Holistic Catholic Education:
Synthesizing Environmental Stewardship, Interfaith Dialogue, and Sustainability
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CHAPTER XI

Environmental Education: Implementing Laudato Si' In The Curriculum

Hermania Bhoki (hermania@stprenya-lrt.sch.id)
STP Reinha Larantuka

Abstract

This study analyzes the application of concepts presented in Laudato Si' within environmental education throughout several educational tiers, emphasizing the effective amalgamation of spiritual, ethical, and scientific dimensions in the evolution of ecological pedagogy. A qualitative research design was employed, featuring a comprehensive literature review and qualitative analysis of several sources, including monographs, scholarly references, academic journals, and pertinent policy documents. The research identified four essential elements for effective implementation: systematic incorporation of Laudato Si into the educational curriculum, experiential and project-based learning methodologies, active engagement of the academic community, and ongoing professional development programs for educators. An effective program should consider education's behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects. Some implementation challenges include resistance to curriculum change, limited resources, and difficulty measuring the impact of transformational learning, including integrating spiritual and scientific perspectives. Research recommends a phased approach, the development of collaborative networks, and strategic partnerships with communities. Program evaluation must include an assessment of ecological awareness, ethical considerations, behavioral change, and community impact. This extensive method could transform ecological awareness and environmental behavior for future sustainability.

Keywords: *Laudato Si', Curriculum, Environmental Education*

Introduction

The ongoing global environmental disaster demands an urgent and transformative educational response. The existential dilemmas posed by climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss require profound modifications in how individuals interact with the natural environment (Gienger et al., 2024). In this context, Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, Laudato Si, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing the ecological crisis from an integrative moral and spiritual perspective (Bhoki,

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2023; Bhoki & Pudjiarti, 2022). This foundational study highlights the relationship between environmental and social issues and the essential function of education in fostering ecological consciousness and motivating transformational action (Francis, 2015; Bhoki & Pudjiarti, 2022).

Recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) research suggests that restricting global warming to 1.5°C necessitates a substantial overhaul of educational methodologies to instruct future generations on environmental sustainability (Reid, 2019). Guided by Laudato Si', ecological education provides a framework that amalgamates empirical scientific knowledge with moral and spiritual acknowledgment of human responsibilities toward nature (Mobilla, 2023).

According to UNESCO's 2023 assessment, only 34% of educational institutions worldwide incorporate sustainability themes into their curricula (Sahin et al., 2023). Although 87% of educators agree that environmental education is critical, only 28% believe they have the necessary skills and resources to successfully incorporate it into their lessons (Mahaska et al., 2024; Medek, 2023). A study by Hadiapurwa et al. (2024) found that while 92% of students recognized climate problems, only 45% could explain how individual lifestyle choices impact the environment globally. Less than 30% believed they could play a role in addressing environmental issues.

The basic concepts articulated in Laudato Si, such as ecological conversion, integrated ecology, and the principle that the Earth is our typical home of all living creatures, form a strong theoretical basis for the formulation of comprehensive environmental education initiatives for the sustainable care of our typical home (Bhoki et al., 2022). Integral ecology underlines the interconnectedness of ecological, social, economic, and cultural systems. In contrast, environmental conversion is related to profound human transformation in thinking, feeling, acting, and interacting in mutualistic symbiosis with the living or natural environment.

The conceptualization of Earth as our typical home emphasizes the need for shared responsibility in preserving this planet and ensuring the survival of various generations of living organisms in the future (Bhoki & Pudjiarti, 2022). Many countries have embraced the Eco-School initiative, which has produced promising results in increasing students' understanding of environmental management, embracing self-care, and encouraging a behavioral shift from indifference to authentic concern for ecological sustainability (Davenport,

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2021). An evaluation of Eco-School programs across twelve countries (Hicks, 2019) indicates substantial advancements: ecological Literacy among students surged by 68%, engagement in initiatives aimed at environmental care and preservation with local communities rose by 45%, and 72% of educational institutions have pledged to uphold environmentally sustainable practices for the benefit of cohabitation within this ecosystem.

The main obstacles to implementation remain numerous. Sulaiman (2024) articulated concerns related to resistance to curricular change, resource constraints, and challenges associated with assessing the efficacy of transformative education. Ethnographic studies show that program sustainability is sometimes threatened by inadequate community engagement, incompatibility with pre-existing evaluative frameworks, and difficulties aligning spiritual and empirical approaches (Francisco & Flores, 2024).

Moreover, applying these ideas to contemporary educational forms poses problems with digital technologies and remote learning (Wu, 2024). Mueller et al. (2020) meta-synthesis of 50 studies identified several critical areas requiring further investigation, including creating universal pedagogical models that embrace cultural diversity and diverse spiritual perspectives, strategies for integrating environmental education into current curricula, and approaches for evaluating long-term changes in ecological awareness.

This project seeks to formulate and evaluate a model environmental education curriculum that effectively incorporates the concepts of Laudato Si' based on the observed gaps and opportunities. The study will (1) identify optimal implementation practices across diverse institutional contexts, (2) create a pedagogical framework that integrates spiritual and scientific elements, (3) assess the impact on learners' ecological perspectives and behaviors, and (4) propose policy recommendations for the expansion of effective practices. The methodology integrates quantitative assessment of learning results with qualitative investigation of transformation processes, examining data from various locations to ascertain the appropriate application of Laudato Si principles in modern environmental education.

Literature Review

Environmental Education Development and Transformation

The evolution of environmental education has experienced considerable change due to worldwide ecological issues. Sinakou et al. (2019) identified a

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shift from traditional knowledge transmission models toward action-oriented transformative approaches. This transformation has been mainly influenced by the encyclical Laudato Si', which emphasizes raising awareness and fostering a culture of care for Earth (Edara, 2017). The integral ecological education model proposed integrates indigenous environmental knowledge with modern conservation understanding, combining traditional wisdom with ecological awareness.

The effectiveness of environmental education is fundamentally influenced by its ability to incorporate three dimensions of learning: cognitive (understanding the environmental crisis), affective (care and empathy with nature), and behavioral (sustainable practice) (Bhoki et al., 2023). When evaluated collectively, some of these characteristics will raise awareness of ecological issues and encourage proactive engagement.

Laudato Si' Core Concepts And Implementation

Incorporating the principles articulated in Laudato Si' in the domain of environmental education marks an essential advance in the pedagogical methodology used to address ecological challenges within an educational framework. Since its publication on June 18, 2015, the encyclical Laudato Si' explains three essential concepts that significantly change the basic framework of environmental education in the light of the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of Catholic faith and morals.

The initial conceptual framework, called ecological conversion, sparked a paradigm shift that integrated behavior modification with enhanced Catholic religious and spiritual awareness. An empirical study conducted by Bhoki (2023) revealed that this form of integration resulted in a significant increase in students' involvement in environmental management, showing a 42% increase, thereby contributing to environmental mitigation efforts, in addition to substantial changes in students' behavioral patterns regarding environmental care, friendly and Brotherhood with the environment, which is seen in an increase of 38%, is exemplified by initiatives in caring for and maintaining the living environment around homes, schools, and churches where we worship and caring for the house as a place to live, the good one, safe and comfortable, friendly and sustainable for all generations of living creatures on this Earth.

Integral ecology presents a comprehensive framework that links empirical scientific knowledge with sociocultural and spiritual dimensions. A longitudinal

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investigation conducted by Taylor and Wilson (2023), covering a sample population of 2,500 students across 15 educational institutions, showed that this integrative approach led to a 45% increase in students' ability to associate scientific knowledge with broader social consequences, including their understanding of the environment.

Their research illustrates that perceiving the ecological crisis through a relational perspective, which includes the interconnections among nature, humans, and spiritual aspects, allows students to formulate more sophisticated and effective responses to environmental issues. This comprehensive comprehension has demonstrated notable efficacy in higher education environments, where intricate problem-solving abilities are crucial.

The third notion, stewardship of our shared environment, highlights ecological responsibility's communal and ethical aspects. Bhoki et al. (2022) researched applications across many educational levels, revealing that this strategy has notably promoted collective responsibility and moral awareness. Their investigation, which covered 1,800 students across the spectrum of primary to tertiary education, showed that initiatives using this paradigm resulted in a 40% increase in community engagement and a 35% increase in collaborative environmental efforts.

Innovation And Adaptation In Environmental Education

The domain of modern environmental education has undergone significant progress due to the integration of novel methodologies and technological advancements. Recent studies illustrate the profound influence of digital integration on environmental education methodologies. Research conducted by Cho & Park (2023) on virtual and augmented reality applications in environmental education indicates a 43% enhancement in student comprehension of intricate ecological systems. Their analysis of 3,200 students across multiple institutions demonstrates that immersive technologies significantly enhance learning outcomes while maintaining engagement with real-world environmental issues.

Digital integration has expanded beyond simple technological adoption to include sophisticated learning platforms and assessment tools. Bhoki's (2023) comprehensive study of collaborative online platforms shows a 38% increase in cross-regional knowledge exchange and a 41% improvement in global environmental awareness. This study is augmented by Guo's (2021)

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examination of mobile applications for monitoring ecological behavior, which reveals a 35% enhancement in users' adoption of sustainable practices. The efficacy of these digital tools is especially apparent when integrated with conventional learning methods and cultural adaptation techniques.

Environmental education programs' effectiveness largely depends on cultural integration and institutional support. Beltran's (2020) research across many cultural contexts reveals that programs using local knowledge achieve engagement rates that are 47% higher and long-term outcomes that are 44% better. Francis (2020) emphasizes the crucial role of community leaders and traditional figures in the efficacy of projects, observing that involved communities have 50% higher rates of program sustainability.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach and a literature review methodology to examine the implementation of Laudato Si's ideas in environmental education. The research process commences with aggregating secondary resources from journal articles, books, reports, and policy briefs, evaluating the relevance, reliability, and significance of these sources in comprehending the implementation of Laudato Si's concepts in education. The evaluation step entails a comprehensive review of the trustworthiness and validity of each source, encompassing the study's design, findings, and conclusions.

The thematic analysis focused on three main themes: integrating Laudato Si's spiritual ideals into the curriculum, effective educational tactics, and the challenges related to environmental sustainability and its execution. The data were evaluated through a narrative technique to produce comprehensive contextual insight. The study findings are documented in a report that encompasses background, methodology, analytical results, and recommendations for enhancing educational methods. This study seeks to elucidate the incorporation of Laudato Si's principles in environmental education and to identify practical solutions and problems associated with its implementation.

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Discussion

Implementation Challenges and Strategic Solutions

Recent studies indicate considerable obstacles in implementing Laudato Si'-inspired environmental education across many institutional settings. Gafurov et al. (2020) researched 127 educational institutions in 12 countries, revealing that 73% encounter systemic opposition mainly due to institutional inertia and resource limitations. This opposition is evident in restricted curriculum flexibility, insufficient finance distribution, and organizational cultural obstacles that hinder transformative educational methods.

A longitudinal study conducted by Wahidmurni et al. (2024) examining implementation patterns in 45 schools revealed that effective institutions exhibited robust leadership commitment, sufficient budget allocation, and organized professional development programs. These findings align with Kasonde et al.'s (2022) comprehensive paradigm for institutional readiness, underscoring the critical significance of organizational capacity and supportive infrastructure in sustained execution.

The advancement of educational institutions requires systematic capacity improvement and strategic resource allocation. Bhoki et al. (2022) examined successful implementation instances. They discovered that institutions achieving significant progress committed approximately 15-20% of their professional development resources to environmental education training and allotted time for collaborative planning and reflection.

This investment resulted in a 40% improvement in teacher effectiveness and a 35% increase in student engagement with environmental issues. This study uses a qualitative approach and a literature review methodology to examine the implementation of Laudato Si's ideas in environmental education.

Lucchi et al. (2024) identify three essential success variables in institutional change processes: enduring leadership commitment, systematic capacity development, and strong assessment procedures. Their three-year analysis of 18 educational institutions showed that schools with integrated support systems had 45% more implementation fidelity and 50% enhanced student learning outcomes than those utilizing ad hoc techniques.

These findings underscore the necessity of creating robust institutional support frameworks encompassing educational transformation's technical and cultural dimensions. Buhmann Volk (2022) asserts that effective

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implementation necessitates balancing top-down policy endorsement and bottom-up initiative cultivation, supported by explicit accountability frameworks and consistent performance evaluation methods.

Pedagogical Effectiveness And Digital Integration

Recent studies illustrate the substantial influence of integrated pedagogical methods in environmental education. A comprehensive meta-analysis conducted by Kukulska-Hulme (2024) covering 85 different implementation cases revealed that a pedagogical approach combining experiential learning, critical reflection on the experience of caring for the living environment, and collaborative inquiry showed promising results of 42%. The findings explain that participants involved in the integrated environmental pedagogy program demonstrated a deep understanding of ecological principles ($P < 0.001$), showed a strong dedication to current global environmental problems, and had the initiative to protect and care for the environment (effect size $d = 0, 7$).

This conclusion is further substantiated by a research study conducted by Häggström & Schmidt (2020), which included a cohort of 1,200 students at 24 educational institutions. The results show that implementing an integrated environmental pedagogy methodology leads to a 35% increase in students' understanding of environmental issues and a 40% increase in their ability to formulate solutions to reducing these ecological challenges.

Incorporating digital technologies is essential to increasing the effectiveness of pedagogical practices. Sarker et al. (2023) conducted a comparative analysis of 32 educational programs, showing that institutions adept at assimilating digital resources achieved student engagement rates of 38% while learning retention rates experienced a 45% increase compared to conventional methodologies.

However, their research highlights the importance of maintaining balance since programs overly focused on technology demonstrated a 25% decrease in children's direct engagement with nature. These findings align with Druker-Ibáñez and Cáceres-Jensen's (2022) research, emphasizing the need for integrated ecological techniques that combine digital and natural interactions.

Recent research by Novis-Deutsch et al. (2024) indicates that thoughtfully crafted digital integration in learning environments can foster profound ecological comprehension while preserving significant linkages with nature. Their study, encompassing 2,800 pupils from 15 countries, revealed that

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effective technology integration resulted in a 40% enhancement in ecological literacy scores and a 35% advancement in environmental behavior metrics.

Cultural Adaptation And Contextual Implementation

Research indicates that effectively executing Laudato Si'-inspired environmental education necessitates meticulous attention to cultural settings and local modifications. A detailed study by Jimmy et al. (2023) examining implementation patterns in 45 educational institutions across 6 Asian countries indicates that programs integrating local cultural elements obtained 47% higher student engagement rates and 52% improved learning outcomes compared to standardized methods.

Their findings highlight the importance of integrating Indigenous environmental knowledge and cultural practices into educational curricula. This data is supported by Jewdokimow et al.'s (2024) longitudinal study of 2,400 students, demonstrating that culturally adapted programs resulted in a 38% increase in student engagement and a 43% rise in environmental awareness ratings.

Community participation and local leadership involvement significantly influence the effectiveness of cultural adaptation measures. Rozi and Taufik's (2020) mixed-methods study involving 28 schools demonstrates that initiatives with active Engagement from community leaders achieved 55% greater implementation success rates and 45% enhanced sustainability outcomes. Their investigation elucidated four key determinants of success: integration of Indigenous environmental knowledge (correlation coefficient $r = 0.72$), ability to adapt to specific regional challenges ($r = 0.68$), recognition of Indigenous spiritual practices ($r = 0.65$), and engagement in systematic society ($r = 0.70$).

A recent scientific investigation conducted by García-Reyes (2023) supports these findings, showing that programs that emphasize cultural connectedness achieved 40% improved behavior modification rates and 35% improvements in metrics related to community impact. A recent empirical study conducted by Lucchi et al. (2024) regarding cultural adaptation in environmental pedagogy underscores the need to formulate adaptable implementation frameworks that meet heterogeneous cultural contexts while maintaining program fidelity.

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Evaluation Framework And Future Research Directions

Current evaluative studies in environmental education highlight the imperative for comprehensive assessment frameworks that integrate short-term effects and lasting consequences. García-Reyes's (2023) systematic examination of 95 evaluation studies delineates four essential characteristics of assessment: perspective transformation (weighted importance 0.35), competency development (0.28), behavioral change (0.22), and community impact (0.15). Their meta-analysis indicates that programs utilizing multi-dimensional evaluation frameworks showed 43% more efficacy in monitoring transformative learning outcomes and 38% enhanced capacity to assess sustained behavioral change.

A recent study by Walbank (2022) and Lambin et al. (2020) underscores the necessity for advanced evaluation approaches. Their joint research analyzing 65 environmental education programs across three continents reveals substantial deficiencies in existing evaluation methodologies, especially in quantifying spiritual-scientific integration (gap index 0.72), evaluating cultural adaptation efficacy (0.68), and monitoring long-term community impact (0.65). Saliba's (2024) longitudinal study with 3,200 participants substantiates these findings, highlighting the necessity for more sophisticated evaluation instruments to thoroughly investigate the intricate relationship among cognitive comprehension, emotional involvement, and behavioral change.

Buhmann Volk (2022) articulates a comprehensive evaluative framework integrating quantitative indicators with qualitative assessment methodologies. A longitudinal study covering three years at 28 educational institutions revealed that a holistic evaluative approach resulted in a 45% increase in program optimization and a 40% increase in the achievement of specific learning outcomes. Bhoki and Pudjiarti (2022) emphasize the need for contextually relevant evaluation tools to measure individual change and communal impact while maintaining fidelity to scientific principles and practical application in diverse educational settings.

Conclusion

Integrating the doctrine described in Laudato Si' in the environmental education paradigm has shown compelling promise for fostering awareness and behavior of ecological love to care for the Earth as a shared home in a sustainable manner. The effectiveness of this application depends on integrating

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three interrelated learning dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. These traits enable learners to understand the complexities of the ecological environment while cultivating a deep understanding and ability for responsible environmental action.

A mixed methodology that integrates scientific aspects of Catholic religious science, ethical aspects of environmental care, and spiritual aspects based on the teachings of faith and morals of the Catholic religion has shown effectiveness through experience-based learning, critical reasoning, and involvement with the community in preserving the environment. This intervention power program is supported by ongoing professional development for educators and strong institutional support. However, its implementation is still hampered by significant challenges, such as resistance to climate change, inadequate resources, and difficulties in reconciling Catholic religious and spiritual perspectives with conventional scientific paradigms that are conservative and difficult to change.

Contextual adaptation is essential for success, necessitating the alignment of the universal principles of Laudato Si' with local knowledge and the unique circumstances of each community. Integrating digital technology in education should be harmonized with direct engagement in nature to attain the best learning results. Program assessment necessitates a thorough process examining knowledge enhancement, view shifts, and enduring behavioral modifications. Incorporating Laudato Si principles in environmental education has shown substantial promise in fostering environmental awareness, sustainable ecological care, and conservation behavior.

The comprehensive involvement of students in proficient environmental stewardship is contingent upon the amalgamation of three interconnected dimensions of learning: cognitive, which pertains to the acquisition of knowledge regarding the ecological framework; emotional, which signifies the internalization of the environment as a fundamental aspect of one's identity; and behavioral, which encompasses the warmth of empathy and concern for the ecological context. These characteristics empower ecology students to comprehend the intricate subtleties of the landscape while fostering a profound awareness and capacity to partake in conscientious environmentalism.

Integrative pedagogical approaches that synthesize spiritual, ethical, and scientific elements have been proven effective through experiential learning, critical reflection, and community engagement. The efficacy of this initiative is

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augmented through continuous professional development for educators and robust institutional backing. Nevertheless, the execution of this program encounters considerable obstacles, including resistance to curricular reform, insufficient resources, and the intricacies associated with integrating spiritual perspectives with traditional scientific paradigms.

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Author's Profile

Dr. Hermania Bhoki, S.Fil., M.Pd is a Congregation Imitationis Jesu (CIJ) member with an extended educational and pastoral career. She completed her



bachelor's degree in Catholic Philosophy of Religion at STFK Ledalero (1999-2003), then served as a CIJ Postulant and Novice advisor (2003-2005). In addition, he has served as deputy head of LITBANG of the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Ende (2005-2010) and has been a regular author of the book IKUT JESUS since 2009. His academic career began as a lecturer at Reinha Larantuka Pastoral College in 2011. He then continued his Master's degree in Education Management at the State University of Jakarta (2013-2015) and Doctoral Degree in Education Management at Semarang State University (2018-2022). After completing his doctoral studies, he returned to serve as a lecturer and was elected Principal of Reinha Larantuka Pastoral College in February 2024. As an academic, Dr. Hermania Bhoki is active in the Tri Dharma of Higher Education by writing educational books and publishing scientific articles in various journals, including the REINHA Journal, Journal of Religion, Education and Culture, Sinta Journal, and reputable international journals.