

THE NEXT DECADE OF BUYER BEHAVIOR THEORY AND RESEARCH

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Predictions typically entail the Bayes theorem in some way because prognosis implies revising the prior probability on the basis of the assessment of symptoms currently manifested in the phenomenon whose direction is to be forecast. Predictions are also hazardous to one's welfare in any discipline, since due to the relatively short histories of the disciplines, the prior probabilities are often no better than random probabilities; moreover, the assessment of contemporary symptoms is made very difficult by the rapid and complex changes a discipline may be undergoing. Buyer behavior theory and research seem to present these problems.

Accordingly, my objective in this paper is to estimate the prior probability by briefly reviewing the historical perspective of the buyer behavior discipline and then to deal with a number of current events that are likely to determine both the velocity and the direction of buyer behavior theory. I shall focus on changes in the structure and content of buyer behavior theory and research that are likely to arise during the current decade, going out on a limb in my speculative tree, so to speak.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE BUYER BEHAVIOR DISCIPLINE

I believe that in the last quarter-century we have come a long way from the dark ages of sporadic and random research in buyer behavior. That the cumulative research effort in buyer behavior—academic and professional, theoretical and empirical, published and unpublished—is indeed impressive can be gauged from several recent reviews (Burk, 1967; Quest, 1962; Howard, 1965; Perloff, 1968; Sheth, 1967; and Tweed, 1965a). A closer examination of these reviews clearly indicates that we can identify four distinct phases of differential thought and emphasis in the discipline.

The Empirical-Inductive Phase

The decades between 1930 and 1950 seemed to be dominated by empirical research, mostly conducted by industry's marketing people to determine the impact of their own decisions in the marketplace. Furthermore, the major emphasis was on gauging the effects of distribution, advertising, and promotion decisions.

Among the several distinct characteristics of this phase, we may list (1) the dominance of economic theory of the firm and especially the concepts of monopolistic competition, marginal utility analysis, and welfare economics; (2) macro-market analysis at the aggregate level or at best at some predefined segmented level; and (3) emphasis on the market's behavior responses as opposed to psychological responses.

The only exception to the above characterization of this phase of the buyer behavior discipline seemed to be the acceptance of motivation research in which both the concepts and the methods of clinical psychology were widely applied to the understanding of buyer behavior.

The Formative Phase

The 1950s must be regarded as the formative years of the buyer behavior discipline, for during this decade several major elements cemented the foundation of buyer behavior theory. First we saw the shift from measuring aggregate buyer behavior to measuring individual behavior. Two different groups of scholars simultaneously contributed to bringing about this change. One the Lazarfeld school of sociologists, whose interest in measuring total change in voting behavior based on longitudinal panels led to the establishment of household consumer panels in buyer behavior. The second was the Xatona school of economic psychologists, who were interested in building better indicators of economic growth based on

the micro data of household acquisitions and inventories of durable appliances. The availability of data on household purchase behavior eventually led to interest in developing quantitative measures of brand or store loyalty and switching behaviors, which in turn brought the utilization of stochastic processes such as Markov chains.

A second major element of the 1950s was a growing interest in providing explanations for buyer behavior differences based on the social environment of the consumer. This led to the borrowing of the concepts of social stratification, reference groups, role orientations, and opinion leadership. Therefore, the major disciplines relied on tended to be sociology and economic anthropology. Even though these theorizing attempts were unsystematic and less refined, they were pioneering efforts in the search for causal explanations from disciplines other than economic theory.

The third distinct element was the introduction to formal model building of buyer responses to marketing stimuli that were based on the optimization theory of operations research and econometrics (see Bass et al., 1961, for examples). Simultaneously, the utility theorists in economics were formalizing Samuelson's revealed preference theory of consumption. The combined effect was the birth of deductive formal model building based on normative axioms and assumptions. This development was further facilitated by the feasibility of using the computer to build complex simulation models. This is quite surprising to observe that management science was adopted in the infancy of buyer behavior theory. But it is therefore not at all surprising that most efforts at normative-deductive model building met with failures and premature rejection. As we shall see later, this negative circumstance has had tremendous implications for the future of buyer behavior theory.

It must be pointed out that all through these formative years the empirical research on buyer behavior continued to accelerate independently, thanks to the availability of micro data and the computer facilities to analyze them.

The Middle-Range-Theory Phase

The first half of the 1960s can best be described as the identification stage. Buyer behavior began to be understood for its own sake rather than from the point of view of the marketer, the government, or some other entity with vested interests. In my opinion, this is directly attributable to the intensive borrowing of theories and concepts from the branches of the behavioral sciences that had emerged as "pure" disciplines. These included experimental

psychology with emphasis on learning and perception, social psychology with emphasis on cognitive consistency, and rural sociology with emphasis on adoption processes of innovative products, practices, and services. For further discussion, see the excellent review provided by Buuk (1967).

The intensive borrowing from the behavioral sciences by numerous researchers, each one interested in some aspect of buyer behavior and predisposed or trained in some branch of the behavioral sciences, resulted in the development of well-identified middle-range theories of buyer behavior. Any examples must include Howard's learning theory, Bannet's perceived-risk theory, and several researchers' development of theories based on Festinger's cognitive dissonance, Lewin's field theory, opinion leadership, innovativeness, and even several personality theories. As I have pointed out elsewhere (Sheth, 1967), the outstanding characteristic of this borrowing phase was the *partial explanations* that each theory provided to the otherwise complex phenomenon of buyer behavior, especially those related to the problem-solving and habitual buying decisions. Not very surprisingly, these middle-range theories neglected other types of buyer behaviors, including unplanned impulsive behavior, novelty seeking, and situationally anchored behaviors, because very little theorizing was offered by the behavioral sciences in these areas.

Even though most efforts in this era concentrated on building middle-range theories, the attempts to build formal models based on optimization theory (including linear programming), stochastic processes (including Bernoulli and Markovian processes), and heuristics and other Monte Carlo techniques continued. In fact, the early 1980s can be regarded as the golden era of management science in buyer behavior, as evidenced in Massy, Montgomery, and Morrison (1970).

The Integrative-Comprehensive-Theory Phase

The years between 1965 and the present are best identified with the emergence of comprehensive theories of buyer behavior. This basically entailed integrating several middle-range theories that had come to be accepted, as well as putting together empirical research not identified with any theory in buyer behavior (Andreassen, 1965; Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat, 1968; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Nicosia, 1966; Sheth, 1973, and chap. 2 of this volume). In my opinion, integrative-comprehensive theory building introduced three factors in the development of the discipline. First, it emphasized the limitations of directly borrowing theories from the

behavioral sciences without first adapting them to the complexity of buyer behavior. Furthermore, it established a precedent in reversing the process of borrowing by first conceptualizing the buyer behavior phenomenon and then searching for as many constructs as could logically be found in the behavioral and social sciences.

Second, and perhaps most important, the integrative-comprehensive theories brought to bear the self-confidence of independently building theories of buyer behavior in place of simply applying a social science theory to the buyer behavior area, with or without modifications. This must be regarded as the genesis of buyer behavior as a discipline in itself rather than simply a problem area that could be explained by some social science discipline. Finally, the theories provided insights into building complex, but realistic, formal models of buyer behavior. This may have contributed to changing the traditional course of model building in terms of starting with simple, unrealistic assumptions and relaxing them to make them realistic (e.g., as in utility theory, Katona, 1953).

Two other developments in buyer behavior theory during this phase are worth noting. The first was the discarding of deductive-normative model building based on operations research methods in favor of statistical inductive model building with the use of multivariate analysis of large-scale survey data. The second development was the broadening of marketing and buyer behavior horizons to nontraditional areas such as population control, nutrition, and public service delivery systems under the pioneering efforts of Kotler and Zaltman.

Assessment of History and Contemporary Signals

The brief historical review just presented indicates that buyer behavior theory is a far cry from random thinking. Within a very short period of time, we seem to have laid a firm foundation for building a distinct discipline of buyer behavior that will not be a subsystem of marketing nor of any of the other, older social sciences. An even more pleasant observation is that we seem to have achieved greater progress with respect to richness of thinking, comprehensiveness of theorizing, and testing of theories in naturalistic and realistic settings than many of the older behavioral science disciplines have in their comparative periods of development. And why should it not be that way? Unless the newer disciplines can begin to avoid the trial-and-error learning of other disciplines,

how can we progress from being strict problem solvers for the government or industry?

If however, an assessment of a number of contemporary events also indicates that the velocity of growth will not only be more rapid and diffused but will likely change significantly the course of the growth curve. Rather than evaluating these events and then forecasting the future directions of buyer behavior theory, I am devoting the rest of this paper to detailing the major dimensions of the future direction of the theory and linking them to my assessment of contemporary events. The future developments are described below in terms of the following categories: (1) structural changes in buyer behavior theory, (2) broadening of the horizons of relevance and applications of buyer behavior principles, and (3) active interest of other disciplines in borrowing from buyer behavior theory.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN BUYER BEHAVIOR THEORY

In the Bayesian crystal urn, I foresee four types of structural changes in the development of buyer behavior theory during the 1970s. They are (1) the establishment of criteria to evaluate the relevance of different theories of buyer behavior; (2) the construction of tests and scales to measure widely accepted hypothetical constructs in buyer behavior theory; (3) the building of complex, formal, but highly realistic and inductive models based on comprehensive theories of buyer behavior; and (4) theoretical and empirical research on nonpurposeful buyer behavior, hopefully leading to a comprehensive theory.

Criteria for Evaluating Theories of Buyer Behavior

Although we have developed several theories of buyer behavior in both middle-range and comprehensive categories, we have so far failed to develop widely accepted criteria with which to evaluate their usefulness or even their relevance to buyer behavior. To be sure, existing theories are differentially accepted and diffused, but this condition seems based on tenuous factors such as the degree of face validity or predictive validity, the reputation of an author, the prestige of an institution, and the ability to generate more research funds and, commensurately, more publicity about the theory. Since an even greater number of researchers are likely to contribute in the coming years, I think the discipline will experience personal rivalries and showmanship among competing

authors unless some evaluative criteria are developed and accepted. Within the next five years, I foresee three different types of criteria emerging to minimize rivalry and showmanship.

The first type of criterion seems to be already visible in the form of the development of a metatheory of buyer behavior (Zaltman, Pinson, and Angelmar, 1973). In other words, theories of buyer behavior are likely to be critically examined, compared, and contrasted on the basis of fundamental judgments from the philosophy of science. This type of criterion is strictly discipline oriented and tends to emphasize the evaluation of the process of theorizing.

The second type of criterion is likely to be pragmatic, being based on the usefulness of a theory of buyer behavior in solving specific problems. This type of evaluation will probably emphasize the capability of a theory in enabling the problem solver to achieve his own goals. What entities are likely to increasingly utilize buyer behavior theories to help solve their problems? The public policy makers, the business managers, and the consumer advocates seem to be the most probable candidates. To the extent that each entity differs in its perspectives and activities, we are likely to see for each entity very different ways of putting buyer behavior theories to use. For example, the research of consumer advocates that is based on buyer behavior theories is likely to be very specific, ad hoc, and symptomatic, since such workers have tended to be issue oriented. The public policy makers, on the other hand, are more likely to utilize comprehensive theories to conduct exhaustive and systematic research to find the root causes of problematic symptoms pointed out by the consumer advocates. At least this is my hope. Finally, the marketing management is certainly likely to favor comprehensive theories of buyer behavior to understand and monitor market behavior simply because past experience has proved that middle-range theories are not satisfactory.

The final type of criterion is likely to stem from efforts to generalize a theory to diverse and nontraditional areas of buyer behavior. The greater the ability of a theory to extend itself with a minimum number of modifications to unexplored areas of buyer behavior, such as the search for information process, or to non-traditional areas, such as product utility and value formation, the greater the likelihood of its popularity and diffusion. However, the diffusion of the theory is likely to be evaluated in terms of specific criteria similar to the criteria in statistics for parameter estimation procedures.

It is my hope that with the development of agreed criteria

in buyer behavior, we shall see greater rigor and deductive logic in theories of buyer behavior.

Standardized Measurement of Buyer Behavior Constructs

Even though we are still striving to develop better theories of buyer behavior, I think we have a consensus on several hypothetical constructs. These include the constructs of brand and store loyalty, behavioral intentions or buyer plans, predispositions toward choice alternatives, and perceptual biases in selective exposure and processing of information. In addition, there seems to be a basic understanding that individual differences in buyer behavior are likely to be determined by constructs such as life cycle, life style, socioeconomic status, and role orientation among consumers. We have also tended recently to follow the psychometric tradition of data analysis, especially with the use of multivariate methods. This has brought to our attention the need for better and isomorphic measures of the above-mentioned constructs, which we strive to relate to one another to describe and explain buyer behavior.

I therefore foresee major research effort in buyer behavior channeled toward the development of standardized scales for many of the constructs in buyer behavior mentioned previously. I also think that this research effort will probably be heavily influenced by the psychometric theories of scaling. This forecast yields several important implications. First, we are likely to become more skeptical of the direct use of standardized scales and tests developed for comparable constructs in the behavioral sciences. In the area of attitudes, for example, it is more probable that we will question the measurement procedures proposed in expectancy-value models in social psychology. Thus we are likely to separate theories from measurement as we continue to borrow from the behavioral and social sciences. Second, it is very probable that buyer behavior theory will become more mathematical and formal, due to the research thrust in measurement and development of tests for the constructs. Finally, the development of standardized tests is likely to augment empirical research in the unexplored areas of buyer behavior because research efforts will tend to be routinized, as they are today in some branches of psychology.

Quantitative Modeling of Buyer Behavior

In the distant future, I foresee reemergence of quantitative model building in buyer behavior. In other words, it will be quite some

time before good mathematical models of buyer behavior appear. Furthermore, the model-building effort is likely to be distinctly different from what has been historically attempted in marketing. First, the models are likely to be problem oriented instead of technique oriented. Thus by definition they will be empirical, summarizing the efforts to research a problem area with the use of existing theories of buyer behavior. For example, a number of researchers are currently applying various theories of buyer behavior to understand how advertising works, how public delivery systems can be made more efficient in health, education, and welfare, and how future transportation and communication needs can be fully met without endangering the environment.

Second, the models are likely to utilize several statistical techniques in a sequential multistage process rather than to try fitting the empirical problem into a single technique such as mathematical programming or multidimensional scaling. Finally, the quantitative models of buyer behavior will be more positive than normative. In other words, we are more likely to see predictive models of buyer behavior and less likely to see control models. Accordingly, the model-building effort will coincide with testing and continuous updating. Furthermore, the adaptive control concepts are likely to be at the core of the updating process. In short, Bayesian philosophy is likely to dominate the model-building effort, replacing the search for optimality.

I also think that a number of researchers will attempt to decompose agreed comprehensive theories of buyer behavior into smaller theories and to develop models for them. We have already seen some efforts in this direction in the information-processing and attitude-structure subsystems of buyer behavior.

Research on Nonpurposeful Behavior

Based on the historical review, it is fair to state that we have so far concentrated on habitual, purposeful, and problem-solving buyer behavior. Furthermore, we have developed several quite comprehensive theories to explain it. However, nonpurposeful behavior has received relatively little attention in the past, and it is therefore likely to become the major substantive area of empirical research and theory building. By nonpurposeful behavior, I am primarily referring to curiosity, novelty seeking, and exploratory behavior, as well as cue-triggered impulsive buyer behavior. Some theorizing on this aspect of buyer behavior based on Berlyne's theory has been recently developed by several researchers (Hansen, 1972; Howard and Sheth, 1969; and Venkatesan, 1972). However,

considerable work remains to be done, especially in terms of gathering empirical data, before a good systematic theory of nonpurposeful behavior can be developed.

It seems inevitable to speculate that any comprehensive theory of nonpurposeful behavior will be extremely difficult to build, and when built, it will depend more heavily on the typology of situational influences surrounding the nonpurposeful behavior than on the personal attributes of the buyer.

BROADENING THE HORIZONS OF BUYER BEHAVIOR PRINCIPLES

Simultaneous with the structural changes in buyer behavior theory, I foresee rapid applications of buyer behavior concepts to three broadly defined substantive problem areas. These are (1) cross-cultural buyer behavior research demanded by the needs of multinational corporations, (2) public policy research on marketing institutions and practices required by increased concern in consumer welfare on the part of regulatory agencies, and (3) extension of buyer behavior to nontraditional areas of societal problems directly attributable to our mass-consumption society. I expect that the bulk of applied research in buyer behavior will be limited to these problem areas in the coming decade.

Cross-Cultural Buyer Behavior Research

I foresee extensive applied research in buyer behavior across different cultures simply because of the increased multinational character of most large business corporations. With the maturity of many foreign markets, the multinational corporations have become sensitive to marketing orientation in their efforts to diffuse products and services throughout the world. The need to understand the impact of cultures on buyer behavior is obvious. In fact, surprisingly little attention has been paid to assessing cultural influences on buyer behavior, even though the United States is recognized as the melting pot of diverse ethnic groups.

I think research on cross-cultural buyer behavior is likely to go through the same stage through which buyer behavior theory itself has passed. First, there will be clusterings of studies, mostly localized to some industries and some countries. Given the pattern of multinational business expansion, it is logical to presume that cross-cultural studies will be concentrated in European markets and will be concerned with nondurable consumer goods. Second, we should expect the development of several middle-range theories of cross-cultural buyer behavior based on the research in the first

stage. Furthermore, because of the substantial costs involved in cross-cultural research, the middle-range theories will be generated by the marketing practitioners and not by the academicians. Of course the scholars are likely to be instrumental in guiding the marketing practice's efforts to build middle-range theories. Finally, I foresee the eventual emergence of several comprehensive theories of buyer behavior. These will mostly constitute efforts to integrate both diverse middle-range theories and existing empirical research in cross-cultural buyer behavior. Furthermore, I think that there will be virtually no differences in structure between cross-cultural and domestic theories of buyer behavior.

Public Policy Research

Inevitably, there will be rapid applications of buyer behavior theories for the purpose of better regulating marketing practices and institutions. Perhaps the most important factor contributing to this observation is the singular inadequacy of the traditional concepts of microeconomic theories to properly guide the function of regulation. A related reason is the divorce of marketing from economics during the past two decades. A second major factor is the increased pragmatism recently exhibited by regulatory agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration. This has brought home the need for empirical research on buyer behavior at the micro level both before and after major regulatory decisions (e.g., the policy of corrective advertising) to ensure that desired consequences follow from them. Finally, the recent spread of consumerism is likely to encourage public policy makers to conduct fundamental research on buyer behavior in the hope of producing good legislative policies.

The bulk of research in buyer behavior for public policy is likely to be problem oriented, and most of the problems are likely to come from the negative side effects of mass marketing and mass consumption—for example, mass media effects on citizens' values.

Buyer Behavior Research on Social and Environmental Problems

Perhaps the most critical applications of buyer behavior theories will arise from research on social and environmental problems. We have already witnessed some application of marketing and buyer behavior concepts to the social problems of less-developed economies—for example, population explosion and malnutrition. However, the social and environmental problems directly related to mass consumption and mass production are more relevant to most

people working in consumer behavior. These problem areas include environmental and social pollution, welfare of minorities, and delivery of public services such as education and health care. The greater social consciousness in solving these problems fortunately seems to be transcending the vested interests of the components of our mass production and mass consumption system, and research in these areas thus should tend to be nonpartisan.

In addition to the broadening of the horizons of buyer behavior, I foresee two subtle and indirect benefits of research on social and environmental problems. The first is the separation of buyer behavior theory from marketing theory. In other words, I foresee greater respectability for buyer behavior theory by its extension to socially relevant issues. It is surprising, on reflection, to see how much psychology has suffered from the crisis of relevance because it emerged as a discipline in areas of research that were not considered to be relevant or essential to mass consumption societies.

The second benefit is the rapid cross-fertilization of philosophy, theory, and methodology between the natural sciences and buyer behavior theory. I think it is simply inevitable that we will be working together with researchers from the hard sciences, such as physics, mechanics, and biochemistry, in the search for solutions to social and environmental problems. Thus, rather than borrowing from the other social sciences, it is likely that we will be borrowing philosophy and methodology from the hard sciences. To me, this appears to be a unique opportunity for buyer behavior theory to elevate itself to a more mature level.

BORROWING FROM BUYER BEHAVIOR THEORY

Historically, we have borrowed a great deal from other disciplines to build buyer behavior theory. Within a decade, however, I think it very likely that other disciplines will be actively interested in buyer behavior and consequently will borrow a set of concepts and research tools from it. Implicit in this prediction is my conviction that we either already have or will very soon have achieved richness of thinking, variety of methodology, and respectability of the discipline to motivate other disciplines to search buyer behavior theory for relevant concepts and methods. It is interesting, therefore, to speculate on which disciplines are likely to borrow what from buyer behavior theory. I describe below three types of borrowing activities: (1) the less mature social science disciplines

borrowing the research methodology of buyer behavior, (2) the older social sciences borrowing the concepts and theories of buyer behavior, and (3) the hard sciences borrowing both the theories and methodology of the buyer behavior discipline.

Less Mature Social Sciences

Compared to some mature social sciences such as macroeconomics and experimental psychology, the buyer behavior discipline looks less mature. By the same token, many other social sciences are even less mature than buyer behavior. I include political science, parts of sociology, history, religion, home economics, law, and public health in the category of less mature social science disciplines. Just as we have borrowed from psychology and economics, I believe the disciplines named are likely to borrow from us. In fact, this is already evident from the recent trend of these disciplines to cite marketing and buyer behavior references.

The less mature social sciences are likely to borrow the research methods identified and routinely utilized in buyer behavior. These include longitudinal panels, cost-oriented sampling procedures, the survey methods of data collection, and the use of multivariate methods. In addition, there is always the possibility of employing marketing strategies and tactics to diffuse radical innovations in each of those disciplines.

Mature Social Sciences

Although some of my colleagues may not agree, I think that many of the traditional social sciences to which we owe so much are likely first to participate in understanding buyer behavior and eventually to borrow from it. My prediction is based on two facts. First, these traditional disciplines are currently facing the crisis of relevance because the foundations of their theory and research have been based on less critical areas of human behavior. I include experimental psychology, social psychology, and small group theory among the fields that have encountered this crisis in recent years. Second, many of the traditional disciplines have built formal models of behavior that have tended to be unrealistic or have become obsolete because of unprecedented technological changes in our society in the last 30 years. Utility theory, micro theory of the firm, and allied areas of economics and decision making are illustrative of this type of social science. As these disciplines search for socially relevant and useful problem areas, and as they begin to build realistic theories, the probability is extremely high that

buyer behavior will become the center of attention, because it tends to directly reflect the social problems of a mass-consumption society.

Owing to the problem-solving interests of the traditional social sciences, I believe that these disciplines are likely to be more interested in the theoretical concepts and substantive findings than in the research methodology of buyer behavior. This also seems plausible because the traditional disciplines are often rich in methodology. I think that buyer behavior has much to offer to the utility theory in economists from its thinking on choice behavior anchored to cognitive-evaluative structures. Similarly, I think that we have much to offer to social psychology both in theory and research methodology in terms of conducting complex longitudinal studies of attitude change and brand choice behavior in naturalistic settings. Furthermore, the growing literature and theory on diffusion of innovations in buyer behavior may enable rural sociology to rethink diffusion theory. Finally, recent efforts of buyer behavior researchers to build test batteries to measure life styles are likely to alter significantly the thrust of personality tests in clinical psychology.

Although most of the borrowing from buyer behavior by the traditional social sciences is likely to involve concepts and substantive findings, there are certain areas of research methodology that may also be useful to them. These include the survey research aspects entailed in the design and execution of large-scale studies in naturalistic settings.

Hard Sciences

By hard sciences I mean the natural sciences and engineering based on physics, mechanics, chemistry, and biochemistry. The hard sciences have reached such a level of maturity in their own disciplines that they will inevitably broaden their horizons. I expect them, therefore, to become concerned with the social consequences of expanded technology and depletion of natural resources. This includes the areas of pollution of resources, urban planning, and the like. Recently we have witnessed research undertakings by the hard sciences in areas of social concern that typically have been the domain of social scientists. It seems certain, therefore, that sooner or later the hard sciences will become exposed to and interested in buyer behavior. When that happens, it is equally certain that they will borrow extensively both the substantive findings and research methodology, because the newer research areas will force them to examine alternative theories and

methodology. For it is generally conceded that the concepts of hard sciences may only be analogously related to social problems.

SUMMARY

In this attempt to speculate on the future of buyer behavior theory, I limited myself to forecasting the major directions that are likely to be taken in the next decade. These predictions were based on a review of the historical perspective of buyer behavior theory, taking into account contemporary events. First, I suggested that four major changes are likely to occur in the structure of buyer behavior theory. They are (1) development of criteria to evaluate theories of buyer behavior, (2) construction of standardized tests and scales to measure buyer behavior constructs, (3) complex model building in an inductive manner with the use of several statistical procedures, and (4) research emphasis on nonpurposeful buyer behavior.

Second, I suggested three major ways by which buyer behavior theory is likely to broaden its horizons—namely, (1) development of cross-cultural theories of buyer behavior, (2) research and theories of buyer behavior for public policy purposes, and (3) research on social and environmental problems created by mass consumption societies.

Third, I predicted that a number of other disciplines will become actively interested in buyer behavior and will therefore borrow research methodology and theory typically identified with buyer behavior theory. Specifically, I have suggested that (1) less mature social sciences such as political science, law, education, and public health will probably borrow research methodology, (2) more mature and older social sciences are likely to borrow concepts and theories from buyer behavior in their efforts to become more relevant and realistic disciplines, and (3) some natural sciences will borrow both methodology and theory from buyer behavior in the process of broadening their horizons to understand the social consequences of technology.

Despite the bright predictions for the future of buyer behavior theory, I think that certain identifiable ailments in today's theories may impede the achievement of these predictions. First, most theories look on buyer behavior as the consequence of some form of the decision-making process, thus they implicitly concede that buyer behavior consists of only goal-directed behavior. This may well restrict the horizons of buyer behavior theory. Second, a large number of theories of buyer behavior often examine the buyer decision process from the point of view of marketing. Al-

though marketing management has made the greatest use of the findings and concepts of buyer behavior, there is no reason why others from different viewpoints cannot utilize the same concepts and findings. Not only has this tendency made buyer behavior theory somewhat myopic, it has produced a terminology and vocabulary for buyer behavior that impedes its extension to non-traditional areas. Third, it seems that most theories of buyer behavior tend to overemphasize the process leading to behavior, while underemphasizing the buying behavior or the antecedent and subsequent events surrounding the behavior. Unless we consciously strive to remove these ailments, buyer behavior theory may take longer than necessary to gain respectability across disciplines.