

PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS ON CROSS-CULTURAL MARRIAGE AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION AMONG NIGERIAN CITIZENS

BY

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines the perceptions of Social Studies teachers regarding cross-cultural marriage and its impact on national integration among Nigerian citizens. Guided by the theoretical framework of Social Constructivism and Intercultural Education. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected 12 information-rich Social Studies teachers from various educational institutions across Nigeria, using purposive and opportunistic sampling (convenience sampling) technique. Data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis technique. This enabled the researchers to group data based on recurring themes. Findings reveal that Social Studies teachers hold positive attitudes towards cross-cultural marriage, considering it a means to foster cultural understanding and integration among diverse ethnic groups. They believe that cross-cultural marriage contributes to national integration by promoting a shared national identity and breaking down ethnic barriers. These perceptions align with the goals of the National Policy on Education, which emphasizes the importance of cultural appreciation and unity. The study underscores the crucial role of teachers in promoting cultural acceptance and cohesion among students. It emphasizes the significance of incorporating intercultural education in teacher training programs and inclusive curriculum materials that reflect Nigeria's cultural diversity. The research contributes to the field of Social Studies and education by highlighting the value of cross-cultural marriage in fostering intercultural understanding and a harmonious Nigerian society. It was thus recommended that education authorities should enhance teacher training programs to include modules on intercultural education; curriculum developers should actively integrate cultural diversity themes into the national curriculum, particularly within the Social Studies curriculum; and also teachers should be equipped with strategies to create a classroom environment that respects and values students' diverse backgrounds.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural marriage, National integration, Social Studies teachers and Intercultural education*

Introduction

In the culturally diverse landscape of Nigeria, cross-cultural marriage has emerged as a pertinent sociocultural phenomenon that plays a significant role in shaping the country's national integration. The intermingling of diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds in cross-cultural marriages can serve as both a catalyst and a challenge to fostering a sense of national unity and cohesion. Social Studies, as a critical component of the education system, plays a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of the younger generation towards intercultural interactions and national identity. Thus, understanding the perspectives of Social Studies teachers on cross-cultural marriage and national integration becomes imperative in comprehending the dynamics of social cohesion in Nigeria. Nigeria, often referred to as the "Giant of Africa," is a country renowned for its rich cultural tapestry and linguistic diversity. With over 250 distinct ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural practices, languages, and traditions, Nigeria stands as an emblem of multiculturalism. This cultural diversity, while a source of strength, has also posed challenges to fostering a strong national identity and integration. Historically, Nigeria has witnessed instances of ethnic tensions, which makes the promotion of national integration a vital concern for policymakers and educators alike.

Social Studies, as an interdisciplinary subject, plays a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of societal dynamics, cultural diversity, and citizenship. Through its curriculum, Social Studies aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for active and responsible participation in a democratic society. The subject provides a platform to explore themes of cultural pluralism, tolerance, and social cohesion, thereby influencing students' perceptions of their own identities and those of others. The perception of Social Studies teachers, who act as facilitators and mediators of knowledge within the classroom, is pivotal in shaping students' attitudes and beliefs. Teachers' views on cross-cultural marriage and national integration are likely to influence the ways in which they approach these topics in the classroom, thereby impacting students' comprehension and engagement. Therefore, delving into the perspectives of Social Studies teachers on cross-cultural marriage and national integration presents an opportunity to gain valuable insights into the processes that influence the development of social attitudes and national identity in Nigerian educational settings.

Despite the significance of this topic, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to exploring the perceptions of Social Studies teachers on cross-cultural marriage and its implications for national integration in Nigeria. Existing literature has mainly focused on broader sociocultural aspects of Nigeria's multicultural society, while neglecting the specific perspectives of Social Studies teachers. By addressing this research gap, this study seeks to shed light on the complex interplay between cross-cultural marriage, Social Studies education, and national integration, providing a comprehensive understanding of the role teachers play in shaping students' attitudes towards cultural diversity and national unity.

Research Questions:

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do Social Studies teachers perceive cross-cultural marriage in the Nigerian context?
2. How do Social Studies teachers believe cross-cultural marriage influences national integration in Nigeria?
3. How do Social Studies teachers incorporate topics related to cross-cultural marriage and national integration within their classrooms?
4. What challenges do Social Studies teachers face in promoting cross-cultural marriage and national integration within the classroom?
5. How can Social Studies education be enhanced to better promote cross-cultural marriage and national integration in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Cross-Cultural Marriage in Nigeria

Cross-cultural marriage, also known as intercultural or interethnic marriage, is the union between individuals from different cultural, ethnic, or religious backgrounds. In Nigeria, a country with a rich and diverse cultural heritage, cross-cultural marriages have become increasingly common, reflecting the nation's multiculturalism. This section discusses the dynamics, challenges, and implications of cross-cultural marriages in Nigeria, shedding light on how such unions influence social interactions, familial ties, and societal attitudes. Nigeria boasts over 250 distinct ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural practices, traditions, languages, and beliefs. As a result, the country offers a rich tapestry of cultural diversity. This diversity is reflected in the prevalence of cross-cultural marriages, where individuals from different ethnic backgrounds come together in matrimony. Studies have shown that the level of cultural diversity within the country significantly influences the likelihood of intercultural unions (Awogbade, 2017).

Several factors contribute to the increasing trend of cross-cultural marriages in Nigeria. These factors include:

- a. **Urbanization and Globalization:** The growth of urban centers and increased globalization has brought people from diverse backgrounds into close proximity, fostering opportunities for intercultural interactions and relationships (Okafor & Oladunni, 2019).

b. **Education and Socioeconomic Status:** As education levels rise and socioeconomic barriers diminish, individuals are more likely to form relationships based on shared interests and values rather than strict cultural boundaries.

c. **Migration and Relocation:** Internal and international migration has led to the movement of individuals across ethnic and cultural boundaries, increasing the likelihood of cross-cultural marriages (Obiechina & Okeke, 2018). Also, cross-cultural marriages in Nigeria bring several positive aspects to individuals and society as a whole. These include:

a. **Cultural Understanding:** Intercultural unions provide an opportunity for individuals to learn about and appreciate different cultures, fostering cultural understanding and respect (Obiechina & Okeke, 2018).

b. **Social Cohesion:** Interethnic marriages can act as a bridge, promoting social cohesion and reducing ethnic tensions by demonstrating shared humanity (Okon & Njoku, 2019).

While cross-cultural marriages have their merits, they are not without challenges. Some common challenges faced by cross-cultural couples in Nigeria include:

a. **Family Opposition:** Families may resist cross-cultural marriages due to cultural, religious, or ethnic differences, leading to strained relationships (Kalu, 2020).

b. **Language and Communication:** Language barriers can pose challenges in effective communication between spouses and their families, affecting intimacy and understanding.

c. **Religious Differences:** Cross-cultural couples may encounter conflicts related to religious practices and beliefs, potentially impacting how they raise their children (Okorie & Adetula, 2018).

Therefore, cross-cultural marriages in Nigeria are not immune to societal perceptions and stereotypes. Some communities may stigmatize such unions, leading to social isolation and discrimination (Oluwafemi & Adepoju, 2017). However, changing societal attitudes and increased exposure to diversity have contributed to a more accepting environment for cross-cultural couples. Cross-cultural marriage in Nigeria reflects the country's multicultural fabric and offers both opportunities and challenges. It serves as a conduit for cultural understanding and social cohesion, bridging ethnic divides and promoting unity. However, cross-cultural couples also face familial opposition, communication hurdles, and societal stereotypes. Understanding the dynamics of cross-cultural marriage is vital for fostering social harmony and inclusivity in Nigeria, recognizing the richness that cultural diversity brings to the nation's collective identity.

National Integration and Cultural Diversity in Nigeria

Nigeria is a diverse nation with over 250 ethnic groups, each possessing its own unique cultural practices, languages, and traditions. This cultural diversity has long been recognized as a hallmark of the country, but it has also presented challenges to fostering a sense of national unity and integration. The process of national integration in Nigeria involves forging a shared identity, values, and sense of belonging among its diverse population while celebrating and preserving the rich cultural heritage of each ethnic group. Scholars have extensively explored the complexities of national integration and cultural diversity in Nigeria. Ezeani and Orji (2019) note that the colonial legacy of Nigeria, which involved the amalgamation of different ethnic entities by the British, laid the foundation for the diverse sociocultural landscape of the nation. This amalgamation has, over time, led to the emergence of distinct ethnic and regional identities that often intersect with religious affiliations, creating a complex web of social divisions.

Adebayo (2021) discusses the challenges and implications of cultural diversity for national integration. Ethnic tensions and conflicts have historically occurred in Nigeria, leading to intergroup animosities and distrust. These conflicts have been exacerbated by competition for political power, scarce resources, and historical grievances. Despite these challenges, Adebayo (2021) argues that recognizing and embracing cultural diversity can also serve as a source of strength, contributing to the nation's rich cultural tapestry and human resources. The promotion of national integration in Nigeria requires acknowledging and addressing the various factors that hinder cohesion among its diverse population. Okafor and Oladunni (2019) emphasize the importance of intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and respect for each other's cultural practices in fostering national unity.

Education, particularly through Social Studies, plays a critical role in this process. Social Studies education in Nigeria has the potential to instill values of cultural pluralism, tolerance, and national identity among students. Aladejana (2016) asserts that Social Studies curriculum emphasizes themes of citizenship, cultural diversity, and social responsibility, which are essential components of national integration. However, there have been challenges in effectively implementing these curricular goals.

Okeke and Nwankwo (2018) explore the role of Social Studies education in promoting national integration and argue that educators must develop pedagogical approaches that encourage cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Teachers play a vital role in shaping students' attitudes and perceptions towards cultural diversity (Okon & Njoku, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to equip teachers with intercultural competence and provide them with training to address cultural diversity in the classroom effectively. Cultural exchanges, festivals, and cultural heritage programs have been used as means to promote national integration in Nigeria (Obiechina & Okeke, 2018). These initiatives aim to create opportunities for different ethnic groups to interact, share their cultural practices, and foster mutual understanding.

Social Studies Education and Multiculturalism

Social Studies education plays a pivotal role in preparing students to become informed and active citizens in diverse societies. In the context of multiculturalism, Social Studies curricula are designed to address issues of cultural diversity, tolerance, and intercultural interactions. This section discusses the importance of Social Studies education in promoting multiculturalism and its potential to foster cultural awareness and appreciation among students. Social Studies education serves as a platform to introduce students to various cultures, traditions, and historical backgrounds. By incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum, students can gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and richness of the multicultural world they inhabit (Aladejana, 2016). Exposure to different cultural practices and beliefs can help students develop empathy, respect, and appreciation for cultural diversity. Also, multicultural Social Studies education encourages the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups in the curriculum. This approach not only enhances students' understanding of diverse cultures but also fosters a sense of belonging and recognition among students from different backgrounds (Adediran & Adeleke, 2019). By acknowledging the contributions of various cultural groups, Social Studies education can challenge stereotypes and promote inclusive perspectives. Another thing is that – multicultural Social Studies education provides opportunities for students to explore societal issues from multiple angles and perspectives. By examining historical events, global challenges, and contemporary issues through diverse lenses, students develop a deeper appreciation for the complexity of human experiences (Oluwafemi & Adepoju, 2017). This interdisciplinary approach fosters critical thinking and encourages tolerance towards different viewpoints. It equally emphasizes effective communication and collaboration across cultures. Through interactive learning experiences and group activities, students develop intercultural communication skills, enabling them to engage respectfully and constructively with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Adediran & Adeleke, 2019). These skills are essential for promoting social cohesion and inclusivity in multicultural societies.

Multicultural Social Studies education nurtures the development of global citizens who can navigate and contribute positively to an interconnected world (Oluwafemi & Adepoju, 2017). By examining global issues, cross-cultural interactions, and international relationships, students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to engage as responsible and informed global citizens. While multicultural Social Studies education offers numerous benefits, it also faces challenges. Teachers may encounter resistance from students or parents who hold ethnocentric views and resist the inclusion of diverse perspectives (Aladejana, 2016). Moreover, limited instructional time and resources may constrain the comprehensive integration of multicultural content into the curriculum. Multiculturalism and Social Studies education in Nigeria are inseparable concepts that contribute to building an inclusive and harmonious society. Through cultivating cultural awareness, promoting inclusive perspectives, encouraging tolerance and interdisciplinary understanding, enhancing intercultural communication skills, and preparing global citizens, Social Studies education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes

towards cultural diversity. By addressing challenges in multicultural education, educators can foster an environment that celebrates diversity and contributes to the creation of a cohesive and unified multicultural society.

Role of Teachers in Shaping Students' Perceptions

Teachers play a critical role in shaping students' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs, particularly in multicultural and diverse educational settings. Their influence extends beyond the transmission of subject-specific knowledge and skills; it encompasses the formation of students' social, cultural, and ethical perspectives. In the context of cross-cultural marriage and national integration in Nigeria, understanding the role of teachers becomes crucial, as they are instrumental in fostering cultural understanding and promoting a sense of national unity among students. This section extensively discusses the various ways in which teachers impact students' perceptions and explores the influence of teacher biases and attitudes on intercultural interactions. Teachers serve as role models and facilitators within the classroom environment. They are responsible for creating a safe and inclusive space where students from diverse backgrounds can learn and interact harmoniously. Studies have shown that teachers who demonstrate openness to cultural diversity and encourage respectful discussions on different cultural perspectives positively influence students' attitudes towards multiculturalism (Okorie & Adetula, 2018). When teachers actively promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, students are more likely to develop empathy and respect for individuals from different ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds (Oluwafemi & Adepoju, 2017).

Teacher attitudes towards cultural diversity significantly impact their instructional practices. Teachers who hold positive attitudes towards diversity are more likely to incorporate multicultural content into their lessons, thereby exposing students to a wide range of cultural experiences and perspectives (Okon & Njoku, 2019). In contrast, teachers who display biases or stereotypes may unintentionally perpetuate negative perceptions of certain cultural groups, leading to a potential reduction in social cohesion within the classroom. The relationship between teachers and students is crucial in shaping students' perceptions. Teachers who establish positive and respectful relationships with students, regardless of their cultural background, create an environment where students feel valued and accepted (Okeke & Nwankwo, 2020). Such teacher-student interactions foster a sense of belonging and facilitate cross-cultural friendships, which, in turn, contribute to improved intercultural relationships among students.

Furthermore, teachers' pedagogical approaches can either reinforce cultural stereotypes or challenge them. Social Studies teachers, for instance, can play a significant role in debunking myths and misconceptions about different cultures, contributing to a more accurate understanding of cultural diversity (Adediran & Adeleke, 2019). By integrating diverse cultural examples and case studies in their lessons, teachers can highlight the similarities and shared experiences between different cultural groups, fostering a sense of common identity and national unity. However, challenges exist in promoting positive perceptions of cultural diversity within the classroom. Some teachers may feel ill-equipped or uncomfortable discussing sensitive topics related to cross-cultural marriage and national integration. In such cases, professional development programs and teacher training initiatives can be instrumental in enhancing teachers' intercultural competence and promoting culturally responsive teaching strategies (Okeke & Nwankwo, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study draws upon Social Constructivism. Social Constructivism is a learning theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which posits that individuals construct knowledge and understanding through their interactions with others and their environment. In the context of the study, Social Studies teachers' perceptions of cross-cultural marriage and national integration are shaped by their social interactions, experiences, and cultural backgrounds (Epstein, 2018). These perceptions, in turn, influence their teaching approaches and interactions with students. Social Constructivism helps to explore how teachers' beliefs and

attitudes towards cultural diversity and national identity are constructed and how these beliefs can impact students' attitudes and learning experiences (Chen & Nelson, 2020).

Methodology

The research methodology employed for the study on "Perception of Social Studies Teachers on Cross-Cultural Marriage and National Integration among Nigerian Citizens" utilized a qualitative research design. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of Social Studies teachers' perspectives and experiences related to cross-cultural marriage and its implications for national integration in Nigeria. A qualitative research design was chosen to capture the richness and complexity of Social Studies teachers' perceptions in their natural context. Qualitative methods facilitate an inductive approach, enabling the emergence of themes and insights from the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By engaging in face-to-face interactions with the participants, the researchers could delve into the nuances of teachers' perspectives on cross-cultural marriage and national integration. The study used purposive and opportunistic sampling (convenience sampling) techniques to select 12 information-rich participants who were Social Studies teachers in various educational institutions across Nigeria. The inclusion criteria were based on teachers' experience in teaching Social Studies and their willingness to participate in the research. Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method used in this study. The researchers developed an interview guide with open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses from the participants. The interviews were conducted in person, allowing for rapport-building and a deeper exploration of teachers' perceptions.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interviews commenced. The researchers explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality measures in place to safeguard the data. The interview data were transcribed verbatim to capture participants' responses accurately. Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed to identify patterns, themes, and recurring ideas within the data. The researchers conducted an iterative process of coding and categorization to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the analysis. Several strategies were implemented to ensure the trustworthiness of the study findings. Triangulation was achieved by involving multiple researchers in the data analysis process, fostering diverse perspectives. Member checking was conducted by providing participants with the opportunity to review and validate the summary of their interviews. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the study, acknowledging the researchers' influence on the data interpretation. The qualitative design, while valuable for in-depth exploration, limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The small sample size may also restrict the transferability of the results beyond the specific context of the study. The study's validity was ensured through prolonged engagement with the data and the use of verbatim quotes from participants to support the findings. The researchers maintained a detailed audit trail to enhance the study's transparency and confirmability.

Results

Research Question 1: How do Social Studies teachers perceive cross-cultural marriage in the Nigerian context?

The study revealed that Social Studies teachers in Nigeria generally held positive attitudes towards cross-cultural marriage. They perceived it as an opportunity to promote cultural understanding and integration among different ethnic groups in the country. These perceptions align with the literature, which highlights the potential of cross-cultural marriages to foster intercultural interactions and bridge cultural divides (Obiechina & Okeke, 2018). Teachers emphasized that cross-cultural marriages can lead to increased tolerance and empathy among students from diverse backgrounds, echoing the principles of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and intercultural education theory (Byram, 1997).

Research Question 2: How do Social Studies teachers believe cross-cultural marriage influences national integration in Nigeria?

Social Studies teachers believed that cross-cultural marriage positively impacts national integration in Nigeria. They argued that such marriages contribute to the breaking down of ethnic barriers and the promotion of a shared national identity. These findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that cross-cultural marriages can play a significant role in fostering a sense of unity and cohesion in multicultural societies like Nigeria (Awogbade, 2017). Teachers viewed cross-cultural marriage as a means to promote a "melting pot" culture where diverse cultural elements blend harmoniously, further supporting the goals of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Research Question 3: How do Social Studies teachers incorporate topics related to cross-cultural marriage and national integration within their classrooms?

The study found that Social Studies teachers incorporated topics related to cross-cultural marriage and national integration in various ways. Some teachers used case studies of cross-cultural marriages from different ethnic groups in Nigeria to facilitate class discussions. Others incorporated cultural diversity as a theme in storytelling and role-play activities. These practices align with the revised 9-Year Basic Education Social Studies Curriculum (National Educational Research and Development Council, 2014), which emphasizes the importance of integrating themes of cultural diversity and national unity in the curriculum.

Research Question 4: What challenges do Social Studies teachers face in promoting cross-cultural marriage and national integration within the classroom?

Social Studies teachers reported several challenges in promoting cross-cultural marriage and national integration within the classroom. The most significant challenge was resistance from conservative elements in the community, who viewed cross-cultural marriages as a threat to cultural traditions. Additionally, teachers faced constraints in accessing diverse teaching resources and materials that reflect the multicultural reality of Nigeria. These challenges resonate with the literature, which highlights societal resistance and limited resources as barriers to intercultural education (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2017; Oluwole, 2021).

Research Question 5: How can Social Studies education be enhanced to better promote cross-cultural marriage and national integration in Nigeria?

Based on their experiences, Social Studies teachers proposed several recommendations to enhance cross-cultural education and promote national integration. They emphasized the need for teacher training programs that equip educators with intercultural teaching strategies and cultural sensitivity. They also called for the inclusion of diverse and inclusive teaching materials that reflect Nigeria's cultural diversity in the curriculum. These recommendations align with the literature, which underscores the importance of teacher training and inclusive curriculum development in intercultural education (Etim & Akubue, 2018; Chen & Nelson, 2020).

Discussion

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into Social Studies teachers' perceptions of cross-cultural marriage and national integration in Nigeria. The results show that Social Studies teachers generally hold positive attitudes towards cross-cultural marriage, perceiving it as an opportunity to promote cultural understanding and integration among different ethnic groups. These perceptions align with the theoretical framework of Social Constructivism, which suggests that individuals construct knowledge and understanding through their social interactions and experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers' positive attitudes towards cross-cultural marriage may influence their instructional approaches, creating a conducive learning environment that fosters intercultural understanding among students.

Moreover, the study reveals that Social Studies teachers believe cross-cultural marriage positively influences national integration in Nigeria. Teachers viewed cross-cultural marriages as a means to break down ethnic barriers and promote a shared national identity, supporting the goals of the National Policy on Education

(Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). This finding is consistent with existing literature that highlights the potential of cross-cultural marriages in fostering unity and cohesion in multicultural societies (Awogbade, 2017). Social Studies teachers' beliefs in the positive impact of cross-cultural marriage on national integration underscore the importance of intercultural education in promoting a harmonious and integrated Nigerian society. The findings of this study are in line with previous research on cross-cultural marriage and national integration in Nigeria. Existing literature has also highlighted the potential of cross-cultural marriages to foster cultural understanding and promote national unity (Obiechina & Okeke, 2018). Similarly, studies have emphasized the significance of intercultural education in shaping students' attitudes and promoting social cohesion (Byram, 1997). The study's alignment with existing literature enhances the credibility of the findings and confirms the relevance of Social Studies teachers' perceptions in the broader context of cultural diversity and national integration in Nigeria.

The perceptions of Social Studies teachers regarding cross-cultural marriage and national integration have significant implications for education and social development in Nigeria. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors (Epstein, 2018), and their positive perceptions of cross-cultural marriage can promote cultural acceptance and appreciation among students. By incorporating themes of cultural diversity and national unity within the classroom, Social Studies teachers can create a more inclusive learning environment that fosters intercultural understanding and tolerance.

Social Studies teachers' positive attitudes towards cross-cultural marriage can influence students' views and behaviors in several ways. Firstly, students are likely to internalize and model the inclusive behavior demonstrated by their teachers (Etim & Akubue, 2018). This, in turn, can lead to increased respect for cultural diversity among students and a more positive perception of cross-cultural marriages.

Secondly, when Social Studies teachers discuss cross-cultural marriage and national integration in the classroom, students are exposed to diverse cultural perspectives and experiences. This exposure can challenge stereotypes and prejudices, promoting empathy and cross-cultural friendships among students (Byram, 1997). Thirdly, the positive classroom environment created by teachers' perceptions can empower students to express their own cultural identities proudly. Students from diverse backgrounds may feel more accepted and valued, contributing to a sense of belonging and fostering a shared national identity (García & Sylvan, 2011).

Conclusion

The study's findings indicate that Social Studies teachers' perceptions play a vital role in shaping students' attitudes towards cross-cultural marriage and national integration in Nigeria. Teachers' positive attitudes and incorporation of cultural diversity themes within the classroom can promote intercultural understanding and social cohesion among students. The study underscores the importance of intercultural education in the Nigerian context and highlights the significance of teacher training and curriculum development in fostering a more inclusive and integrated Nigerian society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Education authorities should enhance teacher training programs to include modules on intercultural education. This training should focus on developing teachers' awareness, knowledge, and skills related to cultural diversity, cross-cultural communication, and the promotion of positive attitudes towards intercultural relationships.
2. Curriculum developers should actively integrate cultural diversity themes into the national curriculum, particularly within the Social Studies curriculum. This includes incorporating case studies, literature, and activities that promote understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures in Nigeria.
3. Teachers should be equipped with strategies to create a classroom environment that respects and values students' diverse backgrounds.

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