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## University Students' Attitude to Environmental Pollution and Religion

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### ABSTRACT

From the day the individual enters the realm of existence, he necessarily enters into a mutual relationship with the environment. As a result of this relationship process, situations both beneficial and detrimental to the environment have emerged at the same time. The consequences to the detriment of the environment can be categorized in two ways. Climate change and ecological pollution. There are two main causes of climate change: natural and human-induced. The primary and natural causes are as follows. Due to the flattening of the Earth's orbit around the Sun every 95,000 years and the shifting of the current systems and winds in the oceans, volcanic eruptions, etc., due to continental shifts. However, the main reason for climate change is that the greenhouse gas in the atmosphere has risen above the required values. The main cause of climate change is not nature but human actions. Although there are greenhouse gases such as water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and per fluorocarbons in the atmosphere, the most common of these gases and the most intense effect on global warming, that is, on climate change, is carbon dioxide. The use of fossil fuels for purposes such as energy production and heating, industrialization, transportation, land change, waste management and agricultural activities increase the emission of carbon dioxide gas, which triggers climate change, to nature. However, the negative impact of the actions of the individual on the nature is not only about the climate change process. The advances in science and technology, directed by the individual's effort to dominate nature, have brought about the unlimited exploitation of nature. In addition to climate change, this situation has brought air, soil, water and sound pollution, the consumption of natural resources, the destruction of animal and plant species, and the resulting very serious environmental problems have become a threat to nature and humanity. Environmental problems, especially caused by technological developments and industrial wastes, have long exceeded local borders and reached global dimensions. For this reason, environmental problems, one of the ecological crises of the age of globalization with climate change, have emerged as an important problem that human beings need to solve. In this context, many legal regulations have been made at the national and international level to protect the environment. For example, the "Kyoto Protocol", signed with the participation of many countries, entered into force on February 16, 2005, and the "Paris Climate Agreement" was signed on December 12, 2015. In the local sense, symposiums were held on topics such as "Environmental Law", "Environment and Ethics", protection and improvement of the environment, which is the common living space of all citizens, prevention of water, soil and air pollution, and the most appropriate use and protection of land and natural resources in urban and rural areas, Environmental laws have been enacted for the purposes of preserving plants and animals, natural and historical riches, and improving the health, civilization and living standards of present and future generations. Although all these activities are important, they have not been effective at the desired level in solving the problem. Today, where the consumption frenzy continues at full speed, the solution of this problem requires an interdisciplinary study. For this reason, both religious and secular perspectives have to be used jointly in the solution of environmental problems. Because many factors such as economy, politics, religion, ideology, management, science, technology, industry and population size direct people's attitudes and behaviors towards the environment. Based on the necessity of considering all these factors as a whole, environmental problems, which were previously seen as a problem to be solved by ecologists, have become the problems of ethics, philosophy, law and theology and have gained an interdisciplinary character. It is possible to find teachings on the relationship between man and the environment in many of the religious traditions around the world. Many of those who belong to these traditions are of the opinion that their beliefs have a positive view of the environment. However, some Western scientists, in particular, have gone so far as to claim that environmental problems stem from religious beliefs. This research was carried out to measure the effect of subjective religiosity perceptions of university students studying in Turkey on their attitudes towards environmental pollution, and also to measure and evaluate the attitudes and behaviors of university youth towards environmental pollution and the deterioration of ecological balance, which is caused by the effect of modern life. This research, which is a study carried out by revealing objective data through an attitude scale developed for environmental pollution, that is, using the survey technique, is the product of an e-survey study applied in the digital environment.

**Key Words:** *Environment, Environmental Pollution, Subjective Perception of Religiosity, Attitude.*

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of environment is as old as the concept of nature itself. Air, water, food, sunlight, etc. It is a compound term denoting the conditions in which organisms composed of these elements develop and become the source of life for all living and non-living beings, including plant life. The term also includes atmospheric temperature, wind and speed. Before understanding what "Pollution" is, it is equally necessary to know what "pollution" is. For this purpose, let's first examine the basic concepts of research and the theoretical background of the research.

### 1. Theoretical Background

#### 1.1. Basic Concepts of the Research

##### 1.1.1. The Definition of the Pollution

“According to Section 1(3) of the United Kingdom Environmental Protection Act 1990, the term 'Pollution' means: The release from any process (any environmental environment) of substances that may cause harm to humans or other living organisms supported by the environment. Pollution occurs when it has the potential to cause harm. Human harm is not limited to physical injury, but includes damage to any of the senses or damage to property, so odor and noise that do not cause injury can create pollution. It may include harm to living organisms, damage to their health, or interference with the ecological systems of which they are a part.”<sup>1</sup>

##### 1.1.2. Types of Pollutions

“Environmental pollution can be broadly classified as follows: (1) Natural pollution; (2) Man-made pollution.

1. **Natural Pollution:** Environment, earthquakes, floods, drought, tornadoes etc. It is frequently polluted due to natural events such as.

2. **Human Caused Pollution:** Human activities. Environmental pollution can also be classified as air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, food pollution, noise pollution and radioactive pollution.”<sup>2</sup>

##### 1.1.3. The Definition of Attitude

Attitude is an individual's tendency to love, hate, like, or dislike a psychological object, either positively or negatively. Schmidt (1968) defines attitude as follows. Attitude is a tendency that is attributed to an individual and that regularly forms his thoughts, feelings and behaviors about a psychological object.

**1-Thinking element;**

**2-Emotion element;**

**3-Behavior element;**

can be grouped under three headings.”<sup>3</sup>“Perception or knowledge is a stand-alone organization, belief is an organization of organizations

**1-In the form of knowledge**

**2- In the form of faith**

**3-In the form of opinion;**

exist and are value-laden.”<sup>4</sup>

##### 1.1.1.4. Individual's Self-Related Subjective Perception of Religiosity

The tendency or perception of religiosity towards oneself is called subjective or subjective religiosity perception. This form of perception is the way of perceiving one's own religiosity. In this study, a subjective religiosity perception question was asked with two options: "I am conservative" or "I am not conservative".

##### 1.1.4. Ecology and the Disruption of Ecological Balance

“It is the science that studies the interrelationships that determine the regional distribution and amount of organisms. The term ecology was first used scientifically in 1869, in a study by German biologist Haeckel on plant ecology. Restrained competition normally operates on a limited scale, as species are interdependent, engaging in a symbiotic relationship in a web of life that allows them to adapt successfully to each other and to nature. This balance is temporarily disturbed when new species begin to dominate. Here, concepts such as ecological occupation, domination

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<sup>1</sup> Appannagari, Ramamohana Reddy, “Environmental Pollution Causes and Consequences: A Study”, North Asian International Research Journal of Social Science & Humanities, August/2017, Vol:III, Number: VIII., p.152.

<sup>2</sup>Appannagari, “Environmental Pollution Causes and Consequences: A Study”, p.152.

<sup>3</sup> Arslanltürk Zeki & Amman Tayfun; Sosyoloji, İstanbul: Çamlıca Publications, 2013, p.157-158. Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı & Zeynep Cemalcılar, Dünden Bugüne İnsan ve İnsanlar, İstanbul: Evrim Publications, 2017, p.129-140.

<sup>4</sup> Arslanltürk & Amman; Sosyoloji, p.158-159.

and displacement are used to express the process of deterioration of the ecological balance.”<sup>5</sup>

### 1.2. Factors Affecting Environmental Pollution

Enlightening us with the above information, Appannagari lists the causes of environmental pollution as follows.

“1-Population Growth, 2-Increased General Welfare and Economic Growth 3-Nature of Modern Technology, 4-Deforestation, 5-Agricultural Development, 6-Industrial Development Urbanization, 7-Urbanization, 8-Unplanned Urbanization, 9-Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plants, 10-Poverty.”<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Applied Research

### 2.1. Methodology

In this study, it was conducted to measure the effect of subjective religiosity perceptions of university students studying in Turkey on their attitudes towards environmental pollution, and also to measure and evaluate the attitudes and behaviors of university youth towards environmental pollution and the deterioration of ecological balance, which occurs with the effect of modern life. This research, which is a study carried out by revealing objective data through an attitude scale developed for environmental pollution, that is, using the survey technique, is the product of an e-survey study applied in the digital environment.

The research has two main hypotheses. These hypotheses are:

1-University students are highly sensitive about environmental pollution.

2- Those who define themselves as conservative are more sensitive about the environment than those who say they are not conservative.

The sub-hypotheses of the research are as follows.

1- University students want to contribute to the efforts of protecting the ecological balance to a large extent.

2- University students are ready to support all kinds of initiatives to protect the environment.

3- University students support new efforts and initiatives to protect the balance of nature in every sense.

The findings of this research will be presented in the context of the results of a survey conducted in November 2022 to determine the relationship between attitudes towards environmental pollution and religiosity in the digital environment.

## 3. Results

First, let's consider the demographic elements of the sample. These factors are factors such as age, gender, economic status.

### 3.1. Distribution of the Sample by Gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Female	195	63
Male	114	37
Toplam	309	100

While 63% of the students participating in the inquiry were female students; There is a group of 37% male students.

### 3.2. The Distribution of Sample By Age

Age	Number	Percent
20-25	257	83
Over 26	52	27
Toplam	309	100

83% of the students participating in this inquiry belong to the age range of 20-25, while 27% are distributed among over 26 age groups.

### 3.3. The Distribution of the Sample by the University Which The Students Educated

The Name of the University Which The Students Educated	Number	Percent
Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University	171	55,33
KafkasUniversity	88	28,47
Tokat Gazi OsmanpashaUniversity	19	6,14
Bursa UludagUniversity	7	2,26
BilecikSheichEdebaliUniversity	1	0,32

<sup>5</sup> Gordon Marshall, *Sosyoloji Sözlüğü*, translation: Osman Akinhay & Derya Kömürçü, Ankara, Bilim ve Sanat Publications, 1999, p. 175-176.

<sup>6</sup> Appannagari, “Environmental Pollution Causes and Consequences: A Study”, s.154-161. James Gustave Speth, *Environmental Pollution: A Long-Term Perspective*; World Resources Institute, National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C., 1988; J. Jeffrey Peirce & P. Aarne Vesilind & Ruth F. Weiner; *Environmental Pollution and Control*, Elsevier Science & Technology Books, 1997.

Yıldız Teknik University	2	0,64
Alanya Alaaddin KeykubatUniversity	2	0,64
Marmara University	1	0,32
Recep Tayyip Erdogan University	1	0,32
Osmaniye Korkut-Ata University	1	0,32
Bülent Ecevit University	2	0,64
ÇukurovaUniversity	1	0,32
Trakya University	1	0,32
Selçuk University	1	0,32
Nahçıvan Devlet University	1	0,32
İslami Azat University	1	0,32
İstanbul GelişimUniversity	1	0,32
Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University	1	0,32
KırklareliUniversity	1	0,32
Atatürk University	2	0,64
İğdirUniversity	4	1,29

83% of the learners joining in this inquiry are the students of Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University and Kafkas University.

### 3.4. The Distribution of the Sample by The Faculty Which the Students Educated

The Name of The Faculty Which the Students Educated	Number	Percent
Theology Faculty	80	25,88
İslamic Sciences Faculty	80	25,88
Social Studies Teaching	25	8,09
Painting Teaching	38	12,62
Music Teaching	11	3,55
Faculty of Fine Arts	3	0,97
Physical Education Teaching	1	0,32
Pre-school Teaching	12	3,88
Political Information and Public Administration	2	0,64
Public Relations	1	0,32
Classroom Teaching	1	0,32
Turkish Teaching	1	0,32
Psychological Counseling and Guidance	1	0,32
Arabic Language and Rhetoric	1	0,32
Those who do not specify	51	16,50

While 52% of the learners joining in this inquiry were from the Faculty of Theology and Islamic Sciences, 47% were from other faculties.

### 3.5. Distribution of the Sample by Approach to Religion

Approach to Religion	Number	Percent
I am conservative	240	%77,7
I am not conservative	56	%18.1
Unanswered	13	%4.2

While 78% of the learners joining in this inquiry define themselves as conservative; 18% said “I am not conservative”.

### 3.6. Frequency Analysis Breakdown of the Distribution of the Sample According to the Questions Given About the Environment

	Environmental Survey Frequency Analysis Table	I don't agree at all		I do not agree		I'm undecided		I agree		Absolutely I agree		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	I Think Exhaust Gases From Vehicles Cause Global Warming.	11	3.6	7	2.3	21	6.8	37	12	233	75.4	309	100
2	I do not believe that global warming is real.	203	65.7	21	6.8	17	5.5	6	1.9	62	20.1	309	100
3	I am not worried about the depletion of the ozone layer.	165	53.4	29	8.4	39	12.6	17	5.5	62	20.1	309	100
4	Transporting Petroleum and Derivative Products by Vehicles such as Tankers and Ships worries me.	27	8.7	19	6.1	71	23	46	14.9	146	47.2	309	100
5	I take care not to disturb people while talking or using a noisy electronic device.	6	1.9	3	1	20	6.5	32	10.4	248	80.3	309	100
6	I support the work done to prevent environmental pollution.	2	0.6	3	1	19	6.1	40	12.9	245	79.3	309	100
7	I value people who work to prevent environmental pollution.	1	0.3	1	0.3	8	2.6	26	8.4	273	88.3	309	100
8	Reading books and magazines about environmental pollution is boring.	120	38.8	66	21.4	82	26.5	21	6.8	20	6.5	309	100
9	Unplanned and crookedurbanization does not disturb me.	200	64.7	48	15.5	19	6.1	12	3.9	30	9.7	309	100
10	I am aware that acid rain pollutes our underground water resources.	12	3.9	8	2.6	42	13.6	48	15.5	199	64.4	309	100
11	I do not warn those who throw garbage on the	158	51.1	63	20.4	58	18.8	18	5.8	12	3.9	309	100

	ground.												
12	<b>I throw wastes such as paper, plastic, glass into recycling bins.</b>	11	3.6	13	4.2	66	21.4	51	16.5	168	54.4	309	100
13	<b>Joining associations and organizations related to environmental pollution is a waste of time for me.</b>	158	51.1	68	22	53	17.2	17	5.5	13	4.2	309	100
14	<b>I like to inform other people about environmental pollution.</b>	8	2.6	8	2.6	40	12.9	67	21.7	186	60.2	309	100
15	<b>I enjoy participating in tree planting activities.</b>	6	1.9	5	1.6	44	14.2	62	20.1	192	62.1	309	100

The results of the Frequency Analysis Breakdown of the Distribution of the Sample According to the Questions Given About the Environment can be summarized as follows.

- While 78% of the learners joining in this inquiry define themselves as conservative; 18% said “I am not conservative”.
- 75% of the learners joining in this inquiry explained that they believed that exhaust gas causes global warming.
- 66% of the respondents stated that they believe that global warming is real.
- 66% of the respondents stated that they are concerned about the depletion of the ozone layer.
- Nearly 55% of the respondents stated that they are against the transportation of petroleum-derived fuels by vehicles such as tankers, ships, etc.
- 80% of the respondents stated that they try not to disturb the environment while using digital devices.
- 80% of the respondents stated that they support the work done to prevent environmental pollution.
- 89% of the respondents stated that they value people who work to prevent environmental pollution.
- 59% of the respondents stated that it is not boring to read about environmental pollution.
- 65% of the respondents said that unplanned and unplanned urbanization bothers them.
- 65% of the respondents stated that they are aware of the fact that acid rain pollutes our underground water resources.
- 71% of the respondents stated that they warned those who throw garbage on the ground.
- 81% of the respondents stated that they throw waste such as paper, plastic and glass into recycling bins.
- 77% of the respondents stated that joining associations and organizations related to environmental pollution is not a waste of time for them.
- 89% of the respondents stated that they like to inform other people about environmental pollution.
- 82% of those who participated in the research stated that they enjoyed participating in activities related to planting trees.

#### 4. Analysis of Relationships Between Variables

In the analysis of the relationship between the variables of this study, especially gender, age and how university students define themselves in terms of religion were accepted as independent variables. As a result, no significant similarity relationship was found between the gender variable and the attitude towards the environment.

However;

1. **Between the independent variable of age and the dependent variable of noise pollution,**
2. **With the second approach to religion, “I value people who work to prevent environmental pollution.” among the dependent variable,**
3. **With an approach to religion, "I do not warn those who throw garbage on the ground." among the dependent variable,**
4. **With an approach to religion “I like to inform other people about environmental pollution.” among the dependent variable,**
5. **With an approach to religion, “I happily participate in activities related to planting trees.” among the dependent variable,**

significant similarity relationship was detected.

##### 4.1. Significant Similarity Relationship Between Age Independent Variable and Noise Pollution Dependent Variable

The overwhelming majority of the subjects aged between 20 and 25 who participated in our research said, "I take care not to disturb people when I am talking or using a noisy electronic device." Since they said they absolutely agree with the sentence, there is a significant relationship.

##### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	50,212 <sup>a</sup>	12	,000

Likelihood Ratio	28,594	12	,005
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,744	1	,029
McNemar-Bowker Test	.	.	<sup>b</sup>
N of Valid Cases	309		

a. 14 cells (70,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,12.

b. Computed only for a PxP table, where P must be greater than 1.

Thus, in this analysis, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between the age independent variable and the noise pollution dependent variable.

#### 4.2. A Significant Similarity Relationship Between Approach to Religion and the Value Given to People Trying to Prevent Environmental Pollution

A significant relationship was found between the variables, since the overwhelming majority of the subjects who participated in our study who said they were conservative, stated that they valued people who tried to prevent environmental pollution with a number above 230 and gave the answer I absolutely agree to this question.

##### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14,270 <sup>a</sup>	4	,006
Likelihood Ratio	11,701	4	,020
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,027	1	,008
McNemar-Bowker Test	.	.	<sup>b</sup>
N of Valid Cases	297		

a. 6 cells (60,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,19.

b. Computed only for a PxP table, where P must be greater than 1.

Thus, in this analysis, there is a significant relationship between the approach to religion and the value given to people trying to prevent environmental pollution.

#### 4.3A Significant Similarity Relationship Between Approach to Religion and Attitude to Warn Those Who Throw Garbage On The Ground

It has been determined that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable of approach to religion and the variable of attitude towards environmental pollution, since the overwhelming majority of the subjects who participated in our study who say they are conservative, say that we should warn those who throw garbage on the ground with a reverse reading of more than 150.

##### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14,338 <sup>a</sup>	4	,006
Likelihood Ratio	12,953	4	,012
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,544	1	,033
McNemar-Bowker Test	.	.	<sup>b</sup>
N of Valid Cases	297		

a. 2 cells (20,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,89.

b. Computed only for a PxP table, where P must be greater than 1.

Thus, in this analysis, there is a significant relationship between the approach to religion and the attitude towards environmental pollution.

#### 4.4. Significant Similarity Relationship Between Approach to Religion and Efforts to Inform People on Environmental Pollution

It has been determined that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable of approach to religion and the dependent variable of informing the public about environmental pollution, as the overwhelming majority of the subjects who participated in our research, who say they are conservative, stated that they would like

to inform other people about the environment, with a number of close to 150, and they strongly agree with their views

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17,422 <sup>a</sup>	4	,002
Likelihood Ratio	14,701	4	,005
Linear-by-Linear Association	6,463	1	,011
McNemar-Bowker Test	.	.	. <sup>b</sup>
N of Valid Cases	297		

a. 2 cells (20,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,51.

b. Computed only for a P x P table, where P must be greater than 1.

Thus, in this analysis, there is a significant relationship between the approach to religion and the attitude of informing people about environmental pollution.

#### 4.5. Significant Similarity Relationship Between Approach to Religion and Attitude to Tree Planting

The overwhelming majority of those who said they were conservative among the subjects who participated in our research, with a number of over 160, "I happily participate in activities related to tree planting." It has been determined that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable of approach to religion and the dependent variable of informing the public about environmental pollution.

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18,369 <sup>a</sup>	4	,001
Likelihood Ratio	14,554	4	,006
Linear-by-Linear Association	9,663	1	,002
McNemar-Bowker Test	.	.	. <sup>b</sup>
N of Valid Cases	297		

a. 4 cells (40,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,94.

b. Computed only for a P x P table, where P must be greater than 1.

Thus, in this analysis, there is a significant relationship between the approach to religion and the attitude towards planting trees.

#### General Evaluation and Conclusion

When we look at the research findings again, it will be heard that our hypotheses were confirmed. And young people are mostly sensitive and sensitive to environmental pollution. They clearly stated this in the questionnaire administered to them.

Because;

- While 78% of the learners joining in this inquiry define themselves as conservative; 18% said "I am not conservative".
- 75% of the learners joining in this inquiry stated that they believed that exhaust gas causes global warming.
- 66% of the respondents stated that they believe that global warming is real.
- 66% of the respondents stated that they are concerned about the depletion of the ozone layer.
- Nearly 55% of the respondents stated that they are against the transportation of petroleum-derived fuels by vehicles such as tankers, ships, etc.
- 80% of the respondents stated that they try not to disturb the environment while using digital devices.
- 80% of the respondents stated that they support the work done to prevent environmental pollution.
- 89% of the respondents stated that they value people who work to prevent environmental pollution.
- 59% of the respondents stated that it is not boring to read about environmental pollution.
- 65% of the respondents said that unplanned and unplanned urbanization bothers them.
- 65% of the respondents stated that they are aware of the fact that acid rain pollutes our underground water resources.
- 71% of the respondents stated that they warned those who throw garbage on the ground.
- 81% of the respondents stated that they throw waste such as paper, plastic and glass into recycling bins.
- 77% of the respondents stated that joining associations and organizations related to environmental pollution is not a waste of time for them.

- 89% of the respondents stated that they like to inform other people about environmental pollution.
- 82% of those who participated in the research stated that they enjoyed participating in activities related to planting trees.
- In addition, on the analysis of relations between variables between age independent variable and noise pollution dependent variable, "I value people who work to prevent environmental pollution." among the dependent variable, with an approach to religion "I do not warn those who throw garbage on the ground." among the dependent variable, with an approach to religion "I like to inform other people about environmental pollution." among the dependent variable, with an approach to religion, "I happily participate in activities related to planting trees." among the dependent variable, significant similarity relationship was detected.

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