

RIGHTS OF LGBT IN GHANA

Perceptions of Ghanaians Living in Finland

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ABSTRACT

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The main purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of Ghanaians living in Finland on the legalization of full rights of LGBT in Ghana, and the need for them to receive pastoral care and counseling in Ghana.

Material and Methods: Quantitative research method was used in gathering data. The respondents were randomly selected to answer online survey questions, and few were also interviewed. One hundred and thirteen (113) responses from the survey and interviews were included in the study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis of the data; to report the frequencies of opinions as well as to compare relationships between various variables.

Results: The opinions of the respondents were significantly influenced by their age, the level of education, the length of stay in Finland and other countries in which respondents had lived, as well as their religious denomination and their religiosity. Reasons for their opinions were that the young generation could learn to become LGBT if their right is legalized. Religio-cultural reasons were also given in addition to the psychological effect of LGBT on children.

Most the respondents indicated that LGBT Acts should neither be decriminalized nor legalized in Ghana. A greater percentage of them believed that families should be encouraged to love and accept their LGBT members. Most of them also approved that LGBT people should be embraced by their religious denominations, but their marriages should not be blessed in their denominations. Their reason was that their sacred religious books or traditions do not guarantee the rights of LGBT people.

It was concluded that because of the importance of religious beliefs to the respondents, they did not want LGBT rights guaranteed in Ghana. They, however, showed an appreciable level of love and acceptance of LGBT people in their religious denominations and in their families.

Key words: Human Rights, Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender, Pastoral Care, Quantitative Research

ACRONYMS *

CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CIA	Central Intelligence Association
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WMA	World Medical Association

Note: * indicates that only those acronyms that occur at least twice in the texts are included

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and Background to the Study

Serious and deadly statements made on the issue of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights by some of the key persons within the Ghanaian communities serve as the background of this research. Below are a few of such statements made through interviews on radio stations in Ghana.

"So I am sending a sign to these people that they will not have it easy in this country. They can leave here and go to other places to practice that. But in this country, I believe that they are treading on dangerous grounds and they could face lynching in future" During the same interview, the same legislator is quoted to have said that:

"Being a God-fearing nation and a God-fearing people, let us not joke with this issue and let us not talk about any issue of human rights. This is uncultured, anti-Ghanaian and if care is not taken, these people will face a very tough time in future" he noted. (GhanaWeb 2011).

In another instance, Ghana's Western Regional Minister, also a member of Parliament, Paul Evans Aidoo, is said to have ordered the immediate arrest of all homosexuals in the country's west. Aidoo has tasked Ghana's Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) and security forces to arrest the country's homosexual population. He has also asked landlords and tenants to report people they suspect of being homosexuals. According to him, "All efforts are being made to get rid of these people in the society" (Geen 2011).

Again, Minister of Justice-designate has stated categorically that Ghana's constitution does not recognize gay rights and has ordered all who believe in the rights of gays to proceed to the Supreme Court for interpretation. The Justice Minister-designate told the vetting committee of Parliament that the position of the law on homosexuality is clear - "unnatural carnal knowledge is a criminal offence," she strongly argued (GhanaWeb and Joy Online 2013).

In addition, on July 1 2013, the head of the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church, Emmanuelle Martey mentioned that homosexuals wanted to destroy the country and formed part of 'Satan's deadly agenda' (Gay Star News 2013).

Finally, the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr. Akwasi Osei, had previously stated in March 2013 that 'homosexuality is not natural and should not qualify for human rights, which are natural rights. In its true nature, it is a disorder' (Appiah 2013).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the U.S Human Rights Country Report, it was detailed that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) persons face widespread discrimination in employment and education, as well as police harassment and extortion attempts in Ghana. There had also been reports that police were reluctant to investigate claims of assault or violence against LGBT persons. It has been reported that gay men in prison were often subjected to sexual and other physical abuse. The report mentions that the government of Ghana took no known action to investigate the matter or punish those culprits in the abuses (US Department of State 2014). There were no reported cases of police or government violence against LGBT persons in 2014, stigmatization, intimidation, and the attitude of the police toward them could be some of the attributable factors in preventing victims from reporting incidents of abuse. (Human Dignity Trust 2015, 4-5).

Also, on the 7th of March 2015, a group of women considered to be lesbians were confronted by a mob during a private birthday party in the town of Teshie near Accra. According to the report, the perceived lesbians were pelted with human excreta. Later, the residents printed and circulated posters to 'out' the women. (Starr Fm Online 2015). In Ghana, the civil society, the faith institutions, including both Christian and Muslim leaders have kicked against the legalization of the rights of LGBT. The practice of homosexuality and "transgenderism" is considered devilish, uncivilized, dirty and abominable or taboo, anti-human as well as inconsistent with biblical teachings (Ghana News Agency 2015a, Ghana News Agency 2015b & Starr Fm Online 2016).

It could be understood that the basis of rejection of LGBT group in Ghanaian communities has its foundation in culture or traditional values, faith or belief systems as well as in the legal system. The above claim is supported by the statement made by the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, that Ghanaians and for the matter Africans cherish their rich and strong values on issues such as homosexuality and so must not allow anyone or group of persons to impose what is acceptable in their culture on them in the name of human rights (Modern Ghana 2011).

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main aim of the study was to investigate the perceptions of Ghanaians living in Finland on the legalization of the rights of LGBT in Ghana.

1.4 Work Life Partner: International Charismatic Bible Church

The International Charismatic Bible Church in Finland was founded in Helsinki in 2010 under the leadership of the researcher. It is a faith community registered in Helsinki. It has a membership of over sixty (60). It engages in family work and children and youth programs. The organization has developed a curriculum to train its parish workers as well as those who might be interested in the program. One of the modules is "Ministry and Human Rights". The need for this project was jointly identified by the researcher and this work place partner. The purpose was to educate the parish leaders and trainees on the issues of growing needs of Human Rights in our societies and the various faith denominations.

1.5 Concepts and Definition of Terms

1.5.1 Sexuality, Sexism and Sexual Orientation

Savin-William (2014, 5) describes sexual identity as historically and contextually specific. He writes that terms come and go with and without universal agreed upon meaning. What was once a sexual invert has become a homosexual, who has become a gay, or a queer, and who became man-man or woman-woman loving person today was once different.

According to Asquith (2010) sexism is a belief or attitude that one gender or sex is inferior to or less competent or less valuable than the other. Sexism is also attitudes, conditions, or behaviors that encourages stereotyping of social roles based on gender. Asquith states emphatically that all beliefs and practices that confine one gender to spheres or denigrate their status in relation to others are discriminatory, arbitrary, prejudicial, restrictive, exploitative, and therefore sexist (Asquith 2010, 131).

Sexual orientation, on the other hand, describes the sex of those to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted. Groups of sexual orientation typically have encapsulated attraction to people of one's own sex such as gay men or lesbians. The term has been used to describe affinity to members of the other sex (heterosexuals), and attraction to members of both sexes referred to as bisexuals (American Psychological Association 2011).

1.5.2 Gay, Lesbianism, Bisexualism and Transgenderism

In some cultures, Gay refers to males in a romantic, erotic and or emotional sense. It is known that not all men who engage in homosexual behavior are identified as gay so this label should be used with caution. Also Gay is used to refer to the LGBTQI community in general, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual (Green and Peterson 2004). Gay and homosexuality are mostly used interchangeably. Homosexuality has been defined by the Catechism of the Catholic

Church as the relations between men or between women who have an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2357). In this research, homosexuality has been used to mean lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and their related categories, other than heterosexuality.

Lesbianism, on the other hand, refers to attraction of a woman to another woman. International Spectrum (2016) describes a lesbian as a woman who is basically attracted to other women. A Bisexual refers to a person who is emotionally, physically and or sexually attracted to males or men and females or women. This attraction does not necessarily have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others (Green and Peterson 2004). The term "transgender" has many meanings. It is often used to describe all people who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system. It involves transsexuals, cross-dressers, gender queer, drag kings, drag queens, and two-spirit persons among others. Some transgender people think that they do not exist within one of the two standard gender categories of male and female, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders (International Spectrum 2016).

The concept "transgender" also refers to individuals who experience gender incongruence, which is defined as a marked mismatch between a person's gender and the sex assigned to him or her at birth. Being transgender does not necessarily imply any mental impairment, transgender people may require counseling to assist them to comprehend their gender and to address the complex social and relational issues that are affected by it. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-5) uses the term "gender dysphoria" to classify people who experience clinically significant distress that result from gender incongruence (World Medical Association 2015). Transgender is virtually uncommon in the Ghanaian societies (Francoeur & Noonan 2004, 474). Considering the above explanation by the International Spectrum (2016), Francoeur and Noonan may have a limited view of the concept of transgender, for writing that transgendered people are not common in Ghana.

Transgender identity is influenced by medical and legal models of gender identity across social institutions and contexts. Social interactions work together with those models to structure transgender people's gendered identities, bodies, and experiences. Medical,

social, and legal contexts simultaneously empower and constrain transgender people. The medical model serves to legitimize gender-affirming medical intervention but simultaneously restrict access to those who conform to a narrow set of criteria, that builds transgender community, but at the same time marginalize members who do not conform. Transgender people whose gender affirming social interaction, healthcare, and legal documents are distributed according to a medical model, responding to the medical model is an important part of daily life. Legal definition of sex and gender also limits transgender people's self-determination because a person needs to be recognized and affirmed by law (Johnson 2015.)

Awareness has been made to no and low-income transgender people's marginalization in both public and private social services (Spade 2011). Also, Johnson (2015, 810), citing the work of Grant et al. (2011), writes that transgender people are disproportionately victims of poverty and homelessness. The implication here, to transgender rights in Ghana demands scrutiny, because poverty prevails in Ghana and that those who might need long term medical support might not be able to afford it. If care is not taken some of the transgender persons' lives would be more miserable than when their rights were not legalized due to unskilled medical procedure or non-affordability of medical care.

1.5.3 Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Human Dignity

Gender identity and gender expression make up the term "gender" itself (World Medical Association 2015). Gender Expression refers to the ways in which each person manifests masculinity or femininity. It is often an extension of our gender identity, the innate sense of being male or female. Everyone expresses a particular gender each day, and this manifests in the way people make their hair styles, choose their clothing, or even the way they stand. Individuals' appearances, speech, behavior, movement, and other factors inform that they feel and want to be understood in one way or the other (GillFoundation 2016).

In Ghana, gender roles are well defined. Males are taught to take authority and assume leadership roles while females are trained to manage the home (Salm and Falola 2002). International Spectrum (2016) uses the term "gender identity" to mean the sense of being

male, female, genderqueer, agender, and others. Some people think that gender identity is in accord with physical anatomy but for some transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. It is, therefore, relevant to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are separate and that one cannot assume how someone's identifies in one category based on how they identify in another category.

With this knowledge in mind, each person, irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation, must be acknowledged, valued and dignified. Valuing human dignity, as Reaume (2003, 645-695) argues, is acknowledging the inner worth of everyone. He contends that violating human dignity means sending the message that some people are less worth than others. Reaume further argues that human dignity should make an individual or a group of persons to feel self-respect and self-worth, and that it is concerned with physical and psychological integrity and empowerment (Reaume 2003). In chapter six of this study, respondents' opinions on whether or not LGBT people in Ghana should be treated with respect and dignity has been discussed.

2 THEORY: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Ghana

Ghana, as a country of constitutional democracy, has a strong presidency and a unicameral, 230-seat parliament (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor 2012). It is a west African country with its geographical area, including land and water, measuring 238,533 sq. km. It shares borders with Gulf of Guinea and lies between Cote d'Ivoire and Togo. It was formed from the merger of the British colony of the former Gold Coast and the Togoland trust territories (Central Intelligence Agency 2016). It is a lower middle income country in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa. Its population, except for those refugees not permanently residing in the country as of 2014 totaled 26, 79 million (World Bank Group 2016). It was the first country in the region to gain its political independence, in the year 1957 (Government of Ghana 2016). 71.2% of the population are Christians while 17, 6 percent are Muslims and 5.2% being traditional, with 5.2 percent having no religion (Central Intelligence Agency 2016).

The religious dimensions of the population explain why it is difficult for the LGBT to have their rights. This claim is supported by research finding that affirms that there is far less acceptance of homosexuality in countries where religion is important part of the life of the people (Pew Research Center 2013). in such countries, the most common reasons given for objecting to LGBT rights are moral and religious (Pew Research Center 2003). There is no official publication on the number or percentage of people belonging to LGBT group in the country.

This above claim is supported by the UK Boarder Agency (2013) which citing Freedom House, contends that there are no registered LGBT organizations in Ghana, and in 2006, the government banned an LGBT rights conference that was scheduled to take place in Ghana. However, there are some organization in Ghana some of which were founded in 1998 and 2006. They seek to protects LGBT people's right (UNHCR 2016), but it is believed that they are not formally registered so they cannot provide accurate number of

LGBT people in the country. Besides, not all LGBT people are willing to be identified as such because of the widespread discrimination and stigmatization.

Homosexuality is on the ascendency among different societies but there is a general homophobic attitude towards them in most African countries including Ghana. Also, because of the general belief systems across a country like Ghana, homosexuality is generally not tolerated (Norman, Awiah, Norvivor, Komesuor & Binka 2016, 14).

It is believed that 98 percent of Ghanaians perceive that homosexuality is morally wrong. According to the Human Rights First (2014), this percentage was the highest among the countries surveyed.

This study by Norman et al. (2016, 19-20) reveals that a few Ghanaians have ever had bi-sexual experiences, irrespective of their religious background. Looking at religious orientation and sexuality, it was shown that two out of five (42%) of 442 of Christians and two out of five (42%) of 108 of Muslims reported being bi-sexual. Respondents aged between 16 and 20 representing 53% of them had ever had bi-sexual experience but two out of five (39%) of those aged between 21 and 25 years, and one out of two (48%) of those aged between 26 and 30 years reported being bi-sexual. one out of five (18%) of 38 of those aged 46 years and above indicated that they were homosexuals.

In this same study, another 34% of 38 respondents reported being bi-sexual among both sexes. A separate view at gender showed that two out of five (39%) of 344 of the females were bi-sexual, while two out of five (42%) of the 357 of the males reported being bi-sexual. Among those that were married, a third (33%) of 205 reported that they were bi-sexual (Norman et al. 2006). It needs to be understood that the study by Norman and his colleagues cannot be generalized due to the small sample size compared to the entire population, but the findings reveal that the number of people believed to belong to LGBT in Ghana could not be underestimated.

2.2 History of Homosexuality 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 Lopang (2014, 82-83), many authors attribute homosexuality to colonialism. It is said that European conquerors imposed same-sex behavior 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 (1998) write to affirm that homosexuality existed both in pre-colonial period as well as in this 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". Wieringa (2005) strongly supports the above claim when she writes that this practice of homosexuality is among school girls in the boarding houses.

2.3 The rights of LGBT in Ghana and Africa

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 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 rights 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 misdemeanor (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.

2.4 Ghanaian Culture and Homosexuality

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 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). His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, the president of Ghana, is quoted to have said that;

I believe that laws must prevail. For instance, people must not be beaten or killed because of their sexual orientation, but in my country, there is a strong cultural hostility towards it. It's a difficult situation, but I guess it's something that - it's very difficult to comment on because often it creates more problems (Stewart 2013a).

The late president of Ghana, H.E. John Evans Atta Mills also made it clear that his government will not back the practice of homosexuality so long as Ghanaian society frowns on it (Daily Graphic 2012). According to the late president, Ghana's norms and

ideals do not support homosexuality so, he would not support or initiate any move to legalize it (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation 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, 44.)

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.

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 behavior. Sexual culture involves the rules, beliefs and norms that are prescribed through communal membership. It also describes whether or not an individual's sexual behaviors 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 behavior 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 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".

2.5 Love: Basic Human Needs and Capabilities

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, 85), 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).

2.6 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, color, 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. Counseling or consultations is, therefore, a necessary ingredient for even some older adults who intend to make some important life decisions such as marriage.

2.7 Universal Declaration of the Right of LGBT

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).

The United Nations, therefore, wishes the LGBT people to also enjoy those rights and freedoms just like any other citizen. But this is not the case because as the UN details in its report on the rights of the LGBT people in 2011, it remains illegal in seventy-six (76) countries to engage in same-sex conduct and in Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen it attracts death penalty (United Nations 2011). LGBT people are often targets of organized abuse from religious extremists, paramilitary groups and neo-Nazis as well as extreme nationalists among others including family and community violence. It is recorded that lesbians and transgender women are at a greater risk. It is reported that homophobic hate crimes often include a greater degree of cruelty and brutality. Violent acts against LGBT people usually go unreported because the victims are not willing to be identified with the group for fear of violence or for mistrust for the police (United Nations 2011).

2.8 Phenomena

2.8.1 Homosexuality: Nature-Nurture Controversy

It is believed by one school of thought that homosexuals have chosen to practice homosexuality because of their exposure to their social environments. Others think that people are homosexuals by genetic influences so they have no control over their sexual orientations. This section discusses these different opinions on homosexuality.

2.8.2 Homosexuality as a Natural Variation

The American Psychiatric Association compromised removing homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) but replaced it with "sexual orientation disturbance" for people who have challenges dealing with their sexual orientation. However, homosexuality was declassified as a mental disorder in 1987. In 1992, the WHO removed homosexuality from its list of ICD-10, it still bears the construct of "ego-dystonic sexual orientation" a condition that a person is not in doubt of his or her sexual orientation but desires that it was different as a result of associated psychological and behavioral disorders. The concept of mental disorders, in the case of homosexuality, therefore changes with society (Burton 2015)

Statements like that made by Ofori Osei, a Psychiatrist in Ghana, as mentioned in the background to this study, that homosexuality in its true nature is a disorder (Appiah 2013), may still have the support of many people all over the world as seen from literature in the next few paragraphs. This argument owns to the fact that five thousand eight hundred and fifty-four (5,854) persons in the American Psychiatric Association voted in favor to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders while three thousand eight hundred and ten (3,810) persons voted to retain it (O'Hare 2004, Burton 2015).

Notwithstanding, a large body of scientific research shows that homosexuality is a natural deviation of human sexuality without any intrinsically harmful health effects.

This is supported by MacCulloch & Waddington (1981) who reveal that female and male brain sexual differentiation may be hormonally determined. So, primary homosexuality in both sexes may be attributed to abnormalities in fetal exposure to hormones, resulting in physical mis-differentiation and later to homosexual behavior in genetically and phenotypically normal men and women.

Owing to the above findings that homosexual feelings are harmless, homosexuality was removed from the American Psychiatric Association's official diagnostic manual in 1973. The World Health Organization (WHO) removed it from the ICD in 1990 following a similar process of scientific literature. The Pan American Health Organization (WHO) that in none of its individual manifestations does homosexuality constitute a disorder or an illness, and so does not require any cure. Direct and indirect discrimination, stigmatization, peer rejection, and bullying continue to have a serious effect upon the psychological and physical health of people with a homosexual or bisexual orientation. These negative experiences lead to an increased rate of depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and suicidal ideations and attempts. The rate of suicide among adolescents and young adults with a homosexual or bisexual orientation is, thus, three times higher than that of their peers (World Medical Association 2013.)

It is believed that the publication of this and some other ones made the USA banned the counseling services for the young people below 18 years of age, who think that they have problems being homosexuals (NBC News 2012). The abolishment of counseling services in the USA for the homosexual youths led the Executive Director of the Homosexual Anonymous, Douglas McIntyre to launch a ten (10) day tour to lobby for freedom for the youth to seek counseling for unwanted homosexuality (Nicolosi 2016). Nicolosi thinks that homosexuality could be society motivated as supported by some study presented in the next paragraph.

2.8.3 Homosexuality as a Choice

Some studies argue that homosexuality is a choice and has nothing to do with genetics. According to Whitehead (2016), all eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades arrive at the same conclusion that

gays were not born that way and that genetics is at best, a minor factor. Whitehead strongly contends that identical twins have the same genes or DNA and they are nurtured in almost identical prenatal conditions, so if homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the other twin should also be gay. The reason is that they have identical DNA so it ought to be hundred percent (100%) but the study shows otherwise.

Whitehead further states that if an identical twin has same-sex attraction the probabilities that the other twin has it are only about eleven percent (11%) for men and 14 percent for women. He asserts that since identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated so refutes the idea that some are born gay. The predominant things that produce homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have an association with post-birth factors (Whitehead 2016.)

It is further contended that the first very large, reliable study of identical twins which was conducted in Australia in 1991, then a large U.S. study about 1997. Again, Australia and the U.S. conducted more twin studies in the year 2000, then by several studies in Scandinavia (Whitehead 2016). Whitehead mentions that twin registers are the basis of modern twin studies and that they are now very large and exist in many countries. A gigantic European twin register with an estimated six hundred thousand (600,000) members is being organized, but one of the largest in use is in Australia, with over than twenty-five thousand (25,000) twins on the books. Identical twin study could be very fluid and changeable as neutral academic surveys show a substantial change. Almost half of the homosexual/bisexual population in a non-therapeutic setting moves towards heterosexuality over a lifetime. About three percent (3%) of the current heterosexual population once firmly believed themselves to be homosexual or bisexual. Sexual orientation is not static but dynamic (Whitehead 2016).

In addition, forty percent (40%) of bisexual males in a study claimed a fair amount or great deal of choice and forty-four percent (44%) of bisexual females in the study reported having a fair amount of choice in the development of their sexual orientation. This is in addition to twenty-two percent (22%) of male bisexuals and fifteen percent (15%) of female bisexuals who reported to have at least a small amount of choice about their sexual

orientation. Other studies also confirm the particular instability of a bisexual sexual orientation (Savin-Williams, Joyner, & Rieger, 2012).

In reaction to Whiteheads` and Savin-Williams with his colleagues' argument on twin studies, detailed in the above few paragraphs, Academy of Science of South Africa (2005), vehemently contends that studies have strongly suggested a maternal pathway for the heritability of whatever genetic factors are at work, and that this is due to the fact that much of the clustering observed, regarding, for instance, greater than average numbers of male siblings, in the case of gay men, and the birth order effect, seem to be passed on through maternal lineage. According to the Academy, the indication that if there is a genetic component for same-sex orientation, it would most likely be located on the X chromosome, was first studied empirically in 1993 by Dean Hamer and his colleagues who found a potentially causative region, Xq28, on the X chromosome in homosexual men. In buttressing the claim that same-sex relationships are genetically influenced, and in support of the above, LeVay (1991) found that for one hypothalamic nucleus, gay men were more identical to heterosexual women than to heterosexual men.

The Academy of Science of South Africa (2015), citing the work of Hamer et al. (1993) writes that this similarity was found in thirty-three (33) out of forty (40) gay brothers examined. In the early 1990s, this finding was the strongest evidence ever found for a genetic component of same-sex orientation in men, a study which first look directly at DNA in humans in this way. The study did not, however, identify a specific gene and no one in the past, or now, working in genetic research expects there to be a single gene that influences sexual orientation. It is claimed that another researcher studied a new group of gay brothers and identified a very similar result (Academy of Science of South Africa 2015, 29-30).

It is again argued that a relatively new field, epigenetics, shows that it is possible for same-sex orientation to be 'genetic' in nature, while at the same time also being affected by the intrauterine and extra uterine ambience. Epigenetics also gives a plausible and testable reasons why there is discordance in identical twins pertaining to both their sexuality as well as other traits (Academy of Science of South Africa 2015, 31). In addition, a study by MacCulloch & Waddington (1981) strongly affirms that neuroendocrine theory hypothesize that homosexual persons have been exposed to

atypical levels of hormones in development, which result in sex-atypical neural differentiation.

On the other hand, Phelan, Whitehead and Sutton (2009) did a review of over hundred years of experiential evidence, clinical studies, and research that show that it is possible for some men and women to change from being a homosexual to a heterosexual. The efforts to change do not invariably result in harm and that homosexual men and women have greater risk factors for pathology than the rest of the general population. Based on their review of the reports of reorienters, clinicians and researchers, it was concluded that reorientation treatment should continue to be available to those homosexuals who seek it (Phelan, Whitehead and Sutton (2009). Also Phelan and his colleagues, citing numerous research findings, contend further that Religiously-Mediated Reorientation has helped in changing many homosexuals towards heterosexuality.

It has been reported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2011, 10) that in the U.S, among a total of three hundred and seven thousand (372,226) males aged thirteen (13) years and older at the end of the year 2010, 63% of infections were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact, eleven percent (11%) to heterosexual contact. Also, among a total of one hundred and fifteen thousand and seven (115,007) females aged thirteen (13) years or older in the same period, sixty-eight percent (68%) of infections were attributed to heterosexual contact.

Also, in May 2011, the Daily Graphic, being the national newspaper in Ghana, reported that eight thousand homosexuals (8000) had been registered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Western and Central regions, and that majority of them were infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS (Amoah 2011). Considering the total population of the homosexuals in the U.S relative to the general population, if they could account for these percentages in HIV infections, and eight-thousand (8000) of them from only two regions in Ghana, then the publication by the WMA is misleading if the Ghana's Daily Graphic's and CDC's publications were to be true.

Notwithstanding, the above assertions, the World Health Organization (2006, 4) argues that reproductive health care includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the improvement of life and personal relations, and not only counseling and care that relate

to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases. WHO (2006, 4), therefore, defines reproductive health as;

a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capacity to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.

Similarly, Academy of Science of South Africa (2015, 64), argues that there is clear evidence suggesting that more repressive environments increase minority stress and impact negatively on the health of LGBT people. According to the Academy, this has a direct effect on the health of the general population, especially, in terms of HIV and AIDS, as well as Tuberculosis and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) reduction campaigns. It is again contended that there are no known positive effects on public health because criminalization cannot stop people from feeling same-sex attractions and expressions of same-sex orientations. This rather makes it difficult for LGBT people to access health care and will more likely to suffer ill-health. There is, therefore reductions in broader social cohesion and stress as well as encouraging the transmission of infectious diseases, including HIV (Academy of Science of South Africa 2015, 64).

In a related publication, the World Association for Sexual Health (2014) recognizes that sexual rights are necessary for the realization of the highest attainable sexual health. Based on the above claim and WHO's definition of reproductive health and the argumentation of the Academy of Science of South Africa, it is, therefore, important that all people irrespective of their sexual orientation receive appropriate education on the best

way to have healthy lifestyles in order to improve their wellbeing and reduce STIs infections.

2.8.4 LGBT People and their Right to Adopt

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, 269). It is also argued that boys would assume to be less masculine in their identity and behavior 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 having a lesbian mother would be teased, mobbed and/or ostracized by other children (Bos, van Balen & Van den Boom 2005, 264).

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, 50) 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, 50-65) 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, 35).

2.8.5 Wellbeing of Children in LGBT Families

In some countries where LGBT people have legal right to raise children, Stacey & Biblarz (2001) write that same-sex attracted people are increasingly raising children so it is imperative to determine how this context impacts on the health and wellbeing of the children. Research has it that rather than sexual orientation, parental gender may play a role in child health and wellbeing, because there is evidence that supports that both lesbian and heterosexual mothers are better in measures of effective parenting than heterosexual fathers. (Stacey & Biblarz 2001). Over a couple of decades, reviews of the literature from Northern Europe and the United States on the health and wellbeing of children with same-sex attracted parents have found that there is no difference when these children are compared to children from other family backgrounds with respect to social, emotional, developmental and educational outcomes, there are no statistically difference in them (Bos, van Balen & van den Boom 2005, Perrin et al. 2002).

A similar research carried out in Italy where same-sex marriage is not permitted, Baiocco et al. (2015) records that when forty (40) same-sex families and forty (40) heterosexual parents in the Italian context were compared, the participants were administered self-reports to investigate the dyadic relationships, family functioning, and emotional and social adjustment of their children. It was discovered that lesbian and gay parents reported higher levels of dyadic adjustment and flexibility, as well as in communication in their family than heterosexual parents. Data shows that children raised by lesbian and gay parents showed a similar level of emotion regulation and psychological well-being than children raised by heterosexual parents (Baiocco et al. 2015).

There is a clear consensus in the social science literature indicating that American children living within same-sex parent households fare just, as well as those children residing within different-sex parent households over a wide array of well-being measures: academic performance, cognitive development, social development, psychological

health, early sexual activity, and substance abuse. Assessment of the literature was based on credible and methodologically sound studies that compare well-being outcomes of children residing within same-sex and different-sex parent families (Manning, Fetto & Lamidi 2014).

2.8.6 Parental Sexual Orientation on their Children

Fulcher, Sutfin & Patterson (2008) argue that research on children of lesbian parents has suggested that such children are developing well, but concerns are raised about their gender development. Associations among parental sexual orientation were explored, parental gender-related attitudes, parental division of labor, and children's gender development were explored by Fulcher and his colleagues. Participants were Sixty-six (66) preschool children and their one hundred and thirty-two (132) parents from the East Coast of the United States participated. Thirty-three (33) families were headed by lesbians and the other half being headed by heterosexual couples. Measures of children's gender development were generally found to be unrelated to their parental sexual orientation. Parents' attitudes and behaviors were more strongly associated with the gender development of the children than was parental sexual orientation.

According to a study by Brakefield, Mednick, Wilson, De Neve, Christakis & Fowler (2014) in a large, nationally representative social-network sample, it was discovered that whereas sexual behavior may spread in adolescent social networks, there was no evidence to suggest that same-sex attraction spreads. This means that having friends who are sexually active or who are interested in having romantic relationships may influence an adolescent's own behavior and attitudes. But this influence does not affect the sex of the object of these affections. A variety of social network models were tested but no evidence was found that peers influence the likelihood that adolescent have feelings of romantic attraction to same-sex partners as Brakefield et al. (2014) assert.

Contrary to the above studies on the parental sexual orientation on their children's sexual behavior, Spring (2016) authoritatively argues that children of homosexual fathers are nearly three (3) times as likely, and children of lesbian mothers are almost four (4) times as likely, to identify as something other than entirely heterosexual. Spring also states that

children of lesbian mothers are seventy-five percent (75%) more likely, and children of homosexual fathers are three (3) times more probable to be currently in a same-sex romantic relationship.

More so, both male and female children raised by both lesbian mothers and homosexual fathers have more heterosexual partners than those of married biological parents. Daughters of homosexual fathers had as twice as many sexual partners. The differences in homosexual practice are even greater among children raised by homosexual fathers. It has been revealed that the daughters of lesbians have four (4) times as many female or same-sex sexual partners than the daughters of married biological parents (Spring 2016).

Daughters of homosexual fathers have six (6) times as many. Spring (2016) further argues that as to whether or not one has ever been physically forced to have sex against their will, not necessarily in childhood, affirmative answers were given by eight percent (8%) of children of married biological parents, thirty-one percent (31%) was reported of children of lesbian mothers which is about four (4) times as many, and twenty-five percent (25%) of the children of homosexual fathers which as three (3) times as many (Spring 2016).

2.9 Pastoral Care of the LGBT People

The purpose of pastoral ministry is to pastoral care, which is concerned about the development of the total person which includes the full expression of young people's spirituality and sexuality as well as incorporating their sexuality (either heterosexual or homosexual) into a genuine loving relationship. Therefore, LGBT people deserve a competent and genuine pastoral care (Canales 2016, 65-67).

It is, therefore, very imperative for the church to understand that it lives in the society and its birth is to bring comfort and healing to those who are oppressed within the society. Such people include the LGBT people. It is said of Jesus Christ as a person who sits and eats with sinners (Mat 9:10-12, Mk 2:13-17). It is in regard of the exclusion of LGBT people from most societies that Asquith (2010, 101) writes that grief in LGBT goes unnoticed and adds that grieving partners stay quiet because the relationships to which

they have committed themselves are not recognized as legal, valued by religious denominations, or honored as commitments. Asquith also writes that it results from the fact that it is often not safe to talk about the loss of one's gay or lesbian partner since people's responses are usually unpalatable and there may be consequences for disclosing one's sexual orientation. The contention is that the LGBT people are denied communities connection and the result of that is their isolation, making it difficult and life threatening alongside emotional torture (Asquith 2010, 101).

It is on this similar note that Canales (2016, 65) attests that the pastoral care for the LGBT people within the Catholic Church creates further alienation and ostracization for most LGBT youths, since the language used to describe the LGBT behavior as sub-culture is humiliating and unacceptable. He emphasizes that two important ministry documents in the Catholic church fail to include the LGBT youths' sexuality, dilemma or situations daily, and he sees this as glaring oversight.

Canales suggests that there should be advocacy work that is aimed at educating all adolescents on psychological and sexual development, especially those teenagers who are considering about engaging in sexual relations and those who are already engaged in sexual intimacy. It is further argued that advocacy should involve standing up for LGBTQ youth and employing policies and practices that eradicate discrimination of sexual minority young people and examine and analyze the practices that alienate LGBTQ youth. It is again said that infusing our sexuality (whether heterosexual or homosexual) into genuine loving relationships is a matter of greatest importance for identity formation (Canales 2016, 65-71).

It appears that Canales has already approved homosexuality as alternative to heterosexuality, and so recommends that it must be fully accepted in the Catholic church. Pastors of Christian Churches need to exercise a high degree of discernment because contending that almost every human sexual behavior is acceptable makes it a perplexing superfluity, to the extent that homage with justice would not be done to the holy Word of God. God warns the Priests, where it is written "And now, O priests, this command is for you" (Mal 2:1), because " You have wearied Jehovah with your words. Yet you say, In what have we wearied Him? When you say, Every evildoer is good in the eyes of

Jehovah, and He delights in them; or, Where is the God of justice?" (Mal 2:17). The issue of homosexuality in the church is still delicate and remains a dilemma.

Canales` arguments on advocating for the homosexual Catholic youths, somehow, sound convincing, but Catholic Bishops in Ghana are strongly opposed to that. Presently, there is no hope for the homosexuals in the Catholic Church in Ghana, as far as their sexual orientation is concerned. The Christian community including the Catholic Bishops have stated unequivocally that homosexuality should not be allowed in Ghana, as already chronicled in the background to this study.

It is believed that, in as much as homosexuals need to be embraced and integrated into our churches, one cannot overlook biblical teachings, and deny the fact that homosexuality is sin. Homosexuals must have their freedom to their perceived sexual orientations and serve God like any other person, because it is only God who judges and condemns all men (Luk 6:36-37, Mat 13:24-42). This position of the freedom of the youth is buttressed by the following text:

Rejoice, in your youth, young man; and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove vexation from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh; for childhood and prime of life are vanity (Eccl 11:9-10).

Every person, either heterosexuals or homosexual, is a free person, and so must have dignified life, and is required, without coercion, to make choices that would make their joy complete. One only ought to take cognizance of the fact that God would bring every act of mankind to judgment. It needs to be understood that sacred texts like Bible or Quran grants freedom of choice to all people.

2.9.1 Bible or Quran on LGBT and Human Freedom

Some church's position on same sex marriage is believed to be grounded on some biblical passages as "You are not to have sexual relations with a male as you would with a woman. It's detestable" (Lev 18:22). Homosexuality has also been condemned in the books of Rom 1:25-28 and in Genesis Gen 19:1-17. Despite the sinful nature of homosexuality,

God has given human beings their free-will to choose him or not. This is buttressed by the statement: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Joh 3:16). An important thing to note here is the word "whosoever" which indicates that everyone who decides to believe in Christ Jesus will be saved. People have the right not to believe in Him for them to be saved. People are not coerced to believe but are made to choose to do so out of their own free-will.

Similarly, in the Quran homosexuality is forbidden as evidenced in the quote below:

We also (sent) Lūt: He said to His people: "Do you commit lewdness such as no people In creation (ever) committed Before you? For ye practice your lust On men in preference To women: ye are indeed A people transgressing Beyond bounds" And his people gave No answer but this: They said, Drive them out Of your city: these are Indeed men who want To be clean and pure! But we saved him And his family, except His wife: she was of those who lagged behind. And we rained down on them A shower (of brimstone): Then see what was the end Of those who indulged In sin and crime! (Surat 7:80-84).

The above quotation refers to the one cited from the Bible in Genesis 19, in the preceding paragraph. Also, Surat 26: 160-169, Surat 27:54-.58, and Surat 29: 28-35 all speak against the practice of homosexuality. The readings from the Holy Quran presented, expressively tell that Allah forbids homosexuality. Allah gives the right to people to make their own free-will choices. Allah does not ask adherents to Islam to destroy the lives of those who do not accept Islam. Allah is just and merciful (Surat 60:8). According to Quran, "If it had been the lord's will, They would all have believed, All who are on earth! Will thou then compel mankind, Against their will, to believe!"

(Sūrat 10:99). Quran, therefore, does not compel persons to submit to the teachings of Allah.

3 RESEARCH AND METHOD

The study used quantitative research method, where online surveys and interviews were used to collect data on the perceptions and opinions, as well as the subjective viewpoints of a sample of Ghanaians living in Finland. This research method measures and describes whole societies, institutions groups of people that are part of them. It provides information through surveys, examinations, records or censuses that are not easily obtainable by observations (Economic & Social Research Council 2017).

The primary data was collected from one hundred and thirteen (113) adult respondents, representing ninety-four percent (94%) of those sampled. Both opened-ended and closed-ended questionnaires in google form were used to collect data on the perceptions of the respondents. The opened-ended questions were intended to extract some relevant information from the respondents that could have eluded the researcher. The researcher intended to interview respondents that could have identified themselves as belonging to LGBT group, but the only person who was identified as a bisexual, declined to supply any information about himself or herself.

First, ten (10) people were randomly sampled to answer the questionnaire for piloting. The purpose of doing this was to ascertain whether or not the wording of the questionnaire made same meaning to different respondents as perceived by the researcher, and to find out if the terms used have different meanings to different people. The piloting served its purpose because it was discovered that the research instruments measured what they intended to measure.

The opinions of those five (5) respondents interviewed were entered directly into the survey questionnaire and added to the data. All the responses from the opened-ended questions were first read, common themes obtained, and then the responses were categorized according to those themes. These were coded into the data in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The responses that corresponded to each research question were analyzed and discussed.

Content analysis, which is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson 1952), was used for the analysis of the data. ANOVA was used to describe relationships among variables within the research data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies of responses were used to compare the opinions of the respondents. Since standard deviations have unclear meanings when applied to Likert scale responses (Sullivan & Artino 2013), they were not used.

3.1 Research Questions

The research sought to address the following questions;

1. What are the opinions of Ghanaians in Finland towards the provision of the full rights of LGBT in Ghana?
2. What reasons do respondents have for their opinions on the rights of LGBT people in Ghana?
3. What are the opinions of the respondents on Pastoral Care and Counseling needs that LGBT people should receive?

3.2 Validity and Reliability of the Research

Research demands dependable measurement (Cautin & Lilienfeld 2015, 2390 & Nunnally 1978) and measurements are reliable to the extent that they are repeatable (Gay 1987, 242-342, Heale & Twycross 2015, 66-67), and that any random influence which make measurements different from time to time or from one circumstance to another is a source of measurement error (Gay 1987, 242-342). Validity on the other hand, is the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study (Heale & Twycross 2015, 66-67). It is the strength of the conclusions, inferences or propositions (Golafshani 2003, 597-606). This research took content validity into consideration.

Content validity involves systematically examining the test content to ascertain whether or not it covers a representative sample of the behavior domain intended to be measured (Anastasi & Urbina 1997, 114). To ensure reliability and validity of the study, a

considerable large number of respondents were sampled at random. This was done to reduce sources of error such as systematic bias and to ensure consistency and repeatability of the findings.

The data for this study was collected between June and July 2016, so there might be slight variation in the data if it was to be collected again today. This is because the respondents might have gained additional knowledge on the issues raised in the research instruments and have become aware of the practicalities of the challenge.

Again, majority of the respondents were Christians so Muslims and other faith communities were underrepresented. Notwithstanding this, the population of Ghana is largely of Christian faith, followed by Muslims. The proportion of females' respondents also formed only a quarter of the respondents. This means that females were also underrepresented. This makes the findings male dominated, but the opinions of male and female respondents did not differ significantly.

Majority of the six percent (6%) who did not respond to the questionnaire were largely Muslims and women. Their inability to respond may be attributed to the fact that they were either not interested in the research topic or their busy schedules did not permit them to do so. If they had all responded and their responses included in the analysis, the biases towards Muslims and females would have been reduced. However, the proportion of Ghanaian Christians to Muslims in Finland is also reflective of the population sample.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

It is asserted by Meezan and Martin (2003) that studying stigmatized populations such as LGBT people raises series of ethical questions and potential dilemmas in the conduct of research. Owing to the marginalized and devalued position of our society on LGBT people, they are at increased risk for experiencing violence, discrimination, and exploitation in a variety of contexts including negative effects of such experiences. Due to this, there may be greater proclivity for exploitation and harm to the respondents or the communities of which they belong than in studies of less vulnerable and marginalized populations (Meezan and Martin 2003).

Respondents consent were sought and their responses as well as their personal information were treated with high level of confidentiality. This conforms to the Helsinki declaration of the World Medical Association in 1964 (WMA 2016). The identities of the respondents were not disclosed to a third party without their consent. The purpose of the research was clearly explained to the respondents before answering the questions.

In gathering data for this study, sensitivity issues of religion and sexuality as well as different cultures and personalities were taken into consideration. Various options covering a large area of sexuality other than stereotyped "male" and "female" were used. Also, conceptualization of human experience in strictly heterosexual terms and thereby ignoring, invalidating, or derogating LGBT orientations, which are considered heterosexuals' behavior (Herek, Kimmel, Amaro & Melton 1991, 957), did not influence the analysis of the data.

The word 'homosexuality' which was used to represent persons of different sexual orientations other than heterosexuals may be offensive to some people because, Nzira & Williams (2009, 142) argue that 'homo' emphasizes sex but there is more to the identity, and that it is often used for males, so its use may not properly and honestly represent the LGBT family. Canales and Sherman (2016, 41) also write that the US Catholic Bishops advice that words such as 'homosexuality', 'gay' and 'lesbian' ought to be used accurately and in honest way. Notwithstanding, the term was used because to many people in Ghana, all people who are not heterosexuals are known to be homosexuals. It is, therefore, for the sake of simplicity that the term was used.

Though the researcher was concerned about the values of his working life partner, his own personal values and the integrity of the research, he was honest in recording and analyzing the findings of the research. The data was not manipulated to suit his own interest nor that of his working life.

The interpretation of sacred texts in this research was done using general principles of hermeneutics from the researcher's perspectives as a systematic theologian, but not from the position of an accredited exegete. Also, because the researcher was a Christian clergy in Finland, the discussions were more toward that of Christian faith. He tried to refrain

from discussing Quranic texts in detail because of lack of comprehensive knowledge of Quran, and owing to issues of sensitivity of handling religious documents.

3.4 Significance of the Study

The study would help government of Ghana and policy makers to ascertain the opinions of a section of Ghanaians on legalization of the rights of LGBT to guide them on their decision making. People in positions of authority would be guided to make informed decisions on the freedom of people, especially, those of LGBT.

The research could help Pastors and church leaders in the International Charismatic Bible Church and other faith organizations to be informed of ways to embrace homosexuals and to offer them pastoral care and counseling when needed.

Finally, the final product of this study would be used as a teaching and learning material for the training school of the International Charismatic Bible Church. This church which is registered in Helsinki, Finland, was the workplace partner for the researcher.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Respondents

The data consisted of one hundred and thirteen (113) respondents aged eighteen (18) years and over. One out of four (27%) were females whereas the males represented about three-quarter (73%).

Among the respondents, majority (96%) of them were Christians and very few (4%) represented Muslims. The question that religious sacred book or tradition grant all people freedom of choice, regardless of their sexual orientation, was influenced by the religious affiliations of the respondent ($p < .00^*$). The question of pastoral care should ensure emotional and psychological wellbeing of LGBT people was also influenced by the question on the sacred religious book or tradition granting freedom of choice to all people ($p < .04^*$).

Almost all the respondents (99%) were heterosexuals but the other was identified a bisexual. The question of LGBT people should not be welcomed into faith denomination because they would go to hell was influenced by respondents' sexual orientation ($p < 0.04^*$). The bisexual failed to provide further information about his or her experiences as a bisexual person in Ghana.

Also, on the level of education of the respondents, 1 out of four (25%) had at most diploma level education, two out of five (40%) had completed Bachelor degree whilst one in every three (34%) had completed Master level degrees. Minority (4%) of them had completed Licentiate or doctoral degrees. The level of education of the respondents influenced their opinions on many of the questions as shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Impact of Education on Respondents' Opinions

Questions influenced	P-Value
It does not matter whether or not LGBT rights would be guaranteed in Ghana	(p< ,05*)
LGBT people in Ghana should have the right to change their gender.	(p< ,02*)
LGBT people must have equal rights to adopt children.	(p< ,01*)
LGBT people should have equal rights to access both social care.	(p< ,03*)
LGBT people should have equal rights to access to health care.	p< ,03*)
LGBT people in Ghana should not be made to feel guilty.	(p< ,01*)
Families should be encouraged to accept and love their LGBT members.	(p< ,04*)

The ages of the respondents were as shown in the table 2 below. It was discovered that the age of respondents influenced the question: my religious denominations should bless all marriages including those of LGBT people (p<0.03*).

Table 2: Ages of the Respondents

Age Group (years)	Frequency (N)	Valid Percentage (%)
18-25	5	4
26-33	39	35
34-41	53	47
42-50	14	12
51 and over	2	2
Total	113	100

Moreover, living outside of Ghana had an influence on the respondents' opinions on the topic under study. But it is difficult to tell how many of the respondents were influenced positively or negatively for living outside of Ghana because, few of the respondents interviewed, mentioned that they have been more negative towards LGBT rights because, they were not aware of anything like LGBT people in Ghana until they travelled outside. This means that not all the respondents who agreed that they have been influenced have become more agreeable to LGBT rights.

It was discovered that living outside of Ghana also had significant influences on the opinions of the respondents on LGBT rights. The analysis revealed that respondents' opinions influenced the questions: It does not matter whether or not LGBT rights would be guaranteed in Ghana ($p < .03^*$), LGBT people should have equal right to adopt children ($p < .05^*$), LGBT people should have equal right to social services ($p < .03^*$) and LGBT people should have the right to change their gender if they choose ($p < 0.00^*$). Living outside of Ghana also influenced the questions: pastoral care should empower LGBT people to accept their sexuality as a gift from God ($p < .01^*$) and strengthening LGBT people to accept that genuine love exists between LGBT couples ($p < .00^*$).

Again, it was recognized that the question of "Ghana should decriminalize homosexuality" was influenced by other countries in which respondents had lived ($p < .04^*$). Other countries in which respondents had lived had been shown in the below table.

Table 3: Other Countries in which Respondents had Lived

Other countries respondents had lived	Frequency (N)	Valid percentage (%)
African or Asian Country	8	7
A country in Europe	22	19
USA, Canada, N.Z & Australia	4	4
Finland & Ghana	79	90
Total	113	100

The religious denominations represented in this study are included in the table 4 below:

Table 4: Respondents' Denominations

Faith Denomination	Frequency (N)	Valid Percentage (%)
Catholic	14	12
Charismatic	37	33
Pentecostal	26	23
Methodist/Lutheran/Presbyterian/Protestant	7	6
Other (JW, Church of Christ, Sunni, etc)	20	18
No responses (i.e. no denomination)	9	8
Total	113	100

Religious denominations to which the respondents belonged had influences on majority of the questions as indicated in table 5 below.

Table 5: Impact of Religious Denomination of the Respondents on their Opinions

Questions Influenced by Respondents' Denominations	P-Value
My religious denominations should embrace all people including LGBT people.	(P< ,00*)
LGBT people should be strengthened so that they see themselves as children of God	(p< ,04*)
LGBT people should be supported in the event of death or bereavement of their loved ones	(p< ,00*)
Families should be encouraged to accept and love their LGBT members	(p< ,00*)
My religious sacred book or religious tradition gives freedom of choice to all people regardless of their sexual orientation	(p< ,04*)
Pastoral care should strengthening LGBT people not to feel guilty about their sexual orientation	(p< ,03*)
Pastoral care should ensure emotional and psychological wellbeing of LGBT people	(p< ,01*)
Strengthening LGBT people that genuine love exists between homosexual couple	(p< ,01*)
LGBT people must be treated with respect and dignity	(p< ,00*)
LGBT people should not be welcomed into their denominations because they would go to hell	(p< ,00*)
LGBT people should have the right to marry whosoever they choose to	(p< ,03*)
LGBT people should have equal right to social service, health services, and transgenderism	(p< ,00*)

Also, on the level of importance of faith or religiosity, more than one in every ten (14%) of the respondents indicated that their faith was not important to them. Only 2% of them remained neutral but more than eight in every ten (84%) of them affirmed that their

faith was important to them. Religiosity of the respondents had influences on the questions: my religious denominations should bless all marriages including those of LGBT people ($p < .02^*$), Ghana should not think of legalizing homosexuality ($p < .00^*$) and that LGBT people should have equal right to access social services ($p < .03^*$).

Also, the period of stay in Finland was discovered to have influenced the respondents' opinions on "LGBT people should not be made to feel guilty about their sexual orientation" ($p < .01^*$). How long the respondents had lived in Finland is also shown in the table below:

Table 6: Respondents' Period of Stay in Finland

Respondents's years in Finland	Frequency (N)	Valid Percentage (%)
0-5	26	23
6-10	63	56
11-15	11	10
16+	13	11
Total	113	100

5 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Impact of Period of Stay in Finland on Opinions

Length of time of the respondents in Finland influenced the results of this study as shown in figure 1 below. It appears from the figure that the longer people had stayed in Finland, the greater it influenced their opinions on the rights of LGBT people.

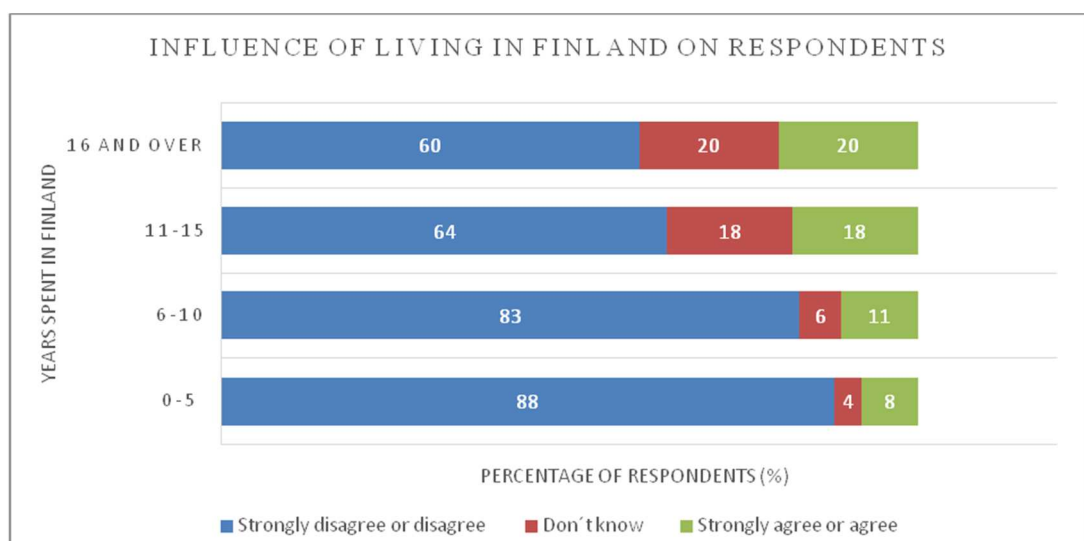


Figure 1: Impact of Period of Stay in Finland on respondents' opinions

N=113

This finding is consistent with research conducted by Pew Research Center (2003) which states that opinions about homosexual relationships are closely associated with places where people live. The reason might be due to the process of socialization and integration in the country. Those who had lived in Finland for a long time might have friends or contacts with people in LGBT group and or are young persons because, research indicates that people with contacts with LGBT people are more accepting of homosexuality (Mason & Mischa 2006, 1). The Analysis of the association between other places respondents had lived and "Ghana should decriminalize homosexuality" has also been discussed in section 5.5 below.

5.2 Opinions on LGBT Peoples' Right to Social and Health Services

It was recognized that almost three out of four (71%) of the respondent asserted that LGBT people should have the full right to social services. Nearly every fifth (18%) of them were opposed to that. One in every ten (10%) of them were undecided on their opinions. Access to health and social care by the LGBT people is one area where the respondents shown positive attitude. It needs to be stated that the LGBT people should have equal right to access social services because it is a fundamental right of all people independent of their sexual orientations as indicated by the United Nations' universal declaration of human right, as detailed in chapter two above.

LGBT people and their families contribute to the development of the country with their taxes, knowledge and skills, among others, so they should not be discriminated against on the issue of health and social care. The opinions that LGBT people should have right to social services were significantly impacted by the degree of importance of faith to the respondents ($p < .03^*$). Majority of the respondents who indicated that their faiths were important to them also affirmed that LGBT people in Ghana should have full right to access social services. Majority of the respondents did not associate their faiths to the right of the LGBT group's access to social services.

Secondly, concerning LGBT people's right to health care, one out of five (20%) of the respondents expressed dislike for LGBT's equal right to access health care whilst a few (4%) remained neutral on the issue. Three in every four (75%) of them, however, agreed that LGBT people should have equal right to health services just like any other person. It should be reiterated that equal access to health and social services is a basic need of every citizen and that denying LGBT people same is a crime against humanity.

5.3 Right to Marry Whoever People Choose and Right to Change their Gender

Majority of the respondents (85%) indicated that they object to the LGBT people's right to marry whoever they choose to, but minority (14%) of them supported it. Opinions of

the respondents here did not differ from those on transgenderism, where three out of four (76%) of the respondents were against it. One out of ten (10%) were in favor of it and over one out of ten (14%) of them remained neutral. The perceptions of the respondents here suggest that they were not willing to promote the rights of transgendered people in Ghana. However, on the question of adoption right, the opinions in support of it were higher.

5.4 Right of LGBT People to Adopt

Almost one in every four of the respondents (24%) supported that LGBT people should have equal right to adopt children, and as lower proportion of them (17%) were undecided about the question, more than half (56%) disagreed that LGBT people should have equal right to adopt children. Educational level of the respondents was found to have influenced their opinions on this question ($p < .01^*$). A detail analysis is shown in the figure 2 below. It is observed from the figure that in all the classes, majority of the respondents oppose child adoption right of the LGBT people in Ghana. The proportion of those who support child adoption right of the LGBT increases with decrease in the level of education. This supports a research finding which shows that majority of college graduates favor LGBT rights but those with less education have considerably negative feelings about it. Thus, education is an important factor among older generations (Pew Research Center 2003).

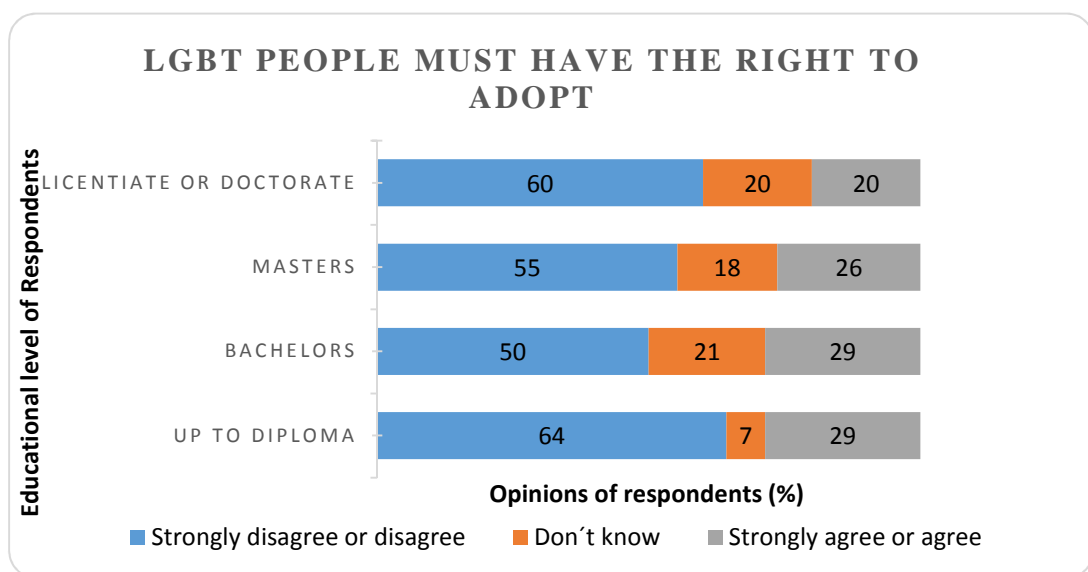


Figure 2: Educational level vrs Opinions on LGBT Right to Adopt

N=113.

In Ghana, as has been discussed already in chapter two above, gender roles are clearly defined in majority of the communities or families. That might explain why majority of the respondents did not support the adoption right of LGBT people. It is possible to say that since the LGBT rights are not legal in Ghana, then they should not have the right to adopt children. As again detailed in chapter two, another contention has been that children having LGBT parents would be teased or ostracized by other children (Bos, van Balen & Van Den, van den Boom 2005, 264). Other reasons in support of their opinions are discussed in section 5.7 below.

5.5 Decriminalization and Legalization of LGBT

Almost three in every four (72%) stated that Ghana should not consider legalizing LGBT right, but below two in every ten (17%) of them indicated otherwise, and one in every ten (11%) remained neutral. This question of Ghana should not consider legalizing LGBT right was greatly influenced by the importance that respondents attached to their faiths ($p < .00^*$). Analysis of the two factors is illustrated by figure 3 below. It could be deduced from the figure that majority of the respondents who answered that their faiths were important to them indicated that Ghana should not consider legalizing LGBT rights. In all the categories, less than one out of five reiterated that Ghana should consider legalizing homosexuality. Opinions of the respondents in this section is consistent with a study by Adamczyk (2017, 35-40) which reveals that there is a strong association between importance people attached to their faiths and their opinions on LGBT rights.

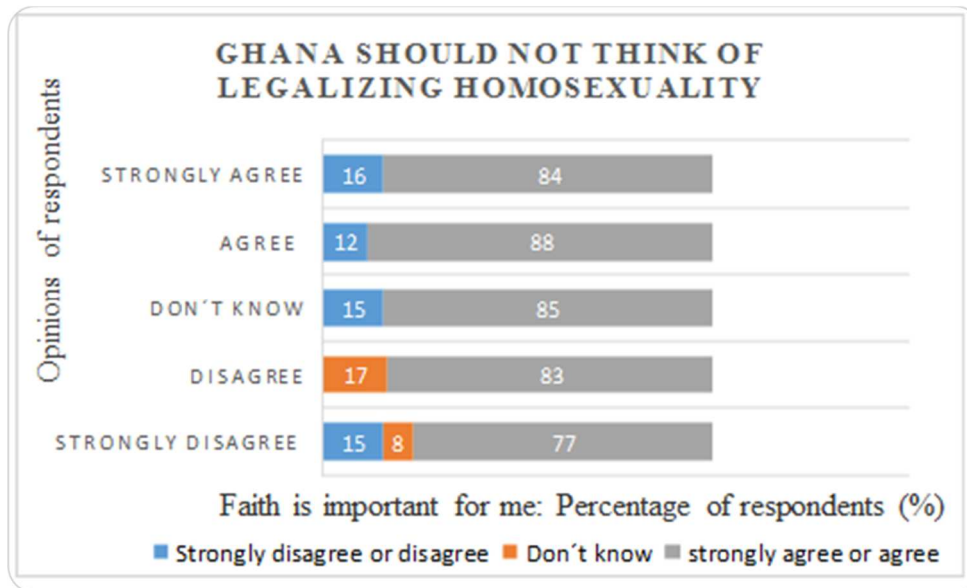


Figure 3: Ghana should not think of Legalizing Homosexuality vrs Religiosity
N=113

To ascertain the extent to which the respondents were concerned about the issue of homosexuality in Ghana, they were made to indicate their opinions on whether legalization of LGBT right mattered to them or not. Per their responses, only one out of ten (11%) indicated that LGBT rights in Ghana did not matter to them, and one out of ten (11%) remained neutral, but more than three out of four (77%) of them responded that the question was of utmost concern to them. Responses to this question was also influenced by the level of education of the respondents ($p < .05^*$). Results from ANOVA analysis produced figure 4 on the next page. It is clear from the figure that the respondents perceive the issue of LGBT rights as a matter of concern to them, and this concern increases with increasing in the level of education. This means that they would not sit unconcerned for such LGBT rights to be granted in Ghana.

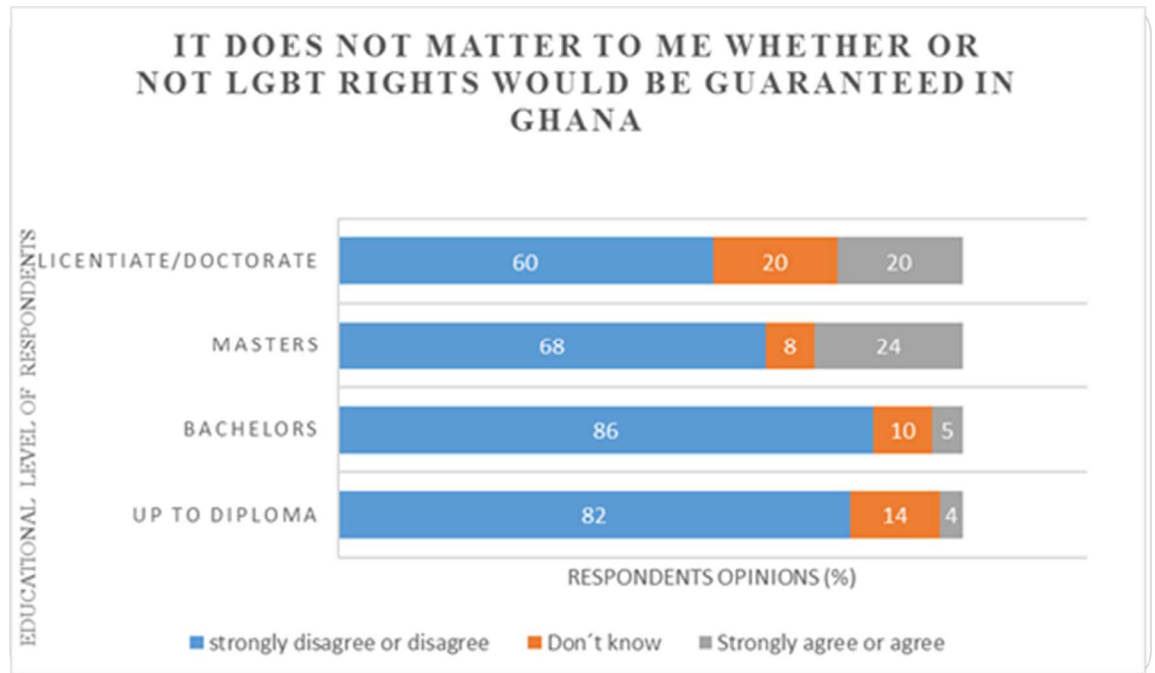


Figure 4: Educational level vrs It doesn't Matter whether LGBT Rights would be Guaranteed in Ghana

N=113.

The next section further discusses the opinions of the respondents to determine whether or not homosexuality should be decriminalized in Ghana. Respondents who did not support the question "homosexuality in Ghana should be decriminalized" were three out of four (75%) while below two in every ten (16%) affirmed that homosexuality should be decriminalized. One in every ten (11%) maintained a neutral position on the question.

It is believed, that, it is not prudent to criminalize homosexuality when consenting adults engage in it. This is a decision they make as adults and free persons. According to research conducted in the United States by Pew Research Center, some people's rejection of LGBT is morally or religiously motivated (Pew Research Center 2003). The truth remains that criminalizing same-sex relationship would not deter people from engaging in it. The question of "Ghana should decriminalize homosexuality" was influenced by the countries in which the respondents had lived ($p < .04^*$). This is shown in figure 5 below.

The figure 5 below reveals that respondents who had also stayed in some African or Asian country where LGBT rights are not guaranteed, majority of them (88%) would not permit Ghana to decriminalize homosexuality, while minority (13%) agreed that the practice

should not be punishable by law. Proportions of the respondents in each category who agreed to decriminalization of homosexuality in Ghana are as twice as those from the developing world.

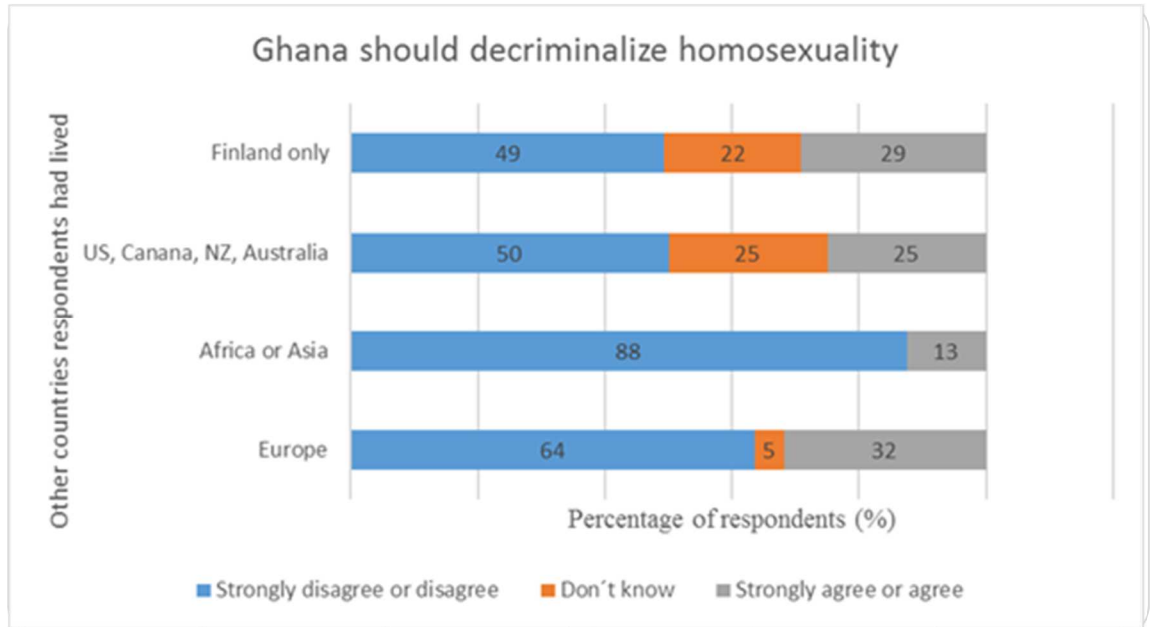


Figure 5: Places Respondents had lived vrs Opinions on Ghana should Decriminalize Homosexuality

N=113.

This observation confirms that opinions about LGBT are closely associated with places where people live as detailed in section 5.1 above. It is proven that people in Europe, Australia and New-Zealand and Canada are more accepting of LGBT (Mason & Mischa 2009, 6-7) than those in Asia, Middle-East and Africa.

5.6 Treating LGBT People with Respect and Dignity

Notwithstanding the above opinions on criminalizing homosexuality, the respondents considered it expedient, that LGBT people be treated with respect and dignity. On this question, two-third (65%) of the respondents answered affirmatively but one out of four of them (25%) objected to it. One in every ten (10%) of the respondents remained undecided. Opinions of majority of the respondents agree with Canales (2016, 67-68), who strongly believes that LGBT people must be treated with respect and dignity.

However, it is difficult to perceive the conception of human dignity and respect from the opinions of the respondents because, if three in every four (75%) of them, as indicated in section 5.5 above, contended that homosexuality should not be decriminalized, then life in prison for homosexuals cannot guarantee the respect and dignity they would wish for LGBT people in Ghana. If the LGBT people or homosexuals are not protected by the law of the state, then people would use the law against them as they do to armed robbers. A minister of state in Ghana wished this for homosexuals, as has been highlighted in chapter one. The professed respect and dignity for the homosexuals is, therefore, unrealizable without decriminalization of homosexuality. Vouchsafing respect and human dignity to LGBT people makes Canales and Sherman (2016, 38) to contend that affirming human dignity is not a matter of endorsing any particular sexual behavior, but it is a necessary posture of Christian hospitality.

Having discussed the respondents' opinions on granting of full rights of the LGBT people in Ghana, the next section discusses reasons for their opinions on the LGBT rights.

5.7 Reasons for the Respondents' Opinions on LGBT Rights

Firstly, transferability of the practice of LGBT across the Ghanaian Society was one of the key reasons that supported the opinions of the respondents on the rights of LGBT people. The reason why over half (56%) of the respondent did not support LGBT right to adopt children might be due to the perception that children adopted by LGBT people would more likely assume the sexual orientations of their parents as detailed in chapter two. This was supported by three out of five (63%) of the respondents who believed that young people would learn the practices of LGBT people, if the practice is legalized in Ghana. On this question, one out of four (26%) of the respondents disagreed that the practice of LGBT is transferrable, as supported by literature in chapter 2. This is also in agreement with Ryan (2009, 2) who strongly argues that no one, including parents, could force people be become gay. One out of ten (12%) of the respondents did not know whether LGBT is transferrable or not.

Moreover, religio-cultural factors were a major determinant of the opinions of the respondents on the rights of LGBT group. Those who did not support LGBT people's right may greatly be influenced by their religious beliefs since their religious faiths were very important to them. This has been indicated under pastoral care for LGBT people in section 5.8 below. There, a greater percentage (84%) of the respondents indicated that their religious faiths were very important to them. This confirms research findings which argue that people who reject adoption right of LGBT people based their explanations on religion as detailed under chapter two above.

Research also attests that Ghanaian seek to foster a Ghanaian identity inextricably linked with religious belief to oppose the practice of homosexuality (Allotey 2015, 70). Most Ghanaians are opposed to LGBT rights because it is believed that LGBT is uncultured and foreign practice as presented under section 2.4 above. The proceeding discussions highlight the influence of importance of religion and culture on the opinions of the respondents.

It was recognized that three in every five (61%) of the respondents refuted the idea that their religious sacred books or traditions grant human beings their freedom of choice. Whilst one in every four (26%) of them thought otherwise, minority (13%) of them did not know whether or not their faiths or sacred books and traditions give people freedom to make their own choices as deemed fit for them.

The question that respondents' religious sacred book or tradition grants freedom of choice to all people regardless of their sexual orientation, was influenced by the level of education of the respondents ($p < .03^*$). Analysis of these two revealed that the proportions of those with Masters and Doctoral level education believed that their religious sacred books or traditions grant freedom of choice to all persons were higher than those with Bachelor degrees or lower.

Since most of the respondents reported that their faiths were important to them, it was deemed necessary to analyze by comparing the responses from the various religious affiliations with their opinions on the freedom of choice for all people including the LGBT persons. This was done to enable all the respondents to answer for themselves what their religious books or traditions say about the freedom of choices.

The analysis revealed that three out of five (62%) of Christians disagreed that Bible gives freedom of Choice to all people while one in two (50%) of the Muslims disagreed that Quran gives freedom of choice to adherents. On the contrary, one in every four (26%) of Christians and Muslims (25%) respectively agreed that their sacred books or traditions grant freedom of choice to all people. Also, more than one out of ten (13%) of the Christians in this study and one out of four (25%) of Muslims did not know whether Bible or Quran gives freedom of choice to all people. Whatever responses people gave; they may largely be due to their knowledge of the hermeneutics of sacred texts.

Furthermore, the respondents considered LGBT as a psychological problem. Analysis of the open-ended questions asking for the need for pastoral counseling for the LGBT persons in Ghana, few of them (4%) indicated that LGBT people must be given psychological counseling so that they stop the practice. One out of four (25%) of the 4% above, also added that LGBT people need to receive pastoral counseling on the psychological effect of their sexual orientation on their school going children. This supports Payne's assertion that some people believe strongly that gay couples having children extends the concept of family too far, and that LGBTs having children would be potentially harmful to the children (Payne 2005, 16). This added to the reasons why a section of the respondents insisted that Ghana should not give LGBTs their full right. This also confirms the views of some antagonists of LGBT rights in our Ghanaian communities as detailed in the background of this study, in chapter one.

Finally, it was noticed that, one in every five (20%) of the respondents had a reason that had to do with the fact that LGBT people had already been condemned to hell, so they need not be in their religious denominations. Two in every three (66%) of them were opposed to this, but minority of them (14%) did not know if LGBT people should be welcomed into their religious denominations. It has been found that highly religious people are far more likely to see homosexuality as sinful than less religious people (Adamczyk 2017 & Pew Research Review 2003).

5.8 The Need for Pastoral Care for LGBT People in Ghana

As already discussed in chapter one, LGBT people in Ghana face many challenges including hatred and exclusion both from the life of the church and the society at large. This section, therefore, details the analysis of the results on the opinions of the respondents on the need of pastoral care and counseling for LGBT people. The starting point for this to happen is their inclusion into the community of believers.

On the need for pastoral care for the LGBT in Ghana, more than three out of four (77%) of the respondents stated that pastoral care should aim at changing LGBT people's sexual orientation. One in every ten (12%) of them disagreed to this question and another one out of ten (11%) remained neutral. Opinions of the respondents on this question provide the background for the rest of the discussions on the remaining opinions of the respondents on the need of pastoral care for LGBT people.

5.9 Religious Denominations Should Embrace LGBT People

When asked the need to embrace LGBT people into respondents' congregations, one in every two of them (51%) answered affirmatively while two in every five (40%) opposed it, and one in every ten (9%) of them was undecided. Majority decision to support inclusion of LGBT in religious denominations is supported by the Episcopal church, which endorsed the inclusion of the LGBT people in the church in 1976. The church's position is that homosexual persons are also children of God and that they have a full and equal claim with all other people on the love, acceptance and pastoral concern as well as care of the church (The Episcopal Church 2012).

Analysis of "my religious denomination should embrace LGBT people" and the religious denominations of the respondents revealed that majority of the respondents in all denominations were willing to welcome LGBT people into their congregations. This is represented by figure 7 below. The denomination being represented by "No Responses" were the respondents who did not provide any name for their religious denominations.

The "Other" group encapsulates Jehovah Witness, Seventh Day Adventist, Sunni Muslim and those with multiple denominations.

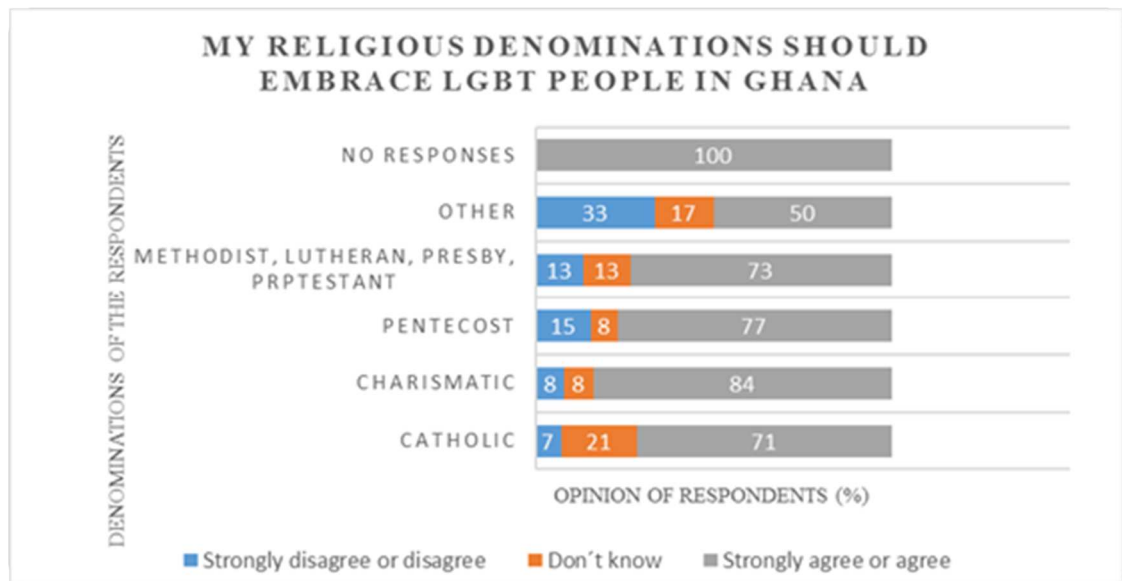


Figure 6: Religious Denominations vrs Embracing LGBT People in their Denominations N=113.

It is reasonable to suggest that those who objected to the inclusion of the LGBT group in their denominations could be thinking that the practice is sin as already indicated above, and so must not be tolerated among faith communities. Some might also be thinking that LGBT is contagious, as discussed already under section 5.7, so other believers may be infested with it. It is believed that those christian respondents who were willing to embrace LGBT people in their faith denominations reminded themselves of the parable of Jesus Christ about weeds among the wheat. Christians are advised to let both weeds and wheat grow together until the harvest, when Jesus would tell his reapers to gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles for burning, but would bring the wheat into his barn (Mt 13: 24-30). It is believed that welcoming LGBT people in religious denominations is not against the teaching of the Bible. Therefore, Canales and Sherman (2016, 49) advice that LGBT people are not to be labelled as persons to be ignored.

It is also possible that those who suggested that LGBT people be embraced in their denominations believed that, if they are welcomed into their denominations, they might be changed by the preaching of the word of God, but not necessarily because they (the respondents) condone the practice. This claim is buttressed by the analysis of the

respondents opinions on 'homosexuality in Ghana should be decriminalized', as discussed in section 5.5 above.

It should be noted that our existing faith denominations are not only filled with holy angels or saints, but also, adulterers fornicators, gluttons, drug users, extortionists, liars, thieves, blasphemers, polygamists as well as LGBT people and the like. The church must, therefore, continue to show love and compassion to all people including LGBT families. However, one cannot redefine and justify sin by arguing that homosexuality should be accepted as an act of righteousness when there is no support for it in the Bible. It should be reiterated that, the fact that homosexuality is claimed to have a genetic component does not make it righteous. If it is, then it is beyond the comprehension of the religious denominations, but God loves all people so should the faith denominations. Bible clearly indicates that, it is God who justifies the ungodly people (Rom 4:5).

5.10 LGBT People and Holy Matrimonies in Religious Denominations

The need to marry or bless the marriages of the LGBT people is one of the pastoral care needs that LGBT group may be happy to receive. Though one in every two (51%) of the respondents affirmed that LGBT people should be embraced in their denominations, as indicated in section 5.9 above, only one in every ten (11%) of them agreed that LGBT people should be married in their denominations. Below one in ten (7%) was neutral but more than four in every five of them (82%) rejected the idea of blessing LGBT marriages in their faith communities. It is believed that the respondents have read from their Holy Scriptures or have been told that their denominations do not encourage same-sex marriages.

It is also believed that the LGBT people could participate in their denominational services to receive grace to repent, but marrying them in these religious denominations is an indication that the church or mosque has endorsed that which their religions condemn. These views are supported by their opinions that pastoral care should aim at changing the sexual orientations of LGBT people as detailed in section 5.8 above.

5.11 Families Must Accept and Love their LGBT Members

The need for love and affection from family members is to be encouraged by pastoral care. It was discovered that one in every two (52%) of the respondents approved that families must be encouraged to accept LGBT members within their families. One in every three (35%) of them was against it whereas minority (13%) of the respondents was unsure of their position on the question. It could be said that accepting and loving LGBT family members does not necessarily mean their approval of the practice. This is anchored by their responses under section 5.5 above, where three-fourth of the respondents (74%) answered that Ghana should not decriminalize homosexuality.

If the respondents could not accept their own family members because of their sexual orientations, the families themselves must examine their own deeds and reflect upon their behaviors in the word of God. When Jesus Christ came into the world, He was a friend of sinners because, He ate and drank with them (Mk 2:15-17, Mt 9:10-13). People ought to understand that all have sinned and have fallen short of God's glory (Rom 3:23). The woman who was caught on adultery was supposed to have been stoned, as the law of Moses demanded, but Jesus told her accusers, that, the one without sin should be the first to throw his stone at her. None of them could do so because, they were convicted by their own consciences (Jn 8:1-11)

If Jesus Christ had said that the one who had never committed adultery should be the first to throw the stone at her, they might have stoned the woman instantly because they might never had committed adultery. But they had sinned in one way or another. It would be good for families to love their LGBT members unconditionally if they could love and accept other sinners in their families.

On the question of encouraging families to love their LGBT members, it was discovered that more than half (55%) of the males and two out of five (41%) of the female respondents supported that families should accept and love their LGBT members. This shows that the males in this study would more likely accept their LGBT family members than do their female counterparts. This finding is agreeable to a study conducted in Ghana which found that male students were more accepting of homosexuality compared with

their female counterparts (Oti-Boateng, Agbakpe & Dziwornu 2014, 31). These findings are not consistent with a research publication which contends that women tend to have more liberal attitudes toward LGBT people than men (Adamczyk 2017, 35).

As already shown in the data, the level of education of respondents had an influence on the question: families should be encouraged to accept and love LGBT members in their families ($p < .04^*$). Among all the various groups analyzed, based on their educational levels, majority agreed that LGBT families should accept and love their LGBT members. However, for those with Bachelor degrees, one in every two (50%) of them disagreed to the question.

5.12 Strengthening LGBT People and their Sexuality as of God

The purpose of this question was to seek opinions of respondents on whether LGBT people need to be encouraged to keep their sexual orientation while pastoral care still strengthens them as children of God. It emerged that over half (53%) of the respondents agreed that LGBT people should be strengthened to see themselves as God's children, but one in every three (33%) of them disagreed. Minority of them (14%) did not have a clear opinion on this issue. It is believed that those who disagreed that LGBT should be made to know that they are the children of God could base their argument on John 1:11-13, where it is written;

He came to His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name, who were born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God (John 1:11-13 MKJV).

So then, it is only those who have accepted Christ Jesus who have become the children of God. One may wonder if LGBT could also become the children of God, if they accept Christ Jesus and keep their sexual orientation. Again, if remaining LGBT and still be a child of God is possible, then God should not have destroyed the people of Sodom and Gomorrah as recorded in Genesis 19:1-17, or God could not have given some of them a recompense befitting their error. But if LGBT people could choose to believe in God, then God would decide their fate as in the case of all people.

Literature also suggests that LGBT people have no control over their sexual orientation as discussed in section 2.8 above. If this is their situation, then God would not accuse them over something they have no control over. But if this is the case, then no man has power over sin. Some heterosexuals still commit fornication and adultery, some people are drunkards, others are thieves and so on, and none of them has power to avoid sinning. This was the condition of Paul in Rom 7:15-24. Paul thanks God that finally he has been given power to overcome sin that dwelt in his body (Rom 7:25). This implies that, if it is the will of God, then all people including LGBT people, who believe in God shall receive power to overcome that which they have no control over. Judgment, therefore, belongs to God who knows the contents of the hearts of all men (Jer 17:10 Jer 20:12, 1Sam 16:7).

The question of LGBT people should be strengthened to see themselves as God's children, was influenced by the denominations to which the respondents belonged ($p < .04^*$). Among the Catholics and Pentecostal denominations, minority (22%) and (31%) of them respectively agreed to the question whilst among the rest of the denominations represented in the study, majority of them agreed that LGBT people in Ghana should be strengthened to also see themselves as children of God.

It should be noted that a greater proportion of all the respondents as detailed in sections 5.5 above reported that homosexuality should not be decriminalized, so for a majority of these denominations to agree that LGBT people be strengthened to see themselves as children of God might mean that, they wanted pastoral care to strengthen them to change their sexual orientation as already discussed, but not to strengthen them as God's children while they keep their sexual orientation.

Similarly, three out of four (77%) of the respondents indicated that LGBT people in Ghana need to be counseled to understand that their sexuality is a gift from God. Here, they meant LGBT people need not change their sexuality to anything other than their assigned sexuality from birth. That is, they should, therefore, be encouraged to accept themselves as they were born. One in every ten (12%) of them disagreed that LGBT people be strengthened to see themselves as God's children, and almost the same proportion (11%) indicated that they were undecided. This explains why majority of the respondents were not willing to endorse homosexuality in Ghana.

5.13 LGBT People Should Not Be Made to feel Guilty

Since constant feeling of guilt may lead to psychological challenges, it was deemed relevant to ascertain whether or not the respondents might see the need to remove guilt from the minds of the LGBT people about their sexual orientation. On this question, one in every four (25%) of the respondents agreed that LGBT people should not be made to feel guilty, and majority of them (55%) agreed that LGBT people should be made to feel guilty. Almost two out of five (17%) on the other hand remained neutral on this question.

Over half of the respondents who indicated that LGBT people should be made to feel guilty may be thinking that refusing to let LGBT feel guilty means the acceptance of the practice, hence the refusal of the LGBT people to change from it. It should be said that the Christian church is not supposed to make people guilt-free for not talking about that which is sin in the Bible. The church speaks against sex outside of marriage, but there are still fornicators and adulterers in the church. There are thieves and drunkards in the church, but the church continues to preach against such practices. LGBT people could still be in the religious denominations, but the Gospel and its righteousness should be preached in full and in love.

It has been argued in chapter two above, that there have been evidence suggesting that some homosexuals, through the Gospel of Christ and counseling, have left the practice. In Ghana, as some research conducted among youths indicates, there might be some people who have chosen to be homosexuals because of poverty, the fun of it, or some other factors. It is commonly believed in Ghana that homosexuals are rich so they entice young people into the practice (Allotey 2015, 82-84). Refusing to speak against it as sin in the faith denominations would not do such people any good.

The question of encouraging LGBT people not to feel guilty of their sexual orientation was influenced by how long respondents had lived in Finland ($p < .01^*$). The analysis is shown in figure 10 below. Among those who had lived in Finland for over 16 years, majority of them (69%) agreed that LGBT people should not be made to feel guilty because of their sexual orientation, but minority of them (31%) disagreed. However, the opinions of the respondents in favor of encouraging LGBT people not to feel guilty

increased from those having lived in Finland between 11-15 years and below, as shown below:

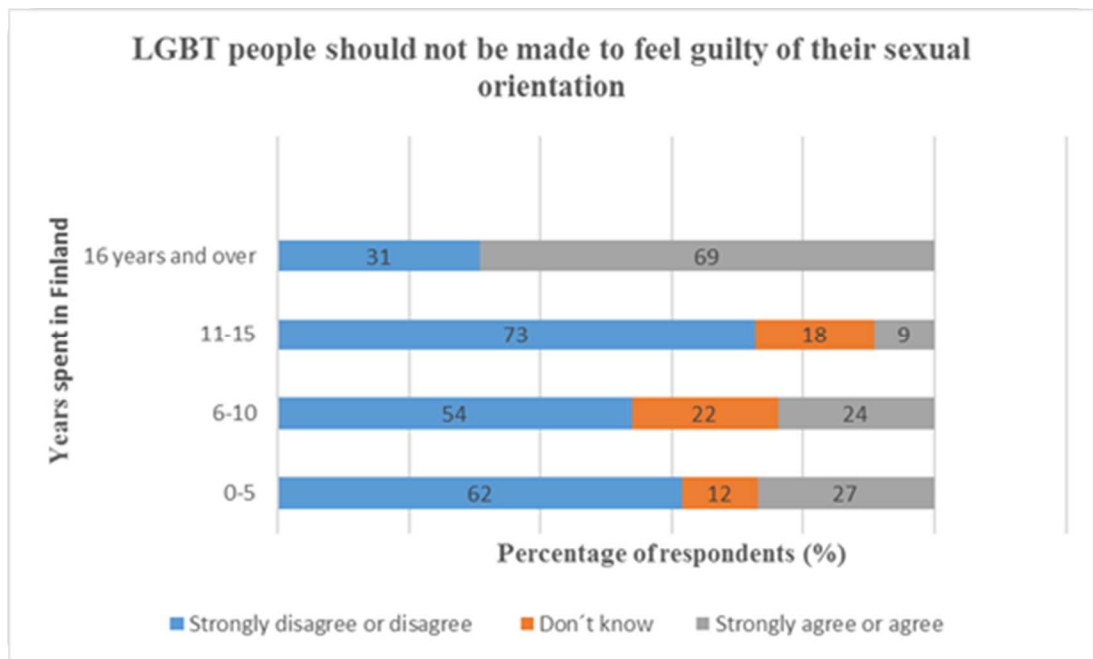


Figure 7: Length of Stay in Finland vrs. LGBT People not to be made to feel Guilty
N=113.

5.14 Ensuring Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing of LGBT People

On the need for pastoral care to ensure emotional and psychological well-being of LGBT people in Ghana, it was surprising that, two in every three (67%) of the respondent indicated that it is necessary to ensure emotional and psychological wellbeing of the LGBT people, but only one out of five (20%) of them, as detailed in the preceding paragraphs, answered that LGBT group should not be made to feel guilty. This implies that the remaining majority (47%) who answered in affirmative, believed the LGBT people have emotional and psychological challenges and that pastoral care should seek to address it.

The minority of the respondents (15%) who disagreed that pastoral care should not aim at ensuring emotional and psychological wellbeing of LGBT people, may on the other hand, believed that LGBT people are sound and that they need no emotional or

psychological counseling as indicated by a section of them, and supported by literature in chapter 2.8 It is believed that the starting point for ensuring emotional and psychological wellbeing of LGBT people may be decriminalization of homosexuality in Ghana. Almost two out of five (18%) did not know what to tell about this. As part of ensuring the emotional and psychological wellbeing of LGBT persons, it was required of the respondents to indicate their opinions on whether LGBT people should be supported in times of bereavement or grief of their loved ones.

5.15 Supporting LGBT People in the Event of Difficult Moments

Being left alone, in times of difficulties, is another depressing moment for human beings. Notwithstanding that, less than half of them (43%) indicated that LGBT people should be supported during times of bereavement or grief. This suggests that this percentage of respondent considered the scripture which entreats Christians to mourn with those who mourn and to rejoice with those who rejoice (Rom 12:15-16). This is one of the ways by which emotional and psychological wellbeing of the LGBT people would be enhanced. Though minority of them (14%) were neutral, one in every three (33%) of them believed that LGBT people should not be supported in times of bereavement or grief.

Again, to ensure emotional and psychological wellbeing of LGBT people in Ghana, it would be imperative to assure them that their love and affection for each other as lovers is genuine. Opinions of the respondents on this question revealed that, one in every ten (11%) of them agreed whilst almost two out of five (18%) did not know what to indicate. More than two in three (71%) of them did not agree that there could be any genuine love among LGBT lovers. It is believed that the one out of ten (11%) who answered in affirmative that genuine love exists among LGBT lovers might have ever related with some of them and have listened to their stories. Research has found that people tend to like, understand or empathize, trust and have compassion on LGBT people if they are familiar with some of them (Adamczyk 2017, 36).

The majority who did not believe to the assertion that genuine love exists between homosexual couple might base their argument on Gen 2:24, where God ordained that a man and a woman shall cleave to each other and become one flesh. This confirms a

research finding conducted in Ghana by Allotey (2015, 69) where a Christian Clergy cited the above scripture and a Muslim Cleric strongly contended that both Quran and Hadith treat homosexuality as sin. It is, therefore, known, originally, that genuine love should exist between heterosexual couples, but not between same-sex couples. Same-sex relationships may be pure lust, but nothing else. This is a question that the LGBT people may answer best, since not all heterosexual couples are bound together by genuine love, but this is known only by the parties involved.

5.16 Further Need for LGBT People to Receive Pastoral Care

This section analysis the open-ended responses from the respondents. Their opinions on whether their faith was important to them or not, and why they think pastoral care and counseling should be done is discussed here. It was important to analyze these two variables because those whose religious faiths are not important to them could not better inform nor influence ways pastoral care should be done within their denominations.

Very few of the respondents (4%) stated that LGBT people are very sound and they know well what they are doing, so they need no pastoral care. It is possible that some of these respondents have been informed by reading, that LGBT are not psychologically affected as supported by literature in chapter two. None of them stated that LGBT people were born with it and for that matter could not change by going through pastoral care and counseling.

It was discovered that almost one in every three (31%) of the respondents indicated that another important need of pastoral care for the LGBT people in Ghana was the need for love. It was suggested that LGBT people should be counseled in love and asked to abandon the practice of homosexuality because it is sinful as has been confirmed by research (Pew Research Center 2003). It is believed that for these respondents, the best way to help LGBT to abandon their sexual orientation is to show them love.

In addition, four in every ten (42%) of them did not have any suggestion to make about other need of giving pastoral care and counseling to the LGBT people in Christian or Muslim congregations. This means that the questions covering pastoral care were either

comprehensive enough or they had little or no knowledge of what goes into pastoral care and counseling.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the important data and results as well as the key findings of this study. Also, based on the discussions of the results, recommendations are made to the International Charismatic Bible Church, on the best practices in dealing with the LGBT people in their congregations.

6.1 Conclusions

These conclusions were made based on the opinions of one hundred and thirteen (113) Ghanaians living in Finland and on biblical texts. The primary data for this study were collected using quantitative research method: survey and interview, and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The respondents were aged eighteen (18) years and over. Majority of the respondents (96%) were Christians while minority of them (4%) were Muslims. Women respondents were the minority (27%) while the opinions of the male respondents were the majority (73%). Only 1% of the respondents was identified as a bisexual but the remaining majority (99%) identified themselves as heterosexuals.

More than four in every five (84%) indicated that their faith was important to them but less than one out of five of them (16%) reported otherwise. This explains that more than eight in every ten of the respondents were religious, implying that the opinions expressed in this study were largely religiously motivated. It was also recognized that the denominations to which the respondents belonged, the level of their education, and their age, as well as the length of stay in Finland or abroad, significantly influenced their opinions on the rights of the LGBT people in Ghana.

Concerning the full rights of LGBT people that should be guaranteed in Ghana, a greater proportion of the respondents indicated that LGBT people should have their right to social care (71%) and health care (75%), as well as their right to life because majority of them (65%) reported that LGBT people should be treated with respect and dignity, and that

they should have the right to pastoral care. Three in every four (75%) of them were, however, opposed to decriminalization of homosexuality Act and almost the same proportion (72%) were against legalization of LGBT rights in Ghana. LGBT right to adopt children was objected to by majority of them (56%) and their right to change their gender was also rejected by three out of four (76%) of the respondents.

On the need for pastoral care for the LGBT people in Ghana, the following observations were made in support of the questions asked. That:

- Pastoral care and counseling should aim at changing the sexual orientations of the LGBT people (77%).
- LGBT people must be encouraged to accept that they are God's children, was accepted by at least one out of two of them (53%).
- Families need to be encouraged to accept and love their LGBT people (52%).
- Denominations should Embrace LGBT people in religious denomination (51%).
- LGBT people must be treated with respect and dignity (65%).
- Emotional and psychological wellbeing of LGBT group should be promoted (67%).

On the other hand, the proportion of respondents who agreed to other pastoral care and counseling needs for the LGBT people have been indicated below;

- LGBT marriages should be blessed in their denominations (11%)
- Strengthening LGBT people to accept that their love for each other is genuine (11%)
- LGBT people should not be made to feel guilty (20%)
- Religious sacred book or tradition grants freedom of choice for all people (26%)
- Supporting LGBT people in the event of bereavement or death of their partners (43%)

Though minority of the respondents (4%) mentioned that LGBT people are strong and know what they do, so they do not need pastoral care and counseling, the rest of the

respondents further suggested the need for pastoral care for LGBT people in the following areas:

- Understanding LGBT people without condemning them (2%)
- Showing them love and counseling them to abandon their orientation (31%)
- Providing them with psychological counseling (4%)

It could also be stated that though the respondents did not support decriminalization or legalization of homosexual act in Ghana, their attitudes towards LGBT people were positive. It was again discovered that their reasons for rejection or acceptance of the right of LGBT people in Ghana was largely influenced by their religious beliefs or traditions.

Finally, religious denominations need to remind themselves of the following, that:

- By the works of the law shall no man be justified (Acts 13:39, Rom 3:20). If Ghana laws forbid people from the practice of homosexuality, they do not refuse to be sinners or homosexuals.
- If LGBT people decide to avoid the practice of homosexuality because of the laws that forbid them, they do not become righteous believers without making personal commitments to accept Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- People become born again only when they have received the “sufficient grace” of God to do so, without compulsion. People must willingly decide to accept Christ after the Gospel of Christ is preached to them. Therefore, if people are driven out of church because they are sinners, they do not receive the faith that comes by hearing by hearing of the Word of God (Rom 10:17).

6.2 Recommendations

On the bases of the results and the discussions, it is recommended that:

- A similar research be carried out in Ghana to include a larger population sample to be able to generalize the findings in Ghana.

- Research among the faith communities in Ghana is recommended, so that comprehensive guidelines for pastoral care and counseling for LGBT groups within their denominations could be established.
- Further research be done in Ghana using LGBT people as sample population, so that they would have the opportunity to express their opinions on issues and rights that concern them.

The following are suggested to the International Charismatic Bible Church, Finland. The leaders in the said school of Ministry must be thought to:

- Be familiar with the rights of the LGBT people and treat them with sensitivity.
- Welcome and treat LGBT people in their congregations with respect and dignity as any other human being.
- Encourage families in their congregations not to disown their LGBT members but to show them love and affection.
- Include LGBT people in their social programs so as promote their social wellbeing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: The Research questionnaire

7/5/2016 Rights of LGBT people in Ghana

Rights of LGBT people in Ghana

Note: LGBT= Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals or Transgendered people and the Queer.

*** Required**

This questionnaire is intended for academic research only. Be assured that any information you provide is strictly confidential. The researcher does not trace the responses to the respondents, since this form has not been coded to that effect. Thank you in advance for your input in this project. Researcher: Seree Yeboa-Mensa (0504329727), Supervisor: Jouko

1. In which of the following age groups do you belong? *

Choose ▾

2. Your gender? *

A. Male

B. Female

C. Transgendered

Other : _____

3. Kindly indicate your sexual orientation. *

A. Straight

B. Gay

C. Lesbian

D. Bisexual

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- E. Asexual
 F. Queer
 Other : _____

4. Your highest educational attainment. *

Choose

5. Your religious affiliation. *

- A. Christian
 B. Muslim
 C. Traditionalist
 D. Hindu
 Other : _____

6. Your religious denomination (e.g. Pentecostal, Charismatic, Catholic, Lutheran, Sunni or shia muslim, etc). You may write one or more that apply to you. If you have no religion, then skip to question 9.

Your answer

7. Your religious belief or faith is very important in your life.

- I Strongly disagree
 I disagree
 I don't know
 I agree
 I strongly agree

8. What sacred religious book (e.g Bible, Quran, etc) do you use for the practice of your religion/faith?

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Your answer _____

9. How long have you been living in Finland? Write *

Your answer _____

10. If you have also lived in other countries outside of Ghana, Where?

Your answer _____

11. The following rights of LGBT people are currently guaranteed in Ghana. Choose one option on each column. *

Kindly indicate your opinion on the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers, but the researcher would like to read from you.

	I strongly disagree	I disagree	I don't know	I agree	I strongly agree
The right to life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to marry who they choose to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to social services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equal right to health services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to pastoral care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equal right to legal services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to adopt children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to change one's gender as s/he chooses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Kindly indicate your opinion on the following statements. *

There are no right or wrong answers but your opinion on these issues need to be heard.



I strongly disagree I I Don't I agree I strongly

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	disagree	know	agree
I think that Ghana should decriminalize homosexuality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect all people including LGBT people in Ghana to have the right to marry whoever they choose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBT people must have the right to adopt children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBT people in Ghana should have equal right to access social services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBT people should equal right to access health facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I permit my religious denomination to bless all marriages including those of LGBT people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect my religious denomination to embrace all people including LGBT people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect people to have the right to change their gender if they choose to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All people including LGT people must be treated with respect and dignity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBT should not be welcomed in the faith denominations because they will go to hell.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ghana should not think of legalizing LGBT rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe young people will learn to be LGBT, if the practice is legalized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It doesn't matter to me whether or not the rights of LGBT people would be guaranteed in Ghana.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Your opinion on pastoral care (e.g. care or counseling given by pastoral or clerical ministry, or people ordained for religious duties which relates to the care of souls). *

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	I strongly disagree	I disagree	I don't know	I agree	strongly agree
Pastoral care should ensure emotional and psychological well being of LGBT people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBT people should not be made to feel guilty of their sexual orientation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBT people should be strengthened so they also see themselves as God's children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pastoral Care should aim at changing LGBT people's sexual orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBT people should be supported in the event of death or grief of their homosexual spouses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Families should be encouraged to accept and love LGBT members within their families.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pastoral care needs to strengthen the idea that genuine love exists among same sex people also.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pastoral care should empower LGBT people to accept their sexuality as a gifts from God	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your sacred religious book (e.g. Bible, Quran, etc) or your religious traditions give freedom of choice to all people regardless of their sexual orientation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Write other ways (apart from those listed in Question 13) by which the LGBT people could receive pastoral care. *

Your answer

*



I strongly disagree I disagree I don't know I agree I strongly agree

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15. Living outside of Ghana has influenced your thinking on the rights of LGBT people.

If you are in LGBT group, kindly proceed to answer the rest of the questions. If not, skip to "submit" at the bottom of this form.

I strongly disagree I disagree I don't know I agree I strongly agree

16. You became one of LGBT people because of societal influence (e.g. money, friends, abuse or something else).

17. If you belong to LGBT group, what were some of your experiences in Ghana? Write freely

Your answer

Being part of the LGBT family,

I strongly disagree I agree I don't know I agree I strongly agree

18. You think that you were born to be in LGBT people.

19. You have ever thought of changing your sexual orientation.

20. As a member of LGBT group, did you receive some kind of support that is related to your sexual orientation from any faith denomination (e.g. a church or mosque or traditional priest)?

- A. Never
- B. Seldom
- C. I don't know
- D. Often
- Very often

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21. If you answered "often" or "very often" to Question 20, what kind of support services did you receive?

- A. Counseling
- B. Social services
- C. Healthcare
- D. Pastoral care
- Other : _____

22. If you belong to LGBT group, I would like to interview you separately. You are assured of confidentiality of your identity and information. If you consent to this, kindly write your contact details. Phone or E-mail.

Your answer _____

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