

# Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria

**Number:** Twenty-Second Annual Conference

**Theme:** Mainstreaming Entrepreneurship in Agricultural Extension Practice in Nigeria

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. **Venue:** University of Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria

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## Framing of Agroforestry Education News in Selected Nigeria Newspapers

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined framing of agroforestry education in three Nigerian newspapers. Specifically, agroforestry articles were categorized according to the space allotted, placement and news sources in the Punch, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune newspapers. The period covered news published from January 2013 to December 2013. Frames investigated include: agroforestry awareness, intervention, warning, opinion and government policies. The result reveals that government policy was the dominant (33.0%) frame reported. Taungya farming system was the most reported news among the newspapers. Most (58.3%) of the news published were in the positive direction. Although, news placements were more in other pages of the newspapers (98.3%), government officials and agencies were the most quoted sources. There was no significant relationship between frame categories and space allotted ( $\chi^2=3.006$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), placement and space allotted ( $\chi^2=12.546$ ,  $p\geq 0.005$ ). However, there was significant difference between the spaces allotted to the news among the newspapers reviewed ( $F=7.142$ ,  $p\leq 0.005$ ). There is need for Nigerian newspapers increase the frequency of reporting agroforestry news.*

**Keywords:** Agroforestry, Frame, Newspaper, Education, News

### **Introduction**

Agroforestry as a science and practice has the potential to contribute to the improvement of rural livelihood due to the capacity of its various forms to offer multiple alternatives and opportunities to small holders to enhance farm production and income, while protecting the climate and agricultural environment (Onilude, Badejo, Oyeleye, Abu, Asinwa, 2011).

As of 2005, Nigeria has the highest rate of deforestation in the world according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Between 2000 and 2005 the country lost 55.7% of its primary forests, and the rate of forest change increased by 31.2% to 3.12% per annum. Forest has been cleared for logging, timber export, subsistence agriculture and notably the collection of wood for fuel which remains problematic in western Africa (News.mongabay.com).

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High demand for agricultural land by farmers to increase their level of agricultural production to meet with the increasing population and to generate more income has led to an increase in the forest lands converted to agricultural lands. Agroforestry is a 'win-win' solution to the seemingly difficult choice between reforestation and agricultural land use, because it increases the storage of carbon and may also enhance agriculture (Mbow, Skole, Dieng, Justice and Kwesha, 2012).

Agroforestry provides an innovative practice that enhances productivity and at the same time contributes to climate change mitigation through enhanced carbon sequestration. Many farmers are facing serious problems of sustaining their livelihood due to urbanization and extensive use of land (Mitchell and Hanstad, 2004). It is imperative therefore to drive agricultural practices that are environmentally friendly. In the submission of Fakoya, Ojo and Oyesola (2002), they opined that the use of sustainable land management practices must be promoted and these practices must be compatible with the environment and local cultural practice.

Media coverage of agroforestry has potential to educate readers on basic environmental management and climate change adaptation approaches. The role of media is not only to create awareness but largely to positively impact the perception of the public for productive agricultural enterprise. Newspapers provide up to date information on local, state, national and world issues. They are among the most widely read periodicals that are available and accessible to the vast majority of people of all ages and walks of life in the community. Today's newspaper use design elements that makes information easily accessible to the reader, for example, important stories have bold headlines, while graphics appear next to related stories. Ala and Ojo (2007) reiterated that newspapers are important because they carry current information and they keep the readers informed of events and happenings within and outside their immediate environment.

Most studies on framing focus on generally on environment management like in the case of Nirmala and Arul (2007), they investigated framing of environment in English and Tamil newspapers in India. Fawole, Thomas and Ibitade (2014) examined framing of avian influenza in Nigerian newspapers. However, scanty information exists on the framing of agroforestry education in Nigerian newspapers. It is against this backdrop that the study investigated framing of agroforestry education in Nigerian newspapers.

The specific objectives were to:

1. identify agroforestry education news framed in the selected newspapers;
2. identify the different categories of agroforestry education news covered;
3. examine the direction and space allotted to agroforestry education news in the selected newspapers; and
4. examine the placement and the source of agroforestry news quoted in the newspapers.

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## Methodology

Framing examines the production of media coverage within the context of how journalist operates as it influences the way a story is told (Kitzinger, 2007). The manner in which an issue is characterized in news reports has a way of affecting audience understanding (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). Frames are interpretive of an issue that communicates why, who and what is responsible for a problem (Nisbet, 2009). This study analyzed the agroforestry storyline based on quantitative and qualitative content analysis using framing paradigm.

Nigerian Tribune, the Punch newspaper and the Guardian newspaper were selected for this study according to media reach OMD Nigeria rating of 2005 which rated these 3 newspapers as the most widely read. Articles for this study were gathered from Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan (research library database) using the keyword “agroforestry news”. Articles collected include news articles, feature article and culled articles. The study covered news published from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. The total number of agroforestry news reported among the three newspapers is 62 while the number of articles selected for investigation was 60. The content categories constructed to provide answers to the research questions are taungya farming, alley cropping, windbreaks and shelter belts, deforestation, home garden, soil conservation and silvopastoral farming.

**Table 1: Framing typology**

<b>Frame</b>	<b>Key issues of themes raised or discussed in newspaper coverage</b>
Awareness	This frame educates the general public on the need for agroforestry practices. It lays emphasis on the various ways to ensure agroforestry is carried and how people can be well informed
Intervention	This frame reveals various strategies that could be implemented by government or researchers to improve agroforestry practice e.g. Our Plans to Control Climate Change (The Nigerian Tribune November 20, 2013)
Warning	This frame gives advice to the general public on the dangers of disregarding agroforestry practices and the consequences on the environment and their way of life e.g. Call for attitudinal change towards agroforestry (The Nigerian Tribune, November 18, 2013)
Opinion	This frame tends to identify various judgments about agroforestry issues. It illustrates different viewpoints and blame on various circumstances about agroforestry issues. Investment Potential of Forestry Development (The Punch, March 7, 2013)
Government Policy	This frame tends to express the actions and decision set down by government at all levels to address agroforestry development. Strict Laws for Forest Reserves (The Punch, February 10, 2013)

**Source: Field Survey, 2014**

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## Results and Discussion

### Frame of Agroforestry Education News

Table 2 shows that news frame under government policy was mostly reported by the newspapers with 33.3%, followed by awareness (23.3%), warning (16.7%), opinion (15.0%) and intervention (11.7%). The Nigerian Tribune and the Punch both covered a high percentage of government policy news which was the highest frame reported (40.0%). This was due to most news report being based on policies being introduced by government organizations to ensure agroforestry practices are being engaged. However, the Guardian reported 30.0% of awareness and warning (25.0%) news. Framing often are guided by sponsorship, which often are very hard to come by for agricultural and forestry related news. This is consistent with Badiru and Adekoya (2014). They opined that sponsors lack the knowledge of the benefits derivable form rural development broadcast.

**Table 2: Frame of agroforestry education news**

Frame	Guardian	Nigerian Tribune	Punch	Total
<b>Awareness</b>	6 (30)	4 (20)	4 (20)	14 (23.3)
<b>Intervention</b>	2 (10)	4 (20)	1 (5)	7 (11.7)
<b>Warning</b>	5 (25)	3 (15)	2 (10)	10 (16.7)
<b>Opinion</b>	3 (15)	1 (5)	5 (25)	9 (15.0)
<b>Government policy</b>	4 (20)	8 (40)	8 (40)	20 (33.3)
<b>Total</b>	20 (100)	20 (100)	20 (100)	60 (100)

**Source: Field Survey, 2014**

### Agroforestry News Categories

Table 3 reveals that the major types of news reported were taungya (43.3%) and deforestation (26.6%). Taungya related news reflects issues of taungya practices within reserved areas and how it could be embraced by farmers and the general populace to encourage environmental sustainability and increase wood supply. Deforestation news was about the excessive exploitation of already established agroforestry areas and woodlots. Windbreaks and shelterbelt news (13.4%), home garden news (8.3%) and soil conservation news (6.7%) were the least reported. It was noted that news on alley cropping and silvopastoral which are major agroforestry practices were not reported by any of the three newspapers.

The Punch newspaper did not report any news on soil conservation. The Tribune newspaper also did not report news on home garden related issues. This results shows that the major types of agroforestry education news reported in the three newspapers were news on taungya and deforestation. Agroforestry education offers

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practical ways of applying various specialized knowledge and skills to the development of sustainable rural production systems and enhance environmental protection.

**Table 3: Agroforestry news categories**

News Type	Guardian (%)	Nigerian (%)	Tribune	Punch (%)	Total (%)
Taungya	40.0	55.0		30.0	43.3
Silvo pastoral	-	-		-	-
Windbreaks and shelterbelt	10.0	15.0		15.0	13.4
Soil conservation	15.0	5.0		-	6.7
deforestation	25	25.0		30.0	26.6
Home Garden	10.0	-		15.0	8.3
Alley cropping	-	-		-	0.0

**Source: Field Survey, 2014**

### Spaces Allotted to Agroforestry News

Table 4 shows the total area allocated to agroforestry news reported on the pages of the newspaper. The total area of space allocated to Guardian was 4800cm<sup>2</sup>, the Nigerian Tribune was 2397.38cm<sup>2</sup> while the punch was 3997cm<sup>2</sup>. The maximum space allotted to agroforestry news in the Guardian was 394.24cm<sup>2</sup>. The Nigerian Tribune was 273.06cm and Punch was 440.32cm. The minimum space allotted to agroforestry education news in the Guardian was 42.86cm<sup>2</sup>; the Nigerian Tribune was 63.50cm<sup>2</sup> while the punch was 34cm<sup>2</sup>. The average space allocated to agroforestry news was 3731.51cm<sup>2</sup>.

The result shows that the Guardian newspaper dedicated the highest amount of space to agroforestry education news while the punch newspaper had the highest space given to single news reported. The tribune was allocated the lowest amount of space for agroforestry education news during the time frame. This agrees with earlier findings on the very poor level of reportage of agricultural development news by newspapers (Okorie, and Oyedepo, 2011).

**Table 4: Agroforestry Education News Space Allotted Categories**

Space Allotted	Guardian %	Tribune %	Punch %	Total %
Total	4800 cm <sup>2</sup>	2397.38 cm <sup>2</sup>	3997 cm <sup>2</sup>	3731.51cm <sup>2</sup> (Average)
Large	45%	40%	35%	40%
Small	55%	60%	65%	60%

Mean: 186.52 SD: 116.96. Source: Field Survey, 2014

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The Table also shows that space categorized into large and small based on the mean of the total space allotted to each newspaper a high percentage of small space was allotted; Guardian (55%), Tribune (60%) and the Punch (65%). In the large category, the Guardian allocated the largest amount of space (45%), followed by the tribune (40%) and lastly the punch (35%). This implies that the space allotted to agroforestry education news in the three newspapers was not sufficient enough to drive agroforest education for the required impact. This is consistent with the submission of Fawole and Olajide (2012). which argues that the space allotted to an issue is one of the criteria for evaluating the importance editors attach to such issues and the more space accredited indicates a high level of prominence to certain news articles.

### Agroforestry Education News Sources Quoted in the News Reported

Table 5 indicates that the newspapers obtained their information from two major sources which are government (60%) and columnist (18.3%). The government group comprised of those in governmental positions either elected, appointed or hired, while the columnist are regular reporters of a particular column in the newspapers. Other sources of information included; NGO's (10%), university scientist (6.7%) and research institute (5%). Government had the highest percentage in all the information sources. Regarding agroforestry education news sources quoted in the news reported, the Nigerian tribune had 85%, the Punch 55%, while the Guardian 40%. The results also indicated that based on bringing awareness to encourage the sustainability of agroforestry, activities the government is in the frontline of this responsibility through its agencies. This corresponds with the high level of frequency attributed to government policy frame earlier reported.

**Table 5: Agroforestry education news sources quoted in the news reported**

<b>News Sources Quoted</b>	<b>Guardian %</b>	<b>Tribune %</b>	<b>Punch %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
NGO'S	20	-	10	10
Columnist	35	-	20	18.3
University Science	-	15	5	6.7
Research Institute	5	-	10	5
Government Agency/Official	40	85	55	60

**Source: Field Survey, 2014**

### The placement given to Agroforestry Education News in the Newspapers

Table 6 shows the prominence given to agroforestry education news in the three newspapers. The newspapers reported 1.7 % of news on the front page, 98.3 % on other pages and none on the back page. The front and back pages are regarded as the most prominent pages of a newspaper.

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Only the Nigerian Tribune gave more prominence to agroforestry news compared to the other two newspapers by reporting 1.7% on the front page. This indicates a very low level of prominence given to agroforestry education news by all newspaper editions. This may be caused by the non-lucrative nature of agroforestry news compared with other news like politics, sports and advertisement which most readers show high level of interest. Telg and Iran (2012) opined that the front page is used to present readers with all the important, attractive, eye catching and major headlines. Only news that was believed to interest the general public and boost newspaper sales are allocated to prominent pages of the newspaper.

**Table 6: Placement of agro-forestry education news in the newspapers**

Placement	Guardian %	Tribune %	Punch %	Total %
Front Page	-	5	-	1.7
Others (Middle and other pages excluding front and back	100	95	100	98.3
Back pages	-	-	-	-

### Category of News and Space Allotted to Agroforestry Education News

Table 7 shows that the category of news does not affect the space allotted to agroforestry education news. Provide the data or statistics. This implies that the editors do not publish agroforestry education news based on the news types but rather on amount of news they received. In the same vein, the placement given to agroforestry education news was not related to the space allocated to the news. According to Clear and Weideman (2007) the content of newspaper is normally organized or structured according to a standard layout, meaning that certain categories of articles determine the space allocated to news in certain pages in the newspaper.

**Table 7: Relationship between frame categories and space allotted**

Variable	$\chi^2$	Df
Significant relationship between frame categories and space allotted	3.006*	6
Significant relationship between placement and space allotted	1.125*	2

**\*P ≥ 0.05**

### Differences in Space Allocated to Agroforestry News

Table 8 shows that there was a significant difference between the spaces allocated to agroforestry education news across the three newspapers, ( $F=7.142$ ,  $P\leq 0.05$ ). It was observed that the Nigerian Tribune contributed a low amount of total space compared to the other dailies. The implication is that reporters place more attention on news stories that

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are more lucrative and attractive to the audience. It has been reported that Nigerian newspapers publish more of attractive news such as political, sports and advertisement which readers patronize the more (Ofuoku and Agumagu, .2008)

**Table 8: Differences in space allocated to agroforestry news across the three newspapers**

	<b>Sum of Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>
Between Groups	167015.42	2	83507.711	7.142*
Within Group	666427.74	57	11691.715	

\* $P \leq 0.05$

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The major frame stressed by the newspapers was government policy and awareness of agroforestry education news. The space allotted to agroforestry education news in the newspapers was tremendously small to communicate adequately to the general public, as agroforestry serves as a major factor in mitigating against climate change. The selected newspapers reveal disparity in the prominence given to agroforestry education news and confer low priority to reportage of agroforestry.

Nigerian newspaper industry should increase their frequency of reporting agroforestry education news. It is equally paramount that civil society groups with mandate for climate change amelioration should mount advocacy mobilization and sensitization for media executives on the importance of agroforestry education news reporting.

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