Conclusion

This research book is based on a series of academic research studies developed over several years focusing on an important area of consumer behaviour—children’s (pre-teens) consumption patterns. This is an under-researched area in marketing due to the real concerns of approaching and investigating young human beings. The content of the book is based on 7 major research studies which took place predominantly in Asia, but also in South America and Europe.

Chapter 1 introduces a very important topic in this particular domain—the issue of ethical stance and ethical research when marketing to children. Many different disciplines, institutions, and professions have norms for behaviour that suit their particular aims and goals. These norms also help members of the discipline to coordinate their actions or activities and to establish the public’s trust for the discipline. Ethical norms also serve the aims or goals of research and apply to people who conduct scientific research or other scholarly or creative activities. There is even a specialised discipline, research ethics, which studies these norms.

There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research. First, norms promote the aims of the research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. For example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and avoid error. Second, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness.

Third, many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public. Fourth, ethical norms in research also help to build public support for research. People are more likely to fund a research project if they can trust the quality and integrity of research. Finally, many of the norms of research promote a variety of other important moral and social values, such as social responsibility and human rights. Lapses in research can significantly harm human and the public. Ethics is a core consideration to most research. This is especially true for research that involves children where there will have to be a balance between the researcher’s aims and the protection of any participants.
Consent is possibly the largest and most complicated issue for researchers hoping to involve children in a study. When conducting research with adults it is normal to use a consent form, or to seek verbal consent in order to include someone. In such cases, if the adult has the capacity to give consent and the research has been adequately explained, then ethically it is easy to proceed. Arguments about ethics of social research with children can be reduced to the question of the extent to which children are regarded as similar or different to adults, and these discussion in turn can be reduced to one related descriptive that adults hold of children, that is, children as vulnerable human beings. The time thus now seems ripe to revisit the issue of whether or not we are getting ethics right when we conduct research with children.

Marketing ethics and social responsibility are inherently controversial, and years of research continue to present conflicts and challenges for marketers on the value of a socially responsible approach to marketing activities. In assessing the effects of deception at the ethical level, a useful starting point lies in a determination of the values of marketing investigators, particularly as they relate to deceptive research practices. One goal of this evaluation is to assess researcher’s attitudes towards the use of deception and to better understand the ways in which researchers resolve ethical dilemmas relative to its use in research contexts.

Deception often lies at the core of moral dilemmas for human subject researchers, who often must weigh the scientific requirements of validity (i.e., in obtaining an objective and valid measure of behaviour) against the ethical imperative of informed consent.

Chapter 2 discusses issues related to the intertwining of future anticipatory efforts, brand personality, and the role of the autobiographic memory. Companies invest a lot of funds to get a better understanding about the future and try to create products that can anticipate customers’ future needs. However, customers sometimes do not appreciate these hard efforts. This research attempts to identify customers’ perceptions about the future anticipatory measures done by a company. We apply digital ethnography in order to better explore customer behaviour.

The results show that future anticipatory efforts conducted by a company are highly appreciated by customers. This, in turn, builds a positive autobiographical memory for customers that finally leads to the development of a brand relationship. Our implication is that perceived future anticipation is very important to create brand association. Therefore, any endeavours done by a company to anticipate the future needs of its customers should be well-informed and continuously improved.

This research study fills this gap of empirical research on future anticipatory endeavours done by companies. The research itself focuses on the goals to which future anticipatory actions can be related and the measures that are associated with the marketing discipline. We found that future anticipatory endeavours that are cre-
ated by a provider company will give a competitive advantage to that company, but
the service provider should be aware that the future anticipatory efforts that were
made by them will increase customer expectations.

Our findings confirm that a marketer/service provider can infer that anticipating
the future is appealing to most customers. Despite this general preference for antici-
pating the future, findings also suggest that perceptions about future anticipatory
efforts play an important role in having better market performance. The issue of
anticipating the future – foresight, strategic vision, and pre-empting future market
developments – as a major proactive posture by companies – is clearly a salient
feature extracted from this study.

This visionary leadership is very much favoured by consumers, not only in terms
of liking the possibility of companies paving the way for the future, but specifically
for the consumer value associated with it. It is also prominent that consumers see
this assessment of future trends and its consequent provision of value, if companies
really mean it in terms of pursuing a transparent, honest, and positive stance, which
means serving consumer needs with relevance, and not artificial features or marketing
ploys. Specifically, a company should periodically do market sensing to know the
upcoming trends. A company should also be challenged to find and identify future
needs and wants from customers, besides the company’s ability to capture market
trends, culture, and technological developments to be able to anticipate future trends.

A futurecast lab should be developed by companies to identify upcoming trends
as a part of anticipating the future. Companies are suggested to establish a futurecast
lab in some of the major areas like marketing, finance, human resources, and produc-
tion. Consumers are much more savvy, experienced, informed, and knowledgeable.
They know what lies behind a brand and an organization. They also favor simplic-
ity marketing and management. They are looking for usefulness and solutions that
matter and that can improve their personal productivity.

Consumers are increasingly looking for companies that show a “genetic” configu-
ration of innovativeness and market leadership in their “DNA”. Companies should
pursue true future anticipation by embarking on the implementation of market driv-
ing strategies, not market control. By doing so, they can pave the way, anticipate,
and even influence the constant flux of change in society. A direct outcome of these
policies would be increased co-creation, the capitalization on presurers, customers,
owners, and crowdsourcing.

Chapter 3 presents a measurement model designed to analyse the impact of future
anticipation and the role of a reference group on the autobiographical memory, brand
relationship and market performance. Due to the high level of importance attached
to predicting the future, it is surprising that research about future anticipation itself
is still scarce. This research study attempts to identify the influence of future an-
ticipation toward the development of brand relationship which finally creates brand
loyalty. This concept of brand loyalty has attracted scholars’ attention for a long period, however its relationship with future anticipation has not been explored yet.

The data of this study were collected from consumer surveys in Indonesia, Spain and Scotland. These three locations were chosen to eliminate the bias of the differences between developed and developing countries. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) approach using Lisrel 8.80 has been used to test the hypotheses and analyse the factors of the proposed model. The data analysis procedure consists of a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the measurement model, and the SEM analyses to examine the overall relationship among the constructs. The research shows that the influence of future anticipation is very essential in creating brand relationship, autobiographical memory or even market performance and both in Asia also Europe has a similar level of significance.

Chapter 4 raises the question of brand loyalty being really present or not in children’s consumer behaviour. The study uses comparative datasets collected in Brazil, Portugal, and Indonesia. Traditional research in both cultural and cross-cultural psychology has focused on culture-based effects by identifying the influence of culture on the individual (culture—affects—psyche). The meaning embedded in brands can serve to represent and institutionalize the values and beliefs of a culture. The comparative frameworks here uses a Latin culture – Brazil and Portugal, and the present day culture of Indonesia, which is itself an outcome of the interplay of age-old-traditions from the time of migrants and the Western thought brought by Portuguese trades and Dutch colonists.

The value systems of both cultural make-ups are formed by specific dimensions. For example, both cultures are greatly influenced by religion. Both countries are amongst the most popular countries in the world – Indonesia – 4th and Brazil – 5th. Brazil is also a multi-ethnic country and most islands in Indonesia are also multi-ethnic. The population of both countries is experiencing high growth rates. Social stratification, classes, and caster also follow a similar structure in both countries. Still many differences do exist between both countries.

This study attempts to analyse factors which are identified as the antecedents of brand loyalty in the children’s market. We propose a model which tries to encapsulate the antecedents of a brand relationship and its influence toward brand loyalty. Brand loyalty was identified as the consequence of a brand relationship, autobiographical memory, and habituation. It was also found that autobiographical memory does not influence brand loyalty across the three countries, since the concept of brand loyalty is still questioned by customers.

This study also suggests that a brand relationship is influenced less by brand personality but more by brand trust in the three countries. Basically, this study suggests that a brand relationship for children is influenced mostly by brand trust. It was found that brand trust and brand salience are the drivers and building blocks
of the development of autobiographical memory through a brand relationship. We also found an interesting finding that autobiographical memory does not influence brand loyalty in the three countries. This challenges our tacit knowledge about brand loyalty. Marketers need to emphasize the development of a brand relationship and autobiographical memory instead of the product characteristics and retail environments.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to analyse the antecedents of a living brand. We attempt to do this by applying a fuzzy logic measurement as well as developing an artificial neural networks topology. In order to face the high competition, corporate brands which target children as their customers have to make their brand become a true living brand. Living means always adapting to trends and move dynamically following customer needs and wants. One way to carry out this activity is by engaging in future anticipation.

Our study here does not focus on the activities done by the companies regarding future anticipation, but rather on customers’ perceptions of the extent to which companies’ possess this vision of future anticipation. This research aims to identify the influence of future anticipation and rituals to the formation of autobiographical memory which finally could lead to the development of the perception of a living brand. A living brand, liquid brand or molecular brand is based on fluidity. It is like a living organism that moves ahead of the market.

A brand that assesses new trends, social values, society behaviours and technological impacts that might impinge future impacts on consumer behaviour and market structures. Our findings confirm that future anticipation contributes the highest to the development of living brand. Furthermore, rituals also support the development of the living brand. It is not surprisingly that these two constructs, i.e. future anticipation and ritual are becoming important antecedents of living brand.

Chapter 6 dissects the underpinnings behind the understanding of children consumption behaviour by using an artificial neural networks approach. From this methodological approach, several interesting insights emerge in respect of children’s consumer behaviour, and in particular, the factors of emotional authenticity, brand partnerships, brand relationship, brand salience, and brand personality in the priming of children’s brand loyalty.

From this preliminary work, it was concluded that brand personality, brand trust, and brand salience were seen as important ingredients for success in the children’s segment, since these features create the desired emotional bonding between the child and the product. When combined with autobiographical memory and habituation, this emotional bonding results in brand loyalty. From this understanding, we then employed a neural network topology in order to fully comprehend the antecedents of brand loyalty construction within the children’s market.
This particular computer modelling approach produced some interesting findings concerning the consumer behaviour of children, these being that emotional authenticity, brand partnerships, brand relationship, brand salience and brand personality, all playing key roles in generating brand loyalty. One of the most important findings of this study is that brand salience features prominently in the formation of brand loyalty during childhood and subsequent stages in the upbringing of children, as well as within the realms of children’s family environments and social interactions.

This brand salience establishes a myriad of important brand relationships which have, at the most, a positive contribution to brand loyalty, although they can also have a negative effect if previous expectations are not met or if promises are not delivered. These distortions and gaps are normally recorded in the autobiographical memory which categorizes in a chronological manner the fragmented experiences in children’s lives in terms of brand touchpoints. The mechanism triggered by the concept of ‘marketing with memory’ can then be a major contributor to the formation of positive mental structures in children, as well as sometimes being the repository of less favourable purchase/consumption experiences.

Brand salience has to be transformed well beyond traditional product attributes and communication narratives into a value to children, taking into account their perceptions and inputs, as well as a ‘market-driving’ approach by which companies anticipate future trends and cultural shifts and then incorporate the influence of these factors into their want-satisfying outputs in terms of an assembly of product/service solutions which will benefit children. Clearly, brand personality must be based on relevance to the consumers (children), showing attributes such as usefulness, capacity to provide fun, extension of life, contribution to personal development, and personal productivity. Marketers need to involve children as their information sources to anticipate their future needs. A children’s market-driving strategy really should be related with the ‘grass roots’ needs of the segment.

Chapter 7 deals with product longevity and the exploration of success factors in the children’s market. The potential of the child segment offers an immense opportunity for marketers to explore. In the ever-dynamic and ever-changing face of the children’s market, the identification and the ability to optimize the factors which can preserve product dominance is the key to product longevity. This study attempts to identify those factors which can influence the success of products in the children’s market.

We focus on identifying the antecedents of brand relationship and brand loyalty for the children’s market. It is hoped that this study can contribute to the body of knowledge and build understanding between the factors and their inter-relations, so that in the end product longevity in the children’s market is finally achieved. In this study, the respondents were children between 10-12 years old. Children within this group tend to realize they should be responsible for their actions and try to behave
well. They are capable to understand moral values and differentiate the good and the bad ones. This age group can be described as being in the phase of thinking development: neurologically, the left brain is developing and this phase is crucial as children view their environment and define themselves in their adjustment to the world around them.

Children are easily impressed: they like to imitate celebrities such as sports stars or other role models such as teachers or parents or spiritual leaders. Children within the 10-12 age group were selected, because it was assumed they were mature enough to understand and reply to simple direct questions. This model provides a useful tool to assist managers in mapping the competing forces that influence the autobiographical memory of their customer base. The variables examined in this study provide a starting point.

More importantly, this study suggests that a brand relationship is influenced less by brand personality but more by brand trust as well as brand salience. We found that brand trust and brand salience are the main drivers and act as the foundation for the development of the autobiographical memory through a brand relationship. Marketers have prioritized developing brand trust and brand salience due to their functions as the drivers of brand relationships and autobiographical memory. Brand trust and brand salience which fulfil customers’ desires will lead to satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, marketers need to apply value-based marketing which delivers superior customer value. Old-fashioned marketing needs to be upgraded.

We also found that there is a stronger link between autobiographical memory and brand habituation. This link is totally based on the relationship of brand trust and brand salience. Hence, it provides emotional authenticity. We can conclude that childhood priming based on emotional authenticity leads to a concept of a heroic brand. Companies need to promote the brands well to customers, including children. On the other hand, a brand relationship appears to act as a brand partnership through mentioned bonding based on benefits and functions. Research needs to reinforce the notion of marketing with memory. Our findings are in line with previous research work on customer-based brand equity which places brand salience as the basic foundation of customer-based brand equity.

We believe that brand trust, brand salience, and brand relationships play a significant role in developing autobiographical memory and brand loyalty not only in Asia but in other developing countries. Marketers need to emphasize on developing a brand relationship and autobiographical memory rather than the product characteristics and retail environments. This is not to say that product characteristics and retail environments are not critical, but due to the limited number of marketers, they have to prioritize the most relevant attributes as perceived by consumers, including children.
Due to the importance of brand relationships for children, marketers have to start thinking about how to initiate true and sustainable relationships with children. Promotions and other marketing activities should be developed in order to build strong relationships with children that ultimately lead to brand loyalty. We found that trust is crucial for children; therefore, marketers need to involve children as much as possible. Children should be seen as story-tellers and co-creators of promotional messages and media.

Since children aged 10-12 years old are quite familiar with the Internet, marketers can utilize social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or blogs to generate positive inputs and testimonials in order to develop a positive autobiographical memory within children. This way is smarter and friendlier than using forced invitations or any type of marketing intrusion. To the extreme, marketers would probably need to spend 2-3 days every month living with children to understand their real world. They have to really pay attention to what kind of repository and opportunities are needed to create a positive perceptual diffidence in their long-term memory.

Challenging yet innovative marketing programs should be created in order to develop positive feelings that can be installed as part of a strong autobiographical memory. Companies need to be more transparent in their communication and become growth-companions for the child consumers. They have to abandon having adult attitudes and engage in market-driving strategies to pave the way for future developments in children’s lifestyles and dietary requirements. They should utilize less “brand dressing” and focus more on relevance and substance in their advertising messages. Less intrusion is needed in children’s lives.

Chapter 8 explores more on the product side of the equation, particularly regarding the product characteristics for children. Specifically, we discuss about the factors which differentiate products for children and the various dimensions of children product’s characteristics.

Children’s products are specifically made to support children development and fill their supposedly cheerful world. Hence, there are special product characteristics that differentiate their world with those of adults’. Children’s product typically has particular characteristics which are unique and become a company’s positioning strategy. This will enable the products to have superior differentiation which will ultimately provide them with competitive superiorities. As explained by McNeal (1999), some of these special product characteristics for children include colour, packaging, symbol, usage, and product’s country of origin.

Furthermore, when it comes to the dimensions of product characteristic, some of the things that we need to take into consideration are trend, usefulness or utility, as well as price. Finally, marketers should also strive to create impressionable products to children by discovering their psychosocial development stages and characteristics.
In this regard, several past researches have revealed that products with characteristics that are perceived as being ‘innovative’ are more preferred compared to those perceived as being ‘non-innovative’.

Chapter 9 elaborates about marketing information process on children in order to come full circle and complete our understanding so that marketers and researchers alike will be fully equipped with the practical knowledge on how to ethically and effectively market products for children.

This chapter covers the stages of information processing inside the brain (i.e., encoding, storing, and retrieving), the forgetting theories (i.e., Decay Theory, Interference Theory, Retrieval Failure Theory, Motivated Forgetting Theory, and forgetting because of Physiological Reasons), 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.

Memory is not just the ability to store experiences, but it also includes the ability to receive (encoding), save (storage), and recover (retrieval) what is experienced. The encoding process can happen intentionally and intentionally. The storage process is also known as retention, which is the process of storing information someone has. Intervals in the storage process comprise interval time and interval content. There are three kinds of retrieval processes, including recall, recognition, and reintegrative.

In the memory process, information that is received will always go to the sensory memory first. Then, certain amount of information will proceed to the short-term memory that is then lost. The rest which have gone through selection process will reside in the long-term memory, while what is not continued will typically be forgotten.

Finally, in conveying marketing information to children, marketers should plant positive memories about a certain product to children, since such information will be stored in the long-term memory, which could very well ensure profitable customer relationship in the long run.

Chapter 10 includes a number of relevant case studies related to the area of marketing to children as well as the ethical issues involved in it. Some of the cases tackle considerations like how marketers market to children, e.g., buzz or street marketing, the link between psychology and marketing as well as the important concept of pester power. Another case study analyses the issue of children’s memory. Do small children remember? Do children’s memories stick into adulthood? Do women tend to have earlier memories than men?

Another case study explores the issue of early age smoking and associated health risks. The content of this case study focus on the role of logotypes, branding and packaging. The formation of associated images in the mind is also discussed as well as the emergence of e-cigarettes. One of the case studies reinforces the analytical discussion of the difficult issues related to advertising to children. It covers the situation in both the USA and the UK with examples raising the question of the moral, ethical or social justification of advertising to children.
Other important aspects that are dissected include children’s credulity, legal implications and media literacy. Yet another case study deals with the subject of acceptance of responsibility when marketing to children. There are many facets that are discussed here and its content covers aspects like obesity, deceptive advertising, corporate accountability, corporate social responsibility, spiritual justification, conscious capitalism, among other relevant issues.

The final case study revolves around the dissection of issues related to marketing to children within the confines of the American Psychological Association. In particular, it focuses on the ethics of advertising to children, targeting young consumers. Unethical practices are discussed as well as the manipulation of children. Rampant consumerism is also analysed. The whole case study involves the bigger subject of ethical responsibilities.