Researchers found that 94% of participants claimed it was “everyone’s responsibility to clean up litter,” but only 1.4% of participants picked up litter 10 feet away from them at the time of their interview (Bickman, 1972). This study is consistent with studies suggesting self-report data may be less accurate than other methods of data collection such as direct observation. (Miller, 2006).

The goal of the current study was to utilize direct observation to obtain information on the frequency with which smoking occurs in areas designated by the university as smoking and non-smoking areas, and to investigate variables that may be associated with smoking frequency, such as time, temperature, and location.

**Locations**

**Human Sciences and Services:**
- Smoking: The loading dock at the southwest corner of the building
- Non-smoking: The back entrance located at the southeast corner of the building

**Towers Hall:**
- Smoking: Designated smoking area near Garfield Avenue
- Non-smoking: The western entrance to McIntyre Library

**Schneider/Phillips:**
- Smoking: The designated area to the east of Phillips Science Hall
- Non-smoking: The western entrance to Schneider Social Science Hall

**Centennial:**
- Smoking: The designated area between Centennial and Zorn Arena
- Non-smoking: The area under the awning between Centennial and Schneider

**Procedure**

Researchers recorded instances of smoking within designated smoking and non-smoking areas. Sets of researchers observed simultaneously at the designated smoking and non-smoking area of a specific location during 30-minute observation sessions. During observation sessions, researchers recorded instances of smoking in the designated area in addition to several other variables including time of day, temperature, and weather conditions. Researchers did not record any personal information or characteristics of participants. Observations took place from a distance which allowed participants to be observed. There was no interaction between observers and participants. Sets of researchers collected data simultaneously at designated smoking and non-smoking areas corresponding to the academic building.

**Results & Discussion**

**Results**

- Results indicate that, during observation hours, 72% of observed smoking occurred in areas in which the current policy prohibits smoking.
- Observed instances of smoking differed across locations, with higher rates observed at several academic buildings relative to others.
- Observed instances of smoking differed across locations for both smoking and non-smoking areas.
- Instances of smoking differed across time of day as is evident in the two Schneider/Phillips graphs above.
- Temperature was found to be positively correlated with instances of smoking.

**Discussion**

- Smoking occurred in non-smoking areas more frequently than in smoking areas, this suggests that these areas are more appealing (less effortful, closer in proximity to classes/popular spots, more comfortable).
- If the university were to enforce the policy, results from the current study may be useful in making data based decisions at the university level in order to allocate resources efficiently.
- Towers hall had the most similar frequency of smoking in smoking and non-smoking areas. Towers hall is also the only smoking area which offered overhead shelter and seating. Further researchers could investigate whether making smoking areas more appealing might shift the proportion of smoking in designated smoking areas.
- Most of the smoking that occurred at Centennial hall was under the awning on the south side of the building between Centennial and Schneider. This location may fit the criteria of a designated smoking area: away from heavily trafficked areas, building entrances, and air intakes.

The university may choose to utilize results from the current study to implement empirically driven policy that may serve as a model for other institutions.

**References**


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