Wasteful Pride: How a Bespoke Urban Waste Management Policy Improves the Lives of Residents

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ABSTRACT

This comprehensive study explores the transformative potential of the Basura model in urban waste management, aiming to significantly enhance resident lifestyles through strategic interventions and community empowerment. Basura is a pioneering initiative crafted by Joel Abreu, which responds to New York City's new waste management laws designed to ease the burden of waste segregation for landlords. By meticulously analyzing qualitative data and survey feedback, the research uncovers the multifaceted challenges of waste disposal, including service inconsistencies, disposal dilemmas, and a notable public awareness gap. The Behavioral Plan, informed by these insights, charts a course from heightened awareness to practical engagement, underpinning the critical roles of education, community action, and feedback in fostering a culture of sustainability and participation. This approach not only promises a cleaner, healthier urban environment but also a more informed and engaged citizenry, pivotal for the long-term success of urban waste management initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

In the bustling heart of the city, Urban Waste Management (UWM) stands as a silent sentinel of urban wellness.

At the core of this research is the Basura model, a pioneering initiative crafted by Joel Abreu, which responds to New York City's new waste management laws designed to ease the burden of waste segregation for landlords (Cohen, 2022). More than just a legislative compliance tool, Basura is a holistic approach to transforming urban waste into a community asset. Named after the Spanish word for 'trash,' Basura draws from global best practices and local innovation to mitigate landfill usage, enhance recycling efforts, and galvanize residents towards sustainable waste habits.

This study delves into Basura's potential to foster a sustainable urban landscape, by empowering communities with the knowledge and infrastructure necessary for effective waste management, thereby ensuring the city's pulse beats to a rhythm of environmental stewardship and collective responsibility (Gonzalez, 2020).

> How does the Basura model enhance sustainable urban waste management by fostering community and environmental collaboration?

APPROACH

A qualitative research method was deemed most suitable to grasp the challenges hindering Basura's team in fostering community involvement. This approach aims to uncover systemic barriers to urban waste management success.

Central to the research was the Behavioral Plan (Fig. 1)—a guiding blueprint for enacting a community-centric approach to waste management. This plan informed data collection, which was conducted through deep listening and comprehensive analysis of articles and open forums. It also served as a foundation for the recommendations
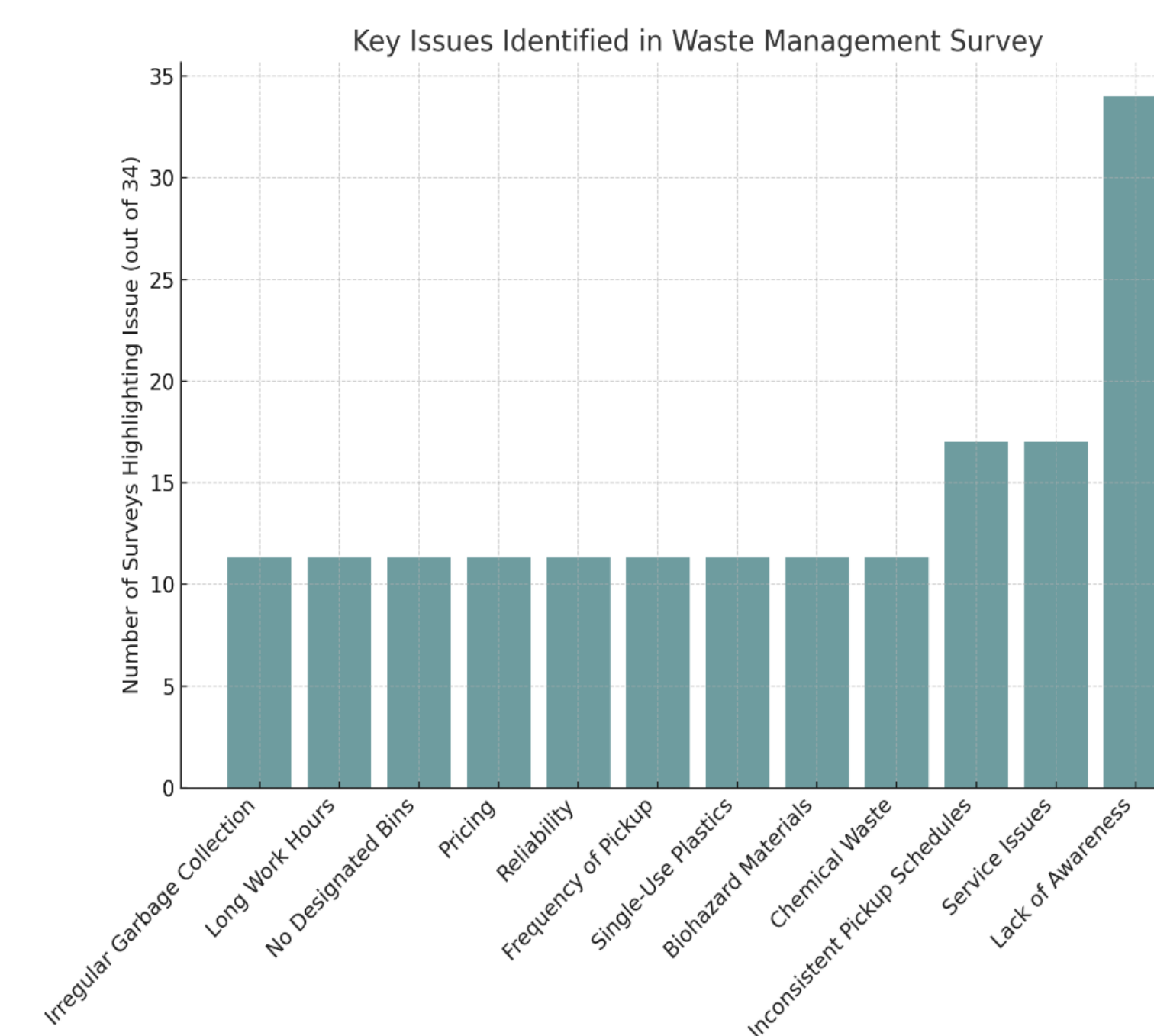

Figure 1. Behavioral Plan

In parallel, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with Basura's team and stakeholders. These discussions were aligned with the Behavioral Plan's phases, from improving waste collection to promoting community engagement.

Together, these methods led to insights into the barriers and potential interventions needed for successful implementation of the Basura model.

FINDINGS

34 surveys were completed, revealing several key issues for successful waste management:

Deep listening sessions, analysis of articles, engagement in community forums, and surveys uncovered key issues impacting waste management success:

- **Service Challenges:** Irregular collection and long work hours hinder effective waste management.
- **Consumer Preferences:** Emphasizes affordability, reliability, and frequent pickup.
- **Disposal Issues:** Single-use plastics and hazardous materials pose significant challenges.
- **Service Satisfaction:** Inconsistent schedules and service quality affect user satisfaction.
- **Awareness Gap:** A notable lack of public knowledge on waste reduction and recycling.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, we recommend specific actions within the Behavioral Plan to strengthen the Basura model's impact:

- **Awareness:** Launch targeted educational campaigns in local communities and schools and establish informational kiosks at community centers to educate the public about the importance of waste segregation and the environmental impact of waste.
- **Participation:** Facilitate community clean-up events, incentivize recycling programs, and introduce easy-to-use waste sorting bins in residential areas to encourage active involvement.
- **Loyalty:** Develop a rewards system that offers benefits for consistent recycling and proper waste disposal behaviors to foster long-term commitment to sustainable practices.

These targeted actions aim to cultivate a knowledgeable and actively participating community, which is essential for a sustainable, cleaner urban environment (Hajam et al., 2023).

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