Effectiveness of Compost Programs
On Eau Claire Campus
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Introduction

- The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has a very strong recycling and composting programs.
- The focus of this study was to determine if differences existed between genders in reference to waste receptacle deposits, primarily compost bins.
- We observed two different locations in Davies Student Center.
- A coding sheet was used to determine if receptacles were used properly and if compostable materials were thrown in the trash.
- Though there are signs specifying what can be composted but the location of these signs are in obscure places.

Hypotheses

- We predict:
  - More women than men would be more likely to compost or recycle items on campus
  - More males than females would throw away materials that should have been composted

Method

Observers were stationed at two locations on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

First location was in Davies center in the student dining area.

Second location where observations were made was by the campus coffee shop in Davies center.

Observations were made March 1, 2011 and March 3, 2011 from 11:00-11:45 a.m. in Davies center in the main dining area for students and on March 7, 2011 from 11:00-11:45 a.m. in the dining area by the campus coffee shop.

Every person that walked up to the waste stations to deposit waste was observed.

Each participant was categorized as either male or female and observers estimated participants’ age.

We recorded whether participants used the waste receptacle and whether they used the right waste receptacle.

Participants use of trash instead of using the compost container for items that are biodegradable was observed as well. We noted this as well and classified it as an inappropriate way to use receptacles.

Results

- Kappa (κ) coefficient for waste receptacle choice was (κ =1.00, p< .01), gender (κ =1.00, p< .01), and proper use was (κ =1.00, p < .01.).

There was no significant difference between waste disposal use and gender, χ²(1, N = 103) = 2.315 p = .31, with a Cramer’s V=.15 indicating a small effect size.

Finally we found an interaction between compost and gender, χ²(1, N = 103) = .890 p = .34, and Cramer’s V=.093 indicating a small effect size.

Discussion

- Because this was a naturalistic observation study we could not directly receive feedback from participants about feelings and attitudes towards composting.
- The results seem to indicate that people want to compost and recycle but are poorly educated on the matter.
- More signs displaying the proper use of receptacles may help.
- People would be more likely to compost or recyle if they knew the correct way how.

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