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### **Class Summary**

Attempting to summarize everything I learned from this class this semester in just one essay seems virtually impossible. Despite already having taken a class on consumer behavior, much of the material taught in this course was brand new to me. Beginning with a lecture on implementing an evolutionary way of thinking, I knew this class would be different from the classes I had taken before this semester– I would actually learn something about the world rather than memorize information just to forget it after the exam. This class has not only provided me with a wealth of knowledge, but has also drastically changed my worldview, which I will elaborate on in this class summary.

Within the lectures, the most intriguing and impactful thing I learned about this semester was the Kenrick pyramid; more specifically, the levels of the Kenrick pyramid and how they can relate to my own life and the world in general. The Kenrick pyramid builds on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs from an evolutionary perspective, and each level focuses on a different aspect of human motivation. We were taught about human motivation on a foundational level through the first two levels of the pyramid: physiological needs and self-protection. The lecture discussed incentive salience theory, which explains how certain stimuli in our environment can become "attractive" to us and drive our behavior. According to this theory, these cues or stimuli can gain significance to us not necessarily due to their actual value or our experiences with them, but because our mind attributes a unique attractive or motivational quality to them. And

sometimes, the feeling of "wanting" creates more dopamine in our brains than the actual process of the experience or "liking." This was impactful to me, as someone who comes from a long line of addiction issues and has struggled with them personally. While I currently do not participate in any drug use and am committed to maintaining this lifestyle, addiction is an ongoing and lifelong journey. Understanding the science behind something that can feel so powerful, almost compulsive, has helped me to feel more in control of my actions and desires.

In general, the Kenrick pyramid and how it differed from its predecessor, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, laid the foundation for a more in-depth and updated understanding of human behavior. Maslow's model implies that needs are universal across cultures, whereas Kenrick's pyramid considers cultural differences and recognizes that these needs will vary. It also emphasizes that these needs are not isolated but interconnected. In the lecture on the Affiliation level of Kenrick's pyramid, we learn that this is especially relevant in our modern world—where we experience evolutionary mismatch— and some needs may take precedence over others. I've learned that this interconnectedness is a crucial concept in evolutionary psychology, highlighting the importance of social networks and relationships in human evolution. Network theory analyzes social structures as networks of interconnected systems; these networks connect and bind us as individuals, facilitate communication, and are overall critically important to sustaining modern societies. They play a significant role in shaping cultures, connecting people with shared values and beliefs, and establishing group "norms." A key takeaway from this lecture is that humans are "norm" based, not truth-based. This suggests that human behavior is more influenced by social norms, rather than what is objectively true in reality. It now seems obvious to me; however, I had never realized or been made aware of this idea. Since this lecture, I have noticed that my justifications for specific situations or decisions aren't actually based on what is morally

or factually correct, but what I know to be the societal expectation. This is just another example of how the material taught in class has provided me with a more profound sense of awareness of the world and myself.

The lectures discussing the Mate Acquisition, Mate Retention, and Parenting levels of Kenrick's pyramid also gave me valuable insight, which was informative, to say the least. The Mate Acquisition and Retention levels explored the dynamics of human mating behavior, and the differences in preferences between men and women. In short, women prefer long-term mating and seek a mate that provides stability and security. Men tend to prefer short-term mating, typically prioritizing physical appearance over other factors. Relationships and mating hold a lot of significance in human motivation, and many people center their lives around finding an ideal partner and procreating. As humans, finding a suitable partner to mate with is a highly significant task, especially considering how long and demanding human pregnancies are. I learned about how the quality of caregiving impacts children during their early childhood and into adulthood. High-quality parenting, sensitive and loving, typically leads to organized and secure attachment styles. In contrast, the opposite can result in insecure-avoidant attachment, insecure-resistant attachment, or insecure-disorganized attachment styles. This relates to life history theory, which explains how individuals strategically allocate their resources across different life stages to maximize their reproductive success and adapt to challenges in diverse environments. Slow strategy individuals prioritize delayed reproduction, fewer offspring, and long-term investment in both individual and offspring survival, often at the expense of rapid early growth and reproduction. Fast strategy individuals prioritize early reproduction and higher investment in offspring quantity, often exhibiting traits and behaviors that enhance short-term survival and reproductive success. Unfortunately, I believe I would fall into one of the latter categories of

attachment styles, as my upbringing was not of the highest quality. When listening to the different qualities of fast and slow types, such as fast types being more likely to suffer from mental disorders, I began to give more thought to the environment that I was raised in and how it has impacted my life thus far. I came to the conclusion that I do not think I fall into either strategy, fast or slow. Much of my college experience has been taking information at face value, and trying to fit myself into a single category or a group. While learning about human sexual behavior and the implications of parenting styles, I also was able to realize that human motivation is not a cookie-cutter concept— it is highly complex and influenced by numerous factors. Even though this is common knowledge, it showed that I learned how to think more critically and draw conclusions about certain things. I wasn't just told from a textbook or PowerPoint that human behavior is complex, I questioned what I was being taught, thought for myself, and drew conclusions from that curiosity.

While Kenrick's pyramid has taught me a lot that relates to my own life and my perception of the world, I also found it incredibly educational regarding marketing and international business. In every class I have taken that has touched on consumer behavior and psychology, traditional psychology has been emphasized, and Maslow's pyramid has been used to explain human needs and motivation. Now that I have a better understanding of the two, I find evolutionary psychology to be more relevant under the lens of international marketing. Understanding the foundations of human behavior and motivation in this manner can be helpful in understanding consumers; specifically how to tailor messages and products to the underlying motivational factors that influence consumer decision-making. The lecture discussing the Status level of the pyramid highlighted various aspects of status within groups, and described the role of opinion leaders in societies. Opinion leaders, or individuals within a group who yield significant

influence over others and guide group decisions or behaviors, play an important part in marketing. Finding opinion leaders in a society, such as actors or social media influencers, and using them to market products to their respective communities can drastically increase brand awareness and sales for a company. This lecture also introduced the concept of corruption, a prevalent issue in modern society. Corruption is defined as the prioritization of subgroups' goals over the goals of the entire group, often involving the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain. As bleak as it is, corruption exists almost everywhere, and can manifest differently in various cultures. An example of this from the lecture on the Parenting level of the pyramid is the "bottom of the pyramid," which is the vast, low-income segment of the global population that forms the base of the socioeconomic pyramid. Many multinational corporations corruptly use and exploit the 'bottom of the pyramid' population for cheap labor.

Beyond the Kenrick pyramid, the lectures following it were also very informative and helped me better understand international marketing. The class discussing culture explained how humans, predominantly norm-based rather than truth-based, often hold negative judgments toward those defying their cultural norms. Due to this, those who attempt to expand and market in foreign countries should know the cultural norms associated with the country, so that they aren't inadvertently defying cultural norms or offending the population (as we saw with Dolce & Gabbana). The 'Diamonds are Forever' lecture highlighted a huge marketing success from De Beers, in which he branded diamonds as a symbol of emotional commitment and luxury. By embedding diamonds in the mate selection and retention process, two of the levels in Kenrick's pyramid of human motivation, he leveraged evolutionary predispositions towards resource signaling in mate selection. He didn't just identify needs within the market, but shaped them, which was the driving force behind his success.

In addition to the lectures, the country profiles greatly impacted my understanding of the world. One of the main ideas of the course was that marketing is not a universal craft, and that marketing to different countries requires an understanding of the country's history and culture. As I've mentioned, before this course, I have only ever been taught basic marketing concepts: motivation, influencing attitudes, situational influences, consumer decision processes, et cetera. These concepts have been taught as blanket statements, and cultural differences have only been touched upon briefly. While we are taught there are cross-cultural variations, I had never been given the opportunity to delve into and research these variations. Through the country profiles, I was able to explore how different cultures require different marketing strategies and research real-life examples of this. I didn't initially choose the Central Asia group for the country profiles— I had chosen the "Bad" Europe group. I wanted this group because I knew a lot about the history and culture of Greece, and had a simple understanding of French culture. In hindsight, I believe that being given the countries of Central Asia allowed me to learn about cultures I knew absolutely nothing about, and will prove to be more advantageous in the long term. I learned about the skin-lightening industry in India, which was very enlightening as an American who has seen many beauty companies celebrate diversity and provide a wide range of skin tone options in recent years. In the United States, there is a new emphasis on self-confidence and being comfortable in your own skin, no matter the color, especially since the BLM movement in 2020. However, in India, there is still a cultural preference for light skin, on which beauty companies base their products and marketing tactics. The country profile on Bangladesh emphasized the fast fashion industry, and the horrible ethics behind it. Researching and reading about the horrific conditions that Bangladeshi workers face every day has made me rethink my purchase decisions as a consumer and think more deeply about where the products I purchase come from and who

made them. My first country profile was on Iran, where I researched the Iranian Revolution and learned that not every country values and wants to conform to Western ideals (as well as the proper way to pronounce 'Iran'). However, I gained a lot more from the assignments than just an understanding of these regions. Though stressful, I delivered my first presentation and was able to improve my public speaking skills. In an interview for a research assistant position, I used the country profiles as examples of my research and work. Having knowledge of Iran's history and values led me to have a meaningful discussion with the research advisor, which aided me in successfully getting the position. I am grateful that I got the opportunity to work on and present these country profiles, and the expanded knowledge and understanding I've gained as a result.

On the surface, I have learned a lot about how international marketing is a deeply nuanced subject— one that is dependent on the country and culture in which you are marketing to. I have gained a base level of understanding of the cultures of many different countries through the lectures as well as watching and presenting the country profiles. The course has allowed me to gain hands-on experience in various invaluable skills, such as research, data collection and analysis, and public speaking. But most importantly, this class has taught me how to think. It has taught me how to think on a much higher level, shaped the way I approach problems, and helped me begin to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. As a professor recently wrote to me, "doing research is about pursuing your interests and what you find yourself thinking about when no one tells you what to think about." Above all, I have been inspired to think for myself, and question why things are the way they are. Whether from this class or something else, I have a new sense of curiosity that wasn't there before, and a further enjoyment for learning. I believe that this will change the course of my college career, and, in turn, my life.