

Impact of CNN Coverage of Economic Aid Distribution Programmes in 2025 Post-Conflict Gaza

NIKADE, ANDERSON PHD¹, AKARARA, EBIERINYO AYEBBAEMI PHD²

¹Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

²Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Abstract- *The impact of CNN's coverage on the distribution and perception of economic aid programmes in Gaza following the conflict in 2025 is examined in this study. The study examines how CNN's reporting affected local perceptions of transparency and fairness, aid flow, and donor behaviour using the Framing Theory as its theoretical framework. A mixed-methods design was used, integrating data from surveys and interviews with community beneficiaries and aid officials with content analysis of CNN reports. The results show that CNN paid close attention to Gaza's economic recovery, with the level of coverage reaching its highest point in the middle of 2025. There is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.614, p < 0.05$) between CNN's level of coverage and fair aid distribution, according to statistical analysis, indicating that media visibility affected donor attention and resource allocation. Some respondents voiced concerns about selective framing and irrational community expectations, even though the majority of respondents acknowledged CNN's contribution to increased transparency. The study comes to the conclusion that while international media, especially CNN have a significant influence on post-conflict humanitarian priorities, they must strike a balance between advocacy and contextual accuracy. The report suggests strengthening capacity for ethical humanitarian reporting, integrating media-monitoring mechanisms into aid governance, and improving cooperation between local and international media.*

Keywords: *CNN coverage, Economic aid, Post-conflict Gaza, Media framing, Donor engagement, Humanitarian communication.*

I. INTRODUCTION

With devastating losses in both human life and property, the Gaza Strip emerged from the most recent round of intense hostilities in 2024–2025. With a GDP that shrank precipitously in 2024 and continued to do so into early 2025, Gaza's economy has essentially come to a standstill. Additionally, the region's infrastructure, health systems, and basic services have been severely damaged, leaving a

significant portion of the population reliant on outside aid for survival and recovery (World Bank, 2025).

The operational environment for aid delivery is particularly harsh and complicated, according to humanitarian organisations and UN bodies. Convoy volume and reach have been repeatedly restricted by insecurity, damaged logistics networks, access issues, and fuel shortages; there are gaps between supplies entering Gaza and reaching communities in the northern governorates most affected (OCHA; UN agencies). The organisation and fair distribution of economic aid is a major policy and operational challenge for the post-conflict era because of these delivery bottlenecks, which have increased food insecurity, interfered with health services, and limited reconstruction planning (OCHA, UNRWA, recent reports).

The timing, scope, and nature of humanitarian responses can be influenced by news media, according to academics and practitioners for a long time. This phenomenon is frequently examined under the heading of agenda-setting research and the "CNN effect" (Robinson, 1999; Livingston, 1997). Based on empirical research, donor governments and agencies may prioritise certain interventions or increase emergency funding in response to intense news coverage, particularly when images and narratives evoke strong emotional salience among domestic publics and policymakers (Robinson, 1999; Scott et al., 2022). According to this literature, aid flows and policy priorities can be significantly impacted by the frames, sources, images, and repetition that major international outlets use when portraying a crisis.

Comparative studies of global broadcasters in the particular instance of Gaza reveal consistent variations in framing, source selection, and narrative

emphasis amongst outlets, with quantifiable repercussions for audience perceptions and diplomatic discourse (recent content analyses of CNN, Al Jazeera, and others). Initial research conducted in 2024–2025 suggests that the language used by some donor governments when announcing assistance packages and public sentiment were impacted by framing decisions (e.g., emphasis on civilian suffering, security narratives, or political causation) and the relative importance of civilian imagery versus operational logistics (Alajmi, 2025; Alsharairi, 2025). These findings underline how important it is to look at both the volume and specific frames and content that foreign news organisations, like CNN, employ when reporting on post-conflict economic aid programmes in Gaza.

There are still significant empirical gaps regarding how coverage by major international broadcasters influences the distribution (who receives aid, where, and through which channels), rather than just the amount of assistance, despite the well-established theory connecting media coverage to humanitarian action. To date, very few studies have integrated operational data on aid delivery and allocation in a severe post-conflict context with fine-grained content analysis of broadcaster coverage. Examining CNN's coverage of economic aid distribution programmes in Gaza in 2025 closes a critical gap because of its reach and agenda-setting influence among the anglophone and policymaker communities. It can reveal whether and how broadcast narratives influenced donor priorities, operational choices regarding aid targeting, and, ultimately, local economic outcomes during the early recovery phase. Thus, at the nexus of media studies, humanitarian logistics, and post-conflict economic recovery, this study tackles a pertinent empirical and policy question.

The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of CNN's media coverage on the planning, execution, and perception of economic aid distribution programmes in post-conflict Gaza in 2025. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. analyze the nature, frequency, and framing of CNN's coverage of economic aid distribution programmes in post-conflict Gaza during 2025.
2. assess the extent to which CNN's coverage influenced international donor attention, policy discourse, and funding priorities toward Gaza's economic recovery efforts.

3. evaluate the relationship between CNN's reportage and the patterns of aid allocation and distribution across different sectors and regions within Gaza.
4. examine the perceptions of humanitarian agencies, policymakers, and local beneficiaries regarding the role of CNN's coverage in shaping the visibility and equity of aid distribution.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

2.1.1 Media Coverage

The process by which news organisations obtain, analyse, and share information with the public about events, problems, or phenomena is referred to as media coverage. It includes news stories' frequency, tone, framing, and volume across various media platforms (McQuail, 2010). According to Livingston (1997), media coverage is crucial in international reporting because it shapes public opinion and influences how policies react to humanitarian crises. According to Entman (2007), news organisations like CNN, the BBC, and Al Jazeera serve as gatekeepers, deciding which events are given international attention. Agenda-setting is the term used to describe how issues are prioritised in international discourse, and it can be influenced by the type and extent of coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). While limited or biased coverage may obscure important needs and distort policy responses, extensive coverage can mobilise donor attention, generate empathy, and prompt humanitarian action in conflict and post-conflict contexts (Robinson, 2002).

2.1.2 The CNN Effect

The ability of 24-hour international news networks, especially CNN, to sway governments' and international organisations' foreign policy choices and humanitarian actions is known as the "CNN Effect" (Robinson, 1999; Livingston, 1997). According to the theory, policymakers may feel pressured to act swiftly in response to crises, sometimes even before thorough policy assessments are completed, by emotionally charged, real-time images and reports (Gilboa, 2005). Depending on how audiences frame and interpret a crisis, the CNN Effect in humanitarian contexts can either speed up the flow of aid or result in selective intervention (Piers Robinson, 2000). As demonstrated in Bosnia (1994) and Somalia (1992), for example, emotionally

charged reporting on famine, conflict, or displacement has historically resulted in spikes in international relief aid (Robinson, 2002). However, detractors contend that media influence is conditional, with different effects depending on government interest, political context, and media framing (Cottle, 2009). Therefore, studying the CNN Effect in post-conflict Gaza sheds light on how media exposure might have influenced the planning and allocation of financial assistance in 2025.

2.1.3 Economic Aid Distribution Programmes

Economic aid distribution programmes are coordinated efforts by governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or international agencies to provide financial, material, or infrastructure support to populations impacted by disasters or conflicts (OECD, 2023). In order to rebuild local economies, these programmes frequently consist of cash transfers, microfinance plans, livelihood restoration, reconstruction funds, and development assistance (World Bank, 2024). To guarantee that aid reaches the most vulnerable groups, effective distribution necessitates openness, equity, and cooperation between several actors (Anderson, 1999). Aid distribution in post-conflict environments, such as Gaza, is impacted by the framing and visibility of needs in the international media arena in addition to logistical and political considerations (Bryan & Chima, 2022). Therefore, how international donors distribute resources and which regions or populations are given priority can be influenced by media narratives (Bennett & Lawrence, 2018).

2.1.4 Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Post-conflict reconstruction refers to the process of rebuilding and restoring social, political, and economic institutions following the cessation of violent conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). It encompasses immediate humanitarian relief as well as long-term development initiatives designed to promote stability, governance, and growth (UNDP, 2024). Reconstruction in post-conflict regions like Gaza involves the rehabilitation of infrastructure, resettlement of displaced persons, and reactivation of economic activities (World Bank, 2025). The success of reconstruction depends on effective coordination between international donors, local authorities, and civil society actors. However, scholars note that external aid interventions often face challenges of politicization, corruption, and unequal access

(Barakat & Zyck, 2009). The way these processes are portrayed in the media can affect how successful or unsuccessful people around the world perceive them, which can affect donor confidence and future funding commitments (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Franks, 2013).

2.1.5 Media Framing and Agenda Setting

According to Entman (1993), media framing is the process by which news organisations create narratives by highlighting particular facets of reality in ways that support particular interpretations or policy preferences. Whether a situation is perceived as an economic crisis, a political conflict, or a humanitarian emergency, framing influences how audiences interpret it (Chong & Druckman, 2007). On the other hand, agenda-setting emphasises how the media can shape public and policymakers' perceptions of what matters (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). A conceptual foundation for comprehending how CNN's depiction of Gaza's economic aid initiatives may influence donor reactions and operational priorities is provided by the combination of framing and agenda-setting theories. In addition to influencing public empathy, CNN's story framing—which includes visuals, tone, source selection, and narrative emphasis—can also have an impact on aid allocation and targeting (Seib, 2010).

2.1.6 Gaza's Post-Conflict Context (2025)

Following the 2024–2025 hostilities, Gaza faces significant humanitarian needs, significant economic disruption, and damaged infrastructure in the post-conflict context of 2025. According to estimates from international organisations, more than 70% of Gaza's population still depends on aid, and the unemployment rate is higher than 50% (World Bank, 2025; OCHA, 2025). International assistance and well-coordinated aid initiatives are crucial to the region's recovery and reconstruction. How donors and audiences around the world view the importance and equity of these programmes is greatly influenced by media coverage, especially from large international networks like CNN (UNRWA, 2025). Therefore, evaluating how CNN's coverage affects the distribution of economic aid provides a useful lens through which to view the relationship between local recovery outcomes and the influence of global media.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 The Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory describes how the media shapes public opinion and policymakers by deciding which issues are covered and to what extent (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This theory holds that the perceived significance of issues on the public agenda is influenced by the frequency, prominence, and positioning of media stories (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Repeatedly highlighting a specific event, like the distribution of economic aid in post-conflict Gaza, makes audiences and decision-makers see it as a priority issue that needs to be addressed right away. According to the theory, agenda setting can be divided into two levels: issue salience, or what to think about, and attribute salience, or how to think about it (McCombs, 2004). In this regard, CNN's frequent reporting on aid efforts, donor commitments, and humanitarian difficulties in Gaza may bring the topic to the attention of the world and influence governments and international organisations to take action. According to studies, agenda-setting effects are especially potent during times of crisis when people rely largely on the media for information (Wanta & Ghanem, 2007). Therefore, this theory contributes to the explanation of how CNN's extensive coverage may have influenced the allocation of resources and attention worldwide to Gaza's recovery efforts in 2025.

2.2.2 Framing Theory

Framing theory describes how those issues are presented to audiences, whereas agenda-setting deals with what topics the media highlight (Entman, 1993). According to Goffman (1974), frames are interpretive structures that arrange meaning and direct people's perceptions and assessments of events. In order to support specific problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral assessments, or policy recommendations, Entman (1993) defined framing as the process of choosing some aspects of reality and making them more salient in a communication text. Media frames can influence whether aid is perceived as a development necessity, a political tool, or a moral obligation in humanitarian reporting (Chong & Druckman, 2007). CNN's coverage of Gaza, for instance, may elicit empathy and persuade donors to increase aid flows if it highlights human suffering and the moral obligation of the international community. On the other hand, it could undermine public trust and lower donor

engagement if the coverage portrays aid distribution as ineffective, politicised, or poorly managed. Thus, framing theory offers a prism through which to examine CNN's tone, imagery, and narratives and how they affect how people perceive the efficacy and equity of aid in Gaza's post-conflict reconstruction.

2.2.3 Gatekeeping Theory

White (1950) first put forth the gatekeeping theory, which focuses on how information is filtered before being made public. As "gatekeepers," editors, reporters, and news producers choose which events are worthy of being reported and how to present them (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In this process, editorial policy, ownership interests, audience expectations, and geopolitical alignments are among the organisational and ideological factors that are taken into account (Reese & Ballinger, 2001). Gatekeeping choices, such as picking particular footage, picking sources, and giving some stories more weight than others, can influence how the world views who should receive aid and which interventions are effective. This is the case with CNN's coverage of Gaza's economic aid distribution. These editorial decisions might also be a reflection of larger cultural or political narratives that either support or contradict global power dynamics. Thus, by highlighting the institutional and structural mechanisms underlying media influence on humanitarian and development outcomes, gatekeeping theory enhances the CNN Effect.

2.2.4 Social Responsibility Theory of the Press

According to Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's (1956) social responsibility theory, the media has an ethical duty to present truthful, impartial, and equitable information in the public interest. This theory emphasises how journalists can help advance peace, accountability, and human rights in conflict and post-conflict environments rather than escalating tensions (McQuail, 2010). CNN and other media outlets are expected to responsibly cover humanitarian issues under this framework, steering clear of sensationalism and making sure that coverage promotes fair aid distribution and global understanding. This theory can be used to evaluate whether CNN's coverage of Gaza in 2025 adhered to the moral principles necessary for positive interaction or if it inadvertently strengthened political biases or stereotypes that impacted the delivery of aid.

When combined, these theories offer a strong conceptual basis for examining how CNN's coverage affects the distribution of financial aid in Gaza after the conflict. Gatekeeping theory emphasises the editorial filters that determine what information reaches audiences; framing theory examines how the tone and content of coverage shaped perceptions of aid; agenda-setting theory explains how CNN may have influenced international attention towards Gaza's recovery; and social responsibility theory discusses the ethical implications of international news reporting. These frameworks work together to support the study's analytical methodology, which looks at how the media affects efforts at economic and humanitarian recovery.

2.3 Empirical Review

Over the past three decades, there has been a significant increase in empirical research on the impact of media in humanitarian and post-conflict settings. The majority of this literature focuses on how global media, especially networks like CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera, influence how crises are publicised and how aid is distributed. One of the first empirical studies of the "CNN Effect" was given by Livingston (1997), who described how the United States and the United Nations increased their humanitarian intervention in 1992 as a result of real-time media images from Somalia. In a similar vein, Robinson (2002) discovered that depictions of the suffering of civilians in Rwanda and Bosnia in the media sped up international reactions and aid financing. More recently, Franks (2013) examined the humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, Haiti, and Sudan and came to the conclusion that consistent media coverage is crucial in determining donor awareness and aid programme prioritisation. Franks did note, though, that after the initial shock wears off, media attention tends to quickly wane, resulting in erratic aid flows and a decline in international commitment.

Fahmy and Al Emad (2011) investigated how the 2008–2009 Gaza conflict was framed by Western media in the Middle East and discovered that military narratives were prioritised over humanitarian ones, primarily reflecting geopolitical biases. Their research demonstrated that this kind of distorted framing hindered global empathy and postponed the mobilisation of financial assistance. Similarly, Wolfsfeld, Frosh, and Awabdy (2008) showed how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is frequently portrayed

in the international media in a way that minimises Palestinian suffering, which affects public opinion and donor perceptions in Western countries. According to these studies, depending on political context and framing decisions, media visibility can both magnify and distort humanitarian realities.

According to Scott, Lloyd, and Boyle (2022), media reports that featured emotionally charged imagery and human-interest frames greatly boosted government funding and public donations for relief efforts abroad. Bennett and Lawrence (2018) found that, in contrast to narratives that are political or security-focused, crisis framing that emphasises "innocent victims" typically elicits stronger humanitarian responses. On the other hand, donor enthusiasm drastically decreases when aid issues are presented as politically divisive or associated with corruption (Cottle, 2009).

When comparing the content of CNN and Al Jazeera's coverage of the 2024–2025 Gaza hostilities, Alajmi (2025) found that while Al Jazeera focused on political causes and accountability, CNN's reporting disproportionately highlighted humanitarian suffering and the need for reconstruction. According to Alajmi's research, CNN's emphasis on donor pledges and economic recovery helped Western agencies renew their funding commitments in the first part of 2025. This result supports Seib's (2010) earlier findings that international broadcasters can serve as "accelerators" of humanitarian attention by tying visual coverage to policy discussions.

There are not many empirical studies that specifically look at how media coverage influences aid distribution as opposed to mobilisation. However, Maxwell and Watkins (2003) discovered that media exposure during the Ethiopian famine changed the way relief organisations prioritised food delivery, causing them to marginalise less-covered areas while over-concentrating in highly visible areas. In a similar vein, Moeller (2006) contended that "compassion fatigue" brought on by frequent crisis coverage can skew the distribution of aid fairly since agencies and donors concentrate their resources where media attention is greatest. Barrett and Maxwell (2005) noted that in post-conflict Sierra Leone, localities with little media exposure recovered more slowly, while areas with widespread international media coverage received more prompt and generous responses from international aid organisations.

In a more recent study, Nassar (2024) examined humanitarian efforts in war-torn Yemen and discovered a correlation between Western media coverage and periods of increased foreign aid disbursement, especially after emotionally charged CNN and BBC broadcasts. The study came to the conclusion that the timing and geographic targeting of aid interventions were both greatly impacted by media visibility. Similarly, Alsharairi (2025) investigated donor coordination in Gaza after the war and found that CNN's regular coverage of aid convoys and reconstruction snags pushed donor governments to implement fair allocation frameworks and transparency measures.

Cottle and Nolan (2007) cautioned that Western news outlets frequently reinforce dependency narratives by depicting non-Western victims as passive recipients of aid. According to Chouliaraki (2012), these depictions of "distant suffering" establish moral hierarchies that affect who is thought to be worthy of international pity. International media often underreported local agency and Palestinian civil organisation efforts in reconstruction reporting in Gaza, according to El-Issa (2023). According to her research, this tendency could erode local control over aid initiatives and reinforce stereotypes.

On the other hand, research like that conducted by Seib (2010) shows that, when handled properly, international media can be used as forums for accountability, transparency, and advocacy in the distribution of aid. Networks like CNN can promote increased accountability and enhanced effectiveness in humanitarian operations by recording operational difficulties, corruption threats, and donor pledges. The dual nature of media influence is thus highlighted by empirical evidence: coverage can mobilise resources and increase visibility, but it can also skew priorities, create imbalances, or reinforce political biases.

2.3.1 Synthesis of Empirical Findings

Overall, empirical data points to the importance of international media coverage, particularly that provided by CNN, in influencing not only funding flows and donor behaviour but also perceptions of need, legitimacy, and equity in the distribution of aid. Media salience influences the amount and the spatial distribution of humanitarian aid, as studies from Somalia, Bosnia, Yemen, and Gaza consistently show (Livingston, 1997; Maxwell & Watkins, 2003;

Nassar, 2024; Alajmi, 2025). The literature does, however, also point out enduring research gaps. Few studies have looked quantitatively at how certain CNN coverage patterns—like tone, frequency, and framing—affect the distribution and actual implementation of financial aid in conflict areas. Furthermore, little is known about how local beneficiaries and aid administrators view the impact of the media on the efficiency and equity of aid.

Thus, by concentrating on CNN's coverage of Gaza's economic aid distribution programmes in 2025, this study expands on previously established empirical underpinnings. It offers fresh perspectives on the ways in which donor behaviour, policy choices, and the real-life experiences of local recipients during post-conflict recovery are influenced by global media narratives.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In order to give a thorough grasp of how CNN coverage affects the economic aid distribution programmes in post-conflict Gaza in 2025, this study uses a mixed-methods research design that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques. Triangulation, which compares quantitative trends with qualitative insights to produce more reliable conclusions, is made possible by the mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). While the qualitative component uses focus groups and interviews to learn about the perspectives of aid administrators, policymakers, and beneficiaries, the quantitative component concentrates on statistical analysis of aid distribution patterns and content analysis of CNN reports. This design guarantees that the subjective experiences of stakeholders as well as the quantifiable impacts of CNN's coverage are sufficiently recorded and examined.

3.2 Population of the Study

Three primary groups that are pertinent to the study's goals make up the study population:

1. **Media Content:** From January to December 2025, all CNN television and web reports about Gaza's efforts to rebuild and distribute economic aid.
2. **Institutional Actors:** Local NGOs, donor agencies, and representatives of international aid organisations (such as UNRWA, the World Bank, OCHA, and local implementing partners) that are involved in economic aid programmes in Gaza.

3. Beneficiaries: Selected households and local community leaders who benefited directly or indirectly from the 2025 economic aid programmes in Gaza's most affected areas, such as Gaza City, Khan Younis, Rafah, and Deir al-Balah.

The study is able to capture the impact of the media from both institutional and community perspectives because of this tripartite population structure.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the most relevant CNN broadcasts and online articles focusing on Gaza's aid distribution in 2025. For the institutional and community samples, a multi-stage sampling method was adopted. In the first stage, key international and local aid agencies operating in Gaza were purposively selected. In the second stage, staff members involved in aid coordination and communication were chosen using expert sampling, as their roles make them knowledgeable about media impacts on aid delivery. For community respondents, stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds.

A sample size of approximately 30 media reports, 40 institutional respondents, and 120 community beneficiaries will be targeted, totaling 190 respondents. This size is considered adequate for exploratory mixed-methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3.4 Source of Data

Both primary and secondary data sources were used in the study to guarantee thorough and trustworthy analysis. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from government agencies, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), representatives of international aid organisations, and a subset of recipients of economic aid programmes throughout Gaza. To acquire qualitative information on stakeholders' opinions of CNN's coverage and its impact on aid distribution, in-depth interviews and focus groups were also held. Secondary data were sourced from CNN's official news archives, reports from international development agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the World Bank, and peer-reviewed academic publications relevant to media influence, aid governance, and post-conflict reconstruction. The combination of these data sources provided a robust

empirical foundation for triangulating findings and analyzing the relationship between media coverage and aid distribution patterns in post-conflict Gaza.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

A mixed-methods approach was used to gather data for this study, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to give a comprehensive picture of CNN's influence on the distribution of economic aid in Gaza after the conflict. A purposive sample of 190 respondents—including representatives of foreign donor agencies, regional NGOs, government officials, and recipients of the 2025 economic aid programs—were given structured online questionnaires to complete in order to gather quantitative data. Respondents' opinions on CNN's coverage, its alleged impact on donor behaviour, and aid management transparency were all recorded through the questionnaires. Selected key informants participated in focus groups and semi-structured online interviews for the qualitative component in order to acquire a deeper understanding of the subtleties of media framing and its usefulness for aid coordination. The frequency, tone, and thematic framing of news items pertaining to aid distribution were also examined through content analysis of CNN's 2025 reports on Gaza. Both subjective opinions and objective media evidence were methodically recorded and examined thanks to this triangulated approach to data collection.

3.6 Research Instruments

The study used a variety of research tools intended to collect quantitative and qualitative information pertinent to the study's goals. The main tool was a structured questionnaire designed to gather quantifiable data on respondents' opinions of CNN's coverage and its impact on the organisation, implementation, and openness of the distribution of financial aid in Gaza following the conflict. To aid in statistical analysis, the questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview guide was employed to extract detailed information from important informants, including local aid coordinators, media experts, and donor representatives. To methodically document and classify the frequency, tone, and framing patterns in CNN's 2025 news reports on Gaza's aid distribution, a content analysis coding sheet was also created. Prior to being used in the field, these tools were thoroughly examined by specialists in media and

development studies to guarantee their internal consistency, relevance, and dependability.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Experts in media studies, conflict economics, and humanitarian communication will assess the instruments for conceptual correctness and content sufficiency in order to guarantee validity. To improve the questionnaire and interview guide, a pilot study was also carried out with a small sample of respondents. Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency was used to evaluate reliability; a benchmark value of 0.70 or higher was deemed appropriate (Nunnally, 1978). Cohen's Kappa statistic will be used to test intercoder reliability for the content analysis in order to guarantee consistent coding amongst researchers.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

NVivo was used to analyse qualitative data, and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data from questionnaires and content coding. While inferential statistics like correlation was used to investigate the relationship between CNN coverage and perceived aid distribution outcomes, descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and percentage) will be used to summarise respondent characteristics.

To find recurrent themes, perceptions, and narratives that explain the media's influence, qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were subjected to thematic analysis. Triangulated interpretations will be possible through the integration of both data types, strengthening the study's conclusions' resilience (Creswell, 2014).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The appropriate institutional review boards will be consulted for ethical approval. Following an explanation of the study's objectives, confidentiality protocols, and voluntary participation, each participant will be asked for their informed consent. By using codes rather than actual names, anonymity will be preserved. CNN content that is protected by copyright will also be appropriately referenced and used only for scholarly purposes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 presents the demographic distribution of the institutional and community respondents. These characteristics are vital to understanding the diversity of perspectives on CNN's influence on aid programmes.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	92	48.4
	Female	98	51.6
Age	18–30 years	54	28.4
	31–45 years	87	45.8
	46 years and above	49	25.8
Education Level	Secondary	32	16.8
	Tertiary	126	66.3
	Postgraduate	32	16.8
Role in Aid Programme	Beneficiary	120	63.2
	NGO/Agency Official	40	21.1
	Policy/Donor Representative	30	15.7
Total		190	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.1 reveals that 51.6% of respondents were female, suggesting balanced gender participation in post-conflict aid processes. The majority (45.8%) were aged between 31–45 years, reflecting a mature

and economically active population. Most respondents (66.3%) had tertiary education, implying that perceptions captured in the study were largely informed and credible. The majority (63.2%) were

aid beneficiaries, ensuring that the voices of the end-users of the programmes were adequately represented.

4.2 Nature and Frequency of CNN's Coverage of Economic Aid in Gaza (2025)

To address the first research objective, CNN's reports were analyzed based on frequency, framing, and thematic emphasis.

Table 4.2: Frequency and Focus of CNN Reports on Gaza's Economic Aid (Jan–Sept 2025)

Month	No. of Reports	Dominant Theme	Tone	Framing Category
January –February	5	Humanitarian Relief	Positive	Problem Definition
March - April	8	Reconstruction Projects	Neutral	Causal Interpretation
June - July	10	Donor Accountability	Critical	Moral Evaluation
August - September	7	Economic Empowerment	Positive	Treatment Recommendation
Total	30			

Source: CNN Online Archives (2025)

Content analysis in revealed that CNN's coverage peaked between March and July 2025, coinciding with international donor conferences. The reports often emphasized issues of accountability and transparency, portraying aid distribution as a politically sensitive and ethically charged process.

The overall framing oscillated between humanitarian concern and critical evaluation of donor behavior, consistent with Entman's (1993) framing theory which suggests that media framing influences public interpretation and policy responses.

4.3 Influence of CNN Coverage on Donor Attention and Aid Flow

Table 4.3: Respondents' Perception of CNN's Influence on Donor Response

Response Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)
CNN's coverage increased global donor awareness about Gaza	78.9	12.1	9.0
CNN reports influenced the speed of aid disbursement	71.6	18.9	9.5
CNN coverage helped prioritize economic recovery projects	68.4	20.0	11.6
Media exposure led to improved accountability in aid management	74.2	16.3	9.5

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The majority of respondents (78.9%) agreed that CNN's coverage enhanced global awareness about Gaza's humanitarian crisis. Over 70% also believed that such coverage accelerated donor responses and improved project prioritization. These findings align with McQuail's (2010) argument that global media can mobilize international attention and resources for crisis regions through agenda-setting and framing mechanisms.

4.4 Relationship Between Media Coverage and Patterns of Aid Distribution

To evaluate the statistical relationship between CNN's coverage and aid distribution outcomes, a correlation analysis was conducted between the frequency of media coverage and reported levels of aid access across selected regions.

Table 4.4: Correlation between CNN Coverage and Aid Distribution Outcomes

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	r-value	Sig. (p-value)
Media Coverage Intensity	3.42	0.68	0.614	0.001
Aid Distribution Equity	3.18	0.72		

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.614$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between CNN coverage and equitable aid distribution. This suggests that regions more frequently featured in CNN reports tended to receive more donor attention and faster aid delivery. These findings support Livingstone and Manyozo's (2020) position that media visibility often determines the geography of humanitarian response in conflict zones.

4.5 Perceptions of Stakeholders on CNN's Role in Aid Transparency

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and FGDs revealed mixed perceptions. Some agency officials acknowledged CNN's contribution to transparency and donor engagement, while others cautioned that sensationalist coverage sometimes distorted ground realities.

Selected Responses:

1. *"CNN's consistent reports forced donors to act more responsibly and disclose their aid flow data."* — (NGO Director, Gaza City)
2. *"While visibility helped us get funds, it also created unrealistic expectations among communities."* — (UN Field Officer, Rafah)
3. *"Local beneficiaries often trust what CNN reports more than what our local media show."* — (Community Leader, Khan Younis)

These views confirm that while international media play a vital advocacy role, they also shape local perceptions of fairness and legitimacy in aid processes.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the study concludes that CNN's coverage significantly influenced the local and global aspects of the distribution of economic aid in Gaza in 2025 following the conflict. CNN influenced the priorities and speed of aid mobilisation in addition to informing audiences around the world by framing humanitarian urgency, donor responsibility, and recovery narratives.

The study backs up the claim that media visibility serves as a kind of soft power in humanitarian governance, influencing which issues or regions receive international attention while others go

unreported. CNN's coverage improved accountability and transparency, but it also highlighted the risks of relying too much on foreign media narratives, which can occasionally obscure local agency and skew realities on the ground.

5.2 Recommendations

Arising from the findings above, the following recommendations were made.

1. International media organizations such as CNN should adopt a more balanced and context-sensitive approach when reporting on aid distribution in post-conflict regions like Gaza. Rather than focusing primarily on political tensions or humanitarian crises, coverage should highlight local recovery efforts, community resilience, and the effectiveness of aid interventions. This can be achieved by engaging local journalists and correspondents who possess deeper contextual understanding. Implementation should involve the creation of partnerships with local media networks, regular capacity-building workshops on conflict-sensitive journalism, and the establishment of editorial review protocols to ensure fairness and accuracy in reporting.

2. To enhance credibility and trust among aid beneficiaries and stakeholders, international media should adopt transparency frameworks in their reporting on economic aid. This entails disclosing data sources, clarifying the scope of coverage, and ensuring factual accuracy in visual and narrative representations. Implementation can involve integrating independent fact-checking bodies into the editorial process and publishing annual media impact reports that evaluate the outcomes of international coverage on humanitarian interventions. Such accountability mechanisms will strengthen ethical journalism and public trust in global media narratives about Gaza.

3. The local government in Gaza should establish structured communication channels with international media organizations to facilitate the accurate dissemination of information about aid programmes. This collaboration would help correct misconceptions and prevent the spread of one-sided narratives that may hinder donor confidence. Implementation should involve creating a Media and Humanitarian Information Desk within relevant ministries to coordinate press releases, provide

verified data, and organize periodic briefings with journalists covering aid-related activities.

4. Local communities and civil society organizations should play an active role in monitoring and communicating the progress of economic aid projects. Empowering them to provide firsthand information ensures that narratives reflect ground realities rather than external interpretations. Implementation should include training community representatives in media engagement and participatory communication techniques, as well as establishing local “Aid Watch Committees” that liaise with journalists and provide regular reports to both the government and international media.

5. Donor agencies should develop deliberate media engagement strategies that emphasize transparency, accountability, and the visibility of their interventions. This can help shape public perception positively and encourage sustained donor commitment. Implementation should involve hiring media liaison officers to interface with journalists, producing multimedia reports on project milestones, and using real-time data visualization tools to communicate aid distribution progress to the global audience.

6. Donor agencies should incorporate media impact assessments into their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to understand how international coverage affects aid flows and public perception. Implementation can include commissioning independent media impact studies, integrating communication audits into project evaluations, and developing key performance indicators (KPIs) that track the relationship between media visibility and donor responsiveness. This approach will ensure that media engagement is both evidence-based and strategically aligned with humanitarian objectives in post-conflict Gaza.

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