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Marketing 4270-003

28 April 2024

Class Summary Final Exam

In the spring of 2024, I took the course Marketing 4270 which is more commonly known as “International Marketing”. As I sat down on the first day of class, I expected the stereotypical first day where the professor introduces himself, briefly goes over the syllabus while no one pays attention, and then class is dismissed within the first thirty minutes. I have been accustomed to this routine throughout my college experience and a majority of the courses fail to setup the course in a manner that is engaging and relatable to the student. However, the first day of class in International Marketing with Professor Poehlman peaked my interests as it was different than any other beginning to a class that I have taken in college. More specifically, he stated something on the first day that I have been waiting for a professor to say throughout my four years at Clemson but no one ever has. This statement loosely translated to the fact that it doesn’t really matter what grade you receive in the course but rather that you understand the information presented to you in lectures and analyze this information to do something useful with it. In other words, no job employer is going to care what letter grade you receive in this course but rather what knowledge do you possess from taking the International Marketing course that is going to give you an advantage over others in interacting with the global market. From this point on the very first day and forward heading, I resonated as relatable to the professor and was truly excited to learn the information in store, as I really never cared what grade I received in the course but

was grateful that this course did not set me up like the others to feel like a cog in a machine to produce an A+ grade. I believe that the A's will come when I am interested in the topics of the class and am able to interpret what the professor is saying to develop my own opinions on the topics that are discussed. As evidenced by my GPA, I am not driven by the gratification of receiving an A letter grade in a course but rather learning useful information that will help me better understand myself as well as the world and people around me. Therefore, something about this course brought back a spark in my education, which to be quite frank I haven't felt the same "excitement to learn" sensation since studying poetry in my 8th grade Literature class.

As I was self-reflecting on this course to write this paper, I tried to figure out what the deeper reasoning was behind my draw to this class over practically every other course I have taken at Clemson. Then I found the answer in the form of one of my favorite poetic works known as "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" by Walt Whitman. Whitman is often referred to as the father of free verse and is famous for instilling his romantic ideals into his poetic use of diction. Romanticism believes that true knowledge does not come from reading an outdated textbook in a confined, contained classroom, but in nature, exploring the universe of knowledge individually. It teaches not to just accept the reality of the world that is being taught and shown but to question and decide what really is true reality. It supports freedom of the mind, human equality, and self-realization. Romanticism ties in with the theory that people should not be controlled by their destiny but should control their destiny for their own. Learning with the imagination produces more effective knowledge than staring at charts and diagrams. I was able to establish this same sense of relation with the teaching philosophy of Professor Poehlman as the romantic concepts within Walt Whitman's poetry. I found this similarity in viewpoints

towards acquiring knowledge between Whitman and Poehlman was attractive to my mind, and therefore kickstarted my curiosity to learn heading from the first day of class into the content of the course. From then on, my excitement to learn about International Marketing was fueled by my own curiosity and engagement in not only the content of the course but also the professor himself. I was fascinated by the idea of using a biological lens to study the global market as it made crystal clear sense as it is impossible to market to all the diverse populations of people in the world but possible to appeal to the biological similarities that all humans share. This iconic viewpoint on successful international marketing in combination with application of examples from different countries around the world changed my perspective on how I think of the world and the different people in it.

Taking this newly developed mindset of mine into consideration, I would like to discuss the major themes of the course that got me to this point of self proclaimed “enlightenment”. As stated prior, this course analyzes international marketing from a biological perspective in which all humans are connected by. Keeping that in mind, the course began with a brief overview of Evolution. More specifically, there are three characteristics that have to be present for evolution to exist. These are Variation (Ex. Genes, phenotypes, etc.), Reproduction (Ex. Mating, behavior, production and Selection. Reproduction occurs as organisms need a way to transfer desirable traits from past generations to future ones. Selection refers to the idea that the environment determines the reproductive success, such that organisms with “generative” phenotypes outcompete others. The different levels of selection include individual selection which favors selfish individuals, group selection which favors cooperative individuals within selfish groups, and multilevel selection (Wilson & Wilson 2007) where the outcomes depend on the balance of

both effects. Then we touched on Maslow's hierarchy of needs for all people which are 1) Self-Actualization 2) Esteem 3) Belongingness & Love 4) Self Protection 5) Physiological needs as well as the Incentive Sensation Theory. This theory explains the two different reward centers in the brain which provide sensations of pleasure from acting. They are the 1) Liking (Consummatory) which is pleasure linked to consumption and 2) Wanting (Anticipatory) which is a stronger form of desire. The Anticipatory part of the brain can be satisfied artificially by different drugs such as cocaine. This information helped lead us into a better understanding of the major biological instrument that would be used to analyze all the content in the entire class known as the Kendrick Pyramid.

The Kendrick Pyramid was established by Douglas Kendrick and orients Maslow's Hierarchy of needs into seven levels starting from the bottom to the top which are: 1) Physiological needs 2) Self-Protection 3) Affiliation 4) Status and Esteem 5) Mate Acquisition 6) Mate Retention 7) Parenting. These pillars of life are topics shared by all humans and can be directly applied in relation to the each other to achieve successful marketing on a global scale. The top six needs are all related to social aspects while the bottom two needs as in self protection and physiological needs are physical needs and is how every person is interconnected on the same basic level of biological similarity. Physiological needs develop upon two time scales which are distal and proximal. The distal time scale is for function of processes (Ex. Hunger, thirst) and the proximal time scale involves more of a questioning of why did I do something. The bottom line of these findings is that the physiological cravings are designed to be adaptive and involve specific environmental tuning. The second level of the pyramid is Self Protection which involves security and is both a feeling and a reality. One of the biological principles in

relation to self protection is The Smoke Detector Principle which follows the belief that the cost of an alarm is much lower than the cost of harm, therefore the alarm will go off often.

The third level of the pyramid begins to discuss how groups are the foundation of social life and are driven by the desire for advantageous affiliation. Humans are biologically programmed to want to always be part of the larger majority of a popular crowd known as the in-group. On the contrary, humans outcast populations with differences that are threatening in a physical or social sense which forms an out-group. Out group individuals are dehumanized by in-group individuals to try and make them feel easier to dislike. They are often falsely blamed for problems within an in-groups society and considered unhealthy, gross, and dirty. For example, when using humor as a baseline for interacting with people we prefer humor that draws distinctions that are favorable to our group and unfavorable to outgroups. Humor that involves similarities has been shown to relieve tension within an in-group and enhances bonding. This concept of in-group vs. out-group is directly applicable to international marketing as companies want to promote their products to the most populous in groups if possible. This divide between in-groups and out-groups is also the basis of how many countries in the world developed a Westernized view of the world. Conquers such as Spain, France, and Britain sought to expand their empires to less developed countries with indigenous populations such as Colombia, Dominican Republic, and Mexico. For these countries, the Spanish conquerors came in established their own in-group as superior which developed into the urban cities that are most popular today (in-group) and drove the rural indigenous populations into poverty ridden rural areas (out-group). The Spanish conquerors had naturally lighter skin tones than the native darker skinned indigenous populations so it was determined to be advantageous to be fair skinned by the newly established

European in-groups and disadvantageous to be darker skinned which was associated with the indigenous out-groups. This divide still has crippling effects to countries where European in-groups took power as for example in Mexico, lighter skinned individuals are still the people found in the most successful cities and control the powerful business sectors and political positions in these countries.

It is necessary to establish this piece of history for developing countries as it explains why implicit cognition, the unconscious or automatic mental processes and attitudes that influence behavior and perception without conscious awareness or control, is a driving force for how people view others in different countries. In other words, most people in modern times aren't even aware that they even have this self-desire to be associated with their in-group and present a facade of equality and openness to diversity, however, our biological tendencies prevail and setup the consumer societies. This is the reasoning why it is important to know the target audience for a marketing campaign and understand the history that has made the population of a country the way that it is. These in-groups develop the societal norms which are the unwritten rules found in society. Cultures can be defined as tight or loose as a framework that categorizes societies based on the degree of social norms and rules adherence (tightness) or flexibility (looseness) within a given culture. Humans are naturally norm-based not truth based. Therefore, different cultures have different normalities that they hold in regard within their societies so when conducting a marketing campaign it is impossible to create a blanket statement campaign that is meant to reach all members of the world. Using McDonald's as a case example, they experienced much success with their fast food concept in the United States and decided to start globally expanding into the international market. However, many of their campaigns in places

such as France were met with backlash as they company tried to push American products and marketing techniques onto the French way of life. The French have different social and cultural norms surrounding the way that they consumer food. It is not a fast process simply based on convenience as it is in America, but rather related intricacies of local dining and sharing a meal with others in support of French businesses all in close proximity or walking distance. The concept of the driveway was antiquated and the American food options were unpopular. McDonald's had then pull back out of the market and reassess why they were not having success. They then decided to use local French talent to drive their marketing campaign and create a better suited store layout and food menu that then experienced success. The degree to which societal norms are strictly followed or lack there of give marketers an advantage to know which products to push into market in different areas based on the societal normalities that are fabricated into society.

The fourth level of the Kendrick pyramid is in relation to Status and Esteem. Status can best be described as an individual's ranking within a group which ultimately translates to access to a high status mate. The largest in-group members that establish the status-quo for modern times are influencers on social media platforms. Most developed countries are constantly gaining access to the Internet and therefore becoming more inter-connected globally. Influencers are people that help establish the social normalities within a group and provide favorable characteristics or channels of thought. Opinion leadership is the frontrunners for what products are to become popular in the future and should be respected and therefore purchased. Influencers act as nodes within a social network and use this opinion leadership to share to their mass fan-following bases what they need to be like them. Marketers can use the incorporation of an

influencer in a marketing campaign to increase its popularity and overall success by creating a desire between consumer and influencer for phenotypic mimicry. This concept is the attempt to copy the phenotype of a desired individual. In other words, if an influencer says that their fanbase should use a certain cosmetic product to enhance their physical appearance and in return mate value, then those consumers are going to try and replicate the desired traits on their own bodies. Higher desired phenotypes translate to a higher social rank and in a primal sense the ability to claim a higher value mate. People aspire to be like this influencer and engage in aspirational consumption where they are simply buying a product because someone with a high social status has it, or they are trying to achieve the same results that an influencer accomplished.

The fifth and sixth levels of the pyramid are mate acquisition and mate retention. These concepts are debatably some of the most important aspects in relation to understanding how products should be developed internationally. All basic human needs are derived from the need to be healthy in order to produce successful offspring. Therefore, certain characteristics play role in physically explaining the characteristics that promote an appearance that would lead to producing healthy offspring. Men have a relatively low obligatory investment for their offspring and have a default short term focus. Woman have a high obligatory investment to offspring so they are default looking through a long-term perspective. More specifically, men prefer easily identifiable physical cues to fertility such as a youthful appearance and good waste to hip ratio while women prefer commitment and good prospects to adaptation of physical surroundings meaning good investment indicators such as seniority and high status or earning potential. For example, a high female mate value is attributed with facial beauty and symmetry, sexual dimorphism, and youthfulness. They use attraction, signal with appearance, and provoking of

jealousy by emotional responses. Males use more primal strategies such as contest mating where there are competitive interactions and behaviors amongst other males associated with reproduction. Therefore, this mate acquisition and retention is a major point of emphasis for marketing products to individuals in every part of the world as all humans share this drive to reproduce. This aspect is highlighted in the use of cosmetic products in developed and developing countries such as India, Mexico, and Colombia. The cosmetic market is a multimillion dollar operation and keeps women in developed countries at a high status level and allows women in developing countries to develop the appearance of a high status mate and therefore increase their mate value. In India, impoverished women spend money that could be allocated towards basic necessities such as food, water, and shelter towards consumption of beauty products that enhance their looks. This consumption is driven by the fact that the best thing a lower-status woman can do is buy cosmetic products to enhance their physical appearance which would hopefully translate into attaining a high status male mate. Marketing in cosmetics capitalizes on this basic biological concept.

The seventh and final tier of the Kendrick pyramid is in relation to parenting and life-history strategies. I find this concept most interesting as all individuals go through critical periods which are Pregnancy, Early Childhood, and Puberty, and these time periods are significantly influenced by the surrounding environment of a person. Individuals develop either on slow-strategy or fast-strategy timeframe. There is a difference between these two strategies and how individuals allocate their energy/ resources when growing. Fast-strategy individuals usually have quick reproduction timing, high number of offspring, and not a lot of investment in their children. These people are usually associated with lower status, poverty, and lower income.

They usually are marketed towards for generic and cheap products. On the contrary, slow strategy individuals usually have slow reproduction timing, low number of offspring, and a lot of investment in children. These are a majority of the individuals that took this class this semester. These people are usually marketed towards higher priced quality goods and luxurious items. The reason that I found this explanation of development so fascinating is that it explained a phenomena that occurred in my own life that I never understood until taking this class.

When I began high school, I received acceptance into Academic Magnet High School which is one of the top-ranked public high schools in the nation and receives a lot of prestige. While attending school here, I noticed that almost all of my class population was about the same as me as white child who was born into the upper middle class. The school lacked diversity and there were only a handful of African American students out of hundreds of kids. There was a hefty population of rich Asian kids as well. However, a majority of the population was like me and I was on the bigger end of the physical height and strength spectrum as some of the other freshman kids looked like they had not hit puberty yet. They were all on a slower pace of development because their stable environment at home allowed them to be nurtured by their family and take time developing. Fast forward, to the end of my sophomore year and I was one of the top recruits for lacrosse in the state of South Carolina. I wanted a shot to play in college and convinced my parents to let me transfer to the local and much larger high school that was in my district, James Island Charter High School which played greater competition that would get me national recognition that I needed to play at a large division 1 college. The school contains individuals of all different diverse backgrounds and the kids stint from lower income parents. Immediately, I noticed that all of the kids around me had a larger physical frame and had

physically developed at a much faster pace than me. There were kids with full on beards and even kids that already had children of their own. Also, it seemed like everyone around me had at least three to six siblings and their parents never seemed to really care what they were doing after school so they were very rarely supervised once the school day was finished. I was perplexed why all these kids were so much more physically mature than me and it even caused me to question if there was something wrong with my development. However, after learning about these fast development and slow development strategies it makes sense that the students at my other school were less developed, and the kids at my new school were much more physically mature. There was a lot more crime at this new school and also in the surrounding area of the campus. Children got arrested on almost a daily basis. The kids at James Island Charter had to react quickly to the unstable home environments in which they were raised in so their bodies naturally responded to the unpredictability of the surrounding environment and decided that it was imperative to reach sexual maturity as quickly as possible so it would be possible and attract a mate to reproduce.

In biological fast strategy sense, the same concept is true for the cartel members of Mexico. These individuals lived in unpredictable environments which led them on a fast strategy development to pursue crime and achieve higher means of living which was implicitly triggered by the need to attract a higher status mate. Since cartel members achieved higher status this was then followed by a great consumption of cosmetic products in Mexico so the low-status women could achieve an appearance of a higher status mate and reproduce with these cartel member who had the best means of living.

The final two factors that played a role in my comprehension of the tactics used by modern International Marketing Professionals stems from the dominance based hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the 1500s and the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church was very tight in its cultural norms and restricted literacy amongst its following crowd. The higher status members of the church were the only individuals allowed to read and they restricted information that was passed along to the common folks. In other words, the Catholic Church created the idea that it was necessary to go through a bishop who went through the pope to establish a relationship with god. The more money that was given to the church the greater promise of salvation in the after life in a simple sense. Eventually, Martin Luther came along and realized this corruption within the Catholic Church which led to the Protestant Reformation. He stated that someone can have an individual relationship with god, they just needed to be able thread the bible which led to a huge increase in literacy across Europe. Then, John Calvin developed his own sector off the Protestant church known as Calvinism which is were modern capitalism stems from. He established the relationship between wealth on earth and access to heaven known as materialism. It became acceptable to accumulate personal wealth which let an idea of using “God-Given” talent for financial gain. Calvinism was revolutionary and setup many principles of international business that are still found in modern times.

In conclusion, International Marketing, has been a wonderful course to partake in and taught me valuable knowledge to apply to professional workforce. I significantly appreciate how Professor Poehlman's class experience deviated from the conventional and stereotypical class format which has left me unengaged countless times. His emphasis on understanding over grades resonated deeply with me, sparking a renewed enthusiasm for learning that I hadn't felt since my

days studying poetry in eighth grade. The connection I established between Professor Poehlman's teaching philosophy and the romantic ideals of Walt Whitman, which prioritize individual exploration and questioning of conventional wisdom, helped me understand the class on a more personal level.

Throughout the course, we delved into the understanding of human behavior and its profound implications for global marketing through a biological lens. The Kendrick Pyramid, with its seven tiers ranging from physiological needs to parenting strategies, provided a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer behavior across diverse cultures. From Maslow's hierarchy of needs to mate acquisition and retention, each concept illuminated the universal desires that drive human decision-making.

Moreover, our exploration used real-world applications to better understand the content in a practical sense. Case studies like McDonald's failed attempt to penetrate the French market failed to recognize the importance of cultural sensitivity and understanding societal norms in developing successful marketing strategies. The historical context of colonization and its enduring impact on societal norms highlighted the implicit biases that shape consumer behavior and lasting impacts of colorism that still can be found in modern cultures.

As I reflect on my own experiences, such as the differences between my high school environments, I realize the influence of environmental factors on individual development and was provided with an understanding to a phenomena that had perplexed me for years. Whether it's the fast-strategy development driven by unstable environments or the slower-strategy development nurtured by stable surroundings, our marketing techniques must account for these diverse life-history strategies.

Finally, the course highlighted the historical roots of modern capitalism, tracing its origins back to the Protestant Reformation and the rise of Calvinism. These foundational principles continue to shape international business practices, emphasizing the pursuit of wealth as a reflection of one's "God-given" talents.

Overall, International Marketing has been one of my favorite experiences in my educational career and has given me a better understanding of how all humans are connected. By studying cases in different countries which allowed direct application of the class content, I have acquired a more knowledgeable perspective on how to market products successfully based on the similarities that humans share biologically.