ETHICS – CONCEPT AND APPLICABILITY IN SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract:

Understanding ethics is fundamental to us as individuals because a healthy ethics is the very essence of a civilized society. Ethics is the foundation on which all our relationships are built. It addresses how we behave towards entrepreneurs, employees, colleagues, clients, subordinates, suppliers, generally to the community we are in. Talking about ethics in the field of social assistance, politics, economy, at the organization level, is today fashionable, it is even a novelty. However, there is a clear lack of ethics in these areas. Ethical standards are often found among universal values. Speaking of universal values, we must admit that universality supposes first of all diversity. Living in society implies the necessity of the emergence and perpetuation of relations between its members. Although respect for ethical principles must govern the whole set of human interactions (family, business, friendship, etc.), in this analysis we only consider the ethical foundation of the relationships circumscribed to the specific environment of social assistance. Social work as a profession builds its system of values, starting from respecting the dignity and integrity of the human being and recognizing democracy as an essential requirement of social life. The main empirical data collection methods used in this paper are: observation and social documents analysis. Style research approach will be both qualitatively and quantitative perspective. Quantitative research will highlight the numerical measurements of specific aspects of the phenomena studied with the aim of testing causal hypotheses, whereas qualitative research paradigms will be based on a kind of postmodern ones. In this paper we present some of the theoretical considerations on the development of ethics in Romania and globally perspective. This paper aims to outline a picture of contemporary applicability of ethics through a general analysis and point some prospects regarding this subject.

Key words: professional ethics, conscience, duty, social life, applied ethics

1.Introduction

From an etymological point of view, "ethics" comes from the Greek words:

• **Ethos** (Homer) = primordial, homeland, dwelling, meeting place, hometown, habits, character;

• **Ethike** (Aristotle) = Knowledge of Knowledge. *Ethos* derived the word "*Ethicos*", meaning "from or for morals," used by the Greeks when discussing the principles of human behavior. To begin with, we can consider ethics as "the science of morality, good / evil" (Socrates, Plato, Cicero), "of happiness, of virtue" (Aristotle), of "social pleasure".

Ethics appeared as a "distinct branch of knowledge", thanks to Socrates. As a scientific discipline, it is from Aristotle's time, which raised ethics to the "dignity of science."

Ethics is defined as "the science that deals with the study of moral principles, their historical development links, their class content, and their role in social life, the totality of

norms of moral conduct corresponding to the ideology of a class or society" (Staicu G. , 2010).

Ethics is the form of knowledge and legitimacy in consciousness through moral norms and imperatives, human acts and deeds. Although related, ethical and moral concepts have different origins and substances: ethics is "moral theory and science," while ethics is "the subject of ethics." The name of ethics is of Greek origin, while morality originates in the Latin word *mos-moris* (moral-manners), from where the moralistic term, the modern etym of the *moral* term, appeared.

Thus, we can consider ethics as "a science of behavior, morals, a set of concrete prescriptions, or a theory of morality." Ethics is the "set of rules of conduct shared by a particular community, rules that are grounded in the distinction between good and evil, while morals comprise an ensemble of principles of universal-normative dimension." (Staicu G., 2010)

2. Approaches to ethics and sphere of coverage

The object of ethics is to find an answer to the question "What is good"?; the answers to such a question are causing disagreements. The answers generated by this question provide the opportunity to ascertain the complex character of the realities of inter-human relations and inter-causality that dominate the sphere of human behavior. The analysis of ethical issues in general and managerial ethics in particular, should take as a starting point the main historical milestones that have contributed to the creation of this science.

The *purpose* of ethical approaches is morality. The mission of ethics is to expose the theoretical aspects of morality, as well as to constitute a practical guide, adapted to the reality, necessary in guiding and improving the moral life of society.

The *role* of ethics is to help people, as well as institutions or organizations, decide what is best to do, the criteria used in elections, and the moral motivation in their actions. In the controversies created on this subject - ethics - there were voices who considered that this as a science was not useful because it had a normative character in terms of people's behavior, and could not actually influence their behavior. However, we must take into account that the freedom of every person has only one limit: the freedom of another person - The idea being underlined elsewhere in *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* approved by the National Assembly of France in August 26, 1789 - "Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; (art.4)".

The central problems of morality are found in questions such as: What should we do (what would be good, fair, honesty)? How should we judge others and ourselves? How should we treat others and admit to being treated by others? What goals are worthy of being followed in life? What is the best way of life? What kind of person should I be?

Ethics, according to the explanatory Romanian dictionary (http://www.dex.ro/) is "the science that deals with the theoretical study of the human condition in terms of values and moral principles and their role in society; All the rules of moral conduct ".

Antonio Ramirez in the selected work "Ethics in enterprise" (*Ethics en la empresa,* 2008) consider ethics as "a science that helps us to know the man, his behavior and selected the company as a whole. Ethics science has a character: analytically - is concerned about the causes of our actions and normative - tells us what we have to do; it is not a descriptive science - it does not indicate how to do it, but it is practical, action-oriented: it is learned from practice. "The concept of applied ethics is often used to understand the moral analysis of concrete situations in social or professional practice, in order to make some decisions."

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We find that most people are living in life after what we can call *conventional morality* or appearance. Ethics philosophy is discipline concerned with what is good and bad, right or wrong. All societies have had and have ethical rules that approve honesty, respect for promises, helping others and respecting the rights of others. Ethics is a universal human trait, despite the fact that the code of ethics is not the same for all, and it presents particularities for each society, organization, field of activity or individual.

Social ethics are oriented towards human relationships with those around him, the individual being at the heart of these relationships. The "common good" of an enterprise, organization, or department is a set of goals that its members try to achieve. Ethics in the organization is based on two fundamental principles:

a) the human supremacy and moral principles on the organization;

b) the attainment of his goal, the "common good", respecting moral principles.

There are at least four elements that aim to create an ethical culture and behavior of employees within an organization. These elements are[6]:

1) a written code of ethics and standards (ethical code)

2) ethics training for executives, managers, and employees

3) the availability of ethical situational advice (i.e. advice lines or offices)

4) confidential reporting systems.

Professional ethics requires the establishment of internal rules, valid for any profession, which may take the form of "good practices", "ethical codes" or "codes of ethics". Ethics involves motivation, which determines a certain way of action, and the adopted behaviors lead to more or less serious consequences for people in interaction. There are certain characteristics that a firm, enterprise or organization may be called ethics[13]:

1. Equilibrium between profit and ethics;

2. Ethical values underlie the daily behavior of individual actions;

3. The existence of a system of sanctions that provides for penalizing and correcting non-ethical actions;

4. Presence of a set of values involving:

- treating others with respect;

- providing adequate services so there is satisfaction for your benefit.

Ethics - in the opinion of Dimitrios Buhalis and Eric Laws (2001), is "a set of rules that define what is right and wrong in our conduct." Thomas Donaldson (1991) describes ethics in organizations as "a systematic study faced by business, industry or activities, institutions, or practices and beliefs related to them."

Ethics is actually our way of interacting as employers, employees, colleagues, customers, friends, or members of the community we live in. Ethical conduct is one of the key criteria that defines how a company is doing business, consolidating or, on the contrary, destroying its reputation on the market. Ethical conduct requires effort, ability to synthesize and intelligence.

3. Ethics in Social Assistance

An understanding of ethics is fundamental to us as individuals because a healthy ethics is the very essence of a civilized society. Ethics is the foundation on which all our relationships are built. The notion of ethics refers to all the rules of conduct (behavior) that govern relationships between members of a company (colleagues, employers, etc.). We have to keep in mind that ethics does not refer to the ties we have with other people - all of us have links to each other - but to their quality and fairness. Although we have different values and principles, there are common ethical standards. These are values on which everyone "agrees" that they are important in interpersonal relationships, no matter

where we are or the culture to which we belong. We can say that ethical standards are often found among universal values.

Referring to universal values, it is necessary to recognize that universality presupposes first of all diversity. Being honest is important and valuable, no matter which part of the world we report. In different cultures, honesty can take on various forms. Apparently, the issue of ethics and morality seems extremely confusing. Some of the generally accepted values are[13]:

- Honesty - is the ability to tell truth and behave correctly in relationships with peers;
- Respect - recognizes that every person is valuable and must be treated with respect;
- Fairness - requires us to act in the spirit of justice on a voluntary basis and not for the fear of enforcing the rigors of the law;
- Responsibility and courage - involves the ability to act and take responsibility for the consequences of our actions.

These values are not inventions of the present times, but they are the product of mankind in its entire existence.

Living in society implies the necessity of the emergence and perpetuation of relations between its members. Although respect for ethical principles must govern the whole set of human interactions (family, business, friendship, etc.), in this analysis we only consider the ethical foundation of the relationships circumscribed to the specific environment of social assistance.

In ethical terms, cooperative relations are necessarily contractual and must reflect the expectation of mutual gain of all participants. We cannot talk about efficiency in the absence of ethical principles. Efficiency and ethics are not contradictory notions or substitute each other, being different faces of the same phenomenon. Only what is ethical can lead to efficiency, and efficiency is unthinkable under conditions of injustice.

As with other professions, also in the case of social assistance it was necessary to develop an ethical code of the professionals in the field. Thus, according to the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 173 / 6.III.2008 - The *Code of Ethics of the social worker profession* clearly defines the regulations regarding the status and activity of the social workers in the work with the beneficiaries of the social protection system. According to: "Art. 1. - (1) The code of ethics of the profession of social worker, hereinafter referred to as *the code*, establishes the mandatory rules of professional conduct of the social workers, respectively of the members of the National College of Social Workers in Romania, hereinafter college "; and "Art. 2. - The Code regulates the social workers' professional relations and sets their standards of conduct in relations with beneficiaries, members of the professional body, as well as with other categories of professionals. The same document also "establishes sanctions and its applicability in concrete situations of working, highlighting the conduct, duties and responsibilities necessary to exercise the profession, with due respect for ethics".

In Romania, the first step in organizing social assistance at national level took place in 1999, when four documents were drafted:

1. The status of the social assistant profession,
2. Ethical code of the social worker,
3. Statute of the College of Social Workers in Romania,
4. Statute of the Federation of Social Workers in Romania.

4. Values and Ethical Principles of Social Assistance

Social theoreticians generally consider that ethical issues arise, especially in the sphere of social assistance, when the social worker has to answer the following question: "What should I or the client - from a moral point of view - do in a particular situation?"

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Starting from this benchmark, we consider that a possible answer to this question involves both a normative aspect, emphasizing the imperative moral character, as well as a descriptive aspect, which emphasizes that the decisions taken in the practice of social assistance have in fact an Ethical foundation.

We cannot reduce everything to the point that everything is important about the values applicable in the field of social assistance can be reduced to the problem of the social and moral conscience of the practitioner. One of the main issues of the debate around the ethical principles of social assistance is that the same term - well-applied in a particular situation in the practice of social assistance, can have different meanings:

- well-technical - used in situations where the rules of professional practice have been invoked and applied correctly;

- well-aesthetic - considering that the practical form of social assistance often appeals to the feeling of admiration for professional success;

- well-moral - taking into account the fact that in the field of social assistance, certain moral objectives are achieved, and professional relationships based on morality are created and created.

Social assistance as a profession builds its system of values by respecting the dignity and integrity of the human being and recognizing democracy as an essential requirement of social life. These two core values represent the support of both - the professional values and the principles of ingenuity, as well as the professional attitudes that any social assistant approaches.

4.1. Values in social assistance

Ethical code of the social worker profession, developed by the National Federation of Social Workers in Romania, sets out "a set of values that govern the work of the social worker". According to the code, these values are: "providing services for the benefit of assisted persons, social justice, respect for the dignity and uniqueness of the individual, confidentiality and integrity of the individual, self-determination and professional competence." So[7]:

a. Provision of services for the benefit of assisted persons

The main purpose of the social worker's activity is to assist people in difficulty in identifying, understanding, correctly assessing and solving social problems. In all its approaches, the social worker acts with priority in the interest of the assisted person. If the assisted person's interest poses a threat to the community / community members, the social assistant has the responsibility to invite the assisted person and to mediate with the aim of harmonizing the interests of the parties involved.

b. Social justice

Social workers promote the principles of social justice. Social assistants ensure equal opportunities for access to information, services, resources and their participation in the decision-making process. They dispute and combat the various forms of social injustice such as poverty, unemployment, discrimination, exclusion and other forms of social injustice.

c. The person's dignity and uniqueness

Social assistants respect and promote the dignity of the individual, the uniqueness and value of each individual. The social worker must not practice, tolerate, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, age, political or religious convictions, marital status, physical or mental deficiency, material and / or any other preference, characteristic, condition or status.

d. Self-determination

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The social worker respects and promotes the right of assisted persons to self-determination. The social assistant supports assisted persons in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals in order to choose the best option. Social assistants can limit the rights of assisted persons to self-determination when, in the professional judgment of the social worker, the present and / or future actions of assisted persons pose a risk to themselves and / or others.

e. Human relationships

Social assistants recognize the fundamental importance of interpersonal relationships and promote them in professional practice. Social assistants encourage and enhance relationships between people in order to promote, restore, maintain and / or improve the quality of life of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

f. Integrity

Social assistants act honestly and responsibly in accordance with the profession's mission and professional ethics. The social worker promotes and maintains the standards of professional practice. The social worker promotes and develops the values and ethics of the profession, the knowledge base and the mission of the profession. The social worker protects and promotes professional integrity through constructive studies, research, analysis and criticism, as well as teaching, counseling, community expositions, and active participation in professional organizations.

g. Competence

Social workers have to work only in the area of professional competence determined by the license, expertise and professionalism. Social workers have the obligation to constantly improve their knowledge and professional skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers contribute to the improvement and development of the knowledge base of the profession.

4.2. Morale and professional ethics

The notion of professional ethics is often used to designate a moral code of people belonging to a particular profession. For example: "The Hippocratic Oath", "The Code of Honor of the Judge"; "The Ethical Code of the Notary" etc.

Professional ethics is determined by the specific features of some professions, corporate interests, professional culture, etc. People who perform similar or identical professional functions develop their specific traditions and associate themselves with principles of professional solidarity that are capable of preserving the reputation of the given professional group. Professional ethics is composed of various codes of conduct and codes of ethics. The term "norm" has the following synonyms: "model", "standard", "rule", "law". The regulatory norm is characterized by:

a) being issued by someone, has its source in the will of a normative authority;
b) addresses to agents called subjects of the norm; to make his will known by the subject, the authority promulgates norms, and in order to make his will effective, the authority adds a penalty or a threat of punishment. The most important issues of morality are centered around how living standards of good and evil evolve in life, how moral judgment develops, how self-control skills are formed in satisfying the internalized standards (of desires, interests, aspirations etc.)

Moral judgment requires the evaluation (most often self-evaluation) of behaviors and situations by reference to the moral requirements imposed by the socio-historical environment of the individual. It is formed through social learning and the critical attribution of the models of conduct promoted by society. Moral development is an active process of organizing experience in structures with increasing significance, through which moral values are seen from a new perspective. *Norm* can be imposed in society as a

habit that can influence people's behavior, exerting a real normative pressure through measures taken by a collectivity towards non-conforming members. Within each profession, there are specific moral issues, but professional ethics is important, first of all, for the professions, the object of which is man. Thus, we distinguish the teacher's ethics, the doctor's ethics, the judge's ethics, etc. So[5]:

Pedagogical ethics obliges the educator to respect the personality of the student and to manifest to him the exigency; to maintain his own reputation and the reputation of his colleagues; to take care of the moral credibility of society towards the teacher.

The *psychologist's ethics* is determined by the specificity of the psychologist profession, which refers to the confidentiality of the information provided by the client, and the avoidance of dependence on the psychologist's services, and to orientate him / her towards identifying solutions.

The *ethics of information technologies* indicate that engineers, scientists and technicians, through the results of their work, determine the quality and conditions of people's lives in the information society. Technicians are obliged not to disturb the activity of other users of the information network, but also to foresee the social consequences of the elaborated programs / systems.

The *social worker's ethics* requires social services to be taken into account, taking into account the needs of applicants, and intervening on all aspects of the problem to be resolved, with the utmost responsibility and for the benefit of the servants.

Medical ethics requires that everything be done to protect and save the patient's life, regardless of the inherent difficulties; keeping the principle of confidentiality with everything the patient discusses with the doctor in the consulting room; under no circumstances should the doctor contribute to the death of the patient, etc.

Legal ethics is determined by the specificity of the professional activity of the jurist, his moral peculiarities and the social situation. The peculiarities of the professional activity of law enforcement workers affect the rights and interests of people, so they require particular characteristics in terms of their influence on the moral content of this activity. Regarding the law courts, there is a cardinal problem - individual freedom, independence from the "money power", parties and other organizations, freedom of opinion. At the same time, the freedom of the law courts cannot be beyond the responsibility, apart from the moral codes specific to the exponents of this profession.

The question is, "What is our duty, that is, the obligation that naturally requires us to tend towards the good ...?" This obligation urges us to lead us by the principles of justice, equality and charity, that is, to take away the general good only the part that is due to us, according to our merits.

Explaining the nature and origin of debt has been one of the most difficult issues in the history of ethics. As the basis and source of duty were the divine commands (religious morals), the *a priori* law (the categorical imperative), or the human nature itself, the natural desire of man to pleasure. The essential significance of moral duty is considered to be imperative. This means that the requirements crystallized in the notion of debt are promoted and perceived in the form of order, the content of which is formulated by society and expressing the inner disposition of the personality to execute the prescribed prescriptions.

Another distinctive sign, equally important for expressing the particularities of the "duty" category, is the fact that its analysis usually dominates reason, objectivity and thought.

Moral consciousness, on the contrary, although directly involved in the action of internal control, is only a moderately expressed form of the notion. The specificity of consciousness is to stimulate the will of consent with the good, but also with the truth,

and even to initiate the search for truth, before making a decision. Moral consciousness manifests itself as purely internal, subjective reflexes and, as well as intuition, cannot be subjected to rational appreciation and practical verification by public opinion. That is why we cannot say that consciousness is the only instrument of appreciation of moral facts and values. For this, an indissoluble link to moral duty is necessary.

The moral requirement can be perceived by the individual as a "severe duty," but it can be advanced as a recommendation or can be expressed as a queue. Legislation is based on external coercion, and moral sanctions are ideal, referring to *Man* as a conscious and free subject. The consciousness of moral duty is at least conceiving the unacceptability of something in itself, the situation in which something must be overcome, and last but not least, the will to resist yourself, which implies a self-subjection.

It is inappropriate to design debt as a form of social control over individual behavior, because in debt is reflected a certain mechanism of interaction between people. Morality can be conceived as a system of reciprocal duties that are imposed on the people that people accept, which they are designed to be vital tasks fulfilled in concrete situations and circumstances. Consciousness is the ability of man to evaluate his actions, his thoughts, his wishes, his awareness, and his inconsistency with what must be, with the failure of duty. Just as debt is autonomous, so man's consciousness is independent of the peoples' opinion. If consciousness verifies the correspondence or inappropriateness of actions in relation to the debt, then the action performed according to conscience is action dictated by the sense of duty. That is, consciousness insists on the fulfillment of duty.

5. Formation of moral conscience

Lalonde C.E. & Chandler M.J. (1995) defines moral consciousness as "being that property of the spirit of affirming normative, spontaneous and immediate judgments on the moral value of certain determined acts." When this consciousness applies to the agent's future acts, it views the form of a "voice" which command or prohibit. When applying to past acts, it translates into a sense of joy (satisfaction) or pain (remorse). Formation of moral consciousness involves three components[9]:

- cognitive - the assimilation of norms and moral values;
- affective - adherence to rules and values;
- voluntary or acting - attitudes towards norms, rules, moral values. This training aims to initiate and inform the student about the contents and imperatives of social morality, how he will have to behave in a given situation. They are in the form of fundamental regulations and commands for the moral consciousness of personality.

5.1. An ethics code must provide:

- how members of an organization should act in a given situation;
- how members of the organization should think and behave;
- issues such as conflicts of interest, competition, privacy of the information, offering gifts, offering / receiving political sponsorship;
- competition between members of a profession;
- conflicts between members;
- relationships between professionals and customers, consumers, sources of supply or beneficiaries;
- employee relations with superiors;
- relationships between practitioners and professionals in a profession, etc.

Ethical codes seek to solve conflicts of interest in the internal environment and in the organization's external relations, meaning to lay down principles and requirements

that make managers more ethical. They do not contain purely theoretical precepts but establish practical meanings that are useful to all members of the organization. This does not mean that a code of ethics automatically provides moral behavior or that it can cover all the situations encountered in organizational life. The limitation of ethical codes is to formulate them in general terms precisely because, initially, their managers and subordinates are unable to identify all the ethical issues that may arise.

5.2. The main features of a code of ethics
To be efficient, the code of ethics in social assistance must highlight distinct features:
    • be rigorous, clearly set forth ideals and / or obligations;
    • should not be used for their own benefit; will not serve a profession to the detriment of the public interest;
    • must protect the public interest;
    • be specific and honest;
    • must also provide for penalties;
    • have to set certain priorities (the true values of the firm / institution, etc.);
    • come from a legitimate authority;
    • not to contravene other laws (the Constitution);
    • be physically and morally possible;
    • be as simple and accessible as possible.
    The problems of creating such codes start from the concept: how could they coexist well and harmoniously in a particular institution or organization, irrespective of religious beliefs, moral principles and habits of each of us?
    Coding is typically done in a team. The objectives of the organization are set by management. All leadership usually calls a working team. This team shares the shared values of members, information about similar codes with similar objectives. Norms, beliefs are generally proposed, discussed and defined by managers and a working team, and then published and distributed to employees, taking into account the needs and specifics of the organization.

5.3. The advantages of developing codes of ethics
    Creating, developing and enforcing the code of ethics in the social assistant profession has advantages in terms of clarifying the boundaries of the work and better understanding the profession itself. So:
- formulate the mature experience of a profession;
- strive to balance the collective and personal interests;
- can provide a guide for young people entering the profession;
- may constitute the basis of disciplinary action against deviations; can be a means of alignment with the norms of the profession of those who deviate from them;
- helps to address effectively the issues of discrimination, ethical dilemmas in general;
- is a means of encouraging ethical practices in organizations;
- increases the loyalty and involvement of leadership and employees;
- there is an improvement in the selection, training, promotion of staff, etc .;
- increases trust and teamwork: personal initiatives are directed towards the general interest;
- decisions adopted concern justice, efficiency and non-discrimination, etc.

6. Legitimate and Principles of Ethical Behavior
    The scientific-philosophical literature of the last decades of the twentieth century has faithfully demonstrated the acute need for the radical reconstruction (ethics) of ethical

thinking, the achievement of a proper and concrete revival in the interpretation of the object of ethics and its methodology. Humanity has stepped into the third millennium, in the era of advanced global technologies, but discussions about how ethics should be, the boundaries of objective reality would be logical to proceed, what the philosopher should do to effectively implement ethical theory in practice, which is the true function of morality, and so forth, are more and more intense. This happens for several reasons, but the main cause is the emergence of planetary problems related to the survival of mankind, the overcoming of the planetary anthropological and ecological crisis.

The conceptual analysis of human existence has imposed interest in normative ethics and adequate normative methodology. The normative methodology, unlike the conceptual methodology, has as its main goal to elaborate the moral principles and norms underlying the determination and solving of the wide range of problems that ethics should take.

Normative ethics had the obligation, in the opinion of its followers, to contribute to self-reflection of personality on the identity of their own problems, to develop their capacity to act based on consciously comprehensible and liberal moral principles. In the late 1970s, early 1980s, normative ethics was unable to indicate how the theoretical-methodological and moral principles, and in particular the imperatives of justice, sovereignty, "to do the good", "not to harm" and so on, but ethics, to be used in practice. This problem remains one of the most important, since it requires a solution. Some researchers[19] considered it not the case of implementing a new methodology, a new ethic in overcoming the rupture between ethical theory, its basic theoretical and philosophical principles and practice. For this, they argue, it is enough to combine the analysis of normative systems, the work of the ethics compartment with the appropriate way of contemporary moral problems, and then to show how to use moral-theoretical principles in different schools.

Researchers like Goodpaster K.E. and Singer M., quoted by Baird Callicot (2013) in *Thinking like a Planet: The Land Ethic and the Earth Ethic*, have advanced the idea of creating a new ethic with an unusual methodology and new scientific principles, linking this interpretation to the extension of the notion of morality and of the living nature. The ethical aspect of these processes is evident and as a consequence is necessary to analyze it. This fact is clear because the mentioned phenomena (research, etc.) practically in all situations and in all the times have a close connection with man, his health and his life.

6.1. General principles of ethics applicable to social assistance

Principles are rules of strategic and operational value that must be respected in order to ensure the efficiency of activities designed at the organizational level.

a. The principle of equality before the rules.

"Morality exists not for heroes and saints, nor for geniuses, but for ordinary people. This does not mean that heroes, saints, and geniuses should not obey moral norms but merely emphasize that morality is the rule and not the exception".[19] When it comes to equality between people, we do not refer to their intellectual, biological, aesthetic equality, but to their equality in the face of moral principles and norms and equality before the law, just as from a religious point of view to the fact that, before God, we are all equal. In order for such equality to be possible, moral principles and norms must be understood regardless of the degree of education of the individual and, at the same time, they must be practicable. Therefore, the content of morality addresses to the greatest extent everyday dilemmas and addresses those who face such dilemmas inserted in terms of what we have called above - moral issues.

b. Principle of clarity and clarification (concepts, positions).

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In an open, pluralistic society, people can clearly articulate their position on a moral issue and, consequently, act. For example, if a doctor thinks that abortion is immoral (it's a crime), he only has to work in a clinic where there are no abortions or just an obstetrician. If a person is not interested in acting for the public good, it would be moral not to be involved in politics or public administration. In these cases, there is also a distinct attitude towards certain fundamentalist positions: a religion is imposed as state morality and fully or almost entirely transferred into legislation. Ethics does not invoke absolute truths, but different positions to problems of moral choice. Ethics studies the general standards that apply to most people, most of their lives. That's why she rarely takes into account particularities such as sex, race, skills and talent, the status of a person. Eventually, these peculiarities are dealt with in a thematic context (rights, justice, equality of opportunity for members of disadvantaged groups: women's rights, racial, ethnic, religious, sexual). The general principles of ethics tend to overcome any differences (even if this possibility is often questioned).

      c. The principle of relativism and absolutism.

The problems of relativism and absolutism, objectivism and subjectivism are of the type: Who am I (or any man) to judge others? What gives me the right to impose my own standards on other people? What gives other people the right to impose their principles of good or bad, justice or injustice? (These questions relate to the legitimacy of the regulator).

      Norms should be of an absolute and objective nature: not to depend on beliefs, feelings, particular habits, nor on the arbitrary will of someone in the possession of normative power. Inside a community, the principles and norms are interpreted and interpreted: the morality of that community is *Morality*, and its good is *Good of All*. Relativism claims that there are no absolute, universal standards. They vary according to community and history. To be moral, you have to live up to your community code and respect others. The issue of absolute tolerance to other codes creates situations that are sometimes unacceptable. It cannot be said that, for the sake of respect for multiculturalism and tolerance, we can accept, for example, slavery, sexism (discrimination based on belonging to a sex), Spartan eugenics, burning of the widow (in India). There are no moral standards beyond private codes nothing is neither absolute nor universal. Absolutists believe that standards must be universally accessible and draws on this idea on the similarities between the norms of different communities, for example: respect for parents, prohibition of incest. These standards come from intuition, consciousness or divine revelation.

      According to *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers,* Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1999 NASW Delegate Assembly, "ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence."

      The principles of moral education are normative theses that guide and direct the activity of the educator in order to achieve the fundamental objective of moral education: the formation of the moral profile of the personality of the children, in accordance with requirements of the ideal of education.

6.2. Traditional approach to the system of principles of moral education

      Persons appointed to work with children, be they educators, nursing staff, social workers, psychologists or other cadres meant to educate and protect children and adolescents, are theoretically and practically subject to norms and principles designed to

outline moral education of children and young people assisted or beneficiaries of other social services. It is important to keep in mind the following aspects:

a. The active character of moral education.

It is imperative, in the framework of moral education, to capitalize on the child's life experience and, at the same time, to offer opportunities for enriching it by engaging in various practical actions. By virtue of this principle, the educator will have to pursue the accumulation of moral experience by experiencing facts and circumstances of life rich in meaning and moral manifestations.

b. Group and group personality education.

The teacher has to organize the collective life of the children by insisting on their integration into the system of interpersonal relations constituted within this collective. Only by working and living in college children will come to understand the dynamics of the relationship between personal desires and the exigencies of the collective, to feel the sense of responsibility for the collective, for each of its members, to identify with the aspirations, prospects and collective joys.

c. Combine the exigency with children with respect for them.

Respecting this principle requires the teacher to be permanently concerned with measuring the requirements system, while eliminating any suspicion, distrust, suspicion, and under-appreciation. Exigency stems from the educator's humanism, respect for human dignity, and is incompatible with so-called pedagogical liberalism.

d. Supporting the positive qualities of the child's personality in order to overcome them negative. The meaning of this principle results from the postulate of the existence of some positive, intellectual, emotional, moral components, traits or qualities in every human personality. It is necessary to combine the encouragement of the positive elements with the disapproval of the negative manifestations, the emphasis being placed on the first. The teacher needs to know the child's personality well in order to distinguish between what is positive and what is negative in the child's behavior.

e. Respect for age and individual peculiarities in moral education.

According to this principle, the instructive-educational process must be carried out in accordance with the age and individual peculiarities of the children. Knowing the psychological profile of the age and the individual is indispensable for everything that the educator undergoes in moral education: formulating the requirements, choosing the methods and procedures, printing a style in the educational relationship, using the various methods of approval and disapproval.

f. Continuity, consistency and unity in moral education.

This principle indicates the need to pursue and adopt, over time, a consistent attitude in the pursuit of educational actions, amid a consensus among different educational factors. Continuity is imposed by the child's psychic and moral evolution itself, by the pedagogical peculiarities of consciousness formation on the one hand and by moral conduct on the other. Consistency in moral education means firmness in fulfilling the requirements formulated, in achieving a concordance between requirement and deed, between action and its appreciation.

6.3. Own Principles vs. Principles of Ethics

It is recognized by all humanity that the contents of the ten biblical commandments are all valid and validated ethical laws universally valid. From this perspective, the general practice has been institutionalized that people who violate absolute ethical precepts must be prepared to bear the consequences regardless of whether these precepts have been highlighted and systematized in ethical codes or legal systems or act spontaneously through the cultural traditions of the human community. Absolute

ethical systems always promote democratic principles: good, freedom, equity. In reality, there is no distinct boundary between these approaches, they are done together and are closely linked, but in practice each is based on the principles that characterize them.

The Venn chart gives us a picture of the relationship between the principles that lead an individual and the principles of ethics.(Fig.1)
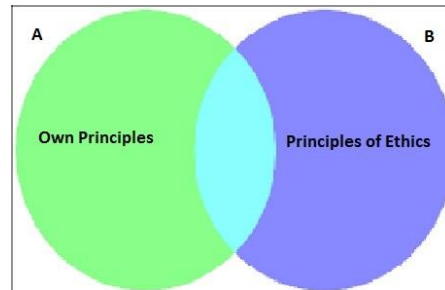

Fig.1 Venn Diagram

A Venn diagram (also called primary diagram, set diagram or logic diagram) is a diagram that shows all possible logical relations between a finite collections of different sets. These diagrams depict elements as points in the plane, and sets as regions inside closed curves.

7. Social responsibility as moral responsibility

The "ethical paradox" can be the subject of a question for the social worker: to assume the responsibility and the risks inherent in his action in the field, or to remain in moral, abstract, unrecognizable judgment this dilemma - responsibility /morality - requires the emphasis of the speech on the employee's code of conduct from "moralism" to the ethics of responsibility. This definition, a formal definition of social responsibility, requires the manager to choose and apply those actions that contribute to the welfare of the individual in consensus with the interest of the society and the organization / institution he is leading.

Social responsibility is considered to be the firm commitment of a firm / institution / organization, beyond the legal obligations or those imposed by economic restrictions, to pursue long-term goals that are in the benefit of society. The institution is considered responsible to clients, suppliers, employees, government bodies, local communities, public opinion. It is not enough that managers only proclaim the need for social responsibility and action ethics for their organizations.

7.1. Social responsibilities

According to the hierarchy included in the Code of Ethics[4], these are a set of rules that reflect the general principles of professional conduct of social assistance. It was published in the Official Gazette, Part I, no. 173/2008 and clearly shows how a social worker must present and address the recipient of social services. Thus, a worker in this branch must:
- to advocate for the improvement of social conditions (social justice);
- act to facilitate access to services for vulnerable, disadvantaged or disadvantaged people;
- promote conditions that encourage respect for social and cultural diversity;
- promote policies and practices that encourage awareness and respect for human diversity;

- to facilitate and inform the public about the participation in community life and the social changes that occur;
- to provide professional services in emergency situations, according to the law and professional norms;
- recognize the fundamental importance of interpersonal relationships and promote them in professional practice, encouraging relationships between people in order to promote, restore, maintain and / or improve the quality of life;
- ensure respect for fundamental human rights and the application of international law to which Romania has adhered.

Beyond creating an ethical culture, issues that arise in human resource management are mainly related to the phenomenon of discrimination, an opposite to equity. Discrimination is the illegal practice of treating some individuals less favorably than others because they are different in sex, religion, race, etc.

A good coordination of the social protection system activity, which aims at providing quality social services to the beneficiaries in the community or assisted in specialized centers requires the observance of a managerial ethics. Thus, reaching the "four corners" of a good leader - vision, realism, courage and ethics - is an ideal (Koestenbaum P.).

People who have subordinate groups of people must meet:
• a number of qualities, including: intelligence, memory, observation, concentration, health, integrity;
• possess knowledges in various fields: management, economics, psycho-sociology, legal, technical, general culture, etc.

Different hierarchical levels also have different characteristics (qualities); thus the most important quality that top managers have to have is the ability to decide, matched by solid managerial knowledge.

7.2. Types of managerial ethics

As in any other field, social assistance requires the observance of ethics, especially at the managerial level, for an efficient coordination of the activity, taking into account the diversity of the activities and services offered, the diversity of categories of beneficiaries of social services and last but not least the human factor Which also takes place at the level of employees and social service providers. Thus, we can distinguish four types of managerial ethics[18]:

a. Ethics of objectivity. - objectivity is an ideal, optimal, appreciation and hierarchy of values, but it is improper for the human being. Every individual is characterized by certain personality traits, which are associated with particular interests and different ways of seeing things. The depersonalization proposed by the objectivity ethics contradicts the prominent personality pattern that a manager has to represent before his subordinates, which makes us believe that impartial solutions will not automatically benefit the organization / institution as a whole.

b. The ethics of virtue and character - finds its origins in value systems that value the cultivation of great virtues, such as wisdom, courage, temperance, equity. The moral integrity of a manager implies respect, the promotion of truth, the observance of promises, and the golden rule: what you do not like to others does not do to them.

c. Ethics of rights and duties - it starts from the idea that the whole human existence is governed by the establishment of a complex of rights and duties, according to which human behaviors must be carried out. The exercise of managerial power must not be at the expense of the rights and freedoms of others.

d. The ethics of the results - it is similar to utilitarianism and it is supposed to achieve some positive results for as many people as possible and to produce negative consequences for a small number. Obviously, a decision is good insofar as it brings benefits, and bad, if it generates the harm of interests. If this is easy to quantify economically, the same is not true in the social sphere. (Tudor A., 2013, *Managerial Ethics)*

The four behavioral typologies try to solve ethical dilemmas in a distinct manner, with a direct impact on the decisions taken. The American economists have noticed that two systems of thought were created around profit as a basis for the manifestation of specific value systems: pragmatism and naturalism.

Pragmatism finds reason in the essence of the thought of the writer and political man Niccolo Machiavelli, which has also given him the name of "applied machiavellianism". The renowned Renaissance believes that any means, including deception and violence, can be used to achieve a particular purpose. As a consequence, the actions that give the best results, not accompanied by social and moral responsibilities or other factors that may cause complications, are considered the most righteous. In mitigated forms, *machiavellianism* is the basis of pragmatism, being in line with the systems of values of practical, action-oriented people. Pragmatic managers, according to this theory, do not engage in ethical issues because they are not important to them. Important are the results! However, to the extreme, pragmatism can generate serious problems by deliberately circumventing legally built and defended society systems, organizational or national ethical codes (where they exist) or even general-valid rights (right to social and individual protection, equal treatment, etc.).

Naturalism, the "invisible hand", is based on the idea of letting nature follow its course, because within it there are forces that allow the good to emerge. Naturalists reject ethical discussion, because in a natural world, ethics they seem artificial.

With reference to a much broader scope (at least by the ideal that follows it), it is noticeable - especially in business, and the ethical system called absolutism. Absolutism is based on absolute ethical laws, universal values, actions or things considered good or bad anywhere in time or space.

The ideal is the projection of the maximum development of human capacities, of mankind in man, that is, of what gives true value and distinction to the existence of man. The ideal in ethics expresses the essence of the image of realizing the personality in freedom and respecting law and order; Expression of personality in its dignity and manifestation of the virtues that human is capable and must prove, aware of his own value and persevere in his effort to satisfy the principle of becoming as a Human (person), a principle - command and indulgence - with functionality in Individual and social plan, which opens the understanding of the necessity of transcending mankind as a demographic and historical reality, shaping humanity as a value ideal that crystallizes over time by developing moral consciousness. As Traian Herseni (1982) observes, "mankind shows what we are, while humanity shows what we need to be."

8. Employee perception of ethical compliance in social assistance services

For a long time, in our country, implicitly in the social assistance system, ethical principles and values, I was more like a system of unwritten rules or "good practices", respected more or less by the employees in system.

The ethical standards promoted and supported by the European Union[22] constituted a special support for the development at national level of the ethical norms

regarding the practices and procedures for their implementation in the social assistance system and the drafting of the ethical code and its assumption of the legislative system[4].

The research focused on the analysis of the specialized documents and the legislation in the field, realizing their theoretical and practical approach, and on the other hand, we considered it appropriate to study the subjective and objective dimensions of the employees' perception within the "Sf. Nicolae" residential center in Bucharest, which serves beneficiaries (children) of the social assistance system. We conducted a quantitative research using the questionnaire-based oral survey method applied to 30 people (21 women and 9 men) - direct workers with beneficiaries, nurses, nurses, social workers, social workers, psychologists.

Taking into account the best interests of the child, a first concern is to provide them with efficient and quality services. The respondents' answers on the correlation between respecting ethical values by employees and improving their quality of life show that: a significant percentage 46.4% , considers that *is not necessarily* a criterion for the quality of life of the assisted, while 32.1 % affirms that *it is largely dependent on the beneficiary*, and only 21.4% consider it *absolutely necessary* to respect the ethical values as a basis for building a high quality life of the beneficiaries of the protection system.(Fig.2)
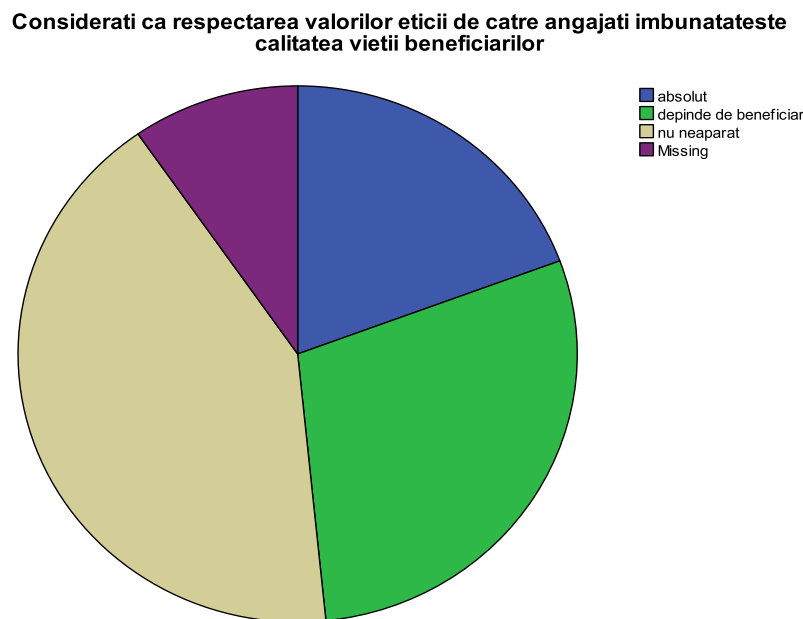

Considerati ca respectarea valorilor eticii de catre angajati imbunatateste calitatea vietii beneficiarilor

■ absolut
■ depinde de beneficiar
■ nu neaparat
■ Missing

Fig.2 Compliance with ethical values by employees improves the quality of life of the beneficiaries

Employees' opinion on the need to develop and implement codes of conduct for the observance of professional ethics is expressed in figures as follows: 67,7% consider that *the existence of norms of conduct define and support respect for good professional ethics*, while only 9.7% do *not consider this necessary*.(Fig.3)

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Sunt necesare norme de conduita pentru a respecta etica profesionala
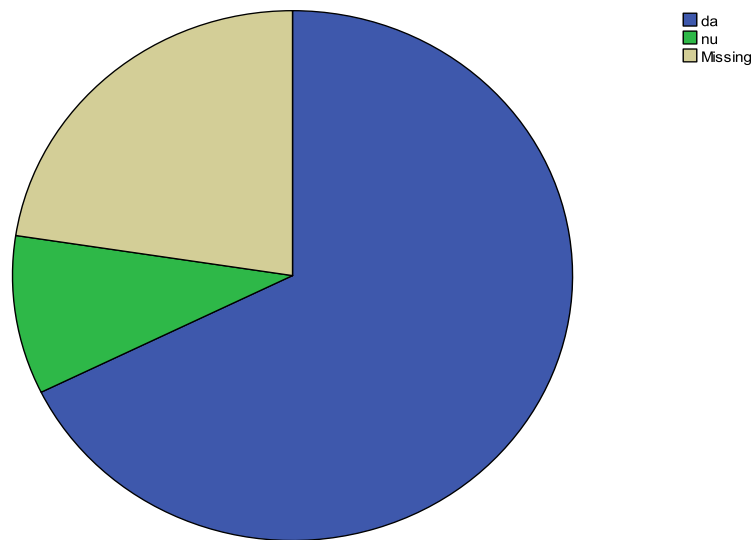

da
nu
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Fig.3 The need for rules of conduct for the observance of professional ethics

Regarding the fact that employees, given the existence of legislation in the field, are guided by a code of ethics in their work, the subjects responded as follows: a percentage of 78.6% have stated *that their work is guided by a code of ethics used by the institution they work on*, 14.3% states that they *follow the ethics code for their own reasons*, and 7.1% mentions *other considerations*.(Fig.4)

Dumneavoastra va ghidati dupa un anumit cod de etica in munca

institutia la care lucrati il utilizeaza
din considerente proprii
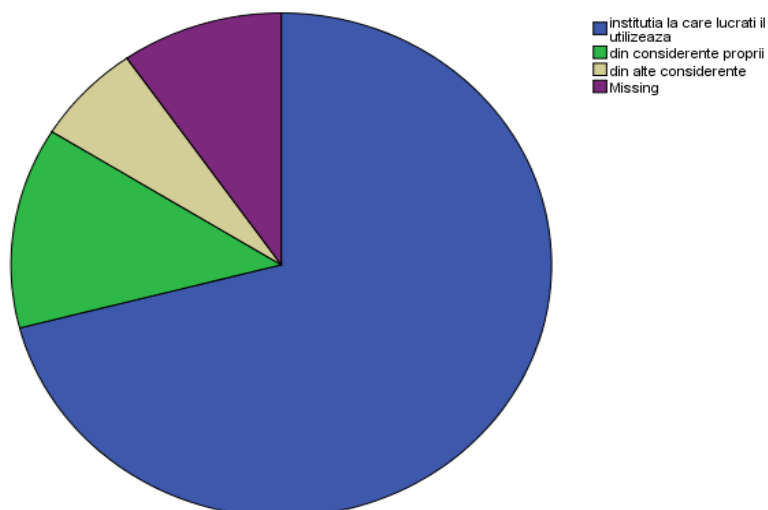din alte considerente
Missing

Fig.4 Use a code of ethics in work because: (blue) the institution you are working with uses it; (green) for the reasons of the person; (gray) for other reasons

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Subjects participating in the research considered that 77.4% that non-compliance with ethical standards could lead to corruption, while 9.7% did not consider this to be true. The rest of the survey participants did not respond.

In the employees' opinion about the important notions that should be highlighted and developed in an ethics code, there is *morality* - with a percentage 61.3%, followed by *the level of competence* with 12.9%, the *confidentiality* and the *sanctions* being equal to a percentage 6.5%.(Fig.5)

Care din urmatoarele aspecte considerati ca ar trebui sa fie detaliate intr-un cod de etica

Legend:
- rolul asociatiilor profesionale
- nivelul de competenta
- moralitate
- confidentialitate
- sanctiuni in caz de malpraxis
- obligativitatea specializarii si informarii continue
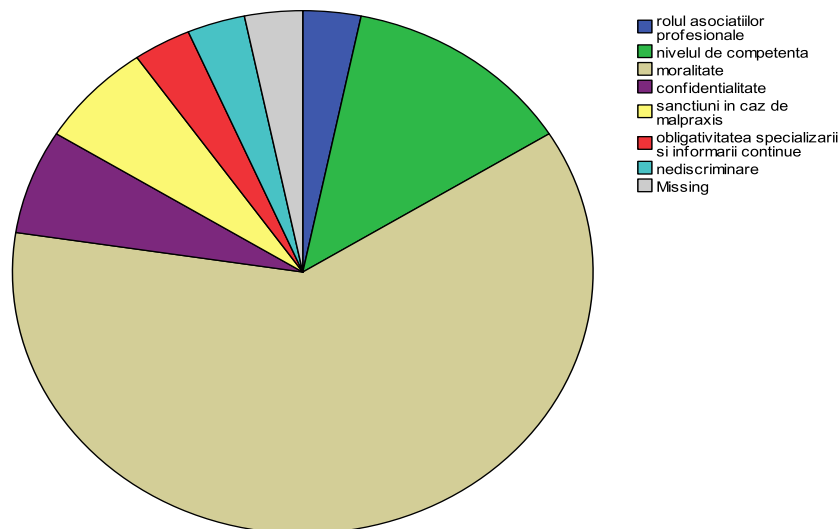- nediscriminare
- Missing

Fig.5 Important issues necessary to be detailed in the code of ethics: 1.(gray) morality; 2.(green) level of competence; 3.(purple) confidentiality; 4.(yellow) sanctions

Managerial ethics gained a great importance lately in our country, which was also evidenced by the results obtained from the application of the questionnaire, the respondents responding *totally* as a percentage 61.3%, 25.8% - partially, and a percentage of 6.5% consider that *in a small part* it would have a significant influence.(Fig.6)

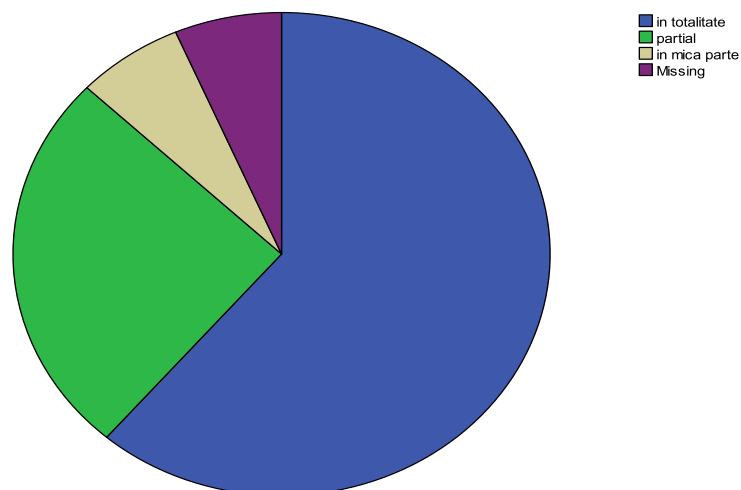**Respectarea eticii manageriale influenteaza si motiveaza activitatea angajatilor**

Legend:
- in totalitate
- partial
- in mica parte
- Missing

Fig.6 Observance of managerial ethics influences and motivates the work of employees

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Being a dedicated and community-focused area, one of the important questions referred to the degree of involvement of civil society in social assistance. Thus, a high percentage 46.4% considers that the involvement of society takes place *at an average level,* 32.1% have stated that the degree of involvement *is low*, whereas only 10.7% consider at *the high level* the involvement of society, respectively the community in this area of activity.(Fig.7)

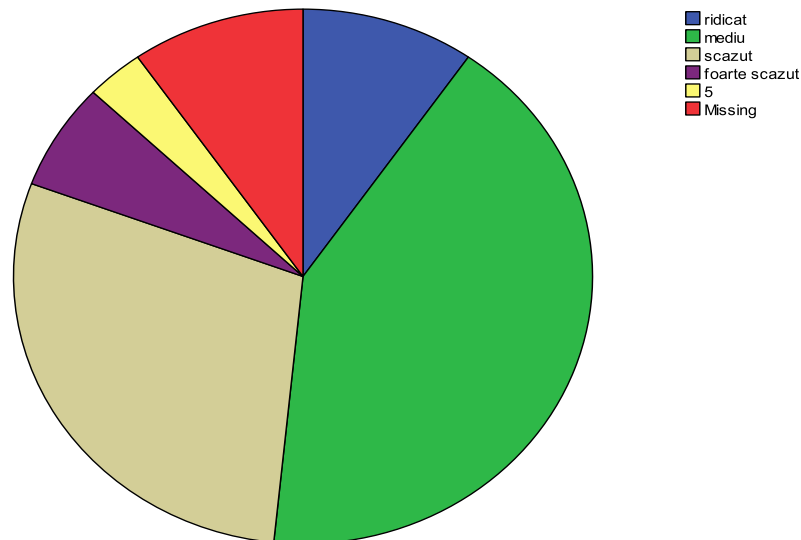**Cum apreciati gradul de implicare al societatii civile in sistemul de as.soc**

Fig.7 The degree of involvement of civil society in the social assistance system: 1.(green) medium; 2.(gray) low; 3.(blue) high; 4.(purple) very low

Applying the values, norms and principles of ethics is the responsibility of all the involvement of employees of the protection system, but also of citizens in general, could add value to the work itself, meant to help those in difficulty at some point.

9. Conclusions

Both institutions and organizations are changing as time passes. Also in post-December (1989) Romania, with the political, economic and social changes, a process of reorganizing the institutions and their directions for action has taken place through a sudden transition from an overly centralized system to an excessively liberalized one. Both institutions and organizations have been forced to abandon certain traditions and adopt new rules where competition has already been exacerbated. To explore the opportunities for action, new skills have been developed, which is also true in ethics.

Loyalty and mutual support spread as far and in all directions as business and services, both within and outside institutions. Moral debt and obligations extend to colleagues, staff and beneficiaries, all of whom need honored contracts and services and understanding. In social assistance we have a moral obligation towards the community, because its specific activity, like the political system, has been designed to serve the needs of society and not the other way round. Every institution or organization has a certain economic and social responsibility.

Ethics and morals are perceived as a simple umbrella under which the institution's internal and external relations are covered, but it cannot be clearly delineated what is right of what is wrong.

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Respect for people is the fundamental principle of ethics that involves the obligation to respect the dignity, freedom of thought and expression of all people. This principle implies the cultivation within institutions and social assistance organizations of values of honesty, honesty, sincerity and development of the potential of employees in the ascension.[19]

"Without ethical culture, there is no salvation for humanity." (Albert Einstein, 1951)

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