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THE ROLE OF THE GHANAIAN MEDIA PRACTITIONERS:

COMMUNICATION AND THE IMPACT ON THE LGBTQIAAP CULTURE

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Sita Yeboa Pipim**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references, contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature ……

Date……

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Ms. Naa Korkor Leeyoo Watson-Nortey

Signature ……

Date:……

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDD	-	Center for Democratic Development
CID	-	Criminal Investigation Department
CSOs	-	Civil Society Organizations
GBC	-	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GJA	-	Ghana Journalist Association
LGBTQ	-	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexuals, transgender and Queer
NMC	-	National Media Commission
TV	-	Television
UN	-	United Nations

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ABSTRACT

The issue of LGBTQIAAP+ has become one of the main social problems that have threatened social cohesion in most part of the world. In Africa, the situation is not different as reports of attacks and rejection of the LGBTQ+ culture have been recorded in most parts of the continent. The objectives of the study were to explore how the media can communicate effectively to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQIAAP+ culture; investigate some communication strategies used by the media and their impact on both the LGBTQIAAP+ community and Ghanaians and also to identify and analyze the challenges facing the media in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the issue of LGBTQIAAP+. The study used the Cass-D'Augelli-Fassinger's model as the theoretical base since the three are rooted in gay and lesbian identity development. The findings revealed, among other things, that the media plays an important role in communicating the culture of Ghana's LGBTQ+ community. The study also discovered that the media use a variety of strategies in communicating about LGBTQ+ culture, including building journalist capacity and frequently organizing LGBTQ+ media programs. The study also discovered that the media in Ghana can and does play a number of important roles, including acting as a conduit for the dissemination and education of citizens on the culture of LGBTQ+ people in Ghana. The study went further to reveal that there was a communication gap between the media and the LGBTQ+ community which needed to be bridged. The study recommended that the National Media Commission (NMC) and the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) advocate for good journalism and professionalism in this regard.

Keywords: Cultural transmission, Community, Gender norms, LGBTQIAAP+, Media

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0.Background to the Study

There is no way to go through a typical day without coming into contact with the media in some way (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2006). In a typical day, one may listen to the radio while they get ready for work, see advertisements as they go to and from work, and watch television in the evening (Nyarko, 2016). Therefore, humans make up the audience for all forms of media. According to Pavlik and McIntosh (2004), the mass media serves four key functions. The first is surveillance, which involves providing information about topics, events, and trends in society. The second is correlation, which is the interpretation and attribution of meaning to events and circumstances so that people understand their responsibilities in society. Cultural transmission is the third. The medium facilitates transmission. This is when the media helps to spread dominant cultures and subcultures from generation to generation or from newcomers. The last job of the media is to amuse the people with music or theatre.

Amedie (2015) is of the view that, in today's world, it is undeniable that social media plays an important role in impacting our culture, our economy and our overall view of the world. According to Hjarvard (2008), the media have an important impact on cultural globalization in two mutually interdependent ways: firstly, the media provide an extensive transnational transmission of cultural products and, secondly, they contribute to the formation of communicative networks and social structures. The rapidly growing supply of media products from an international media culture presents a challenge to existing local and national cultures (Kraidy, 202). The sheer volume of the supply, as well as the vast technological infrastructure and financial capital that

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pushes this supply forward, have a considerable impact on local patterns of cultural consumption and possibilities for sustaining an independent cultural production (Hjarvard, 2008).

Hart (1991 p.16) observes that, the exact relationship between the media and their audiences has been the subject of debate since the media were first seriously studied and emphasizes the importance of audiences and their relationships with the media. The media reporting on homosexuality has been blamed for the spread of the vice with the Christians accusing the media of giving homosexuality unnecessary reporting. Over the span of just fifty years the homosexual political movement has transformed itself from an underground subculture shunned for its practice of illegal sexual deviance into a global cultural and political force with greater influence in the legislatures and courtrooms of the Western world than the Christian church (Katz & Lazarsfeld 2006).

The issue of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Allies, Asexual and Pansexual (LGBTQIAAP) has become a major issue of concern in many parts of the world (Eya, 2003). The term is relatively new and has been defined in various ways by different people. However, according to Parent, DeBlaere, and Moradi (2013), the term is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual and more, and is to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The issue of LGBTQ+ did not just start but it has come a long way from the 10th Century when evidence of social movements for LGBTQ+ (Esterberg, 2019). The issue has since occupied both public and international discourse with varying views and opinions emanating from such discourse. For example, in the United States of America, issues of LGBTQ^{+} were one of the top issues leading to the 2008 Presidential Elections (Ayoub, 2018). Also, in the

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United Kingdom, issues of LGBTQ+ occupied local discourse continuously for at least ten years in the late 2000s. In Ghana, discourse on the issue of LGBTQ+ has been one that has been met with diverse views as many feeling LGBTQ+ is against the cultural and moral fabric of Ghanaian society (Allotey, 2015). Indeed, the 1992 Constitution has to some extent criminalized LGBTQ+ through the 1960 Criminal Code. The somewhat criminalization of LGBTQ+ in the laws of Ghana shows that LGBTQ+ was at least until recent times not an accepted way of life in Ghana. However, the situation is changing as more countries in the world are encouraged to accept the rights of LGBTQ+ (Allotey, 2015).

The United Nations through a resolution of the United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHRC) encourages member countries to identify ways to overcome violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ (Dankwa, 2009). In Ghana, the LGBTQ+ community has consistently suffered different forms of attacks and hate and this is primarily because the Ghanaian community does not regard the LGBTQ+ as an acceptable way of life. Sensitization of the Ghanaian community about LGBTQ+ is thus needed to ensure that the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in the country are protected. One institution that is relevant in communicating to the public and has over the years made a significant impact on public sensitization is the media.

According to Fengler et al (2015), there are two main roles the media can play with respect to LGBTQ+. Fengler et al. (2015) explain that with the power of information, the media can act as an agent of enhancing the education of the public regarding the rights of LGBTQ+ or can act as an agent inciting the public against the LGBTQ+ community through their way of communicating the issues. Sexuality is a prominent part of everyone's life. Those who are heterosexual never have the need to think about their sexuality on a regular basis. However, those who are part of the

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LGBTQ community have had to face prejudice, fear, and hate for their sexuality on a daily basis (Gaines et al., 2005). Throughout history, sexual behaviour and romantic relationships that were not heterosexual have resulted in exile, social ostracism, human testing, physical, mental, and emotional harm, and in other cases death. Highly conservative societies, such as some found in the United States, are known to have a strong animosity toward individuals they deem as different.

Cultural values are what define a community. It is based on spiritual beliefs and practices, norm guidelines, and material, emotional, and intellectual characteristics (Minkov et al., 2013). This is how culture varies across the world as people develop their own beliefs, governments, and social norms. Based on of Hofstede's (2011) model, culture and values have been determined through six different dimensions: uncertainty avoidance (stress in society to face an unknown future), power distance (solutions to the basic problem of human inequality), individualism/collectivism (integration of individuals to primary groups), indulgence/restraint (restraint against humanistic desires), time orientation (focusing on the past, present, or future), and gender norms (masculinity and femininity). Hofstede (2011) focused on how these six distinct characteristics can predict how a country copes with problems, threats, or differences with other cultures. He stated that, as technology progresses, culture will begin to become even more similar, rather than radicalizing into different cultures. This shows how different values of cultures can be altered and influenced.

A predominant factor within a culture is gender norms. As norms are set up within a culture, whether it be a tight or loose culture, each culture will have its own views on how a male and female should play a role in society. For example, Slaaten and Gabrys (2014) focused on the usage of gay-related name-calling in children as a reaction to norm violation. Students rated how frequently they called a person a gay

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related name from violation of gender norms (boys being too feminine, girls being too masculine), for foolish behaviour, in order to hurt, criticize, or belittle someone, to tease in a positive way, or refer to their suspected or actual sexual orientation. The study also focused on whether boys would be more subjected to such name calling than girls. The results demonstrated that 40% of the time students uses gay-related names would be for the violation of gender norms, more than to belittle someone, refer to sexual orientation, or tease in a positive way (such as being mean for liking another student) and be equally as likely to say for stupid or disliked behaviour.

As a new language communication tool, social media enables sexual minorities to get a sense of personal psychological security (Lucassen et al., 2018), interpersonal support with online activities to meet their own needs (Escobar-Viera et al, 2018), and share and mobilize social resources to explore their identity (Craig et al., 2021). It was suggested that social media might also provide an informal educational environment for LGBTQ youth, offering them opportunities to explore and enhance their confidence about their identities (Craig & McInroy, 2014). Evidence has shown that their engagement on social media may also allow them to be affected by LBGT role models or social media influencers, seeking emotional connection from them identities (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011). Giddens (2006) notes that although media has brought about many benefits, allowing us to easily connect with friends and family around the globe, allowing us to break down international borders and cultural barriers, it has come at a price. It has a negative impact on our lives because the combination of isolation and global reach has eroded our culture.

For nearly a century, stereotypes have been problematized, researched and analyzed in social psychology, linguistics, cultural studies, and anthropology, following Lippmann's influential commentaries in the 1920s, as well as in anthropological work

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about how many peoples categorize and stereotype kinds of people, animals, etc. The culture peg allows the communicator to condense, resonate and narrate the subject matter for an audience's easy consumption. Resorting to symbols, myths and easily recognizable cultural images significantly reduces the cognitive costs (Macrae et al., 1994) of the listeners/readers who otherwise could not easily digest foreign news because they lack contextual understanding. Stereotypes, including use of the cultural peg, are thus seen as playing a performative function in the cognition of the readership (Bennett & Edelman, 1985), assisting in the conveyance of a message from the source to the audience. In the process, it relies on shared cultural resources, symbolism of a foreign culture as understood by American readers and the journalists/producers of news, who employ the discursive strategies to conjure up symbolic images. In this sense, the cultural devices known to be employed as discursive strategies such as myths, archetypes and narratives (van Gorp, 2007; Lule, 2001), serve as points of reference and comparison for the culture peg.

Media has strong influence towards people, it plays a role of shaping people's mind and perception of the social world and it is also to manipulate people's action with delicate, subtle and effective ways (Baran & Davis, 2006, p.43). Thus, an audience's construction of reality and choice of what to believe is not entirely in his/her hand, but rather, lies to a large extent on the media. The media industry has been described as a consciousness industry i.e., it produces forms of consciousness, belief, values and perspectives about issues in the society. The audience therefore is offered a position from which it will be able to view the happenings in the society. The media plays a crucial role in public representation of unequal social reactions and playoff cultural power (Cottle, 2000). He cites that it is through the media that the audience is able to construct sense of who they are in relation to who they are not. The media give

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the audience a sense of identity and belonging. At the same time however, the media can also serve to affirm social and cultural diversity and provides crucial space in and through which imposed identities or the interest of others can be resisted, challenged and changed.

Talbot (2007) believes that the media has an important role in the modern world and cannot be ignored at all by the society. Media is guided by code of conducts for the practice of journalism to assist journalists to report objectively while maintaining accuracy and fairness in whatever they report on. Journalists are also expected to write a fair, accurate and unbiased story on matters of public interest with all sides of the story reported even as much as they should be independent in their engagement. The government in many occasions has called on the media to report responsively as the issues being reported are sometimes of security concern (Karimi, 2011). The mass media have made people aware of their cultures, social issues and events that few people could experience directly. Thus, we rely on the pictures presented in the media as a guide to the construction of our own social reality. The basic assumption here is that the media are able to determine the people's perception about facts and values of society through selective presentation and by emphasizing certain themes (Tan, 1982).

According to Stein and Stein (2008) the media weighs people's opinions and shapes public perception about issues that are of concern to the audience. By persistently reporting on these subjects, it may succeed in swaying public opinion towards the matter under investigation depending on how often the issue is reported (Dür, 2019). The elements presented to the audience may be true to some extent but the light in which they are portrayed in the media may cause reinforcement or shattering of audience biases and prejudices (Alia & Bull, 2005). The media are able to construct reality by sometimes highlighting the commonly held stereotypes in the society.

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Stereotypes presented by the media are always stereotypes that are held in the local community (Kumar, 1993). For instance, homosexuals in western films are normally portrayed as people with many partners and discriminated because of their sexual orientation while the normal couples have a sound mind to make decisions.

Globally, the two roles played by the media in relation to LGBTQ+ have been observed in several parts of the world (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011). For example, in the US, the increase in representations of gay people in news, television, and movies since the 19th century has gradually led to the sensitization and subsequent acceptance of the rights of LGBTQ+ in the US (Fisher et al., 2007). On the other hand, in Nigeria, media disinformation against the LGBTQ+ community has led to several actions of the LGBTQ+ community in the country (Winkler, 2021). From the above, it is evident that the media can act as both an agent of enhancing the education of the public regarding the rights of LGBTQ+ or can act as an agent inciting the public against the LGBTQ+ community. In Ghana, attacks on the LGBTQ+ community are a common phenomenon often resulting in the destruction of lives and properties as well as threatening the democracy of the country (Bekoe, 2021). According to the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) (2021), the majority of Ghanaians are intolerant of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana, and as such urgent steps are required to educate Ghanaians on the rights of LGBTQ+. Fortunately, Ghana has a vibrant media space with over 100 radio stations and more than 80 TV stations across the breadth and length of the country (National Communications Authority, 2020). With this vibrant media space, this study seeks to identify how media practitioners communicate to the public and the effect of their communication with regard to LGBTQ+.

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1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ghana has quite a huge number of media houses that are spread across the 16 regions of the country. According to the National Communication Authority (NCA), the last update in the first quarter of 2020 carried out on the number of media houses in Ghana recorded 459 authorized and operational radio stations, 110 Television stations, and 136 Newspapers (NCA, 2020). According to NCA 2020 Report, the top 15 television stations in Ghana as of 2017 had an average reach of 3,783,000 viewers daily. Also, the top 15 radio stations in Greater Accra and Ashanti Region have a daily reach of 737, 000 and 1,194,000 respectively. Whiles newspaper reaches in Ghana record 4,549,000 daily. These statistics explain the significant reliance on the media as a source of information, education, and entertainment. Also, the statistics indicate that the media in Ghana is also able to exert a significant influence on how Ghanaians think and feel about issues.

About 98% of the media houses in Ghana are privately owned by individuals, politicians, and businessmen, and just a few are owned by the state (NCA, 2020). Though this development is a positive achievement in media multiplicity, it has to a large extent polarized the media industry and promoted less or no objectivity due to personal or organizational interest (Asare, 2009; Avle, 2014). This has led to the abuse of the media in the promotion of ethnic and religious bigotries, verbal abuse, and unguided rhetoric against the LGBTQ+ community (Namubiru, 2022). The media has played an important role in the anti-LGBTQ+ campaign (Winkler, 2021). The media's demeanour and coverage of LGBTQ+ community issues are only the tip of the iceberg (Cook, 2018). The media provide no examined or in-depth research on the community, only condemnation of the community (Cook, 2018). Also, in 2021 a private members bill known as the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual and Rights and Ghanaian Family

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Value Bill, 2021 which intends to criminalize LGBTQ+ in Ghana was presented to the Parliament of Ghana. The presentation of the bill led to more attacks on the LGBTQ+ community in the country. The above incidents show that the media in Ghana has largely been used as an agent to incite the general public against the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. With the increasing attacks on the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana, this study seeks to identify how the media practitioners in Ghana can communicate on issues about LGBTQ+ and the impact of their communication on the LGBTQ+ community and the public.

1.3.Purpose of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to identify how the media in Ghana can be used as an effective communication agent in disseminating the culture of the LGBTQ+ community. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore how the media can communicate effectively to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+ culture.
2. Investigate some communication strategies to be used by the media and their impact on both the LGBTQ+ community and Ghanaians
3. Identify and analyze the challenges facing the media in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the issue of LGBTQ+.

1.4.Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How can the media communicate to its public about the LGBTQ+ culture?
2. What are the strategies to be used by the media in communicating to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+ in Ghana?

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3. What are the challenges facing the media in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the issue of LGBTQ+?

1.5.Significance of the Study

The issue of LGBTQ+ is one of the controversial issues that have occupied the local discourse for some time now. The issue has seen varied views and opinions from different sections of the country. The views have been different because the majority of Ghanaians believe LGBTQ+ is again Ghanaian culture and religious values. The study, therefore, when completed would bring to the fore the issue of intolerance of Ghanaians toward the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. The study would also highlight the role of the media in communicating to Ghanaians about LGBTQ+ in the country. It would also serve as a source of information for related studies on LGBTQ+ and the media. The information provided would also draw the attention of policymakers such as government institutions, the National Media Commission, and non-governmental organizations to the roles the journalists play in communicating to Ghanaians about LGBTQ+ in Ghana. The study would also be relevant to future research on related matters.

1.6.Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study was mainly the lack of cooperation from respondents as well as meeting the respondents for the interview. The respondents due to their work schedules were not able to honour the agreed time schedules for the interview. However, with persistent follow-ups and rescheduled appointment times, the respondents were finally interviewed. The challenge of privacy was overcome when respondents who were not willing to participate due to fear of victimization were

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assured of both their institutions' approval for engaging them as well as the confidentiality of whatever information they provided.

1.7.Organization of the study

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one discusses the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives, and the significance of the study, among other things. Chapter two presents the literature review and the conceptual framework. Chapter three is the research methodology and here the various ways by which the objectives of the study are accomplished are elaborated. Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of the study and Chapter five focuses on the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendation.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.Introduction

This chapter reviews related studies carried out by other researchers about the variables of the study. The chapter reviews the literature on the media in Ghana and its role in sensitizing the Ghanaian community about LGBTQ+ in the country. The literature is reviewed based on the objectives of the study.

2.2.Conceptualising LGBTQ+

According to the American Psychological Association (2010), sexual orientation is enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction toward others. Sexual orientation exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality and includes various forms of bisexuality (Boladale et al., 205). Persons with a homosexual orientation are sometimes referred to as gay or as lesbian (Maher, 2007). Sexual orientation is different from sexual behaviour because it refers to feelings and self-concept. Individuals may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviours. The American Psychological Association (2010) indicated that there are numerous theories about the origins of a person's sexual orientation. Most scientists today agree that sexual orientation is most likely the result of a complex interaction of environmental, cognitive and biological factors. In most people, sexual orientation is shaped at an early age. Although one can choose to act on his or her feelings, psychologists do not consider sexual orientation to be a conscious choice that can be voluntarily changed (American Psychological Association, 2010).

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Sexual identity and sexual behaviour are closely related to sexual orientation, but they are distinctive with identity referring to an individual's conception of themselves and behaviour referring to actual sexual acts performed by the individual (Reiter,1989). As previously stated, individuals may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviours. People who have a homosexual sexual orientation that does not align with their sexual identity are sometimes referred to as "closeted" (American Psychological Association, 2010). Sexual identity may also be used to describe a person's perception of his or her own sex, rather than sexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2010). While cultural attitudes prevent most gays and lesbians from acknowledging their sexual orientation or prevent them from behaving sexually in a way that is consistent with their orientation, homosexual people have lived, live now, and will continue to live in every age, culture, race, religion, gender, economic level, and profession (Lewin & Leap, 2002). No one knows for certain how many gay people there are in the world.

Social work scholars over the last several decades have made significant contributions to knowledge development on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (or trans), and queer (LGBTQ) youth. Joyce Hunter (1987) was among the first social workers in the U.S. who prioritized the studies of gay and lesbian youth and called for attention to this "invisible population" (p. 299). Hunter (1987, 1990) made vulnerabilities of gay and lesbian youth known by uncovering their everyday experiences of interpersonal violence, biases and discrimination, and emotional suffering. Ryan and Futterman (1998) published Lesbian and gay youth: Care and counselling, one of the first comprehensive textbooks on social work practice with gay and lesbian youth. One of the key contributions of this textbook lies in its inclusion of content on gay and lesbian youth of colour and highlights their unique identity

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development processes. Ryan has since continued to expose service needs of gay and lesbian youth by researching the role of parents and families on their wellbeing (Ryan et al, 2009; Ryan et al., 2010). In addition, Gary Mallon (1992, 1998) uncovered the unique challenges and barriers faced by LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care. In his studies on out-of-home-care LGBTQ youth and negative psychosocial outcomes, he advocated for equitable service provisions for this population. As an author of several textbooks on social work practice with LGBTQ youth, Mallon (2008, 2009, 2010) was among the first social work scholars who highlighted adversities and lived experiences of trans youth. In Canada, early work on LGBTQ youth came out of the efforts of service providers, rather than academia-based researchers. Similar to early academically-based scholarly work in the U.S., the research team of Central Toronto Youth Services (CTYS), a children's mental health agency, published books and articles in the late 1980s to the mid-1990s to raise the public awareness of the needs and challenges among LGBTQ youth in Canada (Fish et al., 2019). These community-based practitioners at CTYS addressed LGBTQ youths' psychosocial vulnerabilities (Schneider, 1988), challenges and needs unique to working with LGBTQ youth in counselling (Schneider, 1988), addiction (Travers & Schneider, 1996), and out-of-home service programs (O'Brien, Travers, & Bell, 1993). Along with the early work of social work scholars from the U.S., these community-based researchers in Canada contributed to social workers' awareness of the vulnerabilities and service needs among LGBTQ youth populations.

The term LGBTQ+ has been defined and explained in different ways by different activists and movements howbeit LGBTQ+ is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (Parent et al., 2013; Alexander & Yescavage, 2013). When not inclusive of transgender people, the shorter term LGB is

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still used instead of LGBT which may refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual or non-cisgender, instead of exclusively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (Shankle, 2016). Globally, the LGBTQ+ situation has gradually increased over the years and every nation in one way or another other has had to make a decision on the situation. According to Cahill and Bryan (2006) the statistics of LGBQT+, in general, have increased significantly over the past three decades. The numbers, variants, and sympathizers of the LGBT+ community have also increased significantly and several explanations have been offered for this trend. Esterberg (2019), argues that rising numbers of LGBTQ+, especially among European countries and the US is the result of the long-festering global push for gay rights. Although, the push has been slow there is an increasing general public acceptance of the rights of LGBTQ+. In addition, Aragon (2016) agreeing with Esterberg (2019) asserts that headways have been achieved with respect to LGBTQ+ in certain countries because of the substantial changes in laws and norms surrounding issues such as same-sex marriage and the rights of LGBTQ+ communities.

Withers (2012), individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB), the decision to speak the truth about their identity can feel like a matter of life and death. Whether an individual is coming out to his or her friends, family, or even to himself or herself, the moments before the act of disclosure can be particularly daunting. An individual who is about to tell others that they are LGB often experiences shame, self-doubt, and fear of rejection. Unfortunately, these fears are frequently warranted (Withers, 2012). LGB youth represent almost 40% of the homeless population, typically as a result of the very act of disclosure (Withers, 2012). Furthermore, the stigma associated with identifying as LGB is experienced throughout all stages of life (Dentato et al., 2014), with members of this population experiencing more adversity

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than their heterosexual peers (Herek et al., 2009). Adding to the difficulty of the disclosure process, members of this population have a choice to not disclose and allow others to simply assume their heterosexuality. For some, this alternative to stigma is appealing, leading them to maintain an identity which is not true to how they identify behind closed doors. However, for many, the act of disclosure is a way to live more authentically (Bosson et al., 2012) and develop interpersonal relationships (King et al., 2008). Whether or not an individual decides to disclose and "speak" has implications for their mental and physical health (Beals et al., 2009). Within the workplace, the decision to identify oneself as non- 2 heterosexual often carries weighty implications for the future success of the individual, making the decision even more complicated.

The growing acceptance of LGBT+ has come with it numerous variants. Many variants exist including variations that change the order of the letters, including *LGBT+*. For example, other common variants such as LGBTQIA exist, with the 'A' standing for "asexual," "aromantic," or "agender," and LGBTQIA+, where the '+' represents those who are part of the community, but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity (Kuykendall, 2021). The many variants of LGBTQ resulted in longer acronyms which were heavily criticized for their length with most critics referring to the name as an 'alphabet soup' (Bloodsworth-Lugo, 2007). Other variants such as pansexual, omnisexual, fluid, and queer-identified also exist and these are regarded as falling under the umbrella term bisexual and therefore are considered a part of the bisexual community. Other variants of the term may have a "U" for "unsure"; a "C" for "curious"; another "T" for "transvestite"; a "TS", or a "2" for "two-spirit" persons; or an "SA" for "straight allies" (Esterberg, 2019). Several recent large-scale studies have revealed that LGBTQ youth continue to experience social marginalization and exclusion despite the great advancement of legal rights (e.g.,

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marriage equality) and protection (e.g., inclusion of sexual orientation and transgender identity in anti-discrimination policies) for Canadian LGBTQ people. Taylor and Peter (2011) conducted a national school-based survey (n = 3700) and documented a high prevalence of harassment among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth, such as verbal (42-55%), physical (10-21%), and sexual (33-42%) harassment.

The prevalence of harassment was exponentially higher among trans youth: verbal (74%), physical (37%), and sexual harassment (49%). Furthermore, the majority of LGBTQ youth reported feeling unsafe in their schools (64.2%), while only 15.2% of their heterosexual counterparts reported the same. More recently, several prominent scholars on LGBTQ youth (Russell, 2005; Saewyc, 2011) have proposed a paradigm shift from studying risk only to also studying resilience, "the dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, p.543). Resilience research offers a promising framework alternative to the deficit-focused discourse by recognizing that LGBTQ youth can also navigate adversities when the right resources are provided to them in meaningful ways. It also has the potential to offer empirically informed prevention and intervention plans that might help mitigate risk and promote or sustain the wellbeing of LGBTQ youth.

2.3. Sexual identity development

According to Sherif (1994), gender identity means different things to different people. Some broad definitions encompass everything that it means to feel, think and act like a woman or a man. More specific definitions are modelled on social stereotypes of masculinity or femininity and on androgyny. Gender is a scheme for social categorization of individuals, and every gender scheme recognizes human biological differentiation while also creating social differentiations (Sherif, 1994). Sherif further clarified gender identity indicating, "If gender is a social category scheme, then gender

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identity has to refer to an individual's psychological relationships with the gender categories in a society." Gender identity refers to the individual's knowledge of the categorical scheme for gender and that individual's psychological relationships to that scheme (Sherif, 1994). Stereotyped beliefs about the attributes of men and women are pervasive and widely shared. Moreover, these stereotyped beliefs have proven very resistant to change (Dodge et al., 1995; Leuptow et al., 1995). Men and women are thought to differ both in terms of achievement-oriented traits, often labelled as "agentic," and in terms of social – and service-oriented traits, often labelled as "communal" (Bakan, 1966). Men are characterized as aggressive, forceful, independent, and decisive, whereas women are characterized as kind, helpful, sympathetic, and concerned about other (Heilman & Welle, 2001).

Heilman and Welle (2001) indicated that not only are the conceptions of women and men different, but they also often are oppositional, with members of one sex seen as lacking what is thought to be the most prevalent in members of the other sex. According to Heilman and Welle (2001), there is evidence that traditional stereotypes of women and men predominate in work settings as well as non-work settings. Research has demonstrated, for example, that even when they are depicted as managers, women are characterized as less agentic than men (Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995). Not only are gender stereotypes descriptive, they are also prescriptive. They denote not only differences in how women and men actually are, but also norms about behaviours that are suitable for each – about how women and men should be (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly, 1987; Terborg, 1977). There is a great deal of overlap between the content of the prescriptive and descriptive elements of gender stereotypes, with the behaviour that is prescribed directly related to the attributes that are positively valued for each sex. Related to these stereotypes, there are "should" and

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"should not's" for each sex. Typically, these include behaviours associated with the opposite sex that are seen as incompatible with the behaviour deemed desirable for one's own sex. So, for example, agentic tendencies for which men are positively valued are looked down upon for women (Heilman & Welle, 2001).

2.4. Identity development and involvement

Currently no research has examined the relationship between lesbian and gay identity development and involvement in LGBT organizations. Porter (1998) researched some aspects of identity development and leadership in LGBT organizations and nonLGBT organizations, and Renn and Bilodeau (2005) have researched the developmental outcomes for students participating in LGBT organizations, but no one has researched the role of identity development on LGBT organizational involvement. Despite this neglect of lesbian and gay identity-based groups, other cultural and identity-based groups have been researched in terms of identity development and involvement (Morgan, 2013). Many of these studies consider the impact the organizational involvement has on identity. Some also have explored the reverse: how identity development influences involvement.

There are many similarities between models of racial identity development and models of gay and lesbian identity development. Both models suggest that an individual undergoes an internal process of becoming aware of an identity, learning about it, investing in it, and finally integrating the identity with other identities. Research has shown that a relationship between racial or ethnic identity development and involvement does exist (Chavous, 2000; Mitchell & Dell, 1992; Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995). Most of this research supports the idea that during certain stages of identity development involvement in identity-based organization is especially low or especially high. For example, during the early phases of racial identity development, an

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individual is not aware of or uncomfortable with the existence of an identity-based organization. Therefore, their involvement is very low. On the other hand, during later phases of identity development, an individual is very interested in expanding their knowledge and understanding of their identity; membership in an identity-based organization could facilitate the pursuit of these interests. Therefore, involvement is high. Mitchell and Dell (1992) researched the relationship of racial identity development and participation in types of campus activities. The researchers surveyed 101 black undergraduates at a predominantly white university. The sample was obtained from an introductory psychology course and from a list of black students from the registrar's office. To measure racial identity development, the researchers used the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS) (Parham & Helms, 1981), and the researchers developed their own instrument to measure campus involvement. Mitchell and Dell hypothesized that racial identity development would contribute to the type of involvement in student organizations. Specifically, the researchers suspected that students in the immersion-emersion phase of identity development (when they experience more interest in their racial group) would be more involved with culture and racial identity groups on campus than students in the pre-encounter stage (when interest in their racial group would be minimal).

Mitchell and Dell (1992) found that racial identity development was a factor in type of involvement. The researchers used a linear regression test of racial identity development, along with a number of other factors (gender, number of hours working, age, and SES). Significant betas were found for the pre-encounter stage, the encounter stage, the immersion stage, and the internalization stage as they explained involvement in cultural organizations. Pre-encounter had a negative relationship with involvement in cultural organization, and the other stages had a positive relationship. For non-cultural

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organizations, only the internalization stage was significant, with a positive correlation. The data from Mitchell and Dell (1992) confirms the original hypothesis that racial identity development contributes to involvement in cultural organizations. As the researchers predicted, participation was negatively related to the pre-encounter stage and positively with the immersion stage. It is interesting that internalization was positively correlated with involvement in both cultural and non-cultural organizations.

Identity development research would suggest that during this stage the individual would be more interested in non-cultural organizations because the individual has integrated their racial identity into the rest of their identity. The researchers found no significant differences between the two types of involvement for the participants overall, but they did not check for specific differences between each stage. Such data would have been useful. A limitation of Mitchell and Dell's study (1992) was the basic way they measured involvement. Their measure considered the number of organizations with which one was involved, but they did not consider the quality of that involvement. Another limitation was that the participants were drawn from just one (large) institution. The study therefore is limited in its generalizability, especially since the culture of involvement could be unique to that school as well as the number of opportunities for students to be involved. Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) also researched the relationship between racial identity development and student involvement, specifically for African American males. Unlike Mitchell and Dell (1992), this study included participants from ten institutions which were predominantly white (N=117). Student affairs professionals at those institutions assisted in distributing the surveys to students they knew. The researchers used the Student Involvement Survey (Erwin, 1991) to measure student involvement and the Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (RIAS-B) (Helms, 1990) to measure racial identity development. The researchers

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hypothesized that students in the pre-encounter stage would report lower rates of involvement than students in the immersion stage. The researchers further hypothesized that students affiliated with Greek letter organizations would be more involved and more likely be in the immersion or internalization stages. The researchers found that racial identity development was significantly correlated with overall student involvement measure. Overall student involvement included participation in clubs and organizations, academic experiences, sports involvement, faculty and staff interactions, and community service. When the researchers analyzed the contribution of individual variables, they used a stepwise regression.

The results of Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) support some of the findings of Mitchell and Dell (1992) and suggest that racial identity development does play a role in involvement. Unfortunately, the type of instrument used to measure involvement failed to distinguish non-cultural groups from cultural groups. This information would have been more useful in understanding the types of organizations with which the participants were involved. The results are slightly questionable since the researchers failed to properly show their statistics or outline the statistical tests they planned to use. Chavous (2000) explored the relationships of racial identity, perceived ethnic fit, and organizational involvement for African-American students at a predominantly white university. Unlike previous studies of identity and involvement, Chavous addressed a new variable: how the student perceived the institution. In this study, the researcher surveyed 164 students from one institution. Racial identity development was measured differently than in previous studies. Instead of using a developmental model, the researchers used the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998), which includes philosophical attitudes towards race: assimilation, humanism, minority, and

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nationalism. The instrument used to measure these views was the Multidimensional Inventory of African American Identity (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997).

For involvement, the students were asked to list the organizations (both cultural and non-cultural) with which they were involved. The Perceived Ethnic Fit Scale was used to measure perceived ethnic fit with the institution (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). The researcher created a statistical model that used racial identity development and perceived ethnic fit to predict involvement in cultural and non-cultural groups. Both racial identity development and perceived ethnic fit were positively related to involvement in cultural groups. The interaction of the two variables was negatively related to involvement in cultural groups. This suggests that there the combination of racial identity development and perceived ethnic fit is an important factor to consider.

Chavous (2000) also used a multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of the students' background information and racial identity. Student background information (family income, mother's education, father's education, and neighbourhood) was not significantly related to perceived ethnic fit or involvement in cultural organizations. Chavous (2000) did find a significant negative relationship between involvement with non-cultural organizations and the number of African Americans in the neighbourhood where the participant was raised, suggesting that the community in which an individual grows up in can influence the type of involvement later in life. The findings of Chavous (2000) are useful because it acknowledges the importance of perceived fit with an institution. Marginalized groups certainly experience the institution differently than majority groups. Lesbian and gay students, for example, are much more likely than heterosexuals to report that an institution is unwelcoming and hostile. Chavous (2000) showed that there is an important interaction

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between identity and environment that affects involvement. Unfortunately, the study failed to collect data from multiple institutions, which would have given more data for the perceived fit variable.

2.5. Homosexuality

Homosexuality for centuries particularly same-sex relationships between men was regarded as deviant, sinful, and even criminal. Psychiatrists and doctors began to address homosexuality in the late nineteenth century as well. They labelled same-sex desire medically and began looking for ways to reverse it (Blackmore, 2018). A German psychiatrist, according to Blakemore (2018) invented conversion therapy which he claimed has converted a gay man straight. Homosexuality, according to Eugen Steinach, a pioneering Austrian endocrinologist, is rooted in a man's testicles. This theory inspired testicle transplantation experiments in the 1920s, in which gay men were castrated and then given "heterosexual" testicles. The concept of "aversion therapy" was founded on the idea that if LGBTQ people became disgusted with homosexuality, they would no longer experience same-sex desire. People were given chemicals that made them vomit when they looked at photos of their lovers under medical supervision. Others were subjected to electric shocks while viewing gay pornography or cross-dressing.

After several attempts, Exodus International, an umbrella group that connected various conversion therapy groups and gay ministry organizations, closed down in 2013 after nearly 40 years of operations after its president, Alan Chambers, decided it's impossible to change someone's sexual orientation. Studies show that attempts to change someone's sexuality can result in poor self-esteem to increased suicide risk and mental health problems (Blackmore, 2018). Gruyter (2008), said people's private lives carried as much weight as their public lives because they both profoundly influenced

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each other. Intercourse is often much more of intellectual activity than a physical one. Desire combines with imagination to create a story. Intercourse, at its most basic, requires two bodies, but it goes beyond that (Masterson, Babinowitz, & Robson, 2015).

Adua (2018), indicated that homosexuality has been explained by scientists to fall into two categories; biology and psychosocial theories. According to Glass, Deuel, and Wright (1940), the mechanism of sexual development and sex differentiation points to man's inherent bisexuality. Wright proposed a theory of homosexuality based on a sex hormone imbalance in 49 homosexuals. Ricketts (2008), believes that the nature of maleness and femaleness, extrapolated largely from non-primate animal observations, have influenced biological models of human sexuality the most. Olson, Cadge and Harrison (2006) argued that homosexuality is a major component of the 'moral values' discourse in America. According to this review of literature in order to better understand the issue of homosexuality researchers focused mostly on what people think of homosexuality and what affects the way they view homosexuality. Multiple factors influence attitudes towards homosexuality according to past and current literature.

Factors such as economic growth and the increase of inequality bring intolerance towards homosexuality (Anderson & Fetner, 2008). A person with politically liberal orientation holds more positive attitudes towards homosexuality, whereas a person with politically conservative orientation more negative attitudes (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1992). Gender and gender roles (Furnham and Saito, 2009; Whitley, 2001), race and ethnicity (Schulte and Battle 2004) and interaction with a homosexual person (Adolfsen, Iedema and Keuzenkamp 2010; Hans, Kasey and Kimberley, 2012) are other substantial factors that have an impact on attitudes towards homosexuality. Age and education are also considered by researchers to be important

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factors influencing attitudes towards homosexuality (Herek 1988; Olson et. al. 2006). Researcher as well looked at micro and macro effects of religion and a survival vs. self-expressive cultural orientation on the attitudes towards homosexuality (Adamczyk & Pitt 2009). However, religion and religiosity factors are one of the primary factors based on multiple past and current studies (Wagenaar & Bartos 1977; Unneve et al., 2005; Bader & Froese, 2005; Rosik, Ghriffith, & Cruz 2007; Jenkins, 2009).

Hans et al. (2012) found that nearly every respondent with negative attitude towards homosexuality stated religion as a source of his or her attitude and viewed homosexuality as morally wrong. Even the ones who were tolerant towards homosexuality referenced religious beliefs in explaining their attitudes toward homosexuality by stating that according to God all individuals regardless of their orientation have a right to exist (Hans et. al., 2012). Between 1980 and 2008 the influence of religion and religiosity on attitudes towards homosexuality became slightly stronger, however, less religious people still have more positive attitudes (Loftus, 2001). Thus, current thought in examining the impact of religion and religiosity still remains important in understanding why people think of homosexuality in one way or another and what aspects of religiosity in particular determine their attitude.

2.6. Culture and homosexuality

Culture has been one of the major reasons most African governments have rejected homosexuality. Lamb (1982) asserted that homosexuality in Africa is virtually unknown and said that Africa is rigidly heterosexual. Scholars in agreement with Lamb have particularly argued that homosexuality is a cultural practice from the west that was brought to Africa. However, over the years Lamb's idea has been challenged by many scholars. Dynes rejects the claim that homosexuality is western culture but however attributes its current prejudice and marginalization to the missionary's outright

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condemnation of the practice (Pincheon, 2000 cited by Anderson, 2008). He says when missionaries came to Africa to spread Christianity, they preached against homosexuality hence the existence of homophobia today in Africa. Amory (1997) also seeks to dispel the myth of African homosexuality being a culture from the west. He says the 'white man' was most probably the source of African homophobia that perpetuates contemporary persecution.

Anderson (2008) argues that colonialism may have brought Europe's concept of homosexuality to Africa, but it did not introduce her to same-sex eroticism. This leads to an important question. Is the western "concept of homosexuality" understood the same in all cultures across the world? Homosexual behaviour might have existed (or exists) in Malawi but it is looked at in a different perspective because of the cultural differences between the Malawi and the west. There is evidence that homosexuality existed in Sub-Saharan Africa long before colonization (Murray, 2005). Thus, this disputes the claim that homosexuality is an import from the west. Kendall (in Anderson, 2008) makes a fascinating and insightful distinction between women-to-women eroticism and the western concept of lesbianism. She uses the example of Lesotho women in a culture where there is no concept or social construction equivalent to 'lesbian' (Phillips, 2001).

Thus, while the western concept of lesbianism is common place in Lesotho, in the absence of the western lesbian construct this behaviour was not and is not seen as sexual or an alternative to heterosexual marriage. In recent times a number of African leaders have openly criticized homosexuality. Robert Mugabe at one point postulated that homosexuals are "worse than dogs". Namibia's president Sam Nujoma declared that "homosexuals must be condemned and rejected in society" (Anderson, 2008). The Malawian former president Bingu was Mutharika had stated that homosexuality is

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against Malawian cultural values (Chinoko, 2012). Siker (2007), states that the prohibition of a particular behaviour should be taken as prima facie evidence for its existence.

Cultural values are what define a community. It is based on spiritual beliefs and practices, norm guidelines, and material, emotional, and intellectual characteristics (Minkov et al., 2013). This is how culture varies across the world as people develop their own beliefs, governments, and social norms. Based on of Hofstede's (2011) model, culture and values have been determined through six different dimensions: uncertainty avoidance (stress in society to face an unknown future), power distance (solutions to the basic problem of human inequality), individualism/collectivism (integration of individuals to primary groups), indulgence/restraint (restraint against humanistic desires), time orientation (focusing on the past, present, or future), and gender norms (masculinity and femininity).

Hofstede (2011) focused on how these six distinct characteristics can predict how a country copes with problems, threats, or differences with other cultures. He stated that, as technology progresses, culture will begin to become even more similar, rather than radicalizing into different cultures. This shows how different values of cultures can be altered and influenced. Tightness is defined as the degree to which strong societal norms are developed and how a society reacts to an individual or group opposing the societal norms created (Gelfand, Nishii & Raver, 2006). Tightness (and its opposite, looseness) can shift and change, but what develops them in the first place? Which factors play into tightness and looseness? Gelfand et al. (2006) stated that tightness develops from threats to a community, such as famine, ecological disasters, warfare, etc.; for a society to survive and thrive, rules and regulations are created in reaction to threats against the society.

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Spanning over a total of ten years, Mandel and Realo (2015) focused on a new set of rules and regulations formed after the joining of the EU and NATO, but also focused on the reduction of borders among the countries, which in turn would boost intercultural values, material well-being, self-direction, and importance of hedonism. They found that tightness didn't vary among those with different languages, was rated higher among people with lower education as opposed to higher education. For those between the ages of 30-44 years of age levels of tightness had increased, and the tightness among men had risen more than among women (Mandel & Realo, 2015). This suggests that men with lower education felt more threat, indicating that levels of education and gender are strong predictors when it comes to developing tightness. A culture's ecology also plays a role in the development of cultural tightness or looseness.

In reactions to ecological threats, tightness and looseness will adjust by fitting the needs of the culture. Pertaining to religion, Triandis (2017) suggested how tightness and looseness can influence religious beliefs and norms. Mainly focusing on how religion interacts with tighter cultures, Triandis (2017) speculated gods would a.) be more punitive, b) there will be more rules and punishments would mainly pertain to these rules, c) have more elaborate rituals, d) have sacred texts that are seen as literal and pronouncements of supernatural entity, e) deities will severely punish for nonconformity, f) deities observe every move of an individual, g) religious authorities control the acts of individuals and, h) they pay more attention to what an individual does rather than what they truly believe. With all of this in mind, Triandis (2017) proposed that tightness is associated with religiosity. This gives some conjecture that ecological changes can influence tightness within a culture in turn can influence the religiosity of a culture or an individual. Gelfand et al. (2006) stated that there are some

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missing links between tightness and looseness that other studies should look into further, specifically focusing on the ecological theory system.

Further studies should be conducted using Cultural Ecosystem Theory and the already established scales of tightness and looseness to have a clearer understanding of how it would work in the test setting. Focusing primarily on tightness within a culture and how one reacts to homosexual activity or attitudes towards homosexuals, Slaaten and Gabrys's (2014) results showed how students were more likely to call someone a gay-related name for a gender norm violation, stupid behaviour, or to hurt an individual. This shows how tightness also relates to homonegativity as there are violations of social norms, specifically gender norms, to which the punishment is using gay-related terms in a negative connotation. This negative connotation is in reference that being gay or doing actions that are considered "gay" is a violation of norms on its own. There needs to be more research relating tightness and homonegativity. A predominant factor within a culture is gender norms. As norms are set up within a culture, whether it be a tight or loose culture, each culture will have its own views on how a male and female should play a role in society. For example, Slaaten and Gabrys (2014) focused on the usage of gay-related name-calling in children as a reaction to norm violation. Students rated how frequently they called a person a gay-related name from violation of gender norms (boys being too feminine, girls being too masculine), for foolish behaviour, in order to hurt, criticize, or belittle someone, to tease in a positive way, or refer to their suspected or actual sexual orientation.

The study also focused on whether boys would be more subjected to such name calling than girls. The results demonstrated that 40% of the time students used gay-related names would be for the violation of gender norms, more than to belittle someone, refer to sexual orientation, or tease in a positive way (such as being mean for

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liking another student) and be equally as likely to say for stupid or disliked behaviour. As hypothesized, boys were also more likely to be subjected to gay-related name-calling than girls, mainly due to stricter gender norms for boys than girls. This study has shown that following gender norms play an important factor in how people perceive a situation and how to react to the situation. This can be taken into consideration when an individual is faced with a homosexual or something that relates to homosexuality.

2.6.1. Religious values, cultural values and homosexuality

Cultural values and religion tend to coincide with one another. Culture can affect how religion is practiced, while a religion can completely alter how a culture is formed. This can leave some confusion as to which influences the other more. Roccas (2005) created a set of ten values that may factor in culture relating to religion. These include self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity and tradition (both co-occur with each other), benevolence, and universalism. The findings of this study present a positive correlation between one's religiosity and conservative values, self-restriction, order, and their resistance to change. Hedonistic values were negatively associated with religiosity as they are perceived as possible threats to social order and opposing self-regulation of temptations. The results also acknowledged that those who are devoted to their religion tend to rate their values as a high importance which indicates motivations to avoid uncertainty and low importance to values that engage in change. This gives more evidence on how conservative, specifically tight cultures, want to avoid threats such as uncertainty and change and turn to religion for guidance and peace. Culture plays a predominant role on every individual as it can influence people's perceptions and attitudes of people, events, or concepts.

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Culture is a major determining factor that can influence an individual's attitude toward homosexuality. Minkov et al. (2013) focused primarily on how cultural factors shape attitudes toward controversial topics. The researchers questioned people on what they felt was and was not justifiable. Fixating on negative attitudes toward homosexuality, results showed that national wealth, lower levels of geographic variables (such as the distribution, composition, and variation of the population), education, and conservatism were all associated with homonegativity (Minkov et al., 2013). Conservatism is therefore a by-product of a tight culture, as members abide by stricter rules and tend to negate anything that goes against social norms or change. Tightness appears to be a major factor in predicting levels of homonegativity. As tightness focuses primarily on following a strict set of norms, guidelines, and is related to having rigid consequences for going against norms, one may speculate on how tightness can influence perceptions of homosexuality. Homosexuality on its own is considered going against the social norm, either by not abiding by gender roles or participating in "unnatural" same sex relationships (Slaaten & Gabrys, 2014). Coming from a tight cultural background, one might develop homonegativity toward an individual due to the individual breaking of an important social norm. Another important factor in relating to culture is focusing on how collectivism ties into religion.

Religion as a whole consists of multiple people believing in the same deity or continuing with practices for what they believe in, such as attending church, praying, and doing ritualistic things relating to their religion. As a result, religions have created communities, which creates a sense of group understanding or a collectivistic community. However, some religions focus more on the individual than the group as a whole, thus leading to a religion being more individualistically focused. Cohen and Hill (2007) focused on the religious cultural aspects affect collectivism and individualism

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within specific religions. They stated that Protestant religious groups perceive the relationship with God on an individualistic level, while religions that focus more primarily on rituals and traditions are more collectivistic. They found that Protestant's relationship with God had correlated with individualism, while religions that have mainly communal traditions, such as Catholicism and Judaism, rated higher with collectivism. This demonstrates how religion can affect cultural factors. Focusing on values, Cohen and Hill (2007) focused on relating religious values along with horizontal/vertical individualism-collectivism. They found a high relationship amongst collectivism and conservative values, alongside with higher collectivist tendencies coincided with higher espousal of tradition and conformity. They also found individualism positively correlated with openness to changing of values, namely hedonism, and self-direction; additionally, supported the hypothesis that individualistic and collectivistic values affected religiosity. This once again gives evidence that there are variations within religions that resemble the variations across cultures (Cukur, de Guzman & Carlo, 2004). One may see that the tighter the culture is the stricter rules, regulations, traditions, and practices are relating to the religion (Triandis, 2017). There is also evidence supporting that looser cultures will be more accepting of change in traditions and practices, while having less severe punishments for violating any norms or rules based on scriptures or practices. Past research has provided evidence that religion and culture are partners in their mutual influence. Both tend to coincide with one another as specific traits, specifically tight and loose traits, tend to be incorporated into certain religious practices.

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2.6.2. The influence of religion and religiosity in conjunction with other factors on attitudes towards homosexuality

Few studies focused on the relationship between ethnicity and religion in influencing homosexuality (Schulte & Battle, 2004; Jenkins, Lambert & Eric, 2009). Interestingly Jenkins et. al. (2009) found that the denomination one belongs to is not a significant predictor of attitudes towards homosexuality for Blacks, only for Whites. Moreover, Schulte and Battle (2004) concluded that differences in attitudes toward homosexuals in general and gay men specifically, are not affected by ethnicity at all but by religious attendance only. The relationship between religion and familiarity with a homosexual person was also explored by Herek and Glunt (1993) and Adolfsen et. al. (2010). Within religious organizations, researchers have also tried to understand the role of friendship networks and being familiar with a homosexual person in a religious congregation in shaping attitudes towards homosexuality (Hans et. al. 2012; Adolfsen et. al. 2010).

These studies reveal that people whose social networks are deeply tied to a religious congregation tend to be less accepting of homosexuality and have more negative attitudes towards it. The closer friends have in their congregations, the more their outlook on life appears to be affected and structured by these friendship networks, which do not foster positive attitudes towards homosexuality (Herek & Glunt 1993; Adolfsen et. al. 2010; Hans et. al. 2012). Catholics are seen to have more homosexual friends in their congregation as compared to Protestants, 26.7 percent as compared to 23.9 respectively (Hans et. al. 2012). Participants who did not know any homosexuals wanted to interact with them, but showed at the same time more negative views about homosexuality than those who have had previous contact with them (Hans et. al. 2012). The effect of religion and religiosity in connection with gender on attitudes towards

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homosexuality has also been studied. Religious women are considered to be more liberal in attitudes towards homosexuality than religious men (Jenkins, 2009; Finlay & Walther, 2003; Herek, 1988).

More specifically, religious men are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward lesbians than do women. Religious women are seen to have equally positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians, whereas religious men are seen to respond more negatively to gay men than to lesbians (Finlay & Walther 2003). The influence of religion and religiosity in conjunction with internal motivation was also studied. Ford et. al (2009) found that for people who have strongly internalized orthodox Christian beliefs (beliefs that Jesus is both truly a God and truly a man) religion becomes associated with stronger internal motivation to respond without prejudice toward homosexuals and less negative attitudes toward homosexuals.

While measuring attitudes towards homosexuality researchers primarily referred to attitudes towards a homosexuality orientation in general (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009; Adolfsen et. al., 2010; Finlay & Walther, 2003; Lottes, 1992; Wagenaar & Bartos, 1977; Whitley, 2001; Andersen & Fetner, 2008; Loftus, 2001; Furnham & Saito, 2009; Hans et al., 2012). Rather than looking at homosexual orientation in general other studies have examined attitudes towards homosexual behaviour between same sex partners (Treas, 2002; Ford et. al 2009). For example, Treas (2002), using General Social Surveys (GSS), examined Americans' attitudes toward premarital, extramarital, teen, and homosexual sex specifically. Some studies also focused on attitudes towards homosexual persons (Herek et. al., 1993; Ford et. al., 2009). Schulte and Battle (2004) for instance examined the difference between the attitudes towards gays and heterosexual men and between lesbians and heterosexual women. Recent studies also started to examine attitudes of people towards legal same sex unions (Whitehead, 2010;

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Olsen et. al., 2006). Thus, overall researchers have examined attitudes towards homosexual orientation in general, homosexual behaviour between same sex partners, homosexual persons and legal same sex unions.

However, this review of literature established that there is a gap in studies concerning the incorporation of all three parts of attitudes towards homosexuality. For instance, Ford et. al. (2009) studied the attitudes of people towards homosexual behaviour, but also did not include attitudes towards legal same sex unions. On the other hand, while examining attitudes towards legal same sex unions neither Whitehead (2009) nor Olsen at. al. (2006) included measures of attitudes towards homosexual person and homosexual behaviour between same sex partners. Thus, this review identified that past studies have not included the analysis of the attitudes towards homosexuality using all three approaches: 1) homosexual persons; 2) homosexual behaviours between same sex partners and 3) legal same sex unions.

2.6.3. Homosexuality in Africa

Africa is one of the most religious continents in the world with around 93% Sub- Saharans being either Christian or Muslim. This belief forms part of their culture which turns to control most facets of their lives (Hairsine, 2019). Before colonialism, Africans had a culture, and after colonialism, the culture still holds with religion, adding and subtracting some outmoded and barbaric practices from their culture. Religion has infiltrated African culture and is now directing how they conduct themselves. With the introduction of religion to Africa, cultures such as homosexuality have been rejected to be western culture which is not accepted by the religion these westerners introduced to them. Homosexuality has then been viewed as a novel in Africa, but is this true?

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In Alimi, Demetriou, and Bosi's (2015) article, they mention terms used to describe homosexuals in some parts of Nigeria. "Adofuro", a colloquialism for someone who has anal sex, is the Yoruba word for "homosexual." This is a term for behaviour, and it is as old as the Yoruba culture itself. "Yan daudu" is a Hausa term used in northern Nigeria to describe effeminate men who are considered to be men's wives. According to (Roscoe & Murray, 2001) researchers discovered "explicit" Bushman artwork depicting men engaging in same-sex sexual activity. The book examined homosexuality and feminism in Africa. Alimi et al. (2015) further asserts that other evidence suggests that many African ethnic groups' transitions from boyhood to adulthood involved same-sex sexual activities. Now the factors rejecting homosexuality in Africa are not their own culture and not that of the religion of the Westerns because the Westerns have accepted it.

According to Rakhetsi (2021), out of the fifty-four countries of Africa, twenty-two countries have legalized same-sex relationships and South Africa was the first to legalize same-sex marriage. In Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, same-sex relationships are punishable by life imprisonment, whereas in Gambia, Kenya, and Malawi, the penalty is fourteen years in prison. Although homosexuality is not a crime in Egypt, those caught in the act are arrested and charged with debauchery, immorality, or blasphemy. Ivory Coast does not have a law against homosexuals, but there have been cases of detention and prosecution. Convictions for sodomy are reportedly on the rise in Tunisia. In other countries, the situation is different. Three countries provide broad protection against sexual orientation discrimination: Angola, Mauritius, and South Africa. Employment protection is available in the same three countries, as well as Botswana, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Seychelle (Hussain, 2020). In Nigeria, according to Hussain (2020), a judge threw out a case against 47 men charged with

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public displays of affection with members of the same sex, ending what had widely been seen as a test of the country's laws banning homosexual relationships and the High Court of Kenya in 2019 upheld the law criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual activity, adding it is "an effective method to contain the country's HIV epidemic".

2.7. Presence and experiences of LGBTQ+ in Ghana

Homosexuality hardly exist in Ghana, and it was not listed as a sexual offense because self-identified gay men were virtually unheard of (Francoeur & Noonan 2004). The claim by Francoeur and Noonan is not based on reliable evidence because Ghana´s law criminalizes homosexuality since the year 1960. Homosexuality is an old-age concept. According to Wazha (2014), many authors attribute homosexuality to colonialism. It is said that European conquerors imposed same-sex behaviour on black Africa in the times of colonial era to degrade the subject people. However, studies show that homosexuality has been part of the continent as any other. Homosexuality is thus traceable far beyond the colonial era. Murray and Roscoe (2001) write to affirm that homosexuality existed both in pre-colonial period as well as in these modern times, though missionary tried to stop it and criminalize homosexuality which were later continued by colonial and postcolonial government.

Homosexuality was being practiced by some students in the boarding schools in Ghana. Where it existed among girls, it was and is still being called "supi". It needs to be clarified that "supi" does not always involve sexual attractions. This practice among boys was termed "trumu, trumu" an Akan language which is translated to mean "anus, anus". Michaud and Wieringa (2005) strongly support the above claim when she writes that this practice of homosexuality is among school girls in the boarding houses. According to the Law Library of Congress (2015), out of the forty-nine (49) countries in Africa, South Africa is the only nation that constitutionally permits same-sex

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marriage. In some of these countries, example Nigeria, Uganda and Ghana, the practice of homosexuality is considered a criminal act. It is, therefore, punishable by law. Graeme (2015) writing on the rights of LGBT people in Africa indicates that there are thirty-six (36) countries in Africa that outlaw same sex sexual conduct. He contends that the right s of LGBT people in Botswana and Kenya where they have been given legal support to organize themselves and be protected under the law. Graeme adds that in Zambia, people have been given the constitutional rights to advocate for the rights of the LGBT people. Graeme sees this as positive stride to freedom for the LGBT group in Africa. It is known that sodomy is a crime in Ghana, so under Ghana´s law, a person who has unnatural carnal knowledge of another person of not less than sixteen (16) years of age with the consent of that person commits a misdemeanour (Ghana Legal 2016a).

Unnatural carnal knowledge involves sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with animal and this is deemed complete upon sufficient evidence of the least degree of penetration (Ghana Legal 2016b). It is an offense which is punishable on conviction by a maximum of three-year prison term (Ghana Legal 2016c). Interpretation of the unnatural carnal knowledge is not clear. People have the right to privacy as written above. This means that what goes on in people´s private lives must be protected unless they perform it in public. One could write that if a man and his wife engage in anal sex, or so-called oral sex, they must be prosecuted by the law as having engaged in unnatural sex, but states do not concern themselves with this because it is the private life of a couple.

Culture, according to Ghana´s National Commission on Culture (2006), is a lifestyle as displayed by a particular people or society. Culture unfolds for the purpose of living, so it is socially taught and learned. It emanates as human response to the local

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biophysical environment. Cultural traditions lean unto the past for their mandate, authority and authenticity since cultural traits are considered as society's norms handed down the generations. Culture evolves and it is often influenced by local and external influences and impetus (National Commission on Culture, 2006). In Ghana, homosexuality is considered uncultured and an alien culture (GhanaWeb, 2011). It is a common belief among Ghanaians that Ghana is a Christian nation, so accepting homosexuality will provoke God's punishment, and also, Ghanaian cultural tradition is inflexibly heteronormative, therefore, homosexual practices are "un-Ghanaian" (Banks 2013, 30). Cultural independence is a way of establishing the sovereignty of the Ghanaian state; and for some people, this is more important to them than the economic ties that Ghana has with Western nations.

Constructions of Ghanaian cultural traditions are strongly associated with Ghanaian national identity, and these discourses work to strengthen the sovereignty of Ghana and to distinguish it from other nations. As critical remarks of some Ghanaian public figures suggest, the local context is also important for understanding ways in which such discourses are constructed and invoked. These discourses are always strategic, whether they serve to buttress certain political agendas or to establish a hierarchy of social beliefs (Banks, 2013). One needs to take cognizance of the fact that many changes have gone on in Ghanaian cultural settings. These changes cut across politics, economic, religion, and so on. Before Ghana was colonized by the British, the country´s system of government and administration was purely traditional or chieftaincy. The country had its own traditional courts where civil and criminal cases were settled. Nowadays, the country is governed by politically elected governments with various judicial systems.

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Contending that homosexuality is Western culture is a fallacy. The Western world had also been struggling to outdo the practice from their respective countries. Western countries started allowing same-sex marriages only after the year 2000 (Pew Research Center 2015). When the practice of homosexuality became the culture of the Western world could not be ascertained. Until recently, some states in the United States of America (USA) had not legalized the rights of LGBT people, prior to the supreme court´s ruling to legalize the rights of LGBT people in all states within the USA (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2015). Again, in the countries where the practice is legalized, not all the citizens approve of it. They only manage to live with it. Again, over twenty countries in Europe including Italy and Poland have not legalized same-sex marriage (Lipka 2015), so claiming that same-sex practice is Western culture is unacceptable. It must be recognized that same-sex relationship is a global challenge confronting all human societies.

Kontula (2009) argues that sexuality in human societies is revealed through sexual culture which refers to the psycho-social processes that controls sexual behaviour. Sexual culture involves the rules, beliefs and norms that are prescribed through communal membership. It also describes whether or not an individual`s sexual behaviours are virtuous or acceptable. Social traditions such as myths, customs, rituals and ceremonies define sexual culture. Again, sexual culture includes a theory of human nature and set the boundaries of what constitutes natural or unnatural sex. This definition promotes consistent social and political order, controls behaviour and produces order as well as the sustained existence of the community. Sexuality is also an important part of non-sexual institutions, such as religion and politics. Kontula (2009, 13) further argues that sexual roles and the associated demands and opportunities for a

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person´s life span, such as masculine, feminine and androgynous roles are assigned by sexual culture.

Gender-based customs and the characteristics including conceptions of desire, eroticism, ways to view the body, sexual instinct, and the subjective conditions, conceptions and objects that are related to gender, are all assigned by sexual culture. Ghana´s National Commission on Culture´s conception of culture, as explained above, does not necessarily contradict the rights of LGBT people in Ghana, if taken in context. What is needful here, is scientific research, meaningful discussions and dialogues aimed at finding a lasting remedy to this issue of same-sex relationships and "transgenderism". All countries including Ghana need to protect the rights of citizens to basic human needs and capabilities.

In his thesis, Yeboa-Mensa (2012), citing the work of Rees (2011), writes of the World Bank Group´s adoption of Sen's bottom-up ´human poverty´ approach which emphasizes a liberal democratic concept of capability, which has been defined as ´the overall freedoms people have, to live the kind of lives they have reason to value or cherish. The emphasis on human capabilities also placed a high priority on increasing the World Bank´s commitment to democratization in development and to partner with civil society actors. The list of capabilities, according to Nussbaum, includes among others bodily integrity. which encapsulates the ability of persons to move freely from one place to another, being able to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction. Nussbaum contends that the list of capabilities should be a guide to public policy makers and be guaranteed by the constitution (Nussbaum 1999, 31-42).

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2.7.1. Universal declaration of human rights

Ghana as a country, is bound by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of the United Nations, which is an important document as far as human rights are concerned. It was drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all parts of the world, the declaration was announced by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10 1948. This human rights document spells out the fundamental human rights to be protected universally in all states. In this declaration, every person is entitled to all the rights and freedoms documented in this therein, without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (United Nations 2016a).

The Article 3 of the Universal Human Rights Declaration states emphatically that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security. Again, as detailed in Article 16.1, men and women of full age, without any restrictions based on race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are also eligible to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Section two has it that marriage shall be entered, only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses (United Nations 2016a). The implication here is that, the persons intending to enter marriage must have the free-will to decide on their own without coercion. It must be acknowledged that complete freedom is difficult to be obtained since economic, psychological and emotional as well as high aspirations and others may coerce some people to make decision that they would not make if all things were equal with them. Counselling or consultations is, therefore, a necessary ingredient for even some older adults who intend to make some important life decisions such as marriage.

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Some people in Ghana, as detailed in the background of this study, argue that the rights of LGBT people are foreign and for that matter could not be granted. With regards to this belief, the United Nations strongly contends that it is not seeking any new rights for the LGBT people. It argues that the legal obligations of states to safeguard the human rights of LGBT people are those that are well founded already in international human rights law based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequently agreed international human rights treaties. The UN reiterates that all people, irrespective of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, are entitled to enjoy the protections that the international human rights law provides including respect of rights to life, security of person and privacy as well as the right to be free from torture, arbitrary arrest and detention. The right to be free from discrimination and the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are not exemptions (United Nations 2016b).

As far as care or formal adoption is concerned, people who oppose lesbians, gays, and transsexuals raising up children often use religious or legal arguments to highlight many of the misconceptions that still surround the issue of homosexual parenting (Vitelli 2013). About lesbian mothers, it is contended that the absence of a father in addition to the presence of a lesbian mother would lead to atypical gender development in children, because both fathers and mothers are needed for children to develop solid gender identities (Lev 2010). It is also argued that boys would assume to be less masculine in their identity and behaviour and would grow up to be homosexuals, whereas girls would grow up to be lesbians. Judgments by some judges included outcomes of reports that showed devastating effects of the absence of a father on the cognitive development of children. Another contention has been that children

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having a lesbian mother would be teased, mobbed and/or ostracized by other children (Bos, van Balen & Van den Boom 2005).

The arguments from the Judges as detailed above are also true in Ghana, where gender roles are clearly defined. Most heterosexual men would not be able to take good care of children, if they were to live with them without their wives or women. So, it is feared that homosexual men in Ghana would not be able to care properly for children if they are given rights to adopt children. Gender roles may not be deeply entrenched in all countries of the world, but as Allotey (2015) argues, in contemporary Ghanaian communities, the conventional breadwinner/housewife roles exist in many homes. It is common for a man to provide an income for the upkeep of the family while woman take care of the family´s emotional and reproductive needs, although women have been economically active in the past and in the present. Allotey (2015) further contends that traditional gender roles are being challenged by education and modernization. It should also be understood that some homosexual male couples could afford house-helps or child care assistants to help them in caring for their children just as it is in some heterosexual families. It has also been argued that because LGBT people do not have affinity for opposite sex, they do not conform to gender roles (Adamczyk, 2017).

2.8. The Media and journalism in Ghana

Habermas (2015) explains that public sphere is how exchange of ideas takes place. And that media is the public sphere where people acquire knowledge and information with the audiences holding media practitioners to the marrow in exercising public accountability. In Ghana, every conversation among individuals, they form their own public opinions. Globalisation is transforming the society and generation of ideas through political debates in media circles, offer the people public discourse to strengthen the Ghanaian public sphere (Cho, 2010). To strengthen the Ghana

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communication process, the GJA has formed nationwide coalition with many interested parties including OccupyGhana on the passage of Right to Information (RTI) bill into law by Ghana Parliament. And the bill has subsequently being passed into law after receiving the assent of the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Danwka Akufo-Addo. The RTI will among other benefits, enhance dissemination and gathering of information among journalists, media practitioners in entirety. By far, it will enhance the fight against corruption menace and promote national development. (IFJ, 2018) The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) since its inception in 1926 has been the global voice of journalists and world's largest organization of journalists (representing 600, 000 journalists from 187 unions and associations in more than 140 countries), also shares some thoughts on the RTI.

The General Secretary of IFJ, Anthony Bellanger, is quoted as saying that: "The passing of this law is well overdue, and we call on the legislators in Ghana to act urgently and show their commitment of media freedom and access to information". (IFJ, 2018). The RTI is now a legal document working in Ghana and this applause could be attributed not only to Ghana's Parliament but in the annals of the books of Ghana's media situation, the high-level public sphere. RTI Law now operating in Ghana aids the media or journalist community in the country to map up a highly-developed communication structure that "provides ever-growing capacity for citizen journalism and public deliberations but provokes government attempts at control" (Dai & Reese, 2008).

Not only in Ghana; throughout Africa, the mass media have been used as a powerful tool to either ensure the practice of democracy or safeguard their practice from abuse (Amoakohene, 2007). The National Media Commission (NMC) is one of the independent Constitutional bodies alongside the Judiciary that have made the power

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of the media effective. McQuail (2000) helps provide a list of mediation roles and functions of the mass media perceived to be played in society. And the Ghana Media Organizations are media seen as “a window on events and experience”, “a mirror of events in society and the world”, “a filter or gatekeeper”, “a signpost, guide or interpreter”, “a forum or platform for the presentation of information and ideas” and “interlocutor or informed partner in conversation” (McQuail, 2000). This scholarly framework has given birth to the rise of media outlets in Ghana today, especially, radio and democratic-political regimes have observably, ridden on the skins of a powerful mass media. Before radio, newspaper was introduced and used as political tool and also a tool for the dissemination of information (Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998).

Newspapers were used to organise and galvanise the people to fight to liberate Ghana from colonialism during the struggle for independence by Kwame Nkrumah and his allies (Ansah, 1991). However, in the 1990s, following Freedom of the Media as enshrined in Article 164 of the 1992 Constitution, “the period of transition from the Rawlings years of dictatorship to a democratic republic” (Ampaw, 2004) has witnessed greater media involvement in Politics. And Radio is essential tool in this regard. According to Hanitzsch (2008), two main approaches to studying media and journalism in societal perspective are Journalism culture (inductive) by looking at journalism norms and practices and Media Systems (deductive) which is a top-down approach that looks at media relations to political and societal system. Media systems that are functioning in North American and Western European countries have very limited role of the state, weak connection between the press and political parties, high professionalism, neutral journalism practice and commercialised media component (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

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In view of this, Hallin and Mancini (2004) have invented the three models of the Press for a comparative analysis to study media system. They are: The Liberal, the Democratic Corporatist and the Polarised Pluralist Models, focusing on only western societies. The level of diffusion of media technologies, especially radio and television as well as newspapers, became the yardstick for measuring development. In addition, there was an assumed close reciprocal relationship between mass media growth and literacy rates (Lerner, 1958). The essence of mass communication – as in the modernisation paradigm of development – was to transfer the new ideas, and knowledge and approaches from the rich countries to the post-colony. This notion, however, also contradicted the nationalist role of the media. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) and Reese (2001) developed a model of influences on mass media content, which offers a helpful framework for exploring the intertwining of five different levels of analyses including individual journalists' perceptions, media routines, organizational structures and policies, influences from outside the media organization and ideological influences (Reese, 2001).

These influences are ranked hierarchically from the ideological and other macro-system-level factors to the more micro characteristics of individual journalists. According to Reese (2001), although these influences can operate simultaneously with some being more determinative than others depending on the context, they can also be ranked hierarchically with each preceding level subsuming the one before, suggesting that the ultimate level should be an ideological perspective (Shoemaker & Mayfield 1987; Shoemaker & Reese 1996).

With the state losing its control of the media, Ghana's media have moved from virtually state-owned to a vibrant free independent media. This situation has opened the door for free and diversity of debates making it possible for the public with various

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backgrounds to contribute especially to radio debates through 'phone-in', 'mail-in', text-in'. As indicated in A Journalist Guide for Covering Post-Elections in Ghana (2010), "the role of strong and growing media deserves special mention in its contribution to the deepening of Ghana's democracy especially the private radio stations and increasingly available ICT tools such as mobile telephony. These two forms of media have given Ghanaians tremendous voice and space to contribute to matters of political, economic and social interest."

Journalists play a critical role in the structure of modern societies and therefore the need to understand the environment in which they work must be given priority for the betterment of society. "In fact, this is exactly why governments, global institutions, transnational and continental corporations, invest immensely and attempt to monopolize the media. In other words, an informed management of journalism and journalists leads towards channelling informed influence on a society. However, this requires, primarily a thorough understanding of the environment in which journalism is practiced and journalists work or the factors that determine the output of journalists. One of which is job-satisfaction" (Bezabeh, 2017, p.6). Realizing the significance of the media, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana spells out the role of the media among others in Article 162 (5) as "All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana". This is an enormous responsibility and implies the media and journalists in particular have a critical role to play towards the development and prosperity of the nation. This critical role the Constitution has bestowed on the media is a herculean one which demands not only adequate training of media personnel to be able to accomplish

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the task but good working environment and motivation that would ensure satisfactory performances and execution of duty by journalists in Ghana.

Owusu (2012) is of the view that the media landscape in Ghana evolved when the 1992 Republican Constitution was promulgated thus guaranteeing multi-party democracy. “The private media grew gradually but started to make their presence felt in the face of the established state-owned media. Ghanaians, however, witnessed the full growth of the private media from 2001 after the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law with particular rapid expansion of the electronic media. Currently, in virtually every district of Ghana, there is a local radio station and newspapers with national reach are also available. Access to television stations is not hard to come by either”, (Owusu, 2012, p.9).

2.8.1. Roles, journalistic roles and role perceptions

Role theory has developed through several decades of theorising and empirical research. In brief, in the structural-functionalist approach, the main issue is that roles function as expected behaviours that are collectively understood and created by society for the purposes of being upheld by the social actors that occupy the positions to which the roles are in reference (Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Goffman, 1959; Parsons, 1966). Goffman (1959) suggests that the society into which we are born presents us with a series of roles, which are patterns of behaviour, routines and responses, like parts in a play. They are a set of expected behaviours that are predicated on norms as definers of what is appropriate and acceptable behaviour (Jones et al., 1966). The point here is that journalists are offered a range of social-journalistic functions to perform. The role of journalists, for example, involves behaviours that result in the orderly production of news. It is in this regard that a journalist is expected to investigate issues without fear

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or favour, write stories and to uphold the protection of his/her sources of information all of which is not necessarily expected of a builder.

Extant studies of journalists' roles in Western societies have tended to highlight norms and values such as objectivity, facts and a watchdog stance as being essential to the practice of journalism (Deuze, 2004; Drechsel, 1983; Janowitz, 1975; Weaver, 1998). In this case, these rules of behaviour and values (as a reflection of norms) define the roles that journalists act out or perform in society (Deuze, 2001; Goffman, 1959; Parsons, 1966). The point is that for a society in which these kinds of functions are understood to be part of a journalist's role, anyone observed performing these activities would be judged to be and/or identified as a journalist. Although roles are seen as being rigid, static and inflexible in the functionalist approach, they are to an extent still seen as being in interaction with each other for instance as in the case of the 'journalist' and the 'editor'. According to Berger and Luckman (1966), every individual (in this case a journalist) is born into an objective social structure that is posited by significant others as objective reality.

Thus, the roles that are taken on by journalists are selected and mediated by other members of society who define and select these roles in accordance with their own location in the social structure and by virtue of their individual characteristics. In addition, roles can be semi-permanent – 'journalist', 'student', 'writer' – and transitory and that they are not only tied to occupational positions (Goffman, 1981; Parsons, 1966). For instance, if I take on the role of a 'journalist' this does not mean that I cannot take on the role of a 'friend' at another time. This fluidity can be noted more fully in the interactionist approach to roles, whereby they are conceptualised as being flexible and open to negotiation (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Goffman, 1981). Interactionists tend to argue that roles are often ambiguous and unclear. From this point

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of view, a role is not prescribed as such, but is something that is constantly negotiated between individuals and within groups. As will be noted in chapters 8 and 9 on the interview findings, there are moments of (un)certainty, plurality, conflict and even negotiation when it comes to role-taking. For example, journalists in the post-colony were at the time of independence expected to take on the roles of actively promoting nationalist sentiments and pan-Africanism, the fulfilment of which would potentially put them into conflict with the more libertarian and objectivist elements of their journalistic identity (Ebo, 1994; Nkrumah, 1965; Nyamnjoh, 2005).

In a sense, their definitions of what is done by a journalist, a nationalist and a pan-Africanist at times have to be (re)negotiated. Hence, in interactionism, roles, similar to meanings and self-definitions are constructed and negotiated through processes of interaction (Goffman, 1981; Meyer, 1994). However, it must be said that even here roles are at some level still seen as being static and as providing general guidelines for (inter)action. It is in this regard, that roles are generally normative, in so far as they regulate behaviour. As Coyne (1984) argues, "a role is not just a repeated format, but a format to-be-followed, a guide. To enact a role is, wittingly or unwittingly, to invite expectations of further conformity". Thus, journalistic role perceptions amount to informal rules for how the news media ought to function. As might be expected when norms are at stake, the nature of journalism's function has been contested (Hyden et al., 2002; Zelizer & Allan, 2002). That is to say, some see journalism's function or role as disseminating facts, some see the role as interpreting those facts and still others see the role as that of advocacy or even nationalist liberator. In a sense, roles by definition regulate behaviour through a two-stage process in which they must be conceived and then enacted (Biddle & Thomas 1966). In other words, journalists must form some understanding of what their role is and this role perception

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then guides behaviour. Therefore, behaviour is the enactment or concrete manifestation of the role conception. In this case, role enactment is the way that a journalist writes a story and/or presents a news story (Biddle & Thomas 1966).

Based on the above, it can be posited that journalists' role perceptions therefore refer to the expected types of behaviour and norms that journalists think they are supposed to exhibit. The actual work of the journalists is expected to provide evidence of whether or not these perceptions are carried over into the workplace (Deuze 2001; Drechsel, 1983; Drew, 1972). Journalistic roles are what regulate and constitute the creation of professional, occupational and even more broadly institutional journalistic identities. It is in this sense that journalistic identity is in this study treated as the collective integration of what is posited here as the neutral, social agenda, watchdog and development roles – and/or sub-identities as I refer to them later – of journalism. Overall, in this study, the term journalistic role is posited as having two meanings. Firstly, journalistic roles are defined as the kinds of activities that society determines to be appropriate for individuals holding their kind of positions in society. Secondly, individual journalists' roles are also analysed as the ways in which journalistic identity may be expressed.

In attempting to highlight the liberal bias of journalists and the potential reflection of this bias in the news content there is a tendency to conflate journalism and mass media roles. Conceptually, the task of journalism is seen here as being vested in carrying out an autonomous form of communication that is taken on specifically by journalists who are supposed to be acting on behalf of the public interest (Berger, 2000; Deuze, 1998; Scholl, 1996). The mass media on the other hand are institutions that mediate information which includes advertising, public relations statements and entertainment, that is not necessarily reducible to the role of the of the journalist

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(Berger, 2000). Ideally, journalists are therefore different from public relations staffers, advertisers and corporate communicators, given that public relations is for the most part a paid-for deliberate attempt to promote the welfare of a certain party regardless of intrinsic merit, social virtue or the public interest (Nagara, 2004).

2.8.2. The Roles of the media in sensitizing people about LGBTQ+

Much of the research into role perceptions is more interested in psychographic type factors that shape role perceptions than in how role perceptions shape news (Kapuściński & Richards, 2016). For instance, the studies by Johnstone et al (1976) and Weaver and Wilhoit (1986, 1996) mainly focus their attention on the causes of role perceptions by looking at education, politics, and experience as predictors in role adoption. Henningham (1997) explores how personality shapes journalists' role perceptions, and Dillon (1990) considers the place of career values in predicting role perceptions. Still, an assumption behind such research is that journalists' role perceptions shape the news stories that journalists ultimately report. If a journalist conceives of his or her role as interpreting complex problems, news stories will subsequently be written with a significant amount of interpretation, which is either in the journalist's own voice or in his or her selection of content. Graber (1993) states this assumption when she posits that journalists' news stories will vary based on their role perceptions.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) also argue that the way in which journalists define their jobs will affect the content they produce. For them, journalists who see themselves as disseminators or neutrals would write very different accounts of an event from those who see themselves as interpreters or participants. De Beer (2004:195) asserts that the arrangement and/or omission of 'facts' on a news page reveals the reporter's personal opinions, role perceptions and intentions, as well as those of the news medium and the

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society in which the journalist operates. Culbertson (1983) surveyed a wide array of journalists to ascertain their role perceptions and to discern preferences for various news forms, for length of stories, and other factors. The study, despite interesting findings – a correlation between role conception and news construction – relied on the self-reporting of journalists and not on the content, which those journalists produced.

Starck and Soloski (1977) studied journalism student reporters to judge whether role perceptions, among other factors, influenced news writing. They identified the reporters as 'high participant' if they think the press should play a highly active role in society not just reporting the news, but analysing and interpreting its significance. Low participant' reporters "think the press should play a somewhat active role in analysing and interpreting the significance of the news. 'Neutral' reporters "think the press should present facts as objectively as possible without analysis or interpretation. They found that 'low participant' reporters wrote the most comprehensive, objective, fair, and accurate stories. The study found a relationship did exist between role perceptions and the kind of news story that the student produced (Starck & Soloski, 1977).

The media, as opined by Berry (2022), is the central component of modern-day governance. In other words, the media is very essential in the governance of a country it is therefore no fluke that it is referred to as the fourth arm of government. The world is currently a global village and as such the billions of events that occur daily at a specific location are made known through the media at different locations. However not every event that occurs become news and this according to Wolfsfeld (2009) can be attributed to the work of the media. In this light, the basic role of media is to filter information for dissemination whether for publication, broadcasting, the internet, or some other mode of communication. Traditionally, it is this role of the media that makes it relevant in sensitizing people regarding sensitive issues like LGBTQ+. In fact,

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the role of the media is very much needed in this era than before as a result of the increasing spate of discrimination and violent attacks against the LGBTQ+ community.

The role of the media in sensitizing people about LGBTQ+ has been established by several researchers such as Steiner et al. (1993), Raley and Lucas (2006), and Mazur and Emmers-Sommer (2003). In this regard, they, therefore, determine what is to become the public's social reality and their view of the world. One role played by the media sensitizing the public is that they ensure only credible and accurate information regarding LGBTQ+ matters (Raley & Lucas, 2006). In this current era of high consumption rates of clickbait, fake news, and non-journalistic social media pages, the media assert control over news construction and regulate the media space to create a source in which audiences can access credible sensitization materials. The media does not only help to distribute information but also counter hate speech and create an environment of balanced opinions and this is known as information equilibrium. Mazur and Emmers-Sommer (2003) explain that for the media it can be problematic to find a balance between preventing harm caused by speech and protecting individual expression. Therefore, being able to find this balance is important, especially in situations regarding LGBTQ+. Mazur and Emmers-Sommer (2003) further explain that responsible journalism does not just re-publish press releases but is truly concerned with a truthful, balanced, and fair account of events. Thus, the ability for the media to ensure that credible information about LGBTQ+ is only put out into the public domain can assist in the sensitization of the public.

Another role of the media in the sensitization of the public regarding LGBTQ+, according to Gross (2005) is their ability to broadcast issues and attract the attention of both international and local actors to situations involving LGBTQ+. Gross (2005) explains that in case of an injustice to an LGBTQ+ community anywhere in the world,

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the media can attract worldwide attention. This role of the media is supported by Rowe et al. (2017) who asserts that the mass media is a pervasive part of daily life, especially, in industrialized countries, and thus is able to shine a light on situations involving LGBTQ+ anywhere in the world. Since the rights of LGBTQ+ are gradually gaining global acceptance; countries or individuals are often concerned with making sure that the majority of people are on "their" side, which bears a lot of potential for misrepresenting facts and trying to seize control over the distribution of information. For this very reason, the intervention of unbiased and free global media is important not only for the world public but also for the LGBTQ+ people directly affected.

Another role of the media in sensitizing the public about LGBTQ+ is that they shape the public's knowledge of the totality of actual events occurring in reality. According to Gray (2013), hate against the LGBTQ+ community does not occur spontaneously but tends to have a history and local media usually have a deeper understanding of the existing situation as well as how to tackle the situation to ensure the acceptance of people of the LGBTQ+ community. The media, therefore, does not only influence society but it serves as a strong tool to direct the end result of a situation. Gray (2013) further explains that unlike international media covering a situation involving LGBTQ+, local media are a recognized part of society with the ability to accelerate and magnify fears or reduce them. The media, therefore, have the power to defuse tensions before they even reach a critical point and keep a critical eye on the n government, opposition, and society in relation to matters pertaining to LGBTQ+. By supplying credible information and reaching a large audience, before sensitizing society regarding LGBTQ+.

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2.9. Challenges of the media in sensitisation of the public

The roles of the media in the sensitization of the public regarding sensitive matters have in the modern era been faced with a number of challenges. Most of these challenges are a result of the current changes in journalism and the media landscape as a whole. Journalism, according to Wolfsfeld (2009), has transformed greatly from the day the term was used till now. This transformation has challenged the existence and function of certain traditional roles of journalism and media. One of such traditional roles is its role in the sensitization of the public. The influence of the media in sensitizing society is now under siege and this is mainly because of the widening of the frontiers of journalism by technology. Koven (2004) asserts that the influence of the media on society has changed and this is a result of the introduction of technology and the evolving roles and responsibilities of journalists.

Berry (2022) corroborates the views of Koven (2004) and asserts in a study that the power of media seems to diminish in a modern information society. She further asserted that technology such as the internet has defied the whole notion of the concept of regulated media and challenged the idea that journalism should be regulated. In other words, with the advent of technology such as online portals, the media is no longer able to adequately perform its primary role of filtering information before getting to the public. Also, the existence of blogs is also contributing to the challenge of the media. Koven (2004) asserts that as not all bloggers are journalists, the filtering function is therefore compromised anytime a blogger puts up a story. This is because bloggers who are not journalists may lack the necessary skills to sift out unwanted information or even verify the authenticity of their information before putting it up on the internet.

Another challenge facing the media in sensitizing the public is the incessant use of social media platforms by the general public (Kalyvas et al., 2019). Social media

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platforms serve as the platform for which anyone (whether a journalist or not) anywhere can publish a news story without any hindrance. Kalyvas et al., (2019) explain that whiles traditional media are subjected to rules, such as defamation and invasion of privacy which journalists abide by, social media does not have such rules. For example, people hide behind social media and write and say whatever they want about anyone and no one holds them accountable for such acts. More so, such things are very frequently seen on the internet but they will never appear on television or in newspapers and this is because gatekeepers who are seasoned journalists and editors are at work in such areas. In addition, the influencing power of the media over society according to Taylor (2015) faces the challenge of intruders and this is where the role of media is taken over by people outside the journalism fraternity. For example, people with no expertise in journalism host and provide platforms that seek for articles and other news stories from the general public to publish. Such people are expected to carry out the role of journalists by sifting through the news stories, however, because they lack the necessary skills, they are unable to perform the filtering role effectively and hence allow untoward information into the public domain.

2.10. Theoretical framework

Several theories explain coming out and acknowledge that it is part of a more complicated developmental process, which begins with an uncertainty and questioning period and eventually ends with the integration of an established sexual orientation into the rest of his or her identity. Most of these theories also acknowledge that people can go forwards and backwards in this process depending on a number of factors including the environment in which the person lives and the experiences he or she has. Unfortunately, not many theories address the bisexual or transgender identity development process. No model currently exists that effectively describes those

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identities. Three prominent models of gay and lesbian identity development have been used in the literature: the Cass model (1979), the D'Augelli model (1994), and Fassinger's model (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). Each of the theories have advantages and limitations, but this study used the Fassinger model primarily due to the way it addresses both individual identity and group membership development as two separate but concurrent processes. In this section these three theories will be discussed and compared to each other.

2.10.1. Cass model

The Cass model (1979) was one of the first proposed identity development models for lesbian and gay individuals and probably is the most cited model in research of lesbian and gay students. Cass proposed a six-stage model "that all individuals move through in order to acquire an identity of 'homosexual' fully integrated within the individual's overall concept of self" (p. 220). The ultimate goal of this developmental process is for the individual to bring congruence to him or herself. Cass based her proposed theory on clinical work she did with homosexuals in Australia. Cass (1979) grounded her model on interpersonal congruency theory. This theory is based on "the assumption that stability and change in human behaviour are dependent on the congruency or incongruency (sic) that exists within an individual's interpersonal environment" (p. 220). Movement in the developmental process is facilitated by a feeling of incongruence which causes an individual to think critically about his or her own "feelings, thoughts, and behaviours" (p. 220).

In the Cass model, the perceived incongruence has to do with the individual's sexual orientation and the fact that it does not match the heterosexist messages he or she receives from their interpersonal environment. Cass (1979) discusses a complicated cognitive process that an individual uses to determine who and what they are. These

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processes are categorized into stages which signify major milestones in development. These stages are replete with opportunities for the individual to develop further or to stall (or, foreclosure). The first stage of the Cass model is Identity Confusion, where an individual realizes that homosexual topics have some kind of personal meaning to him or her. The individual typically reacts by noting the incongruence and trying to rationalize it. Since this individual previously thought of him/herself as heterosexual a lot of doubt is felt. The individual begins to question who he/she is. The individual typically reacts by either viewing these new feelings as correct and acceptable, correct but unacceptable, or incorrect and unacceptable. The first reaction leads the individual to seek more information (possibly from an LGBT organization), and he/she proceeds into stage 2.

The second causes the individual to focus on inhibiting the feelings and avoid situations or experiences likely to cause those feelings. Most likely they would avoid any association with LGBT organizations. The third potential reaction causes the person to disregard labelling his/her feelings as homosexual. He/she does not link the behaviour or attraction to an identity. In this case, identity foreclosure occurs. As an individual labels their incongruence as having to do with homosexuality, he/she moves to stage 2, identity comparison. This stage is characterized by the individual considering whether or not he is homosexual. As individuals in this stage struggle with defining who they are, they become aware of the implications of that identity. For example, they become aware of the high potential for social alienation. Feelings of "not belonging" typically occur in this stage (Cass, 1979, p. 225). On a college campus, it is important to have positive images of LGBT individuals so that when individuals are in this stage, they can associate positive attributes with this possible identity. An

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individual can react to the second stage by finding the idea of being gay acceptable or unacceptable.

Finding it acceptable moves him or her into the third stage: identity tolerance. This stage is marked by an attitude of "I probably am a homosexual" (Cass, 1979, p. 229). The individual begins making contact with other gay individuals. Based on this contact, either positive or negative associations of a gay identity form. If these contacts are negative, then according to Cass the individual is more likely to form negative perceptions about him or herself being gay and inhibit that behaviour. If he or she has positive contact, though, then the commitment to a gay identity increase. The fourth stage, identity acceptance, is characterized by an attitude of accepting a gay identity, rather than just tolerating it (Cass, 1979). Contact with other gay individuals becomes more frequent as those social networks increase. These friendships are seen as a positive component to the individual's life. At this point the individual is still "passing" as heterosexual to the external world. In the fifth stage, identity pride, the individual becomes more committed to a gay identity, becomes acutely aware of society's negative portrayal of homosexuals, and begins to reject these notions of society.

Unlike in earlier stages, when the individual is more likely to succumb to the negative attitudes society has toward homosexuality, the individual is now actively resisting society. The world is seen as either "pro-gay" or "anti-gay," and most heterosexuals and heterosexual institutions (e.g., marriage) are lumped under anti-gay. The individual becomes immersed in gay culture, attending meetings, rallies, and events, reading literature, and associating only with other gay individuals or "pro-gay" heterosexuals. Much pride is felt toward the lesbian and gay community, and anger is directed at the rest of society. At this point the individual is very likely to be out to most individuals. Cass suggests that if individuals routinely experience negative

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reactions when they disclose their gay identity, then they will likely remain in the fifth stage until finding a more positive environment. In the sixth and final stage, identity synthesis, the individual experiences more positive reactions from heterosexuals. The individual begins to change the "us vs. them" attitude previously held to greater acceptance of heterosexuals being allies. As these perceptions of the outside world change, the individual becomes more able to integrate his or her private and public identities and by doing so integrate his or her gay identity into an overall self-concept.

Now he or she is no longer "just gay" but is a variety of identities. Cass (1979) believes that it is not possible to find complete congruence for being homosexual since society has such pervading messages about the normalcy of heterosexuality. However, she does believe that the incongruence can be minimized to a manageable level. By the sixth stage, the individual finds this congruence as his public and private image can be the same. Several components to the Cass model weaken its applicability to current college students. Firstly, the model fails to recognize the role and importance of other identities. As with most models that focus on specific identities, it is difficult to distinguish where one identity begins and the next one starts.

However, in Cass's model, the researcher went through great pains to identify the thought process as one evaluates the acceptability of his or her homosexual feelings. At no point is the role of one's culture explained. In reality, what one's culture thinks about homosexuality can play a large part in how he or she judges those feelings (Cintron, 2000). The African American community is the same way: "gay" and "lesbian" are viewed as "white" terms (Ferguson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000). In very religious communities (which include the Latino and African American Community) homosexuality is viewed as a sin, and there is a large stigma associated with same-sex attraction and identity (DuMontier, 2000). The role of these cultures would

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undoubtedly play a major role in the psychosocial development of gay and lesbian individuals. It is quite likely that the Australian gay males that Cass worked with were too homogeneous for her to include the role of culture. In stage three (identity tolerance), Cass suggests that if an individual who is tolerating a gay identity has a negative experience with other gay individuals, they are more likely to disassociate with that individual gay identity. This does not seem logical. Instead, it would seem more reasonable to expect that individual to disassociate him or herself from those gay individuals.

Instead, their thought process might be, "I am not like those gay people, but I am still gay." Despite negative reactions with other gay individuals, one can have a positive perception of a gay identity. Fassinger's model (which is discussed later) includes this possibility. In stage five (identity pride) and six (identity synthesis), Cass suggests that after experiencing negative reactions to disclosing a gay identity, an individual is likely to have identity foreclosure. According to this research the achieved integrated identity requires positive external reactions. Just as Fassinger and associates (Fassinger, 1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996) have argued, such reasoning places the individual's development at the mercy of his or her environment. Though climate probably does play a significant role in development, it is this researcher's view that climate is not the only factor that can make or break that individual's development.

2.10.2. D'Augelli's model

Some more recent models have come into use since Cass published her model. For example, the Life-span model of lesbian-gay-bisexual (LGB) development proposed by D'Augelli (1994) uses a completely different theoretical framework than the Cass model. Additionally, the interviews used to create the model were based on

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college students. Unlike the Cass model which is psychosocial, D'Augelli's model is social constructionist. It recognizes that "we are shaped by social circumstances" and that "our images of identity are [in fact] transient and malleable" and can be constructed by our own selves (D'Augelli, 1994, p. 312). According to D'Augelli's model, gay and lesbian individuals have to go through six processes to develop their own identity as gay or lesbian. Unlike Cass' stages, which represent developing clusters of attitudes towards one's gay identity, D'Augelli's processes are more like tasks that represent major milestones in one's identity development. The six processes include: exiting heterosexual identity, developing a personal lesbian-gay-bisexual identity status, developing a lesbian-gay-bisexual social identity, becoming a lesbian-gay-bisexual offspring, developing a lesbian-gay-bisexual intimacy status, and entering a lesbian-gay-bisexual community (D'Augelli, 1994).

Exiting heterosexual identity covers the ongoing process than an LGB individual experiences to disassociate him or herself from a heterosexual identity. Initially it includes recognizing that one is not heterosexual and seeking a new meaning sexually. Over the lifespan, though, the process is ongoing because one has to routinely decide to "come out" to individuals he or she encounters at work, in school, and on the street. Developing a personal LGB identity involves finding one's own stability in thoughts, feelings and desires (D'Augelli, 1994). The sexual identity label that an individual gives to him or herself then drives the person to interact socially with others who are LGB. Based on this interaction the individual develops a better sense of who they are as an LGB person. Like the first process this is an ongoing process. The individual continually updates his or her personal meaning of being LGB based on experiences. It is also during this process that one deals with internalized homophobia and myths about homosexuality. Developing an LGB social identity involves

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networking and socializing with others who affirm his or her LGB social identity. This naturally could include other LGB individuals but also affirming heterosexual individuals.

This is a critical process in that it provides a social system that supports an otherwise invisible and unappreciated component to that individual's identity. Becoming a LGB offspring refers to reconnecting to the family of origin after any initial disruption that occurred when the sexual identity was first disclosed. Since the family typically goes through a series of adaptations as they cope with the sexuality of their son or daughter, the D'Augelli models suggests that much of the responsibility lies with the offspring (the LGB individual). Developing an LGB intimacy status requires the individual to work through whatever pre-existing (stereotypical) notions he or she had about same sex relationships and finding his or her own preferred style of dating and relationships. There is a great deal of ambiguity and uncertainty to wade through during this process as not much information about same-sex relationships exists in the general culture. Finally, the last process is entering an LGB community. This process is marked by becoming involved socially or politically in the LGB community. Some never enter this process, those individuals who consider their sexual orientation a private matter, for example. These processes represent very different milestones than the ones suggested by Cass (1979). For example, the first process, exiting heterosexual identity, lumps all of Cass' first four stages into one process. Instead, this model focuses more on what happens after an individual acknowledges he or she is gay.

2.10.3. Fassinger's inclusive model

The model of gay and lesbian identity development that will be used for this study is Fassinger's Inclusive Model of Lesbian/Gay Identity Formation (Fassinger,

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1998; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). This model differs from other identity models in that it distinguishes individual sexual identity from group membership identity and it argues that these two processes develop separately and concurrently. Fassinger's model describes the development of beliefs and attitudes of gay men and lesbian women in terms of two goals. On one hand, the individuals have to deal with understanding a sexual identity "that they previously considered reprehensible and/or irrelevant" (Fassinger, 1998, p. 16). On the other hand, the individual must also "acknowledge their membership in, and change their attitudes toward, a largely invisible minority group that they also previously considered reprehensible and/or irrelevant…. Thus, identity development is a mixture of self-categorizations related to both personal and social identities" (p. 16). So, there are two tracks of development that students engage in simultaneously, but they do not necessarily move forward on both simultaneously. The course of development is similar to the stages proposed by Cass.

Instead of stages, though, the Fassinger model calls these "phases." It is believed that this term emphasizes the fact that students can move in and out of such stages. There are four phases for both processes. Each phase represents a certain set of beliefs the person holds. The phases are awareness, exploration, deepening/commitment, and internalization/synthesis. During the awareness phases on the individual track a woman might think, "I feel pulled toward women in ways I don't understand" (Fassinger, 1998, p. 17). On the group membership track she might think, "I had no idea there were lesbian/gay people out there." For exploration, the individual considers erotic feelings on an individual level and possible membership on the group level. A gay man might say, "I want to be closer to men or to a certain man" (p.17). On the group level he could think, "I think a lot about fitting in as a gay man and

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developing my own gay style" (p.17). In deepening/commitment, the individual focuses more on his or her own sexual feelings, gains self-knowledge and self-fulfilment, and becomes personally involved with the reference group. This is very similar to the "identity pride" phase that Cass (1979) described in her model. During this stage, the individual sees the world in a very dichotomous sense; in terms of sexual orientation, a gay male may see things as gay or straight and attach more positive meaning to the former.

In Fassinger's final stage, internalization/synthesis, the individual begins to integrate their sexual identity into the rest of their identity and associates with homosexual and heterosexual groups. This final stage is again, very similar to other identity models where integration of one's many identities occurs. Fassinger's model is psychosocial, where the individual experiences psychological conflict at each stage (Fassinger, 1998). As the person interacts with others, learns from experiences, and gains a better understanding of her sexuality, her beliefs will change and she will progress through the stages. Like many other development models, each stage is marked by an increasing amount of thought and understanding regarding the concept of sexual identity. On the group membership side, progression through the model means the individual identifies more closely with that group until synthesis, where the individual realizes she has both gay and straight group memberships.

2.10.4. Comparisons of D'Augelli, Cass and Fassinger models

The D'Augelli model is more specific about what happens than the Cass model. D'Augelli's model highlights the interaction with parents. Cass is completely silent on the role of parents or the family in general. Instead, the Cass model refers to the general outside world that an individual must contend with. Other key differences of the D'Augelli model are that it recognizes the intimacy status of the individual, and it

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suggests that entering an LGB community is not a necessary process. Cass on the other hand would argue that entering the community leads to more areas for development and therefore is an important part of the developmental process. The key difference between the two models is that Cass sees development as resolving perceived incongruence. D'Augelli's model, though, believes that the individual constructs the meaning of their experiences and that most processes are ongoing through the life space. Cass' model is about working through attitudes to reach a healthy, positive sense of oneself, and D'Augelli's model is similar to an ongoing task list of issues to consider.

A more plausible process for the model might be becoming part of a family that is either family of origin or family of choice. The social constructionist point of view used by D'Augelli is useful in analyzing the development of gay identity with other identity processes. For example, Renn and Bilodeau (2005) are looking at the intersections of the development of a lesbian/gay identity and a leader identity. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers have sought to understand how students make meaning from their experiences in leadership roles. In this case, a social constructionist perspective is useful, and the D'Augelli model is applicable. If a needs-based study were to be done, the D'Augelli model would probably be more useful than the Cass model. The D'Augelli model clearly outlines what an LGB person needs to do in the areas of personal development, social life, family, intimacy, and political activism. LGBT organizations would be wise to consider how many of these processes they assist their members with. In other areas of research, though, the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings one possesses are more useful in explaining behaviour. D'Augelli's model is useful after students have developed meaning from an experience, but understanding current behavior, and focusing on attitudes might be a useful next step. For that reason,

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the current study will use a psychosocial perspective for identity development to explain involvement behavior in LGBT organizations.

Both the Cass model (1979) and D'Augelli's model (1994) discussed contact with the homosexual community, but Fassinger's model emphasizes the parallel process of group membership. The previous models make interaction with the gay community part of the phases or processes that lead to personal identity integration. By distinguishing the individual identity development from the group membership development, the Fassinger model explains how a student can be secure in their sexual identity but not be socially integrated into the LGBT community, a phenomenon not explained in the Cass model nor the D'Augelli model. The Cass model suggests that a lesbian or gay person would reconsider their individual lesbian/gay identity. The D'Augelli model suggests that a lesbian/gay individual relies on affirming interaction with others to develop their lesbian/gay identity. Another feature that separates the Fassinger Model (1998) from Cass (1979) is that Fassinger emphasizes that coming out is not a necessary feature of identity development. Fassinger acknowledges that one can choose not to disclose their identity to others but still develop. This is especially true since coming out can be based on external or contextual factors (Fassinger, 1998).

2.11. Empirical research

Preliminary data shows that involvement in an LGBT organization contributes to the identity development of an LGBT leader. In a longitudinal study, Renn and Bilodeau (2005) looked at the impact of leadership involvement on LGBT identity development. In its first phase, this qualitative study showed that the involvement in LGBT leadership activities provides "rich opportunities in [sexual] development" and contributes to that development (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, p. 8). The experience also contributed to the development of other identities that the student held, such as a

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"leader" or "activist" identity (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, p. 16). This research shows that participation in LGBT groups can be valuable experiences for student development, both as a lesbian/gay individual and as a leader. Renn and Bilodeau's (2005) study is limited by focusing only on the leaders involved in the organization. Their study ignores the experiences of the members who participate but are not as active as the leaders. These kinds of data would be useful to understand how LGBT organizations can benefit all who are involved, not just those who are very involved.

For his dissertation, Porter (1998a) explored the role of sexual identity development in students' self-efficacy in transformational leadership in LGBT organizations and heterosexual dominant organizations. Porter found that identity development did not significantly explain any variance in leadership self-efficacy, but that identity development did significantly account for variance in self-esteem. Gay males had significantly lower self-esteem in three of the four stages of group membership development. Gay males had significantly less self-efficacy in their ability to produce change in a heterosexual group than in an LGBT group. For lesbians, self-esteem accounted for a significant portion of the variance in self-efficacy in both types of organizations. Porter's (1998a) study has several limitations. The model of identity development that was used was the Inclusive Model of Sexual Minority Identity Formation, and the Cronbach Alpha for the different constructs in the instrument were relatively low, making internal reliability questionable. There were some internal validity issues due to the small number of participants that were in the early phases of development. Finally, the external validity of his research is limited because the sample was not randomly selected. Porter relied on a snowball sampling technique. These limitations were hard to avoid because of the difficulty in sampling a population that is oppressed and therefore unlikely to participate. Despite limitations in their studies,

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Renn and Bilodeau (2005) did show that identity development is an important concept in the experience of lesbian and gay students involved with LGBT organizations. Porter (1998a) also showed that the experiences of gay men in LGBT organizations are different than their experiences in heterosexual based organizations.

Lopez and Chism (1993) researched the classroom concerns of lesbian and gay college students at a large state institution. Part of this qualitative investigation included careful attention to the identity issues of the students. The researchers contacted students through the LGBT office on campus and provided students with three different options of responding: focus group, individual interviews, or written response to open ended questions. In the three formats questions remained virtually consistent. In their analysis the researchers coded the responses and used outside reviewers to confirm the themes they found. Lopez and Chism (1993) found that participants continually thought about their identities. The participants' thoughts circled around who they were, how they portrayed themselves to the outside world as LGB individuals, how to deal with sexual prejudice, 33 how they self-identified, and how they would want others to classify them. Some students reported that coming out had an impact on school performance and activities. The stress experienced during the initial stages of coming out distracted students from their studies, resulting in declining school performance. This trend continued for some students even as they came to terms with their gay or lesbian identity. For these students the excitement of resolving their identity opened up new social opportunities for them. They became more involved in activities and social experiences that were previously perceived to be closed to them. Lopez and Chism reported that students' grades eventually rose, which indicates that students may have found more balance in their lives after the initial explosion of interest in the LGBT

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community. Most identity theories would describe this as moving from a pride or immersion phase to an integration phase.

According to Weaver and Wilhoit (1996), role conception distils journalists' view of news journalism's basic purposes. In addition, they also refer to roles as journalistic functions" and role conceptions as "core belief systems. Johnstone et al (1976) put it even more bluntly – they identify role conceptions as ideologies. While journalists might not agree with being referred to as ideologues or as having core belief systems (Zelizer, 2004), Lichter, Rothman and Lichter (1987), writing about nuclear energy news flows, concluded that journalists' ideologies influenced their coverage of nuclear energy. Others such as Herman and Chomsky (1988) have also insisted on the liberal capitalist bias of journalists and the potential reflection of this bias in the news content such that the media maintain elite-liberal views in society. Inspired by the outcomes of these studies, some researchers have tried to determine the connections between journalists' liberal-tilted ideologies and their reflections in the news products (Bergen & Mosley, 1994; Herman 1999).

2.12. Chapter summary

This chapter has looked at the various literature for scholars who have studied the role of media and the LGBTQIAAP culture, based on the Cass-D'Augelli-Fassinger's model this section was able to explain the sexual identity development of the individual. While some of the studies gave contradicting findings, others affirmed the fact that it is the media that brings to the fore issues about LGBTQ. Furthermore, many authors attribute homosexuality to colonialism. It is said that European conquerors imposed same-sex behaviour on black Africa in the times of colonial era to degrade the subject people. Also, constructions of Ghanaian cultural traditions are strongly associated with Ghanaian national identity, and these discourses work to

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strengthen the sovereignty of Ghana and to distinguish it from other nations. Based on the literature, it is known that, locally, no work has been done on the impact on the LGBTQIAAP culture in Ghana with a focus on the role of the Ghanaian media practitioner and this has culminated in this study. The next chapter looks at methodological aspect of the study.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1.Introduction

This chapter describes the various processes that were employed in achieving the set objectives of the study. The processes include research design, research approach, data collection procedure, the study site, the study population, sampling size, data collection instrument, sampling method, statistical analysis, and ethical issues. The chapter defines the methods by which the specific objectives of the study were achieved.

3.2.Research approach

Qualitative research has grown substantially over the last thirty years (Santiago-Delefosse et al., 2016) especially so in the health sciences and among health service research (Rosenthal, 2016). While qualitative research methods cannot be used to study the characteristics of an entire populations, it is argued that this form of enquiry can bring unique opportunities in our efforts to understand communication and the impact on the LGBTQIAAP culture: the role of the Ghanaian media practitioners. The study employed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research, according to Ader et al (2008) is about exploring issues, understanding phenomena, and answering questions by analyzing and making sense of unstructured data. This particular research approach was used because it helps to describe the data and characteristics of the population. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), this approach properly helps to identify the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or explore possible correlations between two or more phenomena. It also facilitates the examination of a situation as it is and does not involve changing or modifying the situation under investigation. In other

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words, the main aim of doing qualitative research could be to explore, describe or explain the meaning of things. More so the intention of a qualitative study is to come out with the meaning behind an action that would otherwise not have been possible should one conduct quantitative research.

This qualitative enquiry allowed for the research process to occur in its natural setting and for the researcher to gather information up-close by actually talking directly to participants and observing their actions and behaviour within their context (Creswel1, 2014). This approach was a better fit for the purpose of this study, because the researcher gained an in-depth understanding of the underlying reasons, attitudes, and motivations behind various behaviours described by participants (Rosenthal, 2016). Through this systematic and rigorous form of enquiry, a number of data collection methods such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were used. This chapter will describe these methods in more detail including a description of the sampling procedures, data management, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

This approach also afforded the researcher the necessary research tools to assess how the media can play an active role in sensitizing the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+ in Ghana. The study also employed a descriptive design. This particular design is used because ultimate studies such as those on culture, ideology, young people, identity, and, other aspects of human behaviour evoke a pertinent need for a methodology that affords the researcher close proximity to the research problem and this is what the researcher seeks to achieve (Yin, 2009). This methodology also helped the researcher to describe the data and characteristics of the population.

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3.3. Research design

Corbin and Strauss (2014) noted qualitative inquiry encompasses the need to listen and develop meaning. Participants in qualitative studies have the opportunity to articulate their experiences as experts (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This approach may lead to a holistic description of an issue, event, experience, or phenomenon. A case study design was appropriate given prior researchers had not measured the role of media practitioners in communication and the impact on the LGBTQIAAP culture. Yin (2014) noted cases are particularly effective to explore a modern phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not evident. Participants took part in interviews to share their knowledge on their role in communicating the impact on the LGBTQIAAP culture.

Data collection took place through individual semi-structured open-ended interviews. Interviews provide a further understanding within the context of a phenomenon's environment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Yin (2014) noted in-person sessions permit researchers to discern nonverbal cues (e.g., facial expressions and body language). Marshall and Rossman (2015) indicated open-ended questions provide the opportunity to obtain rich details. Yin (2014) said interviews provide participants with the opportunity to think about situations and not just simply respond to the questions. The value of data collection increases when respondents are key members of organizations, communities, or small groups and not simply average members of such groups.

Case studies are a method of investigating complicated social issues comprised of several variables of possible significance to understand a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Anchored in real life circumstances, results provide a holistic perspective of a phenomenon. Case studies permit researchers to investigate processes,

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problems, and programs to obtain greater knowledge of the issues that can lead to improving practices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Suri, 2011). Erickson (1986) said what researchers ascertain from a specific case may illuminate comparable circumstances elsewhere. Polit and Beck (2014) reinforced Erickson's (1986) perspective that participants from various organizations are likely to help formulate discoveries that can be generalizable. The qualitative case study design was superior to other alternatives (e.g., grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative analysis) in addressing the research problem.

3.4. Researcher's role

The researcher's role represents one of the most distinctive contributing factors of effective qualitative design (Hays & Wood, 2011). Despite the potential biases a researcher may possess, theoretical frameworks provide a solid underpinning that shapes qualitative inquiry. Data analysis is particularly disposed to a researcher's definitive worldview. Coding is an essential instrument of exploration. It provides the ability to categorize the data in broad themes for analysis. I conducted the study as the human instrument and sole facilitator of data collection, coding, analysis, and recommendations. The method used to select participants was the convenient sampling technique. I identified the media persons through their association with the Ghana Journalists Association, National Media Commission and members from the LGBTQ+ community. This selection process thus eliminated potential biases toward participants. The study involved incorporating data and the literature reviewed to answer the three research questions and outline recommendations for social change. As the work evolved, it was essential to remove potential personal biases toward participants or the topic. Accordingly, it was critical to follow the prepared interview structure and questions to ensure the individuals formulated their own responses void of my

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influence. The study included both data-checking and member-checking processes. I reaffirmed responses and shared interview transcripts, summaries, and analysis with the participants through member checking so they could fill in any missing data, correct inaccuracies, and feel informed about the study.

3.5. Study area

The study was conducted in Greater Accra Region. The study region was chosen because the area is the regional capital of Ghana and in recent times has witnessed a number of LGBTQ+ news which have raised concerns. Also, the region has the most numbers of media outlets in the country making the region suitable for this study. The study area, therefore, gives the study the necessary platform to carry out the study. Although media houses were selected from the region, Jamestown in Greater Accra was used as the focus area where respondents who are into LBTQ were selected.

3.6. Sample and sampling procedures

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), the sample size is the count of individual samples or observations in any statistical setting such as a scientific experiment or a survey. For this study, a total of fifteen (15) respondents from the National Media Commission, executive members of the Ghana Journalism Association, and members from the LGBTQ+ community were interviewed. Three of the respondents were from the NMC, five were journalists from different radio stations in Accra, four were executives of the Ghana Journalist Association and three were members of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. As this study is used a qualitative approach, the study takes into consideration how the media communicate and report issues hence the study interviewed key informants at the study site.

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A convenient sampling technique which is a non-probability sampling technique was used to select the participants from the TV and Radio stations within Accra who are members of the Ghana Journalism Association (GJA), members of the National Media Commission (NMC), and executive members of the GJA. The convenient sampling technique is a sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenience and accessibility due to their work schedules. This technique afforded the researcher the opportunity to gather data from the population sample conveniently. The snowball sampling method was used to select the members from the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. With this sampling method, one identified member led to other members till the required number of respondents is reached. Some of the identified members also reported a case relating to LGBTQ+.

3.7. Data collection techniques

Seamen (1999) defines data collection instruments as devices used to collect data such as questionnaires, tests, structured interview schedules and checklists. Collection of data was carried out using a semi-structured interview guide. an interview schedule and document analysis. An interview guide was designed in order to obtain in-depth data from the key participants within the institution's management. The schedules were aimed at standardizing the interview situation to ensure that uniformity in all the interview sessions was maintained. Through the interviews the researcher was able to minimize issues of non-response from the respondents. The interview guide was deemed acceptable because it offered a means to collect organized data from respondents in a systematic way as part of a structured interview (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). The interview guide was chosen because it provided more candid and more realistic responses. The interviews offered more in-depth insight into the thoughts and emotions of the respondents regarding communication to the public. However,

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questions were also posed on subjects that were separate from those addressed by the research questions. The researcher used formal interviews because she claimed that "with reasonably specific topics combined with very flexible order and follow-up questions" (Beaney, 2009, p.90), they are often less time-consuming to evaluate than unstructured interviews (Silverman, 2011). Throughout the interview process, the researcher often posed open questions about "generating data that provided an authentic insight into people's experiences" (Silverman, 2011) in the populations. In addition, the open questions were intended to allow the interviewee to continue to cooperate with the interviewer. These open questions offered differences in the questions posed and in order to extract various perspectives from the interviews.

As Baker and Brown (1984) pointed out, interviews are actively crafted and are as self-evident about the person questioned by the interviewer as they are about the subject under discussion. This means that each interviewee has his/her own attributes and should be handled accordingly. The interview theme guide was used to arrange the interviews. The researcher (interviewer) posed the key questions as set out in the theme guide and in the same order as the guide for reliability purposes (Silverman, 2011). However, the interviewees were allowed to talk more freely about topics that interested them or that seemed important to them.

3.8. Data analysis procedures

Data analysis can follow several paths in a qualitative research study and the approach that is decided upon by the researcher should be outlined for the reader and detailed enough other researchers could build upon the work for future research. According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004), it is impossible for a researcher to not get involved in the interpretation process while it is also very important to let the text speak for itself. This balancing act is particularly important when there are two

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dimensions within one research phenomenon. 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 recordings 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, organizing 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).

3.9. Ethical considerations

Every research has an ethical consideration and this is a very critical component in research as it helps determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in research. Ethical considerations were observed during the study and these included the attachment of an explanation of the purpose of the research to all interview-guided questionnaires and also a statement that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that the subject was free to withdraw from the study at any time. A consent form was also attached to be signed by the participants. A sample of the consent form is attached to the appendix section of the study. The data collected was also kept confidential by coding the responses given by the participants to guarantee that no participant can be individually identified either directly or indirectly.

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Permission was also sought from the NMC and GJA as well as other relevant authorities and this was made known to the respondents.

3.10. Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the methodological approach that were used for the study. This chapter looked at the research design, data sources, data analysis, sample size and sampling methods that were used to collect data and the ethical issues.

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CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is focused on the analysis and presentation of the data obtained from the field through the use of open-ended questionnaires and interviews that were conducted. The analysis and discussions were based on the specific objectives of the study. However, emphasis is laid on only those questions that helped the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. The results were presented in four sections. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. The study used the cultivation theory and the Uses and Gratification theory as the framework to analyse the findings.

4.2. Background of respondents

Analysis of demographic information of respondents is centered on gender, age, type of respondents, and years practiced in the media space. On the issue of gender, data collected indicated 10 males (66.67%) and 5 (33.33%) females. This means that there were more male respondents than female respondents in the study, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of all Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex Distribution	Male	10	66.67
	Female	5	33.33
	Total	15	100.0
Age Distribution	17-25 years	2	13.3
	26-30 years	5	33.3
	31-35 years	4	26.7
	36 and above	4	26.7
	Total	**15**	100.0

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	NMC	3	20.0
Type of Respondents	Journalists	5	33.5
	GJA	4	26.7
	Members of LGBT	3	20.0
	1-5 years	3	26.7
Years of practiced in the	6-10 years	6	40.0
media space	11-20 years	2	16.7
	Over 20 years	1	6.3
	Total	**15**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2022

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarised in Table 4.1. The essence of the demographic data of the study is to enlighten readers to understand the study subjects. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, therefore, include sex, age, type of respondents, and length of years practiced as a journalist as well as years of living as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. This means that there were more male respondents than female respondents in the study. The age distribution indicates that the minimum age was 25 years and a majority of 65(81.3%) of the respondents were over 20 years. This indicates that all the respondents were mature enough to respond to the questions.

The years of practice as a journalist also revealed that, 3 (26.7%) had practiced in the media space for between 1-5 years, 6 (40%) have practiced for between 6-10 years, 2 (16.7%) have also practiced in the media space for between 11-20 years and the remaining 1 (6.3%) have practiced in the media space for over 20 years. The above data reveals majority of the respondents have been in the media space for at least 10 years and this is adequate enough for them to give accurate information regarding the situation under study. The table also shows the number of years the respondents have been members of the LGBTQ+ community. Out of the 3 respondents interviewed, all of

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them had been members for between 6-10 years. This implies that almost all the LGBT respondents were acquainted with the issues facing members of the LGBTQ+ community and were able to contribute meaningfully towards the attainment of the set objective in the present study.

4.3. RQ1: How can the media communicate to its public about the LGBTQ+ culture?

Globally, the media is recognised as a vital component of modern society. In fact, the media is one of the pillars of development and growth in a country. The media is a powerful tool essential for change in both developed and developing countries. It increases public awareness of social concerns, empowers citizens to hold their government accountable, reduces corruption, and fosters civic discourse. It can improve governance where it can successfully perform the functions of watchdog, gatekeeper, and agenda-setter (Haider, Mcloughlin, & Scott, 2011). In Ghana, the media plays several roles in the country. These roles cut across growth and development, governance, and security among many others. This study, however, investigated how the media can assist in communicating to the Ghanaian public about the culture of the LGBQT+ community in the country. The study identified three main ways by which the media can help in communicating to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+ and these ways are discussed below:

4.3.1. Act as an agent to disseminate information on tolerance

The media is a disseminator of information from one point to the other. A strong democracy is shaped by the media, which also helps to ensure good governance. The media plays a crucial role as a source of information and as the nucleus of democratic society and good administration (Sharma & Dubey, 2018). Due to the

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information propagation role of the media, the media has the probability to cause people to be influenced. This influence can, however, be negative or positive depending on the stance the media has taken with regard to a particular situation. Therefore, for the media to assist in communicating the culture of LGBQT+ in Ghana, then the media must be an instrument for propagating tolerance as well as influencing its public in a positive way regarding LGBTQ+. One respondent who was interviewed asserted that:

> *The media has the power to influence people in Ghana and in many instances, the media has proven to us that it can influence people. With this power to influence, the media must be an instrument for propagating tolerance toward the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana* (Interview with Member of National Media Commission, 2022).

Another respondent who is a journalist from an Accra-based radio station also asserted that:

> *The media is one of the main channels of disseminating information to all parts of the country and with this ability, the media has the power to influence people to act in a manner that does not incite people to hate LGBTQ+ but rather tolerate them* (Interview with a journalist from Multimedia, 2022).

Another respondent who is a member of the LGBTQ+ community asserted that:

> *The media wields the power to change the attitude of Ghanaians towards the LGBTQ+ community in the country and this is because the media can influence the tolerability of Ghanaians towards LGBTQ+.With the ability of the media to reach a lot of Ghanaians, the media can assist to change the behaviour of Ghanaians towards LGBTQ+ in the country* (Interview with a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana, 2022).

The above responses were similar to the responses from other respondents. Analyses of the response above, indicate that the media, by serving as an instrument for propagating tolerance, can help communicate the culture of the LGBTQ+ community to Ghanaians. The media thus can be an agent for preaching messages of hope, peace, and tolerance to the Ghanaian public. Ghanaians have claimed that the LGBTQ+

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culture is incompatible with their culture and religious beliefs. Regardless of these considerations, the media should not be used as a means of communication to serve the needs of those who wish to cause harm and violence in the community. This would therefore help change the posture of Ghanaians towards the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. In Ghana, there have been a number of instances where the role of the media has been central to the actions and inactions of the public. For example, in January2018, media outlets in Ghana began a discussion on LGBTQ+, and this discussion generated hatred for the LGBTQ+ community. Consequently, many suspected LGBTQ+ members in the country were attacked and beaten by the public (GhanaWeb , 2022). From the above incidents, there is adequate evidence to support the finding that the media, when it acts as an instrument for the propagation of messages of tolerance can help influence the Ghanaian public on the issue of LGBTQ+.

4.3.2. Act as a means of educating citizens on the culture of LGBTQ+

The media is clothed with the responsibility of ensuring that its audiences are rightly and adequately informed about incidences, happenings, and any form of events. According to Groshek and Tandoc (2016), the media is required to ensure that only credible and accurate information is passed on to the public. This role can therefore be capitalized on by advocates and sympathizers of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana to educate and sensitize the masses on the cultures of LGBTQ+. The power of the media to influence is very enormous and with this power, the public can be educated on how to live with members of the LGBTQ+ community. One respondent who was interviewed on how the media can be used as a tool to educate the public asserted that:

> *The media has a very far-reaching effect and this power of the media can be leveraged as a means of educating the general public on the culture of LGBTQ+* (Interview with a journalist from TV3, 2022).

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Another respondent also asserts that:

> *The media does not only serve as a means of disseminating information but it also serves as a means of educating people. Indeed, several people have been educated on one thing or the other through the media* (Interview with a journalist from Multimedia, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *The media is more or less a source of credible information and as such the media can be used to educate the general public on the culture and orientation of LGBTQ+* (Interview with a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana, 2022).

The above responses were similar to the responses of other respondents. Analyses of the response, therefore indicate that the majority of the respondents think the media can be used as an instrument to educate the public on the culture and sexual orientation of people and this would help in sensitization and education of the Ghanaian public on the issues of LGBTQ+. The above finding is consistent with the assertions of researchers such as Koven (2004) and Pankowski (2007). Koven (2004) explaining the role of the media in asserted that one role played by the media in information dissemination is that they ensure only credible and accurate information is passed on to the public and this, therefore, influences the public mindset about an issue. Pankowski (2007) also asserted that in this current era of high consumption of fake news, the media has the role of regulating the media space and ensuring that its audience has access to credible information that does not incite one group of people against another group.

4.3.3. Act as an agent for countering hate speech

An abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation (Poshka, 2018). Hate speech has been implicated as a trigger to violent responses in the world,

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especially in Africa. For example, in Rwanda, hate speech underlined the worst genocide in the life of Rwanda (Patel, 2008). Hate speech has also been implicated in violent attacks, rejections, and ostracism of members of LGBTQ+ communities in many countries. In Ghana, hate speech against LGBTQ+ has been a common feature of the media landscape in Ghana in the country. Journalists and people who have access to the media have been implicated in this hate speech syndrome.

Although hate speeches are somewhat a feature of society, the media has been used as both an instrument to propagate it or quell it. In this regard, the media in Ghana can serve as an avenue to quell hate speeches that have the tendency to cause attacks and discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community. One respondent who was interviewed asserted that:

> *Hate speeches against LGBTQ have been a common feature in Ghana and the media has been the platform on which such hate crimes are propagated and given legs into the rooms and offices of people. Therefore, when the media puts in structures to deny hate speeches the legs it requires to travel and reach the masses, then the ability of hate speeches against LGBTQ to influence the public is curtailed* (Interview with a member of National Media Commission, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *Hate speeches against LGBTQ+ members are common among members of the Ghanaian community and the media is one of the ways by which these hate speeches can be dealt with. When the media does not allow these hate speeches to be amplified then many people will not be influenced by these hate speeches against members of the LGBTQ+ community* (Interview with members of the LGBTQ+ community, 2022).

The above responses from the respondent are similar to the responses from other respondents and this, therefore, indicates that the media can help deal with unwarranted attacks against members of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana by stemming the propagation of hate speeches. This finding is consistent with the findings of researchers such as Groshek and Tandoc (2016). Groshek and Tandoc (2016)

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explained that the media does not serve to distribute information but also counter hate speech and create an environment of balanced opinions.

4.4. RQ2: What are the strategies to be used by the media in communicating to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+ in Ghana?

As has been discussed, the role of the media is critical in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+ in Ghana. To maximize these roles of the media, the media must identify strategies by which it can communicate effectively to the Ghanaian public. The study, therefore, identified how the roles of the media can be enhanced to influence public opinion on LGBTQ+ in Ghana. The study identified three ways by which this can be done and these ways are discussed below:

4.4.1. Capacity building of journalists for the protection of LGBTQ+ Rights

The area of LGBTQ+ is a sensitive area where people need extensive training to be able to deal adequately with issues of such nature. Therefore, for the media to be able to maximize its contribution in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public on the issue of LGBTQ+ in Ghana, then journalists who are central to media operations must be trained in the area of protection of LGBTQ+ rights. There are several fields in journalism and each field has its unique requirements. Therefore, for a journalist to be effective in communicating effectively with the Ghanaian public on LGBTQ+ issues, then such journalists must be trained in capacity building. One respondent who was interviewed asserted that:

> *For the media to be able to play an effective role in communicating effectively about the culture of LGBTQ+ to the Ghanaian public, then journalists must be trained in how to report on sensitive issues such as LGBTQ+ as well as other sensitive matters in the country* (Interview with a member of the National Media Commission, 2022).

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Another respondent also asserted that:

> *LGBTQ+ is a very sensitive issue in most Ghanaian communities and as such reportage on such issues should be done expertly so as not to incite people against the LGBTQ+ community. The media can therefore enhance its role in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public by building the capacity of journalists how to handle the dissemination of sensitive issues* (Interview with members of the LGBTQ+ community, 2022).

Building the human capacity of the media outlets how to influence public opinion in the country is one of the sure ways to enhance the role of the media in sensitizing Ghanaians on the issue of LGBT in Ghana. The response by the respondent is similar to other respondents and this, therefore, gives credence to the fact that enhancing the capacity of the human resource of the media outlets in Ghana is key to communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the LGBT+ culture in Ghana.

4.4.2. Organization of media programs on LGBTQ+ issues

The media can influence public opinion and this influence stems from the fact that the media can direct public discourse. There is a tremendous amount of trust in the media by society as an authority on a broad range of issues and with this trust, the media can either covertly or overtly draw the attention of the public on issues (Jimenez, 2011). In addition, the media according to Jimenez (2011) can be a helpful force because the inundation of repetitive messages can develop and perpetuate positive perceptions and assumptions as well as shape public opinions and beliefs and also harmful. Therefore, by organizing frequent media programs on the issues of LGBT in the country, the perception of Ghanaians can be changed regarding the issue of LGBTQ+. The respondents who were interviewed corroborated this finding. One of the respondents asserted that:

> *One of the strategies which the media can use as a tool to communicate effectively to the Ghanaian public about LGBT+ is to frequently organize media programs on LGBT for expertise on the*

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> *issue to share their views. The sharing of the views of experts on the issue will help diffuse the negative perception of people regarding LGBTQ* (Interview with a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *The media has a lot of tools at its disposal to carry out effective communication and one such tool is for the media to consistently organize programs on the LGBTQ+ issue in Ghana. When such programs are organized, there is a high tendency that the public will be involved and this will then be an opportunity for most people to have their mindset about LGBTQ+ changed* (Interview with a member of NMC, 2022).

The above responses are similar to the response of other respondents. Analyses of the responses, therefore, indicate that majority of the respondents think that organizing more media programs on the issue of LGBTQ+ would help the media communicate effectively and efficiently to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+. Some of the respondents were quick to add that these media programs should be carried out by journalists who are trained in how to handle such sensitive issues and also panellists on such programs should be people who have the expertise to discuss such issues.

The above finding is consistent with the assertions of Jimenez (2011) study which concluded that the media has the power to influence and this is achieved by repeating a particular message over a long period. The continuous replay of a message such as LGBTQ+ has the power to change the perception of people regarding the issue. Jimenez (2011) also asserts that one of the strategies employed by the media to achieve its influence is to constantly repeat the message it wants its listeners to hear. This strategy can either covertly or overtly influence the public.

4.4.3. Naming and shaming individuals who violently attack LGBTQ+ members

The media serves as both the eyes and ears of society and as such, they report incidents that happen in various areas. This reportage makes it possible for people to

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get knowledge of incidents that occur at different places either far or near them. Media can change perceptions and those perceptions become realities (Vanderwicken, 1995). With this ability, the media can employ the strategy of naming and shaming individuals who are found to be violently attacked members of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. This strategy will impact the media's ability to influence the behaviour of the Ghanaian public toward LGBTQ. This finding was corroborated by the respondents who were interviewed. The respondents gave varying views and some include:

> *For the media to be able to communicate effectively to the Ghanaian public with regards to LGBTQ+, the media must be able to use its strategy of determining what becomes news to identify and highlight people who attack members of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana* (Interview with a journalist from TV3 in Accra, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *For the media to achieve its aim of sensitizing its listeners to the issue of LGBTQ+, then the media must use its strategy of naming and shaming individuals who attack supposed LGBTQ+ sympathizers* (Interview with a member of the LGBQ+ community, 2022)

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *The media has been one of the avenues where social situations are usually highlighted. With this feature of the media, the media must be able to consistently highlight the issue of LGBTQ+ so that people who engage in heinous activities can be named and shamed* (Interview with NMC, 2022).

The above responses are similar to the responses of the majority of the respondents. Analyses of the responses indicate that majority of the respondents are of the view of that one of the strategies the media can employ in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public is by identifying and after naming and shaming individuals who are engaged in attacking members of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana.

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The above findings are consistent with the assertions of Vanderwicken (1995) who asserts that the media has the power to determine what becomes news and with this power, the media can highlight issues of concern and bring them to the attention of the public. In addition, Shoemaker and Vos (2009) also assert that the media is very useful in determining public opinion about an issue and this is because of its ability to highlight and draw attention to social issues.

4.5.RQ: What are the challenges facing the media in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the issue of LGBTQ+?

The role of the media in shaping the opinions of society cannot be overemphasized. From serving as an agent of propagating messages of tolerance, peace, and hope to ensure that only credible information and not hate speeches are distributed, the media is central to shaping the opinions of the public about LGBTQ+. Although the media's role cannot be debated, several challenges impact the media's role in shaping the opinions of society. The study identified these challenges and they are discussed below:

4.5.1. Media ownership

Media ownership in Ghana is either by private individuals or by the state. From the time media began in Ghana, the state has been the sole owner of the media and media space. This has, however, changed as the government owns and controls less than 5 percent of the total media outlets in the country. The majority of the media outlets in the country are owned by private individuals. Although the privatization of the media space in Ghana is good for the country's democracy, this has also been a problem in the management and production of these media outlets. In actual sense, the media outlets in Ghana are owned by individuals who may be biased against LGBTQ+.

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The biasness of the owners of these media outlets impacts the content produced by these media outlets. One respondent who was interviewed asserted that:

> *The business of media houses in Ghana is detrimental to the roles carried out by these media houses. Most media houses are owned by individuals who are biased toward LGBTQ+. Such media houses, therefore, create and churn out contents that demonize LGBTQ+* (Interview with a member of LGBTQ+, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *Media ownership in Ghana is mainly by individual ownership and this affects the content produced by these media houses. Generally, Ghanaians are biased towards LGBTQ+ and therefore media that are owned by private owners are forced to produce programs that are biased towards LGBTQ+* (Interview with a member of the NMC, 2022).

Another respondent also said that:

> *The media has been part of how Ghanaians perceive LGBTQ+. The media have portrayed LGBTQ+ as a demon and this has over time influenced public opinion. The role of the media is somehow attributed to media ownership as journalists for these media houses are directed by the owners of these media outlets* (Interview with a journalist with an Accra-based Radio station, 2022).

The above responses are similar to the responses of other respondents. Analyses of these responses, therefore, indicate that majority of the respondents are of the view that media ownership is one of the main challenges facing the media in carrying out its roles regarding communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public regarding the issue of LGBTQ+ in Ghana. This finding is consistent with the assertions of the Osei-Appiah(2020). Media ownership in Ghana is a mixture of state, businessmen and politicians with private ownership dominating (Osei-Appiah, 2020). According to Osei-Appiah (2020), this form of ownership influences the content which is produced by these media houses and usually such content is skewed toward the interest of the owners..

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4.5.2. Poor remuneration of journalists

Journalists are the core components of the media. According to Jaakkola (2020), journalists are relevant and key stakeholders in media. Journalists, therefore, are the carrier of information as their key objective is to gather information, write news pieces and present the news in an honest and balanced manner. Given the above, journalists are therefore those who ensure that the news is provided to a media outlet for onward dissemination. This job of a journalist is often however hampered by poor remuneration. This poor remuneration is one of the factors that hamper the work of the media in communicating the issue of LGBTQ+ to the Ghanaian public. This finding was corroborated by the responses given by the respondents. One respondent who was interviewed asserted that:

> *Journalists, despite the essential roles they play in the development of a country, are among the least paid. Due to the low remuneration, most journalists are easily influenced by money to disseminate wrong information* (Interview with Member of National Media Commission, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *I can confidently say that one of the noble professions which are poorly remunerated in Ghana is journalism. Most journalists including myself are not paid well and this has been the factor that causes many journalists to be easily influenced by money to disseminate wrong information* (Interview with Journalist from Guardian, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *Journalists are not paid well and as such most of them do not want to do things that will go against the views of the owners of their media houses and this makes them produce contents that are not always factual but rather achieve the goal of their owners* (Interview with a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana, 2022)

The above responses are similar to the responses from other respondents. Analyses of the responses indicate that the majority of the respondents who were

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interviewed are of the view that the poor remuneration of journalists influences the way journalists behave concerning being objective about situations. In addition, some of the respondents are also of the view that poor remuneration of journalists also impacts the authenticity of the information they provide to be disseminated. In the instances of LGBTQ+, influenced journalists turn to be biased in their reportage and this has been responsible for the bad reportage against LGBTQ+ in the Ghanaian media. This finding is consistent with the assertions of researchers such as (Media Ownership Monitor Ghana , 2017) and (Dzidzoamenu, 2022). According to Media Ownership Monitor Ghana (2017), the job of journalists in Ghana is hampered by financial troubles of media houses which leads to poor working conditions. Journalists adopt unhealthy work ethics by demanding money from event organizers before they get their news covered. Dzidzoamenu (2022) also assert that the causal nexus between poverty and below-the-par performance in certain media circles underlines the need to address the salary issue of journalists with urgent promptitude.

4.5.3. Fear of intimidation

The job of journalists can be usually difficult and intimidating, especially when they are dealing with sensitive matters. Indeed, across the world, several journalists have either lost their lives or have been injured due to a story they are following or investigating. In Ghana, some journalists have equally been injured or killed. For example, on 16th January 2019, an investigative journalist was murdered by unidentified people (Okakwu & Rozen, 2023). Also, on 10 September 2015, a journalist who worked for Success Fm and Peace Fm was murdered (Marfo, 2015). These journalists were murdered because they were alleged to have been investigating sensitive matters. The increasing spate of attacks on journalists indicates that journalists are usually faced with threats of attacks and intimidation, especially from influential

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individuals. The fear of attacks and intimidation on journalists impacts their ability to carry out their job without any fear or favour. This fear has in one way or another other impacted how journalists treat sensitive issues such as the LGBTQ+. Most journalists do not want to go against the general belief of society as they fear they would be targeted and harmed for propagating what is believed to be evil. This finding is corroborated by the responses from the respondent. According to one respondent who was interviewed:

> *The job of journalism is very dangerous and in Ghana, several instances have been recorded where journalists have been attacked and even killed for carrying out their duties. Some of these attacks have come up because such journalists are dealing with issues concerning the so-called influential people* (Interview with a member of NMC, 2022).

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *In Ghana, journalists are usually targeted for taking a stand that is not in conformity with the stand of the majority of people in society. This leaves most of them to always want to take the side of society even when the side of society is wrong. This fear has in no doubt impacted the way most journalists report on sensitive issues in Ghana* (Interview with a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana, 2022)

Another respondent also asserted that:

> *Journalists who deal with sensitive issues are usually threatened for the work they do and this is because of the fact not everyone will be pleased with what they are finding out. In the case of LGBTQ+, most journalists fear for their life because a majority of society are blindly against this culture* (Interview with a journalist with a media station in Accra, 2022).

The above responses are similar to the responses of other respondents. Analyses of these responses indicate that majority of the respondents are of the view that fear of intimidation has impacted the work of a journalist in the country and this has equally impacted on how journalists communicate effectively to Ghanaians regarding the issue of LGBTQ+. This finding is consistent with the assertions of Okakwu &Rozen (2023).

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Okakwu and Rozen (2023) assert that journalism in Ghana can be a dangerous thing and this is because crimes against journalists continue as they face abuse in connection to their work. most journalists are usually targeted when they are dealing with sensitive issues. In the case of LGBQT+, journalists who were against a private members bill to be passed into law by the Government of Ghana were bastardized and verbally attacked by people in society. This created a form of fear in other journalists who would want to speak about the issue of LGBTQ+ in the country.

4.6.Chapter summary

This chapter presented the analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. This was done in line with the research objectives and was followed up with the discussion of the key findings supported with relevant available literature.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, the conclusion, and the recommendation of the study. The chapter relates the findings of the study to the objectives and research questions to this study set out to address and answer. The chapter also assesses the implications of the findings from the study and comes up with recommendations to address the identified problems of the related topic.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The media in Ghana is very essential to the growth and development of the country. The media is very essential because it plays several roles in the country. One of the roles which formed the basis of this study is the role of the media in educating and informing the Ghanaian public on sensitive issues such as LGBTQ+. In light of that, this study set out with the main objective of identifying how the media in Ghana can be used as an effective communication agent in disseminating the culture of the LGBTQ+ community. In achieving this main objective, the specific objectives of exploring how the media can communicate effectively to the Ghanaian public about LGBTQ+ culture, investigating some communication strategies that can be used by the media and their impact on both the LGBTQ+ community and Ghanaians and identifying and analyzing the challenges facing the media in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the issue of LGBTQ+ in Ghana were also achieved. The study used fifteen respondents out of which 5 were journalists who work with media outlets in Accra, 5 were members of the National Media Commission, and 5 were members of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. The study employed a qualitative

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approach and this helped the study to investigate how the media can be used as an effective communication agent in disseminating the culture of the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana.

With regards to the objective of exploring how the media can communicate effectively to the Ghanaian public about the LGBTQ+ culture, the study found out that indeed the media can be used to communicate effectively to the Ghanaian people about the culture of LGBTQ+ by reporting detailed issues about the community. The study also found out in communicating effectively, the media must act as an agent to disseminate information on tolerance, the media must also act as a means of educating citizens on the culture of LGBTQ+ and lastly, the media must act as an agent for countering hate speech. The study, therefore, revealed that by these means the media can communicate effectively with the Ghanaian people about the LGBTQ+ culture.

Also, with regards to the objective of identifying some communication strategies that can be employed by the media in communicating effectively to the public about the LGBTQ+ culture, the study revealed that indeed the media can employ several strategies to carry out this communication effectively. The study revealed that for the media to communicate effectively to its public then the capacity of journalists in the media must be built about communicating effectively on sensitive issues. Also, the study revealed that the media can adopt the strategy of frequent organization of media programs about LGBTQ+. Lastly, the media can adopt the strategy of naming and shaming individuals who violently attack members of the LGBTQ+ community. These strategies were identified by the study as a means by which the media can effectively communicate to its public about the LGBTQ+ culture.

Lastly, with regards to the objective of identifying the challenges facing the media in sensitizing the Ghanaian public about the culture of LGBTQ+, the study

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revealed that the media in carrying out its role of effectively communicating to the Ghanaian public about the LGBTQ+ community is faced with several challenges. These challenges as identified by the study include but are not limited to media ownership, poor remuneration of journalists in Ghana, and fear of intimidation. These challenges have been identified by the study to impede the role of the media in communicating effectively with the public about the culture of LGBTQ+ in Ghana.

5.3. Bridging the communication gap

Ghana is known for its cultural diversity and hospitality, so the refusal of the LGBTQ+ culture and community must be addressed. For years, the LGBTQ+ community has been the subject of discussion, and they have been violently attacked by society. The Ghanaian public is intolerant of the LGBTQ+ community because they believe the community's actions violate their religious and cultural values. LGBTQ+ is not a new concept in Ghanaian culture. Society regards it as a strange and unacceptable act. Ghanaians are heterosexual because they believe sexual intercourse was created for procreation, which is to be performed between the opposite sex; they do not approve of the LGBTQ+ community. Prior to the nineteenth century, people lived lives that were similar to our modern understanding of what it meant to be LGBTQ+; the concept of having a different sexual identity did not exist.

The media has been to use as such a medium to reprogram the subconscious mind of people through cinematography. Due to how a village the globe has become coupled with the advancement of technology, information is easily consumed across the globe, and Ghanaians are no exception. This then has allowed some of the most influential institutions and individuals, who operate within the media space to impact the new generations with the content of the LGBTQ in most of their production, especially through movies. Such content has in effect influenced the decision of most

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of the people who turn to join the LGBTQ community. They first dislike scenes of any LGBTQ in movies than with time they develop some emotional attachment to such characters with LGBTQ orientation in these movies and eventually find themselves involved without knowing or understanding exactly how they joined.

In support of their act, the LGBTQ+ community raises concerns about sexual orientation and human rights. Their sexual orientation manifests itself in various ways. A person's sexual orientation or sexual preference is determined by a variety of factors. The most prominent reason for a member of the LGBTQ+ community is that they were born with their sexual orientation rather than choosing it. One reason many members of the minority community share is the belief that a person's sexual orientation is not a choice but rather a result of their birth. This reason has been discussed and advanced by the community in order to have their rights recognized, respected, and accepted in society.

A sense of sexual uncertainty is another reason people have other sexual preferences than heterosexuality. Some millennials and Generation Z have stated that sexual orientation is a spectrum that people can experience at various stages of their lives. This explains why some LGBTQ+ members explore options other than their current preference. They explore their options to make the best decisions.

People make the decision to join the LGBTQ community through the enticement of money. In Ghana, a country that is still underdeveloped, it is no brainer to say the level of financial constraints as well as the disparity between the haves and have-nots, is near a dire situation. In such environments, it is most likely any form of activity that promises financial benefits would be the go-to for most of the youth. It is also trite knowledge that the LGBTQ communities are some of the affluent in societies. This, therefore, has had a significant impact on how most Ghanaian youths have been

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introduced to the deeds of LGBTQ activities. Sexual satisfaction and sexual adventure have also contributed to some members of the community's sexual preferences.

When the conversation has been front and centre, the media has been a key player in the anti-LGBTQ+ campaign. The media's demeanour and coverage of issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community are only the tip of the iceberg. There is no examined or in-depth research on the community by the media, only condemnation of the community. The media has portrayed a distorted narrative of the LGBTQ+ community, which members of the community have spoken out against and shared their personal experiences with the negative consequences of the media's agenda. The Ghanaian media has capitalized on the average Ghanaian's religious and conservative views to perpetuate this narrative.

Members of Ghana's LGBTQ+ community have stated that the media reports have resulted in cyberbullying, physical violence, societal stigma, and mental trauma associated with abuse. Cyberbullying on social media platforms has been common, and many internet trolls have used it to spread misinformation and anti-LGBTQ+ attacks. Members of the minority community have stated that their freedom of expression and speech on social media platforms has been consistently violated by social media platforms and users. Traditional media, such as print and radio, have been major contributors to cyberbullying, as the narrative they promote has shaped the public opinion to attack the LGBTQ+ community.

Another harm caused by the media's anti-LGBTQ+ agenda is the incitement of physical violence against the minority community. Several reports have surfaced of members and suspected members of the LGBTQ+ community being physically assaulted by people who object to their sexual orientation. The media's general stigmatization of the LGBTQ+ community has caused significant harm, and the public

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has become increasingly hostile to them. Most LGBTQ+ people do not feel safe at work or at social events or gatherings because they are persecuted by their own fellow family, colleagues, citizen alike. In recent times, we have learnt about a legal case in the United State of America, which involved a Ghanaian Muslim who turned out to be a gay. According to the case, the guy was caught in the act by his own father here in Ghana. It had to take the intervention of God for him to escape the wrath of his father. He later had to runaway to Togo, where he had the access of jetting off to the United State, eventually. This and many more of such cases has been as a result of the narrative within the media space.

Nonetheless, the media can be used to help change this narrative. Not in the sense of accepting LGBTQ acts, but rather of being tolerant and using a softer means of effecting changes within society where they see fit. To put it another way, the integral institutions within our society that shape the psyche or fiber of the society, such as our religious leaders, political leaders, media personalities, and so on, can educate the general public on why we need to be tolerant when dealing with issues of this nature. And, eventually, propose solutions for either mitigating LGBTQ activities in society or, at best, completely eliminating them. To be effective, this requires a conscious effect. It is true.

Media practitioner's and, their panelists comments should be assessed by their superiors and the NMC, and sanctions should be meted out based on when those comments which incite people against others. If the LGBTQ+ act or culture is to be discouraged, it must be done in a way that leaves no one feeling unsafe or abused. Proper mechanisms should be used to prevent others from engaging in the act, as well as solutions to get people out of it.

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5.4.Conclusions

Globally, there has been enormous hatred and wrongful judgment toward people alleged to be members of the LGBTQ+ community and this situation is worrying. In Ghana, the situation is not different from several attacks and persecutions against alleged members of the LGBTQ+ community. Indeed, reports from the media and the Ghana Police Service have revealed unwarranted attacks on members of the LGBTQ+ community. The growing hatred and wrong judgment against members of the LGBTQ+ by some members of the Ghanaian public can be attributed to the role of the media. The media usually informs and shapes public opinion about any matter and as such the behaviour of the public can therefore be put at the doorstep of the media. The study, therefore, concludes that the media to some extent is responsible for the behaviour of the public toward the LGBTQ+ community in Ghana. With this conclusion, the study, therefore, went ahead to identify how the media can communicate effectively to its public to avert some of these unwarranted attacks on members of the LGBTQ+ community.

From the findings of the study, the study concludes the media plays several roles that are relevant in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the LGBTQ+ culture. These roles include but are not limited to acting as agents through messages of tolerance, hope, and peace disseminated, acting as agents to educate the public regarding the culture of LGBTQ+, as well as acting as agents to counter hate speech against LGBTQ+. Over the years it has turned out that the roles played by the media have been effective in shaping public opinion about incidents. There is therefore the belief that when the roles played by the media in Ghana are maximized then their roles in shaping public opinion about the LGBTQ+ culture in Ghana will also be maximized. The study, therefore, concludes that when strategies such as dealing with

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media ownership, enhancing the working conditions of journalists, and building the capacity of journalists in the area of communicating effectively on sensitive matters are implemented, the role of the media in communicating effectively on LGBTQ+ issues will be enhanced.

5.5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Based on the finding that poor working conditions of journalists are a hindrance to the roles played by the media in communicating effectively about the LGBTQ+ culture, the study recommends that the NMC and the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) should advocate for good working conditions of journalists in the country and on the part of the journalists, they will have to be more professional since they are the medium between the LGBTQ+ community and that of the Ghanaians.
- The study also recommends that the Legislative arm of government should develop rules and regulations that direct media ownership in Ghana. This will ensure that individuals who own media outlets in Ghana do not unnecessarily use their media outlets to propagate hate speeches against any group in the country.
- The study also recommends that civil society groups in the country should work in hand with the NMC and GJA to ensure that the content produced by media outlets in Ghana meets the required standards.
- The NMC must assess the professionalism of media practitioners and impose sanctions on its members in the media who come out to incite the public against

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LGBTQ+ people or media houses that allow panelists on their programs to speak about sensitive issues where professionalism is lacking.

5.6. Suggestions for future research

The study was conducted in the Greater Accra Region. It is therefore suggested that the study be carried out in other parts of the country to have a fair generalization. Also, a quantitative study should be conducted to give respondents the opportunity to be frank and come out with responses which perhaps were not included in the statements provided but can be relevant to the outcome of the study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE ROLE OF THE GHANAIAN MEDIA PRACTITIONERS:

COMMUNICATION AND THE IMPACT ON THE LGBTQIAAP CULTURE

My name is Sita Yeboa Pipim. I am a final year student of the University of Winneba, School of Communication and Media Studies. I am embarking on research work for the award of a Master of Art in Communication and Media Studies

I wish to invite you as a participant in the research project by answering the questionnaires attached. Your participation is voluntary and you have the option to withdraw at any point of the research project without it affecting your status. Every input you make is confidential, your privacy will be protected and your identity would not be revealed to any third party except the researcher and the supervisors. You may also see the summary of the results and the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be part of this research project.

Participant's Signature …….. *Date*……

Researcher's Signature …….. *Date*……

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SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS (Media respondents)

(Please tick the right to indicate your answer)

1. Age range: < 20yrs ☐ 21 – 30 ☐ 31- 40 ☐ 41-50 ☐
   Above 50 ☐
2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
3. How many years have you worked in the media space?
   1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years
   Others……

SECTION B: THE ROLE OF THE GHANAIAN MEDIA PRACTITIONERS AND THE ISSUE OF LGBTQ+ IN GHANA

4. What do you understand by the term LGBTQ?
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……
5. How well do you know the history of journalism and media in the country?
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……

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6. Do you know the LGBTQ+ situation in Ghana?

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7. What do you think is the role of the media in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the issue of LGBTQ+?

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8. What are some of the strategies you think the media can employ in communicating effectively to the Ghanaian public about the issue of LGBTQ+?

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What do you think are some of the challenges confronting the media in its communication to the general public about the issue of LGBTQ+ in Ghana?

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9. What recommendation would you give the study?

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APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

THE ROLE OF THE GHANAIAN MEDIA PRACTITIONERS: COMMUNICATION AND THE IMPACT ON THE LGBTQIAAP CULTURE

My name is Sita Yeboa Pipim. I am a final year student of the University of Winneba, School of Communication and Media Studies. I am embarking on research work for the award of a Masters of Art Communication and Media Studies.

I wish to invite you as a participant in the research project by answering the questionnaires attached. Your participation is voluntary and you have the option to withdraw at any point of the research project without it affecting your status. Every input you make is confidential, your privacy will be protected and your identity would not be revealed to any third party except the researcher and the supervisors.

Kindly sign the consent form attached if you accept being a participant.

I would appreciate it if you could answer all the questions on the subject matter. I will come to either your place of work or your home at a time convenient to you to submit and receive the completed questionnaires. All features that identify you will be removed and the questionnaires destroyed after the research is completed.

However, concerning my schedule, any withdrawals must be done within two weeks after I have received the completed questionnaire.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, you may contact either me (**email address or mobile number**) or my supervisor, ... of the School of Communication and Media Studies, University of Winneba. I would be extremely grateful for your input and thank you in anticipation.

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APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

THE ROLE OF THE GHANAIAN MEDIA PRACTITIONERS: COMMUNICATION AND THE IMPACT ON THE LGBTQIAAP CULTURE

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understood the information sheet given to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I have the option to withdraw at any point of the research project.

I understand that every input I make is confidential, my privacy is protected and my identity would not be revealed to any third party except the researcher and the supervisors. I also understand that, I may see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be part of this research project.

Participant's Signature …… *Date*……

Researcher's Signature …….. *Date*……

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SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS (LGBTQ Respondents)

(Please tick the right to indicate your answer)

1. Age range: < 20yrs ☐ 21 – 30 ☐ 31- 40 ☐ 41-50 ☐
   Above 50 ☐
2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
3. How many years have you been part of the LGBTQ+ community?
   1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years ☐
   Others……

SECTION B: THE ISSUE OF LGBTQ+ IN GHANA

4. How would you describe your sexual preference?
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……
5. When did you find out you had a different sexual orientation?
   ……
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   ……
6. How were you convinced you had a different sexual orientation?
   .....
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7. How do you think people feel about your sexuality?

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8. Do you think the media has contributed to how people feel about you?

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9. What do you think is the cultural view of your sexuality?

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10. What do you think is your religious view of your sexual orientation?

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