QUESTIONS

1. Distinguish among these three disciplines in terms of the unit of analysis: psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

   Psychology, the study of individual and interpersonal behavior, has the individual as its central unit of analysis. Sociology, the study of groups and human interactions, concentrates on the group instead. In the case of anthropology, the study of human culture, it is concerned with an aggregate, social category level (i.e., a large group).

2. Are rational motives more effective than their emotional counterparts in motivating consumers to make a purchase?

   The problem with the conventional classification (i.e., rational vs. emotional) is that a consumer may not recognize emotional motives and may have the tendency to rationalize personal behavior by assigning only rational and socially acceptable motives. In addition, the process of classification is not always straightforward. Convenience, for instance, can be both rational and nonrational at the same time. Also there is little concrete evidence to support the superiority of one kind of motive over the other. In the end, whether a motive is rational or irrational is not important. What is important is to identify specific motives relevant for marketing purposes.

3. Are consumers' perceptions of products affected by the information concerning the products' countries of origin?

   Not only do consumers have general images about certain countries, but they also form specific attitudes about products made in those countries. Several empirical studies support the hypothesis that consumers have stereotyped opinions about specific products from particular countries. "Made in" labels on products are used by consumers as information inputs that can significantly change consumer attitudes towards brands. Therefore, an international marketer should pay attention to the relationship between country of origin and the perception of product quality.

   It must be stressed that the effect of “country of origin” can be considerably weakened when consumers are also presented with other product cues (e.g., brand name, retailer’s reputation, etc.).

4. Explain how attitudes toward (a) marketing and (b) women may vary across countries.

   Attitudes toward marketing are not positive across countries. The Nestle case in Chapter 14 is a good example of this problem. In many countries, marketing is viewed as unnecessary, annoying, and wasteful. Consumers also have varying attitudes toward government regulations of marketing.
Attitudes toward women also vary from country to country. In many countries, women are still considered as a man's property, and a woman must seek her husband's approval before entering into a contract or being allowed to apply for a passport. As mentioned in Case 7-1 (Beneath Hijab), displays of male chauvinism are common in Iran (and in many countries).

5. Do social classes exist in the United States, the so-called land of equality?

Social classes definitely exist in the United States, and Americans are aware of the existence. Social class exists because it, as a functioning mechanism, provides for and assures the smooth operation of the society. For a society to exist, many functions must be performed—some of which are without doubt not very pleasant. The opportunity for upward mobility, however, makes the concept less objectionable in the United States. As a matter of fact, the United States, due to its social mobility, is unique because people have an opportunity to become (i.e., not born) unequal.

DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS AND MINICASES

1. Do you feel that consumer differences can be adequately explained by the all-encompassing concept of culture? Is it a waste of time to employ other psychological and social concepts to understand consumer behavior?

Marketers and researchers should guard against using culture on a wholesale and indiscriminate basis to explain overseas behavior. It is necessary to go beyond noticing cultural differences and to instead attempt to understand the underlying causes of cultural variations. This goal requires researchers to be more specific and rigorous in their investigation by extending the application of relevant psychological and social concepts to the international scene. Instead of attempting to use culture to explain most variations in consumption, researchers should redirect their attention toward smaller units of analysis. This requires a study of psychological concepts as well as social concepts which are not solely based on cultural determinants.

2. Are the same buying motives effective worldwide?

It is extremely unlikely that, for most products, the same buying motives will be effective worldwide. Due to market and consumer differences (e.g., economic development, demographics, perception, etc.), peoples are not likely to be motivated by the same buying motives. Even in the United States, it is not uncommon for firms to use different motives and (advertisements) to appeal to different market segments. However, one must also keep in mind that some products are relatively culture-free and that the same buying motive can be repeated in a number of countries.

3. Because personality is related to an individual person, is it possible for citizens of a country to have unique personality traits? Does a nation have its own national character?
It is very possible that citizens of a certain country may have unique personality traits. Americans, for example, are quite different from citizens of all other countries. The personality traits of Americans and those of Canadians and Britons differ significantly. However, peoples within the same geographic area tend to share some of the common personality traits.

4. Compared to Americans, are Asians and Africans: (1) more group-oriented, (b) more family-oriented, and (c) more concerned with social status? How might such orientations affect the way you market your product to Asian and African consumers?

Compared to Americans, Asians and Africans are more group-oriented, more family-oriented, and more status-oriented. As such, a marketer of an American product needs to be careful in utilizing such appeals as individualism, independence, and equality. Instead, the emphasis should be on groups, families, and status.

5. Do you think it is worthwhile to appeal to opinion leaders and innovators in foreign markets?

In many countries, dualism exists. Some people are much more likely to adopt new products sooner than others. These people tend to be both innovators and opinion leaders. They are relatively well educated, financially privileged, cosmopolitan, and more likely to read business-oriented publications and English-language newspapers. Therefore, it is worthwhile to communicate with these innovators and opinion leaders who can subsequently influence imitation.