

Disposal Behavior of Extreme Poor People Living in Guatemala at the Base of the Pyramid

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Abstract : With the decrease of poverty, the focus on the solid waste challenge shifts away from affluent, mostly Westernized consumers to the base of the pyramid. The relevance of considering the disposal behavior of impoverished people arises from improved welfare, leading to an increase in consumption opportunities and, consequently, of waste production. In combination with the world's growing population the relevance of the topic increases, because solid waste management has global impacts on consumers' welfare. The current annual municipal solid waste generation is estimated to 1.9 billion tonnes, 30% remains uncollected. As for the collected 70% is landfilling and dumping, 19% is recycled or recovered, 11% is led to energy recovery facilities. Therefore, aim is to contribute by adding first insights about poor people's disposal behaviors, including the framing of their rationalities, emotions and cognitions. The study provides novel empirical results obtained from qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews near Guatemala City. In the study's framework consumers have to choose from three options when deciding what to do with their obsolete possessions: Keeping the product: The main reason for this is the respondent's emotional attachment to a product. Further, there is a willingness to use the same product under a different scope when it loses its functionality-they recycle their belongings in a customized and sustainable way. Permanently disposing of the product: The study reveals two dominant disposal methods: burning in front of their homes and throwing away in the physical environment. Respondents clearly recognized the disadvantages of burning toxic durables, like electronics. Giving a product away as a gift supports the integration of individuals in their peer networks of family and friends. Temporarily disposing of the product: Was not mentioned-to be specific, rent or lend a product to someone else was out of question. Contrasting the background to which extend poor people are aware of the consequences of their disposal decisions and how they feel about and rationalize their actions were quite unexpected. Respondents reported that they are worried about future consequences with impacts they cannot anticipate now-they are aware that their behaviors harm their health and the environment. Additionally, they expressed concern about the impact this disposal behavior would have on others' well-being and are therefore sensitive to the waste that surrounds them. Concluding, the BoP-framed life and Westernized consumption, both fit in a circular economy pattern, but the nature of how to recycle and dispose separates these two societal groups. Both systems own a solid waste management system, but people living in slum-type districts and rural areas of poor countries are less interested in connecting to the system-they are primarily afraid of the costs. Further, it can be said that a consumer's perceived effectiveness is distinct from environmental concerns, but contributes to forecasting certain pro-ecological behaviors. Considering the rationales underlying disposal decisions, thoughtfulness is a well-established determinant of disposition behavior. The precipitating events, emotions and decisions associated with the act of disposing of products are important because these decisions can trigger different results for the disposal process.

Keywords : base of the pyramid, disposal behavior, poor consumers, solid waste

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