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The Environmental Values - A Study on the Students' Perception, Attitudes and Behaviours

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Abstract: In the past 30 years the socio-economic field has gone through both theoretical and practical challenges, being accompanied by new orientations such as the environmental psychology. Since "man" is the pawn to which and for which socio-economic systems get adjusted, we believe it is useful to analyze the position of human thinking and action in relation to the environment given the strong interdependence relationships man-nature. The content elements of the environmental psychology allow the analysis of perceptions towards the environment from the perspective of the benefits and the impact which result from the interaction man-nature. To this aim, we performed a survey on a sample of 308 students in order to identify the level and quality of perception of the environmental values from several points of view: knowledge, attitude and behaviour. The study focused on the perception from the perspective of the involvement in ensuring the functionality of the new bio-psycho-socio-economic systems. The environmental psychology can be a real asset in explaining the relational mechanisms between people and the environment and its values. The main reason why we chose to study this subject was that the implementation of the environmentally-friendly development models is conditioned by the degree of social reception and by the level of knowledge and appreciation of environmental values. The results of the study demonstrated that the socio-demographic differences and the educational background influence the perception of the environment, together with the adoption of a favourable attitude accompanied by a pro-environment behaviour.

Keywords: *environment, values, students, attitudes, behaviours, perceptions.*

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1. Introduction

The environmental value topic, beyond being an updated study field with a wide range of approaches, is a real interdisciplinary challenge. Situated at the border of several fields of interest, the subject of environmental values has a definite place including the psycho-social fields of interest. The present paper aims to approach the environmental values in an analysis from the perspective of the transition to an eminently sustainable development as a practical approach and from the psycho-social perspective on the economic topic as well. The main reason behind this choice is that, in order to facilitate the transition to the extension of the theoretical-applicative understanding of the intrinsic issue of environmental values, it is necessary to consider its elements of support, alongside the way in which it can be perceived at the level of human reception. The psychological mechanisms can facilitate or block the more open or close approach of the environmental values considering the various perspectives.

Thus, we can reduce to a common denominator these areas of approach, the denominator being the man who, when capitalizing the environment and its resources, makes the transition towards the personal or collective needs and comes to appreciate favourably new sources of advantage from new fields such as the environmental psychology. In a nutshell, all these are aspects which include cognition, perception, attitude, behaviour, interest and education. Since the values perceived by the society and the human beings are permanently under consideration and since this topic has a direct and great impact on human values, we believe that such a research topic can prove to be at least challenging.

We will analyze the environmental values from the perspective of their perception as a drive for the society development, in order to support their main role in the promotion of sustainable development as a valence for a new socio-economic development threshold. The knowledge of the content and applicability aspects of environmental values is relatively new at least for the educational and social environment in Romania, but in another countries, it has already become a high-ranking priority. From this perspective, we tackle the study topic as a key element which allows the passage from the already established elements in the literature, such as the environmental values adequate to be inserted in the profile studies that consider the implications of their interdependence with man's attitude and behaviour, towards the environment and its resources. Of the multitude of reference values, we chose to highlight the environmental ones because the

human progress has reached the stage when the threshold of material needs is overstepped, in accordance with Abraham Maslow's pyramid.

The current paper represents an integrative approach which reunites aspects of the environment, the attitudes and behaviour-related manifestations of people from the perspective of their perception of the environmental values and the opening to new approaches which facilitate the general well-being. We specifically remarked that the HDI (Human Development Index, n.d.) underlines the connection between the environment with all its values and the quality of human life. The main idea used when we chose this research topic was that we are currently at the stage when the connection man-nature is not only a theoretical one strongly anchored in the socio-economic systems, but it has become a more practical topic in terms of the transition to new, much more environmentally-friendly systems. However, our approach would not be complete without considering the attitudes and behaviours that people adopt when recognizing the environmental values.

The idea to tackle this topic occurred when we noticed that people often seem worried about the problems faced by the environment and they intentionally express their availability to make efforts to solve them; the reality shows significant distortions between statements, intentions and behaviours which means that most behaviours are seldom in line with the respect and valorisation requirements needed by the environment. This is the context in which we defined the idea: if people perceived and became aware of the environmental problems, then they would have a different vision and other behaviours - different from the present ones - towards the environment and its values regarding the modern ways to the social progress and the sustainable economic development.

2. Literature review

The environment with all its components and factors represents undoubtedly a support for the human life in all its complexity. This is one of the reasons why the environmental problem is approached in almost all scientific fields, in various speciality studies. According to the Romanian Encyclopedic Dictionary, the environment holds a vital role in the evolution of the living creatures that are in turn an important factor of the environment transformation.

The notion of value is defined in different ways in relation to the area of the concept (Brown, 1984) and we will refer to the environmental values from the perspective of their perception as a vital connection man-nature. The orientation trends towards the environmental values are based

on connections between what the environment provides and what man believes he needs. We start from the premise that the environment is a resource of goods perceived in multiple ways. Addressing the ecological beliefs and behaviours in a special manner Gray et al. (1985) approach a specific model to measure the ecological attitudes, based on the relation between ecological attitudes and practical actions, taking into account the human personality. Also, the autochthonous authors create a connection between some very important concepts, as that of value, with the psychological ones: attitude, norm, ideal, interest need and the personality traits (Iluţ, 2014). About the environmental attitudes, it is significantly influenced by the contact with nature during childhood (Torkar et al., 2020). There is a positive correlation between the practical experiencing with nature and the environmental values recognition, or a pro-environment behaviour. Tamar et al. (2020) explain the environmental knowledge, the pro-social values or the egoist values as predictors for the positive or negative attitudes and behaviours towards environment. According to Lyons et al. (2010), it is a strong connection between an altruistic character, tendency for pleasure, satisfaction or enthusiasm and all of these values can be perceived in the same issue with the environment one (Yasir et al., 2021).

The environmental values known in the literature are found in the niche scientific research (Martin & Czellar, 2017). If in the international literature the approach of the environmental values is relatively recent - around 30 years ago - in the domestic literature the tackling of this topic is rather sporadic. The specificity of the foreign literature regarding the topic of the environmental values in a psycho-social context is rich, includes many practical examples and has continuity. The specificity in the Romanian literature indicates that it is prevalently theoretical, does not have a solid ground, creates confusions and is insufficiently represented.

When defining the environmental values, it is useful that a community should knowingly come into contact with the environmental goods or services so that their value must be recognized and appreciated; the most frequent references can be made to the material and recreational facilities as well as to the esthetical and entertainment resources.

The environmental values are identified as approachable with the following meanings presented in Table 1 (Schroede, 2011):

Table 1. *The main environmental values*
Source: personal contribution - synthesis, according to Schroede (2011)

Environmental values	Characteristics
Material values	specific to consumption, ensure the material satisfaction and meet people's material needs
Physical and biological values	as qualitative aspects of the environmental factors, they are clearly understood by people in the light of the impact they have on their life especially on their health
Values of direct interaction between man and nature	show the joy of the interaction man-nature, the pleasure of being a part of it, the appreciation of landscapes, activities in contact with nature
Values of direct interaction	reflect the psycho-social aspects and results of the interaction man-nature and can be better understood when thinking about their lack (recreation, mental fatigue, quality of life)
Values of strictly personal significance for the man	the meaning of the place of nature in a person's life, the community identity, natural, historical, cultural knowledge, family ties, symbols, rituals, refuge etc.

The circumstance of how the attitude towards the environment is formed could explain the typology of the ecological behaviour. If regarding other types of attitudes, the differences between the expressed attitude and the manifested behaviour are minor, as regards the environmental attitudes the discrepancy is significant, which means that most people express - verbally or under other forms that allow them to improve their social image - a "pro-environmental" attitude, while their behaviour is far from being manifested in this direction. *The behaviour* is a dynamic concept which makes reference to the attitude put into action. It can be inferred that the investments in education and the responsible involvement in this complex process are vital for the creation of "pro-environment" behaviours which in turn produce direct effects on the socio-economic systems. The change of attitudes and behaviours towards the environment is adjusted in relation to the personal advantages each person or one's group gets. Torkar (2014) notes about the teachers' implication to inoculate the environmental values to students, how important is to have education in this area, the significance of the practice, and the curricula for the environmental education.

In terms of what determines a man's behaviour, Olteanu (2012) explores some determinants at empirical level: attitude, willingness, knowledge, beliefs, values, responsibility, personal norms, intentions and desires. Identifying the divergence *attitude-behaviour*, it is explained how the ecological attitudes rarely lead to positive ecological effects because it is a gap *to say - to do*. (Olteanu, 2012) Thus, we notice the complexity of the evolution of the relationship between the environmental topic, the social one and the human psychology (Năstas, 2014). The attitudes and behaviours concerning the environment are determined by the relationships between the three factor categories: psycho-social, economic and ecological, given the study direction of the environmental psychology (Boncu, 2014). Also, in line with the self-determination theory (STD), the worldviews are intrinsically oriented (Hedlund-de Witt, et al., 2014). Related to practical studies concerning the attitude towards environmental values, Chan (1996) undertook a study regarding the concerns about the environment and conducted a survey of 992 students in Hong Kong, using the Weigel & Weigel scale. The aim was to investigate the attitudes reflected in the availability to be involved in various environmentally-friendly behaviours including the usual norms in the personal life. An important conclusion of the study indicates extremely favourable attitudes towards the environment and a certain availability to get involved in various environmentally-friendly behaviours.

In terms of the scales used to analyze the relationship between the environment and the human attitude and behaviour, the international literature is abundant and illustrative. For the most emblematic scales about the appreciation of the environmental values, we mention some representative authors. Maloney and Ward (1973) and Maloney et al. (1975) developed a 10-item scale to measure aspects regarding environmental concerns. Weigel & Newman (1976) developed a measuring instrument of the population's general attitude towards the environment - the scale of preoccupations about the environment composed of 16 items referring to: pollution, conservation of natural resources, biodiversity protection, the optimistic perspective on the environment, and the impact on the man. Arbuthnot (1977) developed the scale of the attitude towards the environment with 24 items measuring the attitude to ecological aspects from the perspective of the economic, legal, and technological trends, as well as those related to environmental power and future orientations. Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) developed the scale of New Environmental Paradigm - NEP, composed of 12 items that measure the attitudes to the man's influence on nature, the limitations of the population growth, and whether

people should have the right to master nature. With regard to NEP, it is found as "indistinguishable from a scale of awareness of consequences of general environmental conditions, psychometrically and in terms of its relations to behavioral intentions, but somewhat different in its relations to basic value orientations and sociodemographic variables" (Stern et al., 1995, p. 723). The studies of Arcury (1990) demonstrate that the NEP scale positively correlates with the level of knowledge about the environment stated by the people. A new scale for the environmental values - Environmental Motives Scale (EMS) proposed by Torkar and Bogner (2019) is a deeper approach, considering the environment over the economic exploitation, being about the sense of the relationship man - environment. The environmental values according to the EMS scale: altruism, biosphere and egoism. Even the NEP scale (The New Ecological Paradigm) is used worldwide to predict people's environmental worldviews (Liu & Chen, 2019), some opinions disagreed the unidimensional structure of this, so it was developed Two Major Environmental Values (2-MEV) with two dimensions of the environmental attitudes: preservation and utilization.

The most significant aspects in the studies about the environmental attitude are the following:

- age has a substantial significance and is inversely associated with the attitude towards the environment, the female persons present a weak, inverse correlation with the environmental attitude (Arcury, 1990);

- education, family income, life in metropolitan areas indicate a significant positive correlation with the environmental attitude which in turn has a closely positive correlation with the environmental knowledge level;

- the development scales proved to be relevant, valid and with a strong predictability strength as far as the environmentally-friendly behaviour is concerned.

The environmentally-friendly attitude plays an essential role in ensuring the predictability of the environmentally-friendly behaviour and Heberlein & Black (1976) indicates the close correlation between attitudes and behaviours towards the environment. In terms of the effects on the intention to act the locus of control and the attitude are more important than knowledge and personal responsibility (Hwang et al., 2000). To enhance the responsible environmental behaviour, environmental education and interpretation systems need to focus on changing the internal locus of control. About the impact of personality or psychosocial variables on the recognition of the environmental values, Qazi et al. (2020) conclude that the personality is positively and significantly associated with green

entrepreneurial intention, but with insignificant results towards the green entrepreneurial intention of students.

Other research identifies three measures as orthogonal dimensions by means of factor analysis: environmental knowledge, environmental values, and ecological behaviour intention (Kaiser et al., 1999). Some descriptive research has sought to establish an association between demographic and social variables and the ecological concerns of the individual (Marguerat & Cestre, 2002). According to Monús (2021), to measure the environmental perceptions and pro-environmental behaviors (PEB) is need to approach more areas in the same research: environmental education, marketing, sociology, innovation.

3. Methodology

The goal of this paper is to analyze the students' attitude and behaviour from the perspective of the appreciation of values and benefits in the relation man-nature. It has identified the differences between the attitudes expressed and the behaviours manifested towards the environmental values in relation to certain differential socio-demographic elements: gender, origin place, specialization. The research focuses on the problematic of the relationship between environmental attitudes and behaviours, beside the social representations of the appreciation of environmental values.

The research, a quantitative analysis based on a survey, was conducted only on students, because they are the "product" of the current educational system and a link to the future society. The exploratory research has been performed in a prospective manner and it is composed of a demographic, comparative-associative analysis. It is a selective survey with collective administration. The research methods used: the comparison, the crosstab, the factorial analysis of correspondences between variables. The questionnaire, was built especially for the statistical survey among students with regard to their perception about the environmental values. To build our own research tool, we used the NAVS scale (Natural Area Value Scale) that measures the correlation among the intrinsic personal values, the non-use, use and recreational ones - basic values for the environment. The scale, with 20 statements, appreciates the environmental values from the point of view of their recognition.

Our questionnaire structure was created with three main components - knowledge, attitude and behaviour - and makes reference to

the following aspects, inspired from the literature and completed by the authors according to the research scope:

1. knowledge of the taxonomy of the environmental values: learning, collecting and becoming aware of the information about the environmental values from a scientific perspective and their ranking by categories in relation to the expected benefits;

2. the attitude towards the environment: from the perspective of being or not "pro" the environmental values;

3. the environmental behaviour: past and anticipated behaviour, meaning the investment in the recognition of environmental values and the wish to invest time/money in the future recognition and appreciation of the environmental values.

Furthermore, the research goal is focused on:

- *cognitive aspects* - the recognition of the taxonomy of environmental values: educational, recreational, cultural, artistic, emotional, spiritual or religious, and material;

- *aspects related to attitude:* the benefits expected from the personal relationship with the environment and the attitude towards the problems the environment is facing; the benefits obtained from the interaction with the environment: the beauty of the landscape, the possibility of tourism, rest, source of inspiration, education, security of resources;

- *behavioural aspects*: behaviours from the past towards the environment, the already manifested behaviour of the subject towards the environment and its values by means of the involvement in actions of protection and recognition of environmental values, from the perspective of previously expressed attitude, the availability to invest to recognize and appreciate the environmental values.

According to the Winter and Lockwood model (2005), we consider for our survey as main variables for the environmental values the intrinsic, non-use, use (non-recreation) and recreation values.

The sample of students is made up of students from the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Geography. The research universe is the academic environment. The questionnaire was submitted to 320 students and 308 questionnaires were validated and introduced for processing in the SPSS statistical software programme. The sample was extracted in a representative manner based on the student population from the two faculties from the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi, with the mention that a part of the students come from and live in the Republic of Moldova. The control variables were gender and the place of origin. Even if initially, we considered age as an influence variable in the sampling, we

believed that this was not relevant because there are no statistically significant age differences for the reference population - the students. The variables used in the analysis, are summarized in the Table 2:

Table 2. *Research design. Dependent and independent variables.*
Source: personal design in research methodology

Independent variables		Dependent variables	
Vi_1 - origin place	Urban	Vd_1 - recognition of the taxonomy of environmental values	Recognition
	Rural		Non-recognition
Vi_2 - gender	Female	Vd_2 - attitude to the environment	Favourable
	Male		Non-favourable
			Neutral
Vi_3 - faculty	Economics	Vd_3 - behaviour towards the environment	"Pro" environment
	Geography		"Counter" environment

The hypotheses formulated are the following:

H1 - there are socio-cultural differences with respect to the attitude and the behaviour in favour of the environment, in the sense that the students from the Republic of Moldova are more involved in the recognition of environmental values and they appreciate them more compared to the students from Iaşi;

H2 - there are differences for the recognition, attitude/behaviour towards the environmental values in relation to the faculty and specialization; the Geography students are more involved in the recognition/appreciation of environmental values than the Economics students;

H3 - the demographic profile influences the attitude/behaviour towards the environmental values: the females and the persons from the rural environment appreciate more the environmental values and their benefits.

We performed the analysis of differences using non-parametric tests because the distribution of scores is not normal and neither are all scales

standardized. We used the following non-parametric tests for the comparison of two independent samples:

(1) Mann-Whitney U test for two independent samples

(2) Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z test for the investigation of the differences between the groups where the value categories were narrow.

4. Results

In regard to the structure of the sample for which the data were processed in SPSS, we notice that:

- 78.57% of the respondents are female, which reflects the structure of the academic population from these faculties where girls are predominant
- 55.84% persons are from the rural area
- 45.12% are Geography students
- 11.36% are Economics students from Iaşi
- 43,52% Economics students from the Republic of Moldova
- most of the females come from the rural area, while the boys from the rural area are more numerous than those coming from the urban one

From the statistical analysis and the investigation of the significant differences regarding the students' attitudes and behaviours towards environmental values, the following results have emerged:

(1) Gender differences. In regard to the differences of participants' gender, the results show that in general there are no differences between groups. The environmental values and variables taken for analysis were: the intrinsic values, non-use values, recreational values, using values, benefits values, attitude, passed behaviour, actual behaviour, and future behaviour. As for the values recognized by the participants, the results show gender differences. In the case of these differences, we used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z test because the dependent variable is measured globally by means of a single item and it has few categories. The environmental values taxonomy analyzed consist in the following values: educational, recreational, cultural, artistic and aesthetic, emotional, spiritual or religious, and material. There are gender differences in terms of cultural, artistic and aesthetic, emotional, religious and spiritual values. The analysis data results are presented below in the Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Table 3. Results - gender differences between groups (1)
Source: author's contribution

	Intrinsic val.	Non-use val.	Recreational val.	Using value	Benefits value	Attitudes	Past behaviours	Actual behaviours	Future behaviours
Mann-Whitney U	4597.00	4704.50	5453.000	5416.000	5167.500	5325.000	5295.000	4976.500	6049.000
Wilcoxon W	6028.00	6300.50	7106.000	26737.00	6878.500	7036.000	7006.000	6687.500	27994.000
Z	-1.287	-1.789	-.846	-.702	-1.523	-1.218	-1.329	-1.958	-.023
Sig. (2-tailed)	.198	.074	.398	.482	.128	.223	.184	.059	.981

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

Table 4. Results - gender differences between groups (2)
Source: author's contribution

		Educational	Recreating	Cultural	Artistic and aesthetic	Emotional	Spiritual and religious	Materials
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.115	.091	.234	.224	.249	.216	.146
	Positive	.010	.066	.005	.001	.005	.000	.000
	Negative	-.115	-.091	-.234	-.224	-.249	-.216	-.146
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.777	.614	1.576	1.512	1.674	1.457	.984
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.582	.845	.014	.021	.007	.029	.288

Grouping Variable: Gender

(2) Differences in terms of place of origin. As far as the place of origin is concerned, there are differences only for the dependent variable *behaviours for the environment planned in the future*. The place of origin of the participants influences the agreement about future planned environmentally-friendly behaviours, the U test applied shows that there are significant differences between groups (U = 6974.50, z = -2.93, p = 0.003), the participants from the rural area reporting highly more significant results (Mdn = 3.5) than the urban students (Mdn = 3). For the environmental values recognized and appreciated, the results show that there are no differences among groups.

Table 4. Results - the origin environment differences (1)
Source: author's contribution

	Intrinsic val.	Non-use val.	Recreation.val.	Using value	Benefits val.	Attitudes	Past behav.	Actual behav.	Future behav.
Mann-Whitney U	7319.5	7564.000	7933.500	8132.000	8253.000	8185.500	8253.000	8570.500	6974.500
Wilcoxon W	13424.500	17717.000	14954.500	14802.000	15039.000	19063.500	19279.000	15473.500	18149.500
Z	-.578	-.789	-1.042	-.528	-.447	-.558	-.541	-.047	-2.933
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.563	.430	.297	.597	.655	.577	.589	.962	.003

a. Grouping Variable: the origin environment

Table 5. Results - the origin environment differences (2)
Source: author's contribution

		Educational	Recreating	Cultural	Artistic, aesthetic	Emotional	Spiritual, religious	Materials
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.129	.063	.116	.111	.046	.060	.050
	Positive	.021	.039	.011	.019	.023	.060	.038
	Negative	-.129	-.063	-.116	-.111	-.046	.000	-.050
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.047	.515	.942	.900	.371	.488	.407
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.223	.954	.337	.392	.999	.971	.996

a. Grouping Variable: the origin environment

In accordance with the hypotheses formulated, the validation of hypothesis H3 meaning that females and the persons from the rural areas are more present on the trends analyzed, an aspect underlined by the factorial analysis by components regarding the correlations among variables.

The correlation analysis performed based on the demographic structure of the sample indicates some results useful for the confirmation/refutation of hypotheses H1 and H2 referring to the attitude/behaviour towards the environment in relation to the faculty the students attend:

- 39.5% of the students from Economics who come from the Republic of Moldova appreciate a lot the educational values specific to the

environment in comparison with the other groups of students; they appreciate the following values a lot: 36.4% recreational, 41.9% cultural and 41.7% spiritual-religious values;

- the previous behavioural analysis shows that compared with other specializations, the students from the Republic of Moldova become involved to a high degree (40%) to find time to get information about the environmental problems, followed by the Geography students who - to an extent of 34.1% - considerably get involved in the same direction; the most careful students "to a great extent" who buy only the products they need are those from Economics and come from the Republic of Moldova (37.3%), followed by the Geography students (30.8%), while the change of lifestyle to be closer to the environment happened the most for the Geography students (36%) and for those from the Republic of Moldova (30.8%);

- for the availability to adopt a certain behaviour oriented towards the recognition and appreciation of environmental values, the Moldovan students - in comparison with the others - are the most willing to invest time (1-2 hours/day) in order to get knowledge about the environment, 40.7% of them declaring that they agree to this investment, while 41.7% being also positive about investing money to this aim.

- the Economics students from Iaşi are the most who appreciate less the environmental educational values (60%) as well as the recreational values (44.4% appreciate to a lesser extent these values), and the emotional values respectively (appreciated less by 53.3% of the students from Economics in comparison with the other students), the same appreciation ("to a small extent") being for the religious and spiritual values (47.7%);

- the beauty provided by landscapes as an environmental benefit is appreciated "to a small extent" by a considerably great number of students in Economics (42.9%); they also appreciate less the possibility for tourism as a benefit offered by nature (60%);

- the attitude of "disinterest towards the environment and its values" is identified among the Economics students, being the least positive in the favourable appreciation and recognition of environmental values and the least involved in environmentally-friendly behaviours;

- as for the future behaviour stated by these students in Economics from Iaşi regarding the availability to invest time/money in the environmental concerns, most of them (45.4%) do not agree to spend 1-2 hours per day in order to learn about the environment, while 48.3% do not agree to grant 10 lei/month to an environment management fund.

It can be observed that the H1 hypothesis is validated: the students coming from the Republic of Moldova are more involved and dedicated to

the dimensions analyzed. The validation of hypothesis H2 can similarly be noticed: the Geography students are more involved in the recognition and appreciation of the environmental values in comparison with the Economics students.

The total results of the research indicate:

- the female persons in comparison with the male ones recognize/appreciate more the benefits/values of the environment; they have a more favourable attitude and a pro-environmental behaviour both as a past and future availability;

- the persons from the rural area are closer to the environment on all dimensions: knowledge, favourable attitude, identified benefits; the urban persons are those who declare their availability to invest in future environmental preoccupations unlike the rural persons who only expressed a "pro-environment" behaviour for the past;

- material and use values, those producing real material benefits alongside the intrinsic environmental values are the least recognized;

- the students from the Faculty of Geography are to a higher extent closer to the environmental values than the Economics students; they recognize them and have a pro-environment behaviour; they are followed for the same dimensions by the Moldovan students.

5. Limits and discussions

Notwithstanding the results, we are also aware of some limitations of the paper among which the most obvious are: the lack of a unique established instrument for measuring the dimensions under study, the use of an exceedingly high number of statements in the questionnaire, the omission to consider some possibly parasite variables, the subjectivism, the statistical limitations regarding the use of more advanced methods, the relevant sample only for the research universe that was chosen, the reduced number of participants, the unequal representation etc. Despite the identified constraints and given that we intend to continue our study, we believe that the orientation towards further research is not only a desirable aspiration but also a needed one. The future research trends include the clearer analysis of the relationships between variables, namely the consideration of other reference variables - personality variables, the extension of the research universe to other reference categories, the more in-depth approach of the results from the foreign literature.

6. Conclusions

The paper followed the association: the environmental topic - with its values and resources - and the key elements from the environmental psychology: attitudes and behaviours. We thought that the analysis of environmental values in the light of the relation of the person to them is essential because it would be almost impossible to have access to these new, sustainable economic and social systems if the people do not know, recognize and appreciate the environmental values and their benefits or the consequences that result from their interaction. We chose to undertake the study by means of a survey on the students for several reasons: the students of today are responsible for the valorisation of sustainable social and economic systems; the economists can prove the efficiency capacity of resource use if they know their value; the geographers are those who know the environmental values and can act to stimulate their protection. The values taken into account by the individual and by means of which he builds his own reference framework to ensure his material and emotional comfort are varied. We chose to point out the environmental values because the socio-human progress has reached the stage when the material needs are overstepped. The research was based on speciality studies which clearly showed that people are currently more inclined to recognize the values that determine the fostering of well-being on a psycho-emotional level than to outspokenly appreciate the material values. From the material to the recreational resources, man cannot be thought of as being isolated from nature.

We focused on the convergence aspects between the environmental problems and the topic of the attitude/behaviour dimensions as well as that of the new sustainable orientation. We started from the observation that most of the speciality papers written until now refer to the responsibility towards the environment from the perspective of the manifested behaviour. The paper aimed to be a synthesis of the relevant information in the literature concerning the socio-ecological representations, opinions, attitudes/behaviours towards the environment and its values. In fact, we directed the research towards the idea that a conscious connection to the environmental values alongside the adoption of a favourable attitude and a "pro" behaviour are predictive elements that facilitate the transition to new systems, more connected to the environment. The concern for the study of attitudes towards the environmental values is a novelty in our country while in other states it has an over 20-year long history. Therefore, the novelty and the topicality of the topic can be a strong point for the ongoing research

from this paper together with other elements: the introduction of aspects belonging to the social psychology in the eco-economic problematic, the approach of a new set of values and the application of a statistical survey on students.

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