

Development of the Disposition Model: Hypotheses and Conceptual Framework

The main objective of this chapter is to develop a conceptual research model to examine product disposition tendency of disposers. In order to achieve the objective, paradigm of product disposition processes (Hanson, 1980), model of factors influencing product replacement (van Nes and Cramer, 2010) and prior studies that have adopted qualitative approach to study factors impacting product disposition behavior and disposer identity are examined and discussed. Subsequently, these theories are fused to conceptualize the research model. Within this section, the interrelationships between constructs that build up the research model are discussed. The research model for this study is presented within this section. The following section then puts forward the research hypotheses for this study.

3.1 Introduction

Traditionally consumer researchers have believed acquisition and consumption practices of people to be independent of their disposition practices. Although disposition is an integral part of consumer behavior cycle and has a significant influence on the acquisition and consumption behavior, disposition has not been given its due share in terms of exploration. For instance, the process of disposal of unwanted possessions by a disposer through second hand channels turns out to be a lingering act of consumption for many consumers.

The framework and model of consumer goals developed by Huffman et al. (2003) is useful to further understand how self-concept plays a role in shaping consumer behavior (Fig 3.1) and hence impacts product disposition behavior. The three types of goal classification suggested in this model includes “Being” goals connect life themes, values and life projects, “Doing” goals signify activities and tasks to tackle current concerns and consumption intentions and “Having” goals denote the benefits sought and feature.

This is in harmony with researchers’ findings that consumers tend to surround themselves with possessions that are consistent with their desired self-image (Belk, 1988; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987; Sirgy, 1982). Recent literature demonstrates that these foundational models continue to underpin theoretical and empirical work in product disposition, confirming their ongoing relevance in the field

(Madhuhansi, Ozanne, & Kennedy, 2025) Identity formation is a continuous process involving different dimensions of the self and the social structure constraints. Since, possessions can help create self-identity, the possession that is no longer consistent with a person's being goals is likely to get disposed of to maintain the consistency (Cherrier & Murray, 2007). Hence, having goals can both result in the need to acquire the appropriate possessions, and dispose of inappropriate ones (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Lastovicka and Fernandez, 2005; Price, Arnould, & Curasi, 2000; Young & Wallendorf, 1989). Hence, it can be safely suggested that consumers create an ideal self to others by the act of dispossession or through storing if the possessions are meaningful. Finally, the "Having" goals include benefits sought and feature preferences. Since product manufactures are promoting shorter product replacement and disposition cycle by either manufacturing fragile products or by introducing superficial style changes in their new models to gain financial benefits (Cooper, 2012; T. Cooper, 2004; Guiltinan, 2009), consumer products are being tossed away frequently. Hence, centering on product disposition tendency and the influencing factors will further illuminate product disposition research studies.

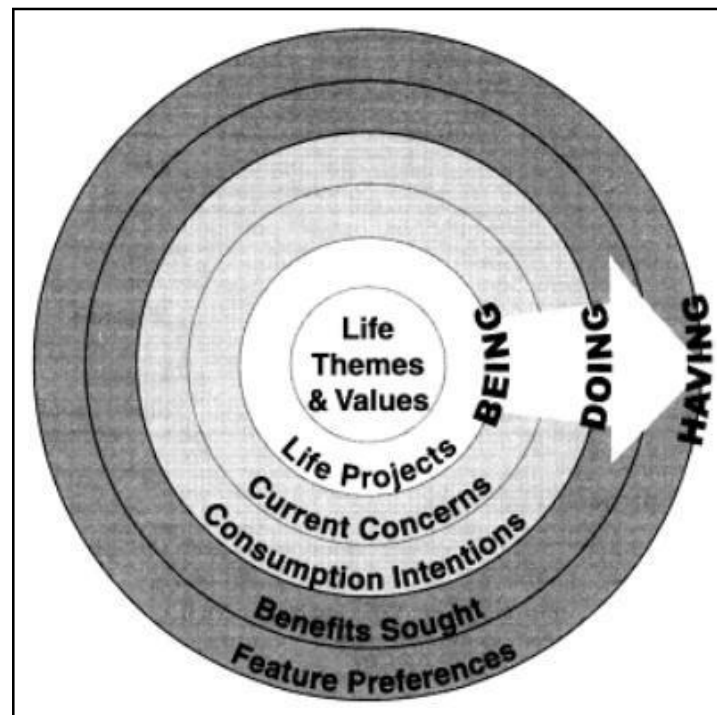


Fig 3.1 A Hierarchical Model of Consumer Goals

Adapted from Huffman, C., Ratneshwar, S. and Mick, D.G. (2000) 'Consumer Goal Structures and Goal- Determination Processes' in Ratneshwar, S., Mick, D.G. and Huffman, C. (Eds). *The Why of Consumption*, pp.9-35. (p.14). London: Routledge.

Also, the shopping behavior of consumers clearly reveals spiraling of social, consumer cultural and commercial pressures to stay in tune with the latest fashion (Bakewell et al, 2006; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004 ;). Researchers have identified consumer tendency to keep clothing for a shorter time and the impact of such frequent disposal on increased purchase behavior (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Large scale consumption of consumer products have led to a large scale disposition in these product categories (Ongondo & Williams, 2011; Li et al., 2009; O'Brien 2009; Singh & Goyal, 2009; James & Drennan, 2005; Van Gorp 2005; Wilska and Pedrozo 2007; Grant and O'Donohue 2007; Croghan et al. 2006; Griffin et al. 2005; Miles et al. 1998; Han et al., 1991). Sometimes, disposition is driven by a wholly practical need to reclaim domestic space by clearing out 'clutter' (Cwerner and Metcalfe 2003; Gregson et al. 2007b). Consumers' lack of satisfaction with their goods post purchase and possessions quickly falling out of use contribute to the fast growing waste fractions. Also, shortening of product life cycles has led to the decrease in the time scales of consumption which further contributes to the increase in the quantity and speed of product disposition. Further research efforts to identify factors influencing product disposition tendency and actual disposition behavior will help unravel disposer categories and specific disposition imperatives within contemporary disposition cultures.

3.2 Theories Employed For This Study

In this study, paradigm of product disposition processes (Hanson, 1980) is used as the underlying theoretical framework to gain insights into product disposition behavior. Model of factors influencing product replacement (van Nes and Cramer, 2010) is used to identify consumer characteristics and situational factors that influence product disposition. Meanwhile, prior studies that have adopted qualitative approach to study product disposition tendency and disposer identity are used to predict the disposer typology and disposition tendency. Thus, the following subsections discuss these theories in relation to this study.

3.2.1 Paradigm of Product Disposition Processes

Hanson (1980) developed a conceptual model to depict the disposition decision making process. The three salient factors proposed in this model include situation, object, and person that are involved in the disposition decision process. This process component of the paradigm is a four stage model of: problem recognition, search/evaluation, disposition decision and post disposition outcomes. The person factor involves both individual and family as decision making units. The situation and object factors depict the external stimuli component of the paradigm. The object here is the product that

has disposition attributes. The product can wield either a direct or indirect effect (by way of interaction with the person and/ or situation) on the disposition process. The situations include objective and psychological factors that can wield either a direct or indirect effect (via interaction with the person and/ or object) on the disposition process (Fig 3.2)

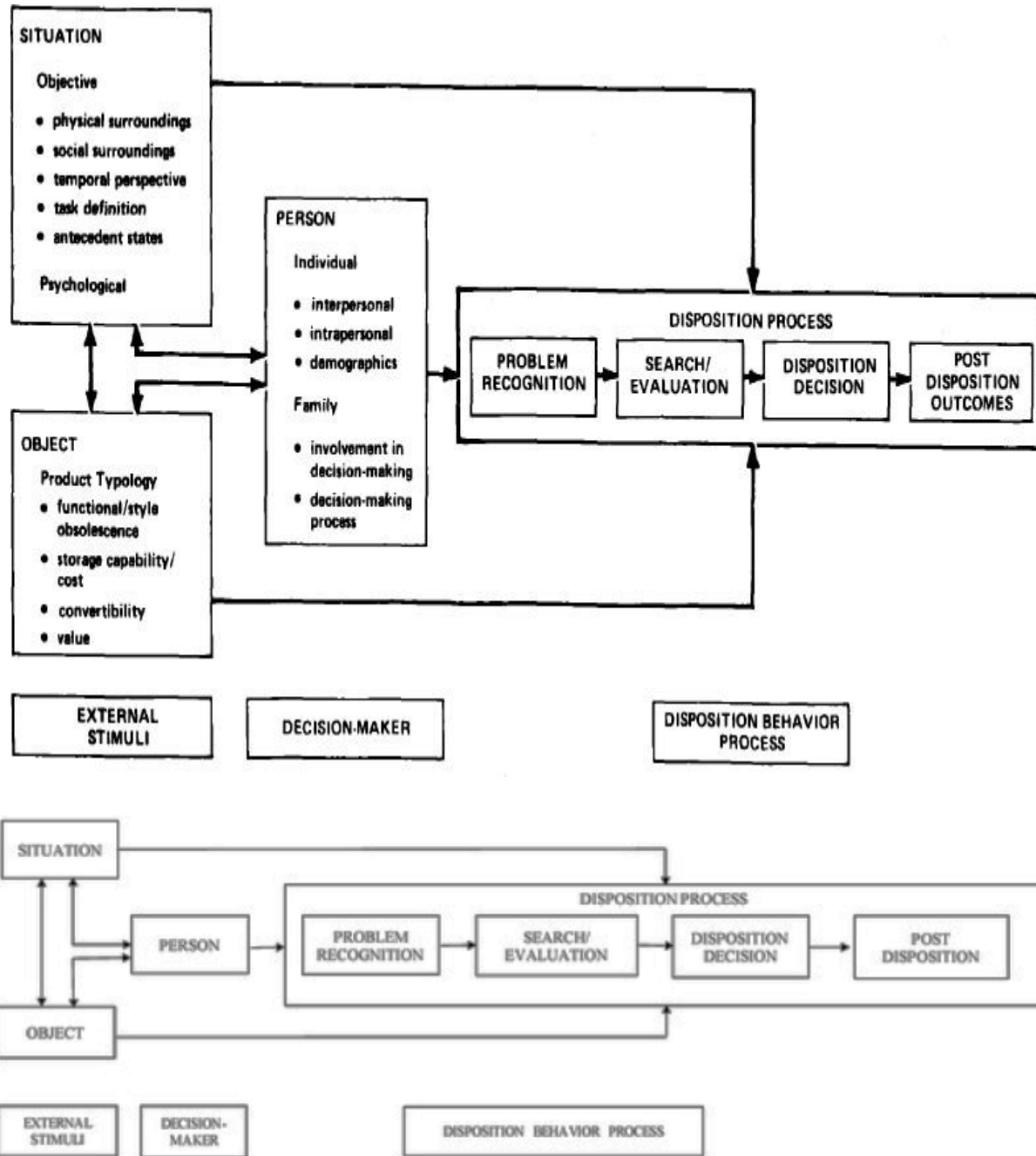


Fig 3.2 A paradigm of consumer product disposition processes (Adapted from Hanson, 1980)

The Decision Maker Components

The decision maker components include the individual and family. The subsequent sections illustrate each of these two components of the paradigm as they affect the disposition process.

Individual - The interpersonal, intrapersonal and demographic characteristics of the individual decision maker impact the disposition process.

Family- Two primary issues concerning the family and consumer behavior include:

- a) Involvement in decision-making-The product category, decision stages within a product category determines who makes the decision and how they are made.
- b) Decision making process- The decisions can be either consensual or accommodative. The decision strategy that helps avoid potential conflict about disposition decision is chosen.

The External Stimuli Components

The external stimuli components include object and situation. The following segments illustrate each of these two components of the paradigm as they affect the disposition process.

Object - The object factor includes the product characteristics that are appropriate for the disposition process. Generally, the products considered for disposition will have many attributes and each of them will have a utility function. The four attributes assessed during the search/evaluation stage of the disposition process include: functional/ style obsolescence; storage capability/ cost; convertibility; and value. The evaluation stage helps the disposer to choose a disposition decision alternative, i.e. store it or get rid of it. For instance, a product that is not in a working condition will eliminate options like reselling or gifting.

Situation- Two types of situations include the objective situation and the psychological situation. This model in line with the previous findings on the situational variables suggests five groups of situational characteristics. These include: physical surroundings, social surroundings, temporal perspective, task definition and antecedent states. The temporal perspective gives indication of the time of year and time of day when the disposition decision is taken. Physical surroundings reflect the kind of storage space availability besides infrastructure, the building, the ambience and all the physical factors surrounding the product. Social environments include the culture that the person was educated or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom he interacts. Social environments are dynamic and change over time.

Task definition identifies specific objectives for disposing, for example, spring cleaning or a

donation to a charity. Lastly, the antecedent stages refer to the financial situation of the disposer.

3.2.2 Model of Factors Influencing Product Replacement

A conceptual model developed by van Nes (2010) posits that the need to replace a possession is triggered by several factors (Fig 3.3). Drawing from past research in product disposition and literature review encompassing the realms of consumer behavior, industrial design and product innovation diffusions, the model of replacement decision process and its influencing factors was constructed. Product attributes, consumer characteristics, and situational influences affect the replacement process. The focal point of the decision process is to compare the current product (actual state) with the replacement product (desired state).

The product characteristics affecting the replacement decision are: technical condition, ease of use, emotional value, social value, design, quality, upgradeability, safety and economy in use. The need to replace a product may be triggered by situational influences. These factors include wear and tear, peer influence, media influence, physical surroundings, personal life, market developments, incidental need, reduced price, opportunity and financial situation. Involvement, innovativeness, replacement morality and specific interest are the four consumer characteristics found to affect the replacement decision.

A quantitative survey was conducted to reveal the replacement motives. The following four clusters were identified: wear and tear, new desires, improved utility and improved expression. The first group of people had a fear of emerging defects as the replaced product was either partly or totally defective. Such people did not have a high level of involvement with the product category. The cluster of people who chose to replace the product was seeking a new product. They were influenced by several situational influences, including, peers, media or changes in personal life. In such cases, the product replaced was mostly in a good working condition. The third cluster of people who replaced their possession for improved utility were influenced by changes in personal life or/ and situational factors.

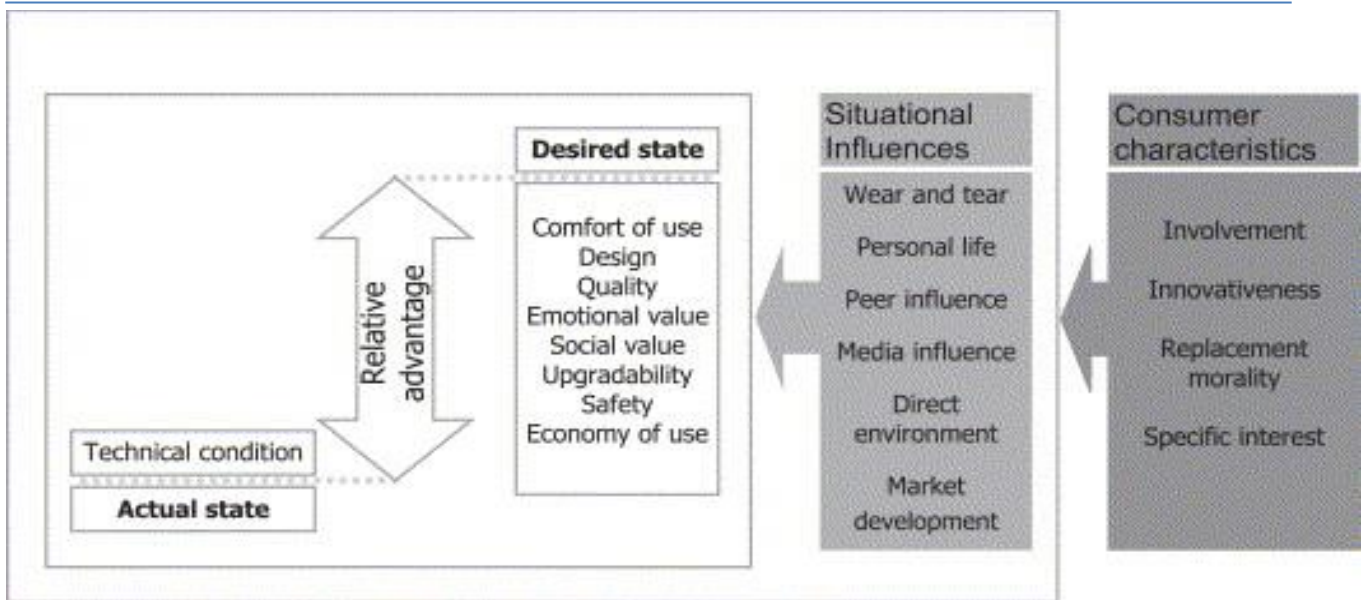


Fig 3.3 Model of Factors Influencing Product Replacement

Adopted from van Nes, N. (2010). Understanding replacement behavior and exploring design solutions. In T. Cooper (Ed.), *Longer lasting products*. 107-132 (p.110). Surrey, England: Gower Publishing Limited.

Generally the replaced product was found to be partly defective. The group of people aspiring to improve their expression was influenced by changes in their personal life, situational influences and their peers. The replaced products were generally not good working condition.

3.2.3 Conceptual Model of Consumer Motivations to Resell On C2C Websites

This conceptual model is used to explain consumer online motivations to resell possessions. This model depicts why consumers engage in online reselling and also elucidates the strategies used by them to sell their possessions. Within this theoretical model, consumer motivations to resell via C2C websites are influenced by four consumer patterns. The four consumer types are as follows: value seeker, big spender, non-spender and experience (Hsunchi Chu, 2011).

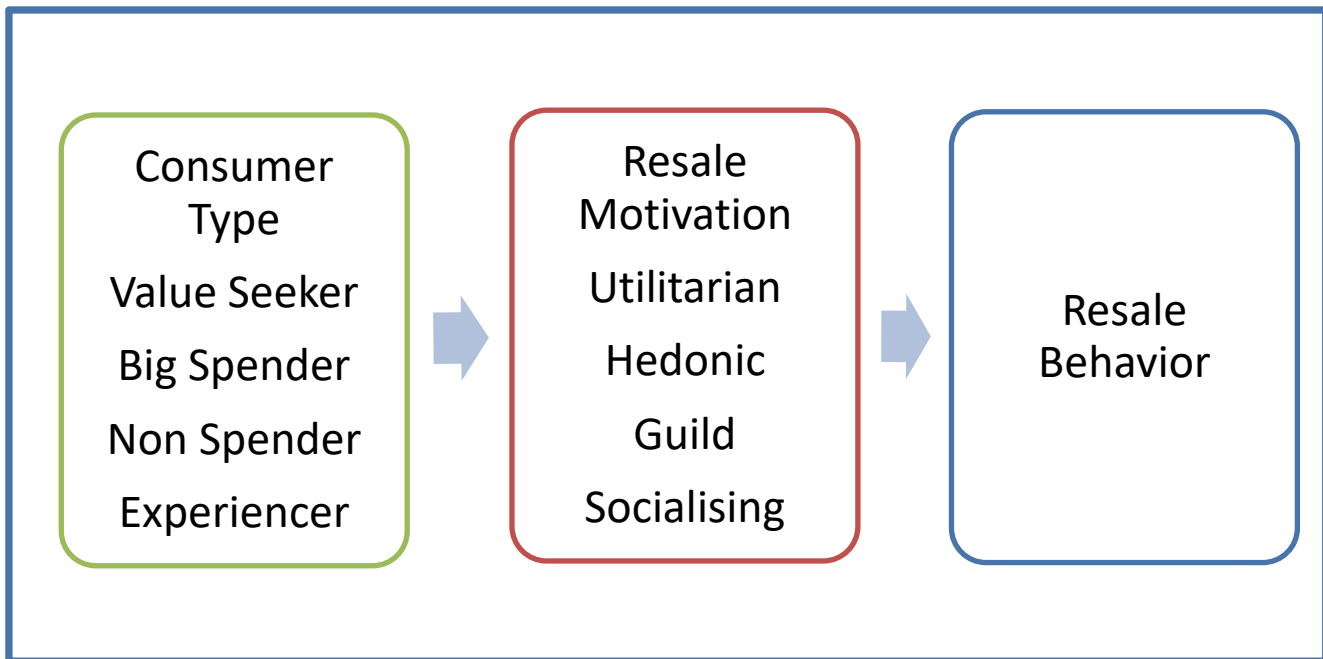


Fig 3.4 Conceptual model of consumer motivation to resell on C2C websites.

Chu, H. (2011). A conceptual model of motivations for consumer resale on C2C websites. *The Service Industries Journal*, 1–17 (p.11)

The value seekers are tight with money and are high materialists. They are rational and competent individuals who make good use of online resale for utilitarian benefits. They spend a lot of time in searching for value-seeking bargains. The big spenders are loose with money but are high in materialism. Such consumers engage in expensive conspicuous spending. As a result, these compulsive spenders are found to have debt, guilt, low self-esteem and social anxiety. Their purchases are often expensive and are of less utility. So, they generally resort to reselling online to recover a financial shortage or from feeling of guilt or anxiety. Non-spenders are tight with money and are low materialists. They enjoy holding on to their money. So, non spenders resell to recover the cost of their possessions.

This helps them to reduce their guilt over storing items that can be resold to save more. Experiencers are characterized by looseness with money and low materialism. They prefer to spend on experiences rather than things. They prefer to spend money to improve their life experiences. These consumer sellers engage in online resale for hedonic or socializing benefits.

Coulter & Ligas (2003) identified two categories of disposers based on their behavioral and psychological traits, viz, packrats and purgers. Packrats are people who retain stuff, and have trouble

disposing of things. Purgers, on the other hand, periodically assess whether items are needed, and if not, typically are quite willing to dispose of them. Packers and purgers belong to the two ends of the disposer spectrum. While purgers are generally found to be organized and neat, packrats are prone to be disorganized and are less likely to have tidy homes. Packrats often find personal and symbolic meaning in their possessions. They are mindful of the money they spent on possessions. Purgers love to stay in tune with the latest technology and trends. They are generally early adopters of new products that are launched. They regard themselves as trendy and so feel relieved and happy to dispose old and out-dated stuff that accumulate dust and occupy space. Purgers prefer to chose a disposition method that is easy.

Later study, found the previously used descriptive labels (e.g. packrat, hoarder) to be quite negatively valenced (Phillips & Segó, 2011). Hence, the researchers substituted more neutral terms, viz, ‘keeper’ for packrat, and ‘discarder’ for purger. They felt a need to evolve a conceptual definition of keepers and discarders. Keepers were identified as those individuals who have solid emotional ties with their possessions in general. Many of their goods help create the extended selves of keepers (Belk, 1988). This conceptual definition of disposer categories with a robust concentration on identity can help explain why even the fervent keepers easily dispose of items that lack connects with their identity. Likewise,

even the most extreme discarders retain meaningful objects. Also, the study went beyond the dichotomous discarder identity and suggested disposers to be arrayed on a keeper/ discarder continuum.

3.3 Conceptual Model

The conceptualization of the research model for this study is based on the three theoretical models discussed previously— Paradigm of Product Disposition Processes, Model of Factors influencing Product Replacement and Conceptual Model of Consumer Motivations to Resell on C2C Websites. These three underlying theoretical models were used to identify factors influencing the disposition tendency construct. Further, two qualitative research papers helped in generating items for identifying disposer typology and calculating disposition tendency score (Coulter & Ligas, 2003; Phillips & Segó, 2011). Nine constructs were identified and their relationships between one another were elaborated in detail within the following subsections. This study has advanced a research model as in Figure 3.4. This model predicts that product disposition tendency is influenced by value

seeking tendency, innovation seeking tendency, tendency to de-clutter, life style factors, storage factors, product working condition and disposition channel. Disposition tendency in turn influences disposition behavior and Impulse disposition behavior. Meanwhile a multi group analysis was carried out to predict the moderating effect of demographic variables, including, gender, age, income, family structure (nuclear or joint) and job transferability on product disposition tendency.

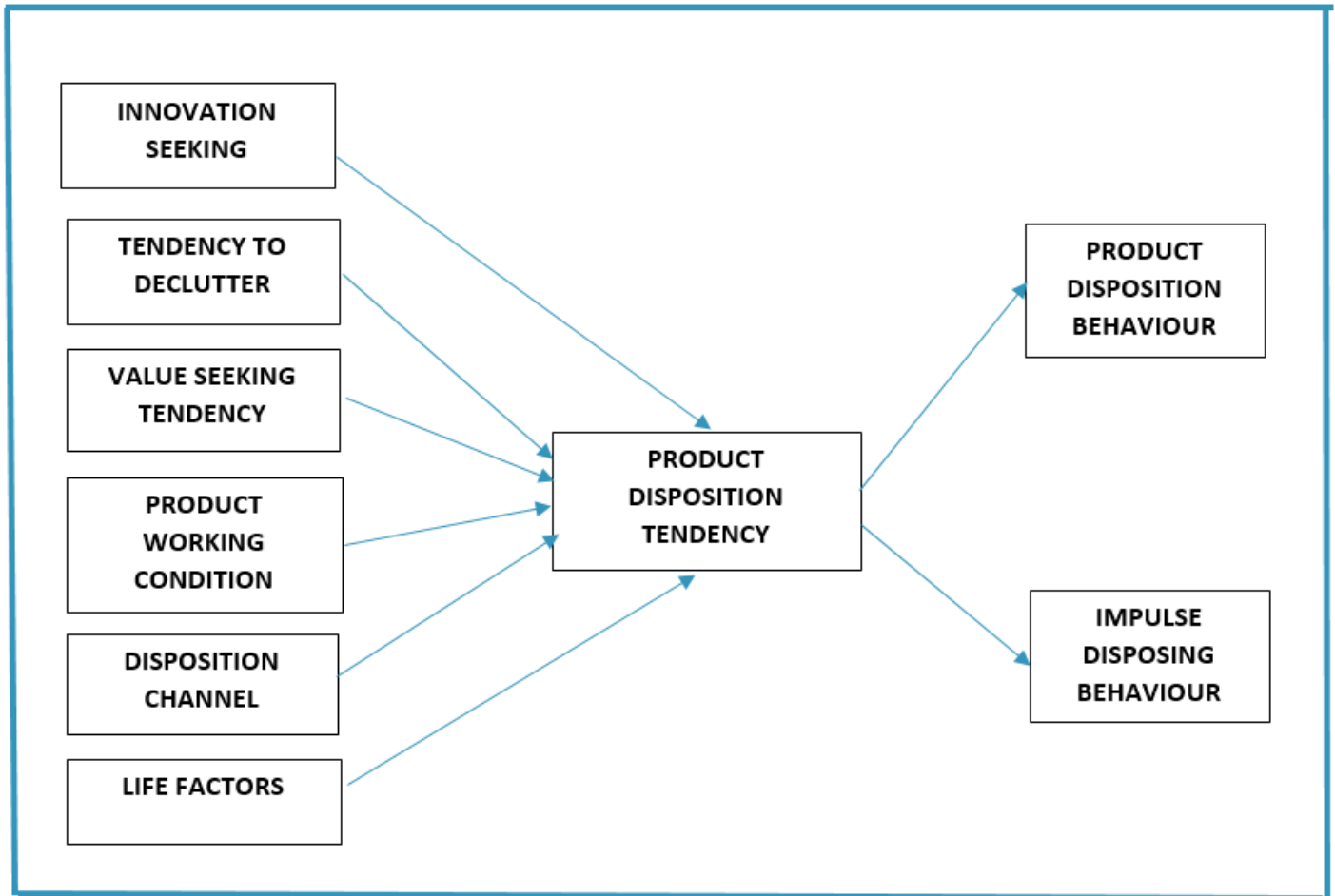


Fig 3.5 Proposed Conceptual Model

3.3.1 Tendency to de-clutter

Within product disposition literature, tendency to de-clutter is identified as an important characteristic trait of ‘purgers’ or ‘discarders’ (Coulter & Ligas, 2003; Phillips & Segó, 2011). Situational factors are temporary outside elements including events may also impact disposition tendency of individuals (Belk, 1975). The most common situational factor that triggers product disposition of unused or unwanted items is the urge to clean up the house. This finding is in line with the data reported by Dovel and Healy that the most significant motive for holding garage sales is to

eliminate clutter (as cited in Rucker et al., 1995). An investigation of individual sponsors of used clothing sales helped conclude that they are primarily interested in discarding clothes they no longer need (Winakor and Martin, 1963).

Situational factors including the temporal, physical and social factors influence the tendency to de-clutter (Belk, 1975; Roster, 2001). A product that has fulfilled its designated function and is no longer of use to the consumer is a classic case of a temporary or short term situational factor that leads to de-clutter activity. Yet another prominent factor that can serve as a catalyst for disposition is the time of the year. For example, students leaving school or graduating from university dispose of their books at the end of each academic year. Also, many of these students who stay in hostels or apartments discard many of their possessions prior to moving home. While some items may be thrown away, many of their stuff are traded for cash at the second hand shops. Similarly, the annual spring cleaning rituals to thoroughly clean up the house provide an opportunity to household members to dispose of items that they no longer need (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009). The unwanted items may be repurposed, donated to worthy organizations, sold via second hand stores, distributed to relatives or chucked in the wheelie bins (Gregson, Metcalfe, & Crewe, 2007; Mitchell et.al, 2009). The cases above illustrate how tendency to de-clutter by individuals trigger product disposition.

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 1: Disposers' tendency to de-clutter has a positive influence on disposition tendency.

3.3.2 Value-seeking tendency

Consumers who ascribe meaning and value to their possessions find disposition to be a complex process, both cognitively and emotionally (Roster, 2001). There is rich literature in disposition studies that inquires into identity value of sacred, singular, and old goods (Arnould and Curasi 2000; Belk et al., 1988; Price, Lastovicka and Fernandez, 2005). People who seek to maximize value manage to either find new ways to use old products or ensure the cherished belongings are passed on to someone who can appreciate its worth (Brough & Isaac, 2012; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Price et al. 2000; Ridgway and Price 1994). Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005) explained how a meaningful possession can be likened to a vessel (a commodity) that not only carries public meanings (popular or collective meanings ascribed to it) but also private meanings (unique meanings held by the individual based on the consumption experience). Young and Wallendorf (1989, p.36)

discovered a pervasive tendency among individuals to delay discarding a possession that reflected aspects of the extended self. The respondents in the study confirmed that they meticulously reflected on the disposition of valuable goods, for instance, replacing a car, for extended periods of time. Price et al. (2000) found that the disposition of valuable special possessions by older consumers is quite a complicated process and involves identifying designated others who can assure immortal self-continuity and respect for the past when the possessions are transferred to the latter. Kleine et al. (1995) suggests that incremental changes to self-image with the passage of time could trigger product disposition as the possessions lose their significant meanings.

Packrats and purgers are distinctly different in their value seeking tendency (Coulter and Ligas, 2003). According to them, the 'packrat' individual is innovative, because he has persistent thoughts about how to extend the utility and life of his possessions. They love to retain their possessions for longer and hence take care of products that evoke pleasant memories of people, places, and events. This helps them to fondly recollect and relive those moments. On the contrary, purgers are practical in the sense that they usually hold on to items with an instant use. A possession that does not serve a purpose in the present is reckoned as trash or clutter. Purgers identify themselves as clean, uncluttered and organized. For purgers, things from the past have little or no future value (functional or symbolic), and they are not interested in thinking about innovative uses for old possessions. Keepers are frugal, become emotionally attached to their possessions, they handle the item with care, fix it when it stops working and postpone its replacement by creating new uses for it (Phillips & Segó, 2011).

According to Lastovicka et.al (1999), frugal consumers have an affective aversion toward buying new goods when long-term goals are at stake, spend their money wisely, and seek clever and resourceful ways of using what they already have. They argued that frugality may elucidate the desire of "Pack Rats" to delay disposition of goods. This qualitative study revealed frugal consumers delight in finding clever ways to recycle goods. Therefore, research confirms frugality or value seeking tendency may reflect an affective affinity toward keeping things.

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 2: Disposers' value seeking tendency has a negative influence on disposition tendency.

3.3.3 Innovation seeking tendency

Innovation seeking tendency is a personality trait that influences disposal tendencies (Paden & Stell, 2005). According to them, innovators, the individuals who are the first to try new products, feel a

strong urge to dispose of “obsolete” products that result as a consequence of their “new” product purchases. Possessions may often be thrown away either because the new product model performs significantly better on certain aspects like performance, features or fashion (T. Cooper, 2004; Wilhelm et al., 2011). The corporate strategies including short technology and fashion cycles, manufacturing fragile products (to make them vulnerable and affordable to disposition) and trade in offers trigger disposition by innovation seekers (T. Cooper, 2004; Gultinan, 2009; Okada, 2001; Purohit, 1995; Swan, 1972; Waldman, 1993; Zhu, Chen, & Dasgupta, 2008). The advent of online channels is driving consumers who have a strong need for trying new products to sell their old goods online (H. Chu & Liao, 2007b). This has led to the emergence of a new consumer segment encompassing those who prefer to buy lower- priced used goods. Second hand markets convert consumer products into liquid assets. These second- hand markets for consumer goods and durables enables the affluent to quickly replace their worn out or obsolescing durable goods with new ones and thereby increasing the total demand for them (Scitovsky, 1994). Online channels for new and used goods have reduced the transaction costs and brokerage fees. This implies that second-hand markets may actually increase material consumption of innovators by helping them dispose of their used goods (Kürsten, 1991).

As noted earlier, this is an era of planned product obsolescence. Since purgers like to keep up-to-date with technology, they are early adopters for new product launches (Coulter & Ligas, 2003). Also, qualitative studies show purgers avoiding keeping old, out-dated items. Purgers and discarders, in general, do not care about the future use of obsolete items as they see such stuff more as a source of clutter and annoyance (Coulter & Ligas, 2003; Phillips & Segó, 2011).

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 3: Disposers’ innovation seeking tendency has a positive influence on disposition tendency.

3.3.4 Life Style Changes

Hermann and Soiffer (1984) also categorized “life-passage sellers” who dispose of items in order to mark a particular life passage, such as when their youngest children reach certain ages. The integration of lifestyle choices, consumption patterns and individual values influenced disposition behaviors (Albinsson & Perera, 2009). According to Chu (2011), big spenders resort to reselling unwanted stuff online to ensure corresponding inflow of money to maintain a materialistic lifestyle.

Schor found that individuals who voluntarily simplify their lifestyles resort to disposing stuff to reduce clutter (as cited in Albinsson & Perera, 2009, p.341). This helps to align their lifestyles with their values. Individuals adopting eco-friendly lifestyle are likely to pass their possessions to new owners rather than simply throwing them away (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010). We explore these areas as consumption and disposition play a symbiotic role in the voluntary simplicity lifestyle. Voluntary simplicity requires a cutback in consumption, within the context of reducing consumption, disposition activities also occur (Ballantine & Creery, 2010; Cherrier, 2009; Craig-Lees and Hill, 2002; Shaw and Newholm, 2002). Heiskanen explained how new personal circumstances, such as , people moving house or children growing older lead to product disposition (as cited in Cooper, 2004, p.425). There is a significant body of theoretical and empirical evidence regarding how product disposition is influenced by role transitions such as changes in marital status or employment (Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf 1988; McAlexander, 1991; Young 1991), changes in health status or mortality (Pavia 1993; Price et al., 2000), and changes in self image with time (Kleine et al. 1995).

Using these theories from consumer behavior literature as a starting point, this thesis examines the impact of life style changes on product disposition tendency and argues that under life style changes increases the tendency to dispose.

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 4: Disposers' life style changes have a positive influence on disposition tendency.

3.3.5 Product working condition

Conn reported the pervasive impact of the functional state of the products on the product disposition decision (as cited in Roster, 2001). The products with high perceived usefulness for other purposes are likely to be retained (Jacoby, Berning, & Dietvorst, 1977). This study showed that products that were functional were revealed to have a higher perceived value regardless of their price. High cost of repair and non availability of spare parts for broken products drive disposition and replacement tend to be “distress purchases”(T. Cooper, 2004). However, in case of goods purchased for their hedonic or psychological benefits, disposition happens even when they happen to be in good working order at the time of disposal (DeBell & Dardis, 1979; van Nes, 2003). This may be attributed to the planned launch of new products in quick succession to make the old goods psychologically obsolete (Cooper, 2004; Gultinan, 2009).

“Trashers” demonstrated a tendency to throw items away at the first sign of malfunction and rarely

kept items in anticipation of future use. On the other hand, “Pack Rats” rarely threw items away and repaired them whenever possible (Coulter & Ligas, 2003). Keepers become attached to their possessions, they handle the object with care, mend it when it breaks down and put off its replacement by creating new uses for it.

Based on these theories from consumer behavior literature on the impact of working condition on disposition, this thesis investigates the influence of product working condition on product disposition tendency.

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 5: Product working condition has an influence on disposition tendency.

3.3.6 Storage

Storage is “the placement of a household item during periods when it is not being used for its primary function” (Boyd & McConocha, 1996, p. 233). Winakor’s (1969) study suggested two separate storage concepts, viz., active storage and inactive storage. Jacoby et.al (1977) first proposed that probability of people retaining a possession will increase as available storage space increases; thereby decreasing the probability that such an item will be discarded. Products pass through rites of passage as consumers discard stuff in order to make room for new possessions (Rucker et al., 1995). Their study revealed that individuals engaged in disposal versus storage decision making when they confronted a storage space constraint. In the absence of storage facilities, consumers who are relocating tend to dispose their possessions if the amount of space available to them is limited (Paden & Stell, 2005). Also, the physical size of an item has an effect on the disposition decision. For instance, individuals with strong product retention tendencies find it difficult to retain an old refrigerator as it occupies a lot of physical space (Haws et al., 2012).

Boyd and McConocha’s (1996) proposed Consumer Household Logistics System Model to address product storage to understand consumer behavior and the decision making process regarding the storage or disposal of inactive goods.

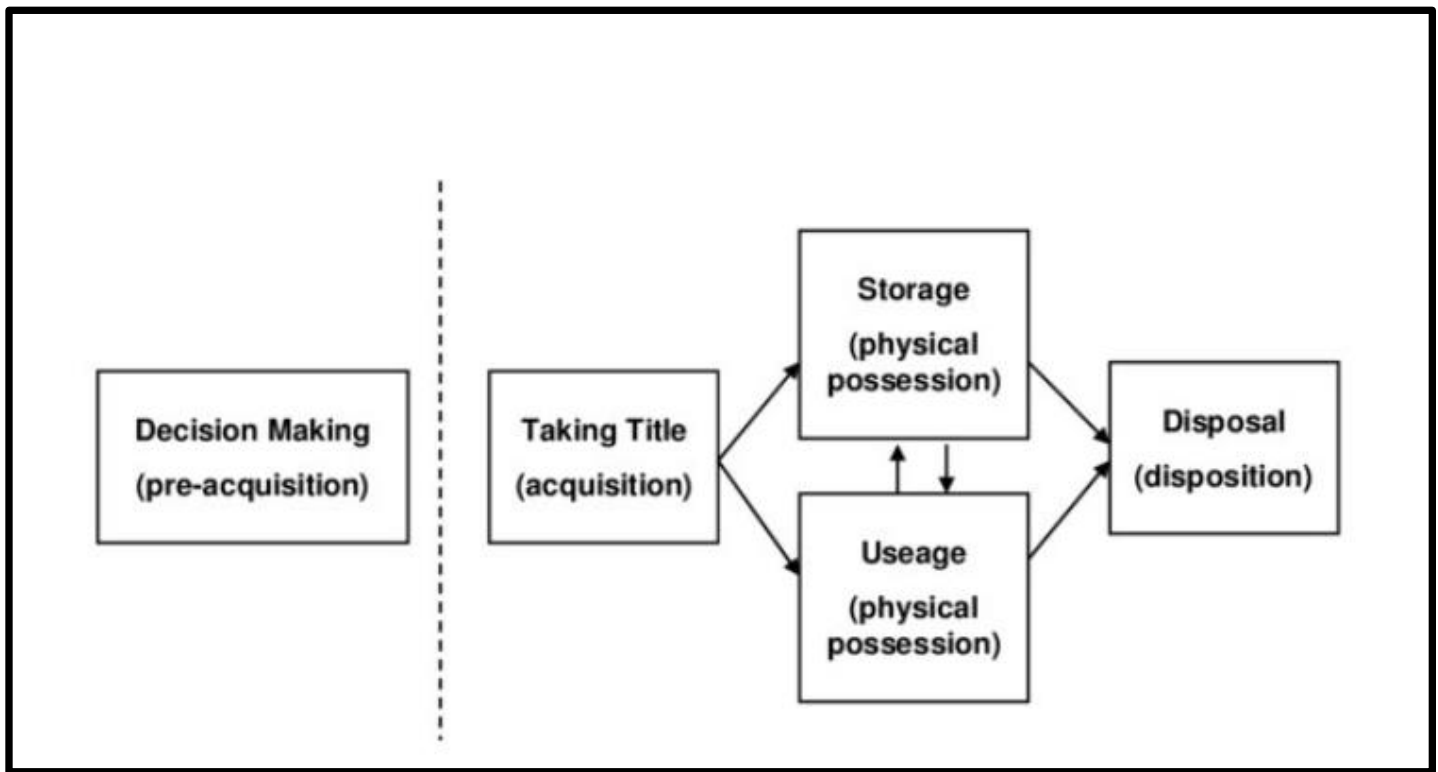


Fig. 3.6 Consumer Household Logistics (Boyd & McConocha 1996).

Hermann and Soiffer (1984) also labeled people with growing children who have to create space as “spring housecleaners”. To sum up, consumers tend to preserve their possessions, even after purchasing a substitute product, if they have the money and space available to do so (Boyd and McConocha 1996; Hanson 1980; Roster, 2001; Young and Wallendorf, 1989). Availability of storage space helps allay fears that the need for the item may resurface at some point in the future (Young and Wallendorf, 1989).

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 6: Ease of Storage has a negative influence on disposition tendency.

3.3.7 Disposition channel

Albinsson and Perera (2009) found that consumers have many different modes of disposition including donation, storing, recycling, exchanging or simply throwing the item away. These are commonly referred to as disposition channels. Knott & Molesworth (2009) found that some consumers would purchase items for only one use with the knowledge that they could then sell the

item on eBay. In another study, Paden and Stell (2005) expanded the model and suggested that four more factors should be considered when studying consumer disposition and the selection of product disposition channels, namely, “knowledge/experience with redistribution,” “availability/access of redistribution channels,” “perceived costs and benefits of redistribution”. The Internet era and C2C e commerce have made significant impacts on resale patterns of consumer disposition by providing more options with which consumers can dispose of unwanted possessions (Cameron and Galloway 2005; Paden and Stell 2005). The available evidence from literature indicates how lack of logistics to get goods to a disposition operator acts as an impediment to disposal, even where consumers are well disposed to the method or the channel (Boyd and McConocha, 1996; Pieters, 1991).

Based on the limited theories from consumer behavior literature on the impact of channels on disposition, this thesis investigates the influence of product working condition on product disposition tendency.

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 7: Disposition channel availability has a positive influence on disposition tendency.

3.3.8 Disposition tendency and disposition behavior

The extant research on the role of disposer identity on product disposition is scant (Phillips & Sego, 2011). Some papers have discussed the characteristics of disposer types (Coulter and Ligas, 2003; Harrell and McConocha, 1992). Coulter and Ligas (2003) developed dichotomous labels to classify those who tend to retain items (packrats) and those inclined to discarding items (purgers). Packrats often find personal and symbolic meaning in their possessions (Belk, 1988; Coulter and Ligas, 2003; McCracken, 1986; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988) and so face difficulty disposing of stuff. The packrats are creative when it comes to extending the life of their possessions by finding new ways to use old products (Price et al., 2000; Ridgway and Price 1994). Packrats are often found to be older individuals who like to repair their worn out products instead of replacing them (Hanson, 1980). In contrast, purgers prefer to get rid of things to keep their living spaces clean and organized. The purgers are young, single individuals with good income and education (Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992) who evaluate whether items are needed on a regular basis and are objective about disposition. Studies show that individuals with purger characteristics have future time orientation (Coulter and Ligas, 2003). Since purgers attach less meaning to products and are quick to dispose stuff, they primarily buy products that are inexpensive and have shorter life cycles

(Raghavan, 2010). Naylor et al. (2008) examined the influence of disposition tendencies on subsequent acquisition. They developed a disposer continuum with packrats at one end and purgers at the other end of the spectrum. Several informants in that study considered themselves as a blend between purgers and packrats. Phillips & Sego (2011) proposed a disposal identity continuum of keepers and discarders. They replaced the term ‘keeper’ for packrat, and ‘discarder’ for purger to remove the emotional overtones and negative valence of the earlier labels. Recent research by Cherrier and Ponner (2010) suggests that keepers are inclined to weave a web of memories connecting events and people to possessions. They are consciously aware of the money they spend on their possessions, and when they are done using a possession, they show keen interest in finding the product a good home (Price et al. 2000).

In our study, respondents appeared to lean toward general tendencies, as some admitted to keeping unused objects because they liked to preserve things, while others were more likely to discard things they no longer needed.

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 8: Disposition tendency influences disposition behavior.

3.3.9 Disposition tendency and Impulse disposing behavior

Harrell and McConocha (1992) looked into the characteristics of disposers and proposed two categories of people in connection with disposition: Planer disposer and Spontaneous Disposer. Whereas a planner disposer is fairly systematic and meticulous about what to do with functional items they no longer need, the responses of a spontaneous disposer are open, unplanned and impulsive (H. Chu & Liao, 2007b) proposed four categories of online resale behavior of consumers rooted in type of resale (“planned resale” and “unplanned resale”) and product usage status (“reselling unused products” and “reselling used products”) so as to examine disposition behavior across type of resale (Table 3.1)

Table 3.1 Taxonomy of Consumer Online Resale Behavior (H. Chu & Liao, 2007b)

	Unused Products	Used Products
Planned Resale	Resale of Extra Purchase	Resale after Temporary Ownership
Unplanned Resale	Unintentional Resale	Disposition

Since there is very little theory or concrete understanding of impulse disposing behavior, this study has made an attempt to understand whether impulse disposing behavior is influenced by product disposition tendency.

While some of the informants of this research study mentioned that they disposed many special items without premeditating, some others claimed they carefully planned the disposition of their low cost possessions. However, this is not the main focus of the study. Our work in this domain only represents an early exploration of the impact disposition tendency on impulse disposing behavior. This study hopes that it has laid the foundation for additional research to further explicate the concept of impulse disposing behavior in consumer research.

Hence, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 9: Disposition tendency influences impulse disposing behavior.

3.3.10 Hypotheses Relating to Moderating Variables

It is generally acknowledged in the literature that age, income and gender have some moderating influence on disposition behavior of individuals (Hanson, 1980; Raghavan, 2010). Older consumers are less impulsive when it comes to tossing away their used possessions (Harrell & McConocha, 1992). They are more prone to creatively reuse their possessions and recycle unwanted stuff. For instance, a study by Bianchi & Birtwistle (2010) on shopping at second-hand stores revealed that older consumers keep clothing longer. On the contrary, younger consumers are quick to dispose and are generally averse to recycling. Younger individuals buy possessions to fulfill their functional needs and to express identity, whereas older individuals view possessions as representing family and ideals (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Since, identity of younger individuals is prone to more changes, they are likely to dispose products while older consumers are likely to have long enduring relationship with their possessions. Also, older people strive to extend the lives of their special possession by passing the stuff on to people who will appreciate and take care of the product (Price et al., 2000). The young consumers tend to be upwardly mobile. Many of them buy low cost second hand goods and so do not mind throwing things away (Raghavan, 2010). Older people are more likely to be influenced by events such as charities and are more likely to donate while younger people look for economic return (Hibbert, Horne, & Tagg, 2005). Older individuals like to fix things instead of disposing of them (Hanson, 1980); Burke et al. (1978) found that consumers who discarded small electrical appliances were mainly young and have a tendency to get rid of products as soon as they stopped working, whereas those adopting other disposition formats (e.g., storing, reselling, donating to charity) were older with the tendency to retaining them, at times repairing them for reuse. More recent studies have examined the disposer sub segments in the context of recycling.

Age and income have been found to be significant demographic variables (Vining and Ebreo, 1990). Maycroft (2009) found that categorization of goods and subsequent disposition depend on knowledge and consciousness about possessions. This knowledge and consciousness will vary across social divisions of class, age, income and so on such that what is viewed as useable, used up or worn out but repairable or trash will vary.

Based on theoretical underpinnings and empirical evidence, there is some evidence to expect that income has an influence on consumers' disposition decisions. The role of income in the context of disposition studies has been given little attention in consumer research. It is generally acknowledged that people with higher levels of income prefer to dispose stuff they no longer need because they have enough disposable income to find a replacement (Guiltinan, 2009). Also, they usually are hard pressed for time to get their items repaired. It is expected that males are motivated more by new technology than females and hence are more likely to dispose their mobile phones (Wilhelm et al., 2011). There is lack of empirical support for a moderating role of work status, family type and job transferability on product disposition. However, the qualitative interviews suggested that people in transferable jobs are prone to dispose more to avoid wear and travel during relocation and packaging cost. Also, those who were in a nuclear family set up are likely to dispose more as they enjoy more autonomy and have fewer conflicts with regard to disposition decisions. Also, such families are expected to have more disposable income. Lastly, the qualitative study suggested that those who were employed were more likely to dispose more. Those who were unemployed showed less inclination to dispose. Hence, based on past studies and above discussions, the following hypotheses are proposed for this study.

Table 3.2 Hypotheses of Moderating Variables

Construct	HY	Path Relationship	Hypotheses
Age	H8a1,a2,a3	DisT→DisB	Age has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
	H9 a1,a2,a3	DisT→ImpDisB	Age has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
Income	H8b	DisT→DisB	Income has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
	H9b	DisT→ImpDisB	Income has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship

Gender	H8c	DisT→DisB	Gender has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
	H5c	DisT→ImpDisB	Gender has a significant moderating on the path relationship
Family type	H8d	DisT→DisB	Family type has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
	H9d	DisT→ImpDisB	Family type has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
Job Type	H8e	DisT→DisB	Job type has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
	H9e	DisT→ImpDisB	Job type has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
Work Status	H8f	DisT→DisB	Work status has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship
	H9f	DisT→ImpDisB	Work status has a significant moderating effect on the path relationship

3.4 Summary of Research Hypotheses

The sources cited (Table 3.3) include studies relating to the constructs in the context of product disposition. Most of them are qualitative studies that have provided rich in-depth descriptions of product disposition behavior. However, there have been no empirical studies that have examined the constructs with regard to product disposition tendency. Using many of the constructs from these earlier studies, this exploratory study on disposition has been designed. The face validity of the constructs has thus been taken as good for further exploration by generating empirical data. There have been no studies on disposition carried out in the Indian context.

The following tables present the summary of developed hypotheses (Table 3.3 and Table 3.4).

Table 3.3 Summary of Hypotheses and their Theoretical Bases (Part I)

Hypothesis	Statement and Path Relationship	Source
H1	Tendency to de-clutter has a positive influence on disposition tendency	Belk, 1975; Coulter & Ligas, 2003; Gregson, Metcalfe, & Crewe, 2007; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009; Phillips & Sego, 2011; Roster, 2001; Winakor and Martin, 1963;
H2	Value seeking tendency has a positive influence on disposition tendency	Arnould and Curasi, 2000; Belk et al., 1989; Brough & Isaac, 2012; Coulter and Ligas, 2003; Kleine et al., 1995; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Phillips & Sego, 2011 Price et al., 2000; Price et al, 2005; Ridgway and Price, 1994; Roster, 2001; Young and Wallendorf, 1989;
H3	Innovation seeking tendency has a positive influence on disposition tendency	Coulter & Ligas, 2003; Cooper, 2004; H. Chu & Liao, 2007; Gultinan, 2009; Kürsten, 1991; Okada, 2001; Phillips & Sego, 2011; Paden & Stell, 2005; Purohit, 1995; Scitovsky, 1994; Swan, 1972; Waldman, 1993; Zhu, Chen, & Dasgupta, 2008; Wilhelm et al., 2011;
H4	Change in life style has a positive influence on disposition tendency	Albinsson & Perera, 2009; Ballantine & Creery, 2010; Belk et al., 1988; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Cherrier, 2009; Chu, 2011; Craig-Lees and Hill, 2002; Hermann and Soiffer, 1984; Kleine et al., 1995; McAlexander 1991; Pavia, 1993; Price et al, 2000; Shaw and Newholm, 2002; Young, 1991;

Hypothesis	Statement and Path Relationship	Source
H5	Product Working Condition has a positive influence on disposition tendency	Conn, 1978; Cooper, 2012; Cooper, 2004; Coulter & Ligas, 2003; DeBell & Dardis, 1979; Guiltinan, 2009; Jacoby et al., 1977; van Nes, 2003;
H6	Ease of storage has a negative influence on disposition tendency	Boyd & McConocha, 1996; Haws et al., 2012; Hanson 1980; Hermann and Soiffer, 1984; Jacoby et.al, 1977; Paden & Stell, 2005; Roster, 2001; Rucker et al., 1995; Young and Wallendorf, 1989; Winakor, 1969;
H7	Disposition Channel availability has a positive influence on disposition tendency	Albinsson and Perera, 2009; Boyd and McConocha, 1996; Cameron and Galloway 2005;Knott & Molesworth, 2009; Paden and Stell, 2005; Pieters, 1991;
H8	Disposition Tendency has a positive influence on Disposition Behavior	Belk, 1988; Cherrier and Ponner, 2010; Coulter and Ligas, 2003; Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; McCracken, 1986; Naylor et al., 2008; Phillips & Segó, 2011; Price et al., 2000; Ridgway and Price 1994; Raghavan, 2010; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988;
H9	Disposition tendency has a positive influence on Impulse Disposing Behavior	Harrell and McConocha,1992; H. Chu & Liao, 2007;

Table 3.4 Summary of Hypotheses and their Sources (Part 2)

Hypothesis	Statement and Path Relationship	Source
H8a1,H8a2,H8a3	Age has a significant moderating effect on DisT→DisB	Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Burke et al., 1978; Hanson, 1980; Harrell & McConocha, 1992; Hibbert, Horne, & Tagg, 2005;. Maycroft, 2009; Price et al., 2000; Raghavan, 2010; Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988;
H9a1,H9a2,H9a3	Age has a significant moderating effect on DisT→ImpDisB	Hanson, 1980; Harrell & McConocha, 1992; Maycroft, 2009; Price et al., 2000; Raghavan, 2010; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988;
H8b	Income has a significant moderating effect on DisT→DisB	Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Gultinan, 2009; Maycroft, 2009;
H9b	Income has a significant moderating effect on DisT→ImpDisB	Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Gultinan, 2009; Maycroft, 2009;
H8c	Gender has a significant moderating effect on DisT→DisB	Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Gultinan, 2009; Maycroft, 2009; Wilhelm et al., 2011;
H9c	Gender has a significant moderating effect on DisT→ImpDisB	Vining and Ebreo, 1990; Gultinan, 2009; Maycroft, 2009; Wilhelm et al., 2011;
H8d	Family type has a significant moderating effect on DisT→DisB	Field Study

Hypothesis	Statement and Path Relationship	Source
H9d	Family type has a significant moderating effect on DisT \rightarrow ImpDisB	Field Study
H8e	Job type has a significant moderating effect on DisT \rightarrow DisB	Field Study
H9e	Job type has a significant moderating effect on DisT \rightarrow ImpDisB	Field Study
H8f	Work status has a significant moderating effect on DisT \rightarrow DisB	Field Study
H9f	Work status has a significant moderating effect on DisT \rightarrow ImpDisB	Field Study

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, paradigm of product disposition processes (Hanson, 1980), model of factors influencing product replacement (van Nes and Cramer, 2010) and prior qualitative studies on disposer identity are synthesized to conceptualize the research model for this study. Based on the conceptualization, research questions and hypotheses are generated. These perspectives are echoed in recent comprehensive reviews of the field, which continue to highlight the explanatory value of established disposition frameworks (Liu & Meng, 2017; Madhuhansi, Ozanne, & Kennedy, 2025). The next chapter discusses the research's methodology, design, and implementation used towards understanding product disposition tendency, disposer types and factors influencing disposition tendency.

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