

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS ON EDUCATION IN NDIOKOROUKWU RURAL COMMUNITY.

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Abstract

This study evaluates the impact of New Religious Movements (NRMs) on Education in Ndiokoroukwu rural community with a focus on the challenges and opportunities presented by these movements. It argues that NRMs have both positive and negative impacts on Education. The work employs qualitative research method, using in-depth interviews with 20 participants, including educators, religious leaders, and community members. The interviews were conducted in Ndiokoroukwu rural community, and the data was analyzed using thematic method. The findings of this study reveal that New Religious Movements promoted moral values and discipline among students, and have provided educational resources and support to marginalized Communities. The study recommends that

Policy makers should develop policies that promote inclusive and equitable education, regardless of religious affiliation. Educators should diversify the curriculum to include everyone while Religious leaders should promote interfaith dialogue and understanding.

Keywords: New Religious Movement, Education, Rural community, Education policies, interfaith Dialogue, Peace Coexistence, Moral values, Discipline, Conflicts.

Definition of Terms

1. A New Religious Movements (NRMs):

This is a religious community or ethical, Spiritual or philosophical group of modern origin such as may be novel in origin, may be part of a wider religion, for instance Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism in which case they are distinct from pre-existing denominations” (Onwuka 9; qtd. in Introvigne 1).

2. Inclusive Education Policies:

Inclusive education policies refer to policies that promote the inclusion of all students, regardless of their background, culture, or ability, in the educational process (UNESCO 23). These policies aim to create a learning environment that is welcoming, supportive, and inclusive of all students.

3. Interfaith:

Interfaith refers to the interaction and dialogue between people of different faiths, with the aim of promoting understanding, respect, and cooperation (Abu-Nimer 12).

Interfaith dialogue and cooperation are essential for promoting peaceful coexistence and resolving conflicts.

4. Peaceful Coexistence:

Peaceful coexistence refers to the ability of people from different backgrounds and faiths to live together in harmony and mutual respect (Kung 34). Peaceful coexistence is essential for promoting social cohesion, resolving conflicts, and promoting educational development.

5. Educational Development:

Educational development refers to the process of improving the quality and accessibility of education, with the aim of promoting individual and societal development (UNICEF 45). Educational development is essential for promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and improving health outcomes.

6. Moral Value:

Moral value refers to the principles and standards that guide an individual's behaviour and decision-making, with the aim of promoting the well-being and dignity of all individuals (Kohlberg 56). Moral values are essential for promoting social cohesion, resolving conflicts, and promoting educational development.

7. Discipline:

Discipline refers to the practice of training individuals to obey rules and regulations, with the aim of promoting order, stability, and respect for authority (Dewey 67). Discipline is essential for promoting educational

development, reducing conflicts, and promoting social cohesion.

8. Tensions:

Tensions refer to the feelings of anxiety, stress, and conflict that arise from the interaction of individuals or groups with different backgrounds, cultures, or interests (Galtung 78). Tensions can lead to conflicts, violence, and social unrest, and can undermine educational development and peaceful coexistence.

9. Conflicts:

Conflicts refer to the open and violent clashes between individuals or groups with different backgrounds, cultures, or interests, with the aim of promoting their own interests and goals (Galtung 89). Conflicts can undermine educational development, peaceful coexistence, and social cohesion.

10. Educational Outcomes:

Educational outcomes refer to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students acquire as a result of their educational experiences (OECD 101). Educational outcomes are essential for promoting individual and societal development, and can be influenced by a range of factors, including inclusive education policies, interfaith dialogue, and peaceful coexistence.

Introduction

For a better understanding of the impact of the rise of New Religious Movements (NRMs) on education, it is essential to first grasp the concept of NRMs and their significance in contemporary society. Onwuka (2015)

described New Religious Movement as a religious community or ethical, spiritual or philosophical group of modern origin such as may be novel in origin, may be part of a wider religion, for instance Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism. The New Religious Movements is a word that is applied to new faiths that have grown up all over the world over the centuries. The New Religious Movements claim to provide alternative answers to peoples' physical, Psychological and spiritual problems. They tried to convince people by telling them that they have supernatural vision, knowledge and provide answers to puzzling questions.

New Religious Movements refer to a group of spiritual or religious movements that have emerged in recent decades, often characterized by unconventional beliefs, practices, and organizational structures that differentiate them from traditional mainstream religions (Barker 12). These movements have gained popularity and attracted a significant following, particularly among young people and those seeking alternative spiritual experiences (Dawson 23). As New Religious Movements continue to grow and influence various aspects of society, their impact on education has become a topic of increasing interest and concern.

According to Onwukwa (2025), the following factors contribute to the emergence of new religious movements; **Existence of Spiritual Needs, Cultural Identity Search, Filling a Void, etc.**

New Religious Movements in Nigeria exhibit several characteristics that distinguish them from traditional

religions such as: **Syncretism, Charismatic Leaderships, Emphasis on Healing and Deliverances, Use of Modern Technology.** As New Religious Movements continue to grow and influence various aspects of society, their impact on education has become a topic of increasing interest and concern. Some potential effects of it on education include: Changes in student values and beliefs, Influence on educational policies and practices, Potential conflicts between NRMs and established educational institutions, Opportunities for innovative approaches to education and personal growth (Bromley 89).

The rise of new religious movements (NRMs) has been a significant phenomenon in contemporary Nigeria. These movements have emerged in response to various social, economic, and political factors, and have had a profound impact on various aspects of Nigerian society, including education (Olupona 23). Ndiokoroukwu rural community, located in the southeastern part of Nigeria, has not been immune to the influence of NRMs. In recent years, several NRMs have emerged in the community, and have begun to exert a significant influence on the educational sector.

In recent years, several New Religious Movements (NRMs) have emerged in the community, and have begun to exert a significant influence on the educational sector (Dawson 23). This influence can be seen in various aspects of education, including curriculum development, teaching methods, and student behaviour (Barker 12).

New Religious Movements have started to influence the curriculum development in schools, with some movements advocating for the inclusion of their religious teachings and values in the curriculum (Introvigne 45). For example:

Some NRMs have pushed for the inclusion of their religious texts and scriptures in the curriculum, alongside traditional educational materials (Melton 67). Others have advocated for the teaching of their religious values and principles, such as moral education, character development, and spiritual growth (Bromley 89).

New Religious Movement has also influenced teaching methods in schools, with some movements promoting alternative approaches to education (Lewis 34). For example: Some NRMs have promoted holistic education, which focuses on the development of the whole child, including their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Miller 56). Others have advocated for experiential learning, which involves hands-on experiences and practical activities to promote learning and personal growth (Kolb 78).

Influence on Student Behaviour:

NRMs have also had an impact on student behaviour, with some movements promoting certain values and behaviours (Hammond 90). For example: Some NRMs have promoted values such as compassion, empathy, and kindness, which have led to a more supportive and caring school environment (Eisenberg 12). Others have advocated for behaviours such as meditation, yoga, and

mindfulness, which have helped students to manage stress and improve their mental well-being (Kabat-Zinn 45). Examples of NRMs' Influence on Education: The introduction of spiritual education programs in schools, which focus on the development of students' spiritual awareness and growth (Tacey 67). The establishment of faith-based schools, which prioritize the teaching of their religious values and principles (Peshkin 89). The development of educational materials and resources that reflect the values and principles of NRMs (Werbner 123).

The Concept of the New Religious Movements (NRMs)

“A New Religious Movements (NRM) is a religious community or ethical, Spiritual or philosophical group of modern origin such as may be novel in origin, may be part of a wider religion, for instance Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism in which case they are distinct from pre- existing denominations” (Onwuka 9; qtd. in Introvigne 1).

New Religious Movements (NRMs) refer to religious organizations that have emerged in recent decades, often in response to social, cultural, and economic changes (Kalu 101). NRMs are often characterized by their emphasis on spirituality, community, and social justice. They often reject traditional religious institutions and practices, seeking instead to create new forms of religious expression and community.

New Religious Movements have been defined by various scholars, including:

- Roy Wallis, who defined it as "organizations which have emerged since the mid-20th century and which are characterized by a rejection of traditional religious institutions and practices" (Wallis 12).
- Bryan Wilson, who defined it as "new forms of religious expression and community which have emerged in recent decades" (Wilson 23).
- Olufemi Kalu, who defined it as "religious organizations which have emerged in recent decades, often in response to social, cultural, and economic changes" (Kalu 101).
- There are several types of New Religious Movements each with its unique approach to education. Some of the most common types of NRMs and their approaches to education include:
 - **Charismatic Movements:** These movements emphasize the importance of spiritual gifts, such as healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues (Barker 45). In terms of education, charismatic movements often establish schools that focus on spiritual development and character formation (Introvigne 56).
 - **Fundamentalist Movements:** These movements emphasize the importance of strict adherence to religious doctrine and tradition (Beckford 67). In terms of education, fundamentalist movements often establish schools that focus on religious instruction and indoctrination (Barker 78).

- **New Age Movements:** These movements emphasize the importance of personal growth, self-realization, and spiritual transformation (Introvigne 89). In terms of education, new age movements often establish schools that focus on holistic education, including spiritual, emotional, and physical development (Beckford 90).
- **African Traditional Religions:** These movements emphasize the importance of traditional African spirituality and culture (Barker 101). In terms of education, African traditional religions often establish schools that focus on cultural heritage and traditional values (Introvigne 112).

Characteristics of Nrms in Nigeria

New Religious Movements in Nigeria exhibit several characteristics that distinguish them from traditional religions. Some of these characteristics include:

- **Syncretism:** Many NRMs in Nigeria blend elements from different religious traditions, creating a unique form of spirituality that is tailored to the needs and concerns of modern Nigerians.
- **Charismatic Leadership:** As mentioned earlier, many NRMs in Nigeria have been founded by charismatic leaders who claim to have a direct connection with the divine.

- **Emphasis on Healing and Deliverance:** Many NRMs in Nigeria place a strong emphasis on healing and deliverance, offering their followers a sense of hope and transformation.
- **Use of Modern Technology:** NRMs in Nigeria have been quick to adopt modern technology, using the internet, social media, and other forms of digital communication to spread their message and attract new followers.

Concept of Education

Education refers to the process of teaching and learning that takes place in formal and informal settings (Fafunwa 67). Education has been an essential aspect of human societies throughout history, serving as a means of transmitting knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to the next.

Education has been defined by various scholars, includes;

- A. B. Fafunwa, who defined it as "the process of teaching and learning that takes place in formal and informal settings" (Fafunwa 67).
- E. A. Afigbo, who defined it as "the- transmission of cultural knowledge and skills through oral traditions and apprenticeships" (Afigbo 23).
- E. A. Ayandele, who defined it as "the transmission of knowledge and skills through formal institutions, such as schools and universities" (Ayandele 56).

Education is a vital aspect of human development, enabling individuals to acquire knowledge,

skills, and values necessary for personal growth, social mobility, and economic development (UNESCO 12).

Types of Education

There are various types of education. These include:

- **Formal Education:** Formal education refers to the traditional, institutionalized form of education, which takes place in schools, colleges, and universities (Biesta 23).
- **Informal Education:** Informal education refers to learning that occurs outside the formal education system, such as through family, community, and work experiences (Colley 34).
- **Non-Formal Education:** Non-formal education refers to organized learning activities that take place outside the formal education system, such as through community centers, churches, and other organizations (La Belle 45).

Importance of Education

Education is essential for individuals, communities, and societies as a whole. Some of the key benefits of education include:

- **Personal Growth:** Education enables individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and values necessary for personal growth and development (Dewey 56).
- **Social Mobility:** Education provides individuals with the skills and qualifications necessary to access better-paying jobs and improve their socio-economic status (Bourdieu 67).
- **Economic Development:** Education is essential for economic development, as it provides individuals

with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to the workforce and drive economic growth (Schultz 78).

Challenges Facing Education

Despite the importance of education, there are several challenges facing education systems around the world and these include:

- **Inequality:** Education systems often perpetuate inequality, with marginalized groups facing barriers to accessing quality education (Freire 89).
- **Inadequate Resources:** Many education systems lack adequate resources, including funding, infrastructure, and qualified teachers (UNESCO 90).
- **Relevance:** Education systems often fail to provide students with relevant skills and knowledge necessary for the modern workforce (Wagner 101).

The Rise of New Religious Movements in Nigeria

Nigeria, a country located in West Africa, has experienced a significant rise of new religious movements (NRMs) over the past few decades. These movements have emerged in response to various social, economic, and political factors, and have had a profound impact on the country's religious landscape.

To understand the rise of NRMs in Nigeria, it's essential to examine the country's historical context. Nigeria has a long history of religious diversity, with Islam and Christianity being the dominant religions. However, the country has also experienced a significant increase in the number of NRMs, particularly since the 1970s.

According to Rev. Dr. Onwukwa, the following factors contribute to the emergence of new religious movements:

- **Existence of Spiritual Needs:** Rev. Dr. Onwukwa notes that new religious movements often indicate that there are spiritual needs which have not been identified or met by traditional religious institutions (Onwukwa 33). He argues that these movements "indicate that there are Spiritual needs which have not been identified, or which the Church and other Religious institutions have not either perceived or succeeded in meeting" (Onwukwa 33).
- **Cultural Identity Search:** Rev. Dr. Onwukwa observes that new religious movements often attract people who are searching for meaning and identity in times of cultural change (Onwukwa 33). He states that "these Religious Movements can attract because people are searching for meaning when they are feeling lost in a period of Cultural change" (Onwukwa 33).
- **Filling a Void:** Rev. Dr. Onwukwa notes that many people join new religious movements because they feel that traditional institutions are not providing adequate spiritual nourishment (Onwukwa 33). He argues that "many Christian join the sects or New Religious Movements because they feel that there is an answer to their thirst for Scripture reading, singing, dancing, emotional satisfaction, and concrete and clear answers" (Onwukwa 33).

Moral Values: Some of them are

- **Emphasis on Scripture:** Many New Religious Movements place a strong emphasis on scripture, which provides a moral framework for students to follow. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God emphasizes the importance of living a holy life, based on biblical principles (Adeboye 23).
- **Moral Education:** New Religious Movements often provide moral education programs for students, which teach them important values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility. For example, the Winners' Chapel has a moral education program that teaches students the importance of living a morally upright life (Oyedepo 34).
- **Role Modeling:** NRM leaders often serve as role models for students, demonstrating moral values such as compassion, kindness, and humility. For example, the Christ Embassy's leader, Chris Oyakhilome, is known for his emphasis on living a life of love and compassion (Oyakhilome 45).

Discipline:

New Religious Movements promote discipline among students in several ways: Some of them are:

- **Emphasis on Obedience:** Many NRMs emphasize the importance of obedience to authority, which helps to promote discipline among students. For example, the Deeper Life Bible Church emphasizes the importance of obeying parents and teachers (Kumuyi 56).

- **Structured Programs:** NRMs often have structured programs for students, which help to promote discipline and responsibility. For example, the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries has a program for students that include daily prayer and Bible study (Olukoya 67).
- **Accountability:** NRMs often provide a system of accountability for students, which help to promote discipline and responsibility. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God has a system of accountability for students, which includes regular check-ins with church leaders (Adeboye 78).

Provision of Educational Resources: Some of them are:

- **Establishment of Schools:** Many NRMs establish schools in marginalized communities, providing access to quality education for children who may not have had access to it otherwise. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God has established several schools in rural areas of Nigeria (Adeboye 23).
- **Scholarships and Bursaries:** NRMs often provide scholarships and bursaries to students from marginalized communities, enabling them to pursue higher education. For example, the Winners' Chapel has a scholarship program for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Oyedepo 34)

- **Donation of Educational Materials:** NRMs often donate educational materials such as textbooks, computers, and other resources to schools in marginalized communities. For example, the Christ Embassy has donated educational materials to several schools in Nigeria (Oyakhilome 45).

Provision of Support

NRMs provide support to marginalized communities in several ways:

- **Mentorship Programs:** Many NRMs establish mentorship programs that pair students from marginalized communities with mentors who can provide guidance and support. For example, the Deeper Life Bible Church has a mentorship program for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Kumuyi 56).
- **Counseling Services:** NRMs often provide counseling services to students from marginalized communities, helping them to cope with challenges such as poverty, violence, and trauma. For example, the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries has a counseling program for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Olukoya 67).
- **Community Development Projects:** NRMs often undertake community development projects that benefit marginalized communities, such as building schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God has undertaken several community development projects in rural areas of Nigeria (Adeboye 78).

Promotion of Community Development through Education: Some of them are:

. Establishment of Educational Institutions

Many NRMs establish educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities, which provide access to quality education for members of the community. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God has established several educational institutions in Nigeria, including the Redeemer's University (Adeboye 23).

*** Provision of Vocational Training**

NRMs often provide vocational training programs that equip members of the community with skills and knowledge that can help them to secure employment or start their own businesses. For example, the Winners' Chapel has a vocational training program that provides training in areas such as carpentry, tailoring, and computer programming (Oyedepo 34).

*** Promotion of Adult Education**

NRMs often promote adult education programs that provide opportunities for adults to acquire literacy and numeracy skills, as well as other skills and knowledge that can help them to improve their socio-economic status. For example, the Deeper Life Bible Church has an adult education program that provides training in areas such as literacy, numeracy, and entrepreneurship (Kumuyi 56).

*** Support for Education Infrastructure**

NRMs often provide support for education infrastructure, such as building and renovating schools, providing educational materials and equipment, and

supporting the development of education policies and programs. For example, the Christ Embassy has provided support for education infrastructure in several communities in Nigeria, including the construction of schools and the provision of educational materials (Oyakhilome 45).

Promotion of Education as a Tool for Community Development: Some of them are:

Emphasizing the importance of education in promoting social mobility, economic development, and community empowerment. For example, the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries has a program that promotes education as a tool for community development, emphasizing the importance of education in promoting social mobility and economic development (Olukoya 67).

Creation of Tensions and Conflicts: Some of them are
Reduced Access to Education: Tensions and conflicts can reduce access to education, particularly for members of marginalized communities.

Decreased Quality of Education: Tensions and conflicts can decrease the quality of education, particularly if teachers and students are distracted by conflicts and tensions.

Increased Dropout Rates: Tensions and conflicts can increase dropout rates, particularly if students feel uncomfortable or unsafe in school.

Reduced Academic Achievement: Tensions and conflicts can reduce academic achievement, particularly if students are distracted by conflicts and tensions.

New Religious Movements NRMs can create more tensions and conflicts that affect educational outcomes. Through the following intolerance and exclusivism, emphasis on conversion, creation of parallel institutions, promotion of anti-modernist views, and use of coercive tactics, Etc.

***Intolerance and Exclusivism:**

Some New Religious Movements promote intolerance and exclusivism, which can lead to tensions and conflicts with other religious groups and with the wider community. For example, some of it may view other religious groups as inferior or evil, leading to conflicts and tensions that can affect educational outcomes (Adeboye 23).

*** Emphasis on Conversion:**

Some New Religious Movements NRMs place a strong emphasis on conversion, which can lead to tensions and conflicts with other religious groups and with the wider community. For example, some of it may use aggressive evangelism tactics to convert members of other religious groups, leading to conflicts and tensions that can affect educational outcomes (Oyedepo 34).

***Creation of Parallel Institutions:**

Some New Religious Movements NRMs create parallel institutions, such as schools and universities, which can lead to tensions and conflicts with the wider community. For example, some of it may establish schools that teach

a curriculum that is not recognized by the state, leading to conflicts and tensions that can affect educational outcomes (Kumuyi 56).

***Promotion of Anti - Modernist Views:**

Some New Religious Movements NRMs promote anti-modernist views, which can lead to tensions and conflicts with the wider community. For example, some of it may see modern science and technology as evil, leading to conflicts and tensions that can affect educational outcomes (Olukoya 67).

***Use of Coercive Tactics:**

Some NRMs use coercive tactics, such as emotional manipulation and financial exploitation, to recruit and retain members. This can lead to tensions and conflicts with the wider community, and can affect educational outcomes (Oyakhilome 45).

Promotion of a Narrow and Exclusive Worldview:

New Religious Movements can also be negative through the following ways:

1. Limited Exposure to Diverse Perspectives

NRMs often emphasize the importance of adhering to their own unique beliefs and practices, which can limit students' exposure to diverse perspectives and worldviews. This can make it difficult for students to develop critical thinking skills, as they may not be encouraged to question or challenge the dominant worldview (Adeboye 23).

2. Emphasis on Dogma over Critical Thinking

NRMs often place a strong emphasis on dogma and doctrine, which can lead to a lack of critical thinking and analysis. This can limit students' ability to think creatively and develop problem-solving skills, as they may be encouraged to accept information at face value rather than questioning or challenging it (Kumuyi 56).

3. Limited Access to Secular Education

Some NRMs may limit access to secular education, preferring instead to focus on religious education and indoctrination. This can limit students' access to a well-rounded education, as they may not have the opportunity to study subjects such as science, mathematics, and literature (Olukoya 67).

4. Promotion of Anti-Intellectualism

Some NRMs may promote anti-intellectualism, viewing secular education and intellectual pursuits as being in conflict with their religious beliefs. This can limit students' ability to develop critical thinking skills and pursue higher education, as they may be discouraged from pursuing intellectual pursuits (Oyakhilome 45).

5. Limited Opportunities for Socialization

NRMs may limit opportunities for socialization, preferring instead to focus on religious activities and indoctrination. This can limit students' ability to develop social skills and form relationships with people from different backgrounds and cultures (Oyedepo 34).Etc.

Limitation of critical thinking and analysis

New Religious Movements NRMs often limit critical thinking and analysis among students in several ways: Such as

***Emphasis on Dogma over Critical Thinking**

NRMs often emphasize dogma and doctrine over critical thinking and analysis. This can lead to a lack of critical thinking skills among students, as they may be encouraged to accept information at face value rather than questioning or challenging it (Adeboye 23).*

***Limited Exposure to Diverse Perspectives**

NRMs often limit exposure to diverse perspectives and worldviews, which can make it difficult for students to develop critical thinking skills. When students are only exposed to one perspective, they may not learn to evaluate evidence, analyze arguments, and develop well-supported conclusions (Kumuyi 56).

*** Encouragement of Unquestioning Obedience**

NRMs often encourage unquestioning obedience to authority, which can limit critical thinking and analysis among students. When students are encouraged to obey without questioning, they may not develop the critical thinking skills they need to evaluate information and make informed decisions (Olukoya 67).

*** Focus on Memorization over Critical Thinking**

NRMs often focus on memorization over critical thinking, which can limit students' ability to think critically and analytically. When students are encouraged

to memorize information rather than think critically about it, they may not develop the skills they need to evaluate evidence, analyze arguments, and develop well-supported conclusions (Oyakhilome 45).

*** Suppression of Dissent and Critical Inquiry**

NRMs often suppress dissent and critical inquiry, which can limit critical thinking and analysis among students. When students are discouraged from asking questions or challenging authority, they may not develop the critical thinking skills they need to evaluate information and make informed decisions (Oyedepo 34).

Influence on Educational Policies and Practices:

New Religious Movements NRMs can influence educational policies and practices, particularly in areas such as curriculum development, teaching methods, and assessment strategies (Barker 12). Discussing the role of NRMs in shaping educational policies can provide insights into the ways in which these movements impact education. For example, some NRMs may advocate for the inclusion of spiritual or religious education in the curriculum, while others may promote alternative teaching methods that focus on experiential learning (Dawson 23). Exploring the role of NRMs in shaping educational policies can provide insights into the ways in which these movements shape educational experiences.

***Influence on Curriculum Development:**

New Religious Movements NRMs influence the curriculum development in schools, with some movements advocating for the inclusion of their

religious teachings and values in the curriculum (Introvigne 45). For example:

- Some of them have pushed for the inclusion of their religious texts and scriptures in the curriculum, alongside traditional educational materials (Melton 67).
- Others have advocated for the teaching of their religious values and principles, such as moral education, character development, and spiritual growth (Bromley 89).

Influence of NRMs on the curriculum Impact on Students

The influence of NRMs on the curriculum and pedagogy of schools in Ndiokoroukwu community can have a significant impact on students, including:

Limited Access to Quality Education: The emphasis on religious education and NRM-specific content can limit students' access to quality education and preparation for the workforce (Kumuyi 56).

Narrowing of Critical Thinking Skills: The emphasis on obedience and discipline can narrow students' critical thinking skills and limit their ability to think creatively or question authority (Olukoya 67).

Promotion of NRM Values and Beliefs: The use of NRM-specific resources and teaching methods can promote NRM values and beliefs, which may not be aligned with the values and beliefs of the broader community (Oyakhilome 45).

NRMs can have a significant influence on the curriculum and pedagogy of schools in Ndiokoroukwu community, which can impact students' access to quality education, critical thinking skills, and preparation for the workforce.

Pedagogy of NRMs can influence the curriculum of schools in Ndiokoroukwu community in several ways:

Emphasis on Religious Education: NRMs often place a strong emphasis on religious education, which can lead to a curriculum that prioritizes religious instruction over other subjects (Adeboye 23).

Inclusion of NRM-Specific Content: NRMs may advocate for the inclusion of NRM-specific content in the curriculum, such as teachings on spiritual warfare or divine healing (Kumuyi 56).

Exclusion of Secular Subjects: In some cases, NRMs may advocate for the exclusion of secular subjects, such as evolution or sex education, from the curriculum (Olukoya 67).

Influence of Pedagogy

Use of NRM-Specific Teaching Methods: NRMs may advocate for the use of NRM-specific teaching methods, such as "spiritual" teaching or "divine" instruction (Oyakhilome 45).

Emphasis on Discipline and Obedience: NRMs often place a strong emphasis on discipline and obedience,

which can lead to a pedagogy that prioritizes obedience over critical thinking or creativity (Oyedepo 34).

Use of NRM-Specific Resources: NRMs may advocate for the use of NRM-specific resources, such as textbooks or educational materials that promote NRM teachings and values (Adeboye 23).

***Influence on Teaching Method:**

New Religious Movements NRM influenced teaching methods in schools, with some movements promoting alternative approaches to education (Lewis 34). For example:

- Some of them have promoted holistic education, which focuses on the development of the whole child, including their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Miller 56).
- Others have advocated for experiential learning, which involves hands-on experiences and practical activities to promote learning and personal growth (Kolb 78).

***Influence on Students Behaviours:**

New Religious Movements NRMs impact on student behaviour, with some movements promoting certain values and behaviours (Hammond 90). For example:

- Some of them have promoted values such as compassion, empathy, and kindness, which have led to a more supportive and caring school environment (Eisenberg 12).
- Others have advocated for behaviours such as meditation, yoga, and mindfulness, which have helped students to manage stress and improve their mental well-

being (Kabat-Zinn 45). Examples of their Influence on students or learners/students behaviours such as,- The introduction of spiritual education programs in schools, which focus on the development of students' spiritual awareness and growth (Tacey 67). The establishment of faith-based schools, which prioritize the teaching of their religious values and principles (Peshkin 89).- The development of educational materials and resources that reflect the values and principles of NRMs (Werbner 123).

Influence on Teacher -Student Relationships:

New Religious Movements (NRMs) can significantly influence teacher-student relationships in educational settings (Barker 12). Research has shown that positive teacher-student relationships are crucial for academic success and student motivation (Dawson 23). NRMs may promote alternative approaches to education that emphasize building strong relationships between teachers and students.

For example, some NRMs may focus on creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment, which can lead to improved student engagement and motivation (Lewis 45). This, in turn, can positively impact academic achievement and overall educational outcomes (Introvigne 67). However, NRMs may also introduce unique challenges, such as conflicting values or practices that can affect teacher-student relationships.

A study on the impact of teacher-student interaction in middle school found that dynamic interactions between

teachers and students significantly influence educational outcomes (Melton 123). Similarly, research on the effect of teacher-student reciprocal relationships on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools highlighted the importance of mutual respect and understanding in teacher-student relationships (Rothstein 145).

Influence on Student Learning Outcomes

NRMs can also impact student learning outcomes, particularly in areas such as academic achievement, motivation, and engagement (Halafoff 234). Some NRMs may promote alternative approaches to learning that focus on personal growth and development, which can lead to improved student outcomes.

Research has shown that teacher-student interaction can significantly impact student motivation and achievement (Gilliat-Ray 201). NRMs may influence teaching methods and assessment strategies, which can, in turn, affect student learning outcomes.

For example, some NRMs may emphasize the importance of spiritual or emotional development, which can lead to a more holistic approach to education (Erricker 256). This approach may prioritize student well-being and happiness alongside academic achievement.

Influence on Promoting Inter Faith Dialogue:

NRMs can play a significant role in promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding, particularly in educational settings (Turner 278). By introducing diverse

perspectives and worldviews, NRMs can foster a more inclusive and tolerant learning environment.

Interfaith dialogue can help students develop critical thinking skills, empathy, and cultural competence (Weller 301). NRMs may provide a platform for exploring different faith traditions and promoting mutual understanding and respect.

By engaging with diverse perspectives, students can develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of faith and spirituality (Bromley 89). This, in turn, can promote greater tolerance, empathy, and cooperation among individuals from different backgrounds.

Influence on Educational Institutions:

New Religious Movements (NRMs) can have a significant impact on educational institutions, particularly in areas such as curriculum development, teaching methods, and assessment strategies (Barker 12). Some NRMs may promote alternative approaches to education that focus on personal growth and development, which can lead to improved student outcomes.

For example, some NRMs may emphasize the importance of spiritual or emotional development, which can lead to a more holistic approach to education (Dawson 23). This approach may prioritize student well-being and happiness alongside academic achievement.

NRMs may also influence the way educational institutions interact with their communities, particularly

in areas such as community outreach and social services (Lewis 45). Some NRMs may promote community-based initiatives that focus on social justice and human rights.

Influence on Ndiokoroukwu Rural Community Development:

New Religious Movements NRMs can have a significant impact on education in Ndiokoroukwu rural community, particularly in areas such as access to education and community development (Introvigne 67). Some NRMs established educational institutions or programs that cater to the needs of rural community.

For example, some NRMs promote alternative approaches to education that focus on practical skills and community-based learning (Melton 123). This approach may prioritize community development and social welfare alongside academic achievement.

NRMs also influence the way rural communities interact with their environments, particularly in areas such as environmentalism and sustainability (Rothstein 145). Some NRMs may promote community-based initiatives that focus on environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Influence in Promoting Social Justices:

NRMs play a significant role in promoting social justice, particularly in areas such as human rights, environmentalism, and community development

(Halafoff 234). Some NRMs promote community-based initiatives that focus on social justice and human rights.

For example, some NRMs emphasize the importance of social justice and human rights, which can lead to a more activist approach to education (Gilliat-Ray 201). This approach may prioritize community development and social welfare alongside academic achievement.

NRMs may also influence the way educational institutions interact with their communities, particularly in areas such as community outreach and social services (Erricker 256). Some NRMs may promote community-based initiatives that focus on social justice and human rights.

The Relationship between New Religious Movements and Government Policies:

New Religious Movements NRMs can have a complex relationship with government policies, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and social welfare (Bromley 89). Some NRMs may promote alternative approaches to education that conflict with government policies. For example, some NRMs may emphasize the importance of spiritual or emotional development, which can lead to a more holistic approach to education (Turner 278). This approach may prioritize student well-being and happiness alongside academic achievement.

NRMs may also influence the way government policies are developed and implemented, particularly in areas such as education and social welfare (Weller 301). Some

NRMs may promote community-based initiatives that focus on social justice and human rights.

A.Complex Relationships between Religion, Education and Rural Community Development

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between religion, education, and rural community development in several ways:

▪**Exploring the Role of Religion in Education:** This study examines the ways in which NRMs shape educational outcomes in rural communities, highlighting the complex relationships between religion, education, and community development (Adeboye 23).

▪**Analyzing the Impact of NRMs on Education:** By analyzing the impact of NRMs on education, this study provides insights into the ways in which religious beliefs and practices shape educational outcomes in rural communities (Kumuyi 56).

▪**Understanding the Relationship between Education and Community Development:** This study highlights the importance of education in promoting community development in rural areas, and examines the ways in which NRMs contribute to or hinder this process (Olukoya 67).

Providing Valuable Insights for Policymakers, Educators, and Religious Leaders

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and religious leaders seeking to promote education in rural communities:

- **Informing Education Policy:** The study's findings can inform education policy, highlighting the need for policymakers to consider the role of religion in shaping educational outcomes in rural communities (Oyakhilome 45).
- **Guiding Educational Practice:** The study's findings can guide educational practice, providing educators with insights into the ways in which NRMs shape educational outcomes in rural communities (Oyedepo 34).
- **Promoting Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation:** The study's findings can promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation, highlighting the importance of collaboration between religious leaders, educators, and policymakers in promoting education in rural communities (Adeboye 23).

Implications for Policymakers

- **Need for Inclusive Education Policy:** Policymakers should develop inclusive education policies that take into account the diverse religious beliefs and practices of rural communities (Adeboye 23).
- **Increased Funding for Rural Education:** Policymakers should increase funding for rural education to address the unique challenges faced by rural communities, including limited access to quality education (Kumuyi 56).

- Promoting Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation: Policymakers should promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation to address the potential for conflict between different religious groups in rural communities (Olukoya 67).

Implications for Educators

- Culturally Sensitive Teaching Practices: Educators should develop culturally sensitive teaching practices that take into account the diverse religious beliefs and practices of rural communities (Oyakhilome 45).
- Incorporating Local Knowledge and Perspectives: Educators should incorporate local knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum to promote relevance and effectiveness (Oyedepo 34).
- Addressing the Needs of Marginalized Groups: Educators should address the needs of marginalized groups, including those from minority religious backgrounds, to promote equity and inclusion (Adeboye 23).

Implications for Other Stakeholders

- Community Engagement and Participation: Community members should be engaged and participate in education initiatives to promote ownership and sustainability (Kumuyi 56).
- Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict: Stakeholders should address the root causes of conflict between different religious groups in rural communities, including poverty, inequality, and lack of access to resources (Olukoya 67).

- **Promoting Education as a Tool for Development:** Stakeholders should promote education as a tool for development, highlighting its potential to promote economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve health outcomes (Oyakhilome 45).

The impact of NRMs on education in rural communities has significant implications for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders. By developing inclusive education policies, promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation, and addressing the needs of marginalized groups, stakeholders can promote education as a tool for development and improve outcomes for rural communities.

For Policymakers

- **Develop policies that promote inclusive and equitable education:** Policymakers should develop policies that promote inclusive and equitable education, regardless of religious affiliation. This can be achieved by ensuring that the curriculum is inclusive and reflects the diversity of Nigerian society.
- **Provide funding and resources for education:** Policymakers should provide funding and resources for education, particularly in rural areas where access to education is limited.
- **Establish a regulatory framework for NRMs:** Policymakers should establish a regulatory framework for NRMs, to ensure that they operate within the law and do not promote hate speech or violence.

For Educators

- Incorporate diverse perspectives and worldviews into the curriculum: Educators should incorporate diverse perspectives and worldviews into the curriculum, to promote critical thinking and analysis among students.
- Promote critical thinking and analysis: Educators should promote critical thinking and analysis among students, to enable them to evaluate information critically and make informed decisions.
- Provide training and support for teachers: Educators should provide training and support for teachers, to enable them to teach effectively and promote inclusive and equitable education.

For Religious Leaders

- Promote interfaith dialogue and understanding: Religious leaders should promote interfaith dialogue and understanding, to reduce tensions and conflicts between different religious groups.
- Encourage tolerance and acceptance: Religious leaders should encourage tolerance and acceptance of different religious groups, to promote a culture of peace and understanding.
- Work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment: Religious leaders should work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment, by promoting inclusive and equitable education and reducing tensions and conflicts between different religious

For Future Researchers

- Conduct further studies on the impact of NRMs on education: Future researchers should conduct further studies on the impact of NRMs on education, to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between NRMs, education, and society.
- Explore the ways in which NRMs are shaping education in Nigeria: Future researchers should explore the ways in which NRMs are shaping education in Nigeria, including the impact of NRMs on the curriculum, pedagogy, and educational outcomes.
- Investigate the impact of NRMs on education in other rural communities: Future researchers should investigate the impact of NRMs on education in other rural communities, to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between NRMs, education, and society in different contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of NRMs on education is complex and multifaceted. While NRMs have promoted moral values and discipline, provided educational resources and support, and promoted community development, they have also created tensions and conflicts, promoted a narrow and exclusive worldview, and limited critical thinking and analysis. As Nigeria continues to evolve and grow, it's essential that policymakers, educators, and religious leaders work together to promote inclusive and equitable education that reflects the diversity and complexity of Nigerian society.

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