FOREIGN TV PROGRAMMES IN GHANA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GTV, VIASAT 1 AND ETV- GHANA

BY

OPHESMUR ADJELEY ADJEI
10551203

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that apart from the references to other people’s work, which have been duly cited, this long essay is the result of my own research undertaken at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. The work was under the supervision of Dr Gilbert Tietaah.

Dr Gilbert Tietaah       Ophesmur Adjeley Adjei
(Supervisor)             (Student)
Date                      Date
DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to Almighty God and my parents, Nii Adjei Klu and Afia Pokua.
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ABSTRACT

Research evidence suggests that developed countries, particularly the US, are imperialistic when it comes to cultural products. This has been attributed to the fact that foreign television programmes, from information rich countries, flood the schedules of local television stations of information poor countries. This phenomenon is referred to as cultural imperialism. The main objective of this study was to ascertain whether the claim that there is Western dominance of media content on African media platforms was empirically founded with respect to TV programmes. Also, the study sought to find out whether media ownership and the quest to gain a market share are major determinants of the choice of content for TV stations in Ghana. A mixed methods approach was used for the study. Programme guides from GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV- Ghana were content analysed. In-depth interviews were also conducted. The combined goal of this research design was to ascertain whether media ownership affected TV programme choice. Findings of the study revealed that out of the 202 programmes analysed, GTV had the largest number of programmes, and provided more variety to its viewers. Programmes among all the stations were found to have been dominated by entertainment related content like TV Series, Drama and Musical shows. This was to the detriment of informational programmes like documentaries, political discussion, and business related shows. This bias towards entertainment related programmes though reflective of the commercial focus of the TV stations tended to exclude programmes that could contribute to the promotion of indigenous cultures and arts. Nevertheless, the expectation that programmes would be preponderantly foreign, particularly from US was not supported by an aggregation of the contents of GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV- Ghana.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The mass media has been identified as being critical to the creation, transmission and reception of the values and meanings of a community and its people. It is therefore unsurprising that historically, the unevenness of media flows between nations has raised questions about its consequence on the culture and the identity of people in the affected countries. These concerns are even more pronounced when it comes to the flow of television programmes. According to Li (2013), the uneven flow of television programmes threatens the “broadcasting sovereignty of the nation-state, and the ability of developing countries to maintain their own cultures in the face of the ubiquitous Western media content” (p. 1). Efforts for the establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) had been based on the recognition of such concerns by developing countries.

An important precursor in the evaluation of the possible impact of these asymmetrical flows is knowledge about the direction, magnitude and nature of the unevenness of the flows. Indeed, some research projects were commissioned by UNESCO to examine the international flow of TV programmes and news in the world. Seminal among these were studies by international communication scholars Varis (1974, 1984) and Nordenstreng (1974) which analysed the amounts, nature and trends of the international flow of television programmes. These studies found two clear trends. Firstly, there was a one-way traffic from the big exporting countries in the West to the rest of the world. In Africa particularly, it was estimated that over 55% of annual TV broadcast hours were filled with imported programmes. Secondly, entertainment programmes were found to have dominated the flow.
However, findings from later flow studies (Sinclair, Jacka & Cunningham, 1996; Fox & Waisbord, 2002) tended to challenge the earlier image of a western domination of the global television market. Such studies found that local, national and regional oriented television programmes were becoming more prominent in television programme content among developing nations. This shift from the dominance of western programmes was particularly observed during prime time hour (Fox & Waisbord, 2002).

Ghana’s television industry has experienced several changes and expansion in recent decades because of the liberalisation and deregulation of its media landscape. Since 1997 when the first private TV stations went on air (Ansu Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998), there have been several privately owned TV channels, which together with the state broadcaster are constantly competing to gain an advantage on market share of audience. Once again, it is uncertain how such diversified ownership patterns have influenced the provision of television programmes among TV channels in Ghana. All these uncertainties are because there is not enough academic work in this field on Ghana. The few that are available, such as Nuviadenu (2005) were limited to examining the programmes of the state broadcaster, GTV more than a decade ago.

This study therefore sought to examine the current flow of television programmes in Ghana in terms of their category (genre), geographic origin, time and duration of broadcast. It also examined whether media ownership and the quest to gain a market advantage influenced Ghanaian television stations’ TV programmes. To do this, the research relied on the analysis of two-week television programme schedules of three Ghanaian television stations and interviews with three television programme directors. This methodological approach was also used in Benitez (2003) and Li (2013) to examine television programmes in El Salvador and China, respectively. Additionally, findings from this study will be juxtaposed to those of
previous studies that have examined television programmes in Ghana and elsewhere. This will help identify and understand the changes that might be observed in local and foreign television programmes in Ghana.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The globalization of television audience and content, in general, and the flow of foreign television programmes, in particular, has engaged the attention of scholars for a long time. This has led to a number of studies (Nordenstreng & Varis 1974; Schiller, 1978; Ogan, 2006; Nuviadenu, 2005; Omoera, 2010). There is however limited research and academic writing on foreign TV content and how ownership affects the focus of TV stations’ content in Ghana.

This lack of empirical certainty is important because, on the backdrop of the controversial role of television programme content in shaping the culture and identity of its recipients and the divergent findings of earlier flow studies in other parts of the world, it is uncertain what the current state of television programme content in Ghana is in terms of the flow of foreign television programmes. The increasing privatization of TV networks has led to an emphasis on commercialization and profit making (Thussu, 2007). For such TV networks, national interest and cultural identity considerations scarcely matter as audiences are seen as consumers who must be served with content that increasingly happens to be perceived as foreign in nature. These realities raise questions about the content of TV programmes and how ownership affects the content of the various TV stations in Ghana.

On the other hand, Schiller (1978) and more recently Benitez (2003) postulate that, it is the right of every individual nation to preserve its national sovereignty, traditions and culture. For this reason, many countries have sought ways to mitigate the adverse effects of the free flow of information on their communication systems. In a bid to prevent the flooding of local media
systems with foreign cultural products, some countries have adopted national communication policies that prescribe specific quotas in television programme content.

In Ghana, the National Media Commission (NMC) has the mandate to control the proliferation of foreign content on local TV. It is stated in the NMC’s Media Policy that the media has the core mandate of serving the wellbeing of all Ghanaians and regards all media and media services as public trust. Thus, local content on GBC’s regular TV channels, shall comprise 60% of total airtime. At least 50% of local programmes shall be aired during prime time. Commercial broadcasting on the other hand or all free-to-air commercial TV stations shall respectfully devote a minimum of 30% of their airtime to local content, including music. Such music shall also be local. At least 50% of the minimum allocation for local programmes shall be aired during primetime (National Media Commission of Ghana, 1996: 42-44). Therefore, this study sought to find out whether quotas given by the NMC were being upheld by the TV stations under study. Specifically, it was designed to find out if private TV stations (Viasat 1 and ETV Ghana), juxtaposed against the public broadcaster (GTV) were honouring these injunctions.

1.3. Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to examine the content of television programmes in Ghana on Viasat 1 and ETV Ghana in comparison with GTV. In so doing, the study sought to:

a) Understand the current state of TV programme content in Ghana.

b) Examine the influence of ownership patterns on the selection of TV programmes in Ghana.
c) To find out the extent to which the National Media Commission’s quota specifications on local content programmes were being adhered to by Viasat 1 and ETV Ghana; compared to GTV.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What is the nature of TV programmes in terms of programme category, duration and time of broadcast?

2. What is the proportion of local and foreign programmes shown on the three television stations under study?

3. To what extent does media ownership affect TV content?

b. To what extent do quota specifications by NMC on local programme content influence TV programme choice by GTV, ETV Ghana and Viasat 1?

1.5. Overview of Television Stations

1.5.1. ETV Ghana

ETV Ghana is a free-to-air commercial television channel which was born out of the partnership between Global Media Alliance in Ghana and Sabido Group, parent company of ETV South Africa, the largest English-medium channel in South Africa. Beyond Accra and Kumasi, the TV station is available via satellite on Sky TV and SMART TV.
1.5.2. Viasat 1

Viasat 1 is part of Modern Times Group (MTG), an entertainment broadcasting group. Viasat 1 attempts to provide entertainment for everyone across Ghana. The TV station’s programmes are events based but they also contribute to important causes which raise awareness on social issues in Ghana. The channel was awarded a license by the National Communication Authority, Ghana in December 2007.

1.5.3. GTV

GTV is the TV broadcast section of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation which is under government subvention. GTV has a mandate to air programmes in the area of culture, education, information and entertainment, to reflect national progress and aspirations. GTV broadcasts in the main Ghanaian languages as well as English. (Golden Jubilee, 1935-1985)

1.6. Significance of the Study

Findings from this study will provide scholarly knowledge about the current state of the flow of TV programmes among both state and private broadcasters in Ghana, in an era of media liberalisation and increased competitiveness.

It would also provide empirical evidence for advocacy, policy and regulatory responses to the implications of global television content on cultural and national identities in Ghana.
Information about how foreign and local content are used in TV programming can help focus responses in areas that are much needed.

Additionally, this study will serve as resource material for researchers who will like to delve into the area of the free flow of information and its effects on developing countries like Ghana.

1.7. Scope of the Study
The study was limited to studying GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana as the physical setting. It was also limited to examining the flow of TV programmes in Ghana.

1.8. Operational Definitions

1.8.1. TV Programme: In this study, the term TV programme was used to denote segments of TV content which come in a variety of formats such as Movie/ Drama, TV Talk shows, Music shows, Sports, among others.

1.8.2. TV Programme Guide: In this study, TV programme guide is used to refer to a catalogue of TV programmes scheduled for a TV station.

1.8.3. Entertainment Related Programmes: In this study, entertainment related programmes signify TV programmes such as Soap Operas/ TV series, Movie/Drama and Musical programmes
1.8.4. Informational Programmes: In this study, this term signifies programmes which seek to enlighten and impart knowledge like documentaries, political discussion, and business related shows.

1.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter has given a background of the study by placing the work within the context of flow studies that examine the ramifications of the free flow doctrine in international communication. This chapter also presented the research problem, objectives and questions to be addressed. The scope and significance of the study as well as operational definitions of key terms are also highlighted here.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter examines the theoretical framework on which the research is established and the fact that the phenomenon of the flow of TV programmes is situated in discussions of the free flow doctrine and media ownership. It also reviews the relevant related literature in order to draw out the concepts and methods that are pertinent to the current study.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This research is built on the free flow doctrine as well as the media ownership theory.

2.1.1. The Free Flow Doctrine

The mass media is essential to the field of international communication and discussions on globalization due to its role in passing on information and helping to form attitudes concerning other people and other countries (Nordenstreng & Varis, 1974). For Schiller (1978), the mass media has served the capitalist purposes of information rich countries like the United States. Schiller (1978) opines that, albeit the world has moved away from the phase of colonialism, the highest form of colonialism exists and is manifested through, “the colonization of the mind” (pg. 35) and this is perpetuated through cultural imperialism with the media as the conduit.
through which the phenomenon is sustained; thus the importance of the study of the flow of foreign cultural products. Ugochukwu (2008) on the other hand, opines that the “move toward a global culture” is the perceived cause of the transnational flow of cultural products.

The transnational flow of media products is important because “television viewing has been connected to people’s daily lives. The reason is that television viewing accounts for major and even dominant everyday leisure time” (Xuexin, Wayne Fu & Straubhaar, 2013: 544). This makes it imperative to connect television to the daily national life of a country’s people in order to engender a connection to national and local ideals (Xuexin, Wayne Fu & Straubhaar 2013).

Thus, it is binding on a nation state to exercise “National self-sufficiency in broadcast television programming” (Xuexin, Wayne Fu & Straubhaar, 2013: 545). A country’s ability to produce and broadcast domestic programmes puts checks on the flow of foreign TV products and augers well for the country’s “national preservation of the domestic cultural industry and resistance to foreign television programmes” (Xuexin, Wayne Fu & Straubhaar, 2013 : Pg. 545). For countries like Ghana, which fall under the ambit of countries without the requisite resources to control the flow of foreign television products, it is imperative to study the flow of cultural products to ascertain whether foreign television products dominate television programme content.
2.2.1 Media Ownership

Yan and Napoli (2007), state that a wide range of factors, including consumer preferences, programme costs, number of competitors and governmental policies, influence the amount of local news a broadcasting station airs. Similarly, Djankov, Nenova, Mcleish and Schleifer (2002) are of the view that media ownership is a major determinant of selection of media content. Because ownership and privatization apportions control, it shapes the information that is disseminated to the consumer. Profit-seeking broadcasting organizations in small countries are vulnerable to imported TV programmes and films because they are cheaper. Small countries which cannot afford to produce TV products are at a disadvantage (Ogan, 2006). They usually face the challenge of covering costs by importing TV products due to their smaller domestic markets (Ogan, 2006). Based on this argument, this study was aimed at studying the television programme content of GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana. Also, the researcher sought to ascertain whether ownership of TV stations affected TV programme content choice by TV stations in Ghana.

2.3. Related Studies

2.3.1. The Flow Studies

According to Ogan (2006), the US is imperialistic when it comes to cultural products; specifically, when it comes to films and television programmes. US soap operas, sitcoms, TV series among others, flood the schedules of local television stations. Similarly, Pjesivac and Imre (2016: 253) state that, “American-labelled leisure products have spread around the world,
reaching a large diverse audience… More than 70% of film and TV series imported by countries around the world are produced in the United States; Hollywood films are shown in more than 150 countries around the world” which is as a result of free markets and the free flow doctrine. According to Pjesivac and Imre (2016), the widespread flow of American cultural products has the propensity to influence foreign audiences, particularly, younger ones in terms of setting new cultural standards such as clothing styles, speech patterns, music choices, educational and moral standards. This has provided the justification for various attempts by nation states at minimizing the effects of cultural imperialism that the flow of cultural products comes with.

Nordenstreng and Varis (1974) conducted a UNESCO study of the international flow of TV programmes and news spanning the period of 1972-1973. This study set the tone for further studies into the flow of cultural products. The researchers sent questionnaires to 50 countries in order to have a documentation of "the composition of television programmes in various countries or the balance of exchange between countries in the area of communication commodities” (Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974: 7). The study revealed that there was predominantly a one-way flow of international programmes from the US or Europe to the rest of the world and that entertainment material dominated the flow. Variables like economic resources of the country, the dominance of a national culture, and a common unifying language were all predeterminers of the extent to which there was a one-way flow of television programmes. The study stated that there were countries that were heavily dependent on foreign imports in their programmes as well as those that were only slightly dependent.
A follow up study was carried out by Tapio Varis in 1985 to ascertain if any changes had occurred after a decade. For Varis’ (1985) new study, a two-week frame, from 31 January to 13 February 1983, was chosen for analysis. Programme categories were discussed and debated. These categories have been adopted and merged with Obonu and Madu’s (2010) programme categories which are discussed in detail in later parts of this chapter. The project was carried out on a regional basis, with eight institutions participating. This inter-institutional approach allowed for data collection and analysis from as many as 56 countries. The study concluded that there had been no major changes in the flow of television programmes since the 1973 study; in effect, the current situation seemed to have repeated the earlier pattern. However, there had been a notable increase in regional exchanges (Varis, 1985). Varis’ (1985) study of “the global traffic in television” revealed that Ghana’s domestic television programmes were 73% higher than the imported or foreign programmes which were ranked 27%.

Eko (1997) studied the flow of TV programmes in Africa and identified weaknesses in the analyses of TV programme flows in studies pertaining to flows from the West to Africa such as the neglect of cultural flow between nations in Africa. This served as a basis for Eko’s study into TV programme flows in Africa. Eko (1997) content analyzed TV programmes and observed these programmes from 1985 to 1994. Eko (1997: 87) concluded that, “Africans still like African programmes though they also watch programmes from other parts of the world.”

Unlike Eko (1997), Nuviadenu (2005) employed a historical approach in studying Ghana Television (GTV) and how its programme content has evolved over time. GTV is a state owned broadcasting organization that was established to broadcast to the whole of Ghana, "education
and the development of social ideals” (Nuviadenu 2005 in Kintz 2007:12). In spite of GTV’s primary goals, the state owned TV station has become a modernized, urban and elite medium which is contrary to the reason for which it was established which is “the medium of the people.” This trend shows an upsurge of international programmes on GTV from 1969-2003 (Nuviadenu 2005 in Kintz, 2007). Nuviadenu (2005) employed a qualitative content analysis because such an analysis is appropriate in dealing with the study of the flow of foreign TV programmes and is important in investigating patterns and trends from the past (Porter 1996 in Nuviadenu 2005). Findings of Nuviadenu's (2005) study showed that TV in Ghana has evolved from a development phase to a modernization phase and finally a phase where TV mirrors global and local phenomena (Nuviadenu 2005 in Kintz, 2007). Unlike 1984 where 93% of programmes on GTV were local and 7% foreign, programmes in 2003 contained 58% local sources and 46% foreign sources.

The findings from this study on Ghana may be outdated and no longer valid if pressures from increased competitiveness and the migration to digital television on the selection of television programmes of local stations are critically considered. These recent changes in the operating environment of local television stations in Ghana necessitate equally recent academic studies into the structure, flow and content of television programming in Ghana. Since Nuviadenu’s (2005) study was conducted, more than a decade ago, GTV has lost its monopoly of its audience share with the upsurge of new private television stations onto the markets competing for the same audiences. This gives the current research the basis for further research into current TV
programme content trends as well as to ascertain whether media ownership affects TV programme content.

Unlike Varis (1985) who investigated the flow of international television programmes in the world, Shah and Tajima (2008) studied the use of local, Western and Indian media by Ugandan college students in order to reconsider whether or not the media imperialism theory still has traces in TV programme content in Uganda or is outmoded since recent studies on global flows have proved that there has been a paradigm shift from the ideology that there is a one-way flow of cultural products from information rich countries to information poor ones; to more recent theorizing on contraflows thus challenging the idea of an audience being passive and susceptible to manipulation by Western media products and emphasizing that audiences are “active audiences that can accommodate, resist, and resignify foreign media products for their own particular and locally relevant uses.”

Shah and Tajima (2008) surveyed a convenience sample of 193 students at Makerere University in Kampala in June 2003 and asked, among other topics, about their media use patterns, their perception of cultural threats posed by foreign media and their reasons for liking and disliking local and foreign media. A combination of closed and open ended questions were used to ascertain whether or not there was consistency with previous studies on the students’ preference for local media over foreign media. Findings of the study showed consistency with past studies in this regard, as well as consistency with previous research, with regards to the fact that respondents were active rather than passive media users. The respondents seemed especially active when they expressed dislike for media.
Omoera (2010) reviewed media imperialism in Nigeria’s television broadcasting. This researcher used the historical approach to ascertain the stages of evolution of imperialistic tendencies in Nigerian media. The historical approach allowed the researcher to read texts and examine the various routes of the phenomenon in world media culture and trace the Nigerian experience to the development of television itself in the country. This would be helpful in gaining an in-depth knowledge of programming trends in Ghana as well as factors that inform programming trends and factors that have shaped these trends.

2.3.2. Media Ownership

Yan and Napoli (2006) studied market competition and how station ownership affected local affairs programming on broadcast television. The study presented descriptive data on broadcast television stations’ provision of local public affairs programmes and investigated economic theory and localism theory perspectives on the factors likely to affect the provision of such programmes. Findings of the study showed that half of the stations in the sample did not air any local public affairs programmes during the two-week sample period. Commercial stations devoted less than one complete programme per week to local programming whereas public stations aired some local public affairs programming during the sample period. Yan and Napoli (2006) indicated that “the commercial imperatives of ad-supported broadcast television inhibit the production of local public affairs programming and that these results suggest that commercial broadcasters are ceding public affairs programming to their non-commercial counterparts.”

http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/
Obonu and Madu (2010) studied programme content in Nigerian Broadcast media, specifically, three Nigerian TV stations. A mixed methods approach was employed. The study combined content analysis and an unobtrusive observation of media contents of both public and private stations. The study sought to describe media contents based on programming, to identify the sources of programmes and state the level of foreign contents in relation to indigenous ones.

The analysis showed a motley of programme patterns or categories under which the various contents aired on the different TV stations fell. There were 17 programme categories in all, including: Educational Programme, Business Related Programme, Political Discussion Programme, News Bulletin, Breakfast show, Documentary, Sports Programme, Children’s Programme, Soap Opera, Talk Show, Entertainment/Musical Programme, Government Sponsored Programme, Game show, Reality TV show, Late night movie, Religious programme and Drama. Findings of the study showed that 85% of programmes were locally produced in Nigeria, contrary to the claim that there was total western influence on African media. Also, Obonu and Madu's study brought to bear the fact that different programme patterns existed based on ownership and focus of the TV stations. This revealed the interest areas of TV stations and their inclination level to particular areas. For instance, it was realized that just like Varis and Nordenstreng (1973), entertainment and musicals were the most frequently aired programmes on private TV stations as well as the programmes that had the most foreign origin.

Obonu and Madu's (2010) study gives a basis for the current study. Obonu and Omadu's (2010) programme categories were helpful in getting the coding scheme for the current research. This study was aimed at ascertaining the trends in the flow of foreign TV programmes in Ghana and
whether the quotas given by the NMC were being adhered to by both public and commercial broadcasting organization.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter explains the method that was used for collecting data for the study and discusses the research design and procedure for data analysis. The study employed the mixed method research approach in the collection and analysis of data. The content analysis technique was used to examine TV programmes on three TV stations in Ghana (GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana). Interviews were also conducted to verify whether or not quotas on the airing of local programme content assigned to TV stations by the NMC were being adhered to by the media organizations under study. The study covered the first two weeks of June, 2016 (1st June, 2016-14th June, 2016) as exemplified by Nordensteng and Varis (1974).

3.1. Research Design

The mixed method approach was used for this study. The mixed method approach deals with, “collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study... in order to expand understanding from one method to another and to converge findings from different data sources” (Creswell, 2013: 240). The method of data collection, analysis and interpretation that was employed in this study was the sequential explanatory strategy. The objective of the sequential explanatory design is to “use qualitative results to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of a primarily quantitative study” (Creswell, 2013: 245). This method was chosen by the researcher because it is straightforward, presents few difficulties and is easy to execute (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013: 245), the sequential explanatory design is easy to implement because, “steps fall into clear, separate stages. In addition, this design feature makes it easy to describe and to report ...The main weakness for this design is the length of time involved in data collection, with the two separate phases.” The data collection
and analysis was strictly guided by research questions that this study sought to answer on the international flow of television products in Ghana.

3.2. Data Collection

Three programme guides from GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana, spanning the period 1st June, 2016 to 14th June, 2016 were content analysed. In-depth interviews were also used to provide more information about TV programme content on TV stations in Ghana.

The TV guides of these broadcasting organizations were used because similar studies that sought to examine the flow of television products used a similar approach. For instance: Nordenstreng and Varis (1974), Varis (1985), Nuviadenu (2005) and Obonu and Madu's (2010). The selection of TV stations was based on the different focus points of the TV stations with GTV being a public service TV station and Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana leaning more towards entertainment. The selection was also based on availability of the TV programme guides.

3.3. Content Analysis

The content analysis approach was used for this study. Walizer and Wienir (1978 in Wimmer and Dominick, 2011) define content analysis as any systematic procedure designed to examine the content of recorded information. This approach is popular with mass media research because it is a valuable tool in investigating the content of a medium such as the number and types of commercials or advertisements in broadcasting or the print media (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011).
The programme guides of GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana were content analysed. Content analysis enabled systematic, objective and quantitative measurement of the variables (Obonu and Madu, 2010). The approach helped to examine the flow of foreign TV programs on GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana. For the purpose of identifying and analysing the sources of the TV programmes, the programmes were categorized into Ghanaian, African, Asian, European, North American and Latin American, Mixed and other. These categories accounted for TV products from the Ghanaian, African, Asian, European, Northern America and Latin American parts of the world. The category ‘Africa’ encompassed TV products from other African countries other than Ghana and the category ‘Ghana’ comprised of TV programmes from Ghana. The category ‘Mixed’ represented TV programmes with co-productions, that is, a TV programme produced by two or more organizations stemming from different countries. The category ‘Other’ encompasses TV programmes which did not fall under the categories listed above, for instance a movie originating from Australia was coded as ‘Other’ because it did not fall under the categories listed above. Also, countries like Australia were not specifically categorized because they were not identified as one of the major cultural imperialistic countries such as the United States. The following categories were adopted from Obonu and Madu (2010): Educational Programme, Business Related Programme, Political Discussion Programme, News Bulletin, Breakfast show, Documentary, Sports Programme, Children’s Programme, Soap Opera, Talk Show, Entertainment/Musical Programme, Government Sponsored Programme, Game show, Reality TV show, Late night movie, Religious programme and Drama.

3.4. In-depth Interview

An in-depth interview is a purposeful and confidential conversation between an interviewer and a participant. After the study had analysed the TV programme guides of the selected media
organizations to ascertain whether or not there is the one-way flow of TV programmes on TV stations in Ghana, three programme directors from the respective media organizations were interviewed. This provided added information about TV programme content trends on TV stations in Ghana. In-depth interviews provided much more detailed information than what was available through the study of the programme content of the three media organizations. The technique allowed for the use of probes to attain greater depths beyond initial responses which may have been at a “surface” level. In-depth interviews also provided a more relaxed atmosphere in which information was collected through purposeful conversations.

3.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology adopted in the study, outlining the research setting and overall design of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

Overall, the study sought to find out the nature of television programmes, the patterns and the proportion of local and foreign programmes among three local TV stations (GTV, Viasat 1, ETV- Ghana) in Ghana. The findings which address these focal areas of the study are presented in this chapter, in line with the sequential explanatory design discussed in the third chapter of this study. The findings of the study are presented in two parts. First, are presented: by way of tables and graphs, an account of the results of the content analysis; secondly is a thematic analysis presentation of the findings of the in-depth interviews.

4.1. Content Analysis

The three TV stations which were studied tended to be different in various ways in terms of programming.
Graph 1 gives a description of the number of TV programmes analysed. A total of 202 programmes were aired on all three TV stations between 1st June, 2016 and 14th June, 2016. The total number of programmes was arrived at by coding individual programmes aired by the TV stations only once. This means that no programme was coded more than once even if it was repeated, however, if a programme slot existed, for instance, TV series, but had different kinds of TV series aired within the week, all these had to be coded for to show the origin or source. This accounts for some stations having more TV programmes than others.

A total of 107 different programmes were aired by GTV during the period of study. Thirty-six programmes were aired on ETV-Ghana and 59 programmes were aired on Viasat 1 within the same period of study. ETV-Ghana had the least number of TV programmes because they repeated a number of programmes during the period of study.
# Table 1: Distribution of Programme Types by Television Station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Programme</th>
<th>Name of Television Station</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GTV</td>
<td>ETV-Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Bulletin</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast show</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Programme</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Programme</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap Opera/TV Series</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk Show</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Programme</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Sponsored</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality TV show</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late night movie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious programme</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.30%</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie/Drama</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Programme</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.90%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Related Programme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Discussion Programme</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>53.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.80%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis brings to bare different TV programme patterns for the various stations based on their focus. The distribution of the 16-point content categorization reflects interest area of the TV stations. Altogether, the three stations were more inclined towards airing soap operas/ TV series (20.80%), followed by religious programmes (18.80%). Musical programmes, educational programmes, sports programmes and news bulletin followed with 14.90%, 11.90%, 5.90% and 5.40% respectively. Documentary, (1.50%), political discussion programmes (1.00%) and business related programme (0.50%) were among the least transmitted programmes. The preference for entertainment related programmes such as soap operas/ TV series and Musical programmes among the three TV stations especially Viasat 1 and ETV- Ghana point to a commercial orientation.

Figure 1: Duration of Programmes

Majority of TV programmes observed were transmitted for 30 minutes which made up 48% of the duration of TV programmes as evidenced by the figure above. Also, programmes that lasted
one hour comprised 32.7% of the total duration of TV programmes with 14.4% of TV programmes lasting less than 30 minutes.

Table 2: Source of Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Program</th>
<th>Number of Programmes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (Co-productions)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>202</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from the study as exemplified by Table 3 show that out of the total 202 TV programmes that were aired, Ghanaian TV programme content was the highest in terms of the origin of programmes. North America followed with a total of 27 TV programmes, Africa with 22 TV programmes, Latin America with 7 and Europe with 3 TV programmes.
Table 3: Local versus Foreign Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local_Vs_Foreign</th>
<th>Number of Programmes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All put together in Table 4, foreign content represented 35.6% of all 202 programmes analysed whereas local content made up 64.4%. This suggests that cumulatively, the three stations produced nearly two in every three of 10 programmes aired.

Table 4: Local Vs Foreign Cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local_Vs_Foreign</th>
<th>Name of Television Station</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GTV</td>
<td>ETV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Name of Television Station</td>
<td>86.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Name of Television Station</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Name of Television Station</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>52.067</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 represents further analysis of the proportion of local and foreign programming across all the TV stations under study. Local programmes out of all programmes analysed were 130 which represents 64.4% of all programmes analysed. Out of the overall 107 programmes that GTV aired during the period reviewed, GTV’s local programmes comprised 86%, ETV’s local programmes out of 36 overall programmes comprised 25% and Viasat 1 out of 59 aired.
programmes had 49.20% local programmes. Foreign programmes across all TV stations on the other hand totaled 72, which is 35.60% of all programmes analysed. GTV’s foreign programmes comprised the lowest percentage within its programming of all foreign programmes analysed which is 14% whereas ETV’s programming comprised the largest percentage of foreign programmes within its programming which is 75%. Viasat 1 almost maintained a balance between the proportion of local and foreign programming with its foreign programming representing 50.80% of its overall programming. A chi-square test was done to ascertain whether there was an association between media ownership and the choice of TV programmes. The result of the test as shown in Table 5 shows that there is a significant relationship between media ownership and programming.

4.2. In-depth interviews: Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis was used in the study to look across all the data to identify the common issues that recur, and identify the main themes that summarize all the views the researcher collected. These themes and subthemes were teased out after a thematic analysis had been done and were arrived at based on the nature of the questions and the pattern of answers.

The analysis of data from the interviews yielded three themes which recur in the data:

1. Programme choice drivers:
   a. State-owned:
      i. Bias towards content quality and setting of production
      ii. The local versus foreign
   b. Private
      i. Cost considerations
      ii. Content quality
iii. Advertisers

2. Policy considerations concerning programming: Compliance to external media regulatory bodies policies, who knows what and how?

3. Local versus foreign: Mixed focus of programming

4.2.1. Programme choice drivers

A. State-owned:
   a. Bias towards content quality and setting of production
   b. The local versus foreign

B. Private
   a. Cost considerations
   b. Content quality
   c. Advertisers

The first theme, programme choice drivers, has questions (1) and (4) embedded in it. The theme was arrived at as a result of answers to the first question of the interview which asked what factors were taken into account in deciding on the range of programmes that go into the broadcast schedules of the respective TV stations. Depending on the pattern of ownership, some answers varied. The interviewee from the State-owned media answered:

We consider content, language, set design and quality. Basically it's the content and whether the programme is in-house or sourced from independent producers.

It was evident that the state-owned media, GTV, was more concerned about the content and whether the programme was local or foreign. Interviewees from privately owned media organizations, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana stated that cost considerations as well as advertisers
were important factors to consider in determining the range of programmes that went into their broadcast schedules. Answers to the first question provided answers to the fourth question which sought to find out whether cost consideration and advertisers were a matter of concern in determining the choice of TV programmes.

4.2.2. Policy considerations concerning programming

A. Compliance to external media regulatory bodies’ policies

B. who knows what?

C. How?

The second theme, policy considerations concerning programming, was arrived at as a result of answers given to question (2) regarding whether media organizations had knowledge of and complied with media policies set out by external media regulators such as the NMC and the NCA. The general response from the interviewees showed they had little knowledge of the existence of media policies from external regulatory bodies except for one interviewee from a privately owned TV station who said:

We try to do what we call compliance with all rules concerning broadcasting from the NMC and NCA… We also have a team which works on the programmes. They try to edit portions of strong language, promoting alcoholic stuff, nudity. There are regulations concerning airing of alcoholic beverages, one does not have to air alcoholic beverage ads before 4pm on weekends. You can promote it after six or so.

All three interviewees however said that there were committees or individuals that were responsible for quality assurance.

4.2.3. Local versus foreign: Mixed focus of programming

This theme answers question 5 on the extent to which TV stations were concerned about local versus foreign content. There was a difference between responses derived from state-owned
media and responses derived from private media. The following response explains the view of the interviewee from GTV:

Most of our programmes are local; about 80%. Our foreign content are usually documentaries on animals, technology or religious programmes and these generally are not paid for except for the foreign religious programmes. We don’t usually air foreign drama. About 85% of the news we air is local news. We don’t have a lot of foreign music; we give priority to local content.

An interviewee from ETV- Ghana also answered differently:

In terms of news we have more local content which takes about 80%. In terms of music, we do more local. When it comes to film or drama, we do more foreign. I can say that about 100% of our programmes on film or drama are foreign.

Another response derived from question five from an interviewee from Viasat 1 was:

I’m not sure of the quota now but we were driving for 50-50, 50% local 50% foreign. Right now the proportion of foreign to local programming is 52%-48%, 52% foreign, 48% local.

These responses show a mixed focus of programming from the three TV stations.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

5.0. Introduction

This study sought to find out the nature of television programmes, patterns and the proportion of local and foreign programmes among three local TV stations (GTV, Viasat 1, ETV-Ghana) in Ghana. This chapter presents an integration of findings of the content analysed TV programmes as well as the thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews. This discussion is done by drawing on the research questions for the study.

5.1. Nature of TV Programmes in terms of time and duration

The duration of TV programmes is an essential factor to consider in order for TV stations to sustain the attention of TV programme audiences and is important in determining audience commitment to a programme. A lengthy programme may limit viewers’ comprehension as a result of loss of attention, interest, boredom, fatigue, time constraints, among others. Accordingly, majority of TV programmes observed were transmitted for 30 minutes at 48%.

5.2. Proportion of Local and Foreign Programming

Results from the study showed that out of the total 202 TV programmes aired on GTV, Viasat 1 and ETV-Ghana, Ghanaian TV programme content was the highest in terms of the origin of programmes. North America, Africa, Latin America and Europe followed respectively. Foreign content represented 35.6% of all 202 programmes analysed whereas local content made up 64.4%. This finding speaks to research question (2) on the proportion of local and foreign programming. The findings of the study therefore contradict the claim of total Western influence on African media and reignites discourses of media imperialism within the context of the Ghanaian broadcast industry. The findings of this study, maintain that, Ghana, though an information poor country, is only slightly dependent on foreign programming unlike http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/
Nordenstreng and Varis’ (1974) study which states that information poor countries are usually heavily dependent on foreign imports in their programming.

5.3. Relationship between Media Ownership and TV Programming

Analysis of the proportion of local and foreign programmes across all the TV stations under study showed a higher percentage of local programmes than foreign programmes. GTV aired the most local programmes during the period reviewed. GTV’s local programmes comprised 86% of its total programmes. According to the findings of this study, GTV, a public broadcaster, was meeting its programme quotas stipulated in the NMC’s media policy which states that local content of public broadcasters should comprise 60% of total airtime (NMC, 1996: 44). Viasat 1 on the other hand, has almost a balance between local and foreign programmes with its foreign programmes representing 50.80% of its overall programmes and 49.20% local programmes. Viasat 1 was also meeting its programme quotas stipulated by the NMC which states that commercial broadcasters should devote a minimum of 30% of their airtime to local content (NMC, 1996: 44). ETV-Ghana on the other hand, according to the findings of this study was not meeting the quotas stipulated by the NMC. ETV-Ghana’s programmes had 75% foreign programmes.

A chi-square test was done to ascertain whether there was an association between media ownership and the choice of TV programmes. The result of the test shows that there is a significant relationship between media ownership and TV programme selection. Also, responses from the interviewee from ETV-Ghana showed that media ownership indeed affected the choice of TV programmes:

ETV exists as a result of an international relationship with South Africa. Most of the things we show on our stations are from South Africa. The reason is because
it’s cheaper. When our South African partners buy the programmes, we get the license or right to show them on our station here.

This excerpt from the interviews is evidence of a relationship between media ownership and the choice of TV programmes and supports Obonu and Madu’s (2010) claim that media ownership and the focus of TV stations affect TV programme choice.

5.4. Limitations

A major limitation of the study was the difficulty involved in obtaining TV programme guides as well as interviews from the TV stations given the limited period of time for the collection of data for the study.

5.5. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and limitations of this study, the current researcher recommends that:

a. A more comprehensive study of more TV stations over a longer period can be done to help provide more statistically valid evidence.

b. Private TV stations can devote more airtime to airing local content in order to mirror and promote the Ghanaian culture and arts.

c. The evidence that more could be done in terms of local programmes suggests the need for a local programmes’ fund.

d. Findings of the study provide a reflection on the need to include adult audiences and the youth who desire and need more informational and educational content during programme scheduling.
5.6. Conclusion

This current study set out to examine the nature, pattern and flow of TV programmes among three TV stations in Ghana, keeping in mind the differences in ownership. Out of the 202 programmes analysed, GTV had the largest number of programmes and provided more variety to its viewers. Programmes among all the stations were found to have been dominated by soap operas/TV series and entertainment related programmes. This was to the detriment of informational and educational programmes like documentaries, political discussion and business related discussions. This bias towards entertainment related programmes though reflective of the commercial focus of the TV stations, most especially the private TV stations, stations may tend to exclude adult audiences who desire more of such information and educational content.

Interestingly, the study found considerable difference between the overall amounts of local programmes as against foreign programmes with a bias towards local programmes. This indicates a partial proof of the claim of total western influence on the programme content of local stations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR BROADCASTING ORGANIZATIONS
1. What factors do you take into account in deciding on/ determining the range of programmes that go into your broadcast schedule?

2. What policy or regulatory considerations (if any), guide those decisions?
   a. What (if any) do media regulatory bodies such as the NMC or NCA require you to do in terms of meeting programme protocols (if any)?
   b. If these requirements exist, what are they specifically?
   c. To what extent are you meeting those requirements?

3. Beyond external regulatory bodies, what in-house guidelines (if any) determine the choice of programmes?

4. To what extent does advertising and cost considerations affect decisions on the choice of TV programmes?

5. To what extent are you concerned about local versus foreign content?
   a. To what extent is this a factor in deciding the choice of programmes, in terms of:
      i. Proportions regarding news and information
      ii. Proportions regarding music and
      iii. Proportions regarding film/drama

APPENDIX B

TELEVISION PROGRAMMING CODING GUIDE

1. Name of Television Station
   GTV
ETV- Ghana
Viasat 1
2. Pattern of Ownership
   State-owned
   Private
3. Name of Program
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Type of Program
   1. News Bulletin
   2. Breakfast show
   3. Documentary
   4. Sports Programme
   5. Children’s Programme
   6. Soap Opera/TV series
   7. Talk Show
   8. Musical Program
   9. Government Sponsored Program
   10. Game show
   11. Reality TV show
   12. Late night movie
   13. Religious programme
   14. Movie/ Drama
   15. Educational Programme
   16. Business Related Programme
   17. Political Discussion Programme

5. Duration of Programme
   1. Less than 30 Minutes
   2. 30 Minutes
   3. 1 Hour
   4. More than an Hour

6. Day part
   1. Prime time 7:00-11:00pm
   2. Non- Prime time

7. Source of Programme
   1. Ghana
   2. Africa
3. Asia
4. Europe
5. North America
6. Latin America
7. Other
8. Mixed