

THE COLLECTION: FROM COMPLETION TO CASTOFF

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Abstract

Much attention has been given to human beings' propensity to acquire collections of objects (e.g. Belk 1988, 1995; Lafferty *et al* 2014; Muensterberger 1995; Pearce 1994). Even medical research suggests that collecting (particularly those with impaired discard behavior) can be a result of neurological disfunction (Anderson *et al* 2005). Studies have looked at collecting behavior with regard to demographics, psychographics, and collecting typologies, which all lend a fascinating picture to the motivations and characteristics accompanying this acquisition behavior. However, little work has been conducted on the consumer behavior regarding decollecting; that is, breaking up or discarding a collection. Under what circumstances does a collection no longer motivate the owner? Are there life phase changes, priority shifts, or simply the completion of a collection that has no more important items to acquire? What happens when a collection must be disposed of "under force" such as economic circumstances, death, or other catastrophic situations such as fires or floods? This research proposes a model of decollecting circumstances and the consumer behaviors associated with them, along with qualitative research to form the basis of the model.

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