

Current Status of Outdoor Education in the Curriculum of the Romanian School to the Discipline of Religion

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Abstract

Outdoor education represents a holistic and innovative approach to learning, having a significant impact on student development. Students have the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, which can stimulate interest and curiosity, thus facilitating the learning process. Outdoor activities can improve students' mood, health, and overall well-being.

Integrating outdoor education into the curriculum allows for a diversified and balanced approach to learning by implementing new teaching techniques. Teachers can adopt innovative methods such as learning through discovery and collaboration in nature, can propose outdoor school programs by planning activities that combine formal education with experiences in nature. Teachers need specialized training to effectively implement outdoor education, to develop group management skills regarding the initiation and active involvement of students in outdoor activities.

The study explores the way in which outdoor education is integrated into the school curriculum, in the Religion discipline, with a possible research theme in the future, which would discover examples of good practices that correlate curriculum documents (framework plans, school programs) with didactic strategies involving outdoor activities. The results can provide information and recommendations for the improvement of educational practices in this field, considering aspects of the curriculum, the influence on the development of students and the optimization of the teaching-learning-assessment process.

Keywords: outdoor education, Religion discipline, Romanian schools, curriculum integration, educational efficiency.

JEL Classification: I20, I21.

1. Introduction

The term *curriculum*, in an educational context, refers to a broader concept that includes content knowledge, which students must acquire, but also the entire learning program (Gruno and Gibbons, 2022). Essentially, the curriculum represents the totality of learning experiences offered to students within a school institution or specific educational program (Asfeldt et al., 2020). In outdoor education, the curriculum discussion includes what students learn (the content), and the ways in which they learn and experience the outdoors (Gilbertson et al., 2022). Thus, the curriculum that includes outdoor education involves planning and implementing activities, establishing learning objectives, integrating themes and key concepts, as well as defining the ways in which students will actively participate in the learning process (Sima, Pițigoi and Pehoiu, 2023).

The holistic integration of practical experiences spent in nature into the curriculum includes innovative teaching methods, educational objectives specific to outdoor education (Dabaja, 2022). The curriculum, in this context, aims to provide students with learning opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of traditional classrooms and allow them to develop skills and knowledge in a natural and interactive environment (Abendan et al., 2023).

The study looks at how the implementation of outdoor education objectives in the discipline of Religion specifically influences the pedagogical skills of teachers, and whether these changes translate into concrete benefits for student learning. Also, how do religion teachers integrate and adapt their teaching strategies in the outdoor environment to ensure an effective educational experience and sustainable learning (Evans, 2020).

Outdoor education has many benefits for students, and teachers' interest in this teaching method is growing (Sjöblom, Eklund, & Fagerlund, 2023), but what this study brings new concerns the need for an applied curriculum promoted as a learning environment efficient, based on the well-

being of students and teachers, as well as the orientation of educational efforts towards the cognitive development of students in the discipline of Religion.

2. Literature Review

Studies (Pricob, 2020; Torkos & Egerau, 2020; Coşarbă & Torkos, 2023; Florea, 2023; Pîrciu & Niţulescu, 2023) have highlighted how teachers integrate and adapt their teaching strategies to the external environment to ensure an educational experience efficient and sustainable learning. Thus, research (Simion & Rusu, 2020; Marin, Bocoş & Baciu, 2022; Mindrescu & Manea-Tonis, 2022) have emphasized the fact that teacher training plays an important role in the development of the concept of outdoor education in the future.

In Romania, outdoor learning is used in education, especially in formal education institutions. Also, studies (Câmpan&Bocoş, 2020) show that outdoor education can develop more skills, more effectively, than any other educational strategies or methods. Moreover, 21st century education (Yildiz, Eroglu & Besikci, 2022) identifies cutting-edge and emerging topics in outdoor education research that are important to both the theory and practice of outdoor education aimed at developing the key competencies provided by European Union (Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on key competences for lifelong learning (2018/C 189/01), annex 1, pp. 7-11), such as transversal competences and life skills. School subjects from the field of new types of education have been introduced in national school curricula (Torkos & Pasinszky, 2020) and a stronger emphasis has been placed on counselling and personal development subjects in primary and high schools, where students can develop certain skills and skills that can help them become useful adults and engaged members of society.

As far as the Nordic school is concerned, the concern related to the use of outdoor education for the development of teaching strategies mainly concerns sustainable development. Three study programs – Finnish, Swedish, and Icelandic – (Seikkula-Leino et al., 2021) incorporated both entrepreneurship education and sustainable development into the curriculum, often not very explicitly. The argument used was that environmental issues have become more and more

present in global discussions, and the inclusion of environmental content in educational programs is important to form aware and responsible future generations.

Formal education institutions (Damoah and Omodan, 2022) can include project-based learning in a Learning Curriculum for Action Competence in Sustainable Development (ACiSD), which comprises six dimensions of implementation, namely: (1) project duration and team arrangements, (2) subject selection, (3) student support, (4) teacher support, (5) learning environments, and (6) digital access and equity (Kalla et al., 2022). With the support of various personal and institutional mobile technologies, numerous physical and virtual spaces can be transformed into interesting and motivating hybrid learning settings (Vlachopoulos et al., 2023). Technical skills and knowledge are not enough to become a good outdoor educator (Metts and Väljataga, 2021). Because, an understanding of teaching and learning, also known as pedagogical content knowledge, is needed because outdoor education (OE) has often been defined in contrast to formal education (North and Dymont, 2021).

Although there is a notion of a *Nordic tradition of outdoor education* in the international literature, research from Nordic countries is rarely included in reviews. Therefore, a review of the scope (Remmen and Iversen, 2023) provides an overview of empirical studies on outdoor education (grades 1-13) in the Nordic countries. Of the 586 results, 52 studies met the inclusion criteria and underwent descriptive and content analyses. Most studies are qualitative and located in primary school contexts. Several school subjects covered outdoor education, such as *friluftsliv*, mathematics and language. Content analysis indicates that teachers' perspectives are most frequently investigated, followed by the nature of outdoor education, well-being, and cognitive learning. Fewer studies investigate teaching and learning processes, digital resources, and outdoor sustainability education.

Another study (Cevher, 2022) found that improving the amount and content of outdoor education by teachers leads to improvements in three interrelated categories: change in pedagogical approach, personal development, and child development. These categories consider the development of skills in overcoming obstacles, approaching risky play, communication style, child-centred practices, self-efficacy, emotional self-regulation, motivation to teach, problem-solving skills, and holistic child development. Moreover, all of these works are mutually reinforcing factors.

How residential outdoor environmental education programs are perceived by teachers who accompany their students to such activities has rarely been investigated. In this sense (Cincera et al., 2021) interviews were conducted with 17 elementary school teachers who participated in one of the five selected residential programs in the Czech Republic during 2018-2019. As the results show, all teachers considered that residential programs are beneficial for teaching outdoor activities. However, most teachers reported that the most significant outcome was the improvement in students' interpersonal competence and the relationship between teachers and their students. Interestingly, the effect of residential programs on the development of students environmental understanding, attitudes and values has remained secondary to teachers concerns or has been questioned. The aspect that the teachers appreciated the most was the application of experiential learning methods that provide situations that value the emotional state of the students. The value of natural environments for developing children's self-identity and social skills has been known for some time, and more recently the potential of nature-specific outdoor learning (excluding built environments) for school outcomes has been explored. Connecting children with natural spaces has been shown to benefit their physical and mental health (Mann et al., 2022). Thus, in a systematic review, Mann et al. (2021) identify studies from eight academic databases that measure the cognitive and social-emotional benefits of outdoor learning, with a focus on its associated benefits for development, well-being, and personal growth.

Of course, we emphasize the limits of using outdoor education in teaching to be able to compare with the limits found in our study regarding its applicability to the discipline of Religion. Time constraints and highly prescribed learning outcomes are often perceived as insurmountable barriers to outdoor learning. Another core challenge to outdoor teaching is a lack of familiarity with curriculum delivery and outdoor classroom management (Neville, Petrass, & Ben, 2023). Exemplification of how outdoor learning can be incorporated into disciplinary areas of the curriculum is therefore needed to support practicing teachers to adopt and implement this approach that supports student success (Restructuring of the National Curriculum. Analysis of implementation conditions. Institute of Education Sciences, 2010). Teacher training for this type of teaching is important from the perspective of improving student learning significantly (Legge, 2022).

3. Methodology

Our *Brief review* focuses on three fundamental aspects of the educational process: curriculum, the influence of outdoor education in the generation and development of knowledge, attitudes, skills on students, and the fruition of positive teaching-learning-evaluation experiences at Religion discipline. Therefore, we took into account answering two questions: *1. What are the pedagogical benefits of using Outdoor Education (OE) objectives in Religion teachers' professional development?* and *2. How does the role of outdoor education (OE) in teaching Religion differ from the use of traditional strategies?*.

The hypothesis of the *Brief review* was formulated as follows: *does the integration of outdoor activities in the teaching, learning and assessment of the contents of the Religion discipline influence the generation and development of students' knowledge, skills, attitudes?*

The *Brief review* aims to:

1. The first objective of our review briefly seeks to identify, in the School Curriculum, in the Religion discipline, within its various components (aims and contents), the characteristic elements of outdoor education.
2. Highlighting the informative and formative nature of outdoor education in teaching-learning-evaluation activities in the current curricular context at Religion Discipline.

We followed the educational resources approved and validated in the system (Program V-VIII approved by Omen 3393 of February 28, 2017; it applies: to the 5th grade - from the 2017-2018 school year; to the 6th grade - from the 2018 school year -2019; in the 7th grade - from the 2019-2020 school year; in the 8th grade - from the 2020-2021 school year; Curriculum IX-XII approved by Om 5230/01.09.2008; Religion textbooks for secondary schools), so as to identify the weight that outdoor education has in the mentioned programs, within their various components (purpose and content).

This review seeks to improve or correct the predisposition/openness to the use of outdoor education in the discipline of Religion, noting specific contents regarding interest in nature, participation in outdoor activities, the attitude towards the natural environment.

1. In the *Framework Plans category*, we directed the observation towards identifying the options regarding the existence of the elements that belong to outdoor education in the Religion discipline. Thus, regarding this theme, we found the following:

- The existing curriculum has a specific application that promotes an effective learning environment, the well-being among students and teachers, as well as the orientation of educational efforts towards the cognitive development of students in close connection with their socio-emotional development including elements of ecological education (in gymnasium school: *human responsibility towards creation*; and in high school: *Christian ecology themes*), which lend themselves to activities outside the classroom, but not specifically oriented towards outdoor education.
- The existence of a system of constructive feedback (educational projects involving volunteering) and formative assessment (composing portfolios) that supports the continuous development of students with an emphasis on the learning process, not just on the final results. Thus, an integrated curriculum could contribute to the creation of a school environment that promotes not only academic, but also socio-emotional development and the well-being of students and teachers.

2. Another aspect subject to observation aimed to identify the options regarding the existence of outdoor education in the contents related to the Religion discipline:

- The contents in middle school, but also in high school highlight, equally, all the components that generate knowledge, skills and attitudes, approaching education in a holistic manner, considering students not only as receivers of information, but above all as active participants in their own learning and development, as we find in the 8th grade Manual, published by Corint (Benga, Ciachir, Filat, Ghițiu & Niculae, 2020): *Conduct a survey among your friends regarding the knowledge of the teaching transmitted by the Savior through the parables spoken and the miracles performed; Create a diagram to highlight the knowledge of the interviewees; Participate in the Holy Liturgy: at the end of the service, carry out a mini-interview with people from the church, regarding the fragment or pericope from the Holy Gospel that was read at the service (p.49) and Activity sheet for the project - objectives: to value volunteering as a manifestation of merciful and active love towards others and the environment to identify situations in which they can help (p.66).*

- The contents aim at a similar structure to all school cycles in which Religion is taught and which can follow the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills and attitudes through outdoor activities.

3. Identification of the options regarding the existence of outdoor education in the open educational resources (<https://e-religie.ro/> and <https://red-religie.ro/red/>) in the Religion discipline revealed:

- The valorisation and correlation of formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, together with the use of varied learning resources, including open educational resources (RED) accessed through new technologies, can significantly contribute to the development of a comprehensive educational approach. We observe that by integrating these elements, the curriculum becomes more balanced and adapted to the needs and learning styles of students, promoting holistic learning that extends beyond the traditional perimeter of classrooms.

4. Identifying options regarding the existence of outdoor education as integrated education, we discovered that:

- The interdisciplinary approach and the integrated approach at the level of the national curriculum bring significant benefits in developing a more comprehensive and relevant learning for students. The integrated approach can transform the learning process into a more comprehensive experience and more connected to the requirements of the 21st century, as we find in the Religion Manual for the 7th grade of the Corint Publishing House (Benga, Ciachir, Ghițiu & Nicolae, 2019): *Interdisciplinary educational project, Together with the religion teacher, guests in the class teachers of plastic education, philosophy and history; Organize a brainstorming session to choose the project topic associated with the area of interest; You can choose a topic for the whole class or one for each team. Examples: Art Gallery, Iconic Saints, Balance and Measure in Spiritual Life, Harmony and Unity in Family Life, Order and Measure in Adolescence* (p.75).

5. Identifying in the timetable the time needed to integrate outdoor education within the Religion discipline. Thus, regarding this theme, found it:

- A unitary curricular concept, encompassing outdoor education, for the entire education (preschool, primary, secondary, and high school) through the continuity of the curricular

approach could be built by developing common aspects that include essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes for all levels of education. Thus, basic skills will be defined, such as literacy, critical and creative thinking, communication skills, to be developed and consolidated throughout schooling within the Religion discipline by implementing a unitary curricular concept that promotes continuity, ensuring that each level of education contributes to preparing students for success in life, integrating relevant approaches adapted to the current and future needs of society without changing the existing number of hours.

6. Regarding the implementation of outdoor education objectives within the Religion discipline, the *Brief review* analysis observes that:

- The implementation of outdoor education objectives within the Religion discipline brings significant benefits in understanding and experiencing religious content. Implementing these goals within the Religion discipline can provide students with a well-rounded educational experience, connecting them more deeply with religious teachings and spiritual values in a natural and authentic environment. It is important that the activities are planned and adapted to the specific needs of the students and to the cultural and religious context in which they are, for example in the Religion Manual for the 11th grade (Lemeni, Nedelea, Punoiu & Tudose, 2006), we identify the following requirement: *compile a portfolio with the theme: "Romanian Governors and the Orthodox Faith" by visiting the churches founded by them (p.84).*

7. Designing some practical learning paths to Religion discipline using the formal contents in the context of some outdoor activities, our study observes:

- The new type of approach that puts the student at the centre of the educational process, considering individual needs, rhythms and learning styles. This perspective requires significant changes at the level of curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation by promoting an inclusive educational environment that recognizes and values cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity.
- The limit of this perspective is given by ensuring equitable access to educational resources and opportunities for all students and the development of additional support programs for students experiencing learning difficulties.

- Student-centeredness with an emphasis on learning and learning outcomes improves the quality of the educational process and contributes to increasing equal opportunities and preparing students for a constantly changing world.

8. Identifying the formative aspects of Religion from the perspective of outdoor education, we found that:

- Outdoor education refers to learning that takes place in natural environments or outside traditional classroom spaces. When applied to the Religion discipline, outdoor education can bring numerous benefits, contributing to the development of the formative aspects of this discipline.
- Here are some formative aspects observed in our research in the context of outdoor education in the Religion discipline:
 - a. Outdoor education provides the opportunity to explore the spiritual symbols present in nature and to connect these symbols with religious teachings. Reflection on the connection between man and the natural environment through which students can understand more deeply religious concepts regarding the relationship between man and nature through direct experiences in the external environment.
 - b. Students learn and apply the ethical and moral values promoted in religion through practical activities, such as volunteering in ecological projects or charitable actions in nature. Outdoor education helps develop empathy and compassion by engaging in activities that promote care for the environment and others.
 - c. Students explore and understand different religious traditions through pilgrimages or visits to sacred places in nature. Outdoor education provides a conducive framework for promoting interreligious dialogue through collaboration in joint activities and projects.
 - d. The Religion discipline uses religious narratives to convey the fundamental teachings and values of religions in a natural context. Thus, we observe the development of a religious perspective that promotes respect and protection of the natural environment as an expression of

divine sacredness. Students are involved in environmental conservation projects to apply their religious teachings of responsibility to creation.

9. The identification in the specialized didactics of the Religion discipline of the elements that can be used in the promotion of outdoor education:

- The *Brief review* took into account examples of outdoor activities found in specialized teaching in the discipline of Religion (Bolocan, 2005, 2008, 2013; Cucos, 2014) for the new generations of students, it involves the integration of specific elements that take into account their needs, as well as changes in the way of learning. The study observed elements that combine specialized didactics with outdoor education to respond to the specific needs of new generations: practical lessons that combine religious content with direct experiences in nature to support deep understanding; integrating technology, such as tablets or mobile devices, to support interactive experiences. Thus, educational games that address religious and ethical themes in an interactive and fun way are integrated; research projects or exploration activities that allow students to discover specific aspects of nature related to religious teachings and that promote respect for the environment through nature conservation and protection activities. Promoting critical thinking through debates and discussions related to religious themes in a natural and relaxed setting stimulates personal reflection and meditation in nature to develop spiritual awareness by integrating artistic and creative projects that reflect religious values and teachings in the natural environment. It also aims to develop social skills and collaboration through team projects carried out in the natural environment and adapt activities to different learning styles and individual needs to ensure an inclusive educational experience.

10. Identifying an interdisciplinary framework in which outdoor education finds its purpose and effectiveness revealed that outdoor education integrates harmoniously into an interdisciplinary framework, offering opportunities for learning and development on multiple levels. We observed the activities proposed in other disciplines:

- Sciences and Biology: direct observation of natural ecosystems to understand life cycles, interdependencies, and environmental implications; research activities and data collection in nature to develop scientific skills.

- Geography and Environmental Studies: exploring natural landscapes and terrains, using the natural environment to learn about physical and human geography; the involvement of students in projects that address environmental issues and the development of sustainable solutions.
- Physical Education and Health: promote sports activities, walks to encourage a healthy lifestyle; explores the link between physical activity in nature and emotional well-being.
- Art and Creativity: proposes outdoor artistic projects and the use of nature as a source of inspiration for artistic and creative projects; outdoor reenactments or theatrical performances to combine art with the natural environment.
- History and Archaeology: through visits to natural historical sites, historical sites and archaeological sites are explored in the natural environment to understand the history and evolution of the sites; by participating in outdoor historical reenactment projects to bring past events to life.
- Mathematics and Applied Sciences: develops outdoor research and computing activities. For the application of mathematical concepts and applied sciences in solving problems related to the natural environment as well as the creation of construction and design projects that take into account practical and ecological aspects.
- Romanian Language and Literature: through writing and reading sessions in nature, it stimulates creativity and imagination regarding nature as a source of inspiration for literary and artistic creations.
- Civics and Social Studies: Engages students in civic projects aimed at environmental conservation and civic responsibility, exploring local communities and cultures in their natural environment.
- Technology and Innovation: uses outdoor technology to support learning, research and innovation in the natural environment through technology projects that help protect the environment.
- Religion and Ethics: Outdoor religious debates address ethical and social responsibility issues in the environment.

- Psychology and Personal Development: promotes mental health through outdoor meditation and relaxation activities that support personal development and confidence building in a natural environment.
- Education for careers and life skills: through outdoor career guidance projects it proposes activities that offer opportunities to explore possible careers related to the natural environment, such as: orientation and survival in the natural environment.

4. Results and Discussions

The first objective of our *Brief review* seeks to identify, in the School Curriculum, in the Religion discipline, within its various components (aims and contents), the characteristic elements of outdoor education. Integrating outdoor education into Religion can provide students with tools and skills for managing emotions, resolving conflicts, and developing healthy social relationships. The use of various teaching and assessment methods include practical projects, group discussions, case studies and other interactive activities.

Promoting outdoor activities in the teaching of Religion encourages interaction between students and teachers and stimulates cognitive and social-emotional development using teamwork and the exchange of ideas, by:

- a. Ensuring students' access to volunteering activities promoted by the Church for the development of empathy and a sense of social responsibility.
- b. Promoting an active and healthy lifestyle by engaging in partnerships with residential centres for older people.
- c. Integrating research projects on local traditions that encourage creativity and curiosity.
- d. Continuous training for teachers in missionary cultural centres belonging to the education sector of episcopal centres for the application of effective methods regarding the involvement of students in activities aimed at the local community.

The comparative perspectives of the reviews mentioned in the specialized literature, studied, and mentioned in the present work, regarding the structure of such a curriculum led us to the following needs:

- a. Designing didactic activities with practical relevance, with applicability in everyday life and with an emphasis on identifying pragmatic solutions (cognitive-educational skills: fundamental knowledge).
- b. Developing critical, analytical, and synthetic thinking skills through activities and projects that require problem solving and informed decision making.
- c. Using research methods that encourage students to explore the needs of the community they belong to.
- d. Integration of practical skills specific to the field of study, so that students can apply knowledge in concrete contexts (volunteering).
- e. Developing partnerships that include collaborative activities, teamwork, communication, and problem solving in a real environment.
- f. Providing opportunities for exchanges of experience with other schools so that students can apply their knowledge in various school contexts.
- g. Encouraging autonomy and responsibility in the learning process by dividing tasks within activities that develop planning, organizing and self-regulation skills.

The second objective of our *Brief review* aims to highlighting the informative and formative nature of outdoor education in teaching - learning - evaluation activities in the current curricular context at Religion Discipline. Integrating interdisciplinary content in a larger context allows students to see the interconnections between fields, helping them develop a holistic understanding and apply knowledge in real contexts, thus we observe that:

- a. Developing projects and outdoor activities to be used in an interdisciplinary context, allows students to use their knowledge synergistically. The integrated approach provides opportunities for students to engage in solving complex problems that cannot be solved exclusively by a single discipline. The integrated approach encourages critical thinking by exploring multiple perspectives and developing the ability to analyse and synthesize information. Integrating content into contexts relevant to students' everyday lives motivates them to see the usefulness of their knowledge and apply it to concrete situations and allows the creation of authentic learning experiences that simulate real challenges and require their approach from various perspectives.

- b. Collaboration and communication among students by integrating socio-emotional content into the integrated curriculum helps develop students' socio-emotional skills, including managing emotions and relating to others.
- c. The integrated curriculum offers greater flexibility in adapting to different learning styles and paces of students, allowing them to explore and engage in varied ways to find comprehensive solutions that allow better use of resources, avoiding fragmentation and redundancy in teaching and study materials.

The study notes that it is necessary to update the content according to the developments of society and technology, so that students are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future by integrating cross-cutting themes such as sustainability, civic education, and the development of digital skills, to meet the needs contemporary with a focus on developing transversal skills such as collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking and communication throughout schooling.

The design of practical learning activities in the Religion discipline in the context of outdoor education can provide students with an engaging and interactive experience, connecting the religious content with the natural environment. The design of such courses must respect certain stages: identification of learning objectives; the selection of specific religious contents that can be better understood and experienced in the outside environment; designing outdoor activities; integration of practical experiences; group discussion and reflection; involvement in volunteer projects in nature that are aligned with the religious principles and values studied; assessment and feedback through the use of assessment tools that look not only at theoretical knowledge, but also at students ability to apply religious teachings in the context of outdoor activities.

Outdoor education in the Discipline of Religion creates an environment conducive to profound educational experiences that develop not only understanding of religious content, but also personal connection and practice of spiritual values and principles.

5. Conclusions

Following the hypothesis of the *Brief review (Does the integration of outdoor activities in the teaching of Religion, learning and evaluation influence the generation and development of students' knowledge, skills, attitudes?)* the study confirms that the inclusion of outdoor education

in Religion education programs can bring several benefits, as it provides a holistic perspective on student learning and development. Outdoor activities provide students with the opportunity to connect with the natural environment and develop an appreciation for creation. This may be relevant in the religious context, as many religious traditions emphasize the importance of respect for nature and spiritual connection with the environment. Outdoor education provides opportunities for hands-on experiences and direct experiences that can help students deepen their understanding of religious values and principles. Through practical experiences, students can associate the abstract concepts of Religion with concrete situations in real life. Outdoor activities require collaboration and social interaction. Students can learn to work together, express their opinions, and solve problems in a different environment than the traditional classroom. These social skills can also be considered important within a religious education, which often emphasizes community and interpersonal relationships. Outdoor activities promote a healthy lifestyle and the physical and mental well-being of students. In the context of the Religion discipline, this could be considered important because many religious traditions place importance on the care of the body and mental health. Outdoor education offers a form of experiential learning, where students learn through direct experimentation and observation. This type of learning can facilitate a deeper and more concrete understanding of religious principles.

A future research approach must note the current limitations of the study:

1. The impossibility of observing changes in the well-being of students and teachers following the use of outdoor activities in relation to the subjects in the current curriculum. From these findings we propose the introduction of educational modules on well-being, stress management and mental health promotion for students and teachers. This could involve both practical techniques (meditation, mindfulness) and discussions about mental health.
2. Continuous training of teachers to develop interdisciplinary teaching skills and to improve collaboration within the teaching team is lacking in the field of outdoor education. Ensuring access to continuous training programs for teachers must aim at the implementation of unitary and updated curricular approaches regarding the introduction of outdoor education in teaching, learning and assessment. Experiencing these types of

activities can lead to the creation of professional communities where teachers can share good practice and develop professionally.

3. Lack of assessment forms specific to this type of education. Implementation of a continuous assessment system that tracks the effectiveness of outdoor activities and student progress throughout schooling, that provides individualized feedback and is geared toward the use of various forms of assessment, including portfolios, projects, and formative assessment, to assess not only knowledge, but also skills and attitudes, and to respond to the diversity of students learning styles.

The study recommends for the future to find out the opinion of a significant number of teachers, from urban and rural environments, from beginners to the first didactic degree, from various curricular areas, on the above-mentioned topics related to the introduction of educational modules about the well-being of students and teachers, the continuous training of teachers for the development of teaching skills in the field of outdoor education and the implementation of a continuous evaluation system, which will track the effectiveness of outdoor activities and the progress of students throughout schooling.

Furthermore, after the present study, we propose to find out the opinion of the teaching staff about if the outdoor education is present in: (1) the existing options at the level of framework plans, (2) the curriculum at the decision of the school (*CDS*), (3) the time range (minimum - maximum number of hours/week) at the level of the optional discipline and at the level of the total number of hours/week that would allow the integration of outdoor education, (4) the local development curriculum (*CDL*), (5) school programs, (6) in the didactic strategies used in teaching or (7) in certain didactic sequences?

We suggest as well to discover – according to the principle of connecting the curriculum to social needs – if: (1) are the objectives of the curriculum, and the differentiated structure of the framework plans, adequate in relation to the socio-cultural requirements and the level of economic development for the implementation of outdoor education; (2) at the level of vocational education, can outdoor education be provided in the local development curriculum (*CDL*) with the role of adapting the professional training of students to the requirements of the local labour market; (3) can school programs based on current documents (research, policy,

didactic etc.) be structured in relation to the formative intentions of the discipline from the perspective of outdoor education.

Last, but not least, we propose to reveal the opinion of the teaching staff regarding if organization by curricular areas reflect features of outdoor education, if it offers the possibility of integrating the disciplinary didactic approach in an interdisciplinary framework that uses outdoor education and if it ensures the continuity and completeness of the didactic approach regarding the integration of outdoor education throughout the school year.

Learning beyond classrooms is becoming increasingly common in formal and non-formal education internationally. Studies are also exploring effective ways to integrate outdoor education into traditional school curricula and how outdoor lessons can be created and implemented, and the results turned into educational policy.

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