

Maslow and the Environment: Integrating the Social Representation and the Theory of Needs

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Abstract: In his Theory of Needs, Maslow argues that in the self-actualization stage the individual would have more developed B- values, which would involve, among other characteristics, the tendency to be mostly dedicated to causes of collective interest to the detriment of individual interests. It would also be in the self-actualization stage that the environment would have an intrinsic value, an important aspect if we consider the need for developing solutions to socio-environmental problems. Would the Social Representation of the environment have a relationship with the different stages of needs proposed by Maslow in his theory? Could the self-actualization stage reveal an individual with a globalizing representation of the environment? To answer these questions, an study was conducted with 134 participants adapting and using the Environmental Motivation Profile Test instrument and the results showed a significant correlation between the stage of self-actualization and a globalizing representation of the Environment.

Keywords: Environment; Maslow; Social Representation and Motivations.

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Introduction

Maslow's theory of needs (MASLOW, 1970), also known as the theory of motivation, defines five stages of basic human needs/motivations that are part of the constitution of all human beings. These stages direct and identify the motivations of human beings, based on what is desired and accomplished through their needs. Each stage of need frames some type of behavioral specificity or propensity (SAMPALIO, 2009): Physiological needs – correspond to basic and intrinsic elements of the survival instinct, such as hunger, thirst, rest, and reproduction; Safety needs – represent stability, understanding, and control over the environment in which one is inserted, as in the case of avoiding unexpected threats or feeling in a comfortable place; Social/association needs – express sharing of affection and intimacy between individuals and the idea of relationships; Esteem needs – demonstrate the image that the individual has of himself, considering his desires and internal motivations, but together with the search for recognition or attention; Self-actualization needs – include personal development, ambitions, achievements, along with the desire to organize, analyze and seek relationships and meanings. In the text that follows, whenever needs and motivations are mentioned they refer to those defined by Maslow (1970), unless otherwise stated.

It should be noted that these stages of needs are fundamental in the healthy development of a child and, therefore, it is imperative that they are met during this period to ensure the full development and to facilitate the integration of the stages of self-actualization in adult life (VERÍSSIMO, 2017). However, although the needs and the resulting motivations last throughout an individual's life, in adult life this process becomes more complex and an infinite range of combinations of needs and motivations can occur, with an alternating predominance of the different stages of needs (MASLOW, 1970).

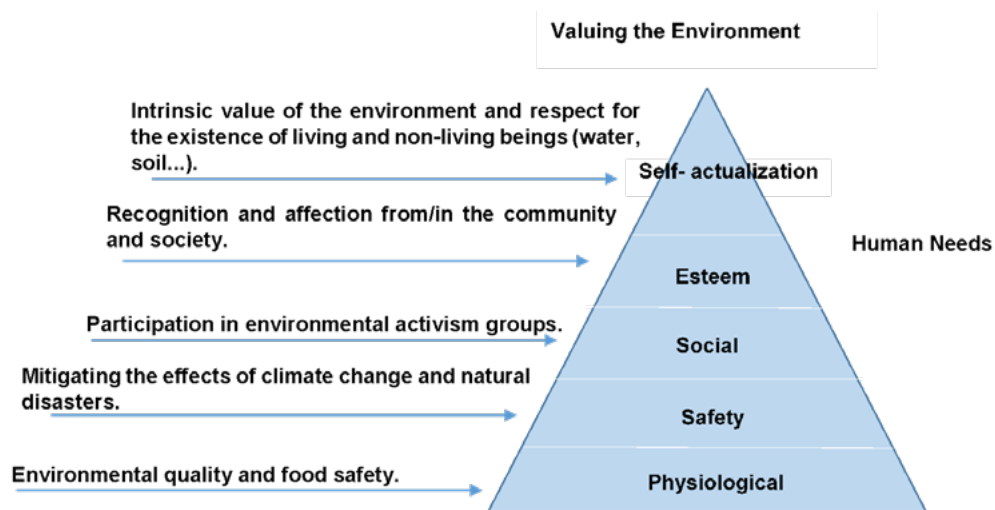
Also, to be taken into account is that the variability of motivations and needs is associated with the issue of desires, which are of important significance in everyday life, usually involving future prospecting, whose ambition can manifest itself consciously or unconsciously, reflecting a high motivational variability (MASLOW, 1970). Culture is also a great influencer of desires and interests, guiding their achievement, based on the priorities and models that are developed, causing a tendency or search for some specific standards, which can result in similarities between individuals who are subjected to the same context (MASLOW, 1970).

For Vernalha (2021), these reflections on human needs and motivations can be used to understand our relationship with the environment. The author outlined what would be an ideal interrelationship between human beings and the environment, considering human needs from the Theory of Needs/Motivations for an in-depth reflection of the relationship between human motivations and the environment (Figure 1).

The socio-environmental issue as an intrinsic value was associated with the need for self-actualization because at this stage the individual is considered more likely to engage in causes of collective interest in a more continuous way and independent of external factors. According to Maslow (1970), the B-values (of Being) appear more frequently and intensely at this stage: cosmoethics, valuing truth and what is right over personal

advantage, goodness, beauty, integrity, justice, simplicity, uniqueness, joy, among others. As a result, individuals may be more inclined to compromise on community actions, as well as be informed about their positions and motivations for their decisions and behavior. In this way, the notion of happiness and well-being of the human being is also brought closer to a more altruistic and less utilitarian or consumerist perspective. It is also at this stage that the individual can better manage the non-fulfillment of some needs, without great emotional impacts. This greater predisposition towards the collective at the expense of individual needs is a fundamental issue in solving the socio-environmental problem.

Figure 1 – Stages of valuing the environment based on human Needs



Font: Vernalha (2021), adapted.

However, as highlighted in Figure 1, this does not mean that environmental preservation/conservation impulses cannot appear in other stages of need, arising, for example, in the need for esteem or even in the social stage (this could explain the adherence of individuals, particularly young people, to environmental activism). Although the ideal is that the socio-environmental issue has an intrinsic value, moving the preservationist/conservationist trend to other stages can also be the first step towards a more effective awareness of the socio-environmental impacts resulting from our development model.

In this case, it is understood that the study of human motivations and needs reveals a theoretical field of great exploratory potential, whose application in socio-environmental studies may allow the development of new knowledge about the relationship between human beings and the environment, from their motivations to their actual behavior. Such theoretical foundation, when related to the social representations of the environment, as previously mentioned, can mean a potential theoretical reference to investigate conflicts between discourse and practice concerning the environment and engagement in the resolution of socio-environmental problems, in order to offer theoretical support

for the development of more effective environmental education projects (BRITO and DIAS, 2011).

The aim of this study was to assess whether there is a relationship between the stage of self-actualization and Social Representations of the Environment, using the adapted instrument “Environmental Motivation Profile Test (EMPT)”. In order to achieve this aim, the following research questions were formulated: would the Social Representation of the environment be related to the different stages of needs proposed by Maslow in his theory? Could the self-actualization stage reveal an individual with a globalizing representation of the environment, as suggested by Reigota (2007)? The hypothesis adopted in the present work is that a stronger and more lasting bond between the human being and the environment arises when the individual reaches the stage of self-actualization.

More broadly, Moscovici (2009) defines social representation as a succession of everyday knowledge and practices, which are the result of direct and indirect influences from individual and collective external factors, which converge towards a common understanding, but which are subject to contradictions or differences, due to the personal and local individualities of each situation. Therefore, if we think about the meaning attributed to the environment, for example, we can see that as well as presenting an interpretation that is also subjective, because it is formed by the individual based on the way they perceive and represent the environment throughout their own learning trajectory, there is also a common sense about the issue in the individual’s group of relationships. In the case of socio-environmental studies, for example, it is possible to discover which social representations stand out, indicating different levels and patterns of the relationship between a group and the environment (REIGOTA, 2007). These factors, associated with the study of needs and motivations, can favor the development of more effective Environmental Education projects.

The results obtained in the present study can also contribute to future studies on attitudes, behavior, and action for the environment, adding to the production of existing knowledge on the subject (PATO and TAMAYO, 2006; POWELL et al., 2011; DIJKSTRA and GOEDHART, 2012; ERDOGAN et al., 2012; ANDERSON et al., 2013; BEERY, 2013; SCHNELLER et al., 2015; UGULU, 2015; BIASUTTI and FRATE, 2016; LALOT et al., 2019; OLSSON et al., 2019; SZCZYTKO et al., 2019; VARELA-LOSADA et al., 2019; SASS et al., 2021).

Methods

The present research had an exploratory empirical character, with a qualitative and quantitative basis (CRESWELL, 2010). The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee from Federal University of São Paulo, as established by CAAE - 16643219.4.0000.5505, opinion - 3.557.711 and project CEP - 0777/2019.

The sample size was defined according to the Hill and Hill (2012) concept, which uses the “Rules of Thumb” for simple analyses, that is, the researcher tests the null hypothesis with a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) and applies the Student’s t-test, the

simple analysis of variance and the parametric correlation coefficient (Pearson type) to the results obtained. The sampling method adopted was non-probabilistic, which is commonly used in exploratory research.

From the instrument for data collection

The study was carried out through a structured online questionnaire with 66 open and closed questions, named Environmental Motivation Profile Test (EMPT) (Supplementary material).

The construction of the methodological instrument, also known as the environmental motivogram, included the following stages: literature review, formulation of the problem, definition of objectives, identification of variables and indicators, evaluation by judges, definition of the target audience (adults and young people), pre-test and application.

For the evaluation by judges, two different profiles of professionals were invited, a psychologist and a historian of science, ensuring significant agreement from both on the validation of the instrument used.

The pre-test was carried out with 20 individuals selected at random from among undergraduate environmental science students. Based on the considerations pointed out, the number of questions was reduced and the structure of the questionnaire was reorganized, making it easier to align the instrument with the “Survio” online research platform (Available at <http://www.survio.com>).

It was only after the corrections indicated by the pre-test that widespread dissemination began via the main social networks and email for the purposes of data collection. It was filled in remotely by the participants.

The construction of the EMPT was based on the structure of the Motivation Profile Test from Maslow’s theory of needs applied in the area of people management (in this work called the original Motivation Profile Test) (HESKETH and COSTA, 1980; BRUNO, 1997; ANDRADE, 2006; MENDES et al., 2013). This instrument aims to recognize the stages of motivations and needs of the participants, making it possible to identify stimuli that move them along their possibilities, such as the evaluation of their actions (PEREIRA, 2005).

For the EMPT, the general structure of the original Motivation Profile Test was maintained. It was composed by 30 questions with two classifiable statements per question, to which scores (zero, one, two, or three) must be assigned, so that the sum of the scores is always three, that is, the valid combinations of scores for the statements could be 0 and 3, 1 and 2, 2 and 1 or 3 and 0 (SANTOS and CRUZ, 2019). In the instrument, the investigated needs are represented by the following letters: V=Physiological needs; W=Safety needs; X=Social needs; Y=Estimate needs; Z = Self-actualization needs.

In addition, the EMPT was devised to expand the scope of the original instrument beyond a diagnosis of the predominant needs only, also to allow for the association of this diagnosis with social representations of the environment by the individuals, as well

as with their possible consumption habits as they can help to reveal or confirm a possible predominant stage of motivation, particularly that of self-actualization since it is at this stage that an intrinsic appreciation of the environment would have developed. According to Maslow (1970), in adulthood the question of needs/motivations becomes more complex, making it difficult to distinguish between desires (motivational states more influenced by emotions and culture) and needs. Consumption habits thus become an interesting indicator because they help us to identify motivational states (desire) that can impact or mask the real stages of needs and motivation. This expansion was an attempt to overcome the criticisms made to the original Motivation Profile Test regarding consistency of the results, since it is an attitude predictor based only on motivations (HESKETH and COSTA, 1980).

The final instrument was divided into four complementary parts, according to the following structure: **Block 1** – Profile of the participants; **Block 2** – Social representation of the environment; **Block 3** – Needs and motivations; **Block 4** - Consumption habits and behavior. The questions were designed and classified into propositions that aimed to assess possible decisions in conflicting situations regarding pro-environment actions in relation to needs, using feelings of motivation/demotivation, feelings of guilt or the emotion of anger. The repetition of some questions in different dichotomous contexts also aimed to make it difficult for the individual to try to answer what they believe is “expected” of them, a common practice in tests of this type.

The coherence of the EMPT was tested using Cronbach’s alpha index, using the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software, which is a widely used statistical tool in research involving the development of tests and their applicability. According to Almeida, Santos and Costa (2010), this index makes it possible to measure the reliability and consistency of what has been assessed, such as the extent to which the items in the instrument are related.

This type of data represents the internal consistency of the questionnaire and is associated with the response pattern of the sample group, with changes depending on the sample and scale. Its classification ranges from 0 to 1|. The higher the correlations between the items, the greater their homogeneity and, consequently, their consistency in what is being measured and investigated (ALMEIDA; SANTOS and COSTA, 2010; MAROCO and GARCIA-MARQUES, 2006).

By relating the questions to professional aspects, the EMPT was focused on young people and adults who are about to start their careers or already have a job position, as 21st-century society demands professionals who also reflect on their professional choices from a socio-environmental perspective.

Result analysis

Content analysis of qualitative data was inspired by Bardin (1994), following the pre-analysis, material exploration, treatment of results, categorization, and interpretation steps.

Social representations of the environment were analyzed by the Free Evocation

of Words test, a method widely used in Social Psychology for its spontaneous character (SÁ, 1996). The words evoked by the proposed inducing term (environment) were analyzed through the following steps: dictionary definition; analysis of words with similar meanings, quantification, and categorization based on Reigota categories (naturalistic, anthropocentric, and globalizing) (REIGOTA, 2007). In the naturalistic category, predominant definitions are related to natural aspects, such as fauna, flora, and ecosystem, and are distant from human beings. In the anthropocentric category, definitions related to a utilitarian conception, nature as a resource, predominate. In the globalizing category, the human being is an integral part of the environment, with no predominant relationship, and there is an understanding that the environment goes beyond natural aspects, also involving other factors, such as political, economic, and cultural, among others.

To minimize the possible change in the distribution of data from evoked words, the phrase that the participants created with the words evoked were adopted as a criterion to determine the category of the social representation of the environment, which allowed the apprehension of the meaning that was being assigned to each quoted word. This phrase was adopted for the classification of social representations of the environment, according to Reigota (2007).

In the text that follows, when categories of social representation are mentioned they refer to those described by Reigota (2007).

For quantitative data, in addition to descriptive statistical analyses, Pearson's chi-square test, or chi-square independence test, was also adopted to verify whether there is an association between the stages of motivation/needs and the categories of social representation. Values lower than the established significance level of 0.05 were considered for the rejection of the null hypothesis (P-Value).

Finally, the present work focused specifically on the analysis of questions 01 to 14 of Block 1; questions 16, 17, and 18 of Block 2, all of Block 3, and questions 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 63 and 64 of Block 4 (Supplementary Material). This choice was made because they are questions directly related to the research questions proposed in this work.

Results

The EMPT was applied between 19 August and 30 November 2020 to 134 individuals. A Cronbach's alpha index value above 0.7 (0.704) was obtained, confirming the coherence of the Motivation Profile Test (HAIR JR et al., 2009). Among social science investigations or those with strong human involvement, an alpha of 0.6 is also considered satisfactory (MAROCO and GARCIA-MARQUES, 2006).

Block 1 - Sociodemographic profile

Sociodemographic profile data (Table 1) revealed that the interviewees were mainly young adults up to 32 years old. Their main income sources were family members or third parties, in families with income above 2 minimum wages, corresponding to R\$ 2,424.00 (approximately US\$ 470).

Table 1 – Education information (primary and higher) and sociodemographic data (n = 134)

Gender					
Female			Male		
54%			46%		
Age					
18-22	23-27	28-32	33-42	43-52	53-67
14%	51%	12%	6%	6%	11%
Primary Education					
Fully in public school		Fully in private school		Public and private school	
27%		44%		29%	
Was there contact with the environmental theme/enrionmental education, during this period?					
Yes			No		
55%			54%		
Did it spark your interest in the subject?					
Yes			No		
48%			52%		
Higher education					
Higher (incomplete)		Higher (complete)		Graduation course	
39%		29%		32%	
Field of knowledge					
Engineering	Exact, Agricul- tural and Earth Sciences	Health Sciences	Biological Sciences	Social Sciences, Humanities, Linguistics, Let- ters and Arts	Interdiscipli- nary*
10%	12%	12%	14%	26%	26%
Income source					
Family or third-party		Own income (work)		Own income (scholarship)	
71%		21%		8%	
Family income (in minimum wages)					
(1 or less)	(1-2)	(2-3)	(3-4)	(4-5)	(5 or more)
9%	11%	20%	15%	14%	31%
Have you ever considered working in the environmental area?					
Yes			No		
75%			25%		
Do you feel responsible for the environment?					
Yes			No		
95%			5%		

*(Mainly Environmental Sciences).

Font: authors, 2024.

Block 2 - Social representation

Among the 134 interviewees, 656 evocations were obtained, with predominance of anthropocentric representations (48%), followed by naturalistic (33%) and globalizing (19%) ones. Below are some examples of sentences from participants and the corresponding categorization of the social representations attributed to them.

Anthropocentric view: It is necessary to think of the environment as an integrated system, so the preservation and sustainable management of natural resources are essential, as they are the fundamental foundation for the maintenance of life (JB - 22 years old).

Naturalistic view - The lives of animals depend on the preservation of forests, woods, and water (CAVL - 41 years old).

Globalizing view - I think we have reached a moment when humanity as a whole needs to intensify its efforts more than ever when it comes to Education so that it can realize how it is intrinsically connected to the environment that surrounds us, thinking not only in the most obvious aspects such as those related to health, but also in everything we can learn from nature, exercising our virtues such as love, and working through cooperation (SM - 22 years old).

The interviewees' description of their contact with environmental education at school revealed that they had access to a fragmented education, as they only interacted with the theme as part of curricular disciplines, such as geography, biology, sociology, religion, science, arts, chemistry, and physics, or through sporadic activities. Finally, it was also evident that many participants did not have access to this type of teaching and information, or that, at the very least, it was not a significant event in their experiences.

Participants were also asked if they would work in a company with a negative environmental history, justifying the answer, regardless of answering 'yes' or 'no'. Three response categories were extracted from the content analysis (Table 2), but most of the responses (56%) were associated with the category "No, due to incompatibility of ideas, values, and disagreement with the company's activities concerning the environment".

Table 2 – Answer categories on the possibility of working in a company with a negative environmental history

Category/Example		Answer
1	Category	Yes, but considering promoting improvements and acting in more conscious ways
	Example	"I would develop courses or lectures to alert, encourage the change of irresponsible practices. It is an opportunity for change." (CAS - 51 years old) 25
2	Category	Yes, for reasons of needs (financial or family), employability, or for not being aware of the environmental history of the company
	Example	"Depending on my financial needs and my family." (IPF – 24 years) 34
3	Category	No, due to incompatibility of ideas, values, and for disagreeing of the company's activities concerning the environment
	Example	"If the company doesn't do its part for the environment and makes an impact, I wouldn't work because it doesn't act according to the values I believe in. I even left my last job because the company had an impact and didn't try to fix what it was doing". (KDLL – 28 years old) 75

Source: authors.

Block 3 - Needs and motivations

Major and minor predominant categories to each individual answer to the EMPT were identified (Table 3). Chi-Square statistics showed that there was an association between the predominant needs and the groups of social representations. The categories with the highest Adjusted Residuals ($|RA| > 5$) were predominant for each individual EMPT response (Table 3). At the time the test was administered, safety needs prevailed for the majority of participants (43% in the group of predominant categories), to the detriment, for example, of esteem needs (69% in the group of non-predominant categories). These data indicate a probable desire for stability, structure, organization, physical security, financial security, a suitable environment, and other security parameters.

The joint analysis of the categories of social representation and of Maslow's needs showed that individuals with globalizing representation were the ones with a greater commitment to the needs of self-actualization (44%), in which the environment has an intrinsic value. On the other hand, participants who were classified with a natural-

istic and anthropocentric representation maintained their priorities mainly associated with physiological and safety needs. This can be reflected in different choices regarding socio-environmental responsibility. As an example, most participants showing a globalizing representation of the environment (60%, n = 25), answered they would not work in a company that causes major environmental impacts (60%), against 49% of those who presented naturalistic and anthropocentric representations (n = 109).

Table 3 – Predominant major and minor needs and social representations (n = 134)

Social Representation / Group	Needs	Major predominant (%)	Minor predominant (%)
Sample Group	V	28%	0%
	W	43%	1%
	X	2%	15%
	Y	3%	69%
	Z	24%	15%
Anthropocentric	V	29%	0%
	W	46%	2%
	X	5%	14%
	Y	3%	67%
	Z	17%	17%
Globalizing	V	24%	0%
	W	28%	0%
	X	0%	8%
	Y	4%	84%
	Z	44%	8%
Naturalistic	V	30%	0%
	W	46%	0%
	X	0%	20%
	Y	2%	63%
	Z	22%	17%

Caption: physiological needs (V), safety needs (W), association needs (X), esteem needs (Y), and self-actualization needs (Z). Source: authors.

Considering that the core of the representation is relatively stable (ABRIC, 2001), its analysis could help assess whether the participant’s motivation is based on an intrinsic need, as advocated by Maslow (1970) and whether motivations would be an important component in the constitution of social representations, which would highlight the importance of also studying the interrelationship between needs/motivations and social

representation. The hypothesis “motivations/needs are influenced by the social representation of the environment that the participant shares with the group” was then tested by Person’s chi-square analysis of the combined data frequencies of needs and social representations (Table 4) and corroborated by a chi-square value of 6.876 with two degrees of freedom and a P-Value equal to 0.032. Thus, there is evidence of an association between the representations of the environment and the human motivations and needs and that, according to the observed frequencies, individuals with globalizing representations tend to have elements more associated with the stage of self-actualization motivations/needs (FEIJOO, 2010).

Table 4 – Frequency set of needs and social representations combined data

	Anthropocentric view	Globalizing view	Naturalistic view
Needs: V, W, X, Y	82,5%	56%	76,8%
Need: Z	17,5%	44%	23,2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: authors.

Block 4 - Consumption habits and behavior

The analysis of questions about the priorities and factors influencing purchase decision and acquisition of services, based on elements of the product or the company, showed that price is the highest priority, followed by the company’s mission, vision, and values. In contrast, the company’s socio-environmental commitment was among the elements with the least influence on the purchase decision of the participants.

As feelings or emotions are strongly correlated to motivational states and to the concept of desire, a question was devised to assess the influence of the different classifications of the category (feeling) on the consumption decision and their attributed level of importance. Happiness (35%) and sadness (33%) represented the most significant drivers for the consumption decision of the participants, followed by fear/concern in the second place (22%), and then anxiety (19%), anger (19%) and desire (16%).

In order to bring socio-environmental research closer to the consumption habit, participants were presented with a hypothetical situation. When asked whether they would buy a product with proven efficacy and competitive price, even if they were aware of the high impact and damage that this product would cause to the environment, 56% of participants answered that they would rarely buy, 30% would buy occasionally, 11% would never buy (11%) and 3% answered they would always buy the product. These answers evidenced that part of the participants, in a situation where the product meets their needs, will probably tend to purchase the product despite the environment, especially when related to their consumption habits.

Answers to this question were also related to the Block 3 results of the EMPT, to evaluate its influence on a decision-making process. This question was developed to statistically verify whether individuals show coherence between discourse and practice, and to evaluate the initial assumption of this research. In this sense, it was observed that motivations/needs do influence the purchase decision, as corroborated by a chi-square value of 15,015, with 4 degrees of freedom, and 95% confidence.

Participants were also surveyed about specific types of purchases and their motivations. The first question was about purchasing a personal vehicle, resulting in 70% of individuals who already owned or were interested purchasing one and 30% of participants who were not interested in purchasing their vehicle. When asked to classify the elements considered as motivators that could impact their decision and the level of importance attributed to them, the group of participants was divided between price (34%) and safety (31%) as the priority criteria for purchasing a vehicle. The data in the second and third positions show that, while price and safety are still a priority, comfort has grown in importance and completes the set of three characteristics that most influence the research participants when buying a vehicle. The classification of these three motivators were significantly variable when compared to the socio-environmental responsibility element, which was stable and constantly classified in fourth place, demonstrating a recurrent organization in which the environmental aspect occupies only the lowest levels of importance. The social status category in this question, in contrast to previous situations, emerged with relative importance in other positions, although it was still more frequently placed as the least relevant of all the characteristics.

Participants were also asked if they would work in a company with a negative environmental history, resulting in 56% of negative answers and 44% of positive answers, suggesting that the adoption of an effective behavior represents greater passivity of reflection than the mechanical action of selecting a product, as previously observed when questioned about buying products despite the damage they may cause to the environment.

Finally, the identification of participants' considerations regarding the stages and needs represented in Maslow's theory of motivations showed that food, rest, and health needs were considered very important (90%), as well as safety needs (74%) and the need for self-knowledge and personal development (70%). The needs for social relationships and coexistence were considered as important (56%) or very important (31%), while the needs for self-esteem and social status were considered as important (58%) or not very important (30%).

Discussion

Studies have shown that, in general, a very ecological, utilitarian, and anthropocentric social representation of the environment predominates in Brazilian society (FARIAS et al., 2017; COLAGRANDE et al., 2021). This same trend was also observed in the present study, in which the social representations of the environment as classified by Reigota (2007) were predominantly anthropocentric and naturalistic (81%).

These are the models developed throughout the childhood and school years of most Brazilians, in which little is discussed about a balanced relationship between the environment and the human being, as well as little critical thinking is developed (BUSATO et al., 2012; FARIAS et al., 2017; MACHADO and TERÁN, 2018). In the present study, 45% of the participants answered that Environmental Education was not a curricular component in basic education and, among those who had it, they mostly reported only behavioral and merely informative activities, which corroborates what has been found in other studies (SOUZA and PEREIRA, 2011; MAGALHÃES and TOMANIK, 2013, RUA et al., 2015; FARIAS et al., 2017; COLAGRANDE et al., 2021).

The initial results obtained in the present study also were revealing concerning the question of the impact that Maslow's needs/motivations can have on the constitution and/or consolidation of a social representation of the environment and, consequently, on attitudes, actions, and behaviors involving our relationship with environmental issues. It is noteworthy that social representations are the result of a subjective experience (hence the importance of perception), but they are also conditioned, which means to say that they depend on the social insertion of the individuals who produce and share them (MOSCOVICI, 2009).

Within this perspective, in general, 95% of the participants declared that they felt responsible for the environment, but with a predominance of anthropocentric and naturalistic social representations. In this sense, Amérigo et al. (2005) and Hansla et al. (2008), authors who are also dedicated to the study of environmental motivations, argue that there are three possible categories to classify these motivations: 1) selfish approach - in which individuals problematize the socio-environmental issue from the consequences of the problems and the environmental impact for oneself, that is, what would bring, for example, harm to one's health or loss of what is meant by quality of life; 2) socio-altruistic approach - would be those individuals who would take into account the consequences of the environmental impact on the collective, that is, for human beings in general and 3) biospheric approach - highlighting the consequences of the environmental impact on fauna, flora, and ecosystems. For Amérigo et al. (2005), it is still possible to relate the selfish approach and the socio-altruistic approach to an anthropocentric representation of the environment, which is similar to the results obtained in the present work.

Regarding the analysis of needs/motivations, now again from the perspective of Maslow (1970), based on the results obtained, a predominance was found that among the participants the most emerging need/motivation was safety, followed by the physiological need, which may indicate that these would even predominate even when socio-environmental responsibility had to be taken into account. This is evident when the results show that 44% of the participants would work in a company with a negative environmental history or would buy a product (although some said that rarely – 56%) that has a high environmental impact but with proven effectiveness and a competitive price, which would bring the results obtained closer to the selfish approach, as discussed by Amérigo et al. (2005).

Therefore, what the results seem to show is that, depending on the prevailing needs/

motivations at the time, which also have a relationship with the social representation of the environment shared by the group, these can lead the individual or the group to minimize their socio-environmental responsibility, being able to resort to mechanisms of moral disengagement to justify their own choices, as discussed by Bandura (2007), particularly if they are associated with naturalistic or anthropocentric social representations. This can lead attitudes, actions, and behaviors that are inconsistent with the the pro-environmental discourse when basic human needs are not met.

However, for those whose predominant social representation was the globalizing representation, the stage of needs/motivations that stood out was that of self-actualization, in which the environment has intrinsic value, as proposed by the EMPT, as well as by the organization made by Vernalha (2021) presented in Figure 1. This may have been reflected in the results presented on socio-environmental responsibility. As an example, 60% of the participants with a predominance of a globalizing representation responded that they would not work in a company that causes major environmental impacts. Among those who presented naturalistic and anthropocentric representations, 49% would not work in a company with these characteristics.

In general, the results obtained suggest that individuals with an anthropocentric and naturalistic representation tend to be more concerned with their physiological, safety, social and esteem needs, while those with a global representation tend to also consider elements present in the need for self-actualization, such as the greater probability of taking into account the common good than just the individual.

The needs/motivations of the physiological, safety, social, and esteem stages would be more susceptible to motivating states arising from emotions or feelings. It is noteworthy that feelings of happiness and sadness have been pointed out as significant drivers of motivation for consumption, and studies and articles on the influences of emotions and feelings on purchasing and consumption behavior have received greater prominence, particularly among the ramifications of marketing and advertising (CARVALHO, 2010).

In this sense, it starts from the understanding that individuals are constantly subject to some type of emotion or feeling, such as sadness, happiness, anger, desire, anxiety, and/or others, which, in turn, can affect both the process cognitive and social behavior, including consumption (CARVALHO, 2010). The act of shopping is an aggregated experience of meaning, according to Portilho (2005), who precisely discusses the dilemmas between socio-environmental responsibility and the impact of individual and collective actions.

In the present study, feelings of happiness, sadness, and anxiety were important constructs regarding motivating states related to consumption. And considering the individual-society interrelationship in the contemporary scenario, in which social status and happiness are associated with consumption (PORTILHO, 2005), the influence of the emotional dimension is undeniable. In particular, according to Carvalho (2010), consumer culture has merged with an incisive association between the acquisition of goods and human personal fulfillment, a kind of distorted "self-actualization" for some individuals, which, according to Maslow's perspective, (1970), would be associated with the stages of social need/motivation and esteem.

Given this and other speculations, we sought to investigate and analyze consumption habits, directly punctuating some environmental issues, such as a purchase that would be financially satisfactory for the participant, but which, in contrast, would generate a lot of impact on the environment. This situation divided the results between those who would rarely buy (majority) and those who would occasionally buy, demonstrating that, although very few stated that they would always buy, regardless of this impact, the majority showed that, when weighing between their needs and the act of socio-environmental responsibility, they would eventually tend to value their own needs more, since they would assess their circumstances, choosing rarely or occasionally.

This question was even statistically tested with the Pearson's chi-square test, weighing between needs/motivations and their impact on consumption habits, with a high degree of significance. The results were consistent with those for the questions about car and cell phone acquisition, in which the participants' choices emphasized mainly the financial aspect and physical safety, but also social status when it came to the cell phone.

It is necessary for the individual be stimulated to think over how this relates to their socio-environmental responsibility, from which it is possible to problematize stages of needs/motivations and possible themes to be considered in environmental education projects. This can promote the moral engagement by the groups or individuals in the struggle for social transformations to reduce injustices and social inequalities starting from their stage of predominant need at a given moment, but with an understanding of the importance of seeking, whenever possible, the stage of self-actualization, in which, according to Maslow (1970), the individual tends to look for what this author called S-values: To be free from psychopathologies; to move more independently through the stages of needs; to value questions of being, such as truth, integrity, joy, beauty, justice, will and others; to perceive reality more efficiently; to accept oneself, others, and nature; to appreciate the new or different; to be spontaneous and simple; to solve problems; to be autonomous; to have healthy and deep interpersonal relationships; to have a democratic structure and character; to understand between means and ends; to be creative and resilient. Finally, this is the stage at which the environment becomes intrinsically valuable.

Conclusions

The results showed that motivations/needs can be related to the predominant social representation of the environment, and that, according to the frequency, individuals with globalizing representation tend to be more associated with the self-actualization stage of motivations/needs.

Therefore, it is believed that an initial diagnosis based on the Environmental Motif, particularly when used in conjunction with questions designed to assess social representations of the environment and consumption habits, can be used to assess what potential attitudes toward environmental issues are prevalent in a given group before starting an environmental education project.

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Maslow e o meio ambiente: integrando representação social e teoria das necessidades e motivações

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Resumo: Em sua Teoria das Necessidades, Maslow argumenta que no estágio de autorrealização o indivíduo teria valores B mais desenvolvidos, o que envolveria, entre outras características, a tendência a se dedicar principalmente a causas de interesse coletivo em detrimento de interesses individuais. Seria também na fase de autorrealização que o meio ambiente teria um valor intrínseco, aspecto importante se considerarmos a necessidade de desenvolver soluções para os problemas socioambientais. Nesse sentido, a Representação Social do meio ambiente teria relação com os diferentes estágios de necessidades propostos por Maslow em sua teoria? O estágio de autorrealização poderia revelar um indivíduo com uma representação globalizante do ambiente? Para responder a essas questões, foi realizado um estudo com 134 participantes adaptando e utilizando o instrumento Teste de Perfil de Motivação Ambiental e os resultados mostraram uma correlação significativa entre o estágio de autorrealização e uma representação globalizante do Meio Ambiente.

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Artigo Original

Palavras-chave: Meio Ambiente; Maslow; Representações Sociais; Motivação, Necessidades.

Maslow y el medio ambiente: integración de la representación social y la teoría de las necesidades y motivaciones

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Resumen: En su Teoría de las Necesidades, Maslow sostiene que en la etapa de autorrealización el individuo tendría valores B más desarrollados, lo que implicaría, entre otras características, la tendencia a dedicarse principalmente a causas de interés colectivo en detrimento de los intereses individuales. Sería también en la fase de autorrealización que el medio ambiente tendría un valor intrínseco, aspecto importante si consideramos la necesidad de desarrollar soluciones a los problemas socioambientales. En este sentido, estaría relacionada la Representación Social del entorno con los diferentes estadios de necesidades propuestos por Maslow en su teoría? Podría la etapa de autorrealización revelar un individuo con una representación globalizadora del entorno? Para responder a estas preguntas se realizó un estudio con 134 participantes adaptando y utilizando el instrumento Prueba de Perfil de Motivación Ambiental y los resultados mostraron una correlación significativa entre la etapa de autorrealización y una representación global del Medio Ambiente.

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Artículo Original

Palabras-clave: Medio ambiente; Maslow; Representaciones Sociales; Motivación.