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## THE GORGON METHOD AS A TOOL IN SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR AND DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

The paper proposes a solution for life quality improvement by changing the individual's mentality and creating a sustainable behavior. The solution consists of the development of a psycho-behavioral pattern starting from the Gorgon experiences. The latter are hurtful experiences in the individual's life the effect of which is a complete or partial emotional components blockage. The hindrance of these components performance affects the individual's behavior, placing him or her in a state of shock which he or she can hardly outrun. The research in this paper approaches the high potential fundamental research at the border between environmental psychology and sustainable development. The creation of a sustainable behavior is a dynamic and complex process, consisting of the loop: problem – problem solving – solution finding – validation. The Gorgon method represents a starting point in raising an individual's sustainable behavior. It implies a body of knowledge, a "core", a sum of specific values and the deliberately use of some searching innovative opportunities techniques. The main objective of the paper is the accomplishment of a multidisciplinary research that can evidence the complex relationship between the environment's components, the quality and the sustainability of human health and of the socio-economical systems, considering the three interconnected sustainable development components: economy, society, and environment. The expected results of the Gorgon method development consist of deep changes in the individual's mentality, which will be directed toward sustainable development and life quality improvement.

*Key words:* sustainable behavior, education for sustainable development, Gorgon method, psychological behavioral pattern

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### 1. Introduction

Harmful experiences can result in a total or partial blockage of emotional components. The hindrance of these components' operation has effects upon the behavior of the individual, who falls in a state of perplexity he or she can hardly overcome. The above description defines what we have dubbed the *Gorgon Hypothesis*. We call such events *Gorgon-type Experiences* (Ioan, 1995), as they describe the behavior of the Gorgon's miserable victims who were petrified by the mythological monster's eyes. Legend has it that valiant Perseus has defeated Medusa by putting before her eyes his polished shield which reflected her image and thus she went petrified by her own stare allowing Perseus to behead her. Thinking of a modern Perseus, we try to go deeper into such experiences that are crucial to many people and to control them in order to create a sustainable behavior.

The paper aims at developing a method based on the Gorgon Hypothesis that intends to shape the individual's behavior. In the Gorgon Hypothesis, this behavior corresponds to a social passiveness (paralysis) similar to the petrified state induced by Medusa's eyes. Modern days Medusa epitomizes the traumatizing environment that has blocked the individuals' attitude in a passive (petrified) state that defines an unsustainable behavior.

Ecological problems such as environmental pollution and its consequences represent this traumatizing environment. The mechanisms that generate mental trauma derive from the consequences of global warming, desertification, water shortage, climatic anomalies (hurricanes, flooding, el Niño, etc.) which erode the life quality and determine high levels of insecurity.

The Gorgon Method aims at shaping the individual's behavior by triggering an active state

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with active attitudes towards nature, environment and other individuals (society). Such a state defines a sustainable mentality that generates the sustainable behavior.

## 2. The Gorgon Hypothesis

In the first instance, the emotional path of an individual subjected to a Gorgon Experience is to accept the situation and to place in the foreground of his/her existence a tough truth, that by that moment he or she had thought that it existed somewhere very far away and possibly affecting the others. Much more frightening is the abrupt and totally unexpected revelation that this tough truth was from the very beginning here with him or her, and it even didn't hide. During such crucial experiences an affective sensitivity sharpening superposes to the deepening of the self-consciousness which can either evolve to a more or less severe inner disruption, or (on the contrary) to the identification and putting into action of some poorly rendered valuable creative resources. This succession characterizes any Gorgon-type experience.

In the process of self-awareness, an acute emotional affectivity can be added after this kind of experiences, which can evolve either to an interior more or less serious or, on the contrary to find out and to use some of the less used creative resources, as a sequence of any Gorgon type experiences. When it was tried to define the essence to approach the theme, it started from the idea that every individual, beside his ethnic origins, educational level, status or social standing etc. has a set of fundamental needs. More or less this means survival, a certain quality of life and it represents the "selfish" part of each one of us. There are two ways of satisfying these needs: the "hard" way, when the individual is satisfying his/her needs by any necessary way (without carrying of anything) and the "smooth" way, when the individual is aware that he or she is a part of the community and there are other people who must be taken into consideration (an image that the individual will have in a mirror), namely their perspective and their future generations, as a result of applying the Gorgon method.

The individual's way of acting is determined by the attitude towards the environment (the world he/she lives in). This is why it is firstly essential to define those fundamental needs of an individual that lead to an unsustainable development of humankind. They constitute what we call the matrix which is present in each individual and which has to be stimulated to "grow" just like as dough in order to go beyond the stage of immediate satisfaction.

Another aspect of the human reality is the care for future generations. (McKeown, 2004) Unfortunately, this concern is very short-ranged, since individuals care only for their offspring with whom they can interact during their life. Those in the far future (three or four generations away) already represent some abstract entities which say nothing to us. This represents another unsustainable element of

the matrix that must be changed with the help of the Gorgon method.

Once the matrix has been defined, the corresponding skills/attitudes/capabilities/behaviors that can be educated in a sustainable manner can be found and transferability can be achieved. Transferability means that they don't have to stick to some particular/specific elements, since in the previous step only the fundamental elements that belong to any individual, regardless of his/her origin, etc. were identified (Ioan et al., 2005).

The expected result of the Gorgon method should represent profound changes in the individual's mentality, which will be oriented towards a sustainable development. Need is the mental expression of the energy of innate and acquired necessities of the human being. The development of individual needs derives inevitably from the interrelations exchange of the individual with the natural and social environment. Needs are oriented towards the necessity for shelter, clothing, food, safety, culture, etc. Need tends to develop in harmony and balance with the civilized structures of satisfaction means. Generally, need expresses the necessity of organisms and organs to utilize what is necessary for their good operation. They must be analyzed in their relation with satisfaction, recurrence, interests, and requirements of preservation, all of them included in their structure.

## 3. The Gorgon Method

According to Maslow's motivational theory, the hierarchical organization of human needs is based on two laws (Maslow, 1972) (Fig. 1):

A need is less likely to occur when it is continuously and more intensely satisfied.

A need emerges as a motivation only when stronger needs of a lower level had been previously satisfied.

Fundamental needs are satisfied in a cyclical continuous manner; other ones have an occasional character (i.e., to be esteemed, to obtain self-achievement), and another category have a circumstantial character.

From this short presentation, it results that the **fundamental needs matrix** (Table 1) should include needs that envisage:

### A. Need for physical and mental health

### B. Need to learn

### C. Need for security

The need to live a better life is satisfied in the matrix by the economic, intellectual, and emotional **immediate interests**.

The emphasis falls on transferability, namely on the capability of the fundamental needs matrix defined above to adapt to future's context accordingly to the specific of present-time.

**Transferability is the property by means of which representative significant specific elements which define the fundamental needs**

matrix become educable, perfectible and applicable to any population (Ioan et al., 2005).

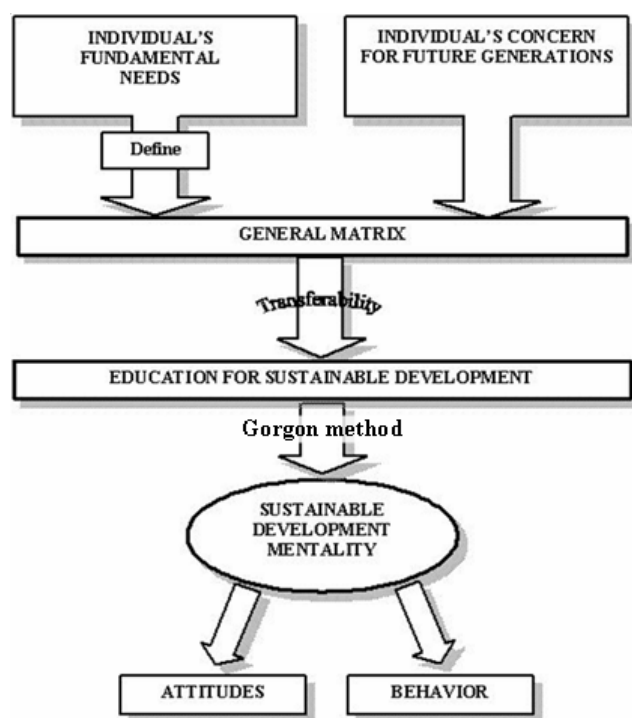


Fig. 1. Flowchart of education for sustainable development in the Gorgon Method context

When designing an education for sustainable development program in the context of the Gorgon Method, attention must be paid to *un-transferable* elements (Ioan, 2003), such as:

- *ethnic/national specific;*
- *mentalities related to a specific geographic/regional area;*
- *specific civilization, religion and culture elements;*
- *specific civic attitude and awareness.*

Poverty aspects must be addressed very carefully since it is useless to try to educate in the spirit of sustainable development an individual or a group living at the limit of subsistence, by teaching them on how to buy expensive ecological products whereas un-ecological ones are cheaper and they represent the difference between survival and starvation (Soubbotina, 2000). These extreme cases must be tackled in a special manner. This remark defines the transferability limits of this guide, which addresses to nations with a minimum living standard in terms of acceptability (Ioan et al., 2005).

The Gorgon method aims at changing the passive, still or socially-petrified behavior of the individual, into a sustainable one. The main objective is to study the evolution of a psychological behavior triggered by Gorgon experiences and to start the process of creating a sustainable behavior.

The secondary objectives of the method are:

- to identify the causes of the individual's lack of attitude towards the environment;
- to examine the issue from different points of view;
- to select the most adequate analysis methods;
- to verify the solutions efficiency and to define the rationale of the chosen solution;
- to study the case from a pedagogical point of view.

Table 1. The fundamental needs matrix and the skills than can be educated in the Gorgon Method context

<i>Matrix of fundamental needs</i>	<i>Skills/attitudes to educate for sustainable development</i>
<b>Physical and mental health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Awareness</li> <li>• Forecast</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Aspiration for a better life</li> <li>• Concern for other people</li> <li>• Concern for nature</li> </ul>
– Food and water	
– Warmth	
– Sex and care for future generations	
– Clothing	
<b>Need to learn</b>	
<b>Need for security</b>	
– Shelter	
– Job	
– Family	
– Independence of movement	
– Leisure	

The Gorgon Method is designed to provide practical solutions for the development of a sustainable behavior in the present socio-economical context in order to improve the quality of life (Macoveanu, 2005).

Considering the interdisciplinary character of this approach, the importance for the implied domains arises from the fact that the Gorgon Method tackles a new perspective, a new view and a new approach. The estimated impact of the method implies three aspects: the change of the behavioral paradigm, the development of a mechanism which can set free the elements of a sustainable behavior, and a last aspect which representing the sustainable development of the individual.

The beneficial change (total or partial) of the individual through the implementing of the Gorgon Method has as an immediate effect the change of view, the awakening of the society, the awareness of the public, having consequences on the cultural heritage or on the socio-economical environment.

The method requires a close cooperation between the specialists of different areas, thus assuring the interdisciplinary between environmental sciences, pedagogy, and psychology. Pedagogy supports the educational activities; psychology pays attention to the human behavior as a structure of the motivation that determines it.

Sustainable behavior, integrated in the sustainable development and consequence of the

sustainable mentality, can be developed through the Gorgon Method.

In order to shape a sustainable behavior, the purpose of the research consists in the development of the Gorgon method, based upon the Gorgon Hypothesis and starting from Gorgon experiences. The steps in the research are:

1. the study and description of the Gorgon Hypothesis, as a solution in shaping a sustainable behavior;
2. the study of the modalities to develop a psychological behavior pattern based upon the Gorgon experiences;
3. construction and development of the Gorgon Method;
4. validation of the Gorgon Method.

The general hypothesis of the Gorgon Method asserts that the shaping of a sustainable behavior is a dynamic and complex process involving the loop: problem – problem solving – solution development – verification.

The Gorgon Method implies a general knowledge, a “core”, a sum of specific values and the deliberately use of innovative opportunity searching techniques.

In the methodological repertory of the research procedures one can enumerate: questionnaires, case studies, quasi pedagogic experiment, comparisons with other psycho-pedagogic procedures, curricular documents analysis.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Gorgon Hypothesis represents a starting point in the shaping process of a sustainable behavior and an opportunity for life standard improvement. The fundamental needs matrix, which signifies a certain quality of life, becomes by means of the Gorgon Method (as a consequence of the educable skills), a foundation and a possibility for a higher standard of life, assuring a sustainable behavior of the individual in relation with the society and the environment.

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