

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES

PREJUDICE AGAINST GHANAIAN HOMOSEXUAL YOUTH

The image shows a large, light blue watermark of the University of Ghana crest in the background. The crest features three golden leaves at the top, a central shield with a golden emblem, and a banner at the bottom with the motto 'INTELLIGENTIA FRATERNITAS'. The text 'BY' is centered over the crest.

BY

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
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DECLARATION

I, Marcella Estella Merley Agbeko, declare herewith that except in places where references have been cited and duly acknowledged, “Prejudice against Ghanaian Homosexual Youth” is the outcome of my own independent research, conducted under the avid supervision of Professor Brigid Sackey of the Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana, and that this has not been presented either in part or full to any other institution for any award.

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my dear husband, Eddison Agbeko and children, Audrey and Maxwell Agbeko through whose selfless support and encouragement, a journey that seemed complex became very simple.



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For me, it has always been by the sustaining grace of God, and I can never thank Him enough for a smooth ride on a bumpy road. The patience and warmth of my supervisor, Professor Brigid Sackey coupled with such high intellectual prowess are matchless, and I do not only feel indebted but also privileged to work under the supervision of such a person whose criticisms were purely constructive and enlightening. God richly bless and reward her efforts

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at examining the spread of homosexual practice among Ghanaian youth in the Accra Metropolis, and the prejudice against those with this sexual orientation. It also discussed the social policy implications of the prejudice in relation to access to education, health and employment. In the employment of qualitative research design, data were collected from participants through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Discussions from the findings revealed that homosexual practice among Ghanaian youth is indeed common. Moreover, homosexuals in Ghana experience high degrees of prejudice from families, friends, associates and the community once they are identified as non-heterosexuals; making access to health, employment and education almost impossible. Therefore, findings from this study could be of interest to stakeholders in education, gender and social protection as well as policy makers in tackling the social, moral and legal concerns of homosexuality among the youth in the country. It is important therefore for the government and the sector ministries concerned to pay more attention to the social sector to ensure that sexual minorities, irrespective of their sexual orientation are protected and given the necessary aid to enhance their socio-economic status and improve Ghana's overall socio-economic development.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

My interest in this study, youth and homosexuality, evolved from my position as assistant youth pastor attending to the affairs of many young people for several years in my church.

In 2010, I was invited by another church to preach to their youth on the topic “The Youth and Homosexuality.” There, a young man who worked with a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) recounted his experiences with some homosexuals for a magazine publication. I realised that the phenomenon of homosexuality, a subject of taboo in Ghana, is now in the public domain. I then apprehended the need to look out for, engage, and counsel the youth on issues that may have a prejudicial effect such as physical, psychological, social and spiritually on their lives.

In view of this, together with a team of other Christian women, and with a religious perspective, we visited some schools and juvenile prisons to talk on issues like social vulnerability, sexuality, empowerment, leadership, decency and hope. There were follow ups with counselling sessions until it became evident that the juvenile brackets have experiences that needed to be addressed and pursued.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The dominance of heterosexuality as the generally accepted form of sexual orientation in Ghana, has led to a high degree of sexual prejudice against homosexuality. The Ghanaian society detests, rejects and sees homosexuality as a practice which has the propensity to corrupt its culture, values and moral standards. For instance, John Macleod, a 63 year-old British was deported from Ghana when pictures of him in a homosexual act came to light. This reaction confirms that same-sex sexual activity is illegal (*Daily Graphic, November*

15, 2007). Most striking was Ghana's late President Professor John Evans Atta Mills' response to a question on whether Ghana's stance to gay issues had been altered. His answer was: "Africans and Ghanaians for that matter frown on homosexuality and no responsible leader will go against the wishes of his people if the people do not wish to legalise homosexuality" (*GNA February 12, 2012*).

Since there is not much academic publication on homosexuality in Ghana, one can only rely on newspaper publications and original research as my study intends to be. Print and electronic media reports on the prevalence of homosexual activities in Senior High Schools in Ghana especially boarding schools where the youth stay together for longer periods in their lives. News media such as *Daily Guide*, *Citi News*, *Ghana Web*, have reported on homosexual practices at the secondary educational level, the Senior High Schools. For example in 'Kumasi Wesley Girls' Senior High School, 12 students were expelled for their alleged act of homosexuality (*Ghana Web*, December 8, 2012). Similarly, in September 2011, stories of a suspected gay teacher who was arrested by the Ghana police for engaging in homosexual activities with some students in Adisadel College in the Cape Coast Metropolis trended on social media. It is thus evident that the practice of homosexuality is widespread among the youth in Ghana.

Homosexuality has had serious health repercussions among the youth which have social policy implications. For example, in 2014, a young man of 22 years confided in me about his engagement in homosexual activities. He revealed that he was introduced to it by an older cousin when he was eleven years old and since then, he has had multiple sexual partners. He then broke down in tears, revealing that he was HIV positive. Probing further, I discovered that there are so many young people who also find themselves in the same predicament. In that same year, he lost some friends who engaged in the act and who were also HIV positive and this got him alarmed.

The young man's predicament together with the Ghana Aids Commission report of 2011 which revealed an estimated 30,000 homosexuals in Ghana, 17 percent of which are living with HIV/AIDS (*Ghana Web, November 14, 2014*) ignited my interest in the youth and homosexuality, and subsequently informed my choice of this research area. Also, as much as Ghana frowns on homosexuality, it has become a global phenomenon now and in some areas of the western world, including France, United Kingdom and United States, it has been linked even to human rights. Section 10 of the December 19, 2008 UN Declaration on discrimination to decriminalise homosexuality states:

"We call upon all States and relevant international human rights mechanisms to commit to promote and protect human rights of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity." (10)

Therefore, there is the need to investigate the reality and veracity of the situation and find ways of addressing them. While exploring the prejudice against them, it is important to also investigate how the continual practice of homosexuality among the youth can impact on the future of Ghana's socio-economic development, if its young people are being driven into exclusion.

1.2 Research objectives

1. To establish the spread of homosexual practice among Ghanaian Youth.
2. To examine the prejudice among Ghanaians.
3. To investigate the level of discrimination in relation to their access to education, health and employment.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How widespread is homosexuality among the youth in Ghana?
2. How does the Ghanaian society treat homosexuals?

3. How can prejudice influence employment, healthcare and educational advancement.

1.4 Homosexuality/Sexual Orientation

This study which focuses on the effects of prejudice against Ghanaian homosexual youth in the Accra metropolis will lay particular emphasis on their access to education, health and employment; the kind of discrimination, stigma and exclusion they encounter and how these affect them socially and psychologically.

Sexual orientation as defined by Coleman et al, (2012) is the progression of an individual's physical, romantic and or emotional attraction to persons of either the same sex, opposite and or both sexes or even more than one sex. Known forms of sexual orientation under which these are categorised include heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and asexuality. Asexuality, sometimes identified as the fourth sex represents the lack of sexual attraction to others. Though these classes remain entrenched, research has proven that sexual orientation's paths are not strictly defined (Shively & DeCecco, 1977). In recent times however, sexual preference has become a more preferred term for sexual orientation.

Several decades of research has shown that sexual orientation is embedded with multiple variations 'from exclusive attraction to the opposite sex to exclusive attraction to the same sex', Hamer et al (1993, p. 23). Scientists have not been able to arrive at a consensus on this debate, though they tend to lean more on biologically-oriented theories of the genes and also social factors.

For example, Dr. Gene E. Robinson notes:

“as much as people like to divide themselves into nature or nurture camps, what genes actually do in the brain reflect the interaction between hereditary and environmental information.” (New York Times, December 13, 2004).

McGue and Bouchard (1998, p. 2) also acknowledge that human behavioural genetics conjoins both the genetic and environmental bases in human variation. Corroborating the above, Kronemeyer (1980, p. 7) concludes:

"With rare exceptions, homosexuality is neither inherited nor the result of some glandular disturbance or the scrambling of genes or chromosomes. Homosexuals are made, not born 'that way.'"

De Young (1998) observes that homosexuality as a sexual orientation existed in all societies from ancient Greek to Rome and even biblical times. He explains further that pederasty, a practice among the upper echelons of the Greek society where an older man would turn a young boy into his sex partner and mentors him, was a marriage supplement. He cited Rome as the next major city in terms of the phenomenon and many scholars believe, that is what Apostle Paul criticised in the book of Romans Chapter One where emperors engaged in the practice. Therefore, Gibbon (1776) comments that, "of the first fifteen emperors, Claudius was the only one who's taste in love was entirely correct" (not sexually perverted). Many scholars allude the earliest form of homosexuality to the Bible in the book of Genesis 9:2-24, where the youngest son of Noah, Ham sodomised his father while the latter was drunk and asleep.

1.5 Homosexuality and Prejudice

Prejudice against homosexuality has become a global phenomenon; Herek (2010) observes that homophobia, a term coined by heterosexual psychologist George Weinberg in the latter part of the 1960s is a reflection of society's mentality of sexual orientation. As a word, homophobia which demonstrated heterosexuals' fear of being in the same environment with homosexuals as well as homosexuals' self-hatred has metamorphosed over the years into a slighter term; "prejudice" which he defines as negative behaviour towards an individual because of his or her sexual orientation, especially by heterosexuals towards the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. Sexual

prejudice is formed against sexual minorities and as opined by Samarakoon (2008, p. 54), it is a normal phenomenon in any society to tag homosexuality as a “sexual deviance.” Sexual deviance is a common problem in any society but due to the rapid social and economic changes, this problem has transmuted into a complex one.

Heterosexism, another form of prejudice, emerged in various literatures as a corresponding term that disparages and stigmatises any form of non-heterosexual behaviour (Herek, 1990).

In a longitudinal study by McGee (2016) on 98 countries worldwide to determine their tolerance and acceptance levels of homosexuality; it was revealed that whereas some countries have become more tolerant of homosexuality, others have also assumed a less tolerant perspective. In Africa and Ghana for that matter, homosexuality is broadly frowned upon by various societies and groups. Homosexuality is perceived as sexual perversion; unnatural and unusual within the Ghanaian culture and therefore has cultural, moral, religious, political and sociological implications. The fact that heterosexuals represent the predominant sexual group in Ghana does not relegate the reality of the existence of homosexuals (Appiah, 2006) and probably bisexuals in the country.

The sudden announcement of an alleged conference of gays and lesbians in Accra in 2006 pulled Ghana into public dialogue on homosexuality (GhanaWeb, September, 2006). The Criminal Code 1960 criminalises as well as causes the arrest and imprisonment of homosexuals. The Criminal Offences Code - 1960 (ACT 29), Section 104 states: (1) whoever has unnatural carnal knowledge of any person of the age of sixteen years or over without his consent shall be guilty of a first degree felony and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years and not more than twenty-five years; or of any person of sixteen years or over with his consent is guilty of a misdemeanour.

Both legal professionals and religious leaders have expressed legal and religious implications on the practice.

These include former Minister for Justice and Attorney General, Marietta Brew Appiah (Ghana Web, February 7, 2013) and the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuhu Sharubutu, leader of the Muslim community in Ghana (GNA, September 6, 2006). Till date, Christian and Muslim leaders in Ghana have continued to condemn homosexuality as an abominable act contrary to the laws of the Holy Bible and Holy Quran. Religion thus, represents a powerful anti-homosexual channel and force in Ghana.

According to Sollar and Somda (2011), respondents in a study carried out in Ghana viewed homosexuality as anti-African culture and Religion as they believe it is a taboo “and does not meet any of their time tested values.” Sadgrove et al (2012) also lament that if people are left to practice homosexuality, procreation will be affected, and McGee’s (2016, p. 4) study shows that Ghana’s tolerance level decreased from a mean score of 1.76 in 2007 to 1.37 in 2011.

Katz (1995) explains that though heterosexuality as a term was later introduced into literature, societies’ understanding of the concept of sexuality and the attractions, behaviours, and relationships were very well defined. Hence, Jackson (1999, p. 26) emphasises that the notion of heterosexuality is not only tied into conceptions, ideas, and acts of sexuality, but it is rather viewed as a foundational structure in society and culture. Sexuality is thus entrenched in societal structures and connected to central social institutions, such as the family and marriage. In view of the above, this study will employ the terminologies Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ), Men Sleeping with Men (MSM), Sexual Minorities and Heterosexual to describe sexual

orientations. Sexual Minorities, LGBT and homosexuals will be used interchangeably in the study.

Youth symbolises an interface between childhood and adulthood. However, youth as a social group are defined in terms of age (Chigunta, 2002). The Ghana National Youth Policy (2010) defines youth as persons within the age bracket of fifteen (15) and thirty-five (35). Ghana's definition is based on the United Nations organisations' and the Commonwealth Secretariat's.

1.6 Relevance of the Study

The emergence of homosexual activities among Ghanaian youth has drawn society's attention to the pervading subject in the Ghanaian social system. Jenness & Grattet (2001) observe that policy makers began to redefine antigay violence in the 1980s, recognising it as a social problem. The Member of Parliament for Effutu, Alex Afenyo Markin in Ghana's Central Region appealed to government to take a stance on gay rights for future policy direction though his own position was not definite (*Ghana Web* February 28, 2014).

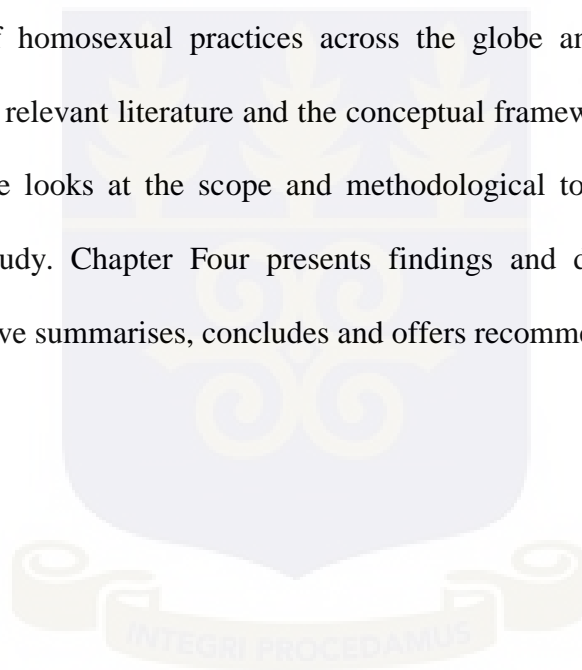
Of the few studies in Africa in general and Ghana in particular on homosexuality, just a handful focuses on issues concerning the youth and the effects of sexual prejudice. This qualitative study thus, intends to delve deeper into homosexual activities among Ghanaian youth, interacting with a cross-section of homosexual youth in the practice and subsequently draw experts' attention to this emerging social trend in order to find ways of addressing it.

It will also expand the knowledge and resource-base in this field. Furthermore, because it goes beyond just attitudes and perceptions, its in-depth nature will bring the current situation to the fore and inform policy makers of the social policy implications of education, health, exclusion and poverty of homosexual youth as well as any human rights

issues that are likely to surface. Subsequently, the findings will inform parents, school authorities, communities, government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) of the need to protect and attend to their physiological and psychological health so they can also contribute to socio-economic development. Moreover, this will precipitate the establishment and or strengthening of a legal framework, social structures and institutions to address this sensitive issue among the youth.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic and gives a general overview of homosexual practices across the globe and Ghana in particular. Chapter two reviews relevant literature and the conceptual frameworks identified with the study. Chapter Three looks at the scope and methodological tools employed and their usefulness to the study. Chapter Four presents findings and discussions on the data collected. Chapter Five summarises, concludes and offers recommendations for the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of a review of relevant literature and chosen theoretical framework, other related studies on homosexuality and concepts identified with the study. The selected literature intends to give a deeper understanding of the concept of sexual prejudice and its add-on effects.

2.1 Introduction

Herek (2009) describes sexual prejudice as “internalised sexual stigma” that results in the negative evaluation of sexual minorities. Sexual prejudice is manifested through various forms of attitudes and behaviours towards the sexual minorities in society. This includes stigma, social stressors, social exclusion and other forms of prejudicial behaviours from social institutions as a result of societal norms, belief system, religious and cultural values among others.

2.2 A Western View of Homosexuality

Worldwide, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons experience vast amounts of discrimination, harassment and victimisation from society. The United Nations reports that in more than 70 countries, laws make it a crime to be homosexual, exposing millions to the risk of arrest, imprisonment and, in some cases, execution (UNHCR, 2010).

Samelius and Wågberg (2005, p. 19) observe that most LGBT persons around the world today are living in a culture of silence, non-recognition and disrespect. Discrimination of LGBT and intersex people comes in varied forms and exists on different societal levels. These are directly or indirectly manifested in state repressions and or through social interactions and institutions. Examples of the usual LGBT persons’ discriminations are through criminalisation of homosexuality, institutionalised homophobia; abuse in state

institutions; forced medication; and cruel treatments, neglect of the existence and needs of LGBT with disabilities, young LGBT persons and elderly LGBT persons; diminished access to healthcare; workplace discrimination; violence and harassment from official state representatives including execution. Other forms of discrimination include social repression with or without state tolerance, revealed in verbal abuse, silence, ridicule, hate crimes, corrective rape of lesbians and forced marriage.

Even in the United States of America (USA) where a good number of states provide some degree of legal recognition to same-sex couples and their children, and for which reason majority of the U.S. population now resides in a jurisdiction where sexual minorities are afforded statutory protection against employment discrimination (Herek 2007, National Gay Lesbian Task Force 2012), a variety of social structures are still prominent based on sexual orientation. Inequalities in health care between heterosexuals and LGBTs (Ross et al, 2011) seem to rule as a result of some institutional policies.

In a longitudinal study by McGee (2016) on 98 countries worldwide to determine their tolerance and acceptance levels of homosexuality; it was revealed that whereas some countries have become more tolerant of homosexuality, others have also assumed a less tolerant perspective. There are also those countries that have not changed their outlook on the phenomenon. McGee's (2016) evaluation revealed that Iraq, Israel and Italy which had no room for homosexuality in the early years have shown the following patterns of tolerance levels in recent years with the following mean scores; Iraq - 1.73 in 2013; Israel - 4.8 in 2001 and Italy-3.34 in 2005. Others with previous zero tolerance levels but who have now embraced the phenomenon are Czech Republic (1991) with a mean score of 5.6; Dominican Republic – 3.26; Ecuador (2013) – 2.8.

Writing on LGBT issues in August 2013, Charles Radcliff, head of the United Nations Issues Section, United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR) in New York says:

“studies conducted in the US, the UK and Thailand show that between half and two thirds of LGBT students are either intimidated or oppressed at school while a third skip school to eschew being pestered. They are not only intimidated at school but are also rejected at home and end up homeless. The survey revealed that up to 40% of homeless youth on the streets of major cities in the US are identified as LGBT or queer.”

Another study found that gay and lesbian youth are four times likely to consider or attempt suicide as against the general population (*Reuters News, August 2013*). Europe though debatable, emerged as the most “gay friendly” continent.

On January 04, 2016, John Fingleton, chair of the board of Kaleidoscope Trust, an institution that works to uphold LGBT rights internationally, shared some of the experiences of sexual minorities on World Economic Forum. A trans activist in Papua New Guinea named Elizabeth Taylor says:

“Stigma, discrimination, abuse and violence are part of my daily life. It is not safe for me to walk around freely in my own country. My voice has not been heard when fronted up at the police station. I am not utilising my rights as a human because I am in fear.”

Again, on the 18th of July 2017, John Fingleton tweeted Ahmed and Saied on social media; a gay couple who have fled Syria and seeking asylum to avoid their society’s pressure.

2.3 The African/Ghanaian Perspectives of Homosexuality

It is common knowledge that the practice of homosexuality is alien to African traditions and culture. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe for example, referred to homosexuals as “prostitutes, dogs and pigs” (Shoko, 2010). Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga commissioned the arrest of both male and female homosexuals since their behaviour was regarded unnatural (Barasa, November 28, 2010; BBC News, November 29, 2010). To

this effect, several researches have indicated that the practice is more criticised in Africa than in any other part of the world.

Conversely, in the book “Boy wives, female husbands” on studies of African homosexuality, Murray & Roscoe (1998) anthropologists, refuted the cliché that “homosexuality is alien to Africa” They maintained that women in Lesotho engaged in communally endorsed "long term, erotic relationships" called *motsoalle*. Substantiating this, Evans-Pritchard (1937) recorded incidents of male “Azande” warriors of northern Congo who engaged young male lovers aged between twelve and twenty in “routine marriage” and even paid their “bride price” to their parents.

Other remarkable examples include the popular ‘Bushmen’ painting of African men in erotic same sex sexual intercourse. Another documented evidence was by a Dutch military attaché in the late 1640s of Nzinga, a warrior woman in the Ndongo Kingdom of Mbundu, who, instead of “king” ruled as “queen”, apparelled as male, encircled with “harem” of young men who dressed as women and who were her “wives” (ibid.). As indicated by Murray and Roscoe (1998), numerous reports also show that in the highly sex-segregated societies of Africa, homosexual attraction and practice were not unusual among male and female peers especially in the years preceding heterosexual marriage.

Supporting the above, Ajen (1998, p. 129) in “West African Homoeroticism” claims that in the entire region of West Africa in particular and Africa in general, issues about sex are hardly discussed openly because many Africans do not feel comfortable with it as it is seen as indecent talk. He therefore refers to this as a “code of silence” since most conversations on sexuality are shrouded in metaphors and allegories.

According to Sollar and Somda (2011), 46% of countries are prejudiced toward homosexuals in Africa. Most researches attribute some of the reasons to morality,

religion, procreation and culture. Hence, only the following six countries signed the December 2008 UN Assembly Declaration to decriminalise homosexuality: Gabon, Sao Tome & Principe, Mauritius, Central Africa Republic, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

As the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to legalise homosexual practice and marriage, it is worth discussing homosexuality in South Africa in a bit more detail. As far back as 1968, Minister of Justice P.C. PeIser, was pushing a bill through legislature which illegalised homosexual relations (Kennedy, 2006, p. 61). However, the emergence of constitutional democracy empowered South African LGBT, mostly white middle and upper classes led by its founder Simon Nkoli, a black South African and a well-known anti-apartheid activist to fight for their rights under the new constitution in the 1980s.

The preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 200 of 1993 states: “there is the need to create a new order of fundamental rights and freedoms” (Ilyayambwa, 2015, p. 51). The South African government in 1996 approved a new constitution in which sexual orientation and national non-discrimination clauses were enshrined. Subsequently, the equality and prevention of Unfair Discrimination bill was signed by Parliament in January 2000, and passed into law by President Mbeki in August of the same year (Raizeberg, 2003) as a result of pressure from Gays and Lesbians of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) group which emerged in the mid-1980s as well as the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) in 1996, claiming "Equality for All" as affirmed in the South Africa Republican Constitution (Ilyayambwa, 2015, p. 51). In spite of this, many African countries continue to both disapprove of and punish homosexuals.

In Senegal, homosexuality is strongly condemned and punishable; a study carried out in Senegal reveals that homosexual men were stigmatised and subjected to violence. They

explain that “homosexual men live in extreme insecurity and are subjected to domestic, community and institutional violence” (Lamerange et al., 2009, p. 637).

The Ugandan Legislative Assembly in February 2014, voted to criminalise homosexuality. A Nigerian president, Goodluck Jonathan also signed a bill criminalising same-sex "amorous relationships" and membership of LGBT rights groups into law. "We will fight these vermins called homosexuals or gays the same way we are fighting malaria-causing mosquitoes, if not more aggressively" were the rantings of Gambia's former president, Yahya Jammeh (Quist-Adade et al, 2014, p. 23).

In other African countries, the acceptance of homosexuality has been hampered by societal attitudes, values systems, religion, traditions and cultural beliefs that are almost impossible to deal with. In August 1995, on learning that GALZ (Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe) was to occupy a booth at the annual Zimbabwe International Book Fair, Mugabe exclaimed:

“I find it outrageous and repugnant to my human conscience that such immoral and repulsive organisations like those of homosexuals, who offend both the agents of the law of nature and the morals and religious beliefs espoused by our society, should have any advocates in our midst or even elsewhere in the world” (Ilyayambwa 2012, p. 57).

Statistics from a study by Mtemeri (2015, p. 117) of 143 students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at a university in Zimbabwe imply that most of the students were not friendly to homosexuals neither did they have homosexual friends as indicated by 76.2%. In a study by Kodero et al (2011, p. 283) on perceptions on the practice of homosexuality in secondary schools in Kenya where the practice is high among students, 64% of respondents perceive sexual starvation as the main root cause of homosexuality in secondary schools.

Some of Ghanaians' perceptions of homosexuality have already been discussed above, but suffice it here to say that one of the sources accounting for the negative attitudes comes from the Ghanaian Constitution, Criminal Offences Code - 1960 (ACT 29) Section – 104. This section is explicit on the country's position on homosexuality, which is explained as “unnatural carnal knowledge.” Because the constitution deems it unnatural, any person of the age of sixteen years or over who engages in such acts with or without his consent is guilty of a misdemeanour.

Another example showing Ghana's abhorrence of homosexual practice is evidenced in its refusal to yield to British Prime Minister, David Cameron's threats in 2011 to limit aid to countries which were anti-gay (Ghana Web, November 2, 2011; BBC News, November 2, 2011). Though the British Government subsequently cut aid to Ghana in response to the Late President Professor John Evans Atta-Mills stance, Ghanaians were resolute.

Ajen (1998, p. 131) observes that contrary to what pertains in most Western societies, the usual attitude towards people who identify as homosexuals in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and the Cote d'Ivoire is prejudice, discrimination and possibly, ostracism. It is remarkable to note that while Ghanaians will resist a known homosexual, they do not see the public holding of hands of the same sex as unusual unlike in the West.

Ajen (1998, p. 131) admits that in Ghana, for instance, girls refer girls to whom they have a strong emotional attachment as their “*supi*,” which denotes a specially loved one. So many stories of “*supis*” participation in sexual activities in secrecy were common, but until one party decides to release the information (because of a disagreement) not much is in the open.

Ajen (1998, p. 130) articulates that to most Ghanaians, the issue of ‘homoeroticism’ is always referred to androgynous characters (known as “*kojobesia*”, translated “man-

woman”) and mostly boarding schools’ same sex relationships. Being a British colony, Ghana’s educational system was patterned after England’s and this kind of erotic relationships is likened to what Faderman (1981) describes in ‘*Surpassing the Love of Men.*’ Strong bonds between members of the same sex are very much allowed with the understanding that “the senior partner in those circumstances will protect, help and generally make the junior’s life in school fulfilling.”

Contrary to the view that same sex schools breed homosexuals, Dankwa (2009, p. 197) revealed that many of the women interviewed in her study on lesbianism had never stayed at a boarding-house. They met their first “supi” at school, church, on the football field, in the market and in other homosocial spaces. They also forge alliances at parties and social gatherings such as naming ceremonies, wake-keepings, funerals and social sites beyond the reach and imaginations of their families and male partners.

Research findings from Ofori (2014, p. 121) among Senior High School students in the Cape Coast Metropolis revealed that 82.6% of the participants accept as true that homosexuality is practised in their schools. 26.5% of the respondent said they have friends who engage in the practice, while 17.4% of participants disagree that homosexuality is practised in their schools. 1.4% of the respondents however said they engage in the practice. This result indicates that homosexual practices really exist in the Senior High Schools in the Metropolis and also confirms the general perception of its practice in the Senior High Schools. In a related study by Antiri (2016, p. 8) among the University of Cape Coast students, whereas a total of 94.75 percent agreed that homosexuality is negative and ought not to be practised there, 5.25 percent said it was not. The Ghanaian society does not favour homosexuality in any form. For example, an anti-gay syndicate in James Town, a suburb of Accra, launched an onslaught on nine suspected homosexuals and declared their determination to weed out homosexuals from the vicinity

(Starr News, August 2012). A related event revealed a mob attack by residents of Teshie, a suburb of Accra in March 2015, in which a group of suspected lesbians were pelted with human faeces, confirms this (Human Dignity Trust, 2015, p. 4).

2.4 Prejudice and Sexual stigma

Though literature indicates that homosexual acceptance has improved over time, heterosexuality is still viewed as the normative, and homosexuality as the uncharacteristic sexual orientation. Whereas heterosexuals are regarded as prototypical members of the category of people, homosexuals and bisexuals are considered deviants (Hegarty & Pratto, 2004). This deviant status is what is believed to legitimate hostility, discrimination, and even aggression against sexual minorities.

According Plummer (1975) and Rubin (1984), the concept of sexual stigma and erotic stigma have been used by many authors as a derogatory tag to describe the stigma attached to male homosexuality and a range of sexual behaviours that society abhors, from immoral commercial sex to any form of sexual perversion. Stigma is a mark delineating individuals from one another based on a socially accepted mentality that some persons or groups are dirty and “less than” leading to negative beliefs and prejudice that have the tendency to socially exclude such persons (Corrigan et al 2003, Link & Phelan, 2001).

Herek (2009, p. 67) explains that sexual stigma is the stigma attached to any non-heterosexual behaviour, identity, relationship, or community. In other words, it is socially shared knowledge about homosexuality’s devalued status relative to heterosexuality. Like other forms of stigma, it has the propensity to create social roles and expectations for conduct that are understood and shared by the members of society, irrespective of their own personal predicament and social issues.

In a review of sexual prejudice, Herek and McLemore (2012) describe sexual stigma as a ‘culture’s shared knowledge about the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords to non-heterosexual behaviours, identity, relationships, and communities.’

Herek (2009) agrees that several other writers who have similarly emphasised that stigma is very much about the socially constructed meanings associated with a characteristic and that these meanings can vary across situations include Crocker, et al 1998 and Jones et al., 1984. Herek (2007, p. 907) amplified that sexual stigma, like other forms of stigma, is expressed in both individuals and society’s institutions. He intimates that structurally, society’s institutions and ideological systems legitimates and perpetuates sexual stigma and its associated power relations.

Herek (2009, p. 67) explains that stigma can be manifested at three levels: (a) individual behaviours that express stigma, (b) individuals’ awareness of stigma and its consequences – and (c) individuals’ acceptance of stigma’s legitimacy, whether it is aimed at them or at others. These manifestations are labelled; enacted stigma, felt stigma, and internalised stigma. Ghanaian homosexual youth although experience all forms, they are victims of enacted stigma which refers to the overt behavioural expression of sexual stigma through actions such as the use of antigay epithets, shunning and ostracism of sexual minority individuals, and overt discrimination and violence. Extreme forms of enacted sexual stigma are expressed in violent victimisation of sexual minorities, property crimes against them, and other forms of overt harassment and abuse.

2.5 Sexual Prejudice and Religion

Religion is one variable that is prejudiced against homosexuals and the negative outlook of homosexuality in society is not different when it comes to religion. In the Torah, the Holy

Bible, the Holy Quran as well as other holy books, homosexuality has been abhorred and condemned, though opinions may vary on interpretation depending on the core beliefs of a particular religion. An Imam in Orlando, Florida, the site of the mass murder of homosexuals in June, 2016, said that “killing of homosexuals would be the compassionate thing to do” (McGee, 2016, p. 1).

Likewise, in July 2013, the head of the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church, Emmanuel Martey’s claim that ‘gays’ were set out to destroy our country because they were in league with ‘Satan’s deadly agenda’, is a clear indication that religiosity has a prejudicial effect on same sex sexual relationships (Human Dignity Trust, 2015, p. 3). This contention is in reference to the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana’s July 2011 statement that “we Ghanaians and for that matter Africans, cherish our rich and strong values on issues such as homosexuality and we must not allow anyone or group of people to impose what is acceptable in their culture on us in the name of Human Rights’ (ibid.).

Citing Rehnstrom (2001), Dankwa (2009, p. 194) said it was very routine for most Pentecostal and or Charismatic churches in Ghana to hold deliverance and counselling sessions to “liberate” perceived homosexual members from their state of demonic bondage and “affliction” This supports Herek and McLemore’s (2012, p. 318) review of religion where they mention that the condemnation of homosexuality and the demonisation of lesbians and gay men became defining features of conservative Christianity recently. In view of this, many religious institutions still continue to express disapproval of homosexuality and have purposed to kick against any form of legal aid in favour of sexual minorities (Herek et al. 2007).

Most scholars agree that Gordon Allport was one of the early researchers to study the relationship between prejudice and religiosity. He contended that people who were

prejudiced against a certain group would be more likely to be prejudiced against other groups as well. “If a person is anti-Jewish, he is likely to be anti-Catholic, anti-Negro, anti any out-group.” This led Allport (1954, p. 68) and others to conclude that there was a “prejudiced personality” that predisposed one to show these consistent biases.

Several researches illustrate that highly religious persons exhibit more prejudicial attitudes towards LGBTs than those who belonged to more “conservative” sects (Finlay & Wadther, 2003; Herek & Capitanio, 1996) because Herek & Capitanio believe conservative Christians are not likely to have much contact with gays.

In McGee’s (2016, p. 4) study on homosexuality and religion of 16 countries, it was revealed that among Catholics of selected countries, Ghanaian Catholics were the least accepting of homosexuality, followed by Catholics in Nigeria and Lebanon, whereas Catholics from the Netherlands, Germany and the United States were most tolerant of homosexuals. Mean scores ranged from 1.37 to 7.71, which represents a highly significant range of scores.

In the same study, the sample from Pakistan had the least tolerance for homosexuality, followed by Nigeria and Ghana, while the most tolerant countries were Germany, followed by the Philippines and Russia. It appears therefore that countries in Africa and the Middle East are less tolerant of homosexuality than countries in other regions of the world, while countries in Western Europe and Asia are more tolerant. It is worth noting however that Lebanon, a Middle Eastern country, was more tolerant of homosexuality than was the Netherlands, which is a rare case.

A review of religion by Herek and McLemore (2012, p. 318) revealed that condemnation of homosexuality and the demonisation of lesbians and gay men became defining features of conservative Christianity recently. According to them, rhetorical themes in the

evangelical Christian movement shifted during the latter twentieth century, from goals in the 1950s of ministering to homosexuals and trying to win them to Christianity through love and compassion, to a view in the 1990s of gay men and lesbians as “an anti-Christian force, promoting a heresy increasingly sanctioned by the state in the form of decriminalisation and the extension of civil rights” (Herman 1997, p. 50).

2.6 Prejudice and Social Exclusion

Takács (2006, p. 11) records that in the 2004 ‘Joint Report on Social Inclusion’, the European Commission and European Council defined social exclusion as: “a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination.” This, as a result estranges them from employment, education, health and other social opportunities and community networks and activities. Their access to power and decision-making are limited; rendering them powerless to making personal decisions that are pertinent to their lives (European Council, 2004).

The school environment of LGBT youth is one major source of social exclusion because Lehtonen (1993, p. 103) referred to a Finnish study which points out that school space “enforces gendered groupings and sexualises the oppositional rooms and spaces of girls and boys, while concurrently discouraging sexual and loving emotional and physical interactions between persons of their same gender” and this is what Takács (2006, p. 30) described as a “strictly heteronormative space” that forces them to hide their feelings and sexuality.

Her study revealed that school environment is a breeding ground for prejudice and/or discrimination against LGBT youth since as much as 61% of respondents referred to

negative personal experiences at school as a result of their LGBT status. 53% of the respondents reported bullying, while 43% found prejudice or discriminative elements in the school curriculum (p.47). They seemed to find more acceptance and recognition in their circles of friends' as less than 30% of respondents report of having experienced prejudice and violence from their friends (p. 59).

In a related study conducted by Russell et al (2011) on LGBT adolescent school victimisation by recruiting 249 participants from LGBT venues, results indicate that 90% of students reported hearing the word "gay" used in a derogatory way, and over 85% reported that they were verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation. Another 44% reported of physical harassment as a result of their sexual orientation.

Most of Takács' respondents referred to stigma and discrimination in the workplace. This ranged from non-promotion, dismissal, ostracism, being muzzled or "subjected to unwanted moralising" to even not being offered any job at all, (p. 61). They said "revealing one's LGBT identity at the workplace seemed to be a risky endeavour, therefore some respondents preferred to hide this aspect of their lives. Sometimes they were forced into subterfuge and deception, while the energy spent in concealing identity and inventing stories is often energy taken away from doing the work at hand" (p. 63).

From the level of religious institutions, church environment, local communities to the personal level, religion came out strongly as a problematic issue for LGBT people. Chief among the discriminants were the Catholic Church and Islam which could not believe "that a human can be homosexual" (p. 67). The Catholic Church's reaction affirms Pope Francis' message in April 2016 where he said 'the family' affirms that existing church teachings oppose gay equality and same-sex marriage (Pink News, 2016).

In Ghana, the Coalition against Homophobia (CAHG) and the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) have come out strongly against the practice. In a related development, a Muslim cleric, Mallam Abass Mahmud literally called for the elimination of gay people by inciting attacks and persecution of homosexuals in Zongo communities in Ghana (Pulse TV, 2016; Ghana Web, 2016).

Corroborating the above, a story written by Prince Charles Dickson (Global Post, 2014), titled “Homophobia unites Muslims and Christians in Nigeria”, showed two suspected homosexuals who, on January 22, 2014, were arraigned before the Unguwar Jaki Upper Sharia presided by Judge El-Yakubu Aliyu. A week after on the 29th January, two Islamic courts in northern Nigeria tried 10 men accused of homosexuality. At the same time, an irate crowd pelted stones at seven men suspected of breaking Islamic law prohibiting homosexuality in the same court. He wrote:

“In a country contentiously split among Muslims and Christians, leaders of Nigeria’s mosques and churches are united in their condemnation of same-sex relationships.”

The media have been seen as channels for propagating prejudice against homosexuals; for example, 75% of Takács’ respondents saw the media as ‘messengers of doom’ who are “distorting reality” by spreading stereotypes (frequently in a sensationalist manner), contributing to the maintenance of heteronormativity and the spread of homophobia by being the mouth piece of homophobic politicians, priests and other “celebrities” (p. 70). This assertion is congruent with Quist-Adade et al’s (2014, p. 17) discussion on the prevalence of negative stereotypes about homosexuality in the Ghanaian media, and reveals the ways in which the type of language used by the Ghanaian media stigmatises and dehumanises the homosexual population. Then again, the media are recognised as potential catalyst for social integration of LGBT people because they use their platforms to

diffuse development communication and call for social acceptance and tolerance of sexual minorities.

2.7 Sexual Prejudice and Human Rights

Sexual orientation can be inferred as a human rights issue; discussions on Human Rights in relation to LGBT persons is often subsumed within the framework of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of December 10, 1948, which talks about the “inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” Human rights are those basic standards that are necessary for people to live in dignity. Hence, treating people less than they deserve is tantamount to rights violation (Samelius and Wågberg 2005, p. 14). Though sexual orientation or gender identity is not explicitly mentioned in the UDHR and subsequent international human rights documents, the law’s interpretation includes LGBT persons’ rights and protection.

According to Badgett et al, (2014, p. 5), the exclusion of LGBT persons from full participation in society with equal opportunity and dignity is an important human rights issue, and one that is increasingly recognised by international bodies and national governments in all regions of the world. They observe further that the challenges of LGBT people are gaining visibility in the human rights sphere; they are also capturing the attention of other key social, political, and economic stakeholders. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights therefore exist to protect LGBT people from violence based on their sexual orientation and gender identity (Dworkin & Yi, 2003).

2.8 South Africa on Sexual Prejudice and Human Rights

Sodomy was illegal under the common law of South Africa; however, a group of white, middle-class, male gay professionals formed the "Homosexual Law Reform Fund" or Law Reform, for short in April 1968, with the aim of raising money to pay lawyers to make a case contrary to the law, to fight their course (Retief, 1995; Palmberg, 1999). PeIser fought against their request insisting that, "if unchecked, homosexuality would bring about the utter ruin of civilisation in South Africa." He then sent out police undercover detectives who tracked down some lesbians and gays and made discoveries of their community (Retief 1995, p. 62).

It was not until 1982 that the two homosexual worlds of South Africa finally met: the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) was formed; this was the first African organisation that approximated the gay and lesbian movements found in the Western world. Other gay movements sprang up and in 1996, South Africa adopted "one of the most progressive and inclusive constitutions in the world" (Isaack, 2003).

Emerging from oppressive apartheid rule, the then new government, led by the African National Congress (ANC) party and President Nelson Mandela, made provision in the bill of rights to include "sexual orientation" to protect its citizens and prevent any form of discrimination. This constitution was the first to legitimise Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) rights by law (Isaack, 2003) though others reject the whole idea of gay rights. This resonates from the words of Duarte (1994): "It's one thing to have your rights and equality in the law, it's quite another to have each day in the street, at work, in the bar, in public places"

2.9 Other Countries on Sexual Prejudice and Human Rights

Kennedy (2006) held that Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Namibia encourage and reinforce homophobic attitudes among their populations through hate-filled rhetoric and general intolerance. Leading the homophobic charge against gay rights, Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe, vehemently exclaimed "I don't believe that they (homosexuals) should have any rights at all" (Palmborg, 1999). This sentiment permeated the other two states as they began to use discriminatory and hate speech as a way to influence public opinion.

Nujoma prohibited the entry of any foreign homosexual into Namibia. He said even if they did, they will be repatriated on the same flight with which they came. The Deputy Minister of Lands reiterated that, "Homosexuality is like cancer or AIDS and everything should be done to stop its spread in Namibia" (Palmborg 1999, p. 283).

However, unlike Mugabe, Nujoma experienced considerable resistance from human rights organisations. Sister Namibia, a women's rights organisation, formed "The Rainbow Project" (TRP), a group dedicated to the support of lesbians and gays in Namibia (Palmborg 1999). In Botswana; the effects of sexual prejudice are comparable and various studies have demonstrated that LGBT persons experience heightened degrees of distress as a result of "social isolation, criminalisation of same-sex behaviours, and unmet health care needs" (Ehlers et al. 2001, p. 10). In Botswana, common law against homosexuality has not changed; and therefore before any kind of debate to review the laws on account of homosexuality was counteracted, the Vice President stated categorically that "the law is abundantly clear that homosexuality, performed either by males or females, in public or private is an offence punishable by law" (Long 2003, p. 48).

2.10 Ghana on Human Rights and Sexual Prejudice

In its report on the state of Human Rights for LGBT people in Africa, Human Rights Campaign (HRC, 2014, p. 9) observes that “Anti-LGBT rhetoric is rampant from prominent Ghanaian politicians, and LGBT citizens face societal discrimination and the threat of violent attack.” A former Minister of Trade and Industry, Hannah Tetteh’s emphatic statement on Ghana’s position revealed a sense of prejudice:

“... every society has its norms and what it considers to be acceptable. In the Western world, it is acceptable to have gay relationships and even move on to the next level to gay marriages; in our society, it is unacceptable” (Ghana Web, 2011).

Several surveys have proven Ghanaians to be anti-gay; notable among them is the one conducted by Pew Research Global (2014) which revealed that 98 percent of Ghanaians feel that homosexuality is “morally unacceptable,” the highest percentage of any country surveyed (HRC 2014, p. 9).

In Ghana, LGBT persons rely on Human Rights organisations such as the Human Rights Advocacy Council (HRAC), the Gay and Lesbian Association of Ghana (GLAG) which is under the Centre for Popular Education and Human Rights Ghana (CEPHERG) and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) to provide them with social and legal support.

It is very common for LGBT persons in Ghana to face multiple streams of discrimination in education employment and health. The following are evidence of abuse of LGBT persons’ rights: residents of Walewale in the Northern Region of Ghana vowed to kill a 21 year-old man and his entire family for being a homosexual and also recruiting other youth into the practice (Human Dignity Trust 2015, p. 2). The Chief Psychiatrist, Dr. Akwasi Osei, in March 2013, stated that ‘homosexuality is not natural and should not qualify for human rights, which are natural rights. In its true nature, ‘it is a social disorder’ (ibid.).

2.11 Theoretical Framework

This study is conducted within the framework of Social Dominance Theory. It addresses various aspects of social interactions and societal hegemony in relation to sexuality and gender.

Pratto et al (2006, p. 271) advance the view that a society's deep-seated belief system coupled with the intricacy of its socio-economic dealings tend to predominate its system of governance, and this is reflected in their hierarchical nature in which at least one group enjoys greater social status and power than other groups.

Social Dominance Theory (SDT) is a “multi-level theory” of societies' patriarchy and heterosexism with a strong intersection between gender norms and sexuality. SDT describes how processes at different levels of cultural ideologies, institutional discrimination to gender roles and the social psychology of prejudice intersect. Hence, in a heterosexually-dominated society like Ghana, prejudice against other sexual minority groups abounds (Pratto & Stewart 2012, p. 1).

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), a derivative of SDT, is defined as an “individual's psychological orientation to group-based dominance. These forms of hierarchies may be preferred, accepted or rejected depending on the social dominance orientation prevailing across particular countries in terms of group prejudices (including sexism, sexual orientation prejudice, racism, nationalism) and also “hierarchy-enhancing policies.”

SDT states that individuals who are social dominance-oriented will skew towards social practices that uphold inequality among groups and kick against social practices that tend to decrease group inequality. The particular social policies that correlate with SDO though, may vary from society to society (Pratto et al, 994, p. 743). For example, in Ghana,

because heterosexual groups dominate homosexuals, the legal and social policy framework in terms of education, healthcare and employment favour heterosexuals.

Contemporary scholars of group dominance (Johnson, 1994; Sanday, 1981; van Dijk, 1987) suggest that the decisions and behaviours of individuals, formation of new social practices and the operations of institutions are shaped by legitimising myths. Legitimising myths are consensually held values, attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, and cultural ideologies. SDT distinguishes between two functional types of legitimising myths (Pratto et al 2006, p. 275).

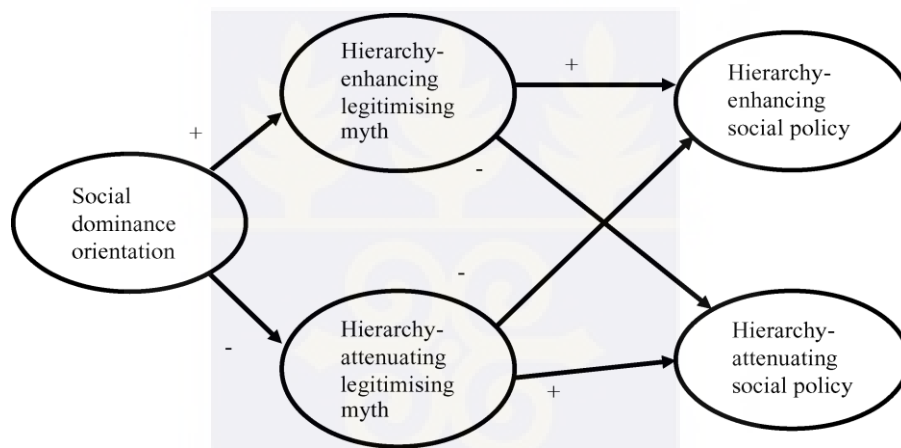


Figure 1: Model of hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating legitimising myths in the centre of SDO and social policies (Source: Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 105).

Hierarchy-enhancing legitimising myths (HE-LMs) provide moral and intellectual justification for group-based oppression and inequality for example; prejudicial attitudes against sexual minorities in Ghana are culturally, morally, religiously and legally justified (Pratto et al, 2006, p. 276). On the other side of the scale are ideologies that counter dominance; hierarchy-attenuating legitimising myths (HA-LMs). HA-LMs present social policy issues to ensure social value among these groups. Examples of hierarchy-attenuating legitimising myths are political systems such as social democracy, socialism and human rights.

In Ghana, LGBT persons are insulated socially and legally by Human Rights Advocacy Council (HRAC), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and Centre for Popular Education and Human Rights Ghana (CEPHERG), an NGO.

As a social psychological theory, social dominance theory understands individuals within their larger social-structural, cultural, and institutional contexts, but allows that, even within a given context, individuals can systematically differ from one another and have agency in affecting hierarchical outcomes (Pratto *et al* 2006, p. 309). Both HE-LMs and HA-LMs are tied to the patterns of behaviour and relations that constitute culture (*ibid.*).



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the scientific approaches utilised in this study to explore how sexual minorities in the Accra Metropolis cope with prejudice as a result of their sexual preference.

According to Leedy (1989, p. 5), research is not just an act of collecting data, but essentially, it is “a procedure by which we attempt to find systematically, and with the support of demonstrable fact, the answer or the resolution to a problem.” Consequently, this qualitative research sought to establish the spread of homosexual practice among Ghanaian Youth in the Accra Metropolis, the accompanying prejudicial effects on their access to education, health and employment. This was guided by a set of research questions which set out to find how the Ghanaian society treat homosexuals; how prejudice can influence employment, healthcare and educational advancement and how the continual practice of homosexuality among the youth can impact on the future of Ghana’s socio-economic development.

3.2 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative approach. There are several methods of obtaining information for qualitative inquiry. Ponterotto (2005, p. 128) describe Qualitative methods as “a broad class of empirical procedures designed to describe and interpret the experiences of research participants in a context-specific setting” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The descriptive and interpretative nature of qualitative research was coordinated to achieve the objectives of the current study. A Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR)

approach was largely utilised; CQR is a recent qualitative explication that was developed by Clara Hill, Barbara Thompson and Elizabeth Williams in 1997 to “integrate the descriptive depth and richness of constructivist qualitative methods with the post-positivist reliance on interpretive consensus” (agreement). They relied heavily on the established qualitative approaches of grounded theory (sociology base), phenomenology (psychology base), and comprehensive process analysis (psychology – psychotherapy). Consensual Consensus, an integral part of the CQR method (Hill et al., 1997, p. 523), “relies on mutual respect, equal involvement, and shared power.” CQR was critical for this study because the key participants, (homosexual youth) ought to feel respected, and so, rapport was initially established through phone calls and social media (Whatsapp messaging and chats), for a consensual research. Hence, epistemology, a key attribute of CQR which according to Ponterotto (2005, p. 131), is concerned with the relationship between the “knower” (respondent) and the “would-be knower” (interviewer).

3.3 Scope and Population of Study

The study was conducted in the Accra Metropolis, the capital of Ghana. The 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) revealed that the Greater Accra region is the second most populous region with a record of 4,010,054 people representing the highest population density in Ghana, with a youthful age structure between 15 and 29 years (GSS, 2013).

According to Mark (1996, p. 105), a population is “the collection of all individuals, families, groups, or organisations, communities and events that will participate in the study.” McBurney, as quoted by Strydom and Venter (2002, p. 199), refers to the population as “the sampling frame; the totality of persons; events; organisation units; case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned.” Leedy

(1993) suggests that the population of a study must be carefully chosen, clearly defined and specifically delimited in order to set the precise parameters for ensuring discreteness to the population.

The study population was selected from homosexuals living in the Accra Metropolis aged between 15 and 35, through snowball sampling technique because as Sadler et al (2010, p. 370) elucidate that the basis for which Snowball sampling was conceptually designed as a sample recruitment method, was to offer a way to overcome many of the recruitment challenges associated with inviting difficult to-reach communities to join health-care intervention projects or research studies. This was complemented with views of purposively and conveniently selected members of society that I refer to as “stakeholders” and two same sex schools (male and female) to obtain varied opinions and standpoints on homosexual practice and also because single sex schools have been branded as breeding grounds for such activities. The same sex schools’ involvement introduced new dimensions to the study and helped to establish the veracity or otherwise of the claim.

3.3.1 Sampling Frame

A sample of 10 individuals of different professions and perspectives, 10 homosexuals were originally slated for the interview (8 Gays and 2 Lesbians for a gender balance) the numerical disparity however, is because Gays generally, are more open than the Lesbians). Whereas the 10 homosexuals were selected through snowball sampling because they are not easily accessible, the other stakeholders comprising 10 individuals and two single sex schools were selected through purposive and convenient sampling techniques. The other 10 stakeholders include a male medical doctor, Anaesthetic Consultant at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital; a female lawyer, the Greater Accra Regional Director of Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ); a male Police and

Public Health Officer (Chief Superintendent of Police) at the Police Hospital; Two Parliamentarians (both males) – both devout Christian and Muslim; a male teacher and student Counsellor from the same sex Girls’ school; a senior civil servant and mother of four boys; a Charismatic Bishop; a female psychologist and lecturer; and a Sociologist. Though the respondents appeared to be many, Neuman (2000, p. 200) suggests that in qualitative data gathering, the principle is to “gather data until saturation point is reached. This requires the researcher to continuously evaluate all the collected data in order to know when saturation point has been reached.” Two same sex schools; Presbyterian Boys Senior High (Presec) and St. Mary’s Girls Senior High (Merries) were selected for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Presec Boys School was considered for proximity to the University of Ghana, and Merries because it is my alma mater, therefore gaining access to the school is easy.

Letters were sent to these schools seeking their consent for their students’ participation in the study. Affirmative responses were obtained within two days. I met with the Assistant Headmaster and Headmistress respectively to schedule a date and time for the FGDs. Sample from the male school represented 10 students aged between 15 and 17 years, from Senior High School (SHS) 1 and 2 (three students from SHS 1 and seven from SHS 2), the selection was made by the school. The female school on other hand presented 10 students all from SHS 2, and aged between 16 and 17. The uniqueness of this sample is that they are “Peer Counsellors” or “Peer Cs” trained to work with the school’s student counsellor to offer counselling and oversight duties over other students.

3.3.2 Establishing Rapport

Social science research on LGBT people are difficult to define because of the potential of discrimination and stigma (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003 as cited in Hartmann, 2011, p. 66).

In line with Hartman's (2011) claim that the difficulty of locating a sizeable sample of a marginalised group (LGBT people) is like finding a needle in a haystack, Meyer & Wilson (2009) confirmed that recruiting LGBT persons in a research is often "fraught with difficulty" because a public identification of such key populations can attract stigma and discrimination (McCormack 2014, p. 476).

The Snowballing sampling technique was adopted for this same reason that the homosexual groups are difficult to reach. I had one initial contact who introduced me to the others. He started by mentioning me to them (15 in number), setting up a social media group chat (WhatsApp) and subsequently introducing me as a pastor on the group platform for familiarity and ease of communication. I also responded by introducing as well as posting a portrait of myself. This sparked a whole new relationship with this group of sexual minorities. After a week however, some left the platform because they were not comfortable chatting there. I then followed them up individually; eight of them were responsive and eager to chat. They had been so marginalised that they needed a friend they could talk to and share their innermost thoughts and feelings with. A more intimate relationship was established out of this pre-interview familiarisation because I spoke with them more on phone and on WhatsApp chat. This supports Walby's (2010) assertion that some LGBT individuals will only feel comfortable coming out to particular people or to support groups or counsellors.

Being a pastor opened the "communication door." The rest were not too comfortable chatting with A STRANGER" so I did not pursue them. A couple of them were apprehensive and even though they were assured of anonymity and my benignity, they did not open up for interview. This makes sexual minorities difficult to reach; especially those who do not belong to clubs, support networks or LGBT communities (McCormack 2014, p. 476).

Sadler et al's (2010, p. 369) explanation that groups of people who are difficult to contact for inclusion in service programmes or to recruit for participation in research studies are those in which the target group has become stigmatised, either by personal circumstance or by association makes Snowball sampling an ideal technique to reach these sexual minorities.

The 10 stakeholders were purposively and conveniently selected because of the need for a cross section of views on homosexuality as well as assess their prejudice levels. This mode of selection tallies with Silverman (2000) who opines that "in purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study" as quoted by (Strydom & Venter, 2002, p. 207), that purposive sampling is "the type of sample that is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population." Neuman (2000, p. 517) refers to purposive sampling as "a type of non-random sampling in which the researcher uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of highly specific and difficult-to-reach population."

3.4 Research Instrument

Seaman (1991, p. 42) defines data collection instruments as devices used to collect data such as questionnaires, tests, structured interview schedules and checklists. This study adopted the unstructured approach which according to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009, p. 1) was initially developed in fields of anthropology and sociology to elicit meaningful and in-depth information from people's social realities. Punch (1998) describes unstructured interviews as a means of understanding the complexities of human behaviour "without imposing any *a priori* categorisation, which might limit the field of inquiry."

With this in mind, three different semi-structured question guides were used to conduct in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions to obtain miscellaneous subjective information from the three categories of respondents. The first was tailored to suit the sexual minorities, the second, for the two selected same-sex schools because they are homogeneous in background, and the third, to elicit stakeholders of society's opinion. This is in line with Patton's (2002) description of unstructured interviews as a natural extension of participant observation since they are tied into the observation process and rely entirely on the spontaneity of natural flow of interaction.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from the Accra Metropolis in the Greater Accra region of Ghana, and because the population is dispersed, respondents were met at various locations of convenience. This ranged from the University of Ghana Campus, Korle-bu Teaching Hospital, Presbyterian Boys Secondary School, Legon, premises, St. Mary's Senior High School, Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) regional office, Parliament House of Ghana, Achimota Mall, Police Hospital among others.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990) data is information that researchers gather on the subject of their research. As Wickham (1998, p. 18) maintains, the fundamental goal of all interviews point is to obtain valid and reliable data - trustworthy and authentic.

3.5.1 In-Depth Interviews with Sexual Minorities and "Stakeholders"

The original intent of the study was to interview 10 homosexuals (8 Gays and 2 lesbians) but I ended up interviewing only 6 (5 Gays and 1 lesbian) because the sound of the word interview did not sit well with some of them. Though I suggested a telephone interview as a substitute, they did not show interest in that either. This attitude confirms Savin-

Williams' (2001) claim that difficulties in recruiting sexual minority populations make attaining a representative sample particularly difficult (McCormack 2014, p. 476).

These sets of interviews were conducted in English with respondents aged between 21 and 27 at locations conveniently selected and consensually agreed. The carefully chosen milieu afforded ease and flexibility of interaction in a heart-to-heart manner, as Leedy (1993, p. 87) observes, data is sometimes embedded within the attitudes of people. This afforded me the occasion "to understand the world from the participant's point of view, as experiences unfold with their previous lives" (Sewell, 2001, p. 1).

The second sets of interviews with the "stakeholders" were held at different locations. From the Parliament House, CHRAJ Regional office, Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, St. Mary's Senior High, Controller and Accountant General's Department (CAGD) at the Ministries, Police Hospital to a church environment among others. This selection which I see as a microcosm of the Ghanaian society was purposely done to obtain diverse views on the objectives, answer the research questions and develop new themes in the research. This is in line with LeCompte and Preissle (1993) who note that the information researchers gather can be used to answer the research questions.

The parliamentarians' views were critical to obtain a public policy perspective and the legislative procedures' position. The MPs among other responses, made references to their religious backgrounds – biblical perspectives and the stance of the Quran; the Chief Superintendent of Police, also a Public Health officer's view was also important to this study because he belongs to the Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC) Team that deals with stigma and counselling of sexual minorities. CHRAJ's view was strategic to the findings because of their human rights touch to homosexuality. The Head of Accounts at the CAGD is a mother of four boys and her viewpoint and thoughts represent the voice of

families, the basic unit of society. The choice of a bishop is fundamentally to express the religious and cultural standpoint of the research questions. The clinical psychologist and the sociologist's views were sought to help unfold their experience with sexual minorities. Appointments were booked for all of the above interviews by phone calls and text messaging.

A self-introduction and declaration of purpose of the study preceded all the interviews. Biographic data was taken; their consent sought and a consent form subsequently signed for both interview and recording thereof. The sexual minorities were however dubbed "AB" and this was very acceptable to all of them. The interviews lasting between 20 minutes and one hour were recorded on my mobile phone and complemented with field notes.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

According to Barry and Williams (2013, p. 2) Focus Groups are group interviews that give the researcher the ability to capture deeper information more economically than individual interviews. The goal of this Focus Group was to have the participants understand the topic of interest to the researcher, irrespective of its use, alone or together with other research methods (Freitas et al, 1998, p. 22).

The first Focus Group Discussion was held at the St. Mary's Senior High, one of the selected same sex schools. The aim was to test the allegation that single schools are breeding grounds for homosexual activities and also obtain their views in relation to the research objectives and questions. The setting was in the student counsellor's office where 10 SHS 2 students gathered, though they had not been pre-informed of the topic.

This is because the counsellor wanted their responses to be spontaneous. They were nevertheless happy to see me because I am a regular visitor to the school. I introduced

myself, the topic and sought their consent for both interview and recording, to which they quickly consented. This provided a conducive ambience and the “discussion was relaxed, comfortable for participants as they shared their ideas and perceptions.” Participants spoke freely, coming from the same class levels.

Each question posed was passed round for participants to share their opinions. This they did without any inhibition except for a couple of them who did not to have any opinion on some of the questions. That notwithstanding, they giggled, laughed and screamed to express themselves. This attitude is articulated by Jakobsen (2012, p. 13), who said FGDs allow participants to “converse among themselves, questioning, challenging and answering one another.” Their views on the topic broadened the arena of the study and this enriched the data analysis.

The second FGD at Presec comprised 10 readily chosen male students; seven from SHS 2, and 3 from SHS 1. Students from SHS 3 were not available for both schools because they had just completed second cycle education. My initial reaction was that of apprehension and asked myself a thousand questions in one minute; will they open up to me? Will they participate freely? I then recomposed my thoughts and told them: “I like talking to bold and energetic youth; I don’t like boring students. I hope you’ll make the discussion interesting. You’re young men and you have to be bold, ok.” The unison of response was good enough to open the discussion on a good footing. For me, this was heart-warming and important because as Krueger (2002, p.4) affirms, the first few moments in focus group discussions are critical because much of the success of group interviewing can be attributed to the development of this open environment.” This discussion ended up being more interesting than anticipated. They shared a lot of humour and frankness and everybody laughed. Their confidence levels, gestures and mannerisms authenticated their responses. Their responses and behaviour support: “non-verbal communication is also data

that can be captured in focus groups. This type of interaction according to Barry & Williams (2013, p. 2) is “useful observation data for analytical purposes.” The presence of the female (teacher) student counsellor did not in any way inhibit the flow of conversation.

3.6 Data analysis

This study adopted the thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke (2006) which involves the identification, analysis and reporting of themes within the data. This approach is particularly useful in generating a comprehensive analysis that gives meaning to objectives and research questions. The audio recording of the 16 in-depth interviews and two focus group discussions on my mobile phone were listened to and transcribed verbatim on Microsoft Word.

The themes that emerged from the study were put in a thematic coding framework, a table illustrating the basic, organising and global themes; showing the frequency of responses, operational definition of basic themes and the complementing quotes of the respective basic themes.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) claim that the principal aim of thematic analysis is to draw a network of participants’ responses into meaningful categories through coding. Coding affords the researcher the occasion to review the data, extract the central theme and simplify it for presentation (Miles & Huberman 1994; Halldorson 2009; Coffey & Atkinson 1996).

Three classes of themes are identified with thematic analysis: Basic, Organising and Global.

Basic themes represent the most basic unit of text derived from the data, undergirding the principal idea of the research. Basic themes are able to make more meanings when interconnected with other basic themes to become an organising theme.

Organising theme is the inter-mediate theme that organises a basic theme into homogeneous clusters to give further meaning to the data, leading to a broader theme that houses all the ideas of organising theme to form a Global theme. Global theme is a set of organising themes that present an argument on a macro level, explaining the whole text and any allegorical meanings associated with data.

3.6.1 Thematic Coding Framework for the Sexual Minorities

Table 1 illustrates the basic, organising and global themes; showing the frequency of responses, operational definition of basic themes and the complementing quotes of the respective basic themes.

Table 1: Thematic Coding Framework

Global Theme	Organising Theme	Basic Theme	Number of Responses	Definition	Quotes
Nature and Nurture	Sexual Orientation	Sexual Preference	6	One's choice of sexuality	<p>1. <i>I was introduced to it at 13 ... the Junior High School would close at 2 so he would take me from the class at 2:30 when we go for break then he will take me to the Junior high classroom and he would+++ hmmm. R1</i></p> <p>2. <i>I think was born with it. I see myself to be a female ... I think at the age of 16. I notice I ++ had no interest for the opposite sex. Not at all. . . . I have never liked a girl as in she being my girlfriend but I always like girls around me as friends because I see myself to be a girl so, I see them as my playing mate and all that. I am 27. R2</i></p>

3.6.2 Respondent Identification

All respondents in this study were assigned identification symbols; “R” This is accompanied by a number in the case of multiple respondents such as FGDs in a uniformed order.

3.6.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are increasingly becoming important denominators in social research. And for a research topic involving sexual minorities, the place of ethics was even more critical and this was strictly adhered to throughout the research. The research was carried out in accordance with the standards of the Ethics Committee of the University of Ghana. Ethical Clearance was obtained from the committee before commencement.

Bibier (2005) advises that social research must exemplify morality and integrity to guarantee data is reliable and valid. In this regard all participants especially the homosexuals were given prior information on purpose and usage of the research to which they consented. The homosexuals were assigned anonymous codes for confidentiality. With this, both oral and written consent were obtained for audio recording before each interview commenced. They were also made to understand that in the event that they did not feel comfortable about the process, they had the liberty to withdraw.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, data collected have been thematically analysed and discussed to achieve coherence with set objectives and research questions. The research sought to examine the effects of prejudice among Ghanaian homosexual youth. It set out to establish the spread of homosexual practice among Ghanaian youth, prejudice against them by society and their wellbeing in terms of access to education, health employment and its corresponding effects on the future of Ghana's socio-economic development when a portion of its youthful population is excluded because of their sexuality. Findings presented here emanate from two sets of in-depth interviews and two FGDs. Herek (2010) defines prejudice as negative behaviour towards an individual because of his or her sexual orientation, especially by heterosexuals towards the LGBT community.

4.2 In pursuit of Objective One: The Spread

The following themes emerged from the data on questions around the existence and spread of homosexual activities among the youth in the Accra Metropolis:

4.2.1 Choice versus Genes

This theme came from the contention that homosexuality is genetic. While scientists are divided on this assertion, Kronemeyer, (1980, p.7) states emphatically that “homosexuals are made, not born that way” McGue and Bouchard (1998, p. 2) also add that human behaviour conjoins both the genetic and environmental bases in human variation. Hence, their claims are not substantiated but born out of their own ideologies. Out of the 6 homosexuals interviewed, two believe they were born with it while four said they were introduced to it. Their responses now ensue:

"I think was born with it. I see myself to be a female ... I think at the age of 16. I noticed I ++ had no interest for the opposite sex. Not at all. . . . I have never liked a girl as in she being my girlfriend but I always like girls around me as friends because I see myself to be a girl so, I see them as my playing mate and all that. I am 27." R2 (twenty seven year-old homosexual, shop assistant)

"... I was born with it because no one taught me that, or talked to me about it. I've always felt different. When I was a little boy, my mum used to say: "as for you, you're so different from all my children" I don't feel anything for the opposite sex. The thing is in me; it's natural. That's how I feel, I can't explain it." R4 (twenty one year old homosexual; unemployed SHS graduate)

". . . it all started with my cousin, yea my mom brother's son who used to share the same room with me. I was I think 9 yrs then when he started that thing ### and ermm ++++ I didn't know what he was doing until I turned 15 then realised that something isn't right." R3 (twenty five year-old homosexual; tailor-apprentice)

The above findings reveal the contention between nature and nurture and form the bases for most arguments on homosexual practice. A cross-section of sexual minorities are pre-conditioned with the conception that they are born with it hence, can do nothing about it.

All 10 stakeholders believe that homosexuality is either a sexual preference or acquired because it can be unlearned if one chooses to:

"Professionally speaking I think homosexuality is a sexual preference so a person can either choose to be a homosexual or be straight." R2 (Female Clinical Psychologist and lecturer)

"It's not natural. It's not something God ordained from the creation of man. . Some claim that it is part of their genetic system." R6 (Member of Parliament, Ho West)

" ... Because ++ err some of them claim that, err they were born with it, it's genetic. But I think ++ interacting with them, most of them it's a learned behaviour..." R7 (Chief Superintendent of Police and Public Health officer)

The above responses are skewed towards environmental and social causes as against genetic. None of the stakeholders attributed homosexuality to the genes; they believe it is simply a sexual orientation that one chooses to identify with. This resonates with scholars who contended that sexual orientation is not static (Shively & DeCecco, 1977).

In the Female same sex school, all the students believe that homosexuality is not genetic.

Their views tally with the general responses already made by the stakeholders:

“Umm I really don’t believe that people are born homo because if you are umm, if, as you are growing up, you’re, folded by factors around you so if you see certain things, the way you feel certain things that’s what builds you so I believe that it’s not genetic.”
R1

“Well, me, first of all, I think maybe there are some people they are “Kojobesia,” I had some in my JHS he sings soprano, like he behaves, he err-... he does everything like a girl but he is a boy” R2

The above statement by R2 supports Ajen’s (1998, p. 130) claim that to most Ghanaians, the issue of ‘homoeroticism’ is always referred to as androgynous characters (known as *kojobesia*, which can be translated “man-woman”). These groups of people may not necessarily be homosexuals but may just express certain behaviours as a result of the dominance of some hormones.

4.2.2 The Reality of Homosexuality in Accra

The fact that homosexuality is practised in the Ghanaian society is indubitable. However, one has not been able ascertain the extent of spread among the youth. Most studies are centred on attitudes and perceptions. The following revelations by the homosexuals demonstrate how widespread the practice is, though unknown to the general populace:

“I have a lot of friends who are gays but nobody knows and they’re in seriously. ++ Go to Osu, go to Adabraka ...that’s where you’ll know that we’re many” R1
(23 year-old homosexual and decor apprentice)

“I was sleeping; we were lot of friends there and actually we were all homosexuals ... And now what Ghanaians should know is, homosexuality now has become more, it is not something that is way way away, it is with us in every home, to me in every extended family there could be homosexual so if you are going to arrest all these people arhh++ I really don’t get it.” R2 (27 year-old homosexual, shop assistant)

“...there is an area near Achimota called Christian village, 90 percent of the guys living there are gays. Even the police know ++ and most of the people surrounding us, about 80% of them are gays including married men, doctors, pastors, lawyers

ministers, it's a whole lot." R3 (twenty-five year-old homosexual; tailor-apprentice)

"Homosexuality is very very common at Accra central (the Palladium, Akoto Lante, Agbado area) where I live. Most of the youth are doing it but they hide." R5

Responses from all the homosexuals establish the reality of the spread as certain localities (Osu, Adabraka, Christian Village, Anumle, Pillar 2, Akoto Lante and Agbado) in the Accra Metropolis have been cited as "Headquarters" of homosexuality.

All the 10 stakeholders' views on the spread of the phenomenon show that they have heard from various quarters that "this thing" as most of them refer to homosexuality "is creeping into our society and it is affecting our youth":

"Yes, as a counsellor I have come into contact with a number of lesbians in one way or the other." R3 (Male student counsellor in a female same sex school)

"There are a lot of them in Ghana now, I mean people talk about them; even at controller here, there is a lesbian and she's told us herself but we don't see them as normal human beings." R4 (Mother of four boys and senior civil servant)

"Yes, I've met about six of them: some coming from Kumasi, in the ambassador's house – the ambassador wanted to create the awareness so that for some of us who are policy makers will bring this issue up for society to know what is going on." R6 (Member of Parliament, Ho west)

The above statements are not too distant from the sexual minorities' responses. They all point to the fact that many youth are engaged in the practice. All respondents said they have heard that 'these people' have now increased in number' but not all of them have had real encounter with them.

Literature on the reality and extent of spread on youth homosexuality is not available except on perception, attitudes and the usual boarding school practice. Ajen (1998, p.131) admits that in Ghana for instance, girls refer to girls to whom they have strong emotions as their "supi," which denotes a specially loved one. Stories of "supis" participation in sexual activities happening under covers were not rare and only come to light on account of

disagreement. This study thus serves to establish, to some extent, original, authentic, and experiential information on practising gays and lesbians in the Accra Metropolis.

Below are views expressed by the students of the male same sex school in the FGD aged between 15 and 17 on their experiences with homosexuals or some of their activities:

“Okay there was this guy in my community where I lived and errm because of the way he behaves, people think he’s gay. He’s girlish and all that and when he went to secondary school actually he was caught in the act and the news spread ...” R2

“Well once upon a time in the school I attended errm++it was time for Nino’s night or Homos (new comers) night and since it was tradition for the seniors to dress us up and all that I just thought mm++ so I went there ++ this senior was dressing me up, the hands and all, it was very awkward “ode ne nsa efifa wo ho” like {is is it was it was} it was weird and after a brief two minutes, I realised no! The way things are going I have to flee and I actually did. It was quiet an encounter actually.” R6

The first response (R2) above from the male same sex school both represents androgyny and homosexuality. The second however, is purely amorous advances on a lad who had just entered Senior High School. So, you realise that somebody was just about introducing him to homosexuality but he fled.

Views expressed by all students of the female same sex school in the FGD aged 15 and 17 reveal some level of homosexual encounter. However, just like R2 from the male same sex school, R1 below, from the female same sex school’s description of a homosexual is more of an androgyne. The other respondents (R2, R3, R4 and R5) have seen and encountered real homosexuals even at the JHS level and in the school’s locality (Korle-Gonnor).

“Yeah. During the vac, I encountered this homo in Achimota School, Motown. He dresses... ‘He’s the girl.’ He dresses like a girl, he acts like a girl, takes pictures like a girl, his hair, like everything and then he does everything to please his partner.” R1

“UMM well yeah I’ve encountered a homosexual. This one it was a girl, and then I think she was ... it was on social media; and then she personal messaged me, as in she gave me a message and then she was all talking about let’s start a relationship ... and then umm at home too there was this friend of mine and he said there’s this guy who has been pestering him ... to come and visit him and all that and I’m like wow, this is really serious.” R2

“Even here in the school, you stand on the balcony of some of the classrooms, you look

outside and then you see 2 men having sexual intercourse. It's weird, it's weird watching it but like, to me when I see it, immediately I turn away because ... it's disgusting. Why would a male and a male have sexual intercourse? For Korle-Gonno, we see it every time.” R3

“It was a girl, first on social media and then another one when I was in JHS. She actually tried to kiss me but I ran away.” R4

“...umm I've also seen another one at Korle Gonno; he was dancing about, shaking his ass to the other guys and everything” R5

Apart from newspaper and social media reports on students' alleged engagement in homosexuality some of the Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana, available literature does not establish the reality. The above are real life experiences of homosexual activity.

4.2.3 The Same Sex School Cliché

Writing on homosexuality, (Dankwa 2009, p. 195) admits that it is a common practice in secondary schools especially boarding, for a female or girl to call another girl her “dear” or “supi” in a type of friendship different from the known. They behave like male and female, fondle each other till a special sensation is experienced. Adjabeng (1996, p. 7) adds that these are the kinds of friendships that develop later into homosexuality, though not all of them.

All 10 students from the male same sex school though, agree to the notion that same sex schools to some extent breed homosexuals; however, they added that mixed schools are also part of the process. Another 5 explained that most of the habits are formed in Junior High School (JHS) before entering SHS so; they only come to the SHS to experiment it. This was recounted by R4 from the female same sex school who actually experienced that. The boys also explained that those who cannot access their female girl friends while at school resort to their male counterparts. This was confirmed in a study by Kodero et al (2011, p. 283) on perceptions of the practice of homosexuality in secondary schools in

Kenya where 64% of respondents perceive sexual starvation as the main root cause of homosexuality in secondary schools.

“... they have female friends at home and they can't erm ++ they can't hold their desires so they bring it to school and would like to do it with boys and they see boys as their females but.... so I think the single sex school is truly serving as a breeding ground for homosexual activities.” R2

“Boys being left alone in one school without female friends for months; without the opposite sex ++ if they find no one, they'll turn to the one on their right.” R5

“...it's not nonsensical to think that the single sex schools will be engaged in that act but I think that mixed schools also engage in such act and there are also boys and boys there to also engage in it.” R8

The above views did not differ much from the female side who also believe that homosexuality is not just limited to same sex schools as articulated by R2 and R5 above that there is an element of truth thereof due to several factors. On the contrary, they argued that in the mixed schools, opposite sexes do not share dormitories; they are separated and sleep as same sex. Therefore, mixed schools could be the worst of culprits:

“in my opinion I think homosex is also prevalent in mixed schools. Sometimes, during our entertainment like this we get some girls mimicking boys and dressing like boys and a girl sees it and is like this guy, this girl is nice and develops interest, it's really happening” R1

“even in mixed schools you would have the boys, the boys live in the same umm dormitories and the girls live in the same dormitories and as my mate umm clearly said umm wherever a group of people of the same sex are gathered it is possible that homosex can happen” R4

“I think homosex in the single sex schools is true but it's also happening in mixed schools for instance in the JHS. We have mixed JHS schools and homosexuality has been, is being practised there also so you can't say it's only single sex schools that homo is being practised it's also in mixed schools as well” R6

Reports of a suspected gay teacher who was arrested by the Ghana police for engaging in homosexual activities with some students in Adisadel College in the Cape Coast Metropolis and others trended on social media.

Though stakeholders of society believe that there could be some underlining forces to the whole spread of homosexuality in Ghana, the secondary schools represent a major

harbour. Respondents believe that though there could be some degree of homosexual practice in the mixed schools, single sex schools account for a good number of the practice.

“I wouldn't accept it hundred percent, but I will admit that there could be some of such things happening in the single sex school, I will agree to some extent because they the opposite sex is not there to sleep with.” R3 (Male teacher and Counsellor at female same sex school)

“... Some also learnt it from schools and it's prevailing especially in our senior high schools from the records that some of us have and emm...” R6 (Male MP, Ho West)

Research findings by Ofori (2014, p.121) among Senior High School students in the Cape Coast Metropolis revealed that 82.6% of the participants believe that homosexuality is practised in their schools, 26.5% have homosexual friends while 1.4% said they engage in the practice. Ofori's (2014) study was general among SHS students and did not mention single sex schools in particular. The student counsellor of the female same sex school supported the students' argument that mixed schools cannot be exempted from the practice.

It is evident from literature though, that most schools that have engaged in the practice are same sex. Little has been written about mixed schools in Ghana except for the one in the media on Akosombo International School (AIS), a mixed school.

Again, Dankwa's (2009, p. 197) revelation that many of the women interviewed in her research had never stayed in a boarding-house but met their first supi in other places like school, market and other “homosocial” spaces like social media and clubs shows that homosexual practised is ubiquitous.

4.2.4 Sex Party

Sex party is another emerging theme in the study; it is the situation where homosexuals engage in sexual intercourse in groups of three or more. They call it “threesome” if it is three gays on one person and “foursome” if it is four gays against one. This revelation establishes the spread of homosexual practice which is not covered in the literature.

“There are times that we have multiple sex for fun and that is why most homosexual relationships don’t last.” R1

“... sometimes they would take you to their friends and have “threesome” “foursome” like having three people having sex with one person sometimes four with one person. So that’s where the risk comes in...” R3

“... yes, so it can be like four tops with one bottom, or three tops with one bottom, and these three guys will sleep with one bottom guy sometimes it’s either they use condoms or they do it raw and that is where this sickness comes in.” R3

Almost all students in the male same sex school are of the view that when it comes to sex, there are those who will do anything to satisfy their sexual hunger:

“... and also lust, some people are so lustful that they will resort to any avenue to satisfy their sexual desires.” R2

“... people will like to do anything just err mm for sexual pleasure, so whether male or female they don’t care” R3

4.2.5 Materialism

Rumours of “big men” engaging in homosexual acts with the youth are no longer news; either on the media landscape or in everyday discourse among Ghanaians, but as to who those big men are, remains another bone of contention. According to some sexual minorities, they are engaged in the practice because they are enticed with money and material goods and because they need the money, they find themselves falling prey to these men. Everybody keeps mentioning “big men”:

“Some of my friends are engaged with big men in society. They don’t want anybody to know so there are gays who recruit for them I even know a top military man, married with children, who is seriously in it.”R1 (23 year-old homosexual and decor assistant)

“Sometimes they lure us with money, they lure us with other stuff like I will take you out, there’s this thing I wanna buy for you. Like one white old man will come and tell you that I will give \$200, \$500, will you have sex with me?” R3 (24 year old gay)

All 10 stakeholders agree that there is something about today’s youth that makes them materialistic. Instead of hard work, they tend to look for quicker ways to acquire wealth and these land them in all kinds of social vices including cyber fraud:

“Err and a lot of them too it’s about being introduced by society where they have, err, they are lured into it with gifts; especially mobile phones and laptops and tablets and the rest; that if you let me have sex with you, I will give you this. Then they start, and then since that is the source of their income, they are forced to do it.” R7 (Chief Superintendent of Police and Public Health officer)

“Well, I, I believe that a lot of the youth are not only doing homosexuality but they are into all kinds of lies because of err, I will call materialism, they want to err, they want to gain, they want to have money at all cause ” R8 (Charismatic Bishop)

Views of the male same sex school on materialism are congruent with the ones expressed by the stakeholders that, it is a generation of avaricious young people who will rather vend sex for wealth at the expense of their health. They would rather be seen as progressive:

“The youth, they engage in homosexuality ermm ++because of money. Rich men are luring the youth that is one main reason.” R1

“For material reasons, because about 2 years ago there was this incidence of a renowned Takoradi doctor who sodomised a Senior High School student and promised the student a phone and the student actually allowed because of the material benefits.” R2

“I mean if all my friends are having iphone7; they’re having the Edges (phone), yes the S8 Edges, the windows Lumia and a senior is, is offering to get, me one for free, for just for small fondling ++++ So it’s material peer pressure” R5

The female same sex schools expressed divergent views on the causes of homosexuality. Apart from respondent R2 who corroborated the popular ‘girl friend’ friendship of secondary schools and sexual pleasure, the rest made references to childhood molestation, abuse, rape, parental influences, family members’ exploitation and closeness to the children and youth. They believe that homosexuality’s root is embedded in domestic violence, childhood environment and experiences:

“It begins from childhood. For instance, maybe, for instance as a child you were molested by your father or something and people keep raping you or you find yourself in certain circumstances relating to rape and those things, you will have hatred for men. So you decide to go for the same sex and then you find pleasure in it then you... R1”

“For some people, it’s actually not their fault as my colleague said, I, at times in the family some of their parents, let’s say for a girl, the mum actually introduced, like she introduces the girl into homosexuality and then maybe the girl is very close to her mum and her mum starts having sexual intercourse with her. It’s actually not her fault.” R4

“I think some people tend to engage in homosex because they think they won’t get pregnant and also I think umm yes, I think they can, they think they can avoid sex-trans diseases if they have sex relations with the same sex.” R6

The above in-depth revelations were not covered in available literature on homosexuality. However, supporting R4, from the female sex school, stakeholders also opined about relations; “so-called aunties and uncles, cousins and so on, and even parents whom their children see as role model.” They see homosexuality as resulting from familial relationships and innocence of the young ones.

Yes parent's play major roles because most children look up to their parents and see them as their role models. Parents must be alert; some other homosexuals were introduced by Uncles, Aunties etc.” R4 (Mother of four boys and senior civil servant)

“One goes to the parents, most parents don’t talk to the children about sexuality they listen to their friends; they are influenced by what they say and they practice it. One girl who was defiled and did know what the guy was doing till she grew up” R3 (Male teacher and student counsellor)

I believe that every parent or as a parent, you are supposed to bring up your child the way he should go, in the fear of God.” R6 (Male MP, Ho West)

Contrary to the views that the youth engage in homosexual practices for material wealth, two of the six homosexuals stated their stance. They believe it is their physiological make up rather than anything else:

“Nobody gives me money. I don’t do it for fun. Actually in the beginning, I did not like it (okay) but eventually I came to accept it. This is what I am. This is what I have become. Whether I like it or yes.” R1 (23 year-old homosexual, décor apprentice)

“I am gay and I’m not doing it because somebody is asking me to do it or what I’m getting from it I am doing it because this is who I am and anything that the other sexual preferences are getting from practicing who they are is what am also trying get++.” R2 (27 year-old homosexual, shop assistant)

4.3 Meeting Objective Two: The Prejudice

This section examines the prejudice Ghanaians manifest against homosexuals and how these prejudices affect their lives psychologically and physiologically. It also explored the various forms and levels of prejudice that are unleashed on homosexual youth.

4.3.1 Sexual Prejudice

Prejudice rests at the core of this study, even though several other themes have emerged during the research. Prejudice is expressed by society and it is experienced by the homosexuals. Prejudice against sexual minorities is expressed in many ways; stigma, discrimination, violence and all kinds of social and psychological abuses. Herek (2009, p. 67) explained that stigma can be manifested at three levels: (a) individual behaviours (b) individuals’ awareness of stigma and (c) individuals’ acceptance that stigma is legitimate; whether it is aimed at them or at others. These manifestations are labelled enacted, felt and internalised stigma.

The following are the lamentations of homosexual respondents on their plight as a result of their sexual preference.

“In my perception, most Ghanaians are homophobic. I went for a job interview and the woman was like you are gay and I can’t work with you. She said from the way I talked and the way I was moving my hands. . . I felt humiliated and stuff but...”R1

“As a human being, when these things are being said you will feel bad. Sometimes I feel like I’m not wanted. Sometimes I would be there and think that why don’t I just end it. Because this is the world we are living in and nobody wants to accept me” R1 (23 year-old homosexual and decor apprentice).

“After I was beaten, I felt I was a ++ arhh – when I went home, but then I was staying with friends. I’m very sure if had gone home without my friends being around I would have committed suicide.” R2 (twenty seven year-old homosexual, shop assistant)

"... so, it got to a time I wasn't sleeping home I could move out for days, weeks and even months I won't come back home because of the maltreatment, inferiority they throw before me ..." R3 (twenty five year-old homosexual; tailor-apprentice).

"In my area they used to beat homosexuals with canes. Once they get a hint ++ you're in trouble!" R5 (twenty five year-old lesbian; shop assistant).

The above findings demonstrate different levels of discrimination against homosexual youth; from physical to psychological abuse.

The two same sex schools' views on one hand and the stakeholders on the other hand exemplify President Robert Mugabe's description of homosexuals as "prostitutes, dogs and pigs" (Shoko, 2010).

"Ghanaians generally are disgusted by it and see it as an abomination. Most people cannot imagine their children being homosexuals. Some people even threaten to kill their children if they find out that they are homosexuals." R2 (Female psychologist)

*"Ghanaians see homosexuals like animals. They don't even think a human being should be homosexual."*R4 (Mother of four boys and senior civil servant)

"... err because we all know that this our country frowns on it; the law frowns on it; the culture frowns on it; and the society in general frowns on it!!!." R5 (Member of Parliament, Wa Central)

Views expressed by the students of the male same sex school in the FGD aged 15 and 17:

"I believe homosexuality is a social canker that's eating into the fabric of this world ... it's so bad that we have to stop it." R7

"Homosexuality is an immoral act and it must not be accepted in the society." R8

"Just abnormal it's just abnormal not anything else!!!" R10

Prejudiced views expressed by the students of the female same sex school in the FGD aged 15 and 17 show that the Ghanaian society detests the whole phenomenon:

"Society frowns upon such acts so if they find, maybe anybody in a community doing such you must be banished from a community." R1

"Let's say more than half of the population find homosexuality as a disgusting activity and even the laws, the constitution doesn't give approval of homosexuality." R3

*"Ghana as a whole it's not accepted but then there are other people who are still fighting for the um homosexuals' rights just as it happened in America."*R5

The above is a reflection of Herek and McLemore's (2012) description of sexual stigma as a 'culture's shared knowledge about the negative regard that society collectively accords to non-heterosexual behaviours, identity, relationships and communities.' In effect, society's prejudice was expressed through these respondents.

4.3.2 Social Stressors

Social stressors represent the kind of discrimination and rejection sexual minorities are exposed to as a result of their sexual orientation. The homosexuals expressed their sentiments of rejection and pain from society and individuals during their social interactions. This is a feeling of prejudice and a sense of stigmatisation that is more internalised in the homosexuals:

"... because erm of the kind of friends I walk with, sometimes when you going around in town, people point fingers at you. Oh this boy going is gay. But I don't mind. Some also get close to me just to find out whether it's really true ... their attitude induces stress around us" R1 (23 year-old homosexual; decor apprentice)

"There are people, like++ you sit by them, they don't really know who you are and the kind of utterances they make++ based on your sexual orientation. There are even some friends I thought there were so liberal and I disclosed who I am to them but because of their reaction, I've actually gone back to tell them I have stopped. I am trying to just live in a denial but++ yeah so because of that I can't really keep straight friends for a very long time." R2 (27 year-old homosexual, shop assistant)

"You intentionally say negative stuff and I know you are indirectly talking about me and it feels like a knife piercing though your heart, it hurts?" R3 (25 year-old homosexual; tailor-apprentice)

"I know I can't stay in this society as a lesbian. It won't be easy. They will kill me oo! Ah, nobody will tolerate me. In fact, nobody tolerates lesbians in my area. You can only hide and do what you want to do." R5 (25 year-old lesbian, shop assistant)

Society's negative reaction is the result of felt stigma which is internalised in the psyche of the LGBT person. For instance the reaction of Jerry Ekandjo, urging new police recruits to "eliminate gays and lesbians from the face of Namibia" is a social stressor. President Museveni of Uganda in September 1999 also insisted on the conviction of homosexuals.

Stakeholders share their opinion:

“Well, as psychologists I don’t think we can do much on prevention, but with counselling we try to help people accept who they are since people sometimes fight with themselves because of the stigma and prejudice.” R2 (Female Psychologist)

“Most of them it’s something they feel bad about and want to quit. Some were introduced at the age of 8, 9 and 10. It means they were innocent and they did not know what they were doing. Now, they feel ashamed; some even feel so dirty they do not wish to continue but they are used to it.” R3 (male teacher and student counsellor)

4.3.3 Religiosity

The irony about this theme is that all homosexuals interviewed claimed to be very active in their respective churches. Five are charismatic while one is orthodox. However, their sexual orientation and identities are not known because they know what the repercussions are. One scripture that is critical for all Christians is in the book of John 14:15 “if you love me keep my commandment.” It is the litmus test of obedience.

“I’m an Anglican, I go to church and I participate in a lot of activities. I’m a very active member. No no no, they don’t know I’m gay, no.” R1

“Yes, I go to church at Action. People know that I’m straight in church and I’m in the choir, you know some people can be so inquisitive that even if you open your bible they want to see what’s in the bible.” R3

I’m a very committed member at ICGC. I attend all prayer meetings, prayer and fasting, everything; ++ I’m a Christian, and I know God loves me. R4

Below are the religious views of the stakeholders. All 10 stakeholders made references either to the Holy Bible or the Holy Quran. Making allusions to instances where God either disowned people or brought destruction to their cities because of homosexuality. Allusions were made to Romans 1:26-28 “... exchanged natural sexual relations to unnatural ones”; Mark 10:6 “at the beginning of creation, God made them male and female” and Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:1-38:

“From de Biblical perspective it is wrong, there is no way one should live with another person from the same sex, so we shouldn't encourage it.” R4 (mother of four boys and senior civil servant)

“In our religious books, we read about Sodom and Gomorrah in the bible the same in the Quran. I am a Muslim and the books of God are against it and God himself has made pronouncements about it so religiously it is unaccepted.” R5 (MP, Wa Central)

“God frowns on it so my personal understanding or belief is that we should all frown upon homosexuality or any carnal knowledge which does not have foundation in the Word of God and ee... I believe my other colleagues from the Muslim faith will also frown on such activities.” R6 (MP for Ho west)

“He created woman also and he commanded that they should be fruitful and there was no way that a man and a man will be fruitful. He told a man a woman to be fruitful. So basically, the Bible doesn't encourage homosexuality” R8 (Charismatic Bishop)

“Those who do not fear God are given to all sorts of pleasures, which are not in themselves, ok in the eyes of humans. So as far as I'm concerned, homosexuality is not a good thing.” R9 (Senior Medical Doctor and Consultant Anaesthetics)

Reverend Emmanuel Martey, head of the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church's claim in July 2013 that 'gays' are carrying out 'Satan's deadly agenda', (Human Dignity Trust, 2015, p. 3) is a clear indication that religiosity has a prejudicial effect on same sex sexual relationships and therefore Christians are prejudiced against the practice.

There was a general reference to religion by all 10 students of the female same sex school. They expressed their disapproval of the practice as it is unrighteous, 5 of them said, it undermines God's law of productivity.

“An example is Sodom and Gomorrah. Because of those, things like homosexuality which was occurring very often over there it led to God destroying the town.” R6

“And when God created Adam and Eve he didn't create and Adam and Adam, he created Adam and Eve. Neither did he create Eve and Eve and then God, when God created Adam and Eve he told them to be fruitful and multiply and a male and a male cannot be fruitful obviously, and then I heard recently umm, Mugabe has, arrested some lesbians and then has imprisoned them and then will release them on account if they are able to mate and give birth to, um yes, an offspring.” R7

“When God let the Israelites out of Egypt, he gave them a set of laws and one of them was that, God himself told the people that he doesn't like homosexuality, he doesn't want a man and a man to engage in sex relations. Neither does he want a woman and a woman to engage in sexual relations.” R9

Sadgrove (2012) lament that if people are left to practice homosexuality, procreation will be affected. In 2006, the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuhu Sharubutu, leader of the Muslim community in Ghana congratulated the Government for banning an alleged conference on homosexuality and called on other religious leaders to support the Government in the same vein (GNA, September 6, 2006).

4.3.4 Key Population and Social Acceptance

A former Minister of Trade and Industry, Hannah Tetteh's emphatic statement on Ghana's position revealed a sense of prejudice,

"... Every society has its norms and what it considers to be acceptable. In the Western world, it is acceptable to have gay relationships and even move on to the next level to gay marriages; in our society, it is unacceptable" (Ghana Web, 2011).

The stakeholder on human rights and the police officer who is also a public health officer held similar views; they are calling for the general social acceptance of all sexual minorities as members of societies and not to be treated with prejudice. The other stakeholders agreed to accept homosexuals but not the act itself based on Christian principles they held:

"We refer to them as key population because we think they're very vulnerable and also to avoid them being stigmatised. We don't like people calling them homosexuals or lesbians. I have a soft spot for them. Not just because I'm a lawyer, but I think that as far as they're human beings nobody should demean them or stigmatise them." R1 (Female Human Rights lawyer from CHRAJ)

"When we try to make them feel accepted socially that is when we can educate them and they'll open up with the emotional, psychological as well as medical problems they face." R2 (Female psychologist)

"Oh ++ our society frowns on it but from where I stand I'm supposed to evangelise to everybody whether an armed robber or homosexual. I'll be nice to them so I can witness and win them to Christ." R4 (Senior Civil Servant and mother of four boys)

"society should rather be accommodating #### if they know that oh society loves me, then they can open up and tell them their challenges, tell what they are facing." R7

Contrary to the analysis of the stakeholders above, several surveys have proven Ghanaians to be anti-gay. The study conducted by Pew Research Global (2014) revealed that 98 percent of Ghanaians feel that homosexuality is “morally unacceptable,” the highest percentage of any country surveyed (HRC 2014, p. 9).

4.3.5 Familial prejudice

This theme examines the extent of prejudice from relations; students from the male same sex school were asked about their reactions should they find out that a sibling is engaged in homosexual activity. The responses generated show that there is a high level of prejudice against the whole phenomenon; homosexuality has no space at all. Five of the respondents though were insistent on seeking spiritual help. This in effect shows that homosexuality is still recognised as demonic. Out of anger and disgust, one student threatened to expose that sibling to public ridicule and stigma:

“Ermm++ I’ll actually be shocked because of our upbringing. I will talk to him and then tell my parents. We’ll take him for counselling and if it still persists we’ll resort to the spiritual side of things”. R1

“Well in my family if for instance my parents get to know it’s either you seek spiritual help or you are disowned. I mean it’s not acceptable but I will just get him a girl there and then to try to change him I mean it’s possible. R3

“Well there can never be a homosexual in my family because from the way my father looks at such an act, he will definitely disown you. But I will talk to him because it’s all about the mindset. R4

“I will allow you to be stigmatised, yeah”. R6

Varied responses from the female students:

“Oh me as for me we’re the same blood, excuse me but no! When I say it in English, it would be so small;l mē shwie no (I’ll lash him). No no no no ah still “mē shwie no. Sister gyae.” (I’ll give him real beatings, sister stop)! I’ll put the fact that I’m a peer counsellor aside and I’ll lash you when I am done we’ll talk because this one I don’t understand it’s not anything genetic ‘cos no one in the family has it and you’re the only one who has it eei where did you get it from my sister? See maybe after beating you severely maybe I’ll take to a pastor to pray for you when it still persists hmm it’s only God oo. R2:

“As she said I’ll beat you when I finish I’ll sit you down speak to you and then tell you that if mommy and daddy were male and female, mated and produce you why would you want someone with the same sex. Me I will beat you up eei. If possible if killing was not a sin I will kill you and resurrect you again.” R3:

“You guys are funny. Errm I think first of all she’s my sibling yes but she’s also a human being and I believe that human being are capable of doing anything if someone has done it then obviously anyone related to me can also do it so I don’t know if I will whip you or something. I will get angry I will get bored, I will get sad but I will try to understand why you did something like that, then we can pick it up from there. R4

Students’ reaction if the homosexual is a parent was also examined:

Male sex school students’ responses ranged from the fact that it is simply impossible for their parents to engage in such acts, calling for professional counselling to banishing their parents from home because they cannot handle the situation.

“Well ++, it’s a possibility, but I know it’s impossible in my family, I believe and pray that never ... ++ R1

“It’s good the question has an ‘if’ clause. It can only be ‘if’ I will be very sad but I’ll pray and also send him for counselling and those stuffs. R2

“I’ll send them on vacation so that mother and father can have a good time somewhere in a very cool place. R4

“Oh for me, I will call his/her siblings talk to them; I can’t stay in the house. R6

“I will sack him from the house.” R8

Stakeholders’ said, should they find out that their children engage in homosexual practice, though they would express their hatred for the phenomenon they will counsel their children in love and work hard to talk them out of it:

“Hmmm +++++ I just can’t imagine it, I can only pray and hope and do all that a good parent needs to do to prevent my child from engaging in such an act.” R2 (Female psychologist)

“Honestly I would be disappointed initially if I were not a counsellor I’d have been very angry with the child but with my experience as a counsellor I will take my time and surely counsel that child out of it.” R3 (Male Teacher and student counsellor).

“Tell the child I love him or her but that I hate the behaviour” R10 (Female Sociologist)

4.3.6 Right-Wing Campaign

Heterosexuals represent the predominant sexual group in Ghana (Appiah, 2006); however, there are other sexual minority groups who are referred to as “out-groups” who according to the social dominance theory should not be allowed to thrive because they are not heteronormative. Inghram (1994, p. 204) sees heteronormativity as “the view that institutionalised heterosexuality constitutes the standard for legitimate and prescriptive socio-sexual arrangements.” A Muslim cleric, Mallam Abass Mahmud literally calling for the elimination of gays by inciting attacks and persecution in Zongo against their communities in Ghana (Pulse TV, 2016; Ghana Web, 2016) is an evidence to the fact that Ghanaians are likely to launch a campaign against homosexuality.

All stakeholders expressed the view that they will campaign and fight against the practice but not the actual individuals involved to ensure that this ‘canker’ as they refer to it is totally eliminated:

“I have met people who pronounce errm++ high sounding anger and rejection revolution of homosexual so generally my impression is that Ghanaians are opposed to it. I just wish there would be an occasion for me to say <<STOP IT>>.” R5 (Male MP, Wa Central)”

“I will not support any law that will come to parliament to allow for err... homosexuality, lesbianism or transgender position because of our culture and my Christian belief.” (MP, Ho West) R6

All 10 respondents from the female same sex schools said they will fully support any campaign against homosexuality because it has a great potential of destroying the Ghanaian society. Secondly, if the practice is not fought against early, the youth will be confused and rather perceive homosexuality as the norm as against heterosexuality:

“Umm yes umm, I think I’ll be at the front line of the battle yes. I will be ready to fight homosexuality because umm hmm, now where the world is going eh, even, the way, it is rising, if we’re not careful, it will be like homosexuals are the ones practising the right wing and we are the ones not accepted. Yes, so I will fight it basically because I don’t want to be in a society that is up-upside down yeah. R1

“I will fight against homosexuality because one, it burns the image of the individual

umm the family of the individual, the society and also the country at large and also it can lead to health problems. R2

“I will also be one of the first people to join the battle against homosexuality because I see it as something that doesn't make sense. ... God didn't create “Adam and Steve” R3

“Umm I think I will also fight against homosexuality because I don't think it's right and for instance Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed because of homosexuality and I don't want God to come and destroy Ghana because there are some things I want to do before I leave the earth.” R4

“I will fight against homosexuality because it's a threat to the society because they might start influencing others to join them in the act and besides God doesn't only punish the evil doer but punishes anyone who takes delight in it. So, if you know what the person is doing is not right and we are just there not doing anything about it then yeah it won't help... R7

Stakeholders will engage in the campaign if it is against homosexuality and not homosexuals.

Two of the stakeholders who have been engaging sexual minorities on various levels believe that they have a choice so their rights must be protected and respected:

“You don't want to look at someone who has chosen to be heterosexual as the one who is prim and proper when talking as a human rights activist. We don't talk like that. The person has decided to marry that's his choice.” R1 (Human Rights Lawyer, CHRAJ)

“There's no need for any negative action against them because that will rather cause to hide. Rather, let's accommodate them and they'll open and then we can help them out” R7 (Chief Superintendent of Police and Public Health office)

4.4 Investigating Objective Three: Social Policy Implications

The spread of homosexuality and sexual prejudice have critical policy consequences in the provision of social services because sexual minorities are discriminated against when accessing these services. It is imperative therefore to ascertain if sexual minorities are indeed rejected or attended to in their bid to access social services.

4.4.1 Societal Misfits

This theme refers to social exclusion which Takács (2006, p. 11) described as “a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from

participating fully ... and lifelong learning opportunities, as a result of discrimination.”

This estranges them from employment, education, health and other social opportunities and community networks and activities:

“Arhh I++ as I move around I feel rejection within myself. Most homosexuals are having a lot of problems they are having desperation, they are getting sick.” R2

“I keep things to myself, I sit myself down and then I move away, I move alone....so they continue mocking me, my grand mom, my sisters, my step sisters ++++ ... they all group themselves and they move away from you and make you feel like you are a nobody #### ++” R3

“I stopped singing in the choir because of this whole thing. I didn’t feel good within me. I felt an internal stigma, I felt I was deceiving myself ++ huh.” R4

4 of the 10 stakeholders are of the view that sexual minorities should not be entertained in society because they are “heterononcompliant” (my own coinage) and therefore do not deserve to be part of society.

“Socially, it does not seem to be fitting in the minds of people. So there is a big problem if a human being is engaged in it. He is torn into being a real person in society that can be accepted and all and somebody who has melted in society and will never be seen on the surface.” R5 (MP, Wa Central)

“They are seen as misfits who are not to be associated with. I think just like the prison, homosexuals must be kept in a special exile for spiritual and medical treatment because they threatens humanity” R10 (Female Sociologist and educationist)

The Ghanaian society does not support homosexuality in any form. For example, an anti-gay syndicate in James Town, Accra, launched an onslaught on nine suspected homosexuals and said they were determined to weed out homosexuals from the vicinity (Starr News, August 2012). A related event revealed a mob attack by residents of Teshie, a suburb of Accra in March 2015, in which a group of suspected lesbians were pelted with human faeces confirm this (Human Dignity Trust, 2015, p. 4).

6 of the 10 stakeholders’ responses show that as much as homosexuality is frowned upon by the Ghanaian society, they deserve to be treated as humans with love and compassion:

So I really think homosexuality is not a good thing and should be seen as such but then homosexuals should be treated with love and mercy, I think that is the only way to get them to see the wrong they are doing.” R2 (Female Psychologist)

"My general view is that, err ++ going by Biblical principles, God says we should detest sin but not the sinner. So ++ even though what they seem to be doing has been, is frowned upon by society, I think if we shun them or isolate them it will make them go into the closet." R7 (Chief Superintendent of Police and Public Health Officer)

4.4.2 Human Rights and the Law

The UN Declaration of December 2008: (10) states:

"We call upon all States and relevant international human rights mechanisms to commit to promote and protect human rights of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity."

In Ghana, however, the Criminal Code of 1960 criminalises the act and allows for the arrest and imprisonment of homosexuals.

8 of the respondents from the male same sex school are of the estimation that even though homosexuality is criminalised, the people are protected by human rights. Two did not agree because they consider it as a “spiritual vice” which is capable of becoming a “societal vice”

“Because they are all human and everybody has the right to life so, we should make them seek counselling, let them seek psychological help.” R1

“Also, the government can put in place laws that ban homosexual activities in the country that will help.” R2

It is not a human rights issue ...homosexual act is a spiritual vice and will be a societal vice. R3

The above proposal is in sharp contrast with President Mugabe’s statement; he has no space for homosexual in his country:

“I find it outrageous and repugnant to my human conscience that such immoral and repulsive organisations like those of homosexuals, who offend both the agents of the law of nature and the morals and religious beliefs espoused by our society,

should have any advocates in our midst or even elsewhere in the world” (Ilyayambwa 2012, p. 57).

Marietta Brew Appiah-Oppong, on her appointment as Minister for Justice and Attorney General designate of the Republic of Ghana, was emphatic on Chapter 6 of the Criminal Code 1960 (ACT 29), Section 104 which states:

“(1) whoever has unnatural carnal knowledge of any person of the age of sixteen years or over without his consent shall be guilty of a first degree felony and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years and not more than twenty-five years; or of any person of sixteen years or over with his consent is guilty of a misdemeanour”

She asked anyone who wanted a redress to seek interpretation with the Supreme Court (Ghana Web, 2013).

All 6 homosexuals know about the law that criminalises homosexual. They all mention “unnatural carnal knowledge” but what they do not know is the number of years involved in the sentence and therefore they contend that it is so unfair. Paradoxically however, they all think that the state should enact policies to protect them from homophobics. One of the respondents expressed the view that if for nothing at all, homosexuality between two consenting adults should be legitimised.

“No, I wouldn’t wish that homosexuality is legalised but what I would want is that society accepts us and we all live in harmony. I won’t fight for this course. Even if you fight for, it’s not going to be given to you in Africa. I’m ok.” (23 year-old homosexual, decor apprentice)

“I think it should be between too matured people. In my world, homosexuality is legal to me but I don’t want it to become legalised in Ghana because people are really going to beat us really hard so it okay now they should leave it like that but there should be strong laws to protect us.” R2 (27 year-old homosexual, shop assistant)

8 out of 10 stakeholders were resolute in their standpoint regarding the issue of homosexuality and the law but 2 articulated divergent views. Whereas the 8 agreed that

sexual minorities be weeded out of the Ghanaian system, the 2 are of the impression that ‘key populations’ should be accommodated rather than ostracised because their opinions are critical to social and public policy formulation. The two; a female human rights lawyer and a superintendent of police who by virtue of their professional designations have been having consultative engagements, counselling and training sessions with sexual minorities, refer to them as key populations. The two policy makers declared openly and emphatically that they will not support any bill in parliament on the grounds of human rights:

“The law criminalises the act; it doesn’t criminalise someone who says I’m a homosexual. “Nobody can take the law into their own hands or demean any human being just because he feels superior. In the eyes of the law we’re all equal hence, you cannot discriminate against any person.” R1 (human Rights Lawyer, CHRAJ)

“It is already clear black and white that homosexuality is not a natural way of relating with another human being and the makers of our laws anticipated that these things are likely to happen and so they thought that they should prevent it by way of legislation.” R5 (MP, Wa Central)

“We’ve had a couple of debates in parliament, I think in the sixth parliament where some of our colleagues decided that well, anybody who will come in the court of the house with a law on homosexuality, we will not allow you because culture does not permit err++... such an activity. Err... coming to the law, the law does also not permit it.” R6 (MP, Ho West)

“...So not until we de-stigmatise ourselves by not urmm frowning on such issues then they will be ++-, they will be able to come out. The moment we encourage arrest, arrest, arrest, they go underground and...” R7 (Chief Superintendent of Police and Public Health Officer)

4.4.3 Health

All 6 homosexuals described the various levels of maltreatments they receive in their attempt to access healthcare facilities, to the extent that one of them will only go to a private health post. They said more often than not, the nurses especially, held their hospital folders in a demeaning manner as if “we’re not human beings” so they would rather stay put. It is worrying for sexual minorities to keep their health conditions to themselves because it will have an adverse effect on society as some are infected with Sexually

Transmitted Diseases. However, this heightened prejudice does not allow for openness. In 2011, the *Finder newspaper* carried a story on the Ghana Aids Commission's report of 2011 titled 'Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance' (IBBS) which revealed that there is an estimated 30,000 homosexuals in Ghana, 17 percent of whom are living with HIV/AIDS. This is a critical policy issue as the situation does not only pose socio-economic threats to the individuals but also to the social institutions, structures and the economy as a whole.

"There are consequences to the acts which we normally advise them as to how to go about it. You are likely to contract this disease or that disease or face this and so you should know how to conduct yourself in public and how to behave toward people to avoid that one." R1 (Human Rights Lawyer, CHRAJ)

"Most of them have gone into hiding because they are now sick. They are HIV positive, and TB patients ...if they come to hospital, you're supposed to treat them as human, whether or not the sickness is as a result of the act. It has nothing to do with you. They have the right to health so give them the necessary help they need." R6 (MP, Ho West)

"We can help minimise the effect on especially health. For instance, about 30% of them are HIV Positive and you know, some of them are not only homosexuals, they are bi-sexual. When they go underground that is where they are more lethal, {I: lethal, yeah}, very dangerous." R7 (Chief Superintendent of Police and Public Health Officer)

*"And herpes HIV, hepatitis damaged to the inner sphinter and faecal incontineneces, these are the problems of anal sex which homosexuals are indulged in."*R9 (Medical Doctor and Consultant Anaesthetics)

Stakeholders are apprehensive about the health conditions of sexual minorities. They noted that irrespective of their sexual orientation, they must not be denied access to basic healthcare facilities. This has a ripples effect on society since some are bisexuals, and can easily spread sexually transmitted diseases. It therefore becomes imperative to assist and ensure their health needs are met.

The homosexuals lamented with pain and bitterness the prejudice and stigma they experience in hospitals and clinics. The insinuations that health workers cast at them

coupled with demeaning looks are enough to kill their souls. For those reasons, they have resorted to alternative means of healthcare. They recount their ordeals:

“I stopped going to hospital because of the way health workers treat us. I go to CEPHERG. It’s an NGO. They take good care of and treat us well and we feel like human beings” (23-year-old homosexual, decor apprentice)

“They are dying!!! Especially, when you are a++ homosexual and you go to the hospital and the nurses see you they don’t want to attend to you and all that.” R2 (27 year-old homosexual, shop assistant)

“There is a nurse at the hospital at Haatso who has been nice to me. She encourages me that this is not the end of life. But the other nurses ++ the way they will even hold your card, humm, you’ll feel dirty.” R3 (25 year-old homosexual, tailor apprentice)

Various studies have demonstrated that LGBT persons experience heightened degrees of distress as a result of "social isolation, criminalisation of same-sex behaviours, and unmet health care needs" (Ehlers et al. 2001, p. 10)

Students of the female same sex school also expressed their apprehension of the health of LGBT persons because of the counter effect it might have on society as a result of multiple unsafe safe sex among Ghanaian youth. This indeed has a social policy implication because the overall health of the youth including LGBTs is critical to overall national development:

“Oh, me I think gonorrhoea because, a guy infected with gonorrhoea goes to sleep with another guy, infects him with gonorrhoea. He, if maybe he’s bisexual, gives it to a lady, she too she goes to sleep with another lady and it also gets spread. Everyone is getting gonorrhoea.” R7

“I went to, I think Ridge hospital, psychology department i saw some guys, so nice, I, I was entering with my father but I turned back and I looked at them, when I turned back the woman was like “Do you see the guys out there? They are all affected with HIV and then they are, they all have umm genital warts”. R1

4.4.4 Employment and Association

Statistics from a study by Mtemeri (2015, p. 117) of 143 students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at a university in Zimbabwe imply that 76.2% were neither friendly to

homosexuals nor did they have homosexual friends. This resonates with responses from the male same sex students that they will have no association with homosexuals beyond the professional level.

“OK yes, I will work with a homosexual if am reaping the financial benefits of the job I certainly will, we will only relate professionally.” R4

“I would work with homosexual, because usually it is in a formal setting, we don't really look at people's personal lives that and also depend on how valuable the person is to the institution.” R5

“I will, I will work with a homosexual, so far as am not there for that person, am there for my money, I will.” R6

“Just on professional basis, it's nothing personal just business. You don't even call each other anytime “daabi.” R7

Students from the female side expressed more sentimental views in terms of association. They would rather associate with homosexuals to help them out of the situation. 2 of the students however think it is not the wisest of things to do because it is biblically wrong and their good manners could be corrupt in the process. One respondent said she will associate with a gay rather than a lesbian because there will be no associated risks in the relationship.

“Ooo well for me errm I'd like to...not really like but then not with a girl who is a lesbian but then I'll like to...If it comes...If a errm if a gay comes to me that he wants to be friends with me fine but not a girl. I'm cutting the girl off. But then with a guy okay fine I know that he's gay. He's fully gay there's no way he would try to make advances.” R1

“Well me if you come to me like as a peer## if you come to me for counselling, fine but to be my friend, there would be a question mark.” R2 “Errrm I don't really mind having friends like homosexual friends I want to understand them actually because I don't know why you would go to the extent of...” R3

“Errm I'd associate with a homosexual because errm by interacting and communicating with the person I can get information from him or her and using that information I can give advice to people who are also homosexual but I wouldn't be that close to the person to the extent of engaging in sexually related activity with the person”. R4

“Well I don't think I will associate myself with a homosexual because the Bible says that bad company corrupts good manners.” R5

“For me I wouldn’t like to associate myself with a homosexual. Why? Because erm a believer must not be friends with an unbeliever and the Bible also tells us that we shouldn’t be deceived because evil communication corrupts good manners so what are you going to talk about if you’re friends?” R8

Stakeholders also convey like sentiments; relationship will remain on the periphery and also purely for the benefits thereof, they will never associate with sexual minorities beyond official duties:

“Yea, I will employ a homosexual. He just comes to work and go. It has nothing to do with his character trait or sexual orientation.”R2

“It will be difficult for me, but if I work with homosexual I’ll look at de benefits I will get from him/her.” R3

Findings from this report on employment demonstrate that respondents will work with LGBTs but of course only on professional levels if need be and purposely for their skills. These attitudes are highly discriminatory and prejudicial; they have just not been openly communicated. Non-verbal communication is sometimes even more pronounced than verbal.

4.4.5 The School environment

Students from both same sex male and female schools expressed their disgust for gay students and the fact that they cannot put up with them. They said they will beat them up severely till they desist from those “foolish acts.” This means that knowledge about gays and their activities by their colleague students is detrimental to their welfare. Moreover, students engaged in such activities end up losing concentration on their studies, and this has a negative effect on their academic performances. School authorities end up suspending or expelling students involved in any form of homosexuality depending on the gravity of the case. This is a critical policy issue which government and stakeholders of education need to pay particular attention to and enact policies to address them.

The male students expressed threatening views against sexual minorities:

“Oh as for this school, they can’t stay here with that kind of nonsense lust. We’ll lash them till they stop... oh they can’t! ...++ they won’t survive” R6

“Unless we don’t know, or hear...how can you be in this prestigious school and be doing those abominable things. Like how++ we’ll lash them! +++We’ll beat them more than they were even beaten in the other schools” R7

“We know definitely there are some students who do it but haven’t caught them, but if we do, ++ ... they nah they know” R8

The female students also stated their position. They explained that though there may be lesbians in the school, there are also those students who engage in very close friendships without any amorous undertones; they are just “buddies”:

“Here, we know there are students who are practicing lesbianism but ermm, it’s not as bad, it’s just a closer relationship; they don’t do anything” but if you’re caught doing silly things, you’ll be exposed, you can only hide and do those things” R1

Oh, you see, if we say they’re not here, it’s a lie but ermm in this school it’s called “borla” meaning rubbish I mean ++ like rotten food that has been thrown away on a rubbish dump. ++ Yeah, it’s rubbish, “borla” R4

“... if they’re caught, they’ll be expelled, oh yes, once they’re caught in the act, at least they’ll be suspended because it is a shameful act, because when they start these things they don’t concentrate on their studies, all they do is writing love letters” R7

The above reasons explain why 12 students were expelled for their alleged act of homosexuality ‘Kumasi Wesley Girls’ Senior High School, (*Ghana Web*, December 8, 2012).

4.4.6 Foreign Culture and Media Influences

The views expressed below by students of the male same sex school show that Ghanaian youth are at the mercy of foreign culture and media influences as a result of mass and social media. They lamented that instead of local and traditional programmes, the media is replete with all kinds of alien cultures leading to cultural and media imperialism.

“And also the last one; media influences or can I say foreign culture. They follow those ‘celebrities, guy guy people’and they think it’s nice, and also lust, some

people are so lustful that they will resort to any avenue to satisfy their sexual desires". R2

I think it's because of what they listen to and learn from friends and also from the outside world because people like 'Birdman', people are saying his gay. He's posting pictures of himself. If I'm a fan of Birdman I'll try and imitate him and I was a fan of Sam Smith and he's gay and it hurts me so much. I can imitate him if choose. R7

The female same sex schools veered into foreign aids as a bait to draw Ghana into accepting the practice of homosexuality; they mentioned Gordon Brown's threat to cut aids to countries which mistreat homosexuals, and were emphatic on the fact that Ghana can make it without UK's aid:

"For me to be frank, I'm saying that if it's because of we are not accepting homosexuality and then you say you're cutting off your fund to Ghana then please take your money. R2

Why should I accept homosexuality, I'm in my country and then you're telling me what to do because you're giving me money no it doesn't work like that". R3

"I think, I think most African leaders have been cited by uhh, western, western leaders that's why they think we can't make it on our own." R5

Another example showing Ghana's abhorrence of homosexual practice is evidenced in its refusal to yield to British Prime Minister, David Cameron's threats in 2011 to limit aid to countries which were anti-gay (Ghana Web, November 2, 2011; BBC News, November 2, 2011). Though the British Government subsequently cut aid to Ghana in respect of the response by the Late President Professor John Evans Atta-Mills stance, Ghanaians were resolute.

4.4.7 Beyond Immorality: Psychological and Spiritual Influence

All 10 students of the male same sex schools believe that homosexuality has deeply rooted spiritual or psychological base or both, because they feel the whole practice is abnormal and highly demonic:

“ermm ++, people attribute it to psychology, other people say it is spiritual; its demonic so it has two sides. There are two sides of the coin. It’s a social disorder and a spiritual problem” R1

“Well I think it’s both and if its spiritual the solution is quite simple, deliverance prayers will do the work but if it is mental it’s a whole new story because first you have convince the person and try getting the person to know what the benefits are from associating or interacting with the opposite sex.” R4

“I believe it’s psychological because it is said that what you are experiencing now in your life is because of your dominant thought” R5

Stakeholders’ views are in support of the above sentiments that there are psychological and spiritual undertones and therefore homosexuals deserve to be examined and attended to. This perception is sated with prejudice:

“... so I think that the people involved in it have a problem, they may have psychological and social challenges in their lives which may have influenced their behaviour in that respect.” R5

"Some of them must be delivered from this particular eumm, I'll call canker because I'm a Christian, sometimes, these things can be demonic and I frown on it!" R8

Opinions on homosexuality being a social disorder is supported by the statement made by the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr. Akwasi Osei, in March 2013, who said “homosexuality is not natural and should not qualify for human rights ... it is a social disorder” (ibid.). The spiritual side which calls for special prayers and deliverance sessions aligns with Rehnstrom (2001), in Dankwa (2009, p. 194) that it was very routine for most Pentecostal and or Charismatic churches in Ghana to hold deliverance and counselling sessions to “liberate” perceived homosexual members from their state of demonic bondage and “affliction”

In conclusion therefore, the study revealed that not only is the practice of homosexuality high among the youth but also that the level of prejudice against them is equally high; affecting both their physiological and psychological health. In terms of employment, they are refused jobs once they are recognised as gays, and even in situations where have been employed by benevolent employers, they still suffer rejection from customers and or other

members of society. The school environment has also not proven to be a safe place for homosexuals since other students subject them to physical attacks.

Secondly, because it is seen as a “taboo” and indecent behaviour, they are not spared by the management team of their schools either; suspension and or outright dismissal are some of the punitive or corrective measures employed by the schools. All these prejudicial behaviours mean that sexual minorities have become vulnerable groups in the society and therefore need special care and attention. Consequently, the critical need for government, ministries and agencies concerned to rise up to the occasion to address these issues is high.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the major findings of the study in line with the objectives and research questions. It also draws a conclusion and makes recommendations for individual researchers, institutions and policy makers for future studies.

5.1 Summary

This study, “prejudice against Ghanaian homosexual youth in the Accra Metropolis” set out to establish the spread of homosexual practice among Ghanaian youth, examine the various levels of prejudice among Ghanaians and also investigate the social policy implications in relation to education, health employment, equality and exclusion of Ghanaian homosexual youth. The research answered the questions: How does the Ghanaian society treat homosexuals? How can prejudice influence employment, healthcare and educational advancement. How can the continual practice of homosexuality among the youth impact on the future of Ghana’s socio-economic development.

Findings from 16 in-depth interviews and two focus group discussions revealed that indeed homosexual practice among Ghanaian youth is real and quite widespread. In a consensual qualitative research, six homosexuals, five males and one female, aged between 21 and 27, recounted their sexual lives and experiences with, and among other homosexuals.

Contrary to views held by some homosexuals that they were born with rather than acquired or learnt, the other study participants, constituting 10 stakeholders of varied professions and socio-economic status and two same sex (male and female) schools with ages ranging between 15 and 17, believe that homosexuality is environmentally and

socially induced; it is a sexual preference and a gender one chooses to identify with and not innate. These claims were also established in the literature as scientists and scholars advanced the view that homosexuality could be the outcome of nature and nurture. Most scholars however, have been able to establish that homosexuals are made and not born.

Interactions with the homosexuals disclosed that a countless number of Ghanaian youth, including married men find themselves in the practice but have discreetly concealed their activities because of society's prejudice against the whole act. They cited the possibility of every extended family housing at least one homosexual, judging from their networks and community of gays. Among themselves, they are even classified into 'black on black' (B on B); 'classic gay dudes' and 'white hunters' with some of their activities comprising 'sex party' in which three or more gays as in "three tops" or "four tops" sleep with one "bottom" in "threesome" or "foursome." Areas like Akotolante, Palladium, Agbado, Osu, Pillar 2, Anumle, Adabraka and Christian Village in Accra were cited as hubs.

Most of the participants have in one way or the other encountered a homosexual and therefore believe they are increasing but cannot quantify their numbers. Also, the cliché that same sex schools are breeding grounds for homosexual activities was refuted by students from both schools, adding that even though the allegation could be true to some extent, the mixed schools are also culpable since some of the habits are learned in junior schools and practised when the opportunity arises especially when they are starving from sex; having left their girlfriends to be in school for a whole term.

Furthermore, just like in the same sex schools, students in the mixed schools do not share the same dormitories as the females, so they could equally engage in the act. The concept of anal sex with the opposite sex was an interesting theme that emerged during the FGDs and calls for further studies; this, the students say is prevailing because it is a way of

preserving their virginities without getting pregnant and also a sexual style and choice of some of the boys on the girls instead of practising it on their male counterparts.

Among the various reasons attributed to the spread of homosexuality among the youth are materialism, celebrity role models, peer pressure, cultural and media imperialism.

Sexual prejudice is high among Ghanaians because the society is heterosexually dominated; homosexuality is seen as a taboo, “unAfrican” and therefore very much “unGhanaian”

Findings revealed that homosexuals in Ghana experience high degrees of prejudice from families, friends, associates and the community once they are identified as non-heterosexuals.

The social dominance theory, the framework undergirding this study is a “multi-level theory” of societies’ patriarchy and heterosexism with a strong intersection between gender norms and sexuality. It is essentially the intersection of the processes of cultural ideologies, institutional discrimination and the social psychology of prejudice.

This theory is a mirror of sexual prejudice’s predominance in the Ghanaian society. Results from this study demonstrate how homosexuals lament about the degree of stigma, discrimination, abuses, violence and all kinds of social and psychological trauma they have had to put up with due to social stressors and enacted stigma.

Participants’ regard for homosexuals is very low as some refer to them “those people” and “animals” among others. They describe homosexuality as abnormal, a disorder, and a social canker.

Citing Sodom and Gomorrah, participants exclaimed that homosexuality attracts God’s wrath and undermines God’s law of productivity and procreation. They are therefore

prepared to embark on a 'Right-Wing Campaign' to stop the practice since some participants see them as societal misfits who must not to be associated with, but must be kept in a special exile for spiritual and medical examination and further treatment. The issue of homosexuality being deeply rooted in a spiritual and or psychological base is a view that was strongly held by a cross section of participants. They believe "these people" need counselling and deliverance. These and many others have led to multiple forms of discrimination especially when accessing employment and healthcare facilities. This, some of the participants feared could have a ripples effect on society since some of them are bisexuals who can easily spread sexually transmitted diseases.

Most participants will employ or only work with homosexuals based on their expertise, and also, the relationship will be on purely professional basis and which will not even extend beyond the office. Some students would only want to associate with them in order to dig into the root causes of this "canker." On the educational front, the school environment is not a safe one for sexual minorities if they are caught in the act. Issues of suspension and possible expulsion were mentioned as punitive measures. Students also vowed to beat any homosexual they find in their schools severely. It also presupposes that a foreknowledge of a person's sexual orientation can impinge on their chances of gaining admission into educational institutions. All of these together, do not just portray the prejudice against homosexual practice in the Ghanaian society but also present social policy implications of exclusion and inequality as issues of human rights began to surge alongside the law, that irrespective of their sexual orientation, the homosexuals' fundamental rights must be protected and respected. Homosexuals, referred to as "key population" by the professionals have appealed for a policy that will protect them from the prejudiced Ghanaian society. The onus now rests on policy makers to collaborate with stakeholders of education, youth and gender to find possible solutions to these challenges.

5.2. Conclusion

The dynamics of a youthful population are complex because they are vulnerable to all kinds of social vices and are also exposed to all kinds of events which they do not have any control over and incidentally, some of these activities have national effects. The youth is a microcosm of a nation's overall social, economic and political strength; so anything they do at every given time is important to the future of that nation.

The findings of this study raise awareness of issues that have been glossed over but which are pertinent to the overall development of the nation. Democracy in the midst of human rights, social welfare and equality require a well structured social sector and Ghana does not have the structures to support such issues, as homosexuals clamour for a counter policy against the 1960 criminal code; Article 29 section 104. This looks like an impossible venture for an African country such as Ghana which is struggling to balance its socio-economic status. It is worth noting that all but a handful of countries lack constitutional legal protection in regards to discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Altogether, there are about 70 countries in the world where homosexuality has been criminalised by legislation and Ghana, the 'lodestar of Africa' will not go against the fundamental beliefs and values system of the continent and these have been categorically expressed by the two policy makers in this study.

5.3 Recommendations

Findings of this study show that government needs to take a second look at certain social policy issues in order to ensure an overall growth and socio-economic development.

- There is the need for the sector Ministries such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Youth and

Sports to put more social and economic structures in place to adequately address sexual minorities.

- Health workers must be adequately trained to handle homosexuals with extra care in order to prevent them from hibernating because some of them have been infected with communicable diseases as a result of their sexual orientation. Coiling into their shells could result in another health crisis for the nation because they will go back into the system and infect others.
- The Ministry of Education must strengthen their sex education sessions; fuse it with the schools' curriculum even at the Kindergarten stage. They must also collaborate with other Departments and Agencies such as the Information Services Department, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies to engage in community-based educational campaigns on sexuality to raise awareness.
- Periodic studies need to be conducted on the youth and homosexuality to assess their sexuality status and how it impacts on Ghana's overall socio-economic development.
- National health campaigns on the dangers of homosexuality must be organised by the Ministry of Health, and the Ghana Health Service to educate the entire population on the spread of homosexuality, and its corresponding prejudice.

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APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Question Guide for in-depth interviews with homosexuals in the Accra Metropolis

Good day, my name is Marcella Agbeko from the University of Ghana, and I'm conducting this interview as part of my dissertation for MA Social Policy Studies. I'd like us to have a little conversation on Ghanaian youth and homosexuality. I'd also like to assure you that this is interview purely for academic purposes and every conversation we hold will be treated with the strictest level of confidence.

I'd also like to seek your permission to record this interview for the purposes of transcription.

Please sign this consent form to indicate your consent for both interview and recording.

Demographics

Gender: Male Female

Age

Sexual Orientation: Bisexual/Homosexual

Gender Identity

Religion: Christian – Orthodox/Charismatic Moslem Other

Occupation: Student Employed Self-employed Unemployed

Looking at our society's prejudice of homosexual orientation, how have you've been coping?

1. For the purpose of this interview can I refer to you as AB?
2. When did you first realise you had a different sexual preference?

3. Do you think you were born with it or acquired through peer pressure or some attractions?
4. Is your family aware? If so, what is their reaction? What about your friends
5. Do you have any challenges in your socialisation? (Religion/Church, School, Work, Sports etc.). Do you feel a sense of rejection, discrimination, and or hatred?
6. What kind of discrimination do you experience? Do you have a job? If no, why?
7. What forms of discrimination do you experience if any at your workplace or school?
8. What is the larger Ghanaian society's reaction to your sexual orientation?
9. Has there been an instance where you have been subjected to any form of mental, physical, verbal and violence abuse etc.? How did you feel? Did you feel stigmatised?
10. Do you know that section 104 of the criminal code, 1960 (ACT 29) of Constitution of the Republic of Ghana criminalises homosexuality and punishes with a term of minimum five years imprisonment?
11. Would you wish that homosexuality is legalised and why? Would you fight for that course?
12. Would say that you feel a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and inner tranquility like non-homosexuals?
13. Is your sexual preference for pleasure, fun or for economic gains?
14. If self-employed, do people patronise your services? Do they know you are homosexual? Do you think they will patronise it if they knew your sexual orientation?
15. If employed, are aware of your sexual preference? What is the relationship between you and your colleagues? What about others – customers, etc.?

16. Do you intend to change your sexual orientation later and get married? If so, would you quit homosexuality, or you'd prefer to be a bisexual?

B. Question Guide for in-depth interviews with stakeholders of society

Good day, my name is Marcella Agbeko from the University of Ghana, and I'm conducting this interview as part of my dissertation for MA Social Policy Studies. I'd like us to have a little conversation on Ghanaian youth and homosexuality. I'd also like to assure you that this is interview purely for academic purposes and every conversation we hold will be treated with the strictest level of confidence.

I'd also like to seek your permission to record this interview for the purposes of transcription.

Please sign this consent form to indicate your consent for both interview and recording.

Demographics

Name of respondent:

Gender of respondent: Male Female

Age of respondent:

Religion: Christian – Orthodox/Charismatic Moslem Other

Marital status: Married Single Divorced Widow

Occupation: Employed Self-employed Unemployed

1. What is your view of homosexuality?
2. Have you had any encounter with homosexuals?

3. What will you do if you realise that your child has same sex sexual preference?
How would you treat that child? What about a sibling? Friend etc?
4. Will you reject, accept, advice reform that child?
5. Would you associate with a homosexual?
6. Would you sit near a homosexual in church, taxi etc.? why?
7. Would you employ a homosexual? If yes why? If no why?
8. What would be your reaction if you realise you are working with or for a homosexual?
9. Do you realise that homosexuality is creeping into the Ghana society?
10. Would you fight against homosexuality?

C. Question Guide for Focus Group Discussions with two same sex schools

Demographics

Name of respondent:

Gender of respondent: Male Female

Age of respondent:

Class/Form

Religion: Christian – Orthodox/Charismatic Moslem Other

1. What do you understand by homosexuality?
2. What is your personal view of homosexuality?
3. What, what does the family think about homosexuality?
4. What is the larger Ghanaian society view of homosexuality?
5. Do you believe that people are born homosexual?
6. Why do you think the youth engaged in homosexual activities?

7. Have you encountered any homosexual before?
8. Over the years, people have talked about same sex schools having intimate relationships with each other. What is your view on that?
9. How would you feel if a homosexual attempts amorous advances towards you?
10. So would you work with Homosexual?
11. Would you sit by homosexual in church, taxi, etc?
12. What would be your reaction if you realise that your sibling is engaged in homosexual activities.
13. What would be your reaction if you realised that either of your parents is engaged in homosexual activities?
14. Do you think you will find yourself campaigning against homosexuality?

