

**PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF AGRICULTURAL
INFORMATION IN ZAMBIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
*TIMES OF ZAMBIA AND ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL NEWSPAPERS***

By

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
Mass Communication**

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LUSAKA

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DECLARATION

I, **DORCAS KABUYA**, declare that this dissertation is a representation of my own work; it was and has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other University in or outside Zambia. This Dissertation does not contain work or published material from another dissertation submitted to this or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This Dissertation by **DORCAS KABUYA** has been approved as having fulfilled the partial requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Mass Communication (MMC) by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this research study is to compare the coverage of agricultural information by print media in Zambia. Specifically, the study was aimed to analysing the importance accorded to agricultural information in terms of length, placement and prominence. To achieve this objective, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this study, two local daily newspapers (*Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*) were analysed using content analysis to ascertain their coverage of agricultural information. The researcher analysed a total of 358 newspaper editions for the two named publications on the coverage of agricultural information for a total period of six months namely December of the year 2018, February, June, and December of the year 2019, and February and June of the year 2020 for the two agricultural seasons namely 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 season. It should be noted that dates sampled for each month for both publications were the same so as to enable effective comparative content analysis. In addition to content analysis, a semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from journalists.

Data collected was analysed using Microsoft excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings show that a total of 374 agricultural news stories were published during the period of coverage selected. Research findings revealed that the frequency of reportage of agricultural information was highest (55.6 percent) in the *Zambia Daily Mail*.

The study concluded that the selected two local daily newspapers did not give significant prominence to agricultural information. This was evidenced by the fact that out of the 17, 597 news stories that were published by the two selected newspapers over a given period, only 374 agricultural stories were published representing 2.1 percent. The study also provided insights on the challenges faced by print media outlets in disseminating agricultural information to farmers and the wider public in Zambia.

Based on the findings of the research, it was recommended that more inspirational stories of farmers in agriculture were needed to create more awareness of agriculture and to motivate the youth to take up agriculture as an occupation. Secondly, capacity building workshops should be organised for journalists with a passion for reporting of agriculture information. Least but not last, the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of

Fisheries and Livestock, working with other agricultural stakeholders need to be more active, interactive and give out information the media is looking for in a timely manner.

Keywords: *Content Analysis, Agricultural Information, Farming Season, Media Coverage, Print Media*

DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my family and friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Christopher and Alfonsina Kabuya whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. Above all I would like to thank my husband Hanford Chaaba and my sisters Rachael and Sarah Kabuya for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them.

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Table of Contents

Content	Page Numbers
DECLARATION.....	i
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURE.....	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Study Background.....	1
1.1.1 <i>Media and Agriculture in Zambia</i>	4
1.1.2 <i>Times of Zambia Newspaper</i>	5
1.1.3 <i>Zambia Daily Mail Newspaper</i>	6
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	8
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	9
1.4 Study Objectives.....	9
1.4.1 <i>General Objective</i>	9
1.4.2 <i>Specific Objectives</i>	9
1.5 Research Questions.....	10
1.6 Research Hypothesis.....	10
1.7 Justification of the Study.....	10
1.8 Delimitation of the Study.....	11
1.9 Conceptual Framework.....	11
1.9.1 <i>Conceptual and operational definitions</i>	11
1.10 Theoretical Framework.....	13
1.10.1 <i>Gatekeeping Theory</i>	13
1.10.2 <i>Framing theory</i>	14
1.11 Ethical Issues.....	15
1.12 Limitation of the Study.....	15
1.13 Outline of Dissertation.....	15
1.14 Conclusion.....	16

CHAPTER TWO	17
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
2.0 Introduction	17
2.1 <i>Background of Agricultural Journalism</i>	17
2.2 <i>Media Coverage of Agricultural Information: A Global Perspective</i>	18
2.3 <i>Media Coverage of Agricultural Information: The African Perspective</i>	19
2.4 Knowledge Gap	23
2.5 Conclusion.....	23
CHAPTER THREE	25
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.0 Introduction	25
3.1 Research Design	25
3.1.1 <i>Research Methods</i>	25
i). <i>Content Analysis</i>	25
i) <i>Journalist survey</i>	28
3.2 Study Population for Journalist Survey.....	29
3.2.1 Sample Size for Journalist Survey.....	29
3.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size for Content Analysis.....	33
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	31
3.5 Data Analysis.....	33
3.6 Ethical Considerations.....	33
3.7 Limitations of the Study	33
3.8 Conclusion.....	33
CHAPTER FOUR	34
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	34
4.0 Introduction	34
4.1 Findings.....	34
4.1.1.1 <i>Newspaper content analysis results on Crops</i>	35
4.1.1.2 <i>Newspaper content analysis results on Livestock</i>	45
4.1.3.1 <i>Media practitioners’ quantitative survey</i>	58
4.1.4.2 <i>Media practitioners’ qualitative survey</i>	60
CHAPTER FIVE	64
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	64
5.0 Introduction	64
5.1 Discussion of Findings	64

5.1.1 Frequency and prominence of agricultural information	64
5.1.2 Focus of coverage of Agricultural Information	66
5.1.3 Challenges journalists encounter when covering Agricultural Information.....	68
5.2 Conclusion.....	69
CHAPTER SIX	70
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	70
6.0 Introduction	70
6.1 Conclusion.....	70
6.2 Recommendations	71
6.3 Further research	72
REFERENCE	73
APPENDICES	79
APPENDIX 'A': JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONNAIRE (SEMI-STRUCTURED)	79
APPENDIX 'B' CONTENT ANALYSIS FOR NEWSPAPER COVERAGE CODING SHEET.....	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Distribution of articles between the two newspapers	35
Figure 2: Comparison of the distribution of non-agricultural and agricultural news stories over the selected period	37
Figure 3: Distribution of articles between the two newspapers by topic	38
Figure 4: Distribution of Agricultural news stories over a period of six months for the two newspapers	39
Figure 5: Comparison of agricultural news story treatment or placement over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers	40
Figure 6: Distribution of pictures in <i>Times of Zambia</i> and <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> newspapers	40
Figure 7: Comparison of length of story allocated to agricultural news over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers	42
Figure 8: Distribution of source of stories in the two newspapers	43
Figure 9: Distribution of type of stories in the two newspapers	44
Figure 10: Sources of stories in the two newspapers	44
Figure 11: Distribution of articles between the two newspapers focusing on Livestock	45
Figure 12: Comparison of the distribution of non-Livestock and Livestock news stories over the selected period	47
Figure 13: Comparison of livestock news story treatment or placement over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers	48
Figure 14: Comparison of length of story allocated to agricultural news over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers	49
Figure 15a,b c: Distribution of type of stories in the two newspapers	50
Figure 16: Sources of stories in the two newspapers	51
Figure 17: Summary of coverage of Livestock stories in <i>Times of Zambia</i> and <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> during the selected farming seasons	52
Figure 18: Comparison of Crops and Livestock coverage in the two selected seasons	53
Figure 19: Summary of coverage of agricultural stories in <i>Times of Zambia</i> and <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> during the selected farming seasons	56
Figure 20: Distribution of livestock news stories over a period of six months for each of the two newspapers	57
Figure 21: Distribution of livestock news stories for Zambia Daily Mail during the period of study	58
Figure 22: Distribution of challenges in covering agricultural information in the selected print media institutions at institutional level	60
Figure 23: Distribution of challenges in covering agricultural information in the selected print media institutions at individual level	61
Figure 24: Distribution of challenges in covering agricultural information in the selected print media institutions in terms of subject	62

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Comparison of Agricultural news coverage by newspaper to the total estimated coverage by all the newspapers over the selected six months.	36
Table 2: Distribution of length of stories in <i>Times of Zambia</i> and <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> newspapers	41
Table 3: Comparison of Livestock news coverage by newspaper to the total coverage by all the newspapers over the selected six months.	46
Table 4: Distribution of pictures in <i>Times of Zambia</i> and <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> newspapers during the period of study.	48
Table 5: Distribution of source of stories in the two newspapers	49
Table 6: Percentage of coverage of agricultural Information	53
Table 7: Coverage of agricultural stories in <i>Times of Zambia</i> during the 2018/2019 season.....	54
Table 8: Coverage of agricultural stories in <i>Times of Zambia</i> during the 2019/2020 season.....	54
Table 9: Coverage of agricultural stories in <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> during the 2018/2019 season	55
Table 10: Coverage of agricultural stories in <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> during the 2019/2020 season ----	55
Table 11: Distribution of livestock news stories for <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i> during the period of study	57
Table 12: Shows age statistics of respondents from <i>Times of Zambia</i>	58
Table 13: Shows age statistics of respondents from <i>Zambia Daily Mail</i>	59
Table 14: Distribution of Journalists' training in covering agricultural information	62

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Communication is the basis of all social life. The more complex society becomes the greater the need for precise communication at an increasingly high level of abstraction. Living in a dynamic and rapidly expanding society, poses a challenge to the communicator of knowing the likes and dislikes; the behaviour patterns of their audience (McGrath, 1948, p. 5).

This master's dissertation therefore, was aimed at analysing print media coverage of agricultural information in Zambia. It was a comparative study of *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers. It will be conducted in Lusaka District as partial fulfilment to obtaining a master's degree in Mass Communication. This chapter also introduces the study by bringing out its background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance or rationale of the study, ethical issues, limitations and it provides both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks governing this study.

1.1 Study Background

Mass media plays a very important role in the process of change. According to Van den Ban and Hawkins (1996) the scholars note that, "the mass media does this in a number of ways including setting the agenda for important discussion, transferring knowledge, forming and changing opinions and behaviour." The media is also said to create awareness and diffuse a personal value system favourable to innovation, mobility, achievement and consumption (McQuail, 1987).

Additionally, newspapers provide updated information on local and international issues. They are among the most widely read publications that are available and accessible to the vast majority of people of all ages and walks of life in any community. Every category of reader can find some important, current, and interesting information in newspapers. Today's newspapers use design elements that make information easily

accessible to the reader. For example, important stories have large bold headlines, while pictures appear next to related stories.

News is written as a way of disseminating information to a large group of people. Reporters and editors are usually conscious of the language they use in news reportage to attract popular readership. In positioning newspapers within the news environment and establishing their academic and research viability, Cheney et al (2006) insist that despite the growing presence of news on the internet, radio, television, and so on, a library's current newspaper collection can continue to play a vital role in the academic community.

Agriculture is becoming increasingly information sensitive (Padre et al 2003) hence, access to information has become a pre-requisite and a valuable resource for agricultural development. In this context, information is needed to exploit opportunities in time, raise awareness about the potential positive impacts of current choices and to get to know about opportunities of other farmers, in order to search for better opportunities and sustainable solutions to the many agricultural problems facing farmers (LEISA, 2002). This therefore, emphasises the point that farming is a business that requires a variety of information.

Newspapers are enduring and very popular print media organ. This is because it can be read and re-read at convenience, thus, allowing for a fuller and better understanding of mass media contents. Newspapers also help the process of information exchange between those searching for information and also support new behaviours (Lightfoot, 2003). Newspapers are permanent, carrying more information and often considered more authoritative than other media. In essence, the newspapers are potent and fundamental tools for technology transfer in the aid of agricultural and rural development. Thus, Aina (1990) with reference to USA and Canada and Fett (1972) with reference to Brazil attributed successes recorded in agricultural production in these nations, to farmers' ready access to agricultural information contained in newspapers.

Despite the pervasive role of the electronic media in agricultural communication and based on the necessity for a rethink of the ways in which advice and information are made available to farmers, it becomes pertinent to focus on the print media as an important

source of agricultural information to farmers (Padre et al, 2003). The population is increasing at a high rate and this puts pressure on the agriculture sector. Agriculture has to provide food and employment to large sections of society. This means that there is a requirement of additional land for agriculture but on the contrary the rapid growth in urbanisation has converted the agricultural land into non-agricultural use.

Agriculture is a major source of livelihood in Zambia. Agricultural productivity can be augmented by relevant, reliable and useful information and knowledge. Indeed, information and knowledge are crucial to farmers, who need both for their development (Hassan et al, 2012). The agriculture sector thrives on the basis of availability of relevant agricultural information that is associated with the needs of those in the sector. The dissemination of agricultural information is very crucial to agricultural productivity of farmers because it is only through this means that they can learn innovations which can improve their productivity (Sanusi, Peti-Ibikunle & Mshelia, 2010).

Agricultural extension is an important tool for disseminating information to farmers, and has been highlighted as critical agent for transforming subsistence farming to modern, commercial agriculture, thereby improving household food security, incomes, and reducing poverty. However, it appears from observation, that the traditional and most used approach of disseminating agricultural information through extension officers has its shortcomings such as weak linkages between researchers, extension officers and farmers (Ogessa, 2013). In some cases, blame has been heaped on the high ratio of extension officers to farmers (ibid.). This has made agriculture to become an issue of global concern due to the many challenges faced by farmers. The changing climatic conditions coupled with technological development have resulted in a growing demand for agricultural information. Farmers need a wide variety of information on appropriate seeds, crop and animal diseases, input and output prices, weather related information, market information, pre and post-harvest management technologies, among others. As a result of this scenario, farmers search for information to solve the problems encountered in their agricultural business and the media is one such source of agricultural information. Nevertheless, achieving the desired objective for agricultural information can only be realised if farmers have adequate access to information and know how to apply these innovations to their potential. Farming is a business that requires a variety of information. Price and supply information, developments in soil, crop and livestock science and

mechanics, and many others are required for a successful farm operation. A lack of information in these areas could cause great income loss for a farmer who is not aware of recent changes and developments.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyse print media coverage of agricultural information by Zambian newspapers using *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* as case studies, and to ascertain whether the coverage was adequate or not. This is because the demand for information is increasing and the media should be capable to meet the demands of the different audience interests.

1.1.1 Media and Agriculture in Zambia

In Africa, agriculture is a key story that needs to be at the top of the news agenda. As such nothing seems more important in agricultural development than the dissemination of latest agricultural information among the farmers. Agriculture particularly in Zambia, has the potential to enhance economic growth and reduce poverty through employment creation. World Bank (2013), contends that the African economy is primarily based on agriculture, which employs most of the population especially in rural areas.

There is no doubt that agriculture is back on the development agenda. But despite the promises and the rhetoric from governments worldwide, investment in agriculture and rural development is still lagging. Communication for agriculture is also not seen as a major priority at either national or international level and the role of the media as an effective player in agricultural and rural development is undervalued.

Moreover, reporting on agriculture is largely restricted to natural disasters, food shortages and rising food prices. Some argue, however, that the media has a potentially broader role in raising the profile of agriculture amongst decision-makers as well as the wider public, and in communicating farmers' needs (New Agriculturist, 2009).

1.1.2 Times of Zambia Newspaper

The Times of Zambia whose headquarters is still in Ndola, is one of the oldest daily national newspapers in the country. The paper started as the Copperbelt Times and later changed its name to the Northern News under the Northern Rhodesia administration. It was a twice-weekly newspaper aimed at European readership (Kasoma: 1986). It was later owned by the South African newspaper chain Argus under the ownership of Lonrho. It was renamed the Times of Zambia on 1st July 1965 (Kasoma: 1997). It was this newspaper that came out with screaming headlines: “The birth of the nation” followed by “We move to freedom and “Now mineral rights belong to Zambia” when Zambia got its independence. In 1975, the former ruling party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) took over the paper and its sister paper, the Sunday Times. When the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) came to power in November 1991, it went to court claiming UNIP had illegally taken over the newspaper. The court ruled in favour of the MMD that the paper’s ownership be transferred to the Zambian government.



Front page of The Northern News (now Times of Zambia) after independence

Currently, the paper is owned by the Zambian government and continues to receive government funding (Banda, 2004). The paper continues to enjoy large circulation and significant social and political impact. The Times of Zambia covers major events in the country and around the world with sections on global news, local news, business news, sports, political news, cultural life and classified adverts. The paper later introduced the

internet edition called e-times at a fee in 2014, a digital platform that allows one to have the actual copy using gadgets like phones and computers. The readers access the latest news anytime, anywhere at <http://www.etimes.co.zm>. The price of a hard copy has to date risen to K10 per copy while nothing much has changed in terms of content.

1.1.3 Zambia Daily Mail Newspaper

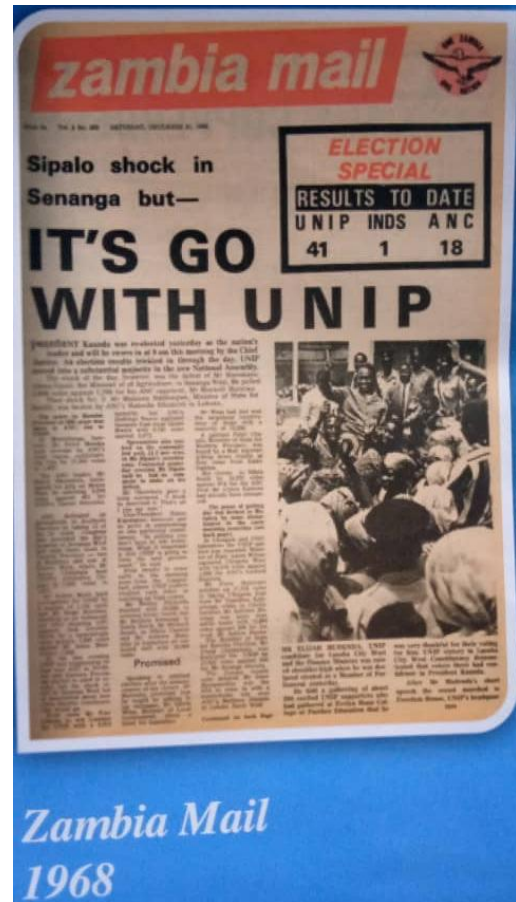
The Zambia Daily Mail another oldest daily national newspaper, is a limited company whose equity is solely subscribed by the government, it has a sister publication called The Sunday Mail. The newspaper ascended from African Mail in 1960, which was later, in 1962, called the Central African Mail (Kasoma, 1986, p. 85). The Central African Mail was co-owned by David Astor, then Editor of the Sunday Observer in London, Alexander Scott, a former Scottish doctor and Richard Hall. However, following financial difficulties in 1965, the Zambian government bought off the paper and renamed it the Zambian Mail in 1970. Actually, the paper only became a daily newspaper in the same year and was in 1983 renamed Zambia Daily Mail with a circulation of 35, 400 copies (ibid).

The newspapers' editorial policy states, "The Zambia Daily Mail Newspaper commits itself to recognise, respect and uphold the highest possible professional and ethical conduct, through good judgement and adherence to journalistic principles, practices and processes that enhance impartiality, accuracy and integrity, and uphold the public interest all the time. The newspaper shall also ensure that shareholder interests are protected during the execution of our duties."

In its formative years, the Daily Mail was outspoken, hard hitting and usually critical of government, notes Kasoma (1986:129). The paper maintained an editorial policy that was somewhat critical of the government, often contradicting official government thought as well as scrutinising prominent politicians despite the paper being an official government organ. The Zambia Daily Mail often published hard hitting editorials, usually departing from the conventional style of a state owned newspaper at the time, where the President and the government were given prominence. For example, Kasoma (1986:177) observes that between 1976 and 1983 the Daily Mail only carried 398 lead (headline) stories of

President Kaunda as compared to 2, 082 lead stories of other sources that were critical of the government.

The independence and critical reportage of the Daily Mail was short lived as the government later succeeded in influencing and controlling the editorial content of articles published in the paper (Chirwa 1997:7). The government enjoyed firm control as public media heads were appointed by the President and, consequently, any erring media head or journalist behind the publication of articles criticising the party (UNIP) and its government was disciplined. Today, the Zambia Daily Mail exists mainly as a state owned and controlled newspaper with a print run of around 20, 000 and several bureaus across the country, according to information obtained from the Zambia Daily Mail. And according to the papers inside source, the Zambia Daily Mail circulation stands at 20,000 copies. The newspaper industry continued to embrace technology to ensure that people are kept abreast with information. The Zambia Daily Mail also introduced its E-paper in 2015.



Front page of The Central African Mail and now Zambia Daily Mail

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Agricultural information is key to agricultural production anywhere in the world. With the need for increased agricultural production comes the need for more agricultural information dissemination (Blackburn, 1999). However, most media organisations in Africa report less on agricultural related issues because they are assumed to be boring (The New Times Rwanda, 2012).

The coverage of Agricultural Information by the print media in Zambia has been a matter of concern for stakeholders in the agricultural sector. Despite the significant role that agriculture plays in the country's economy, the print media's coverage of Agricultural Information has been insufficient. The inadequate coverage has resulted in a lack of dissemination of vital information that could benefit farmers, such as weather forecasts, crop prices, and new farming techniques. This situation has led to limited access to information, which has negatively impacted farmers' productivity and income levels.

According to Oladeji (2011), the newspaper coverage of agricultural and rural development has received little scholarly attention. Further, the New Agriculturist (2009), observed that news reporting on agriculture is mostly limited to natural catastrophes, food shortages and rising prices. Nonetheless, newspapers have a high potential for promoting agricultural and rural development. They can provide a platform through which farmers can access proven technologies and receive important information about farming in general.

It is therefore, necessary for individual agricultural stakeholders to acquire this information in order to increase agricultural production. Having adequate and well-presented information will improve the efficiency of rural development, policies, projects and programmes. Agricultural information provision should be the basic component of rural development programmes. This implies that agricultural information can help inform decision-making regarding land, labour, livestock, capital and management. Interestingly, agricultural information is not static but, instead, needs replenishment through research and development.

Therefore, an emphasis on the importance of agricultural information cannot be overruled, because information is very important in all aspects of agricultural

development from planning to the production stage at the farm. There was therefore, need to investigate this issue.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose was to compare between the Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail newspapers and find out which newspaper printed more information on agriculture.

1.4 Study Objectives

Under this theme, the research looked at the general objective and further went into the specific objectives.

1.4.1 General Objective

The main objective of the study was to establish the frequency and prominence of Agricultural Information in the Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail Newspapers and to ascertain whether it was adequate or not. It is suffix to note that Adequate in this study entails sufficient and it should be noted that there was no standard used to measure adequacy or to determine adequate newspaper coverage of news. However, this study defined adequate as having about 20 percent and above of the stories in a particular newspaper on a topic or subject over a given period of time.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives included the following:

- i. To establish the frequency and prominence of Agricultural Information in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers.
- ii. To establish between the Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail which newspaper reports more on agricultural information.
- iii. To identify the challenges that *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* journalists encounter when covering Agricultural Information.

1.5 Research Questions

The research was guided by the following questions:

- i. What is the frequency and prominence of Agricultural Information in the *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers?
- ii. Which newspaper between the *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* which newspaper reports more on agricultural information?
- iii. What challenges do *The Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* journalists encounter when covering Agricultural Information?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

There is inadequate coverage of agricultural news and information by the print media (*Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*) in Zambia (**Null Hypothesis**).

1.7 Justification of the Study

Upon establishing the extent and quality of coverage of Agricultural Information by Zambian newspapers it is envisaged that different media especially newspapers might improve and increase their coverage of agricultural stories if need be. Consequently, it is hoped that this research may help farmers to gain access to more quality information about agricultural issues. Access to information might in turn empower farmers to make well informed decisions as well as choices about their farming. As a result, there may be an improvement in framers' production and productivity. All this may be achieved by the newspapers tapping into the findings of this research from which they might be prompted to adopt a number of measures which they can put in place in order to improve or increase coverage of Agricultural Information depending on the outcome of this study.

Further, there are no or little comparative analyses of media houses in Zambia, vis-à-vis coverage of agricultural information. Hence, this researcher, conducted a comparative analysis of print media coverage of agricultural information in Zambia and to establish ways in which the media houses can improve in the said regard using a case study of *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail Newspapers*. The study was motivated by this existing knowledge gap.

Furthermore, different media may get to understand and have a passion for reporting on Agriculture, hence stimulating the formation of policies and strategies to cover Agricultural Information in its entirety.

Firstly, comparing the coverage of agricultural information by *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* can help to assess the diversity and balance of their coverage of agricultural Information. Secondly, the comparison can help to identify trends and changes in their reporting of Agricultural Information. Overall, comparing the coverage of agricultural information by *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the media landscape and its role in shaping public understanding on agricultural issues in Zambia.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study only focused on two newspapers that is the *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*. The study also concentrated on reporters from Lusaka only using stratified simple random sampling. Further, only stories covered by the two newspapers in the months of December, January, February, June for two agricultural seasons (2018/2019 and 2019/2020), were analysed. The preference of the two publications was based on the fact that both have consistently been in circulation for a long time and every sold copy of either publication was usually read by more than one person, meaning that readership was higher than circulation Figures.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

1.9.1 Conceptual and operational definitions

1.9.1.1 Definition of concepts

In social sciences, there is always need to define the concepts used in order to contextualise them. This is because social concepts have no definite meaning as they can mean different things depending on the context in which they are used. Therefore, the following concepts used in the study were defined:

a) Agricultural Information

Conceptually, Okwoche et al (2012) citing Agbamu (2006) defined agricultural information as, “published or unpublished knowledge in all aspects of agriculture.”

Tadesse (2008) further defined agricultural information as, “the various sets of information and messages that are relevant to agricultural production activities of farmers such as crop production and protection, animal production and management, and natural resource production and conservation.” However, for the purpose of this study, **Agricultural Information** refers to news stories covered by the print media to be specific on agribusiness, nutrition, climate change (Floods/Droughts), Gender, Agroforestry, Research and Development, Crop Production and Management, Livestock Production and Management, and Agricultural mechanisation which gives small scale farmers information to better their farming.

b) Media Coverage

Media coverage can be defined as the way in which a particular piece of information is presented by media. Coverage by the media can be interactive which refers to the presentation of information and also including audience views in it, thereby making the coverage interactive (Manohar, 2008). The media for mass communication are radios, newspapers, televisions, magazines, the internet and other specialised communication media.

c) Print media

The modern media as known today began with a printed book though at the time it was regarded as a repository of wisdom not primarily as a means of communication per se. Hence, the successful application of technology to the reproduction of texts in place of handwriting, about the mid-15th century, was merely the first step in the development of a ‘media institution’. Thereafter, printing progressively became a new craft and a significant branch of commerce and later printers transformed from traders to publishers (McQuail, 2000). Thus, for this study, print media refers daily newspaper publications of *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*.

d) Farming season

Farming season is the period of the year when agricultural activities such as planting, growing and harvesting of the crops are carried out (FAO, 2016). Under this study, farming season referred to the period from the onset of the rains to the marketing period of the harvested crop.

e) Content Analysis

Content analysis as defined by Babbie (2001) as the study of recorded human communications such as books, magazines, web pages, poems, newspapers, songs, paintings, speeches, letters, email messages, bulletin board postings on the internet. In this study, the researcher adopted this same definition but rather focused on analysing newspapers only.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study. According to Babbie Earl (1989), a theory is a systematic explanation for observed facts and laws that relate to a particular aspect of life. The study finds that in media sense, news values, medium, peers, ownership and sources exert influence on journalists' frame building and gatekeeping processes. Hence, in the topic under study, the researcher adopted the Gatekeeping and Framing Theories.

1.10.1 Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping is the process of selecting, and then filtering, items of media that can be disseminated to the audience either through publication or broadcasting, internet or other forms of communication channels. Simply put, gatekeeping is the process by which the billions of messages that are available in the world get cut down and transformed into the hundreds of messages that reach a given person on a given day. This means gatekeeping falls into a role of surveillance and monitoring data. These gatekeeping decisions are made every day to sort out the relevant items that audiences will see.

In Gatekeeping theory, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1995), defined Gatekeeping as, "the controlling of a strategic portion of a channel, so as to have the power of decision over whether whatever is flowing through that channel will enter the group or not." In other words, news and information has to pass through a hierarchy of gatekeepers before it gets to the public (McQuail 2000, p. 276). The gatekeeping theory of mass communication is a method which allows the media practitioners to keep sanity. By consuming content that is most relevant to the audience each day, the media can ignore the billions of information calling for their attention. Under the concept of gatekeeping, the gatekeeper decides what information should move past them (through the information "gate") to the group or individuals beyond, and what information should not.

Through this process many people have to decide whether or not the news is to be seen or heard. Gatekeeping occurs at all levels of the media structure from a reporter deciding which sources are chosen to include in a story to editors deciding which stories are published or broadcasted. For example, in the news medium the editor plays this vital role. Commonly referred to as The Gates, he (she) has to decide what kind of news items will be published and what should not. Every day the news channel receives various news items from all over the world. The channel has its own set of ethics, policies, and biases through which the editor decides the news items that will be published, aired or spiked. In some cases, some news items are rejected by the editor due to the organisation's policy or the news items which are not suitable for publishing, this is also considered part of the gatekeeping function.

Therefore, this theory contextualises the study in that the media selects what information gets published or broadcasted based on their own judgement or editorial policy. Therefore, the gatekeeping theory becomes relevant to this study as it applies to the approaches taken by the media in reporting everyday events and agricultural information in particular. It will further help the researcher establish how much coverage of agricultural information is done by the newspapers under study.

1.10.2 Framing theory

The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses on certain events and places them within a field of meaning called 'the frame'. Frames are abstractions that work to organise or structure message meaning. Framing is the act of defining issues for public consumption and disseminating these definitions through the use of mass media. Framing is an inherent part of the news process. Framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience, influences the choices people make about how to process that information, (Davies, 2010). Framing theory is closely linked to the Agenda setting theory because they both focus on how the media draws the public's attention to specific topics – in this way they set the agenda. But framing takes this a step further in that it creates a frame for the information presented, (ibid).

This theory is therefore relevant to this study in the sense that through the framing process, the media can influence choices by drawing public attention to an issue and in

this case, agricultural information. In other words, the media can paint (frame) agricultural information in a colour that will affect how people perceive agriculture.

1.11 Ethical Issues

The research ensured that every research procedure was done guided by ethical research practice and principles. For example, before any interviews were conducted, permission and consent were obtained for the use of the information collected. Participants were asked to consent to the study before taking part. The consent was done by signing the prior informed consent (PIC) form. Confidentiality was also observed as established during some of the research processes. The final paper did not at any point expose the privacy of any individual involved in the study.

1.12 Limitation of the Study

Like many other academic works, this study too encountered some limitations that could have affected the results in one way or the other. The findings of this study may not be comprehensive but offered more insights and provided a synopsis on how much attention is given to coverage of agricultural information related topics by the media. Secondly, the study only went for stories published by the two newspapers within a specific period as mentioned earlier meaning that agricultural stories which could have been covered outside that period were left out. Thirdly, the sample size of 20 respondents for semi-structured questionnaire for the selected media houses was not adequate to represent the views of all the journalists. Lastly, there was limited funding for research as this study was sponsored by the researcher.

1.13 Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter was the introduction which discussed the background, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions and the setting of the study. The Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks were also covered under chapter one. The second chapter addresses the literature review where past scholarly works on the subject under investigation were explored. The third chapter attempts to discuss the research designs this study took, methods of data collection and analysis, and the sampling methods used. The fourth chapter presents the

findings which were later discussed in chapter five. A conclusion and recommendations follow in chapter six.

1.14 Conclusion

Chapter one discussed the background of the study where the overview on how the selected print media had been covering agricultural information. The brief backgrounds of the Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail newspapers were also given before the study looked at the statement of the problem. The objectives of the study were also outlined followed by the research questions, significant of the study and the scope of the study. The Conceptual and Theoretical frameworks were also discussed. The next chapter discusses the literature review used in the study in relation to coverage of agricultural information by the print media.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents information from various pieces of literature that were reviewed concerning the subject at hand. It should be noted from the onset that at the time of the research there was no evidence of research that has been carried on the specific subject matter of interest in Zambia. However, Content analysis has been done on agricultural information coverage by the media in different countries worldwide and it was observed that most media houses do not pay much attention to covering agricultural issues (Babu et al., 2011).

2.1 Background of Agricultural Journalism

Tucker et al (2006) alluded to the growing market for agricultural journalists and broadcasters has led to the establishment of agricultural communication academic disciplines. Evans (2008), concurs that the earlier agricultural communicators as well as agricultural journalists were trained like traditional journalists, but bring with them an understanding of agricultural systems and science either through experience and/or academic training. The academic field originated from communication courses that taught students in agricultural science how to communicate. Originally, agricultural journalists were needed to report farm news for a much larger agricultural and rural audience. As people moved from the farm to cities and suburbs, a much greater proportion of the population had less direct knowledge and experience regarding agriculture. While a need still exists for agricultural journalists, an equal if not greater need exists for agricultural communicators who can act as liaisons between an industry and a public with little or no understanding of how agriculture operates and why it is the way it is.

Agricultural information communication as a field of study focuses on communicating agricultural-related information among agricultural stakeholders and between agricultural and non-agricultural stakeholders (Treise et al, 2002). Areas of print media coverage of agriculture and agricultural issues include topics like crop/livestock diseases,

food safety, agricultural biotechnology, genetically modified organisms, general animal/crop husbandry practices, crop/livestock nutrition, pricing of agricultural commodities and inputs, agricultural machinery, soil fertility, organic farming among other agriculture sub-sectors which also include but not limited to value addition, product processing and marketing in the agricultural production value chain. According to Siyao (2012) citing Masuki et al (2010) sees agricultural information as, “a key component in improving small-scale agricultural production and linking increased production to remunerative markets, thus leading to improved livelihoods, food security and national economics.”

Agricultural information is supposed to be made available to research scientists, extension workers, farmers and other users so that they can all engage in agricultural development and food production. This means that they require different types of information at the right time in order to make the right decision. Rehman, Muhammad, Ashrat, and Hassan (2011) concluded that print media was the major source of agricultural information, followed by fellow farmers and television. Thus they posit that the focus should be on the quality of the information in terms of its relevance to farmers. This, therefore, goes to say that most people develop their initial awareness of issues through the mass media and the media are also a primary source of information about technology and science issues (Rogers, 2003).

2.2 Media Coverage of Agricultural Information: A Global Perspective

Media shapes and influences public opinion, while it also mirrors public opinion by reflecting the social values and characteristics unique to a particular group. It is through these specific processes that the media plays an important role in the growth of the agricultural sector. People’s responsiveness is influenced by media news, as they perceive it as a reflection of public opinion (Yuksel, Karantininis & Hess, 2013). Kaniki (1989) argues that agricultural development depends upon effective dissemination and transfer of utilisable information to meet the needs of the user. Media has the potential to effectively provide reliable and comprehensive agricultural information that would empower individuals to make sound agricultural decisions; exchange ideas and indigenous knowledge with other farmers in different parts of the world, and improve their quality of life and that of society by becoming more productive. Individuals can be

provided with information on agricultural inputs (e.g., fertilisers, pesticides, seeds), market prices, transportation systems, product potential, new environmentally sound production techniques and practices, new agricultural technologies, new markets (both local and international), food processing and preservation, the resource base, trade laws and trends in food production and demand across the globe and sustainable agricultural approaches.

Unfortunately, most media outlets focus less on agriculture simply because it is considered a boring topic (The New Times, 2012). A study was conducted in India by Mishra and Verma (1998) on coverage of agricultural information in eight Indian dailies. The findings showed that the percent space allocated to agricultural news per issue as a whole was very low. On the whole, the agricultural news was poorly attended to practically by all the categories of Indian newspapers.

Further, Sharuma et al (2003) also carried out a related study on content analysis of agricultural coverage in eleven Indian national dailies. The results revealed that coverage of environment and ecology-related issues were very low (in contrast to the American scenario who gains most of the agricultural information through the print media). Sharuma (ibid) further indicated that there is need for more coverage of agricultural-based news articles in national dailies.

2.3 Media Coverage of Agricultural Information: The African Perspective

Agriculture greatly sustains the livelihood of the rural population that form a significant portion of the economies of Sub-Saharan African countries. As a sector, it contributes towards economic growth and eradication of poverty and hunger on the continent. This makes media undoubtedly one of the major channels for information delivery to the farmers and other key stakeholders. Secondly the media also provide a platform through which the farmers can engage with policymakers so that their perspectives are be taken on board. Thirdly, the media can also profile the work of farmers so that lessons and experiences could be shared with emerging farmers.

Despite that critical role, the agriculture sector plays in national economy, it has received little attention from the media to match its important status to the economy. A research

was conducted in Mmegi, **Botswana** to analyse the content of agricultural news coverage in the print media, the Reporter and the Botswana Daily News newspapers to determine the frequency and space allocation to agricultural education news in the newspapers from January 2006 to June 2008 (Oladele and Boago, 2011). The results showed that in the privately-owned newspaper, about 61 percent of agriculture news was in advertisement category and in government-owned newspaper it was about 49 percent. The study also showed that privately owned newspapers had more agriculture news on the front page, 39.1 percent, compared to 6.1 percent in government-owned newspapers. In the privately-owned newspaper, 17.4 percent of agricultural news was in local language, Setswana and 57.6 percent in English language, whereas in government owned newspaper, 6.1 percent of the agricultural news is in local language, Setswana and 60.2 percent in English. There was a significant difference between spaces allocated to agriculture news in privately owned newspaper. The study recommended that government owned newspaper must increase coverage of agriculture news in Local language, Setswana.

Additionally, a similar study conducted in **Tanzania** by Ogessa (2013), examined the coverage of agricultural information in Tanzania's newspapers published between 2009 and 2013 in 840 editions of four newspapers namely: Mwananchi, Habari Leo, the Guardian and Daily News. The study findings show that, of the 63,609 news articles in all the four newspaper editions, only 836 (1.3 percent) articles were on agriculture. The proportion of agricultural news articles published ranged from 0.79 percent in 2010 to 1.92 percent in 2012. Habari Leo had an average of 61.4 agricultural articles followed by Mwananchi with an average of 39.4 articles. The prominence of agricultural information was lower than 4.9 percent in all the newspapers. It was recommended that the government formulate and institute policies aimed at increasing the coverage of developmental topics such as agriculture in the newspapers.

This is the same recommendation that was made by Lore (2010), in her study about analysis of coverage of genetically modified crops by the mainstream Kenyan print media. A total of 95 articles published in the Daily Nation, The Standard and Taifa Leo during the period, 2008-2010 were comprehensively analysed to assess the frequency, type, tone, length, authorship and scientific accuracy of the articles as well as the main stakeholders quoted and the frames used to request Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in the articles. She observed that the coverage of GMOs, by the Kiswahili

language newspaper, Taifa Leo was generally low compared to the coverage by the English language newspaper, Daily Nation and the Standard. Despite the two English dailies having higher rating than Taifa Leo, they still had low coverage of agricultural information.

Though the study focused only on the dissemination of information on Genetically Modified Crops which forms key component of the agricultural sector, it could be deduced from that information related to agriculture is rarely considered important. It was expected that a topic of GMO being a contentious issue globally and more especially in Africa would attract more publicity but that was not the case.

Though not indicated by both studies, Lore (2010) and Ogessa (2013), it is also possible that agricultural news was published more in Kiswahili because the majority of the intended audience (farmers) tend to have low literacy levels and understand better in the more accessible language of Kiswahili. The same maybe said about the research by done in Botswana i.e., The Reporter and the Daily News newspapers. On the contrary in a country like Zambia where there so many official local languages, establishing a local language newspaper that would increasing report agricultural news may be difficult.

Another study involving two widely read **Nigerian** Newspapers, Punch and Guardian to assess the extent of daily newspapers involvement in disseminating agricultural information. The newspapers published between 2007 and 2010 were analysed for daily reportage, space allocation and types of stories published. The results showed that the newspapers did not report any agricultural issues in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively (Awojobi and Adeokun, 2012).

In **Kenya**, a similar study was conducted on the two daily newspapers, The Daily Nation and The Standard for a period of one year to assess the coverage of Agricultural Information, (Njoroge, 2012). The research was conducted because of three agricultural-related events: Kenyans for Kenya Initiative, outbreak of Maize Lethal Necrotic disease and Kenya's national Bio-safety bill going through the parliamentary process culminating in its being passed into law that happened around the start and during this period. It was expected to trigger a lot of related agricultural, information communication through the print media and especially, so by the mainstream daily newspapers, the Standard and Daily Nation.

A total of 360 copies of the newspapers were analysed between 2011 and 2012. Results of this study revealed that there were seven different agricultural categories of articles that were published during the study period. They were identified and classified (categorised) as follows: advertisements, features, editorials, letters to the editor(s), hard news, opinions and photographs which were both coloured and black and white. Page location of the agricultural stories showed that the two dailies did not prioritize agricultural news. What is covered on the front page is what editors consider relatively important to their readers and in this case it is non-agricultural information that dominated front pages for both papers during the study period.

The Daily Nation Newspaper had about 7 percent to all its published categories of agricultural information and Standard Newspaper allocated much lesser space than the Daily Nation because it allocated agricultural news 2 percent of its total available space during the study period. The total space allocated to agricultural information by the two dailies was too little to communicate adequately to various agricultural stakeholders because agriculture as a discipline is so wide.

Certainly, the study by Njoroge (2012), adds value in understanding the coverage of Agricultural Information by the print media. It possible that the dismal coverage could have been influenced by the very agricultural events. This in a way indicates that there is lack of interest in reporting about agricultural related information by journalists in the print media. The three agricultural related events which took place during the said period were newsworthy in nature.

Further, five **South African** newspapers were analysed using content analysis to determine their coverage and representation of agricultural issues. Nine thousand, one hundred and twenty-five (9,125) editions were collected over a period of five years between January 2009 and December 2013 (Yusuf et al., 2016). The findings showed that the newspapers did not give significant prominence to agricultural issues such as land reform and youth in agriculture, as news related to business, politics and education. On the other hand, food security, climate change and agricultural marketing were popular topics among the published articles about agriculture. The study suggested that more

inspirational stories of farmers in agriculture were needed to create more awareness of agriculture and to motivate the youth to take up agriculture as an occupation.

The view of agriculture as a hobby has been debunked has the sector now contributes to income security and employment creation. Agriculture is now considered a business which people must expect to break even and be rewarding once they venture into it. It is commendable that the researchers considered Agri-Marketing or did not separate agriculture from business. But it is surprising that even with this inclusion, there is low coverage of agricultural information in the newspaper. It is thus clear from the studies conducted in South Africa and elsewhere, that there is limited accessibility to agricultural information by farmers and other stakeholders in the print media due to low coverage.

It is worth noting that Zambia's media, like those of many other African countries, draws its roots from the colonial past. The media system is directly or indirectly connected to the colonial government's objective reporting news in the British Empire (Banda, 2007). This therefore, implies that the media in Zambia covers more of politics than any other subject as was the case pre-independence era.

Although there are general concerns that the coverage of important developmental information such as agriculture in Zambian newspapers is low, there is hardly empirical evidence to verify such claims.

2.4 Knowledge Gap

It is clear from the forgoing literature that there is an information gap which is related to how media covered issues related to agriculture in most African countries. Thus, it is imperative, that the present study examined the factors that had caused this and thereby find out whether the ownership of a particular media such as *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail Newspapers* had anything to do with the media not adequately covering agricultural stories in this country. The study carried out a content analysis of the two major newspapers – *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*, which have a very wide circulation, to fill the knowledge gap.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature review provided a comprehensive analysis of print media coverage of agricultural information, spanning from a global perspective to specific studies conducted in various African countries, including Zambia. Key findings revealed a general lack of attention to agricultural issues in mainstream media outlets, both globally and within the African contexts. Despite agriculture's pivotal role in economic development, poverty alleviation, and food security, media coverage often fell short, with limited space allocated to agricultural topics compared to other news categories.

In conclusion, while the literature points to significant gaps in media coverage of agriculture, particularly in African countries like Zambia, it also highlights the potential for enhanced communication strategies to address these challenges. By recognising agriculture as a vital sector deserving of greater media attention and fostering partnerships between media, policymakers, and agricultural communities, there is a pathway towards more comprehensive and impactful coverage of agricultural issues in the future. The next chapter looks at the methodology employed in the research.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter primarily discusses the specific methodological approaches and procedures adopted for this study. It describes the sample size, sampling techniques, and the data collection methods. The chapter also describes the study population, instrumentation, coding, limitations of study and procedures for data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is the procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). In other words, a research design spells out the roadmap for a study and how all these components answer the research questions. There are three types of research designs: explanatory, exploratory and descriptive (Robson, 2002). This study therefore, used exploratory and descriptive research designs. As such, the research was not controlled but was done under natural settings of the environment. It also used a causal dimension to test the hypothesis regarding whether coverage of agriculture news and information was adequate or not.

3.1.1 Research Methods

In conducting the study, the researcher used mixed research methods (Questionnaire and Content Analysis). Quantitative research method was used in this study because of its element of number use which allows for greater precision in reporting results. Overall, using mixed methods in research provides several advanced benefits, including a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic, increased validity and reliability, the ability to address complex research questions, and improved practicality and feasibility. The research exploited the following in data collection:

3.1.1.1 Content analysis of newspapers (Quantitative)

i). Content Analysis

Scholars have defined content analysis in different ways. Holsti (1969) defined content analysis as, “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages.” Similarly, according to Krippendorff

(2004:18) defined Content Analysis as, “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context.” Further, Babbie (1998) highlights the advantages of content analysis as being economical with time and money especially if the material to be coded is easily accessible. Content Analysis was the primary data collection method used to examine coverage of agricultural information by *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 farming seasons. Since this study was a comparative study of two media organisations, there was need for a systematic collection and analysis of the content data for a stipulated period of time. The main reason for choosing this method was to clearly identify and calculate the visual elements that are systematic with high standards and principles of social research methods (Bryman, 2004). Content Analysis is an analytical technique often used by researchers on newspapers and other print media to measure the information presented in these media with respect to the frequency with which particular subject matters are reported and the volume of space allocated to the issues in the media. It provides a measure of the commitment of the media sources to different subject matters, as issues that are accorded supremacy are reported more often, and provided larger volumes of space (Oyewole, Oloyede and Meludu, 2014).

This research therefore analysed the content of the two selected newspapers and to affirm if they have accorded agricultural information the needed attention. Content Analysis was used to not only know the amount of coverage but also to gauge the length, the prominence in terms of position of story, the type of agricultural stories as well as the topic and the source. Therefore, news stories, pictures, editorials, columns and letters to the editor were all used as units of measure.

a) Measurement of Variables

- i. Frequency of coverage of agricultural information:** This was measured by counting the number of times agriculture related stories were covered by the two selected newspapers and during the time frame for the research.
- ii. Area of space allocated to agricultural news:** This was measured by mapping out the area covered by agricultural stories in the newspapers. This gave the area of space allocated to agricultural news items.

- iii. **Nature of placement of agricultural information in newspapers:** It was measured by counting the number of times that agricultural stories featured on the front page and middle pages of newspapers.
- iv. **Type of agricultural information covered:** This was measured by checking the category of agricultural information on whether it was a news story, feature story, editorial, column and letter to the editor.
- v. **Focus of coverage of agricultural information:** This was measured by checking topic that was covered in the story such as agribusiness, agroforestry, nutrition, crop production, crop management and climate change to mention but a few.
- vi. **Source of agricultural information:** This was measured by establishing authority quoted in the story like farmer, agricultural scientist, traditional leader, government worker among others.

As a result, the researcher conducted a physical search for manifest agricultural information related content and noted the relevant detail in a special coding sheet in order to establish both the quantity and trends of agricultural information content as covered by the two newspapers. The newspapers were accessed from libraries and the agricultural stories contained were analysed.

b). Coding sheet

To aid analysis, a pre-coded sheet was used. Simply put, a coding sheet is a basic instrument usually used to gather data when content analysis is the preferred research design in a study. The coding sheet(s) comprised content categories for each unit of measure. The researcher did an intensive physical search for articles containing agricultural information throughout the newspapers under study and the ones found were logged using a special coding sheet (**Appendix B**). Information gathered on each article included the following:

- a) Name of publication
- b) Author's gender
- c) Events or Issue based
- d) Type of story (feature, column, news, letter to editor etc.)
- e) Agricultural information covered in the story

f) Source (local, International)

j) Photo

h) Prominence of page where agricultural information was placed (Front lead or page lead story)

Furthermore, the researcher based the content analysis of all publications based on the following themes:

- a) Agribusiness and Value Addition
- b) Crop Production
- c) Crop Management
- d) Climate Change (Floods or Drought)
- e) Nutrition
- f) Agricultural Mechanisation
- g) Agroforestry
- h) Gender
- i) Research and Development
- j) Livestock Production
- k) Livestock Management
- l) Livestock Theft

3.1.1.2 Self-Administered Questionnaires (Quantitative and Qualitative survey)

i) Journalist survey

The sample size for the Journalist survey was 20, 10 for *Times of Zambia* and another 10 for *Zambia Daily Mail*. The self-administered questionnaires consisted both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The qualitative data was collected through open-ended questions after which the data was organised in a way that was manageable and easy to analyse. This was done through a process called coding, which involves identifying themes and patterns within the data and assigning labels or codes to them. The nature of the research allowed the use of qualitative methods in order to identify gaps and challenges in the coverage of agricultural information, and to generate recommendations. The media practitioners were randomly picked from the newsroom registers provided by the two newspapers with each desk having almost the same number. The desks considered were general news, business, Gender and features.

3.2 Study Population for Journalist Survey

From the register of journalists under the selected desks in this study were as follows: TOZ had a total of 10 (News 5, Business 2, Features 2 and Gender 1) while ZDM had 19 (News 7, Business 5, Features 4 and Gender 3). Overallly, the study population for this research was 29.



Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI)

National Plant Genetic Resources Centre (NPGRC)

Mission Report

2024 Trade Fair

3.2.1 Sample Size for Journalist Survey

When Taro Yamane's formula is applied to determine the sample size from a population of 29 journalists from the two newspapers with confidence level of 95 percent and margin of error 5 percent, sample size is 28. The procedure and calculations were illustrated below:

TOZ	ZDM
$n = N/1+N(e)^2$	$n = N/1+N(e)^2$
$n = 10/1+10(0.0025)$	$n = 19/1+19(0.0025)$
$n = 10/1.025$	$n = 19/1.0475$
$n = 9.756$	$n = 18.138$
n = 10	n = 18

Since TOZ had 10 journalists, in order not to create a discrepancy, the researcher took 10 journalists from ZMD. The practitioners were randomly picked from the news desks provided by the two newspapers with each desk having the same number bringing the total sample size to 20.

With 20 journalist surveyed, 10 from each newspaper, the sample size allows for a reasonable representation of the media practitioners working in the newsrooms. In addition, the sample size is manageable in terms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Finally, by randomly picking journalists from the newsroom registers, the sample size of 20 ensures a fair and unbiased selection process

3.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size for Content Analysis

Purposive sampling was used to select two daily newspapers for content analysis to determine the coverage of agricultural information: *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail Newspaper*. These two newspapers were chosen for content analysis because they have got a wide coverage, and reach. In addition, these newspapers are published daily and this was significant for sampling purposes and for consistency in terms of data collection and analysis. Additionally, these publications seem so inclined to reporting the agenda of the government as a result of being state controlled newspapers and agriculture is top on governments' agenda.

The study further analysed print media coverage of agricultural information for two farming seasons (2018/2019 and 2019/2020). The months November, December, January, February, May, June and July of the two selected seasons can be said to represent the two farming seasons namely: Planting season which is usually between November and January, as well as Crop Marketing between May and July. Additionally, agricultural shows which are a platform for disseminating agricultural information among stakeholders in this industry take place within the months selected. It is during the planting season (November, December and January) when the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) is at its pick with a lot of unscrupulous suppliers of agricultural inputs and most cash crops like maize, cotton, groundnuts and soya beans are planted during this period. In the month of January and February there is usually outbreak of pests and diseases. Furthermore, in the crop marketing season, government announces the floor prices of maize, soya beans and rice among other crops, and because of this announcement there are a lot of private and unscrupulous buyers who take advantage of the farmers.

However, for this particular study, the month of December was considered to represent the planting season because every farmer regardless of their category and agricultural zone would be planting. Further, the month of February was selected to represent the field crop management period due to pest and disease outbreaks. Equally, the month of June was considered in this study to represent the marketing season because this is the month when government announces the floor price of major cash crops and most crops would have been harvested.

It was therefore, envisaged that during these months, a lot of information was given to farmers on the best agricultural practices, seed varieties, pesticides, weather predictions and rainfall pattern updates. Other information includes the different floor prices of most crops, reactions by stakeholders and the yield projections for different crops.

The researcher analysed a total of 358 newspaper editions for the two named publications on the coverage of agricultural information for a total period of six months namely December of the year 2018, February, June, and December of the year 2019, and February and June of the year 2020. It should be noted that dates sampled for each month for both publications were the same so as to enable effective comparative content analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

As earlier alluded to, in this study, structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the 20 Journalists and Content Analysis coding sheets were used to get data from the two newspapers under study.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data elicited through the journalist survey questionnaires and content analysis was analysed using the SPSS, Microsoft Excel was further used to refine the graphs. The data was then interpreted and analysed by using frequent tables, pie and bar charts among others in line with the research questions raised for the study or themes and sub-themes that emerged from the findings.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntarily as no subject was coerced to take part. Equally, ultimate confidentiality was exercised in terms of subject identity by utilising numbers to identify questionnaires as opposed to names. Further, all the information from the respondents was treated as confidential and solely used for this study.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Limitations related to this study were firstly, the fact that the study was print-media specific and a case study. While the focus on print media was purposive, it is important to underscore the fact that the print media is only one of many mass media outlets. An argument can certainly be made that the print media can be used as a proxy for media coverage as a whole, though that certainly has its limitations. Therefore, generalisation of the findings should be done with caution. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, data could not be collected as planned as most reporters worked from home and complained of not having internet connection to respond to the questionnaire while in quarantine.

3.8 Conclusion

This Chapter quantitative research methods, being Content Analysis and Questionnaire were used in this study. Further, the study outlined the procedures for sampling and analysis, described the study population, instrumentation, the coding and the limitations of the study. The next chapter is the presentation of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings as analysed from the data collected. The purpose of this study was to do a content analysis of Print Media Coverage of Agricultural Information in Zambia using *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* Newspapers as case studies. This research was undertaken under the premise that there was less importance attached to agricultural information by the said newspapers. This chapter presented the findings according to the specific objectives stated that included: To establish the importance accorded to agricultural information in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers; To establish what *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* focus on when reporting agricultural information and finally to identify the challenges that *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* journalists encounter when covering Agricultural Information.

This chapter shows results of quantitative data entry and analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. The chapter also includes results of qualitative data analysed thematically. Firstly, it presents the quantity of coverage of agricultural information in general by *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers and then it narrows down to show a lot more detail in terms of agricultural information coverage. Additionally, the challenges faced by the print media when covering agricultural information are also presented.

4.1 Findings

Data Characteristics

For this particular research, a total of 358 editions of *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers were sampled representing a total of 17, 597 news articles for the selected time of study. Of this total, only 374 news articles were agricultural related representing a percentage of 2.1 of the total coverage.

4.1.1 Frequency and Placement of Agricultural Information

The first objective was to establish the importance accorded to Agricultural Information by the two newspapers. To achieve this objective, the researcher employed a message content analysis by conducting a physical search for agricultural related content and noted

the detail in a coding sheet. Accordingly, the two newspapers were assessed independently while news stories, editorials, columns and letters to the editor were all used as units of measure.

4.1.1.1 Newspaper content analysis results on Crops

a) News articles

After examining a total of 358 (179 for each newspaper) editions of *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*, a total of 289 agricultural news stories were published during the period of coverage selected. The study analysed print media coverage of agricultural Information for a total period of six months namely December 2018, February, June and December of the year 2019 and, February and June 2020. The 289 news stories found were from a mixture of selected agricultural topics namely: Agribusiness, Crop Production, Crop Management, Climate Change (Floods or Drought), Nutrition, Agricultural Mechanisation, Research and Development, Agroforestry and Gender.

Of the 289 agricultural news articles found, the *Zambia Daily Mail* had the most stories at 160 (55.4 percent) followed by *Times of Zambia* which had 129 (44.6 percent) news articles respectively see **Figure 1 below**.

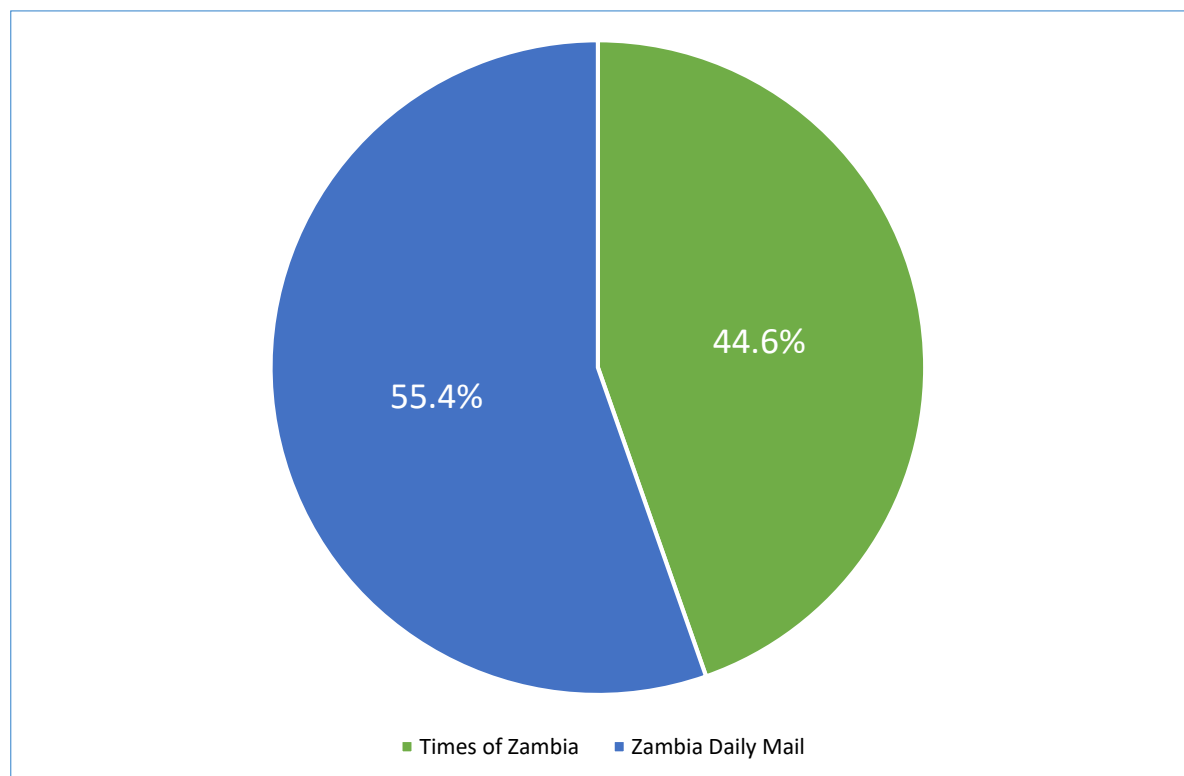


Figure 1: **Distribution of articles between the two newspapers**

Newspaper	No. of stories per daily edition	No. of stories in 6 months	Published agricultural stories over 6 months	Percentage of coverage
<i>Times of Zambia</i>	48	8,566	129	1.5
<i>Zambia Daily Mail</i>	51	9,031	160	1.8
Totals	99	17,597	289	1.6

Table 1: Comparison of Agricultural news coverage by newspaper to the total estimated coverage by all the newspapers over the selected six months.

For *Times of Zambia*, a total of approximately 8,566 news stories as **shown in table 1 above** were published in the selected period (December 2018, February, June and December of the year 2019 and, February and June 2020), from which only 129 stories were agricultural related translating into 1.5 percent. Further, the classification of these stories showed that most of the stories were inclined to Crop Production and Agribusiness at 33.3 percent and 29.5 percent respectively. Agroforestry and Gender featured least at 0.8 percent each.

On the other hand, *Zambia Daily Mail* had a total of 9,031 news stories (**see table 1**) were published in the selected period, from which only 160 stories were agricultural related translating into 1.8 percent. Further, the classification of these stories showed that most of the stories were inclined to Crop Production and Agribusiness at 45 percent and 30 percent respectively while Nutrition was the least at 0.6 percent.

Overall, the coverage of Agricultural Information focusing on crops stood at 1.6 percent in the two newspapers.

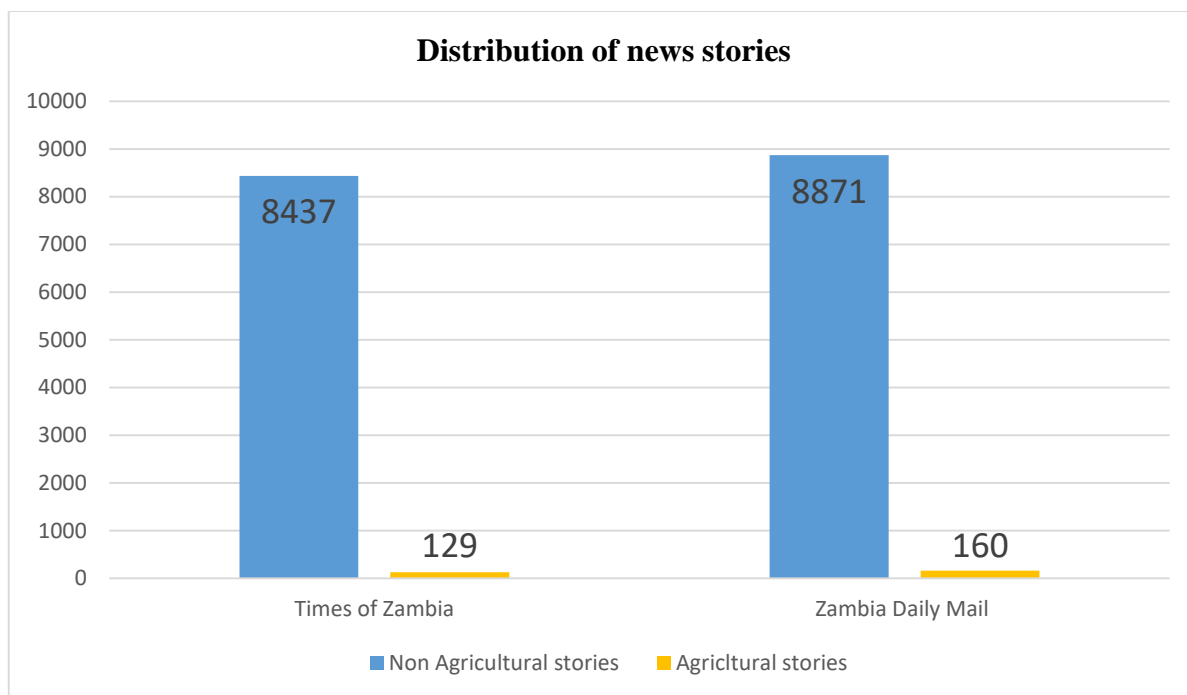


Figure 2: **Comparison of the distribution of non-agricultural and agricultural news stories over the selected period**

Of the nine Agricultural topics (Agribusiness, Crop Production, Crop Management, Climate Change, Nutrition, Agricultural Mechanisation, Research and Development, Agroforestry and Gender) chosen for content analysis, all the nine were covered by the two newspapers. In comparison among the nine topics covered crop production had the highest percentage, with its articles amounting to 39.8 percent (115/289) followed by agribusiness with its articles having a share of 29.8 percent (86/289). Others were climate change articles amounting to 15.6 percent (45/289), crop management articles at 6.6 percent (19/289), research and development at 2.1 percent (6/289), gender and agroforestry were at 1.7 percent (5/289) each. Nutrition and agricultural mechanisation were the least at 1.4 percent (4/289) each (See Figure 3 and 4 below).

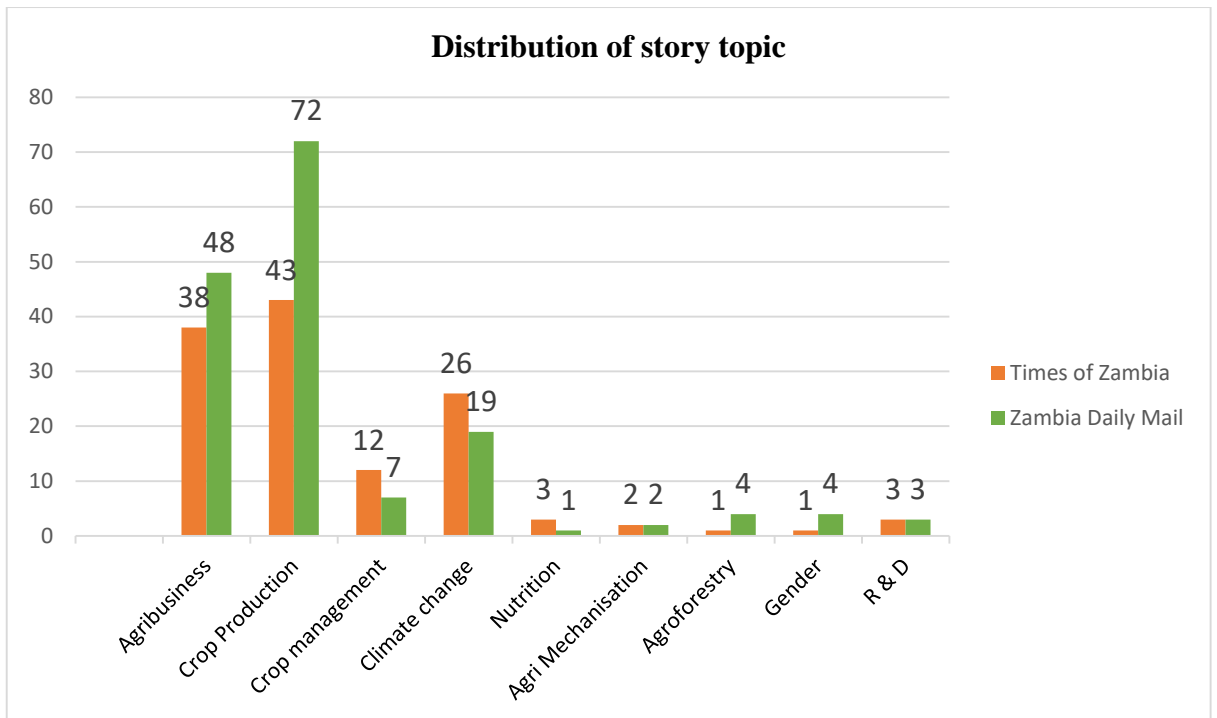


Figure 3: **Distribution of articles between the two newspapers by topic**

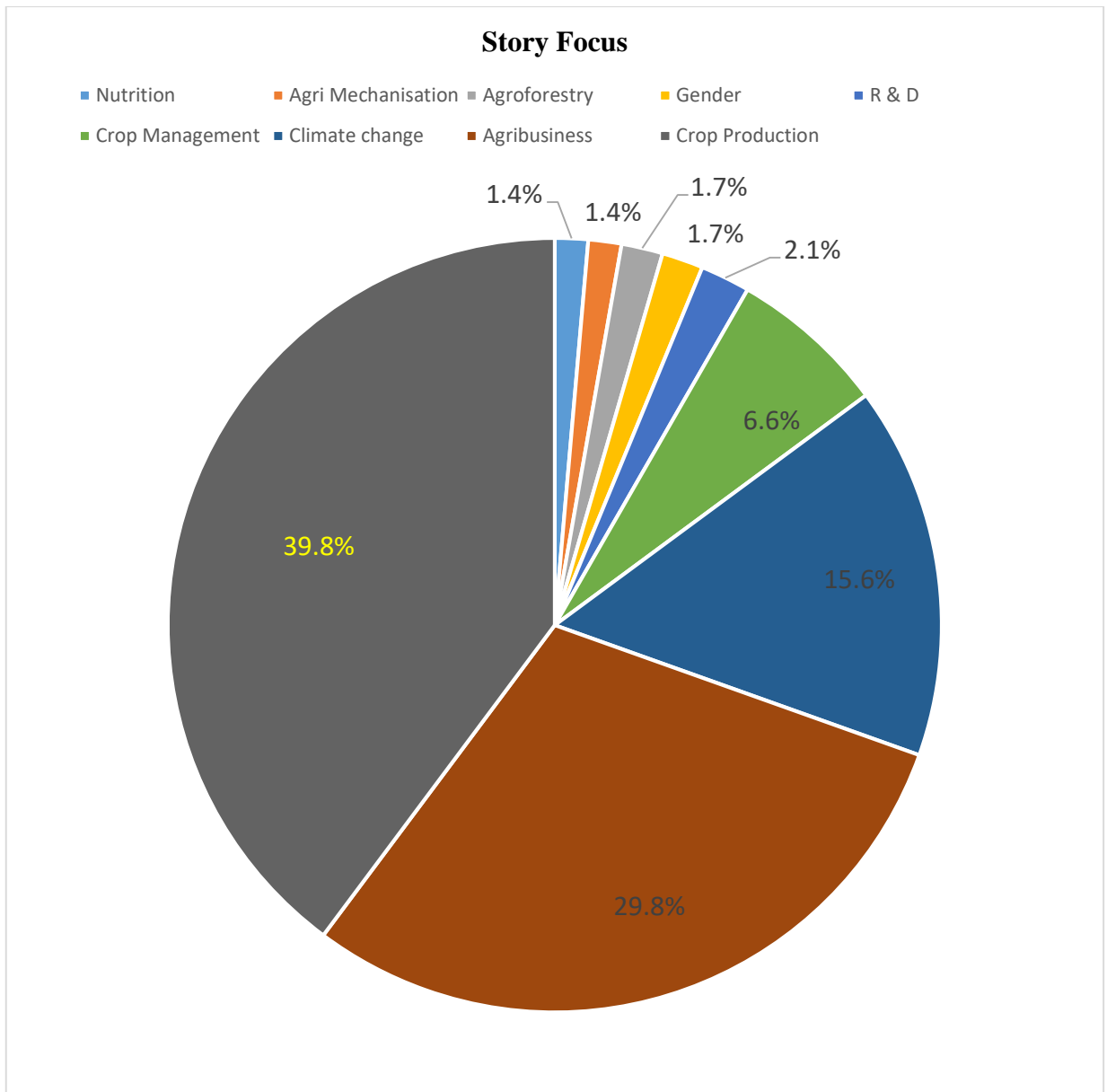


Figure 4: **Distribution of Agricultural news stories over a period of six months for the two newspapers**

b) Nature of placement of agricultural stories in the two newspapers

Figure 5 shows Story treatment in the two newspapers. 10 news stories out of 129 (7.7 percent) were warranted front page main headline in the *Times of Zambia*. However, 34 (26.3 percent) of the stories were page leads while 85 (65.9 percent) were neither main headlines nor page leads. In *Zambia Daily Mail*, only seven out of the 160 stories (4.4 percent) made it as front page main headline whereas 55 (34.4 percent) of the stories were page leads. On the other hand, 98 (61.2 percent) of the stories were neither main headline nor page lead.

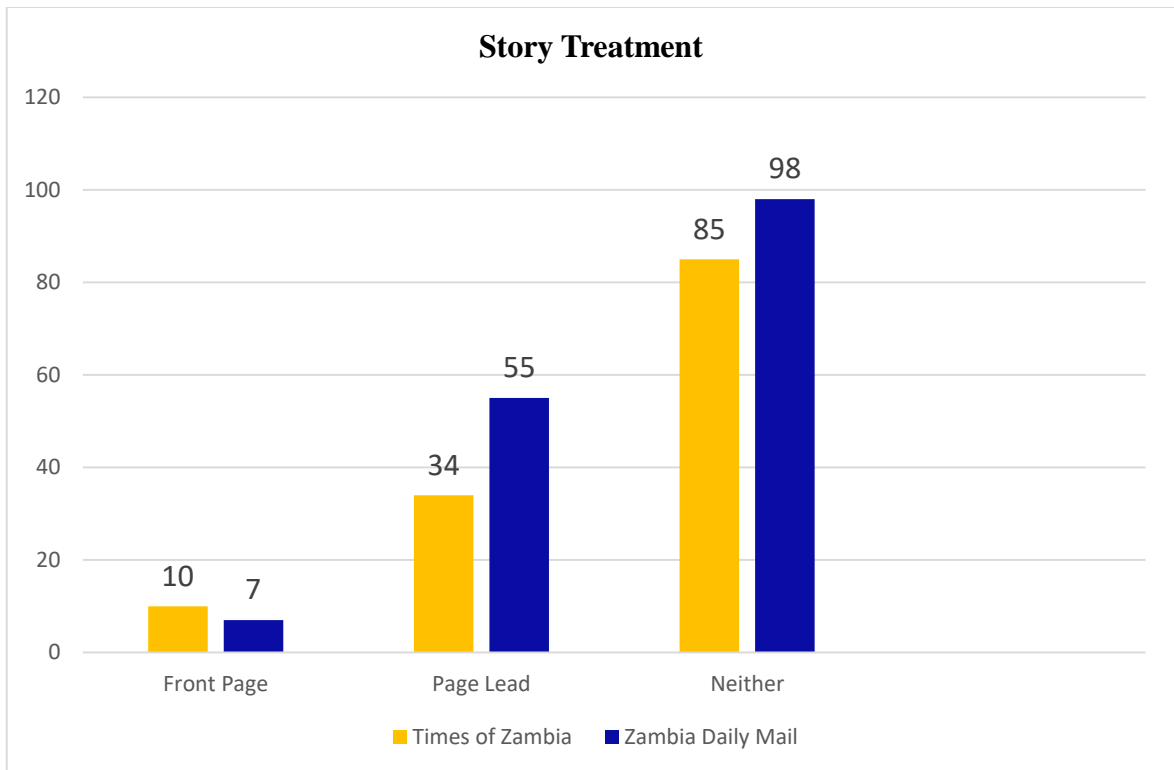


Figure 5: **Comparison of agricultural news story treatment or placement over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers**

c) Pictures

For pictures, the statistics in Figure 7 below indicate that the majority of the stories in *Times of Zambia*, 69 were not accompanied by any picture while 30 stories were accompanied by action picture and non-action pictures each. For *Zambia Daily Mail*, the majority of the stories, 118 were not accompanied by non-action pictures while 42 of the stories had action pictures.

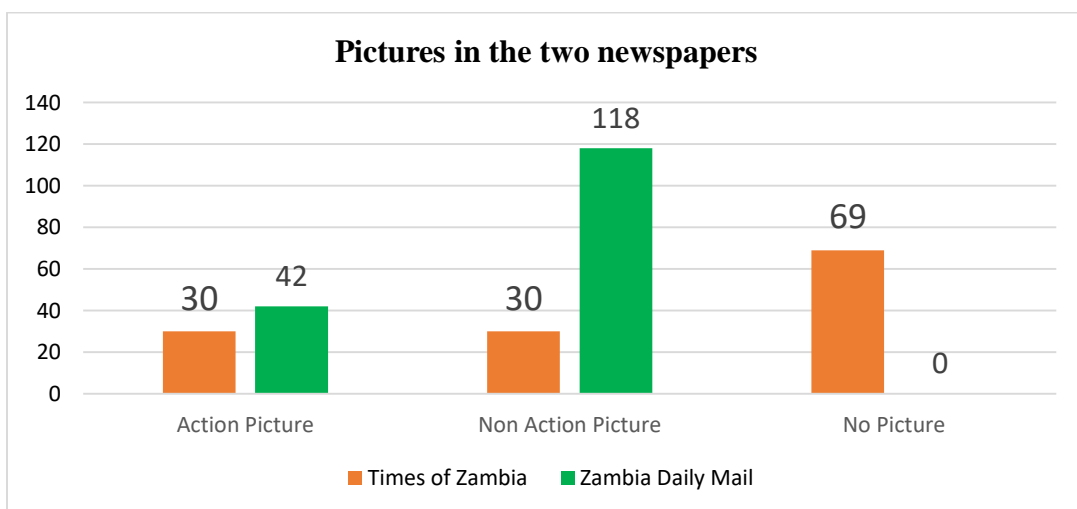


Figure 6: **Distribution of pictures in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers**

d) Area of space allocated to agricultural stories in the two newspapers

Of the 289 agricultural articles, 62.6 percent (181/289) had less than a quarter allocation, 21.1 percent (61/289) of the stories were on quarter allocation. 11.8 percent (34/289) of the stories were tagged at half page while 3.5 percent (10/289) of the stories were on three-quarters. The least was at 1 percent (3/289) on full page.

		Length of Story			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Half a page	34	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Quarter page	61	21.1	21.1	32.9
	Less than quarter page	181	62.6	62.6	95.5
	Three Quarter Page	10	3.5	3.5	99.0
	Full page	3	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Distribution of length of stories in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers

Of the 289 agricultural articles, *Times of Zambia* had 69 stories that occupied less than a quarter page, 22 were allocated quarter page, 16 with half page, 4 stories were on three-quarter page while only one story was granted full page. On the other hand, *Zambia Daily Mail* had 112 occupying less than quarter page, 39 stories were allocated quarter page, 18 with half page, 6 stories were on three-quarter page while only two story was granted full page.

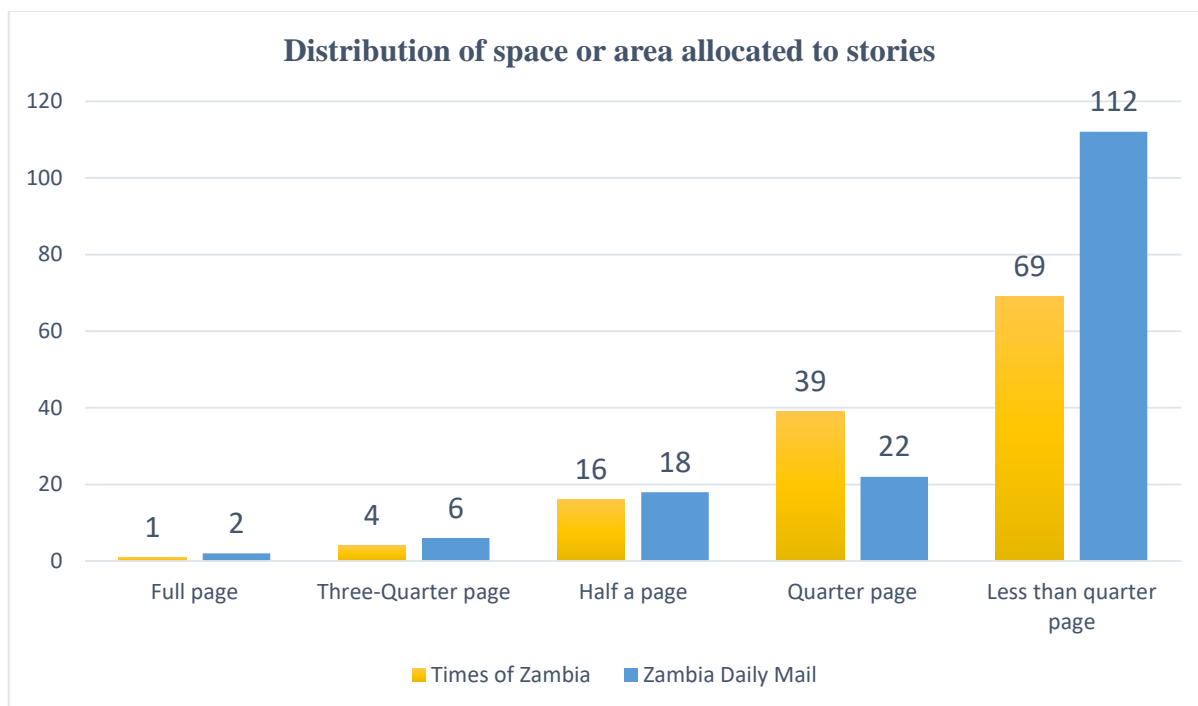


Figure 7: **Comparison of length of story allocated to agricultural news over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers**

e) Source of news

Out of the 129 agricultural stories in *Times of Zambia*, 60.5 percent were in-house news stories whereas only 31.8 percent were from local news agencies with foreign news having 1.6 percent. Stories from private institutions and concerned citizens each had a share of 3.1 percent. For *Zambia Daily Mail* on the contrary, out of the 160 agricultural stories, 90 percent were in-house news stories whereas only 5 percent were from local news agencies with foreign news having the least with 1.6 percent. Private institutions had a share of 3.1 percent while stories from concerned citizens translated into with 1.3 percent.

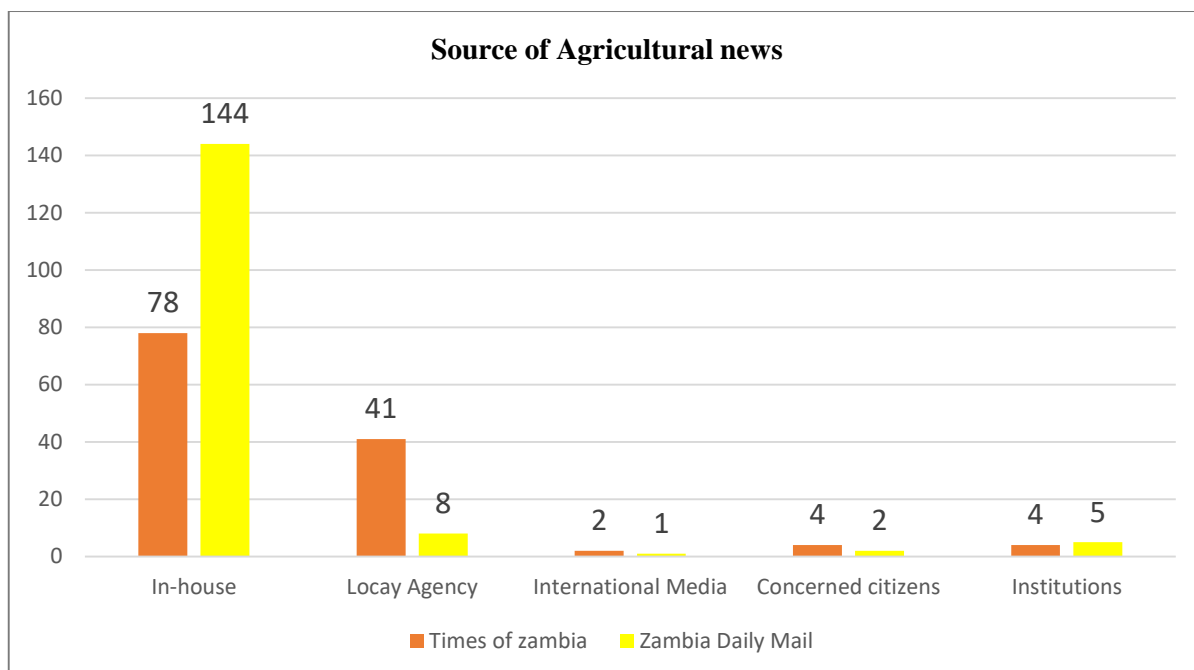


Figure 8: Distribution of source of stories in the two newspapers

f) Type of article

The agricultural articles under consideration in this research were written in the following formats: Feature, Hard News, Column, Editorial Comment and Letter to the editor. Of the 209 hard news stories examined, *Zambia Daily Mail* had the most with 120 stories while *Times of Zambia* had 89 as shown in **Figure 9 below**. Of the 54 feature articles found, *Times of Zambia* had 26 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 28. Under the column section, a total of 18 were recorded with *Times of Zambia* having the highest score of 11 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 7. For the agricultural stories that were under letter to the editor, only two were recorded with each newspaper having a fair share. Further, out of the six editorial comments, *Zambia Daily Mail* had the most with four while *Times of Zambia* had two.

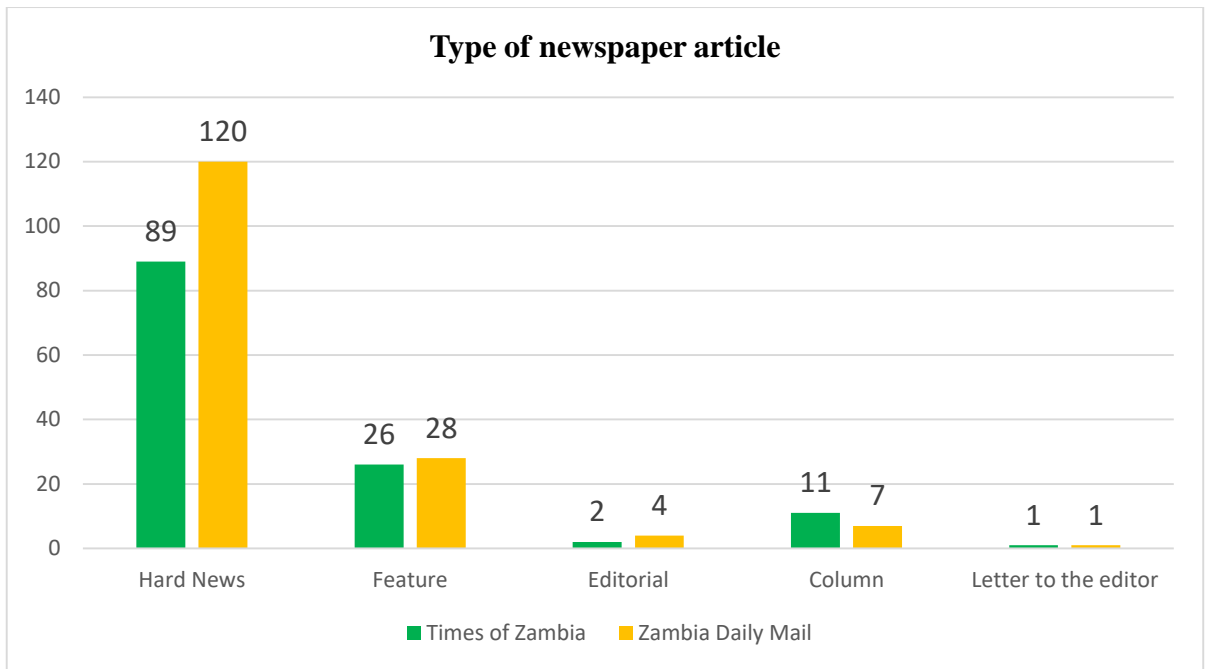


Figure 9: **Distribution of type of stories in the two newspapers**

g) Authority in the story

It was established that most of the voices in the stories of the two newspapers were those of government as opposed to farmers or agricultural scientists who conduct research on trending issues in the agriculture sector.

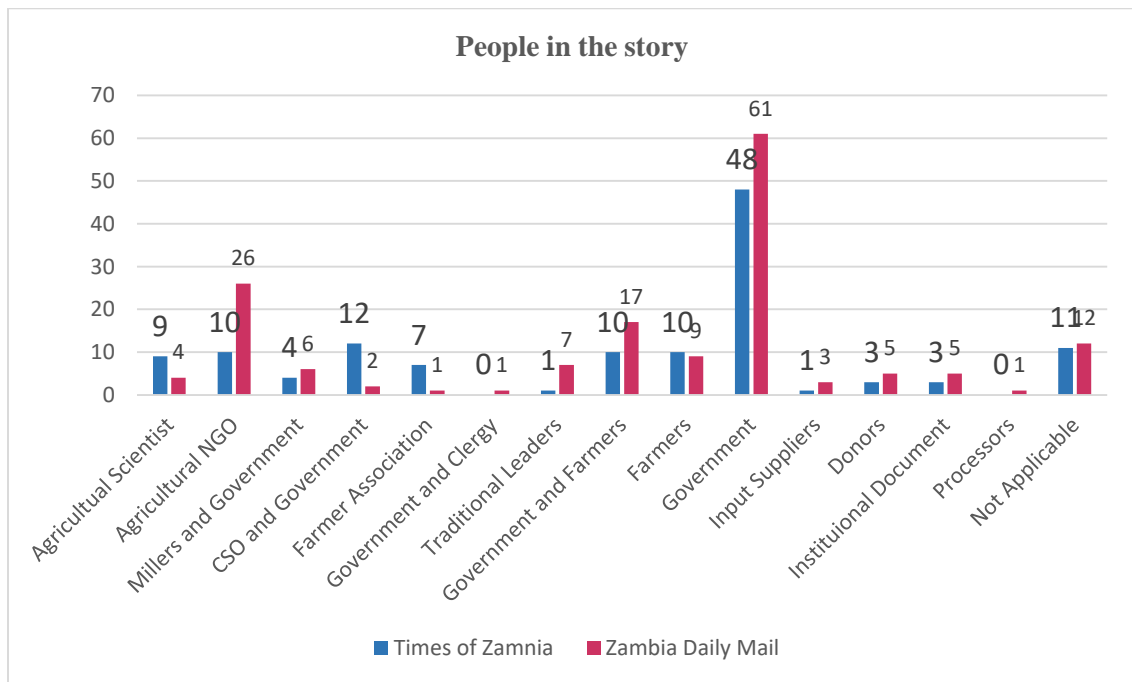


Figure 10: **Sources of stories in the two newspapers**

4.1.1.2 Newspaper content analysis results on Livestock

a) News articles

Of the 85 livestock news articles found, the *Zambia Daily Mail* had the most stories at 48 (56 percent) followed by *Times of Zambia* which had 37 (44 percent) respectively see **Figure 11** below.

The 85 news stories found were from a mixture of selected Livestock topics namely: Agribusiness/Value Addition, Livestock Production, Livestock Management, Climate Change (Floods or Drought), Research and Development, Nutrition and Livestock Theft.

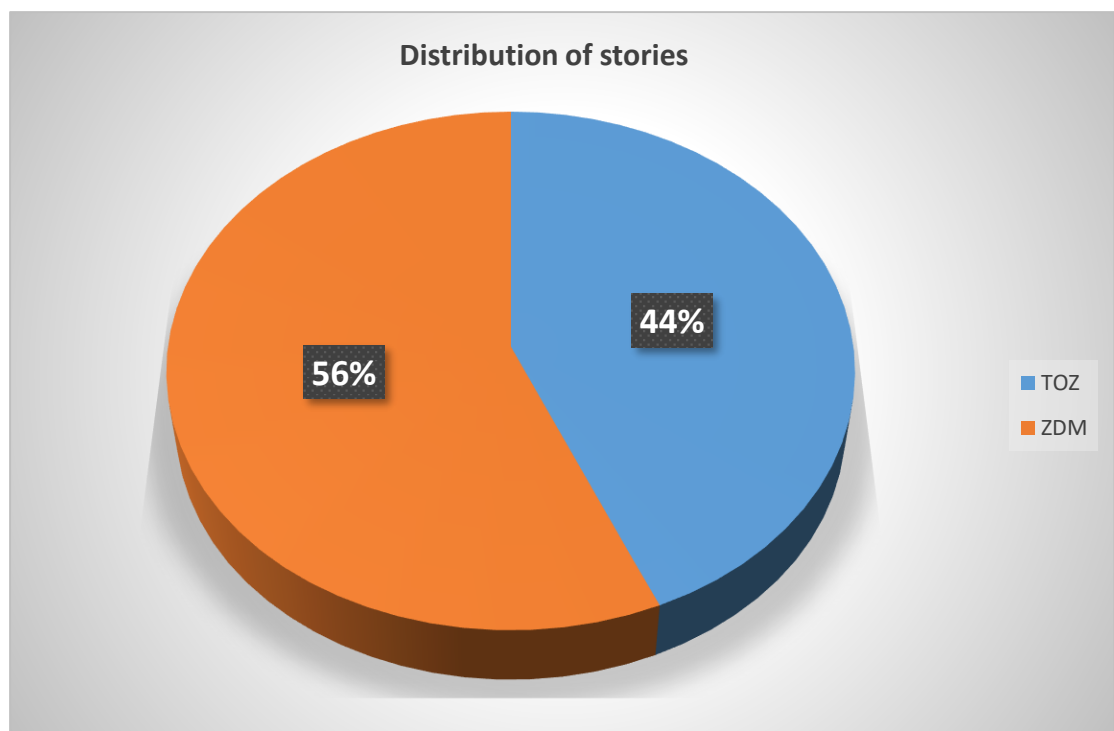


Figure 11: **Distribution of articles between the two newspapers focusing on Livestock**

Additionally, **table 3** below, shows that the Livestock stories published during the selected six months' period only represent **0.5** percent of the total stories published by the two newspapers over the period under study, with *Times of Zambia* having **0.4** percent while the *Zambia Daily Mail* had a share of **0.5** percent.

Newspaper	No. of stories per daily edition	No. of stories in 6 months	Published Livestock stories over 6 months	Percentage of coverage
<i>Times of Zambia</i>	48	8,566	37	0.4
<i>Zambia Daily Mail</i>	51	9,031	48	0.5
Totals	99	17,597	85	0.5

Table 3: Comparison of Livestock news coverage by newspaper to the total coverage by all the newspapers over the selected six months.

For *Times of Zambia*, the taxonomy of these stories showed that most of the stories were inclined to Livestock Production and Livestock Management at 75.7 percent and 21.6 percent respectively while Livestock Theft was the least with 2.7 percent.

On the other hand, *Zambia Daily Mail* the classification of these stories showed that most of the stories were inclined to Livestock Production and Livestock Management at 62.5 percent and 20.8 percent respectively while Agribusiness/Value Addition was at 16.7 percent.

Overall, the coverage of Agricultural Information focusing on livestock stood at 0.5 percent in the two newspapers.

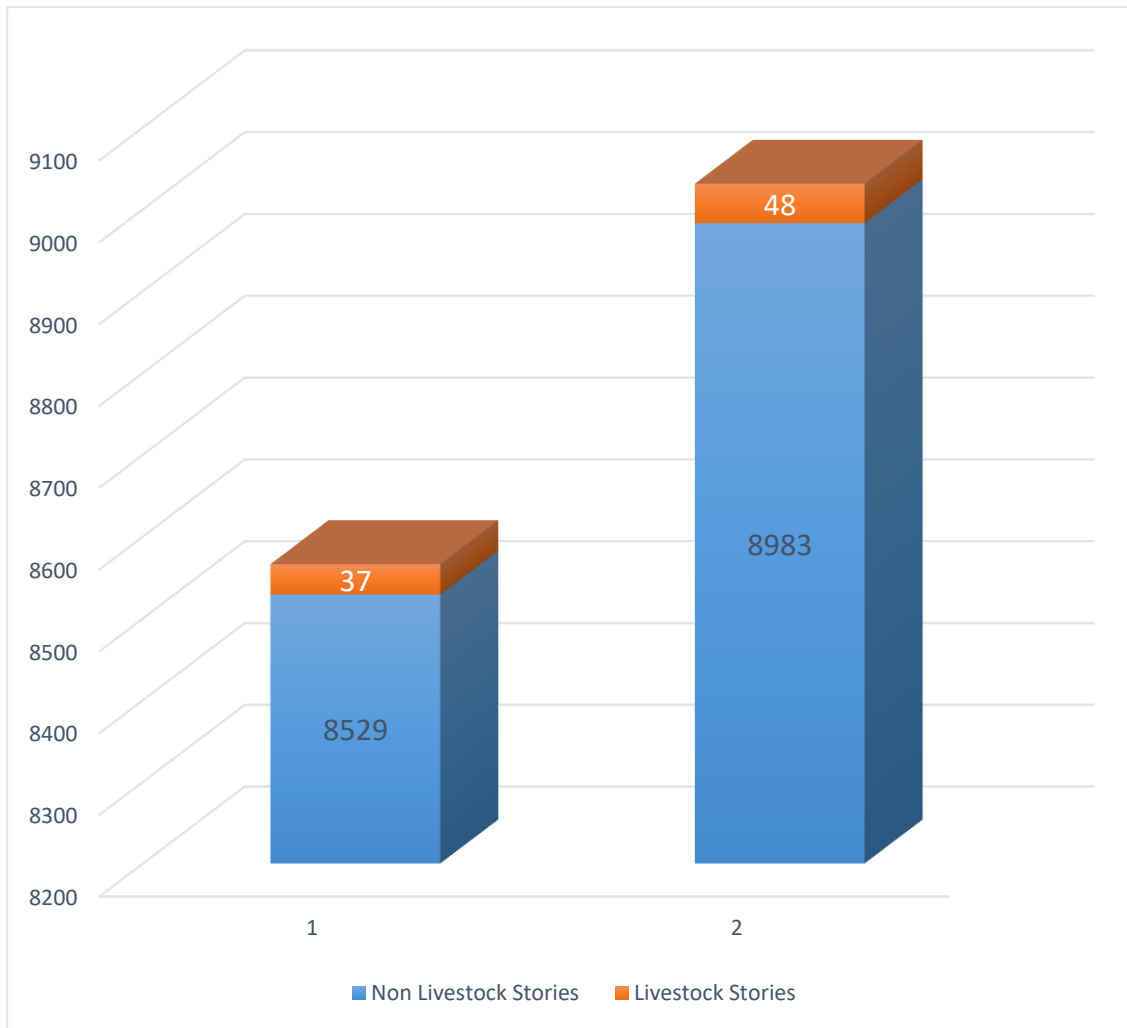


Figure 12: Comparison of the distribution of non-Livestock and Livestock news stories over the selected period

b) Nature of placement of agricultural stories in the two newspapers

Figure 13 shows Story treatment in the two newspapers. 5 news stories out of 85 (5.9 percent) were warranted front page main headline for the two newspapers with the *Times of Zambia* having 4 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had only one. However, 25 (29.4 percent) of the stories were page leads with the *Times of Zambia* having 9 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 16. Furthermore, 55 (64.7 percent) were neither main headlines nor page leads, with the *Times of Zambia* having 24 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 31.

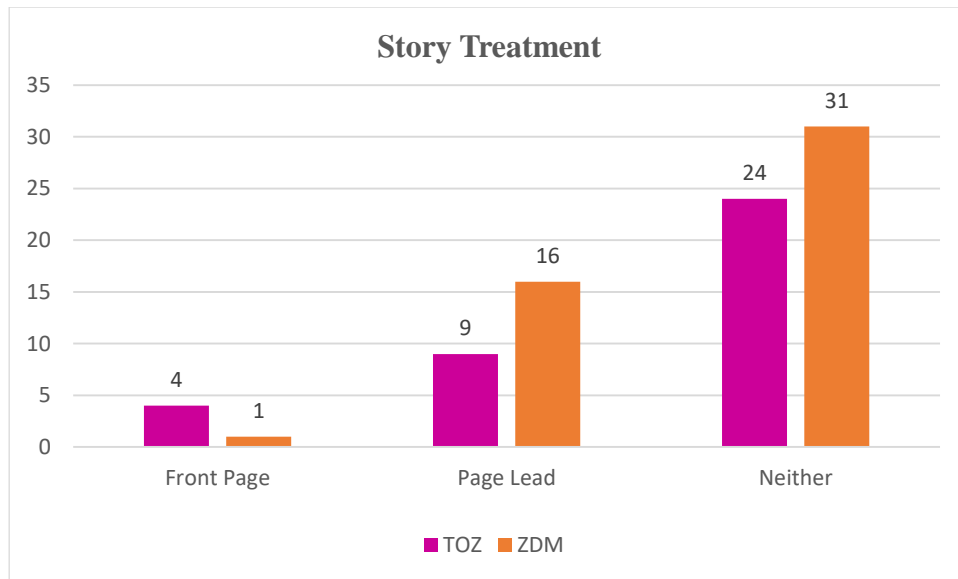


Figure 13: Comparison of livestock news story treatment or placement over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers

c) Pictures

For pictures, the statistics in Figure 6 below indicate that the majority (58) of the stories in the two selected newspapers representing a percentage of 68.1 were not accompanied by any picture (*Times of Zambia* with 22 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 36). Further, 9 (10.6 percent) stories were accompanied by action picture (*Times of Zambia* with 5 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 4) and non-action pictures stood at 18 (21.2 percent) with *Zambia Daily Mail* having a share of 8 while *Times of Zambia* had 10.

		Picture			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Action Picture	9	10.6	10.6	10.6
	No Picture	58	68.2	68.2	78.8
	Non Action Picture	18	21.2	21.2	100.0
Total		85	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Distribution of pictures in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers during the period of study.

d) Area of space allocated to Livestock stories in the two newspapers

Of the 85 Livestock articles, 82.4 percent (70/85) had less than a quarter allocation, 10.6 percent (9/85) of the stories were on quarter allocation. 4.7 percent (4/85) of the stories were tagged at half page while 2.4 percent (2/85) of the stories were on three-quarters.

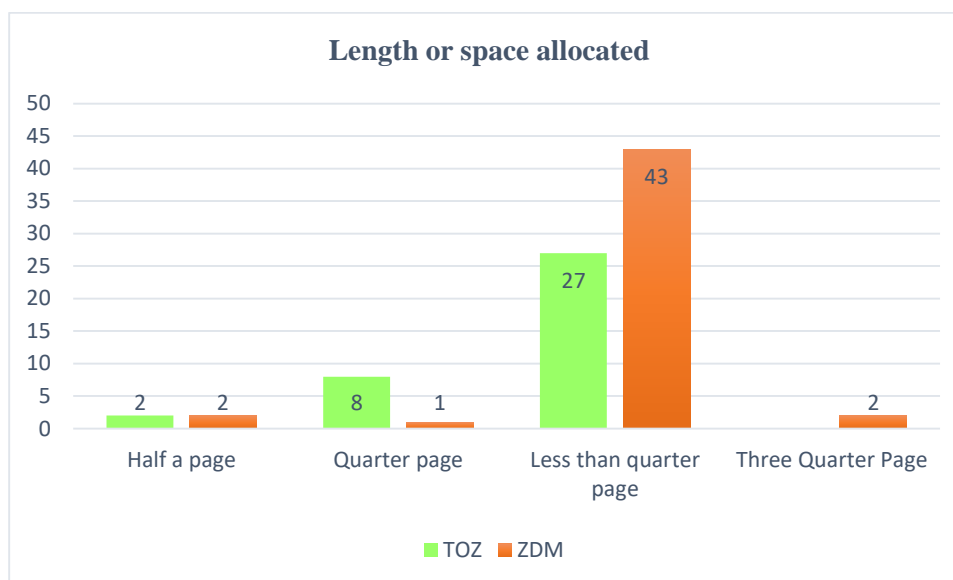


Figure 14: Comparison of length of story allocated to agricultural news over the selected period in the two chosen newspapers

e) Source of news

Out of the 37 Livestock stories in *Times of Zambia*, 64.9 percent (24/37) were in-house news stories whereas only 35.1 percent (13/37) were from local news agencies. For *Zambia Daily Mail* out of the 48 Livestock stories, 95.8 percent (46/48) were in-house news stories whereas only 4.2 percent (2/48) were from local news agencies. There was no news from foreign news agencies covered under Livestock.

		Source			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	In-house	70	82.4	82.4	82.4
	Local agency	15	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Distribution of source of stories in the two newspapers

f) Type of article

The Livestock articles under consideration in this research were written in the following formats: Feature, Hard News, Column, Editorial Comment and Letter to the editor. Of the 66 hard news stories examined, *Zambia Daily Mail* had the most with 39 stories while *Times of Zambia* had 27 as shown in **Figure 15a, 15b and 15c** below. Of the 18 feature articles found, *Times of Zambia* had 10 while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 8. Under the column section, *Times of Zambia* recorded nil while *Zambia Daily Mail* had 1.

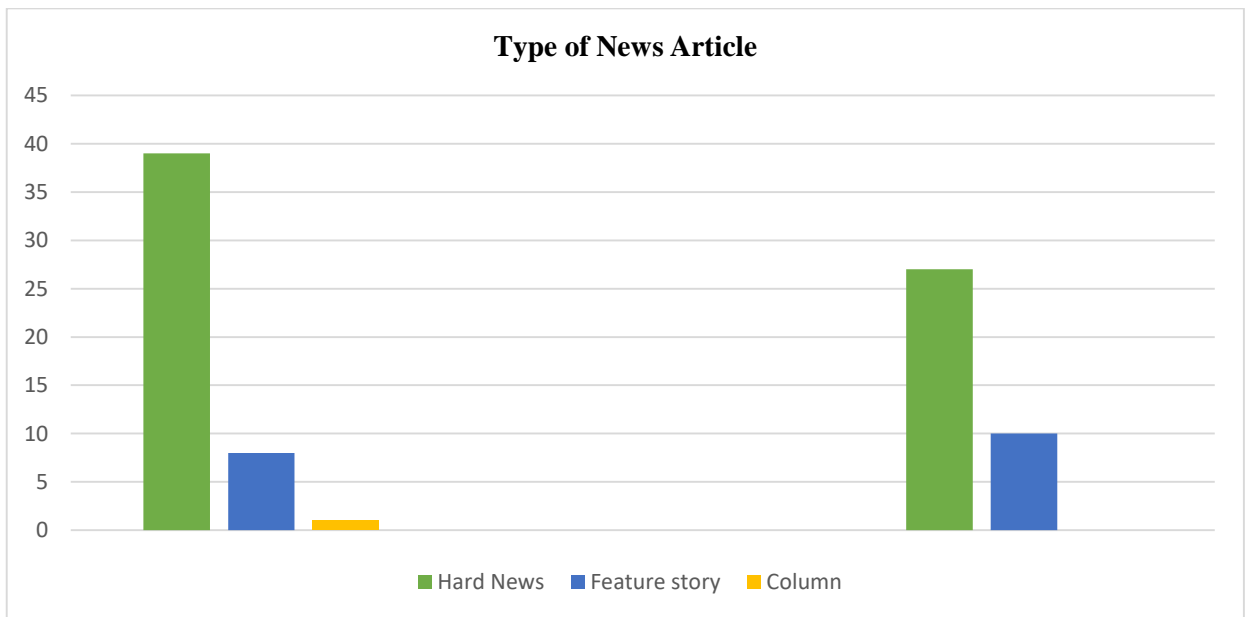
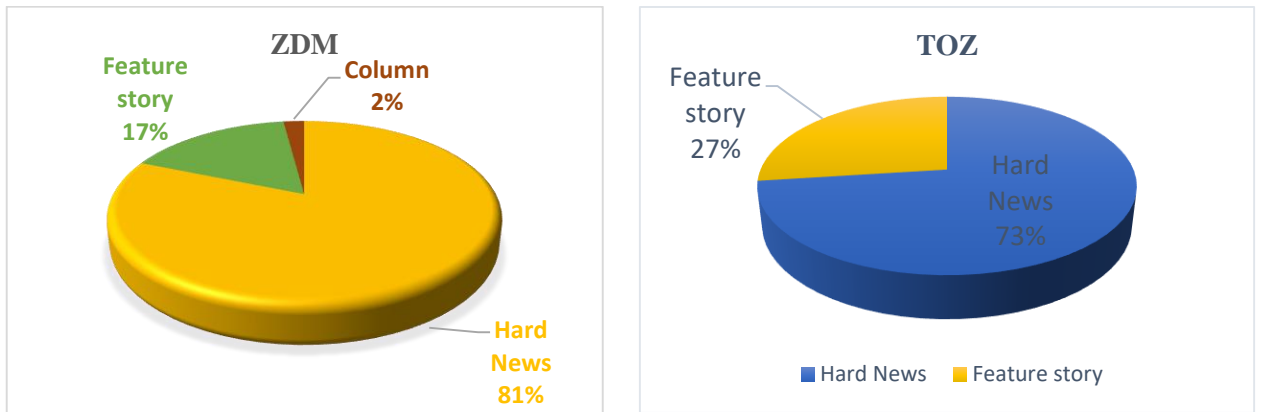


Figure 15a,b c: **Distribution of type of stories in the two newspapers**

g) Authority in the story

Mirroring the types of sources/people used for stories, research showed that most of the voices in the stories of the two newspapers were those of government officials with a percentage of 56.5.

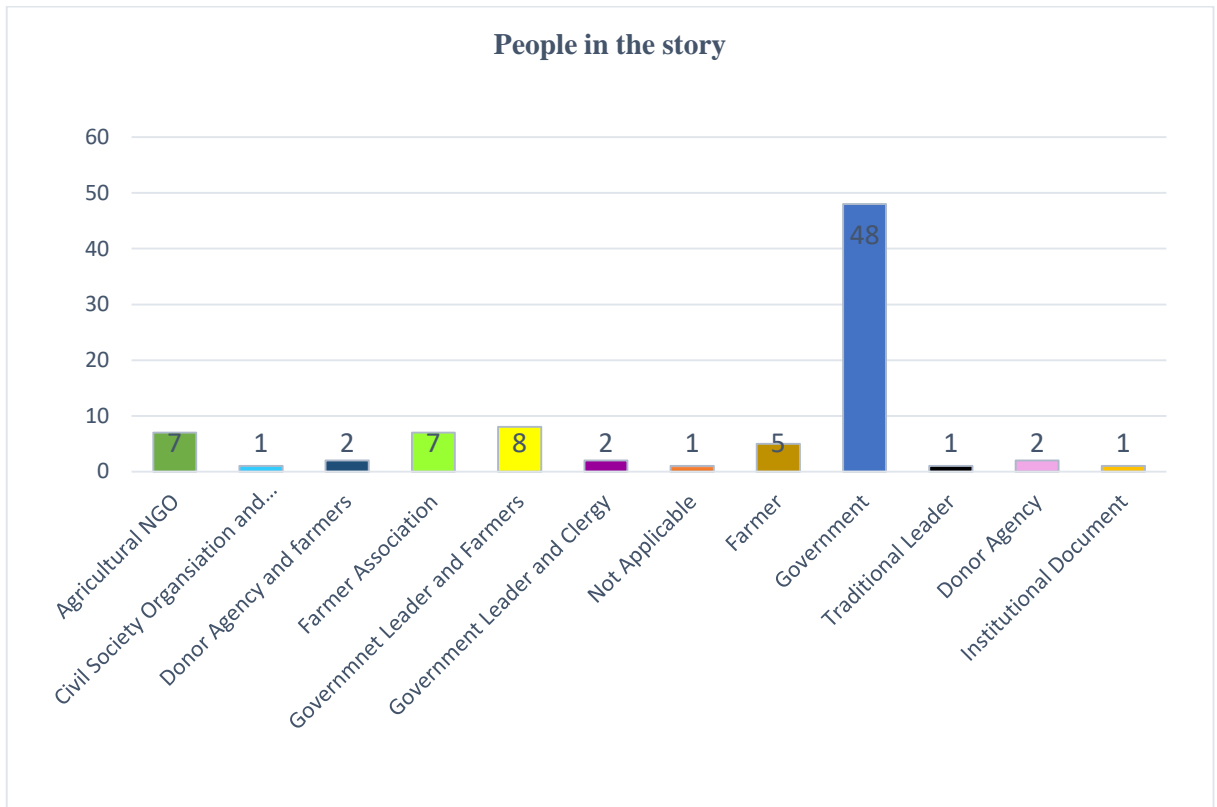


Figure 16: **Sources of stories in the two newspapers**

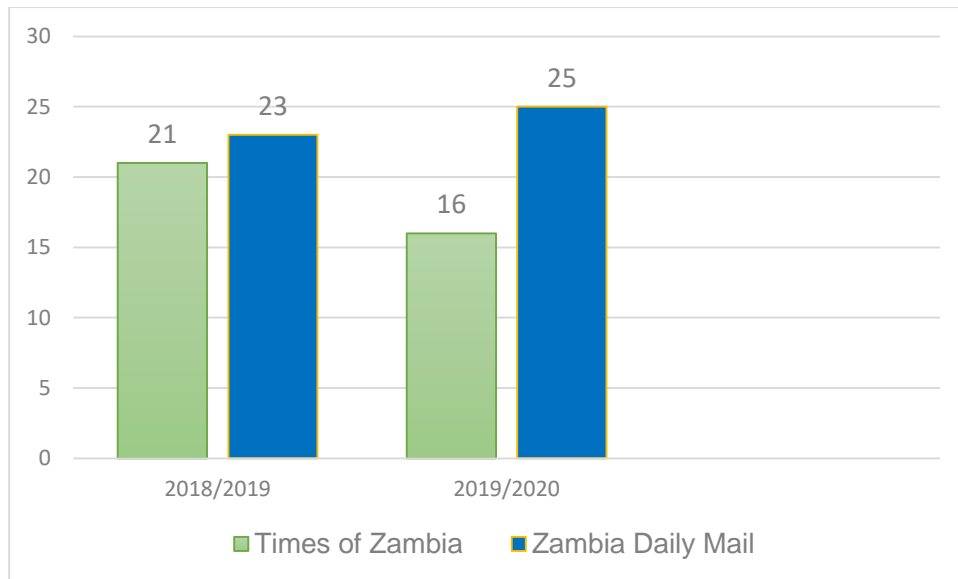


Figure 17: Summary of coverage of Livestock stories in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* during the selected farming seasons

The study results indicate that *Zambia Daily Mail* covered more livestock stories in the two farming seasons as compared to *Times of Zambia*. In the 2018/2019 farming season, *Zambia Daily Mail* had 23 stories while *Times of Zambia* had 21 with the majority of the stories in the two newspapers inclined to Livestock Production

Similarly, in the 2019/2020 farming season, *Zambia Daily Mail* had 20 stories while the *Times of Zambia* had 16 with most stories still focussing on Livestock Production.

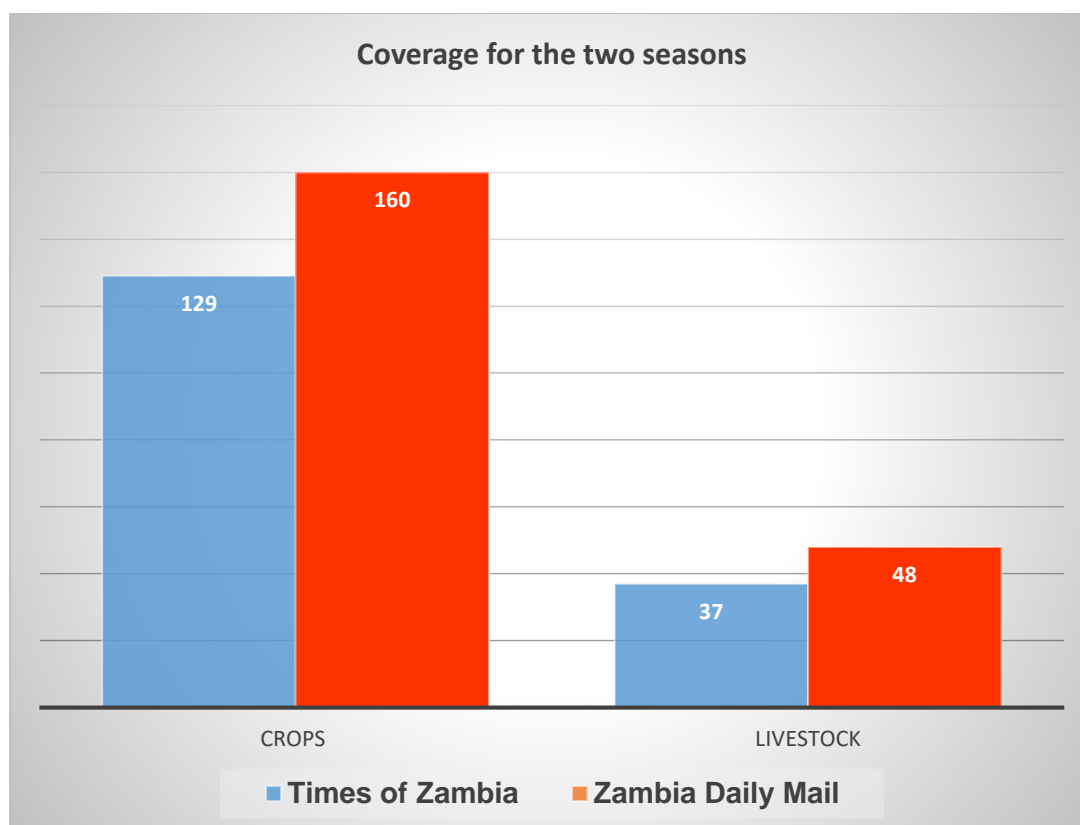


Figure 18: Comparison of Crops and Livestock coverage in the two selected seasons

Newspaper	No. of stories per daily edition	No. of stories in 6 months	Published agricultural/Livestock stories	Percentage of coverage
<i>Times of Zambia</i>	48	8,566	166	1.9
<i>Zambia Daily Mail</i>	51	9,031	208	2.3
Totals	99	17,597	374	2.1

Table 6: Percentage of coverage of agricultural Information

The **Figure 18** and **table 6** above shows the summary of Agricultural Information coverage in totality (Crops and Livestock) for the two selected newspapers in the selected farming seasons.

4.1.2 Focus of Coverage of Agricultural Information

4.1.2.1 Content Analysis for Crops

Since this research was a comparative study of *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* over a period of six months in each of the two agricultural seasons (2018/2019 and 2019/2020), it was imperative to also compare the performance of the print media in each of the two newspapers in each of the seasons.

Story Focus and distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agribusiness/Value Addition	28	35.9	35.9	35.9
	Crop Production	28	35.9	35.9	71.8
	Crop management	4	5.1	5.1	76.9
	Climate change	14	17.9	17.9	94.9
	Nutrition	2	2.6	2.6	97.4
	Agricultural Mechanisation	1	1.3	1.3	98.7
	Agroforestry	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Coverage of agricultural stories in *Times of Zambia* during the 2018/2019 season

Story Focus and distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agribusiness/Value Addition	10	19.6	19.6	19.6
	Crop Production	15	29.4	29.4	49.0
	Crop management	8	15.7	15.7	64.7
	Climate change	12	23.5	23.5	88.2
	Nutrition	1	2.0	2.0	90.2
	Agricultural Mechanisation	1	2.0	2.0	92.2
	Gender	1	2.0	2.0	94.1
	Research and Development	3	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Coverage of agricultural stories in *Times of Zambia* during the 2019/2020 season

Story Focus and distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agribusiness/Value Addition	25	27.2	27.2	27.2
	Crop Production	48	52.2	52.2	79.3
	Crop management	7	7.6	7.6	87.0
	Climate change	5	5.4	5.4	92.4
	Nutrition	1	1.1	1.1	93.5
	Agricultural Mechanisation	2	2.2	2.2	95.7
	Agroforestry	2	2.2	2.2	97.8
	Gender	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
	Research and Development	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Table 9: Coverage of agricultural stories in *Zambia Daily Mail* during the 2018/2019 season

Story Focus and distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agribusiness/Value Addition	23	33.8	33.8	33.8
	Crop Production	24	35.3	35.3	69.1
	Climate change	14	20.6	20.6	89.7
	Agroforestry	2	2.9	2.9	92.6
	Gender	3	4.4	4.4	97.1
	Research and Development	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Table 10: Coverage of agricultural stories in *Zambia Daily Mail* during the 2019/2020 season

The study results indicate that *Zambia Daily Mail* covered more agricultural stories in the two farming seasons as compared to *Times of Zambia*. In the 2018/2019 farming season, *Zambia Daily Mail* had 92 stories with the majority of the stories inclined to Crop Production with 52.2 percent (48/92) while the *Times of Zambia* had 78 with most stories centred on agribusiness and Crop Production at 35.9 percent (24/85).

Similarly, in the 2019/2020 farming season, *Zambia Daily Mail* had 68 stories with the majority of the stories inclined to Crop Production with 35.3 percent (24/68) while the

Times of Zambia had 51 with most stories focussing on Crop Production at 29.4 percent (15/51).

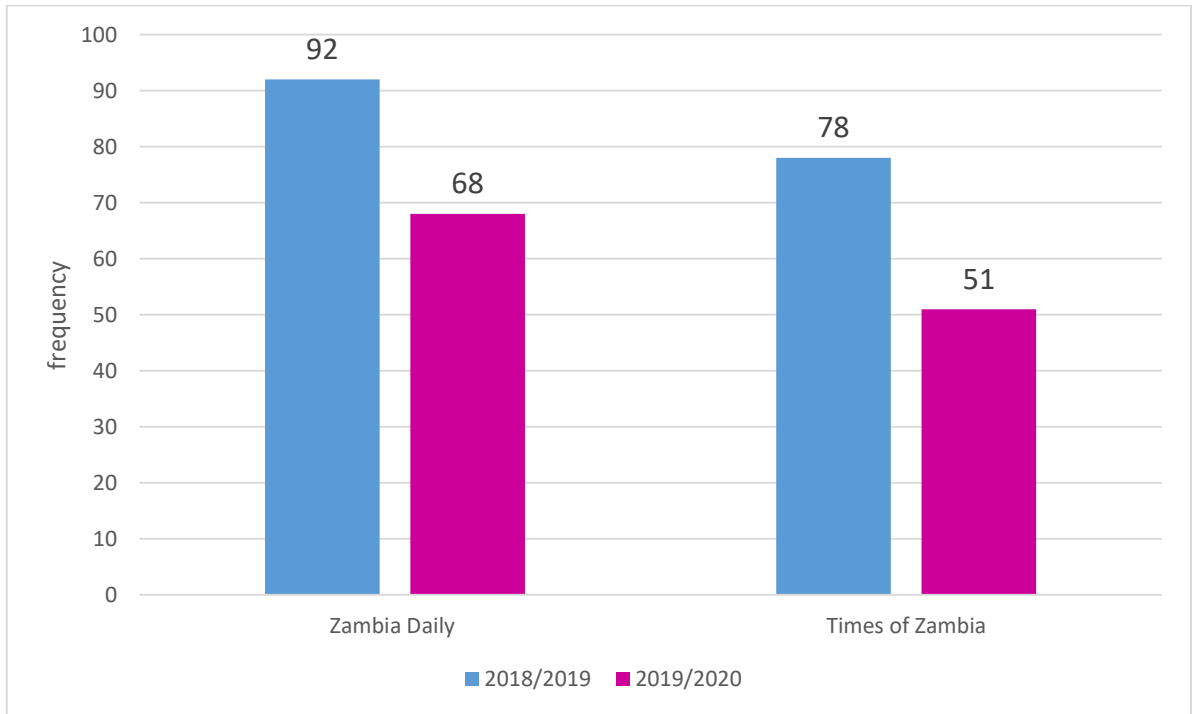


Figure 19: Summary of coverage of agricultural stories in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* during the selected farming seasons

4.1.2.2 Content Analysis for Livestock

Of the nine Livestock topics (Agribusiness/Value Addition, Livestock Production, Livestock Management, Climate Change (Drought or Floods), Research and Development, Nutrition and Livestock Theft) chosen for content analysis, only four were covered by the two newspapers as shown in the table below.

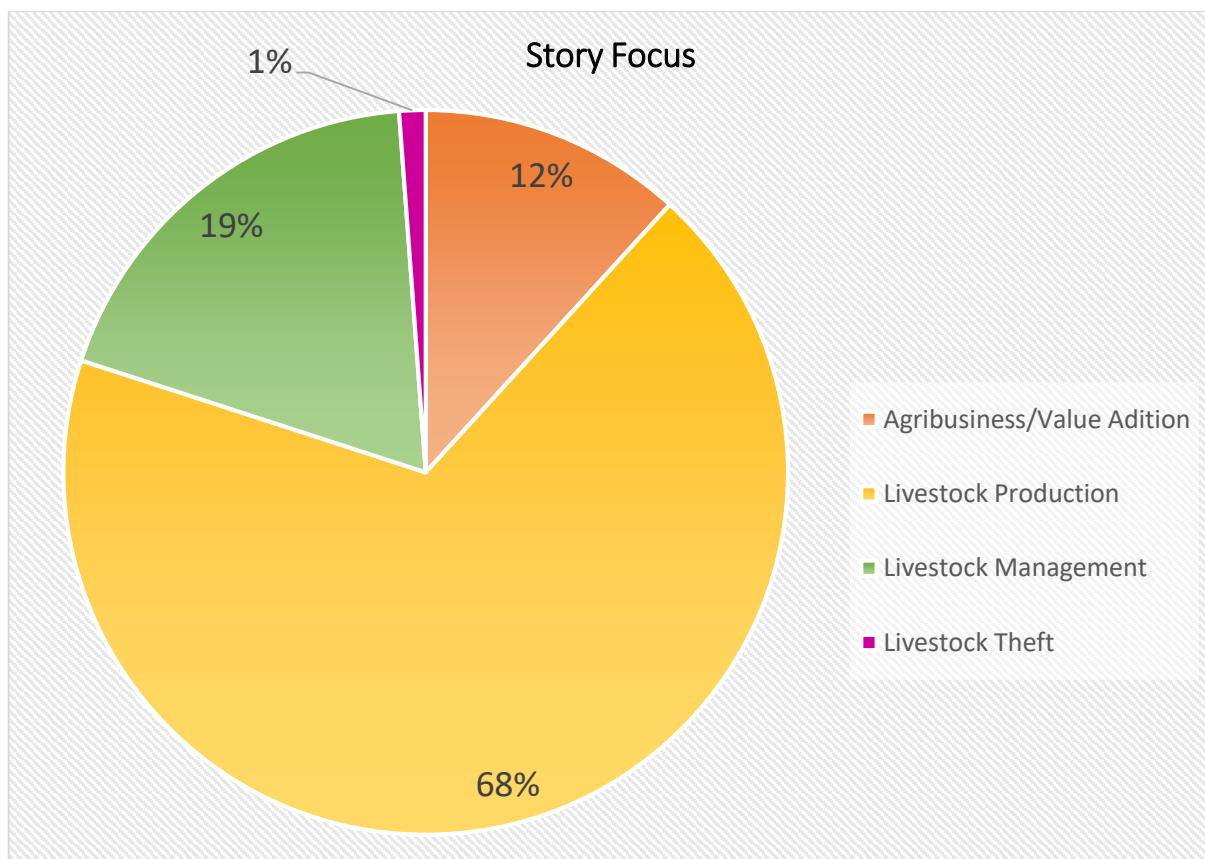


Figure 20: **Distribution of livestock news stories over a period of six months for each of the two newspapers**

		Story Focus			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agribusiness/Value Addition	10	20.8	20.8	20.8
	Livestock Production	30	62.5	62.5	83.3
	Livestock Management	8	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 11: **Distribution of livestock news stories for Zambia Daily Mail during the period of study**

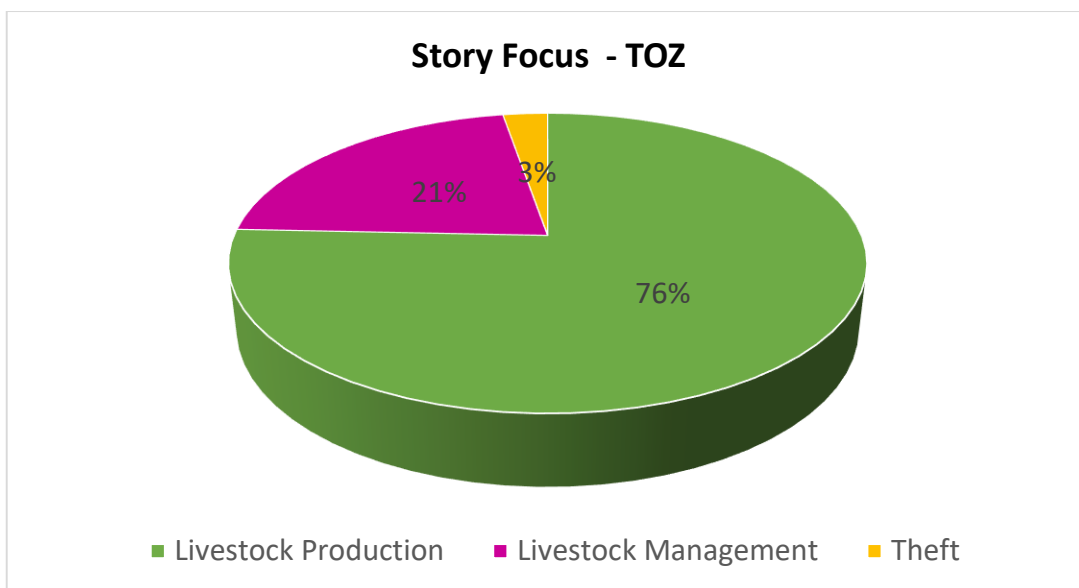


Figure 21: **Distribution of livestock news stories for Zambia Daily Mail during the period of study**

4.1.3 Challenges encountered by Journalists

4.1.3.1 Media practitioners' quantitative survey

In total, 20 journalists were sampled in this study with each newspaper having an equal share. It is also interesting to note that all the sampled journalists indicated having a role to playing in improving and providing agricultural information in the country.

Times of Zambia had four females and six males. The minimum age was 25 and the maximum age was 59. The median age was 35, whereas 35 and 35.8 was the mode and mean respectively. Further, (8) 80 percent of journalists disclosed that they regarded Agriculture as a very important issue worth reporting on while (2) 20 percent held Agriculture as an important issue to report on.

		Statistics	
		Times of Zambia	Age of Respondent
N	Valid	10	10
	Missing	0	0
Mean			37.80
Median			35.00
Mode			35
Minimum			25
Maximum			59

Table 12: **Shows age statistics of respondents from Times of Zambia**

Similarly, 10 journalists were sampled from *Zambia Daily Mail* having a representation of three males and seven females. The minimum age was 25 and the maximum age was 59. The median age was 36.9, whereas 31 and 36.9 was the mode and mean respectively. Further, (8) 80 percent of journalists disclosed that they regarded Agriculture as a very important issue worth reporting on while (2) 20 percent held Agriculture as an important issue to report on.

		Statistics	
		Zambia Daily Mail	Age of Respondent
N	Valid	10	10
	Missing	0	0
Mean			36.90
Median			36.50
Mode			31
Minimum			28
Maximum			47

Table 13: Shows age statistics of respondents from *Zambia Daily Mail*

It is worth noting that although all of the journalists acknowledged agricultural news as a vital issue, some disclosed facing challenges at institutional, individual and subject level.

4.1.4.2 Media practitioners' qualitative survey

Challenges faced in reporting Agricultural stories at institutional level

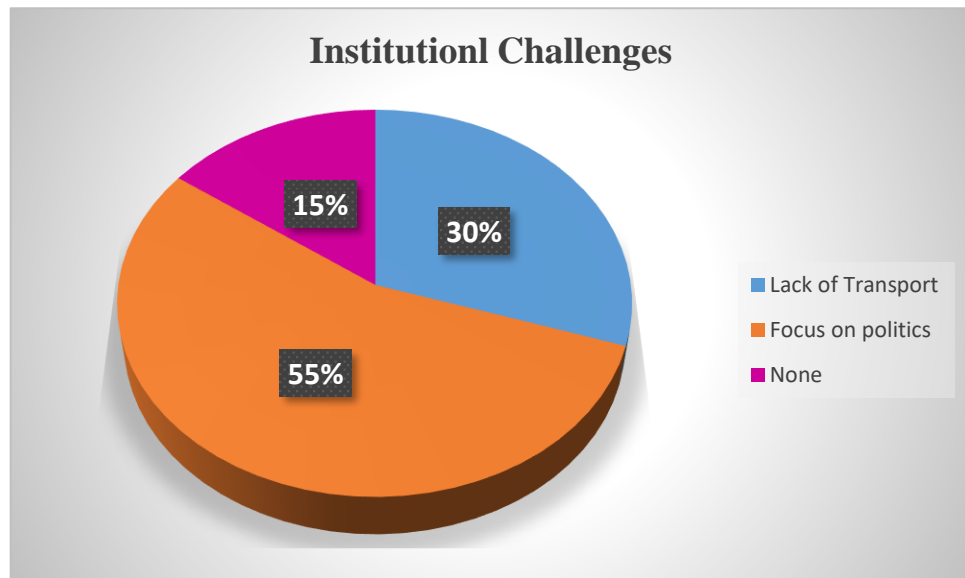


Figure 22: **Distribution of challenges in covering agricultural information in the selected print media institutions at institutional level**

Eleven of the reporters sampled from the two newspapers indicated that one of the major setbacks they faced when reporting agricultural information at institutional level was that their editor gave more priority to the political side of agricultural stories as opposed to educational or inspirational side. They further added that agricultural news stories in most cases are used as filler stories. Six reporters cited lack of transport as another challenge in reporting on agricultural news stating that good agricultural sources of success stories were located in far-fetched areas. However, three said they faced no challenge in agricultural reporting at institutional level.

Challenges faced in reporting Agricultural stories at individual level

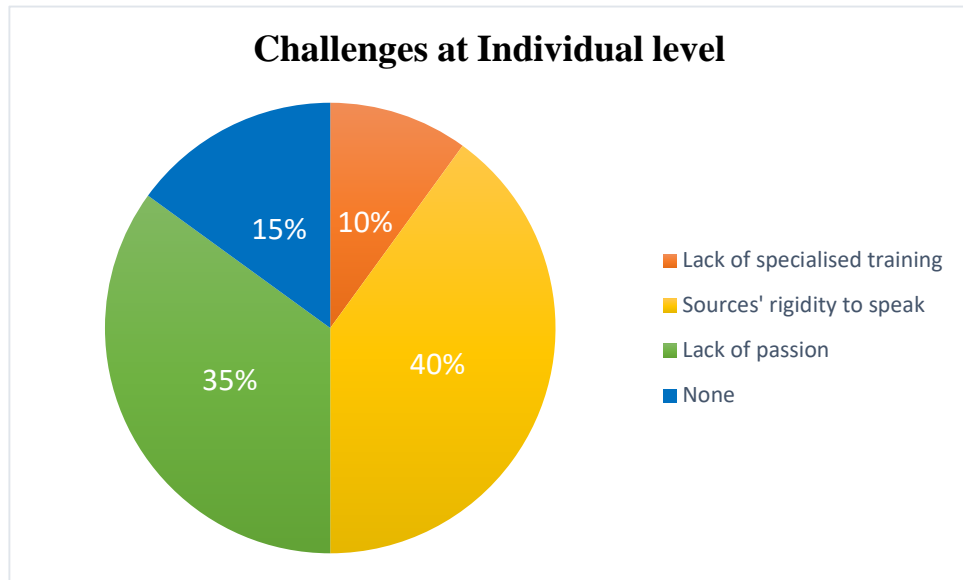


Figure 23: **Distribution of challenges in covering agricultural information in the selected print media institutions at individual level**

Eight out of the journalists sampled indicated rigidity to speak by some sources' as the major hindrance to agricultural reporting. They added that there were a lot of bureaucracies in most institutions on who gives out information to the media. Further, seven out of the sampled disclosed lack of passion for agricultural reporting as another reason for limited coverage of agriculture in the media. Additionally, two reporters said lack of specialised training posed a challenge in agricultural reporting while three noted that they never faced any challenges at individual level.

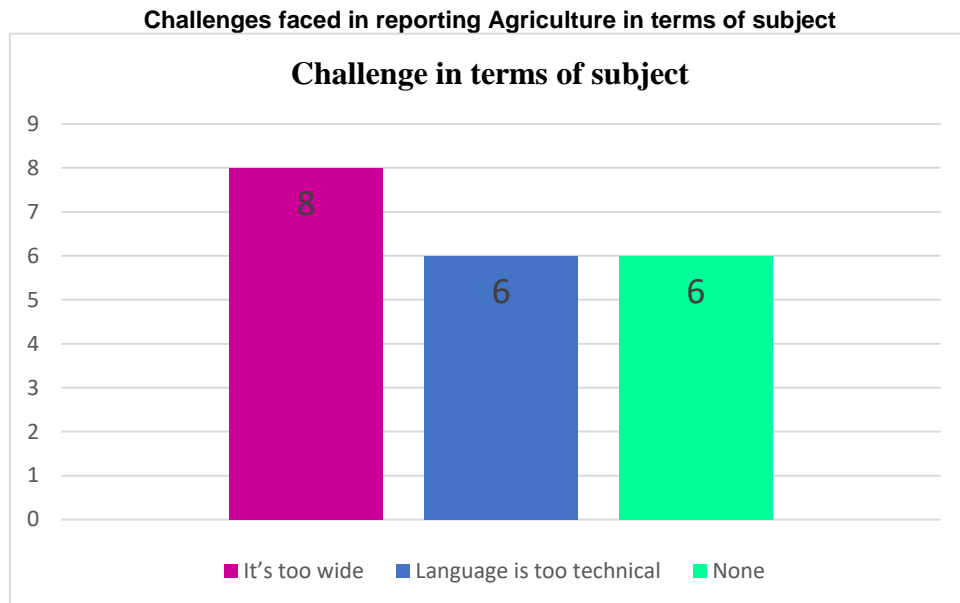


Figure 24: **Distribution of challenges in covering agricultural information in the selected print media institutions in terms of subject**

In terms of subject being challenges, eight (40 percent) out of the sampled reporters revealed that the subject was too wide and needed a lot of time to research in order to write a comprehensive and balanced story. Six (30 percent) of the reporters noted that the language used by agriculturalist was too technical making the subject even more boring while other six (30 percent) reporters said they had no challenge in grasping the concepts and the subject as a whole.

Do you think journalism training adequately equips trainees for Agricultural Reporting?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
	No	14	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total		20	100.0	100.0	

Table 14: **Distribution of Journalists' training in covering agricultural information**

In terms of training journalists in agricultural reporting training in Zambia, 30 percent of the respondents said the training in journalism was adequate to equip one in agricultural reporting while 70 percent said it did not. For *Zambia Daily Mail*, 40 percent of the

respondents out of the ten sampled admitted that the training of journalists in journalism was adequate to enable the reporters undertake coverage of agricultural news while only 20 percent from *Times of Zambia* responded in the affirmative.

4.2 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings which were generated from the research objectives. Therefore, under each theme, only relevant sub-questions from the content analysis and questionnaires were presented. The next chapter is the discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the discussion of findings. It discusses the findings that were presented in chapter four above. The purpose of this study was to do a content analysis of Print Media Coverage of Agricultural Information in Zambia using *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers as case studies. To do this, the study had three specific objectives that included: To establish the importance accorded to agricultural information in *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers; To establish what *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* focus on when reporting agricultural information and finally to identify the challenges that *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* journalists encounter when covering Agricultural Information.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Frequency and prominence of agricultural information

Given the significance of agriculture in Zambia as the driver of the economy, agricultural information does not receive adequate coverage in the print media, *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* as the research results indicate. This is evidenced by the fact that out of the 17, 597 news stories that were published by the two selected newspapers over a given period, only 374 agricultural stories were published representing 2.1 percent of the total coverage. The approximate number of stories per daily edition after doing some simple arithmetic was 48 for the *Times of Zambia* and 51 for the *Zambia Daily Mail*, making this a total of 99 articles per day as shown in **Table 1 in Chapter Four**. This in a way suggested that some newspaper edition actually had no agricultural information content. This low percentage further implied that agricultural news and information coverage by the two newspapers did not meet the researcher's set standard of 'adequate coverage'. As earlier mentioned, this research defined 'adequate' coverage as having at least about 20 percent of the stories in a particular newspaper on a topic or subject over a given period of time. Even by the measure of 25 percent scale used by Muchangwe (2012) to mean 'adequate' coverage in her research on ARSH coverage by Zambian newspapers,

Times of Zambia and *Zambia Daily Mail* agricultural news coverage still falls incredibly short.

Moreover, the findings in terms of coverage are similar to those shown in the literature review in a study conducted in Tanzania by Ogessa (2013) which stated that the prominence of agricultural information was as low as 4.9 percent in all the four newspapers. It was recommended in the study that the government should formulate and institute policies aimed to increase the coverage of developmental topics such as agriculture in the newspapers. And Yusuf et al, (2016) in the study where the five South African newspapers were analysed using content analysis to ascertain their coverage and representation of agricultural issues also discovered that newspapers did not give significant prominence to agricultural issues such as land reform and youth in agriculture, as news related to business and politics enjoyed priority.

Besides the number of agricultural stories published in the selected newspapers during the period of study being low (**as shown in Figures 2 and 13**), placement and space allocated to these articles in the newspapers was also considered as an important matter in the research. Page location of the agricultural stories showed that the two dailies did not prioritise agricultural news. For example, out of the 374 agricultural stories published 22 (5.9 percent) were front page lead, 114 (30.5 percent) were page lead while 238 (63.6 percent) of the stories were placed on the inside pages of the newspaper. It is paramount to note that in journalism, the front page of the newspaper has a special significance, stories featured there exert an impact denied to all other stories featured elsewhere in the newspaper. Front page stories achieve greater exposure and are also perceived to be more important than other stories, and in this case it is non-agricultural information that dominated front pages for both papers during the study period as shown in **Figures 5 and 13 in Chapter Four**. This low agricultural information reportage by the two Zambian dailies is contrast to what Ofuoku and Agumagu (2008) reported that the front page is used to present to readers all the important, attractive, eye-catching and major headlines contained inside the newspaper. This proved that despite agriculture's importance to the economy of Zambia, its information dissemination to the public by the mainstream daily newspapers remained wanting. However, in this case the majority of the articles were placed on the inside pages of the newspaper. Even so, these stories on the inside pages can be considered prominent if they are page leads.

Additionally, it is sufficing to note that the importance given to an article is also determined by its length or amount of space it is allocated in the newspaper as established in a study by Ogessa (2013). Of the 374 agricultural articles, 67.1 percent (251/374) had less than a quarter allocation, 18.7 percent (70/374) of the stories were on quarter allocation. 10.2 percent (38/374) of the stories were tagged at half page while 3.2 percent (12/374) of the stories were on three-quarters. The least was at 0.8 percent (3/374) on full page (see **Figures 7 and 14**).

In other words, print media's role of educating and informing the Zambian public on agriculture, which is a very important sector of the economy, remains rather limited. Despite agricultural information not being granted or allocated a considerable amount of space in the two dailies, it is important to note that Zambia Daily Mail comparatively covered more agricultural news with a percentage of 55.6 as opposed to Times of Zambia with 44.4 percent coverage.

Framing theory can be applied to coverage of agricultural information by the print media in Zambia to understand how the media frames agricultural stories and how this framing affects public perception. This theory helps to understand why certain agricultural issues are not covered in the media while others receive more attention. For instance, in this study, the print media focused more on the political side of agricultural information like FISP, marketing and ban on importation rather than information on improved farming practices. On the other hand, Gate Keeping theory suggests that the journalists and editors maybe responsible for filtering out stories related to agriculture because they do not consider them newsworthy.

5.1.2 Focus of coverage of Agricultural Information

From this study, it was evident that though all of the agricultural topics selected for the research were important, only crop production, livestock production and agribusiness stories received the most coverage during the selected period of study. This could be attributed to the fact that most of the reporting of agricultural stories by the journalists was based on staged events. The print media in Zambia took little deliberate effort to bring out other aspects of agriculture apart from covering staged government programmes such as Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP), announcement of the crop marketing

season, cries from the millers over the ban on import and export of agricultural products among others issues as is displayed in **Chapter Four**.

Though the *Times of Zambia* newspaper had an agro page that was dedicated to the dissemination of agricultural information, only about three stories were published every Friday. The newspaper sometimes gave priority to advertisements in comparison to agricultural articles as the page was sometimes filled with advertisements.

In view of the discussion above, each and every news story, agricultural inclusive must pass through a series of gates before it was published. Editors and journalists, who serve as gatekeepers, determine the information that ultimately reaches readers of newspaper publications. In one of Shaw and McCombs' (1977:5) many studies, they found that writers played an important role as gatekeepers in "shaping our society's reality as they go about their day to day task of choosing and displaying stories." Journalists use a set of news criteria among them human interest, conflict, timeliness, proximity, conflict, impact and prominence.

This is particularly true because in media studies, it is expected that news values come first regardless of the beat. It was clear from the agricultural news selection procedures that the gatekeeping theory was valid. This creates a connection between the choices of agricultural information that *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* Newspapers gave to the public and the powers deliberated on editors and journalists. The same may be said with regards to the framing theory in that the media focuses attention on certain events and place them in a field of meaning. From the data analysed, agricultural news was presented in an inferior manner as the majority of the stories were less than quarter page.

Therefore, this means that the newspapers do actively engage in Gate Keeping Theory and Framing Theory through their coverage of some issues and overlooking others thereby influencing what people view as important issues.

For example, two female journalists from the *Zambia Daily Mail* who regarded agriculture as very important and a topic worth reporting on at an individual level wrote:

[.....Agriculture stories are not regarded as important in selling the newspaper hence at institutional level, agriculture stories are not considered to a great extent]

[There are very few journalists that have interest in agricultural related issues, the focus is mainly on politics because agriculture rarely makes headlines unless an important person is involved.....]

5.1.3 Challenges journalists encounter when covering Agricultural Information

All the 20 journalists sampled from the two selected newspapers disclosed coverage of agricultural information was regarded as very important or important issue worthy to be reported on. From this statement, it is possible to deduce that journalists from the selected media attach great importance to agricultural reporting. However, though they indicated this, they also disclosed that covering agricultural information though important, comes with its own challenges.

From the research findings, it is also clear that journalist's coverage of agricultural information is greatly impacted by various challenges. The challenges were grouped into three categories namely: institutional, individual and subject. At institutional level, the prominent challenges that came out from this study were as follows: 1) More focus on politics; 2) lack of transport and logistics. Eleven of the reporters sampled from the two newspapers indicated that one of the major setbacks they faced when reporting agricultural information at institutional level was that their editor gave more priority to political stories as opposed to any other news beat and this resulted in most agricultural stories being spiked. While at individual level, the journalist's spelt out the following challenges: 1) Rigidity to speak by some sources, 2) Lack of passion for agriculture and 3) Lack of specialised training. Eight out of the journalists sampled indicated rigidity to speak by some sources as the major hindrance to agricultural reporting. They added that there were a lot of bureaucracies in most institutions on who gives out information to the media. Further, seven out of the sampled disclosed lack of passion for agricultural reporting as another reason for limited coverage of agriculture in the media. In terms of subject matter, the major setbacks as outlined by the journalists were: 1) Subject was too wide, 2) Language used by agriculturalists was too technical. One journalist from Times of Zambia wrote:

[...Limited understanding of agricultural practices, terminology, and processes can hinder journalists' ability to effectively communicate information to readers.....]

These quotations illustrate some of the challenges that journalists face at various levels when covering agricultural information in Zambia. Furthermore, the findings on challenges in covering agricultural information are similar to those discussed in chapter five for (Muchangwe, 2012) and (Sakala, 2014) though their focus was on Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health (ARSH) and Human Rights respectively.

It is worth noting that although all of the journalists acknowledged agricultural news as a vital issue, their newspapers presented a complete opposite of what they had said-there was low coverage of agricultural information as has been disclosed by the findings. In spite of these enormous challenges, *Times of Zambia* newspapers still devote a page every Friday called Agro News for reportage of agricultural based information mainly with articles from National Agricultural Information Services (NAIS), a local news agency.

5.2 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study in relation to print media coverage of agricultural information in Zambia using *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* as case studies. The section was essentially divided into themes that emanated from the research objectives and research questions. The next chapter concludes the study and makes recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This section concludes the study, makes key recommendations to media houses. The recommendations are based on the research findings. Further, the section proposes potential areas of research related to this study.

6.1 Conclusion

This research was aimed at doing a comparative analysis of the print media coverage of agricultural information in Zambia as characterised by *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*. This study has finally established that agricultural information receives inadequate coverage in selected Zambian newspapers and is not given the prominence it deserves as a sector which is a fundamental pillar of the economy. To archive the above, the study used quantitative methods to collect data from the journalists and did a content analysis of the newspapers for a total period of six months namely December 2018, February, June and December of the year 2019 and, February and June 2020. SPSS and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse data. Additionally, from the above main aim, the study drew three specific objectives which have been met as below:

The first objective was to establish the importance accorded to agricultural information in the above mentioned daily national newspapers. Accordingly, it has been established that the coverage of agricultural information in the two dailies is low across all the five units of analysis, news stories, columns, editorial and letters to the editor. The total space allocated to agricultural information by the two dailies was too little to communicate adequately to various agricultural stakeholders because agricultural as a discipline is so wide. The research study also established that though the *Times of Zambia* newspaper had a page dedicated to the dissemination of agricultural information, only about three stories were published every Friday. At times the publication of agricultural information was overtaken by events like advertisements.

The second objective was to establish what the two newspapers focus on when reporting agriculture information in their publication. The research established that the inclusion of

agricultural information in the above mentioned newspapers is based on staged events rather than issue driven.

Thirdly, the research aimed at identifying the challenges that journalist face encounter when covering agricultural information and these included: More focus on politics, lack of transport and logistics, rigidity to speak by some sources, lack of passion for agriculture, lack of specialised training. Other challenges were that the subject in terms of agriculture was too wide and the language used by agriculturalists was too technical.

In a nutshell, the implications of this research are clear. The results of this research have clearly indicated that Zambian newspapers have a lot of work to do especially in trying to improve and increase the coverage of agricultural information. Adopting some of the recommendations listed below could help in this regard.

6.2 Recommendations

Following the findings and the subsequent discussion, with learning on the challenges that journalist encounter when covering agricultural related issues, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The total space allocated to agricultural information by the two dailies need to be increased considerably so as to enhance effective communication with the various agricultural stakeholders in a bid to foster sustainable agricultural development.
- ii. The newspaper management should engage agricultural-oriented opinion column writers so as bring about more interactivity with their readers as they share opinions on agricultural issues.
- iii. The managing editors of this two dailies should publish more agricultural information and on the front pages of their respective publications.
- iv. Capacity building workshops should be organised for journalists with a passion for reporting of agriculture information.
- v. The media organisations should also be encouraged to employ journalism graduates with a background of agricultural reporting training as line reporters for agricultural information.
- vi. The civil society stakeholders with mandates for agriculture should mount advocacy, mobilisation and sensitisation for media executives on the importance of reporting agricultural information.

- vii. The print media should feature more farmers and other agricultural experts in their stories as opposed to politicians.
- viii. The Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock working with other agricultural stakeholders need to be more interactive and give out information the media is looking for in a timely manner.
- ix. Journalists should be making agricultural information sexy to attract a lot of people through the use of nice pictures and sending a message that agriculture is not a career for the vulnerable and aged only.
- x. Journalists should be covering lots of success stories.

6.3 Further research

The following areas were suggested for further study:

- i. A similar study should be carried out using the electronic media during the same study period.
- ii. A similar study should be carried out using other Zambian daily newspapers.

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APPENDICES

Research Instrument 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

POST GRADUATE: MASTER OF MASS COMMUNICATION

APPENDIX 'A': JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONNAIRE (SEMI-STRUCTURED)

Dear Respondent,

My name is Dorcas Kabuya and I am currently studying for my master's degree in Mass Communication at the University of Zambia (UNZA). You were randomly sampled to take part in my research study focusing on Analysing Media (Print Media) Coverage of Agricultural Information in Zambia: A Comparative Study of the *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail Newspapers*. Your contributions in answering the questions in this questionnaire will go a long way in trying to find viable ways of increasing and improving media coverage of Agricultural Information. The research is also majorly for academic purposes. You are, therefore, kindly being asked to answer each question truthfully and honestly and all your answers will be treated with utmost confidentiality they deserve.

*Specific Instruction:

Tick [] in the appropriate bracket(s) provided for you next to the answer of your choice, and/or write in the space dotted where your opinion or comment is required.

Questionnaire # ()

SECTION A: Demographic Background of the journalist:

*For official
use only*

Name of Paper:

Gender of Respondent:

1). Your age as of last birthday

2). For how long have you been practicing journalism?

- 1) Less than 1 year []
- 2) 2-5 years []
- 3) 6-9 years []
- 4) 10 and above []

3). On what desk are you?

- 1) General News []
- 2) Business []
- 3) Entertainment []
- 4) Features []
- 5) Sports []
- 6) Gender []
- 7) Others, specify.....

4). What qualification do you have in journalism?

- 1). Master's Degree
- 2). Bachelor's degree
- 3). Diploma
- 4). Certificate
- 5). Others, specify.....

SECTION B: AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION REPORTING

5). Do you report on Agriculture?

- 1) Yes []
- 2) No []

6). If you do cover agriculture, what issues have you been reporting on mostly?

- 1. Agribusiness and Value Addition []
- 2. Crop Production []
- 3. Crop Management []
- 4. Climate Change (Floods or Droughts) []
- 5. Nutrition []
- 6. Agricultural Mechanisation []
- 7. Agroforestry []
- 8. Gender []
- 9. Research and Development []
- 10. Livestock Production []
- 11. Livestock Management []
- 12. Other, specify

.....

7). In your own opinion, what agriculture topics deserve more news coverage and why?

.....

8). How often do you include Agriculture on your diary?

- 1). Every Day []
- 2). At least once a week []
- 3). More than twice a week []
- 4). Rarely []
- 5). Never []

9). Is your reporting on Agriculture event or issue driven?

- 1). Event driven []
- 2). Issue driven []
- 3). Both []
- 4). Neither []

10). Is Agriculture relevant to your line of stories?

- 1). Yes []
- 2). No []

Why/why not?

.....
.....
.....

11). How important do you regard Agriculture as an issue worth reporting on?

- 1). Very Important []
- 2). Important []
- 3). Not important []
- 4). Slightly Important []



a) Explain your answer:

.....
.....

12). What are some of the challenges you face in reporting Agriculture, if any?

➤ At Institutional level

.....
.....
.....
.....

➤ At Individual level

.....
.....
.....
.....

➤ In terms of the subject

.....
.....
.....
.....

13). How can the challenges be addressed?

.....
.....
.....

14). What are the factors that hinder effective reporting of Agriculture?

.....
.....
.....
.....

15). Do you think journalists have a part to play in improving agriculture?

1) Yes []

2) No []

a.) Please explain your answer:

.....
.....
.....
.....

16). Do you think journalism training adequately equips trainees for Agricultural reporting?

1) Yes []

2) No []

a.) Please explain your answer:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation!

**APPENDIX 'B' CONTENT ANALYSIS FOR NEWSPAPER COVERAGE
CODING SHEET**

Theme	Variables and code values in SPSS
Type of Article	1. Hard News
	2. Feature Story
	3. Letter to the editor
	4. Advert
	5. Column
	6. Other Specify.....
Story Treatment	1. Front Page
	2. Page Lead
	5. Neither
Picture	1. Yes
	2. No
Mobilising information	1. Yes
	2. No
Written by	1. Journalist
	2. Agricultural Scientist
	3. Agricultural Student
	4. Farmer
	5. Concerned Citizen
	6. Independent Person
	7. Other Specify.....
Is the language used easy to comprehend?	1. Yes
	2. No
Length of story	1. Half a page
	2. Quarter page
	3. Less than Quarter Page
	4. Other Specify.....
Source	1. In-house
	2. Local Agency
	3. Freelance Journalist
	4. International Media
	5. Institution
Event/Issue Based	1. Event based
	2. Issue based
	3. Both

Story Focus	1. Agribusiness/Value Addition
	2. Crop Production
	3. Crop Management
	4. Climate Change (Floods or Droughts)
	5. Nutrition
	6. Agricultural Mechanisation
	7. Agroforestry
	8. Gender
	9. Research and Development
	10. Livestock Production
	11. Livestock Management
	12. Livestock Theft
	13. Other Specify.....
People in the Story (Voices)	1. Agricultural Scientist
	2. Farmer
	3. Government Rep/Leader
	4. Agricultural Student
	5. Traditional Leader
	6. Input Supplier
	7. Donor Agency
	8. Church
	9. Institutional Document
	10. Agricultural NGO
	11. Millers
	12. Civil Society Organisation
	13. Farmer Association
	14. Other specify.....
Story Author	1. Male
	2. Female
Gender source	1. Male
	2. Female