay more attention to reporting organic agricultural news in the country.

2.6.2 Level of prominence and users reactions.

Ifeanyi and Agumagu (2008) also conducted a study to analyse agricultural news coverage among some selected State and Privately owned newspapers in Nigeria. The State-owned newspapers selected were *The Tide*, *Pioneer* and *New waves* newspapers while the privately owned newspapers selected were the *Punch*, *Guardian* and *Thisday* newspapers between the period, 2005 and 2006. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the newspapers for the study. Data was collected from 438 newspaper publications which were selected using Stratified random

sampling technique. The study findings revealed that out of a total of 438 lead stories published by the newspapers, only 3 percent were on agriculture. The study further revealed that out of the total of 1797 front-page headlines identified, only 4 % were on agriculture. The study results also showed that the State-owned newspapers reported 57 % of the total agricultural news items published in the newspaper while the privately-owned newspapers reported 43% of the total of 160 agricultural news items identified in the newspapers. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that agricultural news coverage in the newspapers were low. This results is similar to the findings of Okorie and Oyedepo (2011), where out of the 750 agricultural news items published by three Nigerian newspapers, 610 of them representing 81.3 % were published on the inside pages of the newspapers while only 4.8%, 9.0% and 4.8% were published in front page lead, front page minor and back page minor. The study findings of Oladele and Boago (2011) where a Government-owned newspaper and a privately-owned newspaper were examined also revealed a similar outcome where only 6.1%, 7.6%, 14.2% and 3.2% of the agricultural news covered in the in Botswana's State-owned newspaper (Botswana Daily news) were reported in front pages, inside pages, middle pages and back pages respectively. Agricultural news covered in the privately-owned newspaper (The reporter) at the front pages, inside pages, middle pages and back pages were also 39.1%, 48.9%, 8.7% and 3.3% respectively. The study concluded that the level of prominence given to agricultural news reportage by newspapers in Botswana was very low.

Akpabio et al., (2006) also conducted a related study where various news items were ranked according to the level of prominence given them by the newspaper. The study revealed that agricultural news was the 8th most prominent news item reported by the newspaper during the period under study. The results indicated that Political news items were the most prominent news

item reported. Tourism news items were found to be the least prominent news item reported. The Prominence level of news items reported in the newspaper was assessed based on whether they were reported in the front, centre-spread, back or other pages of the newspaper. News items reported in the other pages of the newspaper were considered to be less prominent as against news items reported in the front, back and centre-spread pages of the newspaper. The study also revealed that only 7.69% of the journalists interviewed cover agricultural news items as against 46% who covers political news items. The low number of correspondents assigned to agricultural news against other news items was said to be one of the reasons for the low agricultural news coverage in the newspaper. The study recommended amongst other things that Non-Governmental organisations and Government agencies with mandate for agriculture must ensure that journalists are motivated enough to ensure that they pay attention to covering agricultural news in the country.

Nwogbo (2015) also conducted a study in Nigeria to content analyse selected newspapers in the country. The study examined newspaper coverage of agricultural news for national development. Content analysis was adopted as the research design. A sample size of 384 editions of selected newspapers was used. The study revealed that no agricultural news was featured in the front, back or centre spread papers of the newspapers analysed. The study concluded that the newspapers were not doing enough with regards to covering agricultural news in the country.

2.6.3 Agricultural news categories and users reactions.

Njoroge (2012), conducted similar studies in Kenya to compare agricultural information coverage by two different newspapers (Standard and Daily Nation) via content analysis. The study was done within a year. The study was done by categorizing the articles covered by the newspapers and

identifying their page locations as well as their frequencies and the amount of space allocated to agricultural information. A total of fifteen (15) newspapers were selected every month for both papers during the study period using stratified random and purposive sampling. Results from the study showed that the two papers published seven (7) different categories of articles during the study period. They are hard news, features, opinions, photographs, letters to the editor, editorials and advertisements. Results from the study also showed that about 95% of all the identified and categorized articles were located in the middle pages. The frequencies of publication of photograph categories were also found to be 35.1 percent with opinions as the least of about 0.9 %. Findings from the study also showed that the Daily Nation newspaper devoted only 7 percent of its total space to covering agricultural news whilst the Standard newspaper devoted only 2% of its total available space to covering agricultural information during the period under study. Under the features and letters to the editor categories, results showed a 39.7 percent against 16.5 percent and 4.4 percent against 2.8 percent for the Standard and Daily Nation Newspapers respectively. However, the Daily Nation devoted 17.7 percent of its agricultural news coverage to advertisements as against the Standard's 4.4 percent. Unlike the Daily Nation Newspaper, no publications were made under editorials, opinions and black and white agricultural photos categories in the Standard newspaper during the period under study. The study concluded that the diversification or variety displayed by the two pages through publications of agricultural news in different categories was good to avoid monotony to reader and that the total space devoted to agricultural information by the two papers was not enough to communicate adequately to various agricultural stakeholders. The findings of this study is in line with Usharani and Suresh (2009) where agricultural news coverage in Indian newspapers were relatively low with very little coverage in the opinion and article pages.

Oladije and Fawole (2015), also conducted a study in Nigeria which content analysed agricultural news with and without photographs in selected Nigerian Daily Newspaper. The *New Nigeria newspaper* and the *Guardian newspaper* were purposively selected based on their prominence, geographical location, large circulation and blend of agricultural news and activities. Frequency and percentages for frequency, prominence and representativeness of the photographs as well as space allotment was used to analyse a total of 144 news items with and without photographs. The study showed that about 90.3 percent of the agricultural stories published in the *Guardian* and the *New Nigeria newspaper* were accompanied with photographs.

However, results also showed that the *Guardian newspaper* allocated 7902.75sqcm space to photographs compared to *New Nigeria's newspaper's* space allocation of 4190.33 sq.cm. The *Guardian newspaper* has also allocated a space of 6094.34sqcm for agricultural produce and products while *New Nigeria* allocated 2143.52 sq.cm. However, while *New Nigeria* allocated a space of 1,092.72sq.cm for covering agricultural equipment stories, the *Guardian Newspaper* allocated 820.58sq.cm. The study also revealed that about 62.5 percent of the photographs were not related to the stories published. None of the photographs were also strategically placed. The study recommended that newspaper editors should ensure that photographs relate to stories and photographs are placed in strategic locations in their newspapers.

Findings from the study of Botswana newspapers in Oladele and Boago (2011), also revealed that about 49 percent of agriculture news published in the government owned newspaper fell under the advertisement category as against about 61 percent in privately owned newspapers.

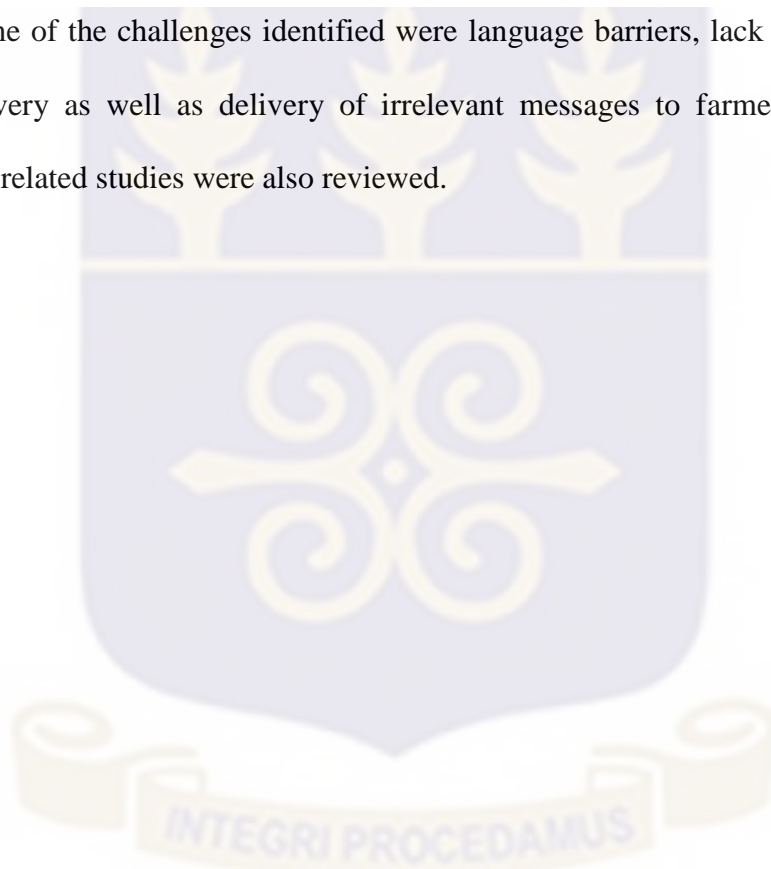
Given the importance of categorization of agricultural information to user reactions, Yusuf, Krul and Marufu (2016) also conducted a study to analyse agricultural news reportage in selected

newspapers in South Africa. Content analysis technique was used to analyse the newspapers. A total of five newspapers were purposively selected for study. A sample size of 9125 editions of the newspapers was considered. A total of 170,557 news items were identified and analysed. Data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Results from the study showed that agricultural news items reportage such as youth in agriculture and land reform were not given enough prominence and attention compared to other non-agricultural news items such as political, business and education issues. However, agricultural news items related to climate change, food security and agricultural marketing received the most reportage of agricultural news covered. The study recommended amongst other things that the newspaper publish more inspirational agricultural stories to stimulate the interest of the youth to engage in agriculture as a business.

It is important to note that even though several related studies have been conducted in Africa, there is still very little information on the role played by the newspapers in Ghana in enhancing agricultural information access in the country. It is in view of that gap in literature that this study sought to content analyse agricultural information coverage in the country's newspapers in order to unearth the role played by the newspapers in making agricultural information accessible to the various agricultural stakeholders in the country.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the theories on which the research was based. The conceptual framework underpinning this study explains that; the frequency of agricultural news reported in the newspaper, coupled with the level of prominence given the agricultural stories as well as the categories in which the stories were reported determines the totality of agricultural news coverage in the newspaper. The Agenda setting theory formed the theoretical framework on which this study was based. Literature was reviewed on the challenges confronting accessibility of agricultural information. Some of the challenges identified were language barriers, lack of feedback, delays in information delivery as well as delivery of irrelevant messages to farmers by some extension workers. Several related studies were also reviewed.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed the research design, data sources, population size, sample size, sampling technique, unit of analysis and data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Kerlinger (as cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p.156) defined Content analysis as "a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables". The use of content analysis in this study assisted in the quantitative measurement of the various variables identified in this report which helped to ascertain the role played by the Ghanaian national newspaper (Daily Graphic) in the dissemination of agricultural news in the country. The choice of the research design was arrived at due to its wide usage in several studies (e.g; Balarubini & Karthikeyan, 2014; Oyewole, Oloyede & Meludu,2014; Oladele & Boago,2011), acceptance and accuracy.

3.2 DATA SOURCES

Secondary data was collected from the Daily Graphic newspaper for the analysis of this study.

3.3 POPULATION SIZE

The population of the study comprised of all editions of the Daily Graphic Newspaper between the period 2014 to 2015. The Daily Graphic is published daily, from Mondays to Saturdays excluding Sundays. A total of 6 editions are thus published daily. This brings to a total of 288 publications

annually. The two-year study of the newspaper will thus bring the population of the study to a total of $288 \times 2 = 576$ editions.

The Daily Graphic newspaper was purposively sampled due to its state status wide coverage and readership in the country.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 192 editions from the total population of 576 editions formed the sample size of this study. The sample size used constitutes more than 30% of the total population therefore, can be said to be representative of the total population. The 192 editions used in this study is also more than the 180 editions of newspapers used in Njoroge(2012) where a comparative content analysis was conducted between two newspapers. The sampling technique below explains the procedures used in arriving at the sample size selected.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In order to have a sample size that represents the population of the study, the composite week procedure was used to select the editions studied. According to Riffe, Aust and Lacy (as cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011), the composite week procedure is the most appropriate technique to use when one is seeking to analyse newspaper or magazine contents. Two editions each were selected from the six editions every week throughout the period under study. The editions in a week were classified into three groups, the Mondays and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and Fridays and Saturday editions. The group selection was done to ensure that the daily editions of the newspaper are adequately represented in the sample. This means that, two editions were studied per

week. A total of 96 editions were studied in a year. In all, 192 editions were studied during the two-year period.

3.6 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Trochim (2006), defined the term unit of analysis is the main entity that is being analysed in a study. According to Trochim (2006), defining the unit of analysis of a study, is the first step in deciding how one will analyse the data. In the case of this study, news stories were considered as the unit of analysis of the study.

3.7 CONTENT CATEGORIES

The study focused on assessing the frequency of agricultural news reportage, the different categories of agricultural news covered and the level of prominence given the agricultural news.

i. Frequency

This is the number of times agricultural news was reported in the newspaper over the period of study.

ii. **News Categories:** This refers to the different categories under which the agricultural news is reported. The news items reported in the newspaper will be categorized into the following; hard news, features, letters to the editor, editorial and advertisements.

iii. **Prominence:** The level of prominence given to agricultural stories by the newspaper was assessed by identifying the page numbers on which the agricultural stories were placed. Under this category, stories were assessed based on whether they were placed on the front pages, back pages, centre spread pages or the other pages of the newspaper., Stories published in the front pages are considered to be most prioritized by the newspapers since they make the most impact

in terms of readership (Tuurosong et al., 2014). Stories published at the back pages are considered to be second most prioritized stories after stories published at the front pages. However, the most impactful stories published in the inside pages of the newspapers are the ones published in the centre spread pages.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected at the University of Ghana Balme Library using a self-designed data collection Guide sheet.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analysed using the Microsoft Office Excel 2007 Software. The investigation was displayed utilizing tables and pie diagrams, informed by the examination inquiries of the review. Factual investigations were made in rate terms and raw scores regarding the tables and diagrams. Findings were presented in accordance with the objectives of the study. The use of Microsoft Excel software in analysing the data and the utilization of tables and pie diagrams in displaying the results of the study was motivated from the works of Atoma (2008) and Nwogbo (2015) where simple frequency counts and percentages were used in analysing their data for easy interpretation.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research design, data sources, population size, sample size, sampling technique, unit of analysis and data analysis. Content analysis was used as the research design. Composite week procedure was used to select the editions studied. The chapter concluded by explaining the modalities used in the data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presented and discussed the frequency of agricultural news reported, the categories in which they were reported as well as the level of prominence given to agricultural news in the newspaper. Data was collected from 192 editions out of a total population of 576 editions during the period under study. The research findings were based on the analysis of the data using Microsoft Office Excel 2007 software.

4.1 Frequency of Agricultural news published in the newspaper.

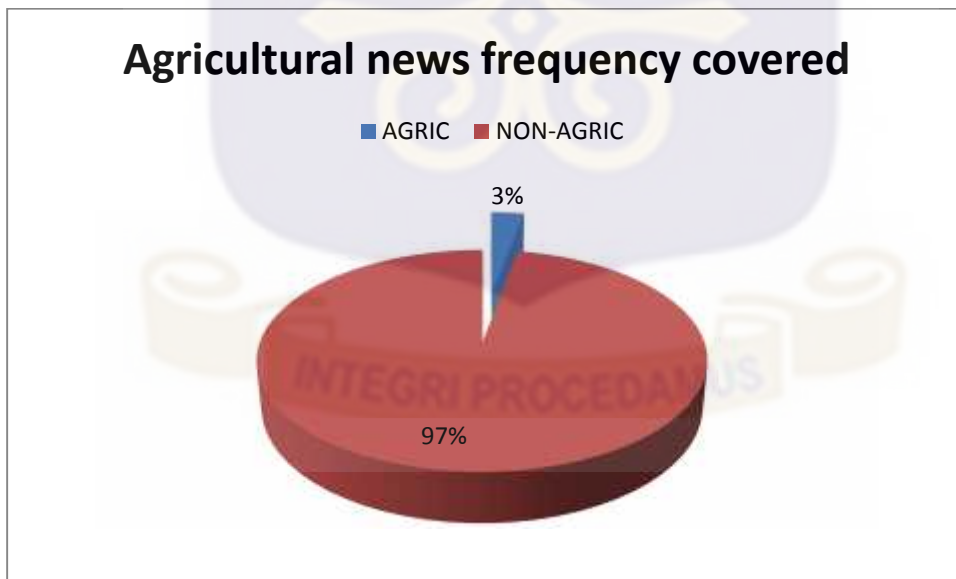
The study revealed that a total of 33, 217 news items were published in the newspaper during the period under study. Out of this total, 32,251 news items were identified as non- agricultural news representing 97% of the total news reported. Only 966 news items reported were agricultural news representing 3% of the total news reported by the newspaper. The study revealed that at least one agricultural news item was reported in each of the newspaper editions studied except for a single case, where no agricultural news was reported on 1st January, 2014. The news items published in the newspaper included news reports on foreign news, education, health, general economic issues, sports, politics, conflicts and agricultural news which consisted of general agricultural news reports on crop production and animal rearing, marketing, credit, agricultural education and training programs as well as agricultural-related vacancy advertisement news amongst others. An example of an agricultural-related vacancy advertisement was on the recruitment of agricultural production officer published on the 14th January 2014 on Page 24. The Association of Church-Based Development NGOs also advertised a job vacancy for Crop Specialist, Aqua culture Specialist and Gender Officer on the 22nd January 2014 on Page 8. The page 48 of the 13th February 2014 edition

of the newspaper also featured a write up on the production, harvesting and marketing of periwinkles. The term 'Non-agricultural news' as used in this study is referred to any news item not related in any way to agriculture. Non-agricultural news items reported in the newspaper included news reports on education, health, sports, conflicts, general economic issues and politics amongst others.

The findings of this study in relation to the frequency of agricultural news covered in the Daily Graphic is similar to findings reported in Njoroge (2012) where a comparative study of two newspapers in Kenya, (Daily Nation and Standard newspapers) were conducted. Findings from the Standard newspaper revealed that the frequency of agricultural news coverage was 1.9 percent as against 98.1 percent for non-agricultural news. Findings from the Daily Nation newspaper also revealed that the frequency of agricultural news coverage in the newspaper was 7.1 % as against 92.9% for non-agricultural news. Njoroge (2012) concluded that agricultural news coverage in both newspapers was very low. Similar studies conducted by Nwogbo (2015) also reported that the frequency of agricultural information coverage were 8.5% of the total news published in the Nigerian newspapers. They concluded that agricultural information coverage in the Nigerian newspapers were low. With reference to the findings of that study, the Nigerian newspapers studied can be said to have reported more agricultural news than the Daily Graphic newspaper. In the case of Usharani and Suresh (2009), agricultural information coverage in two Indian dailies were said to be low upon findings that the frequency of agricultural news coverage in the two newspapers were 4.6% and 1.53% of the total news published. These findings are not very much different from the findings of this study. The performance of the Daily Graphic in terms of the frequency of agricultural news published can be said to be low compared to the 6.1% in the state-owned newspaper and 17.4% in the privately owned newspaper in Nigeria as reported in Oladele and

Boago (2011). The results as identified in the Daily Graphic is also not very much different from the findings in Atoma (2008) where they reported that agricultural news frequency coverage in three different newspapers (Vanguard newspaper, New Nigeria newspaper and the Pointer newspaper) were 2.2%, 1.10% and 6.7 % respectively. The frequency of agricultural information coverage in the Daily Graphic as revealed in this study can also be said to be more than 5 times lower than the average agricultural information coverage in the three newspapers, The Punch, Guardian and The Nigerian Tribune as reported in Okorie and Oyedepo (2011) where the frequency of agricultural news coverage among the three newspapers were identified to be 17.7%. Agricultural news frequency identified in Ifeanyi and Agumagu (2008), a study conducted to content analyse agricultural news coverage among some selected State and Privately owned newspapers in Nigeria, revealed that the frequency of agricultural news covered were 3% which is very similar to the findings of this study.

Figure 2. Frequency of agricultural news covered



Source: (Field Data, 2017)

Makanjuola (as cited in Nwogbo, 2015), attributed low agricultural news coverage by newspapers to unsatisfactory monetary benefits gained by the newspaper organizations for publishing agriculture related news. The report also attributed low number of agricultural news correspondents or journalists as one of the reasons for the low agricultural news coverage in the newspapers. Lack of interest in agricultural news by top hierarchy of the newspaper organization has also been reported as one of the reasons for poor agricultural news coverage in the newspapers.

4.2 Categorization of Agricultural news published in the newspaper

The findings of the study revealed that agricultural news published in the newspaper during the period under study were in six categories namely; hard news, editorial, opinion, advertisement, letter to editor and feature. Examples of agricultural news items published under each of the categories identified was;

- i. a Hard news report captioned "Swine fever kills 600 pigs" and published on the page 16 of the 16th January 2014 edition of the newspaper.
- ii. a news item published under the category of editorial news in the Page 7 of the 3rd October, 2015 edition of the newspaper under the title "Let's focus more attention on agriculture".
- iii. an Opinion article identified on the page 7 of the 3rd October 2015 edition of the newspaper under the title 'Make in Ghana' and sub-title 'The sensible approach to advance into the first world'.
- iv. an Advert placed in the Page 5 of the 24th March 2015 edition of the newspaper which was in relation to a snail and grasscutter seminar.
- v. an article by the Sea Freight Pineapple Exporters of Ghana (SPEG) published on the page 10 of the 23rd January 2014 under the Letter to the Editor category and

- vi. a Special Feature report on periwinkles published on the page 48 of the 13th February 2014 edition of the newspaper.

In relation to the categories identified, the findings of this study is not very much different from agricultural news categories identified in Usharani and Suresh (2009) where the categories in which agricultural news were reported fell under the news reports, articles, editorials, photos, features, columns and letter to the editor categories. However, the categories identified in the Daily Graphic newspaper perfectly correlates with Njoroge (2012) where agricultural news covered in the newspapers (The Standard and the Daily Nation newspaper) were reported under Advertisement, editorials, letters to editors, hard news, opinions and feature columns of the newspaper.

Table 1. Frequency of agricultural news reported under each of the categories.

| Categories | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|
| Hard News | 297 | 31 |
| Editorial | 17 | 2 |
| Opinion | 39 | 4 |
| Advert | 595 | 61 |
| Letter to the Editor | 6 | 1 |
| Feature | 12 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 966 | 100 |

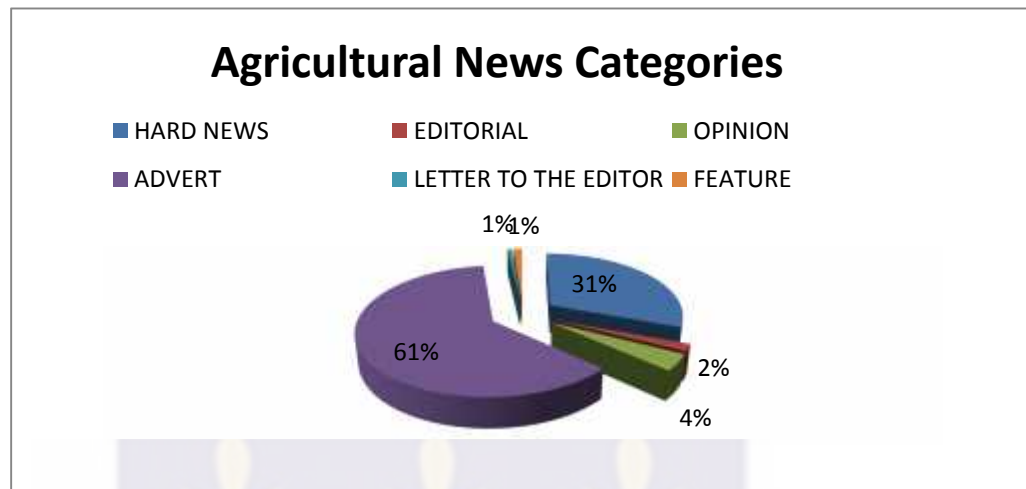
Source: (Field Data, 2017)

As indicated in the Table 1 above, the highest frequency of agricultural news covered was found in the advertisement category. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the agricultural news covered were reported in the Advertisement category whiles Thirty-one percent were reported in the Hard News category.

However, agricultural news publications in the other categories have been very low. Only 2% of the agricultural news covered was in the editorial category, 4% in the Opinion category and 1% were in both the Feature and Letter to the Editor categories each. The 2% and 1% agricultural news coverage in the editorial and feature categories of the newspaper can be said to be very low since similar studies conducted in Nigeria by Ifeanyi and Agumagu (2008) recorded 6% and 5% agricultural news coverage in the Editorial and Special write-up (feature) categories respectively. News items published under editorial news are considered to be the voice of the newspaper and are usually published to draw the attention of their audiences to what the newspaper consider very important. The very low attention given to agricultural news coverage under the editorial category is a reflection of the low level of importance placed on agricultural news by the newspaper. Feature stories are also known to offer much more detailed discussions and analysis of news items than Hard news. According to Adogla-Bessa (2015), feature stories delve deeper into news items and are thus allocated for issues that are considered to be very important and require much attention. However, only 1% of the agricultural news covered was published under feature stories. The Opinion column held in reserve for writers also saw only 4% of the writers paying attention to agriculture.

The findings as identified in the Daily Graphic newspaper are partially in line with findings in Njoroge (2012) where the highest reportage of agricultural news were in the Feature and Hard news categories for the Standard Newspaper (39.7%) and the Daily Nation Newspaper (22.8%) respectively. No agricultural news was covered in the Editorial and Opinion categories in the case of the Standard Newspaper whiles in the case of the Daily Nation Newspaper, the lowest agricultural news was recorded in the Opinion category, thus 1.2 %.

Figure 3. Agricultural news categories covered in the newspaper.



Source: (Field Data, 2017)

4.3 Level of Prominence given to Agricultural news by the Newspaper

The page numbers on which the agricultural news were published were also considered in order to ascertain the level of prominence or importance given to agricultural news by the newspaper. Stories were assessed based on whether they were placed on the front pages, back pages, centre spread pages or the other pages of the newspaper. According to Tuurosong et al., (2014), stories published in the front pages are considered to be the most prioritized by the newspapers followed by stories published at the back pages. However, for stories published in the inside pages of the newspaper, some, which were considered to be given more prominence are those published in the centre spread pages of the newspapers. An example of an agricultural news published in the front pages of the newspaper was captioned 'Swine fever kills 600 pigs' on 22nd January 2014. Similarly, another example of agricultural news published in the front pages of the newspaper was captioned 'Producer price of cocoa goes up' on the 3rd of October 2015. Another example of agricultural news published at the back pages of the newspaper was captioned “Producer Buying Company of Cocoa Board secures \$75m for cocoa purchases” on the 12th of March 2014. Also, an example of an agricultural news published in the centre spread pages of the newspaper was on 2nd December 2015

which talked about climate change and its influence on agriculture. The table below shows the frequency of agricultural news published and their page locations as identified in the study.

Table 2. Frequency of agricultural news published and their page locations.

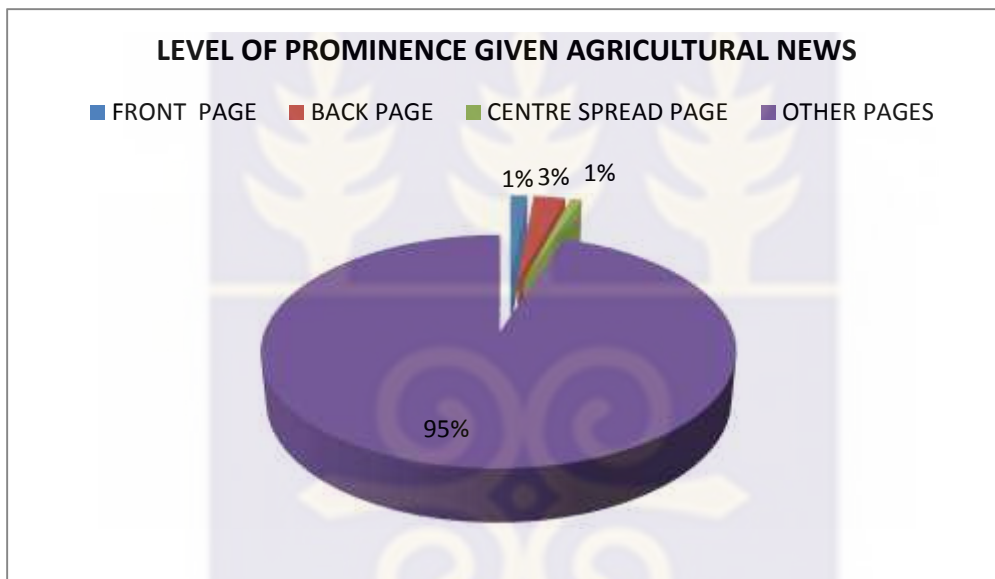
| Page Location | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Front Page (F.P) | 14 | 1 |
| Back Page (B.P) | 26 | 3 |
| Centre Spread Page(C.S.P) | 9 | 1 |
| Other Pages (O.P) | 917 | 95 |
| Total | 966 | 100 |

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

As indicated in the Table 2 above, only 5 percent of the agricultural news published were given priority in the pages considered to attract more attention from audience, thus the front, back and the centre spread pages of the newspaper. However, out of the 5% agricultural news published at the key pages, only 1% was published in the front pages of the newspaper which is usually allocated for news items considered to be of top priority. The study also revealed that 3 percent of the agricultural news items reported were published in the back pages of the newspaper. Even though the centre spread pages of the newspaper are held in reserve for publishing very important stories reported in the inside pages of the newspaper, it saw only a 1% coverage of the total agricultural news published in the newspaper during the period under study. It is however interesting to note that the remaining 95 percent of agricultural news reported were published in the less read pages of the newspaper. The level of prominence given to agricultural news in the Daily Graphic is low compared to findings in Okorie and Oyedepo (2011) where agricultural news published at the Front page lead, Front page minor and the back pages were 4.8%, 9.0% and 4.8% respectively. However,

agricultural news published in the inside pages of the newspapers analysed were 81% of the total news published which is lesser than the 95% recorded in the Daily Graphic. Despite the performance of the newspapers analysed in the Okorie and Oyedepo (2011), the study concluded that less prominence was given to agricultural news items.

Figure 4. Agricultural news covered in the various pages of the newspaper.



Source: (Field Data, 2017)

The findings of this study as identified in the Daily Graphic are similar to findings in Njoroge (2012), where agricultural news coverage in the cover pages were 2.5% of the total agricultural news reported in the newspapers. Agricultural news coverage at the last pages of the newspapers studied were also 2.5%. However, the inside pages of the newspapers covered 95% of the total agricultural news published in the newspapers. This is in line with the findings of this study, which showed that agricultural news coverage in the inside pages of the Daily Graphic were 95%. This

result is also similar to study findings of Ifeanyi and Agumagu (2008) where agricultural news covered in the front pages were only 4 % of the total news items reported.

Results from Okorie and Oyedepo (2011), also reported that 81.3% of agricultural news covered were recorded in the inside pages of the newspapers. This finding is similar but shows a better level of prominence compared to the findings in the Daily Graphic. However, the Daily Graphic performed better compared to findings in Nwogbo (2015) where agricultural news published in the inside pages of the newspapers studied were 100%.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The study revealed that agricultural news coverage in the newspaper constituted only 3 percent of the total news reported in the newspaper. Agricultural news covered were reported in six categories namely; hard news, editorial, opinion, advertisement, letter to editor and feature. The highest agricultural reportage was in the advertisement category while the lowest were in the Feature and the letter to the editor categories. Agricultural news reportage in the front, back and centre spread pages were very low compared to the other pages of the newspaper.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study, conclusions, recommendations as well as suggestions for consideration in further research works. The main objective of the study was to content analyse the agricultural news reported in the Ghanaian National newspaper (Daily Graphic) from January 2014 to December 2015.

The specific objectives as set out by this study were to:

- i. Categorize the types of agricultural articles published by the selected newspaper
- ii. Establish the frequency of appearance of agricultural information under different categories of articles during the period of study as well as
- iii. Assess the level of prominence given to agricultural news by the newspaper during the period under study.

5.1 METHODOLOGY USED TO ACHIEVE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Content analysis was used as the research design of this study. Secondary data was collected from the daily Graphic newspaper for the analysis of this study between the period of January 2014 and December 2015. A sample size of 192 editions out of a total population of 576 editions of the newspaper was analysed during the period.

5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS.

5.2.1 Objective One: *To categorize the types of agricultural news reported.*

The study revealed that; Agricultural news reported in the newspaper during the study period fell under six categories namely; Hard news, Editorial, Opinion, Advertisement, Letter to the editor and Feature.

5.2.2 Objective Two: *To establish the frequency of agricultural information reported under the identified categories.*

Agricultural news reported in the newspaper constituted only three percent (3%) of the total news reported during the period of study. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the agricultural news published were reported under the Hard news category, 2% were reported under the Editorial category, 4% were reported under the Opinion category, 61% were reported under the Advertisement category, 1% were reported under the Letter to the Editor category and 1 % were reported under the Feature category.

5.2.3 Objective Three: *To assess the level of prominence given to agricultural news reported in the newspaper.*

Ninety-five percent (95%) of the agricultural news published were reported at the Less read pages of the newspapers, while the front pages, back pages and the centre spread pages of the newspaper saw only a 1%, 3% and 1 % reportage respectively.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Agricultural news reportage in the national newspaper is too low. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the agricultural news reported were in the category of Advertisements. Despite the State-status of the newspaper and the fact that it has a basic responsibility of using its platform as a tool for national development, its activities in this regard seems to be gearing towards commercialization or profit making than disseminating useful information needed for national development. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the agricultural news reported were published in the less read pages of the newspaper. Only 1%, 3% and 1% were published in the front pages, back pages, and the centre spread pages respectively. This is indicative of how less important the editors of the national newspaper view agricultural news. The very low agricultural news reportage in the editorial, opinion, letter to the editor and feature columns of the newspaper pin points to how less important the editors view agricultural news and the low interest of writers in expressing their views on agricultural stories. The findings and conclusions drawn from this study cannot however be generalized for all other newspapers since only the Daily Graphic was used for the study.

Taking into account the theoretical framework upon which this study was based, thus the Agenda setting theory that elaborates the influence of the mass media in shaping the viewpoints or opinions of the public on issues, it is clear that access to agricultural information is a key requirement to improving the state of agriculture in the country. Given the role of newspapers in making agricultural information accessible in the country and the fact that other sources of agricultural information by smallholder farmers tend to feed on agricultural information published in the newspapers, the low agricultural information coverage by the national newspaper has the potential to negatively influence agricultural information accessibility in the country. In view of the fact that access to agricultural information is a key component in improving small scale agricultural production and linking increased production to markets, thereby leading to improved rural

livelihoods, improving quality and yield, food security and national economies, deliberate and urgent steps are needed to be taken to improve upon agricultural news reportage in the National newspaper.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made by the researcher based on the findings of this study;

- i. Editors and managers of the National newspaper should take deliberate steps into ensuring that enough agricultural news is published.
- ii. Editors and managers of the national newspaper should also ensure that agricultural news are given the prominence it deserves. They must ensure that they are given some space in the front, back and centre spread pages of the newspaper.
- iii. The Editorial columns of the newspaper should also be used by editors of the national newspaper to promote agriculture reportage in the country.
- iv. The newspaper managers and editors should also pay attention to agricultural-oriented opinion writers to ensure that Opinion columns are used to promote greater interactivity between readers and editors on agricultural issues in the country.
- v. The managers of the state newspaper should engage line reporters or journalists for agricultural news in the country.
- vi. Non-Governmental Organizations and other civil society groups with mandate for agriculture should advocate and sensitize the managers of the state newspaper on the need for reporting agricultural news in the country.
- vii. Further research should be conducted to include all other newspapers that publish agricultural information in the country.

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APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION GUIDE SHEET

| DATE | FREQUENCY | | CATEGORIES | | | | | | PROMINENCE | | | |
|------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|--------|----------------------|---------|------------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Agric. News | Non-Agric. | Hard News | Editorial | Opinion | Advert | Letter to the Editor | Feature | F.P | B.P | C.S.P | O.P |
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