

Understanding Children as Consumers

Edited by
DAVID MARSHALL



Understanding Children as Consumers

Advanced Marketing Series

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David Marshall



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Notes on Contributors

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Sarah Todd is Professor of Marketing and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) at the University of Otago. She is co-director of the Consumer Research Group and has been co-leader of the comprehensive study of New Zealanders' consumer lifestyles, undertaken on a five yearly basis. Within the broad area of marketing, Sarah's teaching and research has primarily been in consumer behaviour, with current research interests including children's consumption, particularly how children learn and understand the marketplace, and ethical consumption. Additionally, Sarah has acted as expert witness for NZ's Commerce Commission on a number of cases based on consumers' understanding of information.

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Brian Young is a Research Fellow and consumer psychologist at the University of Exeter. A psychology graduate of the University of Edinburgh, he spent seven years in Hong Kong where he received a PhD in Chinese-English bilingualism. He has published extensively in the area of children and advertising with *Television Advertising and Children* (Oxford University Press, 1990) and with E.L. Palmer (eds) *The Faces of Televisual Media: Teaching, Violence, Selling to Children, 2nd Edition* (Erlbaum, 2003). Brian is Editor of *Young Consumers*, an Emerald Group journal. His interests are in consumer socialization and theories of promotional activity. He teaches at the University of Exeter in both the School of Psychology and the Business School in consumer and economic socialization, child development, and advertising and consumer psychology.

Preface and Acknowledgements

Someone asked me recently why I became interested in young consumers. The answer was simple and I did not have to think long and hard about it – because I had children of my own. As they grew up I became fascinated by their ‘consumer’ experiences, many of which I was responsible for, with a range of products from building blocks to breakfast cereals, trading cards to Tamagotchi pets, football (soccer) players to social networking sites. You may not have guessed but we have boys and I remember having to try to buy a present for my young nieces and realizing that there was another aisle in the toy store where we seldom ventured. Children, both boys and girls, seemed engaged, knowledgeable and ‘experienced’ in this commercial world and I felt that there was more to all this than the model of the passive vulnerable child depicted in many texts. Another reason for my initial interest can be attributed to one of my undergraduate students, Sarah (ffellhan) Case who was looking at the role of character merchandising in marketing to children and wrote an excellent dissertation on the topic. As part of her research into the role of media and character toys she lent me a copy of *Out of the Garden* by Stephen Kline, one of this book’s contributors (I returned it only recently!), and this opened up a new field of research literature which was fascinating and intriguing. The more I read – a number of these books are briefly listed in the introduction – the more it became clear that the views of many experts did not always correspond with my own experiences and so I began to try to see what children made of this all by talking to them.

The idea for the book arose from a meeting with Sarah Todd, University of Otago, at the 2003 European Association for Consumer Research conference in Dublin, Ireland. At that time Sarah was looking at children’s experiences with money and this started out as a joint project. Unfortunately due to other commitments Sarah had to withdraw from her editorial role but continued to offer invaluable comments on the structure of the book as it took shape. Her support and enthusiasm throughout the project have been invaluable and much appreciated. Thanks also go to Phil Harris, University of Chester, who supported the text as part of the Sage Advanced Marketing Series. I am especially thankful to Delia Alfonso the commissioning editor at Sage who embraced the idea with genuine enthusiasm and her unending patience was

to prove a virtue as work commitments and pressure from the UK Research Assessment Exercise led to delay after delay as the project got pushed back. Without Delia and her colleagues at Sage this book would not have materialized.

Huge thanks go out to all the authors, who persevered amidst continual requests for chapters, revised submission schedules and delayed publication dates as the final pieces of the jigsaw were put together. Special thanks go out to those who stepped in at the last minute to contribute chapters to the book. Each author has made an individual contribution despite busy work – and in many cases, family – schedules, to bring their own perspectives on children as consumers that both review the field of study and offer new and interesting perspectives for the reader. I am grateful to John Dawson and Stephanie O'Donohoe at the University of Edinburgh Business School, Stephen Kline at Simon Fraser University and Agnes Nairn, University of EM-Lyon, who provided invaluable insights and constructive comments throughout the project and Rosemary Duff of Childwise who allowed me access to information on the UK children's market.

A number of anonymous individuals gave up their time to review the initial proposal and offer valuable and constructive suggestions on how to improve the book proposal. I endeavoured, where possible, to deliver on these requests and hope this is in line with your expectations. Special thanks go to the two anonymous reviewers who provided some excellent and extremely helpful comments on the manuscript draft and enabled me to revisit, with the help of the contributors, some of these issues and further develop the text.

Finally, I would like to thank my partner Linda and our children Shaun and Ben, who are always willing to offer their consumer perspective.

I hope this edited collection will provide insights and generate some of the enthusiasm that we have experienced in reading, researching, writing about and watching children as consumers. Knowledge should be empowering for us as students, academics, researchers and practitioners and the insights from each of the contributors allow us to understand children as consumers more fully by considering their perspectives on the commercial world. In the process children might benefit from having their voices heard. Ideally the contributions in this book will encourage readers to refresh their thinking and research methods by listening to children about how they engage with the commercial environment, but also reconsider when, where and how children need to be protected from its excesses.

David Marshall

1

Introduction

David Marshall

The aim of *Understanding Children as Consumers* is to look at how we view children as consumers and to consider the extent to which they are actively engaged in the marketplace as the buyers, users and recipients of consumer goods. This edited collection draws on recent research and academic expertise within the area of consumer behaviour and childhood consumption. It looks at a range of age groups but is primarily focused on children aged 8 to 12 years old. As a number of commentators have noted, childhood is firmly embedded in the commercial marketplace (Langer, 1994, 2005; Cook, 2004) and a major challenge is to understand the ways in which young consumers negotiate this terrain.

In (re)thinking children as consumers we need to recognize the ubiquity of the marketplace in children's everyday lives and consider the ways in which they experience this commercial world, be it through exposure to various forms of media, visiting retail stores, making requests for products, or purchasing goods with their own money. With direct and indirect marketing to children on the increase there is a question over how children engage with this commercial world. A number of discussions, for example, around food marketing and childhood obesity, online activity and sedentary lifestyles, or increased materialism among the young tend to place children as hapless victims subject to the onslaught of marketing activity. While we have often excluded children from debates about consumption, manufacturers and retailers have long recognized the role of children as consumers and acknowledged their contribution to family decision making (Kline, 1993; Cross, 1997; Cook, 2004).

With this growth in marketing to children some commentators have gone as far as claiming that children are suffering from 'marketing related diseases' and that we are witnessing the 'hostile takeover of childhood' in a 'toxic' commercial environment permeating all aspects of young lives (Schor, 2006, citing commercialalert.com; see also Linn, 2004; Palmer, 2007). Seen from this

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perspective, this once commercial-free arena of childhood is increasingly populated with attempts to 'lure' young consumers, and their parents, into ever more consumption, with a variety of devious tactics that include recruiting children to promote products in the playground and online through social networking sites, as well as by using a variety of promotional tactics that 'play on their dreams and exploit their vulnerabilities' (Mayo and Nairn, 2009: xvii). Underpinning this moralizing is an assumption about children as 'consumers' and a question over the extent to which they are either vulnerable and exploited in the commercial environment to which they are exposed or competent and savvy individuals. As Cook (2004: 7) notes, 'The dichotomous construction of the exploited child and the empowered child arises from a lingering tension between markets and moral sentiment: it is a tension which, at least since the beginning of industrialisation, continues to inform considerations of childhood'. Resolution of this tension, according to Cook, occurs where goods are considered beneficial and functional, as is the case with educational goods, or when children are seen as full *persons* who desire goods and can exhibit some degree of agency. Gunter and Furnham (1998: 7) argue that children resemble other (adult) consumers in many ways and exhibit a degree of sophistication and pragmatism in their approach to the marketplace to the extent that they are both 'active and discerning' in their consumption. Similar views are expressed by David Buckingham (2000, 2008; Buckingham and Willett, 2006) in his accounts of children and media. One only needs to consider their knowledge about latest toys, or the hottest characters on collectible cards, the 'best' sports players, or the coolest websites.

These issues form the basis of what this book is trying to do in looking critically at children¹ as active consumers, but it differs from previous accounts by trying to address the key issues and uncover what being a consumer means to children themselves – namely, from their perspective!² This attempt to give children some voice in the debate is sympathetic to the idea that they should have some say, that their opinions matter, and that they have some 'agency' as consumers and 'social beings' in their own right (James et al., 1998).³

Marketing to children

To put this idea of vulnerable or competent consumers into context let us consider where much of the discussion about children as consumers has been centred thus far – on marketing to children. One of the most influential writers in the field remains James McNeal. His books include *Children as Consumers: Insights and Implications* (1987) and *The Kid's Market Myths and Realities* (1999) in which he offers interesting insights into young consumers. These, along with texts like Guber and Berry's *Marketing to and through Kids* (1993), raised the profile of the children's market and generated interest in the notion of children as consumers. Much of their focus was on how to market to children as opposed to what children are doing with marketing.

Later texts such as Acuff's (1997) *What Kids Buy and Why: The Psychology of Marketing to Kids*, or Del Vecchio's (1997) *Creating Ever Cool: A Marketeer's Guide to a Kid's Heart* attempted to unpack the key to successful marketing. Cross offers an historical account of children's play in *Kid's Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood* (1997) and *The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture* (2004) where he looks at changes in the children's market in the USA. Cook's historical account of the commercialization of children's fashion with *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* (2004) shows that the idea of marketing to young consumers is not some new phenomenon but part of a gradual process of integrating children into the marketplace. Gunter and Furnham provide an excellent psychological analysis of the young consumer entitled *Children as Consumers* (1998) in which they detail the nature of the children's market and their role as consumers. McNeal's *Kids as Customers: A Handbook of Marketing to Children* (1992) and more recently *On Becoming a Consumer: The Development of Consumer Behavior Patterns in Childhood* (2007) look at how children develop as consumers. Ellen Seiter's (1993) treatise on the children's toy market, *Sold Separately: Children and Parents in Consumer Culture*, focuses on children's creative use of consumer goods and media. David Buckingham in *After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media* (2000) looks at children and the media environment at the start of the century, a theme developed with Rebekah Willett in their (2006) edited text *Digital Generations*. In contrast to this academic approach, Martin Lindstrom and Patricia Seybold (2003) offer a practitioner's perspective on global kids in *Brand Child* looking at contemporary market research with young consumers.

But as an interest in marketing to children grew so too did concerns over the way in which this was developing. Stephen Kline's excellent history of marketing to children, *Out of the Garden* (1993), maps out a detailed historical trajectory of children's play culture and the role of the mass media in building up the 'children's' market. His account ten years later of the development of new media in *Digital Play* (Kline et al., 2003) reveals the emerging relationship between technology, culture and marketing in the games and video industry. Susan Linn's (2004) *Consuming Kids* and Juliet Schor's (2004) *Born to Buy* both raised important questions over this increasingly commercialized world of childhood and the pervasive nature of marketing. More recently the UK National Consumer Council's (Nairn et al., 2007) study on materialism and marketing towards children concluded that children who spend more time in front of the television or computer tend to be more materialistic and have lower self-esteem, raising further concerns over the impact of marketing to younger consumers. Mayo and Nairn's (2009) *Consumer Kids: How Big Business is Grooming our Children for Profit* leaves little doubt as to the sentiment of the text. They provide an insightful account of the latest marketing tactics and the impact on children's wellbeing⁴ in an increasingly commercial world and also look at some of the positive ways in which children are responding to this consumer world.

4 Understanding Children as Consumers

A large part of the debate on marketing to children has focused on advertising, primarily in relation to mass media advertising and the ways in which children engage with television and, more recently, online advertising. Research from over thirty years ago showed that children's ability to distinguish between persuasive advertising and television programmes was related to age (Robertson and Rossiter, 1974). While some would argue that children lack the life skills and experience to resist the persuasive nature of commercial advertising others claim that promotional messages provide information to allow for informed choice (Moore, 2004). Inherent in this debate is the idea that advertising to children is 'unfair' and one approach has been to look for a 'magic age' at which children can understand the persuasive intent of these commercial messages. While it has commonly been assumed that teenagers are less vulnerable to advertising, recent research suggests that they may be just as persuadable as younger children when it comes to digital marketing. The persuasion model relies on explicit mental processes and does not account for the formation of implicit attitudes when children encounter certain stimuli (Livingstone and Helsper, 2006; Nairn and Fine, 2008). Today's children are faced with a variety of new media where the distinctions between commercial and non-commercial material are increasingly blurred, for example, when advergames promote brands online (Moore and Rideout, 2007; Lee et al., 2009). For this generation, television advertising represents only one aspect of their consumption experience and more recent accounts have considered their engagement with a broader range of media including the internet (Livingstone and Helsper, 2004; Tufte et al., 2005; Schor, 2006; Ekström and Tufte, 2007; Livingstone, 2009).

As we ponder on the impact of advertising campaigns on children, few ask if younger children are actually interested in these ever more devious advertising campaigns or how they relate to them, and most importantly how they impact on their behaviour (Andersen, 2007). While most of the discussion around marketing to children has centred on exposure and the comprehension of commercial intent, we know much less about how children utilize that information and the impact on their behaviour (Lawlor and Prothero, 2002; Bartholomew and O'Donohoe, 2003). In a rapidly changing media environment we might also ask how children have learnt to deal with marketing as a consequence of this increased exposure to products and brands and try to understand that experience from their perspective.

Children and consumption

Over a twenty year period from the 1960s to the end of the 1980s, young consumer spending in the USA increased from \$2bn to \$6bn and their

influence extended to a staggering \$132bn of household expenditure (McNeal, 1992). This trend was to continue through the 1980s in the United States with an increasingly affluent teenage market, despite numbers of teenagers declining by 15.5 per cent (Gunter and Furnham 1998: 2; see also Davis, 1990; McNeal, 1992). By the end of the 1990s it was estimated that children in the USA accounted for \$23bn in direct spending, almost all of this discretionary, and influenced a further \$188bn in family purchases (McNeal, 1999). Ten years on the children's market (i.e. the annualized amount spent on child related goods and activities) is around \$921bn⁵ in the United States. The corresponding value of the UK market is around £117 bn.⁶

The most recent account of children's direct purchasing power in the USA is around \$51.8bn (Schor, 2006). It is difficult to get similar figures for the UK but the most recent British pocket money survey from the Halifax⁷ showed the following:

- Average pocket money in 2008 was £6.13 per week, versus £8.01 in 2007.
- Younger children aged between 8 and 11 years old got almost half the amount of their older counterparts (12 to 15 years old) receiving £4.34.
- Pocket money was out of step with inflation – there was a shortfall of £3.30 for 2008's weekly allowance compared with three years beforehand.
- Whilst parents provided a weekly allowance they continued to pay for mobiles, iPods and gifts.
- Three in ten children saved some of their pocket money each week; however, if they wanted something in addition to their allowance they tended to ask for it as a 'present' (Halifax, 2008).

With an estimated 13 million children aged under sixteen in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2009), and around 70 per cent receiving pocket money, this represents considerable spending power that does not include money gifted to children or the cash they earn for part-time jobs or individual enterprise. The *ChildWise Monitor Report*⁸ (2009) found 84 per cent of UK children aged 5 to 16 years old received a regular income, with 72 per cent receiving pocket money or an allowance and a quarter earning income from a paid job. Average weekly income was £10.10, with children aged 5 to 10 years old getting around £4.70 per week on average and 11 to 16 year olds receiving £12.10 each. This gives a total value of children's annual income of £3800m,⁹ with a further estimated £5100m in ad hoc handouts including birthday money. Taken together this represents a combined annual figure of £8900m per year (covering pocket money, allowances, paid jobs and ad hoc handouts) at children's disposal.

James McNeal (1987, 1992, 1999) discusses this potentially lucrative market of young consumers spending their money on a range of items such as confectionary, drinks, toys, fast food, magazines, movies and music and influencing family spending¹⁰ (directly and indirectly) on products as diverse as breakfast cereals, family cars and holidays. The (2008) *ChildWise*

6 Understanding Children as Consumers

Report gave an average annual self spend for the UK's 5 to 16 year olds of £310m on crisps and snacks, £290m on soft drinks, £260m on sweets and chocolate, £1090m on clothing, £440m on music and CDs, and £340m on computer software – a grand total across these categories of £2730m. In a number of these areas children are seen as having their own 'needs' and also a willingness to spend money on such products, but to constitute a market they also need to have the ability and the authority to purchase, as well as some knowledge and understanding of that market.

This idea of a 'children's market' is a relatively new development in 'western' markets and up to the 1960s children were not seen as customers in their own right but as savers and future customers. While most of the focus has been on children's direct and indirect influence on family purchases, from breakfast cereals through to cars, an increasing number of products and promotions are being targeted directly at children. This has led to debates around pester power and persuasive kids, raising concerns over the ways in which this commercialization of childhood is impacting on family life (Wooton, 2003; Carauna and Vasello, 2004; Preston, 2004; Spungin, 2004). However, more recent views suggest that parent-child relationships are less confrontational and more collaborative in contemporary western societies. Finally, children are important as a future market for most goods and services and one to be cultivated early. Consider children's savings accounts offered by most banks, or children's food ranges on the supermarket shelves, or a British advert that reverses the parent-child role and has the kids commenting on the versatility of the family orientated MPV. No wonder that the relevant companies are interested.

One measure of this interest in the children's market is in the amount spent on advertising products to children. A 2007 report for the Advertising Association in the UK reported a 9 per cent (£26m) fall in advertising expenditure on confectionery, potato crisps and snacks, full sugar carbonates (fizzy drinks), breakfast cereals and fast food restaurants between 2003 and 2006. In the same period there was a corresponding 61 per cent increase in expenditure on fruit juice, water, fresh fruit and vegetables (albeit from a low base). The same report shows a fall of 29 per cent in the number of core category ads (all food, fast food and confectionary) watched by 4 to 9 year olds in the immediate period following the introduction of restrictions on UK advertising. From 1 January 2009 there was to be no advertising of high fat, sugar, or salt food products on children's TV channels. Yet advertising in other media (such as online) appears to be taking hold (Lee et al., 2009; Mayo and Nairn, 2009). In the USA, advertising aimed at children is estimated at \$15bn annually (Linn, 2004). The Kaiser Family Foundation (2006, 2007) found food to be the most widely advertised product on the networks in their study. Almost half of the ads on kids' time television were for food products and the vast majority of those brands also had an online presence with websites using a variety of marketing tactics.

Children as consumers

However, this book is not simply about the size of the market or indeed what marketing does to children, but about children as consumers. It looks at what children do with marketing (as consumers of the advertising, promotions and products they are exposed to) and their consumption experiences. While marketers propose a view of children as relatively autonomous individuals making independent decisions, policy groups are more likely to see children in need of protection. This book stands outside those opposing adult views and looks at consumption from the child's perspective. More specifically, it presents the views of a number of leading experts in the field about children as consumers, and one that is *sympathetic* to the idea of looking at consumption from the child's perspective, despite the limited amount of research that adopts this approach. There has been a considerable body of work within the field of marketing that seeks to explore and examine the consumption practices of children, in many cases looking at ideas that have been applied to adult consumers and adapting them accordingly, but in all of this debate there remains a question around the extent to which children should be treated differently from adults.

A number of themes – besides the vulnerable-competent issue – emerge over the course of the book. One such theme is consumer socialization and the extent to which children are integrated into consumption practices either as individuals or as members of a 'family'. Socialization assumes that children are in some form of liminal state and childhood is part of a transition into adulthood, encapsulated in the idea of children as 'becomings'. But as we will see, there is some interest in children as consumers in their own right – as 'beings' – and a need to understand what consumption means to them. This transition and development theme is reflected in the cognitive development literature which has played an important role in how we approach children's consumption. This is evident across a number of chapters and references to the work of Piaget and Roedder-John appear throughout the text.

How we choose to conduct research with children as consumers is beginning to change and throughout the book there is increasing evidence of interpretivist approaches, the use of projective techniques, and looking at children's consumption from a consumer culture theory (CCT) perspective. These new ways of looking at young consumers are evident in a number of the chapters. Another theme to emerge is the issue of ethics, particularly around the growth in materialism and consumption among young children and the role that marketing plays in this development.

Finally, one cannot help but notice the impact of new mobile and internet technologies. Social networking sites, blogs, online gaming, advergames and web 2.0 are connecting consumers and creating new forms of dialogue between young consumers and companies. Increasingly companies

are marketing through these new media channels as well as via the traditional media of television and print. This is an area that has drawn the attention of a number of researchers interested in how children engage with this new media. Evidence from the UK showed that young people (7 to 16 year olds) are engaged with a range of interactive and non-interactive media. Many have internet access at home, a mobile phone, games consoles and a television in their rooms¹¹ (ChildWise, 2008). Children spend twice as much time in front of the screen as they do in class (Mayo and Nairn, 2009).

Organization of the book

There are four sections and 14 chapters in the book (see Figure 1.1). Each chapter has a set of objectives and includes short vignettes that illustrate the issues discussed within, along with some discussion questions at the end of the chapter. The book is organized around the idea of children being actively engaged in the commercial marketplace and begins by looking at some of the ways in which we have conceptualized children as consumers, drawing on psychological and sociological models of childhood. These serve as the background for some of the ways in which children's marketing has evolved in response to the shift from 'cute to cool' and the role of branding, advertising and retailing in shaping their consumption experiences and engaging them as consumers, both directly and indirectly. Developments in marketing towards children force us to rethink some of our ideas around how they function and engage as consumers in the marketplace and this feeds back into our debate around development and socialization. The third section looks at a number of the products that are associated with young consumers, notably snacks, clothes, and the internet, as areas of consumption where they exercise some discretion. These represent specific examples of marketing to children that resonate with developments in Part II, but they also raise issues about children's abilities as consumers and their agency in certain categories of consumption. This leads into the final section that reflects on the moral aspects of these changes and conclude by revisiting the question of whether children are competent or vulnerable beings in a marketplace that is increasingly orientated towards them as consumers. In the end, these questions force us to reflect on, or rethink, the ways in which we look at children as consumers.

Contributors

This book is an edited collection with contributions from a number of international researchers actively engaged in theoretical and empirical work on the consumption practices of children. Contributions from Europe,

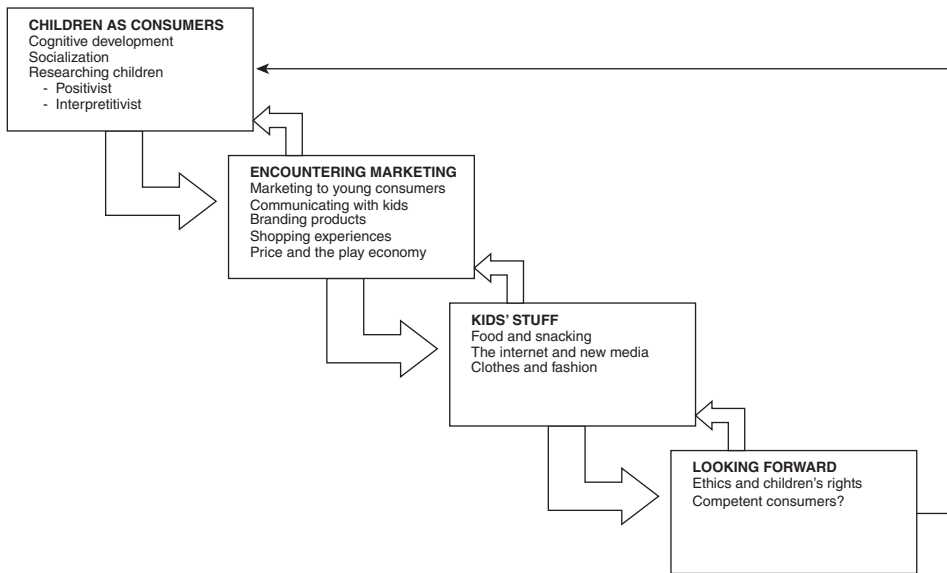


Figure 1.1 Understanding children as consumers

Scandinavia, North America, Canada, New Zealand and Australia offer a contemporary view of child consumers in developed western economies and provide valuable insights into different aspects of children's consumption. This is a rich and emergent field attracting a range of disciplines from business, commerce, and management through to other social science fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, education and history, and the text looks beyond children and advertising to consider how they engage and interact with consumption more broadly. There are clearly questions over children's competencies as consumers and the various contributors revisit the contemporary view of children as passive consumers. The book provides readers with a basis for looking at various aspects of children's consumption, supplemented with cutting-edge research insights that contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which children interact, respond and engage with marketing-related activities.

Part I looks at 'Children as Consumers' and has contributions from experts in the field of marketing to children. In Chapter 2 Valérie-Inés de la Ville and Valérie Tartas look at the contribution from three development psychology perspectives on understanding children as consumers. They offer a considered and insightful critique of the theoretical cognitive development frameworks that have informed much of our research into children as consumers and argue for the need to consider children's development as consumers as a function of environmental influences. They also look at some of the ways in which children acquire social skills through their interaction with others and

offer a framework that brings together these ideas and recognizes the active nature of children's consumption and the role of the environment and socialization in shaping their cognitive development. For de la Ville and Tartas, children are very much active participants in the marketplace and they examine the ways in which children develop as economic actors in a complex cultural system that both enables and constrains their consumption activities. They challenge us to consider how children move from being peripheral to central participants in consumption. This chapter offers an excellent review and critique of the dominant approach to understanding children as consumers and argues convincingly for the need to consider critically what this tells us about children as consumers.

The third chapter by Karin Ekström picks up on this theme of consumer socialization within the specific context of the family, an important site of consumer socialization and one that appears throughout the book. Ekström looks at the mediating influence of the family unit and the extent to which this plays an important role in transferring and transforming children's consumption experiences. But she rejects this unidirectional, one-sided view and sees this process not simply as one where parents influence children but as a much more dyadic interaction whereby children can influence and change what their parents, and grandparents, consume through their provision of knowledge. In this respect children are much more agentive and can influence certain aspects of family consumption. In discussing this process of socialization, Ekström looks at the dualistic perspective of children as either competent or vulnerable and argues, like de la Ville and Tartas, for the need to look at this in a broader environmental context – not least in terms of developments in communication technologies, especially with the emergence of web space and social networking sites that have been enthusiastically adopted by young consumers. She offers ten different family types, derived from her own research, and considers a range of consumption scenarios that explore socialization in contemporary Swedish families. The chapter reveals the extent to which children's influence depends on the nature of family communication, supporting other research in this area. And what she shows, through this, is a relationship between influence and affluence, raising issues around socio-economic differences in the socialization of young consumers.

The challenge of researching young consumers is taken up by Teresa Davis. She discusses the methodological and ethical challenges in undertaking this type of research and offers an insightful and pragmatic approach to understanding children's consumption, drawing on both positivistic – which has dominated much of the consumer research with children – and more recent interpretative approaches. She considers the appropriateness as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Davis recognizes the extent to which the selection of a research method is dependent on a researcher's ontological perspective, with positivist approaches commonplace