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PRODUCT DISPOSAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. To my husband, Jason Caswell Naylor, who has encouraged me in every possible way and believed in me throughout. He is my constant source of inspiration. To my sisters, Priscilla Walker and Stephanie Walker Powell, who I know are proud of me. And, to my parents, whose love and encouragement has allowed me to achieve everything that I have accomplished. Their belief in me throughout my life has been invaluable in any success I have achieved. I would not be where I am today without my father, Michael C. Walker's, thoughtful and patient guidance and my mother, Ellen Hindman Walker's, unflagging support and words of encouragement.

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PRODUCT DISPOSAL

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Consumers often dispose of unwanted goods that are still functional. However, even though the decision of how to dispose of these unwanted goods is both theoretically and practically important, this side of the marketing equation remains relatively unexplored. With a few notable exceptions (e.g., Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005; Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000), disposition has been largely ignored despite repeated calls for researchers to expand their study of consumer behavior beyond acquisition and consumption to include disposition (Holbrook 1987; Jacoby 1978; Wells 1993). My dissertation represents the first experimental research to focus on how consumers' preferences for modes of disposal differ by the nature of the good being disposed. Across three studies I demonstrate that different disposal methods are preferred for "special"

goods, goods to which the consumer has become emotionally attached during the ownership experience, and uncover the directionality of those effects. I find in my first study that, overall, consumers are reluctant to sell special goods and that donation and throwing away are the preferred methods for less special goods. Storage, on the other hand, is considered more appropriate for special goods. My second study demonstrates that these effects are not driven by the good's actual or perceived market value. Emotional attachment has an independent effect beyond that of the initial price paid for the good. The third study identifies four dimensions on which the disposal methods differ that drive the product/disposal method match: the ease of the method, the ethicality of the method, the degree of control the method provides to the disposer over the future fate of the good, and the amount of monetary compensation the method offers. Consumers want to exercise control over the fate of special goods in order to ensure that their specialness remains in tact, even after disposal. Easy methods, methods that direct the good to unknown needy recipients, and methods that provide monetary compensation are more appropriate for less special goods.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Consumers often dispose of goods that are used but still usable. However, even though the decision of how to dispose of these functional but unwanted goods is both theoretically and practically important, this side of the marketing equation remains relatively unexplored. Most marketing research focuses on acquisition, concentrating on the buying process before a consumer even gets a product home. A relatively small amount of research looks at consumption, at how consumers use goods once they have been acquired. However, there is almost no research on disposition, the other side of the marketing equation.

A significant portion of the research on acquisition focuses on different preferences for modes of acquisition by good type. For example, consumers prefer to match the amount of effort required to earn a reward in a reward program to the type of reward (Kivetz and Simonson 2002). Consumers are willing to pay more in time (i.e., effort) for hedonic goods but more in money for utilitarian goods (Okada 2005), and they would rather receive hedonic goods as prizes and utilitarian goods through purchasing (O'Curry and Strahilevitz 2001). The importance of these acquisition effects is two-fold: theoretically it is interesting to know that consumers would rather obtain certain goods in some ways than others, and practically it is possible for marketers to use this knowledge to drive purchase. However, despite this recognition that modes of acquisition are not equivalent, differences across modes of disposal have not been explored.

Just as modes of acquisition are differentially preferred by good type, modes of disposal may be differentially preferred even though in some basic sense the outcome

(i.e., that the good is no longer, or, in the case of storage, only partially available) stays constant across the modes. From a managerial standpoint, it is important to understand how these decisions are made because of the sheer size of the markets that depend on disposition of used goods, including the self-storage industry and second-hand markets for used goods, such as EBay. Apart from the managerial relevance of studying disposition, from a consumer behavior stand point, there is also an interesting psychology behind disposal decisions. Do consumers care whether their good goes to charity or is sold, for example? When do they pay to store goods they are no longer using instead of throwing them away? My dissertation seeks to answer whether consumers have preferences for some disposal methods over othersand , if so, what drives these preferences.

Despite the importance of these questions, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005; Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000), disposition has been largely ignored despite repeated calls for researchers to expand their study of consumer behavior beyond acquisition and consumption (Holbrook 1987; Jacoby 1978; Wells 1993). Wells urged consumer behavior researchers to study "the whole consumption sequence, from preconsideration to ultimate result" (1993, p. 490). However, few researchers have answered his call to study postconsumption behavior.

The relatively small amount of disposal research that exists has typically been conducted using surveys (e.g., Harrell and McConocha 1992; Jacoby, Berning, and Dietvorst 1977) or depth interviews (e.g., Coulter and Ligas 2003; Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005; Price et al. 2000; Roster 2001). To my knowledge, the only previous experimental research relevant to disposal is Okada's (2001) research on trade-ins, which

concentrated on the role played by mental accounting in the decision to trade-in used high-end durables rather than on disposal. In her scenarios the consumer ends the transaction with either the old good (because of a decision not to trade) or a new replacement good. My work concerns consumers' preferences for modes of disposal that leave the consumer without the good or a replacement, with an emphasis on the most theoretically likely (and managerially relevant) variable: the nature of the disposed product.

In order to understand this issue, it is first useful to explore why so little marketing research has focused on disposition.

REASONS FOR THE RELATIVE LACK OF DISPOSAL RESEARCH

One reason why marketing researchers might have focused less attention on disposal than on acquisition is because, at first glance, disposal decisions do not appear to be associated with profit in the same way that acquisition does. It is clear that money changes hands in retail and other acquisition environments commonly studied by marketing researchers. Perhaps it has been overlooked, however, that money often changes hands in disposal scenarios as well. Both permanent disposal (including selling used goods at second-hand markets or on Internet auction sites like EBay) and temporary disposal (i.e., storage) are sizable markets; self-storage alone is a 3.5 billion dollar industry in the United States (www.stockselector.com, 10/2004). Money even changes hands when throwing goods away. For example, 1-800-GOT JUNK? is a self-described "junk removal company" that, for a fee, hauls away items consumers no longer need

(www.1800gotjunk.com, 7/2005). Perhaps the size and importance of the markets for used goods has been underestimated; these companies may not have sophisticated marketing departments, and most people may not think about the money to be made in disposal. In my research, I chose to investigate the four disposal methods (throwing a good away, storing it, selling, and donating it) that either prevent goods from or allow goods to enter the two public markets for disposed items: the self-storage market and the second-hand (or used goods) market. I include storage because it is a form of temporary disposal: the consumer is paying someone (often large sums of money) to be denied easy access to the good while perhaps maintaining later access to it. Note that many consumers may not ever actually retain full use of the good, either through nonpayment or a later decision to dispose of the good.

Another reason that prior research has not more fully explored the disposal method decision may be that most of the experimenters addressing the general issue of giving up goods have focused on the endowment effect (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 1990) and its cause, loss aversion (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). Loss aversion researchers, who have conducted a sizable amount of research on this general issue in marketing and elsewhere, concentrate on the difference in value between the same good when it is owned versus not owned (e.g., Kahneman et al. 1990; Boyce et al. 1992), usually comparing buying prices with selling prices for the same (new) good. Thus, the work is silent with respect to the method of disposal because differential preferences across disposal methods are irrelevant to (and sometimes counter to) their research aims of holding the good and exchange methods constant.

Another potential explanation for the lack of empirical research on this subject is that, from a utility standpoint, one might expect that different permanent disposal methods would be equally preferred because they have the same material outcome for the consumer (i.e., they result in the relinquishing of the good). At first glance it may appear that which method is selected to give a good up is not particularly interesting from a consumer behavior standpoint because there is no obvious reason to suspect differences in preferences across methods. One might make the common-sense assumption that the disposal method decision is relatively simple: selling should be preferred for goods that the disposer considers more valuable because the greater the utility the good has, the more monetary compensation the owner should require to give it up. Indeed, Strahilevitz and Loewenstein (1998) show that owning a good longer periods of time increases the valuation of the object and the desire for compensation in selling it. Following a rational economic model, disposal decisions should be relatively straightforward: the more utility a good provides the more likely one is to sell it, and the more money one is likely to demand for the good. However, as I demonstrate in this research, disposal preferences do not follow even this simple rule. In fact, they often violate it.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

DEFINING DISPOSITION

The most-cited work on disposition in the marketing literature has focused on defining what qualifies as disposition. Jacoby et al. (1977) defined disposition as simply the act of "getting rid of" a good and developed a taxonomy of disposal methods with three main types of disposal: deciding to keep the product, temporarily disposing of it, and permanently disposing of it. This taxonomy is presented in Table 1. Young and Wallendorf (1989) also developed a taxonomy of methods, but defined disposition as the process of detaching goods from the self, focusing on the relationship that a consumer has with the possessions that make up the extended self (Belk 1988). They describe the process as consisting of both physical and emotional detachment from a good. In their taxonomy, Young and Wallendorf (1989) also point out that disposal can be both voluntary and involuntary, as defined from the point of view of the possessor of the good. Involuntary disposal occurs when the possessor does not *choose* to give up their possessions. Losing one's goods in situations like a burglary or a natural disaster is thus a form of disposal, albeit a much more intense one than voluntarily giving up one's possessions (see Delorme, Zinkhan, and Hagen 2004 for a discussion of involuntary disposal due to natural disaster).

My research, however, focuses strictly on voluntary disposal, disposal in which a consumer has decided to give up a good because he or she no longer needs or wants it. I

define disposal as *relinquishing immediate use of the good*. This definition is in line with the Jacoby et al. (1977) taxonomy that includes both permanent and temporary disposal methods. Thus, a good does not have to be destroyed to be considered disposed of, nor does the good have to be permanently out of the owner's possession. Thus, throwing away and storage are considered disposal methods, as are selling and donating. The focus of my dissertation is on understanding when and why these different methods are chosen.

MODES OF ACQUISITION AND DISPOSITION

A variety of evidence within the marketing literature suggests that mode of acquisition is an important consumer consideration in making purchases. For example, consumers may prefer to buy certain types of goods in specific retail environments. McGrath (1989) demonstrated that gift stores are designed "to make the store itself a gift to customers" (p. 435). The store McGrath studied is visually stimulating and relaxing, a retail space reserved as special and different from stores that sell mostly practical items. Why should this be so? Because gifts themselves are typically not practical, everyday items. Instead, they often are extravagant items that the giver wants but would not buy for him or herself (Camerer 1988). Consumers do not wish to buy items intended as gifts in everyday stores, even if the items themselves remain constant across the retail environments. Instead, they prefer to acquire them in a more special retail environment that matches the specialness of the good.

This notion of matching acquisition mode to the product goes beyond the retail environment. Consumers appear to prefer to match acquisition mode to the product

across a number of situations. This matching helps explain why consumers prefer to purchase luxury items with their reward programs when the reward took more effort to obtain (Kivetz and Simonson 2002). The luxury somehow commemorates their effort; it signifies the reward as special. Similarly, the willingness to pay more for some goods in time (i.e., effort) and more for others in money (Okada 2005) and the preference for some types of goods over others as prizes instead of purchases (O'Curry and Strahilevitz 2001) suggests that the type of payment plays a role in acquisition matching. Two important themes emerge from this research that I believe are relevant to disposal preferences: (1) some modes of acquisition are more appropriate for specific types of goods than are others and (2) money is not necessarily an appropriate means of exchange for all types of goods.

PRODUCT/DISPOSAL METHOD MATCH

I propose that consumers are not indifferent between disposal methods and that their preferences follow a consistent, if sometimes surprising, pattern. They seek a match between the relinquished good and the disposal method such that special goods are disposed of in special ways. In line with previous research, I define special goods as goods that are "favorite" or "cherished" and are valued for the positive meanings and memories associated with them (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995; Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005; Price et al. 2000; Richins 1994a, 1994b; Roster 2001; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Special goods possess both public and private meanings that go beyond their functional or material value (Holbrook 1994; Richins 1994b; Young and Wallendorf

1989) and can even help to define a consumer's identity (Belk 1988; Kleine et al. 1995). The specialness of a good to be given up is driven by a consumer's attachment to that good and may be the result of characteristics of the product itself (i.e., some product categories are inherently more emotionally significant than others) or the result of experiences the owner has had with the product (e.g., Strahilevitz and Loewenstein 1998). Thus, goods acquire specialness when (1) they are from a class of goods considered inherently special and/or (2) consumers have become attached to them during the course of product ownership[1]. Consumers select disposal methods that match their attachment to the good.

If, as I propose, disposal methods differ in how special they are (i.e., in their match with special goods), then I would expect throwing away to be especially distasteful for special goods and storing to be more appealing. Note that, to my knowledge, no one has studied this particular comparison, even though it is crucial for two of the most important disposal industries: second-hand markets (which rely on an influx of used goods and hence on the decision not to throw used goods away) and storage companies. However, I can hypothesize the directionality of these effects given my knowledge of the loss aversion literature: throwing away may invoke in people a particularly strong feeling of loss (since the good is undeniably gone and potentially destroyed, with no compensation), and storing may feel like less of a loss since the good can be retrieved at some later time. These effects are likely to be exacerbated for special goods because it has been repeatedly shown that emotionally engaging goods evoke more loss aversion (e.g., Boyce et al. 1992; Irwin 1994). In fact, Boyce et al. (1992) showed that loss

[1] Although goods can be negatively emotionally significant (Kleine et al. 1995; Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005), in this research I concentrate on goods with positive emotional significance.

aversion is exacerbated if the good in question is destroyed when the decision maker forfeits it. Note, however, when comparing storage and throwing a good away, that many goods that are stored in paid storage are forfeited in the future (due to nonpayment) and that retrieving stored goods always takes some degree of effort, so that storage is not equivalent to keeping the good (Jacoby et al. 1977). Nevertheless, despite obvious methodological and theoretical differences between the loss aversion literature and product disposal, whatever psychological mechanisms underlie loss aversion may also play a role in the decision of how to dispose of a good.

The prior qualitative work on disposal can also help us to compare throwing away and storing. When consumers consider a good special, they wish to preserve its meaning even after it is no longer in their possession. Evidence for this desire is seen in Price et al.'s (2000) work in which the consumers interviewed preferred recipients who already know and appreciate a good's meaning over recipients who do not and in Lastovicka and Fernandez's (2005) interviews showing that unknown recipients are considered acceptable for special goods only after a shared identity is uncovered that allows the meaning to transfer along with the good. Throwing the good away destroys the good and thus destroys the meaning it holds for the disposer. Storage, however, may be appropriate for special goods because it preserves the good in its original form and allows the consumer to keep the good in his or her possession. Being able to control the future fate of goods, as storage allows, is an important consideration when disposing of cherished goods (Price et al. 2000). Thus, storage preserves a good's meaning, both by protecting the good from destruction and by protecting the good from going to a new owner who might not value it and its associated meanings appropriately.

Although my hypotheses for throwing away and storing are relatively intuitive, predictions for donation and selling are not as straightforward. There are two competing possibilities for whether donation and selling will be viewed as methods that preserve and honor a cherished good's meaning. On the one hand, it is possible that donation is an appropriate disposal method for special goods because acts of altruism are linked to egotism and the elimination of negative feelings (e.g., Cialdini and Kenrick 1976; Cialdini et al. 1987). It is possible that giving up a special good would make one feel even better about oneself than would giving up a less special good. However, it also is possible that donation is not an appropriate method for special goods because donation means that the good ultimately ends up in the hands of someone with whom the disposer does not have a relationship. This treatment of the good may destroy the good's meaning since the new owner(s) will not be aware of and/or not honor the emotional significance of the good. Because of this potential loss or destruction of meaning, donation might be considered an inappropriate disposal method for special goods.

Likewise, there are competing possibilities for selling. Selling provides economic compensation for losing a good, and special goods should be more valued than less special goods and thus may be more likely to be put up for sale instead of being disposed of in some other way. Indeed, previous research has shown that special goods (such as trophies won instead of found on the street) command higher selling compensation, implying that compensation makes up for losing a special good (Loewenstein and Issacharoff 1994). On the other hand, selling may be considered an unseemly fate for a special good both because the good will end up with an unknown recipient who will not preserve its meaning and/or because consumers are reluctant to accept money for giving

up a special good. Cherished goods are sometimes referred to as “priceless,” so assigning a price to a special good could somehow damage the good’s meaning by putting a price on something that is not meant to be monetarily valued (Price et al. 2000). Some research on loss aversion (e.g., Irwin 1994) has shown that people feel squeamish about putting a price tag on items of great importance to them. Likewise, it has been shown that money is a better acquisitional match with more banal goods than with goods that inspire more loyalty and emotion (Okada 2005). Thus, paradoxically, people may prefer to sell less special goods over special goods.

My goal in this paper is to establish (1) whether in fact different disposal methods are preferred for special goods and (2) the directionality of those effects. My first study will necessarily be exploratory because there is no previous research on the topic, either on overall preferences for disposal methods or on the match between method and good. Study 1 thus has an overall hypothesized effect, that product specialness affects preference for disposal method, as well as four particular effects (i.e., the individual directions of the effect of specialness on each of the disposal methods). The subsequent two studies replicate and expand upon the original results and thus have more concrete expectations about the direction of the disposal effects. In other words, Study 1 reveals the nature of the disposal method to product matches and the subsequent studies confirm and explain these matches.

Next, I demonstrate in Study 2 thatmy effects are not driven by economic value concerns. That is, I show that the specialness match exists above and beyond how much the good is assumed to cost to distinguish the effects from simple economic concerns. In Study 3 I replicate the effects for the third time in conjunction with a factor analysis

designed to establish the psychological components of the disposal methods. That is, Study 3 uncovers, for example, what makes selling different from donating and why storing is different from the other methods, psychologically. These results help shed more light on the specifics of the hypothesized match between disposal method and good.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY 1

In this study I obtain evidence in support of my product/disposal method match hypothesis and establish the directionality of the effect of specialness on the four disposal methods of interest. I manipulated specialness in two ways: by product category (beach towel vs. quilt) and by product experience. Three hundred and four undergraduates at a large southwestern university participated in this study in exchange for either course credit or five dollars.

PRETEST

Common sense suggests that beach towels are less emotionally engaging in our culture than are quilts; it is difficult to imagine people passing down towels for generations or giving a particular used beach towel to someone as a special gift, and, although there are quilt enthusiasts and experts (West, Brown, and Hoch 1996), there are no such known groups for beach towels. To statistically establish the expected relative specialness of quilts I conducted a pretest in which I asked 46 participants (from the same population as the main sample) to indicate how special each product category was perceived to be *a priori*. See Appendix A for the pretest stimulus. As expected, quilts were judged more likely, on a scale from one ("not at all likely") to nine ("extremely likely") to hold sentimental value for the average person ($M = 7.30$) than were beach towels ($M = 3.02$), $t(1, 44) = 3.25$, $p < .01$.

STIMULI

Each participant read two brief scenarios (one about each product) in which they were told that they had decided to give up the product and were given information about the type of experience they had had with the product while it was in their possession. This study tested the effects of specialness of the product (stemming from ownership experience or characteristics of the product itself) on preference for one disposal method over another. Product experience was manipulated separately for the quilt and towel using a between-subject (attachment vs. none) factorial design. In the case of the quilt, attachment was manipulated using sentimental value. For the beach towel, which is less likely to be viewed sentimentally, I manipulated episodic memory (i.e., particular memories about the towel). All of the participants answered questions about both the quilt and the beach towel.

The sentimental value scenario for the quilt read:

> Looking at the quilt, you feel very sad to see it so threadbare due to the sentimental value it has for you. You have had the quilt for years and years, all through growing up, in your bedroom at your parent's house, in your college dorm room, in your first apartment. It really has been with you for a long time. You are sad to see the quilt go, but you decide that it is so worn, you finally need to get rid of it.

In the control condition, the scenario read, simply, "You are sad to see the quilt go, but you decide that it is so worn, you finally need to get rid of it."

For the beach towel, attachment was manipulated using episodic memory. In the episodic memory condition participants were told:

> As you are looking at it, you remember that you got the towel on a trip to Cancun during Spring Break a few years ago. Looking at the towel you

> remember what a great time you and your friends had on the trip. You remember the funky beach shop where you bought the towel right before you and your friends had such a great day at the beach.

In the control condition, participants were told, "As you are looking at it, you find that you can't remember where or when you bought the towel." The stimuli are presented in Appendices B and C.

PROCEDURE

After reading each scenario, participants rated, on a scale of one ("not at all likely") to nine ("extremely likely"), how likely they would be to give up both products in each of the following four ways: throwing it away, putting it in paid storage, trying to sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a garage sale), and donating it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity).

RESULTS

Main Effects of Disposal Method (Collapsed across Attachment Conditions)

These effects tell us whether some disposal methods are more attractive overall (for both product types). These results are less interesting for my purposes than some other findings except that they do help establish that people have significantly greater preferences for some disposal methods over others despite the equivalence of the outcome of the disposal methods (i.e., not retaining immediate use of the good) to the consumer. Thus, this is the first study to show that consumers exhibit a reliable pattern of preferences across disposal methods. The repeated measures analysis reveals an overall

method effect for both the quilt, $F(3, 300) = 140.51$, $p < .0001$, and the beach towel, $F(3, 297) = 196.51$, $p < .0001$. Subsequent analyses will focus on establishing that this pattern varies systematically by the specialness of the good, in other words, that there is a match between the method and the item to be disposed.

Interactions between Disposal Method and Product Category

My next analysis focused on whether disposal preferences depend on product category; that is, whether the disposal method likelihood ratings interacted with product category (beach towel vs. quilt). Since the quilt was determined to be an inherently more special product than the towel, I expected to see different patterns of preference for disposal methods across products. My results supported this expectation.

As Figure 1 indicates, participants were less likely, overall, to want to dispose of the beach towel than the quilt, $F(1, 301) = 58.69$, $p < .0001$. Consistent with my predictions about which methods are a match for special and less special goods, participants were significantly more likely to want to throw the beach towel away than the quilt, $F(1, 303) = 69.92$, $p < .0001$, and were more likely to store the quilt than the towel, $F(1, 302) = 14.83$,$p < .0001$. These findings confirm my hypothesis that storing a good is an appropriate method for cherished goods while throwing the good away is not. Recall that previous research gave us reason to suspect that either donating or selling would be appropriate disposal methods for special goods. In fact, the results for donation and selling indicate that neither method is a good match for special goods. Participants were more likely to donate the towel than the quilt, $F(1, 301) = 22.66$, $p < .0001$, and were more likely to sell the towel than the quilt, $F(1, 301) = 25.28$, $p < .0001$. By

examining the within-category effects of specialness, I can determine whether these results hold when specialness is manipulated via ownership experience.

Effects of Specialness on Within-Category Differences

Differences across category are interesting, but naturally there are confounds involved because beach towels and quilts differ on other dimensions besides their inherent specialness. Thus, I also manipulated specialness of the product within category by varying the experiences the owner had with the product while it was owned (i.e., episodic memory for the beach towel and sentimental value for the quilt). To determine the influence of emotional attachment stemming from ownership experience I regressed the likelihood ratings for each method on the ownership experience condition (attachment vs. none). These analyses are performed within product category for ease of explication. I did not have any hypotheses about the relative effects of this type of specialness across the two categories. Figure 2 presents the means for disposal likelihood in the episodic memory versus control conditions collapsed across product.

A repeated measures analysis revealed an overall method x emotional attachment condition effect, $F(3, 297) = 17.96$, $p < .0001$, and, $F(3, 300) = 8.61$, $p < .0001$, respectively, for the quilt and towel. Again, the pattern for preferences across the different disposal methods does depend on the specialness of the good. The within-product pattern matched the across-product pattern. Both episodic memory and sentimental value led to a reduced preference for throwing the good away, $F(1, 299) = 44.64$, $p < .0001$, for the towel and, $F(1, 302) = 12.24$, $p < .001$, for the quilt. Results for both goods also confirmed my expectation that storage is a better match for more special

goods. Storing was more likely in the attachment condition for both the towel and the quilt, $F(1, 299) = 7.01$, $p < .01$, and, $F(1, 302) = 8.13$, $p < .01$, respectively. Replicating the between-product results, both donation and selling were less likely in the emotional attachment condition for the beach towel, $F(1, 299) = 23.71$, $p < .0001$, and, $F(1, 299)$, = 8.89, $p = .01$, and the quilt, $F(1, 302) = 19.50$, $p < .0001$, and, $F(1, 302)$, = 3.45, p = .06.

DISCUSSION

The results of Study 1 establish two new effects: (1) that preferences for disposal methods differ across goods, and, more interestingly, (2) that this pattern varies systematically by the specialness of the good. In other words, there is a match between the method and the disposed item. Study 1 also tells us exactly what that match is. As I expected, storing was found to be more preferred for special goods and throwing away to be less preferred for special goods. For the other two methods, donation and selling, I let the data tell us the nature of the match (since previous literature suggested competing possibilities). I found, perhaps surprisingly, that both donating and selling are significantly better matches for less special goods. In other words, giving the good away to a charity and receiving money for it are not special methods of disposing of the good. These results hold when specialness is inherent to the product category and when it is manipulated via product ownership experience. To underscore the difference in preference between storage and the other disposal methods by product specialness, I created a contrast code contrasting storing the good (the only method that was more preferred when the good is special) with the other three methods. The store versus other

methods contrast was significantly predicted by specialness condition for both the quilt, $F(1, 302) = 23.91$, $p < .0001$, and for the beach towel, $F(1, 299) = 49.22$, $p < .0001$.

Now that I have established which methods match with special versus less special goods, I can replicate these effects while controlling for other variables. Study 2 achieves this goal. The first variable that Study 2 controls for is the monetary value of the good. It is possible that participants in Study 1 exhibited different disposal patterns between beach towels and quilts because the items differed on perceived monetary value (i.e., quilts could be perceived to be more valuable, overall, than beach towels). To demonstrate that having had a significant ownership experience with a good (i.e., the type that renders it special) has an independent effect on disposal preferences from the market value of the good, in Study 2 I manipulate the initial price paid for the good.

Study 2 also controls for a subtle potential confound in Study 1. Participants who are told that a good is special may imagine a different good than those participants not led to believe the item has special meaning for them. For example, in Study 1, people might have thought, "this must be a nice beach towel if I bought it on vacation and had to carry it home in my luggage," whereas participants in the control condition might picture a less attractive towel, a situation that could potentially be driving the observed disposal preferences. To rule out this possibility, half the participants in Study 2 were shown a picture of the good in question so that their mental image of the towel would be held constant across condition. The other half were not shown a picture. This manipulation allowed me to determine if disposal preferences were influenced by differences in how the good was imagined to look rather than differences in the experience-driven attachment to the good.

Thus, in my conceptualization, the specialness that drives the disposal preferences of interest to me is independent of both price and presence of a picture because a product's meaning is a function of the consumer's personal relationship with the good and not its market value or appearance (Holbrook 1994; Richins 1994b). In other words, even if there were a correlation between these variables and emotional attachment, I am interested in the effects of specialness holding both price and picture constant.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY 2

The primary purpose of Study 2 was to address the limitations of Study 1 by ruling out the price of the good and differences in the appearance of the imagined good as an alternative explanation to emotional attachment for the differences in preferences across disposal method. Six hundred and five students and staff at a large southwestern university (279 women, 325 men) participated in this study when approached by experimenters on campus and asked to complete a one-page survey on product disposal. A majority of the participants were undergraduate students recruited while waiting in line to pick up tickets for a university football game. The average age of the participants was 21.7 years old and their ages ranged from 17 to 59[2].

STIMULI

Study 2 had a two (product experience: episodic memory vs. control) x two (initial price: low vs. high) x two (picture: present vs. not present) between-subjects design. Each participant read a brief scenario explaining that they had decided to give up a beach towel they owned. The product experience variable was manipulated using the episodic memory scenario from Study 1. Price was manipulated by telling participants the initial price paid for the good ($15 vs. $30). I also manipulated whether participants were presented with a visual image of the beach towel. Roughly half the participants saw

[2] I present demographics for Studies 2 and 3 although neither age nor gender affected the results I report.

an image of a blue beach towel with a design of green shells and starfish (thus product appearance was held constant for these participants) while the other half saw no image (which left the appearance of the product open to interpretation as it was in Study 1). The photo of the towel is presented in Figure 3. The stimuli are presented in Appendices D and E.

PROCEDURE

As in Study 1, after reading the scenario, participants rated, on a scale of one ("not at all likely") to nine ("extremely likely"), how likely they would be to give up the towel using the same four disposal methods from Study 1. After indicating their willingness to give up the towel, participants also rated, on a scale from one ("not at all") to nine ("extremely"), how special they felt the towel was to them after reading the scenario, how emotionally attached they felt they were to the towel, and how expensive they thought the towel was compared to the average beach towel.

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

All of the manipulation checks were successful. Participants in the high price condition rated the towel as significantly more expensive ($M = 6.86$) than did participants in the low price condition ($M = 5.60$), $F(1, 593) = 92.60$, $p < .0001$. Also, participants in the episodic memory condition rated the towel as significantly more special ($M = 5.39$)

than did participants in the control condition (M = 3.25), $F(1, 596) = 193.85$, $p < .0001$, supporting my proposition that manipulating significant ownership experiences with a product does render a product more special. Having a picture and a higher price both also significantly increased judgments of specialness, $F(1, 596) = 5.64$, $p < .05$, and $F(1, 596) = 8.81$, $p < .01$, respectively. It appears that, for some participants, the "specialness" question primed both emotional attachment and considerations about the good's value and/or appearance. Since I also measured participants' emotional attachment to the towel, I was able to directly test whether this variable (which captures the type of specialness of greatest interest to me) was influenced by price and imagined appearance. I predicted that emotional attachment should be driven only by the participant's product experience, that is, their relationship with the good. Indeed, participants in the episodic memory condition indicated that they felt more emotionally attached to the beach towel (M = 4.63) than did participants in the control condition (M = 2.52), $F(1, 596) = 175.60$, $p < .0001$. However, picture did not significantly affect the emotional attachment variable, $F(1, 593) = 1.00$, $p = .32$, and price only marginally (positively) affected it, $F(1, 593) = 3.00$, $p = .08$, respectively.

The Independent Effects of Product Experience and Price Paid for the Good

The goal of this study was to demonstrate that the effect of emotional attachment (manipulated via product experience) is independent of the price and the imagined appearance of the good. Controlling for the potential confounds allowed us to isolate the effects of specialness. I conducted three factor ANOVAs, first with the method likelihood

ratings as the dependent variable, and then with the contrast between storage and the other disposal methods as the dependent variable.

The main effect of product experience (controlling for the effects of the other factors) on method likelihood ratings replicates the experience-induced specialness effects from Study 1 (except for throwing the good away, which will be discussed below). Specialness (due to episodic memory) marginally increased the likelihood that participants would store the good, $F(1, 596) = 3.07$, $p = .08$. In other words, as in Study 1, storing was more preferred when the beach towel was special. Also as in Study 1, attachment to the product made participants less likely to donate it, $F(1, 596) = 21.47$, $p < .0001$, and less likely to sell it, $F(1, 596), = 4.08$, $p < .05$, replicating the Study 1 findings that these methods are not viewed as appropriate for special goods. Significantly, these results demonstrate that product experience has these effects on disposal choices above and beyond any effect of price or picture. Thus, product specialness has independent effects on disposal preferences from that of initial price paid and potential differences in how the good is imagined to look. See Table 2 for a summary of these results. The contrast code analysis produced similar results, indicating that participants were relatively more likely to store the beach towel than to execute the other disposal methods in the emotional attachment condition than in the control condition, $F(1, 596) = 13.88$, $p < .001$. Again, this result was obtained over and above any effect of price or picture.

Although I did not have any particular hypotheses about the effects of price and picture because they were control variables, it is interesting to explore how they affect disposal preferences, both to confirm that their patterns differ from specialness as I have defined it and to explore other types of product variables that also are matched with

disposal method. Price and differences in how the good is imagined to look do not have the same pattern of results as does product experience, further confirmation of the legitimacy of experience-induced specialness as a separate construct. Price affects disposal preferences in commonsense ways: participants are less likely to want to throw away, $F(1, 597) = 13.40$, $p < .001$, and less likely to donate, $F(1, 596) = 4.55$, $p < .05$, a higher priced good. Participants also are more likely to sell a good when they saw a picture of it, $F(1, 597) = 3.82$, $p < .05$. There were no interactions of either price or picture with product experience for any of the dependent measures.

Mediation Effect of Specialness and Emotional Attachment

If emotional attachment underlies the interactions between disposal preferences and my manipulation of product experience, then I should see a significant mediation (Baron and Kenny 1986) between manipulated product experience and reported product disposal preferences indicated by the Sobel test (1982). The final goal of this study is to demonstrate that it is the feeling that a product with which they have had significant ownership experiences is special that underlies consumers' preference for some disposal methods over others. The predicted relationship is depicted in Figure 4. I did, indeed, find that participants' rated specialness of the beach towel mediates the relationship between the store versus other methods contrast code and the emotional attachment condition, $z = 6.97$, $p < .0001$. Since feeling that a product is special means being emotionally attached to it, I also expected participants' ratings of emotional attachment to mediate the relationship between disposal preferences and product experience. Indeed, rated

emotional attachment was a significant mediator of this relationship for the store versus other methods contrast code, $z = 6.58$, $p < .0001$.

DISCUSSION

The results from Study 2 replicate the product/disposal method match findings from Study 1: appropriate disposal methods are selected for how special the participant considers the good. Study 2 added to this basic effect by showing that this match is not driven by market value or potential differences in how the good is imagined to look across conditions. The specialness effects (due to experience) are independent of the initial price paid for the good and viewing a picture of the good. Further, these other two factors have a different pattern of effects on disposal preferences than that of emotional attachment manipulated through product experience.

One result, however, was inconsistent with the results obtained in Study 1, the significance of episodic memory on the overall likelihood of throwing the good away, which was not significant in Study 2. I speculate that the effect of specialness on preferences for throwing the good away (which is obtained in both Studies 1 and 3) is not obtained here because of the design of the study. Study 2 was the only study to specify (i.e., prime) a price for the towel, and, consequently, this study has a significantly lower mean rating for throwing away than do the other two studies, $F(2, 1243) = 19.00$, $p < .0001$, ($M_{\text{study 1, towel}} = 4.35$, $M_{\text{study 2}} = 3.33$, $M_{\text{study 3}} = 4.24$). Apparently, mentioning the price of an object (regardless of whether this price is high or low) reduces consumers' willingness to throw it away and induces a floor effect. Presumably mentioning a price

primes consumers to think about market value whether the good is special or not. Although this was an unexpected finding, it is one with potentially important implications. Companies with a stake in persuading consumers to allow goods to enter the public market (and hence not to throw them away) could capitalize on this finding by simply reminding potential disposers to consider the price they initially paid for their good.

Finally, Study 2 also provides evidence that product specialness causally influences product disposal preferences. Participants' ratings both of the specialness of the towel and of how emotionally attached they felt to it mediate the relationship between manipulated product experience and the preference for matching disposal methods. Thus, Studies 1 and 2 established the basic product/disposal method match effect and suggest reasons for this effect.

One potential limitation of the first two studies is that the significant difference between storing and the other disposal methods could be simply due to the effect of emotional attachment on loss aversion (Boyce et al. 1992, Irwin 1994). Storing, a form of temporary disposal, may feel closer to keeping the good than do the other methods. To my knowledge there is no research showing that storage does not invoke loss aversion, but for argument's sake it is worthwhile to consider the possibility. Studies 1 and 2 provide evidence, however, that my results are not merely driven by the effect of attachment on preference for keeping versus giving up the good. In both studies there are significant differential preferences across the three permanent disposal methods (as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2). I would expect the permanent disposal methods, throwing away, selling, and donating, to be equally preferred if my effects could be explained

using loss aversion alone (i.e., the methods resulting in permanent relinquishing of the good should all result in the same loss). One of the goals of Study 3 is to explore why there are differential effects across these methods by identifying the dimensions on which the four methods differ and determining how these underlying dimensions drive disposal preferences. Identifying these complexities also provides more evidence that, although whatever mechanisms underlie previous findings linking attachment to loss aversion may be operating in my studies, too (for storage vs. the other methods), the disposal preferences I find are driven by more than this mechanism.

CHAPTER 5: STUDY 3

My first two studies indicate that consumers prefer to match the product they are giving up to an appropriate disposal method: special methods are preferred for special goods (and vice versa). I defined special goods as those to which consumers feel emotionally attached and showed that this attachment can stem either from episodic memories attached to a particular good or from the product class if that class is particularly prone to sentimental value. Both Study 1 and Study 2 concentrated on characteristics of the goods in question, but marketers also have an interest in the methods. Why might some methods match better with special goods and some match less well? Are there different dimensions to disposal methods that differentially interact with product specialness? Study 3 addresses the other side of the product/disposal method match by identifying what makes some disposal methods a better match for special versus less special goods and by exploring how the methods differ from one another. In other words, this final study uncovers general psychological factors underlying preference for disposal methods and links these to disposal choices. Three hundred and thirty-seven undergraduate students at a large southwestern university (215 women, 122 men; ages ranging from 19 to 31 with an average age of 20.6) participated in this study in exchange for course extra credit.

The findings from Studies 1 and 2, combined with intuitions about what would drive consumers to pick particular disposal methods over others and insights from the prior literature, suggest several key dimensions on which the methods differ. The first dimension on which I expect the methods to differ is the amount of control they provide

the user over the future of the good after it has been disposed. Price et al. (2000) uncovered evidence that older consumers are particularly concerned with exercising control over the future fate of their cherished goods. I expect that this concern over the future of goods to which one feels emotionally attached is not limited to older consumers, as Lastovicka and Fernandez's (2005) work on meaning transfer suggests. I expect that throwing the good away, storing it, selling it, and donating will be perceived to provide varying degrees of control over the good's future fate and that consumers will prefer methods that are viewed as providing more control for goods that have special meaning.

The next dimension on which I believe the methods differ is the degree to which the method is ethical (i.e., helps others). Based on my prior findings that donation is less preferred when a consumer is emotionally attached to a good, I suggest that ethical concerns provide more of an incentive when the giver does not have emotional attachment to the good. When a consumer gives up a good to which they feel emotionally attached, they are less likely to focus on others' needs since they are focusing on their own loss. This focus on one's own loss when the good to be disposed of is special reduces the recognition of others' suffering and hence reduces the desire to engage in ethical behavior to alleviate one's sadness at the plight of others (e.g., Cialdini and Kenrick 1976; Cialdini et al. 1987). Thus, ethical methods should be preferred for less special goods.

When the disposer is focusing on his or her own loss of a cherished good, not only are ethical considerations likely to become less important, other features of a disposal method can become less attractive. One of these features, the amount of monetary compensation the method provides, is the third key dimension on which I

expect the disposal methods to differ. Based on my prior findings that selling is less preferred when a good is special and on the prior acquisition literature that suggests that money is considered an inappropriate medium of exchange for certain types of goods (O'Curry and Strahilevitz 2001; Okada 2005), I expect that receiving monetary compensation is less attractive when a good is special. Consumers are uncomfortable putting a price on a special memory for fear that a monetary transaction could somehow sully the treasured memory. This is also consistent with the notion from the prior qualitative literature that cherished or special goods are often considered "priceless" (Price et al. 2000). Note that this hypothesis is inconsistent with the, perhaps, rational view that the utility of goods can be compensated for with money. If the good is special, it has more utility, and thus the owner should want and expect monetary compensation for it. In truth, disposal is more complicated, as I have seen in Studies 1 and 2 (in which selling is less attractive when the good is special).

Finally, I expect that the disposal methods differ on the ease and convenience with which the method can be executed. I hypothesize that methods high in ease and convenience will be preferred for less special goods. Consumers will not be concerned about preserving these goods' meanings but will instead seek a method that allows for disposal with minimum effort and thought on their part. I expect that easy methods will not seem appropriate for special goods because of the mismatch in how the consumer feels about the good (and the care that might have been bestowed on it while it was owned) and the cavalier ease with which convenient methods allow them to be rid of it.

STIMULI AND PROCEDURE

Study 3 consisted of two stages of data collection. First, I asked participants to rate their agreement with statements about each disposal method in order to tap into the proposed dimensions on which the disposal methods might differ (e.g., "This disposal method makes me feel like I am an ethical person"). The 17 questions are presented in Table 3. The stimulus for the first stage of data collection is presented in Appendix F. Second, after a distracter task, participants completed the questionnaire used in Studies 1 and 2; they indicated their preference for all the disposal methods after reading a scenario describing a beach towel to which they were emotionally attached (manipulated through describing the specific episodic memory used in the previous studies) or one to which they felt no attachment. The stimuli for the second stage of data collection are presented in Appendices G and H.

RESULTS

A factor analysis with a Promax rotation reduced the 17 questions into usable factors[3]. As I expected, four factors with eigenvalues greater than one emerged: (1) Ease: how easy/convenient the disposal method is, (2) Ethicality: how much the method helps others, (3) Control: how much control the method allows the disposer to feel over the

[3] I used Promax because I expected these dimensions to be at least somewhat intercorrelated. The interfactor correlations were: ease with ethicality: -.04, ease with control: .52, ease with monetary compensation: -.10, ethicality with control: -.13, ethicality with monetary compensation: -.37, monetary compensation with control: .08

good's ultimate fate, and (4) Monetary Compensation: how much monetary compensation the method provides the disposer. See Table 3 for the factor structure.

After conducting the factor analysis, I completed three sets of analyses. I provide the results of all three types of analyses below, grouped by factor. First, I examined the factor means by method (see Figure 5) to identify how each method is viewed by my participants. All of the mean differences (i.e., the pairwise comparisons between factors by method) were significant. For efficiency I do not report test statistics for these differences, but I do provide interpretations of the mean effects.

My next analysis was designed to determine whether disposal preferences depend on an interaction between how the methods score on the factors and how special the good is. That is, does how a given method scores on a factor moderate the relationship between emotional attachment condition and the method likelihood ratings? Before conducting this analysis I first regressed the method likelihood ratings on specialness condition as I did in Studies 1 and 2 to ensure that those results matched the other studies. Consistent with the results of these two studies, participants were more likely to store the towel in the attachment condition, $F(1, 334) = 24.01$, $p < .0001$, and were less likely to throw the towel away, $F(1, 324) = 3.73$, $p = .05$, and to donate it, $F(1, 334) = 30.29$, $p < .0001$, in the attachment condition.

For my final analysis, I conducted a hierarchical regression to determine which factors significantly impact the disposal decision across all disposal methods. To do so, I conducted a regression by participant with the factors as predictors of each participant's disposal likelihood for all methods. This allows me to obtain slopes for each factor by individual participant. These slopes then form the dependent measures in a second

regression predicting the slopes with emotional attachment condition (episodic memory vs. none). With this analysis, I can look more generally at which factors influence disposal preferences for special versus less special goods. In other words, this analysis uses the factor as the psychological variable of interest and tells us what factors influence the effect of specialness on disposal preferences. This analysis is attractive because there is no influence of the particular disposal method on the results. Thus, I can get a sense of whether control, for example, is an important consideration in disposal preferences for special versus less special goods across all of the methods.

Ease Factor

As Figure 5 shows, throwing away is judged the easiest method, and participants judged it significantly easier than all of the other methods. Recall that I suggested that easy methods are preferred for less special goods and found that throwing a good away is less preferred when a good is special. Similarly, donation also is viewed as a comparatively easy method. Storage, however, is not viewed as an easy method to execute, which is consistent with my theory that methods that are viewed as easy are avoided for special goods.

Providing further evidence in support of the idea that easy methods are preferred for less special goods, the ease factor moderates the relationship between specialness of the good and likelihood ratings for all three of these methods, throwing away, $F(1, 324) = 3.73$, $p = .05$, donating, $F(1, 322) = 7.40$, $p < .01$, and storage, $F(1, 324) = 8.22$, $p < .01$. If participants felt that throwing a good away was not very easy, they were statistically indifferent between throwing away special versus less special goods. However, if they

felt that throwing away was particularly easy, they were more likely to throw the good away in the control (less special) condition than in the episodic memory (special) condition. The ease factor moderates the relationship between specialness and donation in the same manner. These results support my theory that consumers simply want an easy disposal method for less special goods because they do not want to expend too much effort getting rid of a good that does not have special meaning for them. Although the relationship between specialness of the good and storage likelihood ratings also was moderated by the ease factor, the pattern of results is quite different. Overall, as in Studies 1 and 2, storing a good is more preferred in the episodic memory condition (since it is a more appropriate disposal method for a special good) than in the control condition, but this difference is especially strong when participants find storing relatively easy. This interaction can be explained by the fact that storing generally is considered a difficult method (reflected in the strongly negative mean for storage on the ease factor), but consumers want to store their special goods. Thus, making it a little easier for them does increase preference for storing special versus less special goods, $F(1, 324) = 8.22$, $p < .01$.

Finally, results of the hierarchical analysis (controlling for method) reveal that how easy a method is determines method preference for special versus less special goods, $F(1, 329) = 14.14$, $p < .001$, $M_{\text{control}} = 5.10$, $M_{\text{episodic memory}} = -.005$. As shown in Figure 6, consumers prefer easy methods more so in the control condition than in the episodic memory condition. For special goods, ease does not matter, because the attractiveness of an easy method is offset by the desire not to “take the easy way out” with special goods.

Ethicality Factor

Analysis of the factor means by method reveals that donation is rated the most ethical method, which, in conjunction with my finding that donation is less preferred for special goods, is consistent with the notion that ethical methods are more attractive when a good is not special.

Results of the hierarchical analysis also support the idea that ethical methods are preferred for less special goods, $F(1, 329) = 12.90$, $p < .001$, $M_{\text{control}} = 3.40$, $M_{\text{episodic memory}} = -.13$. As shown in Figure 6, participants prefer ethical methods more in the control condition than in the episodic memory condition presumably because when they are not focusing as much on their own loss, they can focus more on the needs of others.

Control Factor

The factor means by method indicate that storage is primarily viewed as a method that provides the disposer with control over the future fate of their good (because it is only temporary disposal, the disposer still owns the good). This is consistent with the idea that control over the good's fate is more desired for special goods and my finding that storage is more preferred when a good is special.

Although the control factor does not interact with method and product specialness, results of the hierarchical analysis reveal that how much control the method allows one to have over the good's ultimate fate predicts whether a method will be chosen for special versus less special goods, $F(1, 329) = 20.45$, $p < .0001$, $M_{\text{control}} = -2.82$, $M_{\text{episodic memory}} = 16.38$. Thus, as expected, Figure 6 shows that consumers are more concerned with having control over the fate of their special goods than they are over their

less special goods. This finding experimentally confirms suggestions in prior qualitative work that meaning transfer (which can best be assured when the disposer controls the future fate of the good) is desired for special goods (Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005; Price et al. 2000; Roster 2001).

Monetary Compensation Factor

The factor means by method indicate that selling is primarily viewed as a method that provides the disposer with monetary compensation, which, along with my finding that selling is less preferred for special goods, supports my theory that consumers do not want monetary compensation for their cherished goods. The monetary compensation factor's moderation of the relationship between storage and specialness of the good, $F(1, 325) = 3.53$, $p = .06$, and between selling and specialness of the good, $F(1, 320) = 3.33$, $p = .07$, provides further support for this idea.

When a good is not special, participants are more likely to store the good if they have high expectations that they will get monetary compensation for it (presumably because by storing the good it can accumulate value for later selling), but when the good is special, participants are actually more likely to store the good when they do not have high expectations of receiving monetary compensation. This counterintuitive finding supports my theory that consumers do not want to sully the meanings and memories attached to their special goods by receiving monetary compensation for something they consider priceless. Too much monetary compensation for giving up a special good can tarnish the meaning attached to the good, so participants are less willing to store a special

good if it feels like they are only doing it to get increased monetary compensation from doing so.

Similarly, in the control condition participants are more likely to sell the good when they have high expectations of receiving monetary compensation for it, but in the episodic memory condition, they are more likely to sell the good when they do not have high expectations of receiving monetary compensation. Just as in the monetary compensation interaction for storage, participants evidently do not want to sully their memories by getting too much money for their special goods. Note that although research on acquisition has suggested that money is not the appropriate means of exchange for all types of goods (e.g., Okada 2005), this finding has not been explored before in the context of disposition. Indeed, the fact that consumers want less monetary compensation for goods they value more is the opposite of what I might predict using an economic compensation model of disposal.

The marginal moderation of the relationship between sell likelihood ratings and the ethicality factor, $F(1, 320) = 3.10$, $p = .08$, also supports this theory. There was very little difference in the likelihood of selling by how ethical participants thought selling was in the control condition. In the episodic memory condition, however, participants were more likely to sell the good if they thought selling was more ethical. Feeling that selling is somehow ethical apparently makes it more appropriate to sell a special good than if selling is not viewed as ethical. The sense that one is engaging in an ethical behavior apparently mitigates the fact that participants are willing to trade special memories for monetary compensation.

DISCUSSION

This study identifies four primary dimensions on which the four disposal methods of interest differ: ease, ethicality, control, and monetary compensation. Conveniently, each of the four methods I studied is significantly greater than the other methods on each of the four factors: throwing a good away is primarily easy/convenient, donation is primarily an ethical method, storage is primarily a way to exercise control over the good's fate, and selling is primarily a method that provides the disposer with monetary compensation. These findings, along with the interactions between emotional attachment condition and the factors, shed light onto why certain disposal methods are more and less preferred when a good is more versus less special.

Overall, participants prefer easy and convenient methods for goods that are less special. Thus, methods like donation and throwing the good away are especially appropriate for these goods. The consumer is not concerned with preserving any meaning attached to the good, so easy methods are selected since they allow the disposer to be rid of a good that has no meaning to them in the most efficient manner. On the other hand, ease is not attractive when the good is special, an interesting theoretical contribution that also suggests managerial strategies: marketing how "easy it would be to get rid of all of Grandma's heirlooms!" may not be a good idea.

Participants also, overall, prefer methods that are considered ethical for less special goods, presumably because consumers are more concerned with engaging in ethical behavior when not focusing on the loss of their own cherished good. One exception is that consumers are actually more likely to sell a special good when selling is

viewed as ethical. Consumers exhibit an unwillingness to receive monetary compensation for special goods throughout my studies. Associating an economic value with something that is considered "priceless" makes selling an unpalatable alternative for disposing of cherished goods. How could the unseemly nature of receiving money for a special good be mitigated? Perhaps mitigation is possible when selling is viewed as an ethical alternative.

Finally, participants exhibit an overall desire to exercise control over the fate of special goods. Controlling the good's future provides the ultimate opportunity to preserve the good's meaning and ensure that it continues to be considered special. This process is reflected in my finding, replicated in Study 3, $F(1, 334) = 67.34$, $p < .0001$, but found across all three studies, that storing is relatively more preferred than the other methods when a good is more versus less special.

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

My research is, to my knowledge, the first to examine disposal preferences across methods using experimental methodology. In three studies I have identified the direction of effects for which previous literature suggested competing possible directions (e.g., the preference for the donation of special vs. less special goods). In addition, I have explained the psychological locus of these effects by identifying the factors underlying perceptions of disposal methods. My results not only help to establish a theoretical framework for thinking about disposal decisions but also have implications for practitioners with a stake in the fate of used goods.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THEORY OF DISPOSAL DECISIONS

Although it is early to suggest a full-blown decision theory encompassing all of product disposal, my work does allow us to make some general claims about how disposal is driven by a match between the good and the method. First, I uncover systematic differences in overall preferences for disposal methods. Then, more importantly, I show that disposal preferences depend on the specialness of the good: storing is more preferred when the good is special, and donation, selling, and throwing the good away are more preferred when the good is less special. My research also rules out alternative explanations for the effects I find for product specialness. By controlling for factors affecting perceived value (i.e., initial price paid for the good and presence of a picture of the good), I demonstrate that, consistent with the work on product meaning

(Holbrook 1994; Richins 1994b), feeling that a product is special exerts its effects independently of monetary value.

Perhaps most intriguing are the results of Study 3, which identify dimensions on which disposal methods differ that affect disposal preferences for special versus less special goods. While the prior research had focused on meaning transfer, using interviews, I experimentally identify four distinct factors that drive disposal method preferences: ease, ethicality, control, and monetary compensation. I show that easy methods are more preferred for less special goods than for special goods, thus suggesting that consumers desire an appropriate "resting place" for their special goods, something not sullied by excessive ease. Consumers do not want to give up cherished goods lightly in a way that takes little effort. The lack of suitability of throwing special goods away and donating goods seems to be driven by consumers' sense that these are easy methods. The desire to store special goods is also partially driven by the comparative difficulty of storage.

In addition to ease, control matters in the selection of a disposal method for a special good: methods that allow the disposer to have control over the good's future fate are preferred for special goods, a result that dovetails nicely with past research. This desire for control may help to explain the preference for known versus unknown recipients in the prior qualitative work (e.g., Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005; Price et al. 2000). After all, giving the good to someone who already knows and appreciates its emotional value is one way to ensure that the fate of the good is secure in that it will not be destroyed and will continue to be considered special. Storing the good, however, which I explored in this research, is perhaps the ultimate way to ensure control over the

good's future fate. The significant contrast between storage and the permanent disposal methods in my studies reflects the importance of control for special versus less special goods. The fact that the preferences between permanent disposal methods are not equivalent indicates that this preference is not merely caused by loss aversion. In fact, the reduced preference for throwing away, donating, and selling special goods are driven by different psychological factors.

For example, while the unsuitability of throwing a special good away is driven by ease, donating is not an appropriate method for special goods both because it is "too easy" and also because of its ethicality. Since altruistic acts are associated with egotism and eliminating negative feelings (e.g., Cialdini and Kenrick 1976; Cialdini et al. 1987), one might expect donation to be considered an appropriate method for special goods. Giving up a special good as opposed to a less special good could cause one to feel particularly good about oneself. However, I found that donation was actually preferred for less special goods. I suspect that when giving up a special good consumers focus entirely on their own loss and hence are not concerned with acting ethically or with eliminating the negative feelings that seeing another's suffering can cause. In fact, some consumers may find the act of giving a special good away (in a way that exerts no control and is easy) to itself be unethical, offsetting any good feelings engendered by the act of donating.

Most surprisingly, however, was that selling was not more preferred for special than for less special goods, as utility theory might suggest. Instead, driven by a desire to avoid receiving monetary compensation for special goods, consumers exhibited an unwillingness to sell cherished items. This is consistent with the prior qualitative

literature in which special goods are referred to as “priceless” (Price et al. 2000) and with prior literature showing a reluctance to put a monetary price on important and emotionally significant goods (Irwin 1994).

Thus, the results of my studies indicate that methods that do not involve exchanging the good for money, particularly those in which the disposer retains some control over the future fate of the good, are the most appropriate methods for disposal of special goods. Storing is the method that best fits this description in my studies, but there are other methods that fit it as well, including giving to recipients with whom the disposer has a prior relationship (i.e., to a friend or family member), methods shown in prior qualitative research to be especially appropriate for cherished goods (Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005; Price et al. 2000). Future research can explore the relative preferences for these methods using experimental methodology, as well as for other methods I have not explored in these studies. One method not addressed here is trading a good, a topic on which Okada (2001) has made an excellent beginning. Additional methods that could be explored in the future including reusing and/or recycling. The four factors I have uncovered in my research should help illuminate preferences across all disposal methods, not just the four I have explored here. For example, giving to friends and family members is most likely driven by the amount of control these methods provide, and reusing or recycling should be primarily associated with ethicality.

INTEGRATION WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Apart from the importance of my research in terms of using experimental methods to build the foundation for a theory of disposal decisions, my findings also may be relevant to research on the endowment effect. I am especially intrigued that in my studies selling was significantly less preferred than other disposal methods (see Figures 1 and 2). This finding suggests that typical measures of loss aversion, which use buying/selling price differences, may overestimate the amount of loss aversion consumers would feel when disposing of a good in another way, such as storing it or donating it. Perhaps future work in the general area of loss aversion can concentrate on the match between disposal method and product meaning to determine whether loss aversion is reduced under different disposal conditions (i.e., when a method is selected that matches how the disposer feels about the product). Research highlighting the role of emotional attachment in increasing loss aversion (Ariely, Huber, and Wertenbroch 2005; see also Boyce et al 1992; Irwin 1994) suggests that this is indeed a fruitful avenue for future research. Loss aversion for goods to which one is emotionally attached could be reduced if the disposer felt that the disposal method selected appropriately matched the good.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MARKETING PRACTICE

My results all point to the need for practitioners with a stake in the fate of used goods to pay attention to the match between the good to be disposed of and the disposal method. Marketers with an interest in disposal, whether they encourage consumers to

dispose of goods permanently (e.g., second-hand markets) or to only dispose of them temporarily (e.g., storage companies), could segment disposal decisions by special and less special goods. They then could use their knowledge of product/disposal method matches to their advantage. For instance, storage facilities might do well to prime consumers' desire to control the future fate of cherished goods with a tagline such as, "Why let someone else enjoy your favorite things? Store it with us instead." Companies dependent on the resale of used goods could emphasize the initial price paid when the good was purchased, thus reducing the desire for consumers to throw both special and less special goods away, and, for less special goods, should focus on the amount of monetary compensation consumers will receive for selling their good.

My research also shows that consumers have an overall preference for easy and convenient disposal methods for less special goods. Charities that are dependent on donations could capitalize on this notion. Potential donors may respond favorably to communication efforts designed to increase the perception that donating to their organization is quick, easy, and convenient. Finally, I have also shown that consumers are averse to seeing special goods destroyed; that is, they do not want to throw cherished goods away. Marketers could thus contrast whichever disposal method they offer with throwing the cherished good away. This information could benefit all organizations that have a stake in receiving used goods, be it for storage, resale, or charitable purposes.

TABLE 1

LIST OF DISPOSAL METHODS USING THE JACOBY, BERNING, AND DIETVORST (1977) TAXONOMY

Keep	Temporary Disposal Methods	Permanent Disposal Methods
Reuse	Store Loan	Give to Friend or Family Recycle Donate Sell Throw Away

TABLE 2

STUDY 2: MAIN EFFECTS OF PRICE, PICTURE, AND EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT (WHILE CONTROLLING FOR OTHER FACTORS)

	Picture	Initial Price Paid	Product Meaning through Ownership
Throw	**NS**	**-**	**NS**
Store	**NS**	**NS**	**+**
Donate	**NS**	**-**	**-**
Sell	**+**	**NS**	**-**

TABLE 3

STUDY 3: DISPOSAL DIMENSION FACTORS

	Ease Factor1	Ethical Factor2	Control Factor3	Money Factor4
This disposal method is convenient in terms of location (i.e., there are many places/opportunities where I could do it).	0.72	-0.10	-0.21	0.07
I, personally, have experience with this disposal method.	0.77	0.18	-0.33	0.06
This disposal method is a common way that people get rid of their goods.	0.69	0.14	-0.27	0.40
With this disposal method it would be relatively easy to get my item back if I changed my mind about giving it up.	-0.73	-0.24	0.66	-0.53
This disposal method would likely keep my good in its original form (i.e., not change it in any way or destroy it).	-0.67	0.30	0.62	0.02
It would cost me to execute this disposal method.	-0.76	-0.19	0.59	-0.17
It would take a lot of my time to execute this disposal method.	-0.69	0.26	0.45	0.40
This disposal method makes me feel like I am an ethical person.	0.12	0.91	-0.01	0.32
This disposal method is good for society as a whole.	0.05	0.89	0.03	0.47
This disposal method helps other people.	0.10	0.87	-0.06	0.61
This disposal method would honor a good that had significant sentimental value for me.	-0.38	0.52	0.59	-0.16
This disposal method allows me (the giver) to have control over who ultimately gets the item I am giving up.	-0.32	-0.01	0.79	0.05
With this disposal method, I am likely to personally know the person who receives my good.	-0.33	0.04	0.79	-0.11
With this disposal method, the good will go to someone similar to me.	-0.19	0.42	0.55	0.41
With this method, I won't know what ultimately happens to my good.	0.58	0.14	-0.64	0.44
This disposal method provides me with monetary compensation for giving up my good.	-0.01	0.33	0.02	0.86
If I chose this method, I would feel like it was OK to go out and buy more things.	0.26	0.44	-0.11	0.68

FIGURE 1

STUDY 1: MEANS FOR DISPOSAL LIKELIHOOD BY PRODUCT (COLLAPSED ACROSS ATTACHMENT CONDITIONS)

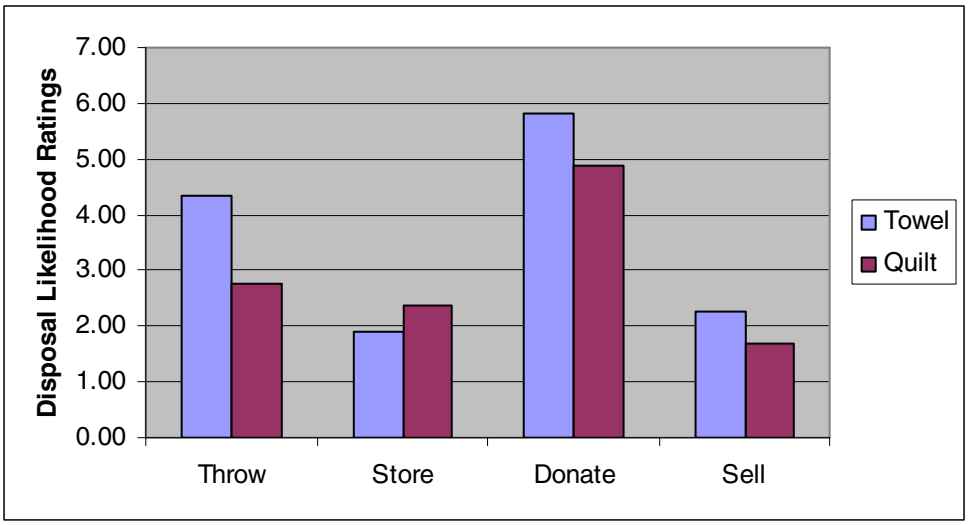


FIGURE 2

STUDY 1: MEANS FOR DISPOSAL LIKELIHOOD BY EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT (COLLAPSED ACROSS PRODUCTS)

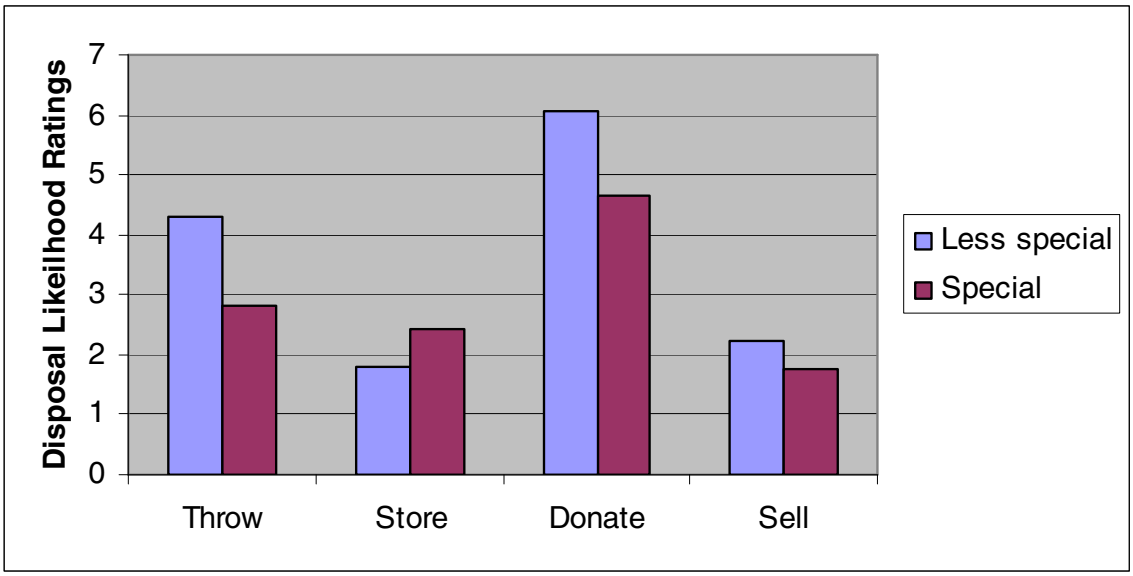


FIGURE 3

STUDY 2: PICTURE OF BEACH TOWEL

Figure 4

Study 2: Conceptual Representation of Specialness Mediation

FIGURE 5

STUDY 3: FACTOR MEANS BY DISPOSAL METHOD

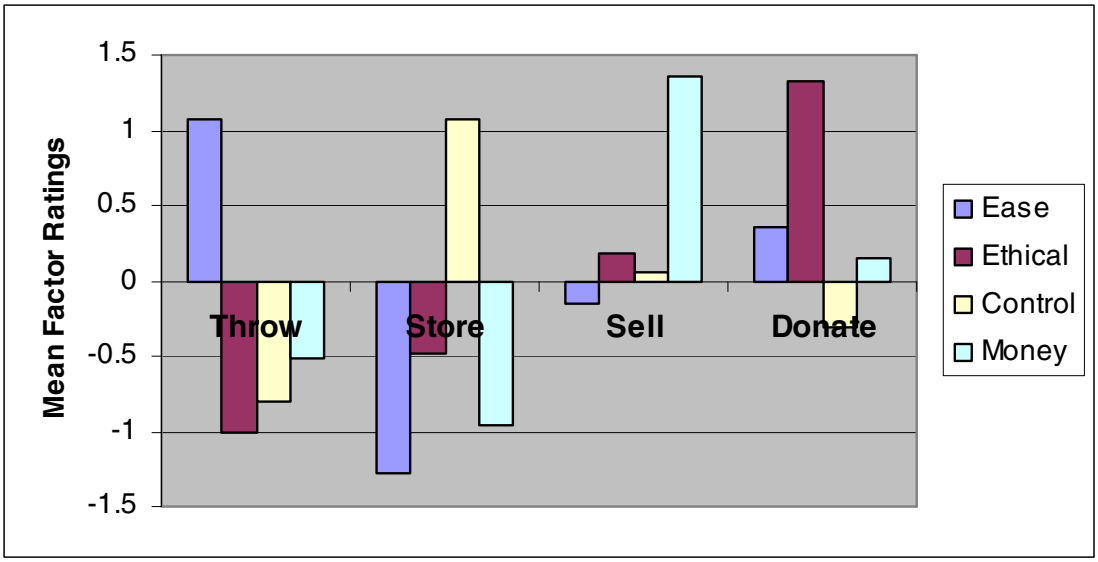
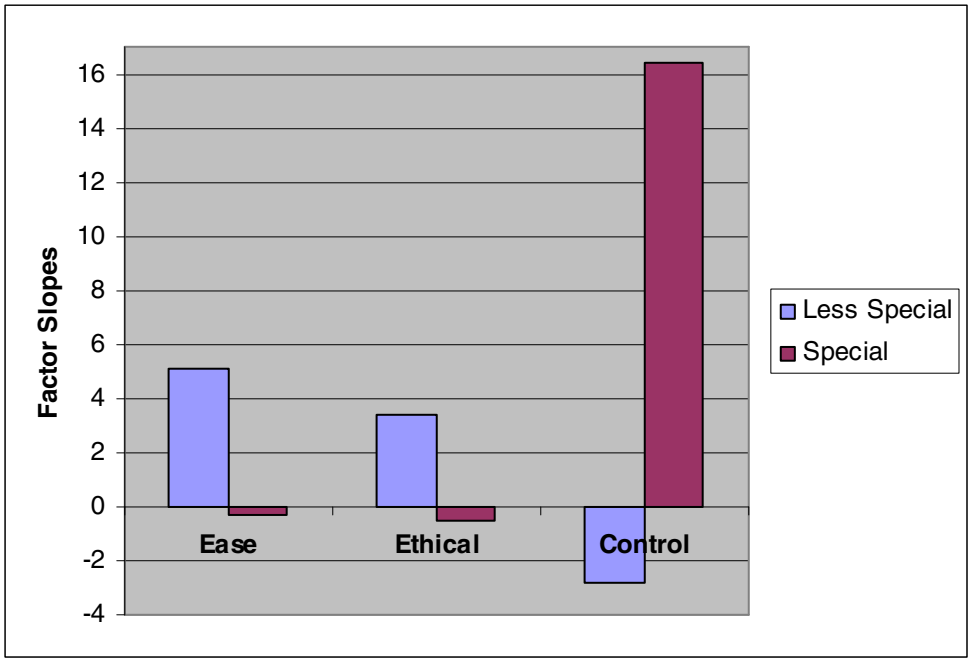


FIGURE 6

STUDY 3: HIERARCHICAL ANALYSIS RESULTS



APPENDIX A

Study 1 Pretest Stimulus

In this mini-survey I am interested in how likely you think the average person is to attach sentimental value to different types of products. Circle a number for both questions below.

1. How likely do you think the average person is to feel that a **towel** has sentimental value?

Not at all Likely **Very Likely**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. How likely do you think the average person is to feel that a **quilt** has sentimental value?

Not at all Likely **Very Likely**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

APPENDIX B

Study 1 Stimulus (Emotional Attachment Condition)

Product Disposal Questionnaire

In this questionnaire we are interested in what people do with things after they have owned them for a while. You will be asked to read a series of scenarios on the next few pages describing a product you own and a situation in which you no longer need or want that product. After reading each scenario, you will be asked to indicate how likely you are to dispose of the product in a variety of different ways.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Scenario One

You are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find an old beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of. As you are looking at it, you remember that you got the towel on a trip to Cancun during Spring Break a few years ago. Looking at the towel you remember what a great time you and your friends had on the trip. You remember the funky beach shop where you bought the towel right before you and your friends had such a great day at the beach. Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Scenario Two

You have just washed your favorite old quilt. It had been looking a little worse for wear recently, and this time when you wash it, it comes out looking really faded and worn. Looking at the quilt, you feel very sad to see it so threadbare because of the sentimental value it has for you. You have had the quilt for years and years, all through growing up, in your bedroom at your parents' house, in your college dorm room, in your first apartment. It really has been with you for a long time. You are sad to see the quilt go, but you decide that it is so worn, you finally need to get rid of it. Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the quilt in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

APPENDIX C

Study 1 Stimulus (No Emotional Atachment Condition)

Product Disposal Questionnaire

In this questionnaire we are interested in what people do with things after they have owned them for a while. You will be asked to read a series of scenarios on the next few pages describing a product you own and a situation in which you no longer need or want that product. After reading each scenario, you will be asked to indicate how likely you are to dispose of the product in a variety of different ways.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Scenario One

You are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find an old beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of. As you are looking at it, you find that you can't remember where or when you bought the towel. Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Scenario Two

You have just washed your favorite old quilt. It had been looking a little worse for wear recently, and this time when you wash it, it comes out looking really faded and worn. You are sad to see the quilt go, but you decide that it is so worn, you finally need to get rid of it. Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the quilt in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

APPENDIX D

Study 2 Stimuli (Conditions without Picture)

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you remember that you bought it on a trip to Cancun during Spring Break a few years ago. Looking at the towel you remember what a great time you and your friends had on the trip. You remember the funky beach shop where you bought the towel right before you and your friends had such a great day at the beach.

You also remember that **you paid about $15.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you find that you can't remember where or when you bought it.

However, you do remember that **you paid about $15.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you remember that you bought it on a trip to Cancun during Spring Break a few years ago. Looking at the towel you remember what a great time you and your friends had on the trip. You remember the funky beach shop where you bought the towel right before you and your friends had such a great day at the beach.

You also remember that **you paid about $30.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you find that you can't remember where or when you bought it.

However, you do remember that **you paid about $30.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

APPENDIX E

Study 2 Stimuli (Conditions with Picture)

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel (pictured at right) that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you remember that you bought it on a trip to Cancun during Spring Break a few years ago. Looking at the towel you remember what a great time you and your friends had on the trip. You remember the funky beach shop where you bought the towel right before you and your friends had such a great day at the beach.

You also remember that **you paid about $15.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel (pictured at right) that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you find that you can't remember where or when you bought it.

However, you do remember that **you paid about $15.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel (pictured at right) that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you remember that you bought it on a trip to Cancun during Spring Break a few years ago. Looking at the towel you remember what a great time you and your friends had on the trip. You remember the funky beach shop where you bought the towel right before you and your friends had such a great day at the beach.

You also remember that **you paid about $30.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

Product Disposal Questionnaire

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel (pictured at right) that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you find that you can't remember where or when you bought it.

However, you do remember that **you paid about $30.00** for the towel.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Important **Extremely Important**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Attached **Extremely Attached**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. Do you think the price paid for the towel is more or less than what the average beach towel costs?

Much less Expensive **Much more Expensive**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. How old are you? _____ years

6. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

APPENDIX F

Study 3 Stimulus (Data Collection Stage I)

PRODUCT DISPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

In this study we are interested in your opinions about different ways to give up goods that you decide you no longer want to own.

When you are thinking about each disposal method, keep in mind that we are interested in how you feel about using that method to give up goods that are ***used but still useable*** (i.e., we are not talking about goods that are broken, just goodsthat, for whatever reason, you have decided you no longer want to own).

The different disposal methods are:

- Throwing the good away
- Putting the good in a paid storage space
- Trying to sell the good (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)
- Donating the good (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)

You will be asked to read a variety of statements and then to rate how much this statement is true of each of these different disposal methods with 1 meaning that the statement is not at all true of a given disposal method and 9 meaning that the statement is very true of that disposal method.

This disposal method is a common way that people get rid of their goods.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This method provides me with monetary compensation for giving up my good.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This disposal method allows me (the giver) to have control over who ultimately gets the item I am giving up.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

It would take a lot of my time to execute this disposal method.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This disposal method makes me feel like I am an ethical person.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

With this disposal method, I am likely to personally know the person who receives my good.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This disposal method helps other people.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This disposal method would honor a good that had significant sentimental value for me.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

With this method, I won't know what ultimately happens to my good.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

With this disposal method it would be relatively easy to get my item back if I changed my mind about giving it up.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

If I chose this method, I would feel like it was OK to go out and buy more things.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

It would cost me to execute this disposal method.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This disposal method is good for society as a whole.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This disposal method is convenient in terms of location (i.e., there are many places/opportunities where I could do it).

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

I, personally, have experience with this disposal method.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

With this disposal method, the good will go to someone similar to me.

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This disposal method would likely keep my good in its original form (i.e., not change it in any way or destroy it).

	Not at all True								**Very True**
Throwing the good away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Putting the good in a paid storage space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Trying to sell it (on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donating it (to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

APPENDIX G

Study 3 Stimuli (Stage II, Emotional Attachment)

PRODUCT DISPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE PART II

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you remember that you bought it on a trip to Cancun during Spring Break a few years ago. Looking at the towel you remember what a great time you and your friends had on the trip. You remember the funky beach shop where you bought the towel right before you and your friends had such a great day at the beach.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. How old are you? _____ years

5. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

APPENDIX H

Study 3 Stimulus (Data Collection Stage II, No Emotional Attachment Condition)

PRODUCT DISPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE PART II

Imagine that you are moving to a newer, much smaller apartment. You love your new place, but you are going to have to get rid of some of your things since you have so much less space. As you are going through your things, you find a beach towel that you decide you want to get rid of.

As you are looking at the towel, you find that you can't remember where or when you bought it.

Please indicate on a scale of 1 ("not at all likely") to 9 ("extremely likely") how likely you are to dispose of the towel in each of the following ways:

	Not at all likely								**Extremely Likely**
Throw it Away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Put it in a Paid Storage Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Try to Sell it (e.g., on EBay, at a Garage sale)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Donate it (e.g., to Goodwill or other charity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. After reading the scenario, how special did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. After reading the scenario, how important did you feel the towel was to you?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. After reading the scenario, how emotionally attached did you feel to the towel?

Not at all Special **Extremely Special**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. How old are you? _____ years

5. What gender are you (circle one)? Male Female

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