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Kranti K. Dugar  
*University of Denver*

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# Consumers' Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study

## Abstract

This exploratory sequential mixed methods study of scale development was conducted among baby boomers in the United States to render conceptual clarity to the concepts of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, to explore deconsumption behavior under the tenets of the attribution theory of motivation, and to examine the components, structures, uses, and measurement properties of scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. It was also an attempt to reiterate the importance of the baby boomer segment(s) for marketing practitioners based on growth, economic viability, and the power of influence, and to establish a deep understanding of the deconsumption processes, which could enable marketers to devise strategies to pre-emptively avoid, pro-actively influence, and/or reactively mitigate deconsumption outcomes. The critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique was used in conjunction with grounded theory approach in the qualitative phase (study 1); and survey research, principal components analysis, and Rasch analysis were used in the quantitative phase (study 2). Behavioral process theories of the experience of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption were posited; and motivations and consequences of both types of deconsumption were discussed. The differences in the experience of deconsumption based on variables such as deconsumption type (voluntary and involuntary), gender (male and female), and baby boomer type (trailing- and leading-edge) were explained as well. Subscales of voluntary deconsumption included four components, i.e., elevated state of purpose, social agency and activism, non-materialism, and acceptance of life circumstances. Subscales of involuntary deconsumption included three components, i.e., victim mentality, materialism, and non-acceptance of life circumstances. Finally, the unidimensionality, appropriate scale use, invariance, and levels of validity and reliability of all the subscales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption were tested, and reported as acceptable and appropriate. In conclusion, the implications of the results for theory, research methodology, and practice were discussed, and recommendations for future research inquiry were made.

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Kathy E. Green, Ph.D.

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Presented to  
the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
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by  
Kranti K. Dugar  
June 2017  
Advisor: Dr. Kathy E. Green

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This exploratory sequential mixed methods study of scale development was conducted among baby boomers in the United States to render conceptual clarity to the concepts of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, to explore deconsumption behavior under the tenets of the attribution theory of motivation, and to examine the components, structures, uses, and measurement properties of scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. It was also an attempt to reiterate the importance of the baby boomer segment(s) for marketing practitioners based on growth, economic viability, and the power of influence, and to establish a deep understanding of the deconsumption processes, which could enable marketers to devise strategies to pre-emptively avoid, pro-actively influence, and/or reactively mitigate deconsumption outcomes. The critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique was used in conjunction with grounded theory approach in the qualitative phase (study 1); and survey research, principal components analysis, and Rasch analysis were used in the quantitative phase (study 2). Behavioral process theories of the experience of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption were posited; and motivations and consequences of both types of deconsumption were discussed. The differences in the experience of deconsumption based on variables such as deconsumption type (voluntary and involuntary), gender (male and female), and baby boomer type (trailing- and leading-edge) were explained as well. Subscales of voluntary deconsumption included four components, i.e., elevated state of purpose, social agency and activism, non-materialism, and acceptance of life

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*Keywords:* deconsumption; voluntary deconsumption; involuntary deconsumption; attribution theory of motivation; materialism; corporate social responsibility (CSR); non-materialism; victim mentality; mixed methods; scale development; critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique; consumer behavior; grounded theory; Rasch analysis; Baby Boomers; United States

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## **Chapter One: Introduction and Review of the Literature**

In 2012, the baby boomer population held more than 90% of the United States' net worth, and accounted for 78% of all its financial assets (Faleris, 2012). This generation, which includes people born in the post-World War II era between 1946 and 1964, was numbered at 80 million in 2000 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). More people were 65 years and over in 2010 than in any previous census. Between 2000 and 2010, the population proportion of individuals 65 years and over increased at a faster rate (15.1%) than the total population (9.7%). By the year 2030 and beyond, the proportional representation of the population above 65 years of age will grow even more, due to decreasing birth rates, increasing life spans, and immigration (Faleris, 2012; US Census Bureau, 2011). As proportionally larger numbers of people reach age 65 and over, it becomes increasingly important to understand the purchasing habits and goals of this population as well as the implications a large older segment of the population has for family, social, and economic aspects of society (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). An element overlooked in discussions of consumer behavior and marketing strategy is that the baby boomer population is not monolithic. Fisher (1993) demonstrates that old age is a series of stages with characteristics that define each stage. The baby boomer population can also be segmented by age, as leading-edge (born between 1946 and 1955) and trailing-edge (born between 1956 and 1964) boomers (Fleming, 2015). Finally, the population can be segmented by gender, as boomer women will soon dominate boomer men both by higher numbers and increased spending power (Faleris, 2012). These are vital

segmentation and targeting cues for both researchers and practitioners of marketing and consumer behavior interested in consumption and deconsumption behavior.

Research interest in deconsumption and similar concepts has grown in the past decade (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012; Markowitz & Bowerman, 2012). Deconsumption is the act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily). It was important to study deconsumption in a baby boomer population segment because there is a dearth of research on deconsumption among baby boomers, even though they are a vital demographic for marketers in the United States. It was important to study deconsumption more generally because deconsumption has implications for marketing and business viability; and, there were numerous gaps in the deconsumption-related literature (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012). Some of these gaps in the literature are listed below, and described in greater depth later in the study. First, the literature on deconsumption, due to its numerous related concepts, begged for conceptual clarity (Séré de Lanauze & Siadou-Martin, 2013). There was a call for deeper research into the distinctions among various types of deconsumption (Shove & Ward, 2002) and behaviors. Second, the current study was the first one to explore deconsumption behavior under the tenets of the attribution theory of motivation. Third, the need for research on *voluntary* deconsumption had been explicitly expressed in the literature (Etzioni, 1998; O'Guinn & Belk, 1989; Shama & Wisenblit, 1984). Fourth, there was scant research on *involuntary* deconsumption in the marketing literature, as deconsumption was typically conceptualized as a phenomenon based on choice, and hence, voluntary (Sharp et al., 2010). Fifth, from a methodological point-of-view, in line with the call for research from Piacentini and Banister (2009), the focus of the current study was on a range of practices

in the everyday lives of the participants, and not just in contexts where excessive consumption was a concern. Sixth, Bagozzi (1980) stressed the need for measurement research and instrumentation in marketing and consumer behavior, and observed that while marketers readily acknowledged the importance of measurement, they seldom examined the conceptual underpinnings of measurement procedures and related them to the purposes for which they were constructed. Fournier (1998b) called for empirical research on the concept of avoidance behaviors, and Sandıkcı and Ekici (2009) called for scale development and measurement, and tests of validity of a quantitatively measurable construct of brand rejection and related terms. According to Iyer and Muncy (2009), one of the main barriers to further development of the subject area of anti-consumption was the absence of appropriate scales that differentiated between the various types of anti-consumers. Also, a disproportionate number of the anti-consumption scale items in the past had been focused on green marketing or environmental issues, and it was recommended that future scale development studies aim to capture a wider breadth of the anti-consumption movement. So, the current study aimed to be the first attempt to develop a measure of scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption.

Among marketing practitioners, simplifiers or deconsumers have traditionally been ignored, given a lack of interest stemming from segmenting consumer markets based on economic viability. Lee et al. (2009a) highlighted the need for learning about the phenomenon of consumption by understanding its antithesis, namely, deconsumption. It is becoming evident that deconsumption is viable as a concept, and as a phenomenon in the marketplace affecting company revenues and bottom-lines. Today, the segments above the age of 50 control 70% of United States' disposable income (Kadlec, 2016).



Hence, practitioners need to understand them better, and they cannot ignore market segments such as boomers, given their unique needs, and financial prowess. An understanding of the deconsumption process would enable marketers to devise strategies to pre-emptively avoid, pro-actively influence, and/or reactively mitigate deconsumption outcomes (Lee et al., 2009a).

The realm of consumption (and indeed, deconsumption) is a “dream world” where fantasy, play, inner desire, escape, and emotion loom large (Schor, in Doherty & Etzioni, 2003, p. 76). This study sought to understand how baby boomers viewed deconsumption, and how it interplayed with their dreams, hopes, and happiness. Its intent was to provide both academics and practitioners with insights on deconsumption, and to encourage theoretical growth on the topic relevant to marketing research. This exploratory sequential study of scale development employed a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2013) to in-depth interviewing, generation of scale items for voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, and finalization of these (sub)scales by testing their validity and reliability.

### **Purpose of the Study**

**Statement of the problem.** Given the importance of studying the baby boomer population in the United States from a marketing strategy and policy point of view, and considering how little attention had been given to the construct of deconsumption (especially involuntary deconsumption), a mixed methods study of scale development was conducted to explore the meaning of, and explain the theoretical processes behind the meaning and motivations of the constructs of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption among consumers, develop scales to measure them, and test the scales.

**Purpose statement.** The purpose of the current exploratory sequential study of scale development was to address gaps in the scholarship of deconsumption among baby boomers. The mixed methods design of the study first qualitatively explored the meaning and theoretical explanation of the process of deconsumption (both voluntary and involuntary) using a grounded theory approach by developing propositions, and generated substantive process theories of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. The focus was on the process of deconsumption, and on the theoretical orientation of participants' views and perspectives of it (Charmaz, 2006). Experiences and perceptions of the concept and process of deconsumption were collected using the critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique from baby boomer participants in several towns and cities in the United States. Common experiences were analyzed using a constant-comparative method to identify the conditions, contexts, motivations, strategies, and consequences of deconsumption, leading to the emergence of substantive, "unified theoretical explanations" (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p. 107) for the processes of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. From this initial exploration, the qualitative findings informed development of instruments to measure voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, which was administered first to a pilot group, and then, to a larger sample. The intent of this study was to provide a theoretical framework of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption to further consumer behavior and marketing research.

### **Self-Positioning**

**Bracketing.** Subjectivity is an inherent part of qualitative and mixed methods research. Experts such as Peshkin (1988) suggested that the inevitability of subjectivity should be acknowledged, and that researchers should systematically seek out their

subjectivity. This seeking out, a self-reflection and soul-searching exercise, should be done actively during the research process, and not retrospectively. The researcher believed in what Krieger stated: “The pot carries its maker’s thoughts, feelings, and spirit. To overlook this fact is to miss a crucial truth, whether in clay, story, or science” (1991, p. 89). Facts are value-laden, and are dependent on prior constructions held by the observer, and hence, theories can never be fully determined by factual evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Reflexivity, the “researcher’s voice” (Kiyama, 2010, p. 340), strengthens a qualitative or mixed methods study by explicitly laying bare the researcher’s philosophical stance (Lichtman, 2005), and his/her personal bias.

So, in an attempt to make himself aware of how his subjectivity would shape the present study (this pot he’s carrying), and to add an element of reflexivity (Grigsby, 2004), the researcher formulated the following account of self-positioning relevant to the study, focusing on his background, work experience, cultural experience, and history (Wolcott, 2010). This account helped him understand how his personal subjectivities drove him to this inquiry, and how they may have informed his interpretations of its findings:

Right from my childhood days, I have been able to associate and relate to the elderly. From them, I got stories, and I practiced listening. Their stories were sometimes about both voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. In the summer of 1998, I was caretaking my grandpa after a surgery he underwent. In 2012, I became a volunteer for SeniorHub, an organization providing care to the elderly in and around Denver. The stories kept coming. The care-receivers would confide in me, and I’d hear accounts of involuntary deconsumption such as, “My

work buddies and I used to golf together. After retirement, there's no more golfing for me. Late at night, I hear my Titleist golf bag calling out my name," and "...you understand how lucky you are to be able to see? You understand what it means to be riding in a car, going at 70, hurtling down the street, hurtling into darkness? Darkness...it came overnight. I'm blind. I can't read music. I don't need to play the harmonica...for what? For myself? I don't even touch the eight Hohners I have." I heard pain. Personally, as an immigrant, and a lover of Cricket (the sport), I could equate that feeling to the angst of moving to a non-Cricket country, and not being able to sip on my morning tea whilst reading Cricket news in the newspaper. And then, there'd be stories of voluntary deconsumption, such as one narrated by a boomer disillusioned by the hegemony of big corporation, "They're a bully. I don't like bullies. I would never shop at Wal-Mart. I like underdogs myself," and evaluation of clutter, "It's a physical thing – what do I need, what do I not need, what's just clutter? I don't put too much value on material things now." The stories were following me wherever I went. Even on a flight from Atlanta to Bahrain once, I read a magazine article about a study of deconsumption conducted by Markowitz and Bowerman (2012). I was taken by that article, as I thought of it as reporting a story seldom heard in the marketing literature and in academic discourse. I wanted to explore both the voluntary and involuntary aspects of this phenomenon. I wanted to theoretically explain the process of it. I had discovered my dissertation topic. On the one hand, I found that the voluntary deconsumption stories were very promising and interesting, and on the other, the stories of involuntary deconsumption pained me.

I was drawn to them. They made me realize, much along the lines of what Rager (2005) said, that worthwhile research breaks one's heart. I'd be, through my experience and sensitivity to boomers' stories of deconsumption, exploring this pain and triumph, and bringing my unique subjectivity to the study, which would strengthen it, and purposefully drive me to achieve the study objectives.

**Philosophical worldview and theoretical foundation.** A researcher's worldviews, strategies of inquiry, and research methods are interconnected. Paradigm worldview (beliefs about epistemology, ontology, axiology, methodology, and rhetoric), which are broad, basic beliefs or assumptions that guide inquiries (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), affect the theoretical lens adopted by the researcher, which affects the methodology selected, and which, in turn, affects the methods of the researcher's study. So, philosophical worldviews shape how the researcher formulates a problem and research questions, and how he/she seeks information to answer the questions (Huff, 2009). The four philosophical worldviews according to Creswell (2009), and Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), and adopted from Crotty (1998), are: postpositivist, social constructivist, advocacy and participatory, and pragmatic. Their characteristics are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1

*Characteristics of Philosophical Worldviews (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998)*

<b>Postpositivism</b>	<b>Social Constructivism</b>
Determinism	Understanding
Reductionism	Multiple participant meaning
Empirical observation and measurement	Social and historical construction
Theory verification	Theory generation
<b>Advocacy/Participatory</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>
Political	Consequences of actions
Empowerment issue-oriented	Problem-centered
Collaborative	Pluralistic
Change-orientated	Realist-world practice oriented

As a researcher, although I have a postpositivist background; in the past five years, I have been exposed to social constructivism, and now, my research philosophy is primarily driven by the belief that reality is co-constructed and multiple (Esterberg, 2002), subjective evidence from participants constitutes knowledge, research is value-laden, and an inductive logic and emergent design serve as appropriate methods for such a worldview. My interpretive framework in this study, then, was social constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2010), manifested through a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) to studying deconsumption. In line with Lincoln and Guba's (2013) conjectures of social constructivism, I wanted to convert constructions (coherent, articulated set of mental realizations that help make sense of the human surround) of deconsumption into shared constructions, and make meaning out of them through communication with participants, experts, academics, and managers.

Secondarily, my training has made me a mixed methods researcher with a belief in pragmatism (Cherryholmes, 1992; Patton, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This explained the purpose of this study, which was to build on qualitative explorations of

voluntary and involuntary deconsumption through in-depth interviews, and then, to develop and test scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. In the context of the present study, different perspectives and themes were reported, the researcher relied on quotes as evidence, openly discussed values, and moved toward a theoretical understanding of deconsumption, and the validation and testing of scales developed to assess it.

### **Research Questions**

The proposed study aimed to answer the following main research question: What behavioral process theory explains the experience of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption among baby boomers in the United States? Secondary research questions included the following: (1) What are the motivations of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption of products, services, brands, and experiences from an attribution theory perspective? How do locus, stability, controllability, and intentionality of deconsumption behavior affect the consumers? (2) What are the consequences and outcomes of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption behavior? What is the role of deconsumption in consumers' self-identity resolution and reformulation? (3) Does the experience of the two deconsumption types (voluntary and involuntary) differ? If so, in what ways? Do the two segments of the baby boomer population (trailing- and leading-edge boomers) differ in their experience of the deconsumption process? Do female baby boomers differ in their experience of the deconsumption process as compared to male baby boomers? (4) Do the scales of deconsumption (voluntary and involuntary) developed in this study exhibit unidimensionality, appropriate scale use, and yield appropriate levels of validity and reliability?

## **Review of the Literature**

A detailed review of deconsumption and its related concepts is followed by a brief synopsis of attribution theory, empowerment evaluation, and baby boomers' consumption and segmentation, which leads into the theoretical facets of deconsumption.

This review of deconsumption and related terms began with an overview of the conceptual domain of deconsumption, an overview of consumption and the consumer decision making (CDM) process, and a thorough review of deconsumption (DC), anti-consumption (AC), anti-commercial consumer rebellion (ACR), voluntary simplicity (VS), consumer resistance (CR), socially responsible consumption (SRC), and demarketing (DM). A detailed section on attribution theory and the application of attribution theory of motivation to the inquiry of deconsumption follows. This examination of deconsumption-related concepts and applicable theories led into the overall theoretical facets employed in the study. An analysis of the baby boomer population growth as well as their consumption/deconsumption habits, and a discussion of the use of the critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique led directly into the gaps in the marketing and consumer behavior literature relevant to academics as well as practitioners. Finally, key definitions and delimitations of the study are specified.

Since differentiations between related concepts (such as deconsumption, anti-consumption, anti-commercial consumer rebellion, voluntary simplicity, consumer resistance, socially responsible consumption, and demarketing) and also between tertiary concepts (such as evocative neologism, decay, consumer expert, creative recovery, and alternative recovery) were subtle, and the concepts were oftentimes overlapping, there was considerable ambiguity associated with deconsumption-related research (Séré de



Lanauze & Siadou-Martin, 2013). Most of the consumer behavior literature had studied voluntary deconsumption (deconsumption motivated by consumers' own will), and the concept of involuntary deconsumption had received no attention.

**Conceptual domain of deconsumption and related terms.** In the last two decades, research interest in deconsumption – the act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily) – and the body of research related to similar concepts has grown (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012; Markowitz & Bowerman, 2012). Analysis of the nomothetic net of deconsumption conjured up a web of key related concepts with varying labels, such as anti-consumption, non-consumption, consumer resistance, voluntary simplicity, socially responsible consumption, and demarketing. At the same time, tertiary concepts such as evocative neologism, decay, consumer expert, creative recovery, and alternative recovery also emerged (Séré de Lanauze & Siadou-Martin, 2013).

The abundance of related concepts, and various methods of exploring them led to conceptual commentaries, critical essays, and overviews on voluntary simplicity (e.g., Doherty & Etzioni, 2003; Etzioni, 1998; Gregg, 1936; McGregor, 2013), consumer resistance (e.g., Penaloza & Price, 1993; Rumbo, 2002), anti-consumption (e.g., Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012; Hogg et al., 2009; Zavestoski, 2002b), and demarketing (e.g., Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Varadarajan, 2014). While some researchers had penned literature reviews of anti-consumption (e.g., Agarwal, 2013; Galvagno, 2011), most researchers in this field of inquiry had, in the past decade, conducted exploratory qualitative inquiries to a subject-matter that was largely in a nascent state. Stammerjohan and Webster (2002), for instance, conducted an exploratory study of non-consumption, whereas Séré de Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) explored deconsumption. The

exploratory nature of this field of study was highlighted by the volume of qualitative work such as netnographies and ethnographies on consumer resistance (e.g., Braunsberger & Buckler, 2011; Kozinets, 2002), and voluntary simplicity (e.g., Sandlin & Walther, 2009); critical ethnographies on voluntary simplicity (e.g., Bekin, Carrigan, & Szmigin, 2005; Grigsby, 2004); phenomenologies on anti-consumption (e.g., Cromie & Ewing, 2009), grounded theory studies of anti-consumption (e.g., Funches, Markley, & Davis, 2009; Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2009b). Furthermore, general qualitative methodologies of inquiry were employed in studies of voluntary simplicity (e.g., Ballantine & Creery, 2010; Grigsby, 2004; Shaw & Newholm, 2002), consumer resistance (e.g., Cherrier, 2009), anti-consumption (e.g., Albinsson, Wolf, & Kopf, 2010; Cherrier, Black, & Lee, 2011; Garcia-Bardidia, Nau, & Rémy, 2011), deconsumption (e.g., Séré de Lanauze & Siadou-Martin, 2013), and demarketing (e.g., Piacentini & Banister, 2009). In addition to these explorations, a few quantitative studies had also been conducted, such as surveys of voluntary simplicity (e.g., Boujbel & d'Astous, 2012; Huneke, 2005), anti-consumption (e.g., Hoffmann & Müller, 2009; Sharp, Høj, & Wheeler, 2010; Yuksel & Mryteza, 2009), downshifting (e.g., Kennedy, Krahn, & Krogman, 2013), consumer resistance (e.g., Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012), and demarketing (e.g., Grinstein & Nisan, 2009; Moore, 2005). There had also been a few surveys leading to index/scale development on voluntary simplicity (e.g., Iwata, 1997; Leonard-Barton, 1981; Leonard-Barton & Rogers, 1980), anti-commercial consumer rebellion (ACR) (e.g., Graham Austin, Plouffe, & Peters, 2005), anti-consumption (e.g., Iyer & Muncy, 2009), and consumers' propensity to resist (CPR) (e.g., Banikema & Roux, 2014); and a few studies of measure validation/confirmation of measures of voluntary simplicity (e.g., Cowles &

Crosby, 1986; Iwata, 1999, 2006). One of the studies reviewed used secondary longitudinal data pertaining to demarketing (e.g., Shiu, Hassan, & Walsh, 2009), and one was an experiment of demarketing (e.g., Miklós-Thal & Zhang, 2013). Just a handful of studies employed mixed methods to get a grasp of voluntary simplicity (e.g., Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Morkowitz & Bowerman, 2012), anti-consumption (e.g., Zavestoski, 2002b), and consumer resistance (e.g., Close & Zinkhan, 2009).

The delineation of these concepts was a challenge for the researcher. Synthesis of the literature revealed that there were three major differentiating factors that lent some delineation to these related concepts: (a) drivers of deconsumption-related behavior, (b) nature of behavior, and (c) levels of analyses. The drivers of such consumer behaviors were either positive (such as to fuel social change, and personal growth), or negative (such as hatred, dissatisfaction, dis-identification, rebellion, inability, bad luck, spite, anger, and resistance to power). The behaviors were either voluntary, involuntary, or mixed (both voluntary and involuntary). Also, they were manifest at the individual or communal levels, impacting self (dis-) identification or social (dis-) identification (Galvagno, 2011).

Since these differentiators were overlapping, there had been considerable conceptual ambiguity associated with deconsumption-related research. For instance, the concepts of anti-consumption and consumer resistance were used interchangeably (e.g., Albinsson et al., 2010). Other studies interchangeably used the concepts of anti-consumption and demarketing (e.g., Sharp et al., 2010). However, in recent years, researchers made efforts to delineate these concepts. Cherrier et al. (2011) maintained that while consumer resistance leaned towards communal/public expression, anti-

consumption remained a more individual and privately exhibited behavior. Lee et al. (2011) delineated anti-consumption from consumer resistance, contending that anti-consumption was focused on “phenomena that are against the acquisition, use, and dispossession of certain goods” (p. 1681), whereas consumer resistance was an opposition to a force of domination. Chatzidakis and Lee (2012) cautioned researchers to not confuse anti-consumption with non-consumption or alternative consumption. The difference between these concepts was explained by Cherrier (2009) and Cherrier et al. (2011). While alternative consumption is regarded as a mere choice, non-consumption due to proscription or other contextual influences entails a preference toward one brand leading to incidental non-consumption of another. Anti-consumption, on the other hand, entails an intentional choice to avoid the non-consumed brand. Galvagno (2011), presenting anti-consumption and consumer resistance as distinct concepts, posited that while anti-consumption was a more private means of self-identity that had no great impact on others, consumer resistance was a conscious behavior exhibited by a powerful collective (such as an activist group, workers’ association, etc.) directed to change or subvert systems. Moreover, consumer resistance could exist without feelings of anti-consumption too. Finally, this march toward conceptual clarity can also be seen in Séré de Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013), where, for the first time, the descriptions of many voluntary deconsumption concepts were presented together.

Based on the review and synthesis of literature that follows, the nature of deconsumption and related terms is presented in a literature review matrix (Table 2). Concepts in this table are ordered based on levels of analyses, as well as on who initiated (consumer, company/government, or both) the concept in the marketplace. Concepts

demanding individual and consumer-levels of analyses appear first, and then, company-level concepts appear. For instance, deconsumption is manifest at the individual consumer-level, followed by anti-consumption (that was mostly individual, but had warranted societal levels of analyses of late). Anti-commercial consumer rebellion, a concept closely related to anti-consumption, followed suit. Then, appeared voluntary simplicity, which was societal (mostly), and manifested at the household levels. The concept of consumer resistance (which was co-constructed on a collective/communal/public level) followed voluntary simplicity. Lastly, two concepts motivated by the company/organization/government, and affecting the individual (socially responsible consumption) and society (demarketing) made an appearance. Table 2 was designed to help the reader take a bird's-eye view of deconsumption and its related concepts. This matrix helps render some clarity to the otherwise obfuscating stream of literature, as it presents the concepts related to deconsumption, the motivations driving each concept, the nature of each concept (locus and initiation), the levels of analyses relevant to each concept, and a list of notable authors who had explored each of these concepts.

Table 2

*Deconsumption and Related Terms – A Literature Review Matrix*

Concept	Motivation(s)	Nature	Level of Analysis/Manifestation	Notable Contributors
Deconsumption (DC)	Pro-social, conscious consuming, environmental consciousness, ethical consumption, sustainability, conservation, thrift	Consumer-initiated, voluntary (note: the mixed and involuntary nature of deconsumption is the proposed topic of exploration in this study)	Individual consumer-level	Hogg & Banister (2001), Leonard & Conrad (2011), Markowitz & Bowerman (2012), Sandıkçı & Ekici (2009), Séré de Lanauze & Siadou-Martin (2013), Stammerjohan & Webster (2002)
Anti-Consumption (AC)	Against consumption rather than pro-social movements, alternative consumption, revenge	Consumer-initiated, voluntary	Individual/private-level, with no great consequence to others (note: recent literature has focused more on community/societal manifestations)	Albinsson et al. (2010), Braunsberger & Buckler (2011), Chatzidakis & Lee (2012), Cherrier et al. (2011), Funches et al. (2009), Galvagno (2011), Garcia-Bardidia et al. (2011), Hoffmann & Müller (2009), Huneke (2005), Iyer & Muncy (2009), Lee et al. (2009a, 2009b), Penaloza & Price (2003), Yuksel (2013), Yuksel & Mryteza (2009), Zavestoski (2002a, 2002b)

Concept	Motivation(s)	Nature	Level of Analysis/Manifestation	Notable Contributors
Anti-Commercial Consumer Rebellion (ACR)	Pro-social, against consumption, formal rebellion, more active than CR	Consumer-initiated, highly voluntary	Community/societal-level	Dobscha (1998), Graham Austin et al. (2005), Kozinets (2002), Rumbo (2002)
Voluntary Simplicity (VS)	Pro-social, conscious, against materialism, competitiveness, and destruction of the planet, human fulfillment, political activism, radicalism, minimalism, ecological, ethical movement, a supporting force	Consumer-initiated, highly voluntary	Societal- and household-level	Andrews & Withey (1976), Ballantine & Creery (2010), Bekin et al. (2005), Boujbel & d'Astous (2012), Brooks (1996), Carey (1996), Cherrier (2009), Cowles & Crosby (1986), Craig-Lees & Hill (2002), Doherty & Etzioni (2003), Elgin (1981, 1993), Elgin & Mitchell (1977), Etzioni (1998), Gopaldas (2008), Gregg (1936), Grigsby (2004), Inglehart (1977), Johnson (2004), Leonard-Barton (1981), Leonard-Barton & Rogers (1980), Maniates (2002), McGregor (2013), Miller & Gregan-Paxton (2006), Oates, McDonald, Alevizou, Kumju, Young, & McMorland (2008), Pierce (1998), Sandlin & Walther (2009), Schor (1998a, 1998b), Shaw & Moraes (2009), Shaw & Newholm (2002)

Concept	Motivation(s)	Nature	Level of Analysis/Manifestation	Notable Contributors
Consumer Resistance (CR)	Against consumption, conscious, confrontational, very active, very effortful, a co-constructed opposing force	Consumer-initiated, highly voluntary	Collective/communal/public-level	Banikema & Roux (2014), Chatzidakis & Lee (2012), Cherrier (2009), Close & Zinkhan (2009), Fournier (1998b), Penaloza & Price (1993), Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis (2012), Thompson & Arsel (2004), Wilk (1997)
Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC)	Pro-social, environmental, policy-centric	Company-initiated, highly voluntary	Manifested by company/organization initiatives, effects consumer- and societal-level	Antil (1984), Antil & Bennett (1979), Henion (1976), Webb, Mohr, & Harris (2008)
Demarketing (DM)	Company initiative, public policy initiative	Company-and government-initiated, against consumers' will in most cases (somewhat involuntary)	Manifested by company/organization/government initiatives, effects consumer- and societal-level	Grinstein & Nisan (2009), Kotler & Levy (1971), McLean et al. (2002), Miklós-Thal & Zhang (2013), Moore (2005), Peattie & Peattie (2009), Piacentini & Banister (2009), Sharp et al. (2010), Shiu et al. (2009)



The effort to achieve conceptual clarity through the literature matrix above guided the exploration of deconsumption, and is presented in the review that follows.

**Deconsumption (DC).** An understanding of the literature on deconsumption warrants a brief overview and understanding of the literature on consumption from a consumer behavior lens. The following section briefly reviewed consumption, the consumer decision making process, the problem recognition model, and brand relationships and their link to consumption.

*Overview of consumption.* Consumption, as a construct, had been linked to the acquiring and using of goods and services to meet one's needs. The American Marketing Association (AMA) defined consumption as "the direct and final use of goods or services in satisfying the wants of free human beings." Two points were worth noting here: firstly, consumption dealt with satisfaction of wants (vis-à-vis needs). Secondly, consumption (much like deconsumption), had been associated with free will, suggesting that consumers acted in a rational manner to acquire what they wanted. The second point, which was closely related to the idea that consumers exercise power, freedom, free will, and rationality to acquire products/services/brands/experiences from the marketplace, would also be challenged to an extent in the discussion of deconsumption and its related constructs.

Next, an understanding of a consumer was required to understand consumption. A consumer was defined by the AMA as "...the buyer or decision maker as well as the ultimate consumer." So, a father buying a toy for consumption by his child was often called the consumer (even though he may not be the ultimate user). This was an example of an individual consumer decision-making process. However, there could also be more

than one person involved in this process. A child and a parent, for instance, might be involved in a family decision-making situation (e.g., eating out). There was a selection process laid out by Atkin (1978) that highlighted two scenarios in decision making in such a circumstance: (1) The child initiates the process with either a request to or a demand from the parent (where to go eat, or what kind of food to eat). The parent either agrees to the request or denies the request or suggests another alternative. In the case of a demand, the parent either yields to it or rejects outright or suggests another alternative. (2) The parent initiates the process either by inviting a selection from (a number of restaurants, or a variety of types of foods), or directing a selection to the child. Responding to the invitation to select, the child selects and the parent agrees or denies. The child then suggests another alternative, which is either accepted or denied by the parent. It is clear that in both individual or family decision making scenarios, consumer(s) engage(s) in a decision-making process.

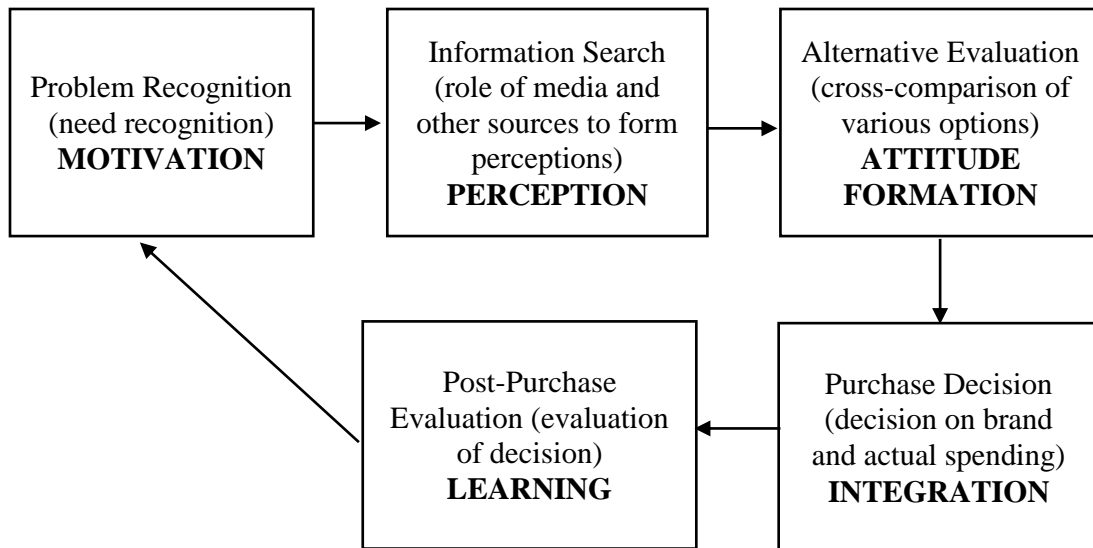
*The consumer decision-making process.* Consumer decision-making (CDM) is a sophisticated and complex process, and the studies of CDM are inter-disciplinary. They blend elements from psychology, sociology, socio-psychology, anthropology, and economics. They attempt to understand the buyer decision-making process, both individually and in groups. The AMA defined CDM as:

The process of selecting from several choices, products, brands, or ideas. The decision process may involve complex cognitive or mental activity, a simple learned response, or an uninvolved and uninformed choice that may even appear to be stochastic or probabilistic, i.e., occurring by chance. It is a process by which consumers collect information about choice alternatives and evaluate those alternatives in order to make choices among them.

According to Davis (1976), most of the emphasis on CDM had been on who shopped and decided within specific product categories. Studies of family decision-

making had, in reality, been studies of husband-wife decision-making. Little was known about household roles (including roles of children and other care-receivers) in information gathering and storage, product use, and post-decision evaluation. It should be noted that major items of consumer spending such as food, shelter, and transportation were often jointly consumed. A deeper understanding of the dynamics of such joint decision-making, hence, needed more attention. Specifically, inter-personal communication in the family was vital in the decision-making process (Moschis, 1985), and behaviors such as bargaining, compromise, mutual discussions, and persuasion need to be studied (Rust, 1993). Moreover, there was a need for focus not only on the outcome, but on the decision-making process itself (Moschis & Moore, 1979).

Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat (1978) developed a five-stage model of the CDM process (problem recognition, search, alternative evaluation, choice, and outcomes). Belch and Belch (2003) refined the model (see Figure 1), and related relevant internal psychological processes to each of the steps of the CDM process (motivation, perception, attitude formation, integration, and learning).



*Figure 1.* A basic model of consumer decision making. Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat (1978).

As can be seen in Figure 1, the consumer's purchase decision process was generally viewed as consisting of stages through which the buyer passed in purchasing a product or service. The internal psychological processes (labeled in each box in bold typeface) are important to promotional planners, since they influenced the general decision-making process of the consumer. Problem recognition, the first stage of the CDM process, was viewed by marketers to reflect the basic motivation for the purchase of a product category (Sirgy, 1987). Problem recognition was defined as "a belief which is formed reflecting the degree of dissatisfaction of a current product used by the consumer." (p. 53). Sirgy (1983, 1984), and Sirgy and Tyagi (1986) introduced a problem recognition model based on congruity theory. Sirgy (1987), then, introduced and tested a social cognition model describing the cognitive determinants of problem recognition; describing problem recognition as a function of the directional discrepancy between the valence level of the perceived performance of one's current product and the valence level of a referent (standard of comparison). Sirgy (1987) concluded that

problem recognition was greatest under negative incongruity, followed by negative congruity, positive congruity, and positive incongruity, respectively. This understanding of problem recognition helped future researchers, and contributed to understanding the process of deconsumption as well.

Belch and Belch (2003) also defined consumer behavior in the light of the steps or stages in the decision-making process above as: “The process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires.” (p. 105). The CDM process was affected by external influences (Belch & Belch, 2003, p. 127) (see Figure 2) such as culture, subculture, social class, reference groups, and situational determinants (in order of magnitude and importance from high to low). The discussion of this model here aided the understanding of consumers’ decision-making processes as a prequel to discussions of deconsumption. The CDM model, although widely used, presented an incomplete view of the decision-making process. Indeed, consumers also make decisions of deconsuming, and the same could be incorporated as a part of this model.

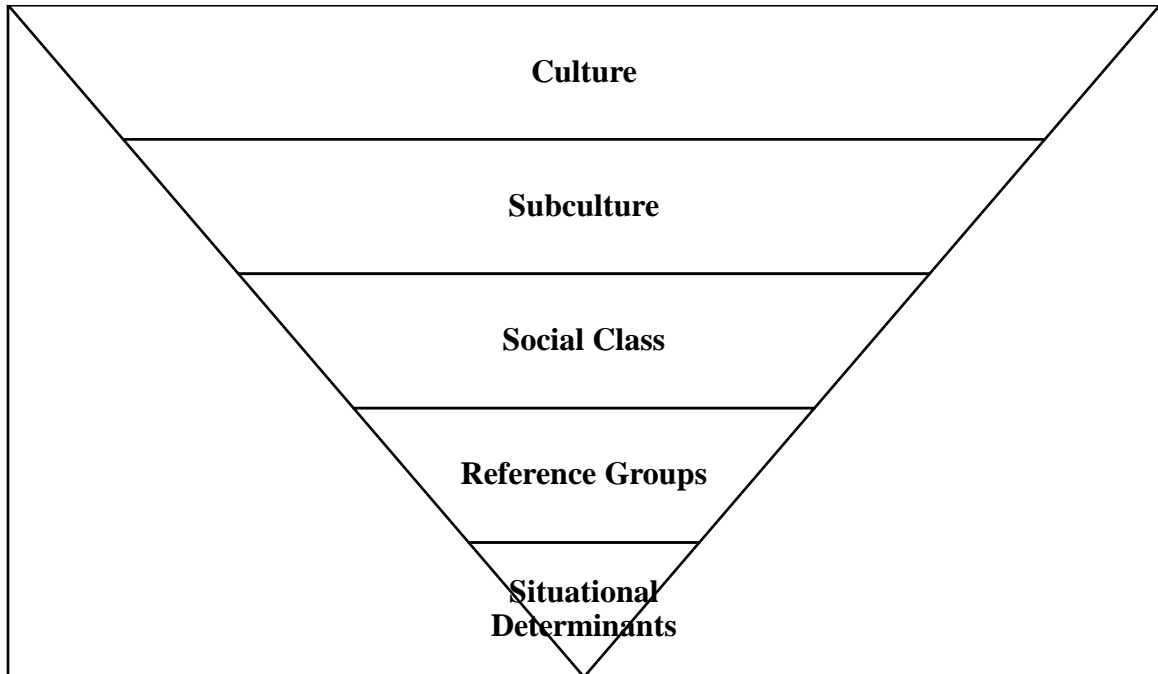


Figure 2. External influences on consumer behavior. Belch and Belch (2013).

**Brand relationships and consumption/deconsumption.** Since the scope of this study went beyond the deconsumption of products and services, and included the deconsumption of brands, a brief review of brand relationships in the context of (de)consumption from branding literature was called for. Fournier (1998a) was the first researcher to look beyond the beaten path of brand loyalty. Using the concept of brand personality, she developed a relationship theory in consumer research, which spurred immense interest, research activity, and growth in the field, including works from colleagues such as Aaker (1999), Aggarwal (2004), Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent (2000), Kirmani, Sood, and Bridges (1999), McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002), and Muniz and O’Guinn (2001). A recent stream of literature in marketing focused on the concept of brand community (i.e., Holt, 1995; McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) defined a brand community as “a specialized, non-geographically bound community,

based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (p. 412). As explained by Cromie and Ewing (2009), brand communities were communities of consumption. Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008) spoke of consumers’ involvement in the process of value co-creation, where consumers formulated their self-concepts and defined their social reference groups through what they chose not to consume as much as what they consumed (Hogg & Banister, 2001; Sandıkcı & Ekici, 2009). The discussion of brand communities was important because brand communities generated brand relationships. More specifically, consumer brand attachment served as a mediator connecting consumer brand community commitment with consumer brand commitment (Zhou, Zhang, Su, & Zhou, 2012). This insight on the nature of brand relationships would aid the understanding of deconsumption.

Another concept central to brand relationships in the context of (de)consumption was congruity (Aaker, 1999; Chandon et al., 2000; Grohmann, 2009; Mothersbaugh et al., 2002). An incongruity between the symbolic meanings of a brand and a consumer’s sense of self-motivated identity avoidance. Consumers protected their identity by avoiding brands that represented their undesired self. In particular, they avoided brands that were associated with negative reference groups, inauthenticity, or a loss of individuality (Lee et al., 2009b). This idea was very important in the exploration of concepts such as consumer resistance, anti-consumption, and deconsumption. There was a need to understand how consumers coped psychologically with dissonance that was aroused by incongruity (Festinger, 1957) – a conflict between their stated beliefs and their observed behaviors. In so doing, insights into the motives that drove both behaviors and responses to deconsume would be uncovered (Markowitz & Bowerman, 2012).

*Deconsumption (DC)*. There was scant literature on the topic of deconsumption. Deconsumption, by all counts, read as being about the avoidance of excess, and as a conscious step toward “conscious consuming” (Leonard & Conrad, 2011, p. 145). Examinations of the public’s beliefs about consumption, and about how much consumption was enough (using scale items such as “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: We’d all be better off if we consumed less”) (Markowitz & Bowerman, 2012, p. 173) had been approached from the perspective that consumers made the decision to consume less or more (in this case, less) based on a voluntary choice. Such studies highlighted for policy makers that Americans were ready to “deconsume” for the sake of the environment, and their personal well-being, cutting back purchases of material goods, and especially reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases. Such ideas of deconsumption, defined by Markowitz and Bowerman (2012) as “making do with less,” missed one major component – will. Deconsumption, along with constructs such as “downshifting” had been treated in literature as voluntary functions of consumers’ behavior. Although deconsumption was presented and studied at the individual level, the only definition of deconsumption in existing literature was macro-economic. It was defined as “the decline in consumption among households in a given area, sector, nation, or internationally” (Séré de Lanauze & Siadou-Martin, 2013, p. 56) – a definition far more overarching and complex than a mere decline in market demand. This treatment of deconsumption seemed like a leap from an individual level of analysis to the societal level.

The motivations leading consumers to deconsumption had been linked to making positive changes in the world. Environmental consciousness, sustainability,



conservation, and thrift (all connected to the environmental movement) emerged as the main drivers of deconsumption. In some cases, it was termed as “conspicuous deconsumption,” – a middle-class phenomenon about rejecting overt signs of wealth (Knight, 2007). Some researchers had termed it non-consumption, defining it as “failing to try to consume” (Stammerjohan & Webster, 2002, p. 126), explained by deferred gratification, asceticism, altruism, self-expression, and resistance. The researchers described this form of “failing to try to consume” with a modified typology with four behaviors: delay, saving, self-control, and ignoring. Séré de Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) formulated four forms of values from the practice of deconsumption based on an intrinsic and extrinsic bifurcation. The intrinsic values consisted of hedonic value (a do-it-yourself approach leading to value and fun), and spiritual value (an approach focused on environmental, ethical, and policy implications). The extrinsic values consisted of utilitarian value (a buy-less approach), and social value (a buy-healthy approach). Overall, the understanding of deconsumption seemed to be nascent and non-existent beyond the instances described above. A review of the literature on deconsumption confirmed the fact that information was lacking in this area. The following sections provide a review of concepts in the literature related to deconsumption.

**Anti-consumption (AC).** Anti-consumption literally means against consumption, yet, the word is not synonymous with alternative, conscientious, or green consumption; neither does anti-consumption merely comprise the study of ethics, sustainability, or public policy. Anti-consumption research is focused on avoidance and reasons against consumption rather than on pro-social movements, phenomena that researchers had traditionally ignored (Lee et al., 2009a). Bertrand Russell is quoted as

observing that “It is preoccupation with possessions, more than anything else, that prevents us from living freely and nobly” (in Andrews, 1987, p. 212). Anti-consumption challenged the stereotype of this preoccupation, and described consumers as becoming postconsumers who had the satisfaction of enough. The International Centre for Anti-Consumption Research (ICAR), hosted by the University of Auckland Business School, and comprised of a network of marketing academics, practitioners, and social scientists from various universities located in New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, is one collaboration of researchers that furthers the cause of anti-consumption research. The ICAR operates on the belief that anti-consumption need not be contrary to business success or enhanced quality of life, nor need it interfere with societal and business progress. The focus is on improving both the quantity and quality of consumption; and not on anti-consumption as an inherent economic threat. This idea paralleled the idea of voluntary simplicity.

Anti-consumption is a nascent yet burgeoning field of research, which was evident in the offering of related conferences and special issues (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012) on the topic, such as the 2009 *Journal of Business Research* special issue, and the 2011 *European Journal of Marketing* special issue on anti-consumption. Hailed as a “liberating, self-imposed shopping sabbatical,” (The Times & Transcript New Brunswick, 2007), anti-consumption was defined as “...more of an attitude related to self-identity resulting from, and related to, an act of consumption. The prefix anti does not indicate lack of; instead, it means opposition to something of the same kind.” (Galvagno, 2011, p. 1698). So, anti-consumption is still consumption. However, some

researchers equated anti-consumption to non-consumption (e.g., Cherrier et al., 2011). They described non-consumption as a broad phenomenon with the following classification of three Is: intentional non-consumption (decision not to consume something), incidental non-consumption (choice towards a preferred alternative), and ineligible non-consumption (inability to act as a consumer). Cherrier et al. (2011) noted that non-consumption was not always manifested against an opponent brand or organization, but could also be directed against mainstream consumers who did not consume sustainably, in line with the belief that consumers' purchasing choices affected not only the consumers themselves, but also the external world (Harrison et al., 2005). Interestingly, these manifestations of anti-consumption (and non-consumption) were acted out in an everyday context (Cherrier et al., 2011; Garcia-Bardidia et al., 2011), and hence, needed to be studied in an everyday behavioral world of consumers.

Lee et al. (2009a) related anti-consumption to other key constructs, such as self-consciousness, self-actualization, and assertiveness, and viewed it as a means for consumers' expression of identity, and satisfaction of motives. It was also seen as a rejection of commercialized celebrations, politicized brands, and commercialized software through retaliatory behaviors such as boycotting (Lee et al., 2009a). Anti-consumption was also related to rejection (Hogg et al., 2009), a result of proscription (Sharp et al., 2010), and brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009b). Zavestoski (2002b) noted that anti-consumption attitudes took many forms:

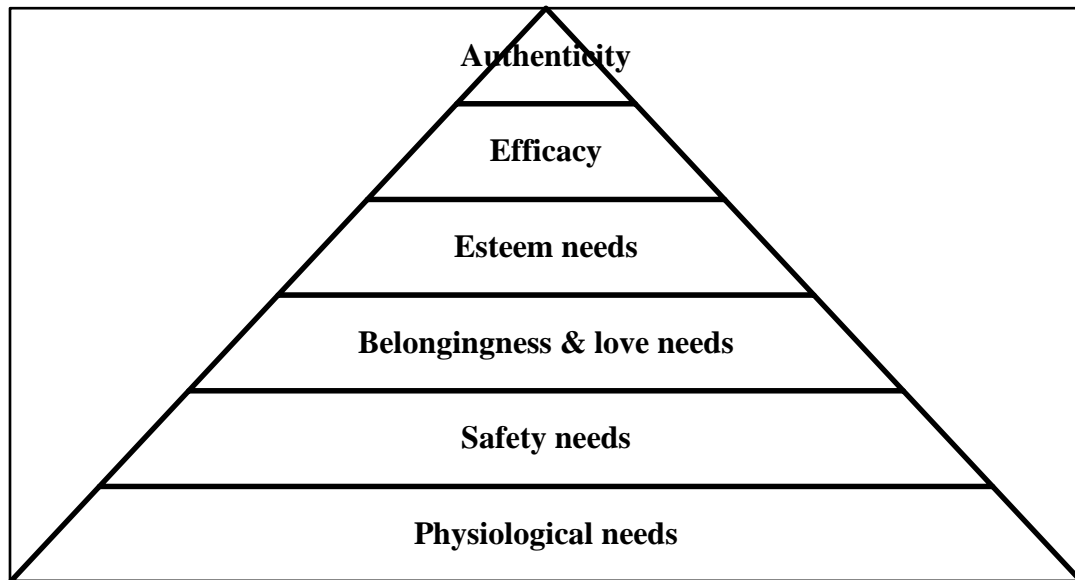
“...from the rejection of mediated images of beauty ideals, to the rejection of material consumption as a means of self-creation, to modifying consumption through the practices of ethical consumption, to battles for the mental space advertising and marketing messages monopolize” (p. 122).

Another active manifestation of anti-consumption was described by Funches et al. (2009) as a concept that extended beyond simple revenge (“getting even”), to the teaching of a lesson or to saving others from the same fate. As pointed out by Cherrier (2009), common to each of these anti-consumption manifestations was the expression of an aim “to withstand the force or affect of” consumer culture (Penaloza & Price, 2003, p. 123) at the level of the marketplace as a whole, and/or at the brand level (Fournier, 1998b).

A typology of anti-consumption was suggested by Cromie and Ewing (2009), and their concept of brand hegemony (see Figure 3) was of special interest to the researcher, as it shone light on an ongoing power struggle between corporations and conscious consumers, and the concept of power was inherent in the researcher’s overall theoretical understanding of deconsumption. They posited that a brand’s increasing dominance in the marketplace coincided with a drop in consumers’ perceived choice, actual choice, product knowledge, search confidence, and trust, making them feel disempowered (such as incompatibility of one operating system with another computer brand). So, brand hegemony was equated to power leading to consumer disempowerment. This idea was helpful in the exploration of control and power in the deconsumption process.

A thorough analysis of the literature on motivations for anti-consumption revealed that Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs informed much of the literature on anti-consumption motivation (Etzioni, 1998; Huneke, 2005). Zvestoski (2002a) devised a hierarchy parallel to Maslow’s, in that safety and psychological needs were still seen as lower order needs, but the variation was that efficacy and authenticity needs were added as higher order needs (clubbed together as self-actualization needs). The insight was that

consumption was ineffective at meeting consumers' authenticity needs, which would motivate them to anti-consume.



*Figure 3.* Anti-consumption as a variation on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Zavestoski (2002a).

Another anti-consumption motivation was simply to achieve certain objectives by using boycotts (Braunsberger & Buckler, 2011; Yuksel, 2013; Yuksel & Mryteza, 2009), defined by Friedman (1985) as “an attempt to change, or at least punish, a corporation's controversial behavior, representing an attempt by one or more parties to achieve certain objectives by urging individual consumers to refrain from making selected purchases in the marketplace” (p. 97). Finally, anti-consumption was linked to various political motivations, including patriotism, ethnocentrism, and animosity (Hoffmann & Müller, 2009). This idea was strengthened by Sandıkcı and Ekici's (2009) emergent concept of Politically Motivated Brand Rejection (PMBR). They defined it as “the refusal to purchase and/or use a brand on a permanent basis because of its perceived association to a particular political ideology that the consumer opposes.” (p. 208). They discussed

three distinct sets of political ideologies leading to rejection of certain brands – predatory globalization, chauvinistic nationalism, and religious fundamentalism. One important distinction between members of a resistance group and members of a PMBR was that consumers who engaged in the latter did not expect any change in marketing practices.

Lastly, like other concepts related to deconsumption, anti-consumption had seen its share of skeptics (i.e., Yuksel, 2013). It had been equated to underdog consumption (keeping the top dog down, and supporting the underdog) seen as more than just a “vote-against” behavior, but an active “vote-for” behavior (McGinnis & Gentry, 2009).

Albinsson et al. (2010), in a study of East Germans, uncovered consumers’ aversion to modern bureaucratic practices of throwawayism and hyperconsumption. This was resentment toward the economic juggernaut of capitalism, resulting in dialogism, and negative hyperconsumption. This study raised questions as to whether anti-consumption was just a superfluous idea compared to related established concepts such as ethical consumption, environmental consumption, and consumer resistance. This call for a reality-check of anti-consumption as an established concept worth exploring was supported by Chatzidakis and Lee (2012).

**Anti-commercial consumer rebellion (ACR).** Anti-commercial consumer rebellion is a concept closely related to consumer resistance. Conceived by Graham Austin et al. (2005), it is categorized as consumer’ formal rebellion in the marketplace, and defined as “consumers’ open and avowed resistance to institutionalized marketing practices” (p. 62). It is related to waste, inefficiency, sickness, and materialism (Dobscha, 1998), clutter (Rumbo, 2002), and emancipation and/or escape from the

domination of a mass society, and march toward progressive change as a reaction to social conformity (Kozinets, 2002).

**Voluntary simplicity (VS).** “Simplicity is hot. The ideal of “the simple life” has become a modern elixir for a diverse array of social and personal ills.” (Johnson, 2004, p. 527). Johnson’s claim was that a simple life has undeniable appeal, and was a precursor to focusing on what really mattered in life. The concept of voluntary simplicity has gained increasing media attention recently, and is possibly a reflection of the number of people now adopting this lifestyle (Ballantine & Creery, 2010; Maniates, 2002). Researchers estimate that 20-30% of individuals living in the United States (roughly 60 million) have voluntarily reduced their incomes and their consumption because of personal priorities and are happy with the change (Maniates, 2002; Schor, 1998a, 1998b). Academic research in this field also matches these recent trends, with a recent surge in inquiry.

Much like deconsumption, the idea that overconsumption, which is promoted by the dominant culture, leads to materialism, competitiveness, and destruction of the planet and human fulfillment lay at the heart of voluntary simplicity (Elgin, 1993). In order to take control of their lives, a retaliatory counterculture fuels the voluntary simplicity as an individual-consumer response, and as a societal-level movement. Participants of this movement sought a lifestyle that laid less emphasis on material abundance, and greater emphasis on quality of life. Such values, termed post-materialistic values, were said to be possessed by participants of what Inglehart (1977) called a silent revolution.

Although Inglehart fueled much of the research activity on voluntary simplicity and the silent revolution, it was Gregg who was acknowledged as the father of voluntary

simplicity. In an article originally published in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* in 1936, Gregg traced the lineage of simple living to Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tse, Moses, Mohammed, and to more recent saints and leaders such as St. Francis of Assisi, Hindu rishis, Hebrew prophets, Moslem Sufis, and even to Lenin and Gandhi (Zavestoski, 2002a). In present day, even Pope Francis had deplored consumerism, wherein “self-concern reigns supreme,” (Goodman, 2015), and called for deeper self-reflection and a bold cultural revolution against it. Gregg (1936) noted voluntary simplicity as “a way of life marked by a new balance between inner and outer growth.” (p. 36), and defined it as:

...singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions...the degree of simplification is a matter of each individual to settle for himself. (quoted in Elgin and Mitchell, 1977, p. 9).

Gregg believed that modern production, commerce, and consumerism had created an unfavorable climate for the understanding of the value, or the practice of simplicity. He posited that such mental cloudiness could be averted by a collection of individuals dedicated to the lifestyle of simplicity. In line with Gregg’s definition, Elgin (1981) believed voluntary simplicity involved both the inner and the outer condition, and defined it as “...singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life.” (p. 23). Leonard-Barton and Rogers (1980) generally agreed with Elgin’s idea of voluntary simplicity involving direct and conscious choice by defining it as “...the degree to which an individual consciously chooses a way of life intended to maximize the individual’s control over his/her own life.” (p. 28). Etzioni (1998) added more to this conceptual understanding by characterizing voluntary simplifiers (individuals who were part of the

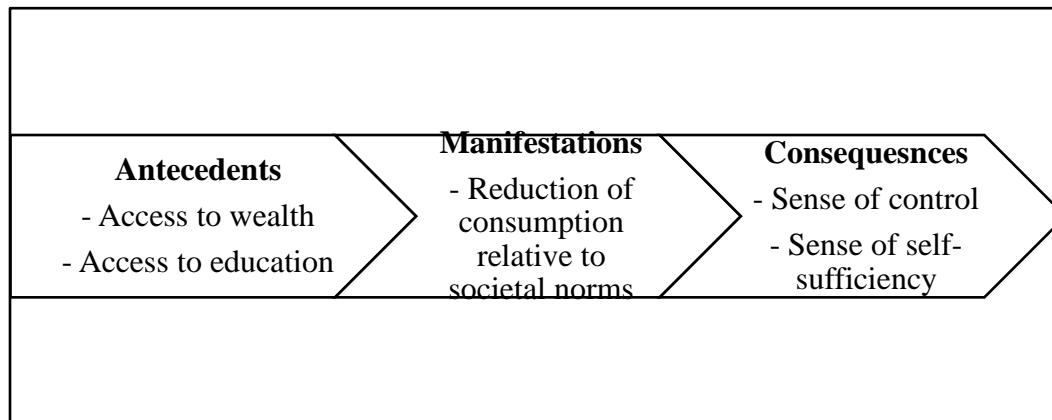


voluntary simplicity movement) as “individuals who opt out of free will – rather than by being coerced by poverty, government austerity programs, or being imprisoned – to limit expenditures on consumer goods and services, and to cultivate non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning.” (p. 620). These individuals (simplifiers) were segmented into two types – moderate form, and strong simplifiers (Doherty & Etzioni, 2003). The idea was that adopting voluntary simplicity as a lifestyle was a deliberate initiative that involved establishing distance from material possessions, and reorganizing one’s life priorities (Cherrier, 2009; Etzioni, 1998). Cowles and Crosby (1986) posited three dimensions of voluntary simplicity - material simplicity, self-determination, and ecological awareness. Miller and Gregan-Paxton (2006) noted that voluntary simplicity did not advocate giving up all material possessions, but instead promoted the notion of mindful consumption. It also promoted self-fulfillment (Grigsby, 2004), removal of clutter, and disposition (Ballantine & Creery, 2010). So, irrespective of voluntary consumption being seen as a lifestyle of minimal, ethical, and ecological consumption (i.e., Bekin et al., 2005; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Elgin, 2000; Etzioni, 2004; Zavestoski, 2002a), a downshifting (reduced income and a commensurate low level of consumption) (i.e., Carey, 1996; Schor, 1998a, 1998b), or as green consumption (i.e., Oates et al., 2008), there were a few ideas that permeated throughout the concept of voluntary simplicity as a common thread. These ideas included: (1) exercising of consumers’ own will, (2) a societal movement of individuals, (3) a maximization of control and power over daily lives, and (4) a minimization of dependence on institutions (Leonard-Barton, 1981).

More recent literature on voluntary simplicity had concentrated on the motivations and reasons behind the adoption of this lifestyle by simplifiers. These included concerns for the environment (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Huneke, 2005; Leonard-Barton, 1981), and dissatisfaction with high-stress lifestyles, a desire to shift to more satisfying ways to spend time, along with the desire for feelings of greater authenticity (Pierce, 1998). In a quantitative study of the association between voluntary simplicity and life-satisfaction, Boujbel and d'Astous (2012) reported a statistically significant positive relationship between the adoption of voluntary simplicity and a measure of satisfaction with life among consumers with limited financial resources. Kasser and Ryan (1993) reported that highly central financial success aspirations were associated with less self-actualization, less vitality, more depression, and more anxiety. Reporting on data collected from a series of five statewide surveys, Markowitz and Bowerman (2102) concluded that reducing consumption improved societal and individual well-being. Incidentally, they reported that the level of one's socio-economic status had no effect on this sense of well-being. Another study (Andrews & Withey, 1976) had reported no significant effect of simplicity on satisfaction with life-as-a-whole. This dichotomy of the role of socio-economic status on the results concerning voluntary simplicity and its outcomes was summed up well by Hubbard, who said that "It's pretty hard to tell what does bring happiness. Poverty an' wealth have both failed" (as cited in Wille, 2008, p. 22).

Moving forward from just the motivations of voluntary simplicity, Gopaldas (2008) presented a more holistic account of the antecedents (access to wealth and

education), manifestations (consumption reduction), and consequences (sense of control and self-sufficiency) of voluntary simplicity (see Figure 4).

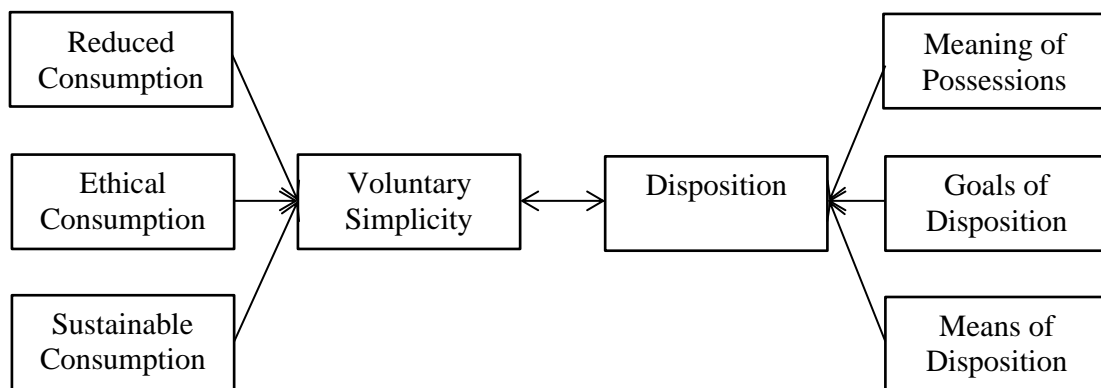


*Figure 4.* Antecedents, manifestations, and consequences of voluntary simplicity. Gopaldas (2008).

Sandlin and Walther (2009) described a process of stages that simplifiers went through. First, simplifiers crafted new identities, rejecting society’s normative subjectivities and creating more ethical ones. Second, they developed and reinforced their moral identities through participating in particular practices of self-regulation. Third, they struggled with trying to balance an ethic of non-judgment with feelings of being morally superior. Finally, simplifiers faced the difficulty of managing collective group identity because of their decentralized and stratified participant base, and highly individualistic moral codes.

Ballantine and Creery (2010) synthesized the literature on voluntary simplicity and disposition. They presented three key themes (see Figure 5) emerging from adopting the voluntary simplicity lifestyle - reducing consumption (limiting consumption through sharing, buying second-hand, and eliminating clutter), ethical consumption (considering environmental and social impacts of consumption, and buying fair-trade and/or

environmentally friendly products), and sustainable consumption (focusing on recycling and composting). They also presented three key themes from the disposition literature – the meaning of possessions (cherished or meaningful status ascribed to an item, and the public and private meanings of possessions), the goal of disposition activities (motives such as passing on a legacy through transferring ownership of an item to another person, or as a means of consumer self-identification or identity construction, and the means of disposition (disposition choices).



*Figure 5.* Key themes from the voluntary simplicity and disposition literature. Ballantine and Creery (2010).

Over time, voluntary simplicity evolved from a mere personal stress-reliever and a means to de-clutter into a more significant movement with a politically progressive ideology as its core. The emphasis shifted from the individual to the social and environmental benefits of living simply collectively. This idea was presented in the first sociological book of original research to explore contemporary interest in the simple life by Grigsby (2004). Grigsby saw the modern voluntary simplicity movement as a loosely-bound cultural movement focused on inner fulfillment, environmental sustainability, and social justice (Johnson, 2004). McGregor (2013), summing up the increasingly inclusive, broad, and philosophical understanding of researchers’ work on voluntary simplicity,

reframed simplicity of consumption as unfolding along a sustainable life path, perceiving consumers as pathfinders along a lifelong journey.

Having said that, the idea of voluntary simplicity also saw opposition over the years. It was dismissed as myth (Gopaldas, 2008), as conspicuous consumption (Adams, 1993; Brooks, 1996), as a phenomenon of the upper and middle class Caucasian, and as a movement that cried for authenticity (Zavestoski, 2002a), and lacked credibility (Ladwein, 2012). The conspicuous consumption of one item in lieu of another was not seen as simplicity by some researchers, but as the rise of materialism, and was hailed as the “triumph of stuff” (Twitchell, 1999). In other words, there were many attacks made on the idea of voluntary simplicity as a detractor from consumption. Doherty and Etzioni (2003), preempting such attacks on voluntary simplicity as mere rhetoric, called for the exploration of the feasibility of this rhetoric, and the reexamination of voluntary simplicity.

**Consumer resistance (CR).** In response to California’s recent water-shortage crisis, a group identifying its members as “water crusaders” took over the social media space in protest of online vigilante justice called “#droughtshaming” (Kirkpatrick & Moyer, 2015). This rebellion even hit the multinational giant Starbucks Corporation. After receiving the brunt of droughtshaming due to embarrassing reports that Starbucks was bottling and selling water from drought-ridden California, the company was forced to stop the production of Ethos water in the state (Moyer, 2015b). In April 2015, Memories Pizza in Walkerton, Indiana refused to cater a gay wedding (Moyer, 2015a). The embattled owners had to close their shop due to protests. The ratings of the pizza place on online websites (such as Yelp.com) plunged. A discussion of resistance is

incomplete without consideration of the 2010 British Petroleum (BP) oil spill. Five years after the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded and unleashed the largest marine oil spill in the nation's history, profound environmental and economic repercussions were still being experienced (Crandall, 2015). Five years on, BP was still feeling the wrath of organized groups. One such group was Greenpeace. Since its inception in 1971, Greenpeace had used peaceful protests and creative communication to “bear witness to environmental destruction in a peaceful, non-violent manner,” says Annie Leonard (Greenpeace USA Executive Director). So, corporations – big or small – may have had to face resistance as a direct result of their operations and strategy. This kind of rebellion is very confrontational, and very active.

Penaloza and Price (1993) defined consumer resistance as “The way individuals and groups practice a strategy of appropriation in response to structures of (marketing) domination” (p. 123). It was related to retaliation to marketing domination (Penaloza & Price, 1993), avoidance and downsizing (Fournier, 1998b), downshifting (Schor, 1998a, 1998b), and disgust (Hogg & Savolainen, 1997). It was also linked to alternative consumption, resistance to giving and receiving gifts, market-resistance, and retail resistance (Close & Zinkhan, 2009). The nature of consumer resistance was diagrammed by Fournier (1998b), as seen in Figure 6. According to Fournier, consumer resistance was manifested in varying degrees on a continuum – ranging from avoidance to active rebellion (characterized by behaviors such as dropping out and boycotting).

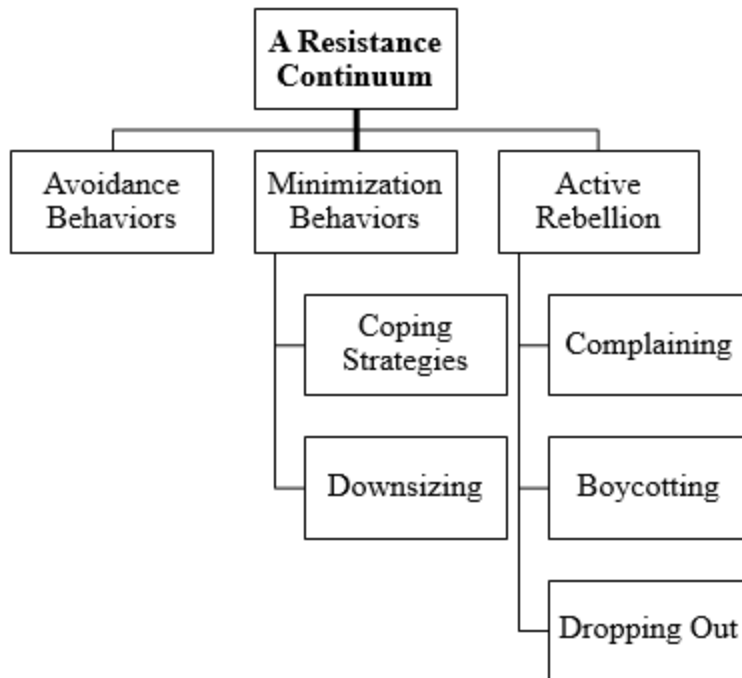


Figure 6. A resistance continuum. Fournier (1998b).

Moving this singular concept of consumers' resistance behaviors forward, Cherrier (2009) uncovered a dualistic and a co-constructive conceptualization of resistance through a culture jammer discnripourse. Culture jamming (sometimes called guerrilla communication), was defined as "a tactic used by anti-consumerist social movements to disrupt or subvert media culture and its mainstream cultural institutions, including (but not limited to) corporate advertising." Culture jamming was a less tangible and observable phenomenon than acts of consumption (Wilk, 1997). So, consumers exhibiting such behavior attempted to make the manifestation of the same much more tangible and observable (for instance, use of anti-brand bumper stickers). Banikema and Roux (2014) shone light on the antecedents to consumer resistance - psychological resistance, skepticism toward advertising (comprising cynicism, distrust, defensive suspicion, and alienation), self-confidence, and market metacognition (comprising materialism and need for uniqueness). Although the concept of consumer

resistance seemed similar to voluntary simplicity, there was an important distinction – whereas voluntary simplicity promoted support of amenable businesses (along with opposition to the non-amenable ones), consumer resistance manifested itself in opposition mainly (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012). So, consumer resistance to a multi-national corporation such as Starbucks did not have to include support to local cafes, for instance (Thompson & Arsel, 2004).

**Socially responsible consumption (SRC).** The concept of socially responsible consumption (SRC) entails making choices of consumption (and non-consumption), and weighing in the social and environmental impact of such choices on the consumers' part. Antil (1984) saw socially responsible consumption (SRC) as an important prerequisite to successful voluntary conservation programs, and called it “voluntary cooperation” (p. 19). Henion (1976), in effect, defined socially responsible consumption as consumer behaviors and purchasing decisions motivated by concern for the possible adverse consequences of consumption to environmental-resource problems. In the marketplace, where there were multiple players, there was an interesting link between some firm-level social responsibility variables, and consumer-level responsible consumption behaviors. In a scale-development study of Socially Responsible Purchase and Disposal (SRPD), Webb, Mohr, and Harris (2008) extracted three dimensions of SRC: (1) purchasing based on firms' corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance, (2) recycling, and (3) avoidance and use reduction of products based on their environmental impact. The first dimension above was critical to the following discussion: understanding the role of a firm's execution of CSR, its impact on consumers' perceptions, purchase intentions, purchase decisions, and thereby on the firm's financial performance and the consumers'



satisfaction was of paramount importance in understanding motivations that led to SRC behaviors.

*The link between corporate social responsibility and socially responsible consumption.* Over the last five decades, the outlook of firms towards CSR has changed into being more accepting and positive. Literature reveals that in the 1960s and early 1970s, CSR was perceived as unnecessary. However, today, businesses recognize the importance of safeguarding private interests of its shareholders, as well as the interests of its multiple stakeholders in the business environment (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Indeed, CSR had come a long way from being considered unnecessary (Friedman, 1970) to being a strategic investment of companies showing interest in long-term viability (Amato & Amato, 2007). Proactive environmental management practices had become an integral part of the business operations of most international corporations (Rondinelli & Berry, 2000) by present day. As was evident in McAlister, Ferrell, and Ferrell's (2005) definition, today, CSR was a given, a necessity, an expectation: "...the adoption by a business of a strategic focus for fulfilling the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities expected of it by its stakeholders" (p. 4). Antil and Bennett (1979) claimed that corporate social responsibility (CSR) was positively related to socially responsible consumption. Trends showed that SRC was on the rise, and that companies were increasingly responding to the desires and, in some cases, demands of socially and environmentally responsible consumers (Webb et al., 2008). This link between a firm's CSR and consumers' SRC behaviors required a little more explanation, as it was not a direct link.

The link between a company's CSR activities/strategies and its financial performance, though, was more direct, and had been the subject of a lively debate since the 1960s (Cochran & Wood, 1984). CSR and corporate philanthropy had been linked to greater investor returns (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Moskowitz, 1972), competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2002), and better business performance (Maignan & Ferrell, 2001). Although CSR entailed short-term costs, it paid off in the long run (Davis, 1977; Steiner, 1980). In a review of 13 empirical studies, Ullmann (1985) categorized eight as reporting a positive relationship between CSR and financial performance. In another review, Pava and Krausz (1996) categorized 12 of 21 studies as reporting such positive relationships. Since the conduct of these reviews, several studies have also reported a positive relationship between CSR and financial performance: Dugar, Engelland, and Moore (2010), Simpson and Kohers (2002), and Waddock and Graves (1997). Recent studies have shown that consumers will pay a premium for ethically produced goods and punish (by demanding a lower price) companies that are perceived as not being ethical or responsible (Trudel & Cotte, 2009). Also, investors consider less socially responsible firms to be riskier investments because they see management skills at the firm as low (Alexander & Buchholz, 1978). It was clear, then, that the connection between doing good and doing well in business was implied (Adam & Shavit, 2008). Not only was CSR linked to better financial performance, but it was also linked to greater customer satisfaction and loyalty. Studies had reported a positive relationship between CSR and customer loyalty (Maignan & Ferrell, 2001; Pirsch, Gupta, & Grau, 2007), customer relations and acceptability by the public (Khan & Atkinson, 1987), and customer satisfaction (Dugar et al., 2010; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006; Sagar & Singla, 2004).

Companies were increasingly investing in CSR to create awareness, positive perceptions, purchase intentions, and demand for their products and services. This demand led to purchases that could be categorized as socially responsible, which, in turn, led to the companies' better financial performance and greater customer satisfaction and loyalty. This motivated the companies, in turn, to continue their CSR efforts. Figure 7 is a representation of this cycle of motivation for CSR and SRC. CSR and SRC feed on each other in this cycle of doing good.

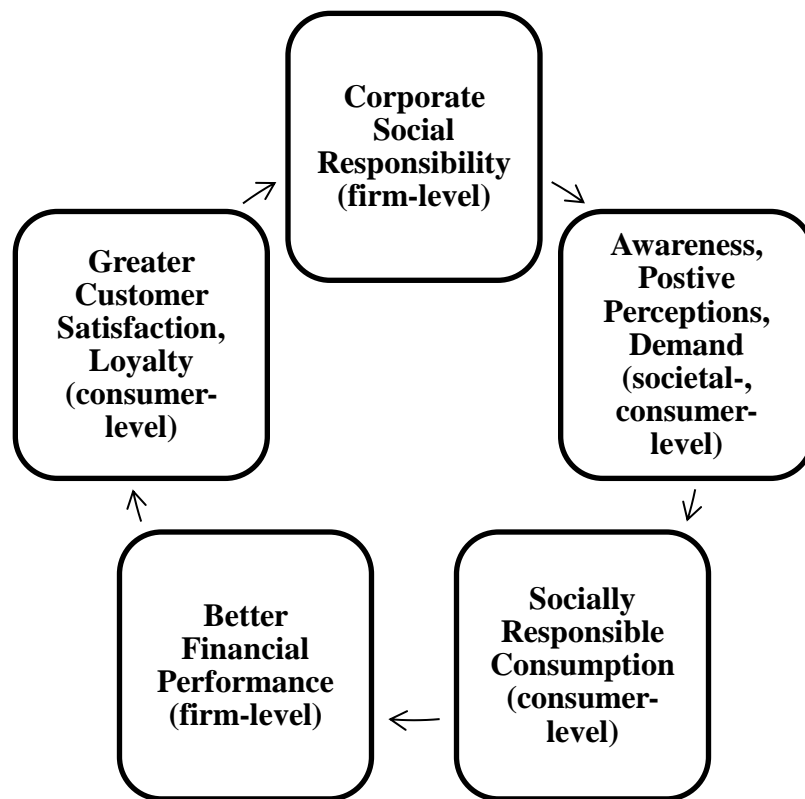


Figure 7. A cycle of motivation for CSR and SRC.

**Demarketing (DM).** In some cases, the motivation for deconsumption on the consumers' part is initiated by the company/organization (or in some cases, the government) itself. This idea, called demarketing, was first proposed by Kotler and Levy (1971), and defined as "that aspect of marketing that deals with discouraging customers

in general or a certain class of customers in particular on either a temporary or permanent basis” (p. 75). The AMA offered two definitions of demarketing – an economic definition (“A term used to describe a marketing strategy when the objective is to decrease the consumption of a product”), and a social marketing definition (“The process of reducing the demand for products or services believed to be harmful to society”). Cigarettes, drug use, and energy use would be some product categories that could be linked to demarketing.

Companies were motivated to demarket for economic reasons, for demarketing lowered expected sales *ex ante*, but improved product quality image *ex post*, as consumers attributed good sales to superior quality and lackluster sales to insufficient marketing (Miklós-Thal & Zhang, 2013). Companies also demarketed to reduce demand in times of a shortage in supply (Moore, 2005). Also, minority consumers may have used consumption or deconsumption to manifest their social identity, beliefs, and goals as minorities, demonstrating their position in relation to the majority group and the government that represented it (Grinstein & Nisan, 2009). The motivation of the government to engage in demarketing efforts, on the other hand, was targeted toward social harm reduction, advocating one behavior over another through public policy initiatives (Moore, 2005) such as alternative allocation (Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Piacentini & Banister, 2009), manifested through social marketing initiatives like curtailing advertising, reducing promotions and sales, increasing prices, increasing effort to possess and use, reducing quality, reducing distribution channels, and eliminating products.

The outcomes of demarketing could be linked to consumers' attitude formation toward the industry and change in attitude toward the product, intention to deconsume (as was evident in a study on tobacco use and demarketing's effect) (Shiu et al., 2009).

Some researchers had questioned the effectiveness of demarketing (i.e., Grinstein & Nisan, 2009). McLean et al. (2002) considered demarketing as a coping strategy by non-participation, and posited that demarketing techniques might only be efficient when targeted at a relatively passive clientele, wherein meek and otherwise disadvantaged groups of society were manipulated and effectively disenfranchised.

As the preceding sections of the review of the literature on deconsumption and its related concepts suggested, the differentiations between said concepts seemed to hinge on internal and external factors manifest through consumers' motivations (as explained in Table 2). These motivations, one would surmise, could be categorized with the help of a process theory of motivation involving dimensions of locus, controllability, stability, and intentionality. Also, the changing relationship with deconsumed products/services/brands could be explained through the lens of consumers' power and empowerment dimensions related to formation of old self-identities, conflicts faced, resolutions reached, and formation of new self-identities enabled by the deconsumption processes. A review of these theoretical concepts (attribution theory of motivation and deconsumption seen through the lenses of theories of action and use) leading to the tie between deconsumption and attribution theory of motivation, and then, leading to the study's overall theoretical facets is presented in the remainder of this review of literature.

**Attribution theory.** Attribution theory, which has been applied in many contexts (e.g., Graham, 1991; Martinko, Douglas, & Harvey, 2006), forms the basis of the present

study's theoretical position. Specifically, attribution theory of motivation based on the consequences of causal explanations (Anderson & Weiner, 1992; Weiner, 1985, 1986) of both voluntary and involuntary deconsumption is used. The focus of inquiry is on both the process of reaching the attribution, as well as on the psychological implications and consequences of the deconsumption behavior. This theory recognizes (Gurevich et al., 2012) that all causes of deconsumption outcomes can be characterized according to three basic properties – locus, controllability, and stability. A fourth dimension of intentionality (intentional-non-intentional) (Kelley & Michela, 1980) was added to the exploration of deconsumption. Also, using an application from the field of organizational empowerment (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, p. 14-15), the researcher identified further explanations for deconsumption behavior as an effort to align desired and real self-identities of consumers (in line with theories of action and use respectively). Deconsumption behavior is closely connected to identity and empowerment issues of alignment, non-alignment, and conflict. Using the theoretical ideas above, the present study was based on overall theoretical facets with themes of control and power permeating assessment of deconsumption behavior. The researcher proposed that alignment between desired and real self-identities among deconsumers could be achieved under the purview of the four tenets of attribution theory of motivation (locus, stability, controllability, and intentionality). These theoretical facets helped guide the proposed exploration and scale development of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption.

Heider (1958) was considered to be the father of attribution theory, which involved attempts to explain how ordinary people (actors) explained observable behavior by making internal or external attributions (Bem, 1972; Harvey, Ickes, & Kidd, 1976;

Heider, 1958; Jones, 1972; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973; Shaver, 1975). It was, up until the late 1970s, considered a general perspective of problem orientation rather than a theory (Buss, 1978). It was considered a study of lay inference or naïve psychology, and very underdeveloped to be considered as a theory (Calder, 1977b). It remained a loose term explaining actors' use of information leading to causal inferences as to why people behaved the way they did (Kelley, 1973), indicating a simplistic process of inference-making based on occurrences of co-varying events across individuals, situations, and over time (AMA). The conceptual dilemmas hindering the growth of this idea as a theory were based on major semantic disagreements. One of these was Kruglanski's (1975) proposal to replace the internal-external partition with endogenous-exogenous attributions (based on distinction between means and ends). This proposal was criticized as lacking in scientific explanation, practical application, and labeled as a misrepresentation of theory (Calder, 1977a, 1977b; Zuckerman, 1977). Calder (1977a), in support of the internal-external cause explanation, maintained that internal (causes attributed to individuals) and external (causes attributed to non-individual situational factors) attributions were labels based on a discounting process derived from the discounting principle, and it was clear that one was seen as a cause when the other attribution was ruled out.

The differentiation between means and ends was followed by the realization that the terms cause and reason were not sufficiently distinguished (Buss, 1978), because the actor(s) could employ either endogenous and/or exogenous reasons to explain their behaviors, whereas the observer(s) could employ either the reasons of the actor(s), their own reasons, or their own internal and/or external causes or interpretations (Buss, 1978).

This dilemma of disagreement on observation of causes and reasons was a major setback for the development of the theory as useful, as evidence indicated that actors and observers were, indeed, adroit at making distinctive causal versus reason statements (Harvey & Weary, 1984). The concept, hence, remained fragmented and obfuscating, inviting calls for theoretical completion (Calder, 1977a), and theoretical integration (Harvey & Weary, 1984). Another reason it never took a dominant position well into the late 1980s was attributed to lack of research attention (Scott, 1985).

These setbacks meant that attribution theory was not perceived as a monolithic theory, but an evolution of theories forming developments in the area of causal attribution (Harvey & Weary, 1984). In a review explaining the paradigms of attribution theory, Mizerski, Golden, and Kernan (1979) noted a very important trend in the data used for making attributions – there had been a shift in focus on how attributions were made. Attributions were made based on the observer’s perception (person-perception) (i.e., Heider, 1944, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965), the actor’s perception (self-perception) (Bem, 1965, 1967, 1972), and object-perception (general perception) (Kelley, 1967, 1971, 1973). This shift in focus from an implicit perception of others’ actions or knowledge of others’ actions, to an evaluation of own behavior, to explicit reflection of object and generalized perception of actors’ behavior informed the study (which made use of explicit, objective perception), and led to a turnaround for attribution theory. By the 1990s, it started commanding major influence in social psychological research (Bagby, Parker, & Bury, 1990). What started as ideas (i.e., Heider, 1958), conceptual critiques (i.e., Buss, 1978; Calder, 1977a, 1977b; Zuckerman, 1977), and reviews (i.e., Scott, 1985; Graham, 1991; Harvey & Weary, 1984; Kelley & Michela, 1980), developed into more



rigorous and meaningful inquiry of attribution based on empirical research using citation analyses (i.e., Bagby et al., 1990), full-factorial experiments (i.e., Laczniak et al., 2001), surveys (i.e., Orth et al., 2012), regression analyses (i.e., Gurevich et al., 2012), and essays lending conceptual clarity through reflection (i.e., Martinko, Harvey, & Dasborough, 2011; Weiner, 2000).

Over time, attribution theory started to be seen as a practical theory applicable to issues of psychology such as emotional reactions to success and failure, perceived personal competence, persistence in the face of non-attainment of goals, evaluations of others (Graham, 1991), and measurement of attributional processes in social psychology (Martinko et al., 2006). The negative criticisms of early 1980s gave way to widespread application, including areas of research as business-centric and organizationally relevant as leadership and organizational sciences (Martinko et al., 2011), economic decision-making (e.g., Gurevich et al., 2012), emotional attachment to brands (Orth et al., 2012), and attribution styles in business leadership (e.g., Martinko et al., 2007). Weiner (2006) branded attribution theory as a theory with endurance, exhibiting greater longevity as compared to its theoretical peers (such as dissonance and social comparison). It was hailed as a vital, rich, and fertile theory.

*Application of attribution theory of motivation to deconsumption.* In line with Kelley and Michela's (1980) general model of attribution theory, which allowed for distinctions between attribution theories (theories concerning antecedents such as information, beliefs, and motivation, and attributions such as perceived causes) and attributional theories (theories concerning consequences of attributions such as behavior, affect, and expectancy), the proposed study's use of attribution theory of motivation was

based on the consequences of causal explanations (Anderson & Weiner, 1992; Weiner, 1985, 1986) of deconsumption. For instance, Sam, a study participant, might have attributed his voluntary deconsumption behavior to his ability and will to do so, and hence, experienced pride and was motivated to let the voluntary deconsumption behavior continue. At the same time, he might have attributed involuntary deconsumption behaviors to uncontrollable external factors, and hence, experienced discomfort and wished the involuntary deconsumption behavior would discontinue. The focus of inquiry, hence, was on both the process of reaching the attribution (i.e., deciding that ability is the cause for the voluntary deconsumption behavior), as well as on the psychological implications and consequences (e.g., emotions, perceptions, decisions and behavior) of the deconsumption behavior. This focus was borrowed from Weiner's (1985, 1986) attribution theory of motivation and emotion, and recognized (Gurevich et al., 2012) that all causes of deconsumption outcomes could be characterized according to three basic properties – locus, controllability, and stability. A fourth dimension of intentionality (intentional-non-intentional) (Kelley & Michela, 1980) was added. This focus on the process of deconsumption and its consequences and causes seamlessly complemented theoretical explanations of the process and meaning of deconsumption. Table 3 is an anticipatory representation of an attribution theory of motivation applied to the various concepts related to deconsumption, with possible levels of locus, controllability, stability, and intentionality associated with each concept, generated from the literature review preceding this section. For example, the causal explanations from study participants for voluntary deconsumption behaviors would have an internal locus of control, and would be attributed as being highly controllable, more stable, and highly

intentional. On the other hand, causal explanations from study participants for involuntary deconsumption behaviors would have an external locus of control, and would be attributed as being highly uncontrollable, less stable, and highly unintentional. It was the researcher's intent that these insights into deconsumption from the perspective of an attribution theory of motivation would promote understanding of the construct, and would help in the scale development process.

Table 3

*Bringing Deconsumption and Attribution Theory of Motivation Together*

Concept	Locus (Internal/External/Mixed)	Controllability (High/Low)	Stability (High/Low)	Intentionality (High/Low)	Level of Analysis (Individual/Collective)
Deconsumption (DC)	Voluntary DC internal, involuntary DC external	Voluntary DC highly controllable, involuntary DC highly uncontrollable	Voluntary DC more stable than involuntary DC	Voluntary DC highly intentional, involuntary DC highly unintentional	Individual/private
Anti- Consumption (AC)	Internal	High	Low (disappears with the end of the social movement)	High	Individual/private
Anti- Commercial Consumer Rebellion (ACR)	Internal	High	Low (disappears with the end of the social movement)	High	Collective/communal/ public
Voluntary Simplicity (VS)	Internal	High	High	High	Individual/household/ collective
Consumer Resistance (CR)	External	Low	Low (disappears with the end of the social movement)	High	Collective/communal/ public-level

Concept	Locus (Internal/External/Mixed)	Controllability (High/Low)	Stability (High/Low)	Intentionality (High/Low)	Level of Analysis (Individual/Collective)
Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC)	Internal	High	High	High	Company/organization/ government/public policy
Demarketing (DM)	External	Low	Low	Low	Company/organization/ government/individual/ societal

*Note.* The researcher was mindful of causal explanations of deconsumption behavior; and looked for explanations for outcomes in ability, effort, the nature of the task, and luck (as posited by Graham, 1991, p. 8; Martinko et al., 2011; Weiner, 2006, p. 12).

*Attribution theory, power, and empowerment.* A vital aspect of the attribution theory of motivation applicable to consumer behavior in general and to deconsumption in particular is control over one's self-identity. An important assumption of attribution theory is that people interpreted their environments in such ways as to maintain a positive self-image. The maintenance of positive self-image comes from control and power struggles. Since an individual's perceived value judgments are both intrinsic and extrinsic (Zeithaml, 1988), they lend interesting dimensions to the idea of desire for control as a key motivating force behind attributional activity, some of which are (Harvey & Weary, 1984): self-ascriptions for success and failure (Graham, 1991), attitude-change and persuasion (Wood & Eagly, 1981), pity, guilt, and anger (Weiner et al., 1982), commitment (Mayer et al., 1980), helping behavior (Meyer & Mulherin, 1980; Weiner, 1980), liking for other (Wachtler & Counselman, 1981), equity behavior (Greenberg, 1980), and frustration, blame, and aggression (Kulik & Brown, 1979). Indeed, the researcher did encounter these dimensions in his exploration of deconsumption.

Pittman and Pittman (1980) found evidence consistent with the hypothesis that attributions are instigated by control motivation, and that attributional activity increases following an experience with lack of control (Harvey & Weary, 1984). Indeed, individuals choosing voluntary simplicity are trying to maximize their control over their daily lives and minimize dependence on institutions (Leonard-Barton, 1981). Market forces (such as brand hegemony) could cause a strong sense of disempowerment. There is a constant power-struggle between organizations and consumers. Various elements of marketing, such as brand imagery, stereotypical user imagery, corporate communications and advertising, and product features (Dalli, Gistri, & Romani, 2005), as well as concepts

like accentuation and social comparison (Hogg & Abrams, 1998) invoke non-alignment of self-image with the desired image, and hence, lead to an undesired self, provoking strong expressions of negative feelings and disgust, aversion, avoidance, and abandonment, and provide “triggers for physical revulsion” (Wilk, 1997, p. 187). Ogilvie (1987) stated that a person’s undesirable state was of particular relevance because anti-consumption-as-rejection (and indeed, deconsumption in general) was about what a person was afraid of becoming, and involved a strong motivational drive to protect self-identity and self-esteem. These ideas were relevant to an inquiry into motivations for deconsumption behavior. Two theories – theory of action and theory of use – helped explain the gap between what organizations/consumers said they wanted/would do (theory of action as desired self-image) and what they actually got/did (theory of use manifest as observable behavior). This, most simply put, was a gap between the ideal and the real, a gap between desired self-identity and real self-identity. Using an application from the field of organizational empowerment (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, pp. 14-15), the researcher identified explanations to deconsumption behavior as an effort to align desired and real self-identities of the study participants (in line with theories of action and use respectively). Recalibration of deconsumption behavior helped deal with the aforementioned negative imagery and undesirable self-identity (a power- and empowerment-struggle), and was closely connected to alignment, non-alignment, and conflict (see Figure 8).

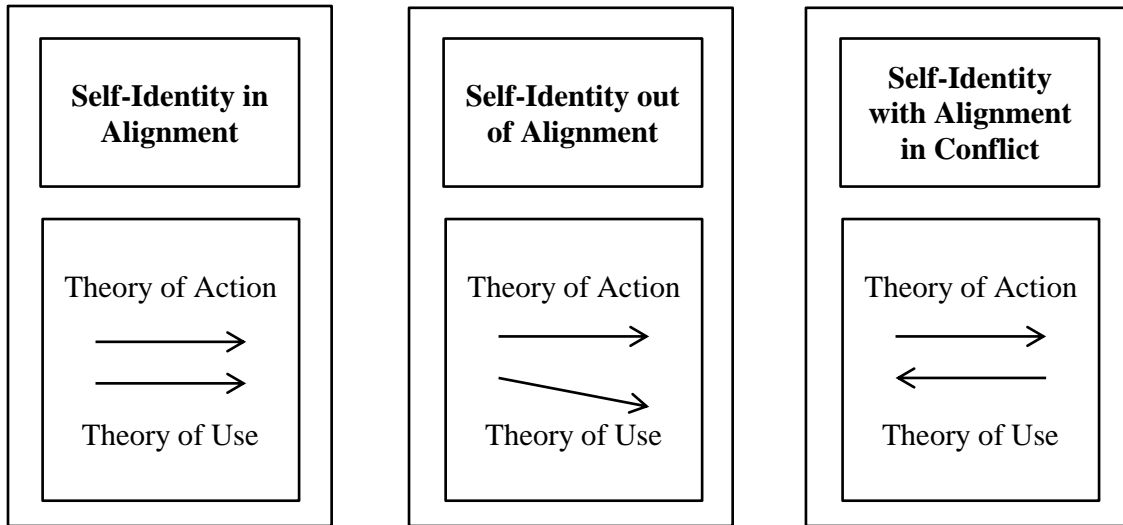


Figure 8. Deconsumption behavior from a power/empowerment lens.

**Theoretical facets of deconsumption.** The synthesis of the literature related to deconsumption, attribution theory, and theories of action and use preceding this section informed the research questions that the current study addressed. The review of the literature helped explore how deconsumption came about, and what the consequences of deconsumption were. The theoretical facets of deconsumption used in the proposed study (shown in Figure 9) depicted themes of control and power permeating assessment of deconsumption behavior so that alignment between desired and real self-identities among consumers could be achieved under the purview of the four tenets of attribution theory of motivation (locus, stability, controllability, and intentionality). These theoretical facets overlaid the construct of deconsumption (voluntary deconsumption and involuntary deconsumption), and helped guide the exploration and scale development of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption.



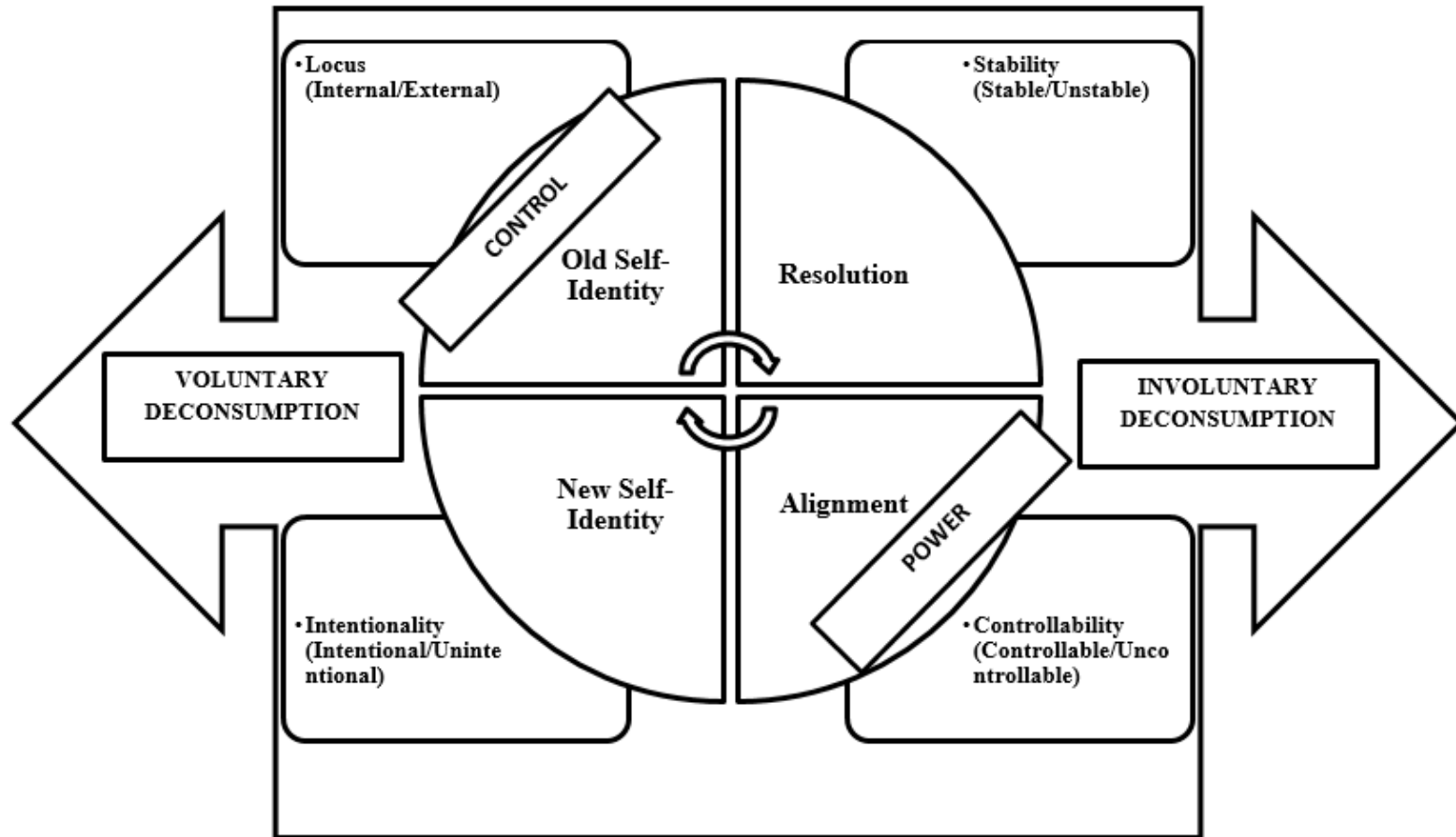


Figure 9. Theoretical facets of deconsumption: Deconsumption motivations: An application of attribution theory of motivation, theory of action, and theory of use on deconsumption.

**Baby boomers and (de)consumption.** As explained in the bracketing section of the introduction (page 5), an interest in the baby boomer population inspired the genesis of the present study to a large part. As the preceding literature review suggested, there was a need for the exploration of deconsumption, and as the following section would explain, there was a need to execute such an exploration among the baby boomer population.

*Proportional growth in the baby boomer population in USA.* Traditionally, many important marketing issues have dealt with the study of change in marketing variables based on an analysis of repeated measurements of entities (demographics, consumers, salespeople, companies, brands, etc.) observed at different points in time or at different levels of an independent variable (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 2000). The growth analysis of demographic variables such as population of a certain target demographic was important, especially in the context of the United States, as it is fast becoming an older nation as the proportion of older citizens is growing. By the year 2030 and beyond, the proportional representation of the population above 65 years of age will grow even more, due to decreasing birth rates, increasing life spans, and immigration (Faleris, 2012; US Census Bureau, 2011). An understanding of this demographic shift, especially from a consumer behavior standpoint, was important to academics and to practitioners in the fields of marketing and consumer behavior.

An integrated latent growth curve developmental model of exploration of national county-level data from the AGing Integrated Database (AGID), based on population characteristics from the Census Bureau Population (Administration on Aging, 2014), of the population of people above the age of 60 years in the 50 states across five time points

(years 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, and 2012) was used to generate a growth plot (Figure 10). This plot revealed that the baby boomer population was not just on a linear growth trajectory, it was on a growth trajectory that was possibly quadratic. While many of the counties fell in the low-growth and medium-growth bands, some demonstrated dramatic growth, especially counties in California and Texas. This was especially true for the Hispanic population (Figure 11).

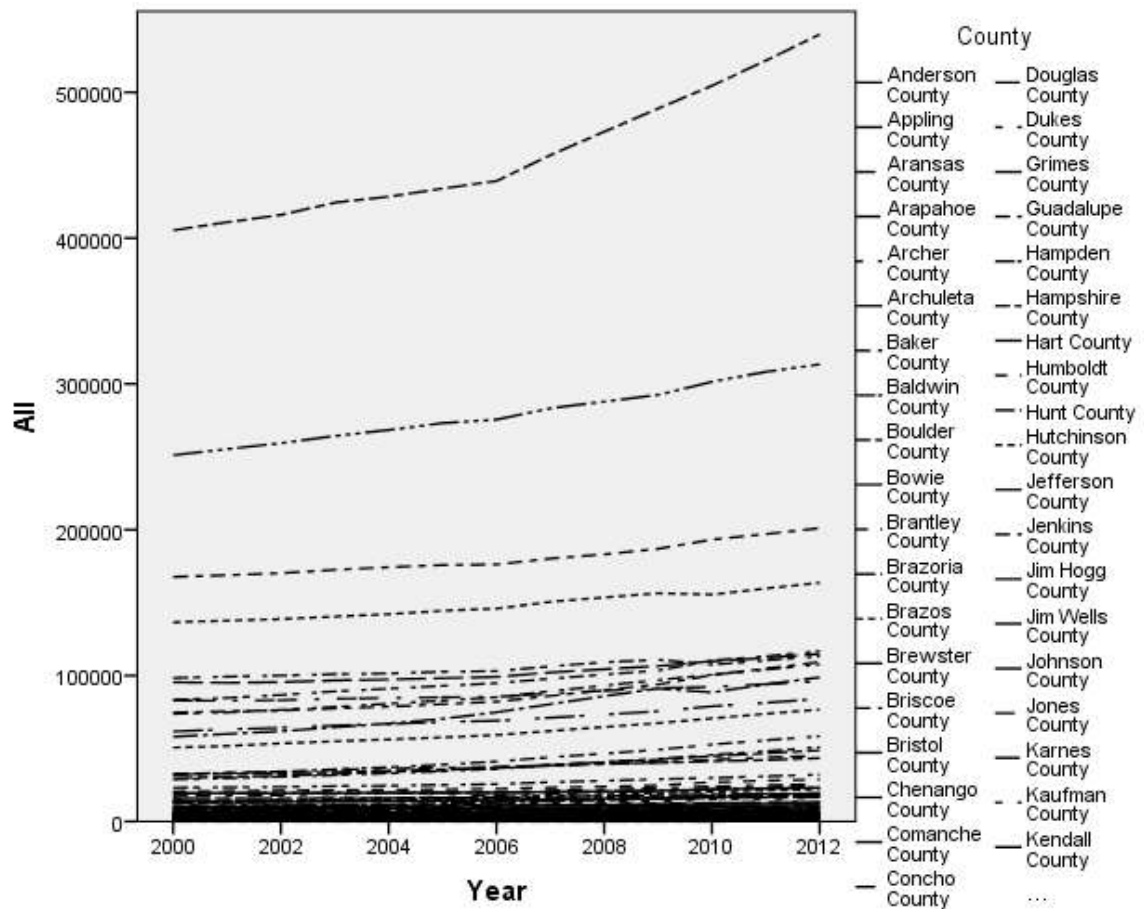


Figure 10. Spaghetti plot of population growth (people above 60 years of age) – 2000-2012.

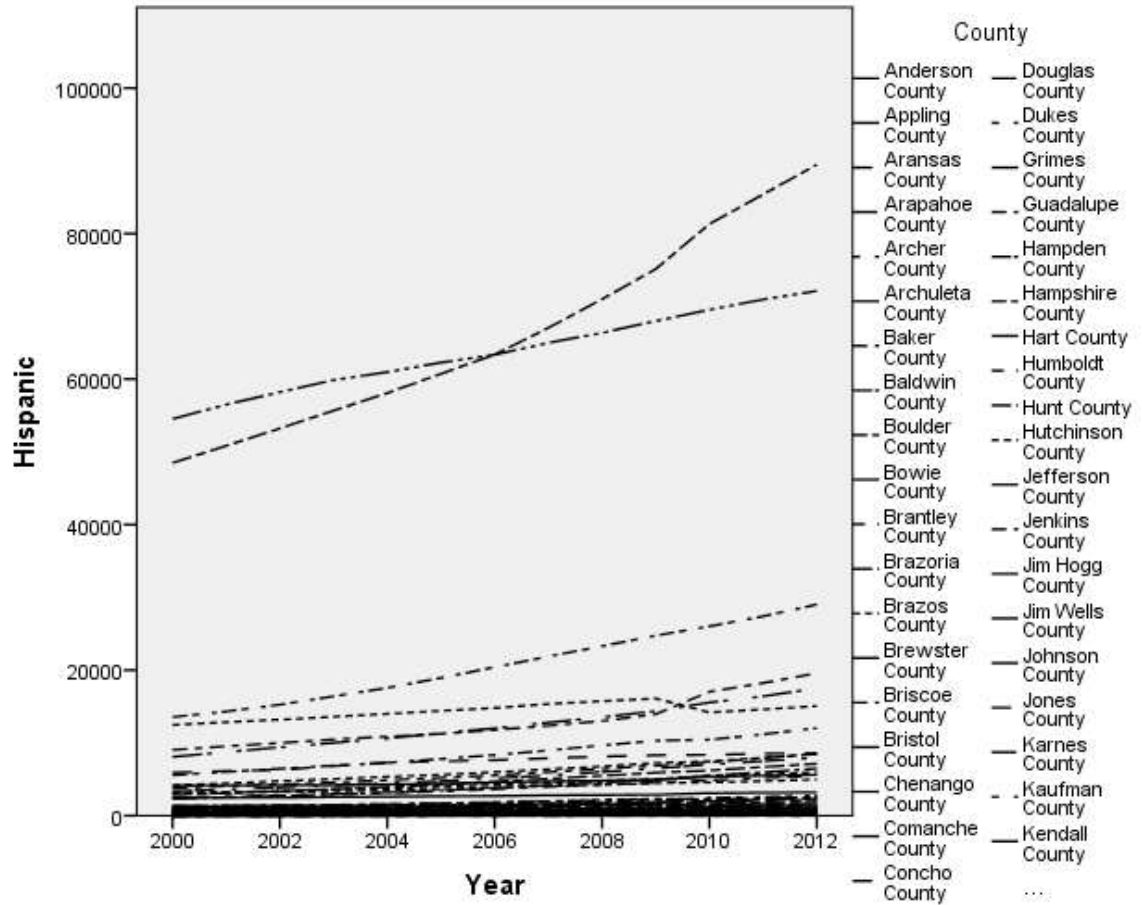


Figure 11. Spaghetti plot of Hispanic population growth (people above 60 years of age) – 2000-2012.

There was linear growth overall, and quadratic growth in the Hispanic baby boomer population in the United States between the years 2000 and 2012. These findings have implications for the study and for the importance of deconsumption among the baby boomer population. Understanding the deconsumption stories of people in the United States (especially older Hispanics) should be a priority for marketing managers and the industry alike. This might be especially true in certain states such as Florida, California, Arizona, and Texas, where the baby boomer population has grown the most, and where the Hispanic population is higher.

An important aspect to be considered along with the proportional growth in the baby boomer population is that the baby boomer population is not monolithic. Fisher (1993) proposed characteristics that defined stages demarcated by age (Figure 12). This view was further supported by Fleming (2015), who said that the baby boomer group was not a monolithic group, but consisted of two kinds of boomers – “leading-edge” boomers (who were born between 1946 and 1955 and came of age during the tumultuous Vietnam War and Civil Rights eras), and “trailing-edge” boomers (who were born between 1956 and 1964 and came of age after Vietnam and the Watergate scandal). Gender difference was another way in which the baby boomer population exhibited non-monolithic characteristics. Boomer women are in a position of economic strength. By 2030, 54% of the 78 million American boomers will be women, who, today, make purchase decisions worth \$20 trillion annually, and control 60% of the America’s wealth (Faleris, 2012). Keeping in perspective that boomers are not monolithic, one could understand some of the disparities in baby boomers’ consumption and deconsumption behaviors (as seen in the section that follows).

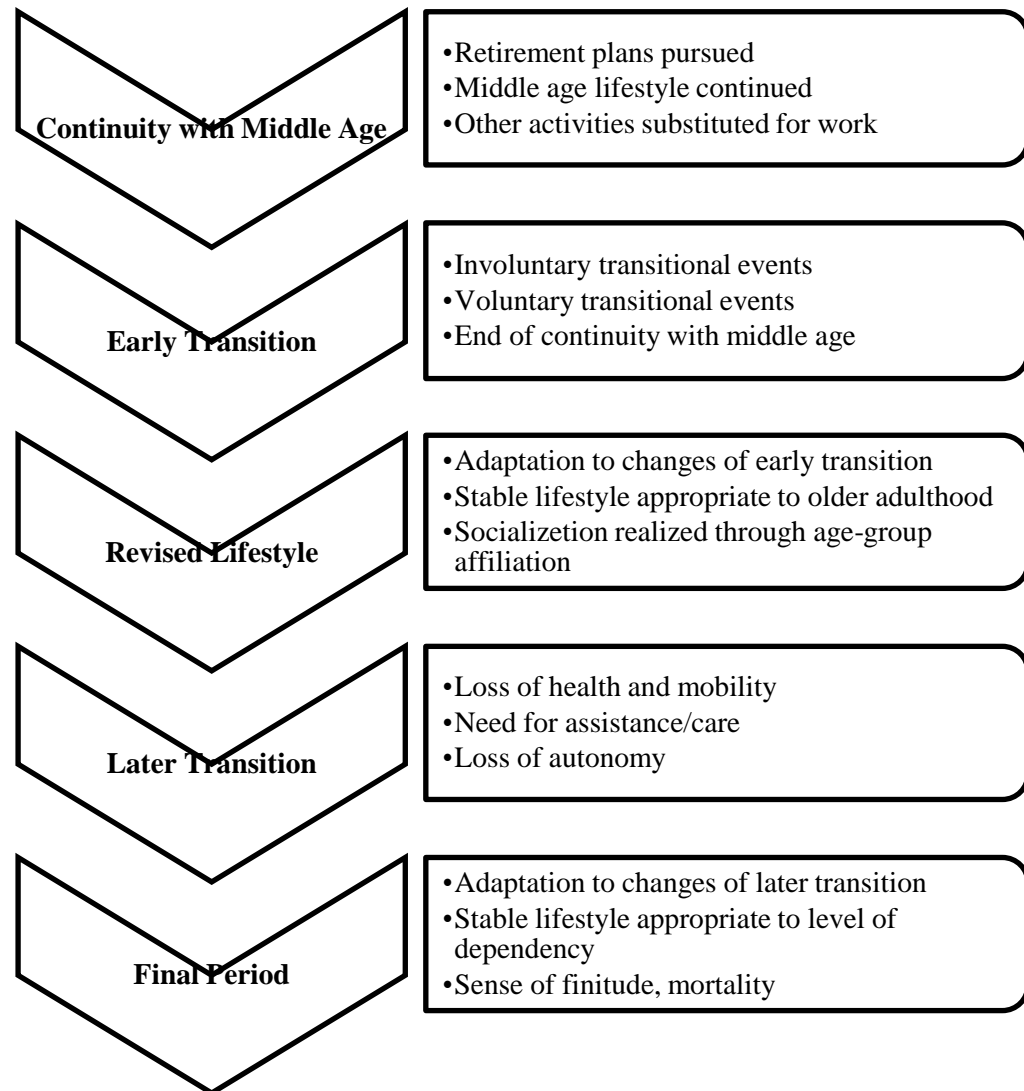


Figure 12. Characteristics of the five periods of older adulthood. Fisher (1993).

*An overview of baby boomers' consumption.* Global personal consumption expenditures (amount spent on goods and services at the household level) topped \$24 trillion in 2005 (Sylt, 2005), up from \$4.8 trillion (in 1995 dollars) in 1960 (The Worldwatch Institute, 2004). This growth in consumption was becoming evident in both the developing and developed parts of the world. For example, between 1980 and 2005, China used more cement per capita as its citizens increasingly could afford and demanded better housing (US Census Bureau, 2011). Countries such as India had fast

growing economies. Clocked at a growth rate of 8.3% in 2010, India is fast on its way to becoming a large and globally important consumer economy. The Indian middle class was estimated to be 250 million people in 2007, and will reach 600 million by 2030 (Farrell & Beinhocker, 2007). While developing economies around the world were seeing accelerated growth in consumption, the developed economies of the western world had been in a cycle of excessive consumption for a few decades now. Books such as *'The Story of Stuff'* (Leonard & Conrad, 2011) were replete with stories, facts, and figures about the culture of overconsumption and consumerism in the United States. An average American had 6.5 credit cards (Hobson, 2009). In 2004-2005, Americans spent two-thirds of their \$11 trillion economy on consumer goods, with more paid for shoes, jewelry, and watches (\$100 billion combined) than for higher education (\$99 billion) (De Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2005). However, when it came to the boomer population especially, consumption in the USA was not about extreme consumerism (Phillipson et al., 2001). Just as the population of baby boomers was not monolithic, their consumption was not monolithic either. There were certain dichotomies (of overconsumption and thrift) associated with consumption patterns among baby boomers. There were segments of the boomer population that were atypical when it came to spending and consumption. There was a segment of the boomer generation that was edging into retirement (trailing-edge boomers). They had low incomes (the median income for people age 65 and older was \$27,707 for males and \$15,362 for females in 2011), and relied heavily on social security (86% of people age 65 and older received monthly payments), and this would be the first generation that overwhelmingly would not receive some sort of guaranteed benefit from employers. Also, they were likely to stay in a particular location (most

people retired where they spent the final years of their career – between 2011 and 2012, only 3% of people age 65 and older moved), and had longer retirements (the average life expectancy for people turning age 65 was an additional 20.4 years for women and 17.8 years for men, women significantly outliving men) (Brandon, 2013). They would act to mitigate changes in their lives (Clayton, 2012). In particular, the importance of identity would drive consumption patterns, social norms would shape consumer behavior, companies would adopt stances to de-market (by creating barriers), and there would be a significant attitude-behavior gap with respect to tempering the real-world impacts of observed deconsumption attitudes of boomers (Bowerman & Markowitz, 2012). This population segment faced a decline in quality of life. Millions of elderly Americans in the trailing-edge boomer segment worked “off the books,” contributing to the younger generation roughly two dollars for every one they got from them (Doherty & Etzioni, 2003, p. 3). The sheer size of this population encouraged the exploration of involuntary deconsumption research.

On the other hand, there was a segment (leading-edge boomers) that was opening up its wallet, with increasing discretionary spending across the board, and increased non-discretionary spending among older boomers. Although the global financial crisis hit baby boomers particularly hard (according to Gallup Daily tracking research, self-reported daily spending among Americans aged 50 to 64 years old – roughly the ages of the baby boomer cohort – reached a low of \$55 in March 2009 from \$114 the year previous), however, by 2012, the baby boomer segment held more than 90% of the U.S.’s net worth, and accounted for 78% of all financial assets (Faleris, 2012). By 2010, boomers’ daily spending had rebounded to a five-year high of \$105 per day. Forty-five



percent reported increased spending on household essentials, including groceries, gasoline, utilities and healthcare rather than on discretionary purchases such as travel, dining out, leisure activities, consumer electronics and clothing. Forty-four percent of boomers' spending increased on needs, not on wants. In general, a higher proportion of leading-edge baby boomers reported that they were spending more today than a year ago compared with trailing-edge boomers. Net spending change – defined as the percentage of consumers indicating that they are spending more today than a year ago minus the percentage saying they are spending less – was positive for leading-edge boomers but negative for trailing-edge boomers (Fleming, 2015). There were substantial differences in the fiscal experiences of different segments of baby boomers. Leading-edge boomers (aged about 60 to 69) may no longer be burdened with some significant financial responsibilities, such as college tuition, mortgages, children's expenses and investments; while trailing-edge boomers (aged about 50 to 59) still were. As a result, leading-edge boomers reported spending more in 2010 in all categories except investments, particularly in the discretionary spending categories of travel, consumer electronics and leisure activities. This was especially true of leading-edge women.

**Critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique.** Given the importance of theoretical sensitivity in this study (Glaser, 1978), and in line with the view that consumption/deconsumption was a journey - a complex, lifelong process - rather than a series of discrete, separate, cumulative transactions (shopping trips) (McGregor, 2013), serious thought was given by the researcher to the technique used to structure the interview and ask questions. The challenging elements of memory and recall bias were in the fore of the reflection, since the inherent combination of the possible unreliability of

memory, and the necessary element of fictional re-construction involved in the study (Bentley, 2007) were threatening. McGregor's (2013) view of the nature of temporal consumption was enlightening:

...the past does not exist independently from the present. Indeed, the past is only past because there is a present, just as I can point to something over there only because I am here. But nothing is inherently over there or here. In that sense, the past has no content. The past – or more accurately, pastness – is a position. Thus, in no way can we identify the past as past (p. 15).

The past, according to Barnes (2010), is what makes the present able to live with itself. It is a bridge, and an element of sales and marketing always intervenes between the inner and the outer person. The researcher sought to understand the deconsumption behavior and motivations of the inner person. Also, historical understanding was always based on perspective, always contaminated by “presentism” (Holmes, 2008, p. 96). This view of the past, coupled with Trouillot's (1995) view, that “...we may want to keep in mind that deeds and words are not as distinguishable as often we presume” (p. 153), made the researcher realize that data collection through in-depth interviews would hinge on accurate retrieval of processes and relationships from memory. The researcher believed in the treatment of time suggested by William Faulkner in his book *'Requiem for a Nun,'* that “The past is never dead. It's not even past” (Faulkner, 1951, p. 73). The use of the critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique went hand-in-hand with such a treatment of time. CIRC was one among a few in the family of critical incident techniques (CIT), which tapped into the relational contexts of consumption. CIT (Flanagan, 1954), which relied on a set of “procedures to collect, content analyze, and classify observations of human behavior” (Gremler, 2004, p. 66), had been influential in services marketing literature (Bitner, Booms, and Mohr, 1994). It involved asking

consumers to recall a remarkable experience with the service provider where they experienced such a remarkable incident, and to describe it in detail. This was followed by a content analysis of the incidents. However, CIT allowed only for the recording of service situations perceived by customers as extraordinarily positive or negative, and hence, was limited to use in extreme situations (Stauss & Weinlich, 1997). CIT also required that interviews were highly structured (i.e., Barnes, Ponder, & Dugar, 2011). Moreover, CIT focused only on attributes of a relationship as an outcome. These characteristics made it unusable for this study. Another technique - the sequential incident technique (SIT) – recorded usual incidents, and focused on the sequence of attributes as an outcome. This technique became a benchmark because it positioned episodes of a relationship in order of priority based on a positive, negative, or neutral weight (Edvardsson & Roos, 2001). Then, there was the switching path analysis technique (SPAT), which focused on switching paths as a relationship outcome based on trigger factors of the relationship (Roos, 1999, 2002). Lastly, there was the critically critical incident technique (CCIT), which dealt with negative critical incidents including relationship consequence decisions, and was focused on attributes with consequence for the relationship (Edvardsson & Roos, 2001). Of all the techniques considered, the CIRC was deemed the most suitable for grounded theory interviews that hinged on memory, recall, and semi-structured questions, as well as relationship processes. Under the purview of CIRC, social situations formed the units of analysis (Clarke, 2005). CIRC treated a consumer-product (or -service, or -brand) relationship to be complex, have a history (length, frequency of use, commitment, trust), a context, and a foreseeable future manifested through the consumer's dynamic perceptions and behaviors. CIRC was

focused on the contextual embeddedness of critical incidents (Edvardsson & Strandvik, 2000). Figure 13 was a representation of a CIRC model adapted to the process of deconsumption.

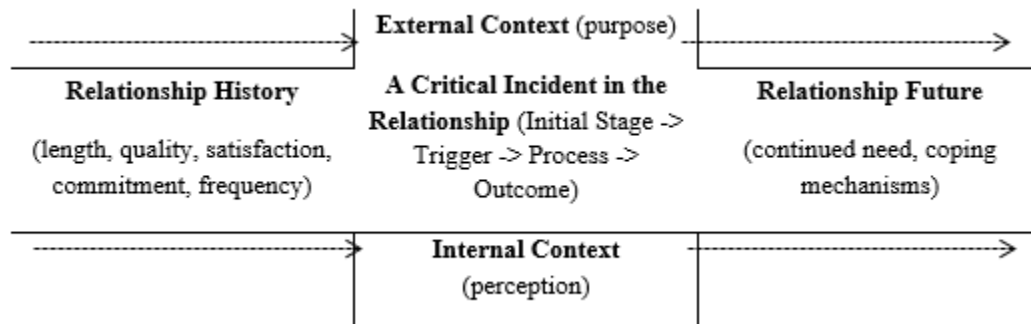


Figure 13. A CIRC model adapted to the process of deconsumption from Edvardsson and Strandvik (2000).

**Gaps in the literature.** A literature review of deconsumption and its related concepts helped uncover numerous gaps – both theoretical and practical – that, if addressed, could increase the understanding of deconsumption from an academic as well as practitioner point-of-view. Chatzidakis and Lee (2012) stated that deconsumption/anti-consumption:

...is a worthy stream of research because it redresses the tendency of both lay people and academics to focus on the phenomena that are made tangible in the conventional marketplace rather than acts that are not. Yet, dislikes, distastes and undesired selves, usually reflected in non-purchases may be more telling of individual identities, and societies, than likes, tastes, and desires that translate into reasons for purchases. (p. 198)

Gaps in the literature were listed earlier. This section expands on the background of those gaps.

**Theoretical gaps and opportunities.** First, there was a call for deeper research into the distinctions among various types of deconsumption (Shove & Ward, 2002) and behaviors such as downshifting (Kennedy et al., 2013; Stafford, Taylor, & Houston,

2001), which were key to conceptual clarity as well as for intervention development (Markowitz & Bowerman, 2012). Not only would that exploration throw more light on the construct of deconsumption from a holistic point-of-view, it would inform better definitions of the construct.

Second, although applications of attribution theory of motivation had been made to the consumer decision-making literature (e.g., Kelley, 1973; Mizerski et al., 1979), the literature on deconsumption had not seen this application. Extending it to deconsumption would help us understand the construct better, especially since the CDM process did not explain the process of deconsumption.

Third, in the past three decades, there had been an ongoing interest in the phenomenon of voluntary deconsumption by social researchers (e.g., Andrews & Holst, 1998; Etzioni, 1998; O'Guinn & Belk, 1989; Shama & Wisenblit, 1984), however, academic literature on voluntary simplicity was rather limited (Ballantine & Creery, 2010), with most papers focusing on either defining or operationalizing the term (e.g. Etzioni, 1998; Iyer and Muncy, 2009; Leonard-Barton, 1981), exploring the motivations behind the lifestyle (e.g. Zavestoski, 2002b), or examining the experiences of voluntary simplifiers (e.g. Bekin et al., 2005; Craig-Lees and Hill, 2002). Much of what had been written was conjecture and to date there has been no substantial investigation by marketers of individuals who voluntarily choose to live with less (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002). None of the expressions of anti-consumption attitudes had received adequate attention from academics or practitioners (Lee et al., 2009a; Zavestoski, 2002b). The need for academic attention on voluntary simplicity was justified (Shaw & Moraes, 2009), given the estimate made by Jebrowski (2000) that 15% of Americans would have

adopted voluntarily simplified lifestyles by 2010. In spite of this growth in the number of voluntary simplifiers, and the number of boycott movements, the daily practice of voluntary simplicity in the United States remained largely unexamined (Huneke, 2005), and so were consumer boycott motivations (Braunsberger & Buckler, 2011). From a branding perspective, specific brand avoidance research was scarce (Lee et al, 2009b). Research on related topics was still in its infancy, and there was a lack of answers to even the most basic questions about voluntary simplicity lifestyle, such as “what a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity entails, what factors prompt an individual to simplify their life, and how voluntary simplifiers participate in the traditional marketplace” (Miller & Gregan-Paxton, 2006, p. 289). The next step, according to Markowitz and Bowerman (2012), was to dive deeper into the question of how and why Americans believed they would be better off if they all consumed less. Concepts such as voluntary simplicity, despite gaining in popularity, were still seen as movements primarily of the well-off (Huneke, 2005, p. 529). As Etzioni (1998) expressed, “Voluntary simplicity is thus a choice a successful corporate lawyer, not a homeless person, faces...” (p. 632). Heeding to the call for reexamination of voluntary simplicity (Doherty & Etzioni, 2003), this study was an attempt to fill the gap in the understanding of voluntary deconsumption and its related terms.

Fourth, there had been calls for research on behaviors and the nature of involuntary simplicity (Leonard-Barton & Rogers, 1980). Literature suggested that an anti-consumption lifestyle (or simple living) was, by default, equated to voluntary simplicity (e.g., Gopaldas, 2008; Leonard-Barton, 1981; Leonard-Barton & Rogers, 1980), and seen as a function of restraint (Gregg, 1936) and priority (Adams, 1993), with

a stress on its voluntary characteristic. Involuntary deconsumption had been treated as forced anti-consumption, and conceptualized as a phenomenon based on free will and choice (Sharp et al., 2010), and as ineligible non-consumption (that resulted when a person could not act as a consumer for a particular product) (Cherrier et al., 2011). Oates et al. (2008) used involuntary simplifiers as a segment of voluntary simplifiers (ones who did not seek information in an effort to execute green consumption). One study compared voluntary simplifiers with involuntary simplifiers (e. g. Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002). Gregg (1936), stating the need to look at simplicity from a holistic point-of-view, linked involuntary simplicity to poverty, and posited that its compulsion created frustration, a sense of inferiority, resentment, and a desire for things denied. It was the researcher's belief, though, that seeing a mere lack of financial resources as an antecedent to involuntary deconsumption was but myopic. There was much more to involuntary deconsumption than the question of "not being able to afford." The researcher also posited an inverse relationship between voluntary and involuntary deconsumption (the two being disparate concepts in the minds of consumers). Hinting at the effects of involuntary deconsumption on consumers, Yuksel (2013) demonstrated strong desires of re-consumption. Other studies had most participants using rationalization strategies to account for their inaction decisions (Ger & Belk, 1999). This predisposition of researchers to theorize acted against consumption to fit into an anti-consumption framework was explained by Chatzidakis and Lee (2012): "...acts against consumption have been scant...it is not surprising to see a tendency to attribute various behaviors to anti-consumption even when they may not be driven by motivations and attitudes that are really against consumption" (p. 190).

Fifth, there was a dearth of research on deconsumption among baby boomers, even though they were a vital demographic for marketers in the United States. The behaviors and feelings that acts of deconsumption stirred (feelings of hostility in boycotts, for instance) among the “seemingly powerless” (Friedman, 1999, p. 225) needed to be studied and understood better (Braunsberger & Buckler, 2011). An exploration of involuntary deconsumption among the baby boomer population would help bolster our understanding of the construct, since members of the trailing-edge segment of this population experience decreasing self-sufficiency (Ballantine & Creery, 2010; Bekin et al., 2005). Also, to date, discussions of consumer resistance had been limited and focused primarily on collective (organized) actions directed at changes in marketing mix structure and composition. Individuals (and less so baby boomers) were less frequently explored (Penaloza & Price, 1993). Also, this study examined the differences in deconsumption behavior between different segments of the baby boomer population (based on deconsumption type, age, and gender).

Lastly, from a methodological point-of-view, the present study aimed to be the first attempt to develop a holistic understanding of deconsumption by attempting to develop and test scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. The behavior of consumption of products/services/brands was somewhat different from the behavior of not consuming (deconsumption), as pointed out by Chatzidakis and Lee (2012), who stated that extant consumer research mainly focused on cognitions and reasons that explain performing a given behavior, despite the fact that the reasons concerning not performing that same behavior may have been qualitatively different. Literature provided three good examples to understand this disparity: (1) As per Chatzidakis, Hibbert,



Mitussis, and Smith (2004), a decision to buy Fair Trade products may be consistently explained by specific, positive attitudes toward Fair Trade, but a decision to deconsume Fair Trade products may or may not coincide with scoring negatively on an evaluation scale used to assess these attitudes, (2) A deconsumer of meat may avoid meat owing to concerns about animal welfare, but it is unlikely that those who consume meat do so because they want animals to be killed (Richetin, Conner, & Perugini, 2011), and (3) Accounts for non-participation in consumer boycotts may not be the exact opposite of the reasons to participate in them (Yuksel, 2013). Clearly, social-psychological research drew a distinction between the reasons for and reasons against performing a behavior (e.g., Westaby 2002; Westaby and Fisbein 1996; Westaby, Probst, and Lee 2010). Anticipating this disparity in the process and behavior dimensions of deconsumption (especially the voluntary and involuntary aspects of it) as opposed to consumption, this consumer behavior study of scale development constructed scales of not doing a behavior, i.e., not consuming.

Overall, researchers strove for a fuller understanding of anti-consumption/deconsumption – one that differentiated anti-consumers based on the purpose of their anti-consumption (social versus personal concerns) as well as the object of their anti-consumption (all consumption versus specific brands or products) – so that a better understanding of this construct could be achieved (Lee et al., 2009a). There was a need for a grand theory of anti-consumption – one that differentiated between personal motivations (the “I”) and societal ideological factors (the “We”). The present study was a step in that direction. It was an attempt to understand deconsumption holistically, and

re-conceptualize and delineate anti-consumption theory from other similar research fields like sustainability, environmental, and ethical concerns in the social marketing literature.

*Opportunities for marketing practitioners.* Marketing practitioners, who had traditionally ignored and alienated simplifiers because of a perceived lack of economic viability, ought to see deconsumption behavior as an opportunity to learn about its antithesis, namely, consumption. The research questions about deconsumption motivations, measures, and specific product/brand/service categories subject to such behavior were aimed to address practitioners' interests in dealing with the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes of deconsumption. This, in turn, would enable them to devise strategies to pre-emptively avoid, pro-actively influence, and/or reactively mitigate deconsumption outcomes (Lee et al., 2009a). As Elgin and Mitchell (1977) foresaw, deconsumption could create markets for products such as first class durables, sturdy clothing deemphasizing fashion, do-it-yourself equipment, in-home services, easy to fix housing appliances, flexible housing, natural foods, self-help items, arts and crafts and other aesthetic pursuits, and communal and cooperative, recycled, country living items.

Given that leading-edge boomers appeared to have latitude in their spending in the United States, the time was appropriate for practitioners to market to the different needs and responsibilities of the different segments of the boomer population. It was the researcher's hope that the present study would help us understand the consumption needs of boomers who were forced into deconsumption involuntarily, and at the same time, make marketing practitioners realize that consumer behavior was not always liberating, or purposive. Baby boomers might not be manipulated, forced, coerced, or duped into re-

consumption, but they did not always act like profit-maximizing entrepreneurs or scientific management experts steeped in informed rationality (Doherty & Etzioni, 2003). The understanding and measurement of deconsumption from baby boomers' points-of-view, hence, was vital, and formed the crux of the present study.

**Definitions.** Voluntary deconsumption was initially (in the screening questionnaire) defined as “the phenomenon exhibited by consumers wherein they make a voluntary/conscious decision on their own will to reduce (or to totally abandon) the consumption of a product, service, brand, or consumption experience that they used to consume in the past.”

Involuntary deconsumption was initially (in the screening questionnaire) defined as “the phenomenon exhibited by consumers wherein they are, due to internal or external factors, forced to, against their will, consume less (or to totally abandon the consumption of) a product, service, brand, or consumption experience that they used to consume in the past.”

**Delimitations.** The delimitations of this study were boundary factors including the choice of study objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives adopted, and the population the researcher chose to investigate. The researcher chose to frame this study within the concept of deconsumption, and not other related concepts, as such an approach encouraged inquiry on a personal, individual level of behavior and cognition. Also, the criteria for screening participants for this study posed notable delimitations, but helped answer the research questions most efficiently. The study was also guided by the facets of the theoretical framework detailed in the review of the literature. The selected methodology and variables in this study also set a

boundary on what the findings would ascertain. One such methodological decision was the use of closed-ended 5-point Likert scale responses to scale items, which might have limited the depth of responses (as afforded by open-ended responses), but increased the likelihood of respondents completing the surveys. Another methodological delimitation was the use of a definition-first technique, which might have affected respondents' responses to in-depth interview questions and scale items.

**Assumptions.** It was important to consider the assumptions under which the proposed study operated. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) posited that “assumptions are so basic that, without them, the research problem itself could not exist” (p. 62). It was assumed that during the in-depth interviews, participants were able to recall and express deconsumption relationships from memory effectively. While conducting the surveys, it was assumed that the respondents answered questions honestly. Anonymity and confidentiality enabled the truthful answering of questions and survey items. Study participants were also allowed to withdraw from the study at any time and with no ramifications. The sample was not be assumed to be representative of the baby boomer population in the United States. Another assumption was that this scale development study would best answer the research questions by integrating complementary strengths of a mixed methods design by employing an exploratory sequential approach. The statistical techniques and methods employed in the quantitative phase had their own set of assumptions about the characteristics of the data (such as distributions, correlational trends, and variable type). Care was taken to not violate these assumptions, so that valid results could be achieved.

## **Chapter Two: Methodology**

This chapter details the mixed methods methodology culminating in the development, testing, and validation of scales for voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, thereby, providing a framework for answering the central research question of the proposed study (what behavioral process theory explains the experience of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption among baby boomers in the United States?), as well as secondary research questions -- (1) What are the motivations of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption of products, services, brands, and experiences from an attribution theory perspective? How do locus, stability, controllability, and intentionality of deconsumption behavior affect the consumers? (2) What are the consequences and outcomes of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption behavior? What is the role of deconsumption in consumers' self-identity resolution and reformulation? (3) Does the experience of the two deconsumption types (voluntary and involuntary) differ? If so, in what ways? Do the two segments of the baby boomer population (trailing- and leading-edge boomers) differ in their experience of the deconsumption process? Do female baby boomers differ in their experience of the deconsumption process as compared to male baby boomers? (4) Do the scales of deconsumption (voluntary and involuntary) developed in this study exhibit unidimensionality, appropriate scale use, and yield appropriate levels of validity and reliability?

## **Overall Approach and Rationale**

The overall approach of this study was guided by two ideas. First, the idea of methodological congruence (Morse & Richards, 2002), which required the purpose, research questions, methods, settings, data, analyses, and interpretations of the study to be interconnected cohesively. Such congruence ensured that the aims of the study and means of achieving them did not come adrift. Deep thought was put into and attention was paid to how the research was approached, in terms of how the methods, strategies, and techniques fit together. Second, the idea of documentation rigor (Morse, Niehaus, Wolfe, & Wilkins, 2006), in line with Creswell's (2013) directive that every complex and rigorous study should comprise the interplay of these interconnected components - approach to inquiry, assumptions, worldviews, theories, and research design - required that the researcher identified with the philosophy and the methodological approach used. This ensured clear, concise presentation of subjects, purpose, philosophy, significance, literature review, research questions, assumptions, researcher credentials, ethical implications, data-gathering strategies, data analysis strategies, theoretical development, conclusions, implications for practice, and suggestions for further study. The idea of rigor was especially central to this study of deconsumption because (1) the consequences of deconsumption are less observable in the marketplace (since it is a non-event), and harder to measure than positive consumer decisions (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012), and (2) there are fewer phenomena to study on the whole (Wilk, 1997), thereby, ensuring that the proposed study would illuminate the core philosophical tenets of the process of deconsumption. The focus of the study was on the process, context, and individual consumer deconsumption behavior, as guided by a social constructivism lens, and the

grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) focusing on the theoretical orientation of consumers' views and perspectives.

### Study Design

In line with the discussion of methodological congruence above, a scale development study of deconsumption warranted an overarching exploratory sequential mixed methods research design – a “...logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions, and, ultimately, to its conclusions” (Yin, 2009, p. 29) – since exploratory sequential design has been referred to as an instrument development design by Creswell, Fetters, and Ivankova (2004). Also, since the present study used a mixed methods approach, instrument development was facilitated by exploiting complementary strengths of the various methods to produce socially useful knowledge (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Moreover, pragmatism, the philosophical lens that mixed methods researchers operate under, served as “a rationale for formal research design as well as a more grounded approach to research” (Feilzer, 2010, p. 6). The sequential nature of the research design was shown in Figure 14 below.

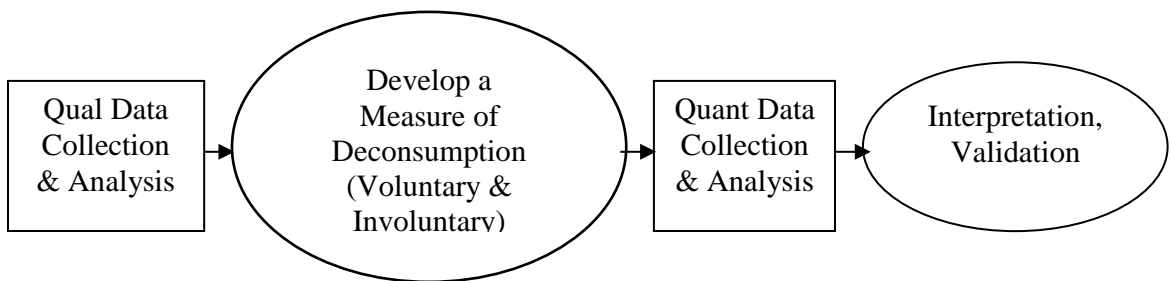


Figure 14. Exploratory sequential design.

Another important design parameter that this study required was an understanding of the theoretical drive, and being consciously aware of the direction of inductive work (for the qualitative phase of scale development), or for deductive work (for the

quantitative phase of scale development), facilitating the conduct of this mixed methods design (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012), and working as a wheel (termed the research wheel by Johnson and Christensen, 2012). This was highlighted in the figure below (Figure 15), wherein the exploratory qualitative phase (phase I) of the design helped formulate grounded theories of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, and the confirmatory quantitative phase (phase II) helped test and finalize the two scales.



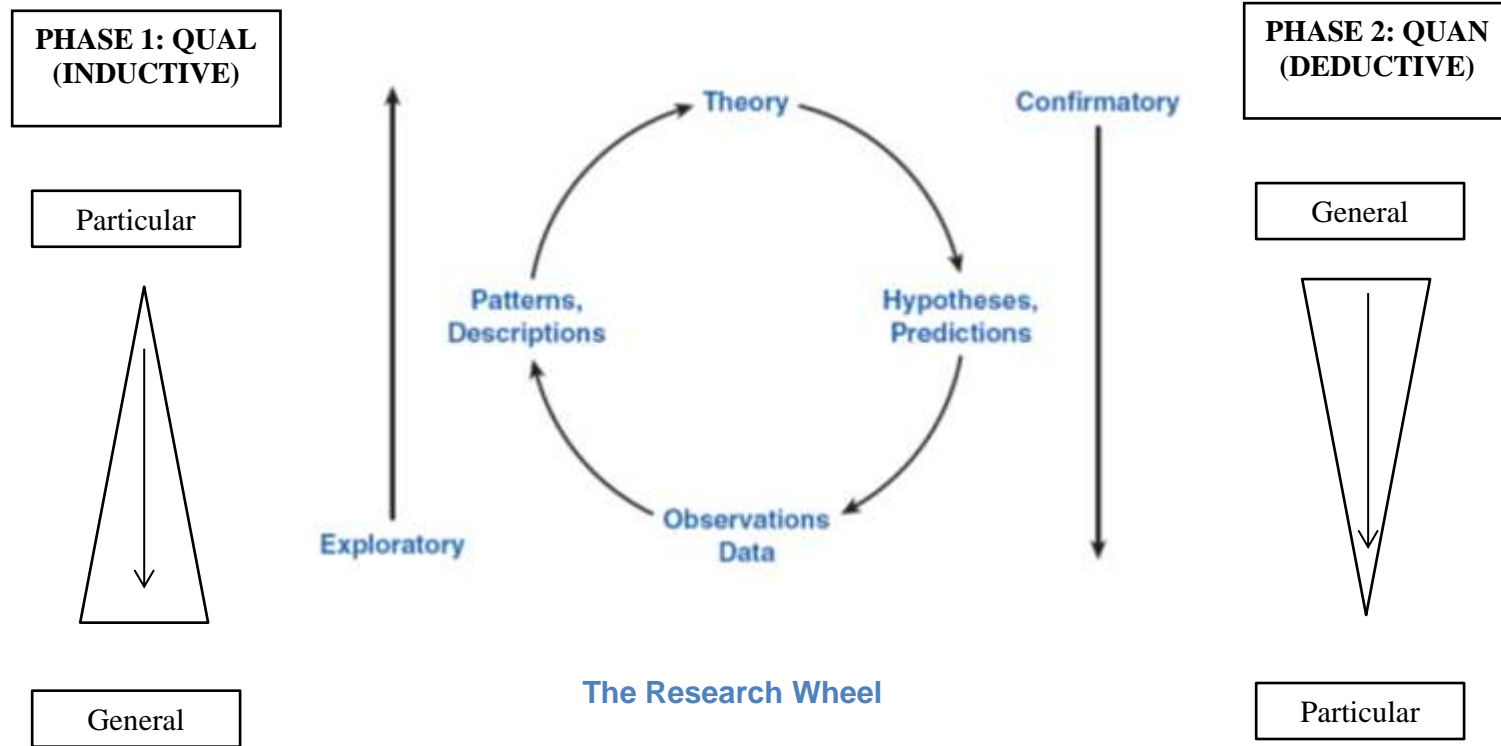


Figure 15. The research wheel. Johnson and Christensen (2012).

Under the purview of this mixed methods design, results from the qualitative phase helped develop the quantitative phase through appropriate sampling, implementation, and measurement decisions (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). While the thorough review of related literature helped provide conceptual clarity, and better definitions of the concept of deconsumption, the qualitative phase provided a deeper theoretical understanding of the processes of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. It also facilitated development of the initial item pools for the two scales, and better survey questions. The detailed study design adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) was shown in Figure 16. The notation for the study was:

QUAL → QUAN = validate exploratory dimensions by designing and testing an  
instrument

The design highlighted that equal importance was given to the qualitative and the quantitative phases of the study, as the researcher believed that both played a vital role in meeting the study objectives, and in answering the study's research questions. The reader must keep in mind that the discussion of the scale development process below was framed within this overarching exploratory sequential design.

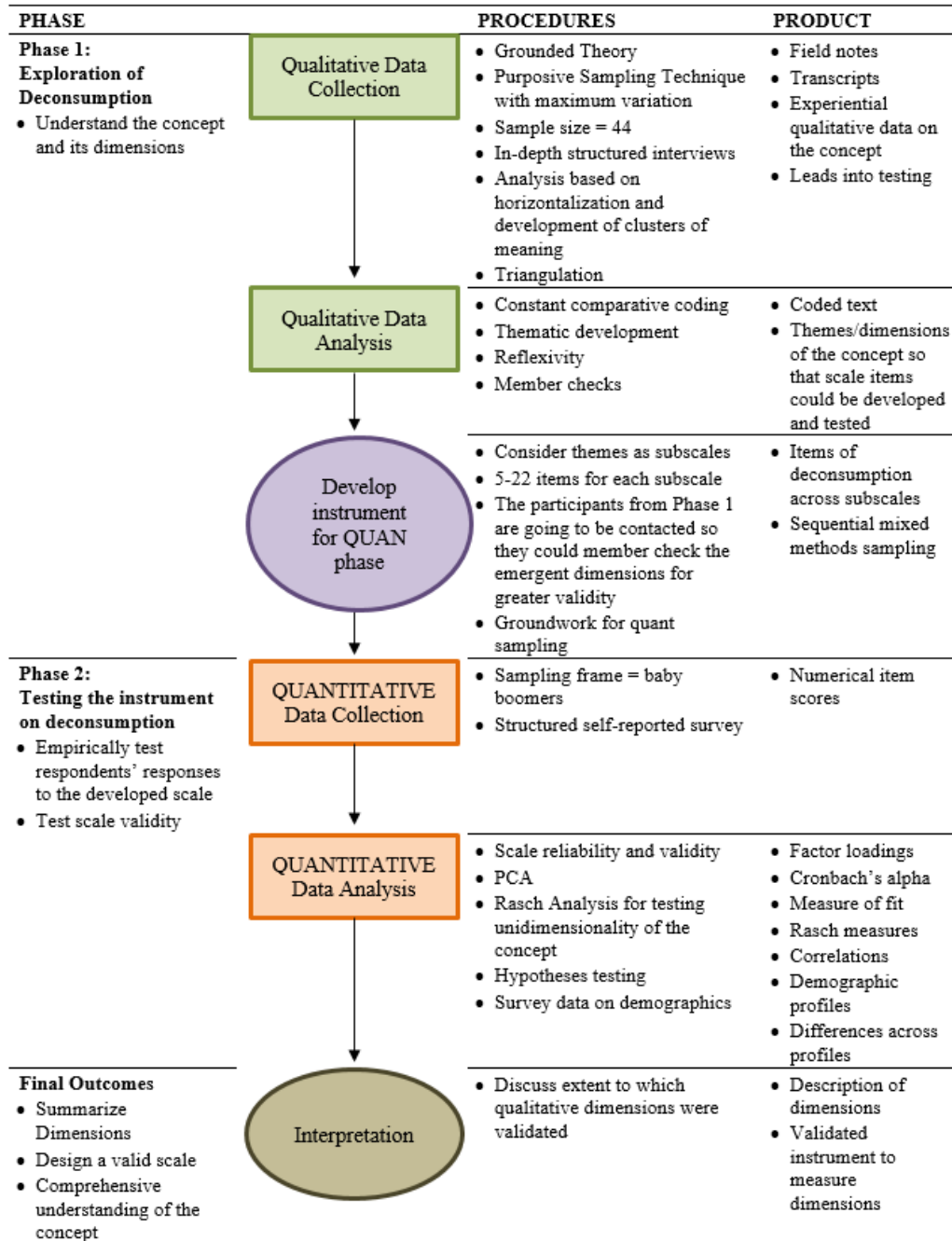


Figure 16. Detailed study design.

## Scale Development

The remainder of this chapter on methodology was structured to delineate the basic process and steps for the central mission of the study – scale development. Several scholars argued that effective measurement was a cornerstone of scientific research (e.g.,

DeVellis, 2012; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003), and was a central component of good assessment of latent variables (Reynolds, 2010). Given the importance of effective scale development, a detailed process model (see Figure 17) was developed. This model was based on Churchill (1979), DeVellis (2012), Netemeyer et al. (2003), and Slavec and Drnovšek's (2012) recommendations. The model had four steps, that were briefly described here, and in detail in the sections that followed.

Step one (construct definition and content domain) focused on the role of theory, importance of thorough literature review, and qualitative data collection and analysis. Since deconsumption was a latent construct (not directly observable), it was grounded in a theoretical framework and its nomological net (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Loevinger, 1957). Step one was to develop a clear specification of the boundaries of the domain of deconsumption (Hattie, 1985).

Step two (generating and judging scale items) entailed generating a sample of items from a large item pool tapping the content domain of deconsumption (Netemeyer et al., 2003). While the qualitative interviews helped formulate items for both voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, some items from existing scales relevant to voluntary deconsumption were adapted too. There were currently no scales measuring involuntary deconsumption. Expert and cognitive interviews supported content validity, and served to solidify and refine items.

Step three (designing and conducting studies to develop and refine the scales) included a pilot study that helped reduce the number of items to a manageable number through deletion of poorly performing items, and initial item and reliability analyses.

Step four (finalizing the scale) entailed Principal Components Analysis (PCA), additional item analyses (Rasch modeling, item-total correlations, interitem correlations), and assessment of validity (Bearden, Hardesty, & Rose, 2001). As seen in Figure 17, the two phases of the study (qualitative and quantitative) were embedded within the steps of the scale development process (steps one and two were qualitative or inductive, and steps three and four were quantitative or deductive).

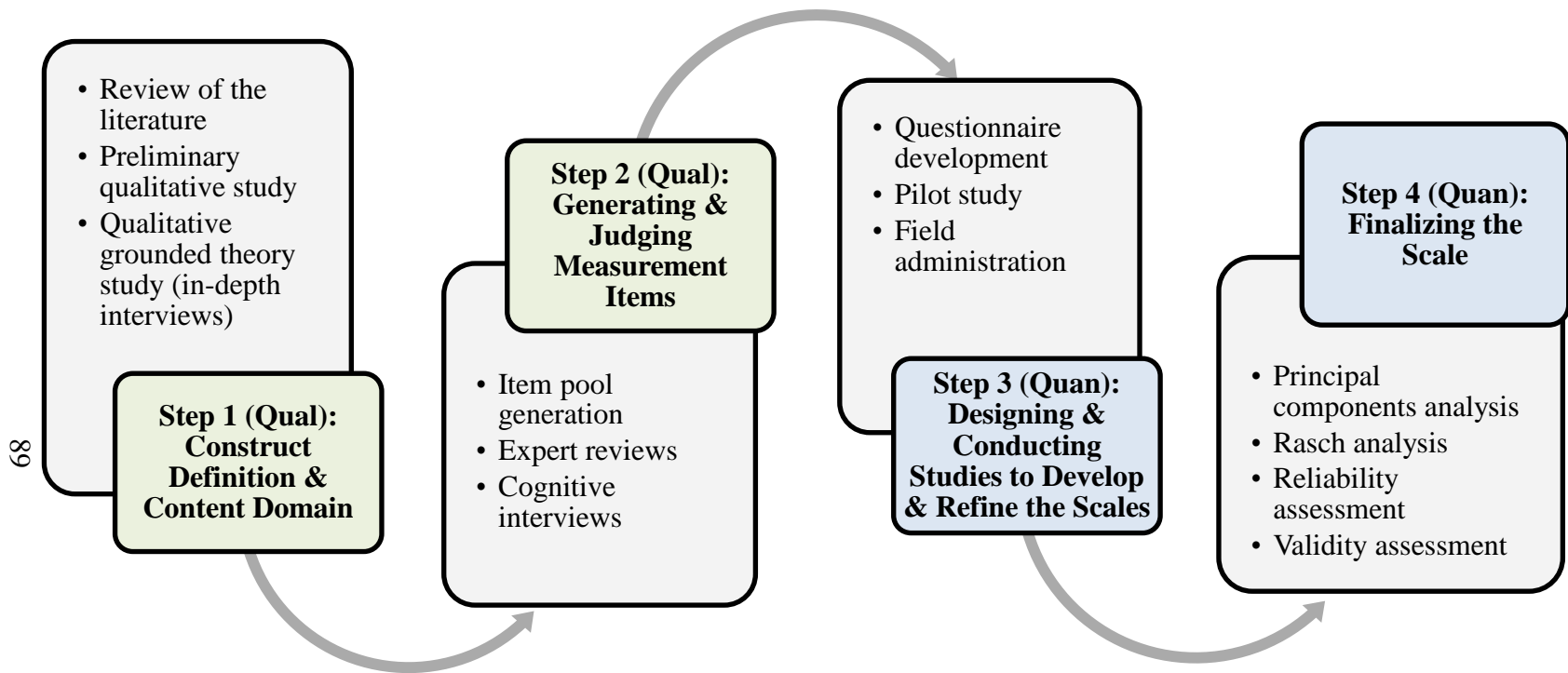


Figure 17. Process model for scale development. Based on Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2012; Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma, 2003; Slavec and Drnovšek, 2012.

**Phase I – qualitative.** Literature revealed that the latent psychological construct of voluntary deconsumption was fragmented and lacked conceptual clarity (see literature review for details). Research on involuntary deconsumption was nascent, and in need of construct definition and understanding. So, the objective of the qualitative phase was to inform the scale development by aiding formulation of better conceptual understanding, construct definitions, and content domains for both voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. The qualitative phase, hence, yielded conceptual clarity, and also helped generate initial item pools, which formed the bases for the measures. The various steps within this phase were detailed in the sections and sub-sections that follow. Although review of the literature was not technically a part of the qualitative phase, it directly did influence it. Next, the qualitative grounded theory in-depth interviews helped generate an initial item pool, which then were followed by expert reviews and cognitive interviews. The hermeneutic/dialectic methodology conjectures specified by Lincoln and Guba (2013), summarized as the fit between inquiries and methodologies, and sharing of common constructions between the researcher and the researched, were at the forefront of the constructivist qualitative phase of this study, and helped distill and interpretive portrayal of the studied world. Also, the integrity of qualitative research was emphasized, in particular its purposefulness.

***Preliminary study.*** Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) advised qualitative researchers to conduct a preliminary study before taking on the more challenging task of a full qualitative field study. So, a preliminary exploratory study was conducted with three participants in Spring 2014 to inform the qualitative study design, the research objectives, the research questions, and more specific inputs such as formulation of questions in the

proposed qualitative interview protocol. Since one of the main objectives was to gain better conceptual understanding and definitions of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, the researcher chose a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2013) to gain greater understanding of the meaning ascribed to the phenomenon of deconsumption. The study helped accomplish the following: (1) development of the qualitative phase of the proposed study's methodology, (2) design and implementation of an interview protocol to facilitate the depth interviews (four versions were revised from the three subsequent interviews conducted), (3) implementation of interviewing techniques (a dress rehearsal for the proposed study), and (4) orientation to the possible theoretical nomothetic net as well as the scope and dimensions of deconsumption.

At the outset, the participants provided fresh perspectives and non-technical definitions of deconsumption, which were utilized as part of the interview protocol.

Voluntary deconsumption was defined by participants as:

The decision I make/have made willingly to reduce my consumption of either a physical product like a food or drink, or maybe a cultural sort of deconsumption (going less to movies), buying less books, a change of habit. It is a decision I make to reduce fiscal expenditures on a product or an item (R.

Walker, personal communication, April 6, 2014).

It's a physical thing – what do I need, what do I not need, what's just clutter? I don't put too much value on material things. It's living in the present moment. It doesn't have to be too minimalist, though. It's relieving (T. Thomas, personal communication, May 18, 2014).



Involuntary deconsumption was defined as:

The phenomenon exhibited by individuals wherein they are forced to consume less or not at all, some products, services, or experiences they used to consume in the past (D. Goldstein, personal communication, April 27, 2014).

You cannot have any more of it! There is some regret, sadness, and frustration around what has changed. The decision is taken out of my hands by some authority or by a reality that supersedes my decision-making freedom (T. Thomas, personal communication, May 18, 2014).

From conducting a cross-case analysis of the three interviews of the preliminary study, the following insights were gained: (1) conceptual clarity, better definitions, and associations of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption (associations were positive for voluntary and negative for involuntary deconsumption), (2) participants, whose average age was 62 years, were eager to have their stories heard, and could be assigned an umbrella descriptor based on their consumption/deconsumption behavior (e.g., “spirituality,” “acceptance,” and “escapism”), (3) deconsumption stories would best be elicited using the critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique, (4) the unit of analyses was not the participants per say, but their deconsumption relationship stories (the three participants conveyed a total of six product deconsumption and four brand deconsumption stories), (5) six of the ten stories were stories of voluntary deconsumption, two were of involuntary deconsumption, and two were, unexpectedly, mixed, suggesting that deconsumption comprised involuntary, voluntary, and mixed characteristics, (6) overall, 60% of the deconsumption stories (all voluntary) were internally driven, 20% were externally driven (all involuntary), and 20% were both

internally and externally driven (all mixed). Also, there seemed to be a gap between the ideal/desired and the real consumption/deconsumption identities of the participants, and hence, an explanation from organizational empowerment could be applied to the causal explanations of deconsumption behavior as an effort to align desired and real self-identities, closely related to conflict, resolution, non-alignment, alignment, and new identity formation. These insights were applied to the theoretical model of this proposed study.

Hence, the preliminary study was valuable in enforcing thought and reflection focused on concepts, theory, methods (such as sampling, interviewing, analyses, communication via the internet, quantizing data, and journaling), ethics, logistics, roles of the researcher, colleagues, communities of practice, and professors. Above all, it convinced the researcher of the need for the present study, and of adopting a grounded theory approach to understanding the process of deconsumption through the qualitative phase.

**Grounded theory.** When Jacob and Furgerson (2012) said, "...at the heart of qualitative research is the desire to expose the human part of a story" (p. 1), they might have been reflecting on the beliefs of the founders of grounded theory approach, Glaser and Strauss (1967). Since 1967, researchers across disciplines had been using this approach more often than any other method of analyzing qualitative data (Morse, 2009). The researcher, in order to answer the qualitative questions of this research study, used constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) as the principal qualitative approach to enable focus on the steps/phases in the process of consumption and deconsumption. Grounded theory is an inductive, comparative, iterative, and interactive method of data

collection (Charmaz, 2006) based on individual interviews that attempt to describe a core phenomenon (deconsumption, in this case) in detail and to relate it to potential causes, consequences, and situational process conditions that affect it (Creswell, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Being true to the concept of methodological congruence, the selection of grounded theory was based primarily on the need to theoretically further the knowledge and understanding of deconsumption. It turned out to be a methodology suited to constructing a data-based theory that can be used as a basis for future research (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It used participants' experiences as data to construct and validate the emergent theory. The end product of grounded theory was a model that systematically linked antecedents, situational conditions, coping strategies, and consequences to the phenomena (voluntary and involuntary deconsumption) of interest (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It helped conceptually construct the reality of the processes (Charmaz, 1990).

The purpose of the qualitative phase of this study utilizing the grounded theory approach was to understand the process of deconsumption by developing hypotheses and substantive process theories to help explain the processes (Creswell, 2013) of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. To achieve that goal, the researcher employed a social constructivism philosophical lens focusing on the methodological assumptions of process, language, inductive logic, context, and use of an emerging design to generate a unified theoretical explanation (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) using a systematic approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The theoretical understanding gained from the literature review and the preliminary study described above aided the qualitative process of this study, wherein a consumer was acquiring, retaining, and/or relinquishing behaviors and

values of deconsumption at both micro (individual, psychological) and macro (social/group, physical, biological, political, economic, and cultural) levels. This enabled the researcher to either bolster these theoretical ideas, or to accept alternative explanations by remaining open to such possibilities.

***In-depth interviewing.*** Padgett (1998) and Weiss (1994) described the rationale for the use of qualitative interviewing to provide preparation for quantitative studies as procurement of key information from participants in specific social/behavioral circumstances (e.g., the process of deconsumption), which enriched the quality of research, informed the survey to be used in the quantitative phase of the study, and formed an indispensable cog in multimethod scale development designs (Padgett, 1998). In essence, validity of concepts and inquiries in quantitative research could be enhanced by first grounding them in real-life situations and observations through having conversations or interviews from an open perspective.

“Interviewing is rather like marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets” (Oakley, 1981, p. 30). Although grounded theory approach was characterized by multiple methods of data collection, in-depth interviews formed the primary method (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Brown, 1992). Interviewing is a relationship – “a collaboration between the interviewer and the participants” (Borer & Fontana, 2012, p. 47). The researcher, who was the key instrument, set off on a journey with the participants, assuming the role of “interviewer-as-traveler” (Kvale, 2007, p. 19-20), and put the participants in a one-up position at the same time, acknowledging that they knew more about the process of deconsumption than the researcher did. The interviewer-as-traveler role bode well for a

postmodern comprehension of socially co-constructed knowledge of deconsumption. In this relationship, reciprocity was of vital importance (Creswell, 2013), wherein the researcher tried to give something back to the participants (Brouwer & Hess, 2007), and not abuse a position of power and authority.

*In-depth interview protocol.* As a result of the preliminary study, an interview protocol used for the semi-structured in-depth interviews was developed (see Appendix B). A series of revisions were made (five in all) based on the problems and opportunities detected, as well as on the guidelines of Esterberg (2002), Kvale (2007), Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), and Wang and Yan (2012). As per Jacob and Furgerson's (2012) directives, questions were tweaked, both pre- and post-interview scripts were added to the protocol, and words such as "tell me about" were added to the questions.

*Participants.* A mix of three qualitative sampling techniques suggested by Creswell (2013) and Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 28) were employed: (1) theory-based sampling (participants who had experienced the process of the theoretical construct of deconsumption were chosen, and theoretical saturation determined the sample size), (2) criterion sampling (participants who met the criterion for having experienced voluntary or involuntary deconsumption, and fell under the demographic of trailing- and leading-edge boomers), and (3) maximum variation sampling (among the sub-samples, an eclectic spread was encouraged so that diverse stories of the deconsumption process could be elicited, even though within each sub-sample, homogeneity was sought). This was achieved by constantly categorizing prospective participants' answers to the pre-interview questions (Appendix A), and maintaining a categorization file, which facilitated selection of participants based on their (1) age, (2) gender, (3) ethnicity, (4) recall of

experience of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, and (5) the deconsumption relationship products/services/brands recalled. Responses to a pre-interview screening protocol (Appendix A), sent out to baby boomers in senior living homes as well as on social media websites, enabled the researcher to select interview participants based on appropriate deconsumption experiences, with a keen eye on the collection of significant and diverse product-, service-, and brand-deconsumption stories.

Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) indicated that “saturation has, in fact, become the gold standard by which purposive sample sizes are determined...” (p. 60). So, theoretical saturation (Beitin, 2012) was desirable, and the researcher strove to achieve the same, conducting interviews until saturation was achieved. A minimum number of interviews based on the suggestions of Creswell (2013) and Patton (1990), however, was aimed for. A total of 42 in-depth interviews were conducted, and included interviews of 11 trailing-edge boomers and 31 leading-edge boomers, as well as 18 process stories of voluntary deconsumption and 24 process stories of involuntary deconsumption. Participants were English-speaking boomers chosen from senior living centers across the United States, or were friends/acquaintances of the researcher, members of college alumni boards, or on the lists of organizations such as Senior Hub. The researcher ensured that at least some of the participants were Hispanic, in line with the proportion of Hispanic population in the US (approximately 20% of the total population).

*Procedure.* Prior to the use of the in-depth interview protocol, pre-interview screening information (see Appendix A) was sent to prospective participants in senior living centers, through e-mail, and on social media websites, so that reflection and

assimilation of ideas and memories of critical deconsumption relationship incidents could be elicited, and screening of the participants could be done.

During the in-depth interviews, as detailed in the literature review, the CIRC technique was used to elicit responses from the participants. The questions were based on the participants' responses to the screening questionnaires. The same pre-planned questions and prompts were asked to all participants (Morse, 2012). Although the participants' home was the preferred location for the in-depth interviews (to facilitate observation of their physical surroundings), location was ultimately decided based on participants' convenience. This required provisions for interviews to be conducted at third-party locations, the researcher's home, or over the Internet (using Skype).

Interviews were conducted in the months of October 2015 through January 2016. Each in-depth interview was limited to approximately 60 minutes. The participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix C). The interviews were recorded using the AudioNotes application on an Apple device. Participants were given a chance to win a \$50 gift-card by way of a lottery as a reward for their participation.

In order to add greater context and depth to the interviews, the researcher collected alternative forms of data (such as artifacts, art-forms, and photographs). The researcher observed the participants' surroundings, their homes, dress, and appearance, if the interview was conducted in person. Researcher notes, reflections or journaling (memoing), participant journaling (provision of space and time), and the examination of favorite possessions or ritual objects were given importance (Creswell, 2013). Attention was paid to the choice of interview location, keeping in mind that the interview was a significant social occasion (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, & McKinney, 2012). In some

cases, the in-depth interviews were followed up by e-mails to render clarity and exercise member checking (Markham, 2004), since it was easier to discuss personal and sensitive topics in a personalized manner by using e-mails (James & Busher, 2012).

*Data analysis.* Under the grounded theory approach, after every completed interview, the data from the interview was compared with the researcher's thoughts about an emerging theory. This method, called the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006), was defined by Creswell (2013) as "taking information from data collection and comparing it to emerging categories" (p. 86). The analysis was based on coding at various levels. The codes were active and fluid, guiding the researcher toward a suggestive theory, not a rigid one (Charmaz, 2005), so as to "avoid imposing a forced framework" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 66). First, open coding was performed, that helped guide the thought process toward possible emerging codes, and helped the researcher focus the emergent theory. Then, axial coding helped explore codes in detail, relating them to one another to form themes and categories. This was followed up with selective coding, wherein a paradigm model was developed, and the themes and categories are inserted into the model to form an intersection of categories, and a story line that integrated the paradigm model was generated. The models (and the collection of selective codes, thereby) were further refined until emergent principles of the processes were obtained through saturation (Lichtman, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Memoing (log of ideas formulating the process), audit trails, and member checks went a long way in solidifying the selective codes in grounded theory analysis. Care was taken to combine themes in a manner consistent with the interviews. For example, macrothemes and themes in categories were based on the antecedents of deconsumption, its definitions,



contexts, and conditions that affected the consumers, and their coping strategies and the final consequences. The following techniques of data analysis were used: theoretical sensitivity, developing concepts, coding at categories, open coding for theory generation, focused memoing, diagramming, and an emphasis on search for core concepts and processes (Morse & Richards, 2012). The researcher maintained a reflexive journal, recognizing the fact that “Epistemology is transactional and subjectivist, and hence, putative facts cannot be independent of the prior constructions held by the observer...a consequence of the constructionist view” (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 57). The qualitative phase helped design typologies or instruments of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption looking for natural differences in responses, with special attention to participant language, identification of quotes, codes, and themes to design items, variables, and the two scales of deconsumption. Groups of attributes/themes were formed through content analysis, followed by a confirmatory quantitative phase.

The researcher did not use qualitative software to analyze the data from the grounded theory interviews, as the lack of human immersion into and touch to the data was deemed as inhibiting the constant comparative flexibility demanded by grounded theory coding. “Data analysis is about making sense of experience” (N. Cutforth, personal communication, May 23, 2013), and the researcher believed that a machine could sometimes come between the researcher and the data.

*Strategies for trustworthiness.* The researcher employed Creswell’s (2013) framework of validation strategies to document the “accuracy” (p. 250) of the qualitative phase of the study, employing prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation of methods and data, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis,

clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich and thick description, and external audits. Trustworthiness and a focus on ethics was ensured through two strategies: (1) the study was conducted within norms of acceptable and competent research practices, and (2) it was conducted in ways that honored participants, and was sensitive to the study setting (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Another term relevant to the validation of qualitative data was rigor. Davies and Dodd (2002) suggested the following to ensure rigor: attentiveness, empathy, carefulness, sensitivity, respect, reflection, conscientiousness, engagement, awareness, and openness. Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) suggested that rigor (quality) could be executed in qualitative research by employing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The quality (rigor) criteria for constructivist inquiry was relativist and subjectivist, in line with the paradigm, reflecting moral, ethical, prudential, aesthetic, and action commitments of constructivism. Finally, as directed by Guba (1981) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), detailed documentation of the research process accentuated the trustworthiness (Guba, 1981) of the study.

Concentrating on the trustworthiness of the substantive model itself, legitimation decisions suggested by Ongwenbuzie and Teddlie (2003) were adhered to, which were: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, leaving an audit trail, member checking/informant feedback, weighting the evidence, checking for representativeness of sources of data, checking for researcher effects/clarifying researcher bias, making contrasts/comparisons, theoretical sampling, checking the meaning of outliers, using extreme cases, ruling out spurious relations, replicating a finding, referential adequacy, following up surprises, structural relationships, peer debriefing, rich

and thick description, the modus operandi approach, assessing rival explanations, and negative case analysis.

*Writing and reporting:* In the initial stage of the qualitative writing process, time was spent on framing of stories (Kiesinger, 1998) to extract stretches of discourse, choosing segments of consumers' lives that were intelligible and coherent. An effort was made to maintain the findings of the qualitative phase as literary, simple, rhythmic, evocative, and assertive (Charmaz, 2006), connecting identified categories through propositions and use of a visual representation in the proposed model. Attention was paid to organization, simplicity, clarity, unity, craftsmanship, and action criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 81-82). As per Strauss and Corbin (1998), detailed information about the research process was provided in the writing. The writing, in line with the analysis, focused on the process theories and arguments that supported them (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher strove for "verisimilitude" - the experience of the reader "being there" (Richardson, 1994, p. 521) as he/she will read the account. Data triangulation (Creswell, 2013) was ensured while disseminating the findings of the qualitative phase by using thick description, narratives, figures, tables, charts, poetry, lyrics, pictures, artwork, and video and audio clips.

*Expert panel review.* After the qualitative interviews, and based partly on the literature review, the researcher developed an initial pool of items of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. Five content experts possessing insights and aggregated knowledge of the deconsumption processes were interviewed to clarify and validate the content, structure, and items (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009) of the deconsumption items in these initial pools.

*Participants.* Experts provided technical knowledge (industry-oriented experts), process-oriented knowledge (professors), and explanatory knowledge (participants) of deconsumption. A panel of five experts representing these areas of expertise were carefully chosen: two marketers with business/industry expertise, two university professors who practiced deconsumption, and one writer who was an expert at language structures and content. The qualifications and demographic information of the expert reviewers is included in Table 12 (in chapter three).

*Instrument.* An expert review protocol was used (see Appendix D) to elicit experts' ratings (on a scale from 1 to 5) of clarity, representativeness to domain, and item difficulty for the items of each scale (voluntary and involuntary deconsumption). The experts then made an overall decision on each item (keep as is, modify, or discard). Finally, feedback on the need for definitions, examples, re-wording, ordering, and other thoughts/concerns were elicited.

*Procedure.* Experts were initially contacted in the beginning of April, 2016 via e-mail with a description of the study, and key definitions to request their participation. Then, by the beginning of June, the expert review protocol was sent to them via e-mail, followed by the two item-pools. They were given a week to respond. A reminder/follow-up e-mail was sent a few days after sending the protocol. Based on experts' ratings, items were retained/modified/discarded on the bases of acceptable cut-offs suggested by means of the ratings, and judgment.

*Cognitive interviews.* Once the initial instruments of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption were developed using input from the literature review, the in-depth interviews, and the expert reviews, cognitive interviews were conducted to uncover and

evaluate sources of response error. Cognitive testing is becoming a standard part of the development process of any survey instrument (Collins, 2003). These interviews were explicitly focused on the cognitive processes that participants used to answer the survey questions; enabling the study of both overt and covert processes that are normally hidden (Willis, 2004). Cognitive interviews were used widely during the pre-testing phase of the questionnaires (Campanelli, 1997; Willis & Schechter, 1997) to detect items that had the potential of not being understood by respondents as intended by the researcher.

*Participants.* A total of five subjects were recruited using the pre-screening interview protocol (Appendix A) for cognitive interviews on Skype. Two of them were leading-edge and the other three were trailing-edge boomers. These subjects had not participated in either the in-depth interviews, or the expert interviews. The qualifications and demographic information of the cognitive interview subjects is included in Table 13 (in chapter three).

*Instrument.* A semi-structured cognitive interview protocol was used to interview the subjects (Appendix E). In the protocol, text was included to be read aloud to the subjects. This provided clarifications, encouraged think-aloud responses (by providing practice to the subjects), and helped bring the subjects who were sensitive about being overly critical out. Critical opinions were encouraged. The researcher recorded notes about comprehension, retrieval, decision, response processes, and behavior for each question. Probes were used at the end of questions as needed.

*Procedure.* Cognitive interviewing methods relied primarily on verbal probes about the interpretation of questions and recall strategies. Such probes were both scripted and spontaneously created by the researcher. Concurrent verbal probing was the basic

technique that was used, as it has increasingly come into favor by cognitive researchers (see Willis, 2004; Willis, DeMaio, & Harris-Kojetin, 1999). So, this technique of concurrently asking responses to each question was adopted. Although the subjects' home was the preferred location for the cognitive interviews, location was ultimately decided based on the subjects' convenience. Interestingly, all cognitive interviews were conducted on Skype. The interviews were scheduled on June 25 and 26, 2016. Each interview lasted about an hour, an optimal suggested time (Willis, 2004) for a cognitive interview. Since the subjects were chosen on the same criteria as the participants of the interviewing phase, they initially responded to a screening protocol too (Appendix A).

**Phase II – quantitative.** The quantitative phase of this study involved scale construction, refining, and finalizing through survey development, administration of a pilot survey, field administration, dimensionality analysis, and scale reliability and validity assessments. The details of these steps, which were only indicative before the emergent qualitative phase, were later solidified based on the findings of the qualitative phase.

The major decisions made under this phase were: what qualitative data were to be used for the quantitative follow-up, how best the psychometric quality of the instruments was to be assessed, and how the quantitative results would build or expand on the qualitative findings. The main objectives of this phase were to (1) refine the two scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, and (2) test the substantive-level theories developed through constructivist grounded theory approach for their empirical verification with quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The various steps within this phase are specified in the sections and sub-sections that follow. These include

operationalization of the key constructs, details of the scale items, survey development, pilot study, sampling, data collection, analysis, validity and reliability analyses, and writing and reporting.

*Operationalization of key constructs.* The scale-items used for the operationalization and measurement of voluntary deconsumption were developed from literature review, adapted from previous research, and a majority were developed anew. In adapting scale items, the step-by-step procedure suggested by Engelland, Alford, and Taylor (2001) was employed, and care was taken when devising these mixed scales. A 5-point Likert (Likert, 1932) strongly agree/strongly disagree scale format was used for the scale items, which was popular, easy to construct, resulted in higher reliability than scales with fewer points (Lissitz & Green, 1975), and was adaptable to the affective domain (DeVellis, 2012; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1978).

The Handbook of Marketing Scales (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Haws, 2011) was scanned for scales similar to voluntary deconsumption. The following three scales were deemed useful to adapt items from: (1) The voluntary simplicity scale (VSS) developed by Cowles and Crosby (1986) and Leonard-Barton (1981), (2) The scale for socially responsible consumer behavior (SRCB) developed by Antil (1984) and Antil and Bennett (1979), and (3) the scale for socially responsible purchase and disposal (SRPD) developed by Webb et al. (2008). A critical review of these scales (presented below) strengthened the case for the need of a more holistic, representational scale for voluntary deconsumption.

The VSS (Cowles & Crosby, 1986; Leonard-Barton, 1981) focused on the degree to which consumers engaged in performing self-reported voluntary simplicity behaviors.

This treatment of voluntary simplicity disregarded consumers' attitudes and values, and concentrated only on the behavioral aspect of voluntary simplicity. The scale also seemed outdated in the context of contemporary voluntary simplifiers, who engaged in power struggles and empowerment processes that helped them gain control in a dynamic marketplace (Cherrier, 2009). In addition to the issue above, some researchers (e.g., Shama & Wisenblit, 1984) had pointed out that the degree of voluntary simplicity captured by the VSS might have been attributable to the economic hardships of the 1970s.

From a methodological standpoint, the VSS used mixed response options (14 of the 18 items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale, two were scored on a 6-point scale, and two were dichotomous). Exact scoring procedures for the 18 items were not specified (Bearden et al., 2011). The VSS also had sampling shortcomings. The original 9-item version was developed with a sample from Palo Alto, California, and the sample size was not reported. The 18- and 19-item versions were also limited to California samples. In the development of the 19-item version, half of the sample ( $n = 215$ ) were homeowners, and users of solar energy. This may have resulted in biases into the measure construction: (1) the choice of an affluent sample may have offered a different representation of voluntary simplicity behaviors as opposed to a truer representation that a socio-economically diversified sample might have offered, and (2) the resultant scale was developed specifically in an energy-conservation context, and was highly focused on energy conservation (the questionnaire contained variables such as investment in energy-conserving equipment, personal conviction to conserve energy, weather stripping, and caulking doors and windows), and self-sufficiency. Other important factors of voluntary



simplicity might have been overlooked. In the discussion of the reliability of the VSS, factor loadings for one of its six factors was as low as .31. Reliability estimates for the six factors were not reported separately, and only the reliability estimates of the summed 9- and 19-item versions were reported (ranging from an alpha of .52 to .70). The need for increasing the reliability and convergent validity of the VSS was expressed by Shama and Wisenblit (1984). In a meta-analysis of scales of materialistic values and environmental attitudes and behaviors, Hurst, Dittmar, Bond, and Kasser (2013) reported low reliabilities for material simplicity and ecological awareness measures, including the VSS. In further developing the VSS, Cowles and Crosby (1986) used a sample of middle- and upper class consumer household panel members residing in Colorado and California. This may have resulted in bias based on socio-economic status, and on geographic location. Shama (1988) validated the VSS using samples from just three metropolitan areas (Albuquerque, Denver, and New York City), making the assumption that “it is logical to propose that both the structure of and the motivation for values of voluntary simplicity and behavior will be similar in different parts of the country” (p. 861), despite the underrepresentation of geography in simplicity literature, which was a locale-specific phenomenon (Drakopoulos, 2013). Cowles and Crosby (1986) and Shama (1988) may have overlooked Leonard-Barton’s (1981) recommendation for “further refinement of the index, including tests for the applicability of items to different geographic locations” (p. 250), especially since states such as Colorado was considered to have higher rates of simplicity lifestyles adoption, while states such as New York were considered slow to adopt innovations through simplicity lifestyles (Naisbitt, 1982). Down from the six factors reported by Leonard-Barton (1981), Cowles and Crosby

(1986) suggested a three-factor model, but two-factor structures fit their data equally well. This may have been a sample-specific reflection on the measure of voluntary simplicity. Finally, the measurement of VSS in the recent years had assumed that voluntary simplicity was linked to second-hand and thrift shoppers' motivations (e.g., Roux & Guiot, 2009; Guiot & Roux, 2010), which was also a narrow approach to measurement of VSS. Among the unaddressed issues in development of VSS was the importance ascribed to the mechanical ability of consumers to do their own repair work. Such variables of self-reliance would have perhaps played a tertiary (if at all) role in the present study, which focused on baby boomers.

The scale for socially responsible consumer behavior (SRCB) developed by Antil (1984) and Antil and Bennett (1979), as well as the scale for socially responsible purchase and disposal (SRPD) developed by Webb et al. (2008) focused on responsible consumption as a result of consumers' perceptions of companies' practice of CSR, altruism, and environmental concern. This, again, was a narrow approach focusing on the environmental domain, missing consumer behaviors in response to a full range of social issues. These were measures of either consumers' attitudes or behavior, but not of both.

This critical review, then, led the researcher to approach the development of scales of deconsumption from a holistic perspective, with inclusion of both attitudes and behaviors of the construct. The researcher strove to attain a socio-economically and geographically diverse sample of respondents for the field survey. Since there was a lack of agreement on the factor-structure of voluntary simplicity, the researcher used PCA and Rasch analysis to assess the factor-structure and dimensionality of voluntary (and

involuntary) deconsumption. Care was taken to ensure, through the screening protocol, that truly voluntary instances were procured from the respondents, and that the voluntary deconsumption was not a direct result of economic hardship, resulting in a truer measure of voluntary deconsumption. In spite of the limitations of the scales mentioned above, they acted as effective reservoirs of items (careful selection was implemented). The need for more current and contemporary measures of voluntary deconsumption was expressed by researchers (Roberts, 1995; Webb et al., 2008), since voluntary deconsumption was dynamic, and asked for continual refinement as our understanding of the domain evolved over time. The present study made an effort, through the qualitative phase, to increase the understanding of the construct domain, so that the measures of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption it developed reflected current market practices. At this point, the reader should note that there were no existing measures of involuntary deconsumption, and so, all the items for it were developed anew.

*Pilot study (study 1).* Once the expert reviews and cognitive interviews were performed and adjustments made to items, the purpose of the pilot study was to further modify the surveys as needed before the larger field administration (study 2). Through an initial reliability analysis, the pilot study helped identify poorly performing survey questions as well as scale items. It helped ascertain the feasibility of the main study through a trial run (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001), and was helpful in pre-testing the instruments (Baker, 1994). The pilot study afforded many advantages: preliminary testing of the hypotheses that led to testing more precise hypotheses in the main study, changing and dropping some hypotheses, checking of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, and reducing the number of unanticipated problems (Meriwether,

2001). The researcher adopted the following procedures suggested by Peat, Mellis, Williams, and Xuan (2002, p. 123): administer the questionnaire to pilot subjects in exactly the same way as it would be administered in the main study, ask for participant feedback, record the time taken to complete the questionnaire and decide whether it is reasonable, and discard all unnecessary, difficult or ambiguous questions.

*Respondents.* The pilot study respondents were English-speaking baby boomers who were acquaintances of the researcher (or acquaintances of acquaintances) situated in various parts of the U.S., and were reached via e-mail, social media, or in person (text for e-mail/verbal/social media recruitment was approved by the IRB). The pilot study was conducted among a total of 56 baby boomers, each of whom answered both surveys on voluntary and involuntary deconsumption over a space of two weeks. The order of the two surveys received by respondents was reversed for half the respondents to achieve counterbalancing (resulting in 28 voluntary deconsumption responses, and 28 involuntary deconsumption responses per week). The researcher ensured that the sample was as diverse (on demographic variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic classification) as possible. Sampling details of the pilot study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Sampling Details of Pilot Study (Study 1)*

Week	Respondent Number	Survey Filled	Notes
1	Respondent 1 to 28	Pilot Survey on Voluntary Deconsumption	Diversity within samples (on demographic variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic classification) ensured, respondent list maintained
	Respondent 29 to 56	Pilot Survey on Involuntary Deconsumption	
2	Respondent 1 to 28	Pilot Survey on Involuntary Deconsumption	Attention paid to the order of the two surveys to ensure each respondent answered both surveys by the end of week 2
	Respondent 29 to 56	Pilot Survey on Voluntary Deconsumption	

*Instruments.* The surveys for the pilot study were developed after analyzing the in-depth interviews, and getting inputs from the expert reviews and cognitive interviews. The surveys constituted three parts: definitions, consumption- and deconsumption-related questions (section A), deconsumption scale items (section B), and demographic questions (section C). The design of the pilot survey was based on the suggestions of de Leeuw, Hox, and Dillman (2008), and the tie between the questions in the survey and the research questions addressed by the study was maintained (Anfara et al., 2002). Additional scripts (definitions of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, explanations on certain questions, skip logic, etc.) were also part of the instruments. See Appendices H and I for the survey instruments.

*Procedure.* Approval to conduct the pilot study was sought from the University of Denver's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and an exempt status was granted on July 12, 2016 (see Appendix G1). The potential respondents first received an e-mail or

message on social media with information about the study, and a link to the surveys on Qualtrics© [2016] software. It took them about 20 minutes to answer each survey. Questions pertained to respondents' attitudes and behavioral intentions about certain statements related to deconsumption (in addition to usage/consumption questions and standard demographic questions). The surveys were sought in the months of July and August, 2016. Snowballing techniques were employed. The researcher ensured masking of identity, and encouraged the participants to communicate before, during, and after the survey.

*Data analysis.* Data from the pilot study were used to determine how the items on the scales reflected their specific domains. This analysis helped reduce the number of items to a manageable number through interpretations of normality, deletion of poorly performing items, item discrimination, and initial item and reliability analyses performed using IBM® SPSS® statistics software (Version 22, 2013). Items were grouped by domain, followed by the analysis of point-biserial correlations producing Cronbach's alpha estimates. Items with estimated point-biserial correlations between .50-.96 were retained. Item estimates falling outside the desired range were removed one at a time. New estimates were assessed at each iteration, until all items fell within the acceptable range. Domains not uniquely identified were combined. The resultant instruments were used in the field administration.

*Field administration (study 2).* Following the pilot study, the process of scale development, refinement, and finalization progressed through field administration of the final surveys.

*Respondents.* A mix of convenience and snowball sampling was employed (roughly 50% voluntary deconsumption and 50% involuntary deconsumption responses) to elicit responses from 682 baby boomers (resulting in 328 voluntary deconsumption responses, and 354 involuntary deconsumption responses) – a sample size based on the requirement of about 10 participants per item (Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987). Such a sample size is categorized as very good by Comrey (1973, 1988), and Comrey and Lee (1992).

Although throughout the data collection period, the researcher sought a convenience sample using social media platforms, however, the researcher reckoned that the size, nature, and pre-specified quotas of demographics, diversity, and standards of quality (validity and reliability) could not be achieved by merely eliciting responses through social media. Placing highest importance on data quality and time constraints, the researcher utilized Qualtrics' proprietary 'Precision Panel' for study 2. The panel enabled employment of strategies for quality control (frequent outgoing reminder e-mails, digital fingerprinting to eliminate duplication, survey logic and randomization, attention filters and checks, speed checks, forced responses, screen-out logic, and meeting of quotas). In addition, a dedicated panel project manager from Qualtrics enabled the researcher to further scrutinize validation and missing/incoherent responses – both numeric and string -- through an initial "soft launch" to boost data quality. The soft launch, executed in December 2016, was based on 25 initial responses to each survey (a total of 50 responses). The overall quality of the final field data collection was greatly enhanced through quality checks at the soft launch level. After all the data were collected, the researcher analyzed the data for discrepancies and lack of variation, and was able to have Qualtrics delete and replace unacceptable responses. Overall, Qualtrics

accounted for representativeness by randomly selecting respondents out of a predetermined pool of respondents determined to be highly likely to qualify specific to the surveys of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption among baby boomers in the United States. Before the final surveys were released, the samples were proportioned to the general population and then randomized using a sophisticated vetting and security process to help ensure that respondents, validated against a national database, were highly engaged and qualified to answer the two surveys. Employment of the Qualtrics panel, ultimately, resulted in the following advantages: (a) higher diversity, (b) staying faithful to study quotas, (c) stringent quality checks, (d) enhanced validity and reliability, leading to greater accuracy of self-reported data, and (e) effectively addressing the researcher's time constraints.

*Instruments.* The surveys for the field administration were developed after analyzing the in-depth interviews, and getting input from the expert reviews, cognitive interviews, as well as from study 1 (pilot study). The surveys constituted three parts: definitions, consumption- and deconsumption-related questions (section A), deconsumption scale items (section B), and demographic questions (section C). The design of the pilot survey was based on the suggestions of de Leeuw, Hox, and Dillman (2008), and the tie between the questions in the survey and the research questions addressed by the study was maintained (Anfara et al., 2002). Additional scripts (definitions of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, explanations on certain questions, skip logic, etc.) were also part of the instruments. See Appendices H and I for the survey instruments.



*Procedure.* Approval to conduct the study was sought from the University of Denver's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and an exempt status was granted on July 12, 2016 (see Appendix G1). In addition, an amendment/modification was filed with the IRB to accommodate employment of the Qualtrics panel. The amendment was approved on December 20, 2016 (see Appendix G2). The potential respondents first received an e-mail or message on social media with information about the study, and a link to the surveys on Qualtrics© [2016] software. It took them about 20 minutes to answer the survey. Questions pertained to respondents' attitudes and behavioral intentions about certain statements related to deconsumption (in addition to usage/consumption questions and standard demographic questions). The surveys were sought in the months of October, November, and December, 2016. Qualtrics as well as the researcher ensured masking of identity, and encouraged the participants to communicate before, during, and after the survey.

*Data analysis.* Initially, data were cleaned, visually inspected, and a descriptive analysis was undertaken. Descriptive statistics (item means and standard deviations) were calculated, and item distributions were checked for normality. As differences in responses were expected based on age- and gender-related segments of the baby boomer population (as explained in the section on the review of the literature), tests of differences were conducted on each relevant variable to test the hypotheses. These analyses were performed using IBM® SPSS® statistics software (Version 22, 2013).

Principal components analysis (PCA). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA), as a dimension reduction technique, was performed. The EFA helped discover the number of factors in the two scales by revealing patterns of correlations among the observed

variables, and isolating coherent subsets of variables that correlated, distinct from other subsets of variables. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) state that principal components analysis (PCA) is the method most commonly used in the analysis of psychological data, and the same was used in the analyses. Through PCA, components were extracted by decomposing the matrix of correlations among the observed variables into its eigenvalues and eigenvectors. Other useful statistics such as communality (the portion of the variance in an observed variable accounted for by the full set of components) and proportion of variance (proportion of variance in the set of observed variables accounted for by a given component) were also computed. Factorability was checked before interpreting the PCA. Multiple decision rules were applied to extract factors including parallel analyses. The method used for orthogonal rotation was varimax rotation. This helped uncover the underlying construct or latent traits of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. The researcher ensured that assumptions of PCA were met, i.e., items/variables had an interval or ratio level of measurement, and the relationship between the observed variables was linear.

Rasch analysis: Two sets of Rasch analyses were conducted for the two anticipated latent constructs of this study – voluntary and involuntary deconsumption – using Winsteps 3.92.1 (Linacre, 2016) software. The Rasch analyses determined how well the scales worked as unbiased measures with items arranged in a monotonically increasing pattern by item position or difficulty (Rasch, 1960). When data fit the Rasch model, item and person estimates were interpretable as equal-interval units created by natural log transformations of raw data odds, within standard error estimates (Bond &

Fox, 2007). Since this study employed a 5-point rating scale, a polytomous rating scale model (Wright & Masters, 1982) was used, as presented below:

$$\ln (P_{nij} / P_{ni(j-1)}) = B_n - D_i - F_j$$

( $P_{nij}$  = the probability that person  $n$  encountering item  $i$  is observed in category  $j$ ;  
 $B_n$  = logit position of person  $n$ ;  $D_i$  = logit position of item  $I$ ;  $F_j$  = logit position of rating scale step  $j$ )

Rasch analysis allowed the researcher to evaluate the extent to which items were useful in reflecting unidimensional scales (Chao, Green, & Dugar, 2016). Rasch fit indices assessed whether items contributed to the construct as expected. Fit statistics, transformations of chi-square statistics, with expected values of the mean square (MNSQ) and standardized fit indices of 1.0 and 0.0, respectively, if the data fit the model, were used to identify misfitting items. Fit was weighted by the difference between the item and the person parameter (termed *infit*) or was unweighted (*outfit*). Underfit, or MNSQ fit exceeding a cut-off (e.g., >1.4) occurred for items eliciting idiosyncratic responses or items that were less strongly related to the measure core. Overfit, or MNSQ fit below a cut-off (e.g., .6) typically occurred for items that showed very little noise, possibly by holding a strong relationship to the measure core. MNSQ values between .5 and 1.5 are called productive of measurement by Linacre (2004, 2012), and MNSQ of .6 – 1.4 or .7 – 1.3 are also used (Smith, Wright, Selby, & Velikova, 2007; Wright & Linacre, 1994).

A Rasch principal components analysis of residuals was used to determine whether second factors were indicated by the data. Linacre (2004, 2012) suggested an instrument may be considered unidimensional if variance explained by the first dimension is substantial (e.g., > 40%), the eigenvalue for the first contrast (analogous to

the eigenvalue for the second factor in an exploratory factor analysis) is less than or equal to 2.0, and the variance explained by the first contrast is less than 5%. Person separation estimates how well items assess different levels of the measures on less-to-more continuums, and identify the number of subgroups of persons that the instrument can discriminate (Chao et al., 2016). Separation should exceed 2.0 for an instrument to be useful, and higher values of separation represent greater coverage of the construct along a continuum. Item targeting was also assessed using the Rasch analysis to ascertain if there was a sufficient number of persons at an ability level comparable to each item's difficulty. When items and persons are not well targeted, they have larger standard error estimates. Differential item functioning (DIF) was assessed across the demographic variables of baby boomer status/type and gender.

The constructs of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption had never been subjected to Rasch analyses, and this study helped provide a detailed understanding of the items assessing deconsumption by tapping on to item response theory's strengths; that is, IRT can estimate ability from any set of calibrated items, examinee's ability estimate is independent of particular items used, item values are independent of examinees, there are individual standard errors, reliability is based on statistical estimation not on parallel forms, ability scores can be interpreted in terms of a probability of success on items in a test (not just entire test level), can equate scores on different forms of test if have linking items, can deal with missing data easily, can develop alternate forms more easily, can identify persons for whom the test does not work, and can identify use of category/scale effectively. All this means that "*within the range of objects for which the measuring*

*instrument is intended, its function must be independent of the object of measure”*  
(Thurstone, 1959, p. 228).

***Validity and reliability analyses.*** The scales were finalized using validity and reliability analyses based on DeVellis’ (2012) directives. Scale purification and validation began with the content validation exercise with experts. Then, after the pilot study, data were analyzed, and coefficient alphas (Cronbach, 1951) were computed. Further evidence of content validity was provided by the item-person maps generated through the Rasch analyses for all the sub-scales of the two types of deconsumption. Construct validity was assessed through item response theory using Rasch analyses to examine the ratios between categories, test scale use, and to explore category structure and function. These analyses were conducted separately for each sub-scale/factor of deconsumption. Differences across baby boomer type, deconsumption type, and gender were also assessed. These analyses were performed using IBM® SPSS® statistics software (Version 22, 2013).

### **Anticipated Methodological and Ethical Issues**

At the point when the qualitative analysis was not started, methodological and ethical issues were anticipated from the process of in-depth interviewing, and the analysis of those data. The three-part coding approach demanded by grounded theory required constant comparisons, time, and effort on the part of the researcher, as grounded theory approach demanded a circular model of gathering and analyzing data; removing redundancies, renaming synonyms, or clarifying terms. Accurate transcription, methods triangulation, and the manual analysis to get inside the data was very challenging as well.

Also, as suggested by Lichtman (2005), telling the story of how the coding and analysis was done was also challenging.

Another anticipated issue was the discussion of emotional deconsumption behavior and processes with the study participants, which ruffled some emotional feathers. The researcher, therefore, executed strategies to help manage this emotion on an ongoing basis (Rossman & Rallis, 2010), so that the understanding of the experience of deconsumption processes could be enhanced. Throughout the dissertation process, the researcher enlisted Dr. Nick Cutforth as a peer debriefer, a sounding board, and a private circle of support. As suggested by Rager (2005), member checks, sufficient spacing between interviews, maintenance of a research journal, and the inclusion of a reflexive section on emotions in the final draft of the dissertation was ensured.

The quantitative phase came with its own set of methodological challenges. Midstream in the process, it was decided that panel data be used to ensure higher quality. Utmost care was taken to ensure the anonymity of respondents, and to meet assumptions associated with the various quantitative methods used in the study. Integration of qualitative and quantitative findings was another anticipated methodological challenge for the researcher.

## Chapter Three: Results

### Qualitative Phase (Phase I)

The qualitative phase was designed to give voice to baby boomers – demographically sizeable, yet psychologically, citizens at the margin of society. In their deconsumption, they jostle between the right and wrong, the successful and unsuccessful, the elevating and devastating, the voluntary and involuntary; aware that decisions have consequences. This was highlighted in a haiku penned by one of the participants:

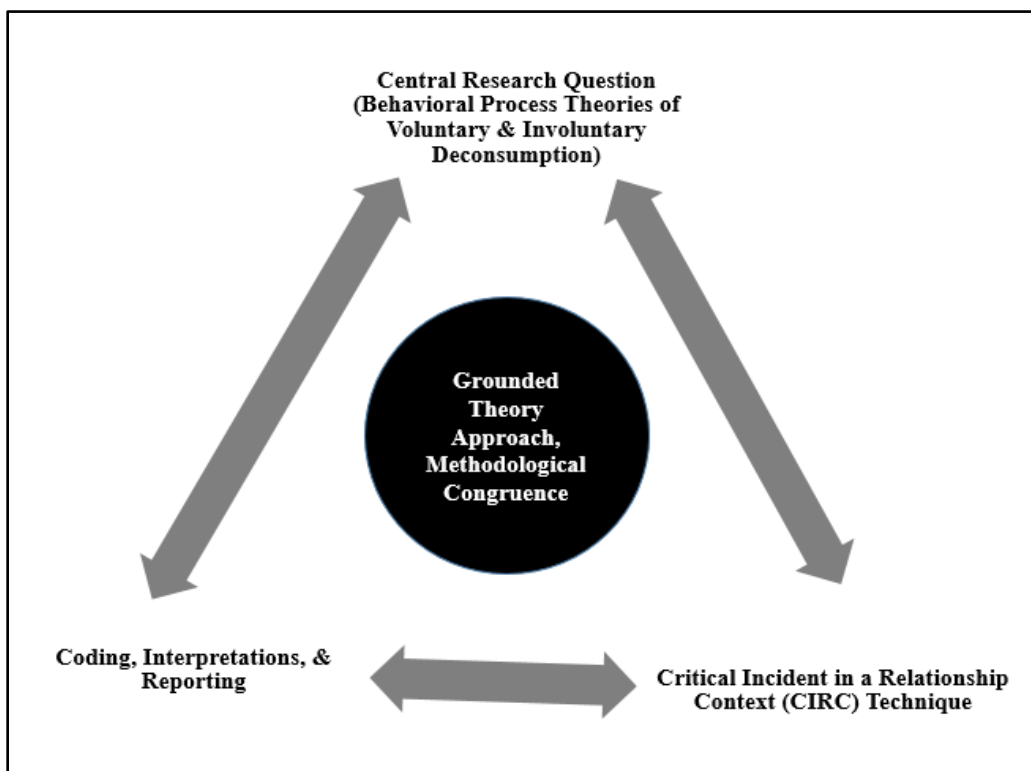
*Decisions, like dogs,  
Have tails wagging after them  
Knocking over lamps.*

This haiku has literally followed me and pops up in my life constantly. There are times in life when we are virtually paralyzed by the need to make a serious, possibly life-changing decision. Which choice will bring success and which will bring failure? Remember that every decision has its consequences (its wagging tail) and if you make the “wrong” choice, it can be devastating personally, emotionally, economically, etc. I have been faced with serious choices a number of times in my life (as have we all), and this haiku represents the predicament we might face if we make the wrong choice...the “lamp,” the chance, the object of desire may be shattered and the opportunity “broken” forever (016\_RP\_I, personal communication, Jan 9, 2016).

With the foremost objective of sharing stories of participants' deconsumption processes, and keeping in mind "...what's past is prologue..." (William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act 2 Scene 1), initial codes, memos, and categories (open, axial, and selective codes) were formulated to lead into theories of studied experiences of deconsumption (theoretical codes), with an eye on the proposed central and secondary research questions. True to idea of methodological congruence (Morse & Richards, 2002), the purpose, research questions, methods, settings, data, analyses, and interpretations of the qualitative strand of the study were kept cohesively interconnected. Deep thought was put into and attention was paid to how the research was approached, in terms of how the methods, strategies, and techniques fit together. The qualitative descriptions of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption followed the mechanics of coding related to the grounded theory approach. Consistent with the focus on open, axial, and selective coding (Charmaz, 2006), the write-ups that emerged from coding and analyses were also focused on the generation of categories (e.g., "continued opposition") leading to themes (e.g., "coping mechanisms of deconsumption") explaining the process theories of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. The chronological components of the Critical Incident in a Relationship Context (CIRC) Model, which mirror human relationships, i.e., relationship history, external and internal contexts, the critical incident, and relationship future (Edvardsson & Strandvik, 2000) were used as defining themes built from classifying related categories together (i.e., categories such as "acceptance," "substitution," "faith," and "continued opposition" made up the theme of "coping mechanisms of voluntary deconsumption," mirroring a component of CIRC Model, i.e., relationship future). Thus, all emerging categories were placed into corresponding



themes representing the experiences of participants in relation to all components of the CIRC Model. Ultimately, codes, categories, and themes, sufficiently saturated, were constructed to reveal dense process theories of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption with well-considered explanations. For this reason, various aspects of most participants' voluntary and involuntary deconsumption experiences appeared under various headings (and sub-headings) of the qualitative description; however, the focus was not on each case, but on saturating each emerging theme as it related to the grounded theory approach (Creswell, 2013). The tripartite congruence between the central research question, the CIRC Model, and the mechanics of coding, interpretations, and reporting within this section is represented in Figure 18 below.



*Figure 18.* Tripartite congruence guiding this study's qualitative reporting. Based on Morse and Richards (2002).

In so doing, 88 information-rich prospective participants were contacted, leading to 42 interviews, and 44 deconsumption instances. The main pre-specified inclusion criterion was to achieve a good mix of voluntary and involuntary instances to achieve theoretical saturation. When 11 out of first 16 participants who responded decided to share voluntary experiences of deconsumption, the screening questionnaire was modified to elicit only involuntary deconsumption experiences in order to meet the desired quota. This resulted in a total of 18 (40.9%) voluntary and 26 (59.1%) involuntary instances reported, until each category was saturated. A good mix of leading- and trailing-edge boomers, ethnicities, and geographical spread was achieved. Boomers working at (or retired from) jobs including healthcare/nursing, college professors, teachers, psychologists, accountants, musicians, writers, artists, upper- and middle-management workers, salespeople, and sundry blue collar workers located in 13 US states were interviewed.

Of the 42 interviews (44 instances), 20 (45.5%) were conducted face-to-face, 14 (31.8%) were conducted on Skype, and 10 (22.7%) were through e-mail. Of the participants, 34 (77.3%) were male, and 10 (22.7%) were female. The majority (n = 36, 81.8%) identified as Caucasian, 6 (13.6%) as Hispanic/Latino, and 2 (4.5%) as Caucasian-Latin American mix; 19 (43.2%) had post-graduate degrees, 20 (45.5%) had four-year college degrees, and 5 (11.3%) had high school or vocational degrees. The average interview time was 57.47 minutes. The average age of the participants was 64.39 years - 32 (72.7%) were leading- and 12 (27.3%) were trailing-edge boomers. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for discovery of new ideas and themes. Certain emerging themes were explored as the process went on.

Recalling their most salient/significant/memorable deconsumption experiences, 31 (70.5%) recalled deconsuming a product, 6 (13.6%) deconsumed a service, and 7 (15.9%) deconsumed an experience; ranging from automobiles to firearms, from soft drinks, distilled alcohol, processed meat, and fast foods, to gasoline, from cigarettes and refined sugar to motion pictures, from religious institutions to antiques, and from American football to alpine skiing. Some salient brands deconsumed were Volkswagen, Mitsubishi, Coca Cola, British Petroleum, McDonald's, Skoal, Delta Airlines, Fenwick, Progresso, Marlboro, Benson & Hedges, Goebel, and the Roman Catholic Church. On average, the participants began consuming these when they were 22.30 years of age, consumed for 30.41 years, initiated deconsumption when they were 52.69 years of age on average, and had experienced 11.71 years of deconsumption.

In general, the participants identified as being raised by children of the Great Depression, a "tough bunch of people," (015\_HF\_I) who did not mind shoveling snow to make pocket-money as kids, were transplanted a lot, and had experienced the "upheaval of moving" (001\_JA\_V). Of the males interviewed, 23.53% were veterans who "knew how to rough it out" (019\_ES\_I). Most participants had witnessed at least one life-changing event, and had had multiple jobs, and some were living on social security, although, 16 (36.4%) were still working. The participants challenged the researcher's (and indeed, society's) preconceived notions by indicating adept adaptation to the use of technology – 84.1% identified as being tech-savvy, 38 (86.4%) were cable and mobile phone users, 39 (88.6%) were e-mail users, and 30 (68.2%) social media users (Facebook preferred). They reported active hobbies such as crafts, model-building, fishing, horse-

riding, landscaping, snorkeling, gardening, golf, tennis, fitness, alternative healing, woodwork, playing music, and volunteering.

The following analysis focuses on the main theoretical ideas (i.e., consumption relationships, motivations to deconsume, the “aha moments” of deconsumption, consequences of deconsumption to self-identity, and coping mechanisms). Personality characteristics were so closely related to consumption and deconsumption behavior, that they are included as a prelude to the analyses. Toward the end, differences across deconsumption types, gender, and age (baby boomer types) are specified, culminating in hypotheses and an initial item pool for the quantitative phase. It is the hope of the researcher that in reading the following sections, baby boomers’ consumption and deconsumption processes are uncovered to readers.

**Voluntary deconsumption.** The following section (and sub-sections) relates to personality characteristics relevant to consumption/deconsumption, consumption relationships, motivations pertaining to voluntary deconsumption, and consequences and coping mechanisms thereof.

***Personality characteristics relevant to consumption/deconsumption.***

*Consumption as identity.* One of the participants recalled a childhood in Brazil, where healthy food was freshly prepared at home, and healthy options for beverages (water, freshly-squeezed juices) were readily available. As a college student in the U.S. west, she’d look for experiences mirroring the options-exercising freedom of her childhood: “I longed for a cafeteria where finding soda wasn’t easier than finding water. I wanted a cafeteria with more healthy food and drink options. I just wanted a water fountain from my childhood.” (006\_RS\_V). Another participant indicated that her quest

for simplicity was her way of running away from a childhood of plenty. “In the 1940s, women only had nine dresses and a little closet. When we lived in the country, there were no roads, no cars, no light pollution. I could pretend I was in the 1930s. I wish I was born in the 1910s, and came of age in the 1930s.” (011\_TT\_V). One participant looked for a masculine identity in his consumption activities: “I was a believer of right-of-passage activities for males to move from childhood to manhood. My hunting, marksmanship, sailing, motorcycle riding, consuming alcohol...made me a man.” (005\_WE\_V). In letting go of an addictive substance, a participant longed for an identity-shift from selfish to selfless, from self-centered to other-centric:

As you grow, you realize life is self-examination. Where are you going?

Where do you want to go? What do you want to be known for – the party animal?

Or a family man? Do you want to be a financially successful loner? Or a mediocre but social being? You have to set parameters. I don’t want to be known as the man who was unable to conquer addiction. I want to be known as the man who was able to sacrifice and to care (013\_BW\_V).

*Looking for a promising future.* Among the voluntary deconsumers, there was an underlying drive to learn and to live a better life. Some grew up in blue-collar communities with a “basic discontent,” that said, “we will do something more, we will go on to college, we will do something, we will be something.” (004\_MP\_V). For others, being “something” came in the form of international educational experiences, helping mold them into global citizens, and into students of culture. Others were fueled to follow their dreams, for example:

I was taught by my parents to follow my dreams. To fly. Not to follow intensive social opinion. To be true to my beliefs. When I was a kid, I'd get on my horse and go off into uncharted territories. As this "hippie chick" grew up, she wanted to be like Joni Mitchell and Joan Baez. She took off to the University of Arizona. It wasn't on her horse this time, but it was horsepower – it was her car! She got into it, and she drove off! (012\_JJ\_V).

*Positivity reflected in consumption and deconsumption.* Voluntary deconsumers came across as self-aware, and aware of the world around them. Some were avid readers of political science and history, some went to segregated schools, forbidden from playing near the "hobo jungles" – neighborhoods where the "other kids" lived. "Such segregation made me aware that deep down inside, we all are the same. We have different skin colors, but our blood is red," said one participant (007\_JO\_V). Most participants reported being environmentally conscious. Some came across as balanced, organized, detached, rational consumers with high levels of acceptance, and seekers of stability. One, in his awareness of growing up in a male-dominated society, became increasingly aware of gender bias, and distanced himself from male activities and male role models, and deconsumed the use of firearms to become more effeminate in the intellectual pursuit that brought about positivity and "softness." (005\_WE\_V). Another, in his dislike for warfare and violence in sports, distanced himself (and his son) from American football. For him, such deconsumption was to be a harbinger of positivity, justice, ethics, and peace in his life, as highlighted in his words below:

*If you claimed heaven a weather-gray board-and-batten shack  
Nestled against a Spring-green mountain  
Instead of an ascetic's gold palace or a hedonist's treasure,*

*I might be tempted to taste from your fountain (004\_MP\_V, personal communication, June 9, 2016).*

Others reflected faith, responsibility, and selflessness in their consumption: “We all have our selfish needs. We all want to have this and that. But if you can get this and that and still not step on anybody, I think that’s good and that’s the way it should be.” (MB\_009\_V).

*Torch-bearers/role models.* Voluntary deconsumers exhibited a strong desire not only to learn, but to teach, and to be role models leading by example. Some expressed “a compulsion to teach” (017\_RD\_V). “I believe my work-ethic comes from my mother, who went to work for the first time after she was widowed. She retired at 93! In what I do, I want to show my kids to be like their grandmother – vibrant, and gritty,” hoped another participant (025\_RL\_V). A spokesperson of sustainable consumption (organic foods) opined, “You have to start somewhere. You never know how you might inspire someone else to do the right thing. You might be setting a positive example whether you realize it or not” (012\_JJ\_V). Talking about his Gulf Coast beach house experience (marred by the British Petroleum oil spill), and about the role reversal from taught to teacher, one participant said,

I want to be a teacher who inspires and makes a difference. I wanna be worthy. I wanna help people. I wanna pay it forward. You see, Nature is a reconnector – I grew up learning how to fish from my dad. Now, when my dad came down to my beach house for the first time, I handed him a rod, and he asked me how to put the shrimp on, to cast it...I showed him how to hit the water, throw the bait down...all of a sudden, he had a red fish! He was hopping and hollering, and screaming, “That’s a nice one!” I guess the roles have reversed. When I was

a kid, he used to show me how to fish. Now, the student becomes teacher (009\_MB\_V).

*Role of personality in consumption control.* In general, participants considered it important for the personality traits they held to be reflected in the things they consumed. In the absence of the same (non-alignment of personality and consumption), they controlled, decreased, or ceased consumption altogether. Talking about an unsatisfactory visit to a fast food restaurant, one participant pointed out, “I am a consistent person who asks for consistency from a fast-food franchise. Arby’s needs more consistent quality control and attention to detail. They specialize in roast beef. I ordered it once, and it was so full of grease, it was just inedible. I said I was never going to go back there again. The stale oil had such a negative impact on me!” (023\_AS\_V). Some took inspiration from their professions to aid in their deconsumption experiences. For instance, a music professor confessed having to bring her sense of habit (self-control) from her music (forcing herself to sit at the piano) to her deconsumption (staying away from soda, and sticking to healthier food options). One of the respondents, reflecting back on an unfulfilled and “unsuccessful” career in the Navy, said that his “life’s submarine remained sunk,” “he felt like a failure,” and that he hoped to find “success at least late in life” (007\_JO\_V) by giving up unhealthy eating habits and dieting. Some reported channeling the stubborn and self-righteous aspects of their personalities to stand up for underdogs in the industry and for fair play, which fueled a dislike for companies that played “dirty pool,” and as a result, deconsumed products from such companies (BP, in this case). An artist, bringing her creative personality into her deconsumption of gasoline, quipped, “Never let the truth spoil a good painting! Gasoline (energy)



companies' agenda is not the truth...it's their truth, and it spoils my reality. In refusing to burn gas, I get realignment, harmony, and more energy" (035\_LJ\_V). In the case of some participants, the cause of their deconsumption was almost immediately apparent to the researcher. One such participant self-reported as having obsessive compulsive disorder. Indeed, his surroundings suggested the same – everything in his house was at a right angle, and during the course of the interview, he uttered the word “consistency” 11 times. He confessed to having “OCD at work, OCD at home, OCD in travel.” Talking about his deconsumption of air travel, he went on to explain, “Change in air travel was hard! Consistency is key. I am very routinized. I wake up at 6:18 am every day” (014\_NB\_V). No wonder then, that when his preferred airline exhibited inconsistency, he decided to deconsume their service. Similarly, in describing deconsumption of an automobile, one participant used analogies of travel and motion, such as “making your own way,” “a company moving forward,” and the call to “tread carefully as a consumer” (020\_JT\_V). One participant let his ethnocentrism become the driver of his aversion to technology:

My children spend thousands of dollars on stuff that I consider bologna! I don't know their world. I'm not a student of the world. I don't study technology. I go to Wal-Mart, and no one can communicate with me. They don't know English! All these liberals think that's the way to go! It's great to be open-minded, but let's be practical here (025\_RL\_V).

In the examples above, the role of personality as a driver of consumption and deconsumption was important.

***Definition of voluntary deconsumption.*** Voluntary deconsumption is a discretionary and deliberate process that leads to an internal, rational, and dispositional attribution based on positive motivations that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience of fairly low commitment and low attachment, which encourages elevated states of self-identity, harmony, and transformation. Such an intentional deconsumption decision, once made, is accepted as a natural phenomenon accompanying aging, and remains highly stable and controlled.

Voluntary deconsumers seemed to possess a habit of self-control, which was internalized and learned based on volition.

It's a drawing back of a need for a lot of things. You watch TV, and they're always trying to get you to buy this, or trying to plant the seed in you to buy that, and as you grow older, you see the need for this is less and less and less. A lot of the stuff that pops up on TV and newspapers, I tune out. If I don't need it, I don't try and buy it. I think it through and make a rational decision (002\_CC\_V).

Some participants, coming across as active anti-spokespeople, related voluntary deconsumption to anger, to taking a stand – a form of stubborn self-righteousness – leading to sustainability instead of rapacious consumption in times of increasing consumerism.

***Consumption relationships.*** Consumption relationships of voluntary deconsumers largely came across as dispassionate, forced as a norm, utilitarian, cluttering, addicting, and resentful. These qualities may have invoked triggers, and led to the motivations that enabled voluntary deconsumption.

*Cultural consumption.* A number of voluntary deconsumers reported their consumption as being part of a cultural norm. For instance, the culture in a small town in the southern U.S. dictates that one buy groceries stocked at a local Wal-Mart without questioning their procurement. “You walk in there and you buy. You buy agribusiness products. You buy non-organic. Oh, you buy what you can get” (012\_JJ\_V). In most college cafeterias, junk food is aplenty, there are no water fountains, and buying water is more expensive than buying sugary soft drinks. As explained by a participant, “It’s as if culturally, the American society provides one with opportunities to eat and drink bad, as it is cheaper. I wanted to experience American life, and I got hooked up on the bad stuff” (006\_RS\_V). Non-availability of a public transport system in most U.S. towns increases people’s dependency on automobiles. Culture and infrastructure demand that a car be a critical part of movement. Consumption of entertainment avenues such as a motion picture theater is considered “a normal part of courtship/dating ritual of one’s early adulthood and constitutes one of the main social activities that partners might enjoy” (040\_FS\_V). Even seemingly extreme forms of consumption, such as consumption of firearms for hunting, were considered “typical” for a rural Texas lifestyle and culture. It wasn’t uncommon for a father to see use of firearms as part of becoming indoctrinated into a culture that he himself had grown up in, and to introduce his son to it. Talking about learning to hunt from his father, a participant recalled,

He wanted to give me a sense of how important it was to use firearms safely. He wanted me to understand what it was like to take the life of another creature. He was trying to instill in me reverence for life. I can remember these things like it was yesterday...the first rabbit I ever killed...I knocked him down

first shot. He was way off and I shot him. My dad said, “Now you have to go get him, kill him.” I asked if I should take the gun, and he said, “No, we can’t waste a round of ammunition on that.” So, I had to crush the rabbit’s skull with my boot. This was just part of it. It was learning reverence for life, although in a cold-blooded manner. You shouldn’t take killing lightly. I appreciate that now. If I had a son, I would impart that knowledge to him too (005\_WE\_V).

*Utilitarian consumption.* Commodities such as gasoline invoked stories of detached, dispassionate consumption, directed only by basic criteria as availability, convenience, and price. Other forms of utilitarian consumptions reported by voluntary deconsumers were directly related to one’s job, or one’s commute to work. Air travel, for instance, was considered as something tied to demands of a job, and utilitarian:

Air travel consumed 50% of my work week. I traveled for my employer three days a week for over 30 years. These travel days were spent coaching, teaching, or selling. This travel required my spending at least two nights each week at a hotel (014\_NB\_V).

Another participant confessed patronizing an Arby’s restaurant (with apparent guilt) just because he wasn’t much for cooking at home, and because the fast food place happened to be right on his way to work. Even a seemingly significant consumption experience (such as membership in a place of worship) was reported by voluntary deconsumers as a fairly non-involved decision made over time, and not as a result of any extraordinary epiphany.

*Consumption as clutter.* Most voluntary deconsumers driven by the need to simplify and declutter spoke of their consumption relationships as ones bringing

disorganization and clutter into their lives. As one participant explained, clutter originating from consumption was a source of physical as well as mental vagueness:

I'd rather have one pair of shoes that is the bomb than a bunch of junk. I'd rather have four crystal glasses than twelve glasses from Wal-Mart. When your house is uncluttered, the energy flows through. You clear the cobwebs out of your home, and all of a sudden, they're out of your mind (011\_TT\_V).

*Consumption as addiction.* In the only instances when voluntary deconsumers reported consumption to have bordered on passion and dependency, there was a pronounced theme of addiction associated with the consumption accounts. What started as piggyback consumption fueled by peer pressure, led, in most cases, to a serious addiction. As one participant recalled,

I saw my dad use tobacco products. So, I started smoking in high school. It was a social thing. But I got addicted. Most of the guys I hung out with in high school had smokeless tobacco. It was a fit-in situation. They did it, I wanted to fit in, so, I chose to try it. The nature of the blend they used, because of where it went in your mouth...the vascular system in your mouth made you get a quick rush to your brain, which made you want to try it again. I started using it more and more. Now, I was one of the guys...I was a man! By spitting in the cup, I relieved stress. I got so habituated to it. I thought I could work through stressful situations if only I could chew on tobacco (013\_BW\_V).

*Resentful consumption.* In some cases, the usage of certain products seemed forced and elicited emotions of resentment from voluntary deconsumers. For example,

one participant felt forced into the use of a cell phone and e-mail communication, despite having a clear aversion to technology:

People resist talking on the phone or writing letters anymore. I am forced to get into e-mail. I feel people lose social skills through use of social media.

People don't know how to communicate anymore. People can't put together a letter that is grammatically correct, what with 140-character tweets! It is hurting our society. I resent technology (025\_RL\_V).

Some environmentally conscious consumers felt forced into the continuous consumption of energy (gasoline, electricity, fuel, and natural gas), and resented this. Such consumption made them long for a simpler lifestyle of less energy consumption. Others felt sorry and sad about consumption that was forced onto them. Talking about being raised in a meat-eating culture, one participant recalled her parents' belief that meat was necessary for growth, development, and continued survival. Consequently, she was required to eat meat. Expressing hatred and resentment for this, she said,

I did not care for meat, and tried to mask it by covering it with cheese or salt. Many kinds of meat I would sneak into my napkin and feed it to the dog. I felt sorry for the animals. I wish others would stop (eating them) as well. I think factory-farming of animals is a crime and the shame of our nation. If people consume meat, I hope it would be from animals who have not been mistreated, and are allowed freedom to live a healthy happy life (038\_BM\_V).

***Motivations of voluntary deconsumption (RQ1).*** When voluntary deconsumers experienced changes in consumption experiences, changes in lifestyle/culture, when consumption became prohibitive (for reasons of health, finances, or non-availability),

when they experienced life-changing events, when they felt betrayal, or when they crossed a threshold of the need for simplification, they were motivated to voluntarily deconsume.

*Changing experience or dissatisfaction.* Unhappy consumption experiences stand out in the mind of voluntary deconsumers. One participant recalled his consumption of a Mitsubishi automobile:

I had the impression that Mitsubishi was a good brand of vehicle and decided to purchase one in approximately 1990 and owned it for 3 years. The car had persistent problems with one expensive part breaking down on a regular basis – to the point where I decided to drive without replacing it. So, for much of the three-year period, I was driving a car with which I was unhappy. I sold it as soon as I could, which was not very quick as I could not afford to sell it at such a loss. Later, I learned from the news that Mitsubishi confessed that it had been systematically lying about defects in its cars for more than 25 years. At that point, I decided I would never purchase a Mitsubishi vehicle again. I realize that many car manufacturers have defects in their manufacture and would prefer to not have to pay for their errors, but the Mitsubishi case stands out for its sheer length of time (020\_JT\_V).

One participant realized that a spectator sport (American Football) that he had learned to love had changed drastically, encouraging triggers to deconsume the same. Explaining how the sport had changed, and how he wanted his son and daughter to stay away from such a consumption experience, he said,

When you start using war metaphors for your sport, there's something wrong. Good heavens! My daughter...when she got out to play organized sport...they start at age six! By the time she was 12, it matters already? She, being physically inept – although, properly enthusiastic, feels like she doesn't fit in! Goodness! What has happened to just having fun and to kids' ability to just gather and cooperate? The time my son was born, I said, "Now, wait a minute here. Is this a good influence?" There's something possibly wrong about this. I certainly don't want him banging his head into other people. It was something that struck me as a bad thing. So, I said, "If I don't want him to play the game, then, I should stop watching it." (004\_MP\_V).

Most participants who recalled the process of deconsuming addictive substances talked about how tobacco/alcohol products had become more addictive and dangerous over time, catalyzing the need and will to deconsume those products. In some cases, participants recalled the deconsumption of highly salient and involved consumption experiences (in this case, the Roman Catholic Church) based on extreme dissatisfaction. A devout Catholic (a musician in the church) recalled,

My wife and I were very active in a local parish until the sexual abuse cases dealing with Catholic priests began to surface in our area. We realized that our contributions to the organization were being used, on some level, to pay settlements of lawsuits and that some of the leaders had broken the law and used their influence on parishioners to cover up their activities. We stopped contributing and no longer attend the church (017\_RD\_V).



*Change in lifestyle/culture.* Some deconsumption experiences recalled by the participants were motivated by changing lifestyles and exposure to new cultures, such as a move away from a farm, a move to another country or another part of the U.S., and a change in jobs leading to non-exposure. Talking about his discharge from the U.S. Navy, a participant expressed the distance from sugary soft drinks by recalling, “I wasn’t privy to Navy barracks and their ever-available soft drink vending machines anymore” (007\_JO\_V). Relating the monotonous and utilitarian consumption of business air travel to a fading desire to travel, one participant decided (upon retirement, and hence, a change in lifestyle) that he would not travel in airplanes anymore, and that he would avoid crowds. “Some people like to spend Uncle Company’s money. But I don’t think there’s any motel in the world that is as nice as my house,” he rationalized (014\_NB\_V).

*Consumption becomes prohibitive.* Participants cited situations (pertaining to health, finances, and non-availability) leading to consumption becoming prohibitive, and leading to deconsumption. Talking about the decision to give up the use of an automobile, a participant confessed,

(My) health hasn’t been very good for quite some time. I had very bad problems with arthritis. It was either between going onto a wheelchair, or having my hips replaced, which I did in 1998. The surgery didn’t go well. They had to do it over again. A couple of years later, they had to replace my shoulders. I’ve had both shoulders replaced. I had a huge tumor that grew out of the shoulder as the shoulder rejected the original operation. They had to redo that. My health has been declining. I am not that active. I have to walk with a cane. It is in my best

interest (and that of the people around me) that I discontinue the use of an automobile (002\_CC\_V).

Recalling the ill-effects of sugary soft drinks, the awareness of the harm they could cause, and the desire to restore health, some participants said that their brains and bodies craved the sugar in the soft drinks. In the absence of the sugar, they would get headaches. These participants were aware that “The sugared soft drinks, they don’t kill you fast, but they kill you. When doctors start talking about ‘You keep it up, and you’re going to have your toes amputated...,’ fear becomes a great motivator!” (007\_JO\_V). Others saw the responsibility of raising a family as a motivator to eat healthier and to deconsume addictive substances bad for their health. “A man without his health cannot provide for his family,” stated one participant (013\_BW\_V). Some participants cited shortage of finances as a major motivator to deconsume. For instance, talking about maintenance costs of an automobile, one participant decided to deconsume as the costs to fix it were getting too high to justify consumption. Non-availability emerged as another prohibitive factor. Talking about the forced consumption of agribusiness grocery products, a participant said that she had known that she wanted to make a change to organic food products but was unable to locate places to purchase sustainably-produced food products. Having made the switch catalyzed by availability, she feared going back to “the dark side” (012\_JJ\_V) if sustainably-produced foods became unavailable in her area supermarket again.

*Life-changing event/s.* Some participants accounted life-changing events (such as divorce, birth of a child, retirement, or death of a spouse) as motivators of deconsumption. Divorce was recalled as both a relief as well as a painful experience.

“Thank God it was over when it was over,” said a participant, who might have been talking about the deconsumption of an automobile he had parted ways with as part of a divorce settlement. “I was enraged. I was screwed and pissed. I got out of the car. I got out of that marriage!” (002\_CC\_V). Another participant expressed relief at losing a partner to divorce, but pain at losing a farm (and the use of a hunting rifle, consequently): “I would’ve been happy to see her go, but losing the farm...it was a dark period in my life” (005\_WE\_V). Not all participants recalled divorce as a relief though. Talking about the aversion to continue watching movies in a theater (a courtship ritual), one participant said, “The emotional and psychological loss and the pain that accompanied attendance (of movies) after my divorce was so intense that I decided to avoid that experience due to such feelings of loss, depression, and sorrow” (040\_FS\_V).

*Betrayal/deception leading to rebellion/boycott.* One of the participants expressed feelings of passionate (and active) rebellion against a company after their careless operations had directly affected (and completely changed) his consumption of a beach house in the Alabama Gulf coast. His rebellion against the oil giant was understandable, as he was a person who had embraced the Gulf coast and its wildlife as his own. Drawing the researcher’s attention to one of his pictures fishing and featuring a great blue heron (Figure 19), he exclaimed, “This guy (the heron) tried to steal my fish yesterday. In fairness, his ancestors were here way before me!” (009\_MB\_V). When the BP oil spill changed everything about living on his beloved Gulf coast, he declared:

I ceased to purchase BP gasoline and stop at BP stations after the oil spill that devastated the Gulf coast. We own a home there and I was angry at the corporate greed and callous disregard for a place that I love. The deception after

the fact only made me angrier. BP attempted to blame others and did not take responsibility for its actions. We usually rent our beach house out. That summer, we had cancellations. We saw big pools of oil on the beach. It was unpleasant! When you turn left, it's the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge – three miles of exclusive property where no one can build a home, a high rise, or a dock – it's just Nature. Every day we were there, we'd walk the three miles up and three miles back...it also is [closes eyes and exhales, like in a trance]...peace! To be able to have access to that was real important to us...and to see it marred by this ugly oil washing up was hurtful. It made me angry! We used to walk by hundreds and hundreds of birds – gulls, great blue herons, pelicans – you didn't see any of them. No crabs scurrying in the sand. It was a desert. They went someplace else to find clean water. It wasn't just that BP soiled the beaches, but it put people in harm's way. It put profits over people. That doesn't seem ethical to me. I have an exaggerated sense of fair play. When I see something that is unfair, somebody more powerful taking advantage of the less powerful, I want to take a stand (009\_MB\_V).



*Figure 19.* Participant's bond with the Gulf Coast depicted as a Great Blue Heron.

Active rebellion and protest for what was right and ethical seemed to emanate from advocates of social responsibility. These feelings seemed to be deep-rooted. One participant, disgusted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill, recalled,

The whole culture...I wasn't sure we were treating our water and air right. I was willing to protest. Greenpeace appealed to me. They impressed me. They were brave. The power of a few individuals appealed to me. I was rebellious. Lies were told about Vietnam. It made me not trust establishment. Counter-culture appealed to this hippie chick. After the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, I boycotted Exxon. They blamed a drunk guy, but we know the issue was that they did not want to spend money on double-hole tankers. Forget the drunken skipper fable! As to Captain Joe Hazelwood, he was below decks, sleeping off his

bender. At the helm, the third mate never would have collided with Bligh Reef had he looked at his RAYCAS radar. But the radar was not turned on. In fact, the tanker's radar was left broken and disabled for more than a year before the disaster, and Exxon management knew it. Was it that expensive to fix and operate? (012\_JJ\_V).

One participant felt betrayed by a sport he grew up watching. "Like most American kids, I grew up with football. I was passionate about the game, loved the game, and a big fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Terry Bradshaw" (004\_MP\_V). Talking about the changing face of the sport, the participant narrated how he had decided to totally stop watching the sport (on TV and in person):

It's a very, very violent game now. We think of it as a sport, we don't think of it as people out to injure each other. Recent concussion research suggests players say, "Oh yes, they told us to hurt the other guy." By its nature, it involves an awful lot of physical contact. In my deconsumption of it, I am sending out a message of boycott. It (my message) will be out there. It will not be piling up in a drawer, it will be looked at by someone (004\_MP\_V).

This participant said that shortly after his son was born, he decided his son should not be encouraged to play football because it was physically dangerous. He decided his watching football might encourage his son to participate in the game, so, he gave up watching the game from the time his son was a year old until he was in high school and had fully established his disinterest in the sport.

Another participant expressed the feelings of betrayal by relating to the hypocrisy of the Roman Catholic Church. "I felt betrayal! The pedophilia scandal was a tipping

point. It highlighted the basic flaws of the church as an organization – celibacy in priesthood enables scandals and hypocrisy. A lot of Catholics like me are grieving. What stigma!” (017\_RD\_V).

*Need for simplification.* As some participants felt a growing desire to simplify, they did exactly that upon reaching a tipping point. One participant, for instance, downsized to a smaller home in a larger city after retirement, thereby, achieving an environment that was more aligned to the retirement lifestyle she desired, including (but not limited to) consumption of less energy, air travel, commuting shorter distances for shopping and services (and consuming less gas in the process), and leading lives with more simplification and less stress. Others actively became proponents of sustainability, upholding a life of less clutter. “I am not putting crap in the landfill. That’s the gravy on the roast beef,” said one participant (011\_TT\_V). These participants seemed very aware of the environment and the possible harm from using unsustainable products. With their deconsumption, they seemed to make long-term commitments to lessening human impacts on fauna, flora, and ecosystems. They cited health benefits, social and environmental consciousness, and the socioeconomic avenue for catalyzing change as their main motivations.

*Motivations from an attribution theory perspective.* The motivations could be analyzed from an attribution theory perspective, with an eye on their locus, stability, intentionality, and controllability characteristics. In general, these voluntary deconsumption motivations seemed to be internally catalyzed, as deconsumers were able to look internally (soul searching), be aware of non-alignment, and recognize the need to set things right, and manifest as personal decisions to change consumption. This

internally-driven decision-making process was highlighted by one participant who deconsumed American Football: “It wasn’t about what my son was allowed to do. Everything was in terms of what I was allowed to do. For me, that meant no more televised football games. Zoom! Cold turkey!” (004\_MP\_V). These decisions were also stable, controllable decisions based on resolve and stubbornness, giving the deconsumers the power to opt out of consumption of things they did not want in their lives. Also, some of the stories of rebellion, boycott, and simplification highlighted the high intentionality characteristics of voluntary deconsumption.

Table 5 summarizes the motivations of voluntary deconsumption (with additional examples).

Table 5

*Motivations of Voluntary Deconsumption*

Motivations	Product/Service /Experience	Brand	Examples
Changing Experience/ Dissatisfaction	Passenger Air Transportation	US Airways/ Delta Airlines	<i>“I discovered after my first year traveling with US Airways, that Charlotte to Greensboro was only a 90-minute drive. It was 9 pm, and they cancelled my flight, put us on a bus, drove us, and I’d get home after midnight! They did that consistently! In the last few years, travel has become very challenging (air and airport) due to reconfiguring airplanes (Delta is making seats smaller, putting more people in), and the traveling public...it’s just awful! Everything else that goes with air travel...well, on my last work trip, I reached the hotel before check-in time. They wouldn’t let me check in! Everything about the travel is awful” (014_NB_V).</i>



Motivations	Product/Service /Experience	Brand	Examples
Change in Lifestyle/ Culture	Soft Drink	Mountain Dew	<i>"I was not a college student anymore. I had a job. I could afford to eat healthier. I could spend money on buying fresh fruits and vegetables. I could churn my own fresh-fruit juices. I could go organic. It was like I was back in Brazil. I even bought a house and started to grow my own vegetables in the backyard. In a way, I felt like a cultural misfit, but hey, I have always been an outlier all my life. Just ask my parents!"</i> (006_RS_V).
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Health/Finances/Non-Availability)	Chewing Tobacco	Skoal	<i>"Tobacco became habitual. I was getting addicted to it. As I was aging, health considerations were becoming more pertinent, as I had become a father, and wanted to be healthier for my daughter and for my wife. A man without his health cannot provide for his family. One day, I fell sideways with no inkling that I would. I thought, "Aha! That's it! I am not having this stuff anymore!"</i> (013_BW_V).
Life-Changing Event/s	Motion Picture Theaters	NA	<i>"It (watching movies together) was a ritual of my courtship and marriage. The emotional and psychological loss and the pain that accompanied attendance (of watching movies in a theater) after my divorce was so intense that I decided to avoid that experience due to such feelings of loss, depression, and sorrow"</i> (040_FS_V).
Experience of Betrayal/ Deception Leading to Rebellion/	Automobile	Mitsubishi Motors	<i>"Mitsubishi headquarters in Japan made a formal apology and admitted they had been systematically lying about their cars for 25 years! They had been getting away with it, but</i>

Motivations	Product/Service /Experience	Brand	Examples
Boycott			<i>then, they got caught. They had lied consistently, which meant you could not take their word at (face) value. I felt betrayed and exposed to falsified information. I got almost nothing for the car as trade-in-value. I got one-fifth of what I should have had! I was not only disappointed, I was robbed! It left a bad taste in my mouth. My association with Mitsubishi was akin to a three-year unhappy marriage leading into divorce” (020_JT_V).</i>
Need for Simplification	Agribusiness Products (Non-Organic)	NA	<i>“Because I am a professional wildlife biologist, I have had a long-term commitment to lessening human impact on native fauna, flora and ecosystems on which they depend. Petrochemical food production and unsustainable agribusiness production of livestock for food has always been worrisome for me. I made the switch to organic and free-range food products as soon as these products became available at the local Kroger. I have been very satisfied and have made the complete transition due to health benefits, social and environmental consciousness, and the socioeconomic avenue for catalyzing change in food production to stimulate less damage to environmental quality and to fish and wildlife” (012_JJ_V).</i>

***The “aha moments” of voluntary deconsumption.*** In general, as participants recalled the pivotal moments when the voluntary deconsumption actually happened, it seemed to be a moment one arrived at after considerable deliberation. Rational decision-

making was a recurring theme. In the situations where they were faced by life-changing decisions, or had to face an addiction, they perceived the “aha moments” as moments of truth.

*A moment of rational, non-emotional decision-making.* For some, the moment of voluntary deconsumption came with no real emotion or fanfare. It was a moment succeeding a period of rational thought. Describing the moment of deconsuming the use of an automobile, one participant rationalized:

The emotion happened earlier, and not at that moment. I had made up my mind to not drive past the age of 70. I was concerned that I was physically not up to the par. I felt the other cars were going too fast, I was not watching for other cars the way I should. I was not turning my neck as I should. I did not want to be in an accident, or cause an accident (001\_JA\_V).

Another said, “My transmission acted up. They wanted so much money to fix it, I thought, “Who is kidding who?” It’s an old car. If I try to fix it, I will spend \$2,600-2,800, and in the end, I will still have a car worth \$1,000. That would be like pouring money down the drain” (002\_CC\_V). Highlighting the rational moment, another said,

The turbo charger of the car kept breaking. It was incredibly non-responsive. Merging into highway traffic became a safety issue! A turbo charger can’t be fixed. You have to buy a new one. The car was between \$2,000 and 3,000. The turbo charger would have been \$1,000. Every 6-9 months, it would break. It did that three times. I spent as much on turbo chargers as on the car itself! It was a systemic problem. I lost confidence and decided not to replace it

any more. It became a liability. At that point, I said, “I’m never going to buy another Mitsubishi. Period.” And I haven’t” (020\_JT\_V).

*A life-changing event.* For some, the moment of deconsumption itself came disguised as a life-changing event (as opposed to a life-changing motivation process leading to voluntary deconsumption, as described earlier). One participant recalled, “My divorce made me lose the farm, and along with that, I lost the use of rifles and guns that came with Mississippi country living. Being a teacher, I didn’t make a lot of money...I couldn’t afford to buy the farm out, so, I sold the farm and we divided the proceeds” (005\_WE\_V). For others, the moment of deconsumption came along with retirement, the birth of a child, or the death of a significant other.

*A moment of truth.* Most participants described the moment of voluntary deconsumption as a profound moment of the realization of truth. The realization presented itself as a moment of profound awareness of health, self, or awareness. For instance, one participant confessed not knowing that Mountain Dew was laced with sugar. It was not until she checked the label that she became aware and realized the need for deconsumption. Another participant recalled a check-up visit to a VA clinic, where they drew his blood, and he became aware that his A1C number (a person’s average levels of blood sugar over the past three months) was high enough to classify him as a type 2 onset diabetic. He felt aware and warned about the need to change his diet and to eliminate sugary soft drinks. One participant expressed profound shock at the awareness that he had opened a can of Skoal (chewing tobacco) one evening, and by the next morning, had used most of the can. The decision to quit cold turkey came swiftly.

For others, the moment of profound awareness was egged on by inspired instances. One participant decided to overhaul her consumption of agribusiness food products after reading Michael Pollan's book called 'The Omnivore's Dilemma,' Temple Grandin's 'Animals in Translation,' and multiple journal articles on bioaccumulation of toxins in animal tissues, bringing her frustration with feed lot production of beef and chicken meat, and knowledge of use of acutely and chronically toxic chemicals in crop production to a tipping point. Another participant recalled the decisive moment as a teenager, when her parents took her to McDonald's: "I watched all the families and people eating hamburgers. I couldn't eat any meat there on in...it all seemed disgusting to me seeing those people eating animals!" (038\_BM\_V). One participant recalled the moment of profound awareness around 2006 or 2007, when Catholic priest pedophilia scandals were rampant all across the US and Europe. He was writing a check to Hope Appeal (a general fund), when he realized his Archdiocese was using his money for legal services. He recalled thinking, "Is this what I want to pay for? I realized the church was a business, and it depended on me to operate in a financial system. I never thought of my faith as ebb and flow of money!" (017\_RD\_V).

Highlighting the stickiness of profound moments of truth and awareness, one participant, who eventually decided to deconsume American Football, recalled:

...an event that happened a bit earlier with this decision. It was several years before the birth of my son, but it prompted awareness and concern. It was a Pittsburgh-Cleveland game. It was a very, very notorious tackle when Joe "Turkey" Jones, lineman for the Cleveland Browns, grabbed Terry Bradshaw and flipped him and planted him into the turf; head first! Bradshaw was laying there,

and I thought he had broken his neck! I did not want to watch that! It remained in my consciousness, it remained in my thought (004\_MP\_V).

For one participant, the television solidified her own desire to simplify in a moment of awareness and truth:

I was watching these Agatha Christie shows from the 1930s and the 1940s...they did not have paper towels and napkins...I wanted to live more like that. I was taking out my garbage, and it was full of used paper towels! I was like, “What is this? Is this my life??” An ocean of garbage! It is disposable, and it is so bad for the environment. I had this profound urge to be mindful of my waste. From then on in, I refused to have so much refuse (011\_TT\_V).

***Consequences of voluntary deconsumption (RQ2).*** The consequences associated with voluntary deconsumption, in line with the motivations of voluntary deconsumption, brought positive outcomes in the lives of the deconsumers, who reported experiencing elevated states of being, reformulated and realigned self-identities, the feelings of inclusion into fruitful and meaningful movements of positive change, and full and final closure.

*Elevated state.* Most participants reported elevated states of body and mind as direct consequences of their voluntary deconsumption. One participant described having the choice to select organic food products satiating and fulfilling. Another described the will to choose as freedom. Some described giving away the deconsumed object(s) to others as liberating acts of generosity. “I had no misgivings about deconsuming firearms. I deconsumed not for negative reasons, but positive ones. I gave it all away. I’ll be gone tomorrow anyway. It is part of the late-life process – to live and to love and to perpetuate

happiness upon those around you is the greatest part of life experience,” expressed one (005\_WE\_V). Others correlated deconsumption to higher levels of awareness about self and about the world around them. For some, deconsumption brought with it greater harmony, purpose, and a drive to reverting to one’s roots. “When you’re forced to do things, you are in loss of harmony. With consumption control comes harmony,” said one participant (014\_NB\_V). “There is a difference between making a good decision and a right decision. Justice and fairness and the good decision might be two different things,” said another (017\_RD\_V). One equated eating healthy with the outcome of “looking good” (007\_JO\_V), and as a social success. Most took pride in their decisions to be environmentally aware, to be custodians of the environment, and to be pioneers within their social circles to initiate and uphold change.

*Reformulated/realigned self-identity.* For several participants, the act of voluntary deconsumption was an enabler of self-identity realignment and of harmony. Realignment of (de)consumption attitudes and behaviors as compatible with one’s values and beliefs was, for most, a consistent state of “how things should be,” and about “the sense of being steady” (009\_MB\_V). For others, it was a total overhaul of long-held beliefs so new beliefs could be aligned with changing values:

When you have it going on, it is all ego. That is great, and that is nothing. You gotta ask yourself, where does that all fit in the grand scheme of things? Ah, the ego show! As you grow older, the ego makes way for something greater. All my life, I worked to consume. Now, I deconsume to have time. I’d rather have the time than the money (011\_TT\_V).

*Movement membership.* The consequence of voluntary deconsumption for many of the participants was the sense of belonging – as members of a greater movement. Most envisioned themselves small (yet, significant) cogs of a powerful cause built around the principles of justice and fairness in society. This membership was manifest in both active actions (such as maintaining a home garden for procurement of food), to more sedate ones (such as solidarity with other living creatures and the environment). One participant encouraged the researcher to envision her belonging to a “triangle movement, with the three sides representing positive self-image fueled by rebellion, lesser environmental damage fueled by altruism, and belongingness to a grand scheme of things fueled by membership to a potent movement for justice” (012\_JJ\_V). At the close of this explanation, this participant beamed a smile, and pointed out, “That’s my Prius parked down the road. That’s part of this movement, by the way.”

*Closure.* Another major theme of voluntary deconsumption seemed to suggest its outcomes as being full and final, as harbingers of full and final closure from consumption; the implication being, that the possibility of re-consumption or remission was faint.

Table 6 summarizes the consequences of voluntary deconsumption (with additional examples).

Table 6

*Consequences of Voluntary Deconsumption*

Consequences	Product/Service /Experience	Brand	Examples
Elevated State	Beef/Processed Meat	NA	<i>“I felt healthier. Yes, I would say my decision to quit meat affected my self-identity. I felt elevated. I felt special, especially since I was the</i>



Consequences	Product/Service /Experience	Brand	Examples
			<i>only vegetarian in my family – including extended family and in-laws – as well as at work. I felt proud of being a custodian against animal cruelty” (038_BM_V).</i>
Reformulated/ Realigned Self-Identity	Automobile	Chevrolet	<i>“My dad was transferred around as I grew up, so, I never really got my feet on the ground any place. I never had a place I could call home. I was here today, gone tomorrow. Change was disquieting to me. I experienced the upheaval of moving. As an adult, my adventures in my car driving up and down mountains...I called her “my little mountain goat” ...were short-lived. I had had it with the movement. I like to be still, just like railroad tracks. I am a “metronaut” – one who uses no car, one who uses public transport – and gets where he needs to go in the least amount of time” (001_JA_V).</i>
Movement Membership	Gasoline	British Petroleum	<i>“I am not naïve to think my not buying BP gas hurts the company too much...but...I continue my opposition...and I believe I make a small difference” (009_MB_V).</i>
Closure	Chewing Tobacco	Skoal	<i>“I had closure from the tobacco. I didn’t want it anymore. Deconsumption was total and complete” (013_BW_V).</i>

**Coping mechanisms (RQ2).** Participants reported avoidance of remission by employing strategies of coping such as acceptance, substitution (a concept different from

switching behavior), leaning on faith and spirituality for increased resolve, and continued opposition.

*Acceptance.* In line with the positive, elevated states they found themselves in as a result of their voluntary deconsumption, participants felt that the change in consumption brought peace and harmony, end-states *sans* pangs of withdrawal symptoms. Many found productive hobbies such as model-building and volunteering as a symbol of acceptance.

*Substitution.* The idea of substitution that participants conveyed as coping mechanisms was disparate from switching behavior. It was the idea of moving on to a whole new realm of consumption different from the product/service/experience deconsumed. "...having mastered one skill (hunting and marksmanship), I was ready to move on to another. Now, tennis is my marksmanship," explained one participant (005\_WE\_V). The fact that such substitution was different from switching brands was highlighted by one participant, who said,

Hell yeah! I craved for it! I tried the diet colas...but they never tasted anything like the real thing. It was almost like I would rather drink nothing than drink that. I now stick to water and coffee. Another interesting thing about (it) is, when your body starts making insulin to digest these sugars...it's like flipping a switch. Your body will store fat when you're making insulin...storing a bunch of calories as fat. I substituted Coca Cola for a healthy diet. I went on a Paleo diet – a little bit of meat, and a lot of green stuff. I started buying these dang soft-flour tortillas. No more loaf bread for me. Have you read the labels on these things?

Think of carbohydrates as sugar. Anything that's not protein is sugar. The caveman never had bread, you know! (007\_JO\_V).

The substitution as not a mere switching, and a search for better options was also highlighted by one participant as describing his move away from the Roman Catholic Church as a move from religiousness to spirituality. "We haven't found anything that replaces what we had. However, we feel like we are on the path of more justice and equality," he said.

*Faith/spirituality.* Some participants solidified their deconsumption by leaning on their faith and/or spirituality. "There are times when I wonder if I hadn't had religion to hang on to, where would I have wound up? It gives you a way. It helps you. It's all part of making your way to the hereafter," said one participant (001\_JA\_V). Another confessed to being more "on the edge," but finding the answer in faith:

The detoxification and withdrawals were difficult and did cause me to be on edge, but were not unbearable by any means. My faith made it bearable. I'm happy to say I no longer have desire for the product (chewing tobacco), or for re-consumption. I depend on God. The strength to overcome addiction came from my faith in God and Christ. It wasn't human strength. I was given the strength to do what I needed to do (013\_BW\_V).

*Continued opposition.* Some participants reported the need to exhibit continued opposition to the companies/brands/products/services/experiences they had deconsumed as a coping mechanism. After retirement, in an effort to continue the deconsumption of airline travel, one participant consciously ignored and rejected kickbacks from an airline company and a motel chain. "I do not live under the false pretense of entitlement. They

think kickbacks can offset dissatisfaction from my work days? They are wrong, and I let them know they are,” he declared (014\_NB\_V). One participant reported using continued opposition and avoidance as “a shield” (040\_FS\_V). Others felt that continued boycott was a small yet significant difference they continued to make in their efforts to stand for fairness and justice. “I am not naïve to think my not buying BP gas hurts the company too much...but...I continue my opposition...and I believe I make a small difference,” said a participant. Here, he elaborates:

I continue to boycott BP products and stations. It has been said many times that this does not hurt the company, but I am not so sure. I do know many BP stations in the Gulf area are now something else. Even if it does nothing to them, it does something for me. It helps me to not forget what I believe to be a heinous act. It helps me to be at peace. It helps me remember. It’s good to remember (009\_MB\_V).

Another said,

I don’t think Monsanto will panic just ‘cause I’m buying only organic! But I know if I am gonna live, I have to eat, and if I have to eat, I wanna try to eat and consume in a way that I have the least amount of damage for other living things (012\_JJ\_V).

***Behavioral process theory of voluntary deconsumption experience (central RQ).***

By organizing the categories from the descriptions of the stories of voluntary deconsumption above, the researcher was able to saturate theoretical themes to finalize the following behavioral process theory of voluntary deconsumption. As intended, the process theory mirrors the CIRC model, as it entails antecedents and consequences of a

relationship process. As explained earlier, the consumption relationships, the motivations, the moment of deconsumption, its consequences and coping mechanisms form the cogs of this process theory. The motivations form a pot in which attitudes simmer until they reach a boiling point and spill over in the “aha moments” of deconsumption. In general, from an attribution theory perspective, voluntary deconsumption relationships are often-times forced as norms, are utilitarian, and are low on quality, commitment, and satisfaction. The process of voluntary deconsumption is deemed as an internal decision high on rationality, intentionality, stability, and controllability; leading to positive states of self-image. The theory is illustrated below (Figure 20).

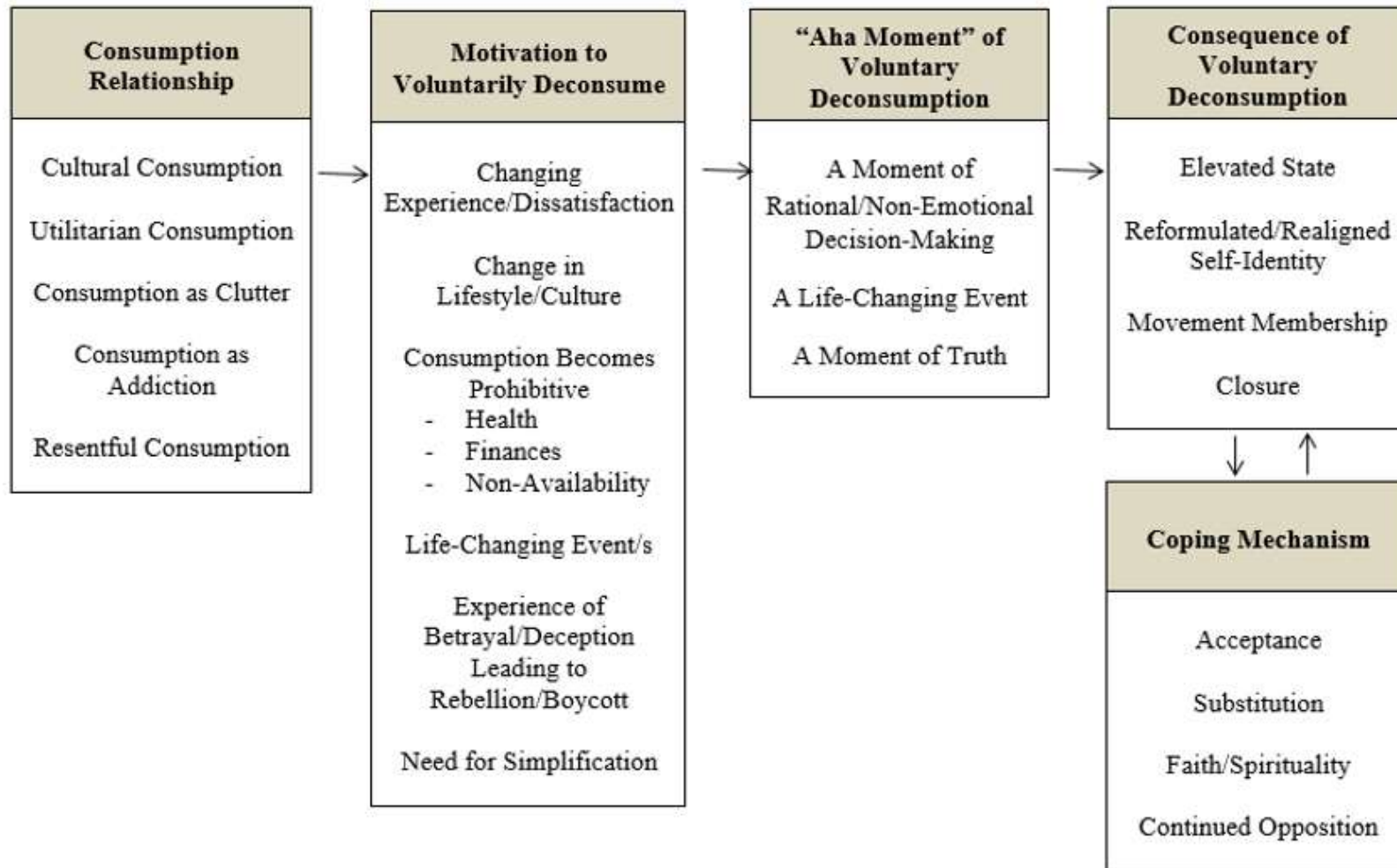


Figure 20. Behavioral process theory of voluntary deconsumption experience.

**Involuntary deconsumption.** The following section (and sub-sections) relates to personality characteristics relevant to consumption/deconsumption, consumption relationships, and motivations pertaining to involuntary deconsumption, and consequences and coping mechanisms thereof.

***Personality characteristics relevant to consumption/deconsumption.***

*Consumption as identity.* Be it seeking peace, harmony, healing, or a connection with nature through outdoor activities such as skiing and fly-fishing, holding on to cultural identity through the consumption of ethnic foods or languages, driving cars across mountain passes to match the freedom of mountain goats, addressing neighborhood security issues of childhood through home ownership or by using security cameras, or indulging in addictive substances such as smoking and drinking alcohol to attain (and maintain) a pre-disposed identity, consumption stories of involuntary deconsumers consistently reflected a match with identity and reflected high-involvement consumption.

*A bleak future.* The theme of perceiving oneself headed for a bleak, uncertain future was consistently apparent in the consumption and deconsumption stories of involuntary deconsumers. Ranging from a general dissatisfaction with life choices and situations to acute existential crises, the stories reflected insecurity, disharmony, and pain. One participant, talking about the experience of an existential crisis, pointed out that “Things didn’t turn out the way we were promised in America. I feel like my future was stolen” (010\_MT\_I).

*Negativity reflected in consumption and deconsumption.* The consumption stories were fueled mainly by negativity, such as the aftermath of a divorce. In her narration of a

divorce, a participant recalled, “I was 27. I had had enough of New York. I didn’t even tell my parents. I grabbed my son who was five, went to the bus station, and asked the man to give me a ticket to anywhere!” (003\_MT\_I). She went on to say that her current-day gambling was her escape route, and in a way, she was still running from a divorce: “When I go gambling, nothing pains. Nothing hurts me. I am still running.” While some participants reported being in debt as they never cultivated the habit of saving, others confessed to being reckless spenders:

When I was younger, I thought my money was “funny money.” I spent without restraint. I am in debt now. It is like a sword hanging over me. I have always thought I am outstanding. I should have a comfortable retired life, don’t you think? But I don’t have it (018\_MO\_I).

*Unworthiness.* Some participants showed a general sense of unworthiness, and of not having achieved more in life. Others reported having to deal with contradictions, incongruities, obsolescence, and regrets in their lives. One participant identified as being “a Jack of all trades, master of none,” and said that “Sometimes, in trying, I am trying. A just man falls seven times a day” (001\_JA\_I). One participant, who was aware of his lack of eye-contact with the interviewer and lack of confidence, pointed out nervously, “I am an extroverted introvert. I look at your shoes and talk to you” (010\_MT\_I). This participant, in his quest for meaning in extreme right-wing, conservative religious beliefs, and membership in a “high-demand” religious group (C.T. Russell’s Bible Student Movement), and in not having finished college, felt unworthy and “...directionless...rudderless.” The theme of being unworthy and of quitting came to the fore in one participant’s recall of his childhood:



I was born one morning when the sun didn't shine...my mother made me take piano lessons from the first to the sixth grade, but my piano teacher told her she was wasting her money, so she finally let me quit. Well, I have quit before, and have quit (playing tennis) again (041\_SS\_I).

*Role of personality in consumption.* Participants' personalities were at the fore of the products/services they had to deconsume. A rock band member and singer/songwriter (consumer of fast food) reported trying to find an identity in rock band membership. Performing gigs in bars, class reunions, and being "surrounded by lots of cans of beer, burgers, fries, and everything fried." Easy access to alcohol made him someone "bordering on alcoholism," which even reflected in a song he wrote:

*Tell me do you think it'd be all right  
If I could just crash here tonight  
You can see I'm in no shape for driving  
And anyway I've got no place to go  
And you know it might not be that bad  
You were the best I'd ever had  
If I hadn't blown the whole thing years ago  
I might not be alone (010\_MT\_I).*

In his consumption of fly-fishing equipment, one participant reported training himself to think like a fish. Recalling painful episodes of being bullied on the way to and from school, he recalled wading river streams to protect himself from bullies. The attachment to the river for solace continued into his adult years, and he often found peace in the activity of fly-fishing. In a pensive manner, he observed, "They say you cannot step in the same river twice. Well, I have stepped in the same river again and again all my life" (015\_HF\_I). Yet another participant, identifying herself as an outsider who was

always on the fringes, reported rearranging her entire life to be closer to her children and grandchildren, and becoming a disorganized hoarder. As someone who had rearranged her professional life when she became a mother, she was, in her retirement too, seeking identity in her family (see Figure 21):

My whole move from Michigan to Colorado, my entire retirement...is centered around moving closer to them. After the kids left, I filled up their rooms with stuff...boxes...some of them haven't been opened in 30 years. I am moving those same boxes around now (033\_DF\_I).



*Figure 21.* A life contained in boxes.

Another participant, associating his childhood with the word “bad,” and admitting to being known as “an accident,” reported a rift between himself and his father. In a tone of being done in by society, looking to run away from a childhood of oppression, and trying to find his own masculine identity in his consumption of cigarettes, he said,

My father was not educated. I wanted to go off to graduate school. In choosing a graduate school, my primary prerequisite was that it had to be as far as my car could take me from him. I drove from New York to California. I

would've gone to Hawaii if they had a bridge! I had no idea then that the world could be so mercenary. I was a very naive and idealistic young man. I had this need to be seen as educated, knowledgeable, and sophisticated – all the things my father was not, and I wanted to be – all the things I looked for in smoking (016\_RP\_I).

Another participant, talking about his consumption of smoking, recalled an incident from when he was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade: “I never fit in. My teacher read out loud in class once, “The quietest of them all was [First and Last Name of the participant]!” Recalling the “noise of rebuke and abandonment,” he talked about his consumption of cigarettes: “The cigarette I really miss is the one I had just before I went to bed. The house was quiet. I was quiet with my cigarette. It was the only one that understood me” (026\_DT\_I).

For some, consumption was a way to be consistent to their personalities, and deconsumption a trigger for inconsistency in personality. Having lost a job and a once-close bond with a daughter, one participant turned to junk food to fill voids in his life. Having grown up in the Mississippi Delta in times when groceries were rationed, one prepared for the worst, and had “dangerous neighborhoods” to live in, a participant (consumer of a security system) reported having “a need for security” (022\_GF\_I).

Another participant, a librarian by profession, alluding to his attention to detail, precision, love for rules of cataloging, punctuation, and spacing, declared, “I am kind of an obsessive compulsive person about a lot of things. I like my lawn to look perfect, I like things in my garden arranged symmetrically. The things on my desk have to be at right angles” (023\_AS\_I). For this consumer, who looked for consistency and control in his

consumption, deconsumption brought inconsistency and loss of control. One participant, raised in a religious, conservative family, identified as being “always a good boy...the conservative little fat boy who always wanted to be a priest” (024\_CF\_I), and in his priesthood, reported feeling “caged and isolated, like living in a mayonnaise jar.” For this lapsed priest, the consumption of passenger air travel was an escape from a lonely, sheltered life, and a way to “break free and fly.” For others, consumption held deep meaning lined with their life experiences and personalities. A consumer of antiques, narrating his need for security, preservation, and protection (which he reported finding in the activity of antiquing), said,

Mom developed leukemia when I was four. I never saw her after that. She died when I was six. Parents don’t talk to kids about why they do things. They just do them. So, I was made to live with my maternal aunt. Only, she wasn’t an A-U-N-T. She was a C-U-N-T! “If I am dead by the time you come home, it’s not your fault,” she’d tell me every single day! My entire childhood was my brother trying to kill me. Literally! He tried to electrocute me. I was the good kid, but no matter how good I was, I was never good enough. Antiques, to me, became a way to ensure preservation and protection (028\_LM\_I).

***Definition of involuntary deconsumption.*** Involuntary deconsumption is a forced and undeliberate process that leads to an externally-fueled situational attribution based on negative motivations that consumers have to make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience of high passion, commitment, and attachment, which encourages compromised states of self-identity, disharmony, struggle, irresolution, and loss. Such an unintentional deconsumption decision, once made, stays in the realm of

denial, remains highly unstable and uncontrolled, and encourages indecisive remission and re-consumption.

Involuntary deconsumers seemed to see it as a loss of self-control, which was externalized and not based on one's volition.

Involuntary deconsumption is a concerted/contrived effort arranged externally; a compulsion, as I have no choice but to deconsume. It's out of my hands. It's a decision that others make. It is an end of freedom to choose. It is a belt-tightening experience (016\_RP\_I).

In the examples above, the role of personality as a driver of consumption and deconsumption was important.

***Consumption relationships.*** Consumption relationships of involuntary deconsumers largely came across as passionate, involved, joyful, addicting, and having a deep meaning. These qualities may have made the deconsumption difficult and painful.

***Cultural consumption.*** A number of involuntary deconsumers reported their consumption as being part of a cultural norm. For instance, the link to eating well was made by one participant to growing up in a southern US town, where memories of mother's cooking, a vegetable garden, fried chicken, cornbread, greens, and sweet tea were invoked. A Hispanic participant, in his quest to be a "mainstream American," aligned his consumption of food to the aspired culture. Interestingly, another Hispanic participant held his consumption of ethnic food dear, which solidified his culture and upbringing where eating spicy food on a daily basis was a norm. He said,

I grew up eating very spicy foods such as chili peppers often grown in our home garden or picked fresh from the local farms in Southern Colorado where

I'm from. I particularly enjoy roasted green chilies, which is a staple of the Southern Colorado and New Mexico regions. In the family home as a kid, we would eat spicy foods on a near daily basis, certainly a couple times a week at the minimum. I could and would eat very spicy foods at will and as I aged, I'd seek out the best examples of food stores and ethnic restaurants all along the Front Range from Pueblo through Denver. I've gone so far as to interview older Hispanic ladies from my hometown of Pueblo (including my own mother) in order to learn how to make the perfect pot of green chili (039\_JR\_I).

One participant related the culture of a college and profession (military) to explain his consumption of (and ultimately, dependence on) alcohol:

I went to a college (Brown) where alcohol was widely consumed after 5 pm, and every weekend. This was the time when the Korean War veterans were returning to university, and as leaders, they were set in their drinking and consuming habits. Upon graduation, I entered into the military where the officer's club was the central social outlet: happy hour turned into dinner time with alcohol frequently (034\_JH\_I).

*The joy of consumption.* Consumption was consistently deemed joyful by involuntary deconsumers. A deconsumer of beef/processed meat joyfully remembered her consumption by exclaiming, "Um hum! I loved hamburgers! Beef tacos were delicious...and *carne asadas*...ohhhh [shutting eyes and clasping hands] so good! *Menudo* was one of my favorite soups" (008\_LJ\_I). Another participant, who began playing tennis in his twenties with college faculty and students on a regular basis, remembered becoming a fair player who found the experience mentally relaxing and very

rewarding. Another participant, a consumer of alpine skiing, narrating a “favorite memory of high school,” joyfully reminisced a senior trip to Breckenridge. Not having spent a lot of time with her friends in high school, she described the skiing trip as a joyful, uniting experience:

The three-day, student-only trip to Breckenridge with nearly 100 classmates left very happy memories with me, which make me smile even 32 years later. Skiing together magically stripped away all the silly cliques, the limiting boundaries we had placed on ourselves in our effort to ‘define the other.’ We all laughed together, we all skied together, we compared our skills (and lack thereof) in such a silly, carefree way – it was a nice way to challenge the dividing subcultures that had so defined our high school experience in the early 1980s. Thus, I associate skiing with something really special – as a large group, at the dawn of our adulthood, skiing had given us the means to successfully challenge our previous ‘reality’ of required tribalism – we had thought the only reality was Them vs. Us. This division within community is literally screamed from films of my time: *The Breakfast Club*, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *The Outsiders*, and *Revenge of the Nerds*. But, this skiing trip planted the seed of possibility of a different type of community where a shared experience could be a bridge that connected those with different beliefs, values, and abilities with each other. We became involved in the independence, freedom, and fun that was skiing (032\_LB\_I).

*Consumption as security.* For some, consumption meant security. The use of a security camera at the entrance of his residential community enabled one participant to



observe vehicles and people entering/exiting a community in a neighborhood where crime was high, and where his wife would be alone at nights at night. To counter his apprehension and stress, he depended on the security camera to provide added assurance. “I think that as we get older, security becomes more important to us. With the camera, I felt more secure. It was another layer of security against fear of the unknown,” he said (022\_GF\_I). Another participant passionately (at times, crying profusely) equated the consumption of antiques to a way to ensure protection. In an effort to get away from an “evil aunt” who would not take the stairs down to the basement, the participant, as a kid, began spending a lot of time in the basement, collecting and refinishing antiques. Exhibiting high self-awareness in his consumption, he explained,

Antiques really saved my life when I was a kid. Because my aunt wouldn't come down there, I eagerly went down to the basement to get away from her and also get involved in doing the antiques thing. In my antique collecting, I was a protector. I was protecting the soul of a painter. I was protecting the life of a child who had made a rug. It wasn't just decorating. Some kid's hand worked on that rug for a year. The representation of humanity and a person's spirit needed to be preserved, even as I tried to save my own spirit [sobbing profusely]...there I was, going through life in antiques trying to preserve my own life (028\_LM\_I).

*Consumption as addiction.* The consumption of addictive substances was frequently reported by involuntary deconsumers as passionate and as an inducer of dependency. What started as piggyback consumption fueled by peer pressure, became, in most cases, a serious addiction. One participant recalled a dramatic increase in his

consumption of cigarettes during times of stress and relaxation. “Even when it was bitter and made me cough, I still wanted another cigarette. I would smoke like a chimney,” he recalled (016\_RP\_I). Another participant, recalling a spike in cigarette consumption, recalled,

My parents would blow smoke into my face and tell me not to smoke!

Talk about mixed messages! I wanted to find out what it was all about. So, I began smoking occasionally my freshman year at university. I smoked because I liked it and also to relieve stress, as I felt different...I never fit in. That’s the beauty of smoking – the effects, the highs you get are momentary. The puffs keep you going. I went pretty fast from 2-3 a day to a pack-and-a-half a day (026\_DT\_I).

Another participant, forced to eat junk food as a kid (because his mother worked and did not cook for him), recalled the take-out junk food as convenient, tasty, satisfying, and quick. He recalled becoming dependent on pizzas and burgers seven days a week for one meal or another, which he found extremely flavorful. “I responded to fat and salt,” he recalled (018\_MO\_I). In a failed attempt to quit addiction, one participant recalled replacing smoke with sugar: “I quit smoking two-and-a-half years ago – it was March 18<sup>th</sup> of 2013, 10:45 pm was my last cigarette. I put on a lot of weight (35 pounds) trying to fill the void, eating sweet stuff” (021\_JD\_I).

*Consumption as deeper meaning.* For a majority of the involuntary deconsumers, consumption relationships held a deeper meaning than was apparent to casual observers. Linking his consumption of fly-fishing to the memory of his grandfather taking him fishing, a participant described fly-fishing as a cerebral connection to his roots as well as

to the waters of the rivers. “Man has a connection to flowing waters,” he opined. Categorizing fly-fishing as an activity that demanded a lot of skill and intelligence, he claimed that in the consumption of it, one had to work the streams – learn how to read a stream, learn about the life of a river, learn what the trout was thinking. He recognized his fly-fishing as a precursor to his profession (a clinical psychologist), which required him to do a lot of watching and observing, “just like watching the river and the trout” (015\_HF\_I).

Talking about his consumption of cigarettes as a quest to attain manhood and sophistication, one participant recalled being a fan of the movies with famous scenes of men lighting cigarettes for women. “When they would have company, they would open up their gold cigarette case and offer their lady guest a cigarette. I wanted to be older, sophisticated, and knowledgeable about the world,” he recalled. Equating smoking to a status symbol, he recalled “standing there looking suave and sophisticated smoking a cigarette...an allure, feeding a desire in your brain...Benson & Hedges...oh, so British, so sophisticated” (016\_RP\_I). This participant might have aspired for the sophistication depicted in the print advertisement depicted in Figure 22.

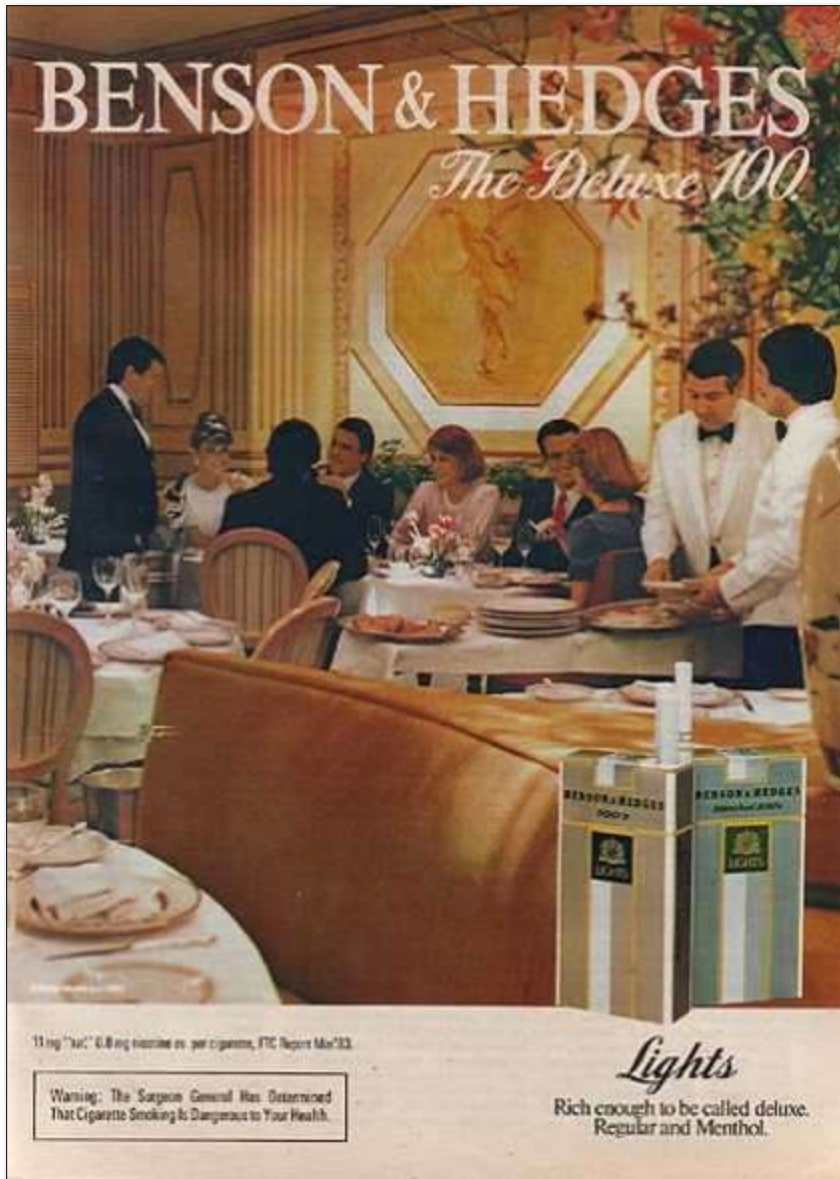


Figure 22. A Benson & Hedges print advertisement from the 1970s.

Another participant regarded her consumption as a status symbol. Talking about a hard childhood in New Jersey, where she did not have a father, and a safe environment to live in, she recalled living in a gloomy apartment above a garage. Initially, a move to Denver did not bring much solace either, as she had to live in a very insecure neighborhood with sub-standard schools for her children. She recalled, “My dream was

to have a home in Wash Park, and it came true!” Categorizing her acquisition as a status symbol and as a proof of “having made it,” she recalled her consumption of the house with pride: “When I walked into that house, it hugged me, and I hugged it back. It was my forever home. It had a waterfall, a front porch swing, a fireplace, green tiles from the Governor’s mansion, a hot tub, and a three-car garage” (029\_JR\_I). One participant saw his consumption of air travel as a means to challenge his conservative, small-town upbringing. In his traveling, he was trying to be a student, and trying to learn a new perspective and to attain growth. He linked his consumption to a sense of freedom.

Categorizing skiing as a “defining activity,” one participant, an avid skier for most of her life, described her involvement in the activity in detail:

I would say that we spent significant discretionary dollars on this sport over the years, in the purchase of equipment, tickets and passes, lessons, commuting to and from, and even the ‘collateral expenses,’ namely, securing hotels, and dining experiences around this chosen activity. Skiing was one of those defining activities, which we centered much of winter social and relaxation events around. The normal stress of our fast lives was mostly balanced by our outdoor recreational pursuits of skiing. We loved it, and this activity is the impetus for one of our family’s mottos: Those who play together, stay together (032\_LB\_I).

Fondly recalling the exhilaration of sweeping downhill at high speeds, she enjoyed testing her physical ability to navigate trees and moguls. Her passion for skiing enabled her to obtain approval from her father, who was also an avid skier. After her marriage, skiing became a way for her to connect with her husband. She expanded her

friend-group to include daring skiers, those who would happily join her (and her husband) on a trek up an isolated mountain in pursuit of the few minutes of a fast downhill descent. “Skiing became our entertainment, our sport of choice, our therapy, our social program, our religion,” she declared. She even began to pay for her young children’s skiing lessons. This shared activity brought her family closer, as she fondly recalled, “We found a new rhythm within our family, one that centered on lots of laughter and learning to love and embrace the slopes.” Her family would ski every other weekend, and took several winter holidays to more far-flung resorts. Holidays and spring breaks were spent skiing at various resorts too. The role of skiing as a means to build stronger familial relationships was highlighted by her when she recalled: “I have a particularly fond memory of my daughter skiing on an empty slope with me bellowing out a beautiful song as she swished through the new powder. She literally sang her happiness into the sky. That memory forever made her ‘Joyful Jill’ to me.” Solidifying skiing as a spiritual, mystical activity, she said, “There is nothing like finding your own path up and down a snow-capped mountain. I am obsessed with mysticism, and skiing has long been my and my family’s church - we challenge ourselves to find each other and God in the snow-covered mountains” (032\_LB\_I). Here, she passionately describes one transcendental experience while skiing:

One of the last times I visited Crested Butte, perhaps my favorite Colorado resort, I rode the lift up with a peaceful man in his 80s. Frankly, I was pretty surprised to find him out in the snow, as he hardly fit the ‘typical profile’ I had come to expect in my lift-mates. He told me that he had been skiing for most of his life, but it really wasn’t until his 60s that something clicked for him. Before

then, he said he would have good days and bad days, and much of the Mountain was not accessible due to his skill limits and his own fear of falling (failure). But, then – almost suddenly – all the Mountain became possible for him. I don't think I really understood what this wise man was trying to tell me then. It didn't really seem relevant at all to me, still clutching onto my visions of personal power, still in pursuit of the Rocky Mountain High. Now, I know I met a Master on that mountain who whispered to me something I needed to hear...I hope to be able to weave that whisper into a new, more accommodating skiing experience for my family because our perspective on what that experience actually is has broadened and evolved to meet us where we are at (032\_LB\_I).

***Motivations of involuntary deconsumption (RQ1).*** When involuntary deconsumers experienced changes in consumption experiences leading to dissatisfaction, when consumption became prohibitive (for reasons of health, finances, or non-availability), and when they experienced life-changing events, they were motivated to involuntarily deconsume.

*Changing experience or dissatisfaction.* Unhappy consumption experiences stand out in the mind of involuntary deconsumers. Talking about the experience one participant had with the deconsumption of a security camera system, a participant recalled reluctantly having to give up the use of it because his residential community management had decided to discontinue usage of security system due to budget constraints. Another participant, passionately talking about the deconsumption of a country/culture (Cuba), expressed his dissatisfaction of living in an uncertain and insecure environment:

No legislation. No universities. No liberty. No freedom. The communist revolution in Cuba drove people out of the country. The government became the sole owner of businesses, education, industries, and land. They'd put people in jail or kill them. People were cornered. There was insecurity, uncertainty, dissent, and widespread dissatisfaction (031\_DR\_I).

*Consumption becomes prohibitive.* Participants cited situations pertaining to health, finances, and non-availability leading to consumption becoming prohibitive, and resulting in deconsumption. A participant had to deconsume Spanish dancing when her knees gave out, and dancing became too painful. Citing an injured knee, and having to undergo a meniscus surgery, one participant reported quitting playing tennis. Another participant deconsumed the regular use of a fitness center when he realized that he was unable to walk any great distance without the use of a walking stick.

Talking about the pain accompanied with smoking, a participant recalled periods of time when it became difficult for him to breathe, and how he would start coughing a lot. "I had "quit" many times before but that last time, I was motivated. We were starting to hear how cigarettes were bad for you. I did not look sophisticated smoking anymore. When society told me to quit, baloney! I didn't! Then, I was wheezing" (016\_RP\_I). The fear of bad health was also reflected in another participant's deconsumption of smoking. He began to worry about the ill-effects of smoking. For him, the process of deconsumption started with frequent attempts to quit, which usually lasted only one or two days. Eventually, the fear coupled with the use of nicotine chewing gum helped him quit. For others, the fear of alcohol addiction and what it was



doing to their health was so big that they received ultimatums from their families to “join Alcoholics Anonymous, or find new friends and family” (034\_JH\_I).

Motivations to deconsume brands such as McDonald’s and Coca-Cola, as well as sugary foods were attached to reluctance, but at the same time, the fear and embarrassment of being overweight, as expressed by one participant: “I reached a point where I was embarrassed to get on the scale. My blood pressure was out of control and I was taking six medications a day (some of them twice a day). I felt lethargic, and was finally faced with the reality of gastric bypass surgery. I knew the primary villain was McDonald’s” (018\_MO\_I). A deconsumer of Coca-Cola said that his physician had warned him against continuing the consumption of the sugary drink, which could lead to diabetes. “Health hazards started coming to the forefront – I didn’t want to, but I was forced to see the connection between sodas and diabetes and obesity,” stated the participant (019\_ES\_I). Another participant, a deconsumer of refined sugar, reported feeling overweight, slow, sluggish, tired, and fatigued; and having too high a BMI, as pointed out by his cardiologist. These deconsumers faced the situation reluctantly by going on low-carbohydrate, non-sugary diets such as the Atkins Method, and by eliminating coffee, fats, soda, and sugar from their diets.

In some cases, consumption became prohibitive for financial reasons. One participant narrated the deconsumption of passenger air travel due to retirement and a drying up of funds available for discretionary travel. “I choose carefully now. Hmmm! Deconsuming basically began when I retired to Oregon. With limited retirement funds, all expensive life choices (including travel) had to be out,” he reckoned (018\_MO\_I). One participant, who had made most of the payments on her house mortgage, was forced

to sell her home in the Washington Park neighborhood in Denver because of a downturn in the economy. “I was forced to sell my home in Wash Park which I loved dearly. I saw the train wreck coming. I couldn’t pay the mortgage,” she painfully recalled (029\_JR\_I).

Another motivation of involuntary deconsumption pertaining to prohibitive consumption was non-availability. A participant had to deconsume the activity of saw-sharpening because of the closing of traditional saw-sharpening shops. Another participant reluctantly deconsumed a variety of Progresso soup when it became unavailable in Publix, his grocery store of choice.

*Life-changing event/s.* One participant, who viewed alpine skiing as an avenue for building stronger familial bonds, had to deconsume the activity she held dear to her heart due to a life-changing event, namely, a life-threatening injury to her son. The injury triggered a significant and lifelong mental health illness, and forced hospitalization. The consumption of skiing had disappeared from her life, and dark clouds of depression took over. Talking about her son’s mental state, she shared, “He had been silently struggling with major depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, and PTSD, and finally told us that he just wanted to die and had tried to commit suicide three times” (032\_LB\_I). The participant also shared some of her son’s “therapeutic artwork” before she got his diagnosis and medication regime in place. As depicted in Figure 23, the artwork represented evidence of his state of mind in the throes of an uncontrolled psychotic and life-changing event.



Figure 23. Artistic evidence of an uncontrolled, psychotic, life-changing event.

Some participants cited the death of a spouse as a motivator of deconsumption, while for others, it was a life-changing event such as retirement. One participant attributed his deconsumption to a “metaphysical existential crisis” that he had “repressed for a long time, and it blew up” (010\_MT\_I) in his life. For another participant, a life-changing event (a move to another place) motivated the deconsumption of antiquing:

I moved to Denver to a smaller house, which could not handle 15 years of antique collecting material. It wouldn't even look good here. Purchasing a much smaller and more modern home and moving to Denver required selling off 98% of my collection. I also had to hire and rely on someone other than myself to value and sell my collection (028\_LM\_I).

*Motivations from an attribution theory perspective.* The motivations could be analyzed from an attribution theory perspective, with regard to their locus, stability, intentionality, and controllability characteristics. In general, these involuntary deconsumption motivations seemed to be externally catalyzed, as deconsumers attributed motivators that were not in their control, experienced non-alignment, fear, or pain, and reluctantly accepted the deconsumption decision. This externally-driven decision-making process was highlighted by one participant's deconsumption of a favorite brand of soup when it became unavailable in his grocery store: "Company headquarters makes the decisions, I don't" (023\_AS\_I). These decisions, based on forceful reluctance, were largely unstable, uncontrollable, and led to perceptions of loss of power and control. Also, stories of joy and meaningful consumption highlighted the low intentionality characteristics of involuntary deconsumption. Describing the instability of his decision to involuntarily deconsume soft drinks (Coca Cola), one participant recalled:

I tried. The next day I made it a point to not drink, but then I'd have one. I had headaches. I wanted that taste! It's an addiction! I tried to substitute soda with water or coffee. It is hard. It isn't something I can do cold turkey [snapping his finger]. I could not be stronger than my best excuse (019\_ES\_I).

Table 7 summarizes the motivations of involuntary deconsumption (with additional examples).

Table 7

*Motivations of Involuntary Deconsumption*

Motivations	Product/Service /Experience	Brand	Examples
Changing Experience	Country (Culture)	Cuba	<i>“Contrary to my will, I had to abandon my country of birth, because of philosophical and religious convictions which were not in accordance to the statements of the new dictatorship in place governing my country. I could have faced the consequence of being put in jail or ultimately being killed” (031_DR_I).</i>
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Health/Finances/Non-Availability)	Soup	Progresso	<i>“There’s a particular variety of Progresso soup that I really like, but it hasn't been available at the supermarket (Publix) where I shop for some time now. According to the Progresso website, they still make it, but my store has not had it in a long time. It’s too much trouble to go somewhere else for soup. I am set in my ways. I keep looking for it. Company headquarters makes the decisions, I don’t” (023_AS_I).</i>
Life-Changing Event/s	Alpine Skiing	NA	<i>“Skiing went out the door for me and my family with a life-threatening injury to my son. The injury likely triggered a significant and lifelong mental health illness – he needed to be hospitalized in a psychiatric facility, as he presented a clear risk to himself. He had been silently struggling with major depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, and PTSD, and finally told us that he just wanted to die and had tried to commit suicide three times. We have</i>

Motivations	Product/Service /Experience	Brand	Examples
			<i>been advised that a formal bipolar disorder diagnosis is likely, but takes time; we apparently have ‘caught’ the development of this illness early. The suicide rate for bipolar males is quite high, particularly if left unmanaged. He had to be re-hospitalized when he engaged in alarming self-injury behavior when he returned to school” (032_LB_I).</i>

***The “aha moments” of involuntary deconsumption.*** In general, as participants recalled the pivotal moments when the involuntary deconsumption actually happened, it seemed to be a charged moment of emotions, realization or reckoning, or at the extreme end of that spectrum, a life-changing event. The perception of being a victim was a recurring theme. In the situations where they were faced by life-changing decisions, or had to face an addiction, they perceived the “aha moments” as moments of truth.

*A moment of emotions.* Involuntary deconsumption invoked negative emotions in the deconsumers, with words such as “sad,” “disappointed,” “discouraged,” “scared,” and “broken” appearing in people’s descriptions consistently. One participant, insecure at his own admission, reminisced about the moment of having to deconsume a security camera in an emotionally charged manner: “The (residential community) management said they would get the security camera repaired and back online. Weeks and months passed by, and still nothing! “It is out of order,” they’d say. Finally, I resigned. I was disappointed and discouraged” (022\_GF\_I).

*A life-changing event.* For some, the moment of involuntary deconsumption was not just fueled by a life-changing event, the occurrence of it proved to be life-changing

too, as recalled by one participant: “The deconsumption basically started when I retired. I retired early to care for my ailing mother, and lost maximum social security and maximum retirement funds from teaching. That was it! No more money for (air) travel” (024\_CF\_I).

One participant recalled end of a rock band membership after one of the band’s songs got stolen (and eventually, became famous), which caused a rift and a band break-up. Labeling this as a “watershed moment,” the participant “quit rock altogether” (010\_MT\_I). For one participant who was forced to deconsume alpine skiing due to a life-threatening injury to her son, the moment of deconsumption turned out to be acutely life-changing. “It is hard to convey the damage done to him, and to our family, by this injury,” she expressed. She confessed that the injury (and consequently, the deconsumption of a passionate experience) “derailed” her life, as her focus shifted from personal enrichment and growth to being a caretaker. Following the concussion her son experienced, she recalled him “coming home and sleeping for more than 60 hours straight.” Looking back at that definitive, life-changing day, she declared, “So, the involuntary deconsumption of skiing - my church, my chosen significant experience - began in [Month, Year]” (032\_LB\_I).

*A moment of truth/realization.* Some participants described their moments of deconsumption as a moment of truth or realization, as if something had suddenly clicked in their brains. Recalling the moment of deconsumption of beef (processed meat), and correlating her allergy to it to the one her son suffered from as well, a participant said, “My youngest, who was five, was having a lot of headaches, he couldn’t sleep, and was hyper. The doctor said it was an allergy to beef. And then, it clicked! My migraines!

Maybe that's the problem! I quit, and then, in two weeks, no more migraines" (008\_LJ\_I). Recalling a moment of realization on the river while fly-fishing, one participant described losing his balance and falling in the river. Categorizing that moment of change in gross and fine motor capabilities as scary, he decided, "I think I'm finished" 015\_HF\_I). The moment of realization was often harsh for people who were deconsuming addictive products. A deconsumer of cigarettes recalled,

When you can't breathe, you get motivated to quit. I didn't want to die. I decided I was going to give it a try. I bought the patches. I was absolutely determined. I was on a break at work, with one of my coworkers. She and I were smoking sitting on a wall, just like Humpty fucking Dumpty! I said to her, "This is my last cigarette." That night, on my way home, I went to the drugstore, I bought the patches, and I haven't had a cigarette since (016\_RP\_I).

After smoking seven cigarettes in thirty-five minutes, another smoker had a pang of harsh realization, and quit cold turkey. "My major change in approaching total deconsumption was from "I'm not going to smoke again" to "I'm not going to smoke right now," from "This is it" to "This is it for now," he explained (026\_DT\_I). Recalling the deconsumption of fast food, another participant recalled getting on the scale, and realizing he weighed more than 300 pounds. "That number was too much. Before that, I would rationalize, but this was totally unacceptable," he said (018\_MO\_I). In some cases, the realization, albeit salient, was milder. One participant, forced to deconsume her house, said, "Realization struck. I was forced into a situation. It was hard - one of the hardest moments of my life. It was not my choice anymore. It was the choice of the world around me" (029\_JR\_I). A deconsumer of tequila explained, "My physiology



seemed to change in the aging process, and I noticed that tequila would burn my skin if I let any get on me, so, I began to examine how this would be internally, too. I didn't trust it anymore" (036\_MM\_I).

*Consequences of involuntary deconsumption (RQ2).* The consequences associated with involuntary deconsumption, in line with the motivations of involuntary deconsumption, mostly brought negative outcomes in the lives of the deconsumers, who reported experiencing declined states of being, reformulated and realigned self-identities, and the feeling of irresolution.

*Declined state.* Involuntary deconsumers faced consequences including pain, frustration, sadness, loss, and depression. Exhibiting a longing desire to maintain a connection to her cultural heritage, a Hispanic participant said that she had Spanish in her blood, and that she spoke it, wrote it, read it, but was now, painfully, unable to dance it. In his deconsumption of ethnic Mexican foods, another participant expressed frustration over the inability to consume the foods he enjoyed and grew up eating. A deconsumer of fly-fishing felt a sense of loss and sadness, whereas another participant who had had to deconsume travel reported having lost the option of choice. He explained, "The adjustment to limited choices for travel are limiting, and with the limitation comes a loss of freedom" (024\_CF\_I). Other declined states mentioned by participants were states of upheaval, confrontation, disappointment, and resignation. One deconsumer termed the consequences as "a big struggle...a loss, a grieving process" (029\_JR\_I).

Reporting feelings of extreme powerlessness and depression, and resolving to getting therapy to cope with the deconsumption of alpine skiing due to an injury to her son, one participant confessed,

So, honestly, my life sucks. Not only must I struggle with the despair of knowing that my beautiful child wants to die, and that he will need to revise all the dreams he held for himself if and when he survives long enough to control this illness – I also must struggle without access to the very experience that was one of my major coping and stress management mechanisms (skiing). We can't leave him home alone (safety), and we dread the effect on his mental state of him knowing that one or two of us go out skiing (and he cannot). I have no idea what I will replace skiing with (032\_LB\_I).

*Reformulated/non-aligned self-identity.* For majority of the participants, the act of involuntary deconsumption was a harbinger of self-identity realignment and of disharmony. The forced realignment of (de)consumption attitudes and behaviors as incompatible with one's values and beliefs was, for most, an inconsistent state of "this is not how things should have turned out" (010\_MT\_I). Having built her life around the identity of being a mother and grandmother, one participant, in her deconsumption of dearly-held familial German Hummel dolls, realized that letting go of the Hummel dolls was like letting go of her identity, her children and grandchildren, which she was "reticent to let go" (033\_DF\_I). The deconsumption of rock music, for one participant, was a realignment of family values, as he saw his music as something that brought his family together. "I feel like I was cheated by the world. The world owes me," he maintained (010\_MT\_I). Involuntary deconsumption, to more than one participant, was a source of changed self-definition. "It was a significant loss as these things and my acquisition of them had been a significant part of my adulthood and defined me in some

way to others,” said one (028\_LM\_I). “It was once said that I could eat fire, not so much these days. I’m a changed man,” said another (039\_JR\_I).

The most salient theme that emerged out of this category was the overall feeling of loss of viability, purpose, and a sense of being “invisible” that baby boomers felt. “...as you get older, things start to fall away. It’s all about loss, but the worst loss is losing yourself, losing your definition, losing parts of your definition,” one participant said (028\_LM\_I). Harping on this same theme, another participant was more emphatic about feeling invisible: “The world is waiting for my generation to die so products don’t have to be dumbed down. Who gives a shit?! Let them croak! Someday, they’ll have a bounty on us - the people who are living longer than they’re supposed to live - eating away at their (the younger people’s) saving accounts” (025\_RL\_V). Confessing to the strong hold of a negative self-identity in his life, one involuntary deconsumer, feeling like a victim, wondered, “The question flashes in my psyche - what did I do wrong? Was I frivolous? Is money related to success, worthiness, capabilities, talent? Oh my!” Seeing himself as the invisible “Mr. Cellophane,” and quoting from the song, he wrote,

*Boy, is this going to be negative! There is a song from Chicago the musical that’s called ‘Mr. Cellophane.’ That’s what we senior people are. People look right through us. How did it go?*

*I’m the father, papa, dad dad. Did you hear me? No you didn’t hear me. That’s the story of my life, nobody notice I’m around, nobody!*

*If someone stood up in a crowd  
And raised his voice up way out loud*

*And waved his arm*

*And shook his leg*

*You’d notice him*

*If someone in the movie show  
Yelled “fired in the second row,  
This whole place is a powder keg!”  
You’d notice him  
And even without clucking like a hen  
Everyone gets noticed, now and then,  
Unless, of course, that personage should be  
Invisible, inconsequential me!*

*Cellophane  
Mister Cellophane  
Should have been my name  
Mister Cellophane  
‘cause you can look right through me  
Walk right by me  
And never know I’m there!*

*I tell ya Cellophane, Mr. Cellophane shoulda been my name  
Mr. Cellophane ‘cause you can look right through me  
Walk right by me  
And never know I’m there!  
Never even know I’m there!*

*Hope I didn’t take up too much of your time (024\_CF\_I, personal  
communication, Jan 13, 2016).*

*Irresolution.* One participant cited peer pressure as a reason for the sense of irresolution she left with the deconsumption of processed beef. “Deconsumption was more difficult because of the people around you. If you tell people you cannot have beef, they say, “Oh, a little bit won’t hurt you.” My husband still eats hamburgers when we go out. I feel there is a void” (008\_LJ\_I). Addressing that “void” that came with

involuntary deconsumption, another participant, talking about his deconsumption of cigarettes, said, “Being an Italian, I was brought up on oral fixation. Food, smoking, drinking, all intermixed over the first half of my life. When you can’t smoke, you still have to put something in your mouth. So, you eat!” (016\_RP\_I). Another participant, who had deconsumed refined sugar, admitted that it was very hard for him to totally eliminate foods that had no sugar, and in so doing, felt unsuccessful in his deconsumption. “It is not easy. It is a daily, weekly, monthly challenge for me,” he said (021\_JD\_I). A deconsumer of tennis confessed that he had unresolved feelings about his deconsumption, and that he rode by the college courts almost every day and thought about playing. Deconsumers of cigarettes and alcohol also confessed to thinking about the deconsumed product frequently. For example:

Frankly, I could imagine a time when I actually started to smoke again. It is in my head. I want one. It’s like your brain cries out for supply. Smoking was thrilling! Captivating! It made me feel wonderful, superb! Then, I think I’d get hooked again. My withdrawal symptoms are psychological. Your physical craving (body’s demand for nicotine) takes about 4-5 days, and then, it’s gone. The problem is, your brain wants cigarettes. It remembers all of the associations. That’s what makes it difficult. I smell them. I dream about smoking. On the sidewalk, if I’d smell someone else’s smoke, it would take me a minute to calm down! There is never a time when I don’t want to. I am fighting will-power. I sit and talk to myself not to do it (016\_RP\_I).

Deconsumers of high-involvement products (such as home ownership) felt like the time of reconciliation felt indefinite, and that they might never truly get over their

deconsumption. Experiencing extreme irresolution about having to deconsume a high-involvement experience (alpine skiing), one participant said,

Crazy thing is that skiing was the means to manage stress, how I sought spiritual solace. It represented family, community, Spirit, freedom, possibility, independence, athleticism, and just plain fun. But skiing, as an experience, now represented a threat to my son's safety and my health. How fucked up is that?! How do you meet two exceedingly important needs that may be in direct conflict with each other? I need my son to be physically and mentally safe, to feel that he is not a failure. I need to feel spiritually connected with Nature, with my love of combining sport and family and something bigger than ourselves in the mountains. But what if skiing becomes an unacceptably unsafe activity for family? Not because the experience itself is unsafe but because one you love has become vulnerable and cannot participate safely due to mental changes. My son is a cracked, empty egg that I so desperately want to protect. I have not made peace with this involuntary deconsumption process, not by a long shot (032\_LB\_I).

Table 8 summarizes the consequences of involuntary deconsumption (with additional examples).

Table 8

*Consequences of Involuntary Deconsumption*

Consequences	Product/Service/ Experience	Brand	Examples
Declined State	Home Ownership	Washington Park, Denver, CO	<i>“I now live in a condo that is not in my preferred area and cannot afford to live in my desired area. This situation has caused great stress and unhappiness. All my dreams are gone. I am depressed. I drive by there real slow. So sad. It’s hard. It’s melancholy [crying]” (029_JR_I).</i>
Reformulated/ Realigned Self-Identity	Antiques	NA	<i>“There are these ideas in poetry that as you age, you become more and more invisible. People don’t even look at you. You start to feel like you are losing viability, which is like losing life altogether. Life is a series of accumulation, but as you get older, those things start to fall away. It’s all about loss, but the worst loss is losing yourself, losing your definition, losing parts of your definition” (028_LM_I).</i>
Irresolution	Cigarettes	Marlboro	<i>“I liked it, I miss it, and think about it frequently. I caught myself even 10 years after I quit smoking, I caught myself...more than once...holding out my two fingers to take a cigarette out of somebody’s hand! Once, I caught myself halted at a stoplight in St. Paul, MN, looking through my console. I was rummaging for a cigarette! It is still there. Everyday, I think about it (026_DT_I).</i>

***Coping mechanisms (RQ2).*** Participants exhibited denial, and reported coping with involuntary deconsumption by leaning on faith and spirituality for increased resolve.

However, the themes of vicarious consumption as well as remission/re-consumption emerged consistently.

*Denial.* Since the experience of involuntary deconsumption was largely painful for deconsumers, many exhibited a sense of denial with regard to the deconsumption situation. Itching to go back to playing tennis by defying a bad knee, one participant wondered if life without tennis was finally here, and confessed he could not believe that he was already seventy: “Life without tennis is here? I’m seventy...is that right?” (041\_SS\_I).

*Faith/spirituality.* Some participants tried solidifying their deconsumption by leaning on their faith and/or spirituality, and “taking it one day the time” (010\_MT\_I). One participant, acknowledging pet-ownership as a support system, and petting her cat, said, “I don’t ask for anything. I just let God know what’s happening, and I’m putting it in His hands” (003\_MT\_I). Faced by peer pressure to reconsume processed beef, one participant reported turning to faith for strength. She pointed out, “When you respect God, you involve Him in every aspect of your life, and food is one of them. I believe in a Bible diet. It is self-control, which comes from help from God” (008\_LJ\_I). Having made the move to a foreign country and culture, one participant said, “Thank God, I was able to adapt to the new way of living, to learn how to cope with different kinds of individuals, and to accept a much lower income and status than the one I was able to attend at my country of birth” (031\_DR\_I).

*Vicarious consumption.* Some deconsumers resorted to vicarious consumption to cope with their deconsumption. A deconsumer of fly-fishing resorted to “pay it forward” (015\_HF\_I) by giving away his fly-fishing equipment and by teaching others how to fly-



fish. He reported reading and re-reading John Gierach to compensate for his loss.

Another deconsumer tried to partially replace smoking by consuming more food through pangs of instant gratification and loss of self-control.

*Remission/re-consumption.* Many involuntary deconsumers confessed to returning to their object of deconsumption. A deconsumer of distilled alcohol said he had started having wine with dinner or a beer with a friend once in a while, hoping, that he'd be "ready to stop again once I feel that I am becoming addicted again" (034\_JH\_I). A deconsumer of spicy ethnic foods confessed to occasionally making a pot of green chili and eating spicy foods in restaurants.

A deconsumer of fast food said, "I find myself still craving fast food. I see that when I give in, I start to gain weight again. I hope fat becomes beautiful and healthy! I am sloppy about my eating habits, and am yo-yoing between indulgence and deconsumption" (018\_MO\_I).

***Behavioral process theory of involuntary deconsumption process (central RQ).***

By organizing the categories from the descriptions of the stories of involuntary deconsumption above, the researcher was able to saturate theoretical themes to finalize the following behavioral process theory of involuntary deconsumption. As intended, the process theory mirrors the CIRC model, as it entails antecedents and consequences of a relationship process. As explained earlier, the consumption relationships, the motivations, the moment of deconsumption, its consequences, and coping mechanisms form the cogs of this process theory. The motivations form a pot in which attitudes simmer until they reach a boiling point and spill over in the "aha moments" of deconsumption. In general, from an attribution theory perspective, involuntary

deconsumption relationships are deemed joyful, involved, necessary, addicting, passionate, and hold deeper meaning. They rank high on quality, commitment, and satisfaction. The process of involuntary deconsumption is deemed as a decision fueled by external factors, ranking low on intentionality, stability, and controllability; leading to declined states of being, and deflated states of self-identity. The theory is illustrated below (Figure 24).

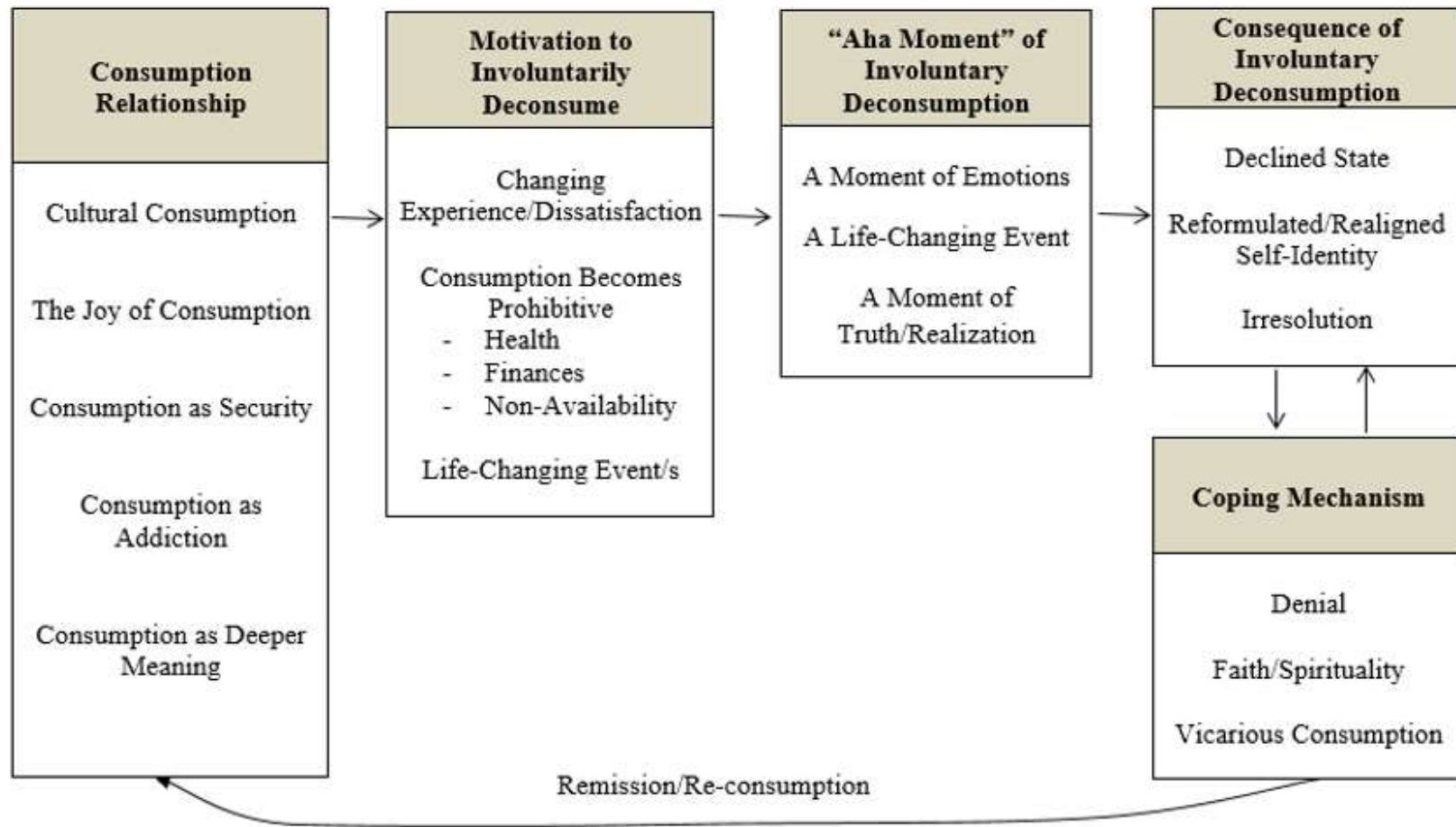


Figure 24. Behavioral process theory of involuntary deconsumption experience.

### **Differences between the experience of voluntary and involuntary**

**deconsumption (RQ3).** The interviews suggested that experiences of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption were separated in the minds of the participants, held different meanings, and invoked different attitudes and behaviors from them.

In general, voluntary deconsumers held higher socio-economic statuses, had higher educational backgrounds, had more long-term outlooks, and exhibited more control over life- and consumption-situations. Their consumption relationships were more detached, rational, utilitarian, and lower in involvement, quality, satisfaction, commitment, and frequency. Their deconsumption decisions were driven by awareness and purpose, and were based on internal, dispositional attributions. The deconsumption experiences were higher on stability, intentionality, and controllability. The motivations and consequences of voluntary deconsumption were more positive, and coping mechanisms were easier to implement and maintain. The deconsumption resulted in more positive self-identities and self-images, and a higher sense of harmony among the participants. Overall, voluntary deconsumers were consistent, happier, purpose-driven, and stable.

On the other hand, in general, involuntary deconsumers held lower socio-economic statuses, had lower educational backgrounds, had more blue-collar backgrounds and vocational degrees, rented more, had more short-term outlooks, and exhibited lesser control over life- and consumption-situations. They seemed to be more dependent on faith/religion, and exhibited more superstitious behaviors, often knocking on wood during interviews, and using phrases such as “I am resigned to my fate,” and “you have to accept your fate.” Their consumption relationships were more attached,

passionate, irrational, addictive, joy-inducing, and were higher in involvement, quality, satisfaction, commitment, and frequency. Their deconsumption decisions were forced on them, driven by lack of control and purpose, and based on external, situational attributions. They reported deconsuming more “experiences” holding high involvement and deeper meanings, such as Spanish dance music, membership in a rock band, a tennis recreational center, a fitness center, alpine skiing, and the experience of culture. The deconsumption experiences were lower on stability, intentionality, and controllability. The motivations and consequences of involuntary deconsumption were more negative and painful, and coping mechanisms were deemed hard to implement and maintain. The deconsumption resulted in more negative self-identities and self-images, and a higher sense of disharmony among the participants. Overall, involuntary deconsumers were more inconsistent, gloomy, regretful, not driven, and unstable.

To test whether the parameters of consumption and deconsumption were different among groups of participants (voluntary vs. involuntary deconsumers, males vs. females, and leading- vs. trailing-edge boomers), Pearson’s chi-square tests for independence were conducted. These tests were in line with the nature of the data (categorical, containing two independent groups each). As can be seen in Table 9 below, the tests were significant for differences among voluntary vs. involuntary deconsumers. Voluntary deconsumers reported lower levels of consumption quality [ $\chi^2 (1) = 23.833, p < .001$ ], satisfaction [ $\chi^2 (1) = 23.833, p < .001$ ], and commitment [ $\chi^2 (1) = 21.815, p < .001$ ]. Voluntary deconsumers also reported lower levels of significance of deconsumption decision [ $\chi^2 (1) = 4.650, p = .031$ ]. Involuntary deconsumers reported lower levels of ease of deconsumption decision [ $\chi^2 (1) = 26.652, p < .001$ ], stability of deconsumption

decision [ $\chi^2 (1) = 25.938, p < .001$ ], intentionality of deconsumption decision [ $\chi^2 (1) = 36.554, p < .001$ ], and controllability of deconsumption decision [ $\chi^2 (1) = 29.009, p < .001$ ]. Voluntary deconsumers reported their deconsumption decision as internally-driven, whereas involuntary deconsumers reported it as externally-driven [ $\chi^2 (1) = 40.081, p < .001$ ].

Table 9

*Pearson's Chi-Square Tests for Independence – Qualitative Phase*

	Voluntary vs. Involuntary			Male vs. Female			Leading- vs. Trailing-edge		
	dof	$\chi^2$	$p^*$	dof	$\chi^2$	$p$	dof	$\chi^2$	$p$
<b>Consumption</b>									
Quality	1	23.833	< .001	1	1.057	0.304	1	0.306	0.580
Satisfaction	1	23.833	< .001	1	1.057	0.304	1	0.306	0.580
Commitment	1	21.185	< .001	1	0.173	0.678	1	0.611	0.434
<b>Deconsumption</b>									
Significance of	1	4.650	0.031	1	0.947	0.331	1	1.207	0.272
Ease of	1	26.652	< .001	1	0.001	0.971	1	0.114	0.736
Locus of	1	40.081	< .001	1	0.245	0.620	1	0.313	0.576
Stability of	1	25.938	< .001	1	0.917	0.338	1	0.313	0.576
Intentionality of	1	36.554	< .001	1	0.108	0.743	1	1.104	0.293
Controllability of	1	29.009	< .001	1	0.637	0.425	1	0.564	0.453

*Note.* \* significant at  $p \leq .05$ , dof = degrees of freedom.

**Differences by gender (RQ3).** As detailed in Table 9 above, the differences in consumption and deconsumption parameters across gender were nonsignificant; that is, males and females did not report differences in the experience of these consumption and deconsumption parameters.

**Differences by baby boomer type (RQ3).** As detailed in Table 9 above, the differences in consumption and deconsumption parameters across baby boomer type were

nonsignificant; that is, leading- and trailing-edge boomers did not report differences in the experience of these consumption and deconsumption parameters.

**Suggested changes to products/services/experiences.** Given the spending power, staying power, and ambition of the burgeoning baby boomer market in the U.S. and around the world, it would be wise for businesses to recognize growth markets for baby boomers such as clothing, food and hospitality, movies, cosmetics, and housework (do-it-yourself as well as in-home services). The interviews with baby boomers focused on their consumption relationships and aspirations, and their deconsumption processes were convincing pointers for marketers toward a call for imagination and innovation in order to meet the changing needs of this dynamic market-segment. These are not merely years filled with golf, cruises, medicines, and rocking chairs. These are people with a hunger for healthier, naturally sourced food items, and a thirst for non-sugary drinks. These are people involved in volunteering, philanthropy, enrichment classes, alternate careers, crafts, exercising, and active sports. Businesses need to understand that longevity is good for business (Kadlec, 2016), and get insights about the physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges baby boomer consumers go through.

Challenging dated models of aging, and indicating a more dynamic, adventurous pattern of consumption (and deconsumption), one participant, in a plea to be considered in non-traditional ways, borrowed inspiration from Doolittle and Martz (1986), re-composed parts of, and shared the following poem (seen by the researcher as directed toward marketers who tend to put baby boomers into predetermined columns of dated silos):

*My soul needs no chicken soup.  
My soul needs foods sometimes coarse,  
Sometimes savory:  
  
Lumpy undersweet oatmeal may add roughage,  
As might bitter, bruised windfall apples;  
On feast days I want free-range meat,  
Musky with memories of life in the wild;  
Olives, cheese, bread, and wine  
Might make my philosophies flower,  
But spring water and a rough-ground bread  
Might serve as well and taste as sweet.  
  
My soul, as feeble as it is,  
Wants none of coddling or nursing,  
So keep your healing chicken soup,  
While my soul thrives or chokes  
On passionate cooks' substantial fare (004\_MP\_V, personal  
communication, Feb 7, 2016).*

As per suggestions from the participants, some examples of such innovation could be making services such as Zipcar more widespread and mobile (include home pick-ups), re-branding retirement homes as wellness homes, catering tourism to baby boomers, targeting awareness campaigns against addictive substances to baby boomers (who want to live longer, healthier lives), providing affordable in-home counseling sessions, providing complimentary trainers to seniors at recreational and wellness centers, and making healthier alternatives to sugary drinks and foods available. One participant, pondering her changing needs for a relevant deconsumed experience (an active outdoor sport, namely, alpine skiing), said,



The narrative I am pondering for myself, and for my family is one of re-imagining the very experience, to fit our lives now. The experience of skiing is “sold” to us as an extreme sport, where only the most fit can get out there and challenge themselves and the Mountain. A classic conquer story. Just Dew It! The entire ski industry is built around young, athletic, risk-seeking speed demons, who take pride in escalating their skills to conquer the green, the blue, the black, the double black, and the extreme. Every app you can get is about tracking your progress, your prowess, your power over the Mountain. I know this. This is the call of the wild that has sung within my blood since I was eight. Independence, youth, physical prowess, power! But, as a large part of the skiing market base ages - or faces significant health changes, as in our case - I think it is imperative that we show ourselves some compassion, to allow ourselves to find a way to enjoy the Mountain differently. Is it possible that there are at least two ways up (and down) the mountain? Can we celebrate the Beauty of Nature by taking it slower, thinking of skiing more as a tour through God’s country? Can we dance with rather than storm through the Mountain? If we expand the story of skiing to allow for the vulnerabilities that eventually make clear the illusion of invincibility – will more people stay and play together in the snow? This is my hope for my family and myself. I do not want to follow my father, who hung up his skis for good at 50. I would like to help my son understand that he yet can play in the Mountain even if he no longer can ski trees or jump cliffs or race the icy face (032\_LB\_I).

There is no denying the fact that deconsumption is a business opportunity - a megatrend reshaping the world economy. Markets and marketers, hence, need to offer more to the aging population, and temper their dated strategies to suit the dynamic needs of the deconsuming baby boomer. The boomers ask not for in-the-face marketing, but for a thoughtful, accommodating social support system, and they are willing to pay good money for it. So, will marketers take this bull by the horns, or will it remain a marketing opportunity hiding in plain sight?

**Methodological notes from the qualitative phase.** Going into the qualitative phase, the researcher wanted to ensure data triangulation by collecting non-traditional forms of data (such as poems, pictures, observation from surroundings, and written narratives). Other general parameters of the interviewing process were largely cemented through a preliminary qualitative study. However, after conducting a few interviews, several changes were made to the methodology. For instance, the sequence of questions on the protocol was changed to invoke definitions at the end (this allowed participants to think about the concept holistically and more clearly, having just discussed it at length). As the researcher started settling into the interview process, the interview times decreased. However, in certain cases, interview times were not representative of the amount of information collected – sometimes, the process of recall was just slow. Also, with each interview, the focus on the process of deconsumption relationship (in a CIRC context) grew. Also, more emphasis was placed on the consumption process in order to properly distill deconsumption experiences. Much was learned from varied surroundings – be it participants’ home, an assisted living facility, a church office, or across from a computer screen (the use of Skype for some interviews worked out well, as the

technology proved to be very reliable, and only three interviews were terminated midway, only to be continued later, without an adverse effect on continuity). Some participants, reluctant to discuss sensitive deconsumption stories face-to-face or on Skype, volunteered to send electronic responses over e-mail. The initial screening questionnaire asked prospective participants to choose sharing their experience of either voluntary or involuntary deconsumption. About about 15 interviews, the researcher realized that most deconsumers would volunteer to share voluntary deconsumption experiences. In order to reach theoretical saturation, the researcher started asking prospective participants to share involuntary deconsumption experiences (which turned out to be more convoluted and pain-inducing, and hence, participants' initial reluctance was justified).

Interviewing baby boomers was an interesting experience. Most times, their self-awareness, articulation, recall, and clarity were admirable. However, some struggled to retrieve information from memory, and asked for more time. They'd say things like, "It slipped my mind. I had it a minute ago," or "The name totally escapes me," or "A thought just popped out of my mind," or "What was I gonna say about that?" or "Oh, for Heaven's sake!" or "Shit! Come on, memory!" or "That's another word that I've lost. See what happens with old age?" This posed added challenges to the interviewing process and required patience, space, and time management. Another lesson learned from the qualitative phase was the inadequacy of dichotomous questions (such as quality, satisfaction, and commitment of consumption – high/low, significance, ease, stability, intentionality, and controllability of deconsumption decision – high/low). Realizing that such responses would not provide enough breadth in the quantitative phase, these

questions were reformulated as 5-point Likert scale questions in the instrument for the quantitative phase.

At times, the researcher had difficulty processing and responding to emotionally charged stories, especially when involuntary deconsumption experiences invoked stories of “existential crises.” “I think I need my tissue, because you’ll probably make me cry,” they’d say. At other times, the researcher felt privy to enlightening personal accounts – stories worth sharing and learning from.

Overall, true to the approach of grounded theory, the researcher let theoretical saturation dictate the sample size (Charmaz, 2006). In this quest, more interviews of involuntary deconsumption than voluntary deconsumption were conducted, as the emergence of the involuntary deconsumption process theory took longer. The interviews were largely clean, information-rich, and clear (barring two participants, who ended up narrating two deconsumption stories within the course of the interview, forcing the researcher to perform bifurcation in analysis).

**Other reflections on the qualitative phase.** The interviewing process was a challenging experience in relationship initiation, growth, maintenance, and management. While the researcher was enlightened to discover the close link between personality and consumption/deconsumption, management of a few incongruencies and inconsistencies within the accounts of some of the participants was quite obfuscating. Post-data-collection, the researcher maintained contact with the participants by exchanging e-mails, postcards, and letters, and by visiting them and lending and borrowing books, music, and artwork. Thus, the realization that baby boomers have a need to be listened to extended outside the realm of a mere interviewer-interviewee relationship.

This immersion, just like the stories of deconsumption with peaks and troughs, had its two sides. Some of it was uplifting and inspiring, and some extremely painful. The researcher, after analyzing one particularly traumatic deconsumption experience, struggled to categorize participation in the study. Was it a venting outlet? Was it healing? Or was it a sprinkling of salt on wounds? To deal with such doubts, and to put them to rest, the researcher wrote to the participant:

I feel I was selfish in my demand from a research participant I saw in you. Your responses pained me, and made me question if my quest for deconsumption stories would help people reminisce and take stock, find healing or empowerment (or both), or be a source of trauma? I had it wrong. It wasn't about anybody but me. The stories have made me a different person, and I know I was naive to think my research could change lives. Your story moved me before, but as I immerse in it toward the end of my analysis, I find it has moved me permanently. I have seldom read personal accounts that have managed to do so much to me. Your earnestness, mysticism, strength, and altruism is inspiring. I keep going back and forth on this, but something makes me believe that if done right, the research process might be seen as an enabler. Your participation in my research and our sharing is why we do research. It helps us connect with people. It becomes an enabler to sharing. And maybe, just maybe, it brings healing. I wanted you to know that I am not just a story-gatherer and a story-monger. I am a traveler. Your story took me to a better place, and I hope sharing this took you (or will take you) to a better place too (Researcher, personal communication, June 22, 2016).

The participant's reply brought about much healing to the researcher, and convinced him of the value of the research process and this research study:

...our research agenda is always a reflection of our innermost passions. It seemed to me that you seek to be of service to others, to try to give people who might be struggling with involuntary change (with age) the opportunity to share their stories ~ you honor the wisdom of ancestors. It is a beautiful passion, and I am glad I had the opportunity to meet such a soul on this journey (032\_LB\_I, personal communication, Jul 14, 2016).

**Hypotheses for the quantitative phase.** The hypotheses for the quantitative phase stemmed directly from the analyses and results of the qualitative phase, were analyzed using ANOVAs in the section following Rasch analyses under quantitative phase in Chapter 3 (Table 76).

**Initial scale items for the quantitative phase.** The pool of initial scale items was adopted verbatim from the qualitative interviews. Since the voluntary and involuntary deconsumption held different meanings conceptually, and invoked different attitudes and behaviors from participants, two scales (one each for voluntary and involuntary deconsumption) were justified.

To ensure that the scales were more holistic (addressing conceptual, attitude-related, and behavior-related factors related to deconsumption), and to ensure maximum coverage, an initial list of 160 items related to voluntary deconsumption with several factors were mustered (Table 10). Similarly, 96 items related to involuntary deconsumption with several factors were mustered (Table 11).

Table 10

*Initial Item Composition by Factors – Voluntary Deconsumption*

Deconsumption		
Type	Factors Related To	Number of Initial Items
Voluntary	Conceptual	26
	Material Simplicity	11
	Self-determination, Rebellion, and Control	28
	Consumption Becomes Prohibitive	5
	Changes in Consumption Experiences	4
	Ecology/Social Impact	21
	Personal Growth	26
	Technology	18
	Self-identity/Personality	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>

Table 11

*Initial Item Composition by Factors – Involuntary Deconsumption*

Deconsumption		
Type	Factors Related To	Number of Initial Items
Involuntary	Conceptual	26
	Self-determination and Control	19
	Consumption Becomes Prohibitive	5
	Changes in Consumption Experiences	4
	Ecology/Social Impact	10
	Personal Growth	6
	Technology	5
	Self-identity/Personality	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>

These items were then slotted to be tested and judged by five expert reviewers, and five cognitive interview subjects, with the intention of reducing down to a final pool of about 60 well-performing and representative items of voluntary deconsumption, and 60 of involuntary deconsumption.

**Results from expert reviews.** Five expert reviewers reflected on the initial pool of items; rated them on clarity, representativeness, and difficulty; and provided a final decision (i.e., keep as is/modify/discard) on each item. The expert reviewers with varied backgrounds were carefully chosen to provide technical knowledge (industry-oriented experts), process-oriented knowledge (professors), and explanatory knowledge (participants) of deconsumption. Of the five experts, three were participants of the qualitative phase (they were chosen based on their extremely information-rich interviews, and exceptional grasp of the concept of deconsumption), and two had not participated as interviewees (they were chosen to provide a fresh, external perspective on the items). The expert review protocols were sent to them via e-mail. Table 12 contains details of the reviewers.

Table 12

*Details of Expert Reviewers*

S. No.	Gender	Age	Leading/ Trailing-edge	Ethnicity	Profession	Educatio n Level	Credentials/ Expertise
1	F	60	Trailing-edge	Caucasian/ Native American	University Professor & Wildlife Biologist	Post- Graduate	Active proponent of using organic, non- agribusiness food products
2	M	69	Leading -edge	Caucasian	Retired from Upper- Manageme nt Sales	Graduate	55 years of upper- management and business experience
3	F	65	Leading -edge	Caucasian	University Professor & Researcher	Post- Graduate	Scale development research
4	F	54	Trailing- edge	Caucasian	Writer	Graduate	High command of



S. No.	Gender	Age	Leading/Trailing	Ethnicity	Profession	Education Level	Credentials/Expertise
5	M	70	Leading-edge	Caucasian	Retired from Retail Salesman position	Graduate	English language, experienced voluntary deconsumption 43 years of middle-management experience, experienced involuntary deconsumption

In general, across the two item pools, items that scored more than 80% on clarity ( $\geq 20$ ), representativeness ( $\geq 20$ ), item difficulty ( $\leq 5$ ), and made the overall decision (keep as is/modify/discard) based on an inter-rater agreement of 80% or more were retained. The experts categorized the definitions of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption as clear.

Judging the initial item pool of voluntary deconsumption items, experts suggested modifying items such as “Deconsumption is a natural end-of-life process” to “...late-life process,” “Deconsumption is not difficult or emotional” to “...not emotionally difficult,” and “People who don’t believe in global warming are out of their mind” to “...are mistaken.” Experts saw redundancy in pairs of items such as “Shopping is about thoughtful decision-making” and “Shopping for me is a well thought-out process,” and between “Deconsumption is emotionally difficult” and “I was surprised how easy it was for me to deconsume.” Experts suggested eliminating potentially controversial items such as “Western cultures are all about possessions,” “Americans are conditioned to have

so much junk,” and “Debt is the new slavery.” They also suggested eliminating sweeping statements such as “Nothing in life is a 100%,” and “I do not have regrets even if life did not seem to click the way I thought it would.” Even though the interviewed participants seemed to feel passionately about technology, experts thought those items were not related to deconsumption. So, they were discarded. Experts suggested that some items belonged under different headings, so the following were moved: “Companies adopt scare tactics to sell to old people” from self-identity/personality to ecology/social impact, “I am not into acquisition of worldly possessions” from conceptual to personal growth, and “As I have grown older, I have become more self-aware” from conceptual to personal growth. Experts suggested adding items related to the coping mechanisms of voluntary deconsumption to the item list. Items on substitution and opposition were already included, so, only two additional items were added (one each on acceptance and faith/spirituality). Suggestions were made to refrain from general social attitudes (such as global warming) and personality (such as “I feel like a success in life”). So, those items were discarded. Lastly, experts suggested that the following items did not belong in the list of voluntary deconsumption items, but in involuntary deconsumption: “I am set in my ways,” “As we get older, security becomes more important to us,” “I never was a great success financially,” “Often-times, I experience resistance to change,” “We are creatures of habit in our consumption,” and “Sometimes, I consume things due to peer pressure.” So, those items were moved into the pool of involuntary deconsumption items.

Judging the initial item pool of involuntary deconsumption items, experts suggested modifying items such as “When you are not one of them, they think you are

different to peer pressure.” Experts saw redundancy in pairs of items such as “I feel like I have lost the freedom to choose” and “Sometimes, I feel like I have no choice,” and “I feel like I have exceedingly important needs that may be in direct conflict with each other” and “I have conflicting desires.” Experts suggested elimination of sweeping statements such as “Things are not the way they are supposed to be in America,” irrelevant items such as “Companies want you to be in debt,” “Global warming is a myth,” and “Sometimes, I enjoy instant gratification.” “Deconsumption is a belt-tightening experience” came across as a confusing item among the experts, and was eliminated. Experts suggested “Retirement hasn’t impressed me” was not universally applicable, and that “I feel like I am always trying to put pieces of my broken life together” was a leading question. On their suggestion, all personal growth and technology items were discarded too.

**Results from cognitive interviews.** Five subjects were recruited and were interviewed face-to-face (or on Skype) to provide feedback on questions in the questionnaires that included items filtered from the expert reviews (feedback was sought on question comprehension, recall, decision processes, and response processes). These subjects had not participated in either the in-depth interviews or the expert interviews. The subjects (two leading- and three trailing-edge boomers for balance and coverage) were chosen for their knowledge of English language and structure, knowledge of question comprehension and recall, and research expertise. Table 13 contains details of the subjects.

Table 13

*Details of Cognitive Interview Subjects*

S. No.	Gender	Age	Leading/ Trailing	Ethnicity	Profession	Education Level	Credentials/ Expertise
1	M	70	Leading-edge	Caucasian	Retired University Professor & Writer	Post-Graduate	Teaching marketing strategy, branding research
2	F	68	Leading-edge	Caucasian	Retired Elementary School Teacher	Graduate	Child psychology and cognitive processes
3	M	55	Trailing-edge	Hispanic	Frontline Sales at Fast Food Restaurant	Graduate	Day-to-day interaction with consumers making seemingly unhealthy food choices
4	M	57	Trailing-edge	Asian	Researcher	Post-Graduate	First author on at least 20 research articles related to corporate social responsibility
5	F	51	Trailing-edge	Caucasian	Research Designer	Post-Graduate	An expert on designing studies and online surveys using multiple platforms such as Qualtrics, and an analyzer of effective online data collection

The subjects' behavior was observed and their behavior codes as well as feedback were used to help solidify the two instruments/questionnaires, and improve their content and structure.

**Instruments for the quantitative phase.** Instruments were finalized after the expert reviews and cognitive interviews. A total of 70 items of voluntary deconsumption, and 50 items of involuntary deconsumption were retained. The two instruments (voluntary and involuntary deconsumption) are presented in Appendix H and Appendix I respectively. Having separate instruments would help differentiate the two concepts, and would assist in meeting quotas of data-collection during the quantitative phase, should that need arise. Respondents would be provided definitions of the two kinds of deconsumption, and would be asked to answer questions specifically bearing in mind a significant deconsumption experience (respondents in study 1 or the pilot study would answer both surveys in two weeks, whereas respondents in study 2 or the main field administration will answer only one survey, not both). The two instruments include definitions, consumption- and deconsumption-related questions (section A), deconsumption scale items (section B), and demographic questions (section C).

### **Quantitative Phase (Phase II)**

The quantitative phase was designed for testing and validation of the scales for voluntary and involuntary deconsumption constructed by gaining an understanding of the behavioral process theories of the two types of deconsumption in phase I. Furthermore, phase II was designed to answer three specific secondary research questions: (a) Does the experience of the two deconsumption types (voluntary and involuntary) differ? If so, in what ways? (b) Do the two segments of the baby boomer population (trailing- and

leading-edge boomers) differ in their experience of the deconsumption process? Do female baby boomers differ in their experience of the deconsumption process as compared to male baby boomers? (3) Do the scales of deconsumption (voluntary and involuntary) developed in this study exhibit unidimensionality, appropriate scale use, and yield appropriate levels of validity and reliability?

This section of the chapter reports the results of the assessment of the scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption through the application of principal components analysis (PCA) and item response theory (IRT). The two types of scales form the main headings, and sub-headings include demographic details, pilot studies, and PCA and IRT (Rasch analyses) leading to a final scale structure, and evidence regarding scale unidimensionality, use, validity, and reliability.

**Voluntary deconsumption.** The following section (and its sub-sections) relates to results from quantitative analyses of the scale of voluntary deconsumption.

*Pilot study.* The pilot study was conducted to understand how the measure of voluntary deconsumption works among baby boomers in the US. This was done in order to refine the 70 items retained post expert reviews and cognitive interviews in the qualitative phase, and to verify scale appropriateness, explore credibility of results, and to weed out poor-performing items.

*Demographic details.* The voluntary deconsumption data from the pilot study (n=56) had no missing data points. Initial assessments suggested the demographic data were well distributed. A good mix of leading- and trailing-edge boomers, genders, ethnicities, and geographical spread was achieved (respondents were residing in 23 different states in the U.S., and urban, suburban, as well as rural areas were all well

represented). As is evident from Table 14 below, the respondent group had representation across demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, education level, work status, and marital status. The average age of the respondents was 65.59 years.

Table 14

*Demographic Details (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Category	Value	Category	Value
Gender		Work Status	
Male	73.20%	Retired	39.30%
Female	26.80%	Part-time	17.90%
Average Age	65.59 years	Full-time	42.90%
Baby Boomer Classification		Marital Status	
Leading-edge	66.10%	Married	73.20%
Trailing-edge	33.90%	Divorced/Separated	12.50%
Ethnicity		Single	8.90%
Caucasian	80.40%	Widowed	5.40%
Asian	7.10%	U.S. States Represented	23
Hispanic	3.60%	Residential Area Classification	
Multiracial	1.80%	Urban	44.60%
Others	7.10%	Suburban	30.40%
Education Level		Rural	25.00%
Post-graduate	66.10%		
Some post-graduate work	7.10%		
College graduate	14.30%		
Others	12.50%		

*Note.* n = 56, all data self-reported.

The baby boomers in the pilot study were fairly sophisticated users of technology. As is evident from Table 15 below, 78.6% were users of cable/satellite TV, 94.6% used mobile phones (78.6% had smartphones), 98.2% were users of e-mail, 80.4% used some form of social media, and 76.8% self-reported as being either fairly tech-savvy, or very tech-savvy.

Table 15

*Media Use Details (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Media Use Category	Yes	No	
TV Usage	78.60%	21.40%	
Mobile Phone Usage	94.60%	5.40%	
Smartphone Usage	78.60%	21.40%	
E-Mail Usage	98.20%	1.80%	
Social Media Usage	80.40%	19.60%	
	Very	Fairly	Not at All
Level of Tech-Savviness	12.50%	64.30%	23.20%

*Note.* n = 56, all data self-reported.

Recalling their most salient/significant/memorable deconsumption experiences, 67.9% recalled voluntarily deconsuming a product, 12.5% deconsumed a service, and 19.6% deconsumed an experience. Varied deconsumption categories were reported, such as antiques, alcohol, fast food, landlines, cable TV, caffeine, carbonated soft drinks, cigarettes, clothing, coffee, discretionary travel, lawn mowers, automobiles, hairdressers, fast food, marijuana, processed meat, movies in theaters, nicotine, processed frozen meals, church, skiing, local newspapers, pro football, and wheat-based products. Almost 6 out of 10 (58.9%) respondents reported the brand of the deconsumed product/service/experience as being salient. Some salient brands deconsumed were Arby's, AT&T, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Dish TV, Eau Claire Leader-Telegram, Gold Flake, Jimmy John's, Kraft, Marlboro, Miller High Life, Mitsubishi Colt, Mountain Dew, NFL, NCAA, Oceanic Time Warner Cable, and the Roman Catholic Church. On average, the participants began consuming these when they were 21.67 years of age, consumed for 29.44 years, initiated deconsumption when they were 46.84 years of age on average, and had experienced 14.93 years of voluntary deconsumption. The average scores for the quality, satisfaction, and commitment of consumption (while it lasted) were 2.25, 2.29,



and 2.18 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The majority (73.2%) of the respondents reported the voluntary deconsumption decision as being internally driven. The average scores for the significance and ease of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 2.21 and 2.79 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The average scores for the intentionality, controllability, and stability of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 1.11, 1.64, and 1.54 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The details related to respondents' consumption and voluntary deconsumption categories are presented in Table 16 below.

Table 16

*Consumption/Deconsumption-Related Details (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Item	Statistics
Deconsumption Category	
Product	67.90%
Service	12.50%
Experience	19.60%
Brand Salience	
Yes	58.90%
No	41.10%
Average Age of Consumption	21.67 years
Average Duration of Consumption	29.44 years
Average Consumption Quality	2.25
Average Consumption Satisfaction	2.29
Average Consumption Commitment	2.18
Average Age of Deconsumption Decision	46.84 years
Average Duration of Deconsumption Decision	14.93 years
Average Significance of Deconsumption Decision	2.21
Average Ease of Deconsumption Decision	2.79
Locus of Deconsumption Decision	
Internal	73.20%
External	26.80%
Average Intentionality of Deconsumption Decision	1.11

Item	Statistics
Average Controllability of Deconsumption Decision	1.64
Average Stability of Deconsumption Decision	1.54

*Note.* n = 56, all data self-reported.

*Item analyses.* Pilot study data were used to determine how well the initial 70 items on the voluntary deconsumption scale reflected their specific domains. Point-biserial correlations and Cronbach's alpha estimates were computed. Items with estimated point-biserial correlations between .50-.96 were retained. Item estimates falling outside the desired range were removed one at a time. New estimates were assessed at each iteration until all items fell within the optimal range. The breadth of construct measurement was considered and maintained, and the resultant instrument was used in the field administration. Item analyses were conducted on the pilot data to identify non-performing items. In an effort to reduce the number of items, item-total statistics were analyzed, and items with item-total correlations less than 0.35 were deleted as well. Table 17 contains the details of the deleted items, and rationale behind deleting them.

Table 17

*Item Deletions and Rationale (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Item	Rationale Behind Deletion
When it comes to buying things, I think it through and make a rational decision.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
Deconsumption is about letting go of desire.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
Deconsumption is about exercising my own will.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
I make decisions that are consistent with who I am.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70

Item	Rationale Behind Deletion
Deconsumption leads to empowerment.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
Deconsumption is an adjustment to newness.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
Growing older involves letting go of who you once were.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
I always stick to my shopping list.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
Deconsumption has had a significant impact on my life.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
I have control over what I consume.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
Deconsumption can result from a change in culture.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
Companies ought to maintain integrity and honesty.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
Deconsumption can be about getting back to your roots.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
As I have grown older, I have become more self-aware.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
I have switched from consuming to sustaining.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70

After deleting the 15 items above, item statistics were recalculated. Each of the remaining 55 items had a response range of a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 (5-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Item means ranged from 2.95 to 4.52. All standard deviations were close to 1.00. Cronbach's alpha was very high at 0.96. All items fit the scale of voluntary deconsumption well with corrected item-total correlations above 0.40. The 55 items were holistic (representing conceptual, attitude-related, and behavior-related factors related to deconsumption). Table 18 lists the item composition by conceptual factor of the voluntary deconsumption scale post-pilot phase.

Table 18

*Item Composition by Conceptual Factors (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Post-Pilot Study*

Voluntary Deconsumption Factors Related To	Number of Initial Items
Conceptual	13
Material Simplicity	8
Self-determination, Rebellion, and Control	7
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive	3
Ecology/Social Impact	11
Personal Growth	8
Self-identity/Personality	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

*Soft launch.* Before launching the voluntary deconsumption survey for the field administration, Qualtrics decided to execute a soft launch (n = 25) with a goal of verification of common data quality checks and issues by the researcher. Issues included incorrect screen out logic (does the researcher see responses that should have been terminated?), incorrect quotas (are the set quota conditions accurate and incrementing correctly?), validation and missing responses (is the data coming in the way the researcher needs it?), text entry responses (are there any gibberish text entry responses the researcher would like to exclude from the analysis?), quality issues (are there any responses the researcher would like to throw out due to straight-lining or survey duration considerations?), and attention filters (are respondents reading the questions carefully and following instructions?). The researcher was able to review the soft launch data and detect three cases with variance across scale item responses of 0.30 or less. These responses were deleted and replaced with higher quality data; and it was decided that at

the end of the final field administration, Qualtrics would help replace up to 10% of low-quality responses, and in addition, proactively gather a few extra responses.

***Field administration.*** The final field administration was conducted to understand how the measure of voluntary deconsumption works among baby boomers in the U.S. This was done in order to finalize the scale from among 55 items retained post pilot phase by deleting poorly-performing items, and to ascertain factor structure, nature of subscales (if any), scale validity, use, dimensionality, differential item functioning (DIF), and reliability.

The researcher was able to review the final data and detect about 10% cases with variance across scale item responses of 0.30 or less. In addition, about 2% of the respondents had reported missing or bogus voluntary deconsumption categories such as, “Na,” “None,” “GVJGFGFF,” “none,” “no comments,” “voluntary,” “Not sure,” and “xx.” These responses were deleted and replaced with high-quality data, or “good completes.”

***Demographic details.*** The final voluntary deconsumption data from the field administration (n = 328) was of good quality, and had no missing data points. On an average, the respondents took 26.28 minutes to complete the survey. Initial assessments suggested the demographic data were well distributed across gender and boomer classification. A good mix of leading- and trailing-edge boomers, genders, ethnicities, and geographical spread was achieved (respondents were residing in 47 different states in the U.S., and urban, suburban, as well as rural areas were all represented). As is evident from Table 19 below, the sample was balanced by demographic variables such as gender, education level, work status, occupation, and marital status. The sample was primarily Caucasian. The average age of the respondents was 65.59 years. Some of the

occupations reported were: accountant, administrator, artist, assembly line worker, attorney, auto mechanic, banker, entrepreneur, chef, caregiver, clerk, data manager, college professor, musician, computer technician, programmer, consultant, mailman, delivery driver, director of sales, director of IT, educator, electrician, engineer, financial advisor, florist, homemaker, human resources manager, journalist, musician, painter, nurse, paralegal, pastor, psychotherapist, retailer, sales manager, self-employed, social worker, teacher, urban planner, military/air force/navy, and writer.

Table 19

*Demographic Details (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Field Administration*

Category	Value	Category	Value
Gender		Work Status	
Male	53.70%	Retired	49.10%
Female	46.30%	Part-time	17.70%
Average Age	58.54 years	Full-time	33.20%
Baby Boomer Classification		Marital Status	
Leading-edge	35.70%	Married	52.40%
Trailing-edge	64.30%	Divorced/Separated	25.90%
Ethnicity		Single	17.70%
Caucasian	86.00%	Widowed	4.00%
Black	4.30%	US States Represented	47
Hispanic/Latino	3.60%	Residential Area Classification	
Asian	3.00%	Urban	28.70%
Multiracial	1.50%	Suburban	43.30%
Others	1.50%	Rural	28.00%
Education Level			
Post-graduate	21.30%		
Some post-graduate work	4.60%		
College graduate	26.50%		
Technical Training	6.10%		
Some College	23.20%		
High School	18.30%		

*Note.* n = 328, all data self-reported.

The boomers in the final field administration were fairly sophisticated users of technology. As is evident from Table 20 below, 264 (80.50%) were users of cable/satellite TV, 307 (93.60%) used mobile phones (243 or 74.09% had smartphones), 327 (99.70%) were users of e-mail, 270 (82.30%) used some form of social media, and 277 (84.50%) self-reported as being either fairly tech-savvy, or very tech-savvy.

Table 20

*Media Use Details (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Field Administration*

Media Use Category	Yes	No	
TV Usage	80.50%	19.50%	
Mobile Phone Usage	93.60%	6.40%	
Smartphone Usage	74.09%	25.01%	
E-Mail Usage	99.70%	0.30%	
Social Media Usage	82.30%	17.70%	
	Very	Fairly	Not at All
Level of Tech-Savviness	16.20%	68.30%	15.50%

*Note.* n = 328, all data self-reported.

Recalling their most salient/significant/memorable deconsumption experiences, 203 (61.90%) recalled voluntarily deconsuming a product, 74 (22.60%) deconsumed a service, and 51 (15.50%) deconsumed an experience. Varied deconsumption categories were reported, such as antiques, airlines, automobiles, discretionary travel, alcohol, artificial sweeteners, beauty care, banks, cable TV, caffeine, church, cell phone, dairy products, dry cleaning, sugary cereals, cheese, chocolate, clothing, crafts, gasoline, fast food, condoms, carbonated soft drinks, cigarettes, instant messenger services, light bulbs, fast food, hair products, health insurance, golf, landlines, lawn mowers, local newspapers, marijuana, big grocery chains, meat products, milk, movies in theaters, nicotine, plastic bags, bottled water, social media, skiing, smartphones, sports shoes, yoghurt, and wheat-based products. 208 (63.40%) respondents reported the brand of the deconsumed product/service/experience as being salient. Some salient brands deconsumed were Arby's, AT&T, Chic-fil-A, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Coors, Comcast, Dish TV, Eau Claire Leader-Telegram, Estee Lauder, Facebook, Gold Flake, L'Oréal, Hershey's, Hollywood, Home Depot, Hormel, Hyundai, Jack Daniel's, Jim Beam, Kraft, Jimmy John's, Las Vegas Review-Journal, McDonald's, Marlboro, Miller, Miller High Life, Mitsubishi



Colt, Mountain Dew, Netflix, New Glarus Brewing Co., Samsung, Schlitz, Smirnoff, Svedka, T-Mobile, Time Warner Cable, Target, Tyson, Twitter, Verizon, Vicks, Wal-Mart, Wells Fargo, and the Roman Catholic Church. On average, the participants began consuming these when they were 34.17 years of age, consumed for 23.77 years, initiated deconsumption when they were 47.72 years of age on average, and had experienced 14.10 years of voluntary deconsumption. The average scores for the quality, satisfaction, and commitment of consumption (while it lasted) were 2.36, 2.34, and 2.34 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). Of all respondents, 275 (83.8%) reported the voluntary deconsumption decision as being internally driven. The average scores for the significance and ease of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 2.14 and 2.36 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The average scores for the intentionality, controllability, and stability of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 1.37, 1.55, and 1.51 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The details related to respondents' consumption and voluntary deconsumption categories are presented in Table 21 below.

Table 21

*Consumption/Deconsumption-Related Details (Voluntary Deconsumption) – Field Administration*

Item	Statistics
Deconsumption Category	
Product	61.90%
Service	22.60%
Experience	15.50%
Brand Salience	
Yes	63.40%
No	36.60%
Average Age of Consumption	34.17 years
Average Duration of Consumption	23.77 years
Average Consumption Quality	2.36
Average Consumption Satisfaction	2.34
Average Consumption Commitment	2.34
Average Age of Deconsumption Decision	47.72 years
Average Duration of Deconsumption Decision	14.10 years
Average Significance of Deconsumption Decision	2.14
Average Ease of Deconsumption Decision	2.36
Locus of Deconsumption Decision	
Internal	83.80%
External	16.20%
Average Intentionality of Deconsumption Decision	1.37
Average Controllability of Deconsumption Decision	1.55
Average Stability of Deconsumption Decision	1.51

*Note.* n = 328, all data self-reported.

*Motivation categories of voluntary deconsumption.* To analyze the open-ended response on the motivation to deconsume voluntarily, content analysis was used (e.g., Barnes, Ponder, & Dugar, 2011; Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994; Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990; Keaveney, 1995). To achieve inter-coder reliability, two independent coders (A and B) with advanced degrees in marketing and/or psychology and experience in the domain of consumption/deconsumption independently sorted, coded, and classified

into categories all the self-reported motivation responses. Then, coders A and B met to discuss the categorizations, and to reach an agreement on the total data set, leading to the creation of mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive category names and definitions that would be given to a third coder (coder C, a doctoral degree holder in management/marketing). To ensure validity, coder A then categorized each response. These categories were then provided *a priori* to coder C, who was able to fit all responses to the pre-determined categories. Then, the results between coders A and C were contrasted. Three measures of inter-coder agreement were calculated (percent agreement, Cohen’s (1960) kappa, which corrects for the likelihood of chance agreement between judges, and Perreault and Leigh’s (1989) Index, which accounts for the number of potential categories into which responses can be classified. All three values exceeded the levels recommended by previous research (percent agreement, Cohen’s kappa, and Perrault and Leigh’s  $I_r$  should be more than 0.80 to be considered significant). Percent agreement was .91, Cohen’s kappa was .87, and Perrault and Leigh’s  $I_r$  was .88. Note that there were a few coding disagreements, which were resolved by face-to-face discussions. The resulting voluntary deconsumption motivation categories and statistics are presented in Table 22 below.

Table 22

*Motivation Categories of Voluntary Deconsumption – Field Administration*

Motivation Category	Count	Percentage	Example
Betrayal/Deception Leading to Rebellion/Boycott	25	6.85%	<i>“They (Wells Fargo) cheated millions of hard working people out of their money. For a bank, this is unacceptable!”</i>
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Health)	112	30.68%	<i>“I was not able to control the amount (of alcohol) I drank. In addition, I drank every day and was only able to sleep when</i>

Motivation Category	Count	Percentage	Example
			<i>I was intoxicated. My doctor advised me that I was beginning to show kidney and liver damage.</i>
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Finances)	45	12.33%	<i>"The service price went up, and I decided to do my own lawn maintenance."</i>
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Non-Availability)	6	1.64%	<i>"Change of location because of a move led to non-availability to the beer I wanted to consume."</i>
Dissatisfaction or Product/Service Failure	67	18.36%	<i>"Went there once to buy some Chanukah decorations, and was told Hobby Lobby is a Christian-oriented business, and does not cater to Jewish people by carrying any Jewish-related products...this occurred about 2-3 years ago, and have not been back."</i>
Need for Simplification	20	5.48%	<i>"I am a simple man. I have no need for more clothes."</i>
Change in Lifestyle/Culture	34	9.32%	<i>"I moved to the city and simplified my lifestyle. I started living in a smaller house, which could not hold my antiques."</i>
Life-changing Event	22	6.03%	<i>"...because it was my mother's favorite brand of pretzels (Bachmann's) and she stocked up on them so when she passed away, I deconsumed as I missed her so much and the pretzels made me sad."</i>
No Specific Reason	18	4.93%	N/A
DK/CS	16	4.38%	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

*Principal components analysis (PCA).* The traditional techniques of assessing dimensionality with software such as SPSS rely on eigenvalues of greater than 1.0 (Kaiser, 1960), scree plots (Cattell, 1966) -- retaining all factors before the elbow where it levels off, consideration of the number of items loading on a factor, inspection of residual correlations, significance tests in PCA, minimum average partial correlation

(Velicer, 1976), and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965; Turner, 1998) as criteria for determining the number of factors to retain. Factorability is checked prior to conducting a PCA by obtaining a non-zero determinant, a large KMO (e.g. > .60; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and a significant Bartlett's test. An initial PCA of the voluntary deconsumption sample ( $n = 328$ , number of scale items = 55) was conducted, and assumptions were tested to ascertain factorability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (Kaiser, 1974) of sampling adequacy for the initial PCA was large (.90), indicating that a PCA was useful. The determinant was non-zero. The correlation matrix had several substantial correlations (e.g., at least >.30). Bartlett's (1937) Test of Sphericity, converted to a chi-square statistic, was significant at  $p < .001$ , indicating that the correlation matrix did not come from a population where it was an identity matrix, and that the sample size was large enough to allow component structure analyses.

The researcher used multiple decision rules to determine the number of interpretable factors present. Care was taken to consider the components before the scree plot elbow, and hence, eigenvalues greater than approximately 2.0 were considered. Enough factors were retained to account for at least 40% of the variance. Residual correlations were inspected as well, and initially, the analysis suggested retention of 4 factors. However, most importance was placed on parallel analysis (Turner, 1998), which suggested up to 5 factors. Assuming that the factors in the analysis were uncorrelated, in an attempt to achieve simple structure (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995), varimax, an orthogonal rotation method, was used (Gorsuch, 1983). This varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization (Kaiser, 1958) helped obtain orthogonal (independent) factors. In most instances (including this one), PCA and PAF yield similar

results, but because the factor correlations were not driven by the data, the solution remained nearly orthogonal, PCA was deemed more appropriate for use. Factor loadings greater than 0.10 were examined, even though only item loadings over 0.40 were considered relevant for interpretation. Initially, 11 items had loadings  $<.40$ . Most of these items were focused on consumption, substitution, and rationing (concepts not inherently in the definition of deconsumption), forced respondents to contemplate demise and loss (sacrifice, late-life, and imminent death), some had convoluted language and hard-to-understand words (“purging” and “unplugging”), and one contained an emotionally-charged word (“passion”). In addition, one item loaded on three factors (crossloading with a loading difference of less than 0.20). This item had multiple foci, i.e., active learning, consumption, and simplification (“I can learn to simplify consumption”). All these items were deleted from subsequent PCA runs. Also, at this point, factors 4 and 5 were emerging as overlapping (themes focused on shopping behavior, such as disenchantment, simplification, and self-control). So, for the second run, comprising 43 items, a 4-factor structure was pre-specified. Two items had loadings  $<.40$ . These items contained emotionally-charged words such as “disenchantment,” “excessive,” and “obsession.” In addition, two items were loading on more than one factor (crossloading with a loading difference of less than 0.20). Again, both these items had multiple foci, i.e., decluttering and freedom, and consumption and decision-making respectively. After deleting these 4 items, 39 items were retained for a third CFA run. For details of the PCA runs and decisions on the voluntary deconsumption scale items, see Table 23 below.

Table 23

*Details of PCA Runs and Decision on Items – Voluntary Deconsumption*

<b>Loadings &lt; .40</b>				
PCA Run	# of Items	Example of Items		
1	11	I might have to get rid of some things in a few years anyway; Deconsumption is a natural late-life process; Deconsumption is about unplugging and purging stuff; Passion for consumption is like an addiction		
2	2	I am disenchanted by the culture of excessive consumption; Our society is obsessed with acquisition		
3	0	NA		
<b>Crossloadings Differing by &lt; .20</b>				
PCA Run	# of Items	Example of Items	Decision	# Retained
1	1	I can learn to simplify consumption	Items deleted	43
2	2	I like to declutter because it is very freeing; Consumption is a personal decision	Items deleted	39
3	0	NA	NA	39

The third PCA run of the voluntary deconsumption sample (n = 328, number of scale items = 39) was conducted with a 4-factor structure pre-specified, and assumptions were again tested to ascertain factorability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was large (.88), indicating that a PCA was useful. The determinant was non-zero. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at  $p < .001$ . None of the items had factor loadings  $< .40$ , and none of them crossloaded. Parallel analysis supported a 4-factor structure. Initial eigenvalues indicated that the first factor explained 24.32% of the variance, the second factor explained 7.79% of the variance, the third factor explained 6.05% of the variance, and the fourth factor explained 5.62% of the variance. This 4-factor solution explained 43.77% of the variance. The 4 factors were also seen in the

scree plot with eigenvalues tapering and the elbow around the fourth component mark (Figure 25).

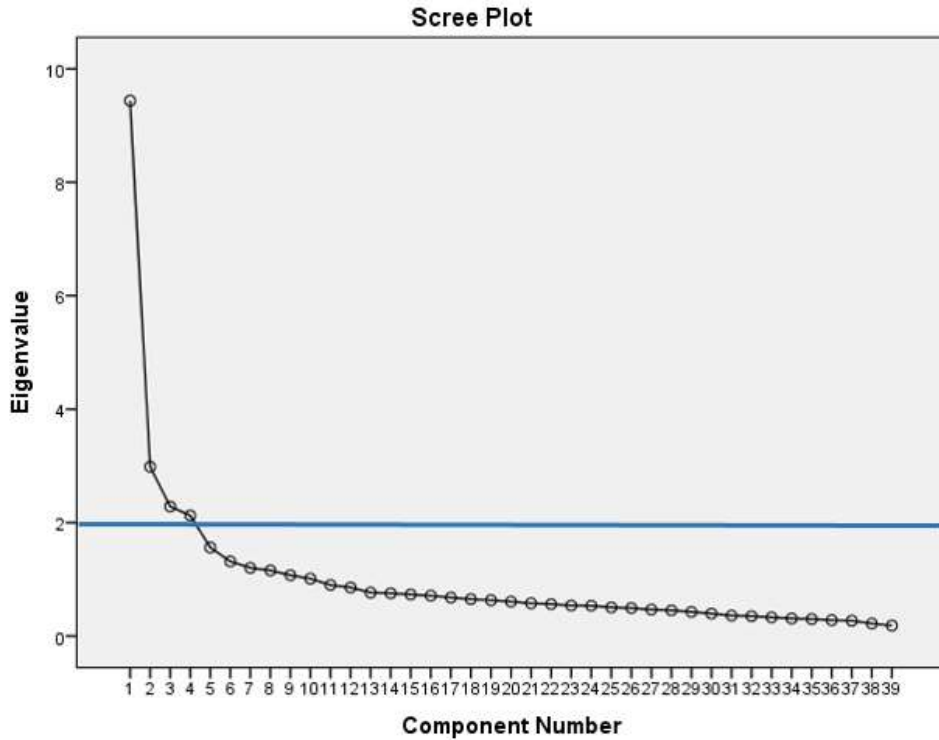


Figure 25. Scree plot for the scale of voluntary deconsumption.

The 39 items were tested for normality. The skewness values, kurtosis values, as well as the Q-Q plots and box-and-whisker plots suggested approximate normality in the distribution of all the items. Table 24 below shed more light on factor memberships and rotated loadings for the various items of voluntary deconsumption. Ten items loaded on factor/component 1, 9 on component/factor 2, 13 on factor/component 3, and 7 on factor/component 4. These four membership patterns were further analyzed to label the four subscales, to understand what component of voluntary deconsumption each measured, and to perform Rasch analyses on each subscale (in sections to follow). For



definitions, descriptions, and factor memberships of the four subscales of voluntary deconsumption, see Appendix J.

Table 24

*Rotated Component Matrix – Voluntary Deconsumption*

		Component			
		1	2	3	4
VD65	Deconsumption leads to harmony	.73			
VD68	My faith and/or spirituality helps me deal with deconsumption	.69			
VD63	When you unclutter, positive energy flows through	.65			
VD66	Deconsumption can help cope with life-changing events better	.64			
VD70	There is a spiritual price to pay for excessive consumption	.63			
VD25	One must learn to be satisfied and content with little	.58			
VD43	In my shopping behavior, I want to be a role model and set an example	.57			
VD67	I cope with deconsumption by accepting it as inevitable	.57			
VD61	Deconsumption can take you back to your roots – to a simpler time	.54			
VD18	Deconsumption is my personal decision to renounce possessions	.52			
VD46	People who do not believe in global warming are mistaken		.76		
VD53	Companies should take a stand on critical environmental issues		.74		
VD45	Companies need to be forced into fair play		.72		
VD47	Companies tend to put profits above people		.69		
VD44	A corporation ought to put social responsibility above its responsibility to shareholders		.67		
VD50	I believe in recycling		.61		
VD48	Consumerism in our country is shoved down people's throats		.55		
VD49	Companies adopt scare tactics to sell to old people		.51		
VD54	The less petroleum energy I spend, the more personal energy I have		.51		
VD38	I am not influenced very much by advertising			.71	
VD24	I am mindful of what I really need versus what I want			.61	

		Component			
		1	2	3	4
VD22	I am never enthralled by products. They are just a means to an end			.56	
VD15	Shopping to me is discretionary. If I do not want to buy, I do not have to buy			.56	
VD60	I am not into acquisition of worldly possessions			.54	
VD30	I try not to get something just to get it			.53	
VD27	I can tune out a lot of advertising on TV and newspapers			.52	
VD02	I can completely eliminate certain items from my shopping list			.49	
VD28	I believe in collecting memories, not things			.48	
VD32	I am surprised how easy it is for me to deconsume			.46	
VD55	I have made my peace with deconsumption			.44	
VD33	I have given up things cold turkey			.42	
VD08	As I grow older, I feel less need for a lot of things			.41	
VD05	Deconsumption is a habit of self-control				.65
VD41	Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity				.62
VD39	Deconsumption can result from a decline in health				.62
VD12	It takes determination and discipline to deconsume				.57
VD36	Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive				.55
VD13	As I have grown older, my priorities have changed				.54
VD34	I know deconsumption is good for me				.47

*Note.* N = 328. Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

*Voluntary deconsumption subscale 1 (elevated state of purpose).* The first component reflected a subscale comprising 10 items. The subscale was labeled “Elevated State of Purpose,” defined as a purposeful positive state of mind occurring as a consequence of voluntary deconsumption. Categories such as harmony, faith, positive energy, spirituality, peaceful coping mechanisms, the desire to act as a role model, contentment, acceptance, a quest to revert to one’s roots, and renunciation formed this subscale. The items were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 =

strongly agree). The mean score across the 10 items was 3.67. Mean scores for items ranged from 3.34 to 3.82. The mode across all items was 3.0. A Cronbach's alpha value of .86 reflected high reliability. Item statistics are presented in Table 25 below.

Table 25

*Item Statistics for Voluntary Deconsumption Subscale 1 (Elevated State of Purpose)*

Item	Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
VD63 When you unclutter, positive energy flows through	3.80	0.93	1–5	323	3	.73
VD65 Deconsumption leads to harmony	3.71	0.93	1–5	323	3	.69
VD66 Deconsumption can help cope with life-changing events better	3.75	0.90	1–5	323	3	.65
VD67 I cope with deconsumption by accepting it as inevitable	3.61	0.90	1–5	323	3	.64
VD68 My faith and/or spirituality helps me deal with deconsumption	3.34	1.22	1–5	323	3	.63
VD70 There is a spiritual price to pay for excessive consumption	3.62	1.14	1–5	323	3	.58
VD25 One must learn to be satisfied and content with little	3.80	0.94	1–5	323	3	.57
VD18 Deconsumption is my personal decision to renounce possessions	3.71	1.05	1–5	323	3	.57
VD43 In my shopping behavior, I want to be a role model and set an example	3.50	1.05	1–5	323	3	.54
VD61 Deconsumption can take you back to your roots – to a simpler time	3.82	0.92	1–5	323	3	.52

*Rasch analysis for voluntary deconsumption subscale 1 (elevated state of purpose).* The Rasch model is used to develop linear interval scales that measure change (Rasch, 1960). Assumptions fundamental to Rasch measurement include (a) each person

is characterized by one ability, (b) each item can be characterized by a difficulty, which can be represented by numbers along a line (similar to a yardstick or ruler), and (c) the probability of observing any specific scored response can be computed from the difference between the person and item estimates (Bond & Fox, 2007). The Rasch model assumes unidimensionality (useful measurement is comprised of the investigation of only one attribute at a time). The Rasch model was used in the analysis of the field study data to provide estimates of person ability and item difficulty, where person ability was estimated in conjunction with item difficulty, to identify the hierarchy of difficulty of items. Unidimensionality was assessed, Rasch-Andrich (Andrich, 2006) thresholds were computed to assess response scale use, and reliability was estimated by calculating the reliability of person separation index. This was done to further examine the structure of the four voluntary deconsumption subscales using Winsteps software. In line with the assumption of unidimensionality, four separate Rasch analyses were conducted, one for each sub-scale. This was done to build on the understanding of the development, scoring, and psychometric characteristics of the voluntary deconsumption scale afforded by the qualitative write-up of results, as well as by the previous section on PCA. Item component membership for the Rasch analyses was based on the findings of the PCA, and Rasch analysis helped enhance the PCA by indicating item and person misfit. In this sense, PCA and Rasch analyses informed each other to ensure greater understanding and evaluation of the scale's (and subscales') structure, use, validity, and reliability.

Overall fit. Prior to interpretation of the item and person logit (position) scores, an appraisal of whether the data fit the model reasonably well is required (Green & Frantom, 2002). This appraisal was done by assessing overall fit using infit and outfit

MNSQ statistics. Wright's (1994) suggestion for overall fit is to have a mean MNSQ value of 1.00 and a mean ZSTD value of 0.0 with values between .5 and 1.5 being productive of measurement (Linacre, 2015). Based on these standards, the data for this subscale of the voluntary deconsumption sample fit the model with a mean MNSQ infit value of 0.99 ( $SD = 0.25$ ), mean ZSTD infit of -0.40 ( $SD = 3.20$ ), mean MNSQ outfit value of 1.01 ( $SD = 0.25$ ), and mean ZSTD outfit of -0.10 ( $SD = 3.20$ ). Infit and outfit mean squares were close to 1.0. These statistics indicated adequate overall average fit of data to the model (Bode & Wright, 1999). See Table 26 below.

Dimensionality. Linacre's (2004, 2012, 2015) suggestion for evaluation of unidimensionality is to use a principal components analysis of residuals. An instrument may be considered unidimensional if the raw variance explained by the first dimension is substantial (e.g., > 40%), the eigenvalue for the first contrast is less than or equal to 2.0, and the variance explained by the first contrast is less than 5%. The measure "Elevated State of Purpose" explained 41.90% of the variance with the unexplained variance in the first contrast having an eigenvalue of 1.94 with 11.20% unexplained variance, which was higher than the expectation, but this is quite common for short measures. Therefore, this sub-scale met the expectations of unidimensionality (see Table 26).

Table 26

*Dimensionality, Fit, and Separation – VD Subscale 1 (Elevated State of Purpose)*

Index	Voluntary Deconsumption Sample ( <i>n</i> = 323)
Dimensionality—eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	1.94
Mean MNSQ Infit	0.99
SD MNSQ Infit	0.25
Mean MNSQ Outfit	1.01
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.25
Real Person Separation	2.16
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.57
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.82
Cronbach's Alpha	0.86
Person Logit Mean	0.99
Real Item Separation	3.09
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.08
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.91

*Note.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation =  $\text{Separation}^2 / (1 + \text{Separation}^2)$ . Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

Item and person fit. Item fit was examined to ensure that each item fit the Rasch model. Values of infit MNSQ between .6 and 1.4 are considered adequate fit (Linacre & Wright, 1994). The MNSQ infit for items in the sample ranged from 0.60 to 1.29. Based

on these statistics, all 10 items of this sub-scale fit the model well (see Table 27 below) with consistently moderate to high point-measure correlations.

Table 27

*Item Statistics – VD Subscale 1 (Elevated State of Purpose)*

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt-Measure Corr
VD 63 When you unclutter, positive energy flows through	-0.25	0.08	0.82	0.67
VD 65 Deconsumption leads to harmony	-0.07	0.07	0.60	0.75
VD 66 Deconsumption can help cope with life-changing events better	-0.15	0.08	0.66	0.72
VD 67 I cope with deconsumption by accepting it as inevitable	0.10	0.07	0.84	0.64
VD 68 My faith and/or spirituality helps me deal with deconsumption	0.55	0.07	1.29	0.65
VD 70 There is a spiritual price to pay for excessive consumption	0.10	0.07	1.22	0.64
VD 25 One must learn to be satisfied and content with little	-0.24	0.08	1.01	0.60
VD 18 Deconsumption is my personal decision to renounce possessions	-0.07	0.07	1.30	0.56
VD 43 In my shopping behavior, I want to be a role model and set an example	0.30	0.07	1.20	0.57
VD 61 Deconsumption can take you back to your roots – to a simpler time	-0.27	0.08	0.93	0.62

*Note.* N = 323. Pt-Measure Corr is the correlation between the item and the measured dimension.

Person fit was examined to ensure that individuals were answering in a consistent, expected manner. Linacre’s (2015) criteria for person fit requires MNSQ infit values to be less than 4.0. Out of the 328 respondents, five had MNSQ infit values of 4.0 or higher (between 4.10 and 4.77). These five cases underfit the model, and their scores were deleted from the sample and the model was rerun (see Table 28 below).

Table 28

*Person Misfit - VD Subscale 1 (Elevated State of Purpose)*

Serial Number	Entry Number	Logit Position	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	68	0.50	4.77	4.79
2	11	1.71	4.71	4.37
3	129	1.71	4.71	4.37
4	165	1.71	4.71	4.37
5	212	1.33	4.10	3.89

All other respondents fit the model well with MNSQ infit values of 3.75 or lower.

All tables presented here reflect the final model with the five respondents removed.

Reliability. Reliability is measured by computing person and item spread across the measure. Person separation explores the ability of items to identify levels of the measure across persons on a less-to-more continuum (Bond & Fox, 2007). A separation of 2.0 is considered minimal with higher levels of separation indicating a wider range of items and persons (Linacre, 2015). Person separation for this sample was 2.16, with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.86, real reliability of person separation of 0.82, and real person root mean square error of 0.57. Real item separation was 3.09, real item root mean square error was 0.08, and real reliability of item separation was 0.91.

Scale Use. Results of the Rasch analysis indicated that respondents in this sample used the rating scale as intended, as presented in the step structure table below (Table 29). Rasch-Andrich thresholds increased with category values with no evidence of step misfit with MNSQ infit and outfit values under 2.0 (Linacre, 2015). Overall, the structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of the response scale.



Table 29

*Step Structure – VD Subscale 1 (Elevated State of Purpose)*

Category	Observed			Sample Expect	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Step Structure	Category Measure
	Count	%	Average					
1	106	3	-1.19	-1.13	0.95	0.96	None	(-2.99)
2	276	9	-0.05	-0.13	1.10	1.16	-1.59	-1.45
3	907	28	0.41	0.43	0.93	0.99	-1.03	-0.19
4	1241	38	1.08	1.08	0.93	0.93	0.42	1.40
5	700	22	2.04	2.03	1.03	1.01	2.20	(3.41)

*Note.* Observed count is the number of all responses to a category. Observed percentage is the percent of all responses in that category. Observed average is the average of the measures that are modeled to produce the responses observed in the category. Sample expect is the expected value of the average measure for this sample. Infit MNSQ is the average of the Infit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Outfit MNSQ is the average of the Outfit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Step Structure is the logit position at which transition is made from a lower category to this category. Category measure is the sample-free measure corresponding to this category, where ( ) is printed where the matching calibration is infinite.

Category probability curves (Figure 26 below) indicated distribution of the five categories with clearly advancing steps.

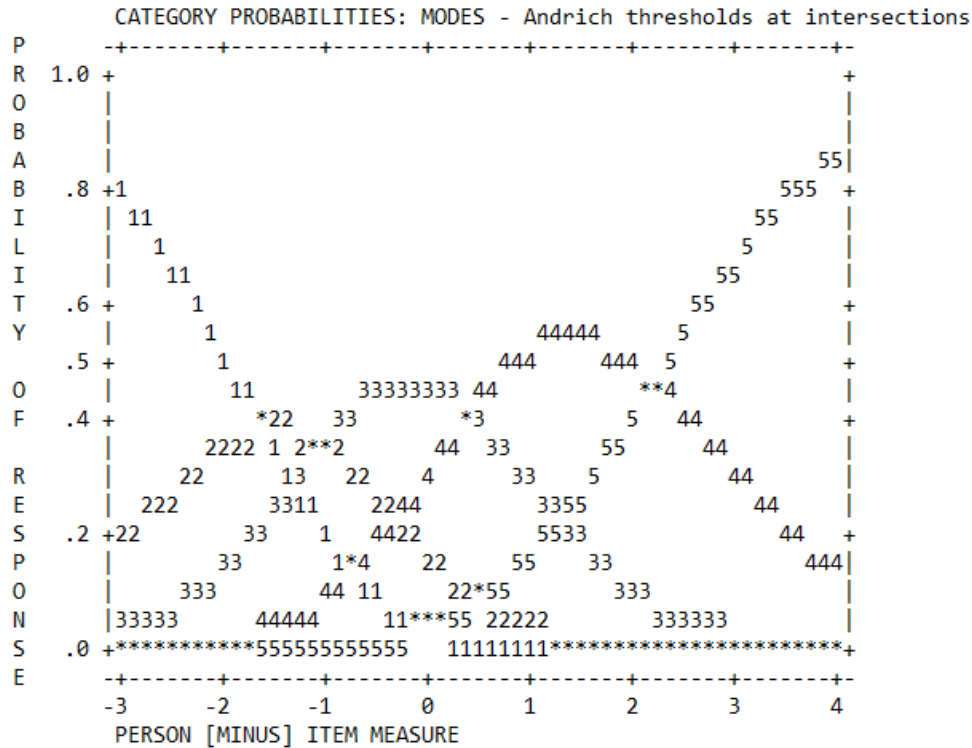


Figure 26. Category probability curves – VD subscale 1 (elevated state of purpose).  
 Note. Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability). The item-person map provided in Figure 27 presents items and persons on the same scale and demonstrates scale functioning for this sample. Respondents represented near the top of the left-hand side of the item-person map were the ones who exhibited higher levels of elevated states of purpose; respondents represented near the bottom were the ones who scored lower on this component. Respondents were spread fairly evenly throughout the item-person map, with minimal overlap or gaps for persons on the ruler. Representation of items and respondents in the map suggested this sample reported well-distributed elevated states of purpose (as a result of voluntary deconsumption). The item logit values were between -0.24 and 0.55, reflecting a relatively narrow range of construct coverage with a person

logit mean of 0.99. More respondents seemed to be clustered toward the top, indicating the respondents in the sample felt strongly about voluntary deconsumption in general, and this component (elevated states of purpose as a result of voluntary deconsumption) in particular. Given the selection criteria of the sample (baby boomers who had experienced this phenomenon), this slight slant toward stronger experiences of voluntary deconsumption was expected.

TABLE 1.4 Dugar\_VD\_Scale\_Items\_Data\_Apr 02 2017 ZOU952WS.TXT Apr 2 2017 13:41  
 INPUT: 328 PERSON 10 ITEM REPORTED: 323 PERSON 10 ITEM 5 CATS WINSTEPS 3.92.1

MEASURE <more>	PERSON	BOTTOM P=50% ITEM	MEASURE ITEM	TOP P=50% ITEM	MEASURE <rare>
5	.##	+	+	+	5
4	.	+	+	+	4
3	.##	+	+	+	3
2	.##	+	+	+	2
1	.#####	+	+	+	1
0	.###	+	+	+	0
-1	.##	+	+	+	-1
-2	.##	+	+	+	-2
-3	.	+	+	+	-3
-4	.	+	+	+	-4

VD68\_FAITH/SPIRITUALITY HELPS COPE  
 VD43\_ROLE MODEL  
 VD67\_INEVITABLE VD70\_SPIRITUAL PRICE FOR EXCESSIVE CONSUMPTION  
 VD18\_RENUNCIATION VD65\_HARMONY  
 VD25\_CONTENTMENT VD63\_POSITIVE ENERGY VD66\_COPING WITH LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS  
 VD61\_BACK TO ROOTS

VD68\_FAITH/SPIRITUALITY HELPS COPE  
 VD43\_ROLE MODEL  
 VD67\_INEVITABLE VD70\_SPIRITUAL PRICE FOR EXCESSIVE CONSUMPTION  
 VD18\_RENUNCIATION VD65\_HARMONY  
 VD25\_CONTENTMENT VD63\_POSITIVE ENERGY VD66\_COPING WITH LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS  
 VD61\_BACK TO ROOTS

<less> ----- PERSON --+ ITEM      --+ ITEM      --+ ITEM      <freq>  
 EACH "#" IN THE PERSON COLUMN IS 3 PERSON: EACH "." IS 1 TO 2

Figure 27. Item-person map – VD subscale 1 (elevated state of purpose).

Invariance. Finally, consistent with the research questions, invariance of subscale item position was assessed for two dichotomous variables – gender (male or female) and baby boomer stage (leading- or trailing-edge). Differential item functioning (DIF) was assessed using a t-test for statistical significance of difference in item logit positions (e.g., male vs. female; leading-edge vs. trailing-edge). When statistical significance was evaluated at  $p \leq .01$ , and using a minimum 0.50 logit difference (Smith et al., 2009), none of the 10 items in this subscale exhibited statistically significant differential item functioning with respect to gender and boomer status, which is evident in the two figures below (Figure 28 and Figure 29).

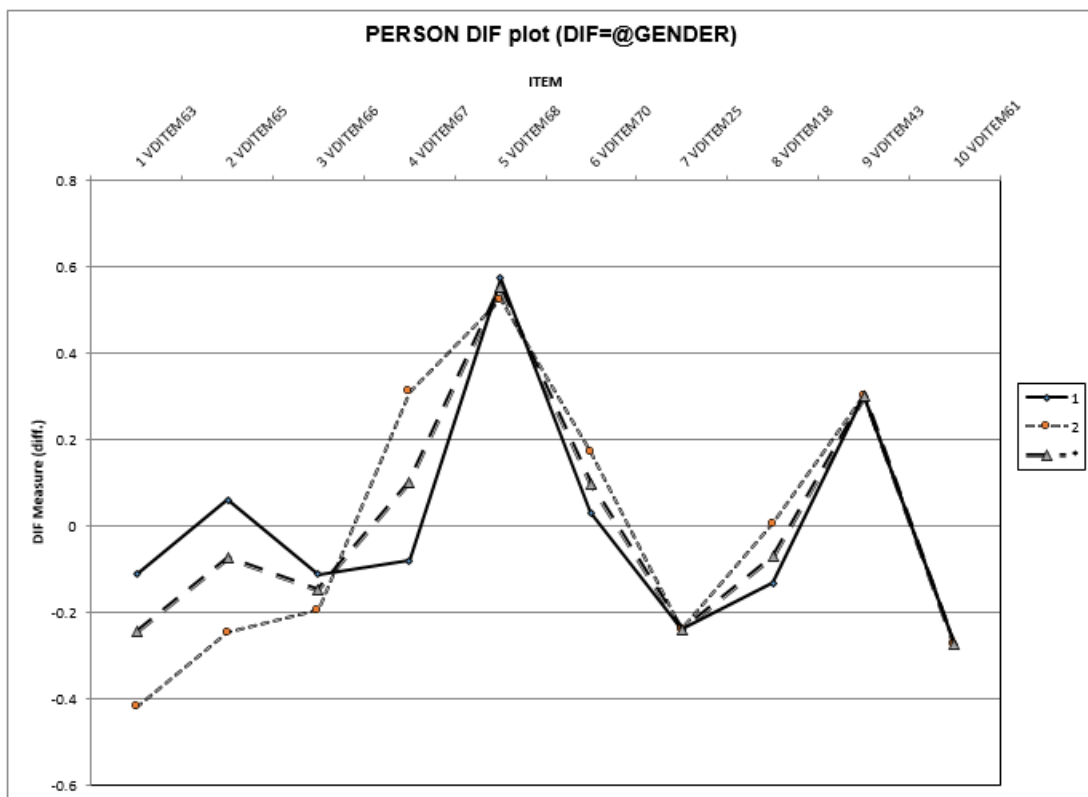


Figure 28. DIF plot by gender – VD subscale 1 (elevated state of purpose).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = male, 2 = female,  $\Delta$  (\*) = average.

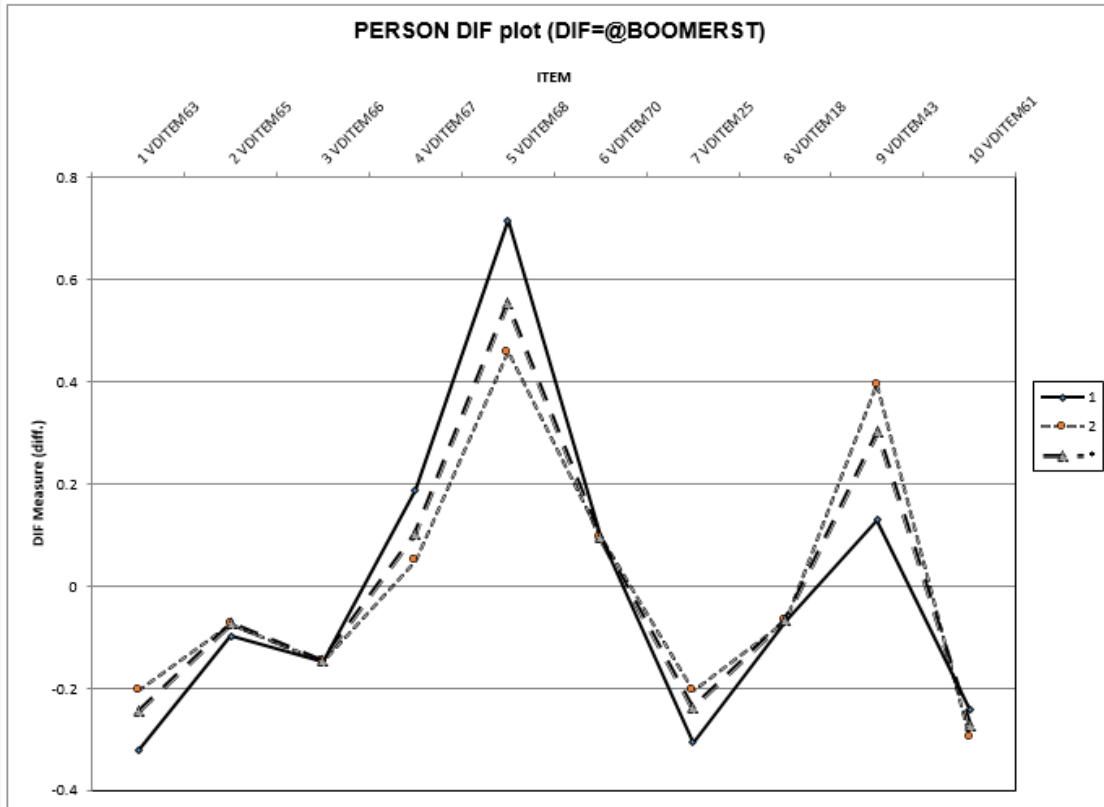


Figure 29. DIF plot by boomer status – VD subscale 1 (elevated state of purpose).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = leading-edge, 2 = trailing-edge, Δ (\*) = average.

Summary. The “Elevated States of Purpose” measure, a subscale of the measure of voluntary deconsumption, can be considered unidimensional based on both PCA and Rasch analyses. Item and person separation statistics were acceptable and items were spread across the continuum. The measure showed support for internal consistency reliability, reliability of item separation, and a reliability of person separation. The 5-point Likert scale was used as intended. Item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some harder-to-agree-with items. The measure can be considered invariant across gender and baby boomer status.

*Voluntary deconsumption subscale 2 (social agency and activism).* The second component reflected a subscale comprising 9 items. The subscale was labeled “Social Agency and Activism,” defined as an active stance and rebellious actions in favor of the protection of the environment, and a desire for corporations’ fair play and socially responsible conduct. Categories such as concern for the environment, belief in the ill-effects of global warming, corporations’ social conduct and responsibility, and active measures such as recycling formed this subscale. The items were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The mean score across the 9 items was 3.92. Mean scores for items ranged from 3.40 to 4.41. The mode across all items was 3.0. A Cronbach’s alpha value of .85 reflected high reliability. Item statistics are presented in Table 30 below.

Table 30

*Item Statistics for Voluntary Deconsumption Subscale 2 (Social Agency and Activism)*

Item	Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
VD46 VD46_People who do not believe in global warming are mistaken	3.70	1.30	1–5	327	3	.76
VD53 VD53_Companies should take a stand on critical environmental issues	4.07	0.92	1–5	327	3	.74
VD45 VD45_Companies need to be forced into fair play	3.75	1.06	1–5	327	3	.72
VD47 VD47_Companies tend to put profits above people	4.26	0.93	1–5	327	3	.69
VD44 VD44_A corporation ought to put social responsibility above its responsibility to shareholders	3.61	0.99	1–5	327	3	.67
VD50 VD50_I believe in recycling	4.41	0.77	1–5	327	3	.61

Item		Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
VD48	VD48_Consumerism in our country is shoved down people's throats	4.14	0.88	1-5	327	3	.55
VD49	VD49_Companies adopt scare tactics to sell to old people	3.94	0.98	1-5	327	3	.51
VD54	VD54_The less petroleum energy I spend, the more personal energy I have	3.40	1.12	1-5	327	3	.51

*Rasch analysis for voluntary deconsumption subscale 2 (social agency and activism).*

Overall fit. Based on the standards for overall fit using infit MNSQ, outfit MNSQ, and ZSTD statistics, the data for this subscale of the voluntary deconsumption sample fit the model with a mean MNSQ infit value of 1.00 ( $SD = 0.20$ ), mean ZSTD infit of -0.10 ( $SD = 2.40$ ), mean MNSQ outfit value of 0.99 ( $SD = 0.20$ ), and mean ZSTD outfit of -0.20 ( $SD = 2.40$ ). Infit mean square was 1.00, and outfit mean square was close to 1.0. These statistics indicated adequate overall average fit of data to the model. See Table 31 below.

Dimensionality. The measure "Social Agency and Activism" explained 47.70% of the variance with the unexplained variance in the first contrast having an eigenvalue of 1.67 with 9.70% unexplained variance. Therefore, this subscale met the expectations of unidimensionality (see Table 31).



Table 31

*Dimensionality, Fit, and Separation – VD Subscale 2 (Social Agency and Activism)*

Index	Voluntary Deconsumption Sample ( <i>n</i> = 327)
Dimensionality—eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	1.67
Mean MNSQ Infit	1.00
SD MNSQ Infit	0.20
Mean MNSQ Outfit	0.99
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.20
Real Person Separation	1.91
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.65
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.79
Cronbach's Alpha	0.85
Person Logit Mean	1.43
Real Item Separation	7.30
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.08
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.98

*Note.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation =  $\text{Separation}^2 / (1 + \text{Separation}^2)$ . Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

Item and person fit. The MNSQ infit for items in the sample ranged from 0.68 to 1.40. Based on these statistics, all 9 items of this subscale fit the model well (see Table 32 below) with consistently moderate to high point-measure correlations.

Table 32

*Item Statistics – VD Subscale 2 (Social Agency and Activism)*

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt- Measure Corr
VD46 VD46_People who do not believe in global warming are mistaken	0.43	0.07	1.40	0.66
VD53 VD53_Companies should take a stand on critical environmental issues	-0.24	0.08	0.68	0.71
VD45 VD45_Companies need to be forced into fair play	0.34	0.07	0.85	0.70
VD47 VD47_Companies tend to put profits above people	-0.64	0.08	1.09	0.62
VD44 VD44_A corporation ought to put social responsibility above its responsibility to shareholders	0.58	0.07	0.86	0.66
VD50 VD50_I believe in recycling	-1.01	0.09	0.89	0.57
VD48 VD48_Consumerism in our country is shoved down people's throats	-0.39	0.08	0.97	0.61
VD49 VD49_Companies adopt scare tactics to sell to old people	0.02	0.08	1.09	0.60
VD54 VD54_The less petroleum energy I spend, the more personal energy I have	0.91	0.07	1.16	0.62

*Note.* N = 327. Pt-Measure Corr is the correlation between the item and the measured dimension.

Out of the 328 respondents, one had a MNSQ infit value of 4.0 or higher (4.24).

This case underfit the model, and its scores were deleted from the sample and the model was rerun (see Table 33 below).

Table 33

*Person Misfit - VD Subscale 2 (Social Agency and Activism)*

Serial Number	Entry Number	Logit Position	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	14	0.14	4.24	4.22

All other respondents fit the model well with MNSQ infit values of 3.65 or below. All tables presented here reflect the final model with the one respondent removed.

Reliability. Person separation for this sample was 1.91, with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85, real reliability of person separation of 0.79, and real person root mean square error of 0.65. Real item separation was 7.30, real item root mean square error was 0.08, and real reliability of item separation was 0.98.

Scale Use. Results of the Rasch analysis indicated that respondents in this sample used the rating scale as intended, as presented in the step structure table below (Table 34). Rasch-Andrich thresholds increased with category values with no evidence of step misfit with MNSQ infit and outfit values under 2.0 (Linacre, 2015). Overall, the structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of the response scale.

Table 34

*Step Structure – VD Subscale 2 (Social Agency and Activism)*

Category	Observed			Sample Expect	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Step Structure	Category Measure
	Count	%	Average					
1	96	3	-0.72	-0.86	1.22	1.36	None	(-2.73)
2	186	6	-0.21	-0.17	0.93	0.92	-1.26	-1.30
3	614	21	0.49	0.52	0.91	0.85	-1.02	-0.16
4	1010	34	1.32	1.31	0.98	0.98	0.41	1.25
5	1037	35	2.31	2.30	1.05	1.03	1.87	(3.12)

*Note.* Observed count is the number of all responses to a category. Observed percentage is the percent of all responses in that category. Observed average is the average of the measures that are modeled to produce the responses observed in the category. Sample expect is the expected value of the average measure for this sample. Infit MNSQ is the average of the Infit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Outfit MNSQ is the average of the Outfit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Step Structure is the logit position at which transition is made from a lower category to this category. Category measure is the sample-free measure corresponding to this category, where ( ) is printed where the matching calibration is infinite.

Category probability curves (Figure 30 below) indicated distribution of the five categories with clearly advancing steps.

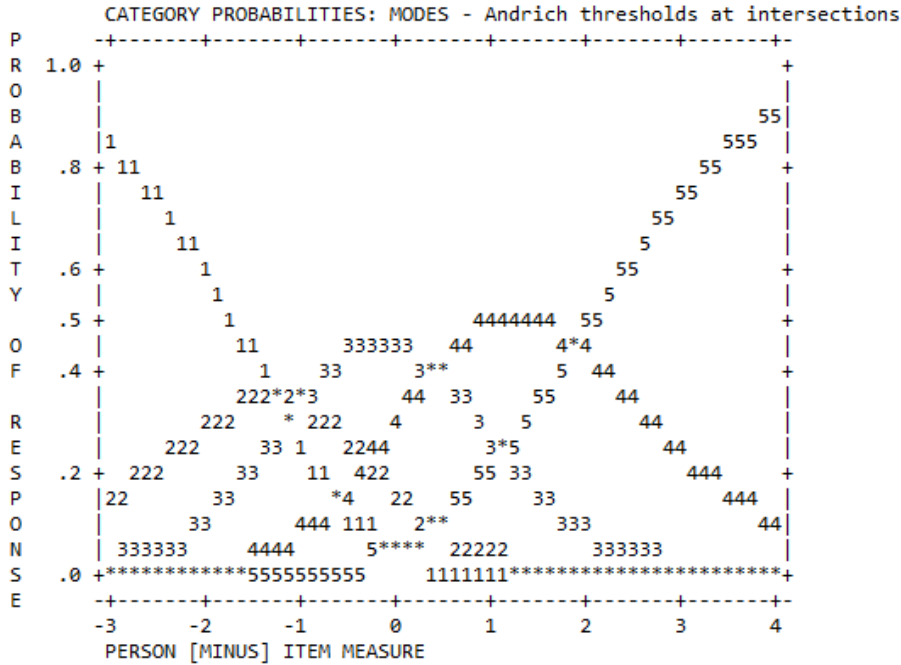


Figure 30. Category probability curves – VD subscale 2 (social agency and activism).  
 Note. Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability). The item-person map provided in Figure 31 presents items and persons on the same scale and demonstrates scale functioning for this sample. Respondents represented near the top of the left-hand side of the item-person map were the ones who exhibited higher levels of social agency and activism; respondents represented near the bottom were the ones who scored lower on this component. Respondents were spread throughout the item-person map. Representation of items and respondents in the map suggested this sample reported a positive stance of social agency and activism (as it relates to voluntary deconsumption). The item logit values were between -1.01 and 0.91, reflecting a range of construct

coverage with a person logit mean of 1.43. The person logit mean of 1.43 indicated the respondents in the sample felt positively about social agency and activism.

▲TABLE 1.4 Dugar\_VD\_Scale\_Items\_Data\_Apr 02 2017 ZOU934WS.TXT Apr 2 2017 14: 0  
 INPUT: 328 PERSON 9 ITEM REPORTED: 327 PERSON 9 ITEM 5 CATS WINSTEPS 3.92.1

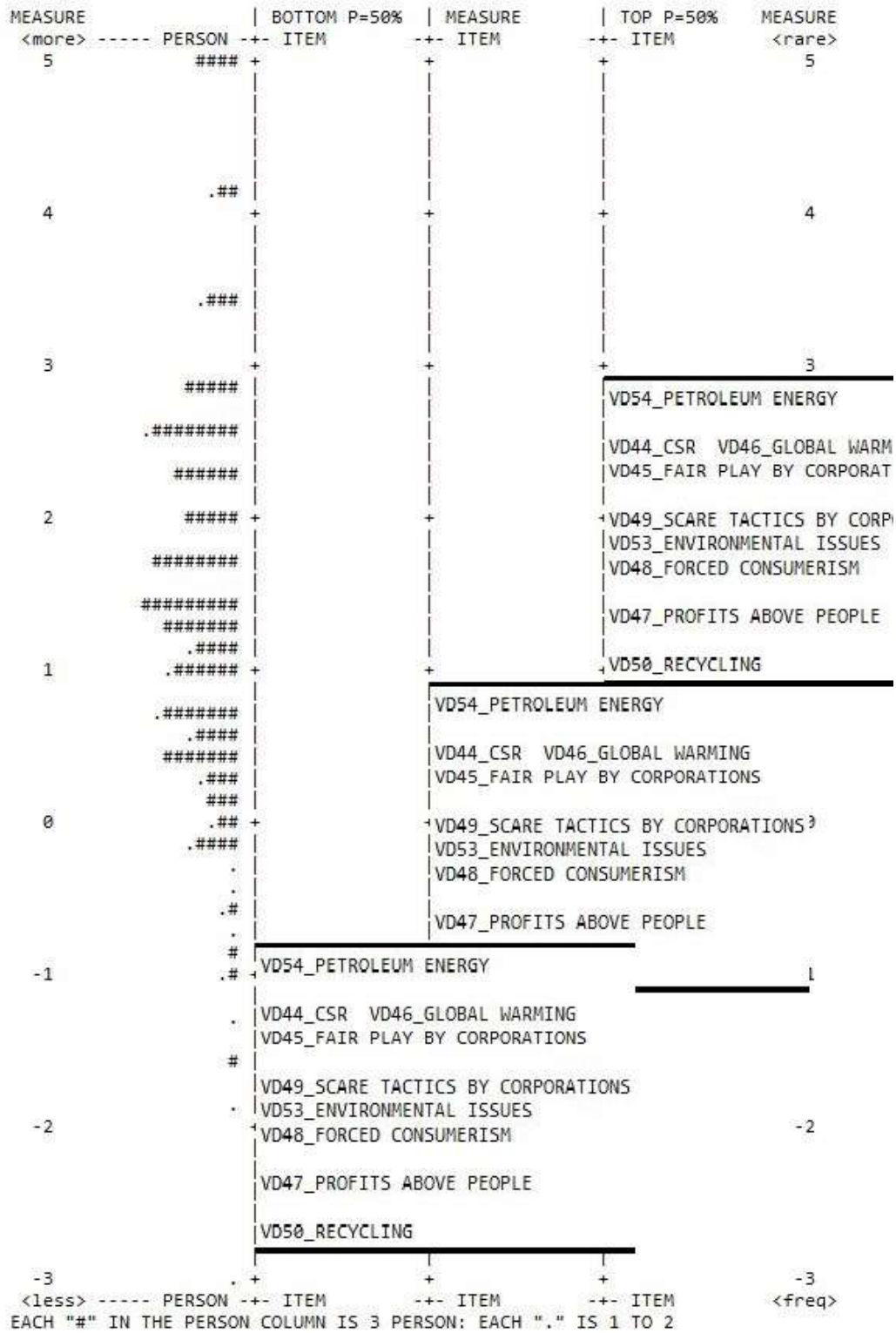


Figure 31. Item-person map – VD subscale 2 (social agency and activism).

Invariance. When statistical significance was evaluated at  $p \leq .01$ , and using a minimum 0.50 logit difference (Smith et al., 2009), none of the 9 items in this subscale exhibited statistically significant differential item functioning with respect to gender and boomer status (Figure 32 and Figure 33).

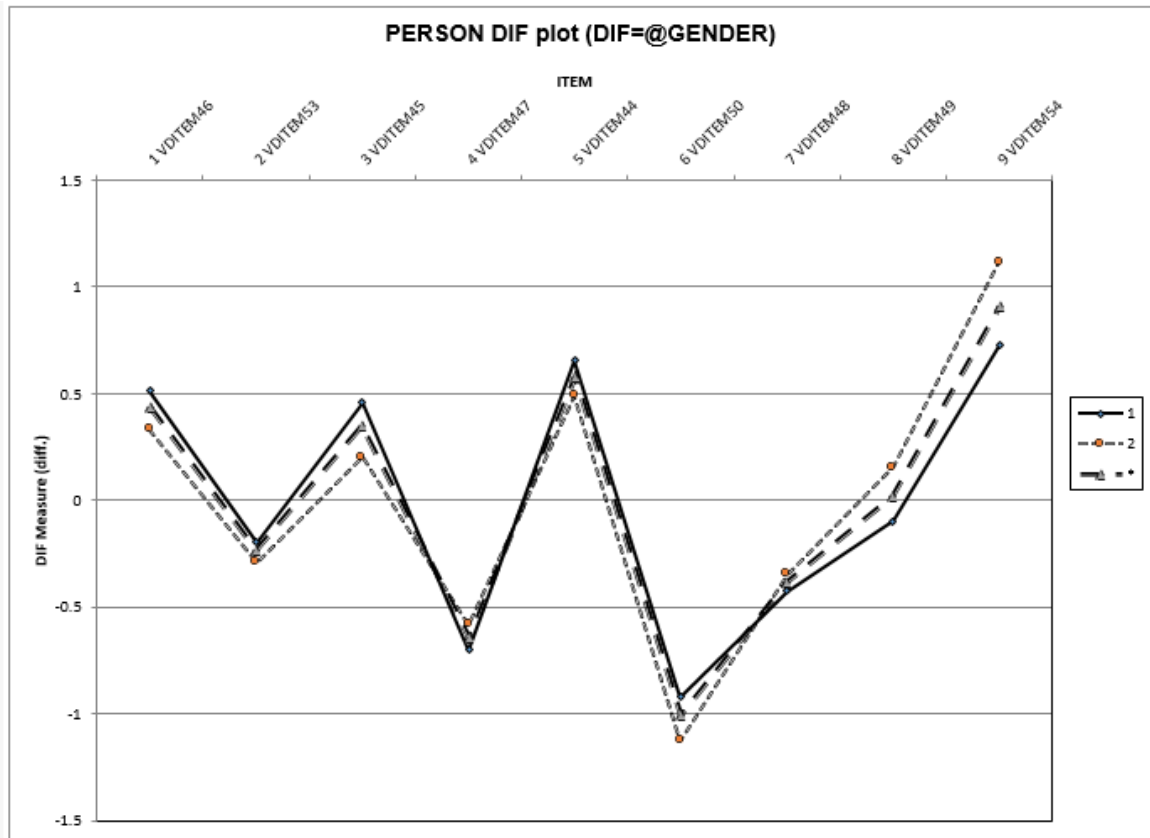


Figure 32. DIF plot by gender – VD subscale 2 (social agency and activism).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = male, 2 = female, Δ (\*) = average.

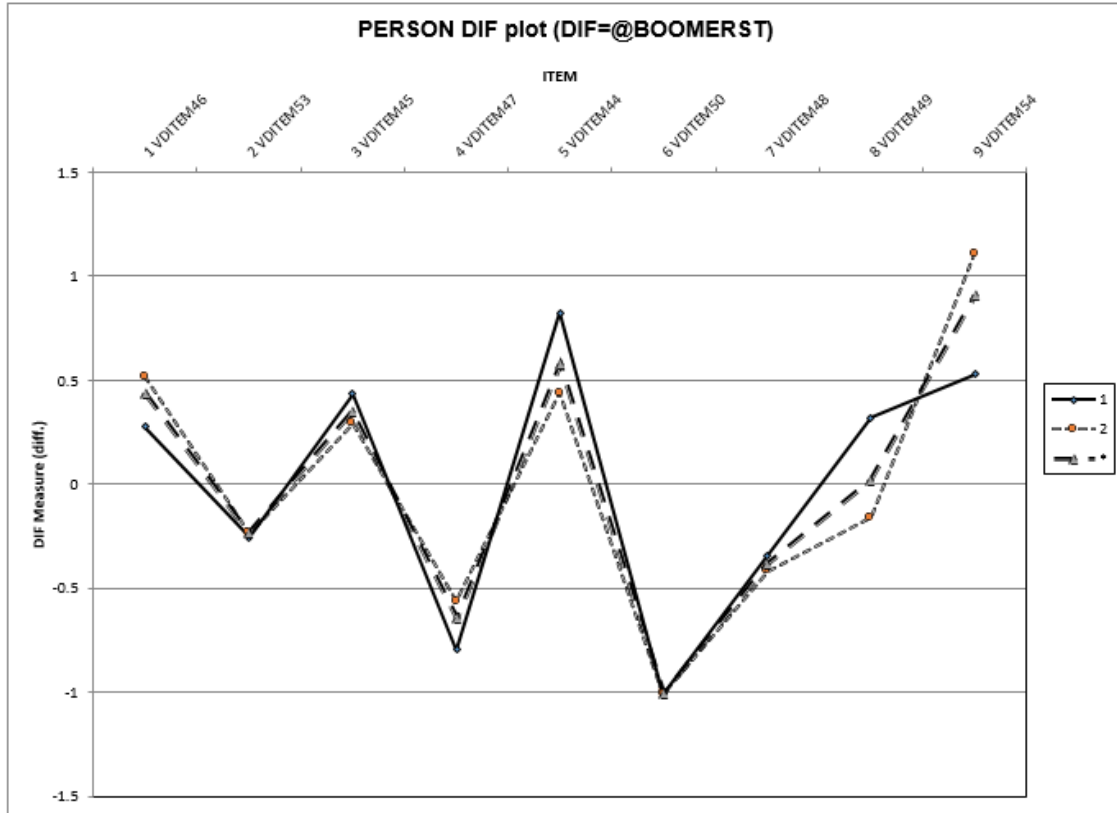


Figure 33. DIF plot by boomer status – VD subscale 2 (social agency and activism).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = leading-edge, 2 = trailing-edge, Δ (\*) = average.

Summary. The “Social Agency and Activism” measure, a subscale of the measure of voluntary deconsumption, can be considered unidimensional based on both PCA and Rasch analyses. Item and person separation statistics were acceptable and items were spread across the continuum. The measure showed support for internal consistency reliability, reliability of item separation, and a reliability of person separation. The 5-point Likert scale was used as intended. Item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some harder-to-agree-with items. The measure can be considered invariant across gender and baby boomer status.



*Voluntary deconsumption subscale 3 (non-materialism).* The third component reflected a subscale comprising 13 items. The subscale was labeled “Non-Materialism,” defined as an ability for discretionary and rational decision-making, and an unattached attitude toward shopping or acquisition of possessions. Categories such as shopping discretion, control, awareness of need vis-à-vis want, shopping as a means to an end, non-possession, and ability to give up consumption and tune out promotions formed this subscale. The items were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The mean score across the 13 items was 3.97. Mean scores for items ranged from 3.54 to 4.36. The mode across all items was 3.0. A Cronbach’s alpha value of .82 reflected high reliability. Item statistics are presented in Table 35 below.

Table 35

*Item Statistics for Voluntary Deconsumption Subscale 3 (Non-Materialism)*

Item	Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
VD38 I am not influenced very much by advertising	3.86	1.04	1–5	327	3	.71
VD24 I am mindful of what I really need versus what I want	4.13	0.86	1–5	327	3	.61
VD15 Shopping to me is discretionary. If I do not want to buy, I do not have to buy	4.36	0.85	1–5	327	3	.56
VD22 I am never enthralled by products. They are just a means to an end	3.54	1.04	1–5	327	3	.56
VD30 I try not to get something just to get it	4.15	0.90	1–5	327	3	.54
VD60 I am not into acquisition of worldly possessions	3.72	0.99	1–5	327	3	.53
VD27 I can tune out a lot of advertising on TV and newspapers	4.09	0.96	1–5	327	3	.52
VD02 I can completely eliminate certain items from my shopping list	4.20	0.91	1–5	327	3	.49

Item		Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
VD28	I believe in collecting memories, not things	4.08	0.94	1–5	327	3	.48
VD32	I am surprised how easy it is for me to deconsume	3.57	1.06	1–5	327	3	.46
VD55	I have made my peace with deconsumption	3.83	0.96	1–5	327	3	.44
VD33	I have given up things cold turkey	3.80	1.05	1–5	327	3	.42
VD08	As I grow older, I feel less need for a lot of things	4.24	0.95	1–5	327	3	.41

*Rasch analysis for voluntary deconsumption sub-scale 3 (non-materialism).*

Overall fit. Based on the standards for overall fit using infit MNSQ, outfit MNSQ, and ZSTD statistics, the data for this subscale of the voluntary deconsumption sample fit the model with a mean MNSQ infit value of 1.02 ( $SD = 0.15$ ), mean ZSTD infit of 0.10 ( $SD = 1.80$ ), mean MNSQ outfit value of 1.04 ( $SD = 0.17$ ), and mean ZSTD outfit of 0.40 ( $SD = 1.80$ ). Infit mean and outfit mean squares were close to 1.00. These statistics indicated adequate overall average fit of data to the model. See Table 36 below.

Dimensionality. The measure “Non-Materialism” explained 33.50% of the variance with the unexplained variance in the first contrast having an eigenvalue of 1.67 with 8.50% unexplained variance. Therefore, this subscale met the expectations of unidimensionality (see Table 36).

Table 36

*Dimensionality, Fit, and Separation – VD Subscale 3 (Non-Materialism)*

Index	Voluntary Deconsumption Sample ( <i>n</i> = 327)
Dimensionality—eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	1.67
Mean MNSQ Infit	1.02
SD MNSQ Infit	0.15
Mean MNSQ Outfit	1.04
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.17
Real Person Separation	1.89
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.50
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.78
Cronbach's Alpha	0.82
Person Logit Mean	1.24
Real Item Separation	5.33
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.07
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.97

*Note.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation =  $\text{Separation}^2 / (1 + \text{Separation}^2)$ . Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

Item and person fit. The MNSQ infit for items in the sample ranged from 0.74 to 1.34. Based on these statistics, all 13 items of this subscale fit the model well (see Table 37 below) with consistently moderate to high point-measure correlations.

Table 37

*Item Statistics – VD Subscale 3 (Non-Materialism)*

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt-Measure Corr
VD38 I am not influenced very much by advertising	0.20	0.07	0.96	0.58
VD24 I am mindful of what I really need versus what I want	-0.23	0.07	0.74	0.59
VD15 Shopping to me is discretionary. If I do not want to buy, I do not have to buy	-0.71	0.08	1.08	0.49
VD22 I am never enthralled by products. They are just a means to an end	0.63	0.06	0.96	0.52
VD30 I try not to get something just to get it	-0.27	0.07	1.01	0.52
VD60 I am not into acquisition of worldly possessions	0.40	0.06	0.80	0.59
VD27 I can tune out a lot of advertising on TV and newspapers	-0.16	0.07	1.14	0.50
VD02 I can completely eliminate certain items from my shopping list	-0.37	0.07	1.17	0.47
VD28 I believe in collecting memories, not things	-0.27	0.07	1.05	0.50
VD32 I am surprised how easy it is for me to deconsume	0.59	0.06	1.05	0.50
VD55 I have made my peace with deconsumption	0.24	0.07	0.86	0.57
VD33 I have given up things cold turkey	0.28	0.07	1.08	0.52
VD08 As I grow older, I feel less need for a lot of things	-0.44	0.08	1.34	0.43

*Note.* N = 327. Pt-Measure Corr is the correlation between the item and the measured dimension.

Out of the 328 respondents, one had a MNSQ infit value of 4.0 or higher (4.52).

This case underfit the model, and its scores were deleted from the sample and the model was rerun (see Table 38 below).

Table 38

*Person Misfit - VD Subscale 3 (Non-Materialism)*

Serial Number	Entry Number	Logit Position	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	129	1.78	4.52	4.33

All other respondents fit the model well with MNSQ infit values of 3.86 or below.

All tables presented here reflect the final model with the one respondent removed.

Reliability. Person separation for this sample was 1.89, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, real reliability of person separation of 0.78, and real person root mean square error of 0.50. Real item separation was 5.33, real item root mean square error was 0.07, and real reliability of item separation was 0.97.

Scale Use. Results of the Rasch analysis indicated that respondents in this sample used the rating scale as intended, as presented in the step structure table below (Table 39). Rasch-Andrich thresholds increased with category values with no evidence of step misfit with MNSQ infit and outfit values under 2.0 (Linacre, 2015). Overall, the structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of the response scale.

Table 39

*Step Structure – VD Subscale 3 (Non-Materialism)*

Category	Observed			Sample Expect	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Step Structure	Category Measure
	Count	%	Average					
1	96	2	-0.07	-0.31	1.24	1.60	None	(-2.61)
2	290	7	0.35	0.26	1.10	1.21	-1.25	-1.11
3	731	17	0.59	0.68	0.89	0.89	-0.45	-0.10
4	1671	39	1.12	1.14	0.91	0.88	0.07	1.06
5	1463	34	1.86	1.82	0.97	0.97	1.63	(2.87)

*Note.* Observed count is the number of all responses to a category. Observed percentage is the percent of all responses in that category. Observed average is the average of the measures that are modeled to produce the responses observed in the category. Sample expect

is the expected value of the average measure for this sample. Infit MNSQ is the average of the Infit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Outfit MNSQ is the average of the Outfit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Step Structure is the logit position at which transition is made from a lower category to this category. Category measure is the sample-free measure corresponding to this category, where ( ) is printed where the matching calibration is infinite.

Category probability curves (Figure 34 below) indicated distribution of the five categories with clearly advancing steps.

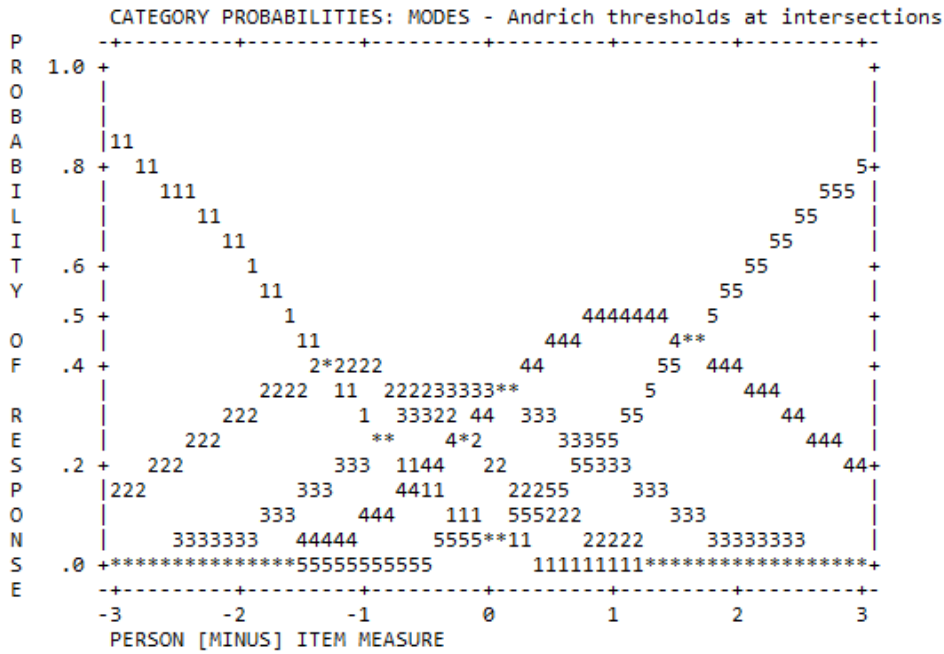


Figure 34. Category probability curves – VD subscale 3 (non-materialism).  
 Note. Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability). The item-person map provided in Figure 35 presents items and persons on the same scale and demonstrates scale functioning for this sample. Respondents represented near the top of the left-hand side of the item-person map were the ones who exhibited higher levels of non-materialism; respondents represented near the bottom were the ones who scored lower on this component. Respondents were spread throughout the item-person map.

Representation of items and respondents in the map suggested this sample reported a well-distributed ability for non-materialism in decision-making and shopping (as it relates to voluntary deconsumption). The item logit values were between -0.71 and 0.63, reflecting a range of construct coverage with a person logit mean of 1.24. The person logit mean of 1.24 indicated the respondents in the sample felt positively about non-materialism.

TABLE 1.4 Dugar\_VD\_Scale\_Items\_Data\_Apr 02 2017 ZOU330WS.TXT Apr 2 2017 14:17  
 INPUT: 328 PERSON 13 ITEM REPORTED: 327 PERSON 13 ITEM 5 CATS WINSTEPS 3.92.1

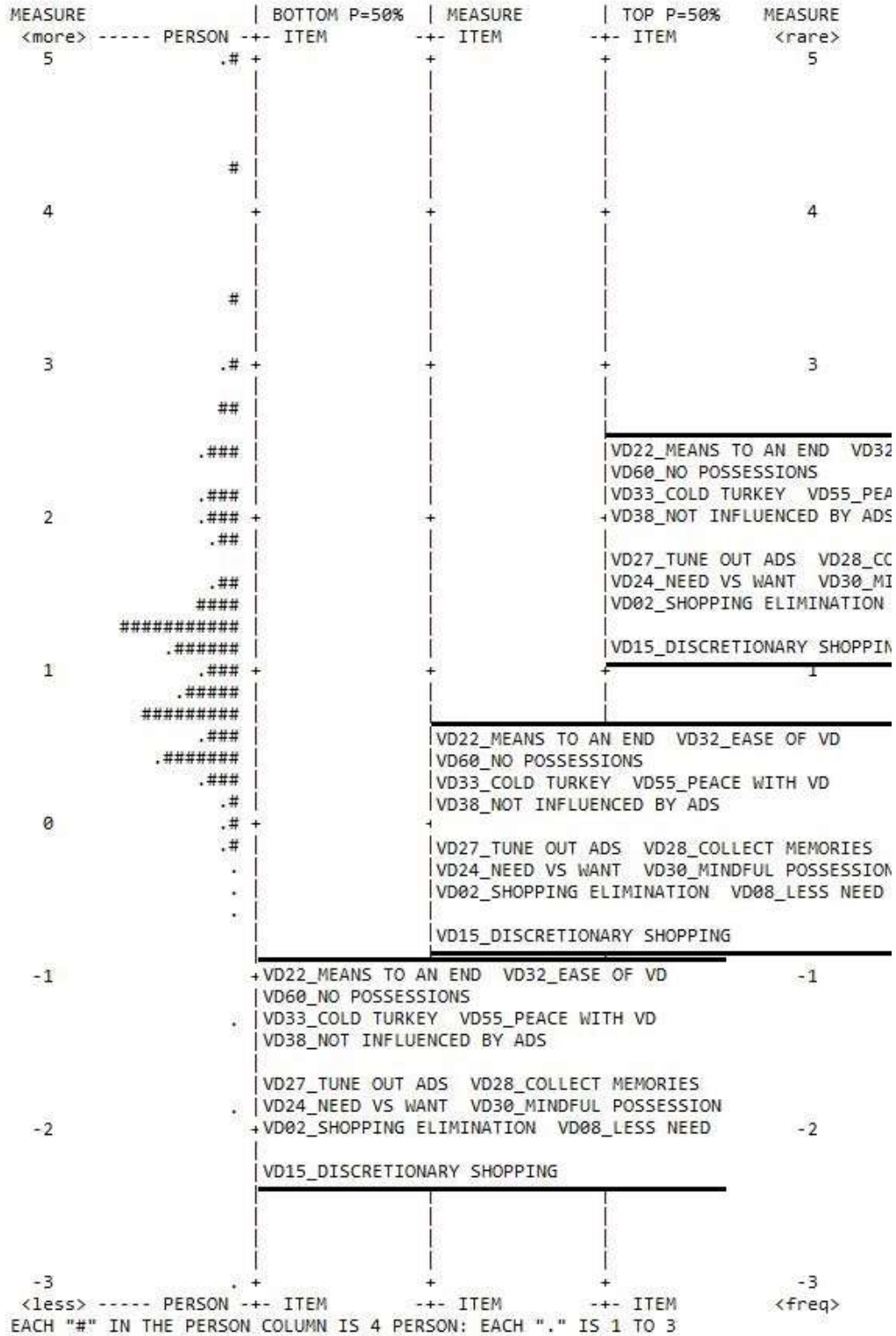


Figure 35. Item-person map – VD subscale 3 (non-materialism).



Invariance. When statistical significance was evaluated at  $p \leq .01$ , and using a minimum 0.50 logit difference (Smith et al., 2009), none of the 13 items in this subscale exhibited statistically significant differential item functioning with respect to gender and boomer status (Figure 36 and Figure 37).

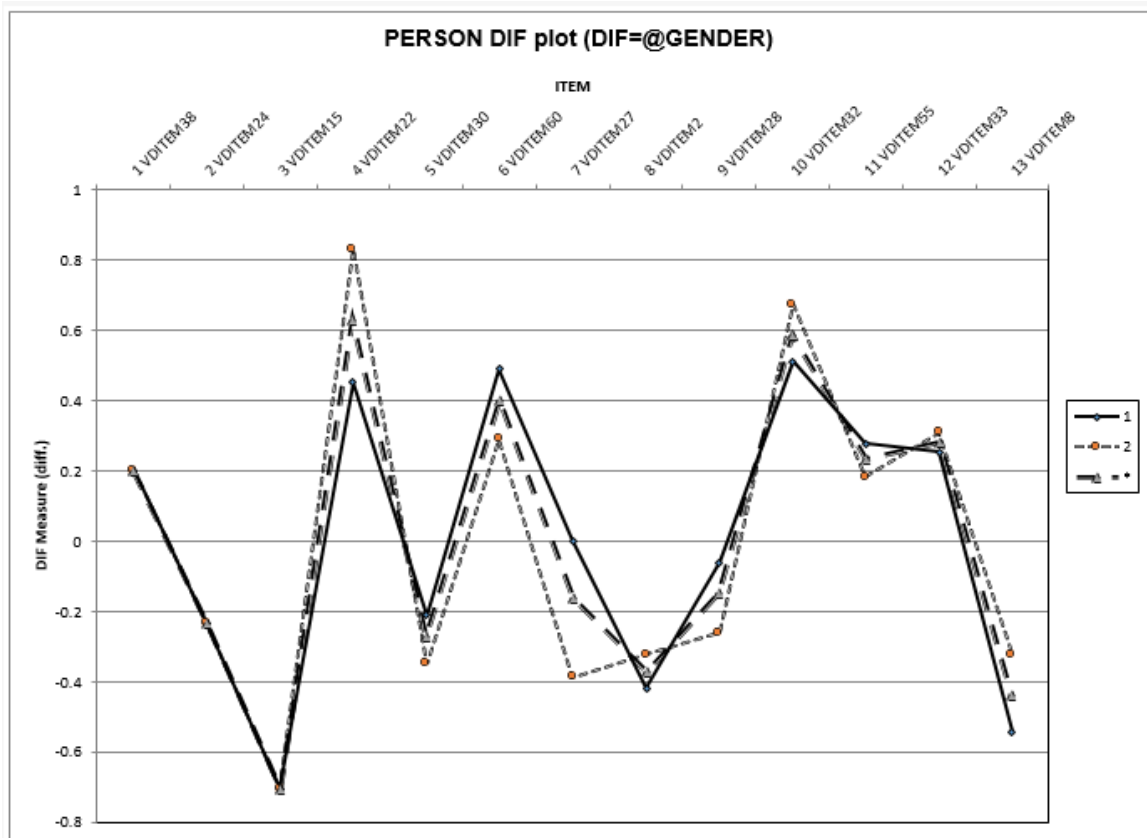


Figure 36. DIF plot by gender – VD subscale 3 (non-materialism).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = male, 2 = female, Δ (\*) = average.

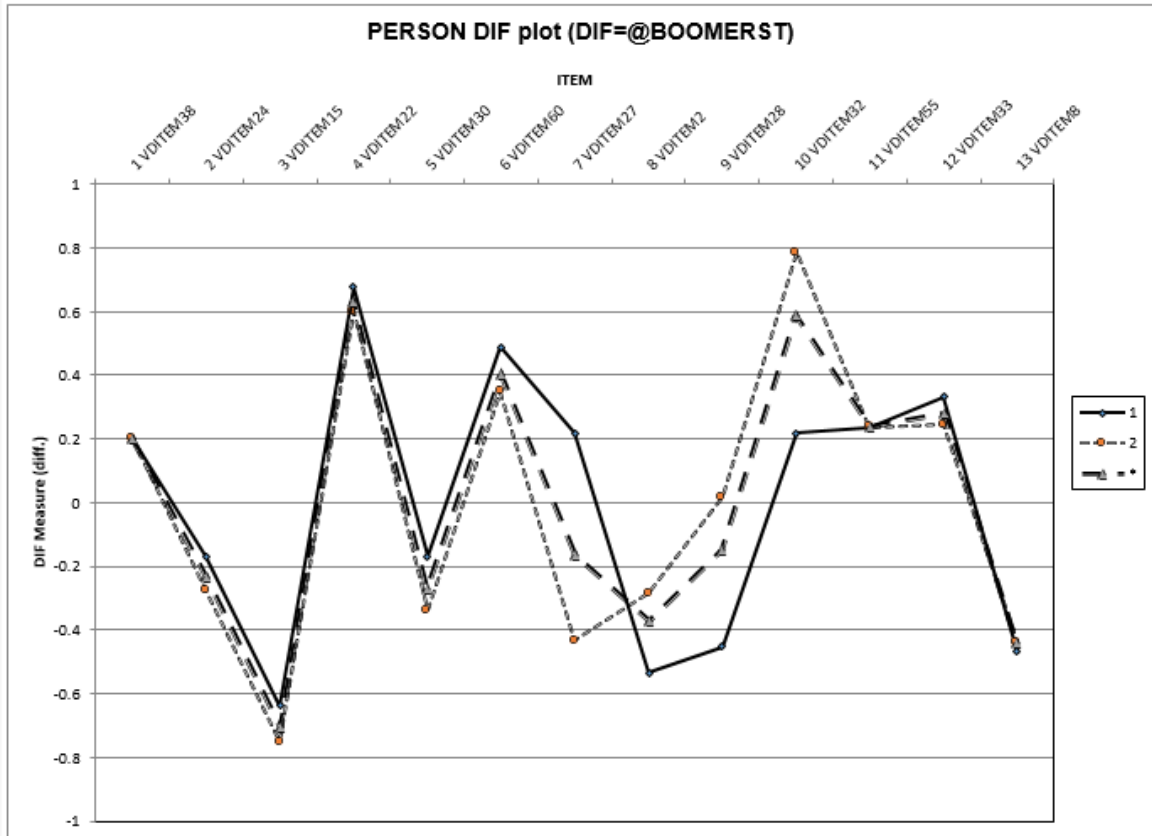


Figure 37. DIF plot by boomer status – VD subscale 3 (non-materialism).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = leading-edge, 2 = trailing-edge, Δ (\*) = average.

Summary. The “Non-Materialism” measure, a subscale of the measure of voluntary deconsumption, can be considered unidimensional based on both PCA and Rasch analyses. Item and person separation statistics were acceptable and items were spread across the continuum. The measure showed support for internal consistency reliability, reliability of item separation, and a reliability of person separation. The 5-point Likert scale was used as intended. Item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some harder-to-agree-with items. The measure can be considered invariant across gender and baby boomer status.

*Voluntary deconsumption subscale 4 (acceptance of life circumstances).* The fourth component reflected a subscale comprising 7 items. The subscale was labeled “Acceptance of Life Circumstances,” defined as the realization of changed priorities accompanying circumstances prohibitive to consumption, such as decline in health, financial capacity, and non-availability. Categories such as decline in health, loss of financial capacity, maintenance costs, and changing life situations formed this subscale. The items were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The mean score across the 7 items was 4.11. Mean scores for items ranged from 3.83 to 4.43. The mode across all items was 3.0. A Cronbach’s alpha value of .76 reflected fairly high reliability. Item statistics are presented in Table 40 below.

Table 40

*Item Statistics for Voluntary Deconsumption Subscale 4 (Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Subscale Item	Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
VD39 Deconsumption can result from a decline in health	3.83	1.00	1–5	324	3	.65
VD05 Deconsumption is a habit of self-control	4.15	0.75	1–5	324	3	.62
VD41 Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity	4.05	0.98	1–5	324	3	.62
VD12 It takes determination and discipline to deconsume	4.12	0.85	1–5	324	3	.57
VD36 Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive	4.09	0.83	1–5	324	3	.55
VD13 As I have grown older, my priorities have changed	4.43	0.74	1–5	324	3	.54
VD34 I know deconsumption is good for me	4.07	0.87	1–5	324	3	.47

*Rasch analysis for voluntary deconsumption sub-scale 4 (acceptance of life circumstances).*

Overall fit. Based on the standards for overall fit using infit MNSQ, outfit MNSQ, and ZSTD statistics, the data for this subscale of the voluntary deconsumption sample fit the model with a mean MNSQ infit value of 1.00 ( $SD = 0.12$ ), mean ZSTD infit of 0.00 ( $SD = 1.40$ ), mean MNSQ outfit value of 1.00 ( $SD = 0.09$ ), and mean ZSTD outfit of 0.00 ( $SD = 1.00$ ). Infit mean and outfit mean squares were 1.00. These statistics indicated adequate overall average fit of data to the model. See Table 41 below.

Dimensionality. The measure “Acceptance of Life Circumstances” explained 38.50% of the variance with the unexplained variance in the first contrast having an eigenvalue of 1.82 with 16.00% unexplained variance. Therefore, this subscale met the expectations of unidimensionality, though with lower variance due to the measure than desired (see Table 41).

Table 41

*Dimensionality, Fit, and Separation – VD Subscale 4 (Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Index	Voluntary Deconsumption Sample ( $n = 324$ )
Dimensionality—eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	1.82
Mean MNSQ Infit	1.00
SD MNSQ Infit	0.12
Mean MNSQ Outfit	1.00
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.09
Real Person Separation	1.52
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.80
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.70

Index	Voluntary Deconsumption Sample ( <i>n</i> = 324)
Cronbach's Alpha	0.76
Person Logit Mean	1.77
Real Item Separation	4.49
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.09
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.95

*Note.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation =  $\text{Separation}^2 / (1 + \text{Separation}^2)$ . Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

Item and person fit. The MNSQ infit for items in the sample ranged from 0.75 to

1.16. Based on these statistics, all 7 items of this subscale fit the model well (see Table 42 below) with consistently moderate to high point-measure correlations.

Table 42

*Item Statistics – VD Subscale 4 (Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt- Measure Corr
VD39 Deconsumption can result from a decline in health	0.59	0.08	0.93	0.66
VD05 Deconsumption is a habit of self-control	-0.08	0.09	0.75	0.63
VD41 Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity	0.16	0.08	1.16	0.62
VD12 It takes determination and discipline to deconsume	0.00	0.08	1.01	0.60

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt-Measure Corr
VD36 Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive	0.07	0.08	1.00	0.59
VD13 As I have grown older, my priorities have changed	-0.86	0.10	1.13	0.53
VD34 I know deconsumption is good for me	0.11	0.08	1.02	0.60

*Note.* N = 324. Pt-Measure Corr is the correlation between the item and the measured dimension.

Out of the 328 respondents, three had a MNSQ infit value of 4.0 or higher. These cases underfit the model, and their scores were deleted from the sample and the model was rerun. In the second iteration, one more respondent had a MNSQ infit value of 4.0 or higher (4.13). This case also underfit the model, and its scores were deleted from the sample and the model was run a third time (see Table 43 below).

Table 43

*Person Misfit - VD Subscale 4 (Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Serial Number	Entry Number	Logit Position	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	264	2.18	5.94	5.95
2	161	1.12	5.31	5.37
3	177	1.12	4.54	4.10
4	272	0.64	4.13	3.81

All other respondents fit the model well with MNSQ infit values of 3.80 or below.

All tables presented here reflect the final model with the four respondents removed.

Reliability. Person separation for this sample was 1.52, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.76, real reliability of person separation of 0.70, and real person root mean square error of 0.80. Real item separation was 4.49, real item root mean square error was 0.09, and real reliability of item separation was 0.95.

Scale Use. Results of the Rasch analysis indicated that respondents in this sample used the rating scale as intended, as presented in the step structure table below (Table 44). Rasch-Andrich thresholds increased with category values with no evidence of step misfit with MNSQ infit and outfit values under 2.0 (Linacre, 2015). Overall, the structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of the response scale.

Table 44

*Step Structure – VD Subscale 4 (Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Category	Observed			Sample Expect	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Step Structure	Category Measure
	Count	%	Average					
1	34	1	-0.57	-0.44	0.88	0.88	None	(-2.76)
2	94	4	0.26	0.15	1.08	1.10	-1.38	-1.31
3	283	12	0.67	0.70	1.00	1.04	-0.68	-0.29
4	1046	46	1.41	1.41	0.90	0.95	-0.27	1.18
5	811	36	2.52	2.52	1.04	1.00	2.33	(3.48)

*Note.* Observed count is the number of all responses to a category. Observed percentage is the percent of all responses in that category. Observed average is the average of the measures that are modeled to produce the responses observed in the category. Sample expect is the expected value of the average measure for this sample. Infit MNSQ is the average of the Infit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Outfit MNSQ is the average of the Outfit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Step Structure is the logit position at which transition is made from a lower category to this category. Category measure is the sample-free measure corresponding to this category, where ( ) is printed where the matching calibration is infinite.

Category probability curves (Figure 38 below) indicated distribution of the five categories with clearly advancing steps.

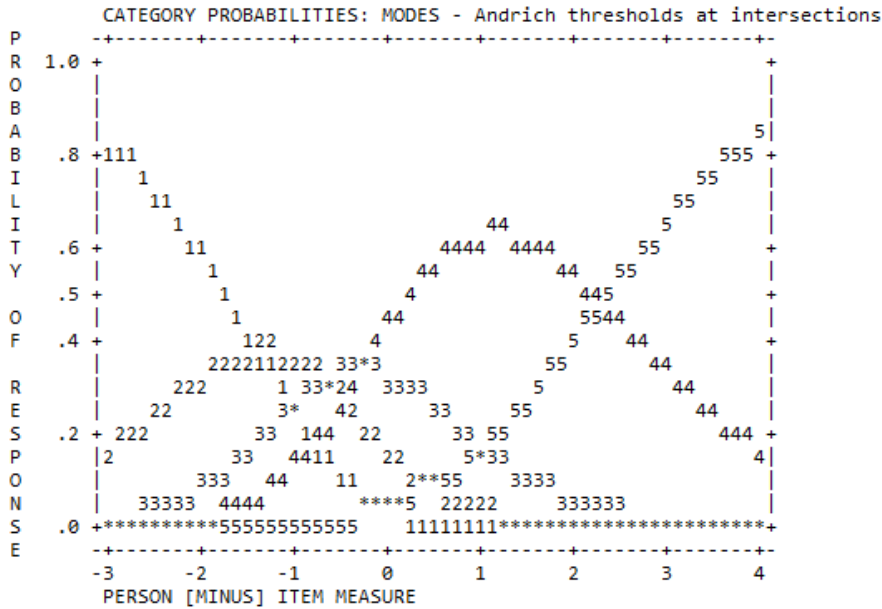


Figure 38. Category probability curves – VD subscale 4 (acceptance of life circumstances).

Note. Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability). The item-person map provided in Figure 39 presents items and persons on the same scale and demonstrates scale functioning for this sample. Respondents represented near the top of the left-hand side of the item-person map were the ones who exhibited higher levels of acceptance of life circumstances; respondents represented near the bottom were the ones who scored lower on this component. Respondents were spread throughout the item-person map. Representation of items and respondents in the map suggested this sample reported a well-distributed realization and acceptance of life circumstances (as they relate to voluntary deconsumption). The item logit values were between -0.86 and 0.59, reflecting a range of construct coverage with a person logit mean of 1.77. The person logit mean of 1.77 indicated the respondents in the sample exhibited high levels of acceptance of life circumstances leading to voluntary deconsumption.



MEASURE <more>	PERSON	BOTTOM P=50% ITEM	MEASURE ITEM	TOP P=50% ITEM	MEASURE <rare>
5	####				5
4	.####				4
3	.#####			VD39_DECLINE IN HEALTH	
	.#####			VD34_GOOD FOR ME VD41_FIN VD12_DETERMINATION VD36_M VD05_HABIT	
2	.#####			VD13_CHANGED PRIORITIES	
1	.#####				1
	.#####			VD39_DECLINE IN HEALTH	
	####			VD34_GOOD FOR ME VD41_FINANCIAL CAPACITY VD12_DETERMINATION VD36_MAINTENANCE COSTS VD05_HABIT	
0	.#				
	.#			VD13_CHANGED PRIORITIES	
	.				
-1	.			VD39_DECLINE IN HEALTH	
	.			VD34_GOOD FOR ME VD41_FINANCIAL CAPACITY VD12_DETERMINATION VD36_MAINTENANCE COSTS VD05_HABIT	
-2				VD13_CHANGED PRIORITIES	-2
-3					-3
<less>	PERSON	ITEM	ITEM	ITEM	<freq>

EACH "#" IN THE PERSON COLUMN IS 4 PERSON; EACH "." IS 1 TO 3

Figure 39. Item-person map – VD subscale 4 (acceptance of life circumstances).

Invariance. When statistical significance was evaluated at  $p \leq .01$ , and using a minimum 0.50 logit difference (Smith et al., 2009), none of the 7 items in this subscale exhibited statistically significant differential item functioning with respect to gender and boomer status (Figure 40 and Figure 41).

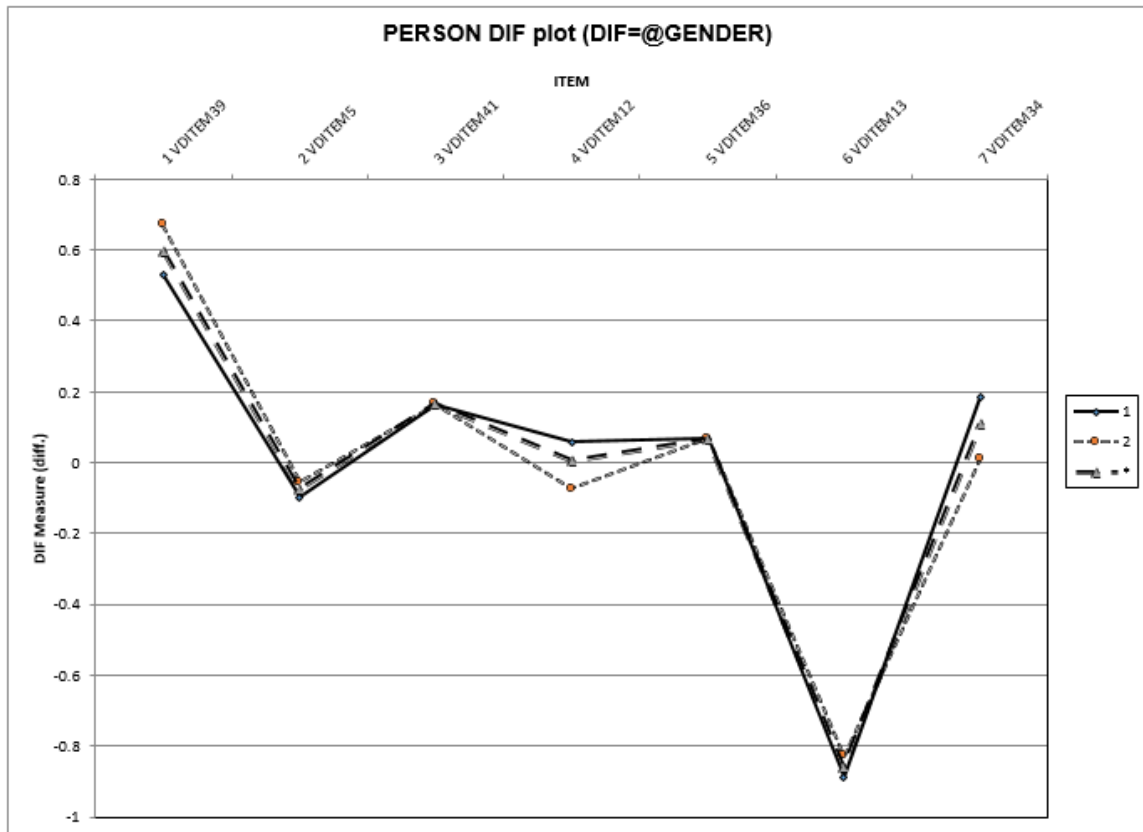


Figure 40. DIF plot by gender – VD subscale 4 (acceptance of life circumstances).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = male, 2 = female,  $\Delta$  (\*) = average.

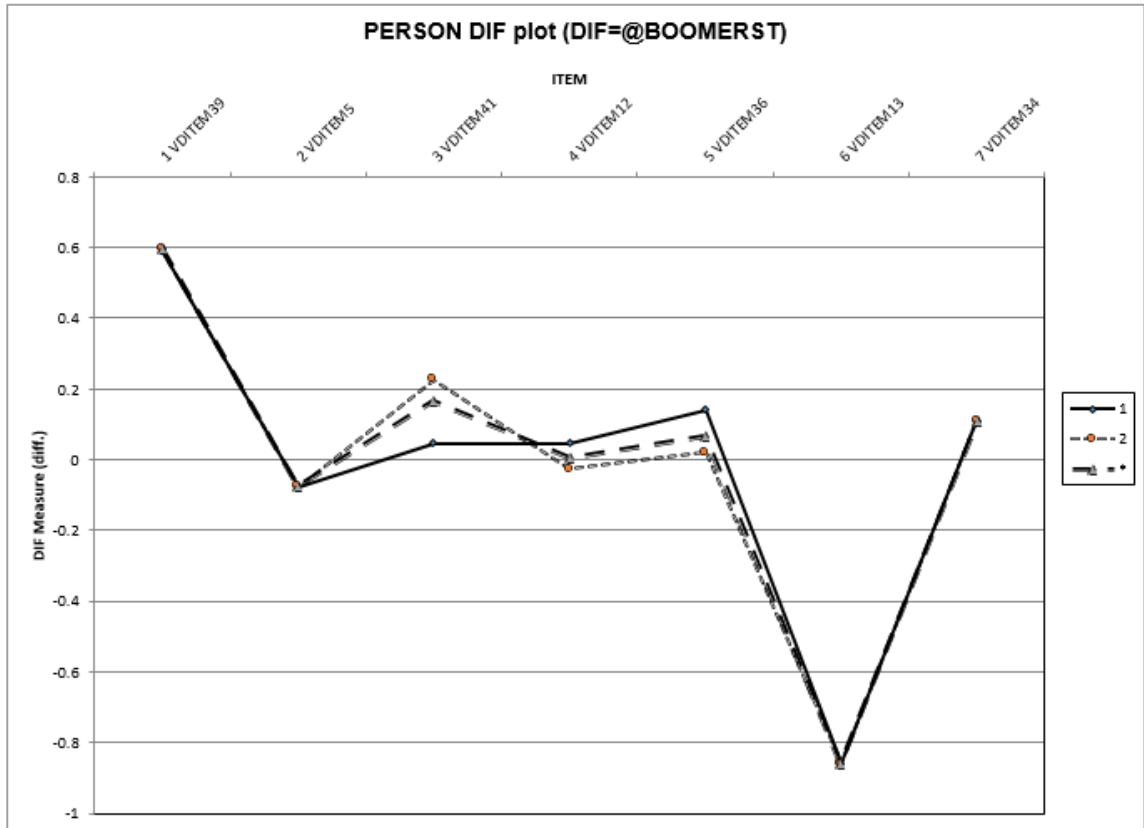


Figure 41. DIF plot by boomer status – VD subscale 4 (acceptance of life circumstances).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = leading-edge, 2 = trailing-edge, Δ (\*) = average.

Summary. The “Acceptance of Life Circumstances” measure, a subscale of the measure of voluntary deconsumption, can be considered unidimensional based on both PCA and Rasch analyses. Item and person separation statistics were acceptable and items were spread across the continuum. The measure showed support for internal consistency reliability, reliability of item separation, and a reliability of person separation. The 5-point Likert scale was used as intended. Item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some harder-to-agree-with items. The measure can be considered invariant across gender and baby boomer status.

*Differences in voluntary deconsumption subscale scores by demographic*

*variables.* Two-way (2x2) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess whether baby boomers were responding to subscale items of voluntary deconsumption differently based on demographic variables gender (male vs. female) and baby boomer status (leading- vs. trailing-edge). All assumptions for ANOVAs were tested and met, including the assumption of homogeneity of variance for gender and boomer type. Levene’s (1960) test for equality of error variances was nonsignificant,  $F(3, 323) = 1.93$ ,  $p = 0.125$ . There were no statistically significant main or interaction effects for the first, second, and fourth subscale of voluntary deconsumption (VD\_01\_ESP, VD\_02\_SAA, and VD\_04\_ALC). The interaction effect of gender and boomer stage was significant for the third subscale of voluntary deconsumption (VD\_03\_NMT),  $F(1, 323) = 5.33$ ,  $p = .022$ ,  $\eta^2 = .016$ . None of the other main and interaction effects were significant. Details of these differences are presented in Table 45 and in the mean plot for interaction below (Figure 42).

Table 45

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Sizes by Gender and Boomer Stage – VD Subscale 3*

Gender	Boomer Type	Mean	SD	n
Male	Leading-edge	3.80	.40	62
	Trailing-edge	4.05	.51	113
Female	Leading-edge	4.00	.68	55
	Trailing-edge	3.96	.56	97

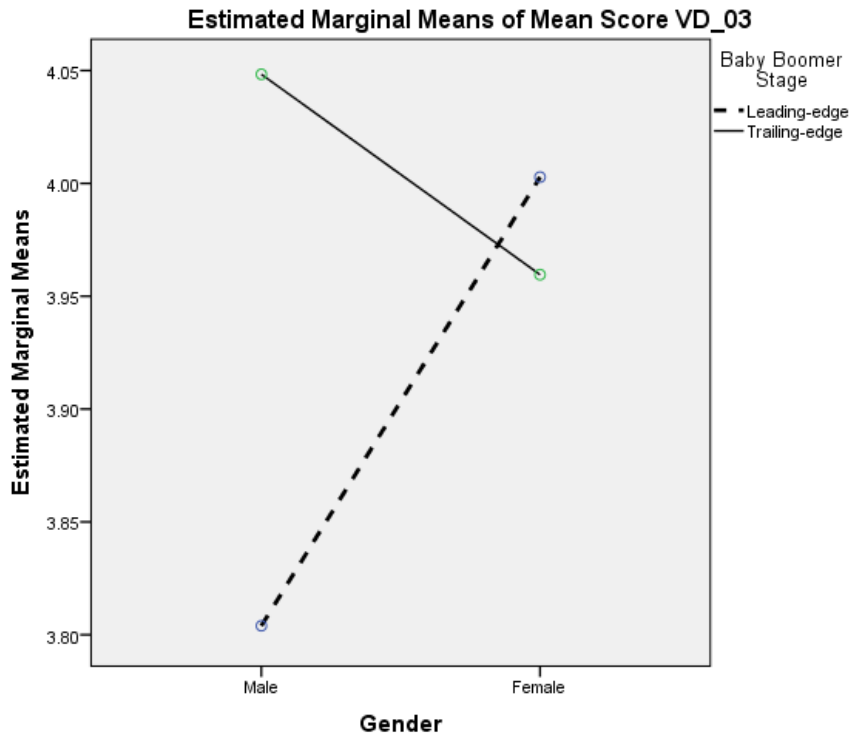


Figure 42. Mean plot for interaction between gender and baby boomer type – VD subscale 3.

Given the significant interaction effect of gender and boomer stage on the mean scores for VD\_03\_NMT (non-materialism), simple effects analyses (t-tests) were used to assess differences among the types of boomer statuses at each gender level (male, female). All simple effects across boomer types were nonsignificant ( $p = .052, .060, .231, \text{ and } .235$ ). The above analyses indicated that the pattern of differences in scores on VD\_03\_NMT (non-materialism) between male and female baby boomers depended on their boomer status membership (leading- or trailing-edge boomers). In other words, voluntary deconsumption subscale 3 (non-materialism) scores were substantially higher among female leading-edge boomers than among male leading-edge boomers, whereas these scores were substantially higher among male trailing-edge boomers than among female trailing-edge boomers, but differences at the simple level were nonsignificant.

**Correlations between voluntary deconsumption subscale scores.** Pearson correlations were run to assess the correlations between the subscale scores of voluntary deconsumption. As expected, all correlations were fairly positive, and significant at  $p \leq .01$  (see Table 46).

Table 46

*Pearson Correlations for Subscale Mean Scores – Voluntary Deconsumption*

	VD_01_ESP	VD_02_SAA	VD_03_NMT	VD_04_ALC
VD_01_ESP	1.00	0.49**	0.49**	0.49**
VD_02_SAA		1.00	0.34**	0.36**
VD_03_NMT			1.00	0.45**
VD_04_ALC				1.00

*Note.* \*\* = Significant at  $p \leq .01$ . ESP = Elevated State of Purpose, SAA = Social Agency and Activism, NMT = Non-materialism, and ALC = Acceptance of Life Circumstances.

**Involuntary deconsumption.** The following section (and its sub-sections) relates to results from quantitative analyses of the scale of involuntary deconsumption.

**Pilot study.** The pilot study was conducted to understand how the measure of involuntary deconsumption works among baby boomers in the United States. This was done in order to refine the 50 items retained post expert reviews and cognitive interviews in the qualitative phase, and to verify scale appropriateness, explore credibility of results, and to weed out poor-performing items.

**Demographic details.** The involuntary deconsumption data from the pilot study ( $n = 56$ ) had no missing data points. A mix of leading- and trailing-edge boomers, genders, ethnicities, and geographical spread was achieved (respondents were residing in 23 different states in the U.S., and urban, suburban, as well as rural areas were all well represented). As is evident from Table 47 below, the respondent group had

representation across demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, education level, work status, and marital status. The average age of the respondents was 65.59 years.

Table 47

*Demographic Details (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Category	Value	Category	Value
Gender		Work Status	
Male	73.20%	Retired	39.30%
Female	26.80%	Part-time	17.90%
Average Age	65.59 years	Full-time	42.90%
Baby Boomer Classification		Marital Status	
Leading-edge	66.10%	Married	73.20%
Trailing-edge	33.90%	Divorced/Separated	12.50%
Ethnicity		Single	8.90%
Caucasian	80.40%	Widowed	5.40%
Asian	7.10%	U.S. States Represented	23
Hispanic	3.60%	Residential Area Classification	
Multiracial	1.80%	Urban	44.60%
Others	7.10%	Suburban	30.40%
Education Level		Rural	25.00%
Post-graduate	66.10%		
Some post-graduate work	7.10%		
College graduate	14.30%		
Others	12.50%		

*Note.* n = 56, all data self-reported.

The baby boomers in the pilot study were fairly sophisticated users of technology. As is evident from Table 48 below, 78.6% were users of cable/satellite TV, 94.6% used mobile phones (78.6% had smartphones), 98.2% were users of e-mail, 80.4% used some form of social media, and 76.8% self-reported as being either fairly tech-savvy, or very tech-savvy.

Table 48

*Media Use Details (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Media Use Category	Yes	No	
TV Usage	78.60%	21.40%	
Mobile Phone Usage	94.60%	5.40%	
Smartphone Usage	78.60%	21.40%	
E-Mail Usage	98.20%	1.80%	
Social Media Usage	80.40%	19.60%	
	Very	Fairly	Not at All
Level of Tech-Savviness	12.50%	64.30%	23.20%

*Note.* n = 56, all data self-reported.

Recalling their most salient/significant/memorable deconsumption experiences, 57.1% recalled involuntarily deconsuming a product, 14.3% deconsumed a service, and 28.6% deconsumed an experience. Varied deconsumption categories were reported, such as alcohol, animal-based protein, backpacking, bottled water, soda, soft drinks, cable TV, clothing, coffee, Cricket, eating out, skiing, gasoline, hair cream, housekeeping services, marijuana, fast food, nicotine, pasta, lawn tennis, oil paints in artwork, church, spicy foods, tobacco, amusement rides, and vitamin supplements. In 48.2% deconsumers' minds, the brand of the deconsumed product/service/experience was salient. Some salient brands deconsumed were Absolut, Cheer, the International Cricket Council (ICC), Coca-Cola, Donna Karan, Pepsi, Google Labs, Haagland, Ibuprofen, Keebler, McDonald's, Mohawk, Mountain Dew, Progresso, Time Warner, Van Kamp's, and the Roman Catholic Church. On average, the participants began consuming these when they were 24.23 years of age, consumed for 23.03 years, initiated deconsumption when they were 46.27 years of age on average, and had experienced 15.41 years of involuntary deconsumption. The average scores for the quality, satisfaction, and commitment of consumption (while it lasted) were 2.04, 1.62, and 1.75 respectively (5-point Likert scale,



1 = very high, 5 = very low). The majority (60.7%) of the respondents reported the involuntary deconsumption decision as being externally driven. The average scores for the significance and ease of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 2.43 and 2.98 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The average scores for the intentionality, controllability, and stability of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 2.29, 1.96, and 1.73 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The details related to respondents' consumption and involuntary deconsumption categories are presented in Table 49 below.

Table 49

*Consumption/Deconsumption-Related Details (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Item	Statistics
Deconsumption Category	
Product	57.10%
Service	14.30%
Experience	28.60%
Brand Salience	
Yes	48.20%
No	51.80%
Average Age of Consumption	24.23 years
Average Duration of Consumption	23.03 years
Average Consumption Quality	2.04
Average Consumption Satisfaction	1.62
Average Consumption Commitment	1.75
Average Age of Deconsumption Decision	46.27 years
Average Duration of Deconsumption Decision	15.41 years
Average Significance of Deconsumption Decision	2.43
Average Ease of Deconsumption Decision	2.98
Locus of Deconsumption Decision	
Internal	39.30%
External	60.70%
Average Intentionality of Deconsumption Decision	2.29
Average Controllability of Deconsumption Decision	1.96
Average Stability of Deconsumption Decision	1.73

*Note.* n = 56, all data self-reported.

*Item analyses.* Pilot study data were used to determine how well the initial 50 items on the voluntary deconsumption scale reflected their specific domains. Point-biserial correlations and Cronbach's alpha estimates were computed. Items with estimated point-biserial correlations between .50-.96 were retained. Item estimates falling outside the desired range were removed one at a time. New estimates were assessed at each iteration until all items fell within the optimal range. The breadth of construct measurement was considered and maintained, and the resultant instrument was

used in the field administration. Item analyses were conducted on the pilot data to identify non-performing items. In an effort to reduce the number of items, item-total statistics were analyzed, and items with item-total correlations less than 0.35 were deleted as well. Table 50 contains the details of the deleted items, and rationale behind deleting them.

Table 50

*Item Deletions and Rationale (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Pilot Study*

Item	Rationale Behind Deletion
I have no self-control.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
When I go shopping, stuff has a hold on me.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
Deconsumption can result from a change in culture.	Cronbach's Alpha Less Than 0.70
A lot of stuff I own has sentimental value.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
I tend to name some of my possessions.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
Big corporations have a lure.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
Being part of big companies makes me feel secure.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
Companies tend to keep harmful product information from you.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
Old age comes with loss in purpose.	Item-Total Correlation Less Than 0.35
A company ought to make profits for its shareholders.	Researcher's Judgment

After deleting the 10 items above, one item was added by the researcher from judgment (in line with the preceding analysis on the scale of voluntary deconsumption):

*"Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive."* Then, item statistics were recalculated. Out of these remaining 41 items, 34 items had a response range of a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5, and 7 items had a response range of a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 4, (5-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 =

strongly agree). Item means ranged from 1.95 to 3.89. All standard deviations were close to 1.00. Cronbach’s alpha was very high at 0.95. All items fit the scale of involuntary deconsumption well with corrected item-total correlations above 0.40. The 41 items were holistic (representing conceptual, attitude-related, and behavior-related factors related to deconsumption). As expected, factors related to material simplicity and ecology/social impact, which featured in the scale for voluntary deconsumption, were the non-performing items. Table 51 lists the item composition by conceptual factor of the involuntary deconsumption scale post-pilot phase.

Table 51

*Item Composition by Conceptual Factors (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Post-Pilot Study*

Voluntary Deconsumption Factors Related To	Number of Initial Items
Conceptual	20
Self-determination and Control	13
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive	3
Self-identity/Personality	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>

**Soft launch.** Before launching the involuntary deconsumption survey for the field administration, Qualtrics decided to execute a soft launch (n = 25) with a goal of verification of common data quality checks and issues by the researcher. The researcher was able to review the soft launch data and detect three cases with variance across scale item responses of 0.30 or less. These responses were deleted and replaced with higher quality data.

**Field administration.** The researcher was able to review the final data and detect about 10% cases with variance across scale item responses of 0.30 or less. In addition,

about 3% of the respondents had reported missing or bogus voluntary deconsumption categories such as, “N/A,” “do not know,” “don’t know,” “various,” “none,” “can’t remember,” “Unsure,” “na,” “best,” and “dunno.” These responses were deleted and replaced with high-quality data, or “good completes.”

*Demographic details.* The final involuntary deconsumption data from the field administration (n = 354) was of good quality, and had no missing data points. On an average, the respondents took 29.62 minutes to complete the survey. Initial assessments suggested the demographic data were well distributed across gender and boomer classification. A good mix of leading- and trailing-edge boomers, genders, ethnicities, and geographical spread was achieved (respondents were residing in 48 different states in the U.S., and urban, suburban, as well as rural areas were all represented). As is evident from Table 52 below, the sample was balanced by demographic variables such as gender, education level, work status, occupation, and marital status. The sample was primarily Caucasian. The average age of the respondents was 66.56 years. Some of the occupations reported were: accountant, actuarial scientist, administrator, addiction counselor, antique seller, art dealer, artist, attorney, banker, business analyst, entrepreneur, chef, caregiver, cashier, clerk, civil servant, data manager, college professor, musician, computer technician, programmer, consultant, customer service representative, data scientist, designer, military trainer, dietary manager, diplomat, director of sales, director of IT, dog trainer, educator, electrician, engineer, financial advisor, gardener, medical doctor, homemaker, immigration consultant, human resources manager, journalist, musician, painter, nurse, marketing manager, minister, pastor,

paralegal, psychotherapist, retailer, sales manager, self-employed, social worker, teacher, urban planner, military/air force/navy, youth service coordinator, editor, and writer.

Table 52

*Demographic Details (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Field Administration*

Category	Value	Category	Value
Gender		Work Status	
Male	53.10%	Retired	31.40%
Female	46.30%	Part-time	21.50%
Average Age	66.56 years	Full-time	31.40%
Baby Boomer Classification		Marital Status	
Leading-edge	34.50%	Married	52.50%
Trailing-edge	65.50%	Divorced/Separated	19.20%
Ethnicity		Single	23.70%
Caucasian	84.70%	Widowed	4.20%
Black	4.50%	US States Represented	48
Hispanic/Latino	2.50%	Residential Area Classification	
Asian	4.80%	Urban	26.80%
Multiracial	1.70%	Suburban	46.00%
Others	1.40%	Rural	27.10%
Education Level			
Post-graduate	18.90%		
Some post-graduate work	3.70%		
College graduate	26.80%		
Technical Training	7.60%		
Some College	29.10%		
High School	13.80%		

*Note.* n = 356, all data self-reported.

The boomers in the final field administration were fairly sophisticated users of technology. As is evident from Table 53 below, 280 (79.10%) were users of cable/satellite TV, 336 (94.90%) used mobile phones (278 or 78.09% had smartphones), 352 (99.40%) were users of e-mail, 302 (85.30%) used some form of social media, and 294 (90.00%) self-reported as being either fairly tech-savvy, or very tech-savvy.

Table 53

*Media Use Details (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Field Administration*

Media Use Category	Yes	No	
TV Usage	79.10%	20.90%	
Mobile Phone Usage	94.90%	5.10%	
Smartphone Usage	78.09%	21.01%	
E-Mail Usage	99.40%	0.60%	
Social Media Usage	85.30%	14.70%	
	Very	Fairly	Not At All
Level of Tech-Savviness	16.90%	66.10%	16.90%

*Note.* n = 356, all data self-reported.

Recalling their most salient/significant/memorable deconsumption experiences, 211 (59.60%) recalled involuntarily deconsuming a product, 84 (23.70%) deconsumed a service, and 59 (16.70%) deconsumed an experience. Varied deconsumption categories were reported, such as alcohol, animal-based protein, backpacking, beer, body wash, books, bread, bottled water, cable TV, artificial sweeteners, caffeine, candy, sugary products, automobiles, floppy disks, compact disks, cellular service, instant noodles, chicken nuggets, chocolate, cigarettes, church, cell phones, coffee, corn, chiropractic treatments, clothing, computer games, credit cards, dairy products, dry cleaning, cyclamate sweeteners, sugary cereals, cheese, chocolate, clothing, dial-up connections, dog food, eating out, skiing, electric cooker, contact lenses, fast food, books, gym, movies in theaters, beauty salons, landline phones, medicine, honey, hot dogs, housekeeping services, ISPs, laptops, lawn care equipment, gasoline, potato chips, microwave, milk, carbonated soft drinks, nicotine, mobile phones, network marketing products, nutritional supplements, paper products, pasta, photo film, postal services, lawn tennis, shampoos, refined sugar, salt, spicy foods, social media, tanning, traveling, vacuum, wild game hunting, wine, telephone directories, and wheat-based products. 178

(50.30%) respondents reported the brand of the deconsumed product/service/experience as being salient. Some salient brands deconsumed were Acuvue, AT&T, American Express, Amway, Applebee's, Benson & Hedges, Bacardi, BMW, Budweiser, Busch, Cadbury, Cheesecake Factory, Comcast, Victoria's Secret, Cheer, Dell, Dish TV, DirecTV, Cox Communications, Dodge, Domino's, Dr. Pepper, Exxon, TGIF, Frontier Airlines, General Mills, Google, Green Giant, Goya, Apple iPad, Apple iPhone, Keebler, Herbalife, Hershey's, Kellogg's, Kenmore, KFC, Kodak, Marlboro, McDonald's, Mohawk, Microsoft, Netflix, Mountain Dew, Newport, Oreo, Pinterest, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, North Face, Porsche, USPS, Quaker, Sprite, Sprint, Sunsilk, Rejoice, Starbucks, Roman Catholic Church, Samsung, Taco Bell, Time Warner, Verizon, Western Union, Wonder Bread, Yellow Pages, Yoplait, and Yuban. On average, the participants began consuming these when they were 31.70 years of age, consumed for 22.20 years, initiated deconsumption when they were 49.47 years of age on average, and had experienced 13.26 years of involuntary deconsumption. The average scores for the quality, satisfaction, and commitment of consumption (while it lasted) were 2.29, 2.14, and 2.20 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). Of all the respondents, 171 (48.30%) reported the involuntary deconsumption decision as being externally driven. The average scores for the significance and ease of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 2.14 and 2.67 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The average scores for the intentionality, controllability, and stability of the deconsumption decision (since it was made) were 2.14, 1.84, and 1.71 respectively (5-point Likert scale, 1 = very high, 5 = very low). The details related to respondents' consumption and involuntary deconsumption categories are presented in Table 54 below.



Table 54

*Consumption/Deconsumption-Related Details (Involuntary Deconsumption) – Field Administration*

Item	Statistics
Deconsumption Category	
Product	59.60%
Service	23.70%
Experience	16.70%
Brand Salience	
Yes	50.30%
No	49.70%
Average Age of Consumption	31.70 years
Average Duration of Consumption	22.20 years
Average Consumption Quality	2.29
Average Consumption Satisfaction	2.14
Average Consumption Commitment	2.20
Average Age of Deconsumption Decision	49.47 years
Average Duration of Deconsumption Decision	13.26 years
Average Significance of Deconsumption Decision	2.14
Average Ease of Deconsumption Decision	2.67
Locus of Deconsumption Decision	
Internal	51.70%
External	48.30%
Average Intentionality of Deconsumption Decision	2.14
Average Controllability of Deconsumption Decision	1.84
Average Stability of Deconsumption Decision	1.71

*Note.* n = 354, all data self-reported.

*Motivation categories of voluntary deconsumption.* To analyze the open-ended response on the motivation to deconsume voluntarily, content analysis was used. To achieve inter-coder reliability, two independent coders (A and B) with advanced degrees in marketing and/or psychology and experience in the domain of consumption/deconsumption independently sorted, coded, and classified into categories all the self-reported motivation responses. Then, coders A and B met to discuss the

categorizations, and to reach an agreement on the total data set, leading to the creation of mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive category names and definitions that would be given to a third coder (coder C, a doctoral degree holder in management/marketing). Three measures of inter-coder agreement were calculated (percent agreement, Cohen's kappa, which corrects for the likelihood of chance agreement between judges, and Perreault and Leigh's Index, which accounts for the number of potential categories into which responses can be classified. All three values exceeded the levels recommended by previous research (percent agreement, Cohen's kappa, and Perrault and Leigh's I<sub>r</sub> should be more than 0.80 to be considered significant). Percent agreement was .87, Cohen's kappa was .84, and Perrault and Leigh's I<sub>r</sub> was .85. Note that there were a few coding disagreements, which were resolved by face-to-face discussions. The resulting involuntary deconsumption motivation categories and statistics are presented in Table 55 below.

Table 55

*Motivation Categories of Involuntary Deconsumption – Field Administration*

Motivation Category	Count	Percentage	Example
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Health)	116	30.61%	<i>"I got advice from parents and did my own research regarding sulphates in shampoos, and what they do to your skin. Harsh!"</i>
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Finances)	42	11.08%	<i>"I could no longer afford the expenses of running a car on the road."</i>
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Non-Availability)	37	9.76%	<i>"The advent of digital photography made film virtually obsolete. I had to change with the times because it was necessary, given the customer preferences."</i>
Consumption Becomes Prohibitive (Demarketing)	6	1.58%	<i>"With how Apple works, if your device becomes too "old" to keep up with the current model, then, you are forced to</i>

Motivation Category	Count	Percentage	Example
			<i>either upgrade or purchase a different product.</i>
Product/Service Failure	29	7.65%	<i>“Cox Cable stopped providing those cable channels.”</i>
Alternative Product/Service Category	43	11.35%	<i>“I loved my iPad, but I realized a Windows-based tablet would serve me much better, as my company was shifting to a Windows-based platform.”</i>
Change in Lifestyle/Culture	31	8.18%	<i>“Moving from India to USA meant I no longer could consume Cricket the way I wanted to - certainly not by going to the ground to watch it live. Certainly not waking up each morning and reading 5-6 pages of it on the newspaper. It is available on the Internet on ESPNcricinfo, but that's not the same.”</i>
Life-changing Event	24	6.33%	<i>“...a thing of the past...life-changing experience as my wife was beginning to show signs of physical and mental degeneration.”</i>
No Specific Reason	33	8.71%	<i>N/A</i>
DK/CS	18	4.75%	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

*Principal components analysis (PCA).* An initial PCA of the involuntary deconsumption sample (n = 356, number of scale items = 41) was conducted, and assumptions were tested to ascertain factorability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy for the initial PCA was large (.94), indicating that a PCA was useful. The determinant was non-zero. The correlation matrix had several substantial correlations (e.g., at least >.30). Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity, converted to a chi-square statistic, was significant at  $p < .001$ .

The researcher used multiple decision rules to determine the number of interpretable factors present. Care was taken to consider the components before the scree plot elbow, and hence, eigenvalues greater than approximately 2.0 were considered.

Enough factors were retained to account for at least 40% of the variance. Residual correlations were inspected as well, and initially, the analysis suggested retention of 3 factors. However, most importance was placed on parallel analysis (Turner, 1998), which suggested up to 4 factors. Assuming that the factors in the analysis were uncorrelated, in an attempt to achieve simple structure (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995), varimax, an orthogonal rotation method, was used (Gorsuch, 1983). This varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization helped obtain orthogonal (independent) factors. Factor loadings greater than 0.10 were examined, even though only item loadings over 0.40 were considered relevant for interpretation. Initially, 2 items had loadings  $<.40$ . In addition, two items loaded on two factors (crossloading with a loading difference of less than 0.20). All these items were deleted from subsequent PCA runs. Also, at this point, factors 3 and 4 emerged as overlapping (themes focused on lack of discipline and self-control in shopping behavior, and non-acceptance). So, for the second run, comprising 37 items, a 3-factor structure was pre-specified. One item had a loading  $<.40$ . In addition, two items crossloaded. One additional item was indicated by Rasch analyses (see succeeding section) as having MNSQ infit and outfit values of more than 1.40 (1.43 and 1.45 respectively). After deleting these 4 items, 33 items were retained for a third CFA run. For details of the PCA runs and decisions on the involuntary deconsumption scale items, see Table 56 below.

Table 56

*Details of PCA Runs and Decision on Items – Involuntary Deconsumption*

<b>Loadings &lt; .40</b>				
PCA Run	# of Items	Example of Items		
1	2	Every decision has an opportunity cost; Consumption brings happy memories of fun and enjoyment		
2	1	I'm taking it one day at a time		
3	0	NA		
<b>Crossloadings Differing by &lt; .20</b>				
PCA Run	# of Items	Example of Items	Decision	# Retained
1	2	Deconsumption is a daily struggle; Circumstances in life have forced me to deconsume	Items deleted	37
2	2	Deconsumption is a difficult thing to do; Deconsumption is an emotional experience	Items deleted	34
3	0	NA	NA	33

*Note.* An additional item (“I remember trauma more than I remember happy times of my life”) was deleted for having MNSQ infit and outfit values > 1.40.

The third PCA run of the involuntary deconsumption sample (n = 340, number of scale items = 33) was conducted with a 3-factor structure pre-specified, and assumptions were again tested to ascertain factorability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was large (.94), indicating that a PCA was useful. The determinant was non-zero. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at  $p < .001$ . None of the items had factor loadings <.40, and none of them crossloaded. Parallel analysis supported a 3-factor structure. Initial eigenvalues indicated that the first factor explained 34.57% of the variance, the second factor explained 6.86% of the variance, and the third factor explained 5.88% of the variance. This 3-factor solution explained 47.30% of the

variance. The 3 factors were also seen in the scree plot with eigenvalues tapering and the elbow around the fourth component mark (Figure 43).

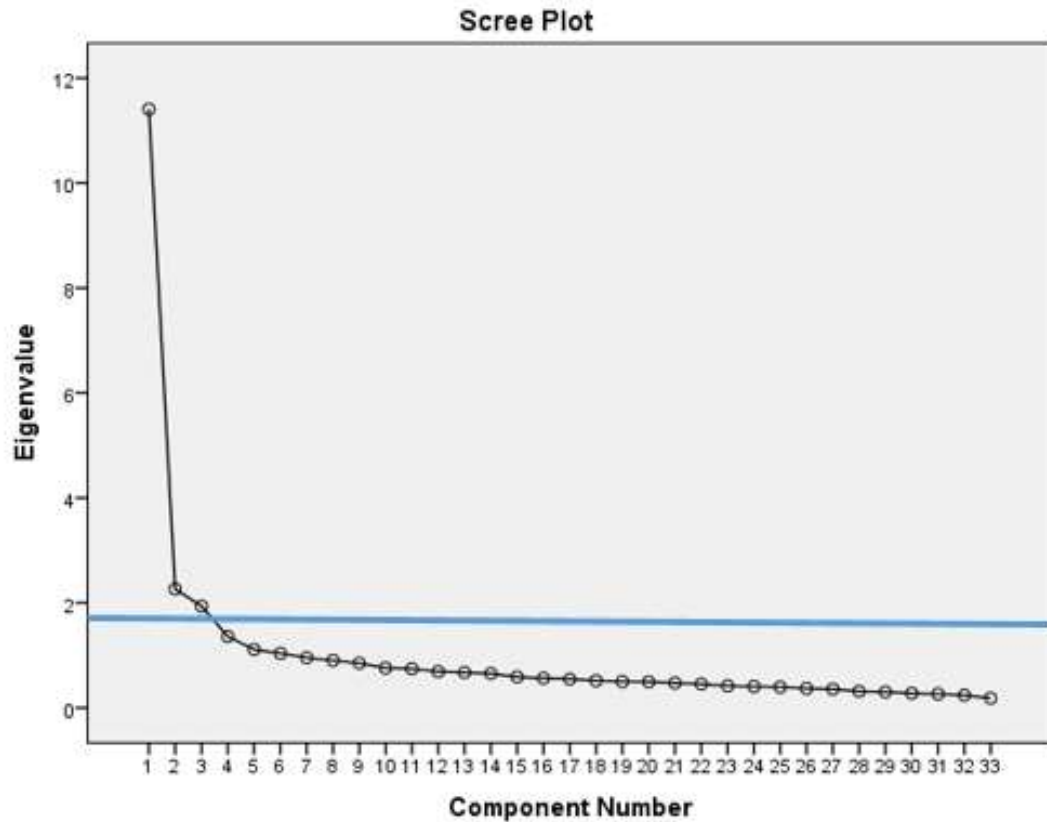


Figure 43. Scree plot for the scale of involuntary deconsumption.

The 33 items were tested for normality. The skewness values suggested approximate normality in the distribution of all the items. Table 57 below shed more light on factor memberships and rotated loadings for the various items of involuntary deconsumption. Twenty-two items loaded on factor/component 1, 6 on component/factor 2, and 5 on factor/component 3. These three membership patterns were further analyzed to label the three subscales, to understand what component of involuntary deconsumption each measured, and to perform Rasch analyses on each

subscale (in sections to follow). For definitions, descriptions, and factor memberships of the three subscales of involuntary deconsumption, see Appendix K.

Table 57

*Rotated Component Matrix – Involuntary Deconsumption*

		Component		
		1	2	3
ID18	It makes me sad to deconsume	.79		
ID17	I feel like I have lost the freedom to choose	.74		
ID11	I feel like I am losing control	.70		
ID28	When I am forced to stop consumption, I feel cheated	.68		
ID06	Deconsumption is about making choices I do not like	.67		
ID05	I find myself giving up things I rely on	.67		
ID09	I wish I did not have to deconsume things	.67		
ID37	It is hard for me to let go	.66		
ID36	I am still coming to terms with my deconsumption experience	.66		
ID26	It is painful to stop consuming things	.65		
ID12	I wish I could re-consume things I used to consume	.65		
ID48	Giving things up is like going through a grieving process	.63		
ID19	I feel like I have exceedingly important needs that may be in direct conflict with each other	.60		
ID21	When I go shopping, I just bite my upper lip and forget about buying some things	.59		
ID04	I am reluctant to give things up	.59		
ID24	Deconsumption is restraining	.58		
ID01	Life is taking things that I still want to keep away from me	.58		
ID20	As you grow older, society takes things away from you	.57		
ID47	I feel like I am invisible to other people	.54		
ID31	I am set in my ways and experience resistance to change	.51		
ID03	I have had to stop consuming things I always used to consume earlier	.50		
ID33	Giving up consumption comes at a price	.48		
ID27	I am swayed by "new & improved"		.74	
ID34	Sometimes, I consume things due to peer pressure		.67	

		Component		
		1	2	3
ID02	Shopping fills a void in my life		.60	
ID50	I feel like possessions are related to success		.60	
ID35	In today's society, I have no choice but to consume		.59	
ID22	I can never stick to my shopping list		.58	
ID38	Deconsumption can result from a decline in health			.74
ID40	Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity			.73
ID44	Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive			.67
ID14	Deconsumption requires discipline			.66
ID16	Deconsumption is an exercise in self-control			.63

*Note.* N = 340. Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

*Involuntary deconsumption subscale 1 (victim mentality).* The first component reflected a subscale comprising 22 items. The subscale was labeled “Victim Mentality,” defined as an experience of negative outcomes such as pain, loss, grief, sadness, a feeling of being invisible, sans freedom and control, and of being cheated and robbed by society, which leads to a sense of conflict and desire for remission or re-consumption; occurring as a consequence of involuntary deconsumption. Categories such as sadness, pain, grief, invisibility, loss of freedom, loss of control, being cheated, being robbed, sense of conflict, and desire to re-consume formed this subscale. The items were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The mean score across the 22 items was 2.92. Mean scores for items ranged from 2.15 to 3.46. The mode across all items was 3.0. A Cronbach’s alpha value of .94 reflected high reliability. Item statistics are presented in Table 58 below.



Table 58

*Item Statistics for Involuntary Deconsumption Subscale 1 (Victim Mentality)*

Subscale Item	Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
ID18 It makes me sad to deconsume	2.69	1.10	1-5	340	3	.79
ID17 I feel like I have lost the freedom to choose	2.48	1.20	1-5	340	3	.74
ID11 I feel like I am losing control	2.15	1.06	1-5	340	3	.70
ID28 When I am forced to stop consumption, I feel cheated	2.74	1.09	1-5	340	3	.68
ID06 Deconsumption is about making choices I do not like	3.10	1.05	1-5	340	3	.67
ID05 I find myself giving up things I rely on	2.63	1.06	1-5	340	3	.67
ID09 I wish I did not have to deconsume things	3.42	1.03	1-5	340	3	.67
ID37 It is hard for me to let go	2.89	1.15	1-5	340	3	.66
ID36 I am still coming to terms with my deconsumption experience	2.63	1.18	1-5	340	3	.66
ID26 It is painful to stop consuming things	2.99	1.04	1-5	340	3	.65
ID12 I wish I could re-consume things I used to consume	3.16	1.17	1-5	340	3	.65
ID48 Giving things up is like going through a grieving process	2.98	1.14	1-5	340	3	.63
ID19 I feel like I have exceedingly important needs that may be in direct conflict with each other	2.80	1.08	1-5	340	3	.60
ID21 When I go shopping, I just bite my upper lip and forget about buying some things	2.95	1.19	1-5	340	3	.59
ID04 I am reluctant to give things up	3.24	1.06	1-5	340	3	.59
ID24 Deconsumption is restraining	3.16	1.05	1-5	340	3	.58
ID01 Life is taking things that I still want to keep away from me	2.92	1.08	1-5	340	3	.58
ID20 As you grow older, society takes things away from you	3.03	1.13	1-5	340	3	.57
ID47 I feel like I am invisible to other people	2.33	1.17	1-5	340	3	.54
ID31 I am set in my ways and experience resistance to change	3.11	1.10	1-5	340	3	.51

Subscale Item	Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
ID03 I have had to stop consuming things I always used to consume earlier	3.46	1.10	1–5	340	3	.50
ID33 Giving up consumption comes at a price	3.31	0.94	1–5	340	3	.48

*Rasch analysis for involuntary deconsumption sub-scale 1 (victim mentality).*

Overall fit. Based on the standards for overall fit using infit MNSQ, outfit MNSQ, and ZSTD statistics, the data for this subscale of the involuntary deconsumption sample fit the model with a mean MNSQ infit value of 1.00 ( $SD = 0.19$ ), mean ZSTD infit of -0.02 ( $SD = 2.60$ ), mean MNSQ outfit value of 1.03 ( $SD = 0.22$ ), and mean ZSTD outfit of 0.30 ( $SD = 2.90$ ). Infit mean square was 1.00, and outfit mean square was close to 1.00. These statistics indicated adequate overall average fit of data to the model. See Table 59 below.

Dimensionality. The measure “Victim Mentality” explained 48.70% of the variance with the unexplained variance in the first contrast having an eigenvalue of 1.97 with 4.60% unexplained variance. Therefore, this subscale met the expectations of unidimensionality (see Table 59).

Table 59

*Dimensionality, Fit, and Separation – ID Subscale 1 (Victim Mentality)*

Index	Involuntary Deconsumption Sample ( $n = 351$ )
Dimensionality—eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	1.97
Mean MNSQ Infit	1.00
SD MNSQ Infit	0.19
Mean MNSQ Outfit	1.03

Index	Involuntary Deconsumption Sample ( <i>n</i> = 351)
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.22
Real Person Separation	3.51
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.34
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.92
Cronbach's Alpha	0.94
Person Logit Mean	-0.23
Real Item Separation	7.09
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.07
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.98

*Note.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation = Separation<sup>2</sup> / (1 + Separation<sup>2</sup>). Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

Item and person fit. The MNSQ infit for items in the sample ranged from 0.62 to 1.36. Based on these statistics, all 22 items of this subscale fit the model well (see Table 60 below) with consistently moderate to high point-measure correlations.

Table 60

*Item Statistics – ID Subscale 1 (Victim Mentality)*

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt-Measure Corr
ID18 It makes me sad to deconsume	0.33	0.06	0.62	0.76
ID17 I feel like I have lost the freedom to choose	0.63	0.07	1.00	0.69
ID11 I feel like I am losing control	1.15	0.07	0.93	0.66

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt-Measure Corr
ID28 When I am forced to stop consumption, I feel cheated	0.27	0.06	0.83	0.68
ID06 Deconsumption is about making choices I do not like	-0.26	0.06	0.86	0.66
ID05 I find myself giving up things I rely on	0.42	0.06	0.93	0.64
ID09 I wish I did not have to deconsume things	-0.77	0.07	0.90	0.67
ID37 It is hard for me to let go	0.03	0.06	0.91	0.69
ID36 I am still coming to terms with my deconsumption experience	0.41	0.06	1.09	0.65
ID26 It is painful to stop consuming things	-0.10	0.06	0.66	0.73
ID12 I wish I could re-consume things I used to consume	-0.33	0.06	1.22	0.60
ID48 Giving things up is like going through a grieving process	-0.07	0.06	0.91	0.69
ID19 I feel like I have exceedingly important needs that may be in direct conflict with each other	0.18	0.06	0.92	0.66
ID21 When I go shopping, I just bite my upper lip and forget about buying some things	-0.04	0.06	1.15	0.64
ID04 I am reluctant to give things up	-0.46	0.07	1.09	0.58
ID24 Deconsumption is restraining	-0.37	0.07	0.87	0.67
ID01 Life is taking things that I still want to keep away from me	0.00	0.06	1.17	0.55
ID20 As you grow older, society takes things away from you	-0.15	0.06	1.07	0.63
ID47 I feel like I am invisible to other people	0.86	0.07	1.36	0.57
ID31 I am set in my ways and experience resistance to change	-0.30	0.06	1.18	0.59
ID03 I have had to stop consuming things I always used to consume earlier	-0.83	0.07	1.34	0.56
ID33 Giving up consumption comes at a price	-0.58	0.07	0.91	0.61

*Note.* N = 351. Pt-Measure Corr is the correlation between the item and the measured dimension.

In the first Rasch analysis run, out of the 354 original respondents, one had a MNSQ infit value of 4.0 or higher. This case underfit the model, and its scores were

deleted from the sample and the model was rerun. In the second iteration, two more respondents had MNSQ infit values of 4.0 or higher (4.08 and 4.05). These cases also underfit the model, and their scores were deleted from the sample and the model was run a third time (see Table 61 below).

Table 61

*Person Misfit - ID Subscale 1 (Victim Mentality)*

Serial Number	Entry Number	Logit Position	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	298	-3.62	4.25	4.11
2	124	-1.18	4.08	4.02
3	173	-2.42	4.05	4.03

All other respondents fit the model well with MNSQ infit values of 3.78 or below.

All tables presented here reflect the final model with the three respondents removed.

Reliability. Person separation for this sample was 3.51 with Cronbach's alpha of 0.94, real reliability of person separation of 0.92, and real person root mean square error of 0.34. Real item separation was 7.09, real item root mean square error was 0.07, and real reliability of item separation was 0.98.

Scale Use. Results of the Rasch analysis indicated that respondents in this sample used the rating scale as intended, as presented in the step structure table below (Table 62). Rasch-Andrich thresholds increased with category values with no evidence of step misfit with MNSQ infit and outfit values under 2.0 (Linacre, 2015). Overall, the structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of the response scale.

Table 62

*Step Structure – ID Subscale 1 (Victim Mentality)*

Category	Observed			Sample Expect	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Step Structure	Category Measure
	Count	%	Average					
1	990	13	-1.88	-1.77	0.91	0.99	None	(-3.23)
2	2017	26	-0.72	-0.81	1.03	1.00	-1.99	-1.42
3	1910	25	-0.19	-0.17	1.00	1.08	-0.43	-0.16
4	2271	29	0.51	0.51	0.99	1.03	-0.02	1.36
5	534	7	1.40	1.44	1.11	1.12	2.44	(3.60)

*Note.* Observed count is the number of all responses to a category. Observed percentage is the percent of all responses in that category. Observed average is the average of the measures that are modeled to produce the responses observed in the category. Sample expect is the expected value of the average measure for this sample. Infit MNSQ is the average of the Infit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Outfit MNSQ is the average of the Outfit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Step Structure is the logit position at which transition is made from a lower category to this category. Category measure is the sample-free measure corresponding to this category, where ( ) is printed where the matching calibration is infinite.

Category probability curves (Figure 44 below) indicated distribution of the five categories with clearly advancing steps.

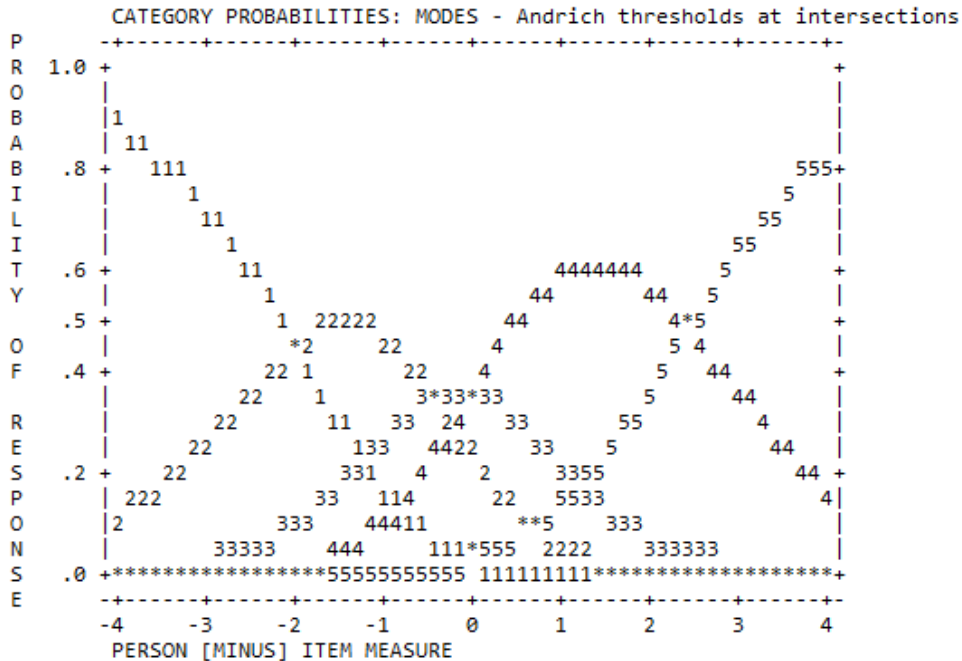


Figure 44. Category probability curves – ID subscale 1 (victim mentality).

Note. Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability). The item-person map provided in Figure 45 presents items and persons on the same scale and demonstrates scale functioning for this sample. Respondents represented near the top of the left-hand side of the item-person map were the ones who exhibited higher levels of victim mentality; respondents represented near the bottom were the ones who scored lower on this component. Respondents were spread throughout the item-person map. Representation of items and respondents in the map suggested this sample reported a distributed experience of victim mentality (as it relates to involuntary deconsumption). The item logit values were between -0.83 and 1.17, reflecting a fairly wide range of construct coverage with a person logit mean of -0.23. The person logit mean of -0.23

indicated the respondents in the sample were experiencing levels of victim mentality in line with item positions as a consequence of involuntary deconsumption.



TABLE 1.4 Dugar\_ID\_Scale\_Items\_Data\_Apr 08 2017 ZOU853WS.TXT Apr 8 2017 22:17  
 INPUT: 352 PERSON 22 ITEM REPORTED: 351 PERSON 22 ITEM 5 CATS WINSTEPS 3.92.1

MEASURE <more>	PERSON	BOTTOM P=50% ITEM	MEASURE ITEM	TOP P=50% ITEM	MEASURE <rare>
4	.	+	+	+	4
	.	+			ID11_LOSS OF CONTROL
	.	+			ID47_INVISIBILITY
	.	+			ID17_LOSS OF FREEDOM TO CHK
3	.	+	+		ID36_COMING TO TERMS ID05_
	.	+			ID18_SADNESS ID28_CHEATED
	.	+			ID19_NEEDS IN CONFLICT
	.	+			ID01_LIFE TAKING AWAY ID2:
	.	+			ID20_SOCIETY TAKING AWAY :
	#	+			ID12_DESIRE TO RE-CONSUME
	.	+			ID24_RESTRAINED ID04_RELU
2	.#	+	+		ID33_COMES AT A PRICE
	.	+			ID09_WISH DID NOT HAVE TO I
	.#	+			ID03_ALWAYS USED TO CONSUME
	.##	+			
	#	+			
	.##	+			
	.##	+			ID11_LOSS OF CONTROL
1	.##	+	+		ID47_INVISIBILITY
	###	+			ID17_LOSS OF FREEDOM TO CHOOSE
	###	+			ID36_COMING TO TERMS ID05_GIVING UP THING:
	.##	+			ID18_SADNESS ID28_CHEATED
	#####	+			ID19_NEEDS IN CONFLICT
0	#####	+	+		ID01_LIFE TAKING AWAY ID21_BITE LIP ID37_
	#####	+			ID20_SOCIETY TAKING AWAY ID26_PAINFUL ID
	#####	+			ID12_DESIRE TO RE-CONSUME ID31_RESISTANCE
	.#####	+			ID24_RESTRAINED ID04_RELUCTANT
	#####	+			ID33_COMES AT A PRICE
	.#####	+			ID09_WISH DID NOT HAVE TO DECONSUME
	.####	+			ID03_ALWAYS USED TO CONSUME
-1	#####	+			ID11_LOSS OF CONTROL
	.##	+			ID47_INVISIBILITY
	.#	+			ID17_LOSS OF FREEDOM TO CHOOSE
	.##	+			ID36_COMING TO TERMS ID05_GIVING UP THINGS I RELY ON
	##	+			ID18_SADNESS ID28_CHEATED
-2	.#	+	+		ID19_NEEDS IN CONFLICT
	.	+			ID01_LIFE TAKING AWAY ID21_BITE LIP ID37_HARD LETTING GO
	#	+			ID20_SOCIETY TAKING AWAY ID26_PAINFUL ID48_GRIEF
	.	+			ID12_DESIRE TO RE-CONSUME ID31_RESISTANCE ID06_DO NOT LI
	.	+			ID24_RESTRAINED ID04_RELUCTANT
	.	+			ID33_COMES AT A PRICE
	.	+			ID09_WISH DID NOT HAVE TO DECONSUME
-3	.	+			ID03_ALWAYS USED TO CONSUME
	.	+			
	.#	+			
-4	##	+	+	+	-4
<less>	PERSON	ITEM	ITEM	ITEM	<freq>
EACH "#" IN THE PERSON COLUMN IS 3 PERSON: EACH "." IS 1 TO 2					

Figure 45. Item-person map – ID subscale 1 (victim mentality).

Invariance. When statistical significance was evaluated at  $p \leq .01$ , and using a minimum 0.50 logit difference (Smith et al., 2009), none of the 22 items in this subscale exhibited statistically significant differential item functioning with respect to gender and boomer status (Figure 46 and Figure 47).

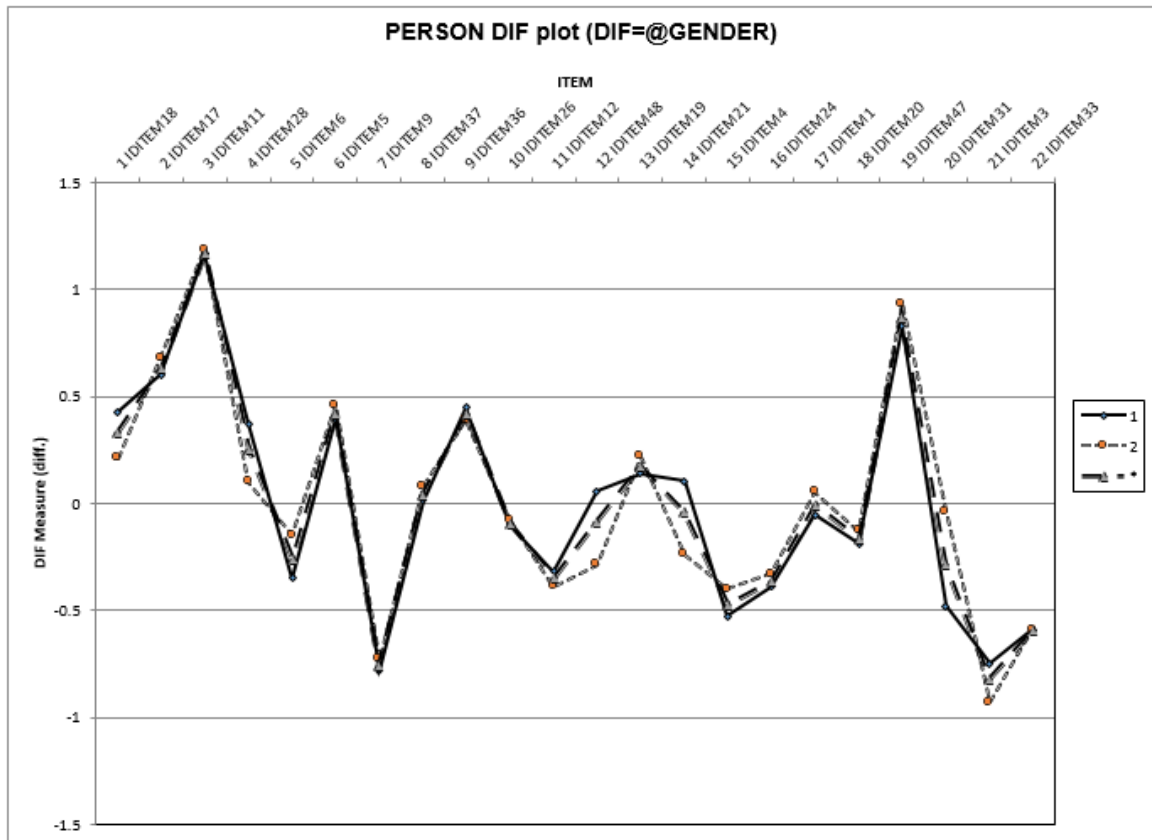


Figure 46. DIF plot by gender – ID subscale 1 (victim mentality).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = male, 2 = female, Δ (\*) = average.

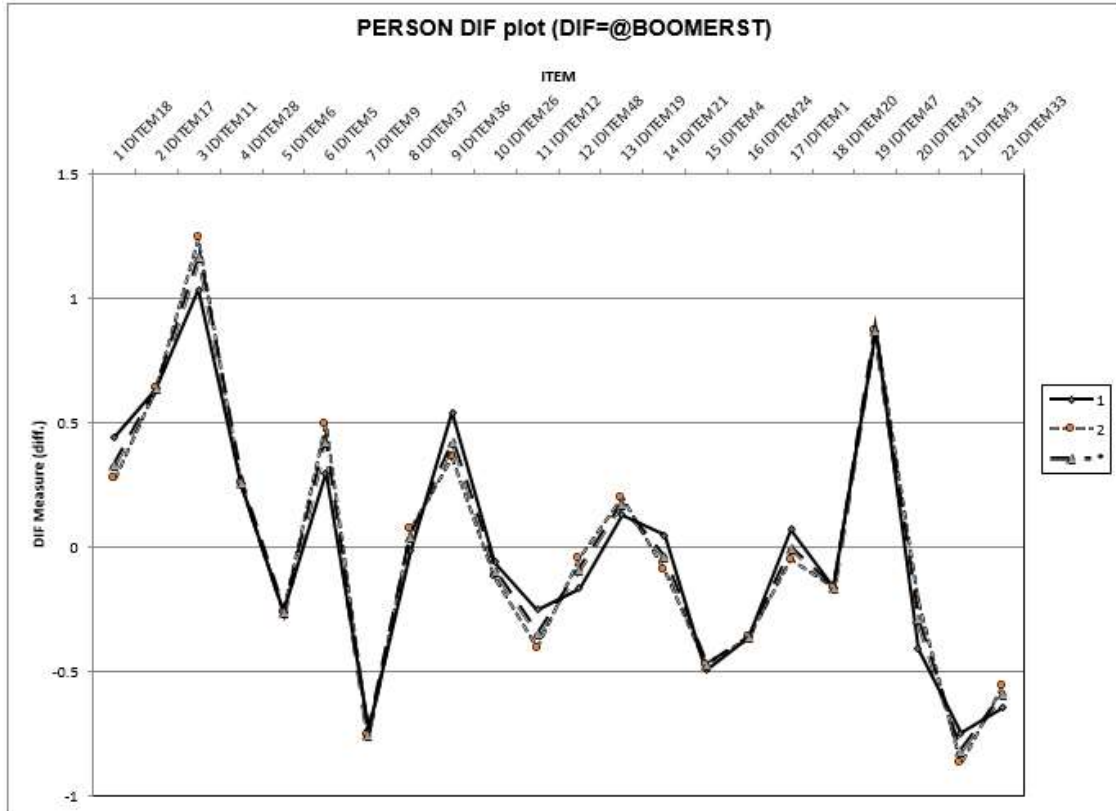


Figure 47. DIF plot by boomer status – ID subscale 1 (victim mentality).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = leading-edge, 2 = trailing-edge, Δ (\*) = average.

Summary. The “Victim Mentality” measure, a subscale of the measure of involuntary deconsumption, can be considered unidimensional based on both PCA and Rasch analyses. Item and person separation statistics were acceptable and items were spread across the continuum. The measure showed support for internal consistency reliability, reliability of item separation, and a reliability of person separation. The 5-point Likert scale was used as intended. Item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some harder-to-agree-with items. The measure can be considered invariant across gender and baby boomer status.

*Involuntary deconsumption subscale 2 (materialism).* The second component reflected a subscale comprising 6 items. The subscale was labeled “Materialism,” defined as a lack of ability for discretionary and rational decision-making fueled by impulsive and illusive shopping behavior, and equating acquisition of possessions to void-fulfillment and/or success. Categories such as shopping indiscretion, loss of control, peer pressure, impulsive shopping as a void-filler, equating possessions to success, and inability to give up consumption and tune out promotions formed this subscale. The items were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The mean score across the 6 items was 2.53. Mean scores for items ranged from 2.43 to 2.62. The mode across all items was 3.0. A Cronbach’s alpha value of .76 reflected acceptable reliability. Item statistics are presented in Table 63 below.

Table 63

*Item Statistics for Involuntary Deconsumption Subscale 2 (Materialism)*

Subscale Item	Mean	SD	Min-Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
ID27 I am swayed by “new and improved”	2.62	1.13	1–5	341	3	.74
ID34 Sometimes, I consume things due to peer pressure	2.43	1.15	1–5	341	3	.67
ID02 Shopping fills a void in my life	2.45	1.19	1–5	341	3	.60
ID22 I can never stick to my shopping list	2.61	1.19	1–5	341	3	.60
ID50 I feel like possessions are related to success	2.62	1.13	1–5	341	3	.59
ID35 In today’s society, I have no choice but to consume	2.48	1.12	1–5	341	3	.58

*Rasch analysis for involuntary deconsumption subscale 2 (materialism).*

Overall fit. Based on the standards for overall fit using infit MNSQ, outfit MNSQ, and ZSTD statistics, the data for this subscale of the involuntary deconsumption

sample fit the model with a mean MNSQ infit value of 1.00 ( $SD = 0.09$ ), mean ZSTD infit of -0.10 ( $SD = 1.40$ ), mean MNSQ outfit value of 1.01 ( $SD = 0.09$ ), and mean ZSTD outfit of 0.10 ( $SD = 1.30$ ). Infit mean square was 1.00, and outfit mean square was close to 1.00. These statistics indicated adequate overall average fit of data to the model. See Table 64 below.

Dimensionality. The measure “Materialism” explained 41.30% of the variance with the unexplained variance in the first contrast having an eigenvalue of 1.46 with 14.20% unexplained variance. Therefore, this subscale met the expectations of unidimensionality (see Table 64).

Table 64

*Dimensionality, Fit, and Separation – ID Subscale 2 (Materialism)*

Index	Involuntary Deconsumption Sample ( $n = 353$ )
Dimensionality—eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	1.46
Mean MNSQ Infit	1.00
SD MNSQ Infit	0.09
Mean MNSQ Outfit	1.01
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.09
Real Person Separation	1.67
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.66
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.74
Cronbach’s Alpha	0.76
Person Logit Mean	-0.72
Real Item Separation	1.38
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.06

Index	Involuntary Deconsumption Sample ( <i>n</i> = 353)
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.66

*Note.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation = Separation<sup>2</sup> / (1 + Separation<sup>2</sup>). Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

Item and person fit. The MNSQ infit for items in the sample ranged from 0.82 to 1.10. Based on these statistics, all 6 items of this subscale fit the model well (see Table 65 below) with consistently moderate to high point-measure correlations.

Table 65

*Item Statistics – ID Subscale 2 (Materialism)*

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt-Measure Corr
ID27 I am swayed by “new and improved”	-0.12	0.06	0.82	0.69
ID34 Sometimes, I consume things due to peer pressure	0.15	0.06	0.98	0.65
ID02 Shopping fills a void in my life	0.10	0.06	1.09	0.62
ID22 I can never stick to my shopping list	-0.08	0.06	1.09	0.62
ID50 I feel like possessions are related to success	-0.12	0.06	1.02	0.63
ID35 In today’s society, I have no choice but to consume	0.06	0.06	0.98	0.63

*Note.* N = 353. Pt-Measure Corr is the correlation between the item and the measured dimension.

In the first Rasch analysis run, out of the 354 original respondents, one had a MNSQ infit value of 4.0 or higher. This case underfit the model, and its scores were deleted from the sample and the model was rerun (see Table 66 below).

Table 66

*Person Misfit - ID Subscale 2 (Materialism)*

Serial Number	Entry Number	Logit Position	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	173	-1.80	4.78	5.11

All other respondents fit the model well with MNSQ infit values of 3.84 or below. All tables presented here reflect the final model with the one respondent removed.

Reliability. Person separation for this sample was 1.67, with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.76, real reliability of person separation of 0.74, and real person root mean square error of 0.66. Real item separation was 1.38, real item root mean square error was 0.06, and real reliability of item separation was 0.66.

Scale Use. Results of the Rasch analysis indicated that respondents in this sample used the rating scale as intended, as presented in the step structure table below (Table 67). Rasch-Andrich thresholds increased with category values with no evidence of step misfit with MNSQ infit and outfit values under 2.0 (Linacre, 2015). Overall, the structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of the response scale.

Table 67

*Step Structure – ID Subscale 2 (Materialism)*

Category	Observed			Sample Expect	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Step Structure	Category Measure
	Count	%	Average					
1	448	21	-1.61	-1.62	1.08	1.09	None	(-3.05)
2	722	34	-0.86	-0.87	0.94	0.94	-1.83	-1.23
3	428	20	-0.42	-0.37	1.05	1.13	-0.08	-0.07
4	424	20	0.15	0.11	0.93	0.91	-0.13	1.19
5	96	5	0.78	0.79	1.04	1.05	2.04	(3.23)

*Note.* Observed count is the number of all responses to a category. Observed percentage is the percent of all responses in that category. Observed average is the average of the measures that are modeled to produce the responses observed in the category. Sample expect is the expected value of the average measure for this sample. Infit MNSQ is the average of the Infit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Outfit MNSQ is the average of the Outfit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Step Structure is the logit position at which transition is made from a lower category to this category. Category measure is the sample-free measure corresponding to this category, where ( ) is printed where the matching calibration is infinite.

Category probability curves (Figure 48 below) indicated distribution of the five categories with clearly advancing steps.



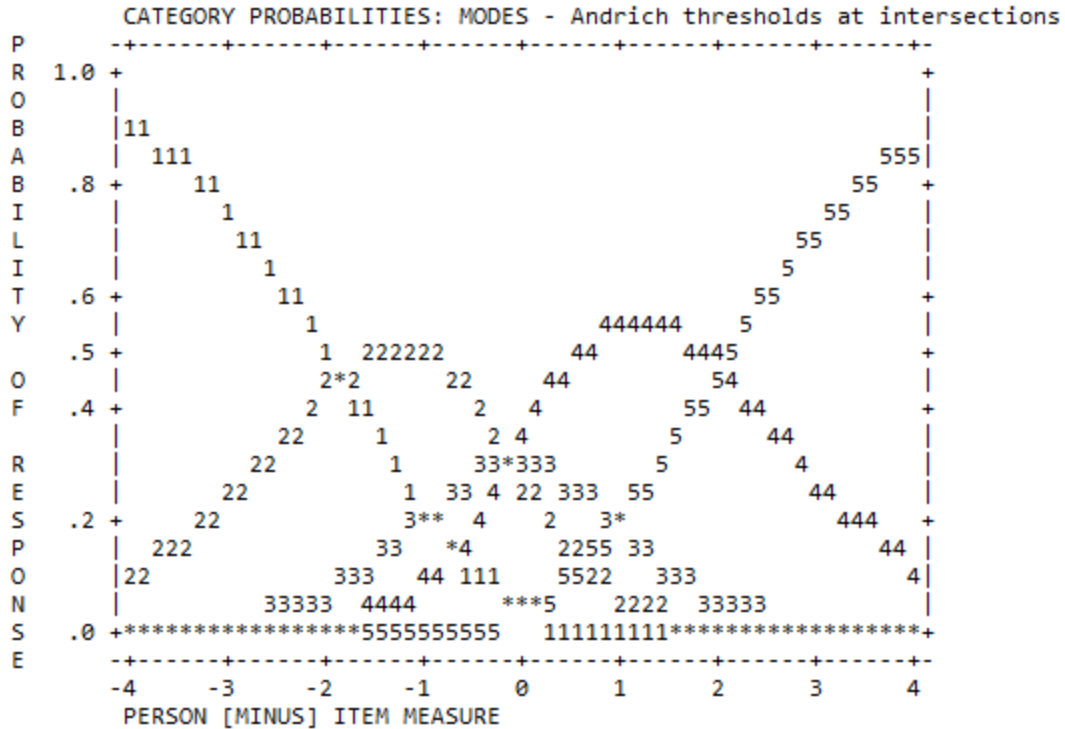


Figure 48. Category probability curves – ID subscale 2 (materialism).

Note. Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability). The item-person map provided in Figure 49 presents items and persons on the same scale and demonstrates scale functioning for this sample. Respondents represented near the top of the left-hand side of the item-person map were the ones who exhibited higher levels of materialism; respondents represented near the bottom were the ones who scored lower on this component. Respondents were spread throughout the item-person map. The item logit values were between -0.12 and 0.15, reflecting a narrow range of construct coverage with a person logit mean of -0.72. The person logit mean of -0.72 indicated the respondents in the sample were experiencing low levels of materialism driving involuntary deconsumption.

TABLE 1.4 Dugar\_ID\_Scale\_Items\_Data\_Apr 08 2017 ZOU584WS.TXT Apr 9 2017 0: 0  
 INPUT: 353 PERSON 6 ITEM REPORTED: 353 PERSON 6 ITEM 5 CATS WINSTEPS 3.92.1

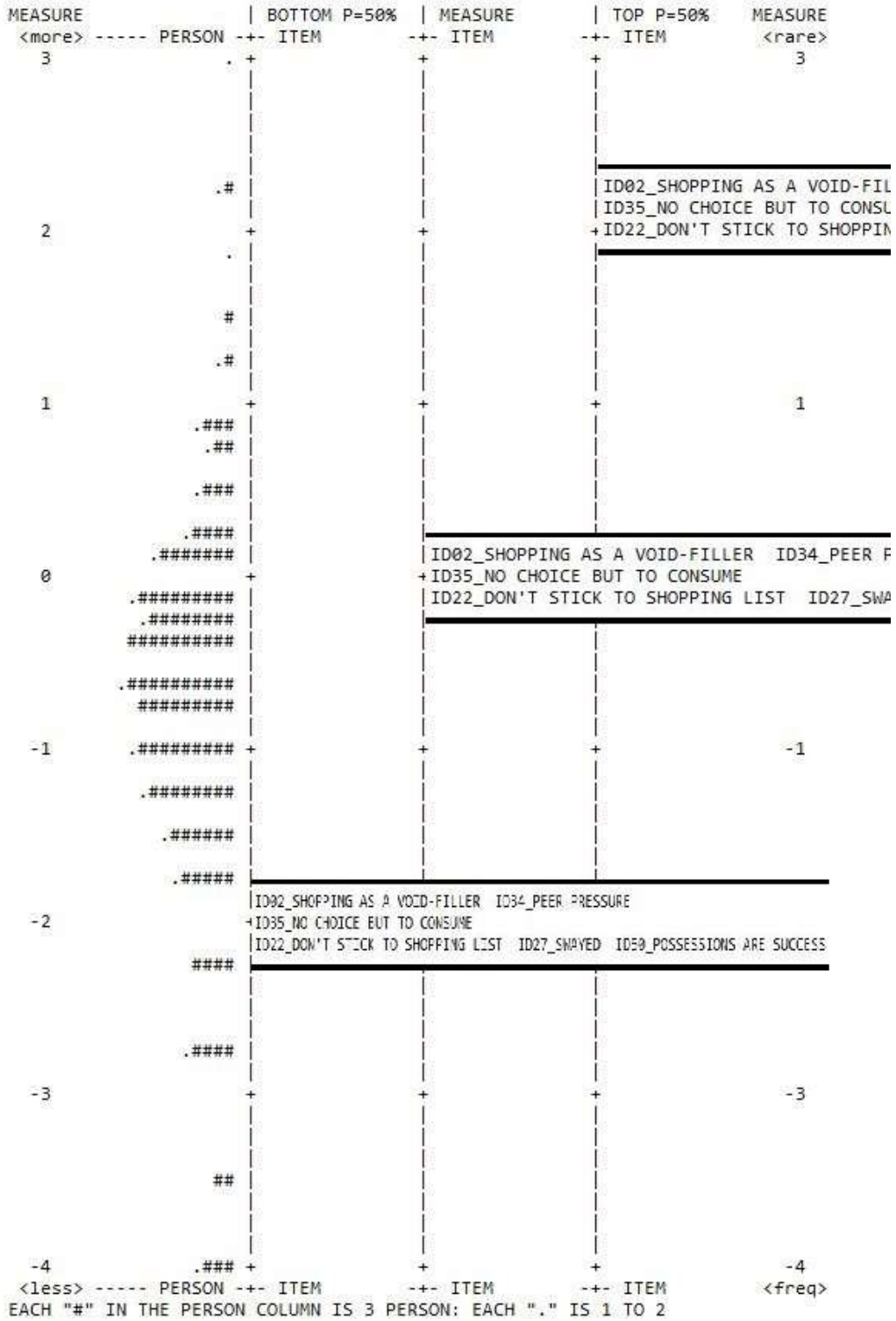


Figure 49. Item-person map – ID subscale 2 (materialism).

Invariance. When statistical significance was evaluated at  $p \leq .01$ , and using a minimum 0.50 logit difference (Smith et al., 2009), none of the 6 items in this subscale exhibited statistically significant differential item functioning with respect to gender and boomer status (Figure 50 and Figure 51).

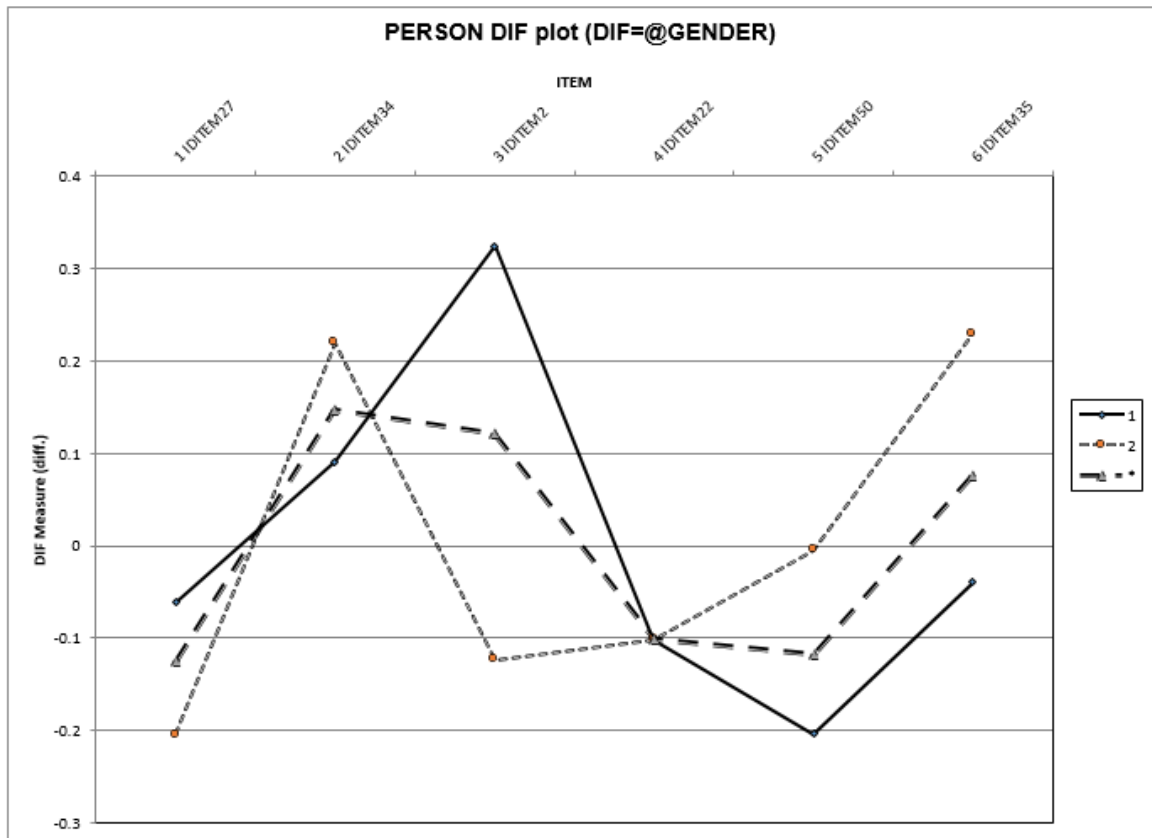


Figure 50. DIF plot by gender – ID subscale 2 (materialism).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = male, 2 = female,  $\Delta$  (\*) = average.

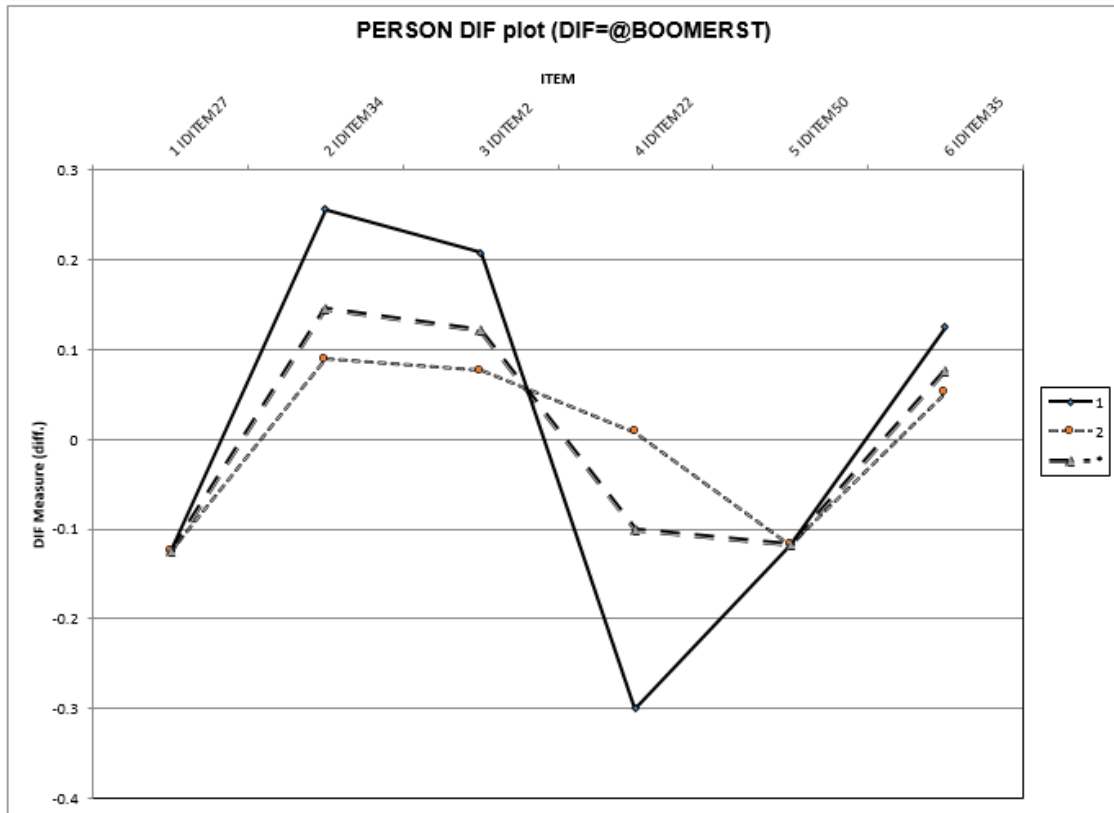


Figure 51. DIF plot by boomer status – ID subscale 2 (materialism).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = leading-edge, 2 = trailing-edge, Δ (\*) = average.

Summary. The “Materialism” measure, a subscale of the measure of involuntary deconsumption, can be considered unidimensional based on both PCA and Rasch analyses. Item and person separation statistics were acceptable and items were spread across the continuum. The measure showed support for internal consistency reliability, reliability of item separation, and a reliability of person separation. The 5-point Likert scale was used as intended. Item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some easier-to-agree-with items. The measure can be considered invariant across gender and baby boomer status.

*Involuntary deconsumption subscale 3 (non-acceptance of life circumstances).*

The third component reflected a subscale comprising 5 items. The subscale was labeled “Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances,” defined as the denial of changed priorities accompanying circumstances prohibitive to consumption, such as decline in health, financial capacity, and non-availability. Categories such as decline in health, loss of financial capacity, maintenance costs, and changing life situations formed this subscale. The items were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The mean score across the 5 items was 3.84. Mean scores for items ranged from 3.77 to 3.93. The mode across all items was 3.0. A Cronbach’s alpha value of .76 reflected acceptable reliability. Item statistics are presented in Table 68 below.

Table 68

*Item Statistics for Involuntary Deconsumption Subscale 3 (Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Subscale Item	Mean	SD	Min- Max	N	Mode	Factor Loading
ID38 Deconsumption can result from a decline in health	3.79	1.08	1–5	341	3	.74
ID40 Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity	3.84	1.04	1–5	341	3	.73
ID44 Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive	3.85	0.83	1–5	341	3	.67
ID14 Deconsumption requires discipline	3.93	0.99	1–5	341	3	.66
ID16 Deconsumption is an exercise in self-control	3.77	0.95	1–5	341	3	.63

*Rasch analysis for involuntary deconsumption subscale 3 (non-acceptance of life circumstances).*

Overall fit. Based on the standards for overall fit using infit MNSQ, outfit MNSQ, and ZSTD statistics, the data for this subscale of the involuntary deconsumption sample fit the model with a mean MNSQ infit value of 1.00 ( $SD = 0.11$ ), mean ZSTD infit of -0.10 ( $SD = 1.20$ ), mean MNSQ outfit value of 0.93 ( $SD = 0.07$ ), and mean ZSTD outfit of -0.80 ( $SD = 0.80$ ). Infit mean square was 1.00, and outfit mean square was close to 1.00. These statistics indicated adequate overall average fit of data to the model. See Table 69 below.

Dimensionality. The measure “Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances” explained 46.10% of the variance with the unexplained variance in the first contrast having an eigenvalue of 2.36 with 25.40% unexplained variance. Therefore, this subscale met the expectations of unidimensionality with room for improvement (see Table 69).

Table 69

*Dimensionality, Fit, and Separation – ID Subscale 3 (Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Index	Involuntary Deconsumption Sample ( $n = 341$ )
Dimensionality—eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	2.36
Mean MNSQ Infit	1.00
SD MNSQ Infit	0.11
Mean MNSQ Outfit	0.93
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.07
Real Person Separation	1.64
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.86
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.73
Cronbach’s Alpha	0.76

Index	Involuntary Deconsumption Sample ( <i>n</i> = 341)
Person Logit Mean	1.27
Real Item Separation	1.07
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.08
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.53

*Note.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation =  $\text{Separation}^2 / (1 + \text{Separation}^2)$ . Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

Item and person fit. The MNSQ infit for items in the sample ranged from 0.89 to

1.21. Based on these statistics, all 5 items of this subscale fit the model well (see Table 70 below) with consistently moderate to high point-measure correlations.

Table 70

*Item Statistics – ID Subscale 3 (Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Subscale Item	Logit Position	SE	Infit MNSQ	Pt-Measure Corr
ID38 Deconsumption can result from a decline in health	0.10	0.08	0.90	0.74
ID40 Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity	0.00	0.08	0.98	0.71
ID44 Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive	-0.03	0.08	0.89	0.63
ID14 Deconsumption requires discipline	-0.20	0.08	1.21	0.64
ID16 Deconsumption is an exercise in self-control	0.14	0.08	1.01	0.65

*Note.* *N* = 341. Pt-Measure Corr is the correlation between the item and the measured dimension.

In the first Rasch analysis run, out of the 354 original respondents, nine had MNSQ infit values of 4.0 or higher. These cases underfit the model, and their scores were deleted from the sample and the model was rerun. In the second iteration, three had MNSQ infit values of 4.0 or higher. These cases underfit the model, and their scores were deleted from the sample and the model was rerun (see Table 71 below).

Table 71

*Person Misfit - ID Subscale 3 (Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Serial Number	Entry Number	Logit Position	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ
1	119	1.58	7.74	7.96
2	98	1.58	7.23	7.11
3	169	0.02	4.71	4.86
4	124	0.02	4.47	4.46
5	206	0.02	4.30	4.23
6	214	0.02	4.30	4.23
7	333	0.61	4.11	4.25
8	204	0.28	4.24	4.20
9	235	0.61	4.00	3.97
10	226	0.70	4.62	4.48
11	212	1.21	4.52	4.52
12	75	1.83	4.41	4.41

All other respondents fit the model well with MNSQ infit values of 3.79 or below.

All tables presented here reflect the final model with these 12 respondents removed.

Reliability. Person separation for this sample was 1.64, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.76, real reliability of person separation of 0.73, and real person root mean square error of 0.86. Real item separation was 1.07, real item root mean square error was 0.08, and real reliability of item separation was 0.53.

Scale Use. Results of the Rasch analysis indicated that respondents in this sample used the rating scale as intended, as presented in the step structure table below (Table



72). Rasch-Andrich thresholds increased with category values with no evidence of step misfit with MNSQ infit and outfit values under 2.0 (Linacre, 2015). Overall, the structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of the response scale.

Table 72

*Step Structure – ID Subscale 3 (Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances)*

Category	Count	%	Average	Sample Expect	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	Step Structure	Category Measure
1	65	4	-1.14	-1.02	0.86	0.75	None	(-2.79)
2	110	6	-0.41	-0.35	0.89	0.77	-1.34	-1.44
3	259	15	0.27	0.22	1.05	1.05	-0.93	-0.47
4	871	51	1.21	1.18	0.94	0.96	-0.56	1.25
5	400	23	2.59	2.65	1.24	1.02	2.83	(3.95)

*Note.* Observed count is the number of all responses to a category. Observed percentage is the percent of all responses in that category. Observed average is the average of the measures that are modeled to produce the responses observed in the category. Sample expect is the expected value of the average measure for this sample. Infit MNSQ is the average of the Infit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Outfit MNSQ is the average of the Outfit MNSQs associated with responses in that category. Step Structure is the logit position at which transition is made from a lower category to this category. Category measure is the sample-free measure corresponding to this category, where ( ) is printed where the matching calibration is infinite.

Category probability curves (Figure 52 below) indicated distribution of the five categories with clearly advancing steps.

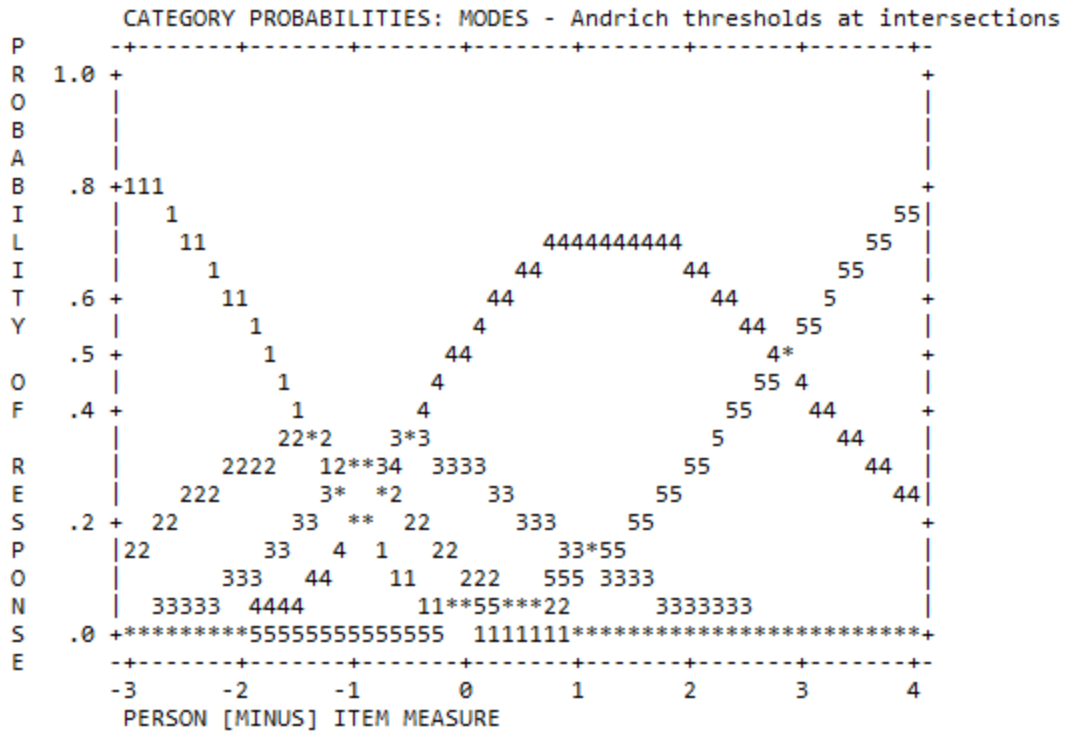


Figure 52. Category probability curves – ID subscale 3 (non-acceptance of life circumstances).

Note. Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability). The item-person map provided in Figure 53 presents items and persons on the same scale and demonstrates scale functioning for this sample. Respondents represented near the top of the left-hand side of the item-person map were the ones who exhibited higher levels of non-acceptance of life circumstances; respondents represented near the bottom were the ones who scored lower on this component. The item logit values were between -0.20 and 0.14, reflecting a narrow range of construct coverage with a person logit mean of 1.27. The person logit mean of 1.27 indicated the respondents in the sample were experiencing high levels of denial of life circumstances in their involuntary deconsumption.

▲TABLE 1.4 Dugar\_ID\_Scale\_Items\_Data\_Apr 08 2017 ZOU433WS.TXT Apr 9 2017 0:56  
 INPUT: 341 PERSON 5 ITEM REPORTED: 341 PERSON 5 ITEM 5 CATS WINSTEPS 3.92.1

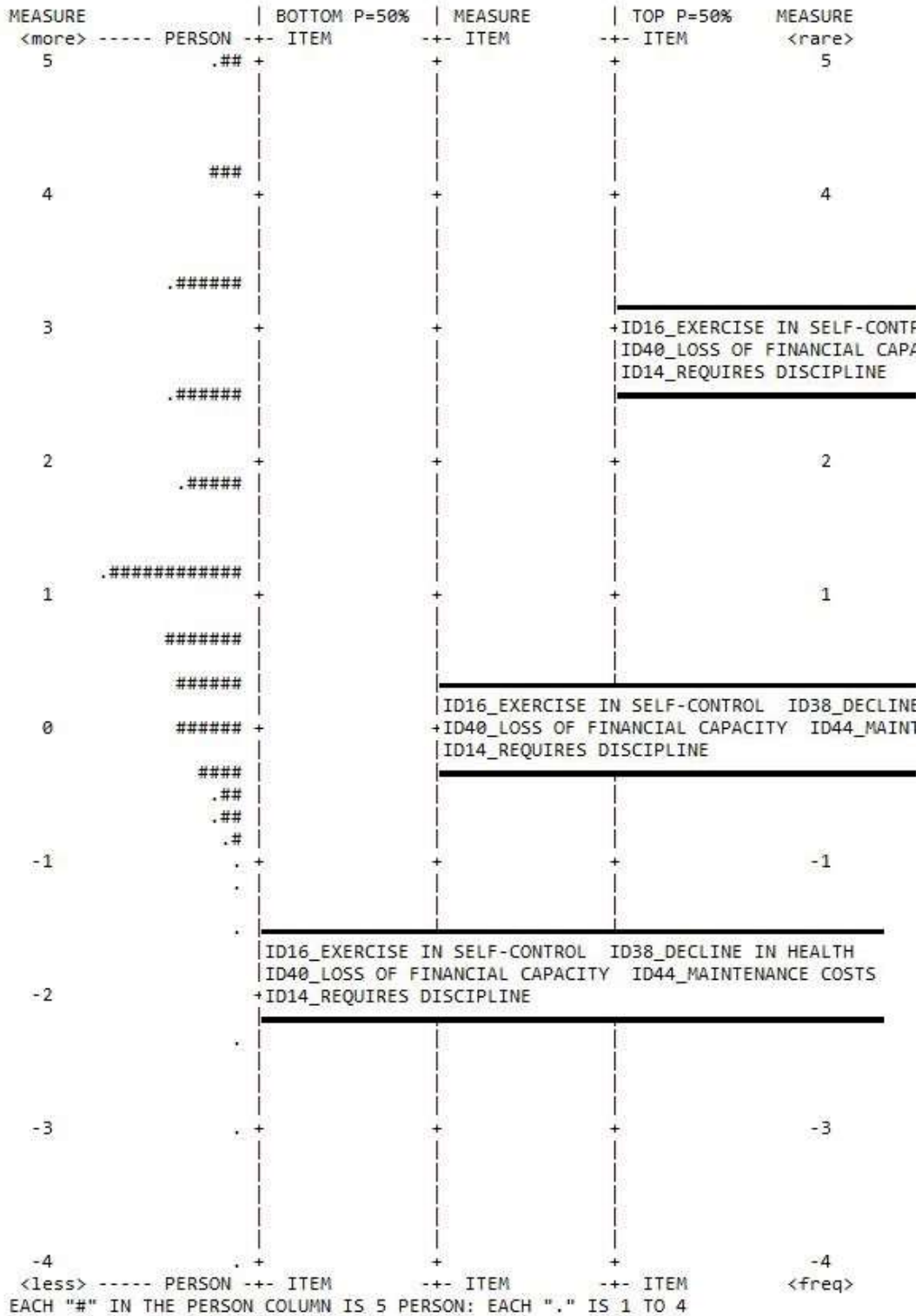


Figure 53. Item-person map – ID subscale 3 (non-acceptance of life circumstances).

Invariance. When statistical significance was evaluated at  $p \leq .01$ , and using a minimum 0.50 logit difference (Smith et al., 2009), none of the 6 items in this subscale exhibited statistically significant differential item functioning with respect to gender and boomer status (Figure 54 and Figure 55).

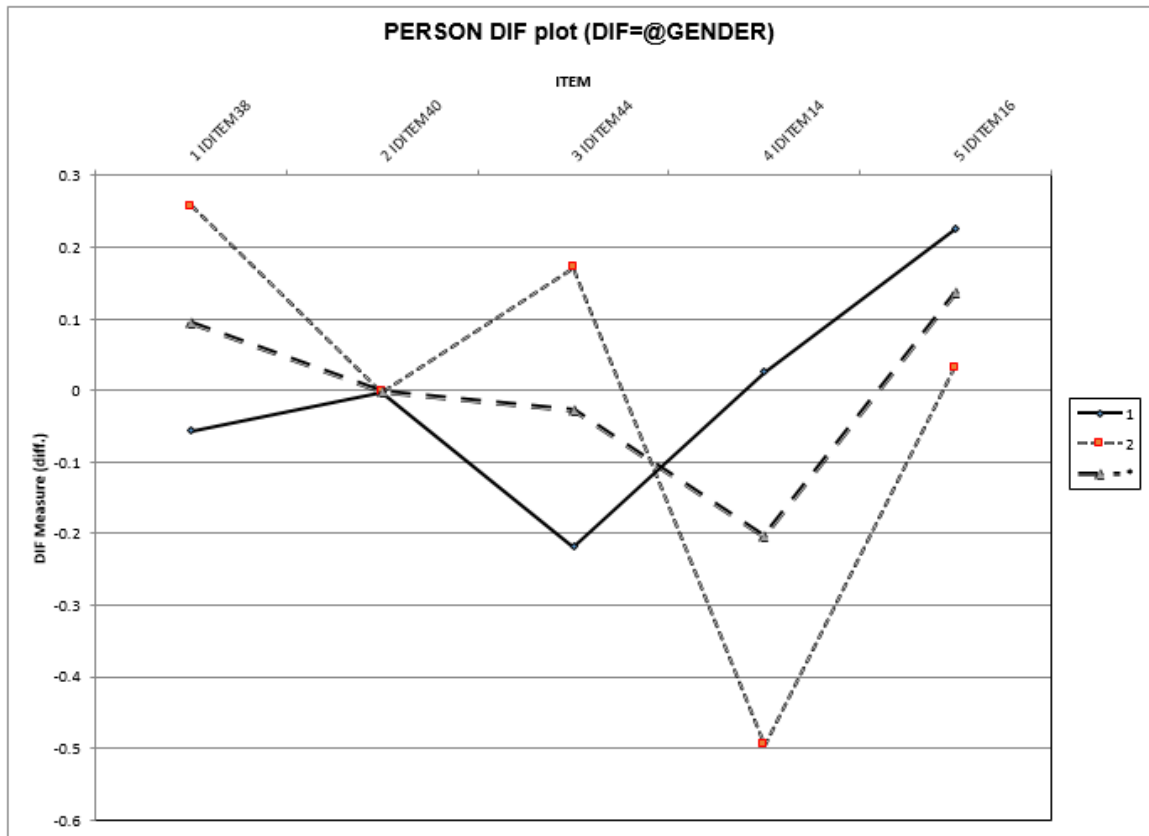


Figure 54. DIF plot by gender – ID subscale 3 (non-acceptance of life circumstances).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = male, 2 = female,  $\Delta$  (\*) = average.

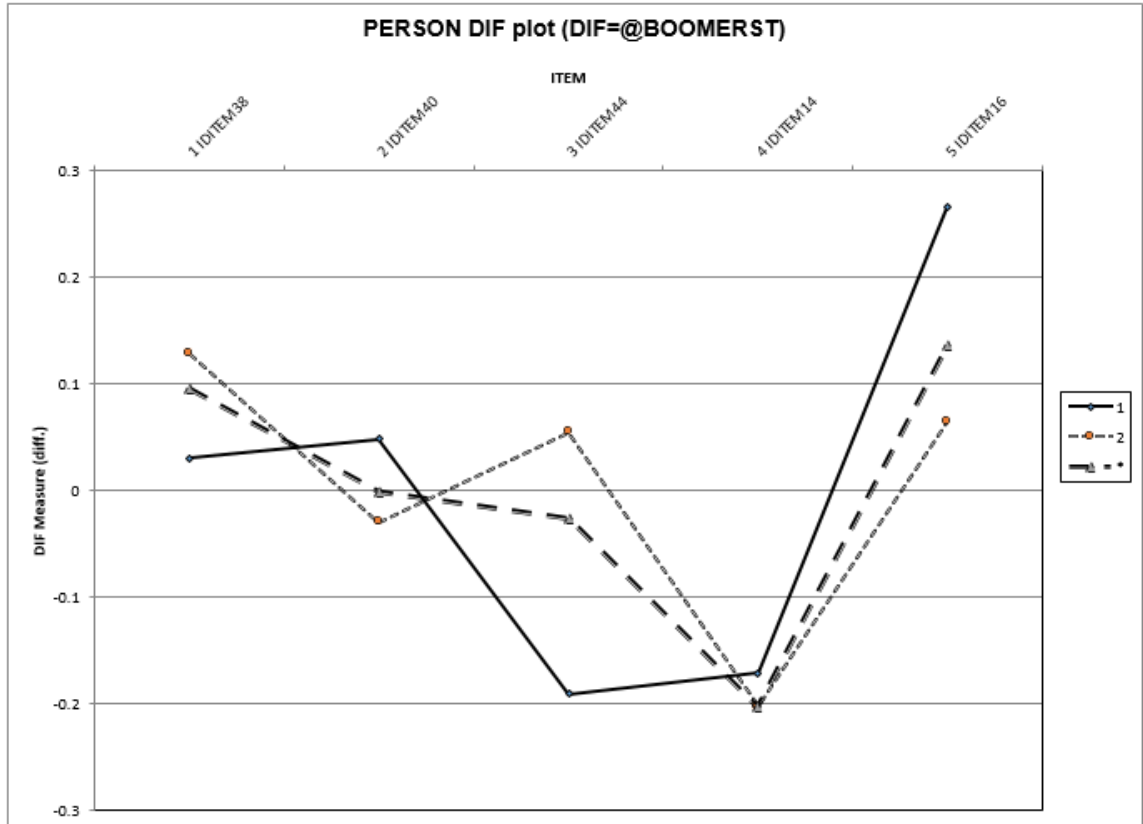


Figure 55. DIF plot by boomer status – ID subscale 3 (non-acceptance of life circumstances).  
 Note. Logit difficulty categories: 1 = leading-edge, 2 = trailing-edge, Δ (\*) = average.

Summary. The “Non-Acceptance of Life Circumstances” measure, a subscale of the measure of involuntary deconsumption, can be considered fairly unidimensional based on both PCA and Rasch analyses. Item and person separation statistics were acceptable and items were spread, though narrowly, across the continuum. The measure showed support for internal consistency reliability, reliability of item separation, and a reliability of person separation. The 5-point Likert scale was used as intended. Item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some harder-to-agree-with items. The measure can be considered invariant across gender and baby boomer status.

***Differences in involuntary deconsumption subscale scores by demographic variables.*** Two-way (2x2) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess whether baby boomers were responding to subscale items of involuntary deconsumption differently based on demographic variables gender (male vs. female) and baby boomer status (leading- vs. trailing-edge). All assumptions for ANOVAs were tested and met. There were no statistically significant main or interaction effects for any of the subscales of involuntary deconsumption (ID\_01\_VIM, ID\_02\_MAT, and ID\_03\_NLC) at  $p \leq .05$ , indicating that male, female, leading-, and trailing-edge boomers did not differ in their mean scale scores for the subscales of involuntary deconsumption.

***Correlations between involuntary deconsumption subscale scores.*** Pearson correlations were run to assess the correlations between the subscale scores of involuntary deconsumption. As expected, all correlations were fairly positive, and significant at  $p \leq .01$  (see Table 73).

Table 73

*Pearson Correlations for Subscale Mean Scores – Involuntary Deconsumption*

	ID_01_VIM	ID_02_MAT	VD_03_NLC
ID_01_VIM	1.00	0.54**	0.42**
ID_02_MAT		1.00	0.22**
ID_03_NLC			1.00

*Note.* \*\* = Significant at  $p \leq .01$ . VIM = Victim Mentality, MAT = Materialism, and NLC = Non-acceptance of Life Circumstances.

**Differences between voluntary and involuntary deconsumption dimensions by demographic variables (RQ3).** Three-way (2 x 2 x 2) ANOVAs were run to assess differences in the dimensions of consumption, as well as voluntary and involuntary deconsumption (as they relate to attribution theory) between respondents belonging to

groups based on (a) type of deconsumption (voluntary vs. involuntary), (b) gender (male vs. female), and (c) baby boomer status (leading- vs. trailing-edge). The following assumptions of three-way ANOVAs were tested and met: (a) Observations were independent (there was no relationship between the observations in each group or between the groups), (b) Dependent variables were approximately normally distributed for each combination of the groups, and (c) Variances were homogenous for each combination of the groups of the three independent variables. Significant effects are listed below and in Table 74.

There was a statistically significant main effect of DeconType on brand salience [ $F(1, 674) = 13.173, p < .001, \eta^2 = .019$ ], ease of deconsumption [ $F(1, 674) = 6.949, p = .009, \eta^2 = .010$ ], locus of deconsumption [ $F(1, 674) = 73.873, p < .001, \eta^2 = .099$ ], intentionality of deconsumption [ $F(1, 674) = 55.917, p < .001, \eta^2 = .077$ ], controllability of deconsumption [ $F(1, 674) = 11.571, p < .001, \eta^2 = .017$ ], and on stability of deconsumption [ $F(1, 674) = 8.596, p = .003, \eta^2 = .013$ ]. There was a statistically significant main effect of Gender on consumption duration [ $F(1, 665) = 4.514, p = .034, \eta^2 = .007$ ], and on significance of deconsumption [ $F(1, 674) = 7.063, p = .008, \eta^2 = .010$ ].

Also, there were significant interaction effects on significance of deconsumption, ease of deconsumption, intentionality of deconsumption, and on stability of deconsumption (details in Table 74). None of the other main and interaction effects were significant. Means, standard deviations, and cell sizes for significant interactions are provided in Table 74.

Table 74

*Results of ANOVAs for Deconsumption Dimensions*

Dimension	Significant Effect from 3-Way ANOVAs	n	F	p	$\eta^2$	Means	SDs
<b>Brand Salience</b>	DeconType	V=328 I=354	13.17	<.001	0.19	V=1.37 I=1.50	V=.48 I=1.50
<b>Consumption</b>							
Age	None	NA	NA	NS	NA	NA	NA
Duration	Gender	M=361 F=312	4.51	0.034		M=24.32 F=21.37	M=18.29 F=18.37
Quality	None	NA	NA	NS	NA	NA	NA
Satisfaction	None	NA	NA	NS	NA	NA	NA
Commitment	None	NA	NA	NS	NA	NA	NA
Frequency	None	NA	NA	NS	NA	NA	NA
<b>Deconsumption</b>							
Age	None	NA	NA	NS	NA	NA	NA
Duration	None	NA	NA	NS	NA	NA	NA
<b>Significance of Deconsumption</b>							
	Gender	M=365 F=317	7.06	0.008	0.10	M=2.26 F=2.01	M=1.16 F=1.09
	DeconType	VML=62	4.53	0.034	.007	VML=2.21	VML=1.23
	*Gender	VMT=114				VMT=2.34	VMT=1.26
	*BoomerStage	VFL=55				VFL=2.16	VFL=1.23



Dimension	Significant Effect from 3-Way ANOVAs	n	F	p	$\eta^2$	Means	SDs
		VFT=97				VFT=1.84	VFT=1.06
		IML=72				IML=2.40	IML=1.20
		IMT=117				IMT=2.11	IMT=.98
		IFL=50				IFL=2.40	IFL=1.10
		IFT=115				IFT=2.06	IFT=1.06
	<b><i>Ease of Deconsumption</i></b>						
	DeconType	V=328	6.95	0.009	0.10	V=2.36	V=1.29
		I=354				I=2.67	I=1.32
	DeconType	VM=62	4.64	0.032	.007	VM=2.45	VM=1.27
	*Gender	VF=55				VF=2.26	VF=1.32
		IM=72				IM=2.56	IM=1.25
		IF=50				IF=2.80	IF=1.38
	<b><i>Locus of Deconsumption</i></b>						
	DeconType	V=328	73.87	<.001	.099	V=1.16	V=.37
	<b><i>Intentionality of Deconsumption</i></b>	I=354				I=1.48	I=.50
	DeconType	V=328	55.92	<.001	.077	V=1.37	V=.77
		I=354				I=2.14	I=1.46
	DeconType	VL=117	4.76	0.029	.007	VL=1.41	VL=.84
	*BoomerStage	VT=211				VT=1.35	VT=.73
		IL=122				IL=1.93	IL=1.29
		IT=232				IT=2.26	IT=1.53
	<b><i>Controllability of Deconsumption</i></b>						
	DeconType	V=328	11.57	<.001	0.17	V=1.55	V=.83

Dimension	Significant Effect from 3-Way ANOVAs	n	F	p	$\eta^2$	Means	SDs
		I=354				I=1.84	I=1.01
<b><i>Stability of Deconsumption</i></b>							
	DeconType	V=328	8.60	0.003	.013	V=1.51	V=.77
		I=354				I=1.71	I=.95
	DeconType	ML=134	4.19	0.041	.006	ML=1.63	ML=.86
	*BoomerStage	FL=105				FL=1.48	FL=.77
		MT=231				MT=1.56	MT=.86
		FT=212				FT=1.72	FT=.94

353 *Note.* DeconType = Type of Deconsumption; BoomerStage = Stage of Baby Boomer Membership; V = Voluntary, I = Involuntary; M = Male, F = Female; L = Leading-edge, T = Trailing-edge, NS = nonsignificant at  $p \leq .05$ , NA = not applicable.

The above analyses indicated that there were patterns of differences in some dimensions of attribution theory based on the main effects of deconsumption type (voluntary, involuntary), and gender (male, female). Brand salience, ease of deconsumption, intentionality, controllability, and stability of deconsumption decision were substantially higher among involuntary deconsumers than among voluntary deconsumers. Voluntary deconsumers reported their deconsumption decisions as more internally driven, whereas involuntary deconsumer reported them as more externally driven. Consumption duration and significance of deconsumption decision was substantially higher among male baby boomers than among female baby boomers.

The two- and three-way interaction effects indicated that dimensions of attribution theory scores between voluntary and involuntary deconsumers depended on their gender and/or their boomer status membership (leading- or trailing-edge boomers). The interaction among two factors was different across the levels of the third factor. Follow-up two-way ANOVAs and simple main effects analyses (t-tests) showed that involuntary male leading-edge boomers reported the significance of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did voluntary female trailing-edge boomers. Involuntary female boomers reported the ease of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did voluntary female boomers. Involuntary trailing-edge boomers reported the intentionality of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did voluntary trailing-edge boomers. Female trailing-edge boomers reported the stability of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did female leading-edge boomers.

**Tests of hypotheses between voluntary and involuntary deconsumption dimensions by demographic variables.** The results of hypothesis tests and the decisions based on the 2x2x2 ANOVAs reported above are detailed in Table 75 below.

Table 75

*Tests of Hypotheses for Deconsumption Dimensions of Attribution Theory*

Dimensions	Null Hypotheses	Alternative Hypotheses	F, <i>p</i>	Means	Decision
Brand Salience	H <sub>01</sub> : There is no difference between the brand salience of deconsumed brand for voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>11</sub> : The brand salience of deconsumed brand is significantly higher for voluntary deconsumers than for involuntary deconsumers.	13.173 <.001	V = 1.37 I = 1.50	Reject H <sub>01</sub>
Consumption Duration	H <sub>02</sub> : There is no difference between the consumption duration of male and female deconsumers.	H <sub>12</sub> : The consumption duration of male deconsumers is significantly higher than that of female deconsumers.	4.514 0.034	M = 24.32 F = 21.37	Reject H <sub>02</sub>
Consumption Quality	H <sub>03</sub> : There is no difference between the consumption quality of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>13</sub> : The consumption quality of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	0.336 0.563	V = 2.36 I = 2.29	Do not reject H <sub>03</sub>
Consumption Satisfaction	H <sub>04</sub> : There is no difference between the consumption satisfaction of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>14</sub> : The consumption satisfaction of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	2.542 0.111	V = 2.34 I = 2.14	Do not reject H <sub>04</sub>
Consumption Commitment	H <sub>05</sub> : There is no difference between the consumption commitment of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>15</sub> : The consumption commitment of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	1.635 0.202	V = 2.34 I = 2.20	Do not reject H <sub>05</sub>
Usage Frequency	H <sub>06</sub> : There is no difference between the usage frequency of	H <sub>16</sub> : The usage frequency of voluntary deconsumers is	3.228 0.073	V = 43.77 I = 42.62	Do not reject H <sub>06</sub>

Dimensions	Null Hypotheses	Alternative Hypotheses	F, <i>p</i>	Means	Decision
	voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.			
Significance of Deconsumption Decision	H <sub>07a</sub> : There is no difference between the significance of deconsumption decision of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>17a</sub> : The significance of deconsumption decision of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	0.031 <i>0.860</i>	V = 2.14 I = 2.14	Do not reject H <sub>07a</sub>
	H <sub>07b</sub> : There is no difference between the significance of deconsumption decision of male and female deconsumers.	H <sub>17b</sub> : The significance of deconsumption decision of male deconsumers is significantly higher than that of female deconsumers.	7.063 <i>0.008</i>	M = 2.26 F = 2.01	Reject H <sub>07b</sub>
	H <sub>07c</sub> : There is no difference between the significance of deconsumption decision of leading-edge and trailing-edge deconsumers.	H <sub>17c</sub> : The significance of deconsumption decision of leading-edge deconsumers is significantly lower than that of trailing-edge deconsumers.	1.650 <i>0.199</i>	L = 2.22 T = 2.10	Do not reject H <sub>07c</sub>
Ease of Deconsumption Decision	H <sub>08a</sub> : There is no difference between the ease of deconsumption decision of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>18a</sub> : The ease of deconsumption decision of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	6.949 <i>0.009</i>	V = 2.36 I = 2.67	Reject H <sub>08a</sub>
	H <sub>08b</sub> : There is no difference between the ease of deconsumption decision of male and female deconsumers.	H <sub>18b</sub> : The ease of deconsumption decision of male deconsumers is significantly lower than that of female deconsumers.	0.161 <i>0.688</i>	M = 2.50 F = 2.54	Do not reject H <sub>08b</sub>

Dimensions	Null Hypotheses	Alternative Hypotheses	F, <i>p</i>	Means	Decision
	H <sub>08c</sub> : There is no difference between the ease of deconsumption decision of leading-edge and trailing-edge deconsumers.	H <sub>18c</sub> : The ease of deconsumption decision of leading-edge deconsumers is significantly higher than that of trailing-edge deconsumers.	2.268 <i>0.133</i>	L = 2.42 T = 2.58	Do not reject H <sub>08c</sub>
Locus of Deconsumption Decision	H <sub>09</sub> : There is no difference between the locus of deconsumption decision of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>19</sub> : The locus of deconsumption decision of voluntary deconsumers is significantly more internal than that of involuntary deconsumers.	73.873 <.001	V = 1.16 I = 1.48	Reject H <sub>09</sub>
Intentionality of Deconsumption Decision	H <sub>010</sub> : There is no difference between the intentionality of deconsumption decision of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>110</sub> : The intentionality of deconsumption decision of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	55.917 <.001	V = 1.37 I = 2.14	Reject H <sub>010</sub>
Controllability of Deconsumption Decision	H <sub>011</sub> : There is no difference between the controllability of deconsumption decision of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>111</sub> : The controllability of deconsumption decision of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	11.571 <.001	V = 1.55 I = 1.84	Reject H <sub>011</sub>
Stability of Deconsumption Decision	H <sub>012</sub> : There is no difference between the stability of deconsumption decision of voluntary and involuntary deconsumers.	H <sub>112</sub> : The stability of deconsumption decision of voluntary deconsumers is significantly lower than that of involuntary deconsumers.	8.596 <i>0.003</i>	V = 1.51 I = 1.71	Reject H <sub>012</sub>

Note. V = Voluntary, I = Involuntary; M = Male, F = Female; L = Leading-edge, T = Trailing-edge.

**Overall scale statistics.** Descriptive statistics were computed from subscale mean scores, as the number of items were different for subscales across the two types of deconsumption. Stem-and-leaf and box-and-whisker plots, as well as presence of outliers suggested that the data were not normal. Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) and Shapiro-Wilk (SW) tests of normality were significant at  $p \leq .05$  for all subscales other than ID\_01\_VIM (KS = 0.035,  $p = 0.200$ ; SW = 0.996,  $p = 0.465$ ). Subscale statistics (voluntary and involuntary) are presented in Table 76 below.

Table 76

*All Scale and Subscale Statistics*

Subscale	# Items	Mean	SD	n	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's Alpha	Person Logit Mean
<i>Voluntary Deconsumption</i>								
01_ESP	10	3.66	0.67	318	-0.53	1.26	0.86	0.99
02_SAA	9	3.91	0.67	318	-0.83	1.15	0.85	1.43
03_NMT	13	3.96	0.54	318	-1.17	4.23	0.82	1.24
04_ALC	7	4.10	0.55	318	-1.09	3.71	0.76	1.77
ALL	39	3.89	0.46	318	-0.95	4.84	NA	NA
<i>Involuntary Deconsumption</i>								
01_VIM	22	2.92	0.73	340	-0.06	-0.05	0.94	-0.24
02_MAT	6	2.54	0.77	340	0.27	-0.01	0.76	-0.72
03_NLC	5	3.84	0.70	340	-1.01	1.92	0.76	1.27
ALL	33	2.99	0.63	340	-0.20	0.41	NA	NA

*Note.* VD = Voluntary Deconsumption, ID = Involuntary Deconsumption, ESP = Elevated State of Purpose, SAA = Social Agency and Activism, NMT = Non-materialism, ALC = Acceptance of Life Circumstances, VIM = Victim Mentality, MAT = Materialism, and NLC = Non-acceptance of Life Circumstances.

**Ancillary analyses (correlations between voluntary and involuntary deconsumption subscales).** Pearson correlations were run to assess the correlations between the subscale scores across voluntary and involuntary deconsumption for the sample of cases who completed both measures ( $n = 56$ ). Mostly, all correlations within



scales were fairly positive and significant at  $p \leq .01$ , and correlations across subscales were low and nonsignificant. However, there were some exceptions to this. For instance, comparable subscales across voluntary and involuntary deconsumption – acceptance of life circumstances and non-acceptance of life circumstances; and acceptance of life circumstances and victim mentality – exhibited positive and significant correlations at  $p \leq .01$  and  $p \leq .05$  respectively. The correlations are presented in Table 77 below.

Table 77

*Pearson Correlations for All Subscale Mean Scores*

	VD_01 _ESP	VD_02 _SAA	VD_03 _NMT	VD_04 _ALC	ID_01 _VIM	ID_02 _MAT	ID_03 _NLC
VD_01 _ESP	1.00	0.64**	0.60**	0.51**	0.16	0.08	0.20
VD_02 _SAA		1.00	0.59**	0.51**	0.03	0.08	0.12
VD_03 _NMT			1.00	0.76**	-0.00	-0.10	0.23
VD_04 _ALC				1.00	0.27*	0.06	0.42**
ID_01 _VIM					1.00	0.63**	0.56**
ID_02 _MAT						1.00	0.34*
ID_03 _NLC							1.00

*Note.* \*\* = Significant at  $p \leq .01$ , \* = Significant at  $p \leq .05$ . VD = Voluntary Deconsumption, ID = Involuntary Deconsumption, ESP = Elevated State of Purpose, SAA = Social Agency and Activism, NMT = Non-materialism, ALC = Acceptance of Life Circumstances, VIM = Victim Mentality, MAT = Materialism, and NLC = Non-acceptance of Life Circumstances.

**Methodological notes from the quantitative phase.** Rich data and insights from the qualitative phase helped set up the quantitative phase (and formed the basis for scale development). The juxtaposition of both PCA and Rasch analyses helped the researcher judge scale dimensionality, validity, and reliability in a broad manner. The pilot phase

enabled the researcher to eliminate and edit numerous scale items, which impacted the overall quality of the two scales. The choice of Qualtrics as a data partner turned out to be a good decision, as the researcher was able to oversee soft launches before field administrations, gather data from 47 states of the U.S., and exercise more quality control in order to obtain high quality data. The two scales were invariant with respect to respondents' gender and baby boomer stage, rendering more reliability to the final scale items. The researcher, based on the tests of differences on various scale parameters, could sense a slight lack of integration between the results of the qualitative and the quantitative phase (for a detailed discussion of the same, see chapter four).

**Other reflections on the quantitative phase.** The baby boomers in the study self-reported as being fairly sophisticated users of technology, and hence, not so averse to changing with times as one might think. The deconsumption categories and brands were eclectic, but the scale items were able to cut across the wide range of industry sectors represented. The motivation categories of deconsumption that were reported through the open-ended questions of the two surveys closely mirrored the process models from the qualitative phase.

## **Chapter Four: Discussion**

*“Remember that what is hard to endure will be sweet to recall.” ~ Tote Yamada*

(Roberts, 2010, p. 183)

This chapter is an effort at thoughtful and comprehensive recalling of interpretations from study findings on the part of the researcher, who, at different times during the study, assumed different roles (such as instrument, voice, collector, traveler, and storyteller). Here, the researcher assumes the role of a commentator with the realization that integrative dissemination is as much a researcher’s responsibility as is research. To that end, this chapter presents a summary of the study and important conclusions drawn from the data and results presented in Chapter 3. It provides a discussion of the implications for action and recommendations for future research. The organization of this chapter is as follows: framing of the study, study summary (purpose statement, research questions, review of methodology, and major findings). Then, a discussion of suggestions for instrument development and conclusions (implications for theory, methodology, and practitioner action) ensues. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of limitations, recommendations for future research, and the researcher’s concluding remarks.

### **Framing**

This exploration of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption among the baby boomer population in the U.S. was undertaken to bolster the understanding of the two

constructs. It was an attempt at holistic understanding of deconsumption, and re-conceptualizing anti-consumption theory by delineating it from other similar research fields, i.e., sustainability, environmental, and ethical concerns in the social marketing literature.

Academics in marketing research and consumer behavior have repeatedly stressed the need for measurement research and instrumentation, and have observed that while marketers readily acknowledged the importance of measurement, they seldom examined the conceptual underpinnings of measurement procedures and related them to the purposes for which they were constructed. According to Iyer and Muncy (2009), one of the main barriers to further development of the subject area of anti-consumption was the absence of appropriate scales that differentiated between the various types of anti-consumers. Also, a disproportionate number of the anti-consumption scale items in the past had been focused on green marketing or environmental issues, and it was recommended that future scale development studies aim to capture a wider breadth of the anti-consumption movement. So, the current study aimed to be the first attempt at developing scales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, with components or subscales covering wider conceptual breadth by inclusion of areas such as states of mind, social action, materialism (or the absence of it), and acceptance; in order to address the shortcomings of existing related measures such as the Voluntary Simplicity Scale (VSS), and the Scale for Socially Responsible Behavior (SRCB).

### **Summary of the Study**

**Purpose statement and research questions.** The purpose of the current exploratory sequential study of scale development was to address gaps in the scholarship

of deconsumption among baby boomers. The mixed methods design of the study first qualitatively explored the meaning and theoretical explanation of the process of deconsumption (both voluntary and involuntary) using a grounded theory approach, and generated substantive process theories of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. The focus was on the process of deconsumption, and on the theoretical orientation of participants' views and perspectives of it (Charmaz, 2006). Experiences and perceptions of the concept and process of deconsumption were collected using the critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) technique from baby boomer participants in at least 47 states in the U.S. Common experiences were analyzed using a constant-comparative method to identify the conditions, contexts, motivations, strategies, and consequences of deconsumption, leading to the emergence of substantive, "unified theoretical explanations" (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p. 107) for the processes of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. From this initial exploration, the qualitative findings informed development of instruments to measure voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, which was administered first to a pilot group, and then, to a larger sample. The intent of this study was to provide a theoretical framework of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption to further the theory and practice of consumer behavior and marketing research.

The proposed study aimed to answer the following main research question: What behavioral process theory explains the experience of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption among baby boomers in the United States? Secondary research questions included the following: (1) What are the motivations of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption of products, services, brands, and experiences from an attribution theory

perspective? How do locus, stability, controllability, and intentionality of deconsumption behavior affect the consumers? (2) What are the consequences and outcomes of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption behavior? What is the role of deconsumption in consumers' self-identity resolution and reformulation? (3) Does the experience of the two deconsumption types (voluntary and involuntary) differ? If so, in what ways? Do the two segments of the baby boomer population (trailing- and leading-edge boomers) differ in their experience of the deconsumption process? Do female baby boomers differ in their experience of the deconsumption process as compared to male baby boomers? (4) Do the scales of deconsumption (voluntary and involuntary) developed in this study exhibit unidimensionality, appropriate scale use, and yield appropriate levels of validity and reliability?

**Review of methodology.** This mixed methods scale development study attempted to integrate complementary strengths and components of qualitative and quantitative designs by employing an exploratory sequential approach. The methodology was executed in four steps: construct definition, content domain specification, and generation and judgment of measurement items (qualitative phase – Phase I), and field study to finalize the scales (quantitative phase – Phase II). This exploratory sequential study of scale development employed a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2013) to in-depth interviewing, generation of scale items for voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, and finalization of these scales by testing their validity and reliability using both principal components analyses, as well as item response theory. The methodology was driven by the concept of methodological congruence. Sampling for the qualitative phase was theory-based, criterion, and maximum variation sampling,

and that for the quantitative phase was based on convenience, snowballing, and usage of national data from online panels. The notation for the study was:

QUAL → QUAN = validate exploratory dimensions by designing and testing an  
instrument

**Major findings.** The major findings of this study are detailed below (by study phase, and by research questions).

*Study 1 (phase I – qualitative).* Among voluntary deconsumers, consumption was a reflection of their personalities, and came across as part of their identities. Positivity, anticipation of a promising future, and being role models or torchbearers emerged as major categories driving consumption and voluntary deconsumption. There was a striking resemblance between the consequences of voluntary deconsumption (elevated state, movement membership, reformulated self-identity, and closure), coping mechanisms (acceptance, faith, spirituality, continued opposition), and the components of voluntary deconsumption from the quantitative phase (elevated state of purpose, social agency and activism, non-materialism, and acceptance of life circumstances). Among involuntary deconsumers, consumption was a reflection of their personalities too, and also came across as part of their identities. Negativity, fleeing from a bleak future, and unworthiness emerged as major personality categories driving consumption and involuntary deconsumption. There was a striking resemblance between the consequences of involuntary deconsumption (declined state, reformulated self-identity, and irresolution), and the components of involuntary deconsumption from the quantitative phase (victim mentality, materialism, and non-acceptance of life circumstances).

*Study 2 (phase II – quantitative).* The potential scale items for voluntary deconsumption were refined from 160 at the end of the qualitative phase, to 55 at the beginning of the quantitative pilot study, and eventually, to 39 items that formed the following four subscales (components) of voluntary deconsumption: (1) Elevated State of Purpose (VD\_01\_ESP): A purposeful positive state of mind occurring as a consequence of voluntary deconsumption, including categories such as harmony, faith, positive energy, spirituality, peaceful coping mechanisms, the desire to act as a role model, contentment, acceptance, a quest to revert to one's roots, and renunciation; (2) Social Agency and Activism (VD\_02\_SAA): An active stance and rebellious actions in favor of the protection of the environment, and a desire for corporations' fair play and socially responsible conduct, including categories such as concern for the environment, belief in the ill-effects of global warming, corporations' social conduct and responsibility, and active measures such as recycling; (3) Non-materialism (VD\_03\_NMT): An ability for discretionary and rational decision-making, and an unattached attitude toward shopping or acquisition of possessions, including categories such as shopping discretion, control, awareness of need *vis-à-vis* want, shopping as a means to an end, non-possession, and ability to give up consumption and tune out promotions; and (4) Acceptance of Life Circumstances (VD\_04\_ALC): The realization of changed priorities accompanying circumstances prohibitive to consumption, such as decline in health, financial capacity, and non-availability, including categories such as decline in health, loss of financial capacity, maintenance costs, changing life situations.

The potential scale items for involuntary deconsumption were refined from 96 at the end of the qualitative phase, to 41 at the beginning of the quantitative pilot study, and



eventually, to 33 items that formed the following three subscales (components) of involuntary deconsumption: (1) Victim Mentality (ID\_01\_VIM): An experience of negative outcomes such as pain, loss, grief, sadness, a feeling of being invisible, sans freedom and control, and of being cheated and robbed by society, which leads to a sense of conflict and desire for remission or re-consumption; occurring as a consequence of involuntary deconsumption, including categories such as sadness, pain, grief, invisibility, loss of freedom, loss of control, being cheated, being robbed, sense of conflict, and desire to re-consume; (2) Materialism (ID\_02\_MAT): A lack of ability for discretionary and rational decision-making fueled by impulsive and illusive shopping behavior, and equating acquisition of possessions to void-fulfillment and/or success, including categories such as shopping indiscretion, loss of control, peer pressure, impulsive shopping as a void-filler, equating possessions to success, and inability to give up consumption and tune out promotions; and (3) Non-acceptance of Life Circumstances (ID\_03\_NLC): The denial of changed priorities accompanying circumstances prohibitive to consumption, such as decline in health, financial capacity, and non-availability, including categories such as decline in health, loss of financial capacity, maintenance costs, and changing life situations.

***Major findings by research questions.***

*Behavioral process theories (central research question).* As intended, the process theory for voluntary deconsumption mirrored the CIRC model, as it entailed antecedents and consequences of a relationship process. In general, from an attribution theory perspective, voluntary deconsumption relationships were often-times forced as norms, were utilitarian, and were low on quality, commitment, and satisfaction. The process of

voluntary deconsumption was deemed as an internal decision high on rationality, intentionality, stability, and controllability; leading to positive states of self-image. The process theory for involuntary deconsumption also mirrored the critical incident in a relationship context (CIRC) model, as it entailed antecedents and consequences of a relationship process. In general, from an attribution theory perspective, involuntary deconsumption relationships were deemed joyful, involved, necessary, addicting, passionate, and held deeper meaning. They ranked high on quality, commitment, and satisfaction. The process of involuntary deconsumption was deemed as a decision fueled by external factors, ranking low on intentionality, stability, and controllability; leading to declined states of being, and deflated states of self-identity.

*Motivations (RQ1).* In-depth interviews from the qualitative phase revealed that the motivations of voluntary deconsumption were internally-driven, and ranged from changing experience/dissatisfaction/product/service failure, change in lifestyle/culture, consumption becoming prohibitive (health, finances, non-availability), life-changing events, experience of betrayal/deception leading to rebellion/boycott, to the need for simplification. The motivations of involuntary deconsumption were externally-driven, and ranged from changing experience, consumption becoming prohibitive (health, finances, non-availability), to life-changing events. These same categories of motivations for voluntary and involuntary deconsumption were confirmed through the quantitative phase as well.

*Consequences (RQ2).* The consequences of voluntary deconsumption were positive, such as elevated states, realigned self-identities, movement memberships, and

closure. The consequences of involuntary deconsumption, on the other hand, were negative, such as declined states, non-aligned self-identities, and irresolution.

*Differences in the experience of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption (RQ3).*

Chi-square tests performed in the qualitative phase revealed significant differences in consumption and deconsumption dimensions (in line with the dimensions of attribution theory) among voluntary and involuntary deconsumers. Voluntary deconsumers reported lower levels of consumption quality, satisfaction, commitment, and significance of deconsumption decision. Involuntary deconsumers reported lower levels of ease, stability, intentionality, and controllability of deconsumption decision. Voluntary deconsumers reported their deconsumption decision as internally-driven, whereas involuntary deconsumers reported it as externally-driven. No differences in deconsumption experiences were seen based on gender or baby boomer status.

As an assessment of whether respondents were answering the subscale items differently, tests of differential item function performed in the quantitative phase revealed that the voluntary and involuntary deconsumption subscales were invariant across gender and baby boomer status, that is, the baby boomers did not answer the items differently based on their gender or age. Pearson correlations between the subscale scores of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption were all fairly positive and significant at  $p \leq .01$ .

As an assessment of whether respondents were answering questions related to consumption and deconsumption attributes (in line with attribution theory) differently based on demographic variables, tests of ANOVAs performed in the quantitative phase revealed that there were statistically significant main effects of DeconType (voluntary vs.

involuntary), of Gender (male vs. female), and some significant interactions. These analyses indicated that there were patterns of differences in some dimensions based on attribution theory as a function of the main effects of deconsumption type (voluntary, involuntary), and gender (male, female). Brand salience, ease of deconsumption, intentionality, controllability, and stability of deconsumption decision were substantially higher among involuntary deconsumers than among voluntary deconsumers. Voluntary deconsumers reported their deconsumption decisions as more internally driven, whereas involuntary deconsumers reported them as more externally driven. Consumption duration and significance of deconsumption decision was substantially higher among male baby boomers than among female baby boomers. The two- and three-way interaction effects indicated that scores between voluntary and involuntary deconsumers depended on their gender and/or their boomer status membership (leading- or trailing-edge boomers). The interaction among two factors was sometimes different across the levels of a third factor. Follow-up two-way ANOVAs and simple main effects analyses (t-tests) showed that involuntary male leading-edge boomers reported the significance of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did voluntary female trailing-edge boomers. Involuntary female boomers reported the ease of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did voluntary female boomers. Involuntary trailing-edge boomers reported the intentionality of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did voluntary trailing-edge boomers. Female trailing-edge boomers reported the stability of their deconsumption decisions as substantially higher than did female leading-edge boomers.

So, consistent with the findings of the qualitative phase, voluntary deconsumers reported as having an internal locus of control, whereas involuntary deconsumers reported a more external locus of control. Inconsistent with the findings of the qualitative phase though, voluntary deconsumers (as compared to involuntary deconsumers) reported higher levels of brand salience, whereas involuntary deconsumers (as compared to voluntary deconsumers) reported higher levels of ease of deconsumption decision, intentionality, controllability, and stability of deconsumption decision. A discussion of why this might have happened is presented later in this chapter.

Pearson correlations were run to assess the correlations between the subscale scores across voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. Mostly, all correlations within scales were fairly positive and significant at  $p \leq .01$ , and correlations across scales were low and nonsignificant. However, comparable subscales across voluntary and involuntary deconsumption – acceptance of life circumstances and non-acceptance of life circumstances; and acceptance of life circumstances and victim mentality – exhibited positive and significant correlations at  $p \leq .01$  and  $p \leq .05$  respectively.

*(Sub)scale use, dimensionality, validity, and reliability (RQ4).* The qualitative phase was anchored around the principles of methodological congruence and trustworthiness, which enhanced the validity and reliability of the final measures. The quantitative phase revealed that the psychometric qualities of the various subscales were acceptable. In particular, the subscales of both voluntary and involuntary deconsumption exhibited high reliabilities, acceptable levels of overall fit, fair unidimensionality, good person and item fits, and subscale use (see Table 78 below). The structure calibration for scale use indicated appropriate use of all the response subscales. Respondents were

spread fairly evenly throughout the item-person maps, with minimal overlap or gaps for persons on the rulers. Representation of items in the maps suggested samples reported some variation in levels of the components of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. More respondents seemed to be clustered toward the top, indicating the respondents in the samples felt strongly about voluntary and involuntary deconsumption in general, and subscale components in particular. Given the selection criteria of the sample (baby boomers who had experienced this phenomenon), this slant toward stronger experiences of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption was expected. As confirmed by differential item functioning (DIF) measures, the subscales of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption showed invariance across gender and baby boomer status. Further, 2x2 ANOVAs suggested no differences in mean subscale scores for VD\_01, VD\_02, VD\_04, ID\_01, ID\_02, and ID\_03) based on gender and boomer status. There was a pattern of differences in scores on VD\_03\_NMT (non-materialism) between male and female baby boomers, which depended on their boomer status membership (leading- or trailing-edge boomers). In other words, voluntary deconsumption subscale 3 (non-materialism) scores were substantially higher among female leading-edge boomers than among male leading-edge boomers, whereas these scores were substantially higher among male trailing-edge boomers than among female trailing-edge boomers. Overall, the subscales could be considered unidimensional, valid, reliable, and invariant across gender and baby boomer status.

Table 78

*Dimensionality, Fit, Separation, and Reliability – All Subscales*

	VD_01_ESP ( <i>n</i> = 323) ( <i>i</i> = 10)	VD_02_SAA ( <i>n</i> = 327) ( <i>i</i> = 9)	VD_03_NMT ( <i>n</i> = 327) ( <i>i</i> = 13)	VD_04_ALC ( <i>n</i> = 324) ( <i>i</i> = 7)	ID_01_VIM ( <i>n</i> = 351) ( <i>i</i> = 22)	ID_02_MAT ( <i>n</i> = 353) ( <i>i</i> = 6)	ID_03_NLC ( <i>n</i> = 341) ( <i>i</i> = 5)
Dimensionality —eigenvalue for 1 <sup>st</sup> contrast	1.94	1.67	1.67	1.82	1.97	1.46	2.36
Mean MNSQ Infit	0.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
SD MNSQ Infit	0.25	0.20	0.15	0.12	0.19	0.09	0.11
Mean MNSQ Outfit	1.01	0.99	1.04	1.00	1.03	1.01	0.93
SD MNSQ Outfit	0.25	0.20	0.17	0.09	0.22	0.09	0.07
Real Person Separation	2.16	1.91	1.89	1.52	3.51	1.67	1.64
Real Person Root Mean Square Error	0.57	0.65	0.50	0.80	0.34	0.66	0.86
Real Reliability of Person Separation	0.82	0.79	0.78	0.70	0.92	0.74	0.73
Cronbach's Alpha	0.86	0.85	0.82	0.76	0.94	0.76	0.76

	VD_01_ESP (n = 323) (i = 10)	VD_02_SAA (n = 327) (i = 9)	VD_03_NMT (n = 327) (i = 13)	VD_04_ALC (n = 324) (i = 7)	ID_01_VIM (n = 351) (i = 22)	ID_02_MAT (n = 353) (i = 6)	ID_03_NLC (n = 341) (i = 5)
Person Logit Mean	0.99	1.43	1.24	1.77	-0.23	-0.72	1.27
Real Item Separation	3.09	7.30	5.33	4.49	7.09	1.38	1.07
Real Item Root Mean Square Error	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.06	0.08
Real Reliability of Item Separation	0.91	0.98	0.97	0.95	0.98	0.66	0.53

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*Note 1.* Eigenvalue for 1<sup>st</sup> contrast is the eigenvalue attributable to the largest secondary dimension. Mean MNSQ Infit measures the average deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to on-target (i.e., midrange) observations. Mean MNSQ Outfit measures the deviation from the measurement model and provides sensitivity to off-target, extreme responses. Real Person/Item Separation is the ratio of the true standard deviation (s.d. adjusted for measurement error), to the error standard deviation (Root Mean Square Error). Real Separation is computed on the basis that misfit is due to departures in the data from model specifications. Real Person/Item Root Mean Square Error = standard error of the measure inflated for misfit. Real Reliability of Person/Item Separation =  $\text{Separation}^2 / (1 + \text{Separation}^2)$ . Person Logit Mean is the average logit position of all persons whose position could be calibrated.

*Note 2.* n = sample size, i = number of items in subscale, VD = Voluntary Deconsumption, ID = Involuntary Deconsumption, ESP = Elevated State of Purpose, SAA = Social Agency and Activism, NMT = Non-materialism, ALC = Acceptance of Life Circumstances, VIM = Victim Mentality, MAT = Materialism, and NLC = Non-acceptance of Life Circumstances.



## **Suggestions for Instrument Improvement**

An increase in the number of items at the extreme ends of the subscales is one recommendation for improvement. Additional suggestions include rephrasing or redesigning redundant items, test persons with more low experiences, and/or better sample-item targeting. The four subscales of voluntary deconsumption seemed to work well, however, barring one subscale of involuntary deconsumption (ID\_01\_VIM, Victim Mentality, 22 items), the other two did not perform very well. Each of these two subscales had only six and five items respectively. Clearly, the need for more items is highlighted here. Overall, item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some easier-to-agree-with and harder-to-agree-with items.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusions of the study are organized into implications of the results (subdivided into theoretical implications, methodological implications, and implications for practitioner action).

**Implications of results.** The main strength of this study was the exploration of a worthy stream of research, as it redressed the tendency of both lay people and academics to focus on the phenomena that are made tangible in the conventional marketplace (consumption, in this case) rather than acts that are not (deconsumption). Indeed, consumers' dislikes, distastes, and desired and undesired selves, usually reflected in non-purchases turned out to be more telling than likes, tastes, and desires that usually translate into reasons for purchases.

*Theoretical implications.* It is the researcher's belief that the present study has been able to build on the literature and prior research related to deconsumption and its related concepts. Foremost, from a theoretical point of view, this study brings greater conceptual clarity by demarcating boundaries between consumer-centric concepts such as deconsumption, other related societal concepts such as rebellion and boycott, and company-specific concepts such as demarketing. Since differentiations between related concepts (such as deconsumption, anti-consumption, anti-commercial consumer rebellion, voluntary simplicity, consumer resistance, socially responsible consumption, and demarketing) and also between tertiary concepts (such as evocative neologism, decay, consumer expert, creative recovery, and alternative recovery) were subtle in existing literature, considerable ambiguity stemming from these oftentimes overlapping concepts was addressed and removed through increased focus on the construct of deconsumption. In addition, this was the first study to explore the process theories of both voluntary and involuntary deconsumption – a holistic view of deconsumption – gaining perspective on deconsumption process theories from an attribution theory lens, and through focus on the attribution dimensions of locus, controllability, stability, and intentionality of deconsumption. In that sense, this was the first study to look at deconsumption from both an attribution theory lens, and from the lens of empowerment. In effect, the end-result (subscales of deconsumption) of this study represented attitudes, affects, as well as behaviors of deconsumption (a first attempt at development of test scales of both voluntary and involuntary deconsumption).

Although parts of the traditional consumer decision making (CDM) model apply to the experience of deconsumption, it seems to the researcher that deconsumption might

warrant an updated decision making model (in line with the emergent process theories of deconsumption developed in this study).

*Methodological implications.* Implications related to methodology that might be useful to other researchers are discussed in this sub-section. The choice of the CIRC model to study deconsumption relationships worked very well in conjunction with grounded theory, and helped the researcher attain theoretical saturation leading to substantive process theories of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption. The focus of the current study was on a range of practices in the everyday lives of the participants, and not just in contexts where excessive consumption was a concern. Data triangulation was an outcome that was actively pursued throughout this study. A gamut of data from various methods culminated into the final findings, some of which were: screening interviews, in-depth interviewing, observations, content analyses, use of alternate forms of data (poems, sketches, drawings, artifacts, art-forms, song lyrics, and photographs), follow-up communication, expert reviews, cognitive interviews, pilot surveys, field surveys, principal components analyses, Rasch analyses, analyses of correlations, and analyses of variances.

Although most results from the qualitative phase were supported and built upon in the quantitative phase (for instance, process theories, motivations, outcomes, and loci of deconsumption), some results made the researcher ponder about the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings that such a mixed methods study warrants. As mentioned (briefly) earlier, inconsistent with the findings of the qualitative phase, voluntary deconsumers (as compared to involuntary deconsumers) reported higher levels of brand salience, whereas involuntary deconsumers (as compared to voluntary

deconsumers) reported higher levels of ease of deconsumption decision, intentionality, controllability, and stability of deconsumption decision. It seems to the researcher that social desirability and acquiescence biases might have been at play in the conduct of depth interviews in the qualitative phase *vis-à-vis* online surveys in the quantitative phase. In an intimate, face-to-face, and emotionally charged scenario (afforded by interviewing), voluntary deconsumers seemed to downplay brand salience, and maintained that the decision to voluntarily deconsume was fairly easy, intentional, controllable, and stable (compared to involuntary deconsumers). Involuntary deconsumers were able to explain the negative impacts deconsumption had had on their psyches, exhibiting victim mentality, materialistic views, and non-acceptance. However, the findings of the quantitative phase suggested that it was the involuntary deconsumers who seemed to downplay brand salience, and maintained that the decision to involuntarily deconsume was fairly easy, intentional, controllable, and stable (compared to voluntary deconsumers). This was especially true of females (reporting higher ease and stability of involuntary deconsumption decisions) across baby boomer types, and trailing-edge boomers (reporting higher intentionality of involuntary deconsumption decisions) across gender levels. Does answering surveys online (in a more private setting) offset the biases associated with social desirability and acquiescence? Does the absence of a qualitative researcher asking questions face-to-face (and indeed, intently listening) discourage people from complaining? Is this behavior amplified among trailing-edge boomers, who might be having a difficult time accepting involuntary deconsumption outcomes? In a private (online) setting, do voluntary deconsumers (especially female boomers, as the study suggests) exaggerate sacrificial (hero) behavior

associated with decluttering, voluntary simplicity, active stance on agency and environmental issues, non-materialism, and acceptance (they overstate the sacrifice required to voluntarily deconsume something, and report it as more salient, more difficult to deconsume – a decision that is reported as more unintentional, uncontrollable, and unstable)? Conversely, in a private (online) setting, do involuntary deconsumers understate their victim mentalities associated with pain and difficulty of involuntary deconsumption, materialism, and non-acceptance (they, especially leading-edge males, downplay their complaining narratives that accompany involuntarily deconsumption, and report it as less salient, and more difficult to deconsume – a decision that is reported as more intentional, controllable, and stable)? Or, is it possible that time teaches them to “learn” how to manage deconsumption? If that were true, could age and gender be moderating variables affecting the consequences of deconsumption? Given that not all findings from qualitative and quantitative findings seem to be consistent, how do researchers integrate these results from a mixed methods study more effectively (going beyond meta-analyses for quantitative studies, and narrative reviews as well as content analyses for qualitative studies)?

***Implications for practitioner action.*** This study has corroborated claims that not only are baby boomers financially viable target segments in the U.S., they are non-monolithic, live interesting lives, are technologically fairly savvy, and experience voluntary and involuntary deconsumption experiences very differently. Voluntary deconsumers might be driven by purpose, self-improvement, active rebellion, judgments of companies’ corporate social responsibility initiatives, care for the environment, non-materialistic values, and simplification of their own lives; whereas involuntary

deconsumers might be dealing with pain, rejection, loss of control, non-acceptance, desire for materialism, and irresolution typical of victim mentality. Indeed, some consumers, depending on deconsumption situations and contexts, could exhibit both. For marketing practitioners (executives, managers, policy-makers, and leaders), paying attention to baby boomers as viable segments is not enough in today's dynamic consumer markets in the United States. A deeper understanding of the deconsumption processes they exhibit, their "aha moments" of deconsumption, their motivations, and coping mechanisms is paramount in better serving their needs. For many of these boomers, consumer behavior does not always pan out as liberating or purposive. Baby boomers might not be manipulated, forced, coerced, or duped into re-consumption, but they do need marketers to understand them better. This study highlights that more than for any other consumer group, marketers need to refocus their attention on segmenting variables such as deconsumption type (voluntary and involuntary), boomer stage (leading- and trailing-edge) and gender, which lead to critically important distinctions in boomers' consumer behavior.

Both voluntarily and involuntarily deconsuming boomers might even offer marketing practitioners with lessons in crisis management, given the burgeoning influence of social media platforms. In that sense, the current study is very timely. The active role in social agency, activism, boycotts, environmental issues, politically motivated brand rejection, and companies' fair play that voluntary deconsumers exhibit finds its way into the social realm swiftly through the reach and power of social media platforms. In spite of the growth in the number of boycott movements, marketers' understanding of such movements (Huneke, 2005) and boycott motivations

(Braunsberger & Buckler, 2011) remains limited. Similarly, victim mentality and complaining behaviors that involuntary deconsumers exhibit can adversely affect brands/offerings. Indeed, economic viability comes from a segment's purchasing power, but also from its power to erode value through complaining behavior. The lessons in crisis management, hence, might be lessons in managing public relations and publicity (both positive and negative), and with the realization that more than ever before, consumers, through their consumption and deconsumption behaviors, co-produce a company's present and its future. Better understanding of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption on practitioners' part would enable more effective interventions, which might enable marketers to devise strategies to pre-emptively avoid, pro-actively influence, and/or reactively mitigate both positive and negative deconsumption outcomes.

Finally, for marketing practitioners, more open-mindedness and creativity might encourage non-traditional participation from deconsumers in a traditional marketplace. Consumer markets such as clothing retail, food and hospitality, movies, cosmetics, and housework (do-it-yourself as well as in-home services) are emerging as growth markets. Imagination and innovation would enable marketers to meet the changing needs of this dynamic market-segment. These are not merely years filled with golf, cruises, medicines, security systems, performance-enhancing products, insurances, hospitals, wheelchairs, and cemetery plots. These are people with a hunger for healthier, naturally sourced food items, and a thirst for non-sugary drinks. These are people involved in volunteering, philanthropy, enrichment classes, travel, alternate careers, crafts, exercising, and active sports. Challenging dated models of aging, business practitioners need to understand that

longevity is good for business (Kadlec, 2016), and muster insights about the physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges baby boomer consumers go through.

### **Limitations**

During the qualitative phase, the researcher used dichotomous variables (low, high; yes, no; internal, external) to classify participants on the dimensions of attribution theory. In hindsight, the use of 5-point Likert scales for classification (as the ones used in the quantitative phase) may have been a productive choice.

Even though respondents in the quantitative phase were diverse on many demographic variables, the samples were mostly Caucasian by ethnicity. The findings of this scale development study are suggestive and not generalizable (due to convenience sampling). In the qualitative phase, homogeneity within baby boomer segments, and maximum variation between them was sought. In the quantitative phase, diverse respondents were contacted. The design of the study and its use of an electronic entry format limited the total number of questions and also possibly limited the research outcomes. The validity of standardized instruments must ideally be established through repeated application of scales in different contexts and among different population groups (Cowles & Crosby, 1986). This study was, however, limited in its scope. This could have had a direct impact on the implications and conclusions of the study. Also, the in-depth interviews hinged on memory attribution, and might have shown fundamental attribution error (see Harvey & Weary, 1984, p. 431-432). However, procedural care was taken to avoid the same. Two definition-first self-report measures were employed in the quantitative phase, which may have contributed to underestimation or over-identification of deconsumption, coping mechanisms, and relationship processes. There might be a



possibility that consumers were reluctant to divulge details of deconsumption, especially involuntary deconsumption, if they were associated with pain, discomfort, hardship, or sadness. To counter this limitation, the researcher ensured and reiterated anonymity, and reminded participants of the larger picture of helping gain a better theoretical understanding and providing marketing practitioners with ways to continue serving the baby boomer population. Another limitation of the study was its cross-sectional design. Results were affected by the societal (e.g., economic, social trends) operations of baby boomers during the time period specified by the researcher. Further, researchers in the field of voluntary deconsumption had called for the incorporation of cultural differences in future studies. Since this study was geographically bound within the U.S., and the target population was baby boomers, it did not elicit a culturally diverse population. Lastly, this study concentrated on individual relationship processes of deconsumption among consumers (at a micro-level), despite calls for future research (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2012) on meso- (family), and macro- (societal) levels.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In future studies, the researcher intent is to compose question-sections on the surveys that will not depend on only one question to ascertain respondents' responses related to the dimensions of attribution theory. In so doing, better estimates of dimensions such as brand salience, and ease, locus, intentionality, controllability, and stability of deconsumption decision may be attained. To bolster targeting and construct coverage (instrument reliability), the researcher would like to expand administration of the two scales among samples dissimilar to the present study (to increase generalizability and instrument validation). It is the hope of the researcher that when administered among

a more general sample, targeting and construct coverage will be further improved. The researcher will also include other scales to ensure concurrent and discriminant validity. The researcher will aim to increase in the number of items at the rare ends of the subscales to improve subscale use, coverage, and reliability. Inclusion of harder-to-agree-with items would improve the subscales too. Overall, item spread could be improved by administering the scale among a more general population, and by expanding the scale with some harder-to-agree-with items. The researcher will try to mitigate biases such as social desirability and acquiescence, so that mixed methods results from future studies may be better integrated. In future studies, the researcher will try to explore the role learning plays in deconsumption outcomes and consequences. The scope of the quantitative phase will be expanded by including cluster analyses, so that a deeper understanding of segmentation and targeting of consumers may be achieved. The researcher will expand this research into more ethnically diverse markets such as India and China.

This study has focused and validated the researcher's drive to explore deconsumption-related areas further. For a few years to come, the following three inquiries, in particular, will be on the researcher's agenda: (a) Voluntary deconsumption (hero behavior) and involuntary deconsumption (victim mentality): Deconsumption in the age of social media, (b) Co-production of the deconsumption experience: Lessons for managers in the age of social media, and (c) Voluntary deconsumption and product fatalism: An exploratory study of self- (and product-)destruction.

## **Concluding Remarks**

In sum, the cogs and phases of this study worked well to present a deeper, more holistic understanding of the process theories of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, and fairly unidimensional, useful, valid, and reliable subscales of these two constructs. However, there is room for improvement, which would be the objective of future research studies. Although the theoretical learning from this exercise has been immense for the researcher, the more significant learning has been methodological. For the researcher, the interviewing (and data collection) process was a challenging experience in relationship initiation, growth, maintenance, and management. The process culminated with the realization that study participants (and respondents) have a need to be listened to, not just in the research context, but outside the realm of a mere researcher-researched relationship.

I have grown both as a mixed methods researcher as well as a marketing professor through this study. My evolving view of consumer markets has mirrored my evolution as a mixed methods researcher. As a researcher, my research philosophy is primarily driven by the belief that reality is co-constructed. As a teacher (and student) of consumer markets, this study has convinced me of the evolving role of the consumer (and indeed, the deconsumer) as a co-producer or co-creator of value. The themes of measurement, old age, ways of seeing, and activity were the standouts in the word cloud generated from the study text (Figure 56). These themes encapsulate my eventful journey of years – setting out to measure an aspect of consumer behavior among old(er) people, being surprised by their levels of activity, finding new ways to see (also listen to and understand) them, and explaining their experiences.

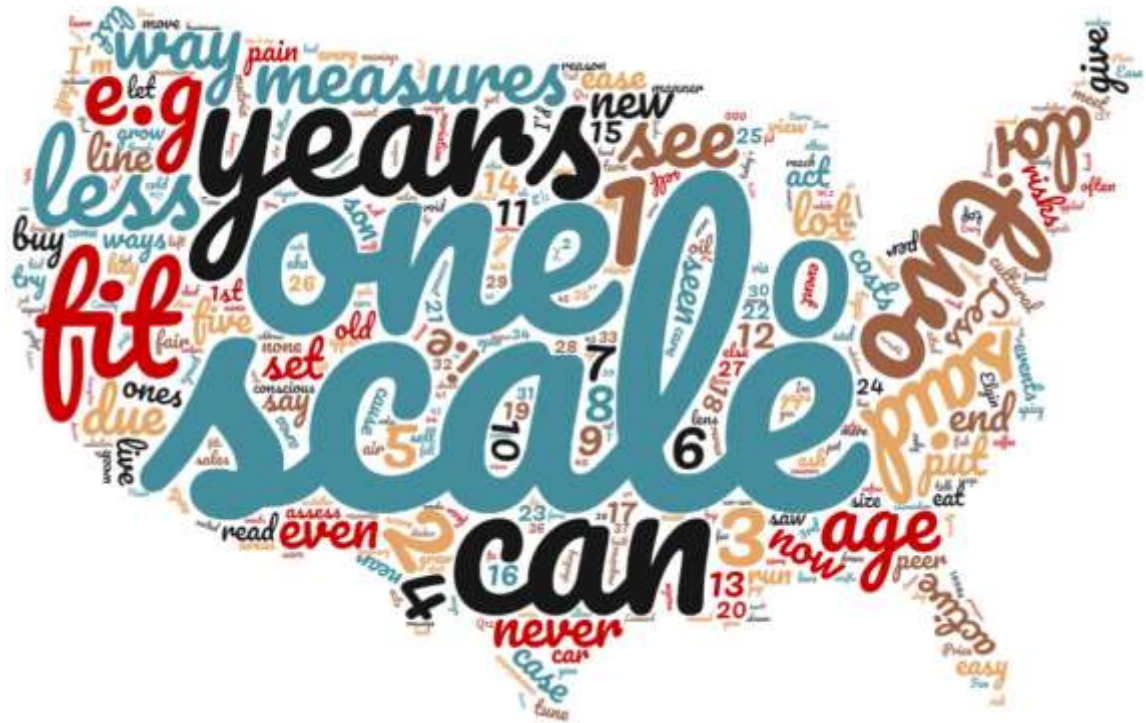


Figure 56. Word cloud from the study.

I might have started this study with certain voids in my research understanding and my soul. This study did not fail to teach. It did not fail to fill many voids. It did not fail to surprise. More than ever before, I believe what Jacob and Furgerson (2012) said is true: "...at the heart of research is the desire to expose the human part of a story." It is my hope that I was able to expose the human part of my study participants' story...and my own.

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## *Appendix A: Pre-Interview Information for Screening Participants*

**Context:** The central topic of this study, entitled “*Consumers’ Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study*,” is **deconsumption**, which is an act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily), a product, service, brand, or experience. Here are the definitions of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption:

*Voluntary deconsumption* is when you make a voluntary/conscious decision on their own will to reduce (or to totally abandon) the consumption of a product, service, brand, or consumption experience that you used to consume in the past.

*Involuntary deconsumption* is when you are, due to internal or external factors, forced, against your will, to consume less (or to totally abandon the consumption of) a product, service, brand, or consumption experience that you used to consume in the past.

**Note:** Switching from one brand to another, or from one product/service to another within a category is not considered deconsumption. Deconsumption is the discontinuation of consumption.

Now, please reflect on the **most important deconsumption experience** you have had in your life. This could be voluntary or involuntary, recent, or from a distant memory.

*Note: Your responses will be kept confidential, and you can decide not to participate and withdraw at any time.*

### **Retrieve Critical Deconsumption Incident from Memory:**

Is it a product? Or a service? Or a brand? Or an experience? (pick ONE)

What is this product/service/brand/experience?

Was the deconsumption voluntary or involuntary?

How long did you consume this (in years)?

How old were you when this deconsumption happened (in years)?

Was this consumption really significant and/or important to you (yes/no)?

**Prepare the Story of Your Deconsumption Experience:** Based on your answers above, you may be chosen for an interview that would last 45-60 minutes, with the objective of eliciting interesting, rich details of the deconsumption relationship you expressed above. The interview would be a chance for you to describe your deconsumption experience (listed above).

In relation to the deconsumption experience you listed above, please reflect on the following: (1) Relationship history (length, quality, need satisfaction, commitment, frequency of use), (2) Your initial state (before the critical process of deconsumption

began), (3) The trigger (THAT “aha” moment when you started to deconsume, or decided you would deconsume - the what, how, and why of it), (4) Process or critical steps (what was the process of deconsumption like), (5) Outcomes (perceived effects of deconsumption on you – emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally), (6) Future (unfulfilled need/s, effects on loyalty, reconciliation). (7) What, if anything, will make you re-consume?

Please jot these thoughts down:

Do you perhaps have pictures or other artifacts to share that can support your stories? A receipt? A picture? A sketch? A poem? A doodle? Something else?

Your age in completed number of years:

Your gender:

Your ethnicity (White/Hispanic or Latino/Black or African American/Native American or American Indian/Asian/Pacific Islander/Other):

Thank you for your time and valuable thoughts. When you feel like you have addressed the questions above, kindly return this form as a reply to my e-mail. Should you have follow-up questions, please feel free to contact me by e-mail ([kran.dugar@du.edu](mailto:kran.dugar@du.edu)), or through my mobile phone (662-617-9820).



**Pre-Interview Script**

[List date, day, time of day, and location.]

Thank participant, reiterate the informed consent form, assure masked identity, and importance of the research project. Anticipate and answer any questions from the participant.

**Interview Protocol**

***Part A – Brief Introduction***

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. Your present and/or past professions?
3. Your family?
4. Your hobbies?
5. Other information you want to share?

**Note:** Ask questions in part A (voluntary deconsumption) or part B (involuntary deconsumption) - only one of these two parts - relevant to participant's answers to the pre-interview questions).

***Part B – Voluntary Deconsumption (Skip To Part C If Not Applicable)***

Researcher: "Please consider the voluntary deconsumption relationship that you mentioned in your response to my e-mail. The following questions are going to be based on the same."

1. What words do you associate voluntary deconsumption with? What does voluntary deconsumption mean to you?
2. You listed \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in from response to pre-interview questions) as your most critical/salient/significant/meaningful product/service/brand category that you deconsumed voluntarily. Tell me about your relationship history with this product/service/brand (length, quality, need satisfaction, commitment, frequency)?
3. How did you feel when you used to consume this, before this critical process of voluntary deconsumption began?
4. Tell me about that moment when you started deconsuming? PROBE on initiation (internal/external), and drive.
5. What triggered you to deconsume? What was your motivation?

6. Tell me about this process of voluntary deconsumption. What was it like? What is it like now?
7. Tell me about the outcomes or the perceived effects of this voluntary deconsumption on you. Has it affected your self-identity?
8. Do you have happy memories of this voluntary deconsumption? If yes, what are they?
9. Do you have unhappy memories of this voluntary deconsumption? If yes, what are they?
10. How did you reconcile with this voluntary deconsumption process in your life?
11. What advice would you give to marketing managers that would make you re-consume?
12. Do you want to talk about anything else that we have not covered, which you think is important? (PROMPT AND ENCOURAGE USAGE OF PARTS OF PREPARED STORY/STORIES, SHARING OF PICTURES/ARTIFACTS)

### ***PART C – INVOLUNTARY DECONSUMPTION***

Researcher: “Please consider the involuntary deconsumption relationship that you mentioned in your response to my e-mail. The following questions are going to be based on the same.”

1. What words do you associate voluntary deconsumption with? What does voluntary deconsumption mean to you?
2. You listed \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in from response to pre-interview questions) as your most critical/salient/significant/meaningful product/service/brand category that you deconsumed voluntarily. Tell me about your relationship history with this product/service/brand (length, quality, need satisfaction, commitment, frequency)?
3. How did you feel when you used to consume this, before this critical process of voluntary deconsumption began?
4. Tell me about that moment when you started deconsuming? PROBE on initiation (internal/external), and drive.
5. What triggered you to deconsume? What was your motivation?
6. Tell me about this process of voluntary deconsumption. What was it like? What is it like now?
7. Tell me about the outcomes or the perceived effects of this voluntary deconsumption on you. Has it affected your self-identity?
8. Do you have happy memories of this voluntary deconsumption? If yes, what are they?
9. Do you have unhappy memories of this voluntary deconsumption? If yes, what are they?
10. How did you reconcile with this voluntary deconsumption process in your life?
11. What advice would you give to marketing managers that would make you re-consume?
12. Do you want to talk about anything else that we have not covered, which you think is important? (PROMPT AND ENCOURAGE USAGE OF PARTS OF PREPARED STORY/STORIES, SHARING OF PICTURES/ARTIFACTS)

### **Post-Interview Script**

Researcher thanks participant, gets consent on: (1) follow-up interviews (as required), and (2) member checks (ask for the best mode of communication to accomplish this). Offers to share study results, and reiterates availability for future correspondence.

**Approval Date: 09/30/15**

**Valid for Use Through: 09/29/16**

**Project Title:** Consumers' Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study

**Principal Investigator:** Kranti Dugar

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Kathy E. Green

**DU IRB Protocol #:** 767941-1

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You are being asked to be in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

### **Invitation to participate in a research study**

You are invited to participate in a research study about deconsumption, which is an act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily), a product, service, brand, or experience. This exploration will lead to a scale-development exercise including the theoretical explanations of deconsumption (both voluntary and involuntary) in the form of relationship-based, experiential, and perceptual process stories collected from baby boomers in several towns and cities in the United States.

You are being asked to be in this research study because you are a baby boomer residing in the United States, have experienced deconsumption, and are capable of sharing stories of your deconsumption experiences. These stories will be analyzed to identify conditions, contexts, strategies, processes, and consequences of deconsumption. From these in-depth interviews, the findings will be used to develop instruments of voluntary and involuntary deconsumption, which could be administered to a larger sample of baby boomers.

### **Description of subject involvement**

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in an in-depth interview at a location convenient to you, and will be asked questions about the deconsumption process experienced by you. This will take about 60 minutes.

### **Possible risks and discomforts**

The researchers have taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. These risks may include retrieval of sensitive and/or unhappy experiences of deconsumption from memory.

### **Possible benefits of the study**

This study is designed for the researcher to learn more about the process of deconsumption from a marketing and consumer behavior standpoint in order to add to the body of academic literature on this topic. Your participation will also provide me with invaluable practice and experience in conducting mixed-methods research in general, and qualitative research in particular. Your participation will also help me attain a doctoral degree in research methods and statistics.

You may benefit from being in this study because it will make you look back at your consumption (and deconsumption) habits, and form meaning out of it. You will be able to reconcile with the idea of deconsumption.

### **Study compensation**

You will not receive any payment for being in the study. However, your name will be entered into a lottery, where one in 15 participants will win a gift card for \$50.

### **Study cost**

You will not be expected to pay any costs related to the study.

### **Confidentiality, Storage and future use of data**

To keep your information safe, the researchers will ensure that your name will not be attached to any data, but a study number (and participant number) will be used instead. The data will be kept on a password-protected computer using special software that scrambles the information so that no one can read it.

The data you provide will be stored on audio recorders, and the audio files will be transferred to the researcher's password-protected computer. The researcher will destroy the audio files once they are transcribed. The transcribed documents will be stored exclusively in the researcher's password-protected computer, and only the researcher will have access to them. The transcribed files will be retained for 3 years after the day of the interview, and will be deleted after that. Any pictorial/artifact data you provide will be stored in a digital format on the researcher's password-protected computer. The researcher will destroy these files after 3 years.

The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study and will not contain information that could identify you.

The results from the research may be shared at a meeting. The results from the research may be in published articles. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published.

## **Who will see my research information?**

Although we will do everything we can to keep your records a secret, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Both the records that identify you and the consent form signed by you may be looked at by others.

- Federal agencies that monitor human subject research
- Human Subject Research Committee
- Professors guiding this dissertation

All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Also, if you tell me something that makes me believe that you or others have been or may be physically harmed, I may report that information to the appropriate agencies. Some things I cannot keep private. If you give me any information about child abuse or neglect, I have to report that to <state Social Services or other agency>. Also, if I get a court order to turn over your study records, I will have to do that. Also, if you tell me you are going to physically hurt yourself or someone else, I have to report that to the <state police or other agency>.

## **Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data you provided will be destroyed.

## **Contact Information**

The researcher carrying out this study is Kranti K. Dugar. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may call Kranti Dugar at 662-617-9820, or e-mail [kran.dugar@du.edu](mailto:kran.dugar@du.edu).

If the researcher cannot be reached, or if you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher about: (1) questions, concerns or complaints regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subjects issues, you may contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4015 or by emailing [IRBChair@du.edu](mailto:IRBChair@du.edu), or you may contact the Office for Research Compliance by emailing [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu), calling 303-871-4050 or in writing (University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121).

**Agreement to be in this study**

I have read this paper about the study or it was read to me. I understand the possible risks and benefits of this study. I know that being in this study is voluntary. I choose to be in this study: I will get a copy of this consent form. I agree to be audiotaped for this study.

Please initial this box if data from this research may be used for future research.

Please initial here and provide a valid e-mail (or postal) address if you would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to you

Signature:

Print Name:

*Appendix D: Expert Review Protocol*

**Context:** The central process phenomenon of this study, entitled “*Consumers’ Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study*,” is **deconsumption**. This construct of deconsumption seems to be a continuum, with voluntary and involuntary deconsumption on its two ends. Here are the definitions:

*Voluntary deconsumption* is defined as a discretionary and deliberate process that leads to an internal, rational, and dispositional attribution based on positive motivations that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience of fairly low commitment and low attachment, which encourages elevated states of self-identity, harmony, and transformation. Such an intentional deconsumption decision, once made, is accepted as a natural phenomenon accompanying aging, and remains highly stable and controlled.

Through a thorough review of related literature, and through an analysis of 42 in-depth interviews, a list of initial items for voluntary deconsumption was developed. Please reflect on each of these items and indicate your ratings of the clarity, representativeness, and difficulty of each of these items, and indicate a final decision on it.

Items from Initial Item Pool Related to Voluntary Deconsumption	Clarity (1 - Not Clear At All to 5 - Very Clear)	Representativeness to Domain of Voluntary Deconsumption (1 - Not Representative At All to 5 - Very Representative)	Item Difficulty (5 – Extremely Difficult to 1 – Extremely Easy)	Overall Decision (1 = Keep As Is, 2 = Modify, 3 = Discard)
Initial item 1				
Initial item 2				
Initial item 3				
...				
Initial item (n-1)				
Initial item n				

What terms should be defined and/or need examples?

Please comment on the comprehensiveness, overall wording, and ordering of the items.

Should any items be re-worded or modified?

What other thoughts or concerns do you have?

*Involuntary deconsumption* is defined as a forced and undeliberate process that leads to an externally-fueled situational attribution based on negative motivations that consumers have to make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience of high passion, high commitment, and high attachment, which encourages compromised states of self-identity, disharmony, struggle, irresolution, and loss. Such an unintentional deconsumption decision, once made, stays in the realm of denial, remains highly unstable and uncontrolled, and encourages indecisive remission and re-consumption.



Through a thorough review of related literature, and through an analysis of 42 in-depth interviews, a list of initial items for involuntary deconsumption was also developed. Please reflect on each of these items and indicate your ratings of the clarity, representativeness, and difficulty of each of these items, and indicate a final decision on it.

Items from Initial Item Pool Related to Involuntary Deconsumption	Clarity (1 - Not Clear At All to 5 - Very Clear)	Representativeness to Domain of Involuntary Deconsumption (1 - Not Representative At All to 5 - Very Representative)	Item Difficulty (5 – Extremely Difficult to 1 – Extremely Easy)	Overall Decision (1 = Keep As Is, 2 = Modify, 3 = Discard)
Initial item 1				
Initial item 2				
Initial item 3				
...				
Initial item (n-1)				
Initial item n				

What terms should be defined and/or need examples?

Please comment on the comprehensiveness, overall wording, and ordering of the items.

Should any items be re-worded or modified?

What other thoughts or concerns do you have?

## *Appendix E: Cognitive Interview Protocol*

**Note:** This protocol is semi-structured, and will be used as a rough guide for conducting the cognitive interviews.

**Pre-text (read aloud to the subject):** “I am not primarily collecting survey data, but rather, testing a questionnaire that has questions that may be difficult to understand, hard to answer, or that make little sense to you. Although I am asking you to answer the survey questions as carefully as possible, please know that I am primarily interested in the ways that you arrived at those answers, and the problems you encountered, if any, in answering them. So, please provide any detailed help you can, even if it seems irrelevant or trivial. When answering each question, please think out loud to the greatest extent possible, so I can tell what you are thinking about when you answer the questions. I did not write these questions, so, don’t worry about hurting my feelings if you criticize them – it is my job to find out what’s wrong with them.

**Responses:** Now, for each question, note the following:

### **Comprehension of the Question**

- a) Question intent: What does the subject believe the question to be asking?
- b) Meaning of terms: What do specific words and phrases in the question mean to the subject?

### **Retrieval of Relevant Information from Memory**

- a) Recallability of information: What types of information does the subject need to recall in order to answer the question?
- b) Recall strategy: What type of strategies are used to retrieve information (e.g., counting relationships/recalling relationships individually/estimation strategy)?

### **Decision Processes**

- a) Motivation: Does the subject devote sufficient mental effort to answer the question accurately and thoughtfully?
- b) Sensitivity/social desirability: Does the subject want to tell the truth? Does he/she say something that makes him/her look “better”?

### **Response Processes**

- a) Mapping the response: Can the subject match his/her internally generated answer to the response categories given by the survey question?

### **Behavior Codes**

1 = interruption with answer, 2 = clarification, 3 = qualified answer, 4 = inadequate answer, 5 = don’t know, 6 = refusal to answer, and 7 = adequate answer

**Verbal Probing Technique (If Required)**

Interpretation probe

Confidence judgment

Recall probe

Specific probe

General probe

**For Problem Question (For Researcher Use Only)**

A suggested resolution to the problem presented by the researcher based on the testing results

**DU IRB Exemption Granted: July 12, 2016**      **Valid for Use Through: July 11, 2021**

**Title of Research Study:** Consumers' Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study (Phase II).

**Researcher(s):** Kranti K. Dugar, ABD, University of Denver.

**Description:** You are being asked to participate in a research study. By doing this research, I hope to learn about deconsumption, which is an act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily), a product, service, brand, or experience. Voluntary deconsumption is a discretionary and deliberate process that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience, which encourages elevated states of self-identity. Involuntary deconsumption is a forced and undeliberate process that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience. This research is part of a scale-development and testing exercise using surveys administered among baby boomers in several towns and cities in the United States. The survey data will be analyzed to identify attitudinal beliefs and behavioral intentions of respondents pertaining to deconsumption, and the validity and reliability of the measures will be assessed. You are asked to fill out a survey to the best extent of your recollection. You are being asked to be in this research study if you meet the following criteria: you are a baby boomer (born between the years 1945 and 1965), are residing in the United States, have experienced deconsumption, and are interested in sharing your deconsumption experiences.

**Procedure:** If you agree to be a part of the research study, you will be asked to fill out a survey containing three parts: (1) general consumption- and deconsumption-related questions, (2) deconsumption scale items, and (3) demographic questions. This will take about 20 minutes of your time.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any survey question for any reason without penalty.

**Potential risks and/or discomforts of participation:** This study is minimum risk and appropriate human subjects protections are in place. The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. These risks may include recollecting sensitive and/or unhappy experiences of deconsumption.

**Study compensation:** There is no compensation associated with this study.

Before you begin, please note that the data you provide may be collected and used by Qualtrics as per its privacy agreement. This research is only for U.S. residents over the age of 18 (or 19 in Nebraska). Please be mindful to respond in a private setting and

through a secured Internet connection for your privacy. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about this project or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact Kranti K. Dugar at (662) 617-9820 or [kran.dugar@du.edu](mailto:kran.dugar@du.edu) at any time. You may also contact Dr. Kathy E. Green at (303) 871-2490 or [kathy.green@du.edu](mailto:kathy.green@du.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns about your research participation or rights as a participant, you may contact the DU Human Research Protections Program by emailing [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu) or calling (303) 871-2121 to speak to someone other than the researchers.

The DU Human Research Protections Program has determined that this study is minimal risk and is exempt from full IRB oversight.

**Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.**

If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent. Please keep this form for your records.

*Appendix G1: E-Mail and Letter from DU IRB Confirming Exempt Status of Phase II*

**From:** Katie Myhand <no-reply@irbnet.org>  
**To:** Kranti Dugar <kran.dugar@du.edu>; Kathy Green <kgreen@du.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 12, 2016 12:12 PM  
**Subject:** IRBNet Board Action

Please note that University of Denver (DU) IRB has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [927383-1] Consumers' Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study (Phase II)  
Principal Investigator: Kranti Dugar, ABD

Submission Type: New Project  
Date Submitted: June 26, 2016

Action: EXEMPT  
Effective Date: July 12, 2016  
Review Type: Exempt Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Katie Myhand at [katie.myhand@du.edu](mailto:katie.myhand@du.edu).

Thank you,  
The IRBNet Support Team

[www.irbnet.org](http://www.irbnet.org)



DATE: July 12, 2016

TO: Kranti Dugar, ABD

FROM: University of Denver (DU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [927383-1] Consumers' Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study (Phase II)

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: EXEMPTION GRANTED

DECISION DATE: July 12, 2016  
EXEMPTION VALID THROUGH: July 11, 2021  
RISK LEVEL: Minimal Risk  
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Exemption Category 2: Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations - Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Thank you for your submission of Exemption Request materials for this project. The University of Denver IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations. This exemption was granted based on appropriate criteria for granting an exemption and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized.

Exempt status means that the study does not vary significantly from the description that has been provided and further review in the form of filing an annual Continuing Review/Progress Report is not required.

Please note that maintaining exempt status requires that (a) risks of the study remain minimal; (b) that anonymity or confidentiality of participants, or protection of participants against any increased risk due to the internal knowledge or disclosure of identity by the researcher, is maintained as described in the application; (c) that no deception is introduced, such as reducing the accuracy or specificity of information about the research protocol that is given to prospective participants; (d) the research purpose, sponsor, and recruited study population remain as described; and (e) the principal investigator (PI) continues and is not replaced.

If changes occur in any of the features of the study as described, this may affect one or more of the conditions of exemption and may warrant a reclassification of the research protocol from exempt and require additional IRB review.

The University of Denver IRB will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records. This exemption has been granted for a five-year time period. For the duration of your research study, any changes in the proposed study must be reviewed and approved by the University of Denver IRB before implementation of those changes.

The University of Denver will administratively close this project at the end of the five-year period unless otherwise instructed via correspondence with the Principal

Investigator. Please contact the Office of Research Integrity and Education if the study is completed before the five-year time period or if you are no longer affiliated with the University of Denver.

If you have any questions, please contact the DU Human Research Protection Program through [irbadmin@du.edu](mailto:irbadmin@du.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Denver (DU)'s records.



*Appendix G2: E-Mail from DU IRB Confirming Approval of Amendment on Phase II*

**From:** Mary Travis <no-reply@irbnet.org>  
**To:** Kranti Dugar <kran.dugar@du.edu>; Kathy Green <kgreen@du.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 20, 2016 12:33 PM  
**Subject:** IRBNet Board Action

Please note that University of Denver (DU) IRB has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [927383-2] Consumers' Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study (Phase II)

Principal Investigator: Kranti Dugar, ABD

Submission Type: Amendment/Modification

Date Submitted: December 7, 2016

Action: APPROVED

Effective Date: December 20, 2016

Review Type: Expedited Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Mary Travis at [mary.travis@du.edu](mailto:mary.travis@du.edu).

Thank you,

The IRBNet Support Team

[www.irbnet.org](http://www.irbnet.org)

*Appendix H: Survey – Voluntary Deconsumption*

**Title of Research Study:** Consumers’ Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study (Phase II).

**Researcher(s):** Kranti K. Dugar, ABD, University of Denver.

**Description:** You are being asked to participate in a research study. By doing this research, I hope to learn about deconsumption, which is an act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily), a product, service, brand, or experience. Voluntary deconsumption is a discretionary and deliberate process that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience, which encourages elevated states of self-identity. Involuntary deconsumption is a forced and undeliberate process that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience. This research is part of a scale-development and testing exercise using surveys administered among baby boomers in several towns and cities in the United States. The survey data will be analyzed to identify attitudinal beliefs and behavioral intentions of respondents pertaining to deconsumption, and the validity and reliability of the measures will be assessed. You are asked to fill out a survey to the best extent of your recollection. You are being asked to be in this research study if you meet the following criteria: you are a baby boomer (born between the years 1945 and 1965), are residing in the United States, have experienced deconsumption, and are interested in sharing your deconsumption experiences.

**Procedure:** If you agree to be a part of the research study, you will be asked to fill out a survey containing three parts: (1) general consumption- and deconsumption-related questions, (2) deconsumption scale items, and (3) demographic questions. This will take about 20 minutes of your time.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any survey question for any reason without penalty.

**Potential risks and/or discomforts of participation:** This study is minimum risk and appropriate human subjects protections are in place. The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. These risks may include recollecting sensitive and/or unhappy experiences of deconsumption.

**Study compensation:** There is no compensation associated with this study.

Before you begin, please note that the data you provide may be collected and used by Qualtrics as per its privacy agreement. This research is only for U.S. residents over the age of 18 (or 19 in Nebraska). Please be mindful to respond in a private setting and through a secured Internet connection for your privacy. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about this project or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact Kranti K. Dugar at (662) 617-9820 or [kran.dugar@du.edu](mailto:kran.dugar@du.edu) at any time. You may also contact Dr. Kathy E. Green at (303) 871-2490 or [kathy.green@du.edu](mailto:kathy.green@du.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns about your research participation or rights as a participant, you may contact the DU Human Research Protections Program by emailing [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu) or calling (303) 871-2121 to speak to someone other than the researchers.

The DU Human Research Protections Program has determined that this study is minimal risk and is exempt from full IRB oversight.

**Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.**

If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent. Please keep this form for your records.

### **Survey – Voluntary Deconsumption**

**Context:** The central topic of this study, entitled “*Consumers’ Perceptions of Voluntary and*

*Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study,*” is **deconsumption**, which is an act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily), a product, service, or experience.

The questions in this survey pertain to your experience of **voluntarily** deconsuming a product/service/experience.

Here is the **definition** of voluntary deconsumption: Voluntary deconsumption is a discretionary and deliberate process that leads to an internal, rational, and dispositional attribution based on positive motivations that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience, which encourages elevated states of self-identity, harmony, and transformation.

**Note:** Switching from one brand to another, or from one product/service to another within a category is not considered deconsumption. Deconsumption is the discontinuation of consumption.

Now, please reflect on the **most significant/important voluntary deconsumption experience** you have had in your life. This could be recent, or from a distant memory.

***Section A – Consumption and Voluntary Deconsumption-Related***

Q1. What is your voluntary deconsumption experience related to?

- Product
- Service
- Experience

Q2. Name the product/service/experience you deconsumed.

Q3. Is the brand of the product/service/experience you deconsumed salient/prominent in your mind?

- Yes
- No

*[Answer Q4 if your answer for Q3 is “Yes,” otherwise, go to Q5]*

Q4. What is the brand you deconsumed?

*[Q5-Q10 are related to your **consumption** of this product/service/experience]*

Q5. How old were you (in completed number of years) when you started consuming this? (years)

Q6. How long (in completed number of years) did you consume this? (years)

Q7. How would you rate the quality of your consumption?

- Very high
- Fairly high
- Neutral
- Fairly low
- Very low

Q8. How would you rate your satisfaction with the consumption?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Q9. How would you rate your commitment to this consumption?

- Very committed
- Fairly committed
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly non-committed

- Very non-committed

Q10. How frequently (per week) did you use this product/service/experience while you were still using/buying it? (times/week)

*[Q11-Q18 are related to your **deconsumption** of this product/service/experience]*

Q11. How old were you (in completed number of years) when you deconsumed this? (years)

Q12. How many years has it been since you deconsumed this? (years)

Q13. How significant would you say this deconsumption has been in your life?

- Highly significant
- Fairly significant
- Neutral
- Fairly insignificant
- Very insignificant

Q14. How easy would you say this deconsumption has been for you to make?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neutral
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult

Q15. Was your deconsumption decision based on your own internal will, or driven by an external reason not in your control?

- Own will
- External reason

Q16. How intentional was your deconsumption decision?

- Very intentional
- Fairly intentional
- Neutral
- Fairly unintentional
- Very unintentional

Q17. Since you deconsumed this, how controllable has your deconsumption decision been?

- Very controllable
- Fairly controllable
- Neutral
- Fairly uncontrollable
- Very uncontrollable

Q18. Since you deconsumed this, how stable has the deconsumption decision been?

- Very stable
- Fairly stable
- Neutral
- Fairly unstable
- Very unstable

**Section B – Voluntary Deconsumption Scale Items**

The following questions pertain to your **attitudes** and **behavioral intentions** about certain statements related to **Voluntary Deconsumption**. Please indicate your responses to these statements on a 5-point scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1	When it comes to buying things, I think it through and make a rational decision.					
2	I can completely eliminate certain items from my shopping list.					
3	Deconsumption is a natural late-life process.					
4	Deconsumption is about letting go of desire.					
5	Deconsumption is a habit of self-control.					
6	I can learn to simplify consumption.					
7	Deconsumption is about exercising my own will.					
8	As I grow older, I feel less need for a lot of things.					
9	What you get out of deconsumption is much more important than what you give up.					
10	Consumption is a personal decision.					
11	Deconsumption is about unplugging and purging stuff.					
12	It takes determination and discipline to deconsume.					
13	As I have grown older, my priorities have changed.					
14	I make decisions that are consistent with who I am.					
15	Shopping to me is discretionary. If I do not want to buy, I do not have to buy.					
16	Deconsumption leads to empowerment.					
17	Shopping is about thoughtful decision-making.					

Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
18	Deconsumption is my personal decision to renounce possessions.					
19	Deconsumption is an adjustment to newness.					
20	When it comes to consumption, I believe in simplification.					
21	I like to declutter. It is very freeing.					
22	I am never enthralled by products. They are just a means to an end.					
23	Passion for consumption is like an addiction.					
24	I am mindful of what I really need versus what I want.					
25	One must learn to be satisfied and content with little.					
26	Growing older involves letting go of who you once were.					
27	I can tune out a lot of advertising on TV and newspapers.					
28	I believe in collecting memories, not things.					
29	I always stick to my shopping list.					
30	I try not to get something just to get it.					
31	I might have to get rid of some things in a few years anyway.					
32	I am surprised how easy it is for me to deconsume.					
33	I have given up things cold turkey.					
34	I know deconsumption is good for me.					
35	Deconsumption has had a significant impact on my life.					
36	I have control over what I consume.					
37	Our society is obsessed with acquisition.					
38	I am not influenced very much by advertising.					
39	Deconsumption can result from a decline in health.					
40	Deconsumption can result from a change in culture.					
41	Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity.					
42	Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive.					
43	In my shopping behavior, I want to be a role model and set an example.					
44	A company ought to put social responsibility above its responsibility to shareholders.					

Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
45	Companies need to be forced into fair play.					
46	People who do not believe in global warming are mistaken.					
47	Companies tend to put profits above people.					
48	Consumerism in our country is shoved down people's throats.					
49	Companies adopt scare tactics to sell to old people.					
50	I believe in recycling.					
51	I believe in rationing my resources.					
52	Companies ought to maintain integrity and honesty.					
53	Companies should take a stand on critical environmental issues.					
54	The less petroleum energy I spend, the more personal energy I have.					
55	I have made my peace with deconsumption.					
56	Sacrifice is a part of life.					
57	Consumption needs to be purposeful.					
58	Deconsumption can be about getting back to your roots.					
59	There is always something you can substitute consumption with.					
60	I am not into acquisition of worldly possessions.					
61	Deconsumption can take you back to your roots – to a simpler time.					
62	As I have grown older, I have become more self-aware.					
63	When you unclutter, positive energy flows through.					
64	I have switched from consuming to sustaining.					
65	Deconsumption leads to harmony.					
66	Deconsumption can help cope with life-changing events better.					
67	I cope with deconsumption by accepting it as inevitable.					
68	My faith and/or spirituality helps me deal with deconsumption.					
69	I am disenchanted by the culture of excessive consumption.					
70	There is a spiritual price to pay for excessive consumption.					



***Section C – Demographic Information***

Q1. Please identify your gender.

- Male
- Female

Q2. What year were you born?

Q3. How would you classify yourself?

- Arab
- Asian
- Black
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Latino
- Other
- Multiracial
- Would rather not say

Q4. What is the highest level of education that you have accomplished?

- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Technical training
- College graduate
- Some post graduate work
- Post graduate degree

Q5. Are you retired or still working?

- Full-time work
- Part-time work
- Retired

Q6. What is your profession (or if you are retired, what was your profession while you were working)?

Q7. What is your current marital status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Single
- Widowed
- Would rather not say

Q8. Which of the following best describes the area you live in?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Q9. Are you a cable/satellite TV user?

- Yes
- No

Q10. Are you a mobile phone user?

- Yes
- No

*[Answer Q11 if your answer for Q10 is "Yes," otherwise, go to Q12]*

Q11. Is your mobile a smartphone?

- Yes
- No

Q12. Are you an e-mail user?

- Yes
- No

Q13. Do you use social media?

- Yes
- No

Q14. Do you consider yourself tech-savvy?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your valuable time and responses!

*Appendix I: Survey – Involuntary Deconsumption*

**Title of Research Study:** Consumers’ Perceptions of Voluntary and Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study (Phase II).

**Researcher(s):** Kranti K. Dugar, ABD, University of Denver.

**Description:** You are being asked to participate in a research study. By doing this research, I hope to learn about deconsumption, which is an act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily), a product, service, brand, or experience. Voluntary deconsumption is a discretionary and deliberate process that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience, which encourages elevated states of self-identity. Involuntary deconsumption is a forced and undeliberate process that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience. This research is part of a scale-development and testing exercise using surveys administered among baby boomers in several towns and cities in the United States. The survey data will be analyzed to identify attitudinal beliefs and behavioral intentions of respondents pertaining to deconsumption, and the validity and reliability of the measures will be assessed. You are asked to fill out a survey to the best extent of your recollection. You are being asked to be in this research study if you meet the following criteria: you are a baby boomer (born between the years 1945 and 1965), are residing in the United States, have experienced deconsumption, and are interested in sharing your deconsumption experiences.

**Procedure:** If you agree to be a part of the research study, you will be asked to fill out a survey containing three parts: (1) general consumption- and deconsumption-related questions, (2) deconsumption scale items, and (3) demographic questions. This will take about 20 minutes of your time.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any survey question for any reason without penalty.

**Potential risks and/or discomforts of participation:** This study is minimum risk and appropriate human subjects protections are in place. The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. These risks may include recollecting sensitive and/or unhappy experiences of deconsumption.

**Study compensation:** There is no compensation associated with this study.

Before you begin, please note that the data you provide may be collected and used by Qualtrics as per its privacy agreement. This research is only for U.S. residents over the age of 18 (or 19 in Nebraska). Please be mindful to respond in a private setting and through a secured Internet connection for your privacy. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about this project or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact Kranti K. Dugar at (662) 617-9820 or [kran.dugar@du.edu](mailto:kran.dugar@du.edu) at any time. You may also contact Dr. Kathy E. Green at (303) 871-2490 or [kathy.green@du.edu](mailto:kathy.green@du.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns about your research participation or rights as a participant, you may contact the DU Human Research Protections Program by emailing [IRBAdmin@du.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@du.edu) or calling (303) 871-2121 to speak to someone other than the researchers.

The DU Human Research Protections Program has determined that this study is minimal risk and is exempt from full IRB oversight.

**Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.**

If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent. Please keep this form for your records.

### **Survey – Involuntary Deconsumption**

**Context:** The central topic of this study, entitled “*Consumers’ Perceptions of Voluntary and*

*Involuntary Deconsumption: An Exploratory Sequential Scale Development Study,*” is **deconsumption**, which is an act of consuming less or not at all (either voluntarily or involuntarily), a product, service, or experience.

The questions in this survey pertain to your experience of **involuntarily** deconsuming a product/service/experience.

Here is the **definition** of involuntary deconsumption: Involuntary deconsumption is a forced and undeliberate process that leads to an externally-fueled situational attribution that consumers make to discontinue consumption of a product/service/experience.

**Note:** Switching from one brand to another, or from one product/service to another within a category is not considered deconsumption. Deconsumption is the discontinuation of consumption.

Now, please reflect on the **most significant/important involuntary deconsumption experience** you have had in your life. This could be recent, or from a distant memory.

## Section A – Consumption and Involuntary Deconsumption-Related

Q1. What is your involuntary deconsumption experience related to?

- Product
- Service
- Experience

Q2. Name the product/service/experience you deconsumed.

Q3. Is the brand of the product/service/experience you deconsumed salient?

- Yes
- No

*[Answer Q4 if your answer for Q3 is “Yes,” otherwise, go to Q5]*

Q4. What is the brand you deconsumed?

*[Q5-Q10 are related to your **consumption** of this product/service/experience]*

Q5. How old were you (in completed number of years) when you started consuming this? (years)

Q6. How long (in completed number of years) did you consume this? (years)

Q7. How would you rate the quality of your consumption?

- Very high
- Fairly high
- Neutral
- Fairly low
- Very low

Q8. How would you rate your satisfaction with the consumption?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Q9. How would you rate your commitment to this consumption?

- Very committed
- Fairly committed
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly non-committed

- Very non-committed

Q10. How frequently (per week) did you use this product/service/experience while you were still using/buying it? (times/week)

[Q11-Q18 are related to your **deconsumption** of this product/service/experience]

Q11. How old were you (in completed number of years) when you deconsumed this? (years)

Q12. How many years has it been since you deconsumed this? (years)

Q13. How significant would you say this deconsumption has been in your life?

- Highly significant
- Fairly significant
- Neutral
- Fairly insignificant
- Very insignificant

Q14. How easy would you say this deconsumption has been for you to make?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neutral
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult

Q15. Was your deconsumption decision internally driven or externally driven?

- Internally driven
- Externally driven

Q16. How intentional was your deconsumption decision?

- Very intentional
- Fairly intentional
- Neutral
- Fairly unintentional
- Very unintentional

Q17. Since you deconsumed this, how controllable has your deconsumption decision been?

- Very controllable
- Fairly controllable
- Neutral
- Fairly uncontrollable
- Very uncontrollable

Q18. Since you deconsumed this, how stable has the deconsumption decision been?

- Very stable
- Fairly stable
- Neutral
- Fairly unstable
- Very unstable

**Section B – Involuntary Deconsumption Scale Items**

The following questions pertain to your **attitudes** and **behavioral intentions** about certain statements related to **Involuntary Deconsumption**. Please indicate your responses to these statements on a 5-point scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1	Life is taking things that I still want to keep away from me.					
2	Shopping fills a void in my life.					
3	I have had to stop consuming things I always used to consume earlier.					
4	I am reluctant to give things up.					
5	I find myself giving up things I rely on.					
6	Deconsumption is about making choices I do not like.					
7	Deconsumption is an emotional experience.					
8	Consumption brings happy memories of fun and enjoyment.					
9	I wish I did not have to deconsume things.					
10	Deconsumption is a difficult thing to do.					
11	I feel like I am losing control.					
12	I wish I could re-consume things I used to consume.					
13	Circumstances in life have forced me to deconsume.					
14	Deconsumption requires discipline.					
15	Deconsumption is a daily struggle.					
16	Deconsumption is an exercise in self-control.					
17	I feel like I have lost the freedom to choose.					
18	It makes me sad to deconsume.					
19	I feel like I have exceedingly important needs that may be in direct conflict with each other.					

Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
20	As you grow older, society takes things away from you.					
21	When I go shopping, I just bite my upper lip and forget about buying some things.					
22	I can never stick to my shopping list.					
23	I have no self-control.					
24	Deconsumption is restraining.					
25	A lot of stuff I own has sentimental value.					
26	It is painful to stop consuming things.					
27	I am swayed by “new & improved.”					
28	When I am forced to stop consumption, I feel cheated.					
29	I tend to name some of my possessions.					
30	When I go shopping, stuff has a hold on me.					
31	I am set in my ways and experience resistance to change.					
32	Every decision has an opportunity cost.					
33	Giving up consumption comes at a price.					
34	Sometimes, I consume things due to peer pressure.					
35	In today’s society, I have no choice but to consume.					
36	I am still coming to terms with my deconsumption experience.					
37	It is hard for me to let go.					
38	Deconsumption can result from a decline in health.					
39	Deconsumption can result from a change in culture.					
40	Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity.					
41	Big corporations have a lure.					
42	Being part of big companies makes me feel secure.					
43	Companies tend to keep harmful product information from you.					
44	A company ought to make profits for its shareholders.					
45	I’m taking it one day at a time.					
46	Old age comes with loss in purpose.					
47	I feel like I am invisible to other people.					



Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
48	Giving things up is like going through a grieving process.					
49	I remember trauma more than I remember happy times of my life.					
50	I feel like possessions are related to success.					

***Section C – Demographic Information***

Q1. Please identify your gender.

- Male
- Female

Q2. What year were you born?

Q3. How would you classify yourself?

- Arab
- Asian
- Black
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Latino
- Other
- Multiracial
- Would rather not say

Q4. What is the highest level of education that you have accomplished?

- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Technical training
- College graduate
- Some post graduate work
- Post graduate degree

Q5. Are you retired or still working?

- Full-time work
- Part-time work
- Retired

Q6. What is your profession (or if you are retired, what was your profession while you were working)?

Q7. What is your current marital status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Single
- Widowed
- Would rather not say

Q8. Which of the following best describes the area you live in?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Q9. Are you a cable/satellite TV user?

- Yes
- No

Q10. Are you a mobile phone user?

- Yes
- No

*[Answer Q11 if your answer for Q10 is "Yes," otherwise, go to Q12]*

Q11. Is your mobile a smartphone?

- Yes
- No

Q12. Are you an e-mail user?

- Yes
- No

Q13. Do you use social media?

- Yes
- No

Q14. Do you consider yourself tech-savvy?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your valuable time and responses!

*Appendix J: Definitions, Descriptions, and Factor Memberships – Voluntary  
Deconsumption*

**Sub-scale 1: Elevated State of Purpose**

**Definition:** A purposeful positive state of mind occurring as a consequence of voluntary deconsumption.

**Categories:** harmony, faith, positive energy, spirituality, peaceful coping mechanisms, the desire to act as a role model, contentment, acceptance, a quest to revert to one's roots, and renunciation.

**Items (10):** VD63\_When you unclutter, positive energy flows through.

VD65\_Deconsumption leads to harmony.

VD66\_Deconsumption can help cope with life-changing events better.

VD67\_I cope with deconsumption by accepting it as inevitable.

VD68\_My faith and/or spirituality helps me deal with deconsumption.

VD70\_There is a spiritual price to pay for excessive consumption.

VD25\_One must learn to be satisfied and content with little.

VD18\_Deconsumption is my personal decision to renounce possessions.

VD43\_In my shopping behavior, I want to be a role model and set an example.

VD61\_Deconsumption can take you back to your roots – to a simpler time.

**Sub-scale 2: Social Agency and Activism**

**Definition:** An active stance and rebellious actions in favor of the protection of the environment, and a desire for corporations' fair play and socially responsible conduct.

**Categories:** concern for the environment, belief in the ill-effects of global warming, corporations' social conduct and responsibility, and active measures such as recycling.

**Items (9):** VD46\_People who do not believe in global warming are mistaken.

VD53\_Companies should take a stand on critical environmental issues.

VD45\_Companies need to be forced into fair play.

VD47\_Companies tend to put profits above people.

VD44\_A corporation ought to put social responsibility above its responsibility to shareholders.

VD50\_I believe in recycling.

VD48\_Consumerism in our country is shoved down people's throats.

VD49\_Companies adopt scare tactics to sell to old people.

VD54\_The less petroleum energy I spend, the more personal energy I have.

### **Sub-scale 3: Non-materialism**

**Definition:** An ability for discretionary and rational decision-making, and an unattached attitude toward shopping or acquisition of possessions.

**Categories:** shopping discretion, control, awareness of need vis-à-vis want, shopping as a means to an end, non-possession, and ability to give up consumption and tune out promotions.

**Items (13):** VD38\_I am not influenced very much by advertising.

VD24\_I am mindful of what I really need versus what I want.

VD15\_Shopping to me is discretionary. If I do not want to buy, I do not have to buy.

VD22\_I am never enthralled by products. They are just a means to an end.

VD30\_I try not to get something just to get it.

VD60\_I am not into acquisition of worldly possessions.

VD27\_I can tune out a lot of advertising on TV and newspapers.

VD02\_I can completely eliminate certain items from my shopping list.

VD28\_I believe in collecting memories, not things.

VD32\_I am surprised how easy it is for me to deconsume.

VD55\_I have made my peace with deconsumption.

VD33\_I have given up things cold turkey.

VD08\_As I grow older, I feel less need for a lot of things.

#### **Sub-scale 4: Acceptance of Life Circumstances**

**Definition:** The realization of changed priorities accompanying circumstances prohibitive to consumption, such as decline in health, financial capacity, and non-availability.

**Categories:** decline in health, loss of financial capacity, maintenance costs, changing life situations.

**Items (7):** VD39\_Deconsumption can result from a decline in health.

VD05\_Deconsumption is a habit of self-control.

VD41\_Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity.

VD12\_It takes determination and discipline to deconsume.

VD36\_Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive.

VD13\_As I have grown older, my priorities have changed.

VD34\_I know deconsumption is good for me.

*Appendix K: Definitions, Descriptions, and Factor Memberships – Involuntary Deconsumption*

**Sub-scale 1: Victim Mentality**

**Definition:** An experience of negative outcomes such as pain, loss, grief, sadness, a feeling of being invisible, sans freedom and control, and of being cheated and robbed by society, which leads to a sense of conflict and desire for remission or re-consumption; occurring as a consequence of involuntary deconsumption.

**Categories:** sadness, pain, grief, invisibility, loss of freedom, loss of control, being cheated, being robbed, sense of conflict, and desire to re-consume.

**Items (22):** ID18\_It makes me sad to deconsume.

ID17\_I feel like I have lost the freedom to choose.

ID11\_I feel like I am losing control.

ID06\_Deconsumption is about making choices I do not like.

ID28\_When I am forced to stop consumption, I feel cheated.

ID09\_I wish I did not have to deconsume things.

ID05\_I find myself giving up things I rely on.

ID26\_It is painful to stop consuming things.

ID37\_It is hard for me to let go.

ID12\_I wish I could re-consume things I used to consume.

ID48\_Giving things up is like going through a grieving process.

ID19\_I feel like I have exceedingly important needs that may be in direct conflict with each other.

ID36\_I am still coming to terms with my deconsumption experience.

ID24\_Deconsumption is restraining.

ID01\_Life is taking things that I still want to keep away from me.

ID20\_As you grow older, society takes things away from you.

ID21\_When I go shopping, I just bite my upper lip and forget about buying some things.

ID04\_I am reluctant to give things up.

ID47\_I feel like I am invisible to other people.

ID31\_I am set in my ways and experience resistance to change.

ID03\_I have had to stop consuming things I always used to consume earlier.

ID33\_Giving up consumption comes at a price.

### **Sub-scale 2: Materialism**

**Definition:** A lack of ability for discretionary and rational decision-making fueled by impulsive and illusive shopping behavior, and equating acquisition of possessions to void-fulfillment and/or success.

**Categories:** shopping indiscretion, loss of control, peer pressure, impulsive shopping as a void-filler, equating possessions to success, and inability to give up consumption and tune out promotions.

**Items (6):** ID27\_I am swayed by “new & improved.”

ID34\_Sometimes, I consume things due to peer pressure.

ID02\_Shopping fills a void in my life.

ID22\_I can never stick to my shopping list.

ID50\_I feel like possessions are related to success.

ID35\_In today’s society, I have no choice but to consume.

### **Sub-scale 3: Non-acceptance of Life Circumstances**

**Definition:** The denial of changed priorities accompanying circumstances prohibitive to consumption, such as decline in health, financial capacity, and non-availability.

**Categories:** decline in health, loss of financial capacity, maintenance costs, and changing life situations.

**Items (5):** ID38\_Deconsumption can result from a decline in health.

ID40\_Deconsumption can result from loss of financial capacity.

ID44\_Sometimes, maintenance costs of certain products become prohibitive.

ID14\_Deconsumption requires discipline.

ID16\_Deconsumption is an exercise in self-control.

## *Appendix L: Detailed Acknowledgments*

*Dedicated to Lt. Mr. Jatanlal Dugar, and to Dr. E. Stanly Godbold, Jr. – one father taken away, and another bestowed upon me.*

These pages mark a long journey, and were written as much in ink as they were in blood, sweat, and tears. I equate this accomplishment to a hike taken in the mountains – challenging, exhausting, inspiring, frustrating, educational, adventurous, and in the end, liberating. The miles done, as I set out my shirt to dry and my boots to breathe, I'd be remiss if I did not look back and appreciate the events and people that made my hike possible and memorable.

Foremost, my gratitude to the members of my committee, who believed in me more than I believed in myself. A special mention to Dr. Kathy Green, who taught me the value of persistence, and gave form to this dissertation, to Nick Cutforth, who always maintained I could write with more brevity, and infused a soul into my qualitative work, and to Dr. Don Bacon, whose marketing insights rendered spirit and purpose to this dissertation.

I was fortunate to have the maternal grandparents (in India) and the paternal grandparents (in the U.S.) that I did. I am more convinced now than I ever was that the only reason I wanted to study the elderly was because of your presence (and later, absence) in my life. “Obama” will always miss you. My sincere gratitude to all my teachers, mentors, and professors – from childhood to present day – for reminding me what Rosalynn Carter eloquently expressed: “*You have to have confidence in your ability, and then be tough enough to follow through.*” This dissertation took time. Even so, my family members and friends made sacrifices and gave me the space I needed. It is through them that I came to believe in Abraham Lincoln’s adage: “*Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.*” To my mother, I want to say a simple thank you. A special shout out to my colleagues (especially the ‘*Thursday Seminarists*’) for putting up with my eccentricities, and cushioning my blows with poetry. Lots of love to Neetu, Sang, Rupa, Narsi, and Nair for taking (and sometimes faking) interest in my work. A ton of gratitude to Dr. Ricardo Inzunza, Dr. Marshall Molen, Dr. Robert H. S. Sarikas (“Zeke”), and Dr. Brian Engelland for their unwavering support. High fives to The Hou, Tommicat, Garfield, Miss Mildred, Jackie, Sam, Sam-2, the Denver kittens, and the raccoons too!

As I look back, I know this hike wasn’t completely mine. Some of the miles were that of my study participants. Your patience and insights form the core of my work. I will forever be indebted to you. To you, I want to say, “Be looking for your mail. A postcard is on its way!” Although I have many more people to thank (there aren’t enough pages), I’d like to mention the contributions of my research assistant, Molly Logic, the meticulous editing skills of my colleague, Jeri Weiser, the unwavering support of my boss, Dr. Kristy Lauver, the wisdom of my expert reviewers and cognitive interviewees, the insights provided by Courtney, Leigh, DVD, Maria, Ron, Marty, and the communities of practice (COPs) in my advanced qualitative research class, the moral support of Dr. Kate Kim, and the inspiration that my beloved students provided.



In the end, to my Mississippi family, for everything and more. JM, I got my ducks in a row. Dad, you were a child prodigy, and now, you are a senior double doctorate, for my degree really is yours.

Sometime in the middle of this hike, I was at the University of Denver gym (at Ritchie Center). I was battered and bruised, and desperate for inspiration, which came in the form of a picture on the wall -- a runner, and alongside him, the wise words of Sir Roger Gilbert Bannister, the British athlete, physician, and academic: "The man who can drive himself further, once the effort gets painful, is the man who will win." I think this is my humble victory. This is my drive beyond pain. This is my miracle mile.