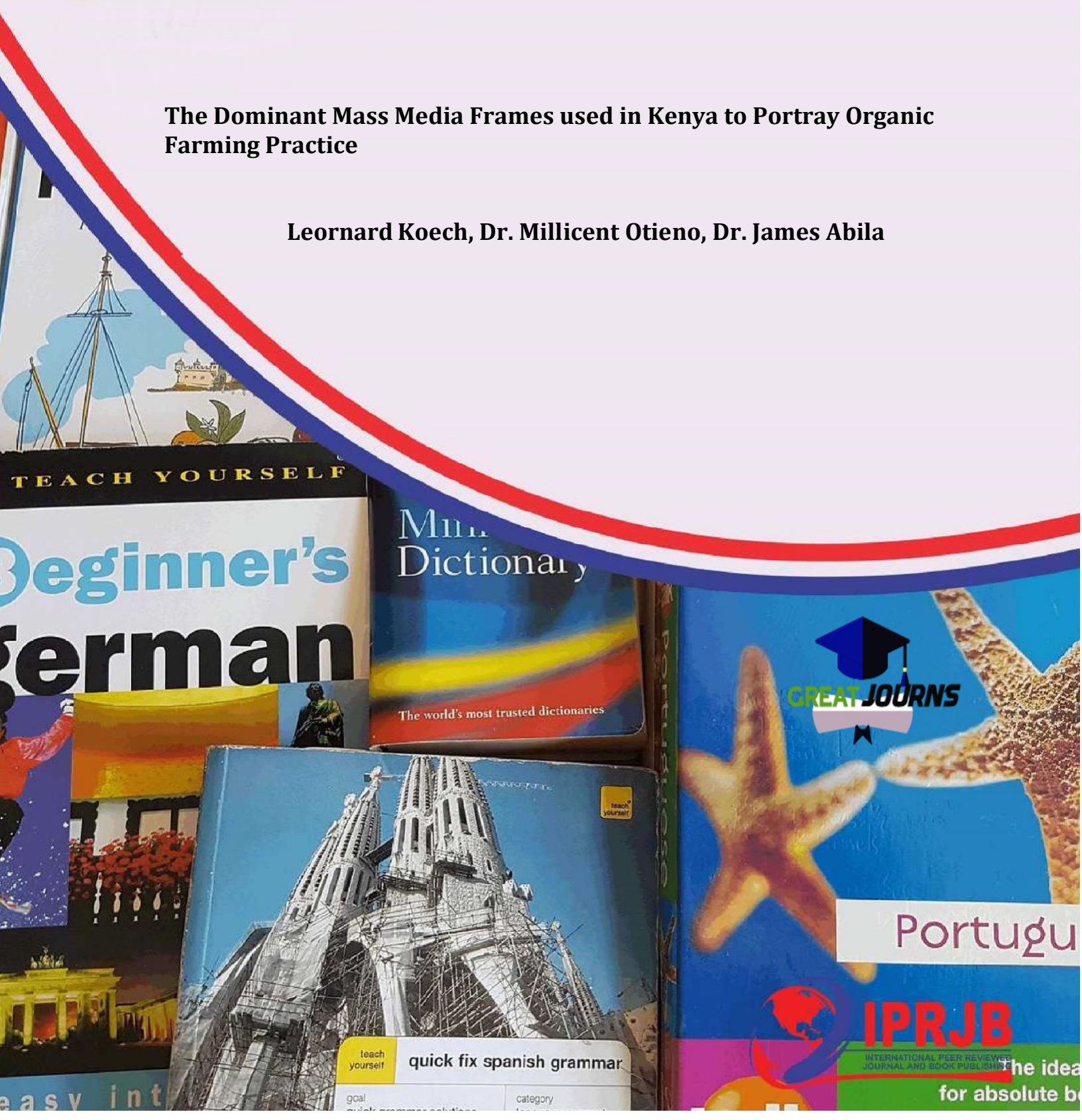


GREAT JOURNS



The Dominant Mass Media Frames used in Kenya to Portray Organic Farming Practice

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Abstract

Abstract: The purpose of the study was to investigate the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices. This study involved systematically analyzing the content of media messages, such as news articles, television programs, and social media posts, to identify the dominant frames used to portray organic farming practices. This approach involved identifying relevant media sources and analyzing their coverage of organic farming over a specified period, looking for patterns in the frames used and how they are presented. This study involved collecting data from a sample of the public to understand their perceptions and attitudes towards organic farming, as well as the sources of information they rely on for their knowledge about organic farming. This approach involved designing a survey questionnaire, selecting a representative sample of the population, and collecting and analyzing the data collected. Depending on the methodology chosen, researchers needed to carefully select their sample. For example, if using content analysis, researchers needed to identify relevant media sources to analyze. If conducting surveys or focus groups, researchers needed to select a representative sample of the population. The Researcher collected data from relevant sources, such as media outlets, members of the public, or stakeholders in the organic farming industry. Depending on the methodology chosen, data collection involved analyzing media content, conducting surveys or interviews, or facilitating focus group discussions (Sapsford, 1996). The Researcher analyzed the data collected to identify the dominant mass media frames used to portray organic farming practices in Kenya. This analysis involved identifying patterns in media coverage or public attitudes towards organic farming, or identifying key themes and topics that emerge from interviews or focus group discussions. The researcher concluded

that dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices are diverse and complex, reflecting a range of social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors. These frames are influenced by various actors, including media outlets, policymakers, advocacy groups, and consumers. Agenda-setting and framing theories provided useful frameworks for understanding the ways in which the dominant media frames are constructed, disseminated, and received by different audiences. They highlight the importance of media in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards organic farming practices, as well as their implications for consumer behavior and policy decisions related to organic farming. The findings of this study suggested that the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices had significant implications for consumer behavior and policy decisions related to organic farming. By promoting positive perceptions of organic farming, these frames helped to support the growth of the organic farming sector in Kenya and had positive implications for health, environmental sustainability, and economic development. Media outlets, policymakers, and advocacy groups should work towards promoting positive media frames that highlight the benefits of organic farming practices. This can help to increase public awareness and understanding of organic farming practices, and can promote consumer demand for organic products. There is a need for the development of effective communication strategies that target different audiences, including consumers, farmers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. These strategies should be designed to promote greater awareness and understanding of the benefits and challenges of organic farming practices, and to dispel any misconceptions or myths about organic farming.

Key Words: Mass Media, Portray Organic & Farming Practices

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Gibbon (2009), Davis analyzed news coverage of organic farming practices in four California newspapers over a six-year period. They found that the dominant media frames were health and environmental benefits, ethical considerations, and economic issues. The researchers noted that while the health and environmental benefits of organic farming were frequently emphasized, economic concerns were also given significant attention. In 2016, a study published in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* analyzed how the *New York Times* framed organic farming and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) over a 10-year period. The study found that the *Times* generally portrayed organic farming as a more environmentally friendly and sustainable approach to agriculture, while GMOs were portrayed as more risky and potentially harmful to human health and the environment. A 2019 study published in the *Journal of Rural Studies* analyzed media coverage of organic agriculture in the United States over a 10-year period. The researchers found that media coverage of organic farming tended to emphasize the environmental benefits, health benefits, and ethical considerations associated with organic farming practices. The study also found that media coverage of organic farming tended to be more positive than negative (Jones, 2009).

A 2018 study published in the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* analyzed media coverage of organic farming in South Africa from 2010 to 2015. The study found that media coverage tended to emphasize the environmental benefits, health benefits, and ethical considerations associated with organic farming practices. Economic benefits were mentioned less frequently. A 2019 study published in the journal *Sustainability* analyzed media coverage of organic farming in South African newspapers from 2007 to 2017. The study found that the dominant media frames used to portray organic farming were sustainability, health, and environmental benefits. Economic benefits were mentioned less frequently (Freyer, 2005).

A 2020 study published in the *Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies* analyzed media coverage of organic farming in South African newspapers from 2013 to 2018. The study found that the dominant media frames used to portray organic farming were health, environmental benefits, and ethical considerations. The economic benefits of organic farming were mentioned less frequently. Organic farming practices involve the use of natural methods and inputs such as compost, crop rotation, and biological pest control to maintain soil fertility, control pests and diseases, and produce healthy crops. The organic farming movement has gained popularity in recent years due to concerns over the use of chemical inputs in conventional farming and the impact of agriculture on the environment and human health (Darnhofer, 2005).

The media's portrayal of organic farming practices can vary depending on the outlet and the specific story being covered. Some media outlets may focus on the health benefits of organic food, while others may highlight the environmental benefits of organic farming practices. Still, others may focus on the economic benefits of organic farming for farmers and rural communities. It's essential to note that the media's portrayal of organic farming practices can also be influenced by political and economic interests. For example, some large

agribusinesses may have a vested interest in promoting conventional farming practices over organic farming practices. Similarly, government policies and subsidies may favor conventional farming practices, which can affect how the media portrays organic farming practices (Kahuthia, 2021).

The media in Kenya tends to frame organic farming practices positively, as a more sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to agriculture. Organic farming is often portrayed as a way to address issues such as soil degradation, food insecurity, and health concerns related to pesticide use. One common framing used in the media is the idea of "going back to the roots" or returning to traditional farming practices. This framing suggests that organic farming is a return to a more natural and harmonious way of farming, and that it is a way to reclaim traditional knowledge and practices. Another framing used in the media is the health benefits of organic food. This framing emphasizes the idea that organic food is healthier because it is free of synthetic chemicals and pesticides, and that it contains more nutrients than conventionally grown food (Schuler, 2015).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing interest and adoption of organic farming practices in Kenya, there is a lack of understanding about how the dominant mass media frames organic farming. This is problematic because media framing can influence public perceptions and attitudes towards organic farming, and ultimately shape consumer behavior and policy decisions (Ndah, 2015). Therefore, there is a need to examine the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices, in order to better understand how organic farming is being represented and communicated to the public. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

What are the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices?

How do these frames influence public perceptions and attitudes towards organic farming?

What are the implications of these frames for consumer behavior and policy decisions related to organic farming in Kenya?

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Agenda-setting theory

This theory was founded by Donald (1968), suggests that the media has the power to shape public opinion by influencing what issues people think about and discuss. In the context of organic farming, the media can use their power to prioritize certain topics or frames related to organic farming over others, and by doing so, influence public perceptions of organic farming. Agenda-setting theory is highly relevant to understanding the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices. This theory suggests that the media has the power to set the agenda for public opinion by deciding which issues are important and which ones are not. This is achieved through the media's ability to control what information is disseminated and how it is presented to the public. In the context of organic farming, the media has the power to prioritize certain frames related to organic farming over others. For example, the media may focus more on the health benefits of organic food or the environmental sustainability of organic farming practices, and less on the challenges or limitations of organic farming. By doing so, the media can influence public perceptions of organic farming and shape the public's agenda on the issue. Additionally, the media can also influence the amount of coverage given to organic farming in relation to other issues. For example, if the media gives more coverage to organic farming than to conventional farming practices, this could create a sense of urgency and importance around the issue, leading to increased interest and adoption of organic farming practices (Woroniccki, 2020).

2.2 Framing theory

This theory was founded by Clark (1997), suggests that the media can shape how people understand and

interpret events by framing them in a particular way. In the context of organic farming, the media can use frames such as "returning to traditional farming practices" or "health benefits of organic food" to shape how people understand and perceive organic farming practices. Framing theory is highly relevant to understanding the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices. This theory suggests that the way an issue is framed can influence how it is understood and interpreted by the audience. In the context of organic farming, the media's framing of the issue can have a significant impact on public perceptions and attitudes towards organic farming practices. For example, the media may frame organic farming as a return to traditional farming practices or as a way to improve health by reducing exposure to pesticides and other harmful chemicals. Alternatively, the media may frame organic farming as an expensive and difficult practice, or as a niche and impractical approach to farming (Brink, 2020).

These frames can influence public perceptions of organic farming and ultimately shape consumer behavior and policy decisions related to organic farming. For instance, if the media frames organic farming as an expensive and difficult practice, this could discourage consumers from purchasing organic food products and discourage policymakers from investing in organic farming initiatives. By examining the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices, researchers can better understand how the media's framing of the issue is shaping public opinion and attitudes towards organic farming, and how to promote more accurate and positive representations of organic farming in the media (Krause, 2020).

III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Content analysis

This study involved systematically analyzing the content of media messages, such as news articles, television programs, and social media posts, to identify the dominant frames used to portray organic farming practices. This approach involved identifying relevant media sources and analyzing their coverage of organic farming over a specified period, looking for patterns in the frames used and how they are presented (Daniel, 2011).

3.2 Surveys

This study involved collecting data from a sample of the public to understand their perceptions and attitudes towards organic farming, as well as the sources of information they rely on for their knowledge about organic farming. This approach involved designing a survey questionnaire, selecting a representative sample of the population, and collecting and analyzing the data collected (Kothari, 2004).

3.3 Sampling

Depending on the methodology chosen, researchers needed to carefully select their sample. For example, if using content analysis, researchers needed to identify relevant media sources to analyze. If conducting surveys or focus groups, researchers needed to select a representative sample of the population.

3.4 Data collection

The Researcher collected data from relevant sources, such as media outlets, members of the public, or stakeholders in the organic farming industry. Depending on the methodology chosen, data collection involved analyzing media content, conducting surveys or interviews, or facilitating focus group discussions (Sapsford, 1996).

3.5 Data analysis

The Researcher analyzed the data collected to identify the dominant mass media frames used to portray organic farming practices in Kenya. This analysis involved identifying patterns in media coverage or public attitudes towards organic farming, or identifying key themes and topics that emerge from interviews or focus group discussions.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The Researcher ensured that their research design and data collection methods are ethical and do not harm or exploit participants. This involved obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality, and ensuring that participants are not coerced or misled (Haug, 1998).

IV. FINDINGS

The researcher found out that one dominant mass media frame used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices is health and safety. Organic farming is often presented as a healthier and safer alternative to conventional farming, with fewer chemicals and pesticides used in production. This frame may appeal to consumers who are concerned about the safety of their food and the environment. Another dominant frame used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices is environmental sustainability. Organic farming is often presented as a more sustainable and eco-friendly alternative to conventional farming, with a lower environmental impact. This frame may appeal to consumers who are concerned about climate change and environmental degradation. Organic farming is also sometimes framed as an economically viable alternative to conventional farming, with potential benefits for farmers' incomes and livelihoods. This frame may appeal to farmers who are struggling to make ends meet or looking for new opportunities to diversify their crops. In some cases, organic farming is framed in terms of cultural identity, with proponents arguing that it represents a return to traditional and indigenous farming practices. This frame may appeal to consumers and farmers who are interested in preserving cultural heritage and promoting traditional knowledge. The environmental sustainability frame is dominant in the media portrayal of organic farming, the public may perceive organic farming as more sustainable and eco-friendly than conventional farming. This may lead to a positive attitude towards organic farming and increased demand for organic products. The economic benefits frame is dominant in the media portrayal of organic farming, the public may perceive organic farming as a financially viable alternative to conventional farming. This may lead to a positive attitude towards organic farming and increased interest in adopting organic farming practices. The cultural identity frame is dominant in the media portrayal of organic farming, the public may perceive organic farming as a way to preserve cultural heritage and promote traditional knowledge. This may lead to a positive attitude towards organic farming and increased interest in promoting traditional farming practices (Wendo, 2020).

The dominant media frames portray organic farming as a healthier, safer, more sustainable, and culturally significant alternative to conventional farming, this can increase consumer demand for organic products. This can have positive implications for farmers who adopt organic farming practices and can help to promote the growth of the organic farming sector in Kenya. The dominant media frames portray organic farming as an economically viable and culturally significant alternative to conventional farming, this can encourage more farmers to adopt organic farming practices. This can help to promote the growth of the organic farming sector in Kenya and can have positive implications for environmental sustainability, health, and economic development. The dominant media frames portray organic farming as an important alternative to conventional farming, this can encourage policymakers to develop policies that support the growth of the organic farming sector in Kenya. This can include policies to promote organic farming practices, provide financial support to organic farmers, and develop markets for organic products. The dominant media frames portray organic farming as a way to promote health and environmental sustainability, this can encourage the development of certification and labeling systems for organic products. This can help to promote transparency and consumer trust in the organic farming sector in Kenya and can help to promote the growth of the organic farming sector (Krause, 2020).

V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The researcher concluded that dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic farming practices are diverse and complex, reflecting a range of social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors. These frames are influenced by various actors, including media outlets, policymakers, advocacy groups, and consumers. Agenda-setting and framing theories provided useful frameworks for understanding the ways in which the dominant media frames are constructed, disseminated, and received by different audiences. They highlight the importance of media in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards organic farming practices, as well as their implications for consumer behavior and policy decisions related to organic farming.

The findings of this study suggested that the dominant mass media frames used in Kenya to portray organic

farming practices had significant implications for consumer behavior and policy decisions related to organic farming. By promoting positive perceptions of organic farming, these frames helped to support the growth of the organic farming sector in Kenya and had positive implications for health, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

There is a need for further research to explore the ways in which the dominant mass media frames are received and interpreted by different audiences, including consumers, farmers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. This can help to inform the development of more effective communication strategies that promote greater awareness and understanding of the benefits and challenges of organic farming practices.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

Media outlets, policymakers, and advocacy groups should work towards promoting positive media frames that highlight the benefits of organic farming practices. This can help to increase public awareness and understanding of organic farming practices, and can promote consumer demand for organic products.

There is a need for the development of effective communication strategies that target different audiences, including consumers, farmers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. These strategies should be designed to promote greater awareness and understanding of the benefits and challenges of organic farming practices, and to dispel any misconceptions or myths about organic farming.

Policymakers and other stakeholders should support research and development efforts in the organic farming sector. This can help to promote the adoption of more effective and sustainable organic farming practices, and can help to address some of the challenges faced by organic farmers in Kenya.

There is a need for the development of certification and labeling systems for organic products in Kenya. This can help to promote transparency and consumer trust in the organic farming sector, and can help to promote the growth of the organic farming sector in Kenya.

Policymakers, media outlets, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders should collaborate and engage in dialogue to promote greater awareness and understanding of organic farming practices. This can help to ensure that the dominant media frames used to portray organic farming practices are accurate and reflect the diversity of perspectives and experiences in the organic farming sector.

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