

Environmental Psychology of Religion in the Era of Digital Learning: Integrating Moral Development, Identity and ICT-Supported Environmental Education

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Abstract

The present study, traversing Environmental Psychology of Religion within the framework of a religio-psychological ecology, focuses on Environmental Education as a counterbalance to the ongoing destruction and degradation of the natural environment by contemporary human societies. The study proceeds from the premise that modern philosophical theories, namely utilitarian and deontological approaches, have not succeeded in adequately addressing this problem through effective environmental education. Accordingly, the study analyzes the emerging field of Environmental Psychology of Religion, a contemporary trend combining Environmental Psychology (Ecopsychology) with the Psychology of Religion, systematically examining how these domains contribute to the formation of theological and spiritual perspectives on environmental issues. It is argued that Environmental Psychology of Religion can provide an adequate theoretical framework grounded in the deeper relationship between humans and the environment as articulated in Christian theology.

Keywords: Environmental Psychology of Religion; Environmental Education; Eco-theology; Environmental Identity; Pro-environmental Behavior; Sustainability Education; ICT in Environmental Education; Digital Learning

1. Introduction

The Psychology of Religion is currently called upon to explore a scientific field that until recently remained outside systematic investigation. This field concerns the relationship between Christian values and environmental attitudes. Several scholars have suggested that a proper interpretation of the Book of Genesis allows for a stewardship relationship between humans and nature (Santmire, 2000; White, 1967; Tsitsigos, 2010).

Environmental Psychology of Religion constitutes the interdisciplinary field combining Environmental Psychology and the Psychology of Religion, examining how natural, social, and digital environments influence the psychological life, religiosity, and spirituality of believers and how these factors shape theological and spiritual orientations toward environmental issues (Clayton, 2012; Tsitsigos, 2011). This perspective is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the relational ontology between humans and the environment (Fountoulakis, 2024).

From this standpoint, Environmental Psychology of Religion may substantially contribute to the development of contemporary Environmental Education by promoting environmental awareness and challenging longstanding assumptions that position humans as dominant rulers of nature (Bernier, 2022; Kearns, 1996). Nowadays environmental problems have become increasingly complicated, which has led scholars to urge integrative solutions that bridge the cognitive, emotional, ethical and spiritual aspects of environmental responsibility (Ardoin et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2017). In this context, the Environmental Psychology of Religion presents an interdisciplinary approach that

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is at one time innovative and directly responsive to the problem that remains unsolved, namely, the gap between environmental knowledge and environmentally sustainable behavior.

Eco-centric concern as one of the most important components of environmentally sustainable behavior is thus apprehended by this new line of research as being deeply embedded in and influenced by systems of meaning and moral motivation; hence, the revitalization of Environmental Education through the infusion of this perspective into present-day school settings is indeed quite feasible. Given these circumstances, the present research intends not only to unveil and dissect the core principles of this discipline but also to investigate its educational practice potential.

2. Environmental Psychology of Religion and Environmental Ethics

Ethics may be understood as the set of principles governing human conduct toward others. Environmental ethics extends this concern beyond human relationships to include the moral status of nature (Nash, 1989). According to Nash (1989), ethical development progressively expands from the self to humanity and ultimately to the entire ecosystem, a perspective further supported by contemporary research on moral expansion and environmental concern (Eom et al., 2021). Environmental Psychology of Religion examines how environmental contexts shape religious cognition and practice while also influencing theological constructs such as ecospirituality (Economou, 1990).

Research in moral psychology identifies foundational moral concerns including care/harm, fairness/reciprocity, loyalty, authority, and purity (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Variations in the prioritization of these concerns influence environmental attitudes and may explain the growing ecological engagement among certain Christian communities (Feinberg & Willer, 2013; Hayes & Marangudakis, 2001). Christian theology offers significant resources for understanding human-environment relations through Scripture and Tradition (Zizioulas, 1998; Werner & Jeglitzka, 2016).

3. Christian Theology as Spiritual Foundation

Within the Judeo-Christian worldview, humans occupy a mediating position between God and creation (Floros, 2000). The biblical depiction of humans as both material and spiritual beings establishes an intrinsic bond with the natural world (Florovsky, 2003; Styliis, 2003). The biblical mandate to “subdue” the earth does not imply domination but responsible stewardship, further expressed in Genesis 2:15 (“to cultivate and to keep”) (Walker & Karras, 2001). The Fall disrupted the harmonious relationship between humans and creation, introducing ecological disorder (Kirman, 2008; Naess, 1986; Tsitsigos, 2000). Contemporary Orthodox theology emphasizes responsible dominion characterized by care and preservation of creation (Gioultsis, 2014).

4. Environmental Education and Social Responsibility

Environmental Education is a continuous process of educating people of all ages, both within and beyond the school environment, with the goal of shaping responsible citizens who actively participate in social issues. The implementation of Environmental Education includes pedagogical methods and activities that foster critical thinking, teamwork, and interdisciplinarity, while also promoting the opening of the school to broader social reality (Kondylis, 2007). Environmental education advocates respect for the environment, which entails recognizing the significance of human interaction with it for survival and, consequently, respecting both the environment itself and one's own self (Bréville & Rimbart, 2021).

Addressing environmental problems through the values and actions that Environmental Education seeks to transmit inherently carries a moral dimension. The normative meaning of living well (εὖ ζῆν) should be distinguished from the notion of merely a good life. Concepts describing this moral dimension, such as virtues, are considered “thick” or “substantive,” whereas those corresponding to abstract principles are described by contemporary philosophers as “thin.” In this context, recent years have witnessed a shift from submission or obedience to an impersonal moral code of rules and principles toward a “thick” conception of qualities. Thus, the issue is no longer solely how one ought to act, but also how one ought to live (Virvidakis, 2013). This ethics of the good life undoubtedly includes the protection and preservation of the environment, which contributes to human flourishing; consequently, Environmental Education should be imbued with the meanings of such an ethics of qualities. This ethical orientation also shapes human psychology and attitudes toward the environment (Syngkollitou, 2009).

At the same time, we live in an era dominated by utilitarian models and paradigms. It is therefore unsurprising that contemporary moral theory and the philosophy of responsibility increasingly address the need to transcend diffuse utilitarianism, which itself emerged from a turn toward the empirical and the practical, albeit with a distortion of the

ethics of substantive virtues. Utilitarianism is consequentialist, meaning that it recommends performing an action by appealing to its consequences and benefits, and only insofar as the action can be positively evaluated from the perspective of maximizing happiness (Moore, 1993). In this sense, utilitarianism does not distinguish between one who acts from duty (autonomously)—a point emphasized in Kantian ethics—and one who merely conforms externally to the law out of well-understood self-interest.

In attempting to address these inherent problems of utilitarian thought and to explore an ethics and psychology of social responsibility, Rawls (already in 1971, in *A Theory of Justice*) raises several fundamental objections. Rawls argues that, from a moral standpoint, utilitarianism fails to adequately account for the value of the person or subject, since it reduces individuals to mere carriers of pleasure or displeasure associated with an action. Politically, utilitarianism emphasizes a social goal of maximizing happiness unconditionally and, consequently, tends to evaluate justice solely on the basis of the aggregate amount of happiness achieved by a society, even when this requires disregarding the particular happiness or freedom of some of its members. By contrast, the ethics of duty or social responsibility suggests that human beings may be required to sacrifice inclinations or sensory tendencies in the name of moral law and obligation (Campbell et al., 2014).

Thus, social responsibility invites recourse to deontological theories, which appear capable of establishing solid foundations for social responsibility in general and, more specifically, in relation to the environment. Deontological theories do not evaluate the morality of an action based on its capacity to produce particular states of affairs or benefits. Rather, they are better suited to examining how the actions of large urban populations—where numerous conflicting interests coexist—should be interpreted or regulated, even when interests and benefits must be set aside in addressing major social concerns such as public safety, democracy, religious practice, and environmental protection. These issues constitute the moral core of a society, indicating that deontological approaches may be more appropriate in a world where moral problems increasingly acquire broader ecological dimensions (Zwolinski & Schmidt, 2013; Mitsea, et al., 2023).

Social responsibility therefore signifies the transcendence of the individual ego in the name of the collective good. In contemporary society, however, what is often observed is a hedonistic rejection of such self-transcendence in favor of self-realization, implying a new conception of the self. Consequently, how can one meaningfully invoke deontological or utilitarian frameworks when the traditional regulatory authority of Reason appears to be collapsing and the self no longer seeks to transcend the “lower” spheres of existence but is instead free to satisfy its impulses in pursuit of self-realization? Inevitably, this leads to expanding consumption and an ever-increasing expenditure of resources (Georgopoulou, 1995).

According to the present perspective, social responsibility—and by extension environmental protection and the cultivation of an ecological ethos and attitude—cannot be grounded solely in philosophical ethical theory. Contemporary society, the progressive alienation of human beings from the environment, the ongoing degradation of nature, and the limitations of environmental education within and beyond formal educational systems suggest that philosophical theories alone cannot provide a secure foundation for reconnecting modern individuals with the natural world that surrounds them (Georgopoulos, 2002). Neither radical utilitarianism nor overly rigid deontological theories have succeeded in shaping a substantive environmental education or a healthy environmental psychology. The present study therefore argues that, for such an environmental ethic, one must turn toward an environmental psychology of religion.

The results of this study have brought to light the necessity that the Environmental Psychology of Religion be further empirically explored in educational contexts. The next studies of this field are expected to analyze how educational environmental programs, both psychologically informed and value-oriented, bring about students' environmental identity, moral reasoning, and behavioral commitments over time in diverse cultural and educational settings (Whitburn et al., 2020; Otto & Pensini, 2017; Simos & Karabatzaki, 2025). The authors underlined the importance of giving special consideration to school environments as a whole, where eco-responsibility is an integral part of the institutional culture, teacher professional development, and community partnerships (Stevenson et al., 2017; Ardoin et al., 2020). These studies will be helpful in closing the widely reported gap between environmental knowledge and environmental action, at the same time enhancing the theoretical and practical basis of Environmental Education in the twenty-first century.

5. Pedagogical and Psychological Dimensions of Environmental Education

5.1. Psychological Foundations of Environmental Responsibility

Nowadays, the success of Environmental Education heavily relies on how well it can stimulate the psychological components that govern environmentally responsible behavior. To date, the empirical evidence paints quite a picture that environmental knowledge does not usually cause a change of behavior that lasts for a long time, instead, it is an emotional connection, identity, and moral motivation that are the main determinants (Clayton et al., 2015; Otto & Pensini, 2017; Whitburn et al., 2020). Hence, the Environmental Psychology of Religion stands as a strong interpretive framework that links the ecological responsibility behavior to larger systems of meaning and value.

One of the concepts that have gained a lot of attention in environmental psychology recently is environmental identity. Environmental identity is understood as the degree to which the natural environment is a part of one's self-concept. It has been researched in a multitude of cultures and it turns out that there is a direct correlation between environmental identity and environmental-friendly attitudes and behavior (Clayton, 2012; Clayton et al., 2021; Whitburn et al., 2020). It is believed that environmental education activities that evoke a feeling of emotional connection with nature, especially at the age of childhood and adolescence, have a good chance of affecting the individual's ecological commitment for the rest of their life (Chawla, 2020; Otto et al., 2019; Rosa & Collado, 2019).

Moreover, social learning plays an important role in environmental responsibility. A student learns about the behavior norms through observation of the teachers, peers, and cultures of the institutions which promote sustainability. If, on the one hand, the schools create an atmosphere of collective responsibility and the students, on the other hand, are willing to participate, the students' eco-friendly attitudes will be more deeply rooted. This is supported by a study demonstrating how perceived social norms could explain a large part of young people's environmentally responsible behavior (Bouman et al., 2021; Cialdini et al., 2011).

From the theory of moral development, we also get a clue as to how that ecologically friendly attitude is formed. Progressing through the stages of moral reasoning, the individual's moral circle will include not only other people but also the non-human nature and the future generations (Wolsko et al., 2016; Otto & Kaiser, 2014; Drigas et al., 2020). Thus, if in the educational setting the students are encouraged to think about ethics, to develop empathy, and to take on perspectives, then the environmental responsibility can be internalized not just as compliant behavior but as a moral commitment.

Within the Environmental Psychology of Religion, the logic of the above psychological arguments is that a religious or spiritual worldview, which is at the core of our meaning-making, strengthens the environment-related attitudes to the level of commitments. It is establishing stories in religion that explain our being earth's caretakers and therefore morally accountable, and this motivates the environmental care (Tucker & Grim, 2016; Taylor et al., 2016; Arli et al., 2018). Research findings show that the value-based and spiritually framed environmental messages may be more likely to generate long-term ecological concern (Bouman et al., 2021; McPhetres et al., 2019; Simos, Larios, & Katsiampoura, 2026).

Another very important variable is Emotion. These emotions of being one with nature, worrying about the state of the environment, and empathizing with non-human creatures strongly influence the students' decision to engage in pro-environmental behavior (Otto & Pensini, 2017; Collado & Corraliza, 2015; Whitburn et al., 2020; Simos, 2025c; Drigas et al., 2022; Chaidi et al., 2022; Drigas A, Sideraki A 2021). That is why the Environmental Education concept should be more than just a cognitive approach and include such pedagogical activities that would stimulate the students' moral and emotional imagination as well (Fountoulakis & Simos, 2026).

To sum up, the psychological basis for triggering environmental responsibility points to the fact that education should be holistic and should address the integration of cognition, emotion, identity, and values. It is the Environmental Psychology of Religion that offers to this integrated approach a meaning-loaded framework that is capable of instilling a long-lasting ecological commitment in the students.

5.2. Pedagogical Applications in the School Context

The implementation of the psychological findings that are summarized here is a key challenge for Environmental Education nowadays. A number of studies conducted around the world suggest that the information-based instruction delivered in a traditional way can hardly result in the change of students' environmental behavior even though their

knowledge of the environment may improve if this instruction is supplemented with experiential, participatory, and value-oriented pedagogies (Stevenson et al., 2017; Ardoin et al., 2020; Monroe et al., 2019).

Through the lens of experiential learning theories, the effectiveness of the environmentally aware behavior can be seen as a logical development of the emotional attachment to nature. Sensitizing outdoor educational practices and activities in the natural surroundings help children and adolescents to discover their connections with nature and allow them to visualize their role in the great ecological web that, in turn, might strengthen their environmental identity (Otto et al., 2019; Chawla, 2020; Rosa & Collado, 2019). This idea corresponds well with the holistic approach of Environmental Psychology of Religion, which focuses on the human, environment relationship as a direct experience and relational way of understanding.

Project-based learning, teamwork, and discussion further broaden the eco-friendly understanding by allowing the students to experience the real social environments where these issues originate. Participating in community projects, working on collaborative inquiry, or dealing with sustainability challenges through problem-solving, the learners realize to what extent their actions and decisions affect both themselves and others. This helps to form a sense of self-efficacy and social responsibility (Ardoin et al., 2020; Monroe et al., 2019; Stevenson et al., 2017). Besides, these teaching methodologies facilitate the use of critical thinking and interdisciplinary learning which have been identified as major competences in the education for sustainability process (UNESCO, 2017; Rieckmann, 2018).

Equally important is the figure of the teacher. Not only do the educators impart the ecological knowledge but also, and mainly, they act as the initiators and facilitators of the students' reflection on meaning and morals. Findings from several researches demonstrate that teachers who possess an environmentally friendly behavior and, at the same time, create a positive atmosphere in the classrooms, emotionally, have a great impact on the students' environmental attitude (Evans et al., 2018; Collado et al., 2015; Bouman et al., 2021). Thus, a professional development program that can enhance both the teacher's environmental literacy and his/her pedagogical self-efficacy should be designed and implemented at the teachers' request.

Within value-loading Environmental Education, the idea of stewardship that comes from Christian theological anthropology might, if interpreted broadly and critically, become a very effective tool for teaching moral values. Using the stewardship communication strategy is not equal to giving a confessional teaching from the pulpit. It points to ethical issues, such as human being's responsibility, interrelatedness, and care for the world (Tucker & Grim, 2016; Taylor et al., 2016). If such viewpoints are dealt with sensitively and put together judiciously, they form an ideal environment for discussions and thus enhance students' moral reasoning skills all this, of course, without leaving any confessional perspective out of consideration and respecting pluralism and democratic principles in education. A few studies draw attention to how important it is to connect the environmental conscience with the environmental behavior.

Intensive programs that combine the cognitive components of the emotion, the social participation, and the value clarification lead to a significantly better performance from the behavioral point of view (Ardoin et al., 2020; Otto & Pensini, 2017; Whitburn et al., 2020). One of the great contributions of the Environmental Psychology of Religion lies in that it helps highlight the power that meaning, purpose, and moral commitment have in inspiring human actions.

Moreover, in the field of sustainability education, whole-school approaches to embedding environmental awareness into the so-called institutional culture instead of being treated as a separate curricular topic are making more and more sense these days (Stevenson et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2017). Schools that implement such major changes in their governance systems, partner up with communities, and take environmentally responsible actions become those learning places where social settings strongly support and enhance what goes on in the classrooms.

Summing up, psychological insight, pedagogical innovation, and eco-theological reflection represent an integrated and consistent framework within which to develop school-based Environmental Education. Systems of education that are geared to nurture students who elicit emotional engagement, ethical reflection, and social responsibility can undoubtedly be one of the main agents in the formation of the ecological consciousness, which is so desperately needed today. Expanding on the above-presented pedagogical methods, the use of digitally mediated learning environments also plays a significant role in modern Environmental Education by continuously providing new opportunities for students to engage ecologically.

5.3. Digital and ICT-Supported Environmental Learning

The proliferation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has opened a new era in education. It has unleashed a raft of options for furthering environmental awareness and having sustainability-oriented learning as an

objective. Digital instruments in Environmental Education are gradually being considered not only as conveying the information tools but also as the means of mediating students' cognitive, emotional, and moral engagement with environmental matters (UNESCO, 2017; Redecker, 2017; Simos et al., 2026). Provided that such pedagogical use of ICT is well-conceived, it can support students in becoming environmentally responsible through increased interactivity, experiential learning, and reflective meaning-making (Simos & Katsinis, 2026, Chaidi, I., et al. 2021).

From the angle of environmental psychology, digital learning may serve as a venue for environmental identity development. It appears that immersive and interactive experiences offered by digital technology, e.g., virtual simulations, digital storytelling, and gamified sustainability platforms, help significantly enhance one's sense of belonging to nature and, consequently, escalate one's pro-environmental intentions (Makransky & Petersen, 2019; Parong & Mayer, 2018; Drigas et al., 2023). In fact, the first-hand experience of the natural environment is and will always be the best. However, well-crafted digital products could act as an extension of the experiential mode of learning by lending students a view of some pristine land or environment which otherwise would be beyond their reach.

Another perspective that the Environmental Psychology of Religion raises is that digital media are not neutral in terms of values. According to the authors, digital spaces are no more than symbolic and social contexts that serve as a base where meaning, identity, and moral orientation are negotiated and worked out (Drigas & Karyotaki, 2019). So, if through the idea of stewardship, interdependence, and care for the earth, digital environmental stories are presented to the students, they may get into the most profound ecological reflections, which will be perfectly in tune with their cognitive and ethical, as well as their spiritual awareness.

With an ever-growing focus on technology-enhanced learning, the functions of teacher and student have quite substantially changed. The former has become in many ways a guide and a mentor, while the latter has got more freedom and responsibility for their own learning process. By using the features of digital platforms, students get an opportunity to work in inquiry-based environmental projects, process and analyze environmental data in real-time, and even, if they want, they can take part in sustainability discussions at a global level, all this happening beyond the walls of their physical classroom (Voogt et al., 2015; Falloon, 2020). In this respect, the affordances discussed in this paragraph are fully aligned with the objectives of Environmental Education that are transformative in nature and require students' active involvement rather than their passive reception of knowledge.

One of the most promising educational innovations on the horizon of sustainability education is the deployment of serious games and gamified learning environments. When well-designed with the use of correct pedagogical principles, game-based environmental learning can be instrumental in raising learners' motivation, emotional engagement, and their intention to behave pro-environmentally (Parong & Mayer, 2018; Makransky & Petersen, 2019; Simos et al., 2025; Drigas et al., 2021). Students get a chance to perform the ethical evaluation of the environmental acts by going through processes; scenario-based decision-making; simulation of ecological consequences, hence being able to correlate with the moral, which is the main part of the Environmental Psychology of Religion.

At the same time, the fusion of ICT in Environmental Education must not be left unchecked pedagogically. Merely employing technological means will not yield learning gains that are both meaningful and substantial. Their competence, thus, is reliant on the quality of instructional design, the discipline of teacher mediation, and the congruence with wider educational aims (Redecker, 2017; Falloon, 2020). Without these conditions, digital activities may remain merely casual or informational, and hence, not touching upon the deeper value orientations that are significant for sustainable behavior.

The teacher is at the heart of technology-accompanied Environmental Education. Teachers are viewed as learning designers who have a crucial task of planning and coordinating activities in such a way that digital media can be used for purposes of critique, ethics, and collaboration. Considering that teaching professionals have a considerable repertoire of theoretical knowledge and that this knowledge can be put into practice in the classroom, research into frameworks of digital competencies points out that effective ICT use goes beyond mere technicalities; it requires the pedagogical and ethical aspects to be incorporated as well (Redecker, 2017; Simos, 2025a). Hence, adequately prepared teachers who combine knowing the environment and the environment of digital pedagogy are the key.

ICT also affords pluralistic educational systems a context in which environmentally theological content can be understood in an inclusive and dialogical manner. Through digital storytelling and mimetic narratives as well as online forums students with diverse cultural backgrounds can voice and explore ideas of environmental responsibility, stewardship, and human, nature relations in a way that does not impose a confessional standpoint (Simos, 2025b). In this manner, technology can be considered as a facilitator of the Environmental Psychology of Religion's broad goals by

offering students meaningful engagement with the topic as well as by acknowledging diversity, critical inquiry, and democratic educational values.

However, scholars warn that we should not let ourselves be drawn into a technocentric view of sustainability education without looking at it critically. Digital mediation should not be excessively relied upon as this could create an even greater distance between students and nature, while nature itself is the basis of the development of the ecological sensitivity (Otto et al., 2019; Chawla, 2020). Therefore, the most up-to-date educational models are those whereby digitally supported studies are combined with the students' own...and here go the scenarios of paint, touch, smell, hear, body going into the natural environment, community-based environmental action, and so forth.

The latest studies emphasize, among other things, the importance of data-driven and participatory digital platforms for creating awareness of environmental agency in students. Learners' perception of the meaningful and impactful nature of their actions getting reinforced when they interact with real environmental data; citizen science projects or sustainability initiatives bringing together various groups of people (Makransky & Petersen, 2019; Voogt et al., 2015). Such experiences have the highest potential of becoming the bridge that connects environmental knowledge with environmental action.

Summing up, ICT-supported Environmental Education opens up a broad and promising landscape for the encompassing educational dimensions of sustainability learning. Whenever digital tools are used on the basis of sound educational philosophy and the insights of the Environmental Psychology of Religion, they can serve as boosters to environmental identity formation, moral reflection, and participatory engagement. However, as a rule, technology should be the mediator just extending direct experience of nature and not the main one by substituting it. A well-balanced and pedagogically orientated integration of ICT within value-laden Environmental Education frameworks is the most likely to produce environmentally accountable and ethically insightful citizens required for the modern day ecological crisis.

6. Conclusions

The present study, already through the preceding analysis and line of reasoning, concludes that social responsibility toward the environment—so necessary in our time—does not currently arise from a deontological rationale or corresponding utilitarian approach, nor is it grounded in a purely philosophical treatment of the issue. Rather, it emerges from a particular stance toward environmental problems which, in turn, reflect social conflicts as well as relations of power and appropriation. The broader “ecological” interest should therefore not be sought in ideological or moralistic interpretations, but in a profoundly existential and spiritual awareness.

If, on the one hand, the desire of powerful interests is profit, the accumulation of wealth, and the appropriation of natural resources, on the other hand stands the aspiration of those who express a sense of duty toward ecological balance—an orientation directed toward being and universal justice, including justice for future or even unborn generations. To the logic of domination and appropriation must be opposed the logic of freedom, equality, and long-term collective interest. At the same time, the integration of environmental and social considerations into business decision-making constitutes a necessary condition for the success of contemporary enterprises and organizations.

The more comprehensive analysis conducted here confirms that fostering environmental responsibility calls for an integrative educational approach which, systematically, unites psychological understanding, pedagogical planning, and value-oriented environmental education. The article's psychological section talks about how the students' environmental identity, moral reasoning, and pro-environmental motivation development are the first necessary steps for them to be truly committed to the environment in the long run.

At the teaching level, the results point out that the school-based Environmental Education program has a pivotal role in making ecological values understandable and internalizable through real-life, learning experiences. Student-centered learning methods such as experiential, cooperative, and reflective are shown to be very effective not only in helping the students become ecologically aware and responsible but also in motivating them to raise their voices and take issue-focused actions.

Moreover, the ever-increasing use of ICT-supported learning environments is bringing about the third and the most powerful avenue for students' increased participation, interactivity, and development of sustainable behavior competences. If the digitally mediated environmental learning tools correspond well both to the theory of Environmental Psychology of Religion and to the valuebased Environmental Education principles, these tools could effectively serve as powerful ecological learning advocates and facilitators. However, the students' direct and real

experiences with the natural world should not be completely replaced by digital learning but should be treated as equally important and complementary in order to keep the authentic ecological sensitivity intact.

Thus, upcoming research work ought to empirically examine how psychologically well-grounded Environmental Education in conjunction with school-based pedagogical innovations as well as ICT-enabled learning contexts can bring about desirable, sustainable environmental attitudes and behaviors, at least, in the students coming different cultural and educational backgrounds.

Such an approach, and the corresponding model of environmental education, must necessarily be sought within the framework of the Environmental Psychology of Religion. Christian theology may serve as the spiritual foundation of this Environmental Psychology of Religion through a form of religious ecology rooted in the sacred texts of the faith. These texts present humanity as the “steward” of the earth and its balance, bearing a moral obligation to preserve the purity and sacredness of God’s creation, so that these two created members of creation—humanity and the environment—may be united with their Creator in the Kingdom of Heaven. Such an eschatological imperative may be realized through humanity’s commitment to the preservation of the environment.

Compliance with ethical standards

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The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

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