

This semester, I took International Marketing and gained very different and valuable learning experience. As someone majoring in Language and International Business, this class truly gave me an understanding of international markets, culture, history, and what truly sits at the core of consumer behavior. This course was designed in a way that, at times, I questioned the purpose of what we were learning had to do with marketing. It was not until we covered more material throughout the semester that this course was breaking down the very fundamentals of humans and how that creates our consumer behaviors. I think the course structure helped me build a greater understanding of why factors such as status, diversity, corruption, ethnic groups, in and out group mentalities, GDP, etc., have to be analyzed. They are all common factors that shape societies and consumer behaviors, but they look different from country to country. Which is why it is important to analyze each factor in regards to a specific country, especially when it comes to market entry. First, I would like to recap my first day of this class, and then highlight the course as we covered evolutionary thinking to set the stage for learning about basic needs through the Kenrick Pyramid. Then, I will go into how these basic needs create markets and consumerism, and how this translates internationally.

We opened the class in an interesting manner by taking a map quiz. In this map quiz, we were instructed to view a map of a continent and name/label the countries listed on the paper. On top of this, we were also asked, if we knew, to label the countries GDP and GDP per capita. I, along with many of my peers, were lost. I could barely point out any of the countries that were listed, much less list the GDP or GDP per capita for each country. However, we were not expected to really know. Our professor then began to express his lack of favor for the American education system because we were not retaining any knowledge and were simply not educated enough on what happens outside of the United States of America. Which was very true. Our

professor acknowledged the faults in the education system, and informed us that his course was structured in a way that would help us understand international marketing and how we can apply this to the real world, and to our dedicated field experience. This helped us understand how the semester would be outlined and what was expected from us. After our first day of class, we were then getting ready to dive into evolutionary thinking and the Kenrick Pyramid.

Our first lecture, that pretty much outlined the entire purpose of the course, was evolutionary thinking. Evolutionary thinking, rooted in the principles of Darwinism, offers a powerful lens through which we can understand human behavior. At its core, evolutionary thinking states that many of the traits and behaviors shown by humans can be traced back to adaptations that ensured survival and gave reproductive advantages to our ancestors. This way of thinking emphasizes natural selection and explains our physical characteristics, psychological tendencies, and social dynamics. For example, evolutionary thinking explores how cognitive thinking evolved to solve adaptive problems faced by our ancestors, such as mate selection. By applying an evolutionary lens to a diverse field like international marketing, we can gain insights into the origins of human behavior and how that affects consumer behaviors. Overall, evolutionary thinking offers a framework for understanding the complexities of human nature and the adaptive strategies that have created a lot of diversity. This understanding of evolutionary thinking set the stage for Kenrick's Pyramid.

Over the course of the next lectures, we introduced and covered each aspect of the Kenrick Pyramid. The Kenrick Pyramid, developed by psychologist Douglas Kenrick, illustrates the hierarchy of human motivations, covering everything from basic survival needs to higher-order social and self-actualization goals. At its base are fundamental biological drives such as thirst, hunger, and sexual desire, which are essential for individual survival and

reproduction. Moving up the pyramid, we have affiliation, which includes the need for belongingness, social acceptance, and the formation of interpersonal relationships. These motivations stem from our evolutionary history as social beings, emphasizing the importance of cooperation and group cohesion for survival. Above social motivations are self-esteem needs, highlighting desires for achievement, recognition, and status within one's social group. Finally, at the top of the pyramid is mate acquisition/retention and parenting, highlighting an idea of self-actualization as a person has reached their fulfillment. The Kenrick Pyramid provides a framework for understanding the complex interplay between our biological, social, and psychological needs, shedding light on the motivations that drive human behavior. When the Kenrick Pyramid was introduced to us, I genuinely wondered what this had to do with marketing. I could not yet see the connection between the two as we went so in depth with each of the pyramids needs. However, having ended the semester and our presentations, I can now see how this all comes into play for each need in Kenrick's Pyramid.

We will start at the bottom with immediate physiological needs. The basic immediate physiological needs within society are food, shelter, clothing, and sleep. These are the basic needs that we are taught. However, interestingly enough, we also covered alcohol in this section. I thought it was an interesting topic as we looked at how alcohol has existed for a while, especially within group settings. I also think it is important to highlight how these needs were introduced because looking back, it is easy to see the relevance between them and marketing. When we went over food, we talked a lot about comfort food and how it is universally a food that is high in calories and is reminiscent of home. Comfort food varies country to country, and even person to person, but at its core, it is fundamental for the dish to be high in calories. This is because, although each individual's history is different, common themes like sugar and high

calorie food being scarce exist. This explains why needs like food and shelter have evolved over time as these foods are no longer scarce. Now that we have these resources, we can see how we advance the need. For example, shelter. Shelter is an immediate physiological need that when compared to the past, it is now another form to show status. Having a big house and other materialistic things inside of it showcase status and how once the basic need is addressed, the need will be taken to the next level. These primal instincts for sustenance and safety form and influence consumer behaviors. Importantly, in the context of international marketing, recognizing these basic needs is important. Without addressing these fundamental needs, any attempts to appeal to higher-order desires or aspirations are futile. Therefore, the understanding of these basic survival needs not only lays the groundwork for understanding consumer behavior domestically, but also serves as a critical lens through which to navigate the complexities of international markets, and inform strategic decisions regarding market entry and expansion.

Next, we can move into affiliation. Affiliation is association or integration with a group. Groups have existed for a long time and they are what drive human connection. Humans were not made to be antisocial and lonely creatures. We were born to form connections and thrive in social environments. This is why we have such a strong group mentality and associate with people that have the same group mentality. Within these groups, social norms are created and these are norms that people follow in order to feel accepted and like they belong. Along with social norms, humor is another one that is shared. An interesting example of this that we covered in class was the example with Dolce & Gabbana in China. In Chinese culture, humor is not held in the same light as it is in other cultures, specifically western cultures. When launching its ad in China, Dolce & Gabbana attempted to use what they believed to be light-hearted humor, only for Chinese consumers to be offended by the ad. Instead of making changes to the ad or apologizing,

Steffano Gabbana doubled down and then proceeded to make racist comments. This is a prime example of what not to do when attempting to market internationally, but also out-group vs in-group mentality, and out-group dehumanization. Dolce & Gabbana failed to understand the in-group mentality of Chinese consumers when marketing their ad in a humorous way, and because there was no understanding of this, Steffano chose to make comments that were said because he does not view this out-group the way he views his in-group. This led to him choosing out-group dehumanization with his racist comments. In order to look at consumer behavior within international markets, we have to analyze these influences of affiliation, especially when it comes to in-group and out-group mentalities. It has become apparent that consumers' affiliations with certain groups, whether it is cultural, social, or ideological, significantly shape their purchasing decisions and brand preferences. This is especially true in the context of in-group bias, where individuals exhibit a preference for products or brands associated with their own cultural or social identity. Conversely, an out-group mentality can manifest in consumers' aversion to brands or products perceived as foreign or culturally incompatible, like the example with Dolce & Gabbana in China. Understanding these affiliation dynamics is crucial for marketers looking to navigate international markets. By recognizing and leveraging consumers' affiliative tendencies, marketers can tailor their strategies to resonate with the cultural values and identities of target audiences. Moreover, by acknowledging the existence of in-group and out-group mentalities, marketers can anticipate potential challenges and create inclusive marketing approaches that bridge cultural divides.

Next, we can look at status. Status is an individual's rank within a group. These groups can be ethnic, social, or cultural, but they all exist with social hierarchies. Once basic needs have been met, status is what is going to push for an enhancement of these needs. Bigger houses,

bigger cars, better dieting, better exercise, better clothing, etc., are examples of how status influences consumption. The more status an individual has, the more of an opinion leadership they have. When people within a group see someone who has gained social status within their norms and hierarchies, they aspire to be that person and will mimic their consumption. This is why influencers are so important when it comes to marketing. In order to look at international marketing, status plays a key role in shaping consumer behaviors across diverse cultures. Within the realm of international markets, social hierarchies and in-group mentalities play a key role in influencing consumer preferences and purchase decisions. Across different societies, individuals adhere to their social standing and often seek to reinforce or heighten their status through conspicuous consumption or consuming brands associated with prestige or exclusivity. Moreover, social norms within in-groups can create a significant influence on consumer behavior, dictating what products or brands are deemed desirable or socially acceptable. Recognizing these dynamics is essential for marketers aiming to resonate with target audiences in international markets. By understanding the social hierarchies and in-group norms, marketers can tailor their strategies to align with consumers' aspirations for status and social belonging, creating brand loyalty and engagement.

Before we look at the last levels of the Kenrick Pyramid, we need to understand how these past few needs have stacked on top of each other. First, we started with immediate physiological needs and self protection, then we moved into affiliation, and then status and esteem. These are all linked together as we have seen in the past examples. At this point, we have seen basic needs that need to be met and how they transform when they are met, and how these three sections at the bottom, immediate physiological needs, self protection, and affiliation, are all affected by status. And status is ultimately what leads to conspicuous consumption. So,

we can now see the connection between Kenrick's Pyramid and why this may be important for International Marketing.

Lastly, we will look at mate acquisition and retention, as well as parenting. At its core, the pursuit of mates and the desire to establish and maintain relationships are deeply ingrained in our human history. Reproduction is quite literally the end goal as we ensure the survival of our species. And, as social beings, we are driven by innate biological instincts to seek out suitable partners for reproduction and to nurture and protect our offspring. So how do people acquire and retain mates? Well, once again, status comes into play. When we look at searching for suitable partners, we all dream of a person that meets our standards and has a certain amount of status. People who are well established in life, have a secure job, and have certain looks that society deems desirable are the people who have a higher chance of obtaining a mate and retaining them. In the past for example, men who could procure and hunt were the ones who had a higher chance of acquiring a mate as their status was high. Status looks different from country to country and group to group. However, ultimately, people want a mate with high status and thus, people will try to mimic high status individuals as a result. And, this creates a market. Status will always look different, but it will always be something people will want to achieve and chase. Being able to identify what it is that gives people the most status is what will help marketers create conspicuous consumption. Within the context of international marketing, understanding the complexities of mate selection and family dynamics is crucial for crafting effective strategies that resonate with consumers' intrinsic motivations and desires, and how each person attracts a mate. Ultimately, by aligning marketing efforts with the primal motivations encapsulated within the Kenrick Pyramid, businesses can effectively engage consumers on a deeply human level, transcending cultural barriers and driving long-term success in the global marketplace.

All of this said, we can now look at how this class chose to tie in everything into one final presentation. Over the course of the semester, we were split into groups and had to create and present country profiles in our region. My group covered the North Eastern Asian countries(South Korea, Japan, and China) and we analyzed many of these factors, along with economical and historical factors. These country profile assignments prepared us for our final assignment. Our final assignment had us create a market analysis between our three countries that would help us decide on which country's cosmetics market to enter. Our group chose to enter South Korea's cosmetics market, as there was plenty of room for demand and less trade restrictions than with China. The goal of this project was to tie everything together and present a report, using an influencer from that country, on why this market is the best to enter for cosmetics. This project made me realize that we learned a lot of information this semester that was more relevant to international marketing than I had thought. The cosmetics market has many influences when looking at the Kenrick Pyramid. Status is the driving force. Which is why we were instructed to choose to show the cosmetics industry in our country through an influencer. An influencer is the epitome of status. They are opinion leaders who set the stage for aspiration consumption as people within their social group. This project helped me better understand and contextualize what we have been learning all semester.

In conclusion, my journey through International Marketing this semester has been nothing short of enlightening and invaluable. As a Language and International Business major, this class has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of international markets, cultural nuances, and the underlying motivations of consumer behavior. Initially, I questioned the relevance of certain topics to marketing, but as the semester unfolded, I came to realize the significance of understanding the fundamental aspects of human nature and evolutionary



psychology. The course structure, which began with evolutionary thinking and culminated in an exploration of the Kenrick Pyramid, provided a holistic framework for understanding the complexities of consumer behavior within international markets. Each aspect of the Kenrick Pyramid, from immediate physiological needs to mate acquisition and retention, served as a lens through which to analyze consumer motivations and preferences across diverse cultural contexts. Through assignments such as the country profiles and market analysis, I gained practical insights into how these concepts translate into real-world marketing strategies. In particular, our final project on entering the South Korean cosmetics market highlighted the importance of status dynamics and influencer marketing in driving consumer engagement and market penetration. Ultimately, this class has equipped me with the knowledge and analytical tools necessary to navigate the complexities of international marketing and make informed strategic decisions in the ever-evolving global marketplace. As I reflect on my journey, I am confident that the lessons learned and experiences gained will continue to inform and shape my future endeavors in the field of international business, even though I realized that I really do not like marketing.