

Media and the Misconception of Feminine Traits in Men and Masculine Traits in Women as Being Homosexual: Insights from Students of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Media has become one of the most influential means of gaining knowledge and socializing. The media has also played an influential role in the construction of identities and labeling behaviours. Movies, documentaries and other video or audio-visual information are often misconstrued by its viewers to be the model of behaviours of society - who is healthy, obese, possibly malnourished and heterosexual or homosexual. With the upsurge of media images of traits of homosexuals, individuals who exhibit these traits – whether they are engaged in the act or not - are misconstrued as homosexuals. Using the labeling theory and the social constructionist theory which are all closely related, the paper argues that what has come to be known as the ideal traits of homosexuals are largely influenced by images from the media. To support this, information for the paper was obtained from students in a tertiary institution through a qualitative method. The findings reveal that a greater majority of the respondents have been influenced by the media to label people with certain physical traits as homosexuals. The paper recommends the need for strict censorship of messages in the media to avoid misleading the public.

Key words: Cape Coast, Ghana, Homosexuals, Media, Misconception

Introduction

Gender role ascription and what is considered acceptable or unacceptable by society has often been based on knowledge gained from the home. The home, being the first contact of an individual, teaches its members the societal approved means of behaviours. Kambarami (2006) asserts that it is the family that creates what is considered feminine and masculine through the differentiated roles it assigns its members during the socialization process. This, in turn, affects ways humans perceive their environment and issues pertaining to their communities. In Ethiopia, for instance, a masculine can be addressed in feminine ‘as a term of insult, to belittle or express distancing from or superiority over someone’ or in another sense ‘a term of rapprochement, or a term of endearment and closeness between friends’ (Pankhurst, 1992: 169).

In recent times, however, the media has become one of the most influential means of gaining knowledge, socialization as well as construction of identities: clothes to wear, ideal body types and so many ideals of society have mostly been gained through access to the media.

Image distortion has also been found to be one of the approaches employed both by the church and the media to create fear among the public (Balcha, 2009; Kozol, 1995). Kozol (1995) argues that the public spheres of mass media have considerable influence in constructing and limiting social knowledge just as education images from the media - news items, movies, drama, music lyrics and videos played on the air waves and on televisions - reinforce the constructions experienced in the home, schools and churches. Gender role segregation learnt from the home is further strengthened by the media through the images portrayed. Movies, documentaries and other video or audio-visual information tell and show its viewers what is expected to be the model of behaviours in society - who is healthy, obese, possibly malnourished, HIV/AIDS infected and being heterosexual or homosexual.

Gender role segregation learnt from the home is further strengthened by the media through the images portrayed. Such portrayal could be found in the perpetuation of the idea that homosexuals are deviants that are deeply disturbed and in need of treatment. By so doing, the media is able to instill a fabricated fear in the minds of the public (Horton, 1995) which Potter and Kappeler (2006) refer to as 'moral panic'. To Potter and Kappeler (2006) 'moral panic' occurs when "a group or type of activity is perceived as a threat to the stability and well-being of society". For McGovern (2011), in order to properly devise a societal moral panic, the media sometimes first exaggerates and in some cases fabricates information regarding the group or activity at hand which then creates an overwhelming amount of scrutiny towards their every move.

Consequently, by such action, the media has been able to play an influential role in labeling behaviours and creating moral panic of certain group of persons in society. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex (LGBTI) community has been a core group of scrutiny, fear, and confusion within the reports of varied mediums of exposure since the 1950s (McGovern, 2011). Until recent times, what was known about homosexuals was that it is men sleeping with men (gays) or women sleeping with women (lesbians). Little was mentioned of traits or characteristics of these people who engage in this form of sexuality. Nowadays, traits such as being effeminate, gay lisp and/or having female like tone (Mckenzie, 2003; Stuever, 2003) are some of the characteristics used for the identification of gay men while lesbians are

thought to be ‘butch’, dressing in a more masculine manner; with short haircuts and work boots (Krantz,1995).

Other myths about homosexuals include; “all gay men have track lighting”, “that all the gay men have large big toes”, “all gay men are named Mark, Rick or Steve” and any woman who is in favor of women’s rights or has a general distrust for men is a lesbian (Abernethy, 2007). Although males with feminine traits and females with masculine traits exist, with the upsurge of media images of traits of homosexuals, individuals who exhibit these traits, whether engaged in this act or not, are labeled as homosexuals and risk being mocked or sometimes beaten to outgrow these traits if identified early in the child’s development.

McGovern (2011) asserts that the highly convincing nature of the media’s influence is deeply rooted as truth within the minds of America. Calzo and Ward (2009) reveal that 40% of Americans gain their direct opinion of homosexuals from the images and reports they obtain from various outlets. These channels range from entertainment based programming such as Emmy or Oscar recognized productions to award winning journalism including publications such as Times, Newsweek, and Life (McGovern, 2011). To McGovern (2011), regardless of the intent, depictions of homosexuals within mass communication are capable of swaying the majority’s perceptions. To him, the extent to which homosexual stereotypes and archetypes have evolved is in the absolute authority of the media at large.

Considering the all-consuming effect the entertainment industry has on society, most especially in this era of globalization, it would be erroneous to discount entertainment media as having a largely important role in the perception of the LGBTI community. According to McGovern (2011), although many moviegoers are not intuitively aware of gay characters, these fictional creations have appeared in several cult celebrated and award winning films. Calzo and Ward (2009), in a study conducted on the level of influence of the media over the perception of homosexuals, recommends socialization as the largest factor in the acceptance of the gay community.

The forms of socialization mentioned comprised exposure to peers, parents, and religion, but more importantly the media. The results of the study also indicate that men and women view homosexuality differently based on specific media consumption that is geared towards their

demographic- sex, age e.t.c. - characteristics. Media outlets that display the more stereotypical representations of homosexuals are met with a high acceptance rate by males, while female directed programming such as soap operas and situational comedies are met with a high acceptance rate by females (Calzo and Ward, 2009). In the light of the above, the paper assesses the extent to which present-day misconception of masculine and feminine traits as being homosexual has been influenced by the media in Ghana with respect to the views of some selected students of the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana.

Theoretical Underpinning

The paper adopts the labeling theory, a strand of social constructionist theory, in the explanation of the discourse. Labeling theory, developed by Becker, concerns the meanings people derive from one another's labels, symbols, actions, and reactions. This theory holds that behaviors are deviant only when society labels them as deviant. As such, conforming members of society, who interpret certain behaviors as deviant and then attach this label to individuals, determine the distinction between deviance and non-deviance. Naturally, society is generally wary of any concept or action that makes it uncomfortable or pushes the boundaries of the normally accepted behavior. Labeling theory questions who apply what label, to whom, why they do this, and what happens as a result of this labeling (Becker, 1991).

Sexuality, under the social constructionist perspective, is understood as the historically specific outcome of intellectual and cultural processes and, as such, an attribute of human experiences intimately bound up with the language and knowledge systems of the post-Enlightenment era (Boyce & Hemming, 2010). According to Harris (1995) messages people hear shapes how they feel about themselves and the way they conduct themselves as these messages express gender role norms that tell them how to conduct themselves. He further asserts that the identities of people wherever they are born, are like unshaped balls of clay but the particular class, status, cultural group, or race that they are born into is what helps determine their identities and propelling them in the directions they take.

People's interaction with norms for maleness and femaleness helps them identify how to behave (Harris, 1995). Thus as each individual grows and matures into a man or woman, he or she constructs a gender identity, which determines how they feel about themselves, their sexuality and their responses to the world around them. Using this theory, the paper argues that what has

come to be known as the ideal traits of homosexuals are largely influenced by images and constructs imbibed from the media and also through socialization process.

Methods

The paper used primary sources of information. The data was collected, through interviews, from tertiary students in the University of Cape Coast. This was from two sets of students, the mainstream and mid-stream students. The mainstream students are what the university of Cape Coast refers to as regular students. These students run on the normal calendar of the university while the mid-stream students constitute the semester break students referred to as sandwich students. The mid-stream students are more of professionals and are predominantly postgraduate students or undertaking professional programmes. The sandwich students used for the study were students from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University while the undergraduate students were selected from the sciences and medical sciences. They are older than the regular students and are mostly married women and men.

The information, which was collected in May/June 2015, constituted students of varied socio-cultural background. The choice of this class of respondents was to see how their individual views will differ from their various work and cultural background and whether or not the media has an outstanding influence on their responses. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, respondents were interviewed based on their willingness to participate.

A total of 44 respondents, comprising of 30 males and 14 females, participated in the study. Sixty percent (26) of the respondents (comprising 18 males and 8 females) are Sandwich students while the remaining 40% (18) – constituting 12 males and 6 females - are regular students. The age of the respondents ranged from 23 to 45 years. Most of the respondents (17 or 65percent) in the Sandwich programme work in government establishments and they come from four ethnic groups in Ghana namely the Akan (14), Gonja (1), Dagbani (1) and Kasena (1) and 1 South African. Similarly, 85 percent (15) of the regular students come from Akan ethnic group while two are from Kasena and the remaining student come from Gonja. Akan respondents constitute 66% (29) of the total respondents. This is normal considering that the Akans represent the majority of the country's population in addition to the university being located in the Akan region. The findings from the respondents' responses are discussed in the next section.

Findings from the study

This section discusses the findings under three sub headings: background to the knowledge on the acceptability of feminine and masculine traits; whether such traits are seen as normal or abnormal; and the influence of the media in the exhibition of masculine and feminine traits as being homosexual.

Background to the knowledge

The findings of the study reveal that society has laid down means of constructing gender roles. These constructions come in particular ways males must behave – they should wear trousers, be strong, assertive, not to put on ear rings, and not put on skirts or dresses. Females, on the other hand, are to be soft spoken, wear skirts and dresses and not be boisterous. With these in mind, there are names given to males and females whose behaviours go contrary to these societal expectations of the various constructions. The names given to males and females who exhibit masculine and feminine traits of the opposite sex in Ghana vary across cultures and languages. The references to these names were given in the local dialects - Akan, Gonja, Dagbani, Dagaare and Kasena languages. The names given could be literally interpreted as man-woman for females and woman for the males. According to the responses from the Akan respondents, a male who behaves like a female is called *kojo besia*. This was mentioned by 34 of the respondents representing 97 percent and 77 percent of the Akan and the total respondents respectively. *Bakena, Kipo, Pogdoo, Dɔɔla pɔɔla* were also local names used in kasena, Gonja, Dagbani and Dagaare languages respectively. A particular respondent used the name *Trumu dii fuor* [anal eater] to represent a female who behave like a male. The South African called it *Dan iska* [meaning child of the wind]. Others who mentioned these labels in English indicated that males who behave like females are called *Salomey*, an English name for females. This was mentioned by two (6%) of the Akan respondents.

Labels given to females who exhibit masculine traits were *ɔbaa barima or ɔbaa beyin* for the Akan languages (twi and Fante); *Kabaro, Dog pog, pɔɔla Dɔɔla, Acholo* for the Kasena, Dagbani, Dagaare and Gonja languages respectively. This was mentioned by 40 of the respondents representing 91 percent of the total respondents. However, a student expressed it in these words:

If it is with respect to a woman she is called *obaa barima*, for males it would be *barima basiriwa* or *barima baa*

On how they came about these names, the respondents said they got that from interaction with community members. From the responses, it is clear that the respondents had internalized these names based on socialization received from homes or information passed to societal members from one ancestry to the next since the names given run across majority of the respondents. To further explore their views, questions on whether respondents see such traits as normal or abnormal was also posed and their responses are discussed in the next subsection.

Perceived normality or abnormality of exhibiting traits of the opposite sex

On whether the exhibition of traits of opposite sex in an individual should be seen as normal or abnormal, 31 of the 44 respondents, representing 70 percent, consider such traits as abnormal because, according to them, such behaviors are not approved societal expectations. For them, society has defined set of rules or expectations for males and females and if not strictly followed by members, is conceived as abnormal and need not be condoned. People who thus exhibit these supposedly abnormal traits are seen by the respondents as ‘deviants’. This affirms the labelling theory assertion that society naturally or generally, when wary of any concept or action that makes it uncomfortable, pushes the boundaries of the normally accepted behavior. As such, conforming members of society interpret certain behaviors as deviant and then attach this label to individuals (Becker, 1991). In the words of a 34 year old male respondent:

They are deviants and abnormal because their behavior does not conform to the normal societal expectations of their sex. The way they behave is contradictory to how God created us and the society: boys are supposed to be boys while girls are to be girls as well.

To a female respondent, aged 26 years and a teacher by profession:

That person should best be described as a comedian because society frowns at such action of males behaving like females and females behaving like males.

To further support this belief, the story of a third year male student who contemplated suicide helps explain the trauma such people go through:

I come from a family of six. I am the first among three boys. I exhibit feminine traits with respect to my physique, the way I walk and even my voice, and this has gained me a reputation of being called a woman not only by outsiders but also by members of my family. My family always taunts me with that and continues to bully me insisting I must come out of my feminine traits. Even some gays in this institution have approached me for a relationship and when I decline and insist

that I am not gay, they taunt me with the accusation that I am trying to be seen as a nice guy. However, in all honesty, I am not gay and don't wish to be one. Sometimes, I contemplate suicide because I do not see why I should not be accepted the way God created me.

This story confirms the influence of societal construction in determining how people are seen and labelled. This student had earned himself various attributes by virtue of his outlook which does not fit into societal expectation of a male: to be strong and assertive among other attributes. For this reason, he is seen as man-woman, soft spoken, a weakling and most of all a target for gay practitioners when he does not have interest in such sexual orientation. He further adds that these gays waylay him and make mockery of him anywhere they see him on campus to the extent that he fears going out unless when he has lectures.

The remaining thirteen respondents however accept the exhibition of such features as normal. The reasons given for this normalcy spanned from the individual's comfort, that is, ability with exhibiting such character as against what is expected of him or her to the background of the person involved. On the background of an individual being an influencing factor in the exhibition of traits of the opposite sex, some respondents (10) are of the opinion that if a male child is born into a family with all females and a female child in an all male family, the individuals are most likely to exhibit the features of the dominant group thus making it normal. To a 26 year old female respondent and a journalist:

It is normal because if a female or male is socialized among either of the sexes, she/he is likely to behave like the people of that sex among which they were nurtured.

Another respondent, aged 41 years, however, retorted:

It's hard to say they are homosexuals because some grow in homes filled with ladies and so they unconsciously pick up the habits. Some, however, are plainly trying to show off how girly they can be to potential homosexuals or bisexuals.

A female student who is a military officer had this to add:

When I was growing up, my parents exposed all of us to various tasks irrespective of sex. We all were made to carry out all tasks equally. This influenced me a lot to the extent that in my secondary school days, most of my school mates regard me as a tomboy: what you might refer to as woman-man. It also helped in fashioning the career I chose – a military person and my colleagues in the military will testify that they are not better off professionally as I have proved myself even as a marksman during training.

Sources of knowledge and length of knowledge of these names

Responses were also sought on the sources and length of the knowledge of these names and their responses reveal that they were obtained from agents of socialization such as the home, school, media and religious institutions that perpetrate the construction of these gender roles as well as inculcate these behaviours in their members. The major source of knowledge on how to label these behaviours was the home. All the 44 respondents had heard of the names from their parents or other members of the family such as grandparents and aunts. The knowledge on labels or how to call such people as it came out was also inculcated in them during their childhood. The implication is that such information ingrained in the mind during childhood is hardly erased later in life. This supports Kambarami's (2006) assertion that it is the family which creates what is feminine and what is masculine through the differentiated roles it assigns its members during its socialization process. To confirm this, a 35 year old male police officer encapsulated it in the following statement:

I have known about this label almost all my life as I heard it from my parents when I was young.

Influence of the media

In soliciting responses from respondents on the influence of the media, images were used in asking the questions. Pictures of cross dressed males and females, and those who seem feminine or masculine in outlook, were shown to the respondents and questions were asked on how they view or label the individuals in the picture based on their physical appearances. Further, images of homosexuals were shown to these respondents to know if they still could associate the responses given earlier with them.

Enquiry into how they will refer to the people in the pictures came out with names such as *lesbians* for the females that dressed like males and *gays* for the males that dressed like females. Respondents expressed that these changes came about because of the labels given to such characters in movies and on the television in recent times. According to a 31 year old female immigration officer:

Nowadays, people who exhibit such traits are not given the traditional names anymore. We now call them gays because when you watch movies, gays dress like women when they are females to their other partner.

Respondents gave traits of male homosexuals as people who often exhibit the traits of the opposite sex in their dressing. A woman dressed in a male dress was called a lesbian for dressing

like a male and having a short hair. A picture of two females standing together was misconstrued as lesbian partners because one of them was dressed like a male while the other dressed like a female. To a 25 year old male respondent:

From what we see in the movies and on the internet, gays wear earring in one ear, wear nose ring and ring on the thumb. Lesbians, on the other hand, wear rings on small finger or the thumb, dress like males and wear chain on the heels (anklets).

In the words of a 35 year old female immigration officer:

Gays have soft bodies like women, walk like women, perm their hair or dress their hairs like women and pin their ears like women do.

The study also tried to find out from these respondents if they believe that people who always exhibit the traits they listed above are homosexuals. Responses reveal that most people nowadays perceive those with such traits as homosexuals until proven otherwise. Thirty-two respondents (73%) agree that based on what they have seen from the mass media, exhibiting such traits automatically makes such a person a homosexual. For instance, a 25 year-old self-employed male respondent had this to say:

Yes, anybody that exhibits at least one of these traits, unless I get close to see whether my supposition is true or not, is assumed to be a homosexual.

Similarly, a 40 year old male respondent concurs in these words:

Yes, as soon as someone starts appearing in this way, it means something is wrong and having sex with someone of his/her own sex is likely to be the outcome.

However eleven of the respondents who refuted this position, also based on knowledge acquired from the media, argued that it cannot always be so because the person could have been born looking more feminine than masculine and vice versa. In the words of a 35 year-old male police officer:

It is not always so because from what I have learnt from some documentaries I watched on the television, a man or a woman could physically look feminine or masculine respectively but may not necessarily be a homosexual. Similarly, those who supposedly appear normal in the eyes of the society may become homosexuals. So, physical look should not be a criterion for determining the sexual orientation of an individual.

Another respondent also said:

Not really, everyone is born differently and the fact that they might act like females doesn't necessarily mean that they are homosexuals. Personally, I don't engage in such act but would definitely not condemn someone who is gay because it's their choice and they should be respected for that.

The findings have revealed that the information received during socialization, whether in the home or other agents of socialization, has a very strong influence in the way an individual looks at issues later in life and homosexuality in particular which has gained a negative import in the life of Ghanaians where the study was conducted. Further discussion on the findings is done in the subsequent section.

Discussion of findings

The study set out to investigate how people view individuals who have physical characteristics of the opposite sex in this era of homosexuality and its attendant criticisms. It also tried to find out how they came about their views. The findings has shown that the way members of a society label others are largely influenced by what is imbibed from various agents of socialization such as the home and its environ, the peer group, the school and the media among others. However, this study has also revealed that the family and the media stand out clearly as the most influential agents of socialization. With respect to the home, the traditional names listed above shows that these names did not just emanate from the respondents but was imbibed during their childhood years, either from parents directly or learned from other relatives and societal members. Having imbibed these messages, any member of the society who goes contrary to such expectations is labelled as a non-conformist thus confirming Harris (1995) argument that messages people hear shapes how they feel about themselves and the way they conduct themselves as those messages express gender role norms that tell them how to conduct themselves *and also view others* (emphasis by the authors).

However, the influence of the media is so outstanding that what was internalized during childhood epoch could be distorted by the images created by the media. What came out of the responses point to the fact that the media plays an influential role in the current change of referring to persons who exhibit traits of the opposite sex as homosexuals. The response of this 25 year old male respondent reinforces that:

From what we see in the movies and on the internet, gays wear earring in one ear, nose ring and ring on the thumb. Lesbians, on the other hand, wear rings on small finger or the thumb, dress like males and wear chain on the heels (anklets).

It is clear from the above response that he was influenced by what the media portrays - that anybody who dresses in the ways described above must be a gay or a lesbian. It is a well known fact that most people dress, nowadays, based on what they consider as the fashion in vogue. For

example, most ladies nowadays, see the wearing of chains in their anklets as trending and even many women in heterosexual relationships are involved in such a fashion. Same goes for wearing of short hair (or what is most commonly known as *low cut*) and trousers by women. Should we then label them as homosexuals (bisexuals) just because they dress in ways portrayed by the media as homosexual dressing style?

Although previous questions asked reveal that males who exhibit traits of women and vice versa were seen as abnormal, however, these people were called names that might bring them to ridicule so as to make them sit up or conform but not necessarily being labelled as homosexuals. With the current upsurge of movies and television imagery representations, where people who cross dress or exhibit feminine and masculine traits of the other sex are labelled as homosexuals, names given by respondents were different from that of the traditional names they had known and mentioned earlier. For instance, the literal meaning for the names provided by the respondents are man-woman for females and woman for males. In other instances, the male could be given Salomey – a name meant for a woman - to express the displeasure. This, nevertheless, does not translate to being a homosexual which is what the media has imbibed in their consumers presently. This shows the influence the media has on its consumers. McGovern (2011) reinforces how the media's influence is deeply rooted as truth within the minds of viewers. Calzo and Ward (2009) also divulge the influence the media has on many Americans in their direct opinion of homosexuals based on the images and reports they attain from various media outlets.

As was learnt from their responses, people who exhibit traits of the opposite sex are usually given names to express displeasure at such traits but not necessarily seen to be *homosexuals*. With the media and its distortive influences, such people are now tagged as homosexuals even when their sexual orientation does not depict such. The student who contemplated suicide, reported in this study, was based on this assumption which is not devoid of what they had learned from the media and that has become a yard stick for describing people's behaviour. This brings to bear Kozol's (1995) claim that the public spheres of mass media have considerable influence in constructing and limiting social knowledge. McGovern's (2011) argument that the channels used by the media in projecting the stereotyping of homosexuals range from entertainment based programming such as Emmy or Oscar recognized productions to award

winning journalism is also relevant in their responses as some of them attributed their behaviour to what is portrayed by the media.

According to responses given, individuals who used to cross dress in the past - males who perm their hair, put on ear rings and so on - were just considered notorious or if we may say *comedians* but not necessarily homosexuals. No wonder the student who narrated his ordeal above contemplated suicide because nobody seems to see his own side based on the internalized belief that people with such features must be homosexuals. This finding affirms McGovern's (2011) statement that regardless of the intent depictions of homosexuals, mass communication are capable of swaying the majority of perceptions and the extent to which homosexual stereotypes and archetypes have evolved is in the absolute authority of the media at large. It also reinforces Kozol's (1995) claim previously stated. In addition, McGovern's (2011) claim that in order to properly devise a societal moral panic, the media sometimes exaggerate and in some cases fabricate information regarding a group or activity at hand which then creates an overwhelming amount of scrutiny towards their every move, makes sense as well.

Although very few respondents seem not to be swayed by the media messages, however, majority goes with the media in their belief and this is where the influence of the media becomes significant. Some activists have argued that those who do not like the sexual orientation of homosexuals flood the media with advertisements that portray them in the negative light. One organization that stands out clearly in this is the religious institutions which have been variously accused of fuelling homophobia against homosexuals (Sprigg, 2010) especially the ones whose clerics have not been indicted in the homosexual saga. If this argument is anything to go by, one might argue here that the media, despite depending on the resources emanating from these advertisements and messages for sustenance, also owe the public the moral obligation to relay what is incorruptible. Labelling somebody based on his/her physical characteristics is taking the continent back to Lombroso's (cited in Haralambos & Holborn, 2004) argument about identifying criminals based on certain physical characteristics which have been found not to hold water. The authors are in no way, by this paper, criminalizing homosexuality or condemning people's sexual orientation, but they are of the opinion that people should not be labelled what they are not because of their physical outlook. In extreme cases where homophobia is enforced, such innocent people may be murdered unjustly. If we must have a society free from biases, the

media has a major role of relaying tested and confirmed information/facts to the public since it has been proven by the responses in this study that their influence on their consumers is considerable.

Conclusion

The paper found a disturbing influence of the media in the misconception of feminine and masculine traits in people as being homosexuals. An analyses of the data obtained show that although there is the recognition that people can exhibit masculine and feminine traits based on their genetic makeup, they are seen as man-woman or woman for females and males respectively. The media, however, is indicted in this study for regarding those with such traits as homosexuals based on what they convey to the public as the study participants expressed. This goes to show that the media is a major influential tool in shaping the perceptions of Ghanaians on who is being viewed as a homosexual. The paper, therefore, recommends that strict censorship of the media with respect to what is conveyed to the public should be of utmost priority in Africa in general and Ghana in particular.

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