**Causal Inference and Research Design**

**Assignment 1 -Personal Essay-**

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**Who am I?**

Anna Wintour once stated “In today’s world, you have to interact. You cannot be some difficult, shy person who is not able to look somebody in the face; you have to present yourself. You have to know how to talk about your vision, your focus, and what you believe in”. This is one of my favorite and best-loved quotes, not only because the person who says it is the fashion figure I look up to the most, but because it has shaped my personality and way of interacting with others throughout the years. To my way of thinking, this has helped me to come out of my shell, being able to leave my comfort zone while learning how to rapidly adapt to volatile and diverse environments. However, in order to dive deeper into this, I would like to talk about my life a little more, highlighting the main aspects of my past, present and most likely future.

My name is María Alejandra Orjuela Pava, I was born on July 5th, 1997 in Bogotá, Colombia. Since I was little, I have been very thankful for being able to live in such a beautiful country which, located in South America, is widely recognized for its biodiversity, home-grown traditions, high-rise business cities and unimaginable historic core. In fact, my father -who is the funniest, yet the most responsible member of my family- and mother -the most patient, loving and protective woman I have ever encountered- have ensured that my three years younger brother, Nicolás, and I discover the beauty and richness of our country.

As I look over my past, I can say, without hesitation, that it was surrounded by joyfulness and happy-ending memories. While my father worked abroad and was able to come up to 3 times a year, my mother, brother and I tried to keep up in touch with him as most as we could, waiting for the Holy week, Summer and Christmas season to arrive so that we could all be reunited. In addition to this, we used to have a dog, her name was Bella -I chose her name based on my favorite Disney movie which, by that time, was *the beauty and the beast*-. She was a beautiful and extremely loyal dalmatian who I spent most of my afternoons with. I should also mention that we used to live nearby my grandparents; this was a quite important part of my childhood as I loved visiting them, listening to my grandfather anecdotes while eating delicious treats cooked by my grandmother. In fact, my favorite memory refers to those weekends in which I stayed in at their home, being able to have amazing sleepovers with my grandmother. Within them she used to read me tones of ‘happily ever after’ books, telling me alongside several stories about one of the industries she did admire the most: Fashion. I remember that due her I began to encounter several names which, at first, I could not correctly pronounce such as Karl Lagerlfeld. I firmly believe she not only helped to shape my current taste for fashion and cosmetics, but also, she did influence on my hobbies. Nevertheless, in order to talk about them, we should begin moving towards my present.

As I grew up, time flied and, all of a sudden, I was in high school. Throughout those 4 years I was very dedicated to my studies. I loved to actively participate in the entrepreneurship fair which was annually held at my school. From it, I learned that the value of an organization resides on its ability to fulfill customers’ needs and wants in an efficient and differential way. Besides this, I was taught that resources were scarce and, if I wanted to achieve the willed objectives, I ought to allocate them in a proper way. These facts made me notice that I should, beforehand, understand people’s behavior and decision taking process, alongside with the necessity of developing skills in investigation. Therefore, I decided to study Economics at the University of Los Andes.

As I moved forward on my career, I complemented my studies with a co-major in Business Administration. I think I took the right decision as one career permitted me to structure a thinking map, solidifying my skills on data research and its further approach, while the courses of the other one helped me to acquire a corporate perspective. I developed a special appreciation for those subjects which had a deeper econometric content as they were more practical, permitting me to use the world’s real data to establish potential causal relationships. During my last semesters at university and, mainly, due to my internship at the sales/marketing area in Samsung Electronincs, I was able to understand that part of a company success depends on its marketing mix. However, in order to establish an adequate plan, you ought to base your strategies not only on qualitative results, but also on quantitative information. Undoubtfully, it is a must to previously perform a market research, yet, it is a duty to interpret the recollected data, making causal inference on the impact advertisements and marketing activities do have on registered sales, people’s purchase decisions and their brand’s perspective. This idea highly motivated me to take this course and I am willing to learn the different techniques available throughout which I can do so. Furthermore, I’m expecting to improve my skills in programing. Even though I have been learning stata and R for the lasts months, every opportunity in which I can practice and find new commands so as to enhance the presentation of the outputs obtained and improve the efficiency of the code, is welcomed.

After I finished college, I decided to make a Master’s in Economics. That is what I am currently doing and I’m beyond excited for all the skills I am acquiring and the interest content I am learning. In spite the fact most of my day is currently invested in it, I have a bit of spare time which I dedicate to my hobbies. They mainly consist on three activities: i.) watching artistic makeup tutorials which I subsequently practice on my mates and me, ii.) reading books about the history of fashion, its icons and worldwide recognized designers -up to date my favorite one is entitled as *The house of Gucci: A sensational story of murder, madness, glamour and greed*-, and iii.) spending time with my family and friends as I am a quite extrovert person.

Finally, when thinking about my future, I look forward to working hard and putting a lot of effort in the Master I am performing, so that I can finish it by next year; it is one of my short-term goals. Meanwhile, I would like to be enrolled in several online seminars or courses related to econometrics, marketing and negotiation. I firmly believe that they can help me to expand my knowledge of several topics and acquire new skills. When talking about a 5-year period, I want to have a job at either the sales or marketing areas within a worldwide-operating company which makes part of the fashion, beauty, or technological industry. The main reason for this, is that those companies tend to be immerse in extremely volatile environments. Therefore, you should constantly execute market research, looking for alternatives in order to cope with the existing demand and attract potential customers. Lastly, in 10 years round, I wish I have gained the experience, knowledge, and abilities so that I am able to apply for an MBA in USA. I think this degree will be an opportunity to enhance technical, managerial and leadership skills, being able to expand my professional network and create new opportunities. That is one of my greatest dreams and I know that if I’m perseverant, curious and hard-working, I can turn this dream into a goal.