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VALUE BEHIND SAVING AND REUSING SHOPPING BAGS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Value behind Saving and Reusing Shopping Bags

Supervisor of thesis: Dr. Rana Sobh.

The behavior associated with saving and reusing shopping bags has been heavily researched in the context of environmental studies. However, few studies have examined this behavior from the perspective of consumer behavior. Previous behavioral sciences research on collecting and hoarding possessions suggested that value is a driver of such behavior. It may therefore also be associated with saving and reusing shopping bags. The main research question of this study was what value consumers gain by a) saving and b) reusing shopping bags. This study used a qualitative research approach, with in-depth interviews with 15 women. All the women were initially screened and selected to ensure that they saved and/or reused shopping bags. The results suggested that there are four types of value associated with saving and reusing shopping bags: functional, social, emotional and conditional value. Using two frameworks of value and value creation, the findings were mapped to improve understanding of this behavior. This research has therefore created a baseline for future work about why consumers save and reuse shopping bags in particular, and packaging more generally. This thesis has also contributed to the literature on value in marketing, by exploring how consumers value packaging, and specifically shopping bags.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family for having patience and faith in me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1.1 Research Background

Shopping bags are a secondary form of packaging, mainly used to facilitate the physical transfer of products bought by consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). In the mid-nineteenth century, shopkeepers noticed that customers would only purchase what they could physically carry. The first brown paper bag with a flat bottom was invented by Margaret Knight in 1871 (Mueller, 2016). In 1912, a shopkeeper named Walter H. Deubner created the first paper shopping bag with handles. These bags were sold for 5 cents. Deubner's bags were commercially successful; he was able to sell more than one million of them each year. In the 1970s, a company in Sweden created the classic plastic shopping bag, which gained popularity all around the globe. Nowadays, shopping bags come in many

forms, shapes, sizes and materials. Increased awareness of the environmental harm caused by plastic bags in particular has led many industries to manufacture and sell reusable natural and synthetic fabric bags.

A few industries, such as luxury fashion-wear and department stores, took the initiative to brand their shopping bags as a method of promotion. The blue Tiffany bag and the Big Brown Paper Bag by Bloomingdale's are considered part of both popular culture and the shopping experience. This pushed mainstream brands to adopt this strategy of creative and unique shopping bag design as part of their branding strategy. In an article in the *New York Times*, Barbaro (2007) reported that mainstream brands were willing to spend a substantial amount of money to design and manufacture a unique and eye-catching shopping bag, not least because consumers tend to reuse bags with a unique design, especially those from luxury and high-end brands. This increases the brand exposure. There is a question, however, of whether the design of the bag is the only reason for reusing them.

Previous studies suggested shopping bags may be used and reused for purposes other than to facilitate the movement of purchased products. Some consumers reuse shopping bags for ecological and sustainable purposes (Farj & Martinez, 2006). Consumers who identify themselves as environmentally conscious, therefore, tend to reuse plastic and paper bags several times before disposing of them. Other consumers reuse bags to comply with political and governmental policies to avoid facing penalties (Li et al., 2010). Roy and Rabbanee (2015) noted that some customers reuse shopping bags to make a personal statement. This idea provides a new perspective on this behavior.

There are, however, likely to be other hidden reasons behind saving and reusing shopping bags. These need to be investigated (Prendergast, Ng & Leung, 2001). Shopping

bags can be considered part of product packaging and branding, but there is little research in this field on the reuse of bags. The main focus of research in both marketing and ecological sciences is environmental (Rokka & Uusitalo, 2008), creating both a difficulty and an opportunity to fill this gap in the literature.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

Rokka and Uusitalo (2008) noted a gap in understanding of this particular consumer behavior, and the factors which lie behind saving and reusing shopping bags and other packaging. This study argues that consumers reuse and save shopping bags for several reasons beyond environmental consciousness, even though few studies have addressed this (Roy & Rabbanee, 2015). This research will therefore fill a gap in the literature on consumer disposal behavior. The reason for this choice is that the acts of reusing, saving, giving, sharing and collecting are all included in the overarching term 'disposal'. The literature on this broad area shows that value is a major driver for saving and collecting behaviors. There is also a direct and strong relationship between possessions and self-image (Belk, 1988). This relationship intensifies the existence of value. This research will therefore examine previous studies on consumer disposal behavior in the context of shopping bags, as well as the role of value. The research question will be: what value do consumers gain from saving or/and reusing shopping bags?

This research had three main objectives. The first was to identify the reasons for saving and reusing shopping bags. Brands are increasingly aware of consumer reuse of bags, and the increased awareness of the harmful effects to the environment of disposing of bags. It is therefore important to know how to motivate consumers to reuse bags, because this has major managerial and environmental implications. The second objective was to

build a cornerstone for packaging reuse behavior by increasing understanding of the phenomenon through the study of a particular area, shopping bags. The third and final objective was to link value to consumer reuse of shopping bags. Value has a clear role in many consumer behaviors, but few, if any, studies have considered it in relation to consumer reuse and saving of shopping bags.

1.3 Research Context

Data was collected in the State of Qatar, which is located in the Arabian Peninsula or Gulf region. Qatar's population is multinational, with a majority of foreigners, expats and labor from all over the world. Local Qataris are a minority, constituting less than 20% of the total population (Sobh and Belk, 2011). Qatar has one of the highest GDP per capita incomes in the world (World Bank, 2017). Qatar residents are no different from those other countries in their immersion in global consumerism and pursuit of the latest trends and fashions (Sobh, Belk and Gressel, 2014). International brands such as H&M, Zara, Mango, Marks and Spencer, Chanel, and Gucci have stores in malls all over Qatar. All these conditions makes it easy to recruit participants from different ethnicities and socio-economic classes to answer the research question and investigate the behavior of reusing and saving shopping bags.

1.4 Research Contributions

There is a gap in understanding about the hidden reasons behind consumer saving and reusing of shopping bags. This research aims to fill this gap and to investigate and understand the reasons for reusing and saving bags other than sustainability. Investigating this behavior is expected to help to identify whether there is a link between consumer reusing and saving of packaging and value. As far as we know, no link has yet been

identified. This would therefore be a major contribution to the field of packaging and a minor one to that of value.

To answer the research question and achieve the objectives, this study used a qualitative approach, because this is frequently used in consumer disposal behavior research. Qualitative methods help researchers to understand the motives behind behavior in a more precise way, and enable exploration of the core understanding of consumers. The research featured 15 in-depth interviews with women from various demographic backgrounds. The data showed that value is indeed a solid driver behind saving and reusing of shopping bags. The study used two main theories or frameworks, Holbrook's (1999) value framework and Sheth, Newman and Gross' (1991) theory of consumption value. This gave a constructive theoretical framework and basis on which to study the value gained by consumers from saving and reusing shopping bags.

1.5 Thesis Overview

This thesis starts by examining previous research on the reuse and saving of shopping bags, in both environmental and consumer-related contexts. The review examined consumer disposal behavior, including reuse and saving behaviors, to form a clearer understanding of why and how consumers choose to dispose of their possessions, and to examine the value from saving and reusing shopping bags. The next chapter describes the methodology used, including the choice of qualitative approach, and comprehensive descriptions of the data collection and analysis methods. This is followed by a chapter on the findings from the data analysis and the themes extracted using two data analysis methods. The final chapter provides a detailed discussion and draws conclusions based on the study findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW
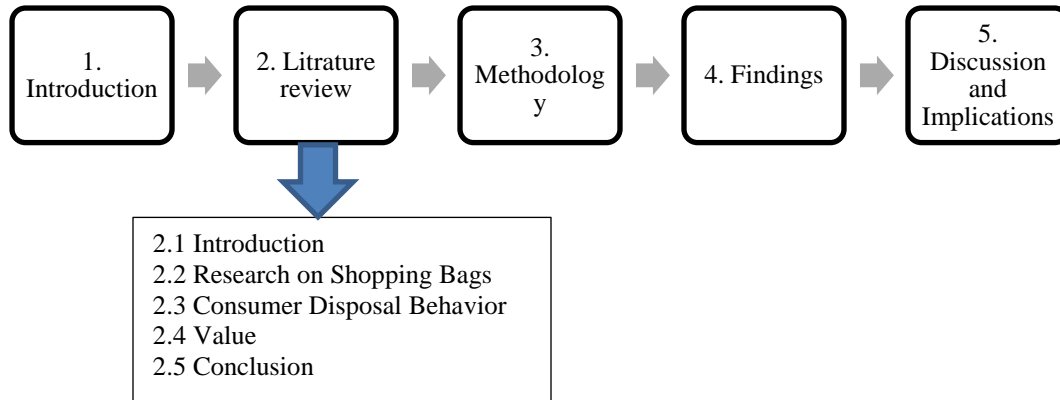
Figure 2. Literature Review Chapter Outline

2.1 Introduction

The concept of reusing shopping bags for environmental and ecological purposes has been heavily researched. These earlier studies therefore provide useful information for this research. The idea of reusing shopping bags in the context of consumer behavior is relatively new, however, so it is important to study this topic from a consumer behavior perspective.

Consumer disposal behavior is another field of research and an important domain to consider in examining the reuse and saving of shopping bags. Disposal includes actions by consumers to save, reuse, share, gift and re-gift, and dispose of their possessions in

various ways and for many reasons. Some of these reasons and ways will be reflected in the reuse and saving behavior adopted for shopping bags and are therefore relevant to the research question. Finally, value is another lens through which to understand how consumers choose to dispose of their belongings.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part reviews research on shopping bags in both environmental and consumer behavior contexts, focusing on four main studies. The second part of this chapter examines previous literature related to consumer disposal of possessions. The final part of the literature review is concerned with understanding the idea of value to help understand how value is created through reusing and saving shopping bags.

2.2 Research on Shopping Bags

Kotler and Armstrong (2010) defined shopping bags as a part of the packaging used to transfer products purchased from the store to a consumer's residence. However, packaging in general and shopping bags in particular (Prendergast et al., 2001; Underwood, 2003) are also an important topic in environmental and ecological contexts. Previous studies have examined the use of recyclable, durable, environmentally-friendly, and cost-effective packaging to both attract consumers, and contribute to environmental sustainability (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Musa et. al, 2013; Rokka & Uusitalo, 2008). Few studies have investigated other reasons why consumers save or reuse packaging and shopping bags, even though there is plenty of research on shopping bags more generally. Prendergast et al. (2001) and Roy and Rabbanee (2015) both discussed the issue of reusing shopping bags in a consumer behavior context.

Some of the previous work in the environmental and sustainability field is worth

examining because it informs the theoretical foundation of this research. Farj and Martinez (2006) concluded that consumers who are environmentally-conscious and eco-friendly tend to be aware of their actions when reusing, saving, and disposing of paper and plastic shopping bags. Interestingly, previous research mentions that these consumers also want to maintain and protect their image. Sirgy (1985) discussed this issue of self- and social image, arguing that customers use brands and products to reflect their self-images or improve their social images. Paper and plastic bags are treated differently by consumers. Paper bags are more likely to be saved and reused than plastic bags. However, plastic bags are perceived to be more durable and waterproof (Cherrier, 2006; Musa et al, 2013). Consumers also tend to further categorize paper and plastic bags by their reuse purposes. Hu et al. (2010) and Farj and Martinez (2006) noted that plastic bags are often saved to be used as garbage liners and pet waste bags. However, Musa et al. (2013) noted that the nature of paper bags, and particularly whether they were woven or non-woven, might alter re-usage purposes, and enable them to be categorized as plastic.

Four main papers have discussed shopping bags in a consumer behavior context. Two of these examined shopping bags as a tool in an experimental manipulation and the other two used bags as a variable. Prendergast et al. (2001) investigated why consumers save and reuse plastic and paper bags by studying the different attributes that drive this behavior. They found that convenience, protection, waterproofness, brand or logo, and appearance were the main reasons for consumers' behavior towards both plastic and paper bags. The researchers used a mixed methodology, which included a focus group and a questionnaire to collect data about attributes supporting the use and reuse of shopping bags. Their sampling used a homogeneous technique and 200 respondents. According to their

results, being waterproof and providing protection were perceived as the strongest reasons for using and reusing plastic bags. An attractive layout and convenience were the attributes linked to the use and re-use of paper bags. Having a visible logo and an attractive design were the least important attributes for plastic bags. This study has a number of managerial implications, in particular identification of the attributes that managers and brands need to take into consideration when designing and manufacturing shopping bags. The article did not, however, provide any information about other underlying reasons behind the reuse of shopping bags beyond the attributes of the bags. These attributes were strictly related to design and material without addressing consumer beliefs. The study mentioned self-expression and conspicuous consumption as possible reasons for using a branded bag, but the results of the questionnaire and focus group did not clearly support those ideas.

Park and John (2010) examined how brand personality could influence consumer personality. The researchers used a Victoria's Secret bag to assess its influence on consumers. Female university participants were asked to carry a Victoria's Secret bag around campus, then asked how they felt about themselves. Participants reported feeling attractive and feminine as a result of carrying the bag. These findings clearly indicate that using a branded bag can alter and influence self-image. Park and John's (2010) study, however, was largely about store patronage and its effect on personality and self-perception. The shopping bag was used as a medium to represent store patronage and was not the focus of the study. However, this finding is similar to that of Farj and Martinez (2006), who examined environmentally-conscious consumers' self-image and social image. These consumers were aware and concerned about their environmentally-friendly social image when they used plastic bags. They feared being seen using plastic bags in

public because of the risk of damaging their claim to be environmentally-friendly. Instead, they wanted to be seen using eco-friendly bags in public to reinforce their social image.

Williams et al. (2012) investigated the effects of store patronage cues in forming personality perceptions. They tested how people create impressions about others via cues such as shopping bags. They conducted a survey using personality dimensions and an experiment. The experiment showed participants a picture of a person holding a Zara bag and one not holding any bag, and asked them to compare the people. The results showed that participants had different perceptions of the two people. Holding a shopping bag can therefore create a particular impression. Like Park and John (2010), Williams et al. (2012) did not see shopping bags as the main focus of their study, but as a tool to indicate store patronage. Nevertheless, both studies show how shopping bags can alter and create both self- and social images.

Roy and Rabbanee (2015) hypothesized that reusing shopping bags was a consequence of self-congruity. Self-congruity can be defined as the match between the consumer's self-image and the brand's image (Sirgy, 1985). Roy and Rabbanee (2015) tested the model of self-congruity by adding antecedents including social desirability, avoidance of similarities, and status consumption. The consequences of self-congruity were self-perception and hedonic use. The researchers used the term "hedonic use" to further explain the reuse of shopping bags. The study used an experimental questionnaire among female students. This asked about the antecedents and consequences of self-congruity, mentioning both luxury and non-luxury brands. The findings showed that self-perception mediated the relationship between self-congruity and the intention to reuse bags. This suggests that consumers chiefly tend to reuse bags for reasons related to self-

perception. This relationship was even stronger for luxury brands.

2.2.1 Gaps and Contributions

Prendergast et al. (2001) and Roy and Rabbanee (2015) therefore identified reasons for reuse of shopping bags. However, there are still gaps in the knowledge, providing an opportunity for this study. Prendergast et al. (2001) studied the act of reusing bags, but their study only focused on the functional and physical attributes of shopping bags that make them reusable. There are, however, likely to be more reasons behind reusing behavior than simply functional, physical qualities, and design of shopping bags. The next section considers this issue in the light of consumer disposal literature: how consumer dispose of their possessions for reasons such as value and emotions. Roy and Rabbanee (2015) concluded that the act of reusing shopping bags was mediated only through self-perception, and this relation was a consequence of self-congruity. The mediated relationship between hedonic reuse of shopping bags and self-congruity, however, only existed for luxury brands. Self-perception therefore cannot be the only reason for this behavior, and there must be others, such as environmentally-friendly self- or social image (Farj & Martinez, 2006). Finally, Roy and Rabbanee (2015) and Prendergast et al. (2001) only addressed the issue of reusing bags. Neither made clear mention of saving bags in the first place. However, to reuse a shopping bag, it must first be saved. It is not clear how and why consumers make the decision to save a shopping bag for reuse. This research will therefore address these three gaps by identifying other reasons why consumers save and reuse shopping bags.

These previous studies also had some limitations. Several studies 'planted'

shopping bags, and did not ask participants to supply their own (Roy & Rabbanee, 2015). The results might be different if the participants had personally owned the bag. Prendergast et al. (2001) mentioned the location of the study as a limitation: their research was conducted in Hong Kong and the results might have been different elsewhere. There are two other important limitations in these studies. First, Prendergast et al. (2001) did not explore the reasons behind the behavior in any depth. They only studied the attributes perceived to encourage reuse of bags. They suggested that self-expression and conspicuous consumption might play a part, but without any clear evidence from the data to support this. Roy and Rabbanee (2015) concluded that bag reuse was linked to self-congruity although the relationship was mediated by self-perception. This mediated relationship could, however, have had more indications regardless of self-congruity. Self-perception only mediated the relationship between reuse of bags and self-congruity, and then only for luxury brands, so this relationship was not fully explored.

It is clear that self-perception is an important reason for reusing shopping bags, but also that it cannot be the only reason. The functional and design attributes can also not be the only reasons to reuse shopping bags. There is therefore an opportunity to fill this gap and contribute to the knowledge in this field. This behavior may be informed by consumer disposal literature and ideas of value, which are covered in the next sections.

2.3 Consumer Disposal Behavior

The previous section makes clear that there could be many different reasons other than self-perception for saving and reusing shopping bags. Maycroft (2009) described consumer disposal behavior as the final phase of the consumer consumption process, and stated that it may involve destruction, reuse, recycling or redistribution. Starting from this

definition, it can be deduced that reuse and redistribution are integral parts of the consumer disposal process.

Consumers purchase and consume many products in different categories. Saving, reusing, re-gifting, recycling or destroying products come naturally as a result of the number of possessions owned (Kings, Moulding & Knight, 2017). For example, parents tend to purchase products for babies and children on an ongoing basis, because children grow very quickly. Phillips and Sego (2011) found that parents, and mothers in particular, seemed to find it difficult to dispose of their children's belongings. Even if their children had outgrown a particular item, memories and feelings attached to the item made disposal hard. Phillips and Sego (2011) also found that mothers preferred to give their children's belongings to charity or to friends to reuse them than to dispose of them. This was because these items had an emotional value that mothers wanted to preserve and pass on to someone who would understand this value. One participant in their study mentioned that she was upset if she gave something to a friend and felt that it was not valued.

Other forms of product disposal include hoarding and collecting. These two behaviors are similar but differ in intensity. Hoarding is defined as the act of keeping and saving items for no rational reason. Functional hoarding is collecting and saving items with a meaning (Cherrier & Ponnor, 2010). One study participant mentioned keeping a broken eggshell because it reminded him of a particular time in his life and the feelings he had during that time. This is similar to mothers keeping their children's clothes and belongings. These items remind the mothers of when their children were younger, which brings back the feelings from that time. These feelings and memories tend to give value to that item, which makes it hard to replace or dispose of it. The other form of hoarding is obsessive

compulsive hoarding behavior. This behavior features collecting and saving items in an uncontrollable manner that may distort the collector's life (Kings et al, 2017).

The broken eggshell mentioned above had a value for that individual that no other eggshell could replace. The same sense of value and emotional attachment is also seen in those who collect other items. Many individuals have a passion for collecting items, such as baseball cards, postage stamps, stuffed animals, or even rare paintings and old cars. These individuals tend to spend money, time, and space on their collections, and see the items as having a valuable sentimental connection. Belk (1995) conducted over 200 interviews with collectors. They mentioned sense of belonging, security, and happiness as reasons for collecting items. All the collections were seen as valuable by the participants, and many believed that their collections would eventually be displayed in museums. Value and the feeling inspired in the individual by the items were therefore common themes. For the individual, these feelings and emotions create a value that no other item could provide.

The previous literature on consumer disposal behavior covers saving (hoarding or collecting) and reusing (gifting or transferring). It shows that this behavior is driven by hidden forces that result in saving and reusing possessions. Emotions and value seem to play a part in this behavior. In other words, if a possession is valuable to the consumer, it is more likely to be saved, reused, re-gifted, or given to charity than to be thrown away. Reuse and saving of shopping bags could therefore also be a result of the value placed on these by consumers. For example, the value of a plastic bag could be less than a paper one. This might be why plastic bags are used as garbage liners, and paper bags are more likely to be saved (Prendergast et. al, 2001). The next section therefore provides an overview of the literature on the concept of value in consumer behavior and marketing.

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2.4 Value

Shopping bags are generally used to facilitate the movement of products purchased (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Studies have also shown that they are mainly reused for environmental and sustainability purposes (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). However, people tend to collect, save, hoard, and share items and possessions that have strong sentimental value (Cherrier & Ponnor, 2010). It is therefore possible that "value" may be a variable in the act of saving and reusing shopping bags. However, value, generally, is a term with many definitions, typologies, attributes, and frameworks.

Value is defined depending on the context and purpose. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) defined it as the exchange of a sacrifice for a desired object. These sacrifices could include money, time, and effort. Holbrook (1999) defined value as a transaction between two entities, where one would give something of value for something with greater value. Ulaga (2003) stated that consumer value is perceived uniquely by individual customers; it is conditional or contextual depending on individual, situation, or product; it is relative (in comparison to known or imagined alternatives); it is dynamic (changing within an individual over time). Ulaga's definition of value therefore explains Holbrook's (1999, p. 5) definition, which is an "interactive relativistic preference experience". Another definition was provided by Zeithmal (1988), who stated that value has a different meaning for different people. For example, value can be a low price for consumers who are looking for the lowest price, but others look at the value in terms of whether the product has the attributes they want, such as color, speed, make, or type of engine in a car. Value is usually created in an exchange between a subject and an object. For this exchange to be considered "valuable", the consumer needs to give something of value to get something more valuable

in return. Consumers would not consider that there was value in giving their hard-earned cash for a "low quality" product. Holbrook (1999) noted that value is often not about the product or its physical features, but is created by the experience, which is consistent with research on consumer disposal behavior. The experience of the consumer when collecting, using, or saving an item can be what makes it irreplaceable and valuable. Ulaga and Holbrook's definitions of value, which are subjective and situation-sensitive, can therefore be applied in the context of reusing and saving something that is perceived as valuable, such as a shopping bag.

The literature is rich in value typologies and their application. These typologies include hedonic and utilitarian shopping values, which are often used to describe the value to the consumer of the shopping experience (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994). Consumer value can also be derived from the organization and brand perspective that enriches consumer loyalty (Smith & Colgate, 2007). Woodall (2003) described a comprehensive framework featuring five forms of consumer values, including net, marketing, sale, rational, and derived value. Holbrook (1999) provided a systematic value typology that includes a detailed rubric of value creation and descriptions of the nature of value. This includes active/reactive and self-/other-oriented types of value. Active value is when the consumer is actively using and manipulating the product or object to add or create value. Examples might include using a washing machine, or a hammer. Reactive value is when the individual is reacting to the object, such as a holiday, where the experience is lived by the individual. Self- and other-oriented value typologies are also important types of value. Humans usually value possessions for their effect on them, their self-development, and how they help form an image to others (Belk, 1988). The interaction between Holbrook's

three typologies—active/reactive, self-/other-oriented, and intrinsic/extrinsic—provides another set of applications of values, leading to properties such as esteem, fun, efficiency, excellence, status, ethics, spiritually, and aesthetics. These interactions between the value typologies are explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Typology of Consumer Value (Holbrook, 1999, p. 12)

		Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Self-Oriented	Active	Efficiency (O\I, Convenience)	Play (fun)
	Reactive	Excellence (quality)	Aesthetics (beauty)
Other-Oriented	Active	Status (success, Impression, Management)	Ethics (Virtue, Justice, Morality)
	Reactive	Esteem (Reputation, Materialism, Possessions)	Spirituality (Faith, Ecstasy, Sacredness, Magic)

The final value typology framework informing this research is the theory of consumption values (Sheth et al., 1991). This defines five empirically-tested consumption values: functional value, social value, emotional value, epistemic value, and conditional value. Functional value is defined as the perceived utility acquired from the utilitarian and functional performance of the item. Social value is defined as value that facilitates an association with a social group. Emotional value is the emotional worth associated with an object. The conditional value is the perceived utility acquired from an alternative as the

result of a set of conditions. Finally, epistemic value is the utility acquired through curiosity and desire for knowledge aroused by the object. These typologies and their definitions show how value is created and differs for different objects and subjects. This theory can inform consumer disposal behavior for shopping bags. A shopping bag could, for example, have a functional value because it was created for a functional utilitarian purpose.

Holbrook (1999) cited Richins (1994) to explain esteem and status applications of value. Richins' research concentrated on how possessions form and create self-esteem and materialistic behavior to maintain esteem and maintain the owner's position in society. Materialistic behaviors include conspicuous consumption, status consumption, and materialism. Richins (1994) commented that individuals have a public and a private meaning for their possessions. She provided an example of a woman who was given diamond earrings by her husband for their anniversary. The public meaning of the diamond earrings was that they are expensive, valuable and luxurious. The private meaning was a gift from her husband on their anniversary. The public meaning is therefore a part of the private meaning. Richins noted that both the private and public meaning of possessions creates a value. However, she did not directly address the issue of whether emotions are part of the private meaning or facilitate the creation of value. This research therefore considered whether the private meaning could be solely about emotions. For instance, the wife's feelings of happiness and joy from receiving a gift from her husband on their anniversary could be why the earrings have a value. However, if the couple later got divorced, these earrings would remind the wife of her ex-husband, and she might therefore perceive that they had a different value: monetary rather than emotional. Private and public meanings are therefore not the only reasons for value. Emotions also play a role. Richins

(1997) tried to understand and measure consumers' emotions before the value created by public and private meanings. Her conclusions suggest that private meanings are closely and inextricably linked to emotions.

This study therefore chose to explore emotional, functional, conditional, and status values as potential reasons for saving and reusing shopping bags. Belk (1995) found that consumers' esteem and status are maintained and boosted as a result of collecting goods, without disregarding functional and even dysfunctional hoarding (Kings et. al, 2017), and sharing and gifting (Phillips & Sego, 2011). Shopping bags certainly have functional and utilitarian value (Prendergast et. al, 2001).

2.5 Conclusion

The research question for this study is what value is generated for consumers by saving and reusing shopping bags. This question draws on the literature review on shopping bags in the context of environmental and consumer behavior studies, and work on consumer disposal and value. Some previous studies have addressed this behavior, but the gaps and limitations in these studies provided an opportunity for this research. Self-perception is a key reason for reusing shopping bags, as well as their functional and design attributes. However, this research expects to find other reasons for bag reuse. Consumer disposal behavior research suggests that people tend to save, reuse, share, and give away their possessions according to the value, meaning, and emotions manifested in that possession. This research will therefore reflect the idea that consumers may save and reuse bags because they have emotional, conditional, functional, and/or social value associated with them. This will contribute to the study of packaging in general and help to link value to this element of consumer behavior. The next chapter describes the methodology used

and the data collection and analysis methods selected to achieve this contribution and answer the research question.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research approach used in this study to achieve the research objectives. It explains the data collection and analysis tools, and the strategy used for sampling and to ensure trustworthiness. It also discusses the ethical considerations of the study (see Figure 3).
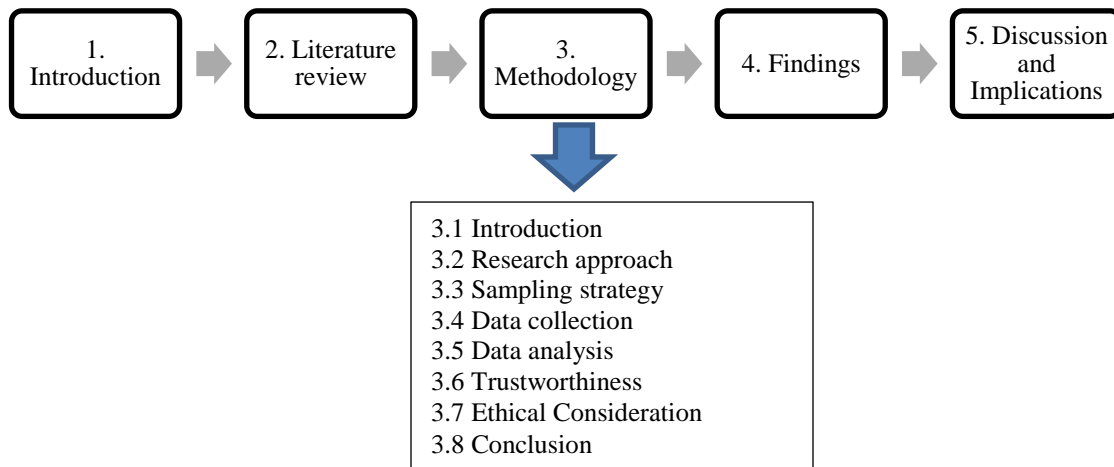
Figure 3. Methodology Chapter Outline

3.2 Research Approach

The study chose a qualitative approach, mainly because of the level and quality of information that had to be gathered from participants to understand the research

phenomenon. Understanding the reasons behind the use and reuse of shopping bags needs an exploratory research approach to gain deep insights into layers of motives and meanings. Belk (1995) and Kings et al. (2017) commented that collecting and hoarding behavior is both individual and subjective. This suggests that there is more than one reason for this behavior and that individuals experience different realities. This description fits within the constructivist research paradigm, which describes multiple realities or explanations for behavior (McCracken, 1988). The positivist research paradigm, by contrast, focuses on one explanation, one truth and one reality behind a behavior (Shenton, 2004). A constructivist mindset is therefore crucial to being open to different explanations, conditions and iterations of behavior. Choosing a qualitative research method fits the constructivist nature of this research.

Qualitative research is used in the field of social sciences to explain and explore behaviors that cannot be investigated through quantitative methods (Belk, 2006). Many social, ethnographic, and psychological studies use qualitative methods to understand the deeper reasons and drivers of human behavior. There are many qualitative tools available to collect information, such as phenomenological in-depth interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observation (Belk, 2006). The choice of tool depends on the nature and level of information needed. This research was inductive, and therefore designed to develop a theoretical hypothesis and conclusion, rather than deductive, testing defined hypotheses through investigation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This also fits with a qualitative approach.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who save and/or reuse shopping bags. Potential participants were randomly selected on campus and in different locations such as beauty salons by asking women if they save and reuse shopping bags. Once they confirmed their use and reuse of shopping bags and agreed to an interview, a meeting time was set for the interview at the participant's residence. Holding the interview at the participant's home was chosen to put participants at ease and ensure that they were comfortable. Being able to observe the participant's home environment and relationship with the shopping bags also added richness to the data. The initial number of participants was informed by the sample sizes used in previous studies using in-depth interviews. However, interviews continued until data saturation was reached and no new themes emerged from the data.

The research question and objectives did not consider demographic differences in saving and reusing shopping bags, because this research field is still developing. However, the participants had different nationalities, age groups, and social and marital status. A diverse sample was selected to see if there is common behavior regardless of background.

The study used only female participants, for three main reasons. First, the research did not aim to study differences in behavior between genders. Second, consumer disposal literature suggests that women are more likely than men to collect belongings and have an emotional attachment to possessions (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009; Phillips & Sego, 2011). Finally, the researcher also obtained information from every participant about male partners or individuals in their lives, to check whether it might be helpful to include men in future studies.

3.4 Data Collection

Previous studies on shopping bags (Prendergast et al., 2001; Park & John, 2001; Roy & Rabbanee, 2015;Williams et al., 2012) used quantitative methods to assess habits connected with the use and the reuse of shopping bags. These studies all used the questionnaire developed by Prendergast et al. (2001) as a data collection tool, and their results are therefore very similar. This study used in-depth interviews for three main reasons. The first was to test whether the results would differ from previous studies on shopping bags. The second was to investigate and discover further in-depth reasons behind reusing and saving bags. Finally, previous studies on consumer disposal used qualitative research methods, and particularly in-depth interviews (Belk 1995; Cherrier & Ponnor 2010; Farj & Martinez 2006a, 2006b; Kings et. al, 2017; Maycroft 2009). This therefore provides strong justification for using in-depth interviews as a data collection tool.

Previous studies on consumer disposal also visited the participants' homes, because this facilitates the observation process and helps to provide ethnographic explanations for behavior (Belk 1995; Cherrier & Ponnor 2010; Farj & Martinez 2006a, 2006b; Kings et. al, 2017; Maycroft 2009). It can therefore be said that conducting in-depth interviews at the participants' homes will provide a comfortable environment for the participant and will also enhance the data by allowing observation of the participants in their 'natural habitat'. Taking field notes during the observations will triangulate the data. Observing where participants store shopping bags, and how they behave towards them, and react to the stories they are telling, are very important inputs to the interviews. Taking photographs was also considered to facilitate comparison between participants, and provide visual evidence of the behavior. This research therefore used three data collection tools: in-depth

interviews, photographs of shopping bags, and observation. All of these methods are supported by previous research.

Themes, topics, and guidelines to be covered during the interviews were developed to provide a semi-structured interview strategy (McCracken, 1988). The interview guide included a set of planned and unplanned follow-up questions and prompts to be used during the interviews. A set of biographical questions was also included in the guideline to provide information about the participants' background, financial and social status, education, and profession. This gave insights into the value that participants place on their possessions.

This study used different instruments and tools to collect data. In line with previous studies, voice recording was used to facilitate transcribing and crosschecking with field notes and observations (Belk, 1995; Farj & Martinez, 2006a; Fournier, 1998; Kings et al., 2017; Phillips & Sego, 2011). A piece of software was used to create verbatim transcriptions of the recordings and they were then manually crosschecked with the voice recording. Photographs of the participants' shopping bags were taken at the interview to support the data analysis and allow triangulation of the data.

3.4.1 Interview Procedure

Once a participant agreed to take part in the study, an appointment was scheduled to visit their home. Interviews were conducted in participants' living or guest rooms. Before the interview took place, the researcher socialized with the participant and discussed several topics to create a welcoming and friendly ambience. The participants all offered food and drink to the interviewer. The welcoming phase ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The interview was initiated by handing the interviewee the consent letter to be signed and giving an overview of the procedure, including the use of voice recording and photography.

Once the consent letter was signed, the voice recording began. The first few elements of the discussion revolved around shopping, shopping frequency, shopping habits, purchases, and brands. Participants explained how many times they went shopping per week or month, the brands or malls they usually visited, and their usual purchases. After establishing an understanding of the participants' shopping habits, the interviews moved onto the question of reusing and saving shopping bags. Participants were asked to show shopping bags where appropriate, and these were photographed. Observation notes were taken throughout the interview on the body language of the participant, reaction to the stories told about shopping bags, and any behavior that could not be recorded via the voice recorder. When the interview guide was finished, and all discussion complete, the voice recording was stopped. The participants then talked generally to the interviewer, often reflecting on the interview and the topic. Some of these reflections and discussions were very interesting and were added to the observation notes.

3.5   Data Analysis

This section describes the approach used to analyze the transcripts, observations, and photographs. Two analysis methods were used: the constant comparative method inspired by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and life history (Dahl et al., 2003; Fournier, 1998). These two analytical methods complement each other and facilitate the iteration of data (see Figure 4).

The first step in data analysis involved converting the audio recording of the interviews into a verbatim transcription using software called "Transcribe". This program converts audio recordings to a Microsoft Word document file (.doc). The Word document was then compared to the audio recording of each interview. The next step was to read the

verbatim transcript to create an initial understanding of the behavior (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). This was followed by a line-by-line and cross-case analysis of the data before comparing the interview data, observation notes, and photographs (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These steps were designed to ensure the consistency and dependability of the findings. The next section describes the two data analysis processes used next.
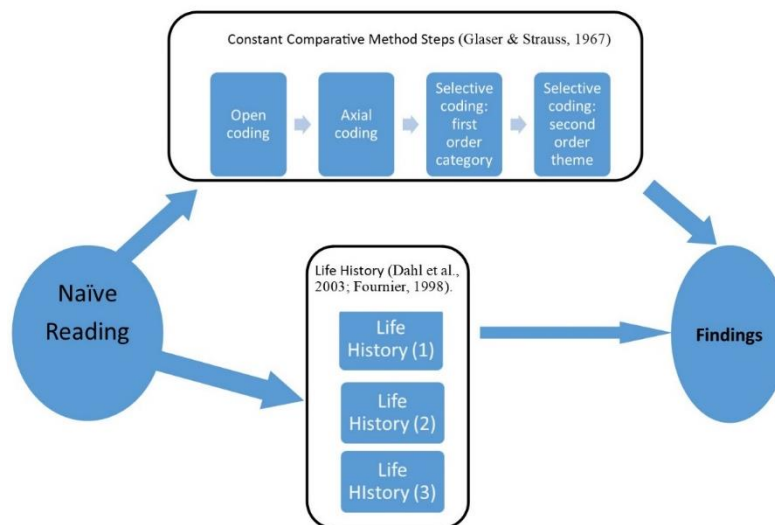
Figure 4. Data Analysis Framework

3.5.1   Constant Comparative Method

Glaser & Strauss (1967) defined grounded theory as a data analysis method used to analyze qualitative data and develop theories. Data are grouped into themes and categories to discover or formulate a theory. Themes and categories are created using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This method examines the data using line-

by-line and cross-transcription analysis to create three levels of coding. The three levels of coding are open coding, axial coding, and theoretical (selective) coding (see Figure 4).

The first level of coding is open coding, labelling each phrase in the verbatim transcription. The second level of coding is axial coding, which focuses on finding a common link between the open codes extracted in the first level. The final level is theoretical or selective coding, which has two stages. The first order category groups the axial codes under a main category, and the second order theme matches the category with a pre-existing theory or constructs. This process occurs both line-by-line and across the transcript. The codes go through many iterations to ensure that they represent all the data extracted from the verbatim transcript and field notes.

In this study, codes were grouped using the data in each phrase, paragraph, or sentence. The same data could be used in different open codes if mentioned in a different context. After many iterations and readings, 24 open codes were generated from the verbatim transcripts. Table 2 shows a sample of some of the open codes and a description of each.

Table 2. Example of Open Codes

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
A1	"Plastic", "Paper", "Cardboard", "Fabric"	Types of shopping bags – material	The material of the shopping bag.

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
A2	"Thin plastic", "Cheap plastic", "Low quality paper", "Thick cardboard", "String handles", "Ribbon handles", "It's red", "Good size", "It's not sturdy"	Types of shopping bags – design	The design (shape, size, color, graphics) of the shopping bag
A3	"From grocery stores", "Fashion", "Cosmetics", "Pharmacy", "Zara", "Chanel", "D&G", "Tiffany", "Michael Kors", "Bershka", "Victoria's Secret", "Sephora", "Al-Meera", "Carrefour", "Monoprix"	Types of shopping bags – brand	The brand or store providing the shopping bag

The codes and the data in Table 2 show how shopping bags can differ in terms of material as well as behavior associated with their use and reuse.

The next step in the data analysis was grouping the open codes under axial codes (see Table 3). Grouping of the open codes explains and represents the behavior and codes. This analysis helps narrow down the codes and find emerging themes. There were 24 open codes, so alphabetical numbering was used to manually group the open codes by axial code category. The process of designating the open codes to specific axial codes was iterative,

to ensure that each was in the most representative code.

Table 3. Example of Axial Codes

Open Code	Axial code	Description of the axial code
A1, A2, A3, I1, I2	Physical attributes of shopping bag (1)	The physical specifications and details of the shopping bag
A1, A3, B1, B2	Significance of storage location (2)	How the location of storage reflects the importance of the shopping bag

The third step in data coding is creating theoretical (selective) codes (Spiggle, 1994), which involves two steps. The first step is to place the axial codes into first-order categories, and select a second order theme for that category by explaining each theme using a theory or/and a construct that fits the study's context. There were nine axial codes, so they were also numbered to facilitate the grouping of the first order categories (see Table 4).

Table 4. Example of Theoretical (Selective) codes

Selective code/first order category	Selective code/second order theme
Functions of shopping bag (1, 2, 3)	Functional value

Selective code/first order category	Selective code/second order theme
Emotional significance (2, 4, 5, 8)	Emotional value

The theoretical connections and findings for the codes are explained in detail in Chapter 4.

3.5.2 Life History

Belk (2006) defined life history as a data analysis approach using data in the form of a story that describes and analyzes behaviors. It is therefore a tool that is used both to display phenomenological and ethnographic data and to facilitate a deep investigation of intimate behavior (Belk, 2006). It has frequently been used in social sciences research, and recently in marketing research (Belk, 2006). Its use as a data analysis tool depends on the type of data being collected, analyzed, and presented. Fournier (1998) used life history to show the depth of the relationship between brands and individuals. Dahl et al. (2003) used it to study the guilt associated with consumption. The main reason for its use is to create a narrative (story) and in-depth understanding of the participants' behavior. Presenting the data in the form of a narrative can help researchers to understand the nature of the behavior and the sentiments and emotions associated (Belk, 2006).

This research used life history for data analysis for three main reasons. First, it was considered helpful to analyze the data with two tools, and not just the constant comparative method, to provide triangulation. Analyzing the data from a different angle was also considered to provide a deeper insight into the participants' behavior. The second reason for choosing the method was to maximize the level of data richness. Finally, life history

was used in this study to unveil behavior associated with saving and reusing shopping bags by selecting three of the 15 participants who displayed unique elements of behavior. The verbatim transcripts and observations were used to create the life history (story) of the participants and reach conclusions about their behavior. To create a story presentation of the data, but still preserve participants' privacy, pseudonyms were given to the life history participants.

The next chapter provides the results of the constant comparative method and then discusses and compares these with the results of the life history analysis. The life history results are presented in the form of stories that show the nature of behavior involved in saving and reusing shopping bags. This also gives insights into the interviews' ambience and setting.

3.6   Trustworthiness

In quantitative research, validity and reliability are established through statistical analyses and indices such as test–retest correlation, Cronbach's alpha, and goodness of fit indices. In qualitative methods, validity and reliability are referred to as trustworthiness, or the credibility and representativeness of the data (Shenton, 2004). A qualitative researcher should prove the trustworthiness of their study before, during, and after collecting and analyzing the data. Trustworthiness has four main components, and each has to be achieved and verified to assure the validity of each stage of the research. The first component is credibility, or the believability of the data. Credibility can be achieved through triangulation, participant checks, and/or peer briefing. The second component of trustworthiness is transferability, or the generalizability of the data and findings. This could be achieved through rich description and purposive sampling. The third component is

dependability, focusing on the method used to collect and analyze the data. It can be achieved through triangulation and audit. The final component of trustworthiness is conformability, covering the objectivity of the researcher. This is achieved through triangulation and peer review.

Flick (2018) defined triangulation as a tool that is frequently used in qualitative research to ensure trustworthiness. It has many forms. Data triangulation includes collecting data from a large sample or using different tools. Theory triangulation is using existing theories to verify the hypothesis and explain the findings. Finally, investigator triangulation means having multiple researchers and comparing notes and analysis.

This study established trustworthiness through triangulation of data collection methods using verbatim transcription, observation field notes, and photographs of shopping bags. Cross-analysis of data from these three sources created a rich description. Triangulation with past theory and previous literature ensured that the findings were compatible with previous work, and fitted with theoretical concepts to ensure credibility. Participant checks—sending the findings and life history to the participants to review— were used to ensured that the findings were objective and unbiased. The findings were also checked with the thesis supervisor to ensure their conformability. Finally, the dependability was ensured by the use of three different data collection tools to triangulate data. Table 5 shows how different criteria were used to ensure trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

Table 5. Research Trustworthiness Procedure

Trustworthiness criteria	Definition	Implication	Achievement
Confirmability	The objectivity of the researcher and results	• Triangulation • Recognition of shortcomings • In-depth methodological description	• Data collection triangulation (audio recording, observation field notes, pictures) • Data analysis triangulation (life history and constant comparative method) • Rich description of behavior
Credibility	The confidence that the findings represent the truth	• Peer briefing • Triangulation • Participant checks • Adopting a recognized research method	• Participant checks • Theoretical triangulation • Data collection triangulation • Data analysis triangulation

Trustworthiness criteria	Definition	Implication	Achievement
Transferability	The generalizability of the study.	• Purposive sampling • Rich description	• Purposive sampling • Rich description
Dependability	The reliability of the findings	• Overlapping methods • In-depth methodological description	• Rich description • Data collection triangulation • Data analysis triangulation • Theoretical triangulation

3.7   Ethical Consideration

The research was designed to be compatible with the ethical guidelines set out by Qatar University. The interview guide and the informants' consent forms were submitted to the Qatar University Institutional Review Board (QU-IRB). The approval for the interview guide and consent form were sent by email along with a hard copy document by QU-IRB before the interviews. Participants read and signed a consent form to indicate their consent to participate in the research, and have their interview voice-recorded. They were told that they had the right to stop and cancel the interview and voice recording at any

stage.

3.8   Conclusion

This chapter has justified and explained the research methodology used to address the thesis research questions. It has described the use of in-depth interviews, field observations and photographs of shopping bags, as a way to explore saving and reuse behavior. To ensure trustworthiness, the research used triangulation in data collection and data analysis, as well as participant checks. The next chapter describes the findings from the data analysis process.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

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│    1.    │    │    2.    │    │3.Methodol│    │          │    │    5.    │
│Introductio│ ▶ │Literature│ ▶ │   ogy    │ ▶ │4. Findings│ ▶ │Discussion│
│    n     │    │  review  │    │          │    │          │    │   and    │
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              ┌────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
              │ 4.1 Introduction                               │
              │ 4.2 Constant comparative method outcomes       │
              │ 4.3 Life history                               │
              │ 4.4 Conditions for saving and reusing          │
              │ shopping bags                                  │
              │ 4.5 Conclusion                                 │
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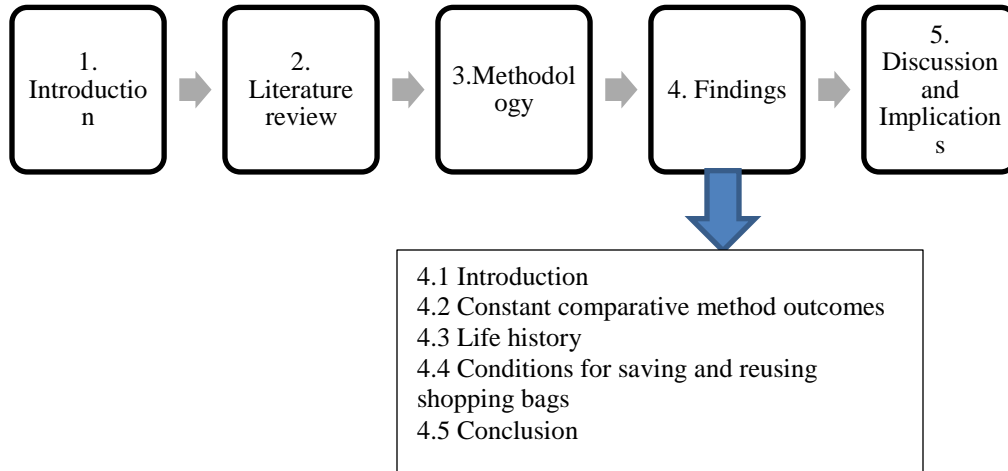
Figure 5. Findings Chapter Outline

4.1 Introduction

In total, 15 female participants were interviewed. The average duration of the interviews was around 90 minutes. The total timing of the interviews selected to be a part of the life history analysis was three and a half hours. Table 6 shows demographic details of the participants.

Table 6. Demographic details of the study participants

Initials	Age	Employment	Status	Education	Region	Social Status
LW	39	Lecturer	Married with two children	PhD	Africa	Mid–high
Amna*	42	Specialist	Married with four adult children	BSc	Africa	Mid–high
MN	27	Stay-at-home wife	Married	BSc	Gulf	Mid–high
NJ	26	Social media expert	Single	MSc	Gulf	High
MS	24	Part-time Teacher Assistant	Single	BSc	Middle East	Mid
DI	28	Events coordinator	Single	MSc	Africa	Mid
LA	26	Administrative assistant	Single	MSc	Gulf	High
Dana*	30	Director of design school	Single	BSc	Middle East	Mid–High
LP	26	Secretary	Single	BSc	Asia	Low
NV	30	Cashier	Single with one child	High school	Asia	Low
CT	41	Waitress	Single with one child	High school	Asia	Low
DM	34	Waitress	Married with three children	High school	Asia	Low
CP	27	Waitress	Single	BSc	Asia	Low
IA	55	Stay-at-home mother	Married with three adult children	High school	Middle East	Mid–high
Lara*	27	Paralegal	Single	Masters student	Middle East	Mid–high

* Pseudonyms adopted to preserve privacy in the life history analysis

Life history and the constant comparative method were used as data analysis tools to explore and understand behavior associated with saving and reusing shopping bags. This chapter starts by discussing the findings from the constant comparative method, then moves on to findings from the life history approach.

4.2 Constant Comparative Analysis Outcomes

The first data analysis tool used in this research was the constant comparative method rooted in grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), involving a process of coding.

When forming the first layer of code, it was clear that some codes had theoretical meanings that could be linked to the literature. The codes and the data (see table D in the Appendix) show how shopping bags can differ in their material as well as in the behavior associated with their use and reuse. The themes emerging from the codes also show the relationship between the participants and their shopping bags, and how the conceptions of these bags differ between participants. Some shopping bags were seen as functional (Prendergast et al., 2001), while others had emotional or hedonic purposes (Roy & Rabbanee, 2015). The codes "Occasion of reusing: for self" and "Occasion of reusing: for others" show how self-image and social image can play a vital role in deciding which shopping bag is to be reused. The initial purpose of reuse might be functional, but the decision is often rooted in emotional and social perceptions.

Many connections emerged between the axial codes and past studies and theories. Under the code "Significance of storage location", plastic shopping bags from grocery stores were often stored in the kitchen so that they could be reused as bin liners. However, paper bags from fashion-wear stores were stored in the bedroom, and few participants intended to reuse them, showing their value. Valuable possessions are generally stored in private locations (Belk, 1995; Sobh & Belk, 2011). The participants often stored certain bags in the kitchen and others in their bedroom. This showed that bags have a value associated with both their material and their brand. For example, plastic bags from fashion brands were stored in the kitchen. This indicated that they had the same value as plastic bags from grocery stores: their value is based on their material, not their brand. The purpose of reuse was also associated with the storage location. Plastic bags were commonly reused as bin liners, so were stored in the kitchen near the bin. Fashion-wear bags, however were

kept in the bedroom to be reused for personal use or given to others.

The axial codes "Memory attributes" and "Emotional attributes" indicate the feelings and emotions that are associated with either saving or reusing particular bags. Storing shopping bags in the bedroom with or without the intention to reuse them has many personal implications. Valuable items, such as jewelry or special belongings, are usually handled with care and kept in a safe location. In some cases, it appears that shopping bags are treated similarly, for example, when they were given with a gift or have a special shopping memory associated. These shopping bags have an emotional connotation, regardless of their brand or material. As a result, they are saved as valuable belongings, often without any intention of reusing them. This behavior is similar to that of mothers saving their children's favorite items or people saving something associated with a special memory (Cherrier & Ponnor, 2010; Phillips & Sego, 2011; Ture, 2014). This memory or meaning creates the importance and significance of the bag.

The axial codes "Self-image attributes" and "Social image attributes" indicated the effect of the shopping bag on the participants' image. Shopping bags stored for reuse have different meanings and associations. For example, the brand and material of the bag were very important when it came to deciding which bag to reuse and for what purpose, because these bags were visible to others and might cause people to make judgements about the person carrying them (Williams et al., 2012). This was even more important when deciding which bag to use to send gifts or items to family and friends (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). This is linked to self- and social image (Wolfe, Lennox & Cutler, 1986).

The last two axial codes, "Conditions for saving" and "Conditions for reusing", were grouped based on their repetitive occurrence in the verbatim transcripts and the

researcher's own observations. The conditions underlying saving or/and reusing shopping bags were evident in almost every interview. Participants had many conditions and criteria associated with saving and reusing shopping bags. In some cases, the decision was made unconsciously, for example, to use plastic bags as bin liners. Other decisions were more critical, for example, which bag to use to send a birthday gift to a friend. Table 7 shows all the axial codes, and their descriptions.

Table 7. Axial coding

Open Code	Axial Code	Description of the axial code
A1, A2, A3, I1, I2	Physical attributes of shopping bag (1)	The physical specifications and details of the shopping bag.
A1, A3, B1, B2	Significance of storage location (2)	How the location of storage reflects the importance of the bag.
A1, A2, A3, B2	Functional attributes (3)	The functional uses and behavior associated with the bag.
E1, E2, F3, F4, G1, I1	Memory attributes (4)	The memories associated with the bag.
C2, C3, D2, E1, E2, F1, F2, G1, I1	Emotional attributes (5)	The emotional associations of the bag.
C4, D1, D2, E2, G1, G2, H1, H2	Self-image attributes (6)	How self-image is related to the bag.
D2, E2, G1,	Social image attributes (7)	How social image is related to the

Open Code	Axial Code	Description of the axial code
G2, H1, H2		bag.
C1, C3, D1, E1, G2, H1, H2	Conditions for saving (8)	The conditions under which bags are saved.
C2, C4, D2, E2, F2, G2, H1, H2	Conditions for reusing (9)	The conditions under which bags are reused.

Applying the definitions of the four types of value in the theory of consumption values (Sheth et al., 1991) to the axial codes shows some clear distinctions (Table 8).

Table 8. Theoretical (selective) codes

Selective code/first order category	Selective code/second order theme
Functions of shopping bag (1, 2, 3)	Functional value
Emotional significance (2, 4, 5, 8)	Emotional value
Self-presentation (1, 6, 7, 9)	Social value
Conditions of behavior (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)	Conditional value

Functional value is defined as the perceived utility acquired from the utilitarian and functional performance of the item or object (Holbrook, 1999). This worth or value is created, in this case, because a shopping bag facilitates movement or carries belongings.

This is considered to be a shopping bag's most basic function and the reason for its existence (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). "Functions of shopping bags" is therefore the most appropriate first-order theme for the axial codes, covering "Physical attributes of shopping bags", "Significance of storage location", and "Functional attributes". The second order theme for "Functions of shopping bags" is "Functional value" (Sheth et al., 1991).

The axial codes "Memory attributes" and "Emotional attributes" showed that some shopping bags had emotional importance to the participants. This importance was not associated with the shopping bag itself, but with the linked memories and emotions. These axial codes were therefore assigned to the first-order category "Emotional significance". The emotional value is defined as the emotional or arousal worth associated with an object. Storing the objects in locations that are considered private and personal to the participant could indicate the significance of the object (Cherrier & Ponnor, 2010). Emotions could be either positive, negative, or neutral (Richins, 1997), and generate meaning for the object in the eyes of the participant (Richins, 1994b). This meaning is private and known only to the individual.

The final axial codes, "Self-image attributes" and "Social image attributes" were assigned to the first-order category of "Self-presentation", for several reasons. First, all the participants mentioned the words "presentation", "presentable", "not presentable", or "unpresentable". These words were mentioned 55 times in different contexts when asked to describe how and when they would reuse shopping bags. The repetition of these words shows both positive and negative connotations, suggesting the choice of shopping bag is important in presenting an image to others, or self-presentation (Wolfe et al., 1986). It is important to show a good social image (Tice et al., 1995). Self-presentation can also

indicate the social value, defined as the worth given to an object because it is associated with social specific groups (Sheth et al., 1991). This means that the object has a value which facilitates or creates an association with a particular social group. This association plays a crucial role in creating and maintaining social image (Sirgy, 1982). Objects can be important in maintaining and creating social image associated with specific groups (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). They therefore have a publicly-known and shared meaning for that group (Richins, 1994b). This meaning also created value for the object. The second order theme is therefore "Social value".

The verbatim transcripts and observations during the interviews showed that participants had specific storage locations, purposes for saving and reuse, and conditions under which they would reuse bags, and for whom. These are considered to be behavioral conditions for saving and reusing shopping bags, and were grouped under the first-order category of "Conditions of behavior". The conditions created significance and motives for the behavior. The second order theme for the first-order category "Conditions of behavior" was therefore "Conditional value". Conditional value is defined as the perceived utility acquired from an alternative as the result of the situation or set of circumstances facing the choice maker (Sheth et al., 1991).

A single object can have more than one type of value (Holbrook, 1999; Smith & Colgate, 2007; Sheth et al., 1991; Ulaga, 2003; Woodall, 2003; Zeithmal, 1988). A shopping bag can therefore have emotional, functional, social, and/or conditional value, all at the same time. This was seen in several cases in this study, such as the use of a Tiffany bag to carry lunch to work, giving it both a functional and social value.

In Holbrook's (1999) typology of consumer value, self-presentation falls under

other-oriented, active and reactive and extrinsic categories. This includes participants'

concerns about their social image and how shopping bags are reused to maintain and

improve that image. In other words, the perceived value of shopping bags comes from how

others would view them (other-oriented), and their effect on esteem (reactive vs. extrinsic)

and status (active vs. extrinsic). Shopping bags are first and foremost reused for functional

reasons, showing their convenience value (self-oriented–active vs. extrinsic) value. Only

good quality shopping bags are kept to be reused, so excellence is also associated with this

behavior (extrinsic vs. reactive) (see Table 9).

Table 9. Shopping bags' value using Holbrook's (1999) typology

		Extrinsic
Self-oriented	Active	Efficiency (convenience)
	Reactive	Excellence (quality)
Other-oriented	Active	Status (impression management)
	Reactive	Esteem (reputation, materialism, possessions)

4.3 Life History

Three participants were selected to show distinctive elements of behavior

associated with saving and reusing shopping bags. These three cases show to what extent

value, in all its types, is linked to saving and reusing behavior. The stories showed

interesting narratives behind the consumption and disposal of shopping bags, allowing a much fuller understanding of the behavior.

- Amna

Amna is a 42-year-old married woman with four adult children. She works full-time at an educational institution. She holds a degree in engineering, but her work is mostly administrative. Amna reported enjoying shopping and dining with family and friends. She is very sociable with a good sense of humor. When talking about shopping, she described it as a long process that usually starts with screening stores for particular items. Amna likes to be able to think that she made the right decision once she purchases any item. She therefore tries to find the best deal available. She has two daughters who keep her informed about current fashions, and so she makes sure that she buys fashionable clothes and other items. She also knows what brands are popular, the current "it" brand, and the luxury items in the must-have lists. Amna is therefore a regular shopper. In saving shopping bags, she showed similar behaviors to other participants. She keeps the plastic grocery bags in the kitchen to reuse as garbage bin liners, and fashion wear, accessories, and cosmetics bags are stored in her bedroom.

Amna keeps every single shopping bag, which was unusual among participants. Amna also has a well-designed re-use/saving system for her bags. The classification system is based on the bags' size, material, brand, reuse purpose, and brand preference. For example, Amna uses bags from fashion wear to send gifts to her family, saying: "I keep the shopping bags, the nice ones, to send gifts back home… and I know they would keep them". Amna sometimes likes to match the gift or item she is sending with the shopping bag. For example, when she sends perfume to a friend, she will reuse a bag from a perfume

store. When she carries lunch to work, she takes the size of the food container and the brand of bag into consideration, saying: "I want to send a message that I can afford this brand".

The most distinctive feature about Amna's behavior was the extent to which she is emotionally attached to her collection of shopping bags. When she was asked whether she had any bags that she saved and would never reuse, she described a link to the memory of her deceased mother:

> "I have one bag and the brand is not very well-known. Many years ago, more than ten years, my mother's friend brought her a gift. It is a very nice bag, but the brand was not well-known and the present was not branded. But the bag was very nice and it was the first time my mother met her friend. So she (my mother) used the present, and I kept the bag and I still keep it because it reminds me of the occasion when that woman came to see my mother and they were very happy meeting each other. Also, it reminds me of the times when my mother used to stay with me here. So I like all the times it reminds me of."

When Amna was asked whether she would ever reuse that bag, she said:

> "Never… I keep it in my cupboard... with some other bags. Those bags that I am sure I will not use. I'm just keeping them".

Amna was asked how she would feel if her children reused those bags without her permission. She reported that she would feel emotionally distressed:

> "I would feel sad. Because they [the bags] mean a lot to me. And I just want to keep them. And I'm sure they [the children] would have done it behind my back. Really behind my back. Because the shopping bags are stored in a place that nobody would look. So the children would definitely have had to make an effort to take one of them.

So I would be sad for two reasons: because the bags had been used and also because they were doing it behind my back. Because they would definitely know how much I valued these bags."

Amna's reaction and words clearly show that these bags had a value to her, even if the brand was not well-known. Despite the fact that the items originally inside the bag had not been bought or owned by her, the memories of her mother made the bag valuable. The idea of it being reused or taken was emotionally distressing. This is similar to how some mothers feel about disposing of their children's old belongings, and is associated with an emotional attachment to possessions regardless of their financial value (Kings et al., 2017; Phillips & Sego, 2011). This clearly indicates the importance of personal meaning and emotional value in saving and reuse behavior.

- Dana

Dana is a successful 30-year-old designer whose education and career revolves around art and design. One of the items she designed, for instance, was a woven shopping bag. As a designer, she gets inspiration from various objects in her surrounding, saying: "I am a designer, so I usually collect things for their beauty and functionality." Dana, like all the participants, saves and reuses shopping bags for various purposes: "I use them to take lunch to work … I have a cat, so I use plastic grocery bags for the litter…I send my clothes to the dry cleaners in them…"

Despite the artistic nature of Dana's job, her main reason for reusing shopping bags was functional, rather than image or brand-related. She stated, "I look at these [bags] from a point of view of their function". Dana made it clear on several occasions that she only

takes utility and convenience into consideration when reusing shopping bags. Their storage location was also driven by convenience: for example, she said, "I keep them under the kitchen sink. Usually, because it is closer to the fridge. It's a matter of convenience". This functional approach made Dana's case distinctive. Even after probing and intense questioning, Dana was clear that design was secondary: "To be honest, I think the design of shopping bags does not really vary all that much. …They all function the same way". Dana was asked about the woven tote shopping bag she had designed, and even there, it was clear that functionality and convenience were the key aspect of her vision. She noted, "I tried to make it dual-purpose, so it serves more than one function. Of course, the design is nice". The function, therefore, was paramount in both life and work for Dana.

At the end of the interview, however, Dana made a disclosure that showed that she too cared about her image. She shared a story about taking her clothes for dry cleaning in black plastic garbage bags:

> "Before, when I used to have a lot of clothes to take to the dry cleaner, I would put them in black garbage bags. It is easier that way. However, everyone looked at me like 'Oh my God, she is carrying her clothes in garbage bags!'. And maybe they think I don't wash my clothes or don't do my laundry. So I thought if I put them in a nicer bag, it's easier to walk around with it without people looking."

Dana and Amna are therefore two extreme cases of behavior associated with saving and reusing shopping bags. Amna is emotionally attached to her shopping bags and saves every one. Each one has a story associated. At the other extreme, Dana views her shopping bags as purely functional. However, both women were affected by social image, and the perceptions of others. This aspect was also highlighted in the third participant's story.

- Lara

Lara is a young postgraduate student with a full-time job in a successful organization. She enjoys both online and offline shopping. She is well-informed about fashion and brands. Lara uses shopping to "reward" herself after spending a day at work or school, or even visiting the gym. One of the most interesting aspects of Lara's case is the importance of her social image. She also showed a strong desire to achieve her ideal self-image (Sirgy, 1982). This is evident in the collection of shopping bags she keeps in her bedroom and in other places around her house. However, the conversation about self-image was strikingly honest and transparent. Lara owns a vast collection of bags, ranging from "low luxury" to "high luxury". She uses the low luxury bags to carry lunch to work, and as a way to send a message to others. She said: "I take them to work for others to see and let them know that I can buy from luxury brands". She reflected on a memory of being an undergraduate student:

> "When I was a university student, I used to see girls wearing expensive brands like handbags or sunglasses. I always wanted to own something expensive… before, I was unemployed and could not buy expensive things."

It was clear that Lara considered being able to buy luxury products as an achievement that marked her financial independence. This achievement is displayed through wearing the luxury product itself or reusing the shopping bag, and the feeling was similar for both. She said, "I carried luxury shopping bags to work before as well as wearing the brand itself. I used to feel satisfied whenever I carried a luxury shopping bag or wore the brand". However, Lara commented that this behavior was gradually changing:

"[I think I was doing it] for others to see that I can [afford that brand], but what is

the use now? I am therefore gradually changing my mindset and becoming more

efficient and down-to-earth."

Lara added that this change was occurring because she could now easily afford luxury

brands, so there was no need to show off to others. She said:

"If I take a plastic grocery bag to work, it means that I am gradually starting to feel

the need to pay less attention to shopping bags in general. I consider this an

improvement."

At the end of the interview, Lara commented on her co-workers and how they

reused shopping bags. She likes to observe the shopping bags that her co-workers carry to

work. She reported having very clear perceptions of people based on shopping bags,

especially those linked to luxury brands:

"I like to see what shopping bags they take to work. I look at the size, brand, and

the design of the bag. There are female co-workers who are extremely into buying

expensive brands. It seems that they were brought up from childhood to care about

these things and as a result, it reflected on their personality as adults."

Previous studies have also found that people built perceptions of others based on shopping

bags (Williams et al., 2012) and their clothes and belongings (Kings et al., 2017). Using

shopping bags that signified financial and social status was clearly more important to Lara

than other participants:

"There is also a case where one of my female co-workers suffered a financial

setback because she was unemployed or her family could not sustain itself

financially. Now that they have become financially stable, they feel the need to

show others that they are now capable of buying expensive brands."
Conspicuous consumption to indicate social and financial status is well-known behavior in the field of marketing (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). Shopping bags are one way to indicate social and financial status.

Amna, Dana, and Lara all show how a possession as simple as a shopping bag can have different effects. It can enhance self-image, indicate social status, and provide both emotional and functional value. Using the consumption values typology (Sheth et al., 1991), Amna showed how people might become emotionally attached to a shopping bag as a result of the memories linked to it. This emotional attachment gave value to the bag. Dana, however, was firm that only functionality mattered, and that convenience determined which shopping bag to carry to work, creating its functional value. However, she was prepared to relax the focus on functionality when her social image was strongly affected. Finally but importantly, Lara showed that the link between self-image and self-presentation is important in presenting a social image and social status through conspicuous consumption and reuse of shopping bags. All three women therefore showed that self- and social image are significant drivers of shopping bag reuse, creating a social value for bags.

Figure 6 shows the conceptual model emerging from the results from the constant comparative method and life history analysis. This figure draws on the consumption values framework (Sheth et al., 1991), the consumer value typology (Holbrook, 1999), and the meanings behind value (Richins, 1994b). This study therefore suggests that consumers choose not to throw away shopping bags, and instead reuse and save them, as a result of emotional, social, conditional, and functional values. Shopping bags can have one or more types of value, and they may therefore be saved with or without the intention to reuse them.

The figure shows that when a shopping bag has a social, functional, and conditional value, it is more likely to be saved for reuse. However, shopping bags seen as emotionally valuable are often saved and never reused.
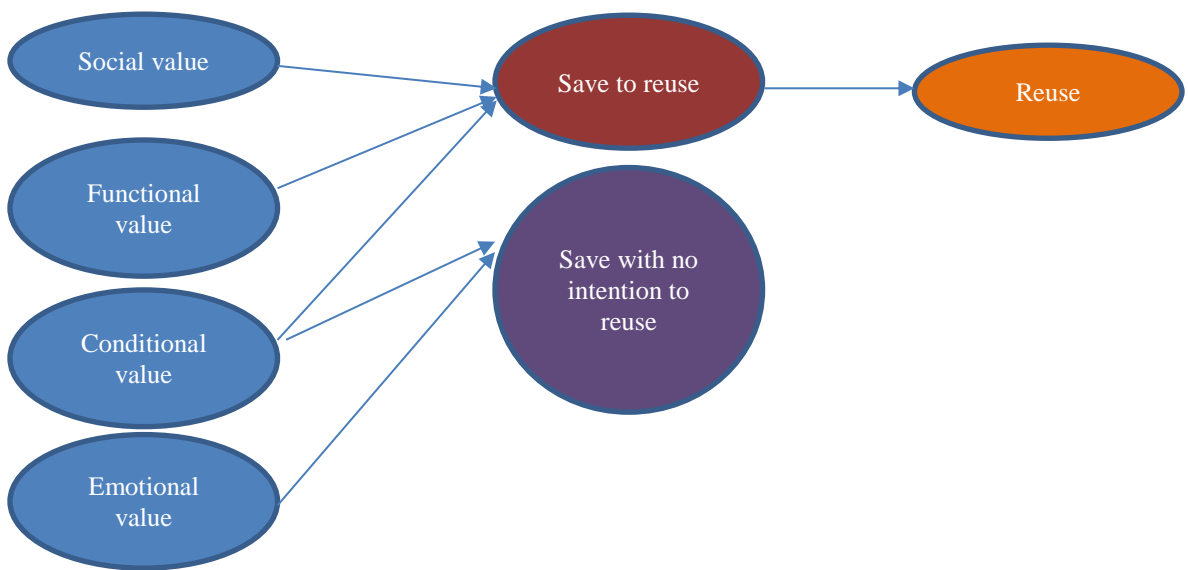
Figure 6. Conceptual model for the study

4.4 Conditions for Saving and Reusing Shopping Bags

This study found that consumers attribute emotional, social, conditional and functional value to saving and/or reuse of shopping bags. It is therefore important to state the conditions for this behavior. The sample group was relatively diverse, but the participants described similar reasons for saving and reusing shopping bags. However, behavior varied with the conditional value. The behavior associated with saving and

reusing shopping bags was guided and managed by three main conditions: the material and design of the bag, the reuse purpose, and the saving purpose.

4.4.1 Material and Design of Shopping Bags

Shopping bags differ in their material and design. They could be made of plastic, paper, cardboard, or fabric. The design could differ in color, graphics, and handles. These attributes play a major role in saving and reusing behavior. Many participants disposed of plastic shopping bags, but reused paper bags. Others, however, said that they might dispose of paper bags because of their poor quality or design.

4.4.2 Reuse Purpose

There were a number of reuse purposes common to many participants, such as the reuse of plastic bags as garbage bin liners. However, the main difference was in the personal element of the reuse purpose. This could be defined as either public or private. Many factors played a role in making the decision for private use, such as self-image, social image, and self-presentation. For instance, LW stated, "I like to dress properly and dress up when I go to work. So I also like to have a nice shopping bag to carry my lunch with … It looks more put together" . Similarly, DL noted, "I like to look good when I go to work so I prefer to carry this shopping bag, because of the brand and because it is a flashy color".

Reusing shopping bags to give a gift is a public use of the shopping bag. This seems to make the decision more complicated than for private use. When participants were asked if they would use particular shopping bags as gift bags or to send items for family and friends, many indicated that this decision would depend on what were they sending and to whom:

"I think about the shopping bag, the item, and the person I am sending it to." (MN)

"I think about the item, the person, and then the shopping bag." (Amna)

"I will not send a gift from one store in a bag from another store." (NA)

"I would use it to send gifts back home because they will think it is expensive."

(LP)

These quotes show that the decision depends on the material of the shopping bag, the brand, the item inside, and the recipient of the gift. Bag reuse of this type seemed to have an impact on self-presentation, and making the wrong decision can therefore have a negative impact on social image, as MN noted:

"When I send something to my friends or family I use the best shopping bag I have because I am criticized every time I send anything."

The reuse purpose condition therefore differs with private or public use. Public use, or gifting of shopping bags, also depends on the first condition, the material and design of the bag. This takes into consideration the person receiving the gift.

4.4.3 Saving Purpose

The condition of saving shopping bags can be split into two. The first condition focuses on saving shopping bags with the intention of reusing them, and the second is saving them without the intention to reuse. These two are clearly quite different issues. For a shopping bag to be saved with no intention to reuse it, it must have an emotional value or a private meaning associated. If this condition does not exist, then the shopping bag might be either reused or disposed of. This value and meaning are regardless of the material, design or brand of the bag.

There are therefore three main conditions driving behavior associated with saving or reusing shopping bags. These conditions are linked to the value placed on the bags by

the consumer. The research question of this thesis revolved around the value generated for consumers by saving and reusing shopping bags. The results from both the life history and the constant comparative method show that consumers do gain value from this process. Four types of value were found: functional, emotional, social, and conditional. Shopping bags could be associated with more than one of these values, and in some cases, all these values existed at the same time. This suggests that although shopping bags vary in their brand, material, and design, they can also be considered similar to any other type of possession (Belk 1988). Consumers view them as an extension of their personality, image, and existence. To an outsider, the bag may be 'just' a bag, but it has value to that person (Cherrier & Ponnor, 2010). In other words, value may be attached to the bag because of what it means to the consumer (Richins, 1994b), and value can therefore be considered subjective (Ulaga, 2003) for shopping bags as well as other possessions.

4.5 Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to understand why consumers save and reuse shopping bags. Its findings provide fascinating insights and make a significant contribution to both theory and practice which will be discussed in more depth in the next and final chapter. Moreover, no research is free from limitations and therefore avenues for future research. These contributions and opportunities for future research will also be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1   Introduction

This chapter puts the overall findings of this thesis in the context of the literature and highlights their implications for theory and practice. It also discusses the limitations of the thesis and suggests some avenues for future research. The chapter structure is shown in Figure 7.
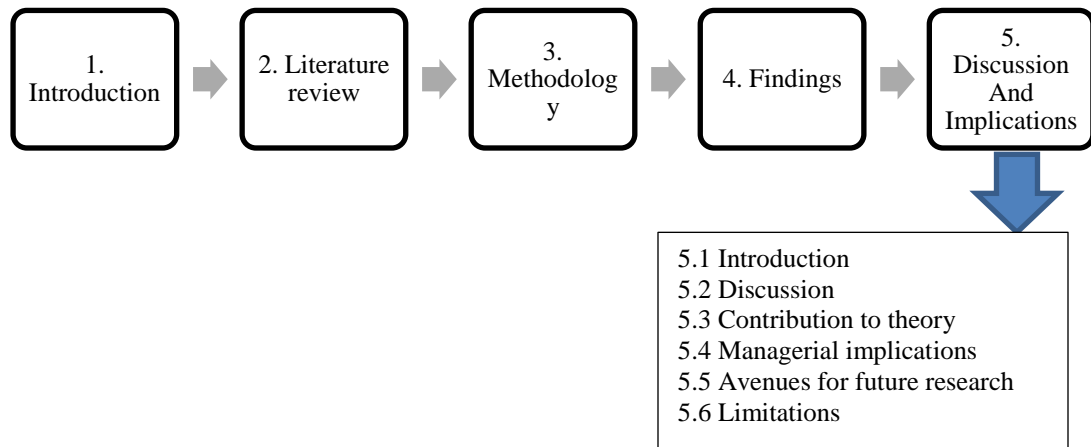

Figure 7. Discussion and Implication Chapter Outline

Walking around a university campus or any organization, we can see the reuse of shopping bags everywhere. Shopping bags are no different from any other possession;

consumers acquire them for functional reasons and tasks, but may develop an attachment to them. This attachment develops because even something as simple as a shopping bag has an impact on social image, self-presentation, or memories. This attachment translates into value, which varies by shopping bag and consumer. Being able to connect something as simple as a shopping bag and a strong concept like value is a strong contribution to the fields of both value and packaging, with both theoretical and practical implications.

5.2   Discussion

Previous studies have suggested that shopping bags are largely saved and reused for environmental, political or regulatory reasons (Chan et al., 2008; Li et al., 2010). However, this study suggests that shopping bags may be saved for other reasons. In-depth interviews with 15 women of different ages, cultures, social status, and educational backgrounds provided insight into why consumers save and reuse shopping bags. The bags discussed were from different types of store, and were also different sizes, materials, and designs. Grocery store shopping bags are usually plastic with a very soft texture and plain design. Fashion-wear store bags are often made of paper or cardboard with a unique design to display the ambience of the brand (Park & John, 2010). Luxury brand bags are mostly made of heavy cardboard with lace or ribbon handles and carry a distinctive logo on the center front and the back.[1]

The category of the store and material of the bag played a major role in the storage location in this study. Plastic bags, whether from grocery stores or fashion stores, were often stored in the kitchen so they could conveniently be reused as bin liners or for other

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[1] Pictures of shopping bags from this study are shown in the Appendix

kitchen- or waste-related functions. One participant (DM) said "I save plastic grocery shopping bags to use for garbage only".

Previous research on shopping bags (Farj & Martinez, 2006; Prendergast et al., 2001), also concluded that plastic bags are commonly reused as garbage bin liners. However, this research has gone further, and explored why this is the case. Plastic shopping bags are perceived as cheap objects and tend to have a low value, as MS said: "[Plastic bags] are cheap and disposable, [and] are only meant to be saved and reused as a garbage bag".

Shopping bags made of paper or cardboard are perceived, valued, and reused differently, especially those from store categories such as fashion-wear, cosmetics, and accessories. These bags were stored differently. At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked to show their shopping bags. The interviewer noticed that there were two main places where bags were stored. Participants usually went first to the kitchen to fetch plastic and grocery bags, then to their bedroom for paper and fashion brand bags. This suggests how the two types of bag are stored, treated and reused. Participants often had a designated drawer or shelf in their bedrooms for these bags. This behavior has not been reported or researched in previous studies on shopping bags. However, similar behavior has been noted in consumer disposal research, and is described there as "collecting" and "hoarding" (Cherrier & Ponnor, 2010). Consumers tend to save or collect valuable possessions in a special and safe place (Cherrier & Ponnor, 2010). This is also consistent with findings from a study about homes in the Arabian Gulf, which suggested that the bedroom is the most sacred room in the house, where women store their most valuable possessions (Sobh & Belk , 2011). This study has therefore contributed to

understanding on the link between storage location and the value placed on bags. Paper fashion bags have functional purposes, but tend to be reused very differently from plastic bags. Rather than being used to hold garbage, they are reused to carry personal items in public, as the following extracts show:

"It's for me to use when I go out and when I want to take things with me." (NJ)

"I use it to carry my stuff or send things to my friends or to my sisters." (LA)

"I keep them for special occasions, like birthdays and parties." (LP)

These reasons for reusing bags tend to be more public-facing and other-oriented. For instance, when deciding on a bag to carry lunch to work, participants said that they considered the brand, color, size, and store category. These factors are important because of image and social image. Park & John (2010) and Williams et al. (2012) discussed how perception is affected by brand cues and brand personality. This study has therefore added to understanding about how this perception is created and considered by individuals, and especially how self-presentation can create social value for a shopping bag:

"I like this shopping bag because I will look more presentable… presentable to others." (DL)

"People look at what you are carrying." (MN)

Presenting oneself to others is a major element of creating and maintaining a social image (Tice et al., 1995; Williams et al., 2012). Putting a gift inside a good-quality shopping bag reflects both the desired self-image and social image. NJ commented:

"I do not think it is appropriate for my image to give my best friend her birthday gift inside an Al-Meera [grocery store] plastic bag. I would feel ashamed and she would feel that I think less of her. You know what I mean."

The reuse of luxury shopping bags is also associated with self-image and self-presentation. However, it is also possible to view this behavior from a different perspective (Prendergast et al., 2001), and associate it with conspicuous consumption. Roy and Rabbanee (2015) compared the hedonic reuse of shopping bags between luxury and non-luxury brands, and found that this behavior is only mediated through self-perception. This study, however, suggests that conspicuous consumption and use of shopping bags is directly related to self-image, social image, self-presentation, and social value:

"If a person knows what Chanel is, I would give them the bag." (IA)

"I consider the person to which I would give the bag … I would give her the D&G one so she will be impressed." (MN)

"I would give my friend a gift in this shopping bag because she will think I bought her something expensive and she would say, 'Wow, you bought me something from Pull and Bear!'" (LP)

This study has therefore demonstrated that reusing shopping bags either personally or by giving them to others is a way to show consumption of a particular brand.

Emotions and memories played a major role in saving shopping bags without any intention to reuse them. However, these emotions and memories could vary in type and intensities. For example, several customers mentioned that a particular bag was associated with a memory of buying their first luxury handbag:

"It is like a reminder that I once bought from this brand." (Amna)

"It reminds me of the first time I bought a luxury item." (MN)

Bags could also be linked to a sentimental memory or emotion, not associated with the brand, shopping experience, or even monetary value:

"I keep it because it reminds me where I have traveled." (IA)

"It was for my birthday, so I kept it." (LP)

This shows the emotional value that some individuals place on particular shopping bags. Previous research on consumer disposal studied the role of emotions in handling possessions (Phillips & Sego, 2011). Previous studies have also shown how emotions create the value for those possessions (Richins, 1994a). This study has therefore added to the knowledge on consumer disposal, and shown that these feelings can also be applied to shopping bags.

The last point of discussion is the conditional value vested in shopping bags. The data coding showed how all individuals require certain conditions for saving and reusing shopping bags. This is a major new contribution to knowledge. As far as can be ascertained, previous studies on consumer disposal and packaging did not directly address such behavior or even mention these conditions, although some indirectly suggested that possessions needed some special element to be considered suitable for disposal, sharing, giving, or collecting (Belk, 1995; Kings et al., 2017; Phillips & Sego, 2011).

This research, however, explicitly considered the conditions required for disposal of shopping bags, in a systematic way. This can be considered a major contribution to knowledge. For a particular shopping bag to be either saved, reused, or disposed, it had to fit certain conditions. These conditions place a conditional value on the shopping bag. The concept of conditional value is new in the domains of consumer disposal and packaging. This study has therefore shown that consumers save and reuse shopping bags as a result of their functional, emotional, social, and conditional value.

5.3   Contribution to Theory

Findings from this study are consistent with previous theories and frameworks about consumer value (Holbrook, 1999; Richins, 1999b; Sheth et al., 1991). These typologies and theories are well-established and have been used extensively in consumer research. However, this research is the first attempt of which the researcher is aware to use these frameworks to explore the behavior associated with reusing and saving shopping bags. The study showed that the participants saved and reused shopping bags for different reasons, associated with the value placed on the bags. The primary function of a shopping bag is to carry products, creating a link or an association with functional value. Previous studies have noted that functional or utilitarian value is associated with products or possessions used for functional reasons, such as cars (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994). However, this association had not previously been made for shopping bags.

Several previous studies have found that emotional value was associated with particular possessions (Richins, 1999b). This research, however, showed that the value attributed to shopping bags is subjective (Ulaga, 2003), and may be associated with memories, meaning, emotions and images (Richins, 1999b). There is also a social value underlying the use and reuse of shopping bags. Shopping bags have an impact on consumer social image and self-presentation when reused in public. Social value is also associated with consumption of other products, such as cars, diamonds, and goods from luxury brands (Chan, To & Chu, 2015). However, no previous studies have associated it with the reuse of shopping bags. Finally, shopping bags are reused, saved, shared, and disposed of based on systematic rules developed subjectively by each consumer. Previous studies have shown that consumers place conditional value on a wide range of products and possessions (Sheth

et al., 199), but it has not previously been associated with "disposable" shopping bags. This study has therefore made a number of useful contributions to both theory and practice.

5.4 Managerial Implications

This research into the behaviors associated with reusing and saving shopping bags may help businesses and companies to design and produce shopping bags that are more likely to be saved and reused. Shopping bags were originally conceived as ways to promote brands and for consumers to carry their purchases (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Several participants showed that they saved or reused bags based on the design, size, and material. Some brand shopping bags that were mentioned during the interviews had a reputation for being "low-quality paper bags that could only be used once" [MN] and were thrown away and not saved or reused at all. Other bags, however, were saved and reused over a long period because of their high quality material and attractive design. Businesses should therefore invest money and effort into creating high quality, well-designed and attractive shopping bags. This will increase the probability that their bags will be reused, and also improve the brand exposure and awareness through reuse over a longer period. Brands could even encourage the reuse of their shopping bags as a promotional tool. For example, brands could ask their customers to bring previously-owned shopping bags and get a discount on their next purchase. This would motivate consumers to save and reuse shopping bags, while also supporting brand awareness, promotion, and corporate social responsibility of the brand towards the environment.

5.5   Avenues for Future Research

The behavior associated with reusing shopping bags and other packaging is under-researched. Further studies are needed in the domain of packaging and its reuse in particular

contexts, and especially looking beyond environmental factors. As far as the researcher is aware, this thesis is one of very few studies tackling this topic, and it therefore provides a foundation for more in-depth research. For example, four of the participants mentioned that they also tend to save shoeboxes and packaging for handbags. The main concern of this study was shopping bags, but similar behavior may be seen for boxes and other forms of packaging. Men were excluded from this study, but future studies may want to include men to investigate their reuse and saving of packaging and how this behavior varies between genders. It would also be helpful to investigate differences in saving and reusing behaviors shown by people from different cultures, economic status, and levels of education.

5.6 Limitations

This research had some limitations. The nature of the work, an MA thesis, created its own problems, because there was no co-researcher to compare field notes and data analysis. Data were collected in several ways, including field observations, interview recordings and transcripts, and photographs. However, the triangulation would have been more complete if other researchers had been involved, improving the quality and depth of the findings. The second limitation lay in the fact that all the participants were women. The researcher did not include male informants for two main reasons. First, the research question did not include gender differences in behavior. Second, the previous literature on consumer disposition indicated that women are more likely to collect items than men (Phillips & Sego, 2011). However, participants were asked if men in their family also saved and reused bags. As with other limitations, this provides an opportunity for future research.

Despite these limitations, this research has made a strong contribution in the field of packaging and consumer disposition, and a smaller contribution to the field of consumer

value. Finding previous work to tackle the research question was both a challenge and an opportunity. Connecting the behavior involved in saving and reusing shopping bags to consumer disposal, and reaching to a conclusion that value is the main driver of the behavior was potentially risky. However, the study findings show that it was justified. This thesis should therefore pave the way for many more studies in this area.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Interview Guide

- Greetings and opening: introducing self, give an overview of study nature, the interview procedure and setting, recording, and signing a consent form.

- Biographical questions:

  - Date and place of birth

  - Primary, secondary education

  - Parents occupation

  - Number of siblings

  - post-school education (if applicable)

  - work experience

  - countries traveled and worked in

  - Current family situation (married, single, divorced, children etc.)

- Topics to cover in interviews

  a- Shopping habits

  - Frequency of shopping

  - Where they shop

  - Reasons to shop

  - With whom

  - Which time of day or week

  - Which brands and stores

- Describe most recent shopping experience

- Post-shopping experience and behavior

b- Saving shopping bags

- Do they save shopping bags?   If yes, why?   If no, why?

- Which kind of bags (paper, plastic, branded, woven etc.)

- Where do they save them,

- Is there a story behind the saved shopping bag (gift, favorite brand, occasion, etc.)

- Do you plan to reuse it? If yes, when?   If no, why?

c- Reusing shopping bags

- Which kind of bags do you reuse (paper, plastic, woven, etc.)

- What brands of bags do you reuse

- Why do you reuse these bags

- When do you reuse these bags

- For what proposes do you reuse the bags

- What if feels to reuse these bags

- What message you want to convey to others by reusing these bags

- How often do you reuse the same bag

- How do you feel if the bag was destroyed

- Using probes and follow up questions will be during all parts of the interviews, such as (Berry 1999; McCracken 1988):

- Contradicting

- Linking

- Showing interest and allowing time for elaboration

- Asking for details

- How questions.

Closing interview and asking permission to contact if needed.

Appendix B:Constant Comparative Method: Open coding table

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
A1	"Plastic", "Paper", "Cardboard", "Fabric"	Types of shopping bags – material	The material of the shopping bag.
A2	"Thin plastic", "Cheap plastic", "Low quality paper", "Thick cardboard", "String handles", "Ribbon handles", "It's red", "Good size", "It's not sturdy"	Types of shopping bags – design	The design (shape, size, color, graphics) of the shopping bag
A3	"From grocery stores", "Fashion", "Cosmetics", "Pharmacy", "Zara", "Chanel", "D&G", "Tiffany", "Michael Kors", "Bershka", "Victoria's Secret", "Sephora", "Al-Meera", "Carrefour", "Monoprix"	Types of shopping bags – brand	The brand or store providing the shopping bag

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
B1	"In my room", "In my closet", "In a drawer in my room", "Under my bed"	Location of storage for saving	The location where participants store or keep the shopping bags they intend to save and not reuse
B2	"In the kitchen", "In my room", "In a closet", "In a drawer in my room", "Under the sink in the kitchen", "In the kitchen area", "In storage room", "In my closet"	Location of storage for reuse	The location where participants store or keep the shopping bags they intend to reuse
C1	"Because it is a brand", "Because it is luxury", "It is Chanel", "It was a gift", "It is special", "It reminds me of the first time I bought a luxury bag", "Reminds me of when my mother was here"	Criteria to save a shopping bag for non-reuse	Why participants will save but not reuse a bag

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
C2	"If it is good quality, good design, and well-known brand, I will keep it", "I keep it because I like the brand", "I like the design", "It is good quality, durable", "It is a known brand", "It is Tiffany", "I keep it to reuse. Because of the quality and brand", "I want people to know I buy from this store", "It is more presentable to reuse"	Criteria to save a shopping bag for reuse	Why participants want to reuse particular shopping bags
C3	"I like the brand that's why I keep it", "It is like an achievement when I carry the bag", "I remind myself that one day I buy from a luxury brand", "It reminds me of my birthday", "It reminds me of the time with my mother", "It is special"	Reasons to save and not reuse	The reasons behind saving the bag with no intention of reusing it

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
C4	"I save them to use for my cat", "For garbage", "For garbage bins", "People will know it is a good brand", "They will know I buy from there", "It is more presentable", "I will look more put together if I use this bag", "When I send things for my family in a good bag it means I respect them", "I look my best when I carry a good bag to work", "I send my clothes to the dry cleaners' in a good bag because people will look"	Reasons to save for reuse	The reasons behind saving the bag with the intention of reusing it
D1	"Carry lunch to work", "Carry things to work", "Send dry cleaning in it", "Cat litter box", "I take my clothes in it when I sleep at my friends' houses", "For garbage"	Occasion of reusing – for self	The occasions and situation when bags would be reused for personal use

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
D2	"Send things to my family and sisters", "Send things to relatives", "As gift bags", "I use it to send gifts back home", "I use it to carry stuff around"	Occasion of reusing – for others	The occasions and situation when bags would be reused and given to others
E1	"Reminds me of my mother", "It is special… for my birthday", "It's my favorite brand", "It reminds me of that time", "It is a reminder that one day I bought from that brand"	Advantages of saving	The advantages and benefits to the participant of saving the bag with no intention of reusing it
E2	"Carry stuff", "Presentable", "Durable", "Functional", "Convenient"	Advantages of reusing	The advantages and benefits to the participant of reusing the bag

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
F1	"It reminds me of my mother", "It reminds me of when I was traveling", "It is special", "It reminds me of when I bought my first bag", "It reminds me of my birthday"	Emotions associated with saving	The emotions associated with saving bags with no intention of reusing them
F2	"I feel more presentable", "I feel good when I carry this bag to work", "It feels more put together", "I feel I look more professional when I carry this bag to work", "I feel proud that I buy from there", "I feel like it is an accomplishment when people see I carry this bag"	Emotions associated with reusing	The emotions associated with reusing bags
F3	"I hate plastic shopping bags", "I don't like to use grocery bags", "I throw away all plastic shopping bags", "I don't like the cheap paper bags", "I don't like the	Negative emotions	Negative feelings and emotions associated with the use or saving of shopping bags

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
	handles of this shopping bag", "Shame on me if I send something in a cheap bag", "If I carry a plastic grocery bag to work people will ask why I did that", "When see someone carrying a Carrefour bag I think why did he do that to himself?", "Grocery bags look cheap and not sturdy"		
F4	"I like the brand, that's why I keep it", "I feel more put together when I use this bag", "I look more presentable", "I give them the best bag I have", "It is like an achievement when I carry this bag", "I remind myself that one day I bought from a luxury brand"	Positive emotions	Positive feelings and emotions associated with the use or saving of shopping bags

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
G1	"Presentable… to myself and others", "It matches my image", "I feel it is important for my self-image", "I feel more presentable", "It is not presentable", "I look more put together", "I do not look good when carrying this shopping bag"	Mentioning self	Use of the word "self" or any description of the self associated with saving and reuse of bags
G2	"I use a Tiffany bag to take lunch to work", "I have this Paris Gallery bag that I use", "The D&G bag I used many times when I take my stuff to go to university or to my family house", "I use the Sansei bag to take lunch", "I use the Bateel bag", "I will not use grocery bags to take food to work", "I don't use grocery or pharmacy or any food-related bags"	Brands in relation with shopping bag reuse – for self	Brands associated with saving bags for personal reuse

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
H1	"People look and judge by what I carry to work", "Presentable for me and others", "People look and judge by what I carry to work", "I look my best when I go out", "People notice these things", "They look at the bag and say she buys from VS", "They will say wow this is expensive", "Shame on me if I send something in a cheap bag", "If I carry a plastic grocery bag to work people will ask why I did it", "When I see someone carrying a Carrefour bag I think why did he do that to himself?"	Shopping bags in relation to others	Association with other individuals while reusing shopping bags

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
H2	"If I will send things to my sisters I will use this Chanel bag", "I would use a Zara bag to send gifts to my family", "I keep like Adidas and GO Sport bags to send to my family back home", "I use the best bag I have, like this one from Chanel or Guess", "If they know what Chanel is, I will send it using it", "I used Mango and Zara bags to send things to my friends", "It is important to use the best bag you have, like a luxury brand"	Brands in relation to shopping bag reuse – for others	Brands associated with saving bags to reuse to give to others
I1	"It is special, that's why I keep it", "It is valuable", "I don't give it to anyone who doesn't understand what it is", "It is cheap", "It is a luxury brand", "It is high quality", "It only has a	Mentioning value	The word "value" or any description representing value associated with shopping bags

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
	functional purpose", "It is special for me", "I will never use it; it is something I will keep", "I keep it to use on special occasions"		
I2	"It is a fancy brand", "I keep it because it is Chanel", "It is not a luxury brand but I keep it", "I will not use luxury shopping bags for anything or to give anyone", "I keep the Victoria's Secret bag because it is luxury"	Brands in relation to saving bags	Brands associated with saving bags without intention to reuse them
J	"Men don't care about these things", "I don't see my husband save or reuse shopping bags", "No, I don't think men do that like women do", "My son only saves boxes", "He carries anything, he doesn't care", "No, I don't see men do that", "Men carry Carrefour bags to work, like	Men reusing bags	Whether men save or reuse shopping bags

Code #	Data	Open Code	Description of Code
	it is fine"		

Constant Comparative Method: Axial and Theoretical Coding

Open Code	Axial code	Description of the axial code	Selective code/first order category	Selective code/second order theme
A1, A2, A3, I1, I2	Physical attributes of shopping bag (1)	The physical specifications and details of the shopping bag	Functions of shopping bag (1, 2, 3)	Functional value
A1, A3, B1, B2	Significance of storage location (2)	How the location of storage reflects the importance of the shopping bag	Emotional significance (2, 4, 5, 8)	Emotional value

A1, A2, A3, B2	Functional attributes (3)	The functional uses and behavior associated with the shopping bag	Self-presentation (1, 6, 7, 9)	Social value
E1, E2, F3, F4, G1, I1	Memory attributes (4)	The memories associated with the shopping bags	Conditions of behavior (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)	Conditional value
C2, C3, D2, E1, E2, F1, F2, G1, I1,	Emotional attributes(5)	The emotional associations of the shopping bag		
C4, D1, D2, E2, G1, G2, H1, H2	Self-image attributes (6)	How self-image is related to the shopping bag		
D2, E2, G1, G2, H1, H2	Social image attributes (7)	How social image is related to the shopping bag		
C1, C3, D1, E1, G2, H1, H2	Conditions for saving (8)	The conditions under which bags are saved		
C2, C4, D2, E2, F2, G2, H1, H2	Conditions for reusing (9)	The conditions under which bags are reused		

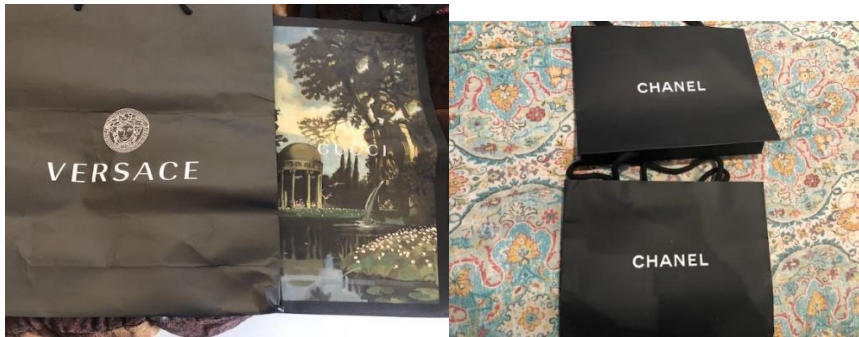**Appendix C: Participants Shopping Bags pictures**

Figure A. DA shopping Bag

Figure B. DL Shopping Bag

Figure 8. CT Shopping Bag

Figure D. CP Shopping Bag

Figure 9. DM Shopping Bag

Figure F. A sample of a grocery plastic Shopping Bag

Figure G. IA Shopping Bags

Figure H . LA Shopping Bagss

Figure I. LW Shopping Bags

Figure J. MK no-reuse collection

Figure K. MK reuse collection

Figure L . MK Late Mother's Shopping Bags

Figure M. MS Shopping Bags

Figure N. MN Shopping Bags

Figure O. NJ Shopping Bags