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**Economic Implications of Media Terrorism
Reports on Agricultural Productivity and
Food Prices in Enugu State**

Social Sciences Research

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Abstract

Agriculture has remained an important aspect of any economy. However, in Nigeria, incessant clashes between herdsmen and farmers, as well as the activities of the boko haram sect in many states of the federation have posed a serious threat to this key sector in recent years. These groups have had a hand in the death of numerous farmers, non-cultivation of farmlands, burning down of farm produce, and attacks on trucks conveying food to different parts of the country, with the consequent reduction in the quantity of food production and then the hike in food prices in Nigeria. Of course, the media, as expected, has been at the forefront of reporting these attacks on farmers. Anchored on the Agenda Setting Theory, this study explores farmers' responses to the influence of these media reports on agricultural productivity as well as food prices. Data were drawn from 390 farmers in Enugu state using simple random sampling technique and chi-square (x^2) was used to test the stated hypotheses. Findings showed that the farmer's exposure to media terrorism reports was high, and that the respondents agreed that media terrorism reports have a significant negative impact on agricultural productivity and food

prices. The study therefore recommends that the government and other relevant agencies should ensure that the media ecosystem is also filled with alternative content that focuses on informing and educating the farmers on the best agricultural practices rather than mostly on terror reports.

Keywords: Agriculture, economy, food, implication, media, perspective, terrorism.

Introduction

Media reports on the recent upsurge of herdsmen and native farmers' clash in Nigeria give room for serious concern (Musa, Terwase & Igbawua, 2016). The herdsmen, according to Global Terrorism Index (2015), were classified as the fourth deadliest terrorist group globally by 2014. Though most media reports have focused on herdsmen brutality, some reports such as that of Premium Times (2017) have looked at the farmers' losses and have revealed that the herdsmen's brutality on farmers has made them lose more in terms of seedlings, farm output, and their farmlands. This in the long-run has led to most farmers abandoning their farmlands for safety, thereby giving room for diminished agricultural productivity.

Unfortunately, efforts of the government to tackle all these conflicts and challenges seem to yield limited positive impact (Abdulbaqi, 2012). Consequently, the herdsmen-farmer conflicts seem to have continued unabated leading to the loss of both lives and properties. There have been speculations that once the news of attacks on farmers breaks in the media, others anticipate similar attacks and tend to fortify themselves in readiness. From Kwara State to Kogi states, Benue, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Kebbi, Kaduna, Ekiti, Oyo, and Niger State, among others, there have been ordeals to tell about herdsmen-farmers conflicts.

As a result of these conflicts, prices of rice, for instance, have been hitting historic highs of up to N32, 500 per bag, triggering panic amongst citizens (Osagie, 2013). Persistent increase in prices of other staple products such as fish, bread, meat,

cereals, chicken, yam, onions, beans, vegetable oil, tomatoes, groundnut oil, and others have aggravated the continued woes of the common man. Shortage of products and ever-increasing prices has created unsettling sentiments across communities, dampening the country's efforts to end poverty. There are estimates that more than 65 percent of the Nigerian population is food insecure (Osagie, 2013).

Nowadays, soaring food prices in major cities across Nigerian states are being experienced with adverse impacts on household budgets. The boko haram insurgency in the northeast and pockets of conflicts in some states where basic food items for the nation come from are making food commodity prices rise for a range of foodstuffs, from beef to fruits and vegetables, thus squeezing consumers still struggling with modest wages. It is axiomatic to posit that the Northern region of the country has remained a major source of food supply to other parts of the country, especially the South. To be sure, about 90 percent of food items consumed in southeast states come from the North (Eyekpimi, 2016). For example, Ketu, Mile 12, and Oyingbo markets in Lagos, all get supplies from the North daily as countless trucks are seen unloading quantities of onions, tomatoes, pepper, fruits, potatoes, yams, and the likes at these markets. But this is no longer the case as the general insecurity in the Northern part of Nigeria is adversely affecting farmers in the area (Eyekpimi, 2016). Fewer trucks now come down to the South these days, because of the crisis and this is having its effects on the prices of food. The effects of the crisis in the North are already being felt, not only by the consumers but the traders as well who depend on supplies from the North for their business. The diminishing food supply from the north would mean that farmers in other parts of the country, including the southeast, would grapple to meet up with the increasing food needs of people in this region. Unfortunately, farmers in southeast states like Ebonyi and Enugu have also had a share of clashes with killer herdsmen. This study explores the impact of media terrorism reports on agricultural productivity and food prices, drawing insights from farmers in Enugu State.

The nature of mass media operation makes conflict a major stake in the affairs of the profession. Adisa and Abdulraheem, (2017) aptly capture this essence in their assertion that conflict is the bread and butter of journalism. Odd, bizarre, and queer occurrences sell newspapers, hence, the scramble to be the first to tell. Unfortunately, media terrorism reports in Nigeria have instilled fear in the entire populace, especially farmers who have been the major targets of recent terrorist attacks. Incessant killings of farmers nationwide, as reported daily in the media, have created the picture of insecurity and hopelessness in the mind of farmers who in the bid to avoid being attacked by the boko haram or killer herdsmen abandon their farmlands for safety. Few studies have explored the impact of terrorism reports on agricultural productivity without ascertaining whether these farmers are exposed to these reports in the first place and then treating the economic implications on the prices of food and the economy at large [Eyekpimi, 2016; Godwin, 2018; Oladele, 2018.; Rasaq *et al*, 2018].

This study is therefore guided by the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the proportion of farmers in Enugu State that is exposed to media reports on terrorism in Enugu state.
2. To find out the response of farmers in Enugu state on the economic implication of media terrorism reports on agricultural productivity.
3. To determine the response of farmers in Enugu State on economic implication of media terrorism reports on food prices.

This study is set out to fill this gap in literature by first exploring the farmers' exposure to these media reports on terrorism and then the impact of these reports on farmers' productivity and food prices through the perspectives of farmers in Enugu State. The hypotheses for the variables were tested in null form. Thus, the rest of the paper is structured into literature review, research methodology, data analysis and interpretation of results and conclusion and recommendations.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework for this study is the Agenda Setting Theory of the press. The agenda setting theory is a theory that discusses how the mass media makes a certain issue as a public agenda. The core idea is that the news media indicates to the public what the main issues of the day are. And this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues. As Trenaman and McQuail (1961) pointed out, the evidence strongly suggests that people think about what they are told but at no level do they think about what they have told.

The term agenda setting theory was first used by McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theory elaborates the connection in terms of relationships between the emphasis that the mass media places on an issue and the media audiences or the public's reaction or attributes to such issue (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The agenda setting theory begins as an explanation of how the mass media changes political behaviour during elections (Cohen, 1963). Subsequently, the theory has inspired and developed hundreds of later explorations on how the mass media primes and frames issues for their audiences.

Folarin (1998, p. 95), classifies Agenda setting theory as "The Conditioning Power Media Theory", and defines it as "the theory that implies that the mass media pre-determine what issues are regarded as important in a given society'. It, however, does not determine what we actually think but does ascribe them the power to determine what we are thinking about. Ekeanyanwu (2005) is also of the view that Agenda-setting is where the mass media is accredited with the power to set the agenda of the topics for discussion".

McLuhan (1968) cited in Folarin (2005) is of the view that the press can colour events by using them in a particular way, or refusing to use them all. This means that it is what the media wants us to think or talk about that they project to the public as important and in the end, it appears important in the public's eye. This then means

that as the media reports on terrorism, it registers on the minds of the farmers as important. The farmers may go ahead to accept the framing or perspective the media presents and are thus guided by it. The media, therefore, uses its power to influence audience perception of reality. The type of report and how often the media showcases a particular event more than the other can change the perspective/meaning for the audience.

Empirical Literature Review

According to Institute for Economics and Peace (2021), about 7.5 million Nigerians have been displaced from their homes. At least 2, 569 persons were killed by the insurgents while 525 others were killed by the nomadic cattle herders between 2018 and 2020. It was also learnt that thousands of persons, including women and children, sustained various degrees of injuries from the attacks.

In December 2015, no fewer than 22 persons were reportedly killed when suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Kwata in Jos South Local government area of Plateau State. In February 2016, suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked a village in Agatu, Benue State, reportedly killing at least 300 persons. The attack has been described as one of the worst ever witnessed in the series of attacks by Fulani herdsmen. Similarly series of attacks in Kaduna, Zamfara, and Nasarawa states have been on the increase every day (Punch, 2016).

According to Punch newspaper reports on Friday, 18th 2018, the Agatu killings in Benue state, Nimbo in Enugu State and Southern Kaduna where many were killed and properties worth millions destroyed are part of the complexities of Herdsmen-farmers conflicts in Nigeria. Little wonder that Global Terrorism Index ranked Herdsmen as the fourth deadliest militant group in the world with a record killing of 1229 people in 2014 (Eyekpimi, 2016).

On the 25th of April 2016, nine villages in Uzo-Uwani local government area of Enugu State in the Southeast of Nigeria were attacked by Fulani herdsmen, and they

left a carnage of destruction of over 11 lives and millions of naira worth of properties destroyed (Vanguard, 2016). The Agatu people in Benue state in the north-central zone of Nigeria were not left out from the continuous attacks, killing, and destruction of properties in 2017 that left more than a hundred people killed by the herdsmen (Rasaq *et al*, 2018). No fewer than ten persons were killed in an attack on the 5th of March 2018 in Omosu Village in Ojigo ward in Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State when armed herdsmen opened fire on civilians (Godwin, 2018). In Ogun State, on the 5th of February suspected herdsmen attacked some local communities in Ketu Local Council Development Area destroying their farmlands and resulted in 30 primary schools being shut down (Oladele, 2018). Also, on January 31, 2018, there was breaking news all over the media with mass killing in Benue state with the headline “Bandits kill, burn seven travelers to ashes.” All these are contributory factors. On February 28 same year, the media reported that 20 people were killed in Adamawa State by armed Fulani herdsmen in Fulani herdsmen clashes in Gwamba village in Demsa Local Government Area of Adamawa state (This Day, 2018).

While it would seem that there is no way the media cannot do without reporting terrorist activities, the focus is then shifted to how media reportage on terrorism instills fear. Interestingly, regarding media reportage of terrorist attacks, some scholars argue that the media usually resort to the allocation of blame and that once a perpetrator is identified, the process of building an enemy image begins (Howard, 2003; Popoola, 2015; Ozuhu-Sulaiman, 2013). Undeniably, there is a sort of romance between the media and the enemy it eventually creates or frames. It is this enemy that sells the news and the media seems lost in the frenzy of repeatedly reporting about his terrorist activities. In so doing, the media goes beyond merely informing the audience about the activities of terrorists to fuelling fires, exaggerating, creating dark imageries, and painting doomsday scenarios that instill fear in the audience (Jackson, 2014; Blanchette, 2019; Jackson, 2019).The framing of conflicts, such as the

herdsmen-farmers conflict by the media means that there is a possibility that it has instigated fear amongst farmers, making them abandon their farmlands for safety, while the courageous ones reduce the quantity of agricultural produce to avoid waste if their farmlands are eventually attacked (Mogekwu, 2011; Adisa, 2012; Abubakar, 2018).

Research Methodology

The study population is 260,000 farmers which is the total number of registered farmers in Enugu State between the ages of 30 to 60 years who are considered mature enough to interact and adequately know and understand the happenings in the country, while the sample size of 399 respondents was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula. The study was designed as a survey and a self-administered questionnaire whose reliability was tested using the test re-test method was used as the data collection instrument and the productivity of the farmers measured by the amount of crop harvested per amount of land planted by each farmer. Additionally, simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents and 390 copies of questionnaire were correctly completed and returned. This means that the response rate was 97.7%. Substantive issues were analyzed using simple frequency distribution tables, while chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the hypotheses

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Results from the survey which involved 390 registered farmers in Enugu State were as follows:

Table 1: Respondents' Exposure to Media Terrorism Reports

Gender	Not at all	Mild	High exposure	Very high exposure	No idea	Total	Percentage
Male	3	5	50	149	2	209	53.59%
Female	2	4	47	127	1	181	46.41%
Total	5	9	97	276	3	390	100%
Percentage	1.28%	2.31%	24.87%	70.77%	0.77%	100%	

Source: Researchers' computation (2021)

The first objective of this research is to ascertain the respondents' exposure to media terrorism reports. Results on Table 1 show that 1.28% of the respondents were not exposed to media terrorism reports, while 2.31% have mild exposure to these reports. In addition, 24.87% were highly exposed to these reports, whereas 70.7% had very high exposure to media terrorism reports. Results presented in this table suggest that majority of the respondents are exposed to media terrorism reports.

Table 2: Respondents Major Medium of Exposure to Media Terrorism Reports

	Frequency	Percentage
Newspaper/magazine	21	5.4%
Television	78	20.4%
Internet/Social media	212	55.4%
Radio	71	18.5%
Total	382	100.0%

Source: Researchers' computation (2021)

Table 2 presents data on the respondents' major sources of exposure to media terrorism reports. As shown in the table, majority of the respondents (55.4%; n=212) indicated that their major source of exposure to media terrorism reports is Internet/social media. This was followed by the respondents who indicated television (20.4%; n=78), and then radio (18.5%; n=71). Only 5.4% of the respondents indicated that their major medium of exposure to these reports is newspaper/magazine. This result suggests that the respondents have relied on the Internet/social media as their sources of information. The implication is that they have been exposed to all sorts of

reports on terrorism, even fake news, which has the potential to have negative effects on them.

Table 3: Respondents View on Whether Media Terrorism Reports has Negative Impact on Agricultural Productivity

Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided	Total	Percentage
Male	99	81	11	6	5	202	51.79%
Female	88	73	13	12	2	188	48.21%
Total	187	154	24	18	7	390	100%
Percentage	47.95%	39.49%	6.15%	4.62%	1.79%	100%	

Source: Researchers' computation (2021)

Table 4: Respondents View on Whether Media Terrorism Reports has Negative Impact on Food Prices

Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided	Total	Percentage
Male	101	84	13	4	4	206	52.82%
Female	91	78	7	4	4	184	47.18%
Total	192	162	20	8	8	390	100%
Percentage	49.23%	41.54%	5.13%	2.05%	2.05%	100%	

Source: Researchers' computation (2021)

Analysis of objectives 2 and 3 are presented in Tables 3 and 4 above. Table 3 shows that 47.95% strongly agreed that media terrorism reports have negative impact on agricultural productivity in Nigeria, 39.49% agreed to this view, while 6.15% disagreed. In addition, 4.62% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the media terrorism reports have a negative impact on agricultural productivity in Nigeria, while 1.79% of the respondents were undecided. Furthermore, of the respondents 187 who strongly agreed that media terrorism reports have a negative impact on agricultural productivity, 99 (52.9%) were males, while 88 (47.1%) were females.

Table 4 also shows that 49.23% of the respondents strongly agreed that media terrorism reports have a negative impact on food prices in Nigeria. In addition,

41.54% agreed to this view, while 5.13% disagreed. Also, 2.05% of the respondents strongly disagreed, and the same percentage (2.05%) were undecided. The results presented in Table 3 and 4 suggest that media terrorism reports have a negative impact on farmers' productivity and the prices of food. To further buttress this assertion, two hypotheses were tested.

Test of Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were postulated for the research.

H₀: There is no significant negative impact of media terrorism reports on agricultural produce in Enugu state.

Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	O - E	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
6	9.2	-3.2	10.24	1.11
11	12.4	-1.4	1.96	0.16
81	79.8	1.2	1.44	0.02
99	96.9	2.1	4.41	0.05
5	3.6	1.4	1.96	0.54
12	8.7	3.3	10.89	1.25
13	11.6	1.4	1.96	0.17
73	74.2	-1.2	1.44	0.02
88	90.1	-2.1	4.41	0.05
2	3.4	-1.4	1.96	0.58
				F Cal = 3.95

Df= n-1; p<0.05; N = 390; Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Decision rule: If F_{cal} > F_{tab}, reject H₀.

Since 3.95 > 0.711, we accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant negative impact of media terrorism reports on agricultural produce in the state and by proxy, in the country in general.

H₀: There is no significant negative impact of media terrorism reports on food prices in Enugu state.

Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
4	4.2	-0.2	0.04	0.01
13	10.6	2.4	5.76	0.54
84	85.6	-1.6	2.56	0.03
101	101.4	-0.4	0.16	0.002
4	4.2	-0.2	0.04	0.01
4	3.8	0.2	0.04	0.01
7	9.4	-2.4	5.76	0.61
78	76.4	1.6	2.56	0.03
91	90.6	0.4	0.16	0.002
4	3.8	0.2	0.04	0.01
				F Cal = 1.254

Df= n-1; p<0.05; N = 390; Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Decision rule: If $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$, reject H_0

Since $1.254 > 0.711$, we accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant negative impact of media terrorism reports on food prices in the state and by proxy, in the country in general.

Discussion of Findings

First, findings from the study showed a high level of exposure to media terrorism reports among the farmers with television and social media as their main sources of exposure. This confirms that the plenitude of media reports on terrorist attacks on farmers is actually reaching the farmers (Punch, 2016; Eyekpimi, 2016). This study argues that a high or repeated exposure to media terrorism reports on the television and on social media, where some of the reports are likely to be fake or exaggerated, is a precursor to its negative impact on agricultural productivity and food prices as

gauged through the farmers' views. Stated differently, the high level of exposure to media reports on terrorism is what makes the farmers susceptible to their effects on them.

Furthermore, the second result of this study suggests that media reports on terrorism have instilled fear which has a negative effect on the farmers' productivity. This result buttresses arguments on the role of media in promoting fear. This is in line with the outcome of Jackson, 2014; Blanchette, 2019 and Jackson, 2019. From the economic angle, findings from this study also suggest that the low level of farmers' productivity, as occasioned by media terrorism reports, has led to a hike in food prices. This view is understandable when considering that a reduction in food production/supply in a situation where there is an increased or unchanged food demand, as the law of demand and supply in economics would have it, would lead to a hike in prices. Here, this substantial economic repercussion in form of a hike in food prices is seen when the farmers, as well as allied industries and services—suppliers, transporters, distributors, and retailers (including the market women) are trying to meet up with their own money needs, despite the low supply of food, thereby increasing the prices.

As would be stated in the agenda setting theory, these negative effects can be attributed to media reports on terrorism since they nudge the farmers to think about the many instances of terrorism, especially those targeted at farmers. What seems to happen is that the farmers go ahead to accept the framing or perspective the media presents and are thus guided by it. Their productivity is reduced due to the sense of fear and insecurity invoked by media reports on terrorism, and what happens consequently is a hike in the prices of food items. The media, in this sense, can be said to invoke or replicate the same sort of ordeals that have been felt or experienced by the farmers who have been attacked by the terrorist groups. Here, farmers can be

seen as not just victims of terrorist attacks but of the media as well. This result validates the the theory on which this study is anchored.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored the impact of media terrorism reports on agricultural productivity and food prices in Enugu state. It concludes that there is a significant negative impact of media terrorism reports on agricultural productivity and on food prices in the state. This study fills a gap in literature on the impact of media terrorism reports on farmers' productivity and food prices in Enugu state by showing a correlation between media reports on terrorism. Also a negative influence on farmers' productivity and food prices was established, therefore, substantiating evidence that suggests that the media has a direct effect on the audience. It also contributes to research in this area by suggesting that perspectives on these effects or even the effects themselves could vary with gender, with findings from this study showing more males than females agreeing that media terrorism reports have a negative impact on the agricultural productivity of farmers.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since it may be difficult to quell the media's frenzy in reporting terrorist attacks on farmers, the government and other relevant agencies should ensure that the media ecosystem is also filled with alternative content that focuses on informing and educating the farmers on the best agricultural practices.
2. Farmers should be taught media literacy skills by relevant bodies, so that they will become more critical/active media audience.

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