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MEDIA COVERAGE ON FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Media is an essential tool and is used to disseminate to the public different forms of information. Media attention on how to boost food security is essential because food is a fundamental need for every household. An expanded menu of food security information resources offered by print media, electronic media and interactive media is provided by the social network, Sacco farmers and social gathering. These literature reviews discussed the impact of media attention on the information on food security in Kenya. Ten bibliographic databases and a reference list of studies and contacts related to the food safety paper's content were included in the study. Fourteen multisubject databases were analysed purposefully in journal articles, book pieces, reviews and online publications. Findings showed that the media continues to raise awareness effectively, provide information, shape perceptions, and consider food security. Research needs were also established on how particular media (TV, radio) coverage affects the public's food safety data.

Keywords: *Media, Food security, Coverage, Information*

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INTRODUCTION

According to (Open Society Foundations, 2013), Kenya enjoys a vibrant media industry ranging from newspapers, magazines, books, radio, internet to TV stations. Different media types exist in Kenya, such as Electronic media, print media and digital media, with various station under listed. In general, mass media offers effective channels for communicating agricultural messages that emphasise food security information, increasing knowledge and influence of the audience (Nazari1 M. & Hassan M., 2011). Majority of Kenyans depend on media for information and trust it more than any other source of information. Media coverage of science and technology issues may frame the issue to highlight scientific evidence, sociopolitical effects, environmental threats, and concerns about public health, according to Marks et al. (2007). Similarly, potential environmental risks of technology may be highlighted while ignoring the potential benefits, or vice versa, depending on how the article has been framed. "Framing" refers to how events and issues are organised and made sense of by mass media and their audiences (Reese, 2003).

In the hierarchy of needs, food is the topmost, as it is essential for healthy living. Thus, the achievement of food security is vital in any country. Food protection occurs when all individuals have physical, social and economic access to adequate, balanced and nutritious food at all times to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for productive and healthier lives (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2008). For food to be accessible, sufficient purchasing power or ability to acquire quality food at all times in households is a must. Utilisation demands household knowledge of techniques for storing and processing food and basic nutrition principles and caring for children (Rivera & Qamar, 2003). Food security is ensured when there is stability in the supply of the available, accessible, and utilised food (Omonona & Agoi, 2007).

The key achievement of the agricultural sector is the national food security. In the early 1980s, while the population proliferated, food production and agricultural incomes declined in many African countries (FAO, 2005). In recent years, and particularly since 2008, the country has faced severe problems with food insecurity. A high percentage of the population demonstrates this with little access to food in the right quantities and consistency. Official figures suggest that over 10 million people, with most of them living on food relief, are food insecure. Households are also incurring large food bills Owing to high food costs. Maise is a staple food since it is in short supply due to food habits, and most households have limited food options.

The agricultural productivity increment is central to growth, income distribution, improved food security, and poverty alleviation in rural areas (FAO, 2002). Several factors are attributed to current food insecurity problems, including recurring droughts in most parts of the world, high domestic food production costs due to high input costs, in particular fertiliser, The displacement in high potential agricultural areas of a large number of farmers following post-election unrest at the beginning of 2008 high global food prices and high agricultural prices.

Ajayi and Nwoko (1995) opined that, with the emergence of the information economy as a global phenomenon, organised production, conscious utilisation of information, and effective and efficient deployment of information is increasingly becoming the basis for achieving household food security.

Many development efforts have been concentrated on improving household food security through improved agricultural

production, training, and dissemination of agricultural information that facilitates effective utilisation (Okwu & Umoru, 2009). Some of these development efforts include presidential initiatives, programs, and projects that have been implemented to facilitate food security and are targeted to benefit both men and women in rural areas.

Statement of the problem

It has been shown that media coverage of food security, especially information on species diversity, stimulates growth, stability, ecosystem services and resilience in natural and agricultural ecosystems (Kremen, 2012). Similarly, dietary differences in food species have been linked with nutritional adequacy and food security (Ruel MT, 2003). It is generally considered that the growth of sedentary agricultural societies and the further rise of modern agriculture have led to a decrease in the total number of plant species on which humans rely for food, especially wild, semi-domesticated and cultivated vegetables and fruits, spices and other food plants that supplement staple crops with micronutrient supplies and that supplement staple crops with micronutrients (Kearney,2010).The loss of crop species diversity, which contributes to the world's food supply, has been considered a possible threat to food security. Changes in this diversity, however, have not been internationally quantified. Simultaneously, the number of measured crop commodities added to the national food supply has increased. The national per capita food supply has grown in total amounts of food calories, protein, fat and weight, with an increased proportion of those quantities coming from energy-dense foods. The number of food items assessed added to the national food supply was also rising at the same time. Among these stocks, these commodities' relative contribution became evener, and the dominance of the most important commodities declined. Food supply data is not directly equal to consumption because food losses are not measured at the house, but are a higher measure of food crops' value to diets than production data (Prescott 1990). Data on national food supply both generalise and underestimate the total diversity of established food crop species, due to sub-national dietary variation, mainly found in home gardens and local markets. Wheeler and Braun (2013) agree that current production trends of these crops do not guarantee major crop commodities vital to national food supplies worldwide due to ongoing and expected climate changes, the decrease in the supply of non-renewable inputs, and the increasingly extreme impacts on land, water quality, and biodiversity of agriculture. Such trends may impact food security regarding crop commodity trade, decrease the nutritional quality of major crops, and enhance under-researched crop species' attractiveness. Accurate, unbiased media coverage on food security is essential because several studies have shown that media reporting directly influences consumers' attitudes and perceptions (Frewer, Miles, & Marsh, 2002; Marks, Kalaitzandonakes, Wilkins, & Zakharova, 2007; Vilella-Vila & Costa-Font, 2008). Since the media serve as primary sources of information for the Kenyan public on food security issues (Gathaara et al., 2008; Kimenju et al., 2005), it is a credible source for educating, informing and raising awareness on how to solve food security issues. Therefore there was need to assess how media coverage affects food security information.

Objective of the study

This study examined the effects of media coverage on food security information.

Theoretical Framework

This section of the paper dealt with food security model and theories relevant to this paper.

Food security model (Four pillar of food model)

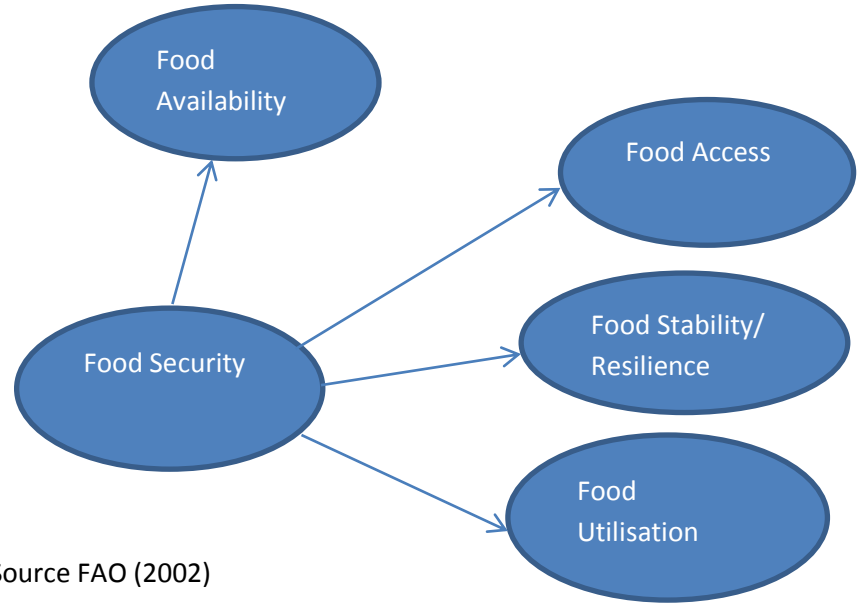

Figure 1: Source FAO (2002)

Food availability

The World Food Programme defines accessibility as the 'quantity of food present in a country or region through all forms of domestic production, imports, food stocks and food aid.' (2009 WFP, p. 170). Riely et al. 1995 confirm that the term appears to refer to food available at the regional or national level rather than at the household level, which may contribute to some uncertainty as to the micro-level word "availability" food are available for a large population of the nation or region categorised to the critical component of food security. For example in Kenya during

Food accessibility

"A household's ability to acquire an adequate amount of food regularly through a combination of purchases, barter, borrowings, food assistance or gifts"the ability of a household to regularly receive adequate amounts of food through a combination of purchases, barter, borrowings, food assistance or gifts. (2009 WFP, p. 170). There are three components of food access, which are physical, economic / financial and Cultural-socio. The physical dimension can be illustrated by a situation where food is being produced in one part of a country. However, an inefficient or non-existent transport infrastructure means that food cannot be delivered to another part suffering from a lack of food.

From an economic point of view, food protection happens when people can afford to buy enough food. The notion that food insecurity exists when food is available, but people cannot afford it is still quite a recent phenomenon in the history of food security. "The importance of market systems to ensure access to food is another economic consideration, as OXFAM points out: "Even in rural areas, the majority of people, and even in rural areas. In particular, the poor rely on market systems to supply food and critical goods and services and sell their items. (2007 by OXFAM). The potential customer has the money to purchase the food, but being a member of a specific social group or even gender is prohibited. Social conflict and civil war can significantly disrupt food production and lead to livestock loss, such as dire consequences for a household's future food security (Riely et al. 1999, 22).

Food utilisation

The definition of utilisation (the third element of food security) by the World Food Summit is "safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs" The availability and access to food alone are not adequate, and "safe and nutritious food" must be maintained for individuals. The food consumed has to provide sufficient energy to enable the consumer to carry out routine physical activities. Utilisation also covers safe drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities to avoid the spread of disease and awareness of food preparation and storage procedures. Therefore, utilisation covers a range of aspects that hinge on the consumer's understanding of what foods to select and how to prepare and store them. It is often a mistake to assume that so-called traditional societies know how best to use food resources. It is also a fact that dietary habits (breast-feeding, weaning foods) change very quickly, even for traditional societies.

Food Stability

The World Food Summit says that stability must be present "at all times" in terms of availability, access and utilisation for food security to exist. The literature distinguishes between chronic food insecurity where food needs cannot be met over a protracted period and where time is more temporary in transitory food insecurity, (Maxwell and Frankenberger 1992).

Agenda-Setting Theory

In 1968, Dr Max McCombs and Dr Donald Shaw proposed the Agenda-setting theory. The theory evaluates the news media's ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. If the media frequently and prominently cover an issue, the audience will regard it as more important. This theory rests on two assumptions; the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and structure it, and that the media concentrates on a few issues and subjects that lead the public's perception to those issues as more important than other topics (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

One of the most critical aspects of mass communication's agenda-setting role is the time frame for this phenomenon. The theory is related to priming, bias, and framing. Priming is the goal, the intended effect, of strategic actors" framing activities (Entman, 1993). Besides, different media have different agenda-setting potential. Via a conceptual process, agenda setting occurs. Cognitive law thus means that the more often and prominently a topic is addressed by the news media, the more instances of that problem become available in the viewer's minds. Human beings recall current events highlighted in many forms by the media and use multiple media types under any usual circumstances.

Mass-media coverage in general impact what individual think, considering the issue to be more critical, thus the more airtime and frequent it is covered the more serious the audience will perceive it. Agenda-setting highlight variability in the correlation between media and public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The theory informs this paper by showing the media's ability to set the agenda to factor in their livelihood in different strategies.

Framing theory

This theory relates to how to present the public with the media package and current issues/information. According to the theory, within a given context, the media emphasises such events and then positions them to promote or discourage their interpretations of the events. Thus, the media exercises a selective impact on how individuals interpret an issue's reality—written in 1972 by anthropologist Gregory Bateson. Owing to its close association with Agenda-Setting Theory, framing is often referred to as the second-level agenda-setting. Kahneman and Tversky (1973) state that in psychology, the origins of framing are traced back to experimental work by

Kahneman and Tversky in 1973 that investigated how different presentations, which had similar decision-making scenarios, affect people's evaluations of the several options given to them and eventually affect their choices. According to Goffman (1974), from the sociological perspective, the framing foundation was laid by Erving Goffman in 1974. He expressed that people are always struggling to understand the world they live in and interpret their individual life experiences. The individuals can process new information more effectively, and they apply interpretive schemas or primary frameworks to categorise information and interpret its meaning. Framing theory is attributed to how information is presented to the audience to influence their choices and process it. These are called frames. Frames are viewed as the abstractions that are used to assemble or structure the meaning of a message. Goffman (1974) indicates that framing analysis supports that people actively classify, organise, and interpret their personal life experiences with an attempt to make sense of them.

Framing research is categorised into two: media frames and audience frames Ireri (2013) and outlined as an attribution of responsibility frame, Conflict frame, Human interest frame, Economic consequences frame and International interest frame. The attribution of responsibility is an issue presented to attribute its responsibility for the solution to an individual, group or a government. The news professional creates news stories that shape public opinion and describes the person or organisation responsible for the issue or problem, including the person's responsibility or organisation giving the solution. Conflict frame: This is a way of drawing the audience's attention to disagreements between groups or individuals.

Human interest frame is used to dramatise, personalise or sensationalise news to attract and retain the audience interest. The economic consequences frame helps media producers report a problem with the view of what economic consequences it will have on a person, group, county, government or nation such as the gain or loss. Journalists and editors use the frame to draw the audience to the story's relevance or issue being covered. Lastly, the international interest frame is described in a situation where international intervention is required to bring a solution to a country facing conflict.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is pure literature reviewed on both published and "grey" literature based on food security information as covered by the media. It involved ten bibliographic databases and a reference list of studies and contacts relevant to the paper with food security contents. Purposively journal articles, book section, reports and online publication was reviewed, included 14 multisubject databases. Combination of media coverage and food security on articles involved cross-term searching. Through web search engines, keywords related to the topic were used food security, media coverage, and food insecurity issues to acquire relevant information to the paper. There were journal articles that had a specialised subject matter. They included media coverage (searched on Taylor and Francis), Journal of Agricultural (searched on framing analysis on newspaper coverage) and African Journalism studies (searched on analysis of media coverage of Somalia famine). The review centred on media coverage and related issues to food security. The documents selected for analysis and reporting consisted of journal articles, books, book chapters, and research reports. Qualitative analysis was involved because of heterogeneity in methods and purposes among the identified studies (Flick 2007)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the definition of agenda-setting, the media does not direct the public to what to think, but they direct the public to what to think about (Marks et al., 2007). According to **(**Tezira et al., 2013) media had low coverage on food security issues and focused majorly on improving agricultural productivity. A total of eight frames were identified—namely, agriculture, controversy, environment, ethics, public awareness, regulation, research, and safety.

The current situation in Kenya on the food security issue is after several posts on social networking sites on people affected by hunger and even several media station reporting the issue was of concern. The events' initial media coverage as news stories were followed by a flurry of media debate in feature articles and letters to the editor on food security (Karembu et al., 2010). This highlight that once media cover an issue, it is further discussed, the more its reported public is aware of and factor it as necessary.

According to (Hillbruner and Moloney 2012), there were months of reliable, frequent reports about what was about to occur to examine significant media reporting. Also, to examine whether this coverage was broadly maintained over time, or was distributed over a short, intense period followed by a more prolonged deterioration in publication volume (Howe 2010). The overall volumes of coverage may vary from organisation to organisation, and the general profile is consistent. Media coverage is not inspired by the availability of early information about an issue, such as drought or famine available substantially beforehand. But the announcement of the happening for example when people die of hunger and starvation, it starts the wave of media attention by declaring as real what the evidence already showed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Food security is among primary goal in sustainable development for the global and our nation Kenya. Policies should be formulated to facilitate this agenda and meet the 2030 goal globally and the Kenyan government agenda on food security. Media has a role in sustainable development goals by informing, educating, creating awareness, and watching for the public. Therefore media should partake coverage on the issue of sustainable development as they do politics. Through media public can be educated on methods that would enhance food security through ways to improve productivity, caution on climatic changes that affect food production, growing crops with high yields and drought resistant and improved food storage methods.

Suggestions

Further research on new and emerging media in coverage of food security is a crucial area. The findings would focus on practical and use of the application in the area. Further research on the subject matter may target specific media such as print media and electronic media, either radio or TV, on their food security information coverage. In these specific areas of study, the extent of coverage will be much more focused and show how effective and useful it has to farmers and the public.

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