

# Temporary Disposition Behaviour in An Online Setting: A Comprehensive Review

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## ABSTRACT

*Renting out and lending are a part of temporary disposition in disposition literature, however, are not studied frequently in previous studies. The growth of renting and loaning due to internet, media and websites have certainly created a new research area. In this study, we intend to address the gaps in the literature by specifically focusing on P2P renting in an online setting from the providers' viewpoint. The goal is to integrate the motivations, reasons and difficulties faced by the providers during temporary disposition and identify the future avenues for research by reviewing and summarising the past literature. The terminology, sustainability factors, motivations and barriers of temporary disposition of products are discussed in detail.*

**Keywords:** collaborative consumption, sharing economy, service provider.

## TEMPORARY DISPOSITION BEHAVIOUR IN AN ONLINE SETTING: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

### I. Introduction

Product disposition as a research area remained highly unexploited till recent years. In the last decade, as the landfills waste has started rapidly increasing and the quantities of waste thrown as trash has hit an all-time high, the academic research on the topic has become the need of the hour. With a revolutionary growth of the IT industry and electronic equipment purchases like portable computers, laptops, smartphones, the disposition research started focusing on environmental issues due to electronic waste disposal (**Hendrickson et al., 1994; Allen & Bakshani, 1992; Matthews & Chambers, 1997**). Researchers now have begun focusing on sustainable disposition, as a result of which a stream of research focusing on product life-cycle extension has started. **Ertz et al. (2019)** emphasized on the importance of studying product lifetime extension strategies like collaborative consumption through peer-to-peer renting and lending. Renting out and lending are a part of temporary disposition (**Jacoby et al., 1977**) in disposition literature, however, are not studied frequently in previous studies (**Bernardes, Marques, Nogueira & Ferreira, 2019**). Temporary disposition is “the product

disposal practice where lenders transfer some degree of power and ownership of their possessions to other people for a certain period of time” (**Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2015**).

This disposition option especially needs more attention given their sustainable nature. It is important to see how it has changed the dynamics from traditional consumption practices to peers-to-peer resource sharing (**Cheng, 2016; Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016**). Since consumers have a major role to play as a service provider, it is essential to study the construct of temporary disposition in the domain of consumer psychology (**Wilhelms, Merfeld & Henkel, 2017; Selvefors, Rexfelt, Renström & Strömberg, 2019**). Temporary disposition through collaborative consumption helps in supporting the local economy and reducing unemployment as under-utilised resources can be rented out. Given the positive social implications, it is important to study what factors motivate consumers to indulge in temporary disposition (**Toni, Renzi & Mattia, 2018**). A transition from traditional consumption to collaborative consumption is highly dependent on consumers’ awareness, collaboration and consumption patterns. Consumers termed as “peers” actually are the ultimate enablers and agents of circular and collaborative consumption through temporary disposition (**Ertz, Leblanc-Proulx, Sarigöllü & Morin, 2019**).

Previous research has addressed several aspects of temporary disposition like collaborative consumption (**Piscicelli, Cooper & Fisher, 2015; Ertz, Durif & Arcand, 2016; Ertz, Lecompte & Durif, 2017; Ertz, Durif & Arcand, 2019**) and sharing economy (**Leismann, Schmitt, Rohn & Baedeker, 2013**). The concept of collaborative consumption has moved out from theory to practical business models. This new trend can be lucrative to consumers who want to be the fashion leaders and stay updated with the fashion. They can rent out the old things and buy new updated things simultaneously (**Van de Glind, 2013**). Social and cultural factors like altruism, collectivism is studied as motivations to temporary disposition in the past studies (**Cheng, 2016; Gupta, Esmailzadeh, Uz & Tennant, 2019; De Ferran, Robinot & Ertz, 2020**). Previous literature (**Van de Glind, 2013; Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016; Cruz-Cárdenas, González & del Val Núñez, 2016; Böcker & Meelen, 2017; Gupta et al., 2019**) has also mentioned various extrinsic motivations like economic gain and intrinsic motivations like fun & joy across different cultures and product categories.

However, very limited number of studies focus specifically on people renting out their possessions and how they become “providers” (**Kaur & Bawa, 2018; Roux & Belk, 2020; Kréziak, Prim-Allaz & Robinot, 2020**). Studies based on sharing economy and collaborative consumption focus primarily on consumers availing the services (**Park & Armstrong, 2019**). The growth of renting and loaning due to internet, media and websites have certainly created a new research area (**Perren & Grauerholz, 2015**). Some of the unexplored dimensions like the role of information technology and online marketing institutions appear to be important and worthy of investigation in the context of temporary disposition. The investigation of these dimensions is important given their features of sustainability and thus, higher relevance in rapidly growing economies like India (**Belarmino & Koh, 2020**). Hardly, if any, study has focused on provider’s role during renting out or lending out products in a digital setting. Furthermore, previous research has focused primarily on temporary disposition of houses and cars but no study in our knowledge has synthesized the literature available on temporary disposition across various product categories, collaborative consumption patterns or sharing economy. In this study, we intend to address the gaps in the literature by specifically focusing

on P2P renting in an online setting from the providers' viewpoint. The goal is to integrate the motivations, reasons and difficulties faced by the providers during temporary disposition and identify the future avenues for research by reviewing and summarising the past literature.

## II. Methodology

To select the relevant articles for this review, electronic databases Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were used. Search terms used include Temporary disposition, Peer to peer renting, collaborative consumption, sharing economy. All of these terms are specifically searched with the word "Service provider" / "Provider" to select the studies which focus on the providers' roles only, given the goal of this study. Papers are further filtered out after reading the abstract. Peer to peer lending as a search term has been avoided due to the results found only in the context of financial lending and not the consumer behaviour. It turned out that many of the prominent studies are not published as journal articles, due to that conference papers have also been included in this review.

The present study includes 41 papers that are reviewed as a part of disposition literature. Some of the prominent articles are mentioned in tabular form (Appendix) including the publication names, objective of the studies, research methodology, journal ratings and country. Only the ultimate findings of all the studies are summarised in this paper.

## III. Literature review

### A. Temporary disposition terminology

Various studies published use different terms to define temporary disposition and the word specifically has been replaced by other terms like P2P renting, collaborative consumption, sharing economy, Renting out etc. It should be noted that for collaborative consumption to occur, it is important that consumers first indulge in temporary disposition of their owned things. Thus, the factors motivating consumers to indulge in temporary disposition are important to study. The main terms overlapping temporary disposition are:

1. ***P2P Renting***: The online process that enables owners of the products to temporarily dispose of their possessions in exchange of the monetary value paid as rent; and enables renters non-ownership access of the goods for a limited period of time (**Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2015**).

2. ***Collaborative consumption***: The exchange practice in which digital platform provider does not own any products but only provides them temporarily to the customer through a non-professional owner (**Hazée, Zwieneberg, Van Vaerenbergh, Faseur, Vandenberghe & Keutgens, 2020**). The owners of the products switch from being the consumers to the sellers under collaborative consumption (**Joyner Armstrong & Park, 2017**).

3. ***Sharing economy***: The online market place for private individuals promoting sustainable, diverse, convenient and anti-capitalist use of the resources (**Mittendorf & Ostermann, 2017**).

## B. Temporary disposition and sustainability

The problem of e-waste, in particular, is becoming a threat to the environment given the constant boom in the Electronic and electrical (EEE) industry all over the world. In an era of constant innovations, Information Technology based companies are left with massive stocks of hardware when they are replaced with new equipment (**Raghavan, 2010**). The website of Uttar Pradesh Industrial Department (<https://niveshmitra.up.nic.in/ElectronicSector.aspx>) claims that it is anticipated to reach US \$400 billion in 2022 from US\$ 69.6 billion in 2012, in India. A recent study indicates that India would need a landfill of 88 sq. km, nearly the size of Bengaluru, to dump all its waste by 2030 (**Samaddar & Bandyopadhyay, 2018**). Since 2018, India generates more than two million tonnes of e-waste annually (**Manish & Chakraborty, 2019**).

Some methods of disposition are naturally more sustainable and environment-friendly than others. Temporary disposition channels have inherent quality of sustainability in them. Mutualisation of assets or possessions through temporary disposition can slowdown the process from acquisition to final disposition (**Ertz, Leblanc-Proulx, Sarigöllü & Morin, 2019**). The practice helps in creating collective utility, is pro-sustainability and anti-materialistic lifestyle (**Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2015**). An understanding of the purpose circular economy fulfils in everyday life and the related predictors can help encourage this behaviour. It is possible to optimise the resource consumption through extending the usage phase of a product if the product is temporarily disposed of. The longer a product is retained, the lower is the product footprint (**Leismann, Schmitt, Rohn & Baedeker, 2013; Wang, Xiang, Yang & Ma, 2019**).

Temporary disposition neutralises losses with gains. It reduces the burden of ownership by economising the purchases made by the consumer. Consumers can opt for temporary disposition of the products they no longer want to use instead of storing them in their house (**Klein, Wilhelms, Merfeld, Henkel & Falk, 2019**). It is a win-win situation for providers, renters and the environment. Providers can get storing utility i.e., freeing up space for new products renters can get easy access to the products they can't/ don't want to own and environment too, is saved from the waste disposition in the landfills (**Lamberton & Rose, 2012; Hamari et al., 2016; Eckhardt, Houston, Jiang, Lamberton, Rindfleisch & Zervas, 2019**). This channel of disposition serves as a C2C market in an online setting, where it prevents exploitation of resources through anti-capitalism (**Mittendorf & Ostermann, 2017**).

## C. Motivations for temporary disposition

Consumers mostly indulge in permanent disposition practices of donating/ reselling and least indulge in temporary disposition practices like renting/ lending (**De Ferran, Robinot & Ertz, 2020**). However, with advent of online rental sites the opportunity to share products and services have increased significantly (**Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2015**). People can conveniently choose to earn profits through their unutilized things. Exponential rise of the use of Information technology due to internet has eventually enabled sharing economy services.

Handy mobile applications and social media has made the process even easier (**Mittendorf & Ostermann, 2017**).

Gratification of seeing their things being used and economic benefits motivate providers to engage in temporary disposition of their products (**Barbour, Zhang & Mannering, 2020**). Cost saving, extra income generation, joy of interacting through renting, sense of sharing, humanness, altruistic behaviour, economic motive, social interaction and ecological motivations are the main reasons of temporary disposition found in past research (**Saunders, 2010; Philip, 2016; Wilhelms, Merfeld & Henkel, 2017; De Ferran, Robinot & Ertz, 2020**). Attachment to the possessions and trust among two parties impact the willingness of providers to rent out their products lending (**Keetels, 2013; Roux & Belk, 2020**).

Consumers see products as their own extension and losing them permanently is seen as a tragedy to them. Peer-to-peer transactions help in sharing out the products consumers possess. It gives a feeling of “keeping while giving” to the owners and helps in effective use of the resources for both the parties (**Ulker & Burnaz, 2017**). Disposer wants to have some control over the special goods even after disposing them (**Walker, 2006**) and temporary disposition methods provide the same to him/ her as the ownership of the product still remains with the disposer. Consumers also prefer temporarily disposing of the products over keeping them due to the housekeeping and environmental benefits. Renting and lending help consumers take control of the otherwise idle items around and make room for the new products. The nature of such disposition practices is temporary and thus prevents consumers from the sentimental loss happening in permanent disposition (**Philip, 2016; Wang, Xiang, Yang & Ma, 2019; Mayasari & Haryanto, 2018**). The respondents in the study of **Agbebo (2020)** also mentioned that they would want to indulge in temporary disposition instead of permanent one so that they can ask the product back when they need it.

The fact that renting practice contributes to collective utility supports temporary disposition. Consumers engage in temporary disposition to build a social network and demonstrate their self-identity socially (**Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2015**).

#### **D. Barriers in temporary disposition**

Various functional as well as psychological barriers restrict providers to get involved in the process of temporary disposition. Difficulty to access and understand the rental platforms, lack of sufficient economic benefits, uncertainties, distrust on the other party, contamination due to sharing are found to be the main reasons that owners do not want to temporarily dispose of their products to another person (**Hazée et al., 2020**). The inflexibility of the online rental infrastructure where the transactions between providers and renters take place and high involvement of the transactions create negative perceptions about P2P renting (**Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2015**). Consumers with high materialism do not want to indulge in CC since they want exclusive rights on their things while CC through Renting and lending includes sharing those rights (**Lang & Armstrong, 2018**).

**Domina & Koch (1999)** reported that majority of consumers do not want to be indulged in disposition through consignment stores where the products can be rented out. The reason behind this reluctance is the time and effort this method of disposition requires.

## IV. Conclusion and managerial implications

The concept of sharing economy has turned consumers into entrepreneurs in a way that they can share (lend or rent out) their idle personal possessions. There is a clear shift in people's preference from ownership to giving away personal goods to strangers online (**Wilhelms, Merfeld & Henkel, 2017; Lutz & Newlands, 2018**). A shift from the usual consumption pattern towards the circular economy is needed to slow down the whole process of consumption. This slowdown would help in reducing waste emissions. Such a transition needs fundamental changes, strategies and analysis of factors encouraging this slowdown (**Degenstein et al., 2021**). The understanding of temporary disposition, thus, is necessary as it is an antecedent of collaborative consumption. **Belarmino & Koh (2020)** said that even though temporary disposition as a measure of sustainability has been explored by researchers, there is a need of research in this area in developing countries like India. Sociologists are encouraged to explore the role of cultural customs and trends on temporary disposition in developing countries. **Gupta et al., (2019); Cruz-Cárdenas et al., (2016)** too, emphasized on the lack of studies focusing on the impact of cultural differences on renting or lending behaviour. They mentioned that rituals, traditions and customs differ from culture to culture and sharing out products can have different meanings in different cultures. The behaviour of people lending out/ renting out can also vary accordingly. At the same time, this behaviour can also vary across different product categories.

The original owner gets a supplementary income while consumers are able to fulfil their consumption needs at a lower cost as collaborative consumption is relatively cheaper than access-based consumption. Studying of temporary disposition and the factors impacting the decision which relate to temporary disposition is of interest for the manufacturers as well. Such renting out would help owners to cover the initial cost of the product. As such, they would be readily paying even high prices of the products in their initial purchases because they could recover it later by renting out the product (**Jiang & Tian, 2018**).

One of the major barriers found in indulgence of temporary disposition is the distribution complexity (**Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2015**). Developing better and flexible online interfaces, rental websites can help overcome this. Information symmetry and trust can be built up between both the parties involved in P2P transactions. **Barbour, Zhang & Mannering (2020)** found that people who register on mobile apps for P2P renting have a higher probability to indulge in the behaviour than others. A knowledge-behaviour gap exists between consumers and temporary disposition. Since, the knowledge about renting out and lending is lesser when compared to other disposition channels, consumers indulge in fewer temporary disposition practices (**Henzen, & Pabian, 2019**). Consumer education programs can play a major role in encouraging these sustainable disposition methods (**Domina & Koch, 1999**).

It is also seen from the comprehensive review that empirical studies based on quantitative methods are missing from the temporary disposition literature. It is suggested for the future researchers to quantitatively analyse the temporary disposition by the consumers and their reasons and motivations behind it.

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