Preface

Children provide great market potential for marketers. This is due to several factors, such as:

- First, nowadays children receive quite a substantial amount of pocket change from their parents for snacks. This causes youngsters to have buying power over the products they prefer.
- Second, children also have a great influence over their parents, relatives, or others in their surroundings to buy their favourite products for them.

Sometimes, children use certain methods like crying, having temper tantrums, screaming, and acting spoiled to get what they desire. Thus, kids are very influential in determining what products their parents or other people in their surroundings will buy. In addition, children also have significant market potential because they can continue to be consumers of a certain product until adulthood. Just imagine an 8-year-old child who uses a particular toothpaste product. Until the individual is around 60 years old or older, the person will still use the same toothpaste brand. Therefore, you can imagine how much money is obtained by a company over dozens of years from that specific individual.

Looking at the extraordinary market potential of the children’s market, marketers should allocate a more significant portion of their promotional activities to children as consumers. Research should be more focused on children, keeping in mind that it is easier to gain their loyalty towards a certain product and difficult to switch to another product. Nevertheless, it seems from searching through all of the research that has already been conducted, there is still only a small amount of research that uses children as a primary data source. Research about children is still dominated by parents’ responses that certainly will incur bias and not be appropriate with the real condition. However, this is understandable.

The majority of research articles from Western countries are greatly concerned with the ethical considerations of conducting research on children. Several advanced countries like England, the United States, and Australia apply strict regulations for
carrying out research on youngsters. These conditions include mandatory permission from the school principals and parents. Next, the researcher must fill out a consent form that has to be agreed upon by the university’s ethics committee. Also, several other conditions must be met that make conducting research on children as a primary data source rather difficult and complicated.

Therefore, to overcome the problems above, the research in this book takes data from Indonesia, Portugal, and China, because it is relatively easier and not as complex as advanced countries like those mentioned above. From the research results obtained, there are several fascinating findings regarding the children’s world as a market.

This research is divided into several sections. It begins with the discussion about ethics for marketers when they target youngsters as consumers. This is significant because we do not want children to be exploited. Marketers must be mindful of the specified regulations and ethics, so that there is a balance between marketing and ethics for kids. We will explain about our experiences when trying to collect data in Scotland, UK. We had to distribute consent forms and receive permission from a university ethical committee. Furthermore, we will introduce the concept of virtue ethics in selling to children. Teaching virtue ethics to children can be a strategic way for companies to engage in emotional bonding and “trust-building by differentiating their products [and goals] from those of their competitors and convincing the market that they deliver superior customer value”.

The following two chapters are about future anticipation. This concept is essential to fathom the marketing notion better. The future is something unseen and we all struggle to find out what the future will hold. By comprehending the future concept, it will facilitate us to be more able and ready to anticipate. Many companies believe investing much funding for their research and development will help them to predict the future and adjust their products according to future trends. However, in fact, this effort is not appreciated by consumers, so that millions of dollars invested for research and development are just wasted. Therefore, these two chapters about future anticipation will cover consumer perception about future anticipation that is undertaken by a company. Keeping in mind that future anticipation is a complex concept, the research (both qualitative and quantitative) uses adults instead of children as research subjects.

After that, we research about brand loyalty that is built for children. We discuss about McDonald’s success story and how it became a favourite destination for children worldwide. We examine what factors cause autobiographical memory, which is memory that is acquired from direct experiences. We believe that a positive autobiographical memory will result in a higher buying intensity and then lead to brand loyalty.
We conduct cross-cultural studies and compare our research results with data from Indonesia, Portugal, and Brazil. We have found interesting similarities and differences in the data taken from the three countries. Through this research, we hope that it can provide a better understanding about the concept of brand loyalty or the variables applied in forming it in the three countries.

One of the significant contributions that we provide is a discussion about a *living brand* in Chapter 6. We introduce the concept of a living brand, which is a brand that lives and moves dynamically, following market needs and desires. Companies need to consider this living brand concept and apply it for their brands if they aspire to be successful and survive in a fiercely competitive market.

In the following chapter, we discuss about a neural network that can be applied to be better aware of consumer behaviour. Through a neural network, marketers can discover hidden neurons found in consumers’ minds, so that the relationship between one node and another node can be more easily comprehended. Through a series of tests, we take an in-depth look at the relationship between one variable and another variable.

We also discuss about the factors which differentiate products for children and the various dimensions of children’s product’s characteristics, as well as strategies in which marketers can convey marketing information to children in order to guarantee that the market will not only for the present, but also for the future of the company.

The last section of this book is a compilation of case studies about children that will provide a clearer depiction about children as consumers.

Although this book attempts to provide a clearer depiction about children as a market and the reality, we have received many contributions to better explain the portrait of children as a market. Nevertheless, we realise that understanding children means comprehending an abstract world. This is considered abstract because the way children think is certainly different with the way adults think.

However, we have tried to use and combine several qualitative data-taking techniques like interviews, focus group discussions, digital ethnography, etc. We also use a quantitative technique like through structural equation modelling to get a picture of visible phenomena, a neural network to understand hidden neurons, among others. Still, we realize that this book is just an initial stage in comprehending the children’s world. Since the children’s world is dynamic and abstract, it needs more attention from marketing scholars, so that fragmented concepts can be united to become a complete depiction.

At the very least, literature about the children’s world from a marketing perspective, or difficulties in obtaining data about children from advanced countries, provides an opportunity for researchers to study about youngsters.
Without disregarding ethical considerations, the large potential of the children’s market should be its own magnet for researchers to study about the children’s market. Doctorate degree students or other researchers should focus more on the children’s market as a potential future market and set aside many domains to be researched.

This book attempts to open a path for researchers who want to fathom more about the children’s world. However, there are certainly many limitations and gaps that can be explored by readers or researchers who are interested in conducting studies about the children’s world. The increase in third world countries’ economies worldwide and the fact that third world countries will contribute more to world education growth reveals that the children’s market is very relevant and has great potential to be discussed.

Several recent concepts in marketing like customer lifetime value, service dominant logic, and return on marketing are very interesting if related with youngsters as consumers. This gives rise to a very mind-provoking question: Are the cases and criteria which are applicable for adult consumers also relevant and have the same occurrences when applied to children as consumers?

When compiling this book, we found many difficulties about the variable related theoretical references that we wanted to research. As an example, when building a theory about brand loyalty, the available theories or concepts are those about brand loyalty for adults. However, the concept of brand loyalty is a primary concept that is often discussed in the marketing world. Likewise, when discussing the concept of a reference group, most theories are about reference groups for adults that may not necessarily be relevant when applied to the children’s world.

We also found interesting phenomena about the concept of exchange, which is a main concept in the marketing world. In marketing for children, we found that an exchange occurs not due to the utilities or functions of a certain product but rather to the emotional involvement of children with the products they purchase. For instance, at this time Indonesia is flaring up with “Minions” where McDonald’s gives “Minions” as a gift for every purchase of a Happy Meal packet. We have discovered that kids buy many Happy Meal packets to complete their Minions’ collections. What happens with the burgers and food that they buy from McDonald’s? We have seen that youngsters give the food products to others, or even in an extreme measure they toss out the food because they purchase Happy Meals just to complete their collection of Minions figures.

These kinds of phenomena are certainly very interesting for researchers of the children’s marketing field to continue to be explored and developed.

As a final thought, we present and dedicate this book for all researchers of children worldwide. This book aspires to provide new insight into our dedication to conduct research about children as consumers with potential for companies.