

## Press Coverage of Food Security in Nigeria: A Case of *The Guardian* Newspaper

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### Abstract

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO's) recent estimates indicate that, globally, 842 million people – 12 per cent of the global population – were unable to meet their dietary energy requirements in 2011–13, down from 868 million reported for the 2010–12 period in last year's report. Most of those affected are in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the challenge of food security is still critical. Nigeria's food security rating remains poor, in the absence of such social shock absorbers as food safety net, and measures aimed at facilitating access by the poor to affordable, quality food, which is on offer in nations that have good food security rating. The goal of this study was to examine reportage of food security as it affects Nigeria, the extent to which the Nigerian mass media accord reportorial relevance to the issue, which is closely linked to the very first of the MDGs that the United Nations floated at the turn of the current century. Therefore, the study examined Nigeria's food security situation through the eyes of the mass media. It purposively selected six-month editions of *The Guardian* newspaper, which the researchers content-analysed using prominence, variety, and direction as content categories. A 132-day sample size out of 184 days in the six months derived from weekdays only. A key finding of this study is that *The Guardian* newspaper has shown gross indifference to an issue as globally critical as food security. The study recommends that both The Guardian and the Nigerian government pay closer attention to the issue.

**Keywords:** Food security; food insecurity; food sovereignty; food security indicators; mass media

### 1. Introduction

The security and welfare of citizens is the responsibility of any serious and responsible government, as captured in the fundamental objectives of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution equally grants to citizens certain fundamental rights, including the right to life, as can be ensured through the provision of qualitative, effective and efficient services like healthcare – including maternal healthcare for pregnant citizens. Such provision should also include care-related dimensions of social security like food security, which is a concern globally. If health is truly wealth, one can arguably say that good, healthy food is a pathway to that wealth. If good and healthy food is wealth, it then means that health will determine an individual's level of stamina, which is a measure of one's ability to withstand rigours. In other words, the strength that an individual needs to do work and other things is a dependent variable on the independent variable of accessible, available, affordable and quality food in a country. In fact, Iredia (2011) reasons that food security ought to should be a component of the national security policy of Nigeria.

The security of a nation is the security of its inhabitants, citizens and aliens, from internal and external threats. For instance, Akinfeleye (2008) suggests that security, especially one that is of a national kind, borders on the collective security of all groups of persons in a country from all forms of threat. Therefore, Akinfeleye implies that national security is not about the security of a government, but about the security of every citizen. To ensure that government carries out its constitutional functions as expected, the mass media must be up and doing in reporting what may end up being threats to society; it must report all dimensions to a nation's national security concerns. One of such is hunger, which is an absence of food security.

#### 1.1 Objective(s) of the Study

The study's objective was to examine the reportage of food security by the Nigerian mass media. Looking in the direction of the print media, newspapers specifically, the study purposively chose *The Guardian*, one of Nigeria's leading newspapers (Kayode & Adeniran, 2012: 7). The total number of daily editions published by the newspaper between July and December 2013 totaled 184, from which emerged a 132-day sample size for content-analysis. The study, through its findings, showed that, within the period studied, *The Guardian* failed in its social duty to society (that is, Nigeria) by not reporting adequately, the issue of food security, which is a key population challenge to Nigeria and Nigerians.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The study answered the following research questions:

RQ 1: What level of prominence is given to food security-related stories in *The Guardian*?

RQ 2: What varieties of stories are most frequently reported in *The Guardian*?

RQ 3: What is the direction of such stories?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Food: an Inevitable Need of Humanity**

The Yoruba people of South West, Nigeria believe that when a human's access to good food is ensured, they are free from poverty. The Yoruba people of Nigeria see food as an antidote to poverty. Hence, in underscoring the significance of food as a human need, they say, *Bi ounje ba ti ku ro ni inu ise, ise pin in*, which, when translated, means, "When food is taken care of, poverty is taken care of". Unlike the dead that have no needs, certain, basic needs determine the well-being of primates, especially humans. The ones that are basic to humans include food, water, clothing, housing and shelter, in addition to some other ones like security, comfort, and leisure. Abraham Maslow, an American clinical psychologist, conceptualised one of the most popular theories on human needs. He called it the Hierarchy of Needs. According to Maslow, there are five levels of human needs; he listed them in the ascending order of physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualisation needs (cited in Aina, 2002: 139). The one of concern to this study is the physiological level of needs, of which food is one.

Thus, within the context of Maslow's theoretical construct, food is a physiological need of humans. Food can be plant, in the form of fruit, vegetable, grain, among others. It can also derive from animals such as cow, ram, goat, and so on. The classes of food are carbohydrates, lipids, nutrients, protein and vitamins, all of which help maintain and sustain the human body system. Just like the humans who depend on it, food can be prone to insecurity and insufficiency, a situation that results in hunger globally. When food becomes insecure, especially because of famine, humanity usually is at the risk of hunger, which can lead to other problems like malnourishment.

### **2.2 Food Security**

Food security, according to Pinstrup-Anderson (2009) in its narrowest sense, means that enough food is available, whether at the global, national, community, or household level. Its opposite, hunger results from a lack or insufficiency in food, its production or importation. The third target of the first United Nations' Millennium Development Goal – to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – seeks to halve the proportion of people in the world, who suffer from hunger, between 1990 and 2015.

When the idea of food security was presented for the first time at the World Food Conference in 1974, it was viewed solely from the perspective of having adequate availability of food on a national scale (Adebayo, 2010: 1). Over time, the term "food security" has been used to mean different things. Originally, it was used to describe whether a country had access to enough food that can meet dietary energy requirements. Then, national food security was used by some to mean self-sufficiency, i.e. the country produces the food it needs, or that which its population demands. Besides, it was seldom made clear whether self-sufficiency meant that all citizens had access to enough food to meet energy and nutritional requirements or whether meeting economic demand from domestic production was enough to claim self-sufficiency (Pinstrup-Anderson, 2009: 1).

### **2.3 Food Sovereignty**

Food security is closely linked with national food sovereignty, which is a means of measuring the extent of a nation's means of making available to its people, the food that they require and demand, irrespective of whether the food is locally sourced or imported. Thus, a food-sovereign nation is able to provide the needed and demanded food available for its people. On the other hand, a nation that is unable to produce the food it needs or its population is prepared to buy and does not have the hard currency to import what is missing, would not be food sovereign.

### **2.4 Food Security: the Indicators**

There are three main indicators of food security. Also known as pillars of food security, they are:

- Affordability of food
- Availability of food
- Nutritional strength and quality of food,  
(The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013, p.18; Quisumbing et. al, 1995, p.1).

Regarding food security and indicators, Pinstrup-Anderson (2009) observes thus:

The use of the term food security at the national and global level tends to focus on the supply side of the food equation. The question raised is: is there enough food available, where food

is usually interpreted to mean dietary energy? But availability does not assure access, and enough calories do not assure a healthy and nutritional diet. The distribution of the available food is critical. If food security is to be a measure of household or individual welfare, it has to address access. This was widely recognized by scholars and practitioners in the mid-1970s, when food security was defined as access by all people to enough food to live a healthy and productive life (p. 1).

An implication of the situation that Pinstrup-Anderson painted above is that food must be available when needed, where needed, and must be of good nutritional quality. Since the 1996 World Food Summit of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO), food security has meant a situation when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food in meeting their nutritional needs and preferences for food that ensures a healthy and active life (FAO, 1996). The addition of 'safe and nutritious' in the FAO's (1996) definition emphasizes food safety and nutritional composition, while the addition of 'food preferences' changes the concept of food security from mere access to enough food, to access to the food preferred. This implies that people with equal access to food, but different food preferences, could show different levels of food security.

### **2.5 Affordability of Food**

Affordability as an indicator of food security measures the ability of consumers to purchase food, their vulnerability to price shocks, and the presence of programmes and policies to support them when shocks occur. High food prices are an important cause of food insecurity—but so, too, are low prices, and wide swings in prices may be most damaging of all. A combination of factors—including an expanding global population, more expensive food preferences in emerging markets, higher costs of agricultural inputs and lower returns on agricultural productivity—have all pushed prices up. Costly food and large, vulnerable populations put Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chad at the bottom of the index for affordability (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013: 18).

The 2013 Global Food Security Index (GFSI, *or the Index*) has found that high prices make food less affordable for consumers, particularly in developing countries. Those closest to the global poverty line and those for whom food consumption makes up a significant portion of household expenditure are the most vulnerable to higher prices. Often, they are already eating the cheapest foods, and they have little disposable income.

The Index (GFSI), in 2013, rated Nigeria 86<sup>th</sup> of 107 countries. Oil-rich Nigeria had a total weighted score of 33.3 out of 100. In the affordability category rank of the Index, Nigeria scored a meagre 16 out of the 105 maximum points. The 2013 GFSI adds that, again populations in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia remain the most vulnerable to high prices. Of the 28 Sub-Saharan African countries covered in the index, food consumption accounts for 50% or more of household spending in 20 of them (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013:19).

The measurement of affordability indicator relies on six indicators. According to the Index, the six indicators are – food consumption as a proportion of total household expenditure; proportion of population living under or close to the global poverty line; GDP per capita (at purchasing power parity, or PPP, exchange rates); agricultural import tariffs; presence of food safety net programmes; and access to financing for farmers. Owing to lack of food safety nets, costly food and large, vulnerable populations shot Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chad to the base of the index for affordability, the Index revealed.

Findings of the Index resonate with Adebayo's (2010: 142) observation that prices of food have been growing in Nigeria since the 1970s, and became much more pronounced from the late 1980s when the nation's economy became deregulated. Adebayo also recalls that in 1995, the Food Price Index was about 2000% of the 1985 price, a period of just about 9 years; and the 2005 Food Price Index was almost 7000% of the 1985 price. He expresses the fear that, without greater increases being recorded in income and without income redistribution that favours the poor, continuous rise in food prices will reduce Nigerians' ability to access available food supplies.

### **2.6 Availability of Food**

At its most basic level, food availability is a measure of the supply of food relative to the size of the population. This is captured in the sufficiency of supply indicator of the GFSI. Food security can be measured in terms of sufficiency of food supply, risks associated with disruption of food supply, country's capacity to supply food to its population, and research efforts aimed at enhancing agricultural output. The Economic Intelligence Unit (2013), while noting that food availability can be possible, through sustained local efforts towards food self-sufficiency (domestic production) instead of food aid from international donors, warns against over-dependency on food aids, because most food aid-dependent nations remain poor. Such nations are mostly in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. However, it considers humanitarian food aid necessary and valuable to food security. Major contributions to food availability come not only from agriculture, but also from fisheries, aquaculture and forest products. It is estimated that between 15 and 20 per cent of all animal protein consumed is

derived from aquatic animals, which are highly nutritious and serve as a valuable supplement to diets lacking essential vitamins and minerals. Forests provide a wide range of highly nutritious foods, in the form of leaves, seeds, nuts, honey, fruits, mushrooms, insects and wild animals (FAO, IFAD, & WFP, 2013: 18).

### **2.7 Nutritional Strength, Quality and Safety of Food**

Also known as food utilisation, this indicator, which measures adequacy of food intake, is generally considered in terms of some minimal recommended level of food (usually energy intake but also protein, fat and the micronutrients) per caput per period (Adebayo, 2010: 142). This category assesses the variety and nutritional quality of average diets, as well as the safety of food, using five indicators: diet diversification; government commitment to increasing nutritional standards; micronutrient availability; protein quality; and food safety.

Poor nutrition is a concern for wealthy and poor countries alike. Nutrition, not included in earlier definitions of food security, is now widely recognised as important, particularly in the 1,000 days between the start of a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday. Research has shown that poor nutrition at a young age, even temporarily because of higher food prices, can harm a child's cognitive development (The Lancet, 2008, as cited in Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013: 25). Poor nations are not the only ones suffering Malnutrition is a financial burden for healthcare systems in many advanced economies. In the UK, researchers estimate that malnutrition and associated diseases raise domestic healthcare costs by £7.3bn (US\$11.7bn) annually (Stratton, Russell, Green & Pan, 2011, cited in Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013: 25).

While micronutrient deficiencies are a significant problem in poor countries, wealthier nations struggle as well. None of the ten richest nations, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head, finishes in the top ten for micronutrient availability, with the exception of Singapore and Ireland. Nearly all high-income countries have ample levels of vitamin A in their diets, but they are significantly lacking in iron from vegetables and vegetable products. But vegetables and vegetable products are the gains of the developing countries, where there is higher iron availability sourced from vegetables, probably because they make up a larger proportion of their diet, says the Economist Intelligence Unit (2013: 26).

### **2.8 Access to food**

According to the FAO et al (2013: 19), economic access and physical access are the two pillars upon which a populations' ability to access food rests. Economic access is dependent upon disposable income, food prices and the provision of and access to social support. Physical access is subject to availability of quality infrastructure, including ports, roads, railways, communication and food storage facilities and other installations that facilitate the functioning of markets.

Incomes earned in agriculture, forests, fisheries and aquaculture play a primary role in determining food security outcomes. Economic access to food is also determined by food prices and people's purchasing power. The domestic food price index, defined as the ratio of food purchasing power parity (PPP) to general PPP, captures the cost of food relative to total consumption (FAO et. al, 2013: 20).

## **3. Food Security: the Environmental Pressures**

There have been concerns regarding environmental dimension to the issue of food security. Owing to increasing population and consumption growth, Godfrey et al. (2010: 812.) foresee that the demand for food globally will increase for at least another 40 years. In the opinion of Godfrey et al, growing competition for land, water, and energy, in addition to the overexploitation of fisheries, will affect our ability to produce food, as will the urgent requirement to reduce the impact of the food system on the environment. While noting that effects of the changing nature of climate are a further threat to global food security, they call for the production of more food that should be used more efficiently and equitably, in the context of a multifaceted and linked global strategy aimed at ensuring sustainable and equitable food security – an ambition tied to the first MDG.

### **3.1 Food-Secured Households**

The concept of food security has been used extensively at the household level as a measure of welfare and attempts have been made to make the concept operationally useful in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs, projects and policies. A household is considered food-secure if it has the ability to acquire the food needed by its members to be food-secure. There are two reasons why household food security may not assure food security for all its members. First, the ability to acquire enough food may not translate into actual food acquisition. Household preferences may not prioritize food acquisition over the acquisition of other goods and services such as school fees and housing. Second, the intra-household allocation of the food may not be based on the needs of each individual member. The existence of a large number of households with both undernourished and obese members is a case in point (Pinstrup-Anderson, 2009: 2).

### **3.2 Food Insecurity**

To define food insecurity, it is pertinent to recall FAO's (1996) definition of food security, which the global food watchdog sees as a situation when people, at all times, have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food in meeting their nutritional needs and preferences for food that ensures a healthy and active life. Food insecurity is the opposite of food security. We, therefore, may define food security as the situation when people have very limited or no physical and economic access to food that is safe and nutritious in meeting their nutritional needs and preferences for food that they need to live a healthy and active life. Food insecurity is of two strands: transitory and permanent food insecurity. Transitory food insecurity describes periodic food insecurity as for example seasonal food insecurity, while permanent food insecurity describes a long-term lack of access to sufficient food as for example prolonged period of famine, occasioned by drought.

#### 4. Nigerian Mass Media and Food Security

The effects that the mass media have on members of the society (their audiences) have progressed through some phases. Effects (functional or dysfunctional) of the mass media used to be maximally powerful, until the *partial* panic triggered by a broadcast on the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). A studio dramatization of *War of the Worlds*, a science-fiction novel, the broadcast is arguably one of the most infamous mistakes committed over the media channel of radio, even though the immediate panic it spread across the New Jersey, though unprecedented, did not affect everyone who had tuned in to the broadcast, which was directed Orson Welles. This *checkmated* the assumed all-powerful influence of the mass media on media audiences (Baran & Davies, 2012). The assertion that the mass media are capable of functioning in the capacities of glue, oil and dynamite in any society reflects the considerably enormous power of influence that they wield in society. Because there is an 'umbilical cord' relationship between the mass media and society, scholars (Mowlana, 2000; Akinfeleye, 2003; Oso, 2012) interested in media-enhanced social development and security, also agree that there is a causal relationship between the mass media and the society.

Lasswell (1960) assigned to the mass media three roles for the society within which they function: surveillance, correlation, and transmission of cultural heritage from one generation to the next. Surveillance as the first function of the mass media refers to how the mass media look out for both threats and opportunities in society. The second function implies how the mass media correlate the different elements of society, allowing its segments work together. Transmission of cultural heritage from one generation to the next is the third. In addition to Lasswell's three, Wright (1960), cited in Hanson (2005), handed the mass media a fourth function – entertainment. Akinfeleye's (2003) submission is that the mass media ought to watchdog, check to uncover and not to cover ills in a society, as may be committed by the three other realms – executive, legislative and judiciary arms of government. While stressing the crucial role of the mass media in society, Akinfeleye (2003) posits that the mass media can be the 'fourth estate of the wreck' - a clear and emphatic allusion to the power that the mass media sometimes can wield in the course of events – or a fourth estate of the realm. The implication of Akinfeleye's position is that the mass media are the engine room of a society, and are capable of engendering progress and well-being in society. Clearly, this also relates to mass media coverage of food security, which is closely linked to the very first of the Millennium Development Goals floated by the United Nations at the turn of the current century. The year 2015 is the deadline set by the UN and its Member-States for meeting all the targets of the MDGs.

#### 5. Theoretical Framework

The mass media are crucial to social discourse and public opinions. People's thoughts and perceptions are susceptible to cues from the mass media, to which many scholars have ascribed certain powers of influence. One area of the enormous power credited to the mass media comes to the fore in the ways that mass media shape perceptions, determine the flow of public opinion. By *telling* them what to think more about, the mass media cause their audiences to *think* in certain pre-determined manner. Thus, when the mass media do this, scholars believe that the mass media are setting the agenda for the public. Gill and Adams (1988: 6) note that the concept describes the ways in which the mass media decide which information and which issues are most important for the public consumption and debate.

Describing an agenda as a list of topics in descending order of importance, Gill and Adams (1988:6) add that whatever is not on the agenda is unlikely to be up for discussion. Thus, the duo argue that as regular viewers, listeners or readers of messages from the mass media, we become aware that somewhere, behind the scenes, people are deciding which stories are of overriding interest, which are next in importance and which are moderately important. Gill and Adams explain the activity thus:

...much of what we see and read about is 'preprogrammed' sometimes months in advance and editorial staff will be able to formulate attitudes long before an event occurs. Perhaps 80 per cent of what of all 'news' concerns events which are known to be going to happen, at least in principle, if not in detail. Setting an agenda suggests an

active editorial policy that determines what sort of information is to be printed or broadcast. Journalists are dispatched to cover certain kinds of event (1988: 6).

The basic premise of the agenda setting theory examines how news media reports particular issues and influences or shapes public awareness and debate on the issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, cited in Kayode & Adeniran, 2012: 6). In describing a phenomenon long noticed and studied in the context of election campaigns, McCombs and Shaw coined the term ‘agenda-setting’, recalls (Oloredo, 2011), who reports McQuail (2000) as having found that the evidence collected at that time, and since, has consisted of data linking two sides: showing a relationship between the degree and order of importance the media give to ‘issues’ and the level or degree of relevance that the public attach to the same issue. Oloredo (2013) believes that the theory helps us understand the pervasive role of the media, especially in political communication systems.

As editors act as gatekeepers of mass mediated messages, they promote a media agenda by prioritising certain issues. They can provide sustained and prominent coverage to an issue while others are marginalised or ignored. Earlier propositions about the agenda setting theory suggested that while media do not tell us what to think, they may tell us what to think about. This suggests that mass media has the potential to draw people’s attention to certain issues, and allows for conclusions already raised in the public agenda (Kayode & Adeniran, 2012: 6). Thus, issues that border on food security, and are crucial to public safety and awareness, ought to be among the ones to which the mass media should devote coverage. By doing this, awareness heightens and measures can be taken, aimed at forestalling disasters arising from poor nutrition and food poisoning and poor handling and other factors. This is as crucial for the mass media as it is for governments across the globe, and is in tandem with the latest recommendations by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO, 2014), which notes that sustained political commitment at the highest level is a prerequisite for hunger eradication. It entails placing food security and nutrition at the top of the political agenda and creating an enabling environment for improving food security and nutrition (<http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2014/en/>).

## 6. Research Methodology

### 6.1 Study Population

The population of the study was Nigerian newspapers only. Out of the several newspapers published in Nigeria, the researchers picked one, *The Guardian*, for content analysis. The choice of the newspaper was influenced by the fact of its leadership role among newspapers in Nigeria (Kayode & Adeniran, 2012:7; Oyero & Areoye, 2008: 49). Therefore, the study sought to examine coverage of the issue by *The Guardian*, a leading Nigerian newspaper, which emerged purposively for the study.

### 6.2 Sampling Procedure

The researchers purposively chose editions of *The Guardian* spanning six months, for analysis of food-security related reports in the selected editions. We drew out a sample of 132 days from a population of 184 that the six months comprised. The 132-day sample size derived from the five working days of the week – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday – in each of the six months chosen for the study. The table below resulted from editions content analysed for the stated period.

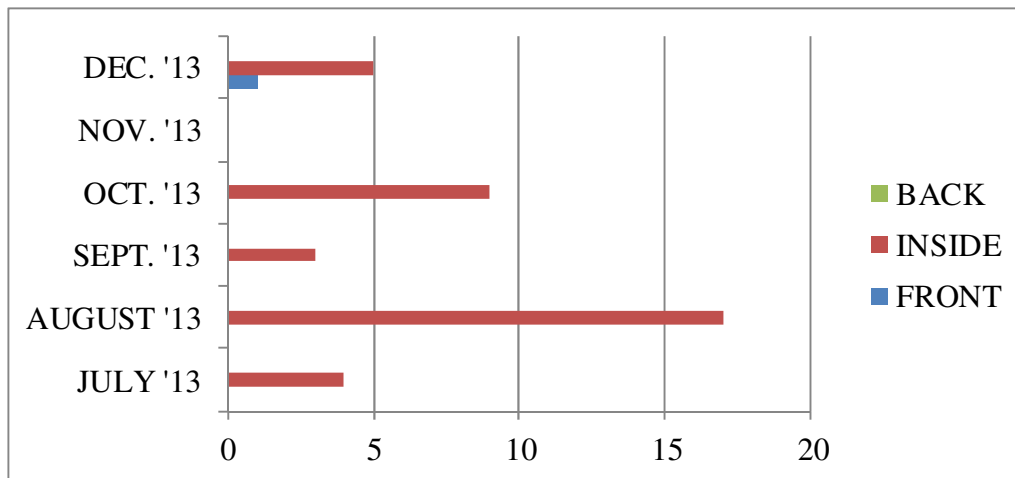
## 7.1 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

**Table 1: Content Variables**

Month	Prominence			Varieties			Direction			Total	%
	Fro.	Ins.	Back	Pic.	News	Articles	P+	N-	Neu		
July '13	-	4	-	-	3	1	2	2	-	4	10.26%
Aug. '13	-	17	-	-	15	2	9	3	5	17	43.59%
Sept '13	-	3	-	1	1	1	1	2	-	3	7.69%
Oct. '13	-	9	-	-	9	-	9	-	-	9	23.08%
Nov. '13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Nil	0
Dec. '13	1	5	-	1	4	1	3	1	2	6	15.38%
<b>Total</b>										<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** Fro. = Front page. Ins.= Inside page. Pic. = Picture. P+ = Positive, Ne = Neutral, N- = Negative.

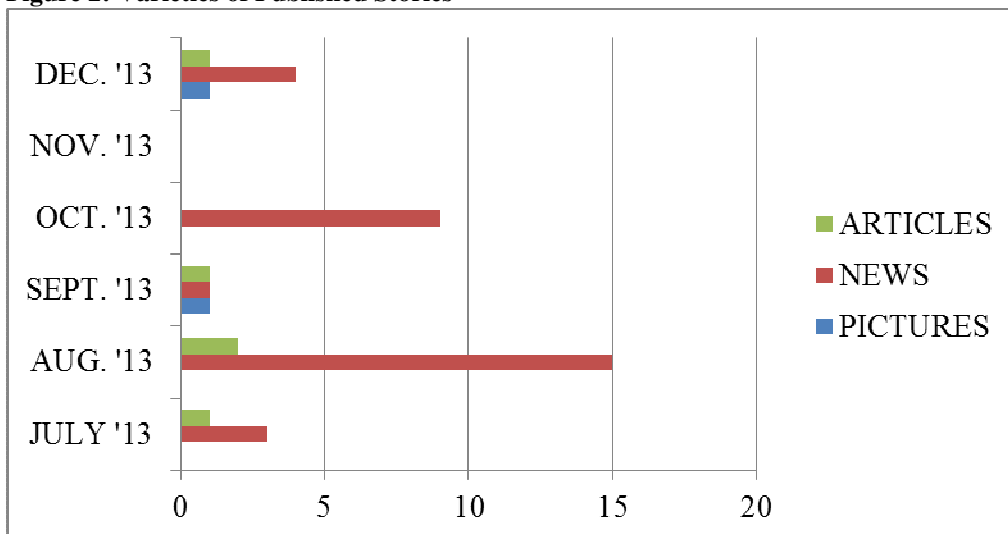
**7.1.1 Research Question 1:** What level of prominence is given to food security-related stories in *The Guardian*?  
**Figure 1: Prominence of Stories**



From Figure 1, the indication is that throughout the period covered by the study, stories on food security did not make the front page of *The Guardian*, except in December. All the stories were tucked in the inside pages. Worse still, none appeared on the back page of the paper. This further indicated that *The Guardian*, and by extension, the Nigerian media do not pay much significant attention to the matter of food security, as germane as it is for development, and being an issue that affects the entire citizenry of the country.

**7.1.2 Research Question 2:** What varieties of stories are most frequently reported in *The Guardian*?

**Figure 2: Varieties of Published Stories**



From the Figure above, it is obvious that most of the publications were news items, while few were articles with few pictures published in September and December only. This means that issue of food security neither attracted public discourses, news analyses nor opinions from public opinion holders. Here again, the media demonstrated indifference to an issue as critical as food security.

### 7.1.3 Research Question 3: What is the direction of such stories?

**Figure 3: Direction of Published Stories in The Guardian**

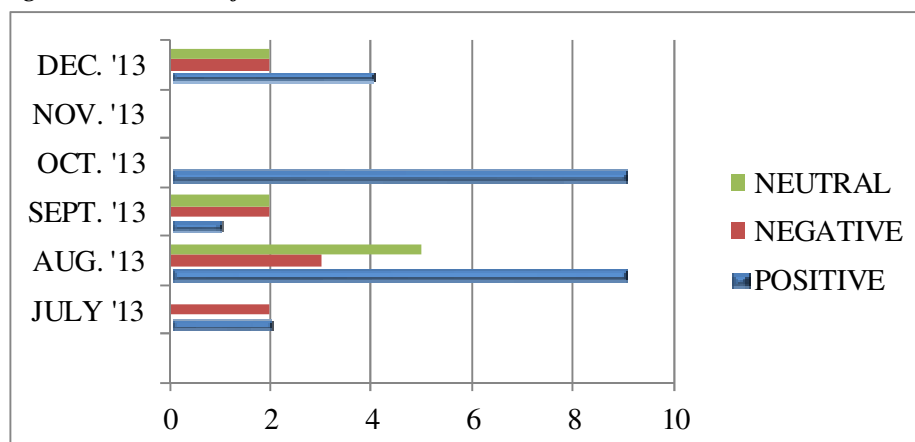
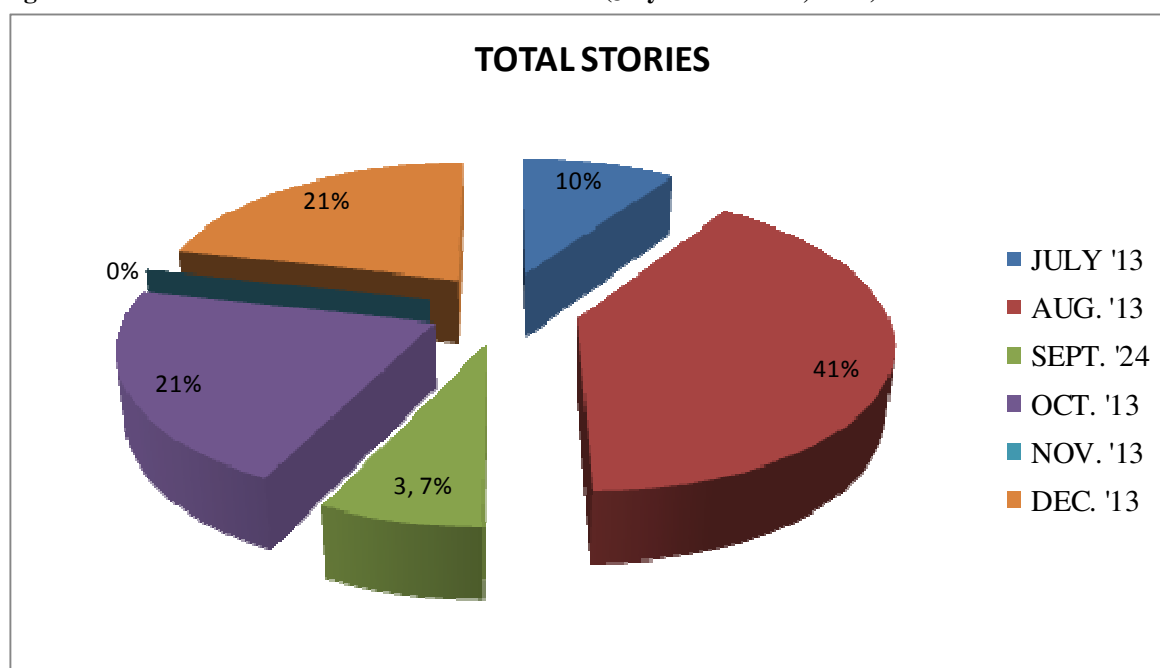


Figure 3 indicates the direction of the stories published in the sampled newspaper. Most of the stories were positive, especially in the months August, September and October, while some maintained neutrality, others were about negative events.

**Figure 4: Total Stories Published Across Six Months (July – December, 2013) in The Guardian**



From the above pie chart, it is evident that in August, *The Guardian* published the highest percentage of food security related stories, followed by those published in the months of October, December, July and September in that order. No food security related story was published in November.

## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The issue of food security is a global one. Every year, several agencies (FAO, EIU, IFAD, etc.) reel out statistics concerning the extent of the situation in countries. Nigeria is one of the most under-fed economies in the world (see, for instance, separate reports by FAO, IFAD & WFP, 2013; EIU, 2013). Nigeria faces huge food security challenges. About 70 per cent of the population lives on less than 100 Naira (US\$ 0.70) per day, suffering hunger and poverty. Despite its reputation as petroleum resource-dependent, Nigeria remains an agrarian economy. The sector provides over 40% of gross domestic product (GDP) with between 60 and 70% of the



population productively engaged in farming. But large regional differences exist (Akinsanmi, 2005, cited in Nwajiuba, 2012: 46).

### 8.1.1 Recommendations

The study now recommends as follows:

#### 8.1.2 *The Guardian*

The Nigerian mass media, especially *The Guardian*, should devote more attention to the issue of food security as it affects Nigeria and Nigerians. The *Guardian* newspaper, if it is not already doing so, should work closely both with agencies of the Nigerian government in charge of agro-allied national policy drafting and implementation concerning food security and international organisations like FAO, World Food Programme and so on. This will enable the newspaper get first-hand information concerning food security and related issues in Nigeria, which should strengthen its reportage in this regard. To achieve the foregoing, the newspaper may need to float an Agro-allied Desk charged with the reportage of agricultural and allied matters in the country. In doing so, it can begin to set a food security agenda, which can influence policy agenda on the part of the government.

#### 8.1.3 The Nigerian Government

Government's on-going efforts aimed at ensuring food security in Nigeria should be sustained. While ensuring this, the government must be seen, read, and heard as making spirited efforts concerning the food needs of citizens; this is where the need for improved media-government relations comes in. The need for such a relationship lies in the fact that the government cannot tell its own story, outside the mass media channels in the country, as the mass media are between the government and the people.

The researchers hope that the recommendations are potentially capable of turning around the food security situation that Nigeria faces. Where there is good quality food, living can be healthy and active. One can only imagine the financial gains from a healthy nation.

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