

Ethics and Environmental Protection - Challenges and Responsibilities

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Abstract

The main objective of the research is Formation of an ecological ethic (attitudes, principles, beliefs); At the same time, the formation of a disapproving attitude towards those who violate ecological norms and laws represents a new dimension expressed in this article.

Awareness of the need to save water, electricity, wood, etc. (all natural resources). The general objective of the research is given by increasing people's awareness of nature protection.

In the context of accelerating environmental degradation and global climate crises, the ethical dimension of environmental protection has become increasingly urgent and relevant. This paper explores the normative foundations, practical challenges, and moral responsibilities associated with protecting the natural environment. It begins by examining key philosophical frameworks-such as anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism- that inform contemporary environmental ethics. The study then analyzes the ethical implications of major global challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource overconsumption, highlighting the moral dilemmas faced by individuals, corporations, and governments alike. Special attention is given to the concepts of intergenerational justice, ecological responsibility, and the intrinsic value of nature.

The paper argues that a shift in moral perspective-from exploitation to stewardship- is essential for achieving long-term environmental sustainability. By integrating ethical theory with real-world applications, the article emphasizes the need for a more profound ethical commitment to environmental protection at both the individual and systemic levels. Through the systematic research of the literature, it was possible to confirm a niche gap in the field - that represented by the scarcity of scientific information resources on commercial performance and the need to configure some studies that capture the essence of the indicators that lead to performance in the field. In a vast literature of commercial performance, this research is positioned within both theoretical and applied research, which provides clues regarding the connection between factoring and the development of modern trade promotion techniques.

The novelty and fundamental contribution of our paintings to the specialised literature comes from the reality that we examine general environmental safety prices in each the private and non-private sectors and distinguish among organizations and families withinside the non-public sector.

Keyword: ethics, environmental, sustainable development, territory

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Introduction

The protection of nature is also required by the need, which is increasingly felt, to preserve and improve the physical and intellectual health of the population (Mogos et al., 2021). It is no coincidence that in highly industrialized countries, people seek to spend their free time, as far as possible, as far away from the city, at the seaside, in the mountains or somewhere in the countryside (Aaltola, 2021).

People who have a moral vision of environmental problems are followers of an ecological ethics consisting of at least one, but generally of several principles (Bran et al., 2020). It is believed that environmental policies should be evaluated only according to the extent to which they affect people (Almiron and Tafalla, 2019).

In recent decades, the accelerated degradation of the environment - manifested in climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution of natural resources and massive deforestation - has created an ecological crisis with global implications. This crisis is not only a scientific or economic crisis, but also a deeply moral one. How people relate to nature reflects fundamental ethical values, choices and responsibilities. In this context, environmental protection can no longer be conceived solely as a technical or legal issue, but must also be understood as an issue of justice, solidarity and moral responsibility.

Environmental ethics - as a branch of moral philosophy - provides the necessary framework for analyzing key questions: What do we owe nature? Do we have obligations towards future generations? Can nature be considered a subject of moral rights? These questions are increasingly relevant in a world where human actions have become the main force transforming ecosystems.

The aim of this paper is to explore the theoretical foundations of environmental ethics, to identify the main moral challenges posed by the current ecological crisis and to highlight the responsibilities of social actors - individuals, states, corporations - in the need to protect the environment. The paper also aims to emphasize the importance of a paradigm shift: from a relationship of domination over nature to one of coexistence and care.

By addressing these dimensions, the article provides a conceptual and applied framework for understanding and assuming ethics as an essential foundation for environmental protection in a responsible and sustainable society.

The modification of the environment is manifested in principle through rejections that attack the environment in several forms (Bodislav et al., 2019). One of the forms of aggression on the environment is carried out through material-physical products that can be solid, liquid or gaseous, and another is carried out through influences that can be thermal, sound, electromagnetic, aesthetic and even moral (Rădulescu and Burlacu, 2019).

Among the many environmental problems that humanity faces, one major one is that of waste (Buzoianu, et al., 2024). For thousands of years, man has thrown away everything that was no longer useful to him, everything that was damaged. Things are no different today. And we do not think that all these things that we throw away, sooner or later we will receive them back. but in another form. Waste, in today's society, results in increasingly large quantities from human activity and their improper management can lead to soil, subsoil, water and air pollution (Florescu et al., 2019).

An environmentalist may want to know whether landfilling is harmful to the environment because he or she wants to protect it or because he or she believes that harming human life is morally wrong. There are also people who are apathetic (amoral) about the issue (Bodislav et al., 2020). However, many people do want their actions and those of others to be based on moral principles.

1.Review of the scientific literature

Man sought to know the environment, to use its properties for shelter and defense, to procure food and the materials necessary for his life. He became aware of what was around him, weighing the advantages and restrictions of the places where he lived to ensure the satisfaction of his own needs. From the appearance of prehistoric man to the present, many changes have occurred in the geographical landscape of the Globe, some due to natural causes, others due to human intervention (Ingrole et al., 2021).

From the minimal changes in ancient times, to those of prehistoric man who switched to agriculture, we reach the great changes that have occurred in the last two centuries, due to industry, the ever-increasing population growth, the growing agglomeration of inhabitants in large urban centers, the increase in the density of transportation routes, over large areas, the discharge of toxic substances into running waters or

their elimination into the atmosphere, all of which transformed the natural environment into a specific environment for man, a humanized environment.

The things that people do in their lives, to meet their daily needs, inevitably have effects on the environment. These effects can be harmful to the natural environment, but they also involve social costs that are borne in varying proportions by different sectors of society, affecting their activity in the future. Human activities exert pressure on the environment and change the state in terms of its quality and natural resource stocks. The concept of environment, a chameleon concept, as characterized by Michel Prieur, knows countless valences and is used with more or less different meanings in the many environments of human society (Biermann and Kim, 2020).

A first meaning, originating from the natural sciences and applied to human society, therefore an ecological approach and which refers to the set of elements and de facto balances that condition the life of a biological group; and a second meaning, which is due to the language of architects and urban planners, refers to the area of contact between the built space and the natural environment (therefore between the artificial and the natural space (Du Toit and Pettorelli, 2019).

Therefore, according to Wackernagel et al. (2018), the environment represents an extremely complex combination of natural elements interwoven and dynamically correlated with each other, to which are added in many places, human constructions that modify the primordial natural landscape in the course of historical evolution. The environment plays the role of a living framework, it is a systemic organism in which everything functions as a system.

According to the Dunlap et al. (2000), dangerous activities to the Environment, it includes:

- abiotic and biotic natural resources, such as air, water, soil, fauna and flora, as well as the interactions between these factors;
- assets that make up the cultural heritage;
- the characteristic aspects of the landscape.

Environmental problems have become especially acute in the last half century, a period in which there was no public information and debate on this topic, the problem being simply denied. Usually people recognize a problem as being related to the environment when it directly affects them, or when it is publicized (for example, a company wants to build a factory or a wastewater treatment center in your neighborhood; an existing factory pollutes the air or water and makes the community sick; someone started dumping garbage on the street or started cutting down trees in large areas or started building on undeveloped land). Understanding the phenomena related to the evolution of human society in terms of environmental protection and management must be part of the elementary education of every citizen (Gonzalez et al., 2021).

The resources necessary for life are decreasing at an alarming rate, both on a planetary scale and on a continental, national, regional and local level, and the direct consequences that the average citizen feels are not long in appearing. Today's environmental degradation affects the safety of tomorrow.

There is no doubt that the protection of nature occupies a very privileged position among the concerns and ideals of contemporary consciousness. The succession of ecological catastrophes due to the oil, chemical or nuclear industries, the worsening pollution affecting the planet's atmosphere have favored a mass awareness of the damage caused by the apparently unstoppable progress of the human being. As a result of these relatively *recent revelations*, a broad consensus is reached on the urgency of saving the *common heritage of humanity*. Thus, some authors, with reference to the statements presented above, maintain "the idea that the Earth is in mortal danger has imposed a new dimension of responsibility, a novel conception of human obligations that goes beyond traditional ethics circumscribed to immediate human relations. Human responsibility must now extend to extra-human things, to encompass the dimension of the entire biosphere, since man has the means to endanger the future life of the planet (Ladkin, 2005).

Knowledge of nature without wisdom has brought ignorance of the risks of its alteration, which is the subject of attention today. The balance between man and the environment has been broken by technological progress, economic development and demographic explosion. In this sense, Lewandowsky (2016) spoke of an environmental holocaust, through what McShane (2014) considered as the effect of disregard for nature, namely the loss of the feeling of piety for nature. As long as the quality of human life depends on its natural environment of existence, on the artificial environment that man has created for himself and on the interrelationships between people, the ecological crisis, the invisible bomb, manifests itself through violence against nature, including man, as well as in man's hedonism at the expense of nature, including at the expense of his fellow man (Taylor and Zimmerman, 2005).

The manifestations of the current ecological crisis consist in the depletion of natural resources and the increase in the rate of extinction of plant and animal species (the disappearance of biocenosis spaces), in pollution that warms the planet and destroys the ozone layer and in overpopulation, its density making man incapable of perceiving the face of his fellow man or due to anonymity, depersonalization of affective relationships and inevitable aggression (Sarbu et al., 2020).

Pollution is considered the essence of the ecological crisis, because what is soulless, nature, is easier to destroy and because maximizing profit has no obstacles but becomes a real obstacle in the reconciliation of man with nature while the destructive drive is inherent in man. The fact that there are no non-polluting energies places the world and development at a serious crossroads.

The desertification of the soil and the destruction of its fertile layer (humus) manifested by the decrease in agricultural productivity, then the death of forests and the decrease in subsoil resources in a civilization based on hydrocarbons (whose reserves last for a maximum of 250 years) are another aspect of the current ecological crisis. The accumulation of waste as the price paid for technological development exceeds the degradation capacity of nature or they are non-biodegradable, which is considered the dark side of consumption, man being the only being who pollutes beyond his biological function.

As it shows today, fierce competition in the field of energy or food resources cannot bring anything good to the Earth. Man has managed to destroy the ecological balance of the planet and today's attempts to return something of what he took are largely unsuccessful due to misunderstandings dictated by economic or political interests (Sevigné-Itoiz et al., 2021).

The end of this struggle for resources as it is now unfolding can be easily guessed: a planet emptied of resources and inhabitants with their eyes on other planets to continue satisfying the hunger for resources. However, it is in our power to change these things so that we can enjoy a green and clean planet Earth for many years to come: we just need to give another dimension and another measure to our needs.

2. Research methodology

The choice of a survey technique or the formulation of questions constitute strategic methodological decisions that must be examined each time depending on what is being attempted, since they constitute positions on the object of the research itself. The questionnaire consists of a series of questions that a person should answer, it is a written form that the respondent completes, ticks or circles his answers

The research instrument used is the questionnaire, which has 25 items. A five-point Likert scale was used, which indicates the agreement or disagreement of the subjects on the characteristics studied. Each characteristic is assigned numerical values from 1 to 5. The items are divided into two dimensions: awareness of the interdependence of human activity-environment and the involvement of civil society in environmental protection. The answers are rated with values between 1 and 5, where 1 means total disagreement and 5 total agreement. The time available for completing the test was a maximum of 15 minutes.

The categorical scale is made up of a series of verbal categories that are presented to the person who evaluates to indicate the category that best corresponds to the behavior, knowledge or attitudes..

Among the specific objectives of the research are the following: cultivating interest in environmental knowledge and protecting it; identifying the impact of pollutants on the health of living organisms; Developing decision-making capacities in solving problems regarding environmental pollution and waste management; statistical analysis of data regarding the implications of pollutants on population health; compliance with the standards imposed by the EU regarding the means of protecting the environment; preserving and conserving the environment that surrounds us in order to ensure local ecological balance. In close connection with the research objectives, the following dependent or independent variables were taken into account, namely the awareness of the interdependence of human activity-environment; the involvement of civil society in environmental protection.

The main aim of this research is to analyze and assess the fundamentals, challenges and responsibilities associated with environmental protection, with a focus on integrating ethical principles into environmental policies and practices, in order to contribute to the development of a sustainable and responsible society.

This paper is based on a number of primary and secondary objectives, the most important of which are to identify the main theoretical foundations of environmental protection, with a focus on the relevant ethical

and normative frameworks, to analyze the major challenges affecting the effective implementation of environmental protection policies, and to highlight the moral and institutional responsibilities of social actors in protecting the environment, from individuals to authorities and corporations.

This article is based on two major hypotheses, namely:

H1: Explicit integration of ethical principles into environmental policies leads to greater efficiency and social acceptance of these policies.

H2: The moral responsibility of individuals and institutions is essential for the success of sustainable environmental strategies.

3. Results and discussion

The high favorable results can also be explained by the fact that the university environment offers a greater openness to everyday problems. Access to international publications offers the chance for broader and more consistent information. Although the sample surveyed does not attend courses at a faculty with an environmental profile, in terms of the degree of information, awareness of the interdependence of human activity-environment they obtained an average of over 4 on a scale from 1 to 5. Mass media also has a modeling role through the cases and reports presented.

Regarding the awareness of the interdependence of human activity-environment according to gender, no significant difference was found between female and male respondents. We can state that neither gender nor the faculty attended influences the awareness of the interdependence of human activity-environment in the applied test.

Regarding involvement according to gender, a greater involvement was found on the part of female respondents, compared to male respondents. This situation may be due to the fact that women have a greater inclination towards everyday problems and are generally the ones who do the shopping, which gives them the opportunity to choose an eco-friendly product over another. They have a more strongly developed sensitive side than men.

One reason why the hypothesis is rejected is that the choice of the compared faculties had to be made taking into account the subjects studied. Thus, a faculty could be chosen where subjects related to environmental protection are studied, such as the Faculty of Geography and Geology or the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Environmental Protection. The difference in profile between the chosen faculties would have led to a significant difference in terms of involvement in environmental protection. Therefore, this close result is also due to the fact that the level of information among students is the same, as they do not have the chance or opportunity, following these specializations, to participate in seminars or volunteering activities that would make them discover the importance of the environment. The behavior of students in the face of such environmental situations is the result of the conditions in which we live and the mentalities we face in everyday life and that shape us.

On the other hand, regarding the level of involvement, it is lower due to the fact that no action has been taken among students to emphasize the magnitude of the impact of human activities on the environment. In a world in full expansion and development, the anthropization of the natural environment is constantly increasing: everything becomes arranged to the detriment of the natural, we enter with “boots” into the bosom of nature without taking into account the natural balance of the earth.

Nature offers us boundless resources, expecting from us that everything proceeds within certain limits so as not to lead to the disappearance of the natural landscape. The most visible effect of the negative influence of man is reflected in the unsightly appearance as a result of the storage of waste in undeveloped places, namely anywhere around us, not just in the trash cans. Although it is one of the most visible effects, there are more important effects in terms of the impact on our health.

Here we can mention human activities that lead to pollution of the three environments of life development: atmosphere, soil and water. The atmosphere is polluted primarily due to factories that do not take into account a minimum of ethical rules and release a whole series of noxious substances. Here is added the effect of road traffic that has been increasingly dense in recent years.

Even though most respondents are aware of the fact that the state of the environment directly influences the activity and health of human society, they have a neutral attitude when it comes to doing something actually.

The hypothesis that gender and the faculty attended influence the dependent variable awareness of the interdependence of human activity-environment is rejected. There were no insignificant differences

between female and male respondents, so we can conclude that gender does not influence this dependent variable.

Regarding the faculty attended, we can state that the respondents surveyed from FEAA had the same average value, following the applied test, as those from Philosophy. The hypothesis that gender and the faculty attended influence the involvement of civil society in environmental protection was partially accepted.

Significant differences appear between the gender of the participants in the sense that female participants consider the involvement of civil society to be significantly more necessary compared to male participants. There are no significant differences between the participants from FEAA and those from Philosophy on the involvement of civil society in environmental protection, so that the faculty does not influence this dependent variable.

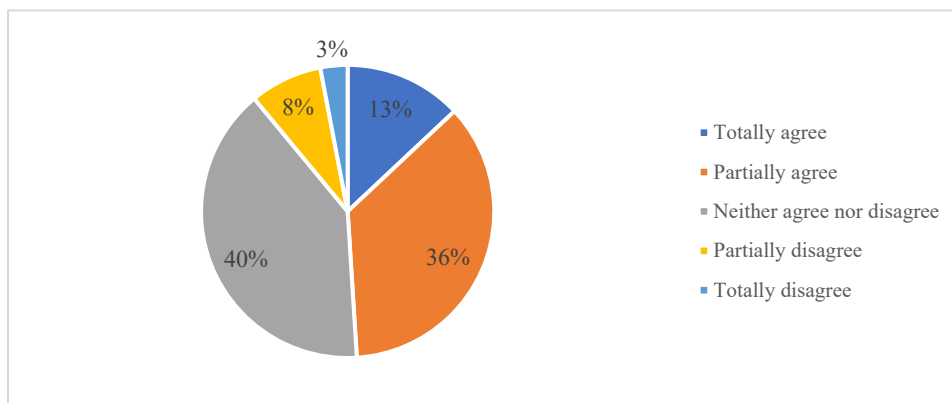


Figure no. 1. Respondents' tendency towards purchasing eco products

Conclusions

Environmental ethics takes into account the fact that an individual has a series of moral obligations that go up to moral obligations towards all the ecosystems of the planet and towards the Earth itself. We can say that man is part of nature, and like any living being, he is born, feeds, grows, multiplies and dies. For food, clothing and housing he uses many products from nature.

Thus, the environment represents an extremely complex combination of interwoven and dynamically correlated natural elements, to which are added in many places, human constructions that modify the primordial natural landscape during historical evolution. The environment plays the role of a framework for life, it is a systemic organism in which everything functions as a system.

Therefore, the causes that led to the manifestation of the current ecological crisis consist in the depletion of natural resources and the increase in the rate of disappearance of plant and animal species (the disappearance of biocenosis spaces), in the pollution that warms the planet and destroys the ozone layer and in overpopulation, its density making man incapable of perceiving the face of his fellow man due to anonymity, depersonalization of affective relationships and inevitable aggressiveness.

Maintaining ecological balance depends on the structure of the economy, the rates of production growth, the volume of productive capital, the degree of environmental pollution, the pace of technical progress, and the expansion of the eco-industry market, which is why it is imperative to correlate economic policies with ethical and environmental protection policies.

In conclusion, to protect nature we must take into account certain specific environmental objectives: cultivating interest in learning about the environment and protecting it; identifying the impact of pollutants on the health of living organisms; developing decision-making skills in solving problems regarding environmental pollution and waste management; statistical analysis of data regarding the implications of pollutants on public health; compliance with the standards imposed by the EU regarding the means of protecting the environment; preserving and conserving the environment that surrounds us in order to ensure local ecological balance; raising awareness of nature and increasing responsibility for environmental problems by informing public opinion; forming an ecological ethic (attitudes, principles, beliefs); forming a disapproving attitude towards those who violate environmental norms and laws; raising awareness of the need to save water, electricity, wood, etc. (all natural resources).

Today's environmental degradation affects tomorrow's safety. There is no doubt that nature protection occupies a very privileged position among the concerns and ideals of contemporary consciousness, therefore we should not treat this problem with indifference but get involved in solving it.

Environmental protection is an essential moral responsibility in the context of the current environmental crises. Environmental ethics invites us to rethink our relationship with nature, promoting respect and care for ecosystems as prerequisites for sustainability. Addressing the complex challenges of environmental protection requires the integration of ethical principles into public policy, education and institutional practices.

Future research should explore concrete ways of applying these principles in various fields (energy, agriculture, industry) and analyze the cultural and social impact of proposed ethical changes. It is also essential to strengthen cooperation between the actors involved - citizens, governments and the private sector- in order to turn moral commitment into effective and sustainable action.

In this way, a sound ethical approach can become the engine of responsible governance capable of ensuring long-term environmental protection.

The practical part aimed at the extent to which two factors, the respondent's gender and the faculty attended, influenced the awareness of the interdependence of human activity-environment and the involvement of civil society in environmental protection.

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