Attitudes and Perspectives Towards Composting, Recycling, and Environmental Education of NNMC Students Spring 2019

Alexa Jaramillo

Northern New Mexico College

Department of BAIS : Psychology

Abstract

Climate change is an issue we need to address not only for the survival of human-kind but for the prosperity of all life. I chose to research attitudes towards recycling and composting as well as the effects of environmental education and having curbside pickup programs in our communities in relation to increased participation with recycling and composting. The literature shows this cause-and-effect relationship: people are more likely to participate in recycling and composting if eco-friendly programs and facilities are more easily accessible and if people are more educated about the effects of climate change, and how recycling and composting makes a difference in combating it.

Introduction

Climate change is a world-wide problem that affects each-and-every one-of-us and is why we should all participate to address and fix these issues before it is too late. It is our responsibility to find solutions to these issues within our communities and part of this is making composting and recycling a solid foundation within our communities.

Theory

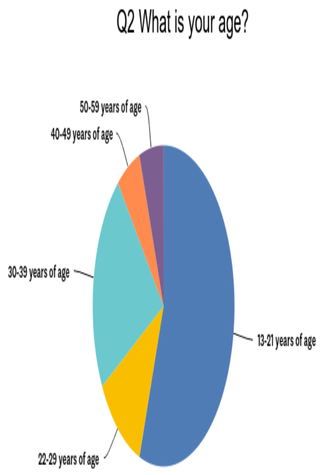
Increased recycling, regenerative farming, and environmental education through support of community will help reverse the effects of climate change.

Hypothesis

Increasing accessibility to recycling in curbside pickup programs as well as greater education about climate change will increase the participation in recycling and composting. The null hypothesis would be there is no relation to increased participation and education of climate change and curbside pickup programs.

Data Collection and Methods

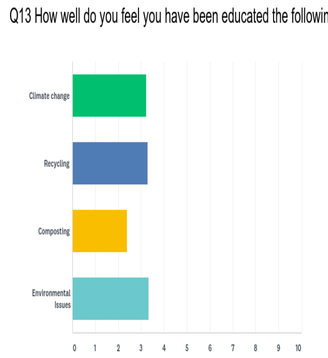
Out of the entire population of students at Northern New Mexico College (NNMC), I obtained data from 18 students from a psychology 101 class to give a general look into the attitudes and perspectives of NNMC students towards recycling, composting, farming, and environmental education. I wished to conduct random sampling because it is the most ethical and unbiased form of research data collection, however, because I was running out of time and there were not enough students in the class I chose through random sampling I chose the psychology 101 class through convenience sampling. I gave each-student in this Psychology 101 class completed a 16 question survey with approval from their teacher.

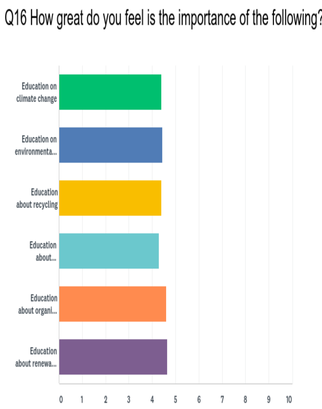


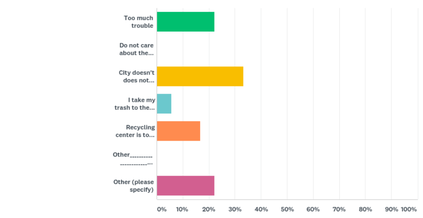
	Person 1's answer	Person 2's answer	Person 3's answer	Person 4's answer
Question #7	Very much and very much "Knowing why we have one and where"	Not at all and not at all	Not at all and not at all "More resources and outreach for the community"	Somewhat and somewhat "If they provide proper containers"
Question #8	A great deal and a great deal "We travel to Santa Fe N.M. for recycling"	Not at all, not at all "not own the space"	Somewhat and a great deal "If they paid"	A great deal and somewhat "Provide the proper bins for it"
Question #9	Very much and a great deal "My sister mom and dad all have a compost"	Not at all and not at all	Very much and very much "If there are positive benefits attached"	Somewhat and somewhat "If there was proper containers"
Question #10	Very Much and very much "To help the Earth, our ozone, and my child's air intake"	Not at all and not at all	Great deal and great deal "Outreach of benefits"	Somewhat and somewhat
Question # 11	"I do recycle"	Too much trouble	City doesn't provide me a recycling bin	Recycling center is too far away
Question #12	"I do compost"	"Do not own the space"	"Unaware of areas to do so"	City does not provide me a compost bin

Data Analysis and Findings

The dependent variable in this research data collection was the survey taken by the 18 students selected. I asked them how well they feel they are educated about environmental issues. I also asked them how often do they recycle and what are the reasons if they do not and how great the importance of recycling, composting, organic farming, and renewable energy in their community. The independent variables were the student's age and different perspectives and attitudes towards the questions being asked in the survey. The data I collected from the survey is both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative data that I collected were the number of students and their ages and how often or how much they recycled, composted, or were educated about environmental issues. 55.56% of students were between the ages of 13-21. The qualitative data were the comments students left about why they do or do not recycle or compost and what would help them recycle or compost more.







Discussion

My interpretation of the data I collected from these surveys is that the majority of students feel like education on composting, recycling, local organic farming, environmental issues, and renewable energy is very important and that they also feel like they do not have the enough resources from their community in education and support to incorporate recycling and composting into their lives in an easy and practical way. I believe this is because we need more hands-on environmental education and community support. Renewable energy, organic farming, education on climate change, and recycling and composting pickup programs are crucial parts of the solutions we need to combat the effects of climate change in-order-to direct a more conscious awareness to the impact we have on our environment and our ability to live healthy and sustainable lives.

Conclusions

The implications of my findings were limitation in my data from needing more students in my sample so that I could collect more accurate data and form a better analysis of the generalized whole population of students at NNMC. I do not believe I have enough data to support or reject the null hypothesis in this research experiment. Continuing in future research, I would simplify and shorten the survey and collect data from a larger sample and conduct and pretest-posttest to view a change in attitudes and perspectives from students.

References

American Society for Horticultural Science. (2016). Campus composting programs effective in educating students. Retrieved from: https://phys.org/news/2016-12-campus-composting-effective-students.html. October 7, 2018.

Bendak S, Attili AB (2017). Consumers Attitude and Behavior Towards Domestic Waste Recycling in Developing Countries: A Case Study. Adv Recycling Waste Management. 2:124. doi:10.4172/2475-7675.1000124

Collins, Lenore. (2013). Keep it out of the Landfill: Survey: Most Americans are proud to recycle. Retrieved from: https://keepitoutofthelandfill.com/category/attitudes-toward-recycling/. Web. October 7, 2018.

DeSilver, Drew. (2016). Pew Research Center: Perceptions and realities of recycling vary widely from place to place. Retrieved from: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/07/perceptions-and-realities-of-recycling-vary-widely-from-place-to-place/. Web. October 1, 2018.

Earth Day Network. Earth Day founded in 1970. Retrieved from: https://www.earthday.org/about/the-history-of-earth day/#.XBH86G2feQg.mailto. Web. Dec. 12 2018.

References

Hardin, Garret. The Tragedy of the Commons. (1968). Science 162. Pp. 1243-1248.

J. Rogelj, D. Shindell, K. Jiang, S. Fifita, P. Forster, V. Ginzburg, C. Handa, H. Kheshgi, S. Kobayashi, E. Kriegler, L. Mundaca, R. Séférian, M. V. Vilariño, 2018, Mitigation pathways compatible with 1.5˚C in the context of sustainable development. In: Global warming of 1.5˚C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5˚C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, H. O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J. B. R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M. I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, T. Waterfield (eds.)]. In Press.

Kimmerer, R. W. Braiding Sweetgrass. (2013). Minneapolis, Minn. Milkweed Editions.

Save the Whales. Organization, founded in 1977. Retrieved from: https://savethewhales.org/about/ Web. Dec. 12 2018.

Smith, Jeffrey M.; Rechenberg, Christine; Cruey, Larry; Magness, Sue; Sandman, Peggy (1997). The Impact of Recycling Education on the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors of Grade School Children. Retrieved from: https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-20479502/the-impact-of-recycling-education-on-the-knowledge. Web. October 7, 2018.

Acknowledgements

Stephanie Amadeo Marquez

NNMC