

## What I Learned Essay

When I registered to take international marketing, I expected to gain some knowledge about different cultures and how to market products to different countries. I did not, however, expect to learn the basics of why all humans behave the way they do. Throughout the course of this class, I have learned how all humans are intrinsically similar because of our evolutionary foundations and why humans behave the way they do due to the Kenrick pyramid. I have learned about different successful international marketing schemes and why they worked because of people's motivations and about how corruption has impacted different countries around the world. I have even gained takeaways from the class lecture on the very first day about the way that students view studying that I will carry with me throughout the rest of my time at Clemson and into the working world.

My main takeaway from this class was learning to look at the world from a different perspective than we have been raised to see it. Instead of learning to understand the people of the specific region to which we are marketing, we learned to understand simply how people are. A good analogy of understanding humanity is thinking about how one views a forest. If one looks at the forest from an aerial perspective, all of the trees can look very different. Seeing all of the different trees can be overwhelming, but if you look at the trees from a different perspective we will see how the trees actually work. Understanding how all trees have roots then branches that continue to branch off into new branches helps us to understand how all trees have the same basic foundations. Humans are the same way in that we all came from the same evolutionary background, but we have developed different 'branches' due to our different cultures. In this class we did not simply memorize the characteristics of different cultures around the world

because by developing an understanding of how all humans work we can transfer this knowledge to whichever culture we encounter.

The first step to understanding why humans behave the way they do is to develop a solid understanding of the Kenrick pyramid. The first tier of the Kenrick pyramid is meeting one's basic physiological needs, and the second these needs are met, we move up to the next level of the Kenrick pyramid. Next, we move into the self-protection level of the pyramid which involves a system that humans have called the behavioral immune system. Once we feel protected, we move into the affiliation level of the pyramid. Humans are extremely social creatures, and we tend to connect and be affiliated with people of similar status to us. Humans tend to view people who are not in their in-group as homogenous due to outgroup homogeneity. We tend to pick a trait that connects them and associate it with all of them which leads to us saying things like "Spanish people are like this...", but we view our own groups as very diverse. This is one of the main problems that international marketers have run into. In order to successfully market to different cultures, it is essential to develop a solid understanding of the culture therefore recognizing how diverse people are within that culture. This is because the more familiar you are with something, the more likely you are to pick up on these differences. It is also essential for international marketers to avoid outgroup dehumanization. This concept describes how humans actually enjoy seeing other people harmed when they are not a part of their in-group.

Understanding this topic helped me during a facilitated dialogue to get my global competency certificate. I was able to describe to the group the reasons why people make horribly racist towards certain groups even though race has no biological foundations. We must get over the feeling that others are inherently different from us and accept humans as they are in order to have successful foreign relations. Once one has a solid affiliation with their in-group, they can move

to the next level of the pyramid and start working on their status. Although money is linked with status in the United States, there are a lot of different factors that contribute to status, and the factors that contribute to status are different in different cultures.

The reason so many people care about their status is because they want to get to the next level of the pyramid which is mate acquisition. From an international marketing perspective, mate acquisition is one of the most important levels of the Kenrick pyramid. Because of the difference in women bearing children and men having no reason for commitment, men want to have as many partners as possible to have the most grandchildren possible from an evolutionary perspective. The women are on the opposite side of this spectrum because they want to find one high-status male to commit their resources to them and their child. This differential obligatory parental investment is the basis of why men and women act in different ways when trying to attract a mate. Females tend to value athleticism, leadership, influence, educational attainment, faithfulness, industriousness, and many other personality-based traits in men. Men tend to value physical attractiveness as a top priority closely followed by parenting skills, chastity, cooking skills, and hygiene as sources of status in women. Because of this females' alpha strategies in attracting males are being selective, attractive, demanding, and resource-extracting. The beta females are more promiscuous, smart, easy-going, and willing to give resources. Men have a very different alpha strategy which includes being physically and socially dominant, resource controlling, and insensitive. Their beta strategy involves creative intelligence, sensitivity, and resource generating. These different preferences between males and females are the reason why extremely attractive females like Beyonce end up with somewhat unattractive males like Jay Z. Since Jay Z is resource controlling, it is completely socially acceptable for him to be married to Beyonce.

These alpha and beta traits between males and females also carry over to how different societies interact. The alpha societies tend to be more hierarchical, coalitional, group-focused, and resource exploitive. These traits apply to most third world countries, and they lead to the governments becoming corrupt. Corruption is actually the most important aspect of the international economy because it is the reason why some countries are wealthy and others are poor. The 30 wealthiest countries in the world are also the least corrupt. The corruption typically starts within the government wanting to use public resources to better themselves, then it spreads to the average citizens. For example, in Russia average citizens can bribe their way out of speeding tickets or bribe their way into getting good grades. This kind of behavior is unheard of in the United states because we are more of a Beta society. Beta societies tend to be more flat, meritocratic, group insensitive, and resource generating. Ultimately, humans work best when there is a mix of alpha and beta strategy in society.

Within these established societies, whether they are alpha or beta, women are constantly attempting to retain their mates. They tend to do this using a pull strategy by competing with other women by wearing more expensive clothes and working more on their physical appearance. Women want to retain their mates in order to continue having access to their resources for when they have children and become parents. Parents can raise either slow-strategy or fast-strategy children which leads to how people behave in the future. Fast-strategy people tend to reproduce faster and lose their virginity sooner. They have more sex partners and casual relationship which leads to them having a higher number of offspring and investing less in their children. Slow-strategy people have later onset puberty and tend to have less overall health issues. Since slow-strategy people are coming into not as stressful environments, they don't like risk as much. Fast-strategy people tend to have a high-risk, high-reward way of life and pay less

attention to social norms. In the grand scheme of things, men tend to be more fast-strategy and women tend to be more slow-strategy. These behaviors and physical traits are caused by the environment and culture into which a child is born. The children born into slower paced and safer cultures tend to be more slow-strategy and handle stress well while the children born into fast-paced societies tend to get into more trouble and develop much quicker.

Whether someone is a fast-strategy or slow-strategy person affects their shopping habits as consumers. A lot of more fast-strategy people will purchase expensive items to give themselves status once they have met their physiological needs. More slow-strategy people tend to think more about their individual purchases while fast-strategy people buy more impulsively. During this class we learned about how to market to these different consumers using the different market segments. When trying to decide which segment to market to we could choose between the premium segment which consists of upper-class affluent women, the value segment which consists of middle class women, or the penetration segment which is full of lower class women. In the poorer countries we would typically market to the premium segment because they are the women who are willing to spend money on makeup. In the richer countries, we would market our product as an efficient product to the middle or lower classes because all women want to appear as conventionally attractive. Similarly to alpha men buying expensive cars to improve their status, women spend countless dollars on makeup throughout their lives. This is because they know that men's ultimate goal is to find a woman who is attractive, and they want to find a man who controls resources. Looking into the different economies, corruption rankings, and many other factors of our selected countries helped me understand everything that goes into deciding how to market a product to a new culture.

In addition to planning how to market our own brand to different markets, we also learned about some international marketing campaigns that were very successful and others that failed horribly. My personal favorite international marketing campaign that we studied was when De Beers decided to market diamonds to the United States because it was the most successful international marketing campaign of all time. Women want costly signals from men that add to their status, and they like having diamonds because it means that they have money and resources. Although most humans view diamonds as being extremely rare, they are actually not that scarce. They are only successful in America because Americans think they are valuable. De Beers created a diamond monopoly where they hid between 75% and 85% of their diamonds to create scarcity. Then they started facing backlash for this and had to get rid of some of their diamonds, so they decided to market to a specific country. They were deciding between Europe, the UK, and the United States, and they ended up choosing the United States due to our Calvinist culture. Americans prize frugality and believe that wealth equals good moral standing which made us the perfect culture to market to. De Beers made diamonds seem like an investment by making them a cultural imperative in the United States. They did this by introducing diamonds into movies and creating the perception that receiving a diamond engagement ring was a cultural norm thus making it more utilitarian. The “A Diamond is Forever” slogan helped to make Americans believe that owning a diamond stands in for love, so now men will put off getting married until they can afford a diamond ring. All my life I have grown up expecting to receive a diamond ring when I get married, but after understanding how diamonds are not nearly as prevalent anywhere else in the world, my entire perspective has shifted.

Understanding the culture to which you are marketing your company is essential to being successful. De Beers understood all the intricacies of the American culture which is how they

were so successful in marketing diamonds to us. In contrast, McDonald's did not have a solid cultural understanding of France when they tried to market themselves to the French market for the first time. The key to marketing to the international market is keeping the essence of the company the same while adapting to the needs and preferences of the consumers in the target market. When McDonald's first came to France, they tried to simply bring American fast food to them. They were met with protests and actually had one of their McDonald's torn down by a group led by Jose Bove. He had become an icon for anti-globalization causes in France at the time, and he helped to make McDonalds leave because they were only "offering people a slice of America". When McDonald's returned to France in 1979, they had adapted their marketing strategy to be for the French what they were for America. They did this by introducing the McBaguette and other traditional French foods. They also designed their restaurants differently because the French people like to sit down and eat. The new architecture and traditional French foods from local farmers helped McDonald's to make a comeback and actually have huge success in France. They learned to apply this success to everywhere else in the world by finding their "McMeaning" which is essentially providing staple foods that are fast and convenient. All people interested in international marketing can learn from the horrible failure than the raging success of McDonald's.

Learning to look at the world from a different perspective is the key to having success in international marketing as well as in life. Truly understanding how all humans work is essential to marketing products to people because all people are intrinsically the same due to evolution. Although culture greatly influences how people behave, all humans have the same basic motivations that are summarized by the Kenrick pyramid. When choosing to market different products to new cultures, it is important to not simply memorize everything about a culture but to

truly understand it. This helps to avoid outgroup homogeneity and truly understand and appreciate our cultural differences. Throughout this semester, I have learned how to truly understand what is being taught to me instead of simply memorizing information which will help me to appreciate my classes for the rest of college and have a deeper understanding of my environment in the working world.