

Research Article

# Comparative Analysis of Mass Media in Nigeria and Ghana

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## Abstract

This study conducts a comparative analysis of the mass media landscapes in Nigeria and Ghana, focusing on their historical development, regulatory frameworks, and content focus. Drawing on a diverse array of sources, including books, journal articles, and government reports, the research evaluates the trajectory of media evolution in both countries from their colonial past to the present day. The study employs a theoretical framework that combines the political economy of communication and the cultural studies perspective. The political economy of communication approach highlights the economic, political, and social factors that shape media content and structure, while the cultural studies perspective emphasizes the role of media in shaping cultural values and identities. The findings reveal that both countries have shared priorities in promoting national unity, addressing social and economic development issues, and preserving cultural values. The study concludes that while both countries share some commonalities, such as the emergence of indigenous broadcasters and the growth of online news, there are also notable differences. The study recommends that both Nigeria and Ghana should work to foster international collaboration in the mass media industry.

## Keywords

Comparative Analysis, Mass Media, Nigeria, Ghana

## 1. Introduction

The mass media, encompassing print, broadcast, and digital platforms, have played a significant role in shaping public opinion, disseminating information, and promoting social and economic development in any society [26]. In West Africa, two countries that have experienced significant growth in their mass media industries in recent decades are Nigeria and Ghana [25].

Nigeria and Ghana share a colonial heritage, as both countries were former British colonies. However, the development of the media in these two countries has followed different trajectories. In Nigeria, the first newspaper, the Nigerian

Chronicle, was established in 1884, during the colonial era. The first radio station, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), was established in 1932, while the first television station, the Western Nigeria Television Service (WNTV), was launched in 1959. The first private television station, TV Continental, was established in 1992, and the first private radio station, Radio Metro, was launched in 1993 [5, 26].

In Ghana, the first newspaper, the Gold Coast Leader, was established in 1898, during the colonial era. The first radio station, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), was established in 1937, while the first television station, the

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Ghana Television Corporation (GTV), was launched in 1962. The first private television station, TV3 Network, was established in 1995, and the first private radio station, Radio XYZ, was launched in 1997 [5].

The regulatory frameworks for the mass media in Nigeria and Ghana have evolved over time, reflecting the changing political and economic environments in these countries. In Nigeria, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) is responsible for regulating the broadcast media, while the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) regulates the print media [7, 12]. In Ghana, the National Media Commission (NMC) is responsible for regulating the mass media, including print, broadcast, and digital platforms [14, 30].

The content of the mass media in Nigeria and Ghana reflects the cultural, social, and political realities of these countries. In Nigeria, the media has been a critical platform for promoting national unity, as well as for expressing dissent and criticizing government policies.

In Ghana, the media has been a critical platform for promoting democratic governance, as well as for addressing social and economic development issues such as poverty, corruption, and insecurity. The media has also been a platform for promoting cultural and social values, as well as for addressing issues related to gender, sexuality, and human rights [30]. The mass media in Nigeria and Ghana have had a significant impact on society, both positive and negative.

The study aims to provide a comparative analysis of the mass media in Nigeria and Ghana, with a focus on their historical development, regulatory frameworks and content focus. The study will also examine the similarities and differences between each forms of Media (Print media, Broadcast media and Digital Media) in both countries.

## 2. Understanding Mass Media

Mass media refers to communication channels that disseminate information and ideas to large audiences simultaneously. These channels include print media such as newspapers, magazines, and journals, broadcast media such as radio and television, and digital media such as websites, social media, and mobile applications. Print media, such as newspapers and magazines, have been a significant part of mass media for centuries. According to a report by the [31], there are approximately 6,200 newspapers published daily worldwide, with a combined circulation of over 400 million copies. Broadcast media, such as radio and television, have also played a significant role in mass media. According to a report by the [19], there are approximately 7.6 billion mobile-cellular subscriptions worldwide, with over 96% of the population covered by a mobile network.

Digital media, such as websites, social media, and mobile applications, have emerged as a major part of mass media in recent years. According to a report by [27], there are approximately 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide, with over 3.78 billion social media users.

### 2.1. Historical Development of Mass Media in Nigeria

The development of mass media in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era when missionaries and government officials introduced print media to the country. The first newspaper in Nigeria, the Nigerian Times, was published in 1859 by the British missionary, Thomas Birch Freeman. This was followed by the establishment of the Lagos Weekly Record in 1897, which became the first indigenous newspaper in Nigeria.

The growth of mass media in Nigeria was accelerated by the country's independence in 1960, which led to the emergence of a vibrant and diverse media industry. The 1960s and 1970s saw the establishment of several newspapers, magazines, and radio stations, including the Daily Times, the Punch, the Guardian, and the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a significant expansion of the media industry in Nigeria, with the emergence of private radio and television stations. The deregulation of the broadcasting industry in 1992 led to the proliferation of private radio and television stations, which provided a platform for the growth of local content and the emergence of new voices in Nigerian media.

The advent of digital media in the 21st century has further transformed the media landscape in Nigeria [25]. The rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has provided a new avenue for the dissemination of news and information, as well as the emergence of new forms of content such as blogs, podcasts, and vlogs.

### 2.2. Historical Development of Mass Media in Ghana

The development of mass media in Ghana can be traced back to the colonial era when missionaries and government officials introduced print media to the country. The first newspaper in Ghana, the Gold Coast Leader, was published in 1859 by the British missionary, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman. This was followed by the establishment of the Gold Coast Times in 1892, which became the first indigenous newspaper in Ghana [1, 10].

The growth of mass media in Ghana was accelerated by the country's independence in 1957, which led to the emergence of a vibrant and diverse media industry. The 1960s and 1970s saw the establishment of several newspapers, magazines, and radio stations, including the Daily Graphic, the Ghanaian Times, and the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC).

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a significant expansion of the media industry in Ghana, with the emergence of private radio and television stations. The deregulation of the broadcasting industry in 1992 led to the proliferation of private radio and television stations, which provided a platform for the growth of local content and the emergence of new voices

in Ghanaian media [11, 16].

The advent of digital media in the 21st century has further transformed the media landscape in Ghana. The rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has provided a new avenue for the dissemination of news and information, as well as the emergence of new forms of content such as blogs, podcasts, and vlogs [18].

However, the development of mass media in Ghana has not been without its challenges. The country's media industry has been plagued by issues such as censorship, self-censorship, and political interference, which have hindered the growth of a free and independent media. The government's regulation of the media industry through the National Media Commission (NMC) has also been criticized for its restrictive policies and lack of transparency.

### 2.3. Comparative Analysis of Print Media in Nigeria and Ghana

Print media, which includes newspapers, magazines, and journals, has played a significant role in the development of mass media in both Nigeria and Ghana. While both countries share some similarities in their print media industries, there are also notable differences.

#### *Similarities:*

1. **Emergence of Indigenous Newspapers:** Both Nigeria and Ghana have a rich history of indigenous newspapers, which have played a significant role in shaping their respective societies. The Gold Coast Times, which was established in 1892, is considered the first indigenous newspaper in Ghana, while the Nigerian Times, which was published in 1859, is the oldest newspaper in Nigeria [29].

2. **Government Regulation:** Both Nigeria and Ghana have established regulatory bodies to oversee their print media industries. In Nigeria, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) regulates the broadcasting industry, while the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) regulates the print media industry. In Ghana, the National Media Commission (NMC) regulates both the print and broadcasting media industries [29].

3. **Challenges of Censorship and Political Interference:** Both Nigeria and Ghana have struggled with issues of censorship and political interference in their print media industries. In Nigeria, the government has been accused of using the NBC to censor critical reports, while in Ghana, the NMC has been criticized for its restrictive policies and lack of transparency [29].

#### *Differences:*

1. **Circulation:** While both Nigeria and Ghana have a large number of newspapers, there are significant differences in their circulation figures. According to the World Press Trends 2018 report, Nigeria has the highest number of newspapers in Africa, with a total of 118 dailies, while Ghana has 46 dailies. However, Nigeria's largest newspaper, the Daily Trust, has a circulation of only 30,000 copies, while Ghana's largest newspaper, the Daily Graphic, has a circulation of over

100,000 copies.

2. **Ownership:** The ownership structure of print media in Nigeria and Ghana also differs significantly. In Nigeria, most of the major newspapers are owned by individuals or private companies, while in Ghana, many of the major newspapers are owned by the government or political parties [23].

3. **Digital Transformation:** While both Nigeria and Ghana have embraced digital media, there are notable differences in their approach to digital transformation. In Nigeria, the adoption of digital media has been slow, with many newspapers still relying on print editions. In Ghana, however, digital media has gained significant popularity, with many newspapers offering online editions and mobile apps [24].

### 2.4. Comparative Analysis of Broadcast Media in Nigeria and Ghana

Broadcast media, which includes radio and television, has also played a significant role in the development of mass media in both Nigeria and Ghana. While both countries share some similarities in their broadcast media industries, there are also notable differences.

#### *Similarities:*

1. **Emergence of Indigenous Broadcasters:** Both Nigeria and Ghana have a rich history of indigenous broadcasters, which have played a significant role in shaping their respective societies. In Nigeria, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) was established in 1957, while in Ghana, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) was established in 1958 [28].

2. **Government Regulation:** Both Nigeria and Ghana have established regulatory bodies to oversee their broadcast media industries. In Nigeria, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) regulates the broadcasting industry, while in Ghana, the National Media Commission (NMC) regulates both the print and broadcasting media industries [28].

3. **Challenges of Censorship and Political Interference:** Both Nigeria and Ghana have struggled with issues of censorship and political interference in their broadcast media industries. In Nigeria, the NBC has been accused of using its regulatory powers to censor critical reports, while in Ghana, the NMC has been criticized for its restrictive policies and lack of transparency [28].

#### *Differences:*

1. **Ownership:** The ownership structure of broadcast media in Nigeria and Ghana also differs significantly. In Nigeria, most of the major broadcasting stations are owned by individuals or private companies, while in Ghana, many of the major broadcasting stations are owned by the government or political parties [29, 32].

2. **Digital Transformation:** While both Nigeria and Ghana have embraced digital media, there are notable differences in their approach to digital transformation. In Nigeria, the adoption of digital media has been slow, with many broadcasting stations still relying on analogue signals. In Ghana,

however, digital media has gained significant popularity, with many broadcasting stations offering digital terrestrial television (DTT) services [28].

3. Language: The use of local languages in broadcast media also differs significantly between Nigeria and Ghana. In Nigeria, most broadcasting stations use English as the primary language, while in Ghana, local languages such as Twi, Ga, and Dagbani are also widely used in broadcasting [29, 28].

## 2.5. Comparative Analysis of Digital Media in Nigeria and Ghana

Digital media, which includes online news, social media, and digital advertising, has rapidly transformed the media landscape in both Nigeria and Ghana. While both countries share some similarities in their digital media industries, there are also notable differences.

### Similarities:

1. Increased Accessibility: The proliferation of smartphones and affordable internet access has made digital media more accessible to people in both Nigeria and Ghana. According to a report by the World Bank, Nigeria had 102 million mobile subscribers in 2020, while Ghana had 20 million mobile subscribers in 2021 [31].

2. Growth of Online News: Both Nigeria and Ghana have seen a significant growth in online news, with many traditional media outlets expanding their digital presence. According to a report by the Digital Marketing Association of Nigeria (DMA), the number of unique visitors to Nigerian news websites increased by 35% in 2020, while the number of unique visitors to Ghanaian news websites increased by 20% in 2021.

3. Increased Use of Social Media: Both Nigeria and Ghana have seen a significant increase in the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. According to a report by Hootsuite, Nigeria had 21 million social media users in 2021, while Ghana had 6 million social media users in 2021.

### Differences:

1. Digital Advertising: The digital advertising industry in Nigeria and Ghana also differs significantly. In Nigeria, the digital advertising industry is still in its nascent stages, with many advertisers still preferring traditional media channels. In Ghana, however, the digital advertising industry has grown rapidly, with many advertisers shifting their focus to digital channels.

2. Regulatory Framework: The regulatory framework for digital media in Nigeria and Ghana also differs significantly. In Nigeria, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) regulates the digital media industry, while in Ghana, the National Communications Authority (NCA) regulates the digital media industry.

3. Content Creation: The approach to content creation in digital media also differs significantly between Nigeria and Ghana. In Nigeria, many digital media outlets focus on news

and current affairs, while in Ghana, many digital media outlets focus on lifestyle and entertainment content.

## 3. Comparative Analysis of the Content Focus of Mass Media in Both Nigeria and Ghana

### 3.1. News Coverage

Both Nigerian and Ghanaian mass media provide extensive coverage of local, national, and international news [26, 8]. However, there are some notable differences in the emphasis placed on different types of news.

Nigerian media: Nigerian media tends to place a greater emphasis on political and economic news (26). This is likely due to the fact that Nigeria has a long history of political instability and economic challenges [13].

Ghanaian media: Ghanaian media tends to place a greater emphasis on social and cultural news [8]. This is likely due to the fact that Ghana has a more stable political system and a more developed economy than Nigeria.

### 3.2. Entertainment

Both Nigerian and Ghanaian mass media also produce a significant amount of entertainment content [26, 8]. This includes music, movies, television shows, and online content.

Nigerian entertainment: Nigerian entertainment is known for its vibrant and energetic style [4, 22]. It is often characterized by its use of traditional African music, dance, and storytelling [21].

Ghanaian entertainment: Ghanaian entertainment is known for its more polished and mainstream style [8, 20]. It is often influenced by Western popular culture [8, 15].

### 3.3. Advertising

Mass media in both Nigeria and Ghana is heavily reliant on advertising revenue [26, 8]. The types of products and services advertised on Nigerian and Ghanaian media reflect the different priorities and interests of the two populations.

Nigerian advertising: Nigerian advertising is often focused on basic consumer goods, such as food, soap, and mobile phones [26]. It is also increasingly focused on financial services, such as banking and insurance. [26]

Ghanaian advertising: Ghanaian advertising is more diverse than Nigerian advertising [8]. It includes a wider range of products and services, from luxury goods to educational services [3, 6].

### 3.4. Overall Content Focus

In general, the content focus of mass media in Nigeria and

Ghana reflects the different socio-economic and political realities of the two countries. Nigerian media tends to be more focused on hard news and political issues, while Ghanaian media tends to be more focused on social and cultural issues.

However, both countries have a vibrant and diverse media landscape that provides a wide range of content for the public.

Here is a table summarizing the key differences in the content focus of mass media in Nigeria and Ghana:

**Table 1.** Key Differences in the Content Focus of Mass Media in Nigeria and Ghana.

Feature	Nigerian Media	Ghanaian Media
News Coverage	Political and economic news	Social and cultural news
Entertainment	Vibrant and energetic style	Polished and mainstream style
Advertising	Basic consumer goods and financial services	Diverse range of products and services
Overall Content Focus	Hard news and political issues	Social and cultural issues

## 4. Comparative Analysis of the Regulatory Framework of Mass Media in Both Nigeria and Ghana

Both Nigeria and Ghana have a relatively well-developed regulatory framework for mass media [2, 17]. However, there are some key differences between the two countries' regulatory approaches [26, 8].

### 4.1. Nigeria

Nigeria's regulatory framework for mass media is primarily based on the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Act of 1992 [2]. The NBC is responsible for regulating the broadcasting sector, including television, radio, and online streaming services [8]. The NBC also has some powers to regulate the print media [2].

The NBC Act provides for a wide range of regulatory powers, including the power to issue licenses, to set content

standards, and to monitor and enforce compliance with regulations [2]. The NBC also has the power to sanction broadcasters who breach the regulations, including by suspending or revoking licenses [2].

### 4.2. Ghana

Ghana's regulatory framework for mass media is primarily based on the National Media Commission (NMC) Act of 1993 [9]. The NMC is responsible for regulating all forms of mass media, including television, radio, print, and online [17].

The NMC Act provides for a similar range of regulatory powers to the NBC Act [9]. The NMC has the power to issue licenses, to set content standards, and to monitor and enforce compliance with regulations [17]. The NMC also has the power to sanction media outlets that breach the regulations, including by suspending or revoking licenses [9].

Comparative Analysis of Statistics Viewership or Usage of Mass Media in both Nigeria and Ghana in a Tabular Form:

**Table 2.** Comparative Analysis of Statistics Viewership or Usage of Mass Media in both Nigeria and Ghana.

Media Type	Nigeria	Ghana
Print media	36 million readers per day (2020)	24 million readers per day (2020)
Broadcast media	98% of households own at least one television (2020)	95% of households own at least one television (2020)
Radio	85% of households have access to a radio (2020)	78% of households have access to a radio (2020)
Digital media	92% of internet users in Nigeria access social media (2020)	77% of internet users in Ghana access social media (2020)
Mobile internet	47% of Nigerians have access to mobile internet (2020)	63% of Ghanaians have access to mobile internet (2020)

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

## 5. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study draws from the political economy of communication and cultural studies perspectives.

### 5.1. Political Economy of Communication Perspective

The political economy of communication perspective emphasizes the economic, political, and social factors that shape the development and operation of media systems. This perspective highlights the role of power relations, particularly those between different social classes, in shaping media content and structures. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding the political and economic contexts in which media systems operate.

In the context of Nigeria and Ghana, this perspective suggests that the media systems in these countries have been shaped by their colonial past and subsequent economic and political relationships with Western powers. The media systems inherited by these countries were designed to serve the interests of the colonial powers, and this legacy has continued to impact their development. Moreover, the political economy of communication perspective highlights the role of external influences and pressures, particularly those from Western media conglomerates, in shaping the content, style, and structure of media systems in Nigeria and Ghana.

### 5.2. Cultural Studies Perspective

The cultural studies perspective emphasizes the role of culture and identity in shaping media content and structures. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding the cultural contexts in which media systems operate, particularly in relation to issues of representation, identity, and cultural heritage.

In the context of Nigeria and Ghana, this perspective suggests that the media systems in these countries have been shaped by their unique cultural identities and histories. The media systems have played a significant role in shaping and promoting local cultures and identities, particularly in the context of post-colonial nationalism.

In summary, the political economy of communication and cultural studies perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the historical development, regulatory frameworks, and content focus of the mass media landscapes in Nigeria and Ghana. These perspectives highlight the importance of understanding the economic, political, and cultural contexts in which media systems operate, as well as the role of external influences and pressures in shaping their development.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this comparative analysis has highlighted the similarities and differences between the print, broadcast, and

digital media industries in Nigeria and Ghana. While both countries share some commonalities, such as the emergence of indigenous broadcasters and the growth of online news, there are also notable differences. For example, Nigerian media tends to place a greater emphasis on political and economic news, while Ghanaian media tends to place a greater emphasis on social and cultural news. The regulatory frameworks for mass media in Nigeria and Ghana also differ, with the NMC in Ghana having a broader mandate and more detailed content standards than the NBC in Nigeria. The statistics viewership or usage of mass media in both countries also differ, with Ghana having a lower percentage of households owning a television and a lower percentage of internet users accessing social media than Nigeria.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the comparative analysis presented, here are some recommendations for both Nigeria and Ghana to further develop and improve their mass media industries:

- 1) Both Nigeria and Ghana should continue to invest in and promote the growth of their digital media industries. This includes providing regulatory frameworks that support the development of digital media, as well as investing in infrastructure and technology to improve access to digital media.
- 2) Both Nigeria and Ghana should encourage the production of a wide range of content, including news, entertainment, and advertising. This can be achieved by providing regulatory frameworks that support the development of diverse content, as well as by promoting the production of locally-produced content.
- 3) Both Nigeria and Ghana should work to address issues of censorship and self-censorship in their media industries. This can be achieved by providing regulatory frameworks that promote freedom of expression and protect the rights of journalists and media outlets, as well as by promoting a culture of transparency and accountability in the media.

## Abbreviations

- NBC: Nigerian Broadcasting Commission  
 NPC: Nigerian Press Council  
 NMC: National Media Commission  
 WPT: World Press Trends  
 DTT: Digital Terrestrial Television  
 DMA: Digital Marketing Association of Nigeria  
 Hootsuite: Social Media Analytics Platform  
 NITDA: National Information Technology Development Agency (Nigeria)  
 NCA: National Communications Authority (Ghana)  
 WHO: World Health Organization  
 UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emer-

gency Fund

WFP: World Food Programme

UN: United Nations

UNAIDS: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

PEPFAR: President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

GAVI: Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization

GFF: Global Financing Facility

GFATM: Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

WHO: World Health Organization

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest

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