

**UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UniMAC)  
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**THE REPRESENTATION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN CHRISTIAN MEDIA:  
ANALYSIS OF LGBTQ+ CONTENT ON CHRISTIAN TELEVISION IN GHANA.**


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**DECEMBER 2025**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that to the best of my knowledge no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere except for the references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my future wife, Rhoda Emefa Meteku, whose unwavering support and prayers have been instrumental in my journey. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to my family and dear friend, Benjamin Danso, for their constant encouragement and backing.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I extend my sincerest appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Solace Yawa Asafo, for her expert guidance, constructive feedback, and unwavering support throughout this research journey. I am also deeply grateful to my parents, loved ones, siblings, and my boss, Mr. Nii Ayite Hammond, for their encouragement, prayers, and moral support during my postgraduate studies. Above all, I give glory to God for making this achievement possible

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the representation of marginalized groups, specifically LGBTQ+ identities, in Christian television sermons in Ghana, with a focus on PENT-TV, a station owned by the Church of Pentecost. Drawing on qualitative content analysis of sermons broadcast between March and May 2024 and semi-structured interviews with preachers, producers, directors, MCs, and a programme manager, the research explores rhetorical tone, dominant frames, theological justifications, and multimodal strategies employed in religious broadcasting. Findings reveal that explicit references to LGBTQ+ identities were rare, with sermons often substituting direct mention with generalized moral categories such as “immorality” or “ungodly behavior.” When addressed, LGBTQ+ issues were framed within corrective discourses emphasizing repentance, reconciliation, and adherence to biblical morality, reflecting a pastoral yet exclusionary stance. Theological justifications relied heavily on scripture, reinforcing heteronormative ideals, while multimodal strategies such as camera angles, close-ups, and scripture captions amplified moral messages visually and rhetorically. Interviews confirmed that institutional directives and leadership influence shaped programming decisions, prioritizing doctrinal fidelity over inclusivity. The study contributes to representation, framing, and queer theory by demonstrating how silence and avoidance function as framing devices in African Pentecostal contexts. It further highlights implications for media ethics, policy regulation, and advocacy, underscoring the paradox of Christian broadcasting in Ghana as both a universal mission and an exclusionary discourse.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the study by summarising the research context, the issue that is going to be discussed in the research, and laying out the study within the current academic and societal debates. It starts with a background that contextualises the role of Christian media in the Ghanaian religious and cultural settings with much attention given to the role these media outlets play in contributing to the discourses on morality and sexuality in the population. Subsequently, the problem statement includes the definition of the gaps in the prior existing literature concerning the LGBTQ+ topics on Christian television in Ghana and the necessity of the systematic empirical investigation. Then, the chapter provides the research questions and objectives that will be used as the framework of the investigation. The study scope aims at elucidating the thematic, temporal, and geographical constraints, whereas the importance of the research underlines the academic, policy, and practical implications of the research. And lastly the study is organised, which is used to give a summarisation of the main points presented. Such an organisation provides readers with an idea of the motivation, direction, and relevance of the study and gets deeper into the literature review and methodology considerations in the following chapters.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

In African societies, religion has played a key role in determining morality, social identity and social debate. African Traditional Religion (ATR) was one of the sources of the moral codes, spiritual cosmologies, and shared values, which ruled the common life long before the advent of Christianity and Islam. Religion in Africa as argued by John Mbiti (1990) in his seminal

work, *African Regions and Philosophy* emphasized that religion in Africa is embedded into every aspect of life such that “Africans are notoriously religious,” and that there is no way that morality can be discussed without that of religion. On the same note, Gyekye (1996) observes that conceptions of morality as it is understood in Africans are based on the sense of community, the respect of the elders, and the development of harmony, which are religiously approved. In this model, the ethical behavior is not defined by the secular codes but by the spiritual beliefs of what is right and wrong. In such a way, morality and religion in Africa cannot be alienated, as the religious cosmologies give the basis of values, according to which social life is organized.

Also, alongside African Traditional Religion, Islam has played a major role in developing moral codes and social discourse in the continent. Several centuries back, Islam has been present in Ghana and other West African countries, and Muslim clerics and rulers can be seen as the guardians of morality and the judges of social conduct. Modesty, family life and gender relations have become a strong force in shaping cultural expectations in West Africa as Trimmingham (1962) notes, due to Islamic principles of modesty, family life and gender relations. This supports the argument that the African societies construct moral values based on various religious traditions and not just Christianity. Any discourse on religion and morality in Africa should therefore consider the aspect of the ATR as well as Islam in terms of their ability to govern the behavior and how they influence the reaction to social matters.

Nonetheless, Christianity has become the biggest religion of Ghana and has influenced the moral debate and discussions in the society in significant manners. According to the 2021 Ghana Population and Housing Census, approximately 71% of Ghanaians identify as Christians (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). Christianity was brought by the colonial period and swiftly propagated by the missionaries and it has ever since become a very strong socio politically powerful movement. As it has been argued by academics like Kwame Bediako (1997) and J.S Pobee (1991), Christianity in Africa was not simply transplanted but was indigenised, fused

within African cultures to produce clearly African versions of faith. In Ghana, the moral, family and sexuality issue are openly discussed within the framework of Christianity.

Within the Christian faith, Pentecostalism is one of the most socially influential movement that is rapidly growing. Since the 1980s, religious life in Ghana has been characterized by a Pentecostal/charismatic revival which focuses on the spiritual gifts and prosperity preaching as well as mass media evangelism (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2004). A Pentecostal church is a spiritual institution as well as cultural and political actors, influencing the opinion of the population regarding the problem of morality, sexuality, and the policy of the country. According to Birgit Meyer (2004), Pentecostalism has been able to distribute its influence and power through the media, ensuring that it has become central in the moral discourses in Ghana. Therefore, Pentecostalism is not simply a religious movement, but a media giant that can affect the agenda in the country.

The development of Christian broadcasting in Ghana reflects this trajectory. At first, Christian material could only be aired on short spurts on the national radio and TV networks at a fee. Already in the 1980s and 1990s, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) gave Christian programmes like *Encounter with Truth* and Catholic mass broadcasts 30 minutes of air time, which opened possibilities to evangelise the state-controlled media. These transmissions were small scale but they signaled the inception of the Christian mass media. The situation however has changed drastically in the past 2 decades. As the media environment has been liberalised and the emergence of the private ownership, the Christian organisations have opened their own radio and television stations, which broadcast 24 hours a day. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) also points out that Pentecostal churches in general have adopted the use of television as an evangelism and moral teaching instrument and have developed entire media empires which extend far beyond the pulpit. This move by the state-controlled slots to 24 hour Christian

broadcasting highlights the increased strength of religious media in influencing social and moral discourses in Ghana.

Moreover, the question of the LGBTQ+ rights is one of the most controversial questions in the Ghanaian public discourse today. Ghana is commonly known as the deeply religious and conservative society, in which both Christianity and Islam highly disapproved of non-heteronormative sexualities (Asante, 2024). Nevertheless, LGBTQ+ rights are not the only ones opposed in Ghana; it is a trend across the entire continent. In Uganda, gay and lesbian relationships have been criminalised by the country through anti-LGBTQ laws, and in Nigeria, the country has one of the most repressive positions toward it through its Same-Sex marriage ban act of 2014. South Africa, in its turn, is the only African state that has legalised same-sex marriage and made rights of LGBTQ+ people constitutional (Epprecht, 2013). These opposing arguments demonstrate the moral and cultural contradictions that exist throughout Africa, in which religion tends to be used to justify the acceptance and rejection of LGBTQ+ identities. The recent discussions about the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill (better known as the Anti-LGBTQ Bill) in Ghana can thus be viewed in this broader continental context.

In Ghana, religious groups have led the fight against the recognition of LGBTQ+. Pentecostal and charismatic pastors have been outspoken condemning the LGBTQ+ practices as unbiblical and immoral using scripture and cultural values. One example is the Church of Pentecost that has strongly promoted the Anti-LGBTQ Bill by means of statements, conferences, and representations to the Parliament. The same opposition was expressed by Muslim clerics and traditional leaders, which contributes to the vision that the LGBTQ + identities threaten the Ghanaian morality and the sense of family values. This convergence of religious arguments within the various traditions illustrates the role of religion in the modern Ghana in terms of the shaping of moral codes and discourse.

Christian television channels especially those owned by Pentecostal churches have become central sources of spreading these stands. These institutions are critical in framing LGBTQ+ debates to their audiences since they run on continuous airtime. One of them, the PENT-TV which belongs to the Church of Pentecost, holds a comparably important place as it is directly associated with a denomination that has actively participated in anti-LGBTQ activism. This means that a study of the ways PENT-TV sermons formulate sexuality issues provides a unique point to examine mediating moral discourses through religious broadcasting in modern Ghana. This emphasis is particularly acute considering that sermons as homiletic performances are prescriptive, in the sense that they are not only theological speakers, but moral instructions that shape the behaviour and belief of listeners (Stott, 2014). The present study focuses on scrutinising the ways in which religious media reflects and reproduces dominant moral stances on sexuality by focusing on sermons.

Collectively, the contextual background verifies that religion in Africa is absolutely inherent in moral matters; that Christianity, and more so Pentecostalism, has become a dominant player in Ghanaian society due to its use of the media; and that the rights of the LGBTQ+ are currently one of the most moral issues that are debated in this religious setting. However, even amid the significant role of Christian broadcasting in the discourse of the country, research on the role of Ghanaian Christian television in the positioning of LGBTQ+ problems is limited. In this line, the present study is placed at the intersection of religion, media and morality with the goal of filling this gap and adding to the larger communities of discourse on the topics of representation and social change.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The concept of religion and morality in Ghanaian society is closely connected and the Christian institutions are one of the most powerful sources of morality in the societal life. Christian leaders influence the people on the critical social matters, such as family, sexuality, and national values, through their wide coverage in the mass media. Christian broadcasting in specifically has emerged as one of the main sources of spreading religious teachings as it reaches out to millions of viewers globally weekly through sermons and discussions among other faith-related programmes. Since pastors are trusted and the Christian television has a vast audience, messages delivered via these channels decisively establish limits to acceptability when it comes to moral conduct in Ghanaian society (Asamoah-, 2005; Meyer, 2004).

Simultaneously, Christian broadcasting is in a paradox. On the one hand, the Christian gospel is universal in its application, focusing on inclusion and salvation of all people without reference to background. Conversely, numerous Christian leaders in Ghana, particularly in Pentecostal and charismatic churches, have established themselves as powerful critics of LGBTQ+ rights, labeling non-heteronormative identities as sins and not aligned with biblical doctrines. Such a dual stance sets up a paradox: on the one hand, Christian television is meant to serve the whole nation, yet on the other hand, it is the one that shapes the narratives that either ostracize or stigmatize certain segments of the nation (Bediako, 1997; Stott, 2014). These contradictions are not only theological but have considerable social consequences and impact the way communities view and treat LGBTQ+ individuals.

Furthermore, it is specifically the Ghanaian context in which the paradox is the most significant, as religious institutions are the most vocal in national discussions on the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill (Anti-LGBTQ Bill). An example is the Church of Pentecost, which has actively been lobbying Parliament, releasing pastoral statements, and organising to support bills aimed at criminalising the LGBTQ+ practices. Television stations

like PENT-TV owned and operated by these same institutions also air sermons and programmes that cement their stance. In contrast with occasional press releases, televised sermons are repeated, highly accessible, and presented as the word of God, which enhances their effectiveness in influencing the perception of LGBTQ + identities in the community (Asante, 2024; Outright International, 2023). Therefore, Christian television is not only a mirror of the current social atmosphere; it creates and propagates the majority moral scripts.

Although the centrality of Christian broadcasting in these discussions is an important point, there is limited academic work on how it contributes to the framing of LGBTQ+ concerns in Ghana. Although there are already studies discussing religion and media in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2004; Meyer, 2004), limited focus has been put on how Christian television, in particular, pursues the issue of LGBTQ+ rights. Religion, media and sexuality have been analysed to some degree of scholarship globally (Coleman, 2000; Gray, 2009), yet no one has explored how African people view these issues, nor are Ghanaian settings covered at all. Such a gap stands out against the backdrop of the presence of the Christian television in Ghana and its involvement in the influencing of the moral discourses on LGBTQ+. It is hard to realize the role of religious broadcasting in wider trends of social acceptance, resistance or exclusion without such analysis.

This research thus arises out of the conflict between the inclusive mission of Christianity and the exclusivist tendencies in media discourse of Ghana. The analysis, emphasizing sermons on PENT-TV, a station that has firm affiliation with one of the most powerful Pentecostal denominations in Ghana, attempts to understand how Christian television shapes LGBTQ+ struggles and what rhetorical and theological resources get used to develop these frames. By so doing, this study fills a significant gap in media and religious analysis and assists broader discussion in representation, morality, and human rights in African communities.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How frequently, and with what rhetorical tone, are LGBTQ+ issues referenced in PENT-TV sermons?
2. What dominant frames are employed in PENT-TV sermons to present LGBTQ+ issues?
3. What theological and scriptural justifications are used in PENT-TV sermons to support particular positions on LGBTQ+ issues?
4. How do PENT-TV sermons use multimodal strategies including language, visuals, gestures, and symbols to reinforce their messages on LGBTQ+ issues?

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

### ***1.5.1 General Objective***

- To examine how LGBTQ+ identities are represented in Christian television sermons in Ghana, focusing on rhetorical tone, theological justification, and narrative framing, and to assess the implications for media ethics and sociocultural inclusion.

### ***1.5.2 Specific Objectives***

1. To analyse the frequency and rhetorical tone of LGBTQ+ references in PENT-TV sermons.
2. To identify and categorise the dominant frames employed in PENT-TV sermons when discussing LGBTQ+ issues.
3. To examine the theological and scriptural justifications used in PENT-TV sermons to support particular positions on LGBTQ+ identities.

4. To assess the multimodal strategies (verbal, visual, and symbolic cues) employed in PENT-TV sermons to reinforce messages about LGBTQ+ issues.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to the examination of sermons in PENT-TV, which is a Christian television station owned by the Church of Pentecost in Ghana. It specifically targets sermons that take place from 31st March to 26th May 2024, as this time frame was chosen because of the increased discussion about the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill. Although the central unit of analysis is the televised sermon, the study also recognizes that the creation and packaging of such material are the decisions of the institutions, not just the pulpit. To this end, the research is based on both a qualitative content analysis of chosen sermons.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The current research is important in multiple aspects, including academic, policy, and practical. On the scholarly level, it adds to the interdisciplinary areas of religion, media, and sexuality, closing a significant gap in research in Ghanaian scholarship. Although much focus has been given to the rise of Pentecostalism and its interaction with mass media (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2004; Meyer, 2004), a limited number of studies have explored the way the issues of LGBTQ+ are framed in Christian broadcasting in Ghana. The majority of available literature on LGBTQ+ in Africa is focused on legal, political, or public-opinion aspects (Epprecht, 2013; Nyeck and Epprecht, 2013), which provides little systematic investigation of religious media as a framing force. This study, one of the few empirical studies to examine the intersection of Christian television, morality, and LGBTQ + representation in Africa, analyses sermons aired in PENT-

TV. By so doing, it contributes to the richness of current discussions about the representation theory, framing, and queer studies in African contexts.

The policy implications of the study are also very substantial. The media environment in Ghana is regulated by the National Media Commission (NMC), which obliges the broadcasters to maintain ethical behavior and avoid spreading the content that discriminates against or inspires hostility against certain groups. Through questioning how LGBTQ+ concerns are framed in PENT-TV sermons, the research provides empirical data that could be used as a guide in regulatory discussions about the balance of freedom of speech and the protection of minority rights in Ghana. This finding is more relevant in the context of new parliamentary debates on the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill. This study can be used by policymakers, regulators and human-rights advocates to make more informed decisions about the regulation of religious broadcasting in a pluralistic society.

In the case of religious institutions, the research serves as a self-examination mirror of the Pentecostal leaders and broadcasters to reflect on the ethical and theological ramifications of their messages. Sermons are not only spiritual encouragements; they are cultural writings that govern social morality and impact on minority group attitudes. By clarifying that rhetorical, theological, and multimodal techniques used to frame LGBTQ+ issues, the proposed study will equip church leaders and Christian media practitioners with the power to analyze the social consequences of their broadcasts more critically. This consideration is particularly important considering that Pentecostal churches in Ghana often command moral authority in the discourse on the national agenda and have a significant impact on the masses.

Lastly, the research has practical implications to civil society and advocacy organizations with an interest in human rights and social inclusion. Providing empiric evidence about the depiction of LGBTQ+ concerns in Christian television preaching, it brings results about the discourses

behind widespread resistance to LGBTQ+ rights. These insights can help advocacy organisations develop more effective engagement practices that can help counter religiously informed objections and promote the positive dialogue between faith communities and rights defenders. As a result, the research has not only filled an academic gap, but it has also offered direct policy, practice, and advocacy contributions in Ghana and beyond.

## **1.8 Organisation of the Study**

The study is structured into five chapters for clarity and coherence:

1. Chapter One introduces the study, outlining the background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, scope, significance, organization, and a summary of the chapter.
2. Chapter Two presents a review of related literature, examining theoretical frameworks, global and African studies on media representation of LGBTQ+ identities, and contextual insights into Christian broadcasting in Ghana.
3. Chapter Three details the research methodology, including research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, analytical techniques, and ethical considerations.
4. Chapter Four presents and analyzes the findings, using thematic and critical discourse analysis to interpret the data in line with the research objectives.
5. Chapter Five discusses the findings in relation to existing scholarship, draws conclusions, outlines implications, and provides recommendations for policy, practice, and further research.

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the study by identifying the background and placing the role of the Christian media in Ghana in context. It framed the problem of interest to be examined, that is, the conflict between inclusive evangelism and exclusionary doctrinal understandings in Christian broadcasting, and the particular research questions and objectives that would inform the study. The study was determined in the range of the thematic focus, time, and geographical status, and importance in the significance had been underlined the academic, policy, practical, and comparative contributions of the study. Lastly, the chapter pre-established the structure of the thesis and gave the reader a trail map to the other chapters. Generally, Chapter One sets the grounds on which a careful study of the issue of how LGBTQ+ identities are represented in Christian television sermons in Ghana is to be conducted.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a literature review of theoretical and empirical evidence that can be used in the study of LGBTQ+ identity representation in Christian sermons in Ghana. The chapter begins by discussing major theoretical approaches- Representation Theory, Framing Theory and Queer Theory- which offer the analytical means of studying meaning-making, discursive organisation, and the critique of heteronormativity. It subsequently summarises empirical research on LGBTQ+ media coverage across the world, continent, and within Ghana itself, stating both the progress and still permeating constraints. The role of the religious media is paid particularly close attention, and yet, it is one area that has under-been studied despite its major impact on the moral discourse relevance in Ghana. The chapter sets out the intellectual justification of the proposed study and shows how the proposed framework bridges the conceptual gaps and links theory, questions to research and methodology.

#### **2.2 Conceptualizing Sermons and Morality**

Sermons hold a central place in the worship and communication within the Christian faith; it is the main channel through which the church leaders unpack the scripture and dictate moral behavior. Traditionally, preaching has been considered the most significant way of how Christian values are passed down to a new generation (Webster, 2013; Beville, 2008). Instead of repeating biblical stories, sermons re-contextualise the bible to apply to modern issues, thus providing the believers with guidelines on how to make ethical choices in their daily living. In Ghana, where Christianity has been highly integrated into the social structure, preaching does

not just serve the spiritual admonition of the congregation but also serves as a tool of social control and cultural guidance.

Sermons have a long-established moral role that has been recognized in theology. Sermons are prescriptive in nature as Stott (2014) notes that sermons are structured to be instructive, corrective and to guide congregants on certain behavioural norms. In this sense, sermons are normative texts, where it determines norms of what is right and wrong in the community of faith. This prescriptive nature is understood especially in the Pentecostal traditions where preaching is not just about individual righteousness but also the national identity, culture and policy. Ghanaian Pentecostal sermons often incorporate a method of biblical exegesis and commentary on political and cultural trends, making them an easy fit between a religious and a civic discourse (Meyer, 2015).

This moral role can be enhanced by the broadcasting of sermons on television which expands the audience of the physical congregation. According to De Witte (2003), the televised sermons in Ghana make religious messages an event mass-mediated and accessible to people who might never set foot inside a church. With the television sermons are given a wider role in the community, where moral consciousness takes a national direction. Their visual and performative nature (e.g. gesticulation, facial expression, stage design) also adds to the persuasive effect, turning televised sermons into not just sound but a multimodal experience (Meyer, 2015). This performativity reiterates the importance of studying sermons as multifaceted communicative practices that integrate media tactics with theological power.

Speaking of the LGBTQ+ matters, sermons serve as the potent means of defining the limits of ethical acceptability. Speaking of scriptures and divine authority preachers depict LGBTQ+ identities either as the unacceptable morally or as undermining the family and national values. Since sermons are perceived by the audience as being a source of authoritative moral direction,

such messages have far-reaching consequences regarding the perception and treatment of LGBTQ + members in Ghanaian society. By framing sermons as a form of moral speech, the suggested analysis will enable this study to understand how Christian television discusses LGBTQ+ issues beyond the cultural discourse but as something that is divinely mandated. This way, sermons can be considered as key texts to examine religion-meets-media-meets-moral phenomena in modern Ghana.

## **2.3 Theoretical Literature Review**

### ***2.3.1 Representation Theory***

Representation theory was developed by Stuart Hall and it is based on the assumption that media are not the inactive passive transmitters of the reality but, instead, active participants of meaning-making systems of language, image, and symbols (Hall, 1997). In this context, representation can be explained as the process of making social groups and identities visible or invisible, praised or stigmatised. Marginalised groups often adopt stereotypes and omissions or reduceable framing in media contexts to justify social inequalities (Dyer, 2013). According to scholars, these representations define the perception of the population, as they make some discourses dominant and suppress other storeys (Machin & Mayr, 2023). In this analysis, the theory is especially instrumental in questioning how the LGBTQ+ identities are constructed in Ghanaian Christian television as an element of sermon, whereby the theory of representation can be applied to the discursive content, as well as what is systematically left out of the discourse and therefore remains hidden.

Representation theory has been widely utilised in global scholarship with respect to media representations of marginalised groups, such as ethnic minorities, migrants, and sexual minorities (McInroy and Craig, 2017; Grey, 2020). In media LGBTQ+ studies, it has been

demonstrated that the visibility frequently requires the stereotyping of the images, i.e., the queer characters are either stereotyped or positioned as problematic (Sender, 2012). Nevertheless, critics observe that the theory of representation that has been produced in Euro-American settings runs risks of universalizing western types of identity and visibility (Nyamnjoh, 2010). Cultural and religious structures have a more important influence on the African context in which discourses of morality and sexuality are constructed, in other words, that there is representation in other symbolic orders than the Western societies. Therefore, although social representations theory offers methods of analytical approaches to study of meaning-making, its use in Ghana should be sensitive to local religious and cultural realities.

In this paper, representation theory will be used to examine how sermons on PENT TV create LGBTQ+ identities, whether they are framed as sinners, outsiders, or as titers of values to the cultural values, and in what way those frames can form social meaning. In particular, it will aid in determining the most visible (e.g., direct mention, images, scriptural examples) and the most invisible ones (e.g., silence, erasure, refusal to recognise LGBTQ+ identities as legitimate research topics). Through this theory, the paper has placed Christian television as a cultural production location whereby social categories are being created and challenged.

### ***2.3.2 Framing Theory***

Framing theory, based on Goffman (1974) and developed by Entman (1993) underlines the role of media in defining meaning by choosing some part of reality and focusing it in communication. Frames can give interpretive schemas under which audiences interpret issues and frequently encourage causes, blame, or offer solutions (Chong, Druckman, 2007). Framing theory can be applied in religious broadcasting to understand how sermons and faith-based programmes frame LGBTQ+ identities not just as represented, but as informed by narrative structures that govern interpretation on the audience side. As an illustration, LGBTQ+ identities

can be presented as wicked deviations that need to be repented, as western cultural imports subject to African culture, or as a social threat that needs to be defended against family values.

Researchers have shown how framing can be used to shape the views people have towards marginalised groups, especially concerning controversial issues in the society. Diagnostic frames are often characterised as identification problems, prognostic frames as suggested solutions, and motivational frames as urging action (Snow and Benford, 1988; Matthes, 2012). Recent research on African media singles out the way LGBTQ+ topics are structured, with moral panic and culture nationalism as the dominant framing modes, with religion being a primary matter of legitimacy (Meijer, 2022; Baisley, 2015). The empirical research has, however, focused a great deal on political speeches and news reports, and sermons, a potent source of framing moral matters, has been under-researched. This restricts our knowledge of the functioning of framing in overtly religious situations where theological power holds some weight.

In this analysis, the framing theory will be operationalised by coding the sermon content. Some of these frames that will be used in examining verbal and non-verbal part of PENTT TV sermons will include the frame of sin and immorality, foreign influence frame and family protection frame. The diagnostic prognostic and motivational aspects of the theory will be applied to unravel how sermons not merely narrate the LGBTQ+ identities but actually prescribe behaviour in the form of exclusion, conversion, or legislative changes. When employed in this manner, the study shows that Christian television creates interpretive paths that predispose the audience and can potentially shape their sociopolitical attitudes toward the LGBTQ+ communities in Ghana.

### *2.3.3 Queer Theory*

The development of queer theory began in the 1990s as a critical theory to challenge the heteronormativity of the social institutions, discourse, and categories of identities. Based on the writings of Judith Butler (1990), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990), and Michael Foucault (1978) queer theory is based on the assumption that there are no fixed sexual identities and that it is performative in character. Fundamentally, queer theory tries to upset a normative binary (heterosexual/homosexual, male/female) and expose the ways that these categories are posed through discourse and relations of power. Queer theory has also been applied to media studies to criticise the manner in which narratives promote heterosexuality and marginalise queer identities by either actively demonising them or simply being silent and erased (Halperin, 2024).

The use of queer theory in the African world has become controversial, whereas in Western academia it has played an important role. Sceptics believe that it threatens to impose Western ideals of sexuality that may not be relevant to the local cultural and religious epistemologies (Seely, 2020; Jagose, 1996). Nonetheless, other academics argue that queer theory can be useful in the study of how heteronormativity is perpetuated by religious and cultural institutions, such as the church and faith-based media (Asante et al., 2024). In Ghana, where a religious discussion is one of the most influential models of determining morality, the queer theory is especially salient to investigate in the development of LGBTQ+ identities as outlives and incongruent with the national culture. However, the theory needs to be used reflexively with both admitting the insights and limitations in non-Western settings.

This research utilises queer theory as a critical approach to challenge the construction of LGBTQ+ identities in Christian television sermons surrounding LGBTQ+ identities by exclusion, erasure, or demonization. It helps the researcher challenge not only the representation of LGBTQ+ people, but also their existence as an issue of contention in theology.

Queer theory, by pre-empting questions about visibility and power, helps to complete the statement of representation and framing, providing more information about the ideological foundation of religious broadcasting. In particular, it will conceptualise the examination of the application of heteronormative assumptions in sermons and how these assumptions operate to justify exclusionary theological frames in Ghanaian society.

#### ***2.3.4 Religious Theory: Homiletics and the Theology of Preaching***

Homiletics theory, broadly defined as an art and theological art of preaching does not consider sermons as acts of rhetoric, but an act of theology when by the sermon God is made known to the congregation (Long, 2005). Sermons also have a halo of divine authorship, as opposed to secular media texts, which are traditionally perceived to be scripturally inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit. This is the theological aspect that lends to sermons a unique persuasive force and makes them the heart of the moral and spiritual training of Christian communities.

The theology of preaching underlines the idea that sermons should perform both didactic and prescriptive roles. Stott (2014) claims that preaching is the exposition of biblical truth in a manner that appeals to the contemporary life providing clear directions on how Christians should live. In this way, sermons are a mixture of scriptural exegesis and moral teaching, thus making the preacher an epiphanous as well as a moral overseer. In Pentecostal churches, sermons are also described as invigoration experiences with Godly power, frequently charismatic, emotional, and appealing to shared identity (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2004). These qualities reinforce the impressions of sermons as ultimate pronouncements that not only influence the formation of religious faith but also the social behavior.

Applying the religious theory to LGBTQ+ discourse, it is possible to identify that sermons are not mere products of the media but theological interventions, which have a moral purpose. Inappropriately defining LGBTQ+ identities as sinful or incompatible with Christian morality,

preachers are acting out of a theological context that the audience believes to be authoritative. As a result, sermons play a critical role in comprehending the purpose of Christian television in shaping the morality of the people in Ghana. This study integrates the media concepts and homiletics in order to identify sermons as cultural texts and sacred precepts, subsequently embracing their dual nature in determining discourse and dictating moral behavior.

## **2.4 Empirical Literature Review**

### ***2.4.1 Global Studies on Media Representation of LGBTQ+ Identities***

Studies in the Western and Global North have exhibited repeatedly that how media presents LGBTQ+ identities has a profound effect on how people see and engage with these concepts of social inclusion. The initial researches emphasised the lack of queers in popular media, and the propensity to degrade to stereotypes, including the effete gays or the hyper sexualized lesbians (Gross, 2001). This invisibility served as a cultural erasure that bolstered heteronormativity by portraying the lives of LGBTQ+ as being peripheral or deviant. Subsequent research has recorded an increasing inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters in TV, film, and advertising programmes, which the researchers noted does not invariably indicate equity (Gonta et al., 2017). The depiction of queers was usually nondimensional, and characters were either given minor parts or characterised exclusively by sexuality (McInroy & Craig, 2017). These results emphasise the need to not only question the presence of LGBTQ+ individuals in representation, but also the way they are depicted.

More current studies around the world show an inclination to be more diverse in LGBTQ+ stories, though they also reflect the challenges that still exist. Popular culture representations of queers in Europe and the United States have grown by offering greater diversity in the identity and relations in mainstream television and streaming platforms (Gillig and Murphy, 2016; Sender, 2012). However, in studies, these figures tend to focus on the white, cisgender,

middle-class, gay males, marginalising other identities, including trans, bisexual, or queer people of colour (Hicks, 2019). The insistence of such restricted visibility implies that even though some progress in the terms of representation has been achieved, this progress is uneven and can recreate hierarchies within LGBTQ+ communities. Moreover, researchers believe that turning queer into a commodity of media companies can weaken the radicalism of queer visibility due to their possible transformation into marketable consumer representations (Grey, 2020).

Global scholarship is also focused on the impacts of representation on the attitudes and behaviour of the audience. Survey and experimental studies indicate that prejudice can be decreased, and rights backing can be increased by exposure to positive LGBTQ+ portrayals and worsened by negative or stereotypical portrayals that reinforce stigma (Gonta et al., 2017; Gillig and Murphy, 2016). Notably, it is these effects, which are mediated by existing cultural and religious values, which implies that media impact is contextual. Although this research can be extremely helpful, it is critically biased, primarily, representing Western liberal democracies in which legal rights are guaranteed, and LGBTQ+ movements are well-developed. This means that their results cannot without scrutiny be extrapolated to Africa, where media regimes are influenced by other cultural logics and where religious authority plays a larger centre-stage in the public discourse.

There is a serious gap in global scholarship that neglects explicitly religious media. Although entertainment, news, and advertising have been commonly studied, less consensus indeed has been put on sermons, faith-based broadcasting, or religious digital platforms. However, these tend to be major providers of moral teachings and identity making in religiously inclined societies. Therefore, global studies, which offer conceptual instruments (e.g., visibility, stereotyping, and commodification), will have to be adjusted whenever applicable to religious

broadcasting in various contexts such as Ghana, where Christian TV is a leading agent in influencing discourses about sexuality.

#### ***2.4.2 Religious Media and LGBTQ+ Representation in Africa***

In African settings, religious media have become focal points in how they structure the debates on the rights of LGBTQ+ people, and in many cases, it has been playing a role where theological authority meets with the political speech. A paper by Ogwo et al., (2013) indicates that sermons and faith-based initiatives often portray identities of LGBTQ+ as a form of moral danger, situating this stance through scripture-justified rhetoric that legitimises act of exclusion. Such framing is that of LGBTQ+ issues as not only a question of personal morality but as an existential menace to national culture and family principles. The studies of sermons and religious talk shows indicate that there is a common resort to the frames of sin, foreign contamination, and family protection (Thoreson, 2014). Such frames frequently mobilise viewers to promote the restrictive laws, which can be seen as an example of how religious broadcasting is connected with the political campaigns against LGBTQ+ rights.

Most importantly, the African literature highlights how religious media has organised a moral panic. The author suggests that those broadcasts in religion raise the opportunity of fearing the visibility of the LGBTQ+ group to a more intense level (Asante et al., 2024; Brown, 2023). According to the writer, the concept of queer identities is presented as a kind of contagion that might interfere with the established order in society. The political economy of media intensifies this panic by making religious stations compete against each other by focusing on their moral uniqueness in order to gain viewers. In Nigeria, Pentecostal television stations, in turn, contextualise homosexuality as a sign of the Western culture of imperialism, and strengthen the postcolonial fears of sovereignty and cultural identity (Ogwo et al., 2013). The same can be seen in East Africa, where clergy mobilise masses against pro-LGBTQ+ changes through the aid of broadcasting platforms (Judge, 2024). These results highlight the fact that, in African

settings, religious media are not only spiritual instruments, but also political powers that influence the national discourse.

In spite of these revelations, there are still gaps. Much of the literature is concerned with elite discourse, e.g., politicians, high-profile pastors, or religious associations, and not the systematic analysis of everyday sermon broadcasts. Furthermore, the body of African queer media scholarship is rich in thin slices that remain limited to case studies in particular countries without international comparison (Asante et al., 2024; Brown, 2023). Methodologically, the studies are inclined to use discourse analysis without strict coding of frequency, tone or multimodal signs like the visual symbols and on-screen text. This makes replication of the findings less replicable and decreases their use in media policy or training interventions. Moreover, although researchers are keen to give attention to the stigmatising nature of religious media, we do not find the incidences of inclusive and alternative theological voices, something that may make the mainstream narrative of exclusion hard to challenge.

In the current study, their limitations demonstrate that there is a need to systematically analyse Christian television sermons in Ghana on a multimodal scale. Equally by coding verbal and visual materials, and by placing the results in context of the overall discourse of religious broadcasting, this study will contribute to African scholarship and fill the gaps in its methodologies. It will also add to conversations on media ethics and regulation, providing empirical evidence on how religious stations produce LGBTQ + identities, and how those identities affect inclusion and policy.

#### ***2.4.3 Ghana-Specific Literature on Media, Religion, and Sexuality***

Studies in Ghana connects to the dominant role that Christianity plays in the national culture and morality, as the religious discourse is often used to influence political and social agenda discussions. Targeting especially Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have proliferated on

television and radio and have become institutions in civic discussion and ordinary life (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013; Gifford, 2009). Framing some social issues: Religious broadcasting involves not only a place of worship but is also one of the crucial vehicles of framing social issues like family life, morality and sexuality. The studies help to primarily understand that the Ghanaian Christian leadership tends to focus on its platforms to present arguments against the LGBTQ+ identities, making the discourse on morality consistent with cultural nationalism (Baisley, 2015). This generates an effective discursive nexus resulting in an intersection between religion, media, and politics to govern social norms.

Empirical reports have pointed out that the societal sense about the LGBTQ+ identities in Ghana does not lean toward any positive position but finds most of its influence through the religious and cultural discourse. The hypothesis that over 90% of Ghanaians are disapproving of same-sex relationships, and many of them provide Christian teaching as the reason behind their views (Dionne & Dulani 2013). Meijer (2022) illustrates the ways in which Ghanaian sermons and pastoral rhetoric support this conservatism by presenting a way of positioning the issues relating to LGBTQ+ behaviours as being moral corruption and existential nemeses of Ghanaian family values. These discussions tend to draw on theological arguments which naturalise heterosexuality as God-imposed and frame non-heteronormative identities as an alien import. Arthur (2024), also, explicates that the importance of political religious broadcasting is further stressful because religious media in Ghana are a common arena where people discuss, legitimise, and normalise their theological understanding of morality.

Despite these observations, most of the Ghanaian literature is engaged in the integration of elite discourse such as parliamentary discourses, party remarkable, or pastoral declarations as opposed to structured content analysis of televised sermons. Available research on religious broadcasting adequately contextualises the role of churches using the media to spread their influence (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013), yet does not analyse the content (sermons) to reflect on the

frequency, tone, and framing of LGBTQ+ identities. Besides, the bulk of the media analysis conducted in Ghana tends to focus either on the secular press or social media activism, leaving a major gap in analysing the news on Christian television. This difference is especially relevant under the condition that sermons are not the one-time occurrence, but ritualization practises that establish moral horizons among audiences.

As far as the current study is concerned, the Ghanaian literature confirms the topicality of the investigation of Christian broadcasting as the area of moral authority and the lack of existing empirical research on sermon content. This study transcends previous intermingling accounts of the role of religion in social life, and through a systematised examination of televised discourse by sermons broadcast through PENTT TV, offers fine-grained statistics on the representation of LGBTQ+ identities in regularly delivered religious messages. This is critical to the relationship between media ethics, policy and the opinion of the people in the societal religious environment of Ghana.

#### ***2.4.4 Identified Gaps in the Empirical Literature***

In the global, African and Ghanaian literature, there are prominent gaps that would lead to the study being present. The first significant loophole is that there is no systematic study on religious broadcasting (sermons specifically) as a place of representation. Although entertainment, news, and advertising have been thoroughly studied globally (Gonta et al., 2017; McInroy and Craig, 2017), religious media have not been investigated and analysed in detail, particularly in Africa. This exclusion is crucial since in places such as Ghana, Christian broadcasting can be far more influential on moral matters of the people than the secular news media. By Excluding interrogating sermons, researchers face the risk of ignoring the role of mass-mediated theology in influences over perceptions of LGBTQ + identities.

A second gap is in the methodological limitation of prior research. African studies often use discourse analysis of pronouncements of the elite or coverage of policy discussions without codifying the frequency, tone, and multimodality of the broadcast information (Ogwo et al., 2013; Brown, 2023). There is a dearth of studies that codify frames (e.g. sin, foreign influence, family protection) into repeated coded categories. Such lack of methodological rigour hampers comparative work and undermines the possibility of correlating findings and regulatory debate. In comparison, systematic content analysis of sermons with the addition of critical discourse analysis would offer solid grounds of media ethics and policy interventions.

A third stolen spot is that of N-scanty integration of the media ethics and regulatory views. Whereas in Ghana the National Media Commission stipulates that there should be fairness and non-discrimination, there has been a dearth of empirical research that links sermon content to regulatory operations. Such disconnect makes it impossible to prepare specialised training or theological ethic in relation to ethical broadcasting by regulators and theological institutions (Outright International, 2023).

Lastly, there is a more widespread geographic and even conceptual imbalance in the literature. African queer media research is also fragmented, including little empirical data about Ghana, as well as little attempts to compare the countries (Epprecht, 2008; Judge, 2024). The overlap of visual symbolism and peritexts with verbal rhetoric in sermons is also under-researched, although tele-preaching is multimodal (Machin and Mayr, 2023). The current research paper fills these gaps because it provides an empirical investigation into the sermons of PENT TV in Ghana based on a multimodal coding model that relies on representation, framing, and queer theory. By so doing, it does not only close a national research gap but also helps in making comparative and methodological progress in African studies of the media.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

Representation Theory, Framing Theory, and Queer Theory are combined to implement the conceptual framework that will determine the process of LGBTQ+ identity construction in the context of Ghanaian Christian tele-evangelical sermons. The structure of Representation Theory offers the principles of study concerning the creation of meanings and the process of social perceptions instigated by visibility, stereotypes, and silences. Framing Theory describes the organisation of the discourse into interpretive packages used in sermons like sin, family values, or foreign influence providing categories of codes that can be systematically analysed. Queer Theory develops a critical eye to question both heteronormativity, marginalisation, and power relations within theological accounts. As shown in the framework diagram, every theory is informed directly by one or more research questions, so there is a direct correspondence in theory, method, and objectives. They can combine and provide a triangulated analysis methodology to understand not only the incidence and cadence of LGBTQ+ presentation but also the theological and ethical internalisation of the Ghanaian society.

THEORETICAL LENSES

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

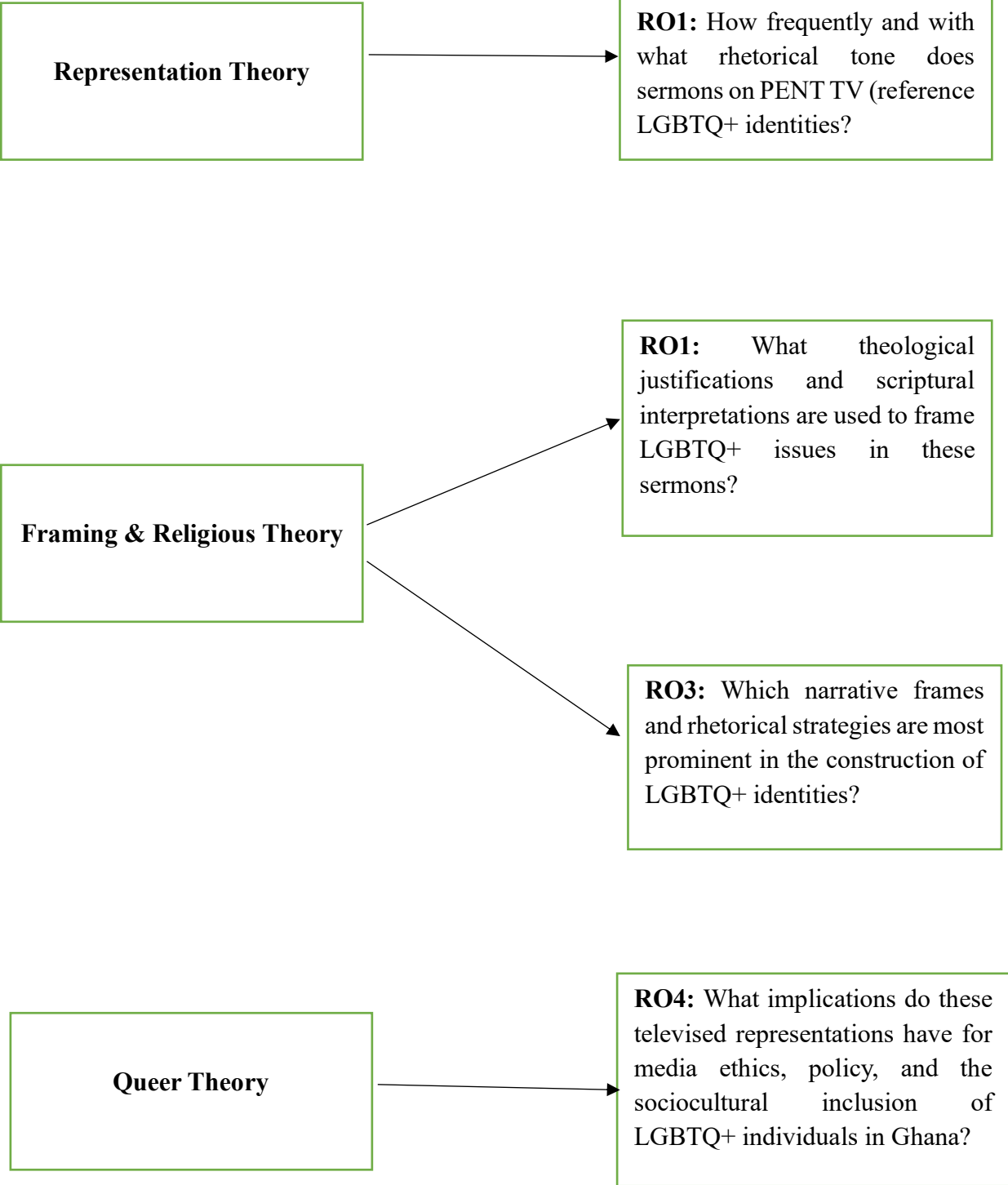


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Construct

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

The chapter has examined both theoretical and empirical literature on the topic that is applicable towards comprehending the challenges of representation of LGBTQ+ identity in Nigeria crusader sermons within the Ghanaian context. The theoretical discussion was also panelled with Representation Theory, Framing Theory and Queer Theory that present rather different types of analytical tools to understanding the construction of meaning, how discourse is ordered and how that discourse is critiqued of heteronormative exclusions in religious broadcasting. The empirical literature tracked the international scholarship on representation of LGBTQ+ in media, discussed both the success of making queer more visible and still draws stereotypes, before analysing the African and Ghanaian studies that emphasise on the leading role of religious language in shaping attitudes towards morality and politics of sexuality. Common gaps were found across these bodies of literature, such as omission of religious broadcasting as an empirical site, underutilised systemic content analysis of sermons, and inadequate incorporation of media ethics and media implications. In turn, the study aligns its conceptual framework into receiving its triangulated approach that incorporates the strengths of the three theories operationalizing them to map the direction in separately coding, analysing, and interpreting televised sermons. This chapter therefore offers the intellectual grounds along with the justification needed to rely on the subsequent methodology, so that the claim made by the analysis that follows is theoretically strong, and contextually under-pinned, and focused on using the existing knowledge gaps, which have been defined.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted to investigate how sermons broadcast on PENT-TV frame LGBTQ+ issues within Ghana's socio-religious context. It outlines the research approach, design, population, sampling, data sources, data collection tools and processes, methods of analysis, and ethical considerations that guided the study.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

This research methodology is qualitative in nature which falls within the paradigms of interpretivism and critical paradigms. Such orientation is suitable since the investigation aims at identifying meanings, discourses and representations instead of statistically quantifying variables. Sermons are discursively constitutive and performative texts that create moral limits, theological power, and social subjectivities. Qualitative approach allowed the researcher to unravel these meanings, decode rhetorical strategies and place them in socio-religious context of Ghana (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Moreover, the research is guided by the critical theory, especially Representation Theory, Framing Theory, Queer Theory, and Homiletics. These hypothetical paradigms focus on the questioning of power, identity and discourse. The qualitative interpretivist position allows the research to recognize that knowledge is a social construction, sermons are not neutral texts but are means of moral persuasion and cultural authority (Silverman, 2021). This enables the gaining of a better insight into the way in which Christian television constructs the LGBTQ+

identities and helps to expand the wider arguments about the morality, inclusion, and exclusion in Ghana.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The study design was founded on qualitative analysis using content and discourse analysis, which were complimented by multimodal and homiletical analysis. The systematic approach to identifying themes, frames, and rhetorical tones in sermons is offered by content analysis whereas discourse analysis enables analyzing how language, theology, and cultural allusions shape LGBTQ+ identities. Multimodal analysis is also included to address the visual/symbolic aspects of televised sermons including gestures, stage design, and liturgical rhythm to strengthen verbal communication (Machin & Mayr, 2023).

This design was ideal since sermons cannot simply be spoken texts but performative events which is an integration of theological authority and media strategies (Yin, 2018). The study encapsulates the complexity of the televised preaching by incorporating content, discourse, multimodal, and homiletic analysis as religious communication and cultural production. This layered structure will make certain that all the research questions, about the tone of rhetoric, framing, theological validation, and multimodal strategies, are subject to theoretically sound and thorough research.

### **3.4 Population and Sampling**

#### ***3.4.1 Population***

The study identifies two distinct populations:

1. Sermon Population:

The initial population is the entire Sunday evening services on PENT-TV in 2024. PENT-TV programs weekly services, which are 52 sermons altogether. These sermons are noteworthy since these are the sermons by senior leaders of the Church of Pentecost and these people have the moral and theological authority in the Ghanaian society. The total number of 52 sermons constitute the entire population of airing preaching occasions in the year.

## 2. Producer Population:

The second population comprise PENT-TV producers that schedule, produce, and transmitted Sunday services. They are the ones who identify the sermons to be aired and the packaging of sermons to be shown to the television viewers. The population involved in producing the programs is 18 people such as programme directors, transmission officers, and scheduling personnel.

### ***3.4.2 Sampling***

The study employed purposive sampling to select both sermons and producers.

#### **1. Sermon Sampling:**

Out of 52 sermons that represented the population, 9 of them were purposely chosen by the study and aired between March and May in 2024. This period was selected due to two primary reasons:

1. It was accompanied by Parliamentary discussions of the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill (Anti-LGBTQ Bill).
2. During this period, the church leaders promulgated publicly in the newspapers and media, with their sermons following national dialogue on sexuality and morality.

All 9 sermons within this timeframe were included in the sample, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the period.

2. Producer Sampling:

Out of the population, 10 individuals were selected for the interview which consisted of 3 preachers, 2 MCs, 1 program manager, 2 producers and 2 directors. The selection of these individuals was based on the fact that the individuals had first hand influence on what is included in the programmes, and gave them an insight on institutional choices made in relation to broadcasting sermons.

Table 3.1: Population and Sample

<b>Population Type</b>	<b>Total Population (2024)</b>	<b>Sample Selected (March–May 2024)</b>	<b>Sampling Method</b>
Sermons (Sunday Evening Services on PENT-TV)	52 sermons (January–December 2024)	9 sermons (March–May 2024)	Purposive Sampling
Production team (Ministering and Transmission Staff)	18 individuals	10 individuals	Purposive Sampling

*Source: Author’s Construct*

**3.5 Sources of Data**

Two major data sources were used in the research. The primary data included of 9 televised sermons aired in 2024 on PENT-TV, between March and May. The choices of these sermons were made intentionally to coincide with increased national discussions about the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill (the Anti-LGBTQ Bill). The broadcasts

provided textual, audiovisual and symbolic content, which can be analyzed by offering content, as presented by senior followers of the Church of Pentecost, whose moral and theological authority makes their sermons especially powerful in their impact on the opinion of the population.

The secondary data included interviews with three producers at PENT-TV who were in charge of scheduling and transmission, publications of the church, press releases and newspaper reports of the same time. These sources provided the contextual information on institutional decision-making and general conversations about LGBTQ+ issues. Combined, the assortment of primary and secondary data offered a very detailed ground to the triangulation of results and so that the study both embraced the content of sermons and the institutional and societal background within which these were created.

### **3.6 Data Collection Tools**

A number of tools were used to collect data in a systematic way. The audio-video recordings of the chosen sermons were acquired in person on PEN-TV and stored in reserve to study. Every sermon was word by word transcribed in order to enable the textual coding and discourse analysis. Also, the analysis focused on observing and watching the sermons. That can provide valuable insights into non-verbal cues, tone, gestures and delivery style. Semi-structured interview guides were made and distributed to producers with a particular emphasis on the role in programming and the attitude towards LGBTQ+ content. Moreover, statements of church and press reports were gathered and observed systematically as document-protocols with document-analysis processes. These devices guaranteed that the research both recorded the verbal and written aspects of the discourse and also the institutional prism of programming choices.

### **3.7 Data Collection Process**

#### ***3.7.1 Content Analysis***

Data-collection was guided through a systematic process, in order to ensure the accuracy and reliability. To do this, all Sunday-evening sermons provided between March and May 2024 were loaded into the archives of PEN-TV and recorded. Each sermon was transcribed to text and transcripts were compared with recordings by cross-checking to be sure.

#### ***3.7.2 Interview Procedures***

In this study, the interviews were conducted over a five-day period from 4th December to 8th December 2025, following carefully planned procedures to ensure consistency and reliability. Prior to each session, participants were contacted and briefed on the purpose of the research, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses, after which informed consent was obtained. The interviews were scheduled at times convenient for respondents, mostly in the late mornings and early afternoons, and held in quiet, private settings such as homes and church offices to minimize distractions. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and one hour, beginning with rapport-building introductions before moving into semi-structured questions guided by an interview schedule that covered themes from the literature review, including attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Probing questions were used to elicit deeper reflections, while notes and audio recordings (with consent) ensured accuracy of data capture. At the close of each session, participants were invited to share additional comments, thanked for their contributions, and reassured of the confidentiality of their input, after which the data were transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis.

### **3.8 Methods and Instruments for Data Analysis**

The research utilized a multidimensional analytical platform to meet the research goals. Sermon content was coded by content analysis in terms of the frequency and rhetoric tonality of LGBTQ+ references, and categories were: condemnation, silence or avoidance, moral framing, and family values appeals (Machin & Mayr, 2023). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was adopted to discuss how language was employed to construct LGBTQ+ identities as something that posed moral, sin, or cultural threat. The use of framing analysis to establish prevailing frames included; sin and immorality, threat to family, and national identity under attack.

Theological analysis justification also utilized references to scriptures and theological reasoning showing how biblical authority was used to justify specific stands. Multimodal analysis examined the visual and symbolic messages (gestures, stage design, liturgical rhythm and symbolic use) that supported verbal messages. Homiletic analysis viewed sermons as prescriptive moral liturgies with an emphasis on their theological intent, liturgical rhythms and rhetorical styles.

NVivo software was used in coding. The analysis was theoretically anchored with a coding framework that was based on Representation Theory, Framing Theory, Queer Theory, and Homiletics (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Peer debriefing and reflexive journaling were used to reduce researcher bias and make the findings more credible.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

#### ***3.9.1 Informed Consent***

All the participants were given a full briefing regarding the purpose, scopes as well as the details of the procedures used during the investigation before the start of interviews. They were notified of their liberty to refuse to participate or pull out at any stage they consider without suffering

any drawback. Both written and verbal consent was received thus making the respondents to be willing to reveal their experiences. This observation process preserved personal autonomy and allowed the participants the right to make an informed choice on whether to participate.

### ***3.9.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity***

In order to maintain the anonymity of the respondents, pseudonymous identifiers were used in transcripts and final report. No personal identifiers (namely, names, addresses, or any other contact information) were included in the final documents. The recorded data on audio tapes and field notes were kept in safe depositories only accessible to the primary investigator. This will have provided confidentiality to sensitive data and privacy of all those participating in the research process.

### ***3.9.3 Voluntary Participation***

The involvement in the study was voluntary. At any time, the respondents were reminded about their right to remain silent to any question that they felt uneasy about and end the interview any time. This overt stress avoided coercion, and made contributions to be sincere. Encouragement of voluntary involvement ensured the moral aspect of the study and led to the establishment of trust between the researcher and respondents.

### ***3.9.4 Minimization of Harm***

The study design was not aimed at inflicting psychological, social, or emotional damage. The interview questions were also put across in a sensitive manner especially when it comes to the case of personal health, moral beliefs or culturally relevant stigma. In case the participants became uncomfortable, the researcher used questions that were softened or slowed down to alleviate the distress. This responsible manner helped to make the process of data collection respectful and reduced the possible damage.

### ***3.9.5 Ethical Approval***

The ethics committee of the corresponding institution reviewed and approved the research protocol before starting the data collection. This approval testified to the fact that the study complied with the accepted human participant research ethical guidelines. Compliance with the institutional requirements enhanced the validity of the research and at the same time showcased the adherence to professional research standards.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study. First, it outlines the research methodology and design in which qualitative multimodal content analysis of sermons is merged with semi-structured interviews in order to obtain a comprehensive view of the research problem. The population and sampling methods are outlined, and sample of the Special Sunday Evening Service sermons aired between 31st March to 26th May 2024 and 10 individuals interviewed. Comprehensive data descriptions, data collection tools, and procedures are followed by a description of the data analysis tools and techniques i.e., multimodal content analysis and thematic data analysis. Aspects of ethics have been addressed with an emphasis on the study being committed to confidentiality, informed consent, and respect of its participants. All these methodological choices are aimed, in a collective way, to match the goals and research questions of the study in question and provide a solid basis to further analysis and interpretation of research results.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the content analysis conducted on sermons drawn from the *Special Sunday Service* programme aired on PENT TV between 3rd March 2024 and 26th May 2024, excluding 7th April 2024 when no service was broadcast. The chapter analyses how these sermons frame morality, Christian identity, transformation, repentance, spiritual accountability, and silence on LGBTQ+ issues. Results are supported with direct quotations and interpreted through the study's theoretical lenses.

#### 4.2 Nature and Description of program

The Sunday Special Service Program is a an hour and half minute live program which is aired on PENT TV and, simultaneously, on Zoom, at 18:30 through 20:00 every Sunday week. The service begins with an opening prayer, which creates a serious atmosphere and puts the participants of the service in a spiritual state of readiness to later action. This is followed by a phase of worship and praise where people in the congregation are involved in singing as well as in shows of devotion. The worship session is both a spiritual work out and a community ceremony that enables oneness and sense of mission among the participants.

After worship, a major sermon is given, which forms the teaching and motivational core of the show. After the preaching, all join in prayer once more, emphasizing the message and requesting a feeling of Godly direction. The service moves into the songs of gratitude and praise and is a celebratory and reflective conclusion to the spiritual experience. Lastly, the program will culminate with a closing prayer, which indicates the end of organized activities and guides

participants to leave the place with a feeling of blessings and community fulfilment. Such arrangement; prayer, worship, sermon, prayer, thanksgiving, and closing prayer shows a holistic methodology which combines piety, education, and community feast in the given time frame.

### **4.3 Frequency and Rhetorical Tone of LGBTQ+ References**

#### ***4.3.1 Frequency of References***

The analysis of the sermons aired by the PENT-TV in March-May 2024 showed that the direct mentioning of LGBTQ+ identities was extremely uncommon. Among the 9 sermons reviewed, only two of them were directly referring to LGBTQ + people. The rest of the sermons did not mention these identities but rather replaced them with general ethical categories like immorality, ungodly behaviour or sexual impurity. Such a calculated replacement implies that preachers were careful enough to solve the problems of LGBTQ+ not directly, but rather to conceal them in more inclusive moral discourses, which will be relevant to the congregation without targeting one specific community. This is a broader Pentecostal dissimulation in Ghana, where sensitive things are commonly discussed indirectly so as not to challenge the teaching does not cause a controversial situation in the public.

The importance of this observation lies in the fact that it shows that silence and avoidance as such act as framing devices. By failing to identify the LGBTQ+ identities directly, the sermons provide a discursive space, where LGBTQ+ identities are both present and absent at the same time; present through implications, yet absent through omission. By which this strategy enables preachers to retain moral authority as well as prevent any possible backlash of the audience or those in authority who might view direct references as discriminatory or inflammatory. Another example of the paradox of Christian broadcasting in Ghana is the androcentric way the industry

tries to pose itself as being all-inclusive and universal, while tactically trying to make sure that certain identities are never explicitly mentioned.

Table 4.1: Frequency of LGBTQ+ References in PENT-TV

Category	Frequency	Notes
Indirect “Immorality” Reference	2	Used as a broad moral category
Indirect “Ungodly behavior”	4	Framed as general moral failing
Indirect “Sexual impurity”	2	Linked to moral discipline

Source: Author’s construct

This silence was proven to be purposeful as the interviews confirmed. According to participants, institutional prescriptions were the reason that motivated indirect references toward LGBTQ+ identities, both to prevent sensationalism and to preserve an emphasis on doctrine. One participant indicated:

*“We don’t mention LGBTQ directly because it can be misunderstood. We prefer to preach about immorality in general terms.” (Programme Manager)*

Another participant emphasized the pastoral reasoning behind this choice:

*“The church wants to avoid sounding like we are attacking people. So we frame it as sin broadly, not targeting anyone.” (Senior Pastor)*

Such explanations prove that the fact that there was no direct mention was not accidental but rather a frame that had been made. The silencing in itself is a representational strategy that can make audiences views the issues of LGBTQ+ without mentioning them directly. This observation is consistent with the framing theory which appreciates omission and avoidance as strong tools of meaning creation (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013; Bediako, 1997).

### ***4.3.2 Rhetorical Tone***

In addition to frequency, the rhetorical tone of sermons demonstrated a corrective and pastoral focus and not explicit condemnation. When gay actions became discussed indirectly, it was put in the context of discourses of repentance, reconciliation and moral repair making emphasis on statement like:

*“Repentance is simply the change of mind”*

*“Repentance proves the genuineness of your faith”.*

The tone highlighted the potential of redemption, which was in line with the pastoral mission of preaching the gospel of the Pentecostal church, but also reproduced exclusion, labelling non-heteronormative identities as sinful (Gyekye, 1996; Arthur, 2024). Such heterotrophic duality is the paradox of Christian broadcasting in Ghana: the teachings of kindness and non-discrimination on the one hand, at the same time, they create constraints which do not allow the LGBTQ+ people to be fully accepted.

Indicatively, one of the sermons referred to sexual impurity as a hindrance to the divine acceptability, asking the believers to repentance and reconcile to God. The language was strong but wrapped in religious nurturing and was rather a paradox of shepherding affection and barring dogma. This means that by using this rhetorical strategy, preachers are able to reconcile being moral but appear as loving shepherds of the faith. This corrective tone is not neutral, thus, implicitly stigmatising LGBTQ+ identities by placing them in the need of redemption, thus, supporting heteronormative principles.

*“We don’t condemn outright. The message is always about repentance and coming back to God.*

*But of course, we make it clear that such lifestyles are not acceptable.” (Pastor)*

*Another participant explained the production perspective:*

*“The tone is intentional. We want to sound loving, but also firm. It’s about correction, not condemnation.” (Producer)*

These observations underscore the attentive use of rhetorical tone to achieve the apparently competing goals of pastoral care and the doctrinal fidelity. Although it is pastoral in tone, the corrective tone implicitly stigmatises non-normative identities by placing them in the role of requiring redemption (Coleman, 2000). The importance of this finding is that it demonstrates how the Christian broadcasting is made to adhere to the rules of rhetoric in order to retain power without direct disputes and enforce heteronormative beliefs in indirect, and yet, potent ways.

Collectively, these results demonstrate that PENT-TV sermons about LGBTQ+ were rare and indirect with their message being based on generalized moral categories. The rhetorical tone was corrective and pastoral in nature when it was addressed and focused on repentance as opposed to a wholesale condemnation in the form of direct criticism. According to interviews, this strategy was premeditated in terms of institutional directives and theological investment. Avoidance and silence are therefore introduced as the devices of framing, promoting the principles of heteronormativity but preserving the image of a pastoral concern. This is a synthesis that highlights the paradox of Christian broadcasting in Ghana, which has a universal mission of salvation, which also marginalizes some identities by remaining silent and correcting them in its rhetoric (Asante et al., 2024; Meyer, 2015).

The addition of this finding shows how silence may serve as a framing instrument in African Pentecostal experience, which is largely ignored in the analysis of global religiosity media. Further, it draws out the contradiction of Christian broadcasting in being inclusive in its universal mission, and being exclusive in its application of doctrines. The paradox is relevant to the ethics of media, the regulation of policies, and advocacy especially in those societies

where the religious broadcasting is endowed with great power to induce the people to debate the moral and sexual issues.

**4.4 Dominant Frames in Sermons**

**4.4.1 Moral Categories: Purity, Sin, and Ungodly Behavior**

The content analysis showed that sermons at PENT-TV tended to use general moral bins in order to indirectly situate LGBTQ+ identities. Preachers did not mention LGBTQ+ people directly but referred to as “immorality,” “ungodly behavior,” “sexual impurity,” and “corruption of the heart”. These categories were umbrella terms in which non-heteronormative identities were tacitly enclosed. It is this indirect framing which enabled preachers to continue to hold power over doctrine without having to face a social problem directly.

The recurrence of such categories shows how Pentecostal preaching establishes the moral boundaries without calling the groups that are excluded specifically. By integrating LGBTQ+ identities in de-racialized types of sin, sermons convey disapproval and deny any plausible deniability. This approach mirrors the aspects of framing theory that see categorisation as central: the wording choice preconditions the perception of moral problems in the audiences, when the particular identities are not brought up.

Table 4.2: Dominant Moral Categories Used in Sermons

Moral Category	Frequency of Occurrence
Immorality	2
Ungodly behavior	4
Sexual impurity	2

Moral Category	Frequency of Occurrence
Corruption	1

*Source: Aurthor's Construct*

Interviewees confirmed that this indirect framing was intentional. One participant indicated:

*“We use words like immorality or ungodly behavior because they cover everything. It’s safer than mentioning LGBTQ directly.” (Programme Manager)*

Another participant explained:

*“The congregation understands what we mean when we say impurity. We don’t need to spell it out.” (Senior Pastor)*

Such observations indicate that indirect fuming did not occur by chance, but it was a rhetorical intention. With generalized categories, preachers were able to prevent any possible backlash without losing neurotic support of heteronormative standards. The significance of this finding is that it shows how language can be utilized to distort the direct references and yet form the perception of the audience on morality and sexuality (Nyeck & Epprecht, 2013).

#### ***4.4.2 Repentance as Corrective Framework***

Repentance was another overriding frame. The non-normative identities that were introduced in the sermons were always seen as having to be rectified through repentance and reconciliation with God. This frame placed the LGBTQ+ as spiritually lost individuals who could be straightened as long as they returned to the biblical morality. The remedial system thus reenforced exclusion and a pastoral care theme.

This focus on repentance can be regarded as an allusion to homiletic traditions of Pentecostal speaking, in which viewpoint repentance is viewed as the sign of true faith. Since LGBTQ+

identities were explained as sinful but are redeemable through a sermon, this simultaneously stigmatises and offers conditional inclusion (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005; Baisley, 2015). The corrective frame is thus simultaneously, a theological and a social demarcation.

One participant indicated:

*“We always preach repentance. Whatever the sin, including homosexuality, the answer is to repent and return to God.” (Youth Pastor)*

Another participant added:

*“The church’s role is not to condemn but to call people back. That’s why repentance is central.” (Producer)*

These views ascertain the fact that repentance was specifically highlighted as a corrective model. Although the tone of the frame is pastoral in nature, the implicit exclusion of LGBTQ+ identities has been suggested by classifying their identities as requiring redemption. This corrective frame is thus a paradoxical one: it appears to be an act of compassion, but its compassion comes with acceptance of the heteronormative standards.

#### ***4.4.3 Civic and Social Framing: The Believer as Moral Guardian***

There were also sermons that placed Christians in the position of moral protectors of society. Preachers stressed that it was the role of believers to enforce national morality and defy practices in culture which were considered ungodly. This civic framing had put the church in the role of the protector of Ghanaian values, and drew upon religious speech to the national discussions like the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill.

In this frame, one can see the extent to which religious broadcasting goes beyond spiritual instruction and enters the realm of determining what people are saying and how they are making policy. Sermons affirm the church authority by presenting believers as moral prudents in

influencing the national discourses on the issues of sexuality and morality. The civic framing therefore relates religious discourses to larger socio-political frames, which boosts church as a source of spiritual and cultural authority.

One participant indicated:

*“We remind members that they are guardians of morality. They must stand against practices that destroy family values.” (Programme Director)*

This civic-based framing shows how the sermons mobilise the believers as a moral regulator and serves to strengthen the role of the church both in religious and national roles. It also brings out the parallel between religious speech and political activism revealing the ways in which the national identity and policy discussions of policymakers can be formed through Pentecostal broadcasting.

#### ***4.4.4 Thematic Area: Strategic Absence and Silence***

One of the most important discoveries was the strategic silence of the LGBTQ+ issues. Although sermons did not mention anything directly, their silence served the purpose of the referencing device. The silence was the means of expressing disapproval without saying it was wrong, to enable preachers to keep to moral standards but avoid labeling them as hateful or sensational.

This theme is essential since it emphasizes the power of absence as compared to the presence in setting the discourse. Literary works on communication have acknowledged silence to be a representation where omission can be used to show exclusion. The silence, in this instance, made gender and heteronormative ideas stronger even when sermons were delivered in a pastoral and nonjudgmental way.

One participant indicated:

*“Sometimes silence is better. We don’t want to sensationalize the issue, so we preach morality broadly.” (Pastor)*

Another participant explained:

“The leadership advised us not to mention LGBTQ directly. It can cause unnecessary controversy.” (Programme Manager)

These insights prove that the silence was a planned policy, which was conditioned by the organizational regulations and the leadership impact. Silence, as used here, has a connotative meaning, i.e., exclusionary: naming LGBTQ+ identities would make them explicitly handled by sermons; nevertheless, it is also implied that they may be categorized as morally degenerate. The importance of this discovery to queer theory is that erasure and avoidance can be used as an exclusionary tool in religious media.

The prevailing frames that could be detected included moral categories, repentance, civic responsibility, and strategic silence which all created the discourses of LGBTQ+ identities as being morally deviant, spiritually wayward and socially threatening. Although these discourses are disseminated as part of pastoral care and national responsibility, they serve as sources of reinforced exclusion as LGBTQ+ persons are relegated in the periphery of acceptable Christian identity (Baisley, 2015).

These frames were intentional, as it can be proven with the help of analysing sermons and gaining insights of the interview: they were created on the basis of the rules set by the institutions and the theological vows. This observation can add value to the representation and framing theory by showing the way the use of indirect language, corrective discourses and silence are used as a framing resource of the African Pentecostal setting (Asante, 2020; Stokes and Schewe 2016). It also highlights the paradox of Christian broadcasting in Ghana: universal mission of salvation that indirectly frames out some identities and effectively silences them.

Moreover, the finding contributes to literature because it points out the peculiarity of silence as a framing tool in Ghanaian Pentecostal broadcasting. Although in global studies one can expect to see open denouncement or open address, the study demonstrates that omission and avoidance can be as effective as far as discursive construction is concerned (McDonald, 2023; Osisanwo and Alugbin 2024). This has been an important contribution as it enlarges the frame analytical file of the framing theory to encompass silence as a form of representation in action.

## **4.5 Theological and Scriptural Justifications**

### ***4.5.1 Use of Biblical Texts***

The content analysis showed that the sermons disseminated through PENT-TV regularly utilized biblical texts in the effort to support moral postures on sexuality. Both Old and New Testaments were used to provide excerpts that allowed to reinforce heteronormative paradigms and to present non-normative identities as sinful. These texts from the Bible were used in order to establish the divine authority over the moral discourse, thus portraying the concept of heterosexuality as the divine and natural order of things.

Preachers used scripture to place their sermons on a level above conjecture; by seeking to use scripture, they constructed their sermons as expressions of God. This reliance upon biblical authority indicates the role of the Pentecostal tradition in prioritizing the Bible as the ultimate source of morality and doctrines, and it illustrates how theological justification can have the effect of framing certain discourses, as it makes them appear as divinely ordained and not as those which are produced by the social world.

Table 4.3: Moral Categories Used in the Sermons and Their Implicit Implications for LGBTQ+ Framing

<b>Moral Category Emphasised in Sermons</b>	<b>Example Quotation from Sermon</b>	<b>Implicit Implication for LGBTQ+ Framing</b>
Heart Purity	<p><i>“God is interested in the condition of your heart...”</i> (24 Mar 2024)</p>	Positions moral purity as essential, implying deviations (e.g., LGBTQ+) as spiritually impure.
Deception	<p><i>“If you are not careful he can deceive you.”</i> (17 Mar 2024)</p>	Constructs deviation from Christian norms as demonic deception.
Divine Standards	<p><i>“The standards are so high.”</i> (31 Mar 2024)</p>	Reinforces traditional Christian norms as non-negotiable, implicitly excluding LGBTQ identities.
Repentance	<p><i>“Repentance proves the genuineness of your faith.”</i> (31 Mar 2024)</p>	Suggests LGBTQ+ persons must repent to align with divine standards.
Sacrifice & Acceptance	<p><i>“Your heart can negate your sacrifice.”</i> (21 Apr 2024)</p>	Frames moral impurity as rendering worship unacceptable, implying LGBTQ+ lives are incompatible with Christian holiness.

*Source: Author's Construct*

Interviewees confirmed the centrality of scripture in framing LGBTQ+ issues. One participant indicated:

*“We don't speak from our own minds. We speak from the Bible. The Bible is clear that homosexuality is sin.” (Senior Pastor)*

Another participant explained:

*“When we preach, we must show the scripture. That way, people know it is God's word, not our opinion.” (Programme Manager)*

These statements emphasize the role of theological justification as one of the means to justify exclusionary discourses. Sermons that base moral standpoints in scripture introduce elimination as something that God has instructed and as such, strengthen heteronormative standards (Davis, 2020).

#### ***4.5.2 Divine Order and Moral Absolutism***

Beyond specific texts, sermons emphasized the idea of divine order and moral absolutism. According to preachers, God fashioned man in a particular order; the male and the female and any alteration of his order was against his will. Such a theology gave strength to heteronormativity as it described heterosexual union as the only acceptable relationship.

This attention to divine order indicates a wider theology of Pentecostals, who view morality as uncompromising and absolute. The concept of sexuality presented in the framework of this absolutist paradigm rendered the LGBTQ+ identities ineligible as a subject of moral enquiry. This omission not only represented preaching as being a divine fact and therefore exempted preachers of charges of partiality; it also justified human prejudice.

One participant indicated:

*“God created man and woman. That is the divine order. Anything outside of that is against God’s plan.” (Youth Pastor)*

Another participant added:

*“We cannot compromise on morality. The Bible is absolute. If we start bending, we lose our faith.” (Producer)*

These views affirm that moral absolutism was one of the main theological defense. Sermons enhanced the excluding forms of discourses kept pastoral authority by arguing morality as an absolute and divinely ordained truth (Bainton, 1998).

#### ***4.5.3 Scriptural Authority and Institutional Guidelines***

The institutional regulations also influenced the dependency on scripture. Interviewees added that church leadership taught preachers to use bible texts in their preaching to be faithful to doctrines. This dictum strengthened scripture as the main defense of moral positions, restricting possibilities of the inclusive interpretations.

One participant indicated:

*“The leadership told us clearly: always use scripture. Don’t speak from your own ideas. That way, we remain faithful.” (Programme Manager)*

Such an institutional focus on scripture shows that theological justification is never an individual decision but rather an organizational mandate. This move, which required scriptural usage, ensured that the sermons were constantly enforcing and strengthening heteronormativity and making LGBTQ+ identities strictly defied as able to be discussed.

The findings indicate that theological and scriptural explanations played a key role in providing the frame of the LGBTQ+ issues in the PENT-TV sermons. Citing particular biblical scriptures, stressing Godly order, and following institutional rules, preachers reified exclusionary

discourses as Godly dictated. This use of scripture was used to reinforce heteronormative ideals and save preachers the accusation of being biased.

As the sermon analysis and the insights gained during an interview are combined, the argument that the theological justification was intentionally arranged in accordance with the doctrinal commitment and the institutional directive is proven (Mrowka, 2025). This observation offers knowledge to the religious theory and framing theory showing that scripture is a framing tool being used in the sermons of Pentecostals. It also highlights the irony of Christian broadcasting in Ghana: it claims to be universal and inclusive at the same time, it leaves out some identities, which it justifies out of theological reasons.

Besides, the discovery contributes to the literature in pointing out the special status of scripture in African Pentecostal broadcasting (Osisanwo and Alugin 2024; Mwita and Tchamba 2025). Although in general studies worldwide do represent cultural or political reasons, the given paper shows that theological reasons are the primary ones to bring LGBTQ+ problems to the world in Ghana. This contribution is so important that it broadens the analytical perspective of the representation theory to include scripture as a framing tool of religious media.

## **4.6 Multimodal Strategies in Sermon Delivery**

### ***4.6.1 Visual Techniques: Camera Angles, Captions, and Screen Layout***

The content analysis shows that the sermons of PENT-TV use a vast pool of visual contingencies that would strengthen moralizing discourses. The camera was used to exude authority by insightfully using camera angles where they would often zoom in on the preacher during moral exhortation. Intimacy and sense of urgency were established in the story through close-ups of the overall face of the preacher, but the sense of collectively in the moral discourse was supported by the wide-angle shots that included the congregants. The visual feed was

always overlaid with scripture captions, effectively adding to a visual reinforcement procedure of biblical references with the spoken word.

Such visual contingencies enhanced the moral authority that is displayed in the sermon. Comparing the verbal expositions with visual reinforcement, PENT-TV created the multi-modal arena where propositions about morality and sexuality were mediated orally and visually. According to this approach, it is in line with Pentecostal tendencies of an immersive worship experience, where audiovisual cues are used to increase spiritual interaction.

Table 4.4: Visual Techniques in Sermon Delivery

Visual Technique	Purpose
Close-up shots	Emphasize preacher’s authority
Wide shots	Reinforce collective participation
Scripture captions	Visual reinforcement of biblical texts
Split screens	Show preacher and scripture simultaneously

Source: Author’s Construct (2025)

Interviewees confirmed the intentional use of visual strategies. One participant indicated:

*“We use close-ups when the preacher is stressing morality. It makes the message stronger.”*

*(Director)*

Another participant explained:

*“Scripture captions are important. People may miss the verse when it’s read, but when they see it on screen, it sticks.” (Producer)*

These testimonies highlight the calculated use of visual modalities to support moral boundaries. The sermons amount to a formidable multimodal sermon that reinforces exclusionary rhetoric by combining both visual and verbal aspects.

Further, the use of split-screen and overlays insured the presence of scriptural material throughout the sermon. This methodological decision strengthened the impression that morality imperative cannot be imagined outside of the biblical authority, thus rendering exclusionary discourses as Godly endorsed. The ongoing interpolation of scripture into the visual frame served as a consistent reminder of the divine truth, which conditioned the perceptions of the audience even in the situation when lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender identities were not mentioned directly.

#### ***4.6.2 Symbolic and Gestural Cues***

Beyond visual perception, sermons also used symbolic and gestural clues to support moral messages. Preachers used hand signals often to emphasize power, pointing or picking up the Bible. There was also a difference in vocal register: the preacher changed his calm pastoral to a firmer and more commanding posture when it comes to issues of morality. The layout of the physical stage, the location of the pulpit, the use of religious iconography all served to underline the sacrality of the sermon.

These symbolic signals were non-verbal framing instruments. Through bodily performances and material signs, the preachers conveyed exclusionary information without necessarily having to judicial discourse unless through only language. This intermodal style reflects Pentecostal vision of embodied preaching when the physical presence and emblematic artefacts are part of the wording of moral truth.

One participant indicated:

*“Gestures are part of preaching. When the pastor points or raises the Bible, it shows seriousness.” (Youth Pastor)*

Another participant explained:

*“We design the stage to highlight the cross and the pulpit. It reminds viewers that morality comes from God.” (Programme Manager)*

These insights validate the use of symbolic and gestic achievements, aimed at strengthening moral authority. The sermons combine verbal, visual and the symbolic and create the multifaceted multimodal discourse that reinforces the rhetoric of exclusion (Davis, 2020). Also, the strategic use of the silence in some moments of preaching was noticed. Breaks in the speech, along with serious body language (for example, bowing of the head or raising hands) contributed to an effect of drama that supported the seriousness of moral calls. These practices were words without words and thus such another evidence of the framing role of multimodal cues.

#### ***4.6.3 Integration of Multimodal Strategies***

The integration of visual, symbolic, and verbal strategies produces a powerful multimodal space where moral messages were reinforced in a number of channels. Such an integration meant that the exclusionary discourses could not just be spoken but also represented and enacted. The sermons established a stratified communicative framework through the use of close-ups, scripture headings, gestures and staging, which reinforced moral boundaries and homogenized heteronormative values.

One participant indicated:

*“We want the message to be clear from every angle—what you hear, what you see, and what you feel.” (Producer)*

These integration shows us how multimodal strategies are deployed as framing apparatuses in Pentecostal broadcasting. The sermons make the exclusionary discourses internal to the worship process by reinforcing the moral messages through various levels of sensory perceptions. Moreover, the Pentecostal devotion to the holistic worship is evident in the multimodal integration. Pentecostal theology views preaching not simply as a matter of teaching, but a practice involving the mind, body and the spirit. Through multimodal techniques, PENT-TV sermons produced such an immersive environment where the moral messages are perceived as Gods truth, fortifying the exclusionary discourses in such a manner that is sensed among viewers as spiritually authoritative.

## **4.7 Emerging Theme**

### ***4.7.1 Overview of the Theme discussed during Sermons***

The reflected sermons broadcast between 3 March and 26 May 2024 under the *Special Sunday Service* programme constitute a coherent and thematically unified homiletic corpus. This was sermons although delivered on different Sundays exhibit strong internal continuity, as indicated by recurrent phrases such as “*we are still discussing the heart of man*” on 17 March 2024 and “*two weeks back, we said...*” on 21 April 2024. This recurrent referencing of earlier teachings indicates that the preaching team does not treat each Sunday message as an isolated discourse. Rather, the series follows a pedagogical logic where each sermon builds upon doctrinal insights established in previous weeks. The sermons thus function as interlinked chapters within a broader moral and theological project, reinforcing spiritual formation through repetition, doctrinal layering, and gradual thematic intensification.

Stylistically, the sermons adopt a liturgical rhythm characteristic of contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostal-charismatic preaching (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013; De Witte, 2003). Each service

begins with a high-spirited greeting “*Hallelujah... Possessing the nations*” as captured on multiple dates, including 21 April 2024. This greeting does not merely function as a ritual opening; it situates the congregation within the ideological motto of the Church of Pentecost, emphasizing Christian witness and societal engagement. From this opening, the preacher immediately transitions into intensive scripture reading and exposition, instructing the assisting reader (Twi Translator) to repeat passages “*Now, let me take it again*” as seen in the 3 March 2024 sermon. This repeated reading reinforces the centrality of the Bible as the primary epistemic authority in the sermon-making process and reflects classical Pentecostal insistence on the performative power of Scripture.

Table 4.1: Summary of Dominant Themes Across the Analysed Sermons

<b>Date</b>	<b>Sermon Focus</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
3 Mar 2024	The Heart of Man	Purity of heart, scriptural authority, moral awareness
17 Mar 2024	Bitterness	Emotional regulation, confession, relational healing
24 Mar 2024	Condition of the Heart	Divine evaluation, sacrifice, moral authenticity
31 Mar 2024	Repentance	Change of mind, restitution, spiritual alignment
14 Apr 2024	Continuation of Moral Teachings	Spiritual vigilance, heart transformation
21 Apr 2024	Reconciliation	Social harmony, restitution, relational ethics

<b>Date</b>	<b>Sermon Focus</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
28 Apr 2024	Heart and Sacrifice	Divine acceptance, purity, obedience
19 May 2024	Moral Examination	Conscience, spiritual maturity, life transformation
26 May 2024	Maximum Impact	Purpose, Holy Spirit empowerment, societal influence

Source: Author's Construct (2025)

#### ***4.7.2 Strategic Absence in Sermons***

The content analysis demonstrated that the strategic omission of direct mentions of LGBTQ+ identities is one of the most impressive aspects of PENT-TV sermons. Whereas moral labels like “immorality” and “ungodly behaviour” used to be invoked quite regularly, there was a lack of explicit references of LGBTQ+ persons. It was not an accident, but a move towards rhetorical silence which, without committing to actual condemnation, allowed preachers to express disapproval.

Silence in this context acts as a framing strategy. Avoiding direct mention, sermons both admit the LGBTQ+ problems and push them out of the record. This twofold role of silence contributes to the paradox of broadcasting the Christian truth in Ghana a universal message of salvation which is cleverly omissionary of particular identities.

#### ***4.7.3 Meaning of Silence***

The meaning of the silence in these sermons can be various. First of all, silence serves as a shielding move as it would protect preachers against accusations of speech of hate or the tendency of sensationalism. With no direct mention involved, sermons preserve the pastoral authority with the least exposure to a public outcry. Second, silence has institutional command:

the religion leaders recommended that preachers should not openly use the term LGBTQ+ identities as a way of maintaining the focus on the doctrinal message and preventing controversy. Third, silence is being used as a kind of erasure to make LGBTQ+ identities inaccessible to a legitimate discourse, nevertheless presenting them as morally deviant by implication.

This finding contributes to representation theory by demonstrating how absence can be as powerful as presence in shaping discourse. Silence is not neutral; a refusal to recognise presents itself as a mode of communication. By so doing, silence is used as a framing mechanism that not only supports heteronormative norms, but sells sermons as pastoral and open-headed.

Interviewees confirmed that silence was deliberate. One participant indicated:

*“Sometimes silence is better. We don’t want to sensationalize the issue, so we preach morality broadly.” (Pastor)*

Another participant explained:

*“The leadership advised us not to mention LGBTQ directly. It can cause unnecessary controversy.” (Programme Manager)*

A third participant added:

*“We know the nation is debating the bill, but our sermons are not the place to attack people. Silence is a way of keeping focus.” (Pastor)*

These insights reveal that silence was not a chance but rather a deliberate plan based on institutional dictates and pastoral factors.

#### ***4.7.4 Silence as Representation***

The responsibility of silence in penetrated TV sermons can be interpreted as representation. Through their refusal of naming LGBTQ+ identities, sermons form them as the subject of

inappropriate discussions, supporting their marginalization as a part of a legitimate conversation. Even this erasure itself is a representation, which means that LGBTQ+ identities are beyond the acceptable territory of Christian identity.

From a queer theory perspective, silence is used as a heteronormative mechanism. The sermons make heterosexuality an unquestioned standard by excluding non-normative identities in a discourse. Silence therefore becomes an effective weapon of exclusion that creates perceptions in the minds of the audience through what is not said as much as the said.

One participant indicated:

*“We don’t want to give the impression that we are targeting anyone. Silence is safer, but everyone knows what we mean.” (Programme Director)*

This line of thought highlights the communicative role of silence, in which preachers can use silence to create the context of LGBTQ+ identities as a deviation without directly referring to them. Silence is thus a framing device that is subtle but effective in Pentecostal broadcasting.

The results show that silence and absence played a major role in the framing of gay and lesbian issues when preaching in PENT-TV. The sermons expressed criticism without seeming to oppose pastoral authority by avoiding explicit references. Silence served as a shield mechanism, an institution, and erasure. The combination of the sermon analysis and interview revelations supports that silence has been premeditated and preconditioned by the theological promises and the business principles.

The research findings help provide an understanding of silence in the functioning of framing through representation and framing theory since it provides an example of how silence is a framing device among the African Pentecostals. It further highlights the irony of Christian broadcasting in Ghana: on one hand, it appears to be all encompassing and open; on the other, it reinforces specific identities by not being explicit.

Furthermore, this contribution adds to the body of literature by bringing into limelight the special role played by silence in religious broadcasting. In contrast to other studies in the global studies realm that usually focus on overt condemnation or description, this research demonstrates that omission and avoidance might be equally effective in discourse formulation. This is a substantial contribution as it adds the analytical perspective of the theory of representation on silence as a dynamic mechanism of exclusion within the context of religious media.

#### **4.8 Field Findings in Dialogue with Existing Literature**

Analysis of PENT television sermons indicates patterns that follow closely the themes that are outlined in past studies. According to previous studies, Pentecostal preaching in Ghana and wider Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to avoid references of LGBTQ+ identities in favor of discussing such concerns within larger terms of morality, like immorality, ungodly behavior, or sexual impurity (Gyasi and Phillips, 2019; Abebe et al., 2020). The study reinforces this trend as very few sermon had direct references to the LGBTQ+, and most of them were based on oblique moralization. This appropriateness continues with the previous research, which highlights the indirect moralization of disputed social problems in religious discourse.

Moreover, the repetition of the terms corruption and sexual impurity recalls the results of Pradeilles et al. (2015) and Bosire et al. (2022), who argue that the sermons of the Pentecostals often contextualise the moral failings in the wider context of societal decadence instead of treating them as the fault of the individual. The generalized framing seen in past studies where moral categories are used as umbrella terms to subsume many social anxieties is reflected in the emphasis on immorality. At the same time, the repetition of these categories in the field data indicates that there is a conscious rhetorical approach that enforces moral borders and forms the ideas about sin and virtue with communities. This completes the research of previous works

because it shows how indirect categories are not only used but given greater emphasis to maintain moral authority.

The information also sheds light on the role of cultural and spiritual interpretations in building the moral discourse, which features prominently in past studies. As an example, the fact that some individuals view diabetes as a spiritual illness is similar to how sermons represent morality problems as a spiritual struggle and not solely a social or biomedical one. The observation supports Gyasi and Phillips (2019), who argue that cultural stigma and spiritual explanations often mislead focus off biomedical explanations. With moral categories placed in the context of spiritual systems, sermons have the effect of reinforcing the hypothesis of moral and social problems as ultimately referring to questions of divine judgment, and bring religious authority into everyday life by extension.

Ultimately, the study supports the claims made in past studies and at the same time adds new information. Although previous studies focused on avoiding direct references, the current analysis shows that sometimes such direct mentions exist, albeit, sporadically, and are part of a larger body of discourse of ungodliness. This observation indicates that preaching in Pentecostal vigor in Ghana is not fixed but fluid with direct reference made in cases where moral urgency is considered pronounced. As a result, the findings not only support the established body of literature but also provide new information on the dynamic encounter of the indirect moral categories and the words used in the modern sermons.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the key findings of the study, situating them within the broader theoretical and empirical literature reviewed earlier. It discusses how the results contribute to existing knowledge, highlights areas of convergence and divergence with past studies, and reflects on the implications for practice and policy. The chapter then presents the overall conclusion of the research, followed by recommendations for future interventions and directions for further study.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

##### *5.2.1 Frequency and Rhetorical Tone of LGBTQ+ References*

The study showed that allusions to LGBTQ+ identities in PENT TV sermons were rare, and they were mostly made in an indirect manner. Sermon preachers routinely substituted explicit acknowledgment with broader moral lexicons such as “immorality” or “ungodly behavior.” As sexual issues were raised, the corrective and pastoral orientation of the rhetorical tenor was taken which anticipates the foregrounding of repentance and reconciliation instead of denunciation. This strategy supposedly hardened the ethical borders and maintained a humane attitude.

##### *5.2.2 Dominant Frames in Sermons*

found in the analytical coding of sermons. These frames placed LGBTQ+ identities in the broader context of moral degradation and made them threats to community and national values. The inclusion of sexuality in stories of moral crisis strengthened the heteronormative principles and prescribed corrective paths through Christian praxis through the sermons.

### ***5.2.3 Theological and Scriptural Justifications***

Preachers consistently used biblical readings which stressed holiness, family principle, and Godly supremacy. The references to Scripture served not only as anchoring tools theologically but as legitimizing tools as well, thus permitting moral exemption of exclusionary talk. This use of scripture highlighted the prescriptive qualities of sermons, portraying the identities of LGBTQ+ as not in line with the Christian morality yet the power of biblical teaching.

### ***5.2.4 Multimodal Strategies in Sermon Delivery***

The research also found out multimodal techniques that strengthened moral messages. Directors used camera angles, close-ups, and captions of scripture to visually emphasize major points, and MCs handled the transition to violate potentially controversial content. These methods provided that sermons worked to convince not merely by the power of language but by the power of performance, media aesthetics and therefore theological authority would be multiplied through visual and rhetorical indicators.

## **5.3 Implication of Study**

The research has a significant theoretical value, especially to representation and framing theory. They show that the silence and avoidance may serve as effective frames, influencing the audience perception by omission. The study goes ahead to apply queer theory to African Pentecostal settings as it demonstrates the ways heteronormativity is affirmed by theological discourse and multimodal efforts. This adds to the study of religion and media by explaining the complex mechanisms by which the peripheral identities are neglected.

Policy and practice wise, the research highlights the conflict between religious freedom and minority rights in the Ghanaian media arena. Although PENT TV considers the doctrinal fidelity, its excluding framing has ethical concerns on fairness and inclusivity. The results indicate that the regulatory authorities like the National Media Commission have to strike a

balance between religion broadcasting respect and protection of the marginalized groups. In the case of advocacy organisations, the research will be a source of empirical data to shape the conversations with the faith group and focus on shared principles of compassion and respect.

#### **5.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

The current research contributes to the academic knowledge on several important levels. To begin with, it provides empirical data on how moral categories are constructed in Pentecostal sermons in Ghana, especially in the areas of the LGBTQ+ identity, corruption and sexual impurity, which are highly disputed. Although other studies in the field have already mostly concentrated on the oblique moralization of social-political interests, the present study adds to the literature base available on the topic by illustrating how the categories in question are strategically repeated and supported in the televised sermons. The results, therefore, can further our understanding of the rhetorical and discursive practices used in modern preaching in Pentecostal.

Second, the research assimilates the interactive reciprocity between the inverted moral classifications and the direct allusions. In contrast to previous studies that suggest that Pentecostal preaching avoids direct references in any manner, the current analysis suggests that these occurrences though rare still occur, but they are place within the larger discourses of ungodliness. This detail adds depth to theoretical discussions of the development of religious speech, in that Pentecostal preaching in Ghana is not fixed or inert but changes to suit the changing moral and cultural situations.

Third, the study has methodological value as it incorporates content analysis and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Using the TPB constructs as attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, the paper proves that behavioural theory is not just useful in a

theoretical manner but also in the translation of religious texts. The interdisciplinary methodology marries both the social psychology and theology, providing a new analytical framework to understand the ways in which sermons influence the development of moral behaviour and social understandings.

Lastly, the research provides a practical value by pointing out the relevance of discourse of sermon to the betterment of society and health. The way that moral categories which are framed as spiritual battles affect the interpretation of problems by congregants include sexuality and corruption, as well as such health conditions as diabetes. The intricate appreciation of these patterns of discourse might be used to provide culturally sensitive interventions in both health promotion and social policy. This way, the research will add value to the scholarly research and at the same time offer practical application to the Ghanaian society.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

### **1. For Policymakers**

The representation of the sensitive issues in religious broadcasting should be regulated by regulatory agencies, including the National Media Commission, that should create more specific guidelines. These guidelines would guard the religious freedom and ensure the minority groups are not stigmatized.

### **2. For Church Leadership**

Leaders of the Pentecostal movement should evaluate more carefully the moral implications of the exclusionary framing. Through embracing more inclusive styles in their pastoral care, they are able to compromise sources of doctrinal fidelity with kindness, devoid of division but dialogue.

### **3. For Media Practitioners**

The ethical scrutiny in place is to be enhanced by producers and the directors who should ensure that multimodal strategies do not enhance exclusionary discourses. Media ethics training might help practitioners to address sensitive issues in a responsible manner.

#### 4. For Advocacy Organizations

The use of the results of the study by civil society groups should enable them to mobilize the faith communities in a better way. Constructive discussion of minority rights can be achieved by focusing on common values like compassion and respect.

#### 5. For Academic Scholarship

Future research should expand to include audience reception studies, exploring how viewers interpret sermons and framing strategies. Comparative studies across different Christian channels would also enrich understanding.

#### 6. For Broader Society

Discourse in the society must foster an amicable interaction between religious bodies and the minority groups. To create a more inclusive society that appreciates faith and also human rights, cross divides dialogue would be a good idea to promote.

### **5.6 Conclusion**

This study examined the representation of marginalized groups, specifically LGBTQ+ identities, in Christian television sermons in Ghana, with a focus on PENT-TV owned by the Church of Pentecost. Using content analysis of sermons broadcast between March and May 2024, alongside semi-structured interviews with preachers, producers, and programme managers, the research explored rhetorical tone, dominant frames, theological justifications, and multimodal strategies in religious broadcasting.

The findings revealed that explicit references to LGBTQ+ identities were rare, with sermons often substituting direct mention with generalized moral categories such as “immorality” or “ungodly behavior.” When addressed, LGBTQ+ issues were framed within corrective discourses emphasizing repentance and adherence to biblical morality. Theological justifications relied heavily on scripture, reinforcing heteronormative ideals, while multimodal strategies such as camera angles, captions, and gestures amplified moral messages visually and rhetorically. Institutional directives and leadership influence were found to shape programming decisions, prioritizing doctrinal fidelity over inclusivity.

In terms of contribution to knowledge, this study demonstrates how silence and avoidance function as framing devices in African Pentecostal contexts, adding to representation theory, framing theory, and queer theory in African media studies. It also provides empirical evidence for policy debates on religious broadcasting and minority rights in Ghana.

The research faced challenges such as limited access to certain broadcast archives and reluctance of some interviewees to openly discuss LGBTQ+ issues. These were overcome through persistence in data collection, triangulation of sources, and building trust with participants to ensure ethical and respectful engagement.

In summary, the study discusses the intersection of religion, media, and morality in Ghana; it employed qualitative content analysis and interviews; and its major findings highlight the strategic silence, corrective framing, and theological justifications that shape LGBTQ+ representation in Christian broadcasting. The most important recommendation for future work is that religious broadcasters and policymakers critically reflect on the ethical implications of silence and exclusion, and explore ways to balance doctrinal fidelity with inclusivity in a pluralistic society.

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# **APPENDIX**

## **Interview Guide for Respondents**

## **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This study forms part of an academic research project examining how Christian television programmes frame sensitive social issues, particularly LGBTQ+ representation. The purpose of the interview is to understand the rationale behind programme design, scheduling decisions, and framing strategies, and to complement findings from a content analysis of selected broadcasts.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without consequence. All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymised in reporting. The interview will last approximately 30–40 minutes. With your permission, the discussion may be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy.

## **Consent Form**

**Title of Study:** The Representation of Marginalized Groups in Christian Media: Analysis of LGBTQ+ Content on Christian Television in Ghana

**Researcher:** Joseph Quarshie

**Institution:** University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC-GIJ)

### **Consent Statement:**

- I understand the purpose of this study and what participation involves.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.
- I consent to the interview being audio-recorded (if applicable).
- I understand that my responses will remain confidential and anonymised.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview Questions**

**Section A: Producer Population and Role**

1. How many programme producers are currently involved in scheduling and transmission at PEN-TV?

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2. What is your specific role in the production and scheduling of Sunday evening services?

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3. Why were you (and others) selected to handle these programmes during March–May 2024?

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**Section B: Programme Development and Selection**

4. Can you describe the process by which Sunday evening programmes are developed and how topics are selected?

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5. How do you decide which sermons are broadcast during a given period (e.g., March–May 2024)?

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6. Were themes of morality and sexuality deliberately emphasized during this period?

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**Section C: Sensitive Issues and Framing**

7. Did the sermons broadcast between March and May 2024 include references to LGBTQ+ issues? If so, how were these framed?

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8. Were there cases where explicit references to LGBTQ+ identities were avoided or censored? Why?

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9. What considerations guide the way you frame sensitive issues such as LGBTQ+ in programming?

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10. Do you have any ministry or institutional policy that specifically ministers to LGBTQ+ individuals, and if so, how does it influence programming?

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**Section D: Institutional Guidelines and Ethics**

11. Are there editorial guidelines or institutional policies that influence how sensitive topics are presented?

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12. How do church leadership or institutional directives shape programming decisions on these issues?

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13. What ethical measures are taken to ensure that programmes respect confidentiality, fairness, and sensitivity when dealing with controversial topics?

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**Section E: Reflection**

13. Reflecting on your programme, do you think it adequately represents diverse voices and perspectives? Why or why not?

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14. In your view, how does PEN-TV balance its religious mission with its responsibility to represent social issues fairly?

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## **Closing**

Thank you for sharing your insights. Your contribution will help us better understand the framing of sensitive issues in Christian media programming and will be used to support the conclusions drawn from the content analysis of sermons.