

MARKETING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW TO SET THE RESEARCH AGENDA

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ABSTRACT

The Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) segment contributes to approximately 40% of the world's population. It comprises of people whose daily income is in the range of \$2-\$8 and annual per capita income is less than or equal to \$ 3,000. The unique nature of this segment calls for specialised marketing management skills to serve these markets. To achieve this goal, a systematic literature review of existing scholarly research in marketing with reference to BOP is undertaken. The study identifies the themes associated to marketing that have been researched at the BOP , the content of these themes, the methods of enquiry that have been adopted by scholars to investigate marketing at BOP and the possible directions for future research in marketing at the BOP. A content analysis and synthesis of these themes reveal the present status and potential research directions. Further research questions that can be studied in detail to deepen the understanding of this market segment have also been outlined. Finally methods used to investigate in the existing literature and potential for future research on methods in the BOP also have been identified.

This review has been done purely from a marketing perspective, which makes it a unique contribution. The second contribution is in terms of identifying the future marketing related research questions pertinent to the BOP context. The review also points out that a multi paradigm research view is to be adopted to study these markets and this would become the basis of choosing the research methods.

Keywords: Bottom of the Pyramid, Low Income Customer, Emerging Markets.

INTRODUCTION

The bottom of the pyramid (BOP) segment comprises of people whose daily income is in the range of \$2-\$8 and annual per capita income is less than or equal to \$ 3,000. They are largely occupied in informal sectors and dejected by poverty. They live in urban slums & rural villages. This population is characterized by low literacy rates, lack of basic infrastructure and a weak legal system. From the business aspect these markets are different from developed markets in the regulatory system, socio economic system, sociopolitical system, poor or inadequate infrastructure & supply chain system, technological system and cultural system (Sheth, 2011). Further, these markets are served by unorganised retailers, the distribution infrastructure is inefficient, and there is an acute shortage of resources and managerial skills. Because of these characteristics and as we move from BOP 1.0 where the poor were treated only as consumers to BOP 2.0 where they were considered as business partners to BOP 3.0 which calls for sustainable development, (Dembek et al., 2019; Lashitew et al., 2020) it is important that this market, marketing practices, consumer behavior and business models are known and acknowledged in extant marketing knowledge to organize for serving these markets. To achieve this goal, a systematic literature review of existing scholarly research in marketing with reference to BOP is undertaken aligned to Kolk et al.

(2014) who have highlighted that wide variations in terms of BOP contexts, initiatives and impacts exist and the role of multinational corporations (MNCs) may be limited thus asking for a deeper understanding on these fronts. The resultant themes highlight the current state of research in the BOP markets and identify research gaps and propose future research directions.

Objectives of the Study

Based on the above discussion the following research questions (RQs) have been framed for the study;

RQ1: What broad themes associated to marketing with reference to BOP emerge in the extant literature?

RQ2: What is the content of these themes?

RQ3: What methods of enquiry have been adopted by scholars to investigate the identified themes in RQ1?

RQ4: What could be the possible directions for future research in Marketing at the BOP?

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions a systematic literature review has been performed. Figure 1 describes the study design and approach for each of the research question. Figure 2 describes the systematic literature review protocol. A step by step approach has been adopted to conduct the systematic literature review (Kitchenham, 2004). The process comprised of developing a protocol to select relevant articles, extraction of data from the selected articles, synthesis and reporting of the results. As a part of protocol development for selection of relevant articles with reference to marketing and BOP the following selection criteria have been used;

1. The paper should have been published in a peer reviewed journal.
2. The paper should be in English Language.
3. The paper should have been published in a Business & Management journal and should be from the marketing subject.

All papers published from 2002 till February 2021 has been considered.

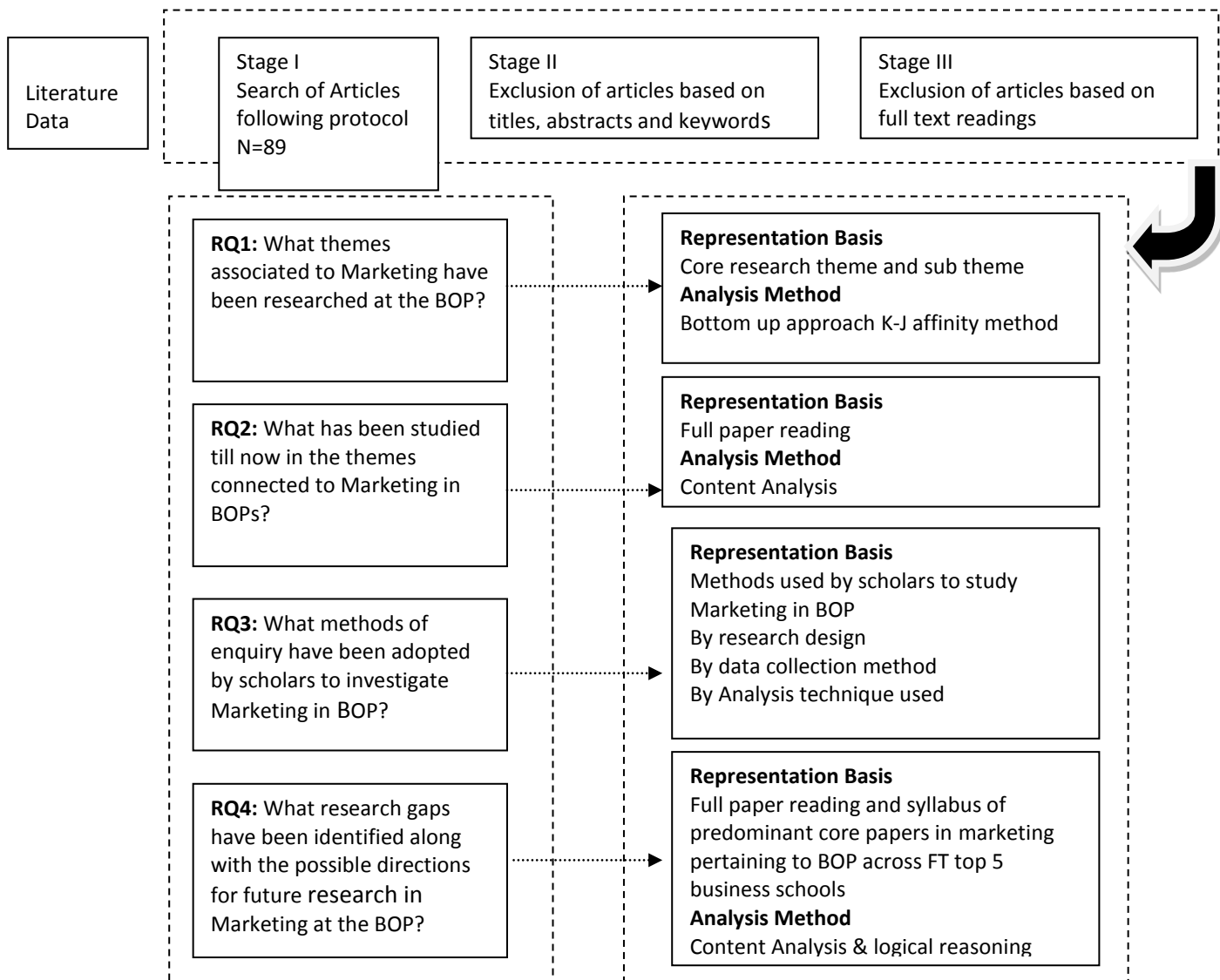
Three online databases EBSCO, Scopus database and Google Scholar were searched to select relevant articles. Given the purpose of the study, different keyword search strings were formed so that no potential paper was left out. The Boolean “AND” and “OR” operator were used between the key words in the search string at appropriate place. The keywords used in the search strings were “*bottom of the pyramid*”, “*base of the pyramid*”, AND “low income customers”. 166 peer reviewed marketing articles from business & management journals were identified as an outcome of this step. Next, the title and keywords of each paper were examined.

The papers that seemed non relevant were then identified. 20 papers were excluded at this stage. Then, the abstracts of each of these papers was carefully reviewed to assess if the focus of the paper was on ‘marketing’ and eliminate the risk of exclusion of a potential paper that was apparently not found relevant from its title and keywords but seemed promising from its abstract (Gupta & Srivastava, 2021; Srivastava & Gupta, 2021; Gupta et al., 2019).

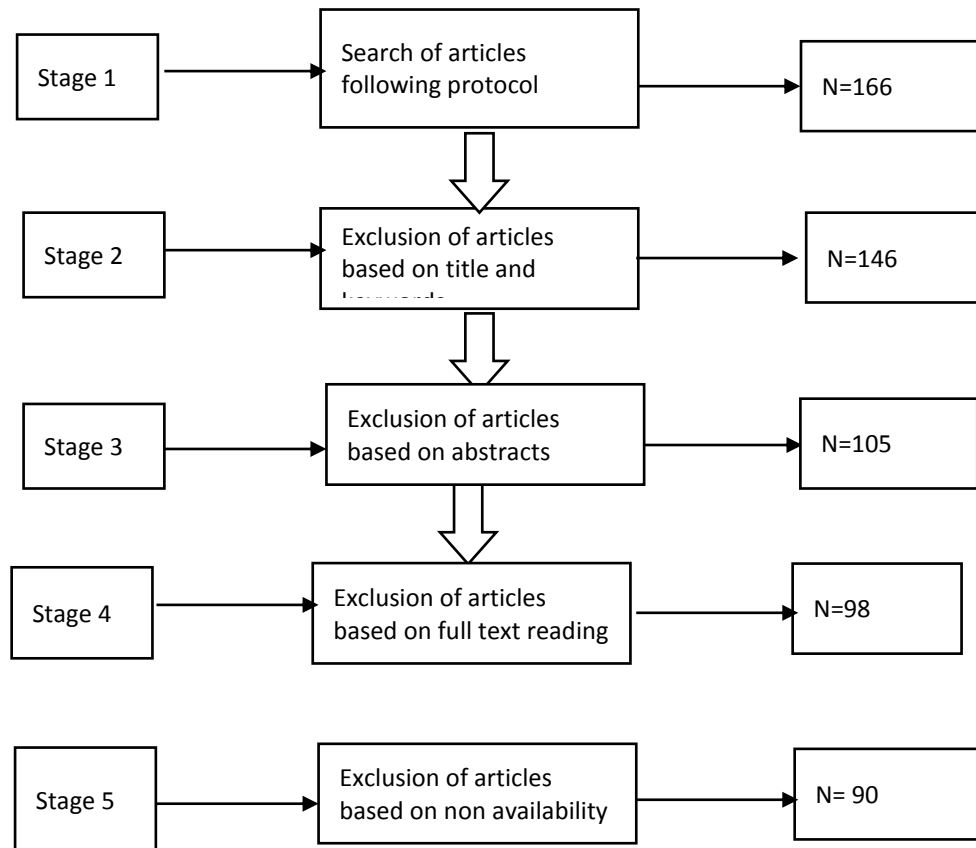
The abstract was checked for research objectives and focus of the paper. As an outcome of this step 105 papers were left. Full text reading of these papers was done and it was observed that some papers mentioned the keywords, title and abstract also seemed dealing with the subject but their emphasis or key content was not related to the context of this study. However, before excluding any such paper two selection criteria were checked;

1. The core research theme of the paper had to be related to ‘marketing’ to the ‘low income’ or ‘bottom of the pyramid’ markets.
2. One of the main objectives of the paper had to be related to ‘marketing’ to the ‘low income’ or ‘bottom of the pyramid’ or ‘base of the pyramid’ markets.

Thus 98 papers were left as the sample. In the next step to extract and synthesise the data from the sample papers a data extraction sheet was prepared in a MICROSOFT EXCEL worksheet. The full text of 8 papers could not be found in any of the data bases and the respective website of the journal. Thus a total of 90 articles have been studied for this review.



**FIGURE 1
STUDY DESIGN AND APPROACH**



**FIGURE 2
ARTICLE SELECTION**

Next a systematic classification scheme was developed based on ‘bottom-up’ approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach has been considered as a rigorous methodology for classifying literature (Wolfswinkel et al., 2011). In this approach each sample article was first coded under a specific subtheme. All subthemes were then synthesized under generic research themes. The generic research themes have been named as ‘core research theme’. Figure 3 describes the process followed. In the first step each sample paper was reviewed for the research problems / questions, main research objectives, findings and results to generate a broad range of 26 open codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Multiple iterations were performed at the open coding stage given the diversified nature of open codes. The next step was axial coding in which the related open codes were reduced to 16 sub-themes. In the third step the subthemes were grouped into 5 core research themes. This was done through affinity diagramming (K-J method) suggested by Kawakita (1986). An affinity workshop was finally conducted to negotiate and attain agreement on core research themes. As a part of this process, there were some hybrid sub-themes also identified. Therefore, core research themes have some overlapping of sub-themes.

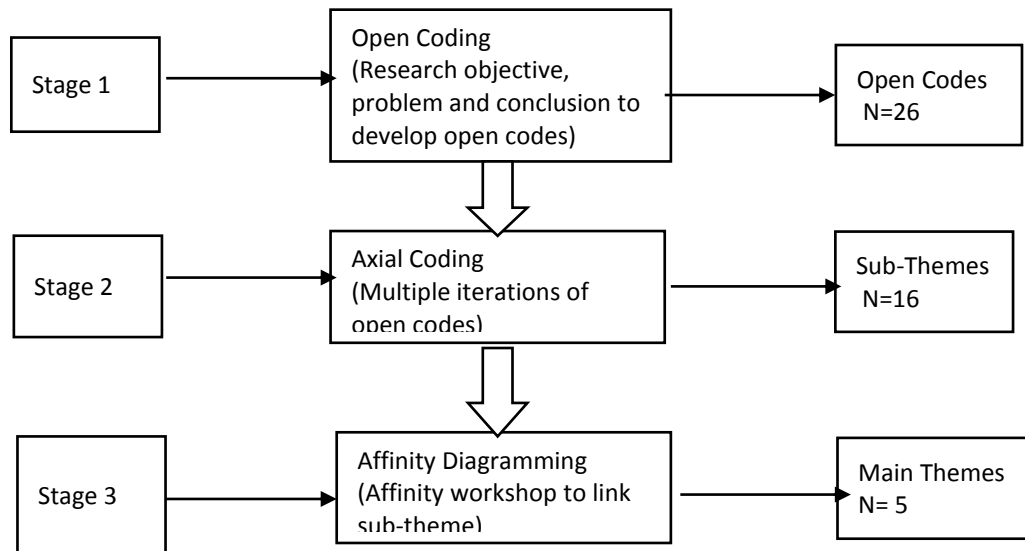


FIGURE 3
EXTRACTION OF MAIN THEMES

Content Analysis of Marketing Themes in Bop Context

There were five core marketing research themes identified in the extant scholarly research. A thorough content analysis of these themes identified what has already been studied in these. The subsequent sections then identify the research methods used, the existing research gaps and directions for future research. The following section discusses the themes in detail.

Approach of the Firm

Under this cluster there were a total of 35 studies since 2008 till 2021. It has been suggested that opportunity of co creation at the BOP is capable of both addressing the economic and social and/or environmental issues of the BOP including improving healthcare and quality of life (Agrawal et al., 2018; De Silva et al., 2019; Akter et al., 2021). Talking about hybrid forms it has been observed that quasi-profit hybrid forms are more widespread and attain greater usage in sub national BOP markets (Vassallo et. al., 2019). Scholars have expressed the need to know about innovation adoption in the BOP and found that two models work at the BOP; value based adoption model and consumer acceptance of technology model (Hasan et. al., 2019). Coming to business model practices the spatial-temporal dynamic of the business model proximities framework show that some proximities strengthen others through time, with negative and positive consequences (Mason & Chakrabarti, 2017) and a naturological approach based on stakeholder theory can help to understand how different

entities interact in a BOP system apart from the traditional buyer-seller interactions (Hill, 2010). Lashitew et al. (2020) developed a framework that showed the dynamic interaction between internal business model elements and external situation elements that control social value creation for the BOP.

As a part of the approach of the firm, scholars have also tried to study the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives of MNC firms and provided insights for policy making (Gruber & Schlegelmilch, 2015), the effect of lender's CSR on microfinance clients' re-borrowing intentions (Jose et. al., 2015) and the social responsibility of small scale individual entrepreneurs and their impact on customer loyalty (Azmat & Samratunge, 2013). Rabino et al., (2015) have developed a framework for MNCs that brings together different thoughts and perspectives and details the connection among three marketing conceptualizations – the "BOP" perspective, the diffusion of the innovation model, and the new product development process. All three deal with the communication of knowledge from BOP markets, and symbolize business processes that when implemented, increase the sustainability and competitiveness of MNCs. Scholars have been studying the level of intentionality and social value creation forms of business models which is different from the developed contexts (Sinkovics et al., 2014). The deviant marketplace behaviors that emerge in BOP marketing systems involving consumer merchants and their beneficial and detrimental implications have been studied by Upadhyaya et al. (2014). Bharti & Agarwal (2014) have identified the characteristics of BOP markets which deter the MNCs to enter these. They have further explored the co creation concept because the characteristics of these markets necessitate a new classification of customer needs and innovative product offerings which can be done by involvement of the people from these markets leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Further, Sharma and Bumb 2021 identified challenges faced by marketers in reaching rural BOP customers. Based on an interpretive structural model they have proposed an action plan that can help marketers deal with these challenges and access these markets. The idea of customer satisfaction has been explored with reference to the CSR of MNCs in the context of microfinance lending. Such lenders have been classified as working poor and their perception of firm's corporate social responsibility highlight the importance of relationship quality for such customers (Jose & Buchanan, 2013). From the international business perspectives scholars have tried to study the entry mechanisms of MNC firms into the BOP markets and the process of knowledge gain in these markets. Ordinarily it has been proposed that MNC firms which are already operating in the top of the pyramid markets of developing countries are in a better position to enter the BOP markets and the farther the two markets the greater the commitment (Schuster & Holtbrügge, 2012). The idea of poverty as not only being the lack of income but also the lack of capabilities has been explored by Ansari & Munir (2012) resulting in a framework for understanding the societal impact of BOP business-driven initiatives and how BOP communities are empowered and develop capabilities. Scholars have also tried to identify and deal with the challenges when conducting research at the emerging BOP markets of countries such as Zimbabwe (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012a). One such solution proposed to the distribution challenge is 'Franchising' (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2011a). The framework for value creation at BOP has also been suggested by Williams et al., (2011). Talking about the differences at BOP markets scholars have highlighted the idea of share of wallet and global umbrella brands being important for firms at the BOP (Wood et al., 2008). In fact Brand orientation has been proposed as a strategy to influence adoption of innovation in the BOP markets because of the characteristic 'relative advantage' (Rahman et al., 2013). Nielsen & Samia (2008) have further provided a comprehensive understanding of social enterprise development at the BOP to deal with the challenges there. It has been

suggested that the business model at the BOP would need three different perspectives to be successful which are; the role of microfinance, strategic alliances and adaptation of marketing mix (Pitta et. al., 2008). The idea of visual comprehensibility because of the high school dropout rate has been studied by Hasan et al., (2017), whereas the co design process has been explored by Schmidtke et al., (2021). Hernandez-Cazares et al., (2021) have tried to identify various managerial strategies for firms to conduct profitable business at BOP. Finally, scholars have considered the BOP market as a blue ocean and tried to evaluate different marketing concepts for creating distinctive positioning and branding (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2011b; Sharma et. al., 2013) along with using information and communications technology for market development (Tarafdar et al., 2009); Karnani (2007) has taken an alternate view of looking at BOP as producers rather than markets and the role of business especially private sector in alleviating poverty by investing in upgrading the skills and productivity of the poor, and thus creating more employment opportunities.

Consumer Behaviour

Under this theme there have been 30 studies. To start with there has been a need raised to study this consumer market independently by redefining marketing for them (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012a). It has been enforced that the socio cultural influences of global consumer culture needs to be studied by international marketers in detail for different BOP markets (Özsomer, 2019). Empirical evidence has been gathered for the income and expenditure related fluctuations of the share of wallet of BOP households in South Africa (Lappeman et. al., 2019). A theoretical model to improve Srilankan youth's aim of obtaining microcredit with the mediating role of self-identity has been proposed by Jebarajakirthy & Thaichon (2016). Yurdakul et al., (2017) have highlighted the gap in marketing literature on the conceptualization of poverty. They mention that scholars have been relying on the existing definitions of the BOP "poor" from sociology and economics. Therefore, the analytic foundations and the practical implications of poverty-centered discourses occasionally remain vague in marketing theory. They have further developed a more broader and comprehensive culture-linked understanding of poverty and BOP from a consumer research perspective.

It has been observed that despite unethical practices such as selling counterfeit products, charging high prices, withholding of promotional offers, selling expired products impoverished customers tend to stick with their retailers and consider co creation of value with a long term orientation (Gupta & Srivastava, 2016). Scholars have also studied the aspirational consumption of the poor who unlike spending only on utilitarian needs spend discretionary income on such products as well (Gupta & Srivastava, 2016) and the drivers for their marketing behavior (Jaiswal & Gupta, 2015). Subrahmanyam and Tomas Gomez-Arias (2008) have examined the fundamental characteristics and overall consumption baskets of the BOP consumer across four continents. A blend of sales promotion tactics have proved effective in driving consumer action such as purchase, new product trial and brand switching among others. The deal proneness of BOP customers has also been studied along with them not responding to certain sales promotion tactics (Gupta & Denbleyker, 2015). Gupta & Pirsch (2014) found that a firm targeting a discretionary product to a more-vulnerable segment will receive lower ethical evaluations. Intentions to engage in disapproving behaviors seem to be negatively related to the ethical evaluations that a strategy receives. It has been suggested that responsible consumption at BOP would require the active creation and management of consumers as moral subjects (Giesler & Veresiu, 2014).

It has been found that firms would get advantage if they practice customer relationship management at the BOP (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2013). The role of family decision making and family buying behavior models are different for the BOP (Chikweche et al., 2012). Scholars have used the theory of self-determination to study the role of individual psychological need fulfillment and found that only when basic life necessities are fulfilled do relatedness and autonomy better poverty's negative influence on life satisfaction (Martin & Hill, 2012).

The purchasing power and context specific market segmentation has also been studied by marketing scholars (Guesalaga & Marshall, 2008; Janda et al., 2021). Choudhury et al. (2019) have analysed thoroughly how BOP consumers try to minimise their transaction cost. They have identified new constructs in the BOP consumer decision-making process literature, including vulnerability, bounded rationality, opportunism and lock-in effect. Perceived stress as a construct has been explored in detail to check the vulnerability of functionally illiterate customers at the BOP (Jayasundara et al., 2020). Conservation of resources and resilient pathway theory has been used to identify the source of perceived stress along with the coping mechanisms. It has been found that loyalty at BOP is both context and category dependent (Costa Filho et. al., 2020). Scholars have used the capability-based view of the firm and social capital theory to develop a research that explains the extent to which the local BOP manufacturers use bricolage to develop innovative products that create value for BOP customers (Srivastava & Srivastava; 2021; Srivastava, 2020; Srivastava, 2018; Getnet et. al., 2019). Further there have been research studies where service quality and technology adoption has been studied at the BOP (Otalora et al., 2018; Dey et al., 2013). The issue of heterogeneity at local level and limited product knowledge that can be used by BOP customers in creation of value has been researched to find out that (Howell et al., 2020; Dey et al., 2016).

Innovation

This cluster comprised of 10 studies. It has been observed that research on innovation adoption within BOP marketplaces and the developing context is scant. Because of its unique context such markets need conceptualization of frameworks in a different way than the developed markets (Gibbert et al., 2014). It has been found that the two most useful models in these markets are Value Based Adoption Model and the Consumer Acceptance of Technology model. Further it is important to note that marketers need to work on hedonic attributes of new products and reduce the internal/external constraints faced by customers to lead to better adoption of such innovations (Hasan et al., 2019). In context of Chinese migrant workers a study finds out that these people are more likely to adopt online banking when they have higher levels of economic, biological, and social resources. The results are in the support of habit adoption theory and provides marketers with insight to increase BOP consumers' adoption of financial services (Leonhardt & Chu, 2017). Characteristics such as after sale services, product bundling, interference from other institutions, monopoly and information opaqueness along with perceived corporate integrity are found to influence mobile payment adoption in the Chinese BOP context (Hasan et al., 2020). In the context of Bangladeshi farmers' use of mobile telephony it was found that these farmers went beyond the initial adoption, as they appropriated it through social and institutional support, inventive means and/or changes in their own lifestyle (Dey et al., 2013). Baishya and Samalia (2019) have established that 'effort expectancy', 'performance expectancy' and 'perceived monetary

value' have a positive impact on the 'behavioural intention' of using smartphones at BOP. In India Further 'smartphone anxiety' and 'smartphone self-efficacy' are found to have an impact on 'effort expectancy'.

Prahalad et al. (2012) have highlighted that the BOP markets can act as a new source of radical innovation. Managers need to focus their attention on creating awareness, access, affordability, and availability to create an ambient environment for innovation. A framework for grassroots innovation has been proposed by Gupta (2020) which defines the antecedents, moderators and outcomes in an integrated manner at the BOP. Viswanathan et al. (2011) have proposed a suitable course curriculum to deal with the subject in management programs. Using the capability based view and the social capital theory a research model has been developed to explain the extent of local BOP manufacturers using bricolage to build up innovative products at BOP that creates value for customers (Getnet et al, 2019).

Policy Making

This particular customer though comprised of 5 studies. One of the important agenda items for policy makers in developing countries is to reduce poverty. To do this policy makers in these markets have made attempts to tie producers at the BOP to high-income markets. There emerges a need to build policies on the different kind of arrangements that companies offer to BOP producers. There has been a dearth of research studies that address the design of arrangements to increase their reception among BOP producers. Scholars have tried to study the different parts of such arrangements such as marketing competence, third-party control, and payment on delivery to understand how to design such arrangements that prove effective at the BOP (Adekambi et al., 2018). Scholars have used the concept of neoliberal governmentality to assess public policy failures in BOP initiatives. Taking the case of echaupal from India research shows how the divide between poverty alleviation and profit seeking is inadequately reconciled by the neoliberal government policies that dominate contemporary India (Varman et al., 2012). One study has identified seven features of the BOP markets, their buyer-seller interactions and the specific elements of exchange. Combining this with consumption in poverty and social capital theories, the authors state that the business policies in developing countries should try to empower consumers and subsistence entrepreneurs, accept and adopt solutions that are social capital and, try to reduce the gap between formal and informal economies, and assume a bottom-up direction to policy development (Viswanathan et al., 2012). Scholars have suggested three methods in which marketing scholars could bring their unique proficiency to the query of social justice in an international economy: by reworking the theoretical fundamentals of social justice, documenting and evaluating emergent "feasible fixes" to achieve justice and exploring the parameters of the consumption basket that would be minimally required to achieve human capabilities (Scott et al., 2011). With reference to BOP voters electing candidates or a particular party as a part of political marketing, it was found that local dominance, ignorance or lack of information, benefits, coercion, sense of belongingness, social ties and social capital along with social identity play an important role (Sengupta et al., 2020).

Marketing Mix

Marketing Mix forms an integral part of any firm's marketing strategy. It has been suggested that to start finding realistic marketing opportunities at the BOP, there has to be taxonomy. The urban/rural divide is a good classification basis to do this. The informal and

formal areas in the same city may be segregated and characteristic different between those need to be understood so that marketing practices be aligned to them (Faria & Hemais, 2017; Ireland, 2008). To serve the BOP markets firms need to adopt a unique segmentation approach that takes the local BoP characteristics into account (Chikweche, 2013 a; b; Lappeman et al., 2019; Ahmed, 2013). To market new products to the BOP, companies can create products with functionality and cost advantage for the poor without compromising on safety and comfort (Waeyenberg & Hens, 2008). It has also been suggested that businesses must follow three rules for consumer marketing at the BOP; understanding of consumer psychology, social embeddedness and entrepreneurial empowerment to be successful (Sridharan & Viswanathan, 2008; Payud, 2014). Alur (2011) has suggested social franchising to be an effective distribution model for health care services to the BOP markets. Geographical separation, lack of healthcare professionals, and inadequate government funds in healthcare harshly limit health services accessibility in rural BOP markets. Social franchising brings together the principles of commercial franchising with social marketing to develop a sustainable business model for increasing healthcare availability. It has been found that the attitude of the BOP customers towards marketing mix is different than other segments and there is a need to revisit the marketing mix (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012a). They identified social networks as an intervening variable and regular consultative interaction between firms, customers and social networks could play an important role in the marketing strategy of the firms have further asked to develop the services marketing mix at the BOP. They have taken the banking and financial services context of BOP markets and developed a framework based on the elements of the service marketing mix Purohit et al. (2021). Finally Mehta & Swami (2020) build a marketing framework of 8As on the already established framework of 4As at BOP; awareness, accessibility, affordability and availability (Payud, 2014). They club these 4As with adaptability and put it in the first phase of firms establishing in the market followed by assistance and action innovation in the second phase of firms expanding the market and accelerating scale in the third phase of stabilising the market.

Methods used for Investigating Marketing at the BOP

It has been observed that approximately 20 percent of the scholarly research on marketing at the BOP has relied on the quantitative research techniques such as regression models, factor analysis and experiments. However a large majority of the studies (40 percent) have used qualitative techniques particularly case method of analysis. There are other qualitative methods also used such as ethnography, focus group discussions and grounded theory. The rationale for such methodologies comes from the fact that in absence of theories on which empirical quantitative work can be based upon, this area is still to be understood and theories need to unearthed and conceptualized. Interpretivist research paradigm is found to be more used in favour of socially constructed realities at the BOP. This is in contrast to the positivist research paradigm that builds on the view that the society shapes the individual and supports quantitative methods. Data collection methods have varied between a predesigned survey to semi structured and fully structured interviews with an interview protocol developed. The sampling unit has been either an MNC organisation operating in BOP markets or the consumers from the BOP households across different markets. In very few instances secondary data based research has been done. Most of the studies used primary data. The most common limitation of the scholarly extant BOP literature in marketing is the

generalisability of the findings. 25% studies were found to be of conceptual nature and 15% studies used mixed method of research.

Analysis and Discussion

It would be interesting to note that while the existing research has explored the role of the firm in co creation of value the role of strategic partners and alliances in co creating social and economic value in different contexts still needs to be explored (De Silva et al., 2019). Co creation also has to be studied from the consumer perspective where existing research has to be supplemented by strengthening situational and individual level variables that affect such co creation of value (Bharti & Agarwal 2014). Further diverse variables such as different types of organisations, firm size, type of industry, cultural and social habits, the structure and size of the value chain and their impact on the contribution of MNC firms in BOP markets needs to be assessed (Borchardt et al., 2020). The admiration of economically developed countries has been studied with reference to the BOP consumers for the CSR strategy of firms but it would be interesting to understand it from the managers dealing with BOP markets as it would affect their decision choices for entry mode strategies as well a foreign firm's employment of local workers (Randrianasolo, 2018).

With studies now talking of different business models, there is a need to develop a typology for such models with new criteria such as proximity. This can be an interesting classification criterion for new business models that may have implications for firms in different national contexts (Mason & Chakrabarti, 2017). Store related practices have been touched by existing scholars but there is a possibility to study these in the contexts of rural - urban and different types of store formats. There could be difference in the nature of transaction and behaviour across these especially for the more prevalent formats that are unique to this context such as social based cooperatives and black markets. The studies can be done for marketplace exchanges in these formats along with ethical / unethical practices being followed there. The role of public policy makers is questioned here along with the responsibility of MNC firms and large domestic organisations that use this network in curbing the unethical practices that may exploit BOP customers (Gupta & Denblyekar, 2015). Ethical behaviour of companies who serve different segments including BOP should also be evaluated.

With reference to CSR strategy against the localisation, globalisation, regionalisation spectrum the role, autonomy and responsibility allocated to regional headquarters and subsidiaries can be contrasted in the context of international marketing. Interesting insights can be generated with headquarters as the focus by analysing the tensions between global and local CSR strategies and actual decision making. It would be insightful to explore the role of poor and captive customers and whether they care about CSR strategies which may not be directly related to them or their communities (Gruber & Schlegelmilc, 2015). The role of CSR perceptions in influencing continuity of purchase intention can be an important research question.

With reference to social value creation at the BOP the concept, nature and impact of trigger constraints can be explored theoretically as well as empirically leading to implications for business models (Sinkovics et al., 2014). From a marketing perspective several psychological and behavioural level insights are to be explored at BOP. The role of psychological distance as a part of social groups impacting the goals of such populations should be considered while devising the marketing strategies. The knowledge about complementarities between bonding and bridging social capital can serve in building

capabilities at the BOP. Further poverty alleviation needs to be linked with environmental sustainability with population growth as an anchor.

Human aspiration and level of need may be an important area of scholarly work in BOP research. The difference in family structures and decision making may be an element of consumer behaviour which can be studied across different BOP markets (Gupta & Srivastava, 2016). As of now there are a few studies that have touched on this in some specific markets only. The cross cultural contexts can also be studied with respect to several international marketing topics such as entry modes, standardisation versus adaptation of products and brands along with the marketing communication tools used.

Distribution channels are another main area for research with reference to businesses at the BOP especially with reference to the customer relationship management (CRM) practices. Additional three marketing tasks of acquiring, retaining and growing with the customers also need to be understood from a channel perspective. CRM's linkage with brand is also an important area to be researched. The role of employee empowerment to develop them into good CRM managers in firms can be explored. There is also a need to establish benchmarks for CRM at the BOP (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012). The role of social networks for a CRM program is another future research direction.

Further there has been need raised to understand the consumer behaviour at BOP from the theoretical lens of self-determination theory. The constructs of autonomy and relatedness can be taken as mediators for consumer's happiness, well-being and life satisfaction with consideration given to relative versus actual poverty and the importance of social comparisons (Martin & Hill, 2012).

The resources used for coping mechanisms of the BOP customers could give insights that would help corporate with interventions in this sector that could address the concerns and minimise resistance (Jayasundara et al., 2020). The availability of downstream resources and its effect on product adoption, satisfaction and loyalty are some of the customer related outcomes that can be studied for developing new theories (Leonhardt & Chu, 2017). Bricolage with reference to products, technology, supply chain and distribution needs to be explored as there are several grass root innovations done by the BOP consumers and producers (Getnet et al., 2019). Competitiveness is also a concern to be looked at the BOP (Leonhardt & Chu, 2017; Ireland, 2008). While the grassroots innovation framework has been developed future research can develop a multidimensional scale (Gupta, 2020). It would be interesting to identify and contrast the developed versus emerging market context for the BOP markets for the above identified future research directions along with merging marketing at BOP with development research.

The following research questions are proposed based on the scholarly review of extant BOP marketing literature;

1. What is the role of strategic partners and alliances in co creating social and economic value in different contexts?
2. What are the situational and individual variables that affect co creation in the BOP markets?
3. What are the firm specific factors that affect the MNCs with reference to co creation in the BOP markets?
4. What will be the factors affecting managerial choice on international market entry modes and local employment for BOP markets?
5. Would the type of store format have implications on BOP marketing strategy based on urban or rural context?
6. How can the BOP business models be classified with reference to marketing criteria?

7. What would be the deontological role of MNC firms and policy makers in the BOP markets?
8. Do the role, autonomy and responsibility allocated to regional headquarters and subsidiaries have an impact on the CSR strategy of the internationalising firm?
9. What do poor captive customers understand of the CSR strategies of firms and do they get influenced by them?
10. What is the nature and impact of trigger constraints for social value creation in BOP markets?
11. What are the psychological and behavioural variables that impact the BOP consumer decision?
12. How can marketing help to achieve community goals of BOP customers while exploring the role of psychological distance between individual constituents?
13. How do BOP communities bond and can this knowledge help firms in building the capabilities for themselves as well as the BOP markets?
14. How do family structures impact consumer decision making in different BOP markets?
15. What is the role that MNC firms can play in shaping up BOP consumer aspirations that would enable a mutual value satisfaction for both parties?
16. What is the impact of culture on international market entry modes, standardisation versus adaptation of products and brands along with the marketing communication tools used?
17. With reference to CRM practices of firms across stages of customer acquisition, retention and growth what is the role of channel – customer interaction in BOP markets?
18. What can be the benchmarks for CRM strategies in BOP markets?
19. What is the role of social networks in establishing consumer loyalty at the BOP?
20. How do the environmental circumstances involving limited choice, conditions of purchase and shortages in official distribution channels impact the CRM program?
21. What is the link between brand and CRM initiatives?
22. What would be the impact of empowerment on employees working in the BOP markets for a CRM program?
23. Is there a link between poverty alleviation, population growth and environmental sustainability that would impact marketers?
24. How can autonomy, competence and relatedness impact consumer's happiness, well being and life satisfaction with consideration given to relative versus actual poverty and the importance of social comparisons?
25. How do BOP consumers cope with constrained resources and infrastructure and what could be the marketing interventions to ease the situation and build capabilities?
26. What is the impact of difference in allocation of resources at the BOP markets on marketing outcomes such as product adoption, customer satisfaction and loyalty?
27. What can be the antecedents, consequences and mediators or moderators for grassroots innovations at the BOP?
28. What is the role of competitiveness in BOP markets?
29. What can be the different dimensions of grassroots innovations that can be assessed through the development of a scale?
30. What are the characteristics of BOP markets in emerging markets and developed markets? What is the difference or similarity amongst them?
- 31.

The Approach towards Methods for Future Research in Marketing at the BOP

From a methodological perspective the marketing research at BOP has now come to a position of 'structurationism' as a research paradigm. The BOP idea stems from view that because of the difference in contextual characteristics the customer in these markets would be different and so would be their behavior which would be dependent on these characteristics. This tenet is more aligned to the interpretivist research paradigm as also mentioned in section 4. The goal of theory building in the interpretive paradigm is to generate descriptions,

insights, and explanations of events so that the system of interpretations and meaning, and the structuring and organizing processes, are revealed. On the other hand, organizational structure is taken as an objective phenomenon linked to the functionalist paradigm that is external to, and independent of, organization members. The functionalist paradigm seeks to examine regularities and relationships that lead to generalizations and (ideally) universal principles that help in managerial decision making. Structurationism serves as a means of bridging a gap between subjectivist and objectivist views of related notions. It focuses on connections between human action (in the form of structuring activities) and established organizational structures thus creating ground for a multiparadigm mixed method approach for theory building that can link the difference in social construction of reality to the objective view of organisational structure and result in mid-range theories that help businesses in serving the BOP markets better.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

The present study offers an overview of the research on BOP with a marketing emphasis. Five core themes were identified to which the content of the existing research has been mapped while also identifying the future research directions and gaps. It is pertinent to mention that BOP marketing research has now come to a point where future research would need to use structurationism following a mixed methodology so that it can be integrated with the mainstream marketing knowledge both for classroom and practice. The questions identified to be studied further would not only play a role in theory building and testing, but would help corporates in designing suitable solutions and building capabilities of the BOP markets.

Though the study followed a rigorous methodology to carry out the SLR, there are some limitations. First, a protocol was established to distil articles from the appropriate online databases, through the use of some keywords for this reason. A few potential articles might not have appeared if the search keywords were not included in the text. In addition, other related articles published in journals that were not SSCI indexed might not have been included. Further, the study considered only peer-reviewed articles published in high-impact factor journals. It did not include books, book chapters and conference proceedings. Despite these limitations, the current study provides a marketing snapshot of BOP research over the two decades, highlights the research gaps and filters the research questions for future studies.

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