

## **Module - 5**

# **CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

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## LESSON – 12

### Models of Consumer Behavior IV

#### Instructional Objectives:

After completion of this lesson, the student shall know about:

#### 5.4 Models of Consumer Behavior: Specific Models II

#### 5.4 MODELS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: SPECIFIC MODELS II

The previous session dealt with two of the Specific Models. This session deals with the rest of the Specific Models.

**SPECIFIC MODELS:** The models that have been explained in this session are Bettman's Model and the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat's Model (Engel-Blackwell-Miniard) Model.

#### **iii) Bettman's Information Processing Model of Consumer Choice (1979):**

Bettman, in the 1970s introduced a consumer behavior model that bases itself on the information processing that takes place within a consumer. According to him, the consumer is central to a host of information processing activities. He receives a large amount of information externally from the marketer, competitors and the environment. He also has a large store of information within him as a database that he builds over time from his learning, experiences, social influences etc. With a huge amount of information that he is exposed to, the processing becomes difficult and unmanageable. According to him, consumers' possess a limited capacity for processing information. Thus Bettman concluded that consumers use certain simplifying strategies to process information. Within such decision strategies (heuristics), the consumer does not necessarily process all the information together; he could use simple decision rules for specific situations.

The consumer information process is depicted through several flowcharts, which depict the various components of the model and the interrelationships between them. The main components of the model are processing capacity, motivation, attention, information acquisition and evaluation, decision process, consumption and learning processes.

**1. Processing capacity:** Bettman assumes that while the information processing capacity varies across people, it is limited for each one of us. Every person has a limited capacity to process information; thus, consumers are not interested in extensive information processing, and select strategies that make product selection an easy process. They try to bypass their limits by being selective towards information receptivity, ignoring certain information that they consider irrelevant or incomprehensible, prioritizing information that is required and is in use etc. The marketer needs to understand the information processing capacities of individual consumers while delivering marketing information; this would provide invaluable insights to marketers for design of their marketing communication strategies.

**2. Motivation:** The decision making choice process within a consumer is provided strength, intensity and direction through motivation. There exists a hierarchy of goals' mechanism that provides different sub-goals to simplify the choice selection. Depending upon the goal hierarchy (priority of goals), this component acts as the powerful and imposing component that controls directly not only the subsequent processes of attention, information acquisition and evaluation, decision processes and the consumption and learning processes, but also controls indirectly the various sub-processes in the model via the main process components. The continuation and suspension of various sub-processes and their interrelationship with the main processes are all impacted by motivation. This component also converts the non-action or passive inputs in the consumers into action outputs or active behavior.

**3. Attention and Perceptual Encoding:** According to Bettman, attention could be voluntary as well as involuntary in nature. When a consumer actively consciously seeks attention to achieve his goals, it is referred to as a voluntary attention. It is the conscious allocation of processing capacity to current goals. Non-voluntary or involuntary attention is the short term attention that he provides before deciding whether he should process the information that he has been exposed to and as to whether he should provide a voluntary attention. It is an automatic response to disruptive events. Non-voluntary attention could

also occur when the consumer is exposed to conflicting information about the product and needs to resolve between this conflicting information.

Perceptual encoding occurs when the person integrates the information that he has processes into his already existing perceptual network or database. Based on perceptual encoding and the database, the consumer decides on the need and the quantum of marketing information that he needs to process.

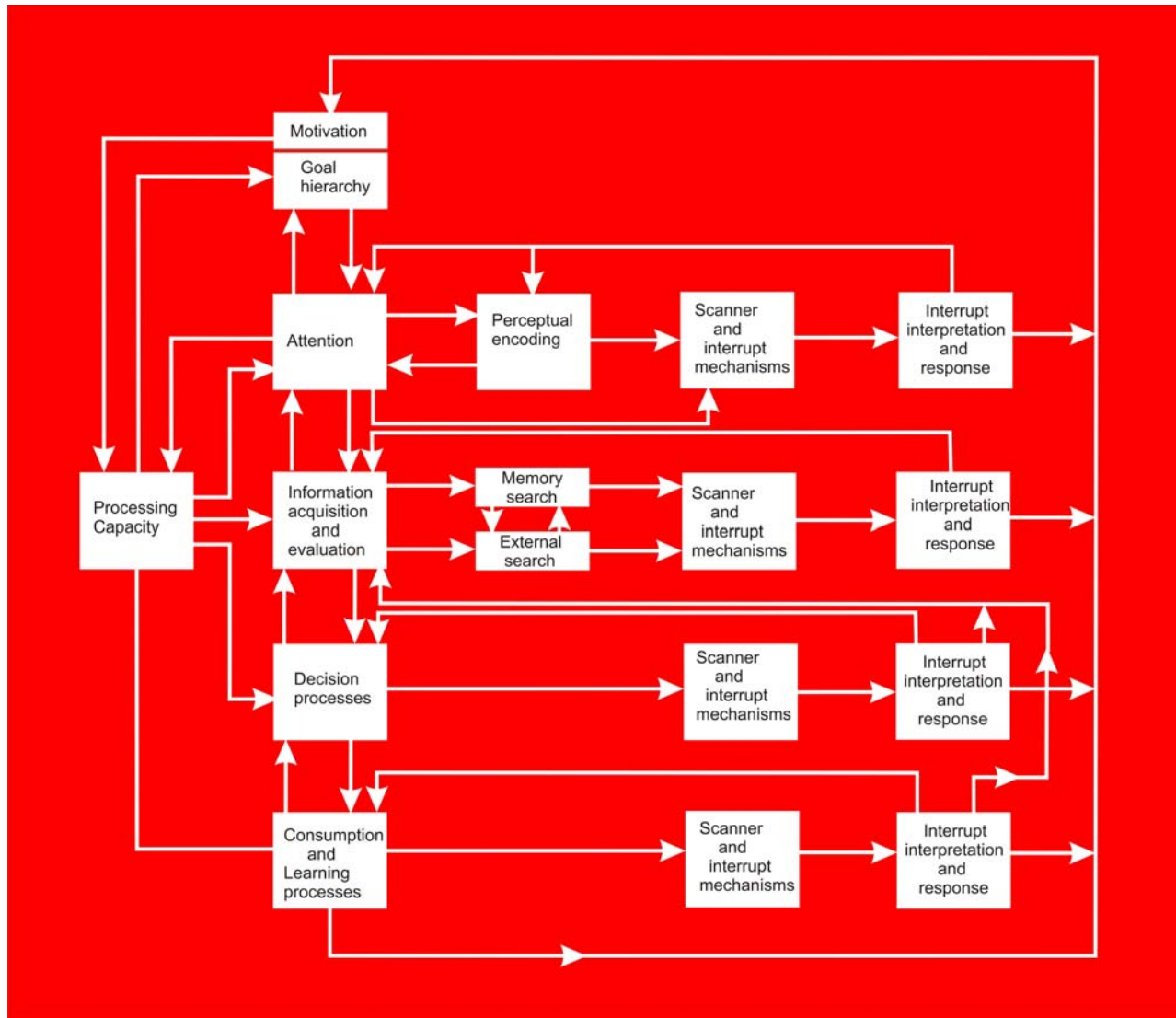


Figure: The Bettman Information-Processing Model of Consumer Choice  
Source: Bettman, J.R., An Information Processing Theory of Consumer Choice, Redaig, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1979, 17.  
In Schiffman, L.G. and Kanuk, L.L., Consumer Behavior, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Prentice Hall

This leads to the scanner and interrupt mechanisms and the resultant responses. The scanner and interrupt mechanisms act like on and off switches for a consumer. When the consumer realizes that he does not have adequate and appropriate information in his database (memory), he searches for information; he gives attention to and becomes receptive to information. On the other hand, if he feels that he has sufficient information, the information search process gets interrupted.

**4. Information acquisition and evaluation:** The consumer decides on the kind of information as well as the quantum of information required for the choice decision. Based on heuristics, he assesses the importance and availability of information. If he has the necessary information in a sufficient quantum in his memory, he goes ahead with the next stage. Memory is the source for the internal search for information. If he feels that the information that he has in his memory is insufficient, when it is found to be insufficient, he acquires more information through external search. At this stage too the consumer again experiences the switch on and off modes through scanner and interrupt mechanisms. When the consumer realizes that he has adequate and appropriate information in his database (memory), he does not search for more information and the information search process gets interrupted; else he does search for more information. After acquiring information, the consumer evaluates the information for utility and sufficiency, and then moves on to make decision choices.

**5. Decision Process:** After information search and evaluation, the consumer takes a decision; the final decision of the brand is based not only on the acquired and evaluated information, but also his personal characteristics, demographics, psychographics (motivation, learning and experiences, attitude, personality, perception, etc), social influences and situational factors. This stage is also affected by the scanner and interrupt mechanisms. If the purchase is a routine purchase, the decision making is faster and often repeat; in other cases, it may take time.

**6. Consumption and learning processes:** After the consumer buys decides on a choice, he purchases the brand. The experience that he gains through the decision making and the consumption of the product in terms of satisfaction/dissatisfaction gets stored in his memory. This learning affects subsequent decision making for similar product categories, and affects the future heuristics for consumer decision making. It provides the consumer with information to be applied to similar choice situation in future. This stage is also affected by the scanner and interrupt mechanisms.

### **Working relationships between Components and the**

Processing capacity in an individual affects the motivation, attention, information acquisition and evaluation, decision process, consumption and learning processes. These processes impact and are impacted by their respective sub-processes. Thus, all the sub-processes, impact the processes, directly and/or indirectly, and are also impacted by them. And information processing capacity impacts and is also impacted by the various processes directly and sub-processes indirectly.

## An Assessment of the Model:

Bettman's model is a model that focuses only on information processing. It starts with the motivation to search for information; be attentive to information; acquire and evaluate information; take a decision; and finally adds up the information (based on good/bad experiences) into the memory for further use. However, critics argue that while the model provides insights into consumers', it is difficult to implement practically.

### iv) Engel, Blackwell and Kollat's Model: Engel-Blackwell-Miniard Model of Consumer Behavior:

The Engel, Kollat and Blackwell Model, also referred to as the EKB model was proposed to organize and describe the growing body of knowledge/research concerning consumer behavior. A comprehensive model, it shows the various components of consumer decision making and the relationships/interactions among them. The model went through many revisions and modifications, with attempts to elaborate upon the interrelationship between the various components and sub-components; and, finally another model was proposed in the 1990s which came to be known as the Engel, Blackwell and Miniard Model (EBM).

The model consists of five parts, viz. information input, information processing, decision process stage, decision process variables, and external influences.

**1. Information input:** The information input includes all kinds of stimuli that a consumer is exposed to and triggers a kind of behavior. The consumer is exposed to a large number of stimuli both marketing (advertising, publicity, personal selling, demonstrations, store display, point of purchase stimuli) as well as non-marketing sources (family, friends, peers); thus the various stimuli compete for consumer's attention. These stimuli provide information to the consumer and trigger off the decision making process.

**2. Information processing:** Stimuli received in the first stage provide information; the information is processed into meaningful information. The stage comprises consumer's exposure, attention, perception/comprehension, acceptance, and retention of information. The consumer is exposed to stimuli (and the accompanying information); attention determines which of the stimuli he will focus upon; thereafter he would interpret and comprehend it, accepts it in his short term memory and retains it by transferring the input to long-term memory.

**3. Decision-process stage:** At any time during the information processing, the consumer could enter into this stage. The model focuses on the five basic decision-process stages, viz., problem recognition, search, alternative evaluation, choice, and outcomes (post-purchase evaluation and behavior).

There is problem recognition; this is followed by a search for information, which may be internal based on memory. The search of information is also impacted by environmental influences. Thereafter, the consumer evaluates the various alternatives; while evaluation, belief lead to the formation of attitudes, which in turn affect the purchase intention. The next stage is the choice and purchase, which gets impacted by individual differences. Finally there is an outcome, in the form of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This outcome acts as a feedback on the input and impacts the cycle again. Environmental influences, individual differences and social influences, directly and indirectly influence each of the stages of the decision process.

However, EKB proposed that it is not necessary for every consumer to go through all the five stages; it would depend on whether the problem is an extensive or a routine problem-solving behavior.

**4. Decision process variables:** The model proposes individual influences that affect the various stages of the decision making process. Individual characteristics include constructs like demographics, motives, beliefs, attitude, personality, values, lifestyle, normative compliance, etc.



**5. External influences:** The model also proposes certain environmental and situational influences that affect the decision making process. The environmental influences include “Circles of Social Influence,” like culture, sub-culture, social class, reference groups, family and other normative influences; situational influences include consumer’s financial condition.

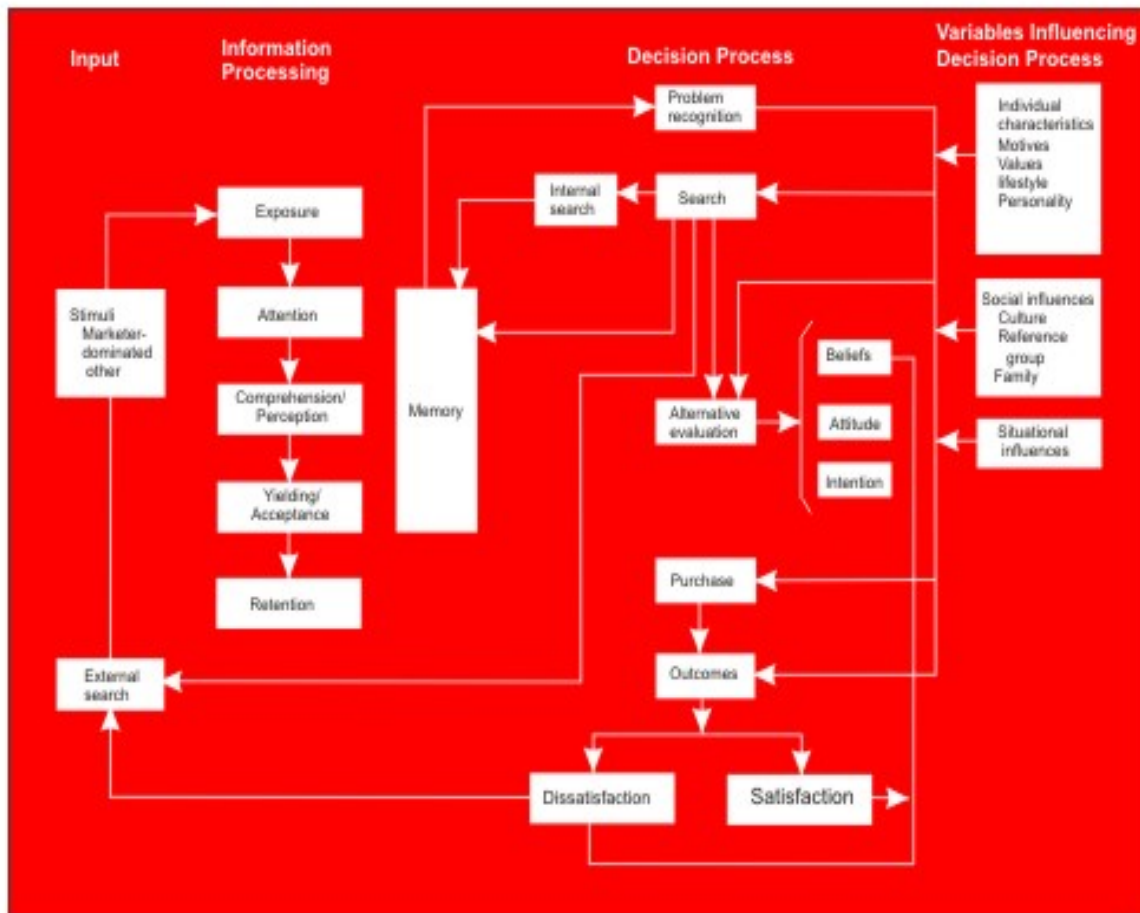


Figure: Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (Engel-Blackwell-Miniard) Model of consumer Behavior  
Source: Engel, J.F., Blackwell, R.D., and Miniard, P.W., Consumer behavior, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition,  
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## **Working relationships between Components and the**

The decision process comprises five stages from need recognition to outcome. The outcome in the form of satisfaction/dissatisfaction acts as the input in then next cycle of a similar purchase. Each of the components is directly or indirectly impacted by environmental influences, individual differences and social influences.

### **An Assessment of the Model:**

The model incorporates many constructs that impact consumer decision making. It tries to explain clearly the interrelationships between stages in the decision process and the various variables. They attempted to relate belief-attitude-intention. An attempt was made to define the variables and specify functional relationships between the various constructs. However, the model fails to adequately explain as to how each of these influences consumer decision making. Critics argue that there are too many variables; these have not been defined; the model is vague and complex; and the validity of the model has been questionable. The model was revised in the 1990s and proposed again as the Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (EBM) model.

## **Modification :**

### **Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (EBM) model:**

The EKB model went through a series of revisions and modifications and finally it was proposed as the Engel, Blackwell and Miniard Model. The model consists of four sections viz., information input; information processing; decision process and variables influencing the decision process. The variables and the working relationship is similar to the EKB but has been slightly modified.

Information received from marketing and non-marketing stimuli feeds into the information-processing section of the model. The information section of the model comprises various stages like exposure, attention, comprehension, acceptance and retention. After passing through these stages, it goes into the memory. Then this information that is stored in the memory acts as an initial influence on the need recognition stage. If internal information is inadequate there is a search for external information. The model focuses on the decision process stages: need recognition, search, pre-purchase alternative evaluation, purchase, consumption, post-purchase alternative evaluation and divestment. “Divestment” as a construct was additionally added as a modification over the EKB model. Divestment relates to options of disposal, recycling or remarketing. The entire process is influenced by environmental influences and individual differences.

## REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING:

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## **FAQS (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS):**

**Ques 1 Critically assess Bettman's model of Consumer Behavior.**

**Ans1 Bettman's model of Consumer Behavior:**

Bettman, in the 1970s introduced a consumer behavior model that bases itself on the information processing that takes place within a consumer. According to him, the consumer is central to a host of information processing activities. He receives a large amount of information externally from the marketer, competitors and the environment. He also has a large store of information within him as a database that he builds over time from his learning, experiences, social influences etc. With a huge amount of information that he is exposed to, the processing becomes difficult and unmanageable. According to him, consumers' possess a limited capacity for processing information. Thus Bettman concluded that consumers use certain simplifying strategies to process information. Within such decision strategies (heuristics), the consumer does not necessarily process all the information together; he could use simple decision rules for specific situations.

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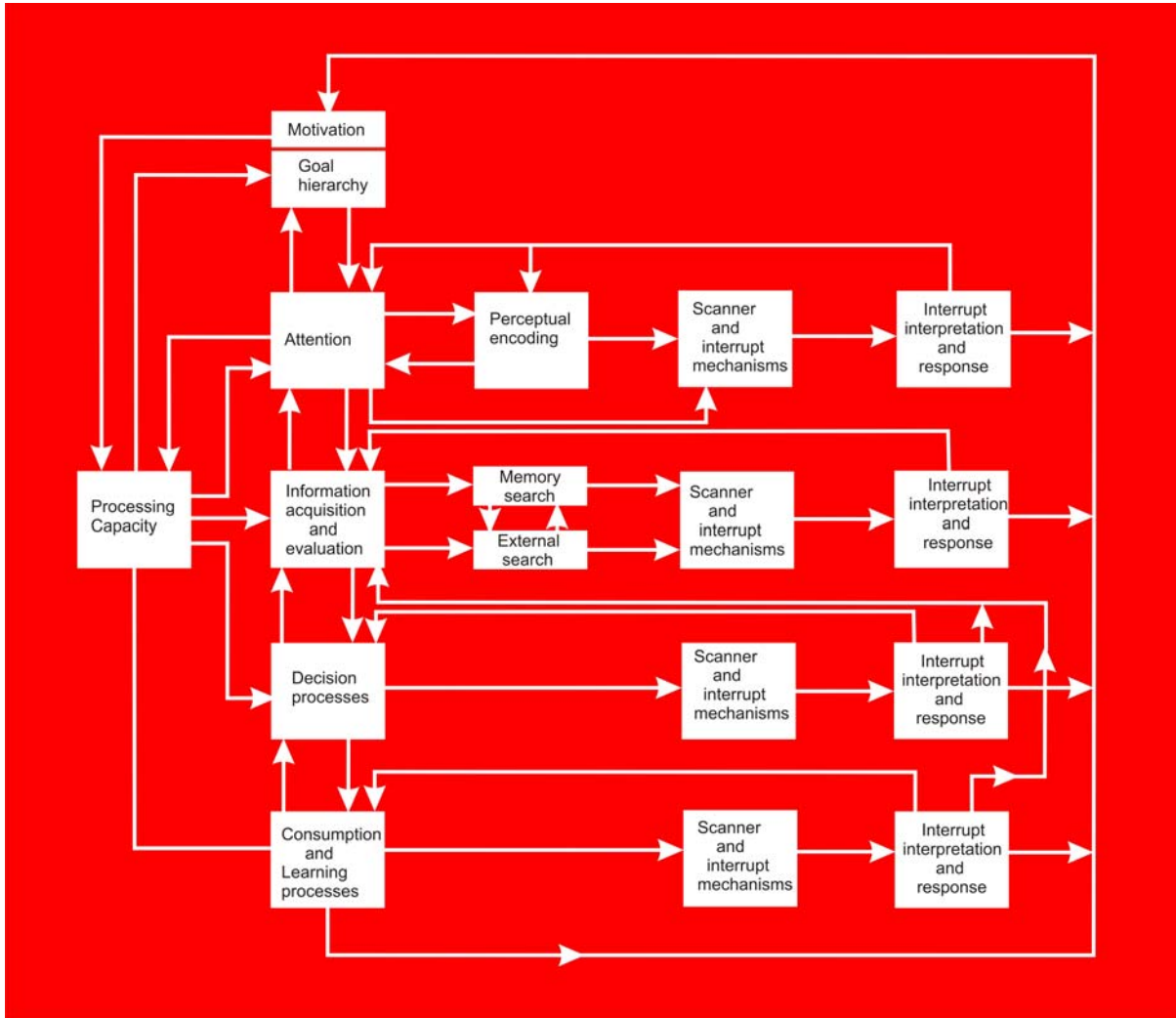


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**Ques 2 Explain the EKB Model. What was the improvisation that led to the EKM Model?**

**Ans iv) Engel, Blackwell and Kollat's Model: Engel-Blackwell-Miniard**

### **Model of Consumer Behavior:**

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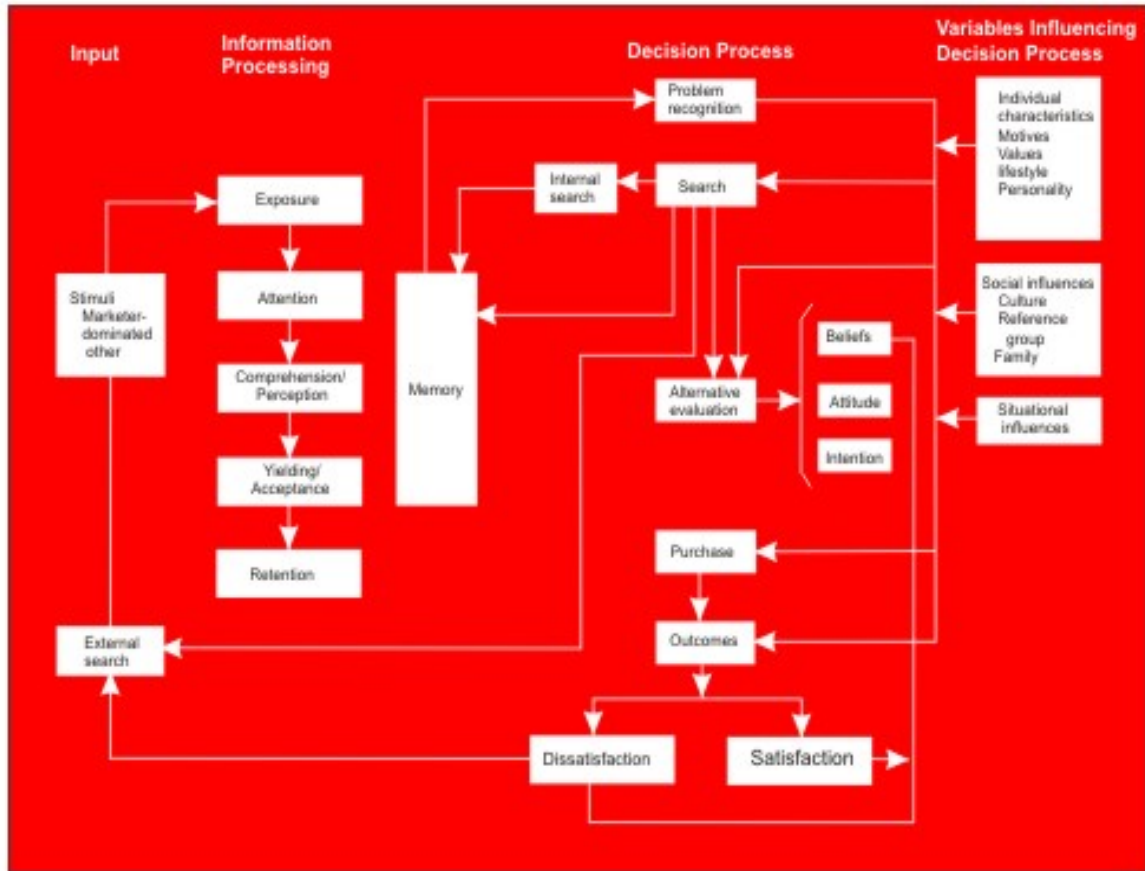


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## **SELF EVALUATION TESTS/QUIZZES:**

### **Section A True/false:**

1. The Bettaman’s model consists of five parts, viz. information input, information processing, decision process stage, decision process variables, and external influences.
2. The EKB model consists of four sections.

**Section B Fill up the blanks:**

1. Bettman's model is model that focuses only on \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ as a construct was additionally added as a modification over the EKB model

**Section D Short answers:**

1. Mention the main components of Bettman's model.
2. The EBM model consists of four distinct parts. Name them.

**KEY**

**Section A True/false:**

1. False
2. False

**Section B Fill up the blanks:**

1. Information processing
2. Divestment

**Section D Short Answers:**

1. Processing Capacity; Motivation; Attention; Information acquisition and evaluation; Decision process; Consumption and learning processes.
  2. Input; Information processing; Decision process; Variables influencing the decision process.
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