

## Housewives are more ecologically aware and recycle more than university students

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Research carried out in the Department of Social Psychology and Methodology of Behaviour Sciences of the University of Granada has shown that the level of academic training is not related to the ecological awareness of people, despite the great proliferation of programs designed to educate and increase social awareness of the environment. Thus, according to research, housewives are more ecologically aware than university students, given they are more willing to recycle glass.

This research was carried out by doctor Maria del Carmen Aguilar Luzon under the direction of professor J. Miguel Angel Garcia Martinez. The environmental behaviour chosen for the study was the separating of glass from other garbage. In the study, a sample of 525 university students and 154 housewives was used. Existing differences between both groups are significant: housewives are more willing to separate glass from other garbage, have a more favourable attitude towards recycling, and have enough willpower to do it.

### Less control

However, the researcher points out that university students "have less control over glass recycling behaviour, given they perceive it as a series of barriers and limitations hard to overcome." The container being far from home and they having to make their way to it while carrying heavy bags full of glass, for example, is viewed as a difficulty for students, and not for housewives. In fact, housewives adopt environmentally friendly practices more often than students.

This research was carried out by adopting as a study framework two behaviour prediction-explanation models. On one hand there is a general model (TPB, Theory of Planned Behaviour); on the other hand there is a specific model for studying environmental behaviours: a values, rules and beliefs model. In this sense, taking into account the predicting power and the adjustment of both models to empirical data, TPB is more appropriate than the values, rules and beliefs model when comparing both groups (housewives and students), although special features of the samples must be taken into account.

Work carried out at the UGR found that a greater awareness of the environment does not always lead to ecologically responsible behaviours. In other words, many people consider themselves "ecologists" or show a favourable attitude towards the environment but then rarely act according to their environmental beliefs.

### Programme elaboration

Practical applications of this work are orientated to elaborate programmes destined to education and increasing social awareness of the environment. According to research results, social factors (that is, what people who are important to us think about our attitude towards recycling) do not influence glass separating behaviour (recycling) of either housewives or students. On the contrary, the so-called "moral rule" or "personal rule" towards recycling behaviour does have an influence: a feeling of moral obligation, either ethical or moral, towards the environment.

Anguilar Luzon therefore points out that "if there were proposals for programmes designed to raise people's awareness of the consequences of recycling (and of not recycling) which generated a certain "ethical commitment" or morality with respect to environmental issues, people would probably act in a more environmentally friendly manner."

Results of this research have been published in prestigious journals such as Medio Ambiente y Comportamiento Humano (Environment and Human Behaviour) and Investigacion en Psicologia Aplicada (Research in Applied Psychology), as well as in the bulletin of the IAPS (International Association for People-Environment Studies).

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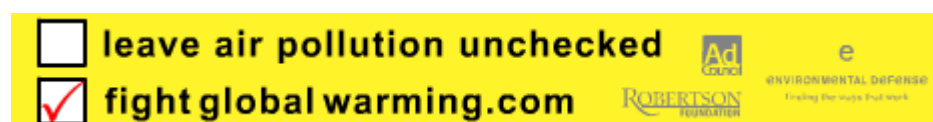
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