

## **WHY DON'T PEOPLE RECYCLE- A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND INDIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this day and age where the amount of waste in the world is increasing each day, we as a civilization need to adopt sustainable practices. Though we have always been recycling old products to utilize in a different manner, recycling of waste was only introduced first in Switzerland in 1991. Since then, some countries have adopted and implemented schemes that have majorly reduced the waste accumulation while some countries have not. This research paper is a comparative study between the United States of America and India. By taking a total survey of 80 citizens- 40 from India and 40 from the US- this research tries to compare the attitudes and the involvement of waste (paper, food, biodegradable, and non-biodegradable waste) recycling in the population in both countries. Further, the sample size was divided into teenagers and adults to compare the attitude and level of participation between the two age groups.

The results of the study concluded that Americans participate more in recycling and have a more positive attitude towards waste disposal and preserving the environment compared to Indians. Adults take part in household chores and recycling more than teenagers in both countries. 92.5% of the people surveyed believed they had a positive attitude towards environmental conservation. The leading question of the research was whether people would recycle if they saw a friend or colleague doing it. This proves that people are influenced by their peers and would recycle to show others that they recycle rather than for the act of recycling itself. From the data accumulated there seems to be a balanced response from respondents of both countries. 75% of respondents in both countries accept that they would recycle if they saw someone else do it. This proves our hypothesis that people will recycle irrespective of their country as long as people around them are recycling, showing the role of social influence and conformity in society. One of the findings to increase the scope of recycling was found to be incentivizing the population. 65% of the population agreed an incentive such as small sums of money for every returned glass bottle, or recycling of waste in bulk will increase the participation.

**Keywords:** Recycling, adults, teenagers, attitude, environment, positive

The findings of the research paper in a presentation form:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Gq2qGOMRKewR1i1zbCClfsBOY7DCxEUBhN5VoDxxrzA/edit?usp=sharing>

**Problem:** Why do people continue to buy new products, hence creating more waste, rather than recycling old products to effectively eradicate wastage?

**Aim:** To determine how much people truly care about the environment, whether they are taking the necessary steps to preserve and recycle it, and what drives people to recycle more.

**Psychological attribute:** People's care for the environment.

**Hypothesis:** People are more prone to recycle when they see others (friends, colleagues, idols etc.) recycling.

**Experimental design:** In order to get a comparison between different age groups as well as different countries, Armaan and Dhruv simultaneously conducted their survey in America and in India and targeted two distinct age groups as well as countries. The comparative study is on two levels, the first level is between Americans and Indians, and the second level is between adults and teenagers.

**Variable:** A variable is any stimulus or event that can be measured and changed. In our research, there are no identifiable variables, however there are extraneous variables that may have affect the results.

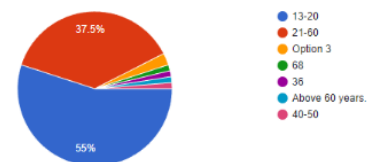
### Reviews of Literature:

1. [http://www.huffingtonpost.in/entry/psychology-of-why-people-dont-recycle-us\\_57697a7be4b087b70be605b3](http://www.huffingtonpost.in/entry/psychology-of-why-people-dont-recycle-us_57697a7be4b087b70be605b3)

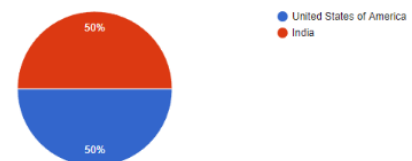
### The Psychology Behind Why People Don't Recycle

- Erin Schumaker

Age group:  
80 responses



Country of residence:  
80 responses

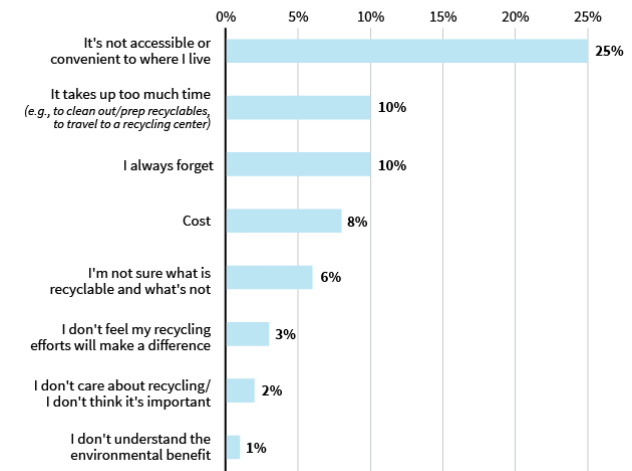


- The benefits of recycling seem straightforward. The practice reduces waste sent to landfills, conserves natural resources, reduces pollution and creates jobs. And the majority of Americans do recycle... sometimes.
- Far fewer, however, do it consistently.
  
- “Recycling is a behavior,” Brian Iacoviello, an assistant psychiatry professor at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City told The Huffington Post. “Much like exercising or eating healthily, people often engage in this behavior less than they ‘should.’”
  
- Indeed, according to a 2011 Ipsos Public Affairs survey, only half of adults recycle daily. Another third of respondents said they recycle less frequently than that, and a full 13 percent revealed that they never recycle.
- Because the reward for recycling (saving the earth) and the repercussions for infrequently recycling (damaging the environment) aren’t necessarily immediate, it can be hard for people to make the association between their daily habits and those habits’ consequences.
  
- “It’s that true paradox,” said Jessica Nolan, an associate psychology professor at the University of Scranton. “Individual behavior is both essential and inconsequential.”
  
- Nolan, who previously worked as a municipal recycling director and who researches environmental problems from a social perspective, said that identifying a community’s barriers to recycling is an important first step toward increasing participation.
  
- The primary excuse people gave for not recycling was that recycling wasn’t convenient or accessible to them.
  
- “Obviously if the infrastructure is not there, you can’t expect people to participate in a program that doesn’t exist,” Nolan said. “We know that convenience is one of the strongest predictors of whether or not somebody will participate in the available recycling program.”
  
- According to The Economist, about a quarter of Americans don’t have access to curbside recycling, meaning they have to take the extra step of dropping their cans and bottles at a recycling center if they want to participate.

- Of course, how people answer a survey isn't necessarily a reliable indicator of whether or not services are available to them. While doing an informal survey of college students in Arkansas, Nolan noticed that individuals from the same town sometimes answered differently about whether or not a recycling program existed in their hometown.
- "If you're not interested, you might think you have no recycling program, but in fact you do," she said. "If there's a drop off center, you wouldn't see it unless you went looking for it."
- HuffPost combined the reasons people said they don't recycle into three clear "types," then asked the experts what can be done to convert them:

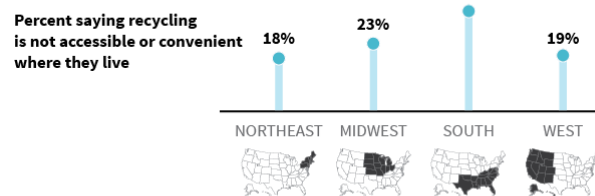
**Why People Don't Recycle**

Which of the following, if any, prevents you from recycling more?



52% of respondents said 'None of the above.'

The most common reason people don't recycle, lack of access or inconvenience, is more prevalent in the South than other regions of the country.



Source: Ipsos poll conducted May 2-5, 2011

The Huffington Post

**1. The 'No-Time' Non-Recycler**

**The excuse:** Recycling is inconvenient, time-consuming or too costly.

**The experts say:** Iacoviello thinks the crude cost-benefit analysis people do when evaluating recycling's benefit to them emphasizes the immediate over the long term.

The cost of recycling "is seen and felt more immediately than the cost to the environment of not recycling, which is why it influences behavior more," he explained.

Those who think recycling is inconvenient may be doing a similar cost-benefit analysis of how much time recycling takes compared to how easy they perceive the activity to be.

"Once you've got your system in place, it's really not that hard," Nolan said. "The perceived difficulty of doing something is always greater."

**Targeted intervention:** Structural solutions are fundamental to getting more people to participate in environment efforts, according to Nolan.

If, for example, citizens say their town's drop off program is inconvenient, instituting a curbside program could improve recycling participation rates. Rural communities may need to think more creatively; Nolan suggested partnerships with grocery stores, convenient drop-off sites because people are already visiting them.

Or, she said, "If you see recycling as a value-added activity, why not charge a little more for trash [services] and then make recycling [pickup] free? There are structural ways that you can incentivize recycling."

## 2. The Aluminum Can Confuser

**The excuse:** Isn't sure what's recyclable and what's not; doesn't understand recycling's benefit.

**The experts say:** Recycling can be confusing. It differs from community to community and rules about recycling have changed over time.

And recycling contamination — when non-recyclables are mixed in with recyclables, rendering the whole batch useless — is a real issue. (Pro tip: plastic bags CANNOT go in the recycling bin.)

"There's always that tension between getting people to participate and making sure you end up with a product, rather than just a waste stream," Nolan said.

**Targeted intervention:** Uniform educational materials across communities could help eliminate confusion, even if those communities accept different materials as recyclable.

Nolan suggested having one single image for a given material that's used everywhere. "If you take glass, then this is the sticker for glass," she explained. "If you take metal, this is the sticker for which metals you can put in. The idea is to make it easier and free up mental resources."

Penalties for not recycling are especially effective at encouraging people to learn their cities' recycling rules. San Francisco, for example, has made strides by making recycling mandatory and fining citizens, building owners and businesses who don't separate their trash, recycling and compost materials.

Today the city has the highest landfill diversion rate in the country, and diverts 80 percent of its waste away from landfills, with a goal of eliminating waste entirely by 2020.

### **3. The Debris Denier**

**The excuse:** Believes recycling doesn't make a difference, isn't important or is a low priority ("always forgets" to recycle).

**The experts say:** Despite tangible evidence to the contrary, some respondents still said they didn't think recycling makes a difference. That's an indication there's a key disconnect between communities and recycling advocates, according to Suparna Rajaram, a psychology professor and director of the social memory and cognition lab at Stony Brook University.

"People are not receiving information, whether it makes a difference and in what way it makes a difference," she said. "There's no direct connection."

Other responders say "they always forget" to recycle, another indication that recycling is a low priority for them.

"Why do you forget?" Rajaram asks. "Because you don't see [recycling] as being a salient behavior that has any consequences."

**Targeted intervention:** Rajaram says it's not just important that people know how to recycle correctly. They also need information about how their recycling efforts directly affect their community.

"Reward can reinforce action," she said, noting that a reward needn't be personal. It could be as simple as well-circulated information about the tangible benefits of high participation in community recycling programs.

"If there is not enough information about that connection, we don't have a starting point."

2. <http://www.ecorazzi.com/2013/08/27/why-we-dont-recycle-psychology-is-to-blame/>

## **WHY WE DON'T RECYCLE: PSYCHOLOGY IS TO BLAME**

- Alexandra Branscombe

- Think of the last time you found a crumpled, discarded sheet of paper on the ground- did you recycle it, or throw it in the trash can? We would all like to say “recycle it,” but psychologists have found that in reality people do the opposite.
- A recent psychology study found that people tend to throw away recyclable material- paper, plastic, aluminum- if the item is no longer whole. Basically, once a package is opened, or a can is dented, people will no longer see it as recyclable, even though the material properties remain the same.
- In a study to understand how users perceive the way products look (i.e. recyclable or garbage), marketing professor Jennifer Argo, from the University of Alberta School of Business, found that object size does not matter, but how close the item is to its original form. One example is can crushing- many people crush aluminum cans to make room in their recycling bins, except when the can was pre-crushed, dented, or otherwise damaged. Then it will go in the trash.
- “People see it as a damaged good that is not useful anymore in any way,” said Argo in a press release from the U of A. “What can you do with a crushed can? If the can came to you crushed and you had to make the decision our research shows that it’s going in the garbage.”
- Argo and co-author Remi Trudel, from Boston University, say that a psychological hard-wire is to blame; a mental definition of garbage being something that is worthless or useless. However, consumers can also be influenced to see the “use” again.
- To study this, Argo and Trudel gave study participants a piece of paper, asking them to do a creative writing assignment, then tell them what the paper is useful for. When they did that, 80 percent of the time the paper went into the recycling, said Argo.
- “It was an automatic flip that it became useful to them again,” she said.
- Despite national efforts to increase recycling across the nation, less than 35 percent of households in the U.S. recycle, and less than 10 percent of businesses. This study helps deduce the challenges to recycling: changing people’s perceptions and beliefs about product usefulness.

- Besides increasing repetitive messaging to encourage recycling, Argo said that producers should revamp their packaging to encourage recycling. Making it easier to preserve the original condition of the package after it has been opened will positively influence the tendency to recycle it, she explained.

3. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/nine-ten-adults-recycle-only-half-do-so-daily>

**NINE IN TEN ADULTS RECYCLE, BUT ONLY HALF DO SO DAILY**

- Rebecca Szelove

**New York, NY** - Nine in ten adults (87%) report that they recycle, though only half of adults (51%) recycle every day, according to a national survey of over 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Yesterday's News. Roughly a third (36%) tend to recycle less frequently, while 13% admit that they never recycle.

- Those most likely to recycle on a daily basis are college graduates (59%), adults aged 55 and older (57%), residents of the Northeast (58%) and West (56%).
- Cat owners are more likely than those without a cat at home to say that they recycle in general (91% vs. 85%).

***Benefits of Recycling***

U.S. adults do see a wide variety of benefits of recycling, particularly that it helps to reduce landfills (81%), saves trees (69%), and conserves energy (62%). Many also believe that recycling has economic benefits, such as creating jobs (45%) and making money (33%). Very few are unsure of the benefits (3%) or do not see any of these as advantages.

***Barriers to Recycling***

Though many acknowledge the many benefits of recycling, adults cite a variety of barriers that prevent them from recycling more, with the top reason being that it is not accessible or convenient to where they live (25%). Others report that it is too time consuming (10%), that they just forget (10%), that they aren't sure what is recyclable and what isn't (8%), or the cost (6%). Very few report that ideological concerns prevent them from recycling more often, such as feeling their efforts wouldn't make a difference (3%), not thinking it's important (2%), or not understanding the environmental benefit (1%). At the same time, a majority (52%) reports that none of these barriers prevent them from recycling.

***Recycling Habits***



Nearly three quarters (72%) report that they recycle to most at home, either through curbside recycling (46%) or by taking their recyclables to a local recycling center (26%). Just 6% say that they recycle most at work, though this proportion jumps to 11% among full-time workers. One in ten (10%) say that they recycle elsewhere and 12% report that they do not recycle at all.

The most commonly recycled items include plastics, such as water bottles and packaging (69%); metals, such as soda cans and soup cans (64%); newspapers (56%); other paper products such as cardboard boxes, magazines, junk mail, etc. (56%); and glass, such as jars and juice bottles (49%). Fewer report that they most recycle electronics, such as CDs or old computer parts (14%) or other items (4%).

- Older adults, college graduates, and residents of the Northeast - those who also tend to recycle most frequently, are also more likely to recycle a wider variety of items, particularly glass, newspapers, and other paper products.

### ***Recycling IQ***

While majorities say that they recycle plastics, metal and paper products, there does seem to be some confusion about which items can be recycled and which cannot. While majorities understand that cell phones (78%) and motor oil (67%) can be recycled, many are unaware that other, less typical items can also be recycled, such as trophies (36%) and crayons (36%). Conversely, many may be trying to recycle items that are not actually recyclable, such as pizza boxes (77%) and juice boxes (73%). Waxed paper and cardboard that is contaminated by food cannot be recycled.

Similarly, many adults are unconscious of the fact that certain household items are often made from recycled paper. A third (34%) report that they would be most surprised to learn that cat litter can be made from recycled paper, followed by greeting cards (8%), egg cartons (6%), and phone books (5%). However, nearly half (48%) say that they would not be surprised to learn that any of these items are made from recycled materials.

- Adults under 35 (42%) and residents of the West (41%) are most likely to be surprised that cat litter can be made from recycled paper. However, there is very little difference between cat owners and those without a cat at home (33% vs. 35%).

When unsure as to whether an item is recyclable, half of adults (50%) say that they are most likely to just throw the item away. Roughly one in six (18%) say that they would put it into the recycling bin anyway. Just a quarter (26%) report that they would look it up before deciding whether to throw it in the trash or the recycling bin.

Perhaps some of these misperceptions about what can be recycled and what can't stems from a lack of information. Nearly half (47%) say that they haven't learned anything about recycling in over six months and 12% report that they have never learned anything about recycling. At the same time, so are exposed to this information more regularly, with 13% reporting that they are flooded with information about recycling and an additional 29% saying that they learned something about recycling in the month.

- However, as noted above, less than one in ten (8%) cite a lack of understanding about what can be recycled as a barrier to recycling more. However, this is a more common problem among adults under 35 (15%) and college graduates (13%).
- 4. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-green-mind/201503/the-self-deceptions-recycling>

### **The Self-Deceptions of Recycling**

- Kenny Worthy
- *Let me begin by saying that if you've come here looking for an excuse to get out of your recycling chores, you may be disappointed! But you might want to make sure your recycling activities don't lead you to other environmentally destructive choices.*
- A graduate school colleague once told me to stop printing double-sided because you can always just recycle the paper when you're done with it (since the paper would go into making more paper, she thought, there was no real cost to printing single sided).
- Her argument is wrong for various technical reasons. Recycling does save landfill space and reduces the harvesting of trees for virgin paper. But about a third of printouts will never find their way into the recycling stream. And for those that do, making products from recycled materials is hardly free. It takes a lot of energy to recycle materials, and paper recycling creates significant amounts of pollution—toxic chemicals must be used to remove the inks and toners from the paper. In Wisconsin a paper recycling factory is the second-largest polluter in the state.
- Other types of recycling take their toll as well. In chapter 1 of my book *Invisible Nature: Healing the Destructive Divide between People and the Environment*, I write extensively about the filthy business of recycling electronic waste (your unused laptops, cellphones, car stereos, and so on). These devices contain over a thousand different embedded toxic materials such as beryllium, cadmium, mercury, and arsenic. Removing them from circuit boards and disk drives safely takes a lot of care, but it's often done by poor people in

Asian and African villages using inappropriate low-tech methods (fires and acid baths!) that release these toxicants into the soil, air, and waterways—and into their bodies.

- Another problem with recycling is that it degrades most materials, so the more they're recycled, the less valuable they become. When paper is recycled its fibers become shorter and thus less valuable in the paper-making process (shorter fibers = weaker papers). Recycling plastics increases the toxic compounds in them. Recycling insiders have a word for the way materials degrade through recycling: **downcycling**—the process of making materials increasingly less valuable through successive cycles of recycling. Moreover, because of market forces (the high cost of recycled materials and low costs of raw materials), much of our curbside recycling ends up getting diverted to landfill anyway. So recycling may be less a virtuous circle than a downward spiral.
- **Bottom line:** recycling is no panacea!
- **It Gets Worse**
- But hold on—when you start to consider the psychology of recycling, the news gets even worse (but don't give up just yet because I present some solutions at the end of this article).
- When consumers see the recycling symbol, they may think that the product is without environmental costs (just as my colleague in graduate school assumed) or that purchasing is actually an environmentally positive act. So the recycling symbol on the bottle or just the idea that we can recycle stuff when we're done with it may actually lead us to buy more stuff than we need in the first place. That's the **rebound effect**—the idea that a product is more efficient or recyclable may make people buy more and thus cancel out the purported efficiency, perhaps resulting in more overall environmental damage.
- A study published in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* experimentally verified the rebound effect. When the possibility of recycling paper was offered in an experimental setting, people consumed more paper.
- How does rebound work? The presence of the recycling option may pre-emptively alleviate any guilt or other negative emotions that might be associated with taking and using the paper. On a related note, one study found that anticipated guilt of not recycling

was an important factor in whether people chose to recycle. Worse still, the very idea of recycling may distract us from fundamental changes that are more effective at reducing our environmental impacts. Substantially reducing our environmental damages ultimately means transitioning to a less materials-intensive economy.

- It comes as less of a surprise that recycling symbols (that triangle of arrows chasing each other that you see, for instance, on the bottom of plastic bottles) may lead to more consumption when you consider that they were invented by the beverage and container industry (in particular the Container Corporation of America) shortly after the first Earth Day as a way to ward off more serious regulation such as “bottle bills” requiring deposits to be paid when purchasing bottled beverages. Industry uses the idea that you can always recycle to both avoid further regulation and to promote more consumption.
  
- **Now what?**
  
- Does all of this mean that we must stop recycling? Absolutely not. Recycling is essential to a closed-loop economy. Throwing all of our unused materials into landfills or just letting it dissipate throughout the environment would not be a good choice at all. Using those materials can save energy and resources. People who work to divert materials from landfills for re-use—from citizens putting their bottles at the curbside for pickup to employees of single-stream waste sorting facilities to people scavenging valuable materials from the large landfills of Asia—are doing good work for the environment, reducing the amount of waste we bury. After all, they’re mimicking the processes of nature—all materials are recycled and reused in nature because *there is no waste in nature*.
  
- But we should be vigilant to ensure that the ability to recycle materials, a problem-laden process, does not influence us to purchase more things we don’t need in the first place. Our consumerist society is wreaking havoc on nature worldwide as resources dwindle and landscapes and seascapes become polluted—think of the trillions of bits of plastic floating in continent-sized batches in our oceans.
  
- A better approach than buying and recycling is to follow the “three Rs”: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. They go in order. First, reduce the amount of stuff you buy or consume (beyond your life essentials). Second, reuse what you have rather than getting more stuff; if you can’t reuse it, get it to someone who can. Third, if the thing or material you acquired truly can’t be reused any longer, get it into the recycling stream. Always remember that the

stuff you buy has environmental consequences, even if they are tucked far away in the economy so that you can't see them.

- Governments could promote the three Rs by requiring that the cost of disposing things goes into the prices we pay. So we'd pay more for things that can't be reused and must be recycled. But we'd pay even more for things that cannot be reused OR recycled and must be added to our ever-growing landfills.

5. <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/18/health/psychology-of-recycling/index.html>

### **CAN PSYCHOLOGY INFLUENCE THE WAY WE RECYCLE?**

- Jacopo Prisco

(CNN)Have you ever had your name spelled wrong on a disposable cup in a coffee shop?

If you have -- and you probably have -- chances are you did not recycle that cup.

That's what a team of psychologists realized when they ran a study using cups with names spelled intentionally wrong, disguised as a juice tasting. People were significantly more likely to recycle their cup when their names were spelled correctly: 48% did, as opposed to 26% of those who had no name at all and a paltry 24% of those who had a misspell.

"We are averse to trashing something that is tied to our identity," said Jennifer Argo of the University of Alberta, one of the authors of the study, "as it would be conceptually similar to trashing a part of the self, which makes people more likely to recycle."

#### **The whole problem**

When it comes to recycling, studies show that we can be easily swayed, and small details can produce big changes in behavior.

In another study, Argo and co-author Remi Trudel of Boston University discovered that when an object loses its original shape, its chances of being recycled collapse.

A crushed can, for example, is considered damaged -- as such, it's more likely to end up in the trash can than in the recycling bin: "When items become damaged, they differ from the 'prototype' or ideal version of that product, and as a result, they are perceived as being less useful. As consumers, we tend to equate things that are useless with garbage," Argo said.

Small bits of paper also usually end up in the trash can: People are less likely to recycle them even when the total quantity of small pieces is double that of a single regular sheet.

But just ask people what the bits of paper could be useful for, and 80% of the time, they will recycle it, showing how quickly we can shift our perception.

"Things that are useful are recycled; they still serve a purpose. In fact, Coke ran a campaign shortly after our first paper on the topic, showing a crushed can and emphasizing it was still recyclable. Educating consumers through promotional techniques as well as highlighting identity would increase recycling," Argo said.

### **The power of influence**

A big push toward recycling can come from social norms, or unwritten rules on how to behave.

In 1990, psychologist Robert Cialdini of Arizona State University and his colleagues set up an experiment in a car park in Texas. As people walked back to their cars, they had an accomplice walk in front of them and drop a large flier on the floor. Half the time, this happened in a spotlessly clean parking lot. The other half, the lot was already full of litter.

Once they go to their car, the unsuspecting subjects found a similar flier obstructing the view on their windshield. What did they do with it?

Out of those who saw the confederate litter in the littered environment, 54% threw their flier on the floor: When exposed to a prevalent behavior, we follow suit.

Conversely, only 6% of those who saw the accomplice litter in the clean environment did so themselves: The gesture stood out, making it easy to disapprove of.

Cialdini used these findings to craft a series of TV ads to increase recycling in Arizona. In the ads, people who already recycled spoke approvingly of it while disparaging a single individual in these scene who did not recycle. A 25% increase in recycling was recorded in communities exposed to the ads.

### **It matters a 'hole' lot**

Even simpler things like the shape of a lid can affect recycling behaviors, which is why bins tend to have differently shaped holes for different items such as bottles, cans or paper.

In a 2008 study titled "It matters a hole lot," two sets of three bins were placed throughout an academic building. One set had no lids, while the other had a flap lid for trash, a lid with a 6-inch hole for recyclables and a lid with a narrow slit for paper.

The results were astonishing: Not only did the shaped lids increase correct recycling by 34%, but the amount of contaminants, such as food, in the recycling stream collapsed by 95%.

The key might be in the concept of "affordance," which is a property of an object that tells us how to use it. A hanging string, for example, affords pulling; a handle on a door can afford -- sometimes ambiguously -- pushing or pulling.

The shaped lids provide affordance in a much stronger form than just a label and require people to pay attention to what they're doing. The open lids won't stop anyone who's distracted from just tossing their trash into a random bin.

Well-designed waste bins, remark the study authors Sean Duffy and Michelle Verges, can thus be crucial for recycling: "Something that is nothing -- a hole -- can dramatically increase environmentally responsible behaviors."

### **Recycling gone bad**

The act of depositing an item into a recycling bin doesn't make it disappear -- nor guarantee that it won't end up in a landfill -- yet it's quite enough to influence our decisions. Sometimes for the worse.

In a study titled "Recycling gone bad," participants were split into two groups, given sheets of paper and asked to rate a new brand of scissors. One group only had a trash bin in the room, the other both a trash bin and a recycling bin. This group used far more paper to "test" the scissors.

A similar finding came from a follow-up study involving paper towels in a restroom. A bin marked with a recycling symbol created a significant uptick in consumption.

If the option to recycle is present, it seems, we use more resources: "We think this happens because people think about recycling in terms of its environmental benefits, with less awareness that there are also environmental costs," said Jesse R. Catlin of Sacramento State University, one of the authors of the study.

"This view may allow people to rationalize to themselves that consuming more is OK, as long as they recycle."

If money is thrown into the mix, behavior changes again, according to a study from the University of British Columbia.

Two groups of students was again tasked with cutting up paper. They could then discard it into a trash bin within the room or use a recycling bin outside it. The group that was given an hourly wage as compensation for the test, as opposed to a fixed wage, recycled less: "Putting a price tag on time leaves individuals to focus on their own needs and goals, as opposed to the needs and goals of others, including the environment," said Ashley Whillans, lead author of a paper on the study.

When time is money, we care less about the planet.

"People's behavior can be sensitive to a variety of different factors," said Catlin.

"Whether it's simply the availability of a nearby recycling bin or the signage applied to the bins themselves, the research seems clear that consumption levels and recycling decisions are not set in stone and therefore subject to change based on the particular situation."

**Questionnaire:**

1. Do you recycle waste products such as one-side used paper, glass containers, tin cans and electronics?  
A) Yes B) No
  
2. Do you think you have a positive attitude towards environmental conservation?  
A) Yes B) No
  
3. Do you practice waste segregation at your home (small scale or otherwise)?  
A) Yes B) No
  
4. Do you feel that since rag pickers and machines recycle waste products, it does not make a difference whether you recycle or not?  
A) Yes B) No
  
5. Do you tend to forget to recycle?  
A) Yes B) No
  
6. Do you think the government is doing a good job with the current system of waste disposal?  
A) Yes B) No
  
7. Do you think you understand the environmental benefits of recycling?  
A) Yes B) No
  
8. Are you unsure about the things which should and should not be recycled?  
A) Yes B) No
  
9. Do you think that by recycling, you are being forced into doing something you would otherwise not do?



A) Yes

B) No

10. Do you believe that recycling is cost effective (provides benefits with respect to the investments made)?

A) Yes

B) No

11. Do you feel more compelled to recycle when the item is relatively intact, compared to when it is partially or wholly damaged?

A) Yes

B) No

12. Do you think that recycling should be given more emphasis than it is currently getting (TV advertisements, more information provided in schools, etc )?

A) Yes

B) No

13. Would you recycle more often if given an incentive, such as a small sum of money per bottle recycled?

A) Yes

B) No

14. Do you think that recycling is outdated and that other, better processes of managing waste exist today?

A) Yes

B) No

15. Do you feel compelled to recycle more if you see a friend doing it?

A) Yes

B) No

16. Are there any other reasons besides those previously mentioned that in your opinion may prevent you or others from recycling on a regular basis? If so, please specify:

Link to the responses :

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1A2cbOWQfx4NZRAHWcP1vM4PJQd3LmOvceqMjh3NQ2VY/edit?usp=sharing>

**Conclusion:**

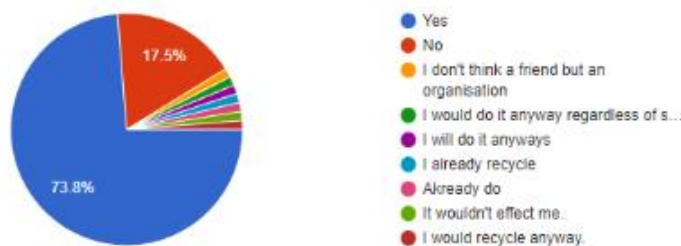
The research conducted include a comparison of the attitudes of people towards recycling on two basic levels. First, there was a comparison between the attitudes of Americans and those of Indians, and then there was a comparison between the attitudes of teenagers and those of adults. In the research, a variety of questions were included to ensure that the result or conclusion

achieved is adequate and firm, and three leading questions were used to determine whether candidates answering the questionnaire were answering honestly, and to determine whether even those who didn't make a conscious effort to recycle or conserve the environment, felt they understood the benefits of recycling, or thought they had a positive and selfless attitude towards it. The research has shown that Americans recycle more and have a more positive attitude towards waste disposal and preserving the environment than Indians do, especially when it comes to recycling in the household. Adults take part in household chores and recycling more than teenagers in both countries. 93% of the people surveyed believed they had a positive attitude towards environmental conservation. When asked whether they believed the government was doing a 'good job' with the current system of waste disposal and recycling, most Americans responded with a yes while every Indian responded with a no.

The leading question of the research was whether people would recycle if they saw a friend or colleague doing it. This proves that people are influenced by their peers and would recycle to show others that they recycle rather than for the act of recycling itself. From the data accumulated there seems to be a balanced response from respondents of both countries. 75% of respondents in both countries accept that they would recycle if they saw someone else do it. This proves our hypothesis that people will recycle irrespective of their country as long as people around them are recycling. This shows the role of conformity in society.

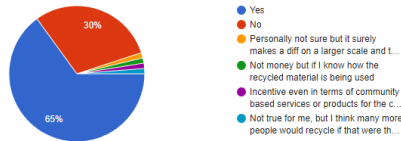
Would you recycle if you saw a friend doing it?

80 responses



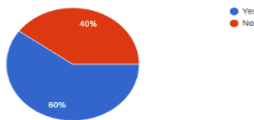
Would you recycle more often if given an incentive, such as a small sum of money per bottle recycled?

80 responses



Do you feel more compelled to recycle when the item is relatively intact, compared to when it is partially or wholly damaged?

80 responses

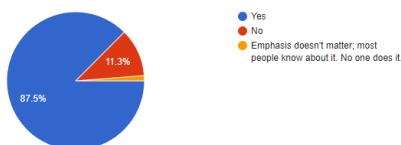


The highest unanimous response( 48 out of 80)was to the question whether people would recycle if an object was whole rather than crushed or partially damaged. Since a clear majority of people answered that they would recycle more if an object was whole, it is obvious that the people surveyed are so naïve that they feel recycling a whole object has a much larger or more profound impact than recycling damaged products. This is a large problem as it proves that people are stuck in the mindset that crushed or damaged objects cannot be recycled, showing that they are not aware that all objects are crushed during the process of recycling in order for them to be used again.

People generally believe that they have a positive attitude towards recycling and environmental

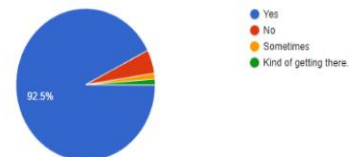
Do you think that recycling should be given more emphasis than it is currently getting (TV advertisements, more information provided in schools, etc )?

80 responses



Do you think you have a positive attitude towards environmental conservation?

80 responses



conservation, but when it comes to the 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle), they take minimalistic steps. People in India are very practical when it comes to doing extra work. They are more likely to leave recycling for rag pickers instead of doing it themselves. Most people forget to recycle even though think they understand the environmental benefits. It is sad that people in India do not want to recycle even though the situation in India is so dire, and the environmental benefits of

recycling are much higher than any other waste treatment programs. Most people tend to agree that there is no better process than recycling, yet they still do not take part in it.

It has been concluded that the education and knowledge people have about recycling is very poor. They do not know what can and cannot be recycled, and many of the people surveyed feel recycling should get more attention through television ads and newspaper articles.

What is very evident is that the environment of a country is determined by the attitude of its citizens. The reason America is much cleaner than India is because the population is better informed about the benefits and process of waste management, and Americans also have a certain pride in their country which makes them work hard to keep it clean and healthy, a pride that many Indians lack. This is shown as over 50% of Americans recycle at least aluminium or metal cans, paper or plastic, and less than 30% of Indians recycle even that base amount. It is also important to note that India generates over 27 million more tonnes of waste per year than America, and has a population far larger. Indians on the other hand are more laid back and feel that the difference they could make individually is not worth the effort they would have to put in.

It has also been realized that adults are much more regular and aware when it comes to recycling than children in America, while children in India are more caring compared to adults. In India, there is an apparent shift in attitude towards waste management from millennials to generation z. American teenagers are still more focused on recycling than Indian teenagers, but this is changing and that soon enough Indian teenagers will be as, if not more, focused on recycling than American teenagers.

Hence, to conclude this survey, America does indeed have a cleaner and healthier environment, but the main reason for recycling in America is because people are influenced by others. The reason that India is lacking behind is that there are few people who are currently participating in recycling. With the increase in the amount of people it is proved that they are more likely to conform and take part themselves.

**Limitations:**

- The sample size surveyed was relatively small and the findings may or not be accurate on a larger scale.
- A much larger sample size would be required to be able to apply this survey's conclusion to the general or standard population of both countries.
- It was difficult to find American adults and teenagers as many of them were not willing to take the survey, and there were few contacts in America that could be trusted to answer the questionnaire honestly.

- The format used to acclimate the data did not segregate Indians and Americans, this had to be done manually.