

UDC 070

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E-mail: ibaa2011@hotmail.com**The role of news agencies in the news exchange
(A study on Sudan News Agency SUNA 2013)**

Sudan News Agency (SUNA) is one of local news agencies which were established in the Arab- African world, when the counties have obtained their independence to support the informational performance in this field.

This study depended on the historical method and the content analysis tool in collecting data and information. The sample was selected from the news stuffs in SUNA Arabic daily bulletin.

Important findings of this study were that, most of the sample items were collected from SUNA local offices and its correspondents who work in some parts of the world with which Sudan has good relation. Most of the stuffs were news stories, most of them were economic news, most of the stuffs were covered objectively, most of the stuffs include the value of importance and most of them were covered lively besides that most of them were local stuffs.

Key words: news agencies, Sudan, SUNA, information work, news, local media representatives.

Ибаа Ахмед Эль-Тигани ОМЕР Авад

**Роль информационных агентств в обмене информацией
(На примере Информационного агентства Судана, SUNA, 2013)**

Агентство Судана (SUNA) является одним из местных информагентств, которые были сформированы в арабо-африканском мире для проведения информационной работы в период, когда эти регионы получили независимость. Исследование проведено на основе исторического метода и контент-анализа. Данные получены из арабского информационного ежедневного бюллетеня SUNA. Важным результатом исследования стало то, что большинство образцов были также получены из местных отделений и от собственных корреспондентов SUNA, которые работают в разных частях мира и с которыми Судан имеет хорошие отношения.

Ключевые слова: информационное агентство, Судан, SUNA, информационная работа, новости, местные представители СМИ.

Иба Ахмед Эль-Тигани ОМЕР Авад

**Ақпарат алмасудағы ақпарат агенттіктерінің рөлі
(Суданның SUNA ақпараттық агенттігінің мысалында, 2013)**

Суданның SUNA ақпарат агенттігі араб-африка әлемінде тәуелсіздік алғаннан кейін осы өңірдегі ақпаратпен қамтамасыз етуді жақсарту үшін құрылған. Бұл зерттеу негізінен тарихи және мазмұндық-талдау әдісі негізінде жүргізілді. Деректер SUNA күнделікті араб ақпараттық бюллетенінен алынды.

Зерттеудің негізгі нәтижелері жергілікті ақпарат құралдары материалдарына негізделеді. Мақалада жергілікті ақпараттар өңірдегі өзгерістерді шынайы көрсетіп бергені анықталады.

Түйін сөздер: ақпарат агенттігі, Судан, SUNA, ақпараттық қызмет, жаңалықтар, жергілікті БАҚ өкілдері.

Introduction

Development of mass media comes from the international development in the field of the communication technology. The most important target in the field of communication is to provide news for the audience, thus, news agencies are established for this purpose. Their existence has led to availability of information for mass media generally and newspapers particularly. The increasing number of the news agencies also created a strong competition among them around the globe. News is considered as commodities which are prone to be out of date immediately.

This research aimed at studying of the efficiency of news agencies in making news stuffs available. They are considered as main sources of information for the media, their types, classification, method of the news coverage and values and their geographical dimensions. This was applied study on Sudan News Agency SUNA and means of benefitting from the international news agencies in providing information to local media.

Necessity of the Study

The importance of the study comes from the necessity of the immediacy of conveying and the exchange of information between SUNA and the other news agencies to enable SUNA to realize its aims and improve its performance.

Different types of news agencies have managed to build up stance and form public opinion on important issues for the audiences by realizing the immediacy in conveying and transmission of the information. They also realize the immediacy in the coverage of the important events in the world.

Problem of the Study

The problem of this study came from the necessity of the role that is played by the news agencies in providing the news. According to my follow up that role during my work as a journalist and translator for SUNA, I noticed that the SUNA receives news stuff from other news agencies and sends the important news of Sudan.

The problem of this study can be summarized in the two following points:

1- The importance of the studying the means of benefitting from the news agencies in news gathering and exchanging among each other and sending them to mass media to reach the targeted audiences.

2- The necessity of allocation of the news stuffs that are transmitted by the news agencies, means and

method of their coverage, values and geographical dimensions.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at clarifying means of benefitting from the information which is provided by the news agencies in the issuance of the daily news bulletin to supply Sudanese media with foreign news then the media send them the various types of the audiences.

Questions of the Study

The questions of the study are:

1. What is the number of news stuffs which are published in the SUNA daily online bulletin?
2. What are the types of the news agencies which supply SUNA by news stuffs?
3. What are the news stuffs types which are transmitted in SUNA daily bulletin?
4. What are the classifications of the news stuffs types?
5. What are the means of the news stuff coverage?
6. What is the type of the news stuff coverage?
7. What are the values of these stuffs?
8. What are the geographical dimensions of the news stuffs?

Terms of the Study

1- News Agency

It is defined as (an organization that provides news coverage to subscribers as to newspapers or periodicals. It is also called press agency or association.) (An organization that collects news reports for newspapers). It is also known as (..... an organization of journalists established to supply news reports to news organizations: newspapers, magazines, and radio and television broadcasters. Such an agency may also be referred to as a wire service, newswire, or news service). News agency is a source which provides the information for the mass media such newspapers, magazines, radio stations and Television channels. It supplies the news daily bulletins which are transmitted through mass media in the world.

It is also has a number of names such as press agency, press association, wire service, or news service. It is known as an organization that gathers, writes, and distributes news from around a nation or the world to newspapers, periodicals, radio and

television broadcasters, government agencies, other users.(1)

2- News

It is defined as the communication of selected^[1] information on current events which is presented by print, broadcast, Internet, or word of mouth to a third-party or mass audience .(2)

Methodology

In this study, the researcher used three methods, they, are as follows:

1-Descriptive method aims at describing an idea, an issue and a phenomenon. This method is famous in the field of communication, because, it has organized stages upon the application and it helps researchers in carrying out their studies accurately. In this study, this method aimed at describing the activities of the news agencies.

2- Historical method which aimed at studying the historical background of the news agencies and their developments and performance during the certain periods.

3- Analytic method is a systematic way for current facts concerning a phenomenon or stance or an individual an aim in reaching new facts or making sure of the reality of ancient facts, their effects, their relations with other facts and their interpretation. This method canalized the news stuff to reach accurate findings by choosing a sample.

Sample of the Study:

The sample of this study was chosen from the total news stuffs which were covered during the days of 1,5,9,13,17,21,25,29 of November 2013.

Data collection tools

In this study, the main tool of the data collection was the content analysis of the news stuff during the period of the study. This study also used the observation, references and various information sources such as the internet.

Sudan News Agency

The decision establishing the Sudan News Agency (SUNA) was made on January 1st, 1970 in an address by former president JafaarNemeiri at Obeid town on the occasion of the country's Independence Day. SUNA was officially launched during the second anniversary of the May

Revolution in 1971. On September 21, 1970, the news agency issued its first bulletin in both Arabic and English languages. The first act of SUNA was issued on 19.11. 1973. It was followed by a number of acts for the news agency. When the Public Corporations Act, 2003 was issued, SUNA had to cope with it by canceling its act of 1998 and issuing a memorandum of association in compliance of the Public Corporations Act. The Council of Ministers approved Memorandum of Association of Sudan News Agency Public Corporation on 11.2.2011. A number of new services were then added by SUNA such as video service. The objectives and powers of SUNA can be summarized in gathering text, audio and video news and information from inside and outside Sudan and their processing and dissemination internally and abroad in a manner that serves the interests of the country.

Technology:

SUNA has been witnessing great technological advances since its establishment. It was able to expand its activities in news and information gathering to cover all regions of the Sudan via a radio telecommunication network and then a computerized network. The news agency introduced the MENOS (Multi-media Exchange of News over Satellite) system in 2010 to expand its news exchange network internally and externally and accommodate new services such as video.

SUNA Today:

Currently SUNA is composed of three integrated sectors; top of them is the Editorial Sector and then there are two assisting sectors, which are the Technical and Engineering Sector and the Financial and Administrative Affairs Sector.

SUNA Videos:

In its drive to shift to multi-media (text, audio and video) services, SUNA has established a studio and a hall for montage and production for recording of documentary information and films and interview programs. As part of this, a state-of-the art newsroom has been set up with 52 computer stations linked with the Internet.

The Correspondents:

SUNA news services cover all the 15 northern states around the clock through a network of correspondents stationed at the headquarters of the states and their localities, who are linked with SUNA Head Office in Khartoum via the MENOS Network. The news agency has also some 23 correspondents in the countries of the world, covering Europe, Asia and Arab and African countries.

News Exchange:

SUNA contributed to the establishment and boosting of a number of Arab and African news agencies, such as the Pan African News Agency (PANA). It also maintains more than 50 bilateral cooperation agreements with the international and regional news agencies in the domains of news and information exchange, technical field and training. (5)

New Transmission

From 1915 until the 1940s; news agencies in the United States transmitted most copy over telephone wires to teletypewriters in newspapers offices. The late 1940s, however, brought the introduction of Telepester machines, which allowed the stories from the agencies, in the form of perforated paper tape, to be fed into typesetting, or linotype, machines, without the use of human operators. In using teletypesters to save labor, publishers ceded to the agencies some of their editing prerogative, thereby standardizing usage and writing style in news stories.

Newspapers moved from linotype to photocomposition in the late 1960s to 1970s. Information are now transmitted by satellites service or the Internet and newspapers reconstruct the information in their own format. Most of news agencies also offer their clients photographs, news analyses and special features covered from radio and television stations. They transmit news- broadcast scripts, video and programming. Since the advent of computer technology, many news services have become available online and their products are also available from mobile phones and other devices. A great change happened in the function of news agencies at the turn of the century. At first, they provided newspapers and magazines with news items and official government information. Now they also supply news stories, articles, reviews, sketches and illustrations. Some news agencies clients with made to order special newspaper columns or entire issues. The range of information has broadened extraordinary, encompassing various aspects of special, political, scientific and culture life. Scientific and technology items have proliferated. News agencies can receive process and deliver information quickly by using modem communication methods such as radio transmitters and receivers besides multiconductor telegraph and telephone cable, teletypewriters, photography, facsimile apparatus, calculators and computers.

New agencies exert efforts to provide information for all of journalists, at an aim of pleasing all news editors, everywhere. Responsible bodies of news agencies plan to work harder than their client journalists to realize the appearance of objectivity and neutrality. In so doing, they manufacture a bland and homogeneous, but still ideologically distinctive, view of the world; stories challenging the ideological positions of the dominant political players on the world scene.

News agency role is crucial for additional reasons. News agencies set the agenda for what international stories other media choose to carry through the choice of stories they distribute to clients and the amount of visuals provided and in the case of agency-provided TV pictures, the nature and amount of accompanying audio and textual information.

Global and regional news agencies are crucial due to their agenda-setting influence on other media, but have grown even more crucial as they increasingly bypass intermediary processors of news in cyberspace enabling them to directly reach – for the first time – a large portion of the mass news audience. News agencies are also often accused of producing a bland and predictable news product, devoid of color and enterprise reporting and dependent on official sources and definitions of news. But in the realms they know best, like conflict zones and developing regions of the world, the news agencies frequently break stories other major media miss.

Despite that, news agency research has demonstrated a highly constrained, homogenous content dictated by the ideological, structural, and cultural nature of these organizations. (6)

Most of local and regional news outlets, will be providing the same news agency coverage and offer readers the same coverage of the story. The intention seems merely to offer the «4,500 news sources updated continuously,» as Google news promises. (7)

This shapes a picture of an online news world (in the English language) where only four organizations do extensive international reporting (Reuters, AP, AFP, BBC) a few others provide some international reporting such as (CNN, MSN, New York Times, Guardian besides a few other large newspaper and broadcasters. Most of them do no original international reporting. (8)

National News Agencies

National news agencies appeared at the end of colonization in the Middle East, Africa and Asia,

referring to the new or the transformed agencies which have appeared in the Commonwealth of Independent States and in Eastern and Central Europe. Some of these news agencies have been in existence for 50 years, 100 years or more than 150 years. Their existence created benefits and different types of ownership, relationships between states and agencies.

There are some challenges faces at some national agencies, as well as some challenges of a more ideological kind which are posed by the international agencies. These challenges are:

1- The well-worn theme of the saturation of traditional press markets. Even more serious, especially for agencies which are owned exclusively by press interests, is the intensifying trend toward concentration within the newspaper industry.

Stepping outside Europe for examples, there is the degree of concentration which has been experienced some counties such as Canada with the virtual takeover of the entire industry or in New Zealand where Terry O'Reilly and Rupert Murdoch basically share control of the press.

This situation is good for news agencies the general public. News agencies are concerned, how can it be beneficial that organizations which have been set up as cooperatives, as is the case in both Canada and New Zealand.

2- The development of new competition from some of the press or media conglomerates that would rather be self-sufficient and depend on their own internal news-gathering networks. This phenomenon has made it more difficult for some news agencies. However, historically most such efforts have been exerted. This has been a challenge faced in recent times and in different ways by some news agencies such as ATS, AFP and the PA, but it has been a challenge that has been overcome, and much the same has been true since the commercial wars of the 19th century to establish the preeminence of particular agencies as 'national' agencies.

A national monopoly leaves a space for specialist and local agencies, but not enough for competing national agencies, because competition reduces the credibility of competitors' claims to be 'national', given the important reciprocal relations that maintain between member/client news media and the national agencies.(9)

3- The fragmentation of large state broadcasters and the emergence of satellite, cable and pay-TV providers of broadcast entertainment. The decline of state broadcasters threatens a reduction in revenue and a decline in the symbiotic environment of the

'public service' ethos that once maintained between state or national monopoly/oligopoly broadcasters and national news agencies. Equally, the appearance of new players opens up a new market, but it is a different market by and large, one that is leaner and more commercially driven, and whose news appetite and philosophy push more in the direction of what a colleague of mine has dubbed 'infotainment' fodder.

A new agenda which is dominated by formal politics, economics and sport, but which is not equally enthusiastic about sexual behavior and mores, lifestyles, the world of entertainment and social trends, is addressing a relatively small part of the full diet of the 'news' media.

4- The commercialism of news is not only about content but it is also about presentation, about mode of address to the reader or viewer, the uses of language and the relationship of the word to the image.

News agency news has not typically competed well in these dimensions and agencies have not generally considered it necessary. Some agencies are still dependent on state revenue and in parts of Central and Eastern Europe state, some parts of Africa and Asia ownership still prevails.

On the other hand, a key issue for some agencies is overdependence on media markets; curiously, some of the older, cooperative agencies are among those most

ATS is an example of an agency which has worked hard to build new markets: heavily wedded to traditional media markets, 80–90 percent in some cases. Dependence on media markets was 78 percent in 1988, and this had fallen to 66 percent in 1994 as non-media revenues grew faster than media revenues. In parallel with the growing reluctance of state governments to continue subsidizing news agencies – in those countries where there has been tradition.

On the other hand, there is partial government control – there has also been a leveling off of interest on the part of intergovernmental or NGO institutions in the support of agencies in the developing world and of alternative news agencies such as the Inter Press Services. (10)

The dependence of initiatives such as the original Pan- African News Agency on intergovernmental sources of revenue was so heavy an incubus that it cast doubt on the value of all such ventures: the problems included sponsors who could not be depended upon to deliver the promised funds, who talked rhetorically about a third news force in Africa.

News agencies take advantage of the Internet, those who already have the news-gathering

infrastructure of journalists and networks with primary sources, the know-how of writing, editing, illustrating and packaging, and who possess the hard-earned credibility that can attract customers who want to read what is provided. The real difficulty here is what it is possible to do on the Internet that is not a threat to owner-clients or simply to valued traditional clients. The Press Association in the UK is one example of a national agency that has made significant headway in exploring the entrepreneurial opportunities of the Internet and has struck a deal with owner-clients – provision of traditional services at greatly reduced rates – that will keep their fingers out of the pot, at least for the time being.

Some of local news agencies in the developing world also used the Internet in their daily activities of sending, receiving and exchange of news during

1990s. SUNA is good example of this development in the field of using the Internet.

That means most of news agencies benefit from the new technology of communication in all of their processes such information gathering, coverage, sending and receiving news stuffs which make their work easier than in the past.

Field study

In this study, the sample was selected from the stuffs total which was covered in the duration of the study. The stuffs were covered by SUNA news agencies which have agreement of news transmission and exchange.

The study was quantitative, using content analysis tool.

Discussion

Table 1 – Sources of the news stuffs

Source	Number of iterations	Percentage
News agencies	315	37.6
Other news agencies	523	62.4
Total	838	100

The above table explains the following.

1-37.6% of the news stuffs were covered by the other news agencies, whereas, 62.4% of them were provided by SUNA.

2-Most of the news stuffs were covered by SUNA.

Table 2 – News Stuffs

News stuffs	Number of iterations	Percentage
News stories	801	95.6
Reports	36	4.3
Questionnaires	1	.1
Total	838	100

The table above shows the news stuffs which represent the sample of the study, the findings are as follows:

1- 95.6% of the sample was news stories, 4.3% of the sample was reports and .1% was Questionnaire.

2- Most of the sample represented news stories.

Table 3 – Types of the News Stuffs

Type of news stuffs	Number of iterations	Percentage
Political	278	33.1
Economic	333	39.7
Military	12	1.4
Security	40	4.8
Legal	5	.6
Social	43	5.1
Educational	17	2.2
Health	34	4.1
Technological	10	1.2
Space	9	1.1
Cultural	21	2.5
Sport	36	4.3
Total	838	100

The above table showed the types of the news stuffs as the following findings:

1- 39.7% of the news stuffs were economic, 33.1% of them were political, 5.1% were social, 4.8% of them were security, 4.3% were sport

ones 4.1% of them were health, 2.5% of the news stuffs were cultural ones 2.2% of the stuffs were educational, 1.4% of them were military ones, 1.2% of the sample were technological ones, 1.1% were space ones and .6% of them were legal ones.

Table 4 – Style of Coverage

Style of coverage	Number of iterations	Percentage
Objective	565	67.4
Propaganda	273	32.6
Total	838	100

Table 5 – News Values

News Values	Number of iterations	Percentage
Importance	467	55.7
Conflict	169	20.2
Bigness	101	12.1
Closeness	100	11.9
Oddness	1	.1
Total	838	100

According to the above table, the findings were as follows (Table 4):

1- 67.4% of the new stuffs style of coverage was objective, whereas, 32.6% of the coverage contained propaganda.

2- Most of the news stuffs were covered in objectivity.

The above table showed the news values as the following findings:

1- 55.7% of the stuffs carried the value of importance, 12.1% contained the bigness, 11.9% of them contained closeness and .1% contained oddness.

2- Most of the news stuffs contain the importance value.

Table 6 – Type of Coverage

Type of coverage	Number of iterations	Percentage
Pre- coverage	144	17.6
Follow up	284	33.5
Live –coverage	410	48.9
Total	838	100

The above table showed the types of coverage of the news stuffs as the following findings:

1- 48.95% of the news stuffs were obtained in the live coverage, 33.5% of them were collected by

follow up coverage and 17.6% of them were gained by the pre- coverage.

2- Most of the news stuffs which represented the sample were gained in by live- coverage.

Table 7 – Geographical Dimensions of News Stuffs

Geographical dimension of news stuffs	Number of iterations	Percentage
Local	519	61.9
Arab	96	11.5
African	51	6.1
Asian	92	11
International	80	9.5
Total	838	100

The above table showed the geographical dimensions of the news stuffs as the following findings:

1- 61.9% of the news stuffs were local, 11.5% were Arabians, and 11% were Asians, 9.5% were international news stuffs and 6.1% were African news stuffs.

2- Most of the news stuffs which formed SUNA news daily bulletin, represented the study sample were local news stuffs.

Findings

The study reached some finding, they are as follows

1- 37.6% of the news stuffs were covered by the other news agencies, whereas, 62.4% of them were provided by SUNA.

2- Most of the news stuffs were covered by SUNA.

3- 95.6% of the sample was news stories, 4.3% of the sample was reports and .1% was Questionnaire.

4- Most of the sample represented news stories.

5- 39.7% of the news stuffs were economic, 33.1% of them were political, 5.1% were social,

4.8% of them were security, 4.3% were sport ones 4.1% of them were health, 2.5% of the news stuffs were cultural ones 2.2% of the stuffs were educational, 1.4% of them were military ones, 1.2% of the sample were technological ones, 1.1% were space ones and .6% of them were legal ones.

6- 67.4% of the new stuffs style of coverage was objective, whereas, 32.6% of the coverage contained propaganda.

7- Most of the news stuffs were covered in objectivity.

8- 55.7% of the stuffs carried the value of importance, 12.1% contained the bigness, 11.9% of them contained closeness and .1% contained oddness.

9- Most of the news stuffs contain the importance value.

10- 48.95% of the news stuffs were obtained in the live coverage, 33.5% of them were collected by follow up coverage and 17.6% of them were gained by the pre- coverage.

11- Most of the news stuffs which represented the sample were gained in by live- coverage.

12- 61.9% of the news stuffs were local, 11.5% were Arabians, and 11% were Asians, 9.5% were

international news stuffs and 6.1% were African news stuffs.

13- Most of the news stuffs which formed SUNA news daily bulletin, represented the study sample were local news stuffs.

Conclusion

SUNA is a model of national news agencies which has been established in Arab-African area. Local news agencies were founded when these countries gained their independence to support news production performance distinctly.

This study used historical and content analysis methods on the news stuffs which are collected by SUNA. These news stuffs are used by Sudanese media to be transmitted to Sudanese audience in the country and abroad.

Important findings of this study were that, most of the sample items were collected from *SUNA* local offices and its correspondents who work in some parts of the world with which Sudan has good relation. Most of the stuffs were news stories, most of them were economic news, most of the stuffs were covered objectively, most of the stuffs include the value of importance and most of them were covered lively besides that most of them were local stuffs.

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