Worksheet 7.2

Environmental attitudes: Shades of green

Introduction

Attitudes towards the environment can vary a great deal depending on age, gender, place in society, upbringing, education, and many other factors. Showing different environmental viewpoints visually (i.e. in graph or chart form) can summarize complex information in a simple yet effective way. A good way of illustrating different attitudes to the environment is by using different shades of green to represent different viewpoints. This was done in an on-line survey of homeowners in the USA which divided environmental attitudes into different shades of green (see Figure 7.6, page 297 of the textbook). The following shades were used:

- **yellow–green**: those unmoved by environmental issues
- **light green**: don’t particularly care, but may act in a minor way in response
- **mid-green**: are aware and taking steps
- **forest green**: are vocal in their support but may not always take action
- **dark green**: the environment is a passionate concern central to their personal value system.
The survey shows that green concerns are limited and not yet a compelling driver of green choices (those people in the darker shades of green make up a minority of the total population). Dividing personal value systems into shades of green provides a visual way of summarizing the views of society in relation to the environment.

**Your task**

- Develop a questionnaire to explore the environmental attitudes of different groups in your school or community.
- The questionnaire could be used to examine different age ranges (as shown in the study above), different genders (males vs. females), or some other factor.
- Plot pie charts to illustrate your data. The following shades of green could be used:
  - **yellow–green** (no awareness/non-active) – use this shade in the chart
  - **light green** (slight awareness/neutral) – use this shade in the chart
  - **mid-green** (good awareness/slightly active) – use this shade in the chart
  - **forest green** (very good awareness/actively promote) – use this shade in the chart
  - **dark green** (excellent awareness/enthusiastically promote) – use this shade in the chart

(Colours taken from here)

- What conclusions can you draw from your data? Discuss your results.
- What were the problems with your method? What affect may these limitations have had on your data? How could you improve the method if you were to do the survey again?

*Turn onto next page for an example of the type of questionnaire you could use. Don’t just copy – develop your own ideas!*

**Good luck!**
Sample questionnaire

- Read each statement carefully.
- Tick the box that best matches your level of agreement with each statement:
  1 – strongly disagree
  2 – do not really agree
  3 – partly agree
  4 – agree
  5 – strongly agree
  6 – very strongly agree

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Earth’s resources are limited and finite</td>
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<td>Human population growth is putting huge pressures on the Earth’s natural resources</td>
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<td>Scientific evidence strongly suggests that climate change (global warming) is being caused by human activities</td>
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<td>Our impact on the Earth can be reduced by making our belongings last, not frequently replacing them with new ones</td>
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<td>Our impact on the Earth can be minimized by reducing consumption and recycling waste</td>
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<td>We only have one planet Earth – we need to take good care of it</td>
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<td>The Earth is currently undergoing a mass extinction of species</td>
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<td>I believe I can make a difference to the well-being of the planet through personal action</td>
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<td>Fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas) need to be replaced by renewable sources of energy (e.g. solar, hydroelectric, wind)</td>
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<td>I would be happy to walk more and use my car less so as to reduce my impact on the planet</td>
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<td>I would get actively involved with environmental initiatives in my local community</td>
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<td>I understand the environmental crisis the Earth faces and want to do something about it</td>
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Average marks

- Work out average marks and allocate shades of green as follows:
  - 1–2: **yellow–green** (no awareness/non-active)
  - 2–3: **light green** (slight awareness/neutral)
  - 3–4: **mid-green** (good awareness/slightly active)
  - 4–5: **forest green** (very good awareness/actively promote)
  - 5–6: **dark green** (excellent awareness/enthusiastically promote)

- Work out the proportion (percentage) of your sample which fits each of the shades of green categories.

- Plot pie charts as indicated on pages 1 and 2.