

**INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN
IN CROSS CULTURAL MARRIAGES IN YENAGAO
METROPOLIS, BAYELSA STATE**

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Abstract

The study investigated information needs and seeking behaviour of women in cross cultural marriages in Yenagao Metropolis, Bayelsa State. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The population was cross cultural women in Yenagao metropolis, Bayelsa State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 25 respondents from different cultural backgrounds. Structured interview was used to gather the data. The study was analyzed using simple percentages and mean score. The study discovered that women in cross cultural marriages needed information on culture/tradition of the people, language, local food, locality, Neighborhood, market, personal development, health, social life, business and agriculture. It also revealed that women in cross cultural marriages consulted friends, family members, neighbors, internet, radio and television when seeking for their information needs. The challenges that faced women in cross cultural marriages were gender stereotype, cultural differences, coping with local language, loss of identity, unsupportive family and coping with local food. Furthermore, it revealed that Information overload, inadequate information sharing and lack of information literacy skills were the challenges faced in information seeking. The study recommended that there should be periodic sensitization for people to understand and respect different cultural backgrounds to avoid stereotypes in cross cultural marriage and women in cross cultural marriages should seek for ways of developing their information literacy skills to be able to seek and use information to cope with challenges of cross-cultural marriages.

Keywords: Information, information needs, information sources, information seeking behavior,
cross cultural marriage.

Introduction

Marriage is a powerful bond that affects human behavior as well as culture and religion. Men and women desire marriage for a variety of reasons, including political, religious, economic, social, and cultural ones. Because they are the result of human creativity, feelings, and intentions that are passed down from generation to generation, cultural variables have unique qualities. According to Dewi et al. (2019), women who marry men from various ethnic groups can still uphold their cultural values. However, as each couple comes from a different ethnic background, their values, norms, and rituals will also differ. Inter-ethnic marriage is a widespread phenomena in Nigeria, which has many different ethnic groupings. The act of marrying from different cultural background is cross-cultural marriage.

According to Nagrale (2023) cross-cultural marriage, as the name suggests, is a marriage between people from different cultures. These people may or may not come from different countries altogether. However, there can be a wide range in the values, food, and other aspects of their upbringing. Depending on the values that the two people have grown up with and lived with, these differences may be slight or challenging to adjust to. For some people, cross-cultural unions can be

unusual. They do, however, have some relevance to the world and relationships. They provide the new couple more opportunities to explore, broaden their worldview, experience a new culture, learn more about them and the rest of the world, and help them adjust to new and better ways of living. They also give unconditional love a chance to bloom. Information is therefore, imperative for women in cross-cultural marriage to adapt. This is because Information is considered an important resource that is essentially needed in all human endeavors. It is a message that changes an individual's knowledge by adding to existing knowledge or filling in the gap, hence information significantly enhances the existing knowledge of the user.

Everyone requires information that is accessible and comes in a wide range of levels, frequencies, and volumes. Information requirements therefore start with a hazy sense of something being missing and end with finding information that adds to understanding and meaning. According to Adeyinka et al. (2017), people seek knowledge since they depend on information resources to survive in all spheres of life. The amount of positive information that a person or group of users needs to have for their work, recreation, and many other types of satisfaction can be defined as their information need (or need for information), which is a factual situation in which "information" and "need" are inseparably connected. Therefore, information needs develop whenever people encounter a scenario that necessitates knowledge in order for them to respond to it as they see fit (Horsfall et al. 2020). Women in intercultural marriages require information in a variety of ways, such as knowledge of the local area, local cuisine, the language, and culture. Certain pertinent information sources must be consulted in order to deliver any significant information. knowledge seekers can only get knowledge from such sources that is perfect for making meaningful decisions that boost productivity. The information sources utilized by different users to gather data on the information needed include friends, coworkers, neighbors, the internet, books, journals, magazines, and newspapers, yearly reports, handbooks, etc. for women in cultural marriages. It is therefore, imperative that information needs and seeking behaviour of women in cross cultural marriages be studies since there are cultural differences in Nigeria which has promoted cross-cultural marriages

Accordig to Green (2023) Nigeria has over 200 million people making it Africa's largest and the world's seventh largest country by population. Almost two thirds of its population (62 per cent) are under the age of 25 years, and 43 per cent are under the age of 15. Just under half the population lives in urban areas, including over 21 million in Lagos, Africa's largest city and one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups, the most populous and politically influential being Hausa-Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%. With more than 300 ethnic groups, over 500 languages, and many distinct religious and regional differences, it's also one of the world's most culturally diverse countries.

On the other hand, Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group (2023) confirmed that Bayelsa State is dominated by the Ijaw ethnic group whose members speak Ijaw language. Other Ijaw dialects include Tamu, Mein, Jobu, Oyariri, and Tarakiri. There are other pockets of ethnic groups such as Urhobo and Isoko. There are local dialects in some places. Other notable languages in the State are Epie, Atisa, Nembe and Ogbia. Christianity and traditional religion are the two main religions in the State. The culture of the people is expressed in their unique dresses, festivals, dietary habits, arts and crafts, folklore and dancing. These distinguish the people from other ethnic groups. The major crafts include

canoe building, fish net and fish traps making, pottery, basket and mat making. Cane furniture industry is thriving in the State.

The geographical constraints imposed by the limited dry land for settlements and agricultural practices, extensive mangrove swamps, excessive rainfall, prolonged and disastrous floods, and creek erosion, among others, underscore the population distribution pattern in the state. People are thinly scattered among “floating” settlements of villages and towns. The population concentration among LGAs ranges from 23.8 per cent in Southern Ijaw, 14.2 per cent in Ogbia, through 11.1 per cent at Ekeremor to as low as 9.3 per cent in Yenagoa and 6.0 per cent in Kolokuma/Opukuma LGA . The geographical difficulties of the state and its neglect with respect to infrastructural provision and environmental degradation have limited inter-ethnic migration on a national scale in the State. There are few migrants, mostly raffia palm and oil palm tapers. The creation of Bayelsa State has however opened the state to Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa traders.

Bayelsa State is a state of numerous villages and rural settlements that are scattered and isolated from each other. Twenty five per cent of the state population live in “Urban villages” such as Ogbia, Oloibiri, Ogbolomabiri, Bassambiri, Okpuama, Twon-Brass and Nembe. Other important settlements include Yenagoa, Ofoni, Odi, Kaiama, Amassoma, Oporoma, Olugbobiri and Ekeremor. The population of each of these towns is above 10,000 and, with the newly created local government areas, all of them have been made local government headquarters. Out of a population of 1,121,493, only 280,280 live in urban centers, hence the very low urbanisation index of 0.25. However, urbanisation index is very high in Nembe (0.47) and Yenagoa (0.43), while it is lowest in southern Ijaw (0.17). Settlements are built on patches of dry land, islands and levees.

The difficult environment makes it impossible to build access roads to link other settlements and thus constrain human economic activities and land use. Almost all the rural settlements are ‘floating hamlets’ i.e. built on mangrove swamps and thus constantly threatened by floods. On the whole, small villages and hamlets predominate in the state and this characteristic poses problems for economic development since urban centers are needed to provide propulsive growth to the neighbouring regions. Bayelsa State is a state of few towns and numerous isolated villages. Out of the sixty towns of 5000 persons and above, only two (Ogbolomabiri and Amassoma) record a population of 20,000 and above. These two settlements may be described as urban in so far as they have populations of 20,000 or more.

Statement of the Problem

The coming together of man and woman to get married is not limited to same culture. In Nigeria, there exist multicultural, language and religious differences which could have influence in marriages. Thus, women in cross cultural marriages need information to understand the culture of the people, and how to cope with the family, the locality, local food, etc. This is because moving into a new environment is demanding and requires adjustment which the adequate information can help overcome. Women in cross cultural marriages exhibits different information seeking behaviours in quest to meet their information need which involves consulting different sources. Sadly, studies are lacking in the area of information needs and seeking behavooous of women in cross-cultural marriages as most of the studies are rather centered towards, women in rural areas and farmer. This study therefore, sought to

investigate information needs and seeking behaviour of Women in Cross Cultural Marriages in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate information needs and seeking behaviour of Women in Cross Cultural Marriages in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State. The specific objectives are to:

1. ascertain the information needs of women in cross cultural marriages in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State
2. Discover the sources of information consulted by women in cross cultural marriages in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State
3. Investigate challenges faced in seeking for their information needs by cross cultural women in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

1. What are the information needs of women in cross cultural marriages in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State
2. What are the sources of information consulted by women in cross cultural marriages in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State
3. What are the challenges faced in seeking for their information needs by cross cultural women in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State.

Review of Related Literature

Ani et al. (2022) assert that the family of women in cross-cultural marriages is one of the most significant social groups because it supports the physical and mental health of its members. Each cross-cultural married family has unique traits, ideas, viewpoints, and beliefs. Characters' unique characteristics, especially their cultural backgrounds, have an impact on how this idea differs from one another. Marriage is an attempt to meld two separate cultures, both broadly speaking—in terms of race, ethnicity, skin color, and customs—and specifically speaking—in terms of habits, personal traits, and thoughts (mindset).

In the cross-cultural scope, marriage has unique challenges and opportunities. It is crucial to examine the challenges and successes faced by cross-cultural families in fostering cultural resilience from a

variety of perspectives. Women are the cornerstone of every community, hence the information needs of cross-cultural women should concern everyone (Olorunda, 2004). People's information demands vary depending on a number of variables, including their level of education, occupation, age, gender, area, socioeconomic status, religion, and even the weather. According to Ukachi (n.d.), an individual's or group of individuals' information demands are greatly influenced by their line of work. For instance, doctors need information on the treatment of illnesses, whereas farmers need information on agriculture. However, the cross-cultural women do not have specific information need like doctors and farmers rather, they individually have different information needs based on their work activities. The family situations led cross cultural women to seek information included culture of the peoples, health, agriculture, family violence, and basic needs for the family (Dewi et al, 2019).

Women's information needs on personal, religious, social, domestic, professional or medical are an important factor in determining the quality of life they live, their output professionally or socially, at home and to the world generally (Ani et al, 2022). In order to meet their information needs, cross cultural women consult different sources and exhibit different seeking behaviors. Information seeking is a complex information and communication activity requiring access to diverse of sources of information to deal with personal, social and work-related problems. Radio and television are available in almost all houses. The cross cultural women could consult their friends, neighbors. Hossain (2012) discovered that women used Television as a source of information, including radio, friends, neighbours and used personal experience as a source of information. The study also discovered that there was no woman who went to library to meet their information need, only few of the respondents read newspaper for information.

Dewi et al (2019) investigated the role of culture in cross-cultural marriage among Minangkabau women. The study is based on interviews with 37 women in 7 districts in West Sumatra where the Minangkabau tribe reside. The women live in either urban or rural areas such as Padang, Pariaman, Agam, Tanah Datar, 50 Kota, Payakumbuh and Solok. The women come from various educational backgrounds. The results showed that a man from a different ethnic background than Minangkabau must follow the malakok tradition as a requirement if he wants to marry a Minangkabau woman. The majority of women meet with their partners in the overseas area. They then bring their partners back to live with their extended family. This study also found that the Minangkabau culture places women as the educators of children, in addition to their roles as household regulators and role models for the community. These cultural values have proven to be successful in creating harmonious households, as well as becoming characteristic of Minangkabau women.

Saleh (2011) studied information needs and information-seeking behavior of rural women in Nigeria with particular reference to Borno State and discovered that women needed information on agriculture, health, education and economy. Similarly, Bakar (2011) carried out a study on information needs and information seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in Malaysia. It discovered that women particularly needed information on pre and post natal care and current immunization facilities for their children and themselves and agriculture

Kim et al (2017) explored the issues and strengths of cross-cultural marriage among Korean immigrants. The study focused on the cross-cultural marriages between female Korean immigrants who have married Americans, aiming to identify the positive and/or negative aspects of cross-cultural

marriage from the Korean women themselves. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted on a total of 14 participants. Their ages ranged from 45 to 66 years (M D 52.5 years) and the average length of time since their immigration was 25 years. Each interview lasted between 45 and 120 min and, with participants' permission, were recorded and transcribed. Based on the participants' life experiences and personal statements, the study revealed that communication barriers, cultural conflicts, misunderstandings and unclear cultural identities were the challenges that face cross cultural marriages. The strengths of cross-cultural marriages were identified were development of coping strategies and improving cultural understanding. It appears that participants developed their own coping strategies and improved their cultural understanding in order to deal with the various stressors associated with cross cultural marriage.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The population was cross cultural women in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 25 respondents from different cultural backgrounds as distributed below:

Table 1: Distribution of sample of the study

State/culture of women	State/culture of men	Sample
Imo/Ibo	Bayelsa/Ijaw	5
Ogun/Yoruba	Bayelsa/Ijaw	5
Rivers/Ikwerre	Bayelsa/Ijaw	5
Akwai-Ibom/Ibibio	Bayelsa/Ijaw	5
Rivers/Kalabari	Bayelsa/Ijaw	5
Total		25

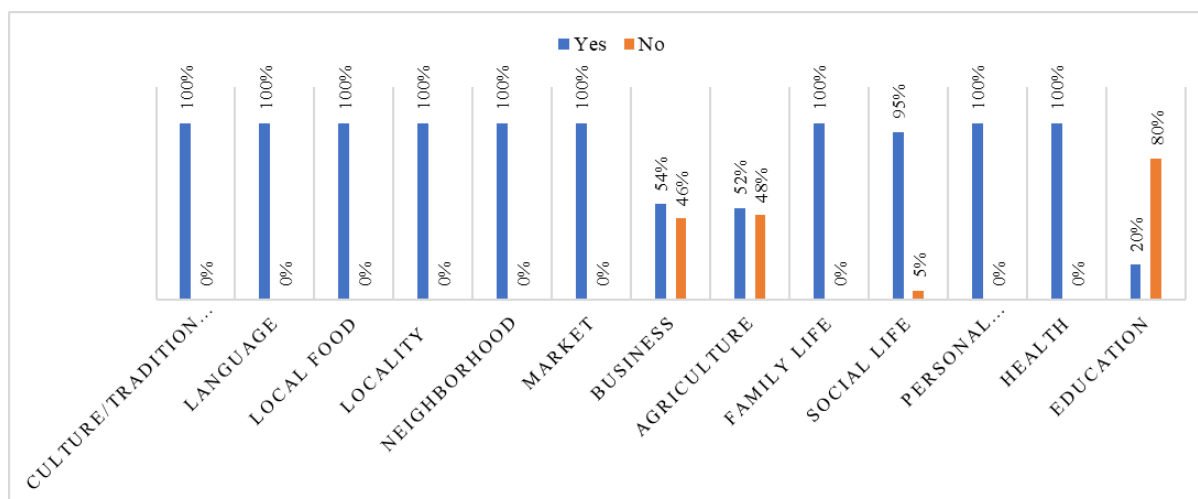
Structured interview was used to gather data. The interview was in form of a questionnaire such that as the researcher asked the respondents, the responses were recorded on the questionnaire. A total of 25 responses were recorded and found valid for analysis. The study was analyzed using simple percentages, mean and standard deviation.

Results and Discussion

Table 2: Information needs of cross-cultural women in Yenagao Bayelsa State

Item	Yes	No
Culture/tradition of the people	100%	0%

Language	100%	0%
Local food	100%	0%
Locality	100%	0%
Neighborhood	100%	0%
Market	100%	0%
Business	54%	46%
Agriculture	52%	48%
Family life	100%	0%
Social life	95%	5%
Personal development	100%	0%
Health	100%	0%
Education	20%	80%



The result from figure 1 indicate the information needs of women in cross-cultural marriages in Yenagao metropolis, Bayelsa State. It revealed that their information needs were: Culture/tradition of the people (100%), language (100%), local food (100%), locality (100%), Neighbourhood (100%), market (100%), personal development (100%), health (100%), social life (95%), business (54%), agriculture (52%). Only 20% of the respondents agreed that they need information on education (20%).

Table 3: Sources of information Consulted by Cross Cultural Women in Yenagoa Metropolis Bayelsa State

Item	Yes	No
Friends	100%	0%
Neighbors	93%	7%
Family members	100%	0%
Internet	81%	19%
Library	20%	80%
Television	59%	41%
Radio	60%	40%
Newspaper	10%	90%

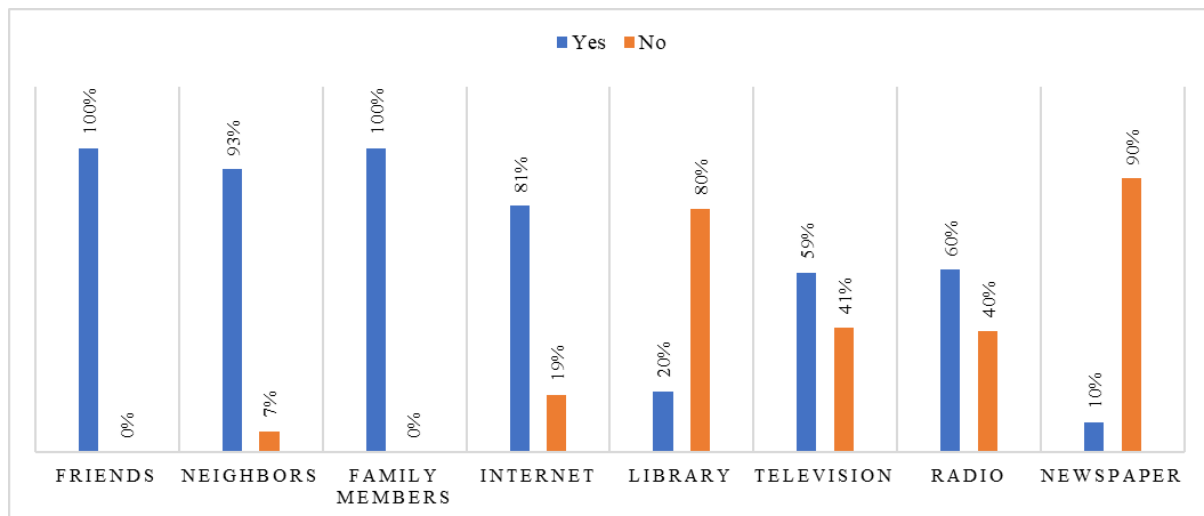


Fig. 2 indicates the sources of information consulted by cross cultural women in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State. It revealed that their sources of information were: friends (100%), family members (100%), neighbors (93%), internet (81%), radio (60%), television (59%). They disagreed that the consulted the library (20%) when seeking for their information needs.

Table 2: Challenges faced cross cultural women in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State

Item	Mean	Decision
coping with religious differences	2.2	Disagree

loss of identity	2.6	Agree
cultural differences	3.4	Agree
Unsupportive family	2.5	Agree
gender stereotype	3.5	Agree
Coping with local language	2.8	Agree
Coping with local food	2.5	Agree
Challenges faced in information seeking		
Lack of information literacy skills	2.5	Agree
Discrimination	2.1	Disagree
Information overload	2.7	Agree
inadequate information sharing	2.6	Agree
Non-challant attitudes towards information seeking	2.0	Disagree

Result from table 2 indicates the challenges that faced cross cultural women in Yenagoa metropolis in Bayelsa State. It revealed the following challenges: gender stereotype (3.5), cultural differences (3.4), coping with local language (2.8), loss of identity (2.6), Unsupportive family (2.5), coping with local food (2.5). Coping with religious differences was not a challenges (2.2). On the challenges faced in information seeking, it indicates that Information overload (2.7), inadequate information sharing (2.6) and Lack of information literacy skills (2.5) were the challenges faced in information seeking. On the other hand, discrimination (2.1) and non-challant attitudes towards information seeking (2.0) were not agreed as challenges faced when seeking for information needs.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of research question one revealed that information needs were: Culture/tradition of the people, language, local food, locality, Neighborhood, market, personal development, health, social life, business and agriculture. This study is in line with the study of Sakeh (2011) who investigated information needs and information-seeking behavior of rural women in Nigeria with particular reference to Borno State and discovered that women needed information on agriculture, health, education and economy.

The result research question two revealed that women in cross cultural marriages consulted friends, family members, neighbors, internet, radio and television. The study corroborates with Hossain (2012) who discovered that women used Television, radio, friends, neighbours and used personal experience as a source of information.

The result from research question three revealed that the challenges that faced women in cross cultural marriages were gender stereotype, cultural differences, coping with local language, loss of

identity, Unsupportive family and coping with local food. Also On the challenges faced in information seeking, it revealed that Information overload, inadequate information sharing and Lack of information literacy skills were the challenges faced in information seeking. The study corroborates with the study of Kim et al (2017) who explored issues and strengths of cross-cultural marriage among Korean immigrants and discovered that communication barriers, cultural conflicts, misunderstandings, and unclear cultural identities as the challenges faced cross cultural marriages.

Conclusion

The pattern of husband-and-wife relations in the society shows that the cultural factor is still strong as a reference in their interactions. This cultural factor influences the construction of women. Women in the society are seen of as active and taking on responsibilities and being able to work together with men. Due to divers culture, women in cross cultural marriages need information to cope in marriage. This is because Information is considered an important resource that is essentially needed in all human endeavors. It is a message that changes an individual's knowledge by adding to existing knowledge or filling in the gap, hence information significantly enhances the existing knowledge of women. The study investigated information needs and seeking behaviour of women in cross cultural marriages in Yenagao Metropolis, Bayelsa State and discovered that women in cross cultural marriages needed information on culture/tradition of the people, language, local food, locality, Neighborhood, market, personal development, health, social life, business and agriculture. It also revealed that women in cross cultural marriages consulted friends, family members, neighbors, internet, radio and television. The study found that the challenges that faced women in cross cultural marriages were gender stereotype, cultural differences, coping with local language, loss of identity, Unsupportive family and coping with local food. Furthermore, it revealed that Information overload, inadequate information sharing and lack of information literacy skills were the challenges faced in information seeking.

Recommendations

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

1. there should be periodic sensitization for people to understand and respect different cultural backgrounds to avoid stereotypes in cross cultural marriage.
2. Families should support women in cross cultural marriages to cope with their way of life and not to make them feel strange
3. Women in cross cultural marriages should seek for ways of developing their information literacy skills to be able to seek and use information to cope in cross cultural marriages.

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