Conceptual Clarity in Consumer Scholarship

McGregor Monograph Series No. 201101

Sue L. T. McGregor PhD Professor
Docentship in Home Economics University of Helsinki
Doctoral Program Coordinator, Faculty of Education
Mount Saint Vincent University
Halifax Nova Scotia B3M2J6 Canada
Sue.mcgregor@msvu.ca
902-823-2625h 902-457-6385w
Http://www.consultmcgregor.com

April 2011

Acknowledgements: This monograph reflects insights gained from the insightful comments shared by Liz Goldsmith (Florida State) and Tahira Hira (Iowa State).

Introduction

The academic discipline concerned with the nuances of consumers in the marketplace has evolved over the past century. With that evolution, many nouns have emerged that are prefixed with their fellow noun, consumer. A prefix is a word placed before another word to alter its meaning. We now have consumer issues, interests, perspectives, protection, behaviour, studies, and the list goes on. This collection of derivative concepts scaffolds our consumer scholarship discourse and practice. This monograph assumes that, with conceptual clarity, consumer scholars can better ensure more robust theories, research, curricula and policy analysis. It strives to shed light on how the consumer-related terms used within the discipline each have a unique conceptualization while being inherently interconnected.

Suggestions for conceptual clarification are offered for consideration and further dialogue. The discussion starts by defining consumer, consumption and consumerism. This is followed with an overview of consumer marketplace failures as a concept, and then a discussion of consumer issues, the consumer interest, consumer protection and a consumer perspective. In table form, the results of a seminal, consumer-related higher education program audit are shared and expanded to include consumer education and consumer behaviour (Figure 1).

As a caveat, this monograph acknowledges that the consuming role held by people involves the judicious management of money, time and energy (and other resources and associated resource management tasks, see Goldsmith 2009, 2010), but the focus of the monograph will be limited to concepts prefaced with the noun consumer.

This monograph encourages those using these fundamental consumer scholarship terms (and others) to remain cognizant of the nuances of each one, and the import of using them interchangeably without clarifying their distinctiveness. Conceptual clarity reduces obscurity, increases comprehension and conveys the qualities of certainty, coherence and intelligence. Conceptual clarity helps validate consumer scholarship and ensuing practice informed by this scholarship. Miller and Goebel (1984) asserted that members of the consumer field must be able to understand and correctly apply the concepts innate to their basic discipline. The 15 fundamental concepts profiled in this monograph (Figure 1) define
the consumer field and provide its boundaries, the visible signs to others of our remit and our disciplinary, conceptual responsibilities. We are the stewards of the terms identified in this monograph, and we define them in such a way that we privilege the consumer relative to the producer. As a caveat, the definitions tendered in this monograph are admittedly rudimentary in nature, but believed to be sufficient to distinguish amongst them and to scaffold future conversations.

**Consumer, Consumption and Consumerism**

**Consumer Interest** (includes rights and responsibilities and consumer-citizen)

**Consumer Protection**

**Consumer Perspective**

**Higher Education Audit:**
- Consumer Affairs
- Consumer Education
- Consumer Behaviour
- Consumer Sciences
- Consumer Studies
- Consumer Economics
- Family Economics

Figure 1 15 consumer concepts profiled in this monograph

**Consumer, Consumption and Consumerism**

Consume is Latin, consumere, from com “intensive” and sumere “to take” (Harper, 2010); thus, to consume is to intensively take or use up something. For the sake of this discussion, in brief, the consumer is a person, consumption is an activity in which the person
engages and consumerism is an ideology and belief system, as well as a social institution, that informs and shapes the former. While these three concepts are interrelated, they also are independent.

**Consumer**

A consumer is anyone who considers purchasing (pre-purchase) and/or actually buys, uses and disposes of (post-purchase) goods and services generated in the formal economy, doing so for personal use, ownership and gain. The term consumer has existed since 1745, in an economic sense, juxtaposed against the term producer, Latin *prōducere*, to lead forward (Harper, 2010). Consumer is a synonym (means the same thing) for buyer or purchaser, and involves the expenditure of one's own income as well as the use of others' money in the form of credit (credit cards, conditional contracts, collateral mortgages), saving and investment earnings, insurance claim payouts and pension income. As a caveat, this monograph recognizes that people do other things with money in addition to spending it (e.g., saving, investing, giving, gifting), and that each of these activities also can lead to consumer issues and problems.

As well, per the previous reference to saving, investing and spending, this monograph acknowledges that many consumer scholars focus on the inherent link between consumption (see next), finances and money¹. They bring various assumptions to this issue including that (a) consumption is bigger than money or finances or (b) money and finances are larger than consumption, which is only one piece of the former. Respecting this reality of consumer scholarship, this monograph remains limited to a focus on concepts prefaced with the noun consumer, inviting dialogue about the conceptual linkages to other consumer scholarship terms.

As well, recently, in a challenge to the myopic focus of relating consuming to producing, the term consumer-citizen has emerged (Gabriel & Lang, 1995), likening consumer to citizen, Old French, *citeien*, inhabitant of a city (Harper, 2010). The consumer-citizen term extends the scope of the consumers’ concern beyond that of themselves (self-interest as an economic agent relative to the producer) to others, other species and the ecosystem with whom they share their habitation (Johnston, 2008; McGregor, 2010) (more to follow).

---

¹ Middle French *finance*, settling a debt, ending. The term took on the meaning of managing money in 1827. Money is Latin *moneta*, mint, coinage, metal currency, taken to mean paper money in the early 1800s. In the mid-15th century, the word money took on the meaning of “to make money, to earn pay” (Harper, 2010).
Consumption

Consumption is an activity that people engage in within the marketplace (McGregor, 2008). It often is defined in opposition to production and involves the buying or use of a good or service that has been previously distributed and produced in the marketplace (Cultural Anthropology, 2010). Consumption can be considered as an aggregate of all economic activity that does not entail the design, production, marketing and retailing of goods and services. Per the definition noted above of the consumer, these economic activities involve the selection, adoption, use, disposal and recycling of goods and services (Wikipedia Foundation, 2010).

The consumption activities of consumer-citizens are especially characterized by individuals who make choices based on moral, ethical, social, ecological and sustainability considerations. Ideally, consumer citizens would actively contribute to the maintenance of just and sustainable living by caring and acting responsibly on family, national and global levels as they engage in consumption activities (McGregor, 2010). This approach to conceptualizing consumer expands the term from a mere micro-consumption unit to that of a global citizen. Such consumers are seen as both part of a “value-laden chain” (Leonhäuser, 2004, p.5) while being active global citizens - a more holistic and complex understanding of consumption.

As a conceptual aside, consumer issues and citizen issues overlap to very great extents; they are not mutually exclusive. If we are not careful, however, the twin but separate and distinct principal duties (be a consumer and be a citizen) can become aligned and subordinated into just the consumer. Livingstone, Lunt and Miller (2007) actually recognized that some parties see "the ‘consumer-type’ as a person while the ‘citizen-type’ is an 'issue'" (p.20). From this stance, consumer issues, positioned within a competitive market framework, are considered to be worthy of our attention, while citizen issues, positioned as social constructs (not market constructs) can more readily be dismissed by those concerned with the consumer interest. More aptly, consumer issues are economic in nature while citizens involve social, cultural and democratic issues. Some issues are obviously consumer issues and some issues are obviously citizen issues, but at the end of the day, we are talking about people (Livingstone et al.). The consumer issue concept is discussed below in more detail.

Consumerism

While consumption is an activity that consumers engage in within the marketplace, consumerism is understood to be an ideology with an attendant belief system (Abbott, 2008;
McGregor, 2008). “The role of consumption and the ideology of consumerism are key elements in modern global cultures and societies, and are increasingly the subject of academic investigations” (Hinkins, 2007, p. 44). An ideology shapes the assumptions that consumers hold about power relationships, preferred market dynamics, presumed rights and responsibilities and how people make sense of their role as a consumer. Ideologies are understood to be the ruling ideas of the times, prescriptions for a preferred way to live day-by-day. There is a healthy body of discourse about ideologies in consumer research (see McGregor). The values, beliefs and notions of truth that constitute an ideology inform the nature of politics, economics, culture, the media, education and other social institutions, thereby profoundly shaping every day life (McGregor).

Indeed, in addition to being an ideology, consumerism also is conceived as an institution, the latter referring to customs, practices, relationships, or behavioural patterns of importance in the life of a community or society. If nothing else, consuming has become a central component of individual, family and community life. Without doubt, consumerism is an established and stable way to organize the social, daily life of a people - it has become a familiar institution (for bad or for worse). Within this institution, people are socialized to see themselves as individuals with a consuming role (McGregor, 2007).

**Consumer Marketplace Failures**

Failure is Old French falir, lacking, missing, deficient, not succeeding. Market stems from Latin merk, referring to various aspects of economics. It also means a public building, space or arena where buying and selling occurs (Harper, 2010). Consumer marketplace failure is a modern day term referring to when trade arenas malfunction (Old French mal, wrongly or badly). The complexity of consumer household and resource management (see Figure 2) exposes people to situations ripe for market malfunctions, exploitation and harm. Modern day marketplaces are rife with imperfections (Latin imperfectus, incomplete, faulty, defective, unfinished, undesirable) (Harper).

Consumers’ interests (stake, rights or conditions, to be discussed shortly) as participants in the marketplace readily can be compromised. Consider that issues surrounding consumption decisions can arise due to (a) external contexts (social, economic, political and technological), the actual decision making process, and values and belief systems (including what it means to live in a consumer society). Per Figure 2, consumer issues can arise (b) from the nuances of the many aspects of household resource management. And, consumer issues are affected by (c) the adequacy of consumer protection policies, consumer laws and consumers’ ability and propensity to participate in self-advocacy (Bannister & Monsma, 1982).
McGregor (1996) provided a detailed discussion of three additional approaches to characterizing marketplace failures (citing original sources). First, consumer problems can arise due to inequity and inefficiency in the marketplace. The former pertains to fairness of the transactional process and the latter refers to the distribution of resources so the benefits outweigh the costs. Inefficiency stems from mismanagement and inequity arises from disreputable business behaviour and consumer exploitation. Second, consumers can encounter problems when the marketplace fails due to (a) issues with the actual transaction for a specific good or service or (b) the overall structure of the marketplace. The former can occur due to the vulnerability or inadequacies of particular consumer sectors, the behaviour of particular sellers, or both. The latter refers to levels of competition, the degree and scope of state-provided consumer protection, and the adequacy of consumer voice. Third, marketplace failures can occur during one or more of the three basic stages of the market transaction (consumer-seller interactions) for goods and services: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase, appreciating that service transactions are quite unique relative to those entailed for a product (McGregor, 2005a).
Consumer Issues

The term consumer issues is a very common in consumer scholarship, employed in the previous discussion of marketplace failures. Issue is Old French issue, a way out or a point to be decided (Harper, 2010). An issue is an important question, topic, matter, point of concern, event or situation that is in dispute, discussion or debate and must be settled. If the market economy does not function properly, it is said to have failed, resulting in a consumer issue (Harris & Carman, 1983).

Consumer issues are conventionally understood to be economic issues, and related to whether people are getting the best deal for their money in the market. Consumer issues fall within a market ethos (the characteristics of the market culture manifested in its beliefs and aspirations). Those who embrace this market ethos (Greek ethos, nature, disposition, habits, customs, Harper, 2010) assume that effectively working and mature competitive markets bring benefits to consumers. In short, consumer issues traditionally are associated with ensuring a competitive market that delivers value for money to consumers (Livingstone et al., 2007). The aforementioned consumer-citizen concept challenges this narrow focus on the market ethos and on the 'best deal for your money' axiom. A better deal for other humans, other species and the planet also should fall within the purview of consumer issues.

From a conventional stance, consumer issues can be aggravated by, and become visible problems (and a part of public discourse) as a result of, : (a) the behaviour of the seller (manufacturer, marketer, retailer and service provider, leading to product-related or service-related concerns); (b) the behaviour of the consumer; (c) the import of technological innovations (e.g., privacy issues with internet transactions); (d) the pressure of media investigations; (e) the consequences of consumer interest groups' oversight and resultant allegations; and, (f) the inadequacy of existing consumer protection frameworks (see Mayer, 1991a).

As a result, consumers can experience concerns for both products and services. Their issues (something that must be settled or resolved) tend to fall within the following consumer problem areas (Greek problema, a thing put or thrown forward for solution, Harper, 2010): (a) economic and financial security, (b) health and personal safety, (c) information needed to make consumer decisions, (d) education about how to be a consumer, (e) competition and choice, (f) representation in the policy process, (g) redress and satisfaction, and (h) environmental concerns. When any of these situations emerges in the negative, the marketplace is said to have failed consumers (Mayer, 1991b; McGregor, 1996, 2005a); their interests as market actors have been compromised.
**Consumer Interest**

Interest is Latin *interesse*, to concern, to make a difference, to be of importance (Harper, 2010). If something is of interest to someone, it benefits them or gives them an advantage. Interest can have several meanings relative to consumers. It can refer to what is good for a person (objective consumer interest) as well as to what the person wants (subjective consumer interest). Also, it can refer to the conditions and possible modes available for the realization of both subjective wants and what is good for people in given sets of circumstances. This is another form of objective consumer interest (Grønmo & Ölander, 1991). It is in the best interest of consumers (to their benefit or advantage) to have the aforementioned consumer issues and marketplace failures (the conditions that affect the realization of interests) dealt with effectively and expediently.

**Consumer Rights**

In efforts to ensure the consumers’ interest is respected and protected, that people can maintain an advantage and gain benefits from their marketplace transactions (and get good value for their dollar), a globally recognized set of consumer rights was developed (see Table 1), inspired by John F. Kennedy's 1962 "Consumer Address." Right is Old English *reht*, be just. A right refers to the moral or legal entitlement to have or obtain something or some action by others. If people have a right to something, they are owed it; it is their due (Latin *debere*, to owe) (Harper, 2010). "Consumers have the right to..." is a common phrase in consumer scholarship. Any infringement of these consumer rights leads to situations not in the best interest of consumers (individuals or aggregate, objective or subjective) because they (a) have not received any benefits; (b) are harmed or injured or left less secure or protected; (c) are disadvantaged, exploited or marginalized in some way (morally, personally, financially), or all three.

**Table 1 Basic Consumer Rights**  (Consumers International, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The right to satisfaction of basic needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To have access to basic, essential goods and services: adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, public utilities, water and sanitation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The right to safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be protected against products, production processes and services which are hazardous to health or life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The right to be informed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be given the facts needed to make an informed choice, and to be protected against dishonest or misleading advertising and labelling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The right to choose
To be able to select from a range of products and services, offered at competitive prices with an assurance of satisfactory quality.

The right to be heard
To have consumer interests represented in the making and execution of government policy, and in the development of products and services.

The right to redress
To receive a fair settlement of just claims, including compensation for misrepresentation, shoddy goods or unsatisfactory services.

The right to consumer education
To acquire knowledge and skills needed to make informed, confident choices about goods and services, while being aware of basic consumer rights and responsibilities and how to act on them.

The right to a healthy environment
To live and work in an environment which is non-threatening to the well-being of present and future generations.

Consumer Responsibilities

These rights are accompanied with attendant responsibilities (see Table 2). Responsible is Latin respondeere, to pledge back, with a sense of obligation (Harper, 2010). Consumer responsibilities are actions that all consumers should take before, during and after they engage in consumption activities. Consumers International developed five overarching consumer responsibilities instead of pairing each right with a responsibility, per Table 2. Responsible consumers will respect (Fazal, 2011):

• Critical Awareness - The responsibility to be more alert and to always question the use, price and quality (and other criteria) of the goods and services they use.

• Assertive Action - The responsibility to assert themselves and to act to ensure that they get equitable treatment (everyone treated the same) and a fair and just deal (equity). Passivity leads to continued exploitation.

• Social Concern - The responsibility to be aware of the impact of their consumption on other citizens, especially disadvantaged or powerless groups, whether in the local, national or international community.

• Environmental Awareness/Intergenerational Equity - The responsibility to understand the environmental consequences of their consumption. They should recognize their individual and social responsibility to conserve natural resources, protect non-human species and protect the earth for future generations.
• **Solidarity** - The responsibility to organize together as consumers to develop their strength and influence, and to promote and to protect collective interests.

**Table 2 Consumer Responsibilities Directly Corresponding to Consumer Rights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>read instructions on products and use them as intended. Check the qualifications of service providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>ask for and critique information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>compare prices (and other criteria), find out about differences between products and services and make informed decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Heard</td>
<td>make needs and expectations known to vendors and to the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redress</td>
<td>insist on a fair and reasonable deal if not satisfied with the purchase; seek redress and complain so sellers’ practices can change and those at fault can be penalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Education</td>
<td>seek education programs, advocate for inclusion of consumer education in public school systems, inform oneself about goods and services to be purchased and continually ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Environment</td>
<td>help build a healthy environment by conserving natural resources and choosing products and services that do not harm the environment (or other species), now and in the future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Consumer Protection**

If consumers’ rights are infringed upon, consumers may be harmed, meaning they need protection from these marketplace contingencies. Protect is Latin *protegere*, *pro* “in front” and *tegere* “to cover” (to shield or provide security) (Harper, 2010). To that end, governments often implement formal or informal consumer policy frameworks that serve to protect consumers from the actions of business (keep consumers safe from harm or injury) (McGregor, 1996). Consumer protection frameworks are designed to prevent businesses that engage in fraud or specified unfair practices from gaining an advantage over competitors and may provide additional protection for the weak and those unable to take care of themselves (i.e., disadvantaged or ill-prepared consumers).

In particular, when the interests of consumers are compromised or threatened, governments can step in and mediate and/or mitigate the situation, facilitated by departments or offices of consumer affairs, corporate affairs or both. These agencies can draw from a range of consumer policy instruments: moral suasion, taxation, legislation, regulations, voluntary codes, programs, education, and information, as well as consultative partnerships and funded consumer research (McGregor, 1996). Consumer protection also can be asserted through consumer activism as well as through pro-active, educated consumers (who protect themselves) (Goldsmith, 2009; McGregor, 2005b).
Consumer Perspective

Perspective is Latin perspectus, to inspect or to look through (Harper, 2010). The commercial perspective represents work undertaken in business and economic disciplines to help better understand how and why consumers buy things so this process can be manipulated and influenced with buy-me-messaging via packaging, advertising and marketing. Most consumer studies experts agree that research generated from, or interpreted within, the consumer perspective is intended to aid consumer activists, policy makers and educators when helping consumers maintain their power in their relationship with businesses. If this power balance can be maintained, there is a reduced likelihood of the consumer interest being compromised and consumer issues arising. How has the marketplace failed? Which right(s) have been infringed upon? Which responsibilities have not been honoured? How have consumers been exposed to harm, exploited or disadvantaged? These are questions framed from a consumer perspective lens.

A consumer vantage point privileges the viewpoint of the consumer relative to business with the intent of shedding insights into inequities, inefficiencies, malfunctions and deficiencies in the marketplace. These insights can be used to develop better informed theoretical and conceptual frameworks, conduct more pertinent research, prepare more relevant consumer education curricula, and generate the best possible array of consumer protection policies and instruments in response to (or to prevent) marketplace malfunctions.

Higher Education Consumer Definition Audit

Because many consumer scholars are exposed to these 15 terms (and others) in their college or university experiences, a discussion of how these terms are understood in higher education is warranted. The American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI) published a seminal paper in its 1984 annual conference proceedings (Chenoweth, Eigsti & Stampfl, 1984). Their American university program audit concurred that five terms required distinctive definitions to better describe consumer-oriented higher education programs: family economics, consumer economics, consumer science(s), consumer studies and consumer affairs (see Table 3, which also includes consumer education and consumer behaviour). Please read this table as if it were narrative text (i.e., don't skip it).
Consumer Affairs

Consumer affairs is a field concerned with policy development as well as with consumer activism, liaisons and advocacy. Consumer affairs has a heavy emphasis on intervention and, more recently, on prevention. It is informed by issues, concerns, problems, expectations, rights and responsibilities of consumers (Chenoweth et al., 1984).

Consumer Science

After discussing possible definitions for consumer science, Chenoweth et al. (1984) concurred that the umbrella term consumer science encompassed the terms of family economics and consumer economics. They subsequently amalgamated the three terms and defined consumer science as an interdisciplinary field that applies the (basic) scientific method to the analysis of economic, social and political actions and interactions of consumers with the market and their use/consumption of those products and services through the exchange process.

Consumer and Family Economics

Widdows and Bryant (1993) did not merge consumer and family economics with consumer studies, per the above definition. They suggested that consumer economics and family economics can be perceived as integral parts of the same field of study. But, whereas both streams of study are concerned with the study of individuals and families in their interaction with markets for consumer goods and services, consumer economics focuses on household economic decisions in the marketplace (consumer decision making and marketplace issues) whereas family economics focuses on family management of resources to enhance well-being at home and in the work force (intrafamily allocation and behavioral issues). Shepard (1978) agreed that consumer economics is involved with economic interactions between consuming units and their environments (outside the home) while family economics is involved with economic interactions within consuming units.

Consumer Studies

Consumer studies refers to the study, via an interdisciplinary, applied, micro approach, of the interaction of consumers with economic, social and political systems while making consumer decisions (see also Widdows & Bryant, 1993).

Consumer Education

"Consumer education is the process of gaining the knowledge and skills needed in managing consumer resources and taking actions to influence the factors which affect consumer decisions" (Bannister & Monsma, 1982, p.5). Consumer educators teach many topics related to the consumer interest, issues and protection. Recent revisions to their definition have recognized the reciprocal nature of the elements in the definition and also have added the notions of values, global, sustainability and citizenship (see McGregor, 2010).
### Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is "the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society" (Hawkins, Motherbaugh & Best, 2007, p. 6). Aside from improving marketing strategies, consumer behaviour research informs public policy (Perner, 2010). See also MacInnis and Folkes, 2010.

Chenoweth et al. (1984) concluded that, whereas consumer science implied the application of the basic, pure, scientific method\(^2\) to study actual consumer behaviour and generate data, consumer studies implied an applied micro approach that uses the empirical\(^3\) findings from basic research to achieve the objective of working with families to enhance their economic security and well-being. Consumer economics pertained to consumer activities outside the home while family economics referred to intra-family resource management interactions inside the home (appreciating that the latter processes are integral to the former). Consumer affairs implied consumer activism and advocacy on behalf of consumers, in the political and policy arenas and in the marketplace. These 1984 audit definitions have withstood the test of time; they remain the gold standard for the discipline (see recent usage by Bailey, 2010).

### Discussion and Conclusion

It is challenging to discuss consumer phenomena without interweaving these many concepts together; yet, they are conceptually distinct. To illustrate, marketplace failures lead to consumer issues because the consumer's interest has been compromised, necessitating an analysis of the issue from a consumer's perspective in order to develop the best consumer response and consumer protection framework, consumer education curricula, and pertinent consumer theories and research. The latter can focus on intra-family economics, consumer economics (beyond-family interactions), consumer affairs/policy, consumer studies (consumer interactions in the market) and consumer sciences (consumers and the larger context). Consumer science employs basic research and consumer studies

\(^2\) Since the mid 80s, the consumer field has come to embrace other ways of knowing in addition to the scientific methodology, including interpretive and critical methodologies (McGregor & Murnane, 2010).

\(^3\) See Footnote #2. In addition to empirical findings, applied research also draws on findings from interpretive and critical studies. Applied research is intended to address and solve the practical problems that exist in the modern world, rather than to just acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake, the remit of basis research. Applied research strives to improve human conditions and make the world a better place, not just expand humanity's knowledge of the world (basic research).
employs applied research. Consumerism, as an ideology and as an institution, shapes and informs how people understand the consumption activities of consumers.

In summary, although richly interconnected conceptually and in reality, the array of consumer-related terms identified in this monograph are unique in their own right and warrant conceptual distinction and definition. This monograph strived to aid members of the consumer field to conceptually distinguish and clarify the concepts innate to their basic discipline. These concepts define the field and provide its boundaries, those visible signs to others of our remit and our disciplinary responsibilities (for, we are a discipline in our own right, Morse, 1984). The intent of this monograph was stimulate a conceptual discussion and dialogue. I invite constructive feedback as befitting the purpose of a monograph.

References


