



Bottom of Pyramid Marketing: A Bibliometric Analysis and Future Directions

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the trends and characteristics of The Bottom of pyramid (BoP) marketing research published from 2014 to 2024 to identify the track of the research area, provide information about major contributors, and suggest future direction for research. This study used the Scopus database, searched for relevant articles using the keyword “Bottom of pyramid marketing,” and compiled the results using different bibliometric analysis software. A total of 219 articles were identified, but only 83 were included in this study. This study observed a volatile trend in publishing articles in this research area. The journal Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies published the most articles. At the same time, the most cited was the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Service. Important keywords were Bottom of the pyramid, marketing, Emerging market, India, and Poverty. Many countries have published research in this area. This study uses TCM (Theory, Context, and Methods) framework for identifying limitations, and future recommendations. It also suggests developing a theoretical framework and practical applications in BoP marketing.

Keywords: Bottom of Pyramid, Marketing, Emerging Markets, Bibliometric Analysis

JEL Classifications: M3, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

The bottom of the pyramid (BoP) refers to markets that serve some of the poorest individuals on the planet Payaud (2014). The market with low income presented a phenomenal opportunity for many companies globally, and the motive was to seek their fortunes and bring prosperity to the aspiring poor Bukhari et al. (2024). The BoP marketing concept has emerged as a key area of inquiry in academic, research, and business lessons, primarily driven by the recognition of the vast market potential represented by the world’s low-income populations. The BoP proposition redefined people experiencing poverty not as mere beneficiaries of aid but as value-conscious consumers and capable entrepreneurs. Since then, scholars and practitioners have been exploring how to effectively engage with this demographic segment through inclusive and sustainable marketing strategies. Motivated by these metamorphic changes in BoP marketing. This study used a bibliometric analysis to understand the production trends, identifying the top journals

and countries that contributed the most to this research area. This study also brings forward a future research agenda to understand and enhance this growing research domain’s practical and theoretical robustness. Many researchers and scholars have augmented the BoP literature with different perspectives such as, Gupta and Pirsch (2014) highlighted the profitability and ethical considerations of marketing to low-income consumers, emphasizing that while such markets can be lucrative, fairness in marketing practices is paramount. Uzma and Pratihari (2019) underscored the importance of creating value for BoP customers and partners such as community service providers (CSPs), demonstrating the dual value creation approach BoP marketing often demands. Mishra et al. (2021) expanded the poverty discourse by highlighting the urban poor, whose vulnerabilities have often been overlooked in conventional BoP narratives. Musona et al. (2020) introduced the concept of bricolage using networks, skills, and waste resources creatively as a strategy for entrepreneurs operating in resource-scarce environments. Challenges such as illiteracy and vulnerability, as discussed by Hasan et al. (2017) have profound

implications on product communication and customer engagement strategies in BoP contexts. They also bridge literacy gaps using symbols and imagery and targeting literate family members.

Thakur (2015) noted that the BoP market's heterogeneity demands localized strategies that consider income disparities, cultural nuances, and communication barriers. Nagy et al. (2020) counter the myth of radically distinct consumer behavior at the BoP, finding similarities with more affluent segments, particularly in brand loyalty. In addition, Purohit et al. (2021) proposed a revised marketing mix framework tailored for financial service providers targeting the BoP, emphasizing elements such as personalization and process efficiency. Santos et al. (2015) and Borchardt et al. (2020) stressed the significance of sustainability and ethical business practices in building enduring market relationships in impoverished communities. Efforts to co-create value and empower BoP consumers are further illustrated by works such as Schmidtke et al. (2021) on co-design frameworks, Getnet et al. (2019) on marketing innovation under resource constraints, and Upadhyaya et al. (2014) on leveraging marketing system deviance as an opportunity rather than a barrier. Despite growing scholarly interest, the BoP literature remains fragmented, lacking a consolidated view of influential contributions, key themes, and future directions.

This research addresses that gap by presenting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis, mapping the evolution of the field, and

identifying underexplored areas such as digital transformation (as emphasized by Utami et al. (2021)), microcredit impact on youth (Jebarajakirthy et al., 2014), and political marketing in BoP settings (Sengupta et al. (2023)).

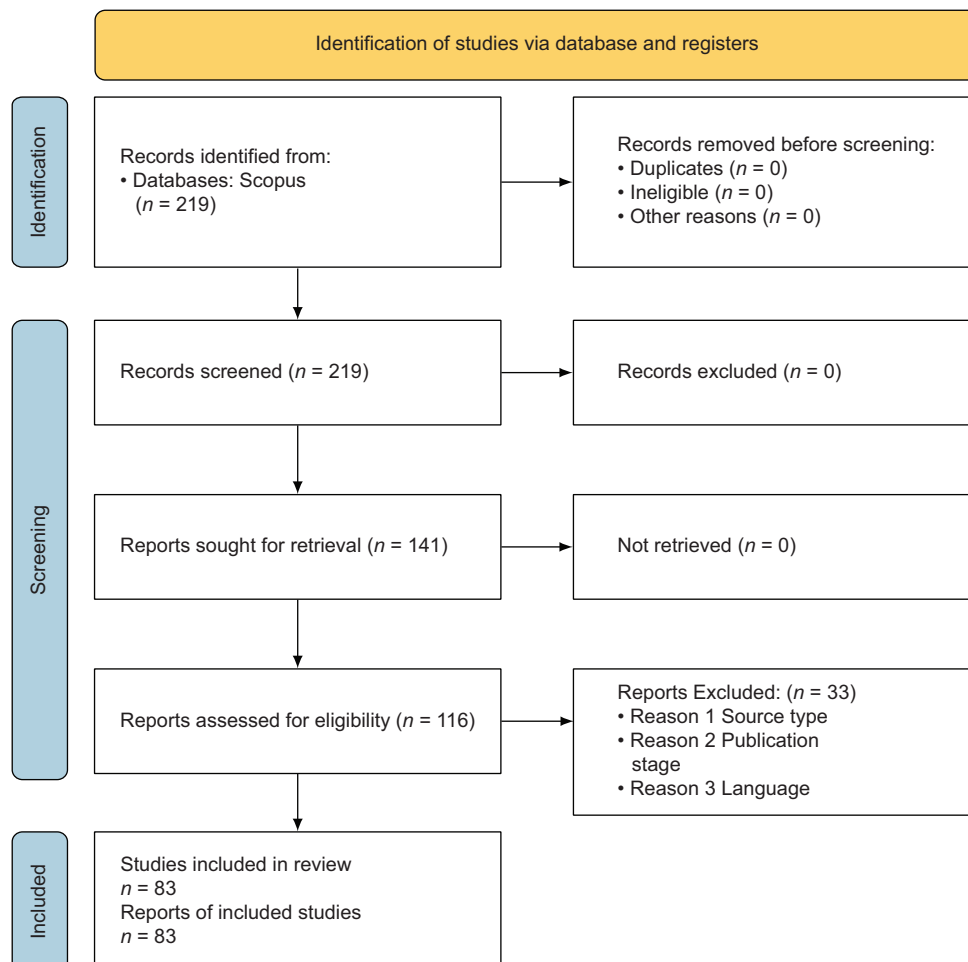
2. METHODOLOGY

The Scopus database collection is available at www.scopus.com and was examined for the articles published under the topic of "Bottom of Pyramid Marketing" from 2014 to 2024. Under the subject area of business management and accounting in the English language. Documents type, Source type, and Publication stages were restricted to Articles, Journals, and Final Stages, respectively (As shown in Figure 1). The articles included in this study were exported into CSV and Bid files. The exported files were analyzed using MS Excel, VOSviewer, and R software. MS Excel allows for the preparation of a graphical representation of data, whereas VOSviewer also provides the ability to create a visual network based on the uploaded data. R software gives the trend analysis of articles published per year.

3. RESULTS

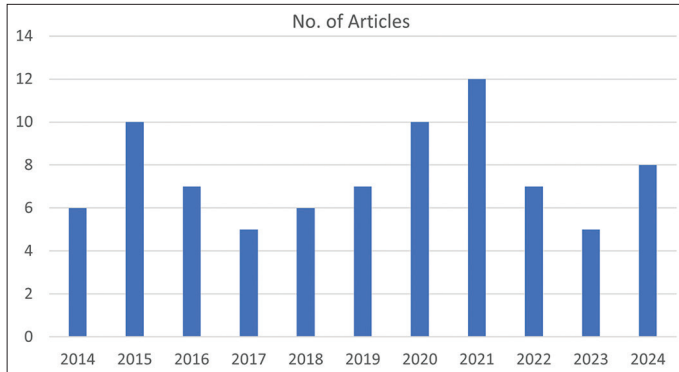
The Scopus database identified 219 articles, as shown in Figure 1, and after the screening, 83 articles were included in this study with the above-stated criteria; of the 83 articles published, an average of

Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart: Article sourcing criteria



7.54 articles per year from 2014 to 2024. As shown in Figure 2, the bar graph shows a volatile trend in publishing articles the maximum number of articles was 12 published in 2021, and the minimum was 5 published in 2017 and 2023. Figure 3 shows the major contributors, leaders, and collaborators based on their contributions to the bottom of pyramid marketing. The author created a collaboration network

Figure 2: Bar graph represents number of articles published from 2014 to 2024. The x-axis represent year and y-axis represent no. of articles



of countries to identify major countries contributing to this research area. India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Brazil were major contributors and collaborators to the literature on the bottom of pyramid marketing. Figure 3 gives a visual representation of countries publishing together with different color clusters and strings and a color gradient school to represent the country's collaboration and publication per year. The top ten journals highlighting publications on the bottom of pyramid marketing from 2014 to 2024 have been EMERALD EMERGING MARKETS CASE STUDIES (10), JOURNAL OF GLOBAL MARKETING (4), INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BANK MARKETING (3), JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS (3), JOURNAL OF MACRO MARKETING (3), INDUSTRIAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT (2), INNOVATIVE MARKETING (2), JOURNAL OF CONSUMER MARKETING (2), JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER MARKETING (2), JOURNAL OF RETAILING AND CONSUMER SERVICES (2) (Figure 4).

The top ten journals with the maximum number of citations on the bottom of pyramid marketing have been JOURNAL

Figure 3: Countries collaboration network

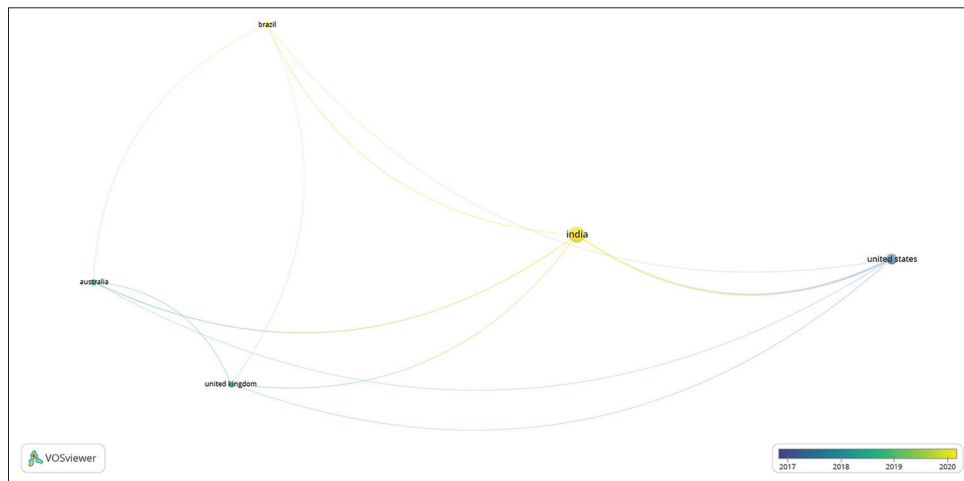


Figure 4: Bar graph represents number of articles published in a particular journals. The x-axis represent no. of publications and y-axis represent journals



OF RETAILING AND CONSUMER SERVICES (103), INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BANK MARKETING (99), MARKETING THEORY (74), JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER MARKETING (72), JOURNAL OF CONSUMER MARKETING (70), JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS (62), IN-

DUSTRIAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT (59), JOURNAL OF MACROMARKETING (42), JOURNAL OF GLOBAL MARKETING (16), AND EMERALD EMERGING MARKETS CASE STUDIES (16) (Figure 5).

A co-occurrence network of all keywords was created to visualize better this research area's trends (Figure 6). A network of top ten keywords with five or more occurrences was included out of 391 keywords, forming three main clusters in the keyword network represented in Figure 6. These clusters were divided into three colors, i.e. red (4), green (4), and blue (2). The occurrence of keywords has been as follows: Bottom of the pyramid (20),

Marketing (11), Emerging market (9), Bottom of pyramid (9), India (9), Bop (8), Consumer behavior (7), Bottom of the pyramid (bop) (6), and Base of the pyramid (6). Keywords such as Bottom of the pyramid, Marketing, and Emerging market have been the top three and show a strong connection with other keywords. To shortlist this keyword without author bias, keyword analysis was performed using VOS viewer, which follows an inbuilt extraction of all keywords used in 83 articles. This visual network shows an emerging opportunity in the Bottom of pyramid marketing. This network is consistent with the results from all keyword analysis. Consumer behavior and poverty are far from the Bottom of the pyramid, which suggests a work scope in this area. The emerging market and India are directly linked, proving India is an emerging market on a global level.

4. LIMITATIONS

The study's limitations have been identified and divided into theoretical, contextual, and methodological limitations.

4.1. Theoretical Limitations

Borchardt et al. (2020) found that theories in BoP literature are polarized and lack integrative or multi-theoretical frameworks. Gupta and Srivastav (2016) and Gupta and Pirsch (2014) Theories around aspiration and ethics are nascent, with limited clarity on how aspirational consumption links to social mobility or well-being. Adekambi et al. (2018) The use of transaction cost theory provides valuable insights, but narrow theoretical framing dominated by mainstream marketing or economic Logic.

4.2. Contextual Limitations

Baishya and Samalia (2020) and Jaiswal and Gupta (2015) found several limitations based on geographical and cultural

Figure 5: Bar graph represents number of citations in a particular journals. The x-axis represent no. of citations and y-axis represent journals

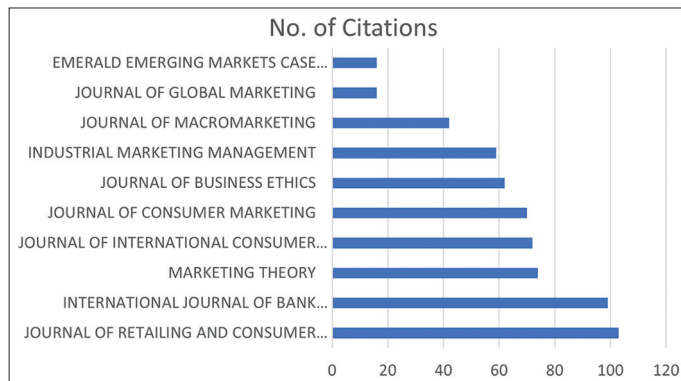
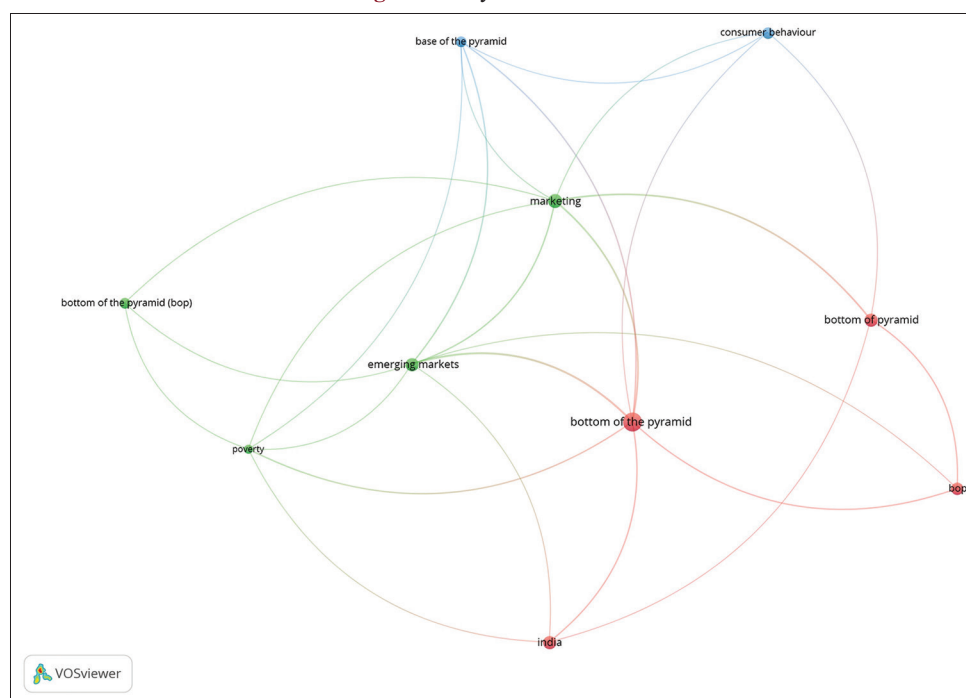


Figure 6: Keywords network



representation. Dalal et al. (2023) and Bhattacharya and Dalal (2024) suggested that studies were more narrowly focused. Hopkinson and Aman (2017) found insufficient attention to informal institutions and power structures.

4.3. Methodological Limitations

Several methodological limitations, like Overreliance on CrossSectional Designs, Dumalanede et al. (2020) and Jose et al. (2015). Some studies employ experimental techniques, but there is a Lack of Experimental and Longitudinal Studies Gupta et al. (2024). Bhattacharya and Dalal (2024) and Hasan et al. (2017) Found a lack of deep integration or triangulation across data types. Small sample sizes were another limitation of quantitative methodology.

This limitations further provide direction for the future research.

5. FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This study offers avenues for future research to improve knowledge and understanding of the BOP marketing. The authors used the TCM framework to separate the suggestions given in different articles according to their theoretical, contextual, and methodological views.

5.1. Theoretical Future Recommendations

Future studies should go beyond traditional theories. Adekambi et al. (2018) suggested expanding the theoretical foundations beyond transactional cost and mainstream models. Borchardt et al. (2020) suggested developing an integrated hybrid theoretical framework that includes social impact and commercial viability. Gupta and Srivastav (2016) and Gupta and Pirsch (2014) suggested that theories parallel to ethical marketing, subjective well-being, and aspirational consumption need deeper conceptual development.

5.2. Contextual Future Recommendations

Baishya and Samalia (2020) and Jaiswal and Gupta (2015) suggested focusing on geographical and cultural diversification. They also offered to perform cross-cultural comparative research to avoid research based on a narrow sample. Dalal et al. (2023) and Bhattacharya and Dalal (2024) suggested studying underrepresented sectors such as agriculture, waste collection, domestic labor, etc. Hopkinson and Aman (2017) explained the need to research power dynamics based on gender, caste, and community. Also, they suggested the use of critical marketing theory and institutional theory to examine informal institutions in the BOP ecosystem.

5.3. Methodological Future Recommendations

Future research should cover various other dimensions of social transformations and determinants, preferably using longitudinal studies. Shukla et al. (2023), and adopt the conceptual model with longitudinal designs Jebarajakirthy et al. (2014) suggested using a field experiment and quasi-experimental designs to enhance validity. Hasan et al. (2017) suggest employing mixed-method approaches and using technology for data collection.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive synthesis of the academic landscape on BoP marketing from 2014 to 2024, revealing both the depth and fragmentation in the field. The study credits Uzma and Pratihari (2019) for highlighting dual value creation involving BoP consumers and business partners, while Gupta and Pirsch (2014) explore the ethical tensions and profitability in BoP marketing. Mishra et al. (2021), Singh et al. (2015), and Jaikumar et al. (2018) contribute by expanding the narrative to include the overlooked urban poor, and Musona et al. (2020) emphasize the creative use of limited resources by BoP entrepreneurs. Hasan et al. (2017) underscore the literacy challenges that necessitate innovative communication strategies, while Thakur (2015) illustrates the heterogeneity within BoP segments. Nagy et al. (2020) challenge assumptions about brand loyalty differences, and Purohit et al. (2021) propose a revised marketing mix tailored to BoP needs. Additional contributions by Santos et al. (2015), Getnet et al. (2019), Upadhyaya et al. (2014), and Schmidtke et al. (2021). offer insights on ethical sustainability, innovation under constraints, the role of marketing system deviance, and participatory design, respectively.

The conclusion stresses that while BoP markets are economically promising, they demand culturally sensitive, ethically sound, and resource-aware strategies. Moving forward, research should explore underrepresented themes such as digital inclusion (Utami et al., 2021), microcredits sociopsychological effects (Jebarajakirthy and Thaichon (2016)), political marketing (Sengupta et al., 2023), and co-creation models involving BoP consumers (Dey et al., 2016), thus broadening both theoretical frameworks and practical applications in BoP marketing.

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