

Project Summaries – An experiment on Food Waste Recycling

Project Description

This research aims to find out: 1) what works to improve the participation rate of food waste collection as well as to reduce contamination and 2) the extent to which the effort of promoting participation in food waste recycling makes an impact on the rates. For this experiment, we will use a feedback as a treatment and the main hypothesis is whether activating the collective norm by giving people feedback on their street recycling rate compared to others creates the sense of competition and therefore could promote recycling behaviour. This is ‘social identity theory’ that regards key aspects of our behaviour as being motivated by a tendency towards intra-group solidarity and inter-group competition. In collaboration with Oldham Council, we will monitor the participation rate and the contamination rate of 9,000 households in Oldham.

Progress to date

We will send out the analysis plan next week to Professor David Torgerson and Professor Don Green. We also have a joint meeting with Oldham Council and Emerge, who monitor participation and contamination, Sarah and Hisako from IPEG. We are scheduled to start monitoring in August. We will collect 2 weeks of baseline data and provide feedback twice. In total we will monitor three times including baseline. The final data collection ends at the end of September and early October.

Preliminary findings

- It is likely that we will monitor collections of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
- 2 Crews per Refuse collection
- One round is 1,500
- They do 2 rounds a day, thus the sample N is 9,000 households (i.e. 2 rounds=1500x2=3,000 households a day)
- To meet at 7 am and finish at 3 pm (the Refuse collection need to come back by 3 pm)
- We monitor 2 weeks for 3 times.
- If the first monitoring starts the 1st week of August, then the calendar would look like:

Time table:

| | |
|------------|----------|
| 1wk August | monitor |
| 2wk August | monitor |
| 3wk August | feedback |
| 4wk August | monitor |
| 1wk Sept | monitor |
| 2wk Sept | feedback |
| 3wk Sept | monitor |
| 4wk Sept | monitor |

Next steps

- Meet Emerge on 16th July
- Meet Oldham and Emerge the last week of July

Outputs

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Name Hisako Nomura and Sarah Cotterill
Organisation IPEG, University of Manchester
Date 16 July