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Adapting Supply Chains for the Base of the Pyramid Business

ABSTRACT

Research has not yet captured nor synthesized the supply chain (SC) adaptations (as well as their contextual drivers and contingency factors) exercised by various external stakeholders for successful Base of the Pyramid (BoP) business. This is a crucial shortcoming that our study has taken a major step to address, with the aim of advancing theory in BoP supply chain management (SCM). We draw on Carter et al.'s (2015) theory of the SC and use a multi-method approach combining systematic literature review (SLR) and embedded case studies based on secondary data.

We compare SC adaptations of MNCs, local companies (LCs), NGOs, Social enterprises (SEs) and governments for BoP business across the following categories: network and partnership, products and services, operations and processes, transaction and contract, and development and support. We find that SC adaptations exercised by BoP initiators are influenced by their sense-making of institutional and agency drivers at the BoP, and contingent on whether the poor are engaged as recipients or value co-creators.

We offer an original model of BoP initiator-based configurations of SC adaptations for BoP business. As such, we make a strong contribution towards advancing BoP SCM theory and practice by mapping substantive concepts and their relationships associated with BoP SC adaptations.

KEYWORDS: Base of the pyramid, Supply chain management, Multi-method