

## Key Research: Lord (1994) – Motivating recycling behaviour: A quasi-experimental investigation of message and source strategies.

### Method / Design

Quasi experimental method using direct behavioural observations and survey data.  
Independent groups design used where each household allocated to one of three conditions for message source and one of two for message framing.

### Procedure

**Data collection:** students observed and recorded contents of household's recycling bin. The following day, they left a message (different conditions below) at front door. Following week, observation took place again. The day after, a questionnaire was delivered to household that asks subjects to evaluate the truthfulness of certain statements about recycling behaviour with a 7 point scale and also made use of semantic differential scales to measure attitude towards recycling.

**Message sources:** advertisement, newspaper article, personal letter from acquaintance

#### Message framing:

Positive – environmental benefits, savings to community and person satisfaction.

Negative - described risks of failing to recycle.

### Participants and Sampling

140 households were used to collect data in a north-eastern community in New York State.

Quota Sampling was used to ensure the representation of multiple neighbourhoods and diverse socio-economic characteristics.

57% of respondents were female, age 19-65.

### Results

Positive appeals gave most favourable levels of beliefs towards recycling, particularly when with personal and advertising message sources.

Greatest increase in recycling behaviour came from the negatively framed message when presented by a personal acquaintance.

### Conclusions

Consumer response to appeals to increase compliance to community recycling programs is complex. Consumers have a preference for positively framed messages with the advantage that it is more believable.

The credibility advantage of news organisations is that when presenting a negatively framed message it enhances the believability of its claims and overcomes any adverse effects.

The use of advertising space to promote socially responsible behaviour rather than a product gives it more credibility.

The obvious advantages of recycling are the long term environmental benefits so personal consequences will have less impact.

### Key Issues relevant to study

Methodological issues (especially those linked to observations and self-reports)

Usefulness

Ethics

Individual and Situational explanations

