RAMA UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.B.A.LL.B. IInd Semester

SUBJECT: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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Lecture-36

Models of Consumer Behavior

Consumer Behavior Models

Contemporary Models

4. Howard Sheth Model of Buying Behavior

The Howard Sheth model of consumer behavior posits that the buyer's journey is a highly rational and methodical decision-making process. In this model, customers put on a "problem-solving" hat every step of the way — with different variables influencing the course of the journey.

According to this model, there are three successive levels of decision-making:

- **Extensive Problem-Solving**: In this stage, customers know nothing about the product they're seeking or the brands that are available to them. They're in active problem-solving mode to find a suitable product.
- **Limited Problem-Solving**: Now that customers have more information, they slow down and begin comparing their choices.
- **Habitual Response Behavior**: Customers are fully aware of all the choices they have and know which brands they prefer. Thus, every time they make a purchase, they know where to go.

We've all gone through some version of these stages. Let's look at an anecdotal example.

When I first started buying glasses online, I had no idea which retailers I should use or whether the glasses sold online would be the same quality as the opticians' offerings. I searched online to find a high-quality online glasses retailer (extensive problem-solving).

I found a few choices and started comparing them from both a pricing and quality standpoint (limited problem-solving). I eventually chose one, and that's the retailer I've used ever since (habitual response behavior).

But these stages aren't that simple. According to the Howard Sheth model, I was under the sway of several stimuli during this process:

- **Inputs**: This refers to the marketing messages and imagery a consumer receives while they're going through the decision-making process. "Inputs" also refers to any perceptions and attitudes that come from the consumer's social environment, such as their friends, family, and culture.
- **Perceptual and Learning Constructs**: This may sound complicated, but this stimulus is simply the customer's psychological makeup and psychographic information. Perceptual and learning constructs may include needs, preferences, and goals.
- **Outputs**: After inputs and perceptual and learning constructs are mixed together, you get the output. The output is the customer's resulting action under the influence of marketing messages, social stimuli, and internal psychological attributes. It can result in the customer paying more attention to a certain brand over another.
- **External Variables**: This is anything that's not directly related to the decision-making process, such as weather or religion, that still may sway the customer's decision.