

# Recycling Awareness and Habits of Teenagers in Košice-Krásna

John Doe

Gymnasium of Awesomeness, Slovakia



## Abstract

This paper presents the results of a survey on recycling habits among 20 high school students in Košice-Krásna. Most students recycle and consider it important, but many lack detailed knowledge or consistency. Family support and school education are key factors influencing recycling behavior. The findings highlight a strong interest in further learning and suggest the need for more practical environmental education and household involvement.

## Introduction

Recycling is one of the most important environmental actions that individuals can take to help protect the planet. It is also one of the easiest to implement in daily life. In recent years, there has been growing concern about environmental problems such as global warming, pollution, and the increasing amount of waste produced by human activity. Recycling plays a key role in reducing the negative impacts of these problems.

In Slovakia, the government and various environmental organizations have made efforts to promote recycling. However, real change starts with individuals, especially young people. This research focuses on the recycling knowledge and behavior of high school students living in the district of Košice-Krásna. I decided to conduct a survey to find out if teenagers understand the importance of recycling, if they know what materials can be recycled, and whether they practice recycling at home.

This paper presents the results of a small study conducted among local students, analyzes the data, and makes recommendations for improving recycling education in schools and families.

## Literature review

Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into new products, which helps reduce the consumption of raw materials, energy usage, and pollution. The European Union has long supported recycling initiatives through its waste management directives. According to the European Environment Agency (2023), the EU recycling rate for municipal waste reached 48% in 2021. Slovakia's national recycling rate was 44% in 2022 (Ministry of Environment, 2023), showing that we are getting closer to the EU average.

Young people are an important part of this effort. The earlier people start recycling and understanding its benefits, the more likely they are to continue doing it throughout their lives. Several studies, including research by the Slovak Environment Agency (SAŽP), suggest that environmental education in schools has a direct impact on recycling behavior. Campaigns such as "Zemík" or "Recyklohry" are already being implemented in Slovak schools, but their effectiveness depends on the level of student engagement and support from families.

Although many students know about recycling, there is still confusion about what materials can be recycled and how to separate waste correctly. For example, paper contaminated with food or certain types of plastic are often thrown into recycling bins, even though they should not be. This shows the need for more practical education, including hands-on activities.

## Methodology

To understand recycling behavior among students in Košice-Krásna, I created a simple questionnaire and asked 20 students aged between 15 and 17 to answer it. The questions were:

1. Do you recycle at home? (Yes/No)
2. Do you know what can be recycled? (Yes/No)
3. Do you think recycling is important? (Yes/No)
4. Do your parents or family members support recycling? (Yes/No)
5. Do you separate paper, plastic, and glass properly? (Yes/No)
6. Would you like to learn more about recycling in school? (Yes/No)

The answers were collected anonymously. After collecting the data, I created several charts to help visualize the results. I also did a small test to see if there is a link between knowing what can be recycled and actually recycling at home, and if family influence plays a role.

## Results and Discussion

Initial data analysis showed that 75% of the surveyed students reported recycling at home, while 25% said they do not. This suggests a generally positive attitude toward recycling, though a considerable portion of students still remain disengaged. The gap points to the need for targeted educational interventions, especially for those who lack support or information.

Below is a table summarizing the link between family support and recycling behavior:

Table 1.

**Link between family support and recycling behavior**

Family Supports Recycling	Recycle at Home (Yes)	Recycle at Home (No)
<b>Yes</b>	12	1
<b>No</b>	3	4

These numbers reinforce the importance of home influence: almost all students whose families support recycling also recycle themselves, while among those without family support, only a minority recycle.

The results of the questionnaire provide several insights into the recycling habits and awareness of high school students in Košice-Krásna. A majority of students, precisely 75%, indicated that they recycle at home. This is encouraging and suggests a growing environmental consciousness among youth in the region. However, this also means that one in four students does not participate in recycling activities at home. The reasons for this varied, including lack of space for separate waste bins, absence of family encouragement, and uncertainty about how or what to recycle.

In terms of knowledge, 14 out of the 20 surveyed students stated that they knew what could be recycled. While this is a positive finding, it also highlights that a significant minority of students may still be misinformed or unaware, which can lead to improper recycling practices. Misunderstandings were particularly common with items like greasy pizza boxes or multi-material packaging, which are often assumed to be recyclable but actually are not.

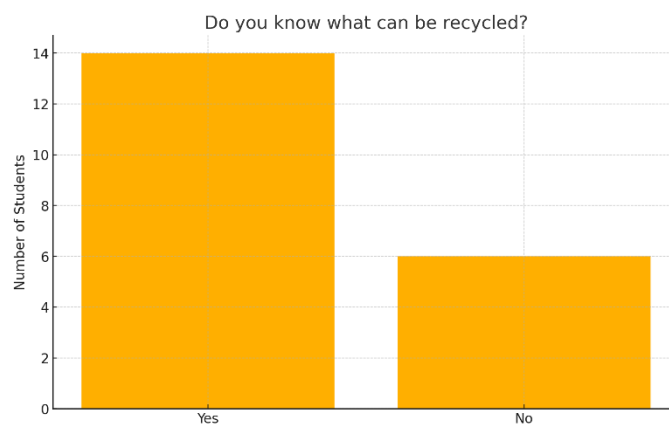


Figure 1.

### Do you know what can be recycled?

The perceived importance of recycling was another strong point. A total of 17 students agreed that recycling is important. Interestingly, all students who claimed to recycle at home also believed in its importance. Conversely, the few who did not find recycling important were among those who do not practice it, suggesting a correlation between personal values and environmental behavior. This pattern underlines the potential of educational programs to influence behavior by addressing beliefs.

Family influence emerged as a crucial factor. Thirteen students reported that their families actively support recycling. Among them, almost all recycled themselves. On the other hand, students without family support were less likely to recycle, indicating that habits formed at home significantly impact student behavior. This was further confirmed by the data cross-analysis, which showed a strong relationship between parental support and student recycling habits.

Proper separation of materials—like paper, plastics, and glass—was also examined. Only 12 students claimed to separate their waste correctly all the time, five admitted doing it only sometimes, and three said they never do it. This suggests that even those who attempt to recycle may do so ineffectively due to lack of knowledge or practical challenges, such as bin availability or label clarity.

Furthermore, there is a notable interest among students in expanding their knowledge about recycling. Sixteen students expressed a desire to learn more, indicating a demand

for more comprehensive environmental education. Several respondents suggested that school programs should include recycling workshops, competitions, or guided visits to recycling plants to make learning more engaging and practical.

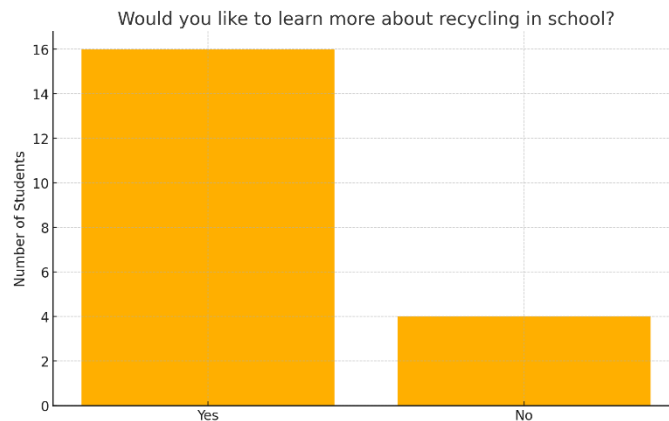


Figure 2.  
**Would you like to learn more about recycling in school?**

Overall, the patterns revealed by this survey suggest that while there is a generally positive attitude toward recycling among students in Košice-Krásna, more effort is needed to translate this awareness into consistent and correct action. Education and family involvement stand out as the key areas to focus on for improving recycling behaviors at the individual level.

In light of this, one proposed solution is to introduce structured workshops in schools. These workshops could follow a clear structure, including the following components:

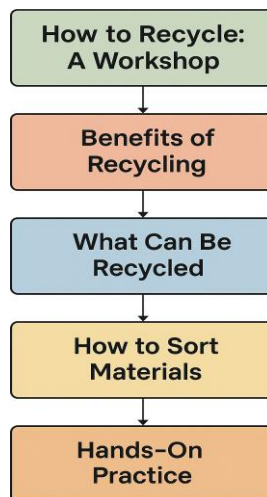


Figure 3.  
**Proposed workshop structure**

This figure outlines the key stages of an educational workshop. It would begin with a brief introduction and overview of the environmental benefits of recycling. Then, students would learn what materials are recyclable, how to sort them correctly, and finally take part in hands-on sorting exercises using real or mock recyclable items. This interactive format helps reinforce learning through experience and peer engagement. toward recycling

among students in Košice-Krásna, more effort is needed to translate this awareness into consistent and correct action. Education and family involvement stand out as the key areas to focus on for improving recycling behaviors at the individual level.

## Conclusion

While the results already indicate strong motivation and interest in recycling among students, practical implementation still lags behind. Educational initiatives—especially interactive formats like workshops—can bridge this gap effectively. Involving students in hands-on activities not only increases knowledge but builds habits that can be transferred into their households.

This study demonstrates that high school students in Košice-Krásna, are generally aware of the importance of recycling and that many are taking action in their homes. Nevertheless, several gaps remain, particularly in detailed knowledge about material separation, proper recycling practices, and consistency of behavior. The data suggest that family environment and formal education are key factors influencing whether students engage in recycling.

Most students expressed a strong willingness to learn more about recycling, which indicates an opportunity for schools to integrate more environmental content into their curriculum. Based on these findings, the implementation of hands-on educational activities, stronger school-community partnerships, and greater involvement from parents could significantly boost recycling participation and effectiveness.

Reinforcing positive habits through both school and home can help create a generation of environmentally responsible citizens. These efforts are crucial not just for Košice-Krásna, but for Slovakia and the global community as we work together to reduce waste and protect our planet.

## References

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