

# Psychology of social influence

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Don't Throw in the Towel: Use Social Influence Research This article is detailing how psychology can be used in a variety of ways in society other than counseling or the cliché of psychology. It looked at a simple problem to find the best solution. The problem in this article was looking at ways to inform guests from various hotels to reuse their towels. Reusing towels would, “ increase the environmental protection and environmental cooperation. ” It would also help conserve environmental resources.

Many of the hotels tried various ways to increase their guest’s awareness and responsibility in this process by placing different key phrases on a card placed around the room. The hotels started by trying different things that would try to influence their guest, instead of looking at it from a psychological point of view. This study examined the persuasive appeals and its focus on descriptive social norms. It looked at what people were doing and willing to do. There were many example phrases they tested. These included the following: HELP SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT. You can show your respect for nature and help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

A second type of card focused guests on environmental cooperation. It stated: PARTNER WITH US TO HELP SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT In exchange for your participation in this program, we at the hotel will donate a percentage of the energy savings to a nonprofit environmental protection organization. The environment deserves our combined efforts. You can join us by reusing your towels during your stay. A third type of card focused guests on the descriptive norms of the situation. It stated: JOIN YOUR FELLOW GUESTS IN HELPING TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT Almost 75% of guests who are asked

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to participate in our new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

The cards that displayed the fact that the guest was improving the environment had little increase in the reuse of towels. Other towels however did have a response but examined the data and found many interesting findings. According to psychological influences on people, the article stated that, “ There is no sense of social obligation to cooperate with someone who offers you something, provided that you perform a favor first. ” So to say that you are more likely to do something in return for someone then initiate the action in a promised return i. e. the donation. According to society norms, a person is considered “ moochers”, or “ takers” if they do not return the favor after something has been done for them.

With this in mind they added a four card statement that returned a 47 percent success rate, one that was greater than the corporation conditions. It was as followed: WE'RE DOING OUR PART FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. CAN WE COUNT ON YOU? Because we are committed to preserving the environment, we have made a financial contribution to a nonprofit environmental protection organization on behalf of the hotel and its guests. If you would like to help us in recovering the expense, while conserving natural resources, please reuse your towels during your stay. This card explained that the hotel had already done their part in making a financial contribution to a nonprofit organization, and we might feel socially obligated to do our part in reusing the towels. Even though the cards above stated similar wording, having the hotel make a contribution first initiates us as humans to want to return the

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favor. Social psychology can be used in many different ways outside the classroom and have real applications to everyday life and everyday problems.

We can use the research data found by these psychologists to make significant improvements in something as simple as towel reuse with a little bit of knowledge of social psychological theory.