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What Are The Rural And Urban Marketing Components, If Any, Within Agri-Food Marketing In Bottom Of The Pyramid- Subsistence Market Contexts In Developing Countries? A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the research was to consider the rural and urban marketing components, if any, within agri-food marketing in bottom of the pyramid-substance markets in developing countries. The research considered rural and urban contexts in bottom of the pyramid-substance markets in developing countries. The research also considered agri-food marketing in bottom of the pyramid-substance markets and in particular rural agri-food marketing and urban agri-food marketing. In this regard it identified their specific characteristics and compared them with agri-food marketing characteristics in bottom of the pyramid-substance markets in developing countries. The findings provided that there were components of both rural and urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing in bottom of the pyramid-substance markets in developing countries, but found that within main stream sources of literature specifically devoted to agri-food marketing, evidence of both rural and urban argi-food marketing was thin at best, if not inexistant. This was quite surprising, seeing the importance of agri-food marketing in both rural and urban areas. This inevitably points to a 'gap' within agri-food marketing main sources of literature. This providing for consideration to be taken for 'mainstreaming' both rural and urban agri-food marketing in the agri-food marketing discourse. What was also found, with some degree of confidence, was the interlinkages between rural and urban agri-food marketing. Further what also emerged was 'rurban': small urban agglomerations, like small towns for example, that are urban, but have distinct rural characteristics and as such cannot be treated as rural or as urban. In this regard further and more research should be considered on rurban agri-food marketing. Moreover what also emerged from the research, was that, and seemingly, a different fundamental notion and concept of marketing needs to be considered for agri-food marketing specifically in bottom of the pyramid-substance market contexts in developing countries and thus also here further research should be considered.

Keywords: marketing, rural marketing, urban marketing; agricultural marketing, food marketing, agri-food marketing, urban agri-food marketing, rural agri-food marketing

1. Introduction

Agri-food marketing in developing economies diverges from that of developed economies. This divergence has been documented over the years, for example see Hilmi (2022); van Trijp, & Ingenbleek (2010); Tollens (2010); Padberg *et al.,* (1997); and FAO (1984). This marketing adaptation is provided necessarily by the specific context found in developing economies, and in particular in bottom of the

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pyramid (BOP) subsistence market contexts (SM)[1]. This provides that agri-food marketing does not only have to adapt, but be flexible, variable, versatile and agile to such contexts. However, within such contexts, considerations should also be given to the differences found between, for example, rural and urban areas, and should also provide for agri-food marketing adaptation, flexibility, variability, versatility and agility. In this regard, it may be presumed that agri-food marketing in developing rural economies should diverge from that of agri-food marketing in developing urban economies in BOP-SM contexts.

In terms of rural marketing in general, for example, Kripanithi & Ramachander (2018) provide that the rural consumer is different from the urban consumer, exhibiting 'behaviour that is different from the behaviour of consumers in urban areas' (Velayudhan, 2007) and the needs and perspectives of the rural consumer being distinct in that, for example, the rural consumer will not purchase low-priced stripped down product versions with inadequate features as rural consumers have 'more specific requirements for features to suit their more challenging living conditions' (Naidu, 2017). Dadzie *et al.,* (2017) further provide that the marketing mix and its '4 P's' of price, place, product and promotion as is used commonly in more sophisticated urban settings where market segmentation, targeting, and positioning practices are provided. As such, though, the 4 Ps may be far less apt for rural settings as what seems more viable is the 'creation of a marketing mix which is unique and tailored to the local market that is both culturally sensitive and economically feasible' (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012a). Traditionally, in fact, and to reaffirm the previous point, Kashyap (2016) also provides that the marketing mix framework was designed for urban markets. In this regard, urban marketing, in fact, tends to be ' highly competitive, sophisticated, and often focused and targeted at middle and high income consumers' (Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011) and as also provided by Hammad (1990) such urban markets tend to draw most of the attention.

Consequently it thus seems that rural and urban marketing have separate disciplinary areas based not only on geographical location, but far more on 'variation in consumer behaviour and income levels as well as by the considerable differences in the macro- and micro-environment of consumers' (Velayudhan, 2007). Hence and in this regard, the research attempted to ascertain the rural and urban marketing components, if any, within agri-food marketing in developing economies. In specific, the research aim was to assess, appraise and diagnose the rural and urban marketing components, if any, within agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries.

Background to the research

The 2008 global recession provided for incremental poverty, the widening of income and wealth gaps in many societies, increased debt and also provided for 'indebted developing economies forgiving portions of their economic growth' (Rabie, 2018). Developing economies have also 'experienced growing structural weaknesses over the last decade' (World Bank, 2021d) and it is estimated that global activity 'contracted 4.3 percent in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, making it the fourth most severe global recession of the past 150 years and created recessions in over 80 percent of developing economies '[2](World Bank, 2021c). In particular UNCTAD (2021), provides that there are '46 least developed countries mired in the health, economic and social crises brought about by the pandemic in 2020, as such countries recorded their worst growth performance in about three decades'.

The overall challenge of poverty reduction has been affected severely. Such adversities have resulted in a lack of economic growth, a rise in commodity prices, higher and increasing inequalities, increased income disparities, unemployment and 'poverty is forecast to further increase in the world's most vulnerable economies'(UNDESA, 2022). In fact 'insufficient fiscal space and the slow recovery of employment in general will undermine poverty reduction in many developing countries as more than

[1] The BOP refers to the poorest in the economic human pyramid (Prahalad, 2005) and SM consists of 'consumer and entrepreneur communities living at a range of low-income levels' (Viswanathan & Rosa, 2007a).

[2] The World Bank (2021c) provides that 'the pandemic will leave lasting scars on productivity, including through its effect on the accumulation of physical and human capital, which will exacerbate the downward trend in potential growth'.

85 million[3] people entered extreme poverty in 2020 globally' (UNDESA. 2022). Already, prior to the pandemic, rural areas in many regions of the world were home to about 80 percent of the world's extremely poor people[4], and 'over the decades such rural areas have not experienced changes in their overall wellbeing' (Nehring & O Campos, 2019). As such, extreme poverty, seemingly, is overwhelmingly rural and those living in rural areas are more prone to poverty and deprivation (IFAD, 2020): 'four out of every five individuals below the international poverty line[5] live in rural areas although the rural population accounts for only 48 percent of the global population as poverty, seemingly, is becoming more rural over time' (World Bank, 2020).

Unfortunately, rural families in their millions 'are trapped in a cycle of hunger, poverty and low productivity that causes unnecessary suffering and impedes agricultural development and broader economic growth' (FAO, 2015). Poverty remains so 'deeply entrenched in rural areas of many low-income countries that it slows economic and social progress'[6] (FAO, 2015). Many of the rural poor are 'family farmers[7], subsistence producers and/or agricultural workers and include fisherfolk, pastoralists, forest-dependent people and households with no natural resource based assets and limited access to productive means, many of whom also experience social exclusion and physical remoteness' (FAO & OPHI, 2022). In fact, 'agriculture and natural resource management are central to the livelihoods and food security of such populations' (FAO & OPHI, 2022) as the shares of 'agriculture in the economy and in employment are typically high in lower income countries of Central America, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and other regions' (FAO, 2015) and where family farms are the 'backbone of agriculture and nearly 75 percent of farms in low and middle-income countries are smaller than one hectare '(FAO, 2015). Indeed, 'agriculture and the rural economy are fundamental for obtaining substantive and sustainable gains in the fight against poverty as agriculture has strong links with other sectors in many countries and, a productivity-induced agricultural expansion can 'pull' other sectors with it, increase economic activity and employment opportunities in rural areas' (FAO, 2007a).

In the past forty years, there is ample evidence and clear indications that to enable 'rapid poverty reduction in pre- and early-industrial economies is achievable, but only, (and seemingly), via a combination of agricultural and rural development' (Brandt & Otzen, 2007). Further, and in this regard, as provided by Rabie (2016) 'development is a combination of economic quantitative as well as qualitative growth, but this cannot exclude culture, as culture reflects on and governs the attitudes and the ways of thinking of the people involved in the development process'. Indeed 'culture is vital for development that is sustainable in terms of involving simultaneously the pursuit of environmental quality, economic prosperity, human development, social equity, freedom, human values, and cultural diversity'[8] (Rabie, 2016). In this regard, rural development has the main intent of attempting to improve the quality of life and well-being of rural inhabitants, especially the rural poor (Shephard, 1998) through 'the development of agriculture and allied activities; village and cottage industries; crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities and, above all, human resources' (Singh, 2009). It is not only economic development , but a process that commonly provides also for 'changes in popular attitudes and, in many cases, even in customs and beliefs and should provide changes by

[3] The World Bank provides this figure to be circa 100 million and increasing (World Bank, 2021b; World Bank, 2021d; World Bank, 2020), while FAO (2021b) provides a figure of 118 million

[4] Poverty is not a constant for many households as 'weather, pests, diseases, and policies cause fluctuations in income that translate into movement in and out of poverty' (Norton *et al.,* 2010)

[5] The international poverty line is set at US$1.90 a day in purchasing power parity terms (World Bank, 2020). However about a 'quarter of the global population is living below the US$3.20 poverty line, and almost half is living below the US$5.50 line: these higher poverty lines of US$3.20 and US$5.50 a day reflect national poverty lines in lower-middle income and upper-middle-income economies respectively' (World Bank, 2020).

[6] In fact, most of the extreme poor live in 'rural areas and often reside in remote areas that are not well connected to other rural areas, have poor agroecological endowments, limited access to markets and few sources of employment' (FAO, 2018)

[7] According to de Janvry & Sadoulet, (2016) 'farm households, also called family farmers, smallholders, and peasants, are one of the most important social categories in the world'

[8] This perspective of development has become even more relevant as over the past decades 'the rapid growth that has taken place in agriculture, industry, infrastructure and settlement in rural areas has resulted in major depletion, degradation and pollution of the environment and natural resources' (UNDESA, 2021a).

which a social system moves away from a state of life perceived as unsatisfactory towards a materially and spiritually better condition of life' (Singh, 2009).

Agriculture, commonly being the dominant sector in many developing economies 'has a central role to play in rural transformation and not only' (Mellor, 2017). In fact, in many developing countries agricultural can be a very viable engine of development (Singh, 2009) and is linked more and more increasingly to enterprise development in terms of rural entrepreneurship (Gosavi & Samudre, 2016) that requires the 'establishment of small and less capital intensive industrial enterprises in rural areas, along with the introduction of new technology in agriculture: this likely establishing linkages between agriculture and industry' (Singh, 2009). Furthering on this point, indeed, agriculture 'requires a radical modernization as the driving engine of agriculture's impact on the economic transformation is the biological, science-based, and technological change that radically increases the productivity and income of small commercial farmers, who produce the bulk of agricultural output in low- and middle-income countries, and also spend half of their incremental income on the rural non-farm sector' (Mellor, 2017).

On a global basis, agricultural and food systems 'produce some 11 billion tonnes of food each year[9] and form the backbone of many economies[10] and a multitude of non-food products, including 32 million tonnes of natural fibres and 4 billion m3 of wood' (FAO, 2021b). Many millions of farming households[11] contribute to agricultural and food systems, via 'primary food production and small-scale agri-food enterprises as small-scale farmers, agri-food entrepreneurs and rural workers produce, process and distribute much of the world's food' (FAO, 2021b; IFAD, 2021). Indeed, small-scale family farmers are still the 'foundation of food supply across all low- and middle-income countries as they play a critical role in reducing rural poverty and ensuring national food and nutrition security, but many are unable to earn a decent living' (IFAD, 2021). In this regard, in many developing countries 'the growth in agriculture has played a pivotal role in not only starting, but also facilitating economic growth, but this in turn also transformed agriculture as per urbanization and structural transformation' (Pingali & Feder, 2017). Also, and as provided by Cervantes-Godoy & Dewbre (2010), 'agricultural progress contributes strongly to poverty reduction'.

Perkins *et al.,* (2013) further provide that 'agriculture has substantial implications at both the macroeconomic and microeconomic levels in most developing countries as agriculture is a dominant sector in many of the world's poorest countries[12]'. However not all the inhabitants of rural areas are involved in farming exclusively as 'many farmers earn at least some of their income outside of farming and importantly most non-farm rural activities depend substantially on the existence of a vibrant agricultural sector' (Perkins *et al.,* 2013). On the consumption side of the economy 'agriculture also plays a substantial role as it is common among poor households in developing countries for food expenditures to make up 50 to 70 percent of total household expenditures'(Perkins *et al.,* 2013). As an example, such expenditures rose increasingly in 2021 as for the general rise in food prices, which impacted the vulnerable in many low income countries, and threatened their food security (UNDESA, 2022).

The agricultural and food sector is 'also distinguished from other sectors by both the sheer number of participants and by the degree of decentralization of those participants as the sector may consist of hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of individual production units, all operating independently, yet all allocating resources in response to the same broad set of incentives created by (markets and) government policies' (Perkins *et al.,* 2013). In this regard, in fact , 'investment in agriculture is critical to increasing production, productivity and employment in agriculture, and hence lowering poverty in the rural sector'(Junankar, 2016). Indeed 'a prosperous agricultural sector helps to decrease rural

[9] Interestingly however, even though in reality the world produces enough 'food to feed everyone on the planet, in 2020, an estimated 786 million persons suffered from hunger and some 2.4 billion people worldwide experienced moderate or severe food insecurity' (UNDESA, 2021b).

[10] 'The global agriculture, food and beverage sector, with associated services, is worth about US$10 trillion' (IFAD, 2021).

[11] 'Approximately 2.7 billion rural people depend on small-scale food production and, of those participating in agri-food systems, over 1.1 billion live in moderate to extreme poverty' (FAO, 2021a).

[12] Developing countries agriculture and developed world agriculture are interlinked, even though they are distinctive, for example developed countries 'agriculture has more in common with manufacturing than with traditional agricultural production systems of developing countries' (Dixon, 1990).

poverty, increase demand for products from the urban industrial sector, and also lowers the rate of rural-to-urban migration, but depends on income distribution in the rural sector as the less unequal the distribution of income, the greater the demand for industrial goods and hence the greater is the favourable impact on the urban industrial sector' (Junankar, 2016).

However, as 'food prices increase[13] (which is good for the agricultural sector) wages in the industrial sector are likely to increase, which results in lower profitability in the industrial sector' (Junankar, 2016). Further de Janvry & Sadoulet, (2016) provide that agriculture can be a 'key source of growth for the rest of the economy and the way in which agriculture helps the other sectors of the economy grow can be decomposed into the product, factor (capital, foreign exchange, and labour), and market contributions of agriculture'. Moreover de Janvry & Sadoulet (2016) also provide that 'agricultural growth can in turn have large multiplier effects in inducing industrial growth[14]'.

As provided by FAO (2017b), prior to the pandemic, and its impacts, already the agri-food sector was undergoing: 'structural changes in many developing economies; employment migration; an aging population, also in rural areas; regionally specific growth in populations; increasing urbanization and consequent dietary transitions; increased competition for natural resources, productivity and innovation challenges; increasing climate change and natural disasters; conflicts, transboundary pests and diseases; migration; food losses and waste; poverty; rising inequality and food insecurity; increased malnutrition; changing food systems; and financial investments'. Further, within agri-food sectors and more specifically within emerging markets and developing economies, informality[15] is ever present and 'can commonly represent up to one third of an economy and may provide employment to around 70 percent of people within the economy' (World Bank, 2021a).

The informal economy 'is flexible in nature and in some ways better able to adapt to difficulties' (Chambwera *et al.,* 2011) and even though informal enterprises 'tend to be less productive than formal enterprises, they still play an important role in economic development and provide livelihoods for billions of people' (La Porta, 2008). In fact many 'developing countries depend on the informal sector for their daily livelihoods as such economic informality is important for billions of people as income derives mainly from agriculture, micro and small-scale enterprises, trade in products and services and waste scavenging ' (Blades *et al.,* 2011). In regard to agriculture, in specific, it is in fact 'a giant informal sector as tax authorities have no way to observe how much output a farmer produces, and even if they do, they cannot prove it in a court of law, so agriculture often goes untaxed' (Ray, 1998). This provides that 'economies with larger informal sectors have tended to have less access to finance for the private sector, lower productivity, slower physical and human capital accumulation, less educated workforces, and smaller fiscal resources' (World Bank, 2021a). However 'informality is highly context specific as there is a wide heterogeneity and just like formal economies, informal economies feature business cycles, but are not fully synchronized with business cycles in the formal economy as a larger informal economy is associated with weaker economic, fiscal, institutional, and development outcomes' (World Bank, 2021a). But the informal economy and the formal economy are both part of a 'continuum with backward linkages involving the flow of raw materials, equipment, finance and consumer goods from formal to informal sector enterprises and there are also limited forward linkages, such as when large domestic companies or government agencies subcontract production to the informal sector or buy their goods directly' (Chambwera *et al.,* 2011).

As provided previously, circa 'nearly half of the world's population, including four out of five people living below the poverty line, live in rural areas and rural people also generally have less access

[13] Food prices rose in 2021 as per 'unfavourable weather conditions for key agricultural commodities, for example, soybeans, sugar and cereals, disruptions in supply chains and logistics networks increased transport costs, and higher fuel prices also boosted the costs of agricultural inputs and drove up the prices of grains and oilseeds. While food prices appeared to stabilize in the third quarter of 2021, they had increased nearly 20 percent since the end of 2020 and in this regard low income countries have been particularly vulnerable as surging food prices feed inflation and threaten food security' (UNDESA, 2022).

[14] However, the 'speed at which countries make the transition from largely agriculture-based to urbanized economies varies greatly and thus the pace of change within countries may vary dramatically' (World Bank, 2011).

[15] Informality is typically defined as 'market-based and legal production of goods and services that is hidden from public authorities for monetary, regulatory, or institutional reasons' (World Bank, 2021a).

to education, health and other essential services' (UNDESA 2021a), but in many settlements, 'a large number of households live, work in and depend on both rural and urban ecosystems that sustain human life beyond political and administrative spheres' (UN HABITAT, 2019). In fact 'the reciprocal and repetitive flow of people, goods and financial and environmental services (defining urban-rural linkages) between specific rural, peri-urban and urban locations are interdependent; they are the reality of socio-spatial arrangements, creating places with distinct yet interwoven, socially constructed identities' (UN HABITAT, 2019). Areas which are rural and urban can be defined broadly as those areas on the one side 'dominated by agriculture, as by necessity, sparsely populated, as agricultural activity requires a great deal of open land (rural) and by contrast, on the other side, commerce and industry require many people working in close proximity, so that areas dominated by them are also areas with high density of population, thus qualifying as urban'. (UNDESA, 2021a). Urban areas are on the rise as the rising densities of human settlements have provided for urban centres that are ever expanding and 'denser concentrations of economic activity[16] increase choice and opportunity' (World Bank, 2009) as well as how 'markets and governments work together determines the speed and sustainability of geographic transformations' (World Bank, 2009).

In terms of urbanization, since 2009, 'the urban population surpassed that of the rural population' (Wiskereke, 2015). Urbanization, though, is at best heterogeneous: this is not only 'between regions, but provides for even greater variation in the level and speed with which individual countries or indeed individual cities within regions have and are growing. For example, the growth of mega cities (population of more than 10 million); the vast majority of urban population growth in smaller cities and towns (a population of less than one million residents), and followed by medium-sized cities (a population between one to five million residents)' (Wiskereke, 2015). Indeed it seems that 'the location decisions of industrial and commercial firms cause the development of various types of cities' (O' Sullivan, 2000) and the 'contemporary city, as a specific spatial, economically productive, prosperous, and often praised form of social organization, is a consequence of agricultural revolutions and advancements in food security' (Tzachor & Richards, 2021). In fact, the twenty first century is the first urban era (Parnell, 2015), as since the middle of the twentieth century, 'the world's population has grown rapidly, rising from around 2.5 billion in 1950 and reaching an estimated 7.8 billion in 2020' (UNDESA, 2021b). In fact, as environmental challenges grow and multiply and the pandemic has highlighted 'the fragility of food systems, one of the biggest challenges facing the world is feeding growing urban populations while attending to the social, economic, and environmental needs and aspirations of cities' (UNEP, 2022).

Rural and urban areas within a county are two economic subsystems: 'urban economies tend to be smaller, more developed and absorb most of the material, financial, and educated and talented manpower, while rural economies comparatively are very large, but are traditional and underdeveloped, characterised by widespread poverty, unemployment and low productivity, which forms the majority of the population resources' (Singh, 2009). However, even though such economic subsystems may seem distinct, 'there are interconnections and complementarity that are critical for the overall economic development' (Sing, 209). As provided by Dixon (1990) the division between rural and urban, in many cases, 'can be artificial and that looking at rural and urban separately can overlook the processes common to both' and further Todaro & Smith (2020) also provide that the 'lines between rural and urban are fuzzy'. Moreover, IFPRI (2005) considers that 'the perceptions of separateness between rural and urban stifles poverty reduction and economic growth'. As an example, in terms of agri-food

[16] 'Density is defined as the economic mass or output generated on a unit of land and usually the concentration of economic activity rises with development' (World Bank,2009). 'Depending on what type of agglomeration economies they deliver, places can be large or small, function is far more important than size, and location that is farther away from economic density generally reduces productivity' (World Bank, 2009). Further 'economic distance, which is related to but not the same as physical distance, refers to the ease or difficulty for goods, services, labour, capital, information, and ideas to traverse space. It measures how easily capital flows, labour moves, goods are transported, and services are delivered between two locations. Distance, in this sense, is an economic concept, not just a physical one. Although economic distance is generally related to Euclidean (straight-line) distances between two locations and the physical features of the geography separating them, the relationship is not always straightforward. One reason is that distance for the exchange of goods is different from that for the migration of people' (World Bank, 2009).

marketing, where rural farmers may market produce both to rural as well as urban areas and as such this rural and urban linkage integrates urban and rural areas and links agricultural production with industry and services' (IFPRI, 2005). It is these mixtures of rural and urban activities and vice versa that are 'not anomalies but the reality of livelihoods in rural and urban areas' (IFPRI, 2005).

However, the majority of the global population has 'been left behind by the economic miracle of the 20th century and this implies better understanding how the marketing model can be adapted and applied to raising the consumption capacity and quality of life of the world's four billion consumers' (Achrol & Kotler, 2016) who live and work in both rural and urban BOP-SMs. As is well known marketing contributes to development in economic, social and cultural terms as it provides for the critical 'link between production and consumption' (Hammad, 1990), 'mobilizes latent economic energy' (Drucker, 1958), the efficient and effective utilization of resources (Kaynak, 1986) so as to enable and consider people's want and needs within social systems (Kinsey, 1982) and further fosters 'social development via social goals and values, as for example, innovativeness, entrepreneurship, reduction of pollution, reduction of waste and so forth'(Holsey & Wee, 1988). In particular to agri-food marketing, Padberg (1997) provides it to be 'a turning point' and Rao & Taget (1985) 'as an instrument to deliver a standard of living rather than a process of exchanging goods and services to satisfy human needs and wants' and Tollens (2010) provides that 'agri-food marketing is recognized as an important, if not critical, component of economic development, and not only in developing economies'.

But, even though markets are critical 'in creating value for societies, markets of the poor (most often) fail as the poor are ill informed, less educated (often illiterate) and disadvantaged due to various social, cultural and political deprivations, which make them vulnerable consumers' (Karnani, 2012). As provided by Sen (2000) poverty is not only related to low income, but also to 'capability inadequacy'. Further urban and rural BOP-SMs are 'highly local and governed by faith- based socio-political institutions in which public policy matters, have inadequate infrastructure, chronic shortage of resources, competition coming mainly from unbranded products or services, and consumption is more of a make versus buy decision and less about what brand to buy' (Sheth, 2011). This provides that 'many beliefs that are fundamental to marketing, such as market segmentation, market orientation, and brand equity, are at odds with such realities' (Sheth, 2011), even though 'the growth of emerging markets offers great opportunities to develop or discover new perspectives and practices in marketing, which may become valuable for the neglected and economically non-viable markets' (Sheth, 2011).

In this regard, marketing adaptation to varying and diverse contexts of developing economies and within BOP-SM contexts in particular, has provided for a good deal of literature , for example see: Kinsey (1988); Sheth & Parvatiyar (2020); Sheth & Sisodia (2012); Sheth (2011); Viswanathan (2020); Viswanathan *et al.,* (2019); Venugopal & Viswanathan (2015); Viswanathan *et al.,* (2012); and Viswanathan (2010). In this same line and in particular, agri-food marketing in developing economies, should also adapt and diverge, but not only in terms of marketing in developing economies per se, but also when contending with marketing agri-food products in rural[17] and urban[18] areas. In this regard, thus, and following the theory and logic as provided previously, agri-food marketing should differ between rural and urban areas in developing economies. However is this really the case? and does, in fact, agri-food marketing diverge between rural and urban areas in developing economies? This question set the main aim of the research in terms of attempting to assess, appraise and diagnose the rural and urban marketing components, if any, within agri-food marketing in developing countries.

Research aim

The main aim of the research was to assess, appraise and diagnose the rural and urban marketing components, if any, within agri-food marketing in bottom of the pyramid- subsistence market contexts in developing countries.

[17] There are many literature sources on rural marketing in general , for example see: Dash et al., (2020); Hakhroo (2020); Das (2018); Khaleel (2018); Kripanithi & Ramachander (2018); Nunna (2018); Ahmed (2017); Bhanot (2017); Kashyap (2016); Haldar (2015); Ahmed (2013); Modi (2012); Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan (2011); Ramkishen (2009); Vachani & Smith (2008); Velayudhan (2007); Singh & Pandey (2005); and Rao & Tagat (1985).

[18] The sources devoted to urban marketing in specific are very thin and do not, in most cases, deal with the subject matter directly, see for example FAO (1999); FAO (2008); Smith, (1998); World Bank & FAO (2018)

Methodology

The research referred to the characteristics of purposiveness, rigor, testability, replicability, precision, confidence, objectivity, generalizability and parsimony (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The research took a qualitative and abductive stance and was based on literature and sources of secondary data and information. The literature and secondary sources of data and information research and review took a systematic, historical, exploratory and descriptive approach. Designated quality criteria were set for selecting the literature and sources of secondary data and information. The quality criteria were based on Saunders *et al.,* (2016), Adams *et al.,* (2014) and Fisher (2010) and provided for the following: the direct and indirect relevance to the research subject matters; value (methodological rigour, quality of the reasoning or arguments, references, etc.,); research evidence in terms of either or both primary source-based (credibility; reliability; ecological validity)and secondary source –based information derived from an identified and reliable source (author(s), scientific journal publisher, reputation of publisher, etc.,); date of publication (not older than 100 years); references used; and peer review conducted.

The research was based on three systematic literature and secondary data and information research and reviews[19]. The first phase of the research was focused on exploring and finding key research terminology related to the research aim[20]. It used eight online databases of AGRIS; AgEcon search; FAO documents; FAO e-library; Google Scholar; IFAD Knowledge; ResearchGate; World Bank documents & reports. This generated 30 key research words: agricultural marketing; food marketing; agri-food marketing; rural marketing; rural agricultural marketing; rural food marketing; rural agri-food marketing; agricultural rural marketing; food rural marketing; agri-food rural marketing; rural and agricultural marketing; rural and food marketing; rural and agri-food marketing; rural economy; rural development; urban economy; urban development; urban marketing; urban agricultural marketing; urban food marketing; urban agri-food marketing; agricultural urban marketing; food urban marketing; agri-food urban marketing; urban and agricultural marketing; urban and food marketing; urban and agri-food marketing; rural-urban linkages; rural urban linkages; rural and urban linkages.
The second phase of the research[21], was systematic, exploratory, historical and descriptive, and involved using the 30 key research terms found and using 16 online databases: AGRIS; AgEcon search; CORE; Emerald Fulltext; FAO documents; FAO e-library; Google Scholar; IFAD Knowledge; IFPRI publications & tools; JSTOR business collection; Refseek; ResearchGate; SAGE Journals Online; ScienceGate; UNHABITAT Knowledge; World Bank documents & reports. This research phase generated 97 publications, based on the set quality criteria and was primarily composed of journal articles, technical reports and books. In the second phase of the research, the analysis of the literature and sources of secondary data and information, was provided via thematic analysis and this was then followed by searching for characteristics, their frequency and if a characteristic was found more than three times (triangulation) it was considered as valid and reliable. As the results were coming in from the analysis, this enabled for iteration to take place in the research and thus guidance for the following third phase of the research.

As a result of the iterative nature of the second phase of the research and its related preliminary findings, the final and third stage of the research[22] was still systematic, exploratory, historical and descriptive, but involved using only some of the initially defined 30 key research terms and online databases. In particular six key search terms were used: rural agricultural marketing; rural food marketing; rural agri-food marketing, urban agricultural marketing; urban food marketing; urban agri-food marketing; and six online databases: AGRIS; Google Scholar; ResearchGate; SAGE Journals Online; ScienceGate; World Bank documents & reports. This research phase generated 62 publications[23], based on the set quality criteria and was primarily composed of journal articles, technical reports and books. Analysis of the sources of secondary data and information was provided via thematic analysis. This was then followed by searching for characteristics, their frequency and if a characteristic

[19] The research was conducted between November 2020 and April 2022.
[20] The first phase of the research lasted circa two months between November and December 2020.
[21] This second phase of the research lasted circa nine months between January 2021 and September 2021.
[22] The final and third stage of the research was conducted between October 2021 and March 2022, lasting circa six months.
[23] In total 159 publications were reviewed as derived from the second and third phases of the research.

was found more than three times (triangulation) it was considered as valid and reliable. The characteristics were then compared and also here frequency was sought for each. In terms of assessing for reliability and validity, in a qualitative stance, the criteria used were trustworthiness, in terms of credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability as well as authenticity, in terms of fairness (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The resulting findings from the analysis in the third and final stage of the research were provided to three reviewers[24] for review and feedback[25] and a follow up online feedback meeting[26]. The final draft article was than provided also for review and feedback to the same three reviewers[27]. Feedback received was also compared and triangulated to provide for a further layer of reliability and validity.

Findings

The rural context in developing countries

In terms of defining what is a rural area, commonly 'there is no universal definition of what constitutes a rural area' (FAO, 2021a). Many countries globally have developed their own criteria for defining rural areas, also implying, by default to a degree, definitions of urban areas. Common criteria used for defining rural areas are 'population density, distance from densely populated areas, administrative classifications, share of agricultural employment in total employment', etc. (FAO, 2021a). Therefore, it is 'not surprising that there is a wide diversity among areas categorized as rural in different countries'[28] (FAO, 2021a). In fact as provided by FAO & OPHI (2022), the definition of rural area is 'laden with conceptual and measurement complications as a result of the specificity of what is considered a rural space and the associated livelihoods and tends to be diverse across countries, and certainly more diverse compared to urban contexts' and to further complicate matters both rural and urban areas, usually, are dynamic as they are in constant change.

One of the main features of developing economies is the living standards commonly divided between 'rural and urban areas, and this based mainly on income and consumption' (Lagakos, 2019). According to Keats & Wiggins (2016) rural areas differ demographically from urban areas as per mortality tends to be higher in rural areas, fertility is higher in rural areas, there is migration to urban areas and in general the world is becoming less rural'. Further HelpAge International (2014), provides that rural populations are ageing globally, and farming populations, in specific, are 'ageing across sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, even though rapid rural ageing is occurring in southern Africa and South East Asia'. Moreover, seasonality has an influence on rural areas: for example this can provide for 'seasonal poverty, but there can also be opposite effects to seasonality, where for example the dry season provides for human wellbeing' (Chambers, 2012). In fact, seasonality can have multiple effects and not only on poverty, but matters related to it, such as, for example, 'health, nutrition, gender (women), migration, and can provide for anti-social behaviour in rural communities' (Devereux *et al.,* 2012).

However, the effects of seasonality are becoming far less predictable as per impinging climate change, for example, 'causing the seasons to become more erratic and less favourable to farming families, whose livelihoods depend on predictable rainfall through the growing season' (Devereux *et al.,* 2012) and this rising unpredictability affects food prices, and in turn affects purchasing power of the more vulnerable[29], who also have to cope 'with large variations in what they can afford for basic

[24] Two reviewers were academics involved in agri-food marketing, while one reviewer was a field practitioner from the private sector, working in agri-food marketing in developing economies.
[25] The review and written feedback was provided between December 2021 and January 2022. The feedback was also compared and triangulated to provide for reliability and validity.
[26] The online feedback meeting was attended only by one reviewer and occurred during February 2022.
[27] This was provided during March 2022.
[28] As provided by Wiggins & Proctor (2001) there is, in fact, no 'exact definition of what rural means, even though rural areas are recognizable via abundance of land and other natural resources, distances between settlements and urban centres and the poverty of many of its inhabitants'.
[29] ILO (2017) provides that in a general definition, 'vulnerability links the exposition of people, individuals or population groups, to threats, their capacity of reaction, and the consequences in terms of a decline in

survival' (Berton *et al.,* 2012). Moreover and importantly, 'rural areas are critical for the ecology and environment of a country: the lives and livelihoods of the rural population depend on the complex interaction between their economic activities, the quality of their social condition, and the management of their environment' (UNDESA, 2021a).

Rural poverty can be: transitory, for example, seasonal, or structural, for example, chronic, and 'individuals and households may move in and out of poverty, or be pulled deeper into poverty and extreme poverty, depending on their ability to manage shocks and sustain income generation over time' (FAO, 2018). In the case of extreme rural poverty, usually, it is specific to the 'context in which people live' (FAO, 2018). Rural poverty is however complex, multidimensional, characterized by a myriad of challenges, and can involve markets, forces of nature and public policy, and 'needs to be considered not only by the symptoms, but importantly in understanding 'what poverty means to rural people' (FAO, 2021a, 2021a;Khan, 2000; Dixon, 1990). Rural poverty, as provided by ILO (2017) has 'numerous root causes, ranging from climate change, natural resource degradation, conflict, weak institutions, poor agricultural conditions and trade related challenges' and is a 'driver of a host of social problems, including hunger and malnutrition, poor working conditions and exploitation of children' (ILO, 2017). Further rural poverty is 'influenced by different levels of urban linkages, population density and agroecological conditions, as well as by social and political exclusion dynamics at the local level' (FAO, 2018) and tends to increase 'during the lean season of agriculture' (FAO, 2018).

As per this poverty in rural areas, local community economies have often developed, where the 'community is the organization that guides community members to voluntary cooperation based upon close personal ties and mutual trust' (Hayami & Good, 2005). Such community economies are based on 'means of cooperation provided by consent, coordinate division of labour, mutual trust created through personal interactions in a socially desirable direction' (Hayami & Good, 2005). In fact such community cooperation and social capital is provided for in many rural activities and as is well known, 'agriculture has been and remains the main economic activity of rural areas' (UNDESA, 2021a), as agriculture and its related activities being the main source of income and rural consumers spending most of their income on food' (Sekhar & Padmaja, 2014). As such, small-scale farmers, with their small-scale enterprise farms are in fact small-scale businesses[30], and 'thus a core part of the rural private sector' (Rahman, 2014). However, these small-scale enterprises 'lack access to high-quality technology, secure access and control over productive land, access to water, quality education, markets, and financial resources and are often located in marginal areas' (Hazell & Rahman, 2014).

However, rural people's livelihoods have also 'diversified rapidly in recent decades' (IFAD, 2021). Many small-scale farmers do not 'dedicate all their time to farming as most have other jobs, both on and off their farms' (Wiggins, 2014). This diversification being often seasonal, sometimes involving 'temporary migration, including labouring on other farms, operating a wide variety of small and medium sized enterprises[31] (SMEs) in the agri-food sector or wider economy, salaried employment, and remittances from family members who have migrated to urban areas or abroad' (IFAD, 2021;Wiggins, 2014). Indeed and as a result of this rural migration both 'across borders and within country of origin has increased remittances sent back home and their investments in local economic opportunities, this leading to improved health, education, housing and entrepreneurs' (FAO *et al.,* 2018). On a global basis, in fact, 'the impact of remittances on the development of local communities is considerable, bringing in large amounts of funds that help sustain millions of families' (FAO *et al.,* 2018). Overall, the rural non-farm economy, is becoming 'increasingly important in rural areas: a growing share of households participate in it, while it provides increasing proportions of rural household income as the rural non-farm economy comprises a highly heterogeneous collection of activities' (Wiggins *et al.,* 2018; Wiggins, 2014).

wellbeing'. While the 'level of vulnerability depends in great part on the people's capacities to cope with external situations, at times difficult, and also on the social, economic, political and environmental systems in which they live in' (ILO, 2017).

[30] Clearly 'smallness' is a 'relative term depending on the resources of the holding, not only the land, but the labour, skills, finances, and technology available' (Conway, 2014)

[31] Many rural enterprises are in fact micro-scale enterprises, 'with one or two workers and use little capital and are labour intensive' (Wiggins *et al*., 2018).

Further, rural areas are becoming 'increasingly less isolated from the outside world due to improved transport, trade, mobility, communications and the emergence of new media'(Szirmai, 2018). For example, in rural areas the spread of mobile technologies has enabled and facilitated access to price information, markets, inputs, finance and learning for small-scale farmers (FAO, 2019a) and this has influenced not only the rural economy in general, but also the agri-food sector in particular[32] (Hilmi, 2021a). Clearly location is a 'key determinant of opportunities and outcomes and local conditions have a major impact, but these conditions differ geographically, even between different rural areas in a single country: distance to urban markets, flows of goods and services to and from cities, the quality of local infrastructure and public services, the natural resource base, and population density differ strongly between different rural areas' (UNDESA, 2021a). Hence, rural areas that are well connected tend to benefit from urban demand and not only (Wiggins *et al.,* 2018). Estimates provided by FAO (2018; 2017a) entail that 'about half of the world's population resides within or in proximity to small cities and towns, compared with 35 percent living in or near larger cities, while the remaining 15 percent reside in the rural hinterland, located more than three hours of travel time from any urban centre of 50 000 inhabitants or more'.

Indeed, rural and urban areas, and their economies 'often enjoy a symbiotic relationship' (Gough *et al.,* 2010), are interlinked via, for example: rural products being sold in urban markets, with the latter being important sources of income for rural economies; rural areas also accessing services in cities, as well as employment and information; urban areas, in turn, sourcing from rural areas key goods and services, raw materials and natural resources; rural people often moving to urban centres temporarily or permanently for work and often keeping close links with rural areas through family connections, remittances and investments, land, and other assets' (IFAD, 2015). Interestingly, such interconnected rural and urban areas, via 'rural and urban linkages can lead to interdependence between rural and urban, and to the formation of intermediate rural-urban functional areas (territories) that very often cut across administrative boundaries and that encompass a number of rural localities, as well as a few towns and small and medium cities' (Berdegué *et al.,* 2014). Such areas, interestingly, and as still provided by Berdegué *et al.,* (2014) 'cannot be treated as rural or as urban; they share elements of both, and are distinct from both and may be considered to be distinct societies'.

As provided by Basu (2017) interestingly, the top 10 rural markets of the world: 'India, China, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Egypt and the Philippines, collectively cover two-thirds of the world's rural population nearing 2.2 billion people' and 'trends and market estimates spell more optimism around these rural markets by the virtue of their size and steadily increasing indicators that fuel consumer spending and aspirations' (Basu, 2107). But overall though, and as provided by Sekhar & Padmaja (2014), rural areas and in particular 'rural markets are gold mines paved with thorns' (Sekhar & Padmaja, 2014). Such rural markets commonly portray the following characteristics: 'heterogeneity in culture, languages, dialects and social customs; underdeveloped markets; lack of access to services; dependence on agriculture; low population density and clustered demand scattered over large areas; fragmented markets; uneven development; irregular and seasonal demand, low consumption as well as a narrow consumption basket; purchasing on credit; a growing number of youth in the rural population; an ongoing trend of rural to urban migration as well as emigration to foreign countries; heterogeneity in lifestyles; lack of social mobility; low and non-regular income streams; reliance on remittances; low savings rate; lack of steady consumption; diversity of occupations; low literacy levels; limited accessibility; limited awareness and acceptance of products and services; differences in the macro and micro-environment of consumers; the creative use of products; and lack of marketing infrastructure. '(Dash *et al.,* 2020; Hakhroo, 2020; Das, 2018; Khaleel, 2018; Kripanithi & Ramachander, 2018; Nunna, 2018; Ahmed, 2017; Bhanot, 2017; Kashyap, 2016; Tutorials Point, 2016; Haldar, 2015; Ahmed, 2013; Modi, 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Modi, 2009; Ramkishen, 2009; Vachani & Smith, 2008; Velayudhan, 2007; Singh & Pandey, 2005; Rao & Tagat, 1985).

[32] As provided by Rabie (2013a) this transition from 'the twentieth-century industrial civilization to the twenty-first-century knowledge civilization (has and)is transforming people's life conditions and ways of living, and changing them fundamentally and irreversibly, as well as the assumptions that form the foundations of political, economic, and social systems' (Rabie, 2013a).

The urban context in developing countries

As per the lack of a universal definition for a rural area, much the same is valid for an urban area: 'there is no international standard definition of an urban area or urban population as each country has its own and collects data accordingly' (World Bank, 2015). Some of the criteria used by various countries to better identify urban areas are, for example, based on 'population density and size, type of economic activity, physical infrastructure, level of infrastructure, etc.,' (World Bank, 2015). Indeed, urbanization has been 'substantially faster in today's developing world' (Jedwab *et al.,* 2015) and is 'unprecedented in speed and scale and urban now represents the world economy's centre of gravity, which is shifting from the advanced economies of the west to the emerging powerhouses of the east and south: Just 600 cities could generate two-thirds of global GDP growth—and half that growth could come from 443 cities in emerging economies' (Dobbs & Remes, 2013). UN (2020) provides that 'more than 55 percent of people live in urban areas, but between 2020 and 2050, globally, the portion of people living in urban areas will shift from 53 percent to 70 percent', even though the 'pace of urbanization is expected to slow in the future, with both the absolute size of the urban population and the proportion likely to grow less rapidly' (UN DESA, 2019).

There are five main factors that drive urbanization and urban population growth: 'natural population increase, rural-urban migration, rural to urban land conversion, international migration' (UN, 2020) and 'economic development fuels urbanization, and in turn, urbanization has generally been a positive force for economic growth, poverty reduction and human development'[33] (UN DESA, 2019). Indeed, urbanization and economic growth 'are generally mutually reinforcing as urbanization fosters innovation, economies of scale and agglomeration effects, including more efficient labour markets, lower transaction costs and knowledge spill overs that in turn lead to economic growth' (World Bank & FAO, 2018). This provides that, 'urbanization is strongly correlated with economic growth, but is not the cause of economic growth as urban concentration has growth enhancing benefits as it is regional trends that impact the relation between urbanization and economic development' (Khan *et al.,* 2016). Urbanization, though, is a 'complex socio-economic process that transforms the built environment, converting formerly rural areas into urban settlements, while also shifting the spatial distribution of a population from rural to urban areas' (UN DESA, 2019). Urbanization 'also alters the demographic and social structure of both urban and rural areas, and a major consequence of urbanization is a rise in the number, land area and population size of urban settlements and in the number and share of urban residents compared to rural dwellers' (UN DESA, 2019). Further, nearly about 50 percent of urban dwellers globally 'reside in relatively small settlements of less than 500,000 inhabitants, while around one in eight live in 33 megacities with more than 10 million inhabitants' (UN DESA, 2019). Moreover, urbanization levels vary considerably by region: 'Latin America and the Caribbean account for 81 percent, Asia is around 50 percent, while Africa remains mostly rural, with 43 percent of its population living in urban areas' (UN DESA, 2019).

In most developing economies, as they progress, 'the economic density in some places increases as more people move to live in or near towns and cities[34] and economic activities become more concentrated, but concentration of people and production is fastest locally, slowest internationally' (World Bank,2009). In fact 'rising urbanization and national economic growth, together with improved transport and communication networks, provide important economic linkages between urban and rural areas, opening up new opportunities for rural households' (Wiggins, 2014). Indeed, as urbanization increases, 'the vigour of the industrial and urban economy also influences interactions, in both strength of demand for rural outputs and for additional labour, thereby affecting the attractiveness of migration or commuting for rural workers' (Wiggins, 2014).

In fact, urbanization and investments in transport 'means that cities are increasingly accessible for many people in rural areas, with greater interaction between the two, thus enabling rural households and their individual members to have access to more options than in the past, including migrating or commuting to urban areas, starting non‑farm enterprises or being employed by such a business' (IFAD,

[33] An increasing share of 'economic activity and innovation becomes concentrated in cities, and cities develop as hubs for the flow of transport, trade and information' (UN DESA, 2019)

[34] 'Over 80 percent of global GDP is already generated in cities' (UNDP, 2021)

2016a). The initially 'slow, but typically increasing, pattern of migration from rural to urban sectors contributes to a dynamic of youth and young adults becoming an increasing share of the urban population and as such these groups bring new demands and aspirations –partly fuelled by an emerging digital and technological revolution – and contribute to an accelerated process of change' (IFAD, 2019a). Rural-urban migration is driven by a 'multitude of factors ranging from seeking better opportunities in life to forced migration from one's native region due to climate shocks, conflicts and wars'(Selod & Shilpi, 2021). Rural-to-urban migration is a 'vital part of the development process, as people move to cities to benefit from agglomeration economies, and is very common in some developing countries because it is less costly and requires less investment in new skills'(FAO *et al.,* 2018). However, most often ties to rural areas are not severed as 'most first-generation migrants retain strong links with their homelands, and frequently tend to engage in circular migration, traditionally associated with the seasonal calendars of agriculture' (FAO *et al.,* 2018). Evidence from developing countries suggests that 'rural-to-rural, urban-to-urban, circular, and return migrations are equally if not more prevalent forms of migration' (Selod & Shilpi, 2021).

In this regard, and in general, not only do 'urban centres operate as the transmitters of change to the rural areas' (Dixon, 1990), but also 'influence agricultural production and rural livelihoods as much as the economy of cities as it escalates demand for rural food production for growing urban populations' (UN, 2020). The 'growth of the urban sector, driven by both natural increase (fertility exceeding mortality) and rural -to -urban migration helps to fuel agricultural transformation' (IFAD, 2019a). This provides for 'rising agricultural productivity as the rural sector provides cities with essential ingredients, including the food for a growing population, the labour needed for expanding the industrial and service sectors and the savings to help finance the more capital-intensive economic activities' (World Bank,2009). The demand for food in cities is 'growing and requires quantities of food that rural and peri-urban areas may not be able to supply, and moreover, existing market, storage and transport infrastructure is less and less able to cope with the growing quantities of foodstuffs and as a result, the informal sector expands to provide low-income families with their only means of livelihood' (FAO, 2008). In fact as urbanization continues 'an estimated 80 percent of food will be consumed in urban areas by 2050' (UNEP, 2022), but this will signify that increasing urban food demand 'means that food production systems will have to change in significant ways, including by bringing food production closer to urban areas' (UNEP, 2022) as well as changing urban agri-food marketing systems, in acknowledging that fundamentally 'urban and rural dwellers have very different ways of life' (Lynch, 2005) and consumption patterns.

Agri-food marketing in developing countries

Agri-food marketing is the conjugation of agricultural marketing and food marketing. Agricultural marketing, as provided by Ritson (1997), refers to commodity marketing, undifferentiated products, coming, most often from remote areas, thus implying mainly a distribution function. Ramkishen (2009) defines agricultural marketing as 'input and output marketing: all the activities involved in the supply of farm inputs and outputs, which includes movements from input suppliers to farmers and farmer produce from farms to final customers'. Food marketing is the 'performance of all business activities involved in the flow of food products and services from the point of initial agricultural production until they are in the hands of the consumer' (Kohls & Uhl, 2015). Hilmi (2022) provides that food marketing 'refers to semi to highly processed commodities being marketed, for example, in small packaging with brands, to final consumers'. Consequently, as is clear, the 'marketing of commodities is very different from marketing food products'(Padberg, 1997) and thus the coming together of agricultural and food marketing, provided as agri-food marketing, can be defined as 'the buying and selling; the economic incentive structure; and the goods handling system for food, from the point of production through processing and distribution to final sales to consumers' (Padberg, 1997). Dani (2015) provides that agri-food marketing is 'a complicated web of interconnected entities working to make food available'. Hence, both definitions include agricultural marketing and the application 'of mainstream marketing management' (Ritson, 1997), and consequently can be provided as the 'integrative force that matches production to customer needs and satisfaction' (FAO, 1997) or put another way 'agri-food marketing bridges the gaps between producers and consumers' (Schaffner *et al.,* 1998).

Clearly marketing agri-food products, as per the very 'nature of agriculture and its characteristics, inevitably influences the marketing of such products, be they undifferentiated commodities and/or processed commodities' (Kohls & Uhl, 2015). For example agricultural marketing outputs, i.e. undifferentiated commodities are 'bulky, perishable, require some further processing, quality varies and is, basically, a process of movements: a series of actions, events, in some sequence all with coordination' (Khols & Uhl, 2015), so as to provide for form, time, place, space and possession utilities for farm produce.

In this very same way of marketing requiring to be adapted for marketing of agri-food products, it needs also to take into account enterprise size and how this affects marketing and how marketing needs to adapt to this. For example, the characteristics of small-scale enterprises will inevitably influence the marketing characteristics of such enterprises (Chaston *et al.,* 1995). In developing economies most enterprises are micro and small-scale in size and are commonly referred to as consumer-entrepreneur enterprises as in BOP-SM contexts there is what is termed the 'duality of the consumer-entrepreneur' (Viswanathan, 2020), as consumers can also be sellers and sellers can also be consumers. Many in BOP-SM contexts 'turn to entrepreneurship, prevalently subsistence entrepreneurship, and in particular family micro-scale enterprises (usually called household enterprises), as a major means of generating subsistence' (Webb *et al.,* 2015) and in attempts to overcome daily hardships. Indeed most micro-size enterprises are in fact family run enterprises as this is the most common form of enterprise found (Alderson, 2018). Venugopal *et al.,* (2015) estimate that there are circa one billion of these micro-sized family run enterprises found globally.

In terms of marketing by enterprise size, Chaston *et al.,* (1995) provides that the level of marketing activity can be influenced by the age of the enterprise, the nature of the market, the marketing resources and marketing abilities available. Carson *et al.,* (1995) categorize the level of marketing activity in small-scale enterprises: little or no marketing; implicit and simple marketing; and explicit and sophisticated marketing. The characteristics of micro and small-scale enterprise marketing are as follows:

- Context specific; flexible; inherent informality in structure; restricted in scope and activity; simple and haphazard; product and price –oriented; owner/manager involvement; networking relationships with customers; relationships with staff; competitive alliances and support; intuitive; opportunistic; adaptive; innovative; risk-taking; change-oriented; customer –focused relationships; morality; religiosity; resource constrained (Carson *et al.,* 1995; Gilmore *et al.,* 2001; Bjerke & Hultman, 2002; Chaston & Mangles, 2002; Carson, 2003; Simpson *et al.,* 2011; Blankson *et al.,* 2018; Gilmore & Carson, 2018).

Further, Chaston & Mangles (2002) find that small-scale enterprises have four alternative and hybrid styles of marketing compared to traditional and standard marketing: 'transactional-conservative; relationship-conservative, transactional-entrepreneurial; and relationship – entrepreneurial'. However, the existence of different approaches to marketing in small-scale enterprises 'should not however, be interpreted that small-scale enterprises reject classicist marketing thinking' (Chaston & Mangles, 2002). Thus it may be provided that marketing in micro and small-scale enterprises has some of the basic dimensions of traditional and standard marketing, but others being very different (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002).

In micro and small-scale enterprises marketing implementation is more important to success than strategy and planning (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002), and marketing is not a separate function from other business functions and has a special role in the success of small-scale enterprises (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002). Many small-scale enterprises unconsciously do marketing and do not plan it (Cacciolatti & Lee, 2015). Hence it seems that there is a strong interface between marketing, how it is practiced in micro and small-scale enterprises and entrepreneurship, and thus, consequently, it seems that micro and small-scale enterprise marketing and its characteristics are in reality entrepreneurial marketing. In this regard, Cacciolatti & Lee (2015) provide that entrepreneurial marketing 'entails the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation'. Indeed this stance is further supported by the fact that classic or traditional marketing operates in a 'stable environment, where market conditions are continuous, while entrepreneurial marketing, operates in an uncertain

environment, where market conditions are discontinuous and the needs of the market are as yet unclear' (Hills & Hultman, 2013) as commonly found in BOP-SM context. Moreover, and on the same lines, Collinson & Shaw (2001) provide that entrepreneurial marketing commonly is most apt for a fluctuating and changing environment as that found in BOP-SM contexts.

As clearly as the characteristics of agri-food products influence marketing as well as enterprise size, also the context of developing economies, and in specific BOP-SM contexts, require marketing to adapt. This in fact leads on from what has been provided previously by Sheth (2011), just as one example among the many[35], to 'discover new perspectives and practices in marketing, which may become valuable for the neglected and economically non-viable markets' (Sheth, 2011) and this is enhanced by Ingenbleek, (2010) in that 'marketing in developing economies is fundamentally different from marketing, for example, in developed economies'.

In this regard, agri-food marketing in developing economies and in particular within BOP-SM contexts, needs to consider a variety and diverse number of factors that are social, economic, political, physical, technology, cultural, psychological as well as ethical, (Chee Seng *et al.,* 2015) but also consider, importantly, the perspective of agri-food marketing from a developing economies 'point of view'. For example for marketing in general and not specific to agri-food marketing, Sheth (2011) provides that marketing needs to become 'far more global' in its mindset, Viswanathan (2020) considers to take a 'bottom-up approach' to marketing in BOP-SM contexts, while in specific to agri-food marketing, Hilmi (2022) provides that it needs to be based on the three levels of micro, meso and macromarketing to 'work in unison', be far more coordinated, organized, managed and time bound. Further Anwar (2017) provides that 'society and marketing go hand-in-hand and the influence that each has on the other is undeniable: customers live in society and are influenced by changes therein; consequently, societal changes must, in some form or shape, affect marketing as well'.

Agri-food marketing in developing economies and within BOP-SM contexts, as provided previously has to take account of the social, economic, political, physical, technology, cultural, psychological as well as ethical factors (Chee Seng *et al.,* 2015) that are implied. Some of the main factors that need to be taken into account are as follows:

- *The main characteristics of the local economies:* the prevalent young age of populations; low incomes, cash flows and saving rates; market fragmentation, shortages and informality; lack of literacy and more in general consumer literacy; the social structure and its effects on purchasing; emigration to foreign countries and rural to urban migration; reliance on remittances; weak infrastructure; weak distribution systems; lack of access to and availability of the internet and ICTs; and underdeveloped legal frameworks (Sinha & Oburai, 2008);
- *BOP-SM characteristics:* lack of basic infrastructure; lack of services; resource scarcity for both supplier and buyer; high seller responsiveness to consumer demand; unequal distribution of wealth; informality; secluded and insular exchange systems; globally networked; violence; forced displacement; market volatility; chronic uncertainty; poverty premium on products (Viswanathan, 2020; Muthuri & Farhoud, 2020; Mason *et al.,* 2017; Viswanathan & Sreekumar, 2017; Figueiredo *et al.,* 2015; Benninger & Robson, 2015; Upadhyaya *et al.,* 2014; Viswanathan *et al.,* 2012)
- *BOP-SM consumers:* low and limited income; high illiteracy; consumer illiteracy; high and consistent uncertainty; high degrees of depravation on basic needs; low quality of life; low self-esteem; lack of savings; role of consumer as both consumer and entrepreneur; value conscious; large cultural influence on consumption; multitude and diversity of cultural factors influencing consumers; local community influence on consumption; long term relational focus with sellers; relation networks used in buying; one-to-one relational and interactional behaviour between consumer and seller; interdependence between consumer and seller; interdependence between consumer and family, friends and others in the social and relational network; high degree of customization; high degree of orality; empathy; non-routine buying behaviour; consider purchases for long term purposes; high degree of reassurances provided on purchases made; trust building (McGrath *et al.,* 2021; Viswanathan, 2020; Muthuri & Farhoud, 2020; Viswanathan *et al.,* 2019;

[35] For example see also: Pels & Sheth (2021); Viswanathan (2020); Benninger & Robson (2015); Viswanathan *et al.,* (2008); Kinsey (1988)

Singh *et al.,* 2017; Figueiredo *et al.,* 2015; Benninger & Robson, 2015; Gau *et al.,* 2014; Viswanathan *et al.,* 2014; Usunier & Lee, 2013; Viswanathan *et al.,* 2012; Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012a)

- *BOP-SM rural characteristics:* 'heterogeneity in culture, languages, dialects and social customs; underdeveloped markets; lack of access to services; dependence on agriculture; low population density and clustered demand scattered over large areas; fragmented markets; uneven development; irregular and seasonal demand, low consumption as well as a narrow consumption basket; purchasing on credit; a growing number of youth in the rural population; an ongoing trend of rural to urban migration as well as emigration to foreign countries; heterogeneity in lifestyles; lack of social mobility; low and non-regular income streams; reliance of remittances; low savings rate; lack of steady consumption; diversity of occupations; low literacy levels; limited accessibility; limited awareness and acceptance of products and services; differences in the macro and micro-environment of consumers; the creative use of products; and lack of marketing infrastructure. '(Dash *et al.,* 2020; Hakhroo, 2020; Das, 2018; Khaleel, 2018; Kripanithi & Ramachander, 2018; Nunna, 2018; Ahmed, 2017; Bhanot, 2017; Kashyap, 2016; Tutorials Point, 2016; Haldar, 2015; Ahmed, 2013; Modi, 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Modi, 2009; Ramkishen, 2009; Vachani & Smith, 2008; Velayudhan, 2007; Singh & Pandey, 2005; Rao & Tagat, 1985).
- *BOP-SM urban characteristics:* many small urban settlements; few megacities; rapid urban population growth; increasing inhabitant density; increasing rural to urban migration; urban to urban migration; linkages with rural areas; informal settlements; forced displacements; violence; isolation; insulation; social marginalization; slum seclusion; menial job employment; low income; growing youth population; increasing poverty; development of urban 'slum culture'; lack of sanitary, health, financial and educational services; urban consumption patterns; increasing food demand; multitude of formal and informal organizations and institutions involved in food distribution; inefficiency in agri-food distribution; informal food distribution networks; high numbers of informal food sellers; high numbers of informal food retailers; lack of specialization; highly competitive markets; poor quality goods; high agri-food prices; increasing localized urban and peri-urban agricultural activities; increasing local food consumer groups; high customization; high degrees of relational and social networks; lack of appropriate agri-food distribution infrastructure; lack of access to mobility; increasing informality; increasing environmental hazards (UNEP, 2022; Purohit *et al.,* 2021; Selod & Shilpi, 2021; Hilmi, 2020; Mathur *et al.,* 2019; UN DESA, 2019; IFAD, 2019a; Kripanithi & Ramachander; 2018;World Bank & FAO, 2018; IFAD, 2016a; Brown *et al.,* 2014; Upadhyaya *et al.,* 2014; FAO, 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Anderson *et al.,* 2010; FAO, 2008;FAO, 2007b)

Thus agri-food marketing in developing economies needs to consider the nature of agri-food products, the size of enterprises, commonly consumer-entrepreneur micro-scale family enterprises and the specific characteristics of BOP-SM contexts in both rural and urban areas. Within this background thus agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts, should by default, cater for such characteristics and hence provide marketing that adapts, is versatile, variable and flexible and as such, becomes agile. However and, for example, agri-food marketing in developing economies, as found by Hilmi (2021b) involves mainly operations including: 'choosing the products; starting production; managing production; harvesting; handling; sorting; packaging; storing; transporting; processing; financing; associating; deciding how to sell; where to sell; when to sell; and costing'. This is much in line with what is provided by de Veld (2004) in that marketing is 'all of the activities that can contribute to selling a product for a better price'. Hilmi (2022), though, further found that agri-food marketing needed to consider three levels of marketing:

- Agri-food micromarketing that is commonly provided as the marketing performed by the 'individual decision maker in the agri-food marketing system, for example a farmer and an agri-food enterprise manager, and uses the principles of marketing management' (Kohls & Uhl, 2015);
- Agri-food macromarketing that refers to the 'big picture: how the food system is organized, its performance and social task and how the food system is changing over time (Kohls & Uhl, 2015);

- Agri-food mesomarketing as per Larson (1985), that refers to a rural marketing system that aggregates agri-food products and moves within and out of regional areas and Viswanathan, (2020), Venugopal & Viswanathan (2015) and Viswanathan *et al.,* (2014) refer also to the community marketing system this being 'densely networked social communities and providing community social capital and as such these social exchanges help construct meso-level community exchange systems, which, in turn, contribute to developing and maintaining the informal economy' (Viswanathan *et al.,* 2014).

Still Hilmi (2020), found in a review of 12 developing economies, that agri-food marketing practices in BOP-SM contexts, were, in fact, entrepreneurial marketing practices as per the common consumer- entrepreneur micro-sized and also small-sized family enterprises and the BOP-SM context. In this regard the characteristics found were: networks; knowledge of market demand; risk-taking; self-confidence (calculated risk-taking); low production costs (resource constrained); customer-relationships; and value creation. However, agri-food marketing in developing economies was found to have also other 34 characteristics as prescribed by Mathur *et al.,* (2020); Kashyap (2016); Viswanathan *et al.,* (2012); Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan (2011); Mulky, (2010); Weidner *et al.,* (2010); and Velayudhan (2007): relational; trust; social and relational networks; loyalty development focused; adaptive by local context and location; heterogeneity; suitability; innovative; consumer critical needs research; distribution focused; consumer-entrepreneur; empathy sensitive; cultural sensitive; societal sensitive; traditional norms sensitive; religious sensitive; community sensitive; language and dialect sensitive; visual sensitive; oral sensitive; information and communication technology focused; communication for awareness development; communication for educating; two-way communication and interactivity; partnerships with customers, NGOs, Public sector; needs value based; aspirational value based; social interdependence for consumption; co-creation of value; high level of customization; acceptability; affordability; availability; and win-win outcome focused.

Consequently and in this regard by combining the characteristics of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM of Hilmi (2022); Hilmi (2021b); Hilmi (2020); Mathur *et al.,* (2020); Kashyap (2016); Viswanathan *et al.,* (2012); Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan (2011); Mulky, (2010); Weidner *et al.,* (2010); and Velayudhan (2007), a more complete and in-depth picture can be provided of agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SM in developing economies. The 69 characteristics can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SM in developing economies [36]

Micro level sensitive
Meso level sensitive
Macro level sensitive
Informal
Formal
Networks
Social networks
Adaptive by local context and location
Heterogeneity
Suitability
Innovative
Flexible
Variable
Versatile
Agile
Relational
Trust

[36] If a characteristic was found within the various sources of literature at least three times (triangulation) this would provide for a valid and reliable characteristic.

Market demand knowledgeable
Consumer critical needs research
Customer relational
Consumer-entrepreneur duality
High level of customization
Social interdependence for consumption
Loyalty development focused
Partnerships with customers, NGOs, Public sector
Two-way communication and interactivity
Empathy sensitive
Cultural sensitive
Societal sensitive
Traditional norms sensitive
Religious sensitive
Community sensitive
Language and dialect sensitive
Visual sensitive
Oral sensitive
Information and communication technology focused
Communication for awareness development
Communication for educating
Needs value based
Value creation
Aspirational value based
Co-creation of value
Acceptability
Affordability
Availability
Awareness
Win-Win outcome focused
Risk-taking
Self-confidence (calculated risk taking)
Low production costs (resource constrained)
Distribution focused
Process focused
Operations focused
Product choice
Production
Managing production
Harvesting
Handling
Sorting
Packaging
Storing
Transporting
Processing
Financing
Associating

Deciding how to sell
Where to sell
When to sell
Costing

(Source: Hilmi, 2022; Hilmi, 2021b; Hilmi, 2020; Mathur *et al.,* 2020; Kashyap, 2016; Viswanathan *et al.,* 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Mulky, 2010; Weidner *et al.,* 2010; Velayudhan, 2007).

Hence and as provided previously, agri-food marketing in developing economies BOP-SM contexts, does in fact adapt, become flexible, versatile and variable and consequently is agile.

Urban marketing

Marketing 'in its modern form, is a product of the industrial revolution and consequent urbanization of populations' (Wooliscroft & Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, 2018) and such marketing tends to be ' highly competitive, sophisticated, and often focused and targeted at middle and high income consumers' (Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011). In fact marketing focuses mainly 'on fulfilling the demand for products and services in cities where consumers are concentrated, relatively easy to reach, have access to various forms of media, have the purchasing power' (Bhanot, 2017; Mathur *et al.,* 2019) and thus 'tend to draw most of the attention' (Hammad, 1990).

Developing economies, though diverse in nature in many countries, share three common characteristics: rapidly expanding urban centres, increasing urban populations and urban poverty (FAO, 2008). Indeed, as countries develop, the rate of urbanization usually increases and rural areas need to feed growing urban populations over larger distances (FAO, 1997), this implying the growing and increasing 'decoupling of food production places and practices' (Kasper *et al.,* 2017). Urban markets offer large opportunities for rural products (MOE, 2020) and hence marketing to urban centres and within urban centres, by implication requires marketing to be planned and implemented for and/or in urban areas (MOE, 2020). In fact, marketing food to towns and cities, for example will provide for 'combining different modes of food provisioning' (Wiskereke, 2015). Such diversity is derived from the fact that some towns and cities are mainly, though not exclusively, 'fed by intra-urban, peri-urban and nearby rural farms and food processors, while other towns and cities are largely dependent, though not entirely, on food produced and processed in other countries or continents'(Wiskereke, 2015). This implies that urban agri-food marketing 'is not only shaped by the dynamics characteristic for that particular region around the city i.e., the city and its urban fringe and rural hinterland, but also, and sometimes even predominantly, by dynamics at a distance'(Wiskereke, 2015). Urban agri-food marketing systems are 'composed of rapidly evolving and overlapping traditional, modern and informal subsystems'(World Bank & FAO, 2018) and 'are complex combinations of activities, functions and relations (production, handling, storage, transport, processing, packaging, wholesaling, retailing, etc.) that enable cities to meet their food requirements' (FAO, 2008). These activities are provided by a multitude of formal and informal organizations and institutions, for example informal street sellers, formal retailers, public institutions and so forth, and such operators, usually, but not always, operate in both formal and informal[37] agri-food marketing systems and market activities. But all such operators and their activities need 'infrastructure, facilities, services and laws as well as formal and informal regulations to govern their decisions' (FAO, 2008). In regard of urban agri-food marketing, most people who live and work within urban slums[38], i.e. BOP-SM contexts, 'depend on an informal economy that is inefficient, offers poor quality goods, poor distribution, higher prices' (Mathur *et al.,* 2019), ' low pay and high exposure to environmental hazards' (Brown *et al.,* 2014). In fact, the urban informal economy is 'growing especially rapidly where formal economic growth has not been commensurate with urban population growth' (Brown *et al.,* 2014). But 'informality is rarely the primary cause of

[37] The urban informal economy in general is commonly 'characterised by small, competitive, individual or family firms, petty retail trade and services, labour-intensive methods, free entry, and market-determined factor and product prices' (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

[38] The majority of those living in slums are located in three regions: Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (332 million), Central and Southern Asia (197 million) and sub-Saharan Africa (189 million) (UN DESA, 2019).

these poor working and living conditions, which typically reflect broader issues of poverty and inequality' (Brown *et al.,* 2014).

Very much in line with rural areas, also the urban poor[39], who commonly reside in slums, are 'the economically and socially marginalized, commonly located on land over which the inhabitants do not hold legal title, as the inhabitants, typically have migrated to the slums from rural areas in order to exploit actual or perceived economic opportunities and such slums have inadequate access to safe water; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; and insecure residential status' (Anderson *et al.,* 2010). Urban slum inhabitants spend the majority of 'their income on consumption-based goods, for example on food, and lack access to life improvement measures such as clean energy, healthcare, financial inclusion and quality education' (Mathur *et al.,* 2019). But even though BOP-SM agri-food marketing systems and markets being located in populated urban centres, tend to be isolated and insular, and tend to develop their own 'strong cultures'(Mathur *et al.,* 2019). In this regard, there are growing numbers 'of local food initiatives and action by communities, towns and cities throughout the world' (World Bank & FAO, 2018). This growing localization addresses not only agri-food matters, such as urban agriculture and nutrition, for example, but also correlated issues of, for example, 'environmental quality and sustainability and employment in communities ' (World Bank & FAO, 2018)

Some of the trends influencing such agri-food marketing are: urban population growth; increasing urbanization; changing dietary habits as a result of relative increases in urban incomes, compared to rural areas; urban food insecurity in terms of availability, accessibility, affordability and adequacy; malnutrition; hunger; obesity; scarcity and depletion of resources, both natural and human; climate change impact on the productive capacity of agriculture; urban heat islands; decline in urban green; the rise in supermarkets; the increase in peri-urban and urban agricultural efforts and consequently of 'short' urban agri-food marketing systems (Moustier & Renting, 2015; Wiskereke, 2015; FAO, 2012). In regard to urban agricultural production and short urban agri-food marketing systems, the numbers of urban residents involved is substantial, 'although the percentage of participation in urban agriculture is highly variable from one city to another' (Moustier & Renting, 2015). As such urban agriculture and its related short agri-food marketing system[40] may provide for poverty alleviation, better nutrition, more varied diets, more employment and income opportunities, lower transaction costs in marketing, lower agri-food product prices, maintaining produce freshness[41], more control over food safety and food quality, and provide for less waste (Moustier & Renting, 2015; FAO, 2012; FAO, 1999) and compete effectively with agri-food products being marketed from rural areas. For example, in terms of 'fresh perishable vegetables, the relative contribution of urban agriculture in total urban food supply in many cities is around 60 to 70 percent (and during the dry season even higher), whereas for other fresh vegetables, eggs, milk, poultry meat, and pork these percentages may reach levels of 40 percent or even higher with large variations between the cities' (Moustier & Renting, 2015).

As per such short agri-food marketing systems, in the past, collective agri-food marketing i.e. group marketing, in urban- and peri-urban areas had little success, given the variability of production in quantity and quality and hence provided to be a disincentive for some farmers not to join such collective marketing activities (FAO, 1999). However, this is changing, and as provided previously, there are growing numbers 'of local food initiatives and action by communities, towns and cities throughout the world' (World Bank & FAO, 2018) in terms of urban agriculture and short agri-food marketing systems that are collective in nature. Further and 'especially during the last decade, in cities in developing countries, more and more initiatives with several types of innovative collective businesses

[39] 'Roughly 84 percent of the multidimensional poor live in rural areas and about 16 percent in urban areas' (UNDP & OPHI, 2021), but 'poverty in urban areas is somehow constituted differently from that of a rural areas' (Parnell, 2015) and this diversity of urban poverty is increasingly being recognized by 'aid agencies and scholars alike particularly in the rapidly urbanising global south' (Lemanski & Marx, 2015b).

[40] In regard to short urban agri-food marketing, this could be also termed as 'urban agri-food proximity marketing'.

[41] 'In situations of limited access to fridges, freshness of produce is especially valued by urban consumers' (Moustier & Renting, 2015)

for the direct sales of food products to consumers and other urban markets parties have been observed' (Moustier & Renting, 2015).

In terms of the informal agri-food marketing system, most often than not, it provides food and food distribution activities for low-income urban people (World Bank & FAO, 2018; FAO, 2012), within urban BOP-SM contexts. Such a system, caters predominantly for the poor as they depend, more than any others, on 'informal market vendors, open markets and small traditional retail outlets' (World Bank & FAO, 2018). This is per their lack of access to urban mobility and per, in some cases, the inadequate urban transport system, this exposing them to 'small selections of food items and an even smaller choice of nutritious products and frequently consuming prepared foods' (World Bank & FAO, 2018). This consumption of prepared foods is a consequence of the 'lack of storage and refrigeration, the cost of electricity or cooking gas, and the lack of time or hygienic areas to prepare food' (World Bank & FAO, 2018).

The informal food trade does however offer 'a large number of sales points, provided by informal street food sellers, in the urban districts furthest from the city centre and the organized secondary markets, thus bridging the inadequacies of the formal food distribution structure' (FAO, 2003). Informal street food vending 'can be found on nearly every corner of the world and such foods have been on sale for thousands of years' (Hilmi, 2020; FAO, 2012). Informal retailers may be stationary or mobile and 'most informal traders sell in the street because they believe that they can reach more customers, others do so because they are denied access to market facilities and services, as they are unable to pay market charges and because of their illegal status, informal traders are often harassed by police' (FAO, 1999). In many instances, 'the informal sector has forged a network of relations, practices and rules of operation that are more effective than those of the formal sector, also in maintaining urban-rural links: exchanges of food items and services within or outside the family or through direct sale by producers; intermediation: supply and distribution of unprocessed products (transporters, retailers, including street vendors); processing and sale of ready to- eat food: street food and small catering' (FAO, 2003). Mostly transactions are based on cash and/or on credit and are 'characterized by small volume retail transactions, affordable to the poor, involving both domestic and imported food products sourced from open or wet retail markets or wholesale markets in the traditional system' (World Bank & FAO, 2018) and such informal street food sellers 'adopt customer friendly practices to cultivate loyalty: extra portions at no charge or as also provided previously, the provision of credit' (FAO, 2003; FAO, 1999).

In terms of agri-food distribution, in many cities, such informal marketing systems are used by the public sector as well as non-profit organizations to better reach the poor as per their geographic coverage within urban centres, the well-established knowledge of local consumption patterns and consumer relations, and trust that can be provided by such food outlets. Further governments, civil society, faith-based organizations and others 'have successfully developed government-run, community dining rooms to serve nutritious meals prepared with locally sourced food at subsidized prices and food banks and soup kitchens have also been effectively used to distribute available, unused food to those in need'(World Bank & FAO, 2018). Some countries also 'provide food to the urban poor at subsidized prices in government-managed stores or cooperatives as part of government food programmes' (World Bank & FAO, 2018). Also in some cities, 'half to three-quarters of the urban poor in informal settlements receive food transfers from their rural-based families engaged in agriculture and others may access food by simply producing their own food i.e. urban agriculture'(World Bank & FAO, 2018).
The 42 characteristics identified of urban agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing economies are provided in Table 2

Table 2: Urban agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SM contexts in developing economies[42]

Micro sensitive
Meso sensitive
Macro sensitive
Informal
Formal
Cultural
Social
Networked
Relational
Partnerships
Collective
Customized
Loyalty focused
Consumer concentration
Sales on credit
Competitive
Linkages
Planned
Short
Integrated
Dynamic
Intensive
Frequent
Modern
Traditional
Complex
Variable
Adaptable
Versatile
Agile
Uncertain
Isolated
Insular
Closed system
Resource scarce
Services
Awareness
Affordability
Acceptability
Availability
Public interventions
Subsidized

(Source: Hilmi, 2022; Hilmi, 2020; Mathur *et al.,* 2019; MOE, 2020; World Bank & FAO, 2018; Wiskereke, 2015; Moustier & Renting, 2015; Brown *et al.,* 2014; FAO, 2012; FAO, 2008;FAO, 2005; FAO, 2003; FAO, 1999)

[42] If a characteristic was found from the various sources of literature at least three times (triangulation) this would provide for a valid and reliable characteristic.

Rural marketing

It is not only urban conglomerations and markets that have 'provided for economic development, but rural markets have also 'played a significant role in the growth of emerging economies' (Modi, 2012). Rural markets, though, do vary considerably from urban markets (Kripanithi & Ramachander, 2018; Bhanot, 2017) and this was also well recognized historically, for example, in the USA as per Lund's (1956) recognition that 'the rural market is different and diverges from urban markets, and, for example, sales programs geared to urban markets evidently have not developed the rural market as rapidly or to the same degree'. A rural market is a 'set of consumers who are located in a rural area and who exhibit behaviour that is different from the behaviour of consumers in urban areas' (Velayudhan, 2007). Thus such a behavioural variation, suggests behaviour over geographical location and that 'mentality, and not locality, is the identifier for rural markets'(Velayudhan, 2007), and further the 'geographically spread-out nature of markets also requires different approaches to these markets' (Velayudhan, 2007), this implying a differing typology of marketing in rural areas and markets. In fact, rural markets commonly provide for a high degree of heterogeneity (Singh & Pandey, 2005) as the 'rural space, markets and consumers are a lot more heterogeneous than their urban counterparts' (Modi, 2012). A rural consumer, generally, is a 'traditionalists in outlook, rooted in the land, resists change' (Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011), is 'very conscious of value for money, does not always look for cheap products, wants good quality, cannot afford a high price' (Mahapatra, 2001), but has 'high aspirations' (Haldar, 2015). In fact the 'popular belief that cheap products will always do well in the village is not necessarily true' (Mahapatra, 2001).

Indeed rural areas and markets commonly, but not always, provide for 'uneven development; irregular demand; dependence on agriculture; fragmented markets; heterogeneity in lifestyles; lack of social mobility; low and non-regular income streams; lack of steady consumption; diversity of occupations; low literacy levels; limited accessibility; limited awareness and acceptance of products and services; differences in the macro and micro-environment of consumers; as well as the creative use of products' (Kashyap, 2016; Modi, 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Velayudhan, 2007). Consequently, in rural marketing, the word rural not only connotates an environment (Rao & Tagat, 1985), but also and importantly 'variation in consumer behaviour and income levels' (Velayudhan, 2007) as provided previously. Hence rural and urban marketing, seemingly, have separate disciplinary areas based not only on geographical location (Velayudhan, 2007).

Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan (2011) provide that rural marketing is an 'entrepreneurial process of developing rural people by partnering with development agencies and a business function that involves assessing, stimulating and satisfying demand for products and services through innovative approaches with a concern for customer satisfaction and corporate profitability'. Further Singh & Pandey (2005) provide that rural marketing is 'the process of developing, pricing, promoting, distributing rural specific goods and services leading to exchanges between urban and rural markets which satisfies consumer demand and also achieves organisational objectives'. Thus the focus of rural marketing is not just marketing in the rural and urban interface, i.e. rural to urban marketing, but also rural to rural marketing, as well as urban to rural marketing (Jha, 2012; Ramksihen, 2009). Indeed as provide by MOE (2020) marketing activities are undertaken in terms of 'marketing of agricultural products from rural to urban areas and marketing of manufactured goods and services in rural areas'. This makes rural marketing a three-way marketing process in 'which goods from rural markets are marketed in urban areas and goods and services from urban markets are marketed in rural areas and also includes the flow of goods and services within rural areas' (MOE, 2020).

Rural marketing provides for various orientations, which are not only commercial, but are also quasi-commercial, developmental and holistic (Jha, 2012). This point is furthered also by Vaswani *et al.,* (2005) in terms of rural marketing being not only focused on economic exchange, but also non-economic exchange as well as focusing on rural producer empowerment and being partnership focused. Jha (2012) provides that the rural marketing activity has a 'net developmental positive impact on rural people'. Rao & Tagat (1985) see rural marketing as 'an instrument to deliver a standard of living rather than a process of exchanging goods and services to satisfy human needs and wants'. Modi (2009) in this regard, considers rural marketing having a development component to it, defined in terms of its 'net developmental impact on rural people and not merely as a flow of goods'. Thus, there is a focus on 'producer empowerment within the marketing context of rural areas and in rural urban linkages, in other

words, providing a bigger share of consumer spending on rural producers' products' (Vaswani *et al.,* 2005). Hence, rural marketing can be seen as holding ' the promise of delivering better standards of living to rural people' (Modi, 2009) and 'quality of life to the rural environment, taking into consideration the prevailing rural milieu'(Rao & Tagat, 1985).

Functionally then, the rural marketing process involves the 'entire socio-economic activity network aimed at rural development: it involves not only commercial business organizations, but also private, public, and voluntary organizations associated with the rural development process and as such rural marketing is a catalytic activity for effecting socio-cultural change' (Rao & Tagat, 1985). It 'creates trust and relevance through an ecosystem of stakeholders' (Prakash & Kethan, 2018) and to a good degree rural marketing can be provided as 'injecting social entrepreneurship into the marketing philosophy' (Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011). This is further provided by Achrol & Kotler (2017) that provide 'flooding markets of the poor with products manufactured in modern plants in distant cities and countries is not a sustainable answer to poverty as more of value added must be located near value consumption and distributed as close to the consuming populations as possible'. In this regard, as also stated previously, the poor are not only consumers, 'but also are producers-suppliers of goods and services and such an approach offers the promise of adding economic value to the goods and services contributed by the poor, and can therefore impact poverty positively' (Kashyap, 2016).

In fact entrepreneurship has always been 'an integral aspect of the agricultural sector '(Alsos *et al.,* 2011) in rural areas, as for example, the small-scale family farm enterprise 'has much in common with the non- farm enterprise' (Alsos *et al.,* 2011) and farms are family dwellings, but are also basically family enterprises, and as such the business of 'farming takes place in a family context' (Jervell, 2011). This also means that a farm family enterprise is a consumer of products and services as well as a provider, a seller, of products and services. This is very much like the consumer-entrepreneur micro-scale family enterprise mentioned previously. As such, for a 'successful intervention in rural markets, there is need for developing an ecosystem where both the actors and factors need to come together and collaborate with each other for selling of products and services in rural areas' (Das, 2018) as ' the use of existing networks of channel members in rural markets is the key to connecting with the rural heartland' (Velayudhan, 2007). This provides that in serving rural markets considerations need to be provided on, for example , the type of 'channels available in serving rural markets, the type of media available, the type of infrastructure found in rural areas, the geographical spread of such markets' (Velayudhan, 2007), the micro and small-scale enterprise size of village retailers that can be both mobile and stationary (Haldar, 2015) and the common practice of 'retailers from smaller villages visiting retailers in larger villages to buy products for re-sell' (Bhanot, 2017).

However in rural marketing what also needs to be considered is what Jha (2012) provides as 'rurban: this essentially represents small towns and areas on the periphery of large towns, with pretensions of an urban agglomeration but with distinct rural characteristics', this being much in line, as provided previously in what Berdegué *et al.,* (2014) provide that such areas 'cannot be treated as rural or as urban; they share elements of both, and are distinct from both and may be considered to be distinct societies'. Thus within rural marketing, elements of urban marketing need to also be considered and vice-versa.

The implications of rural marketing, its clear interlinkages with urban marketing as well as rurban areas, implies that marketing needs to be adaptable, flexible, variable, versatile and agile. Thus, and for example , the marketing mix may not be a viable and feasible option for rural markets (Mathur *et al.,* 2020) in particular and in BOP-SM contexts. Traditionally, the 4 Ps (product, price, place and promotion) framework was designed for urban markets, but 'the distinctiveness of rural consumers means that something different is required' (Kashyap, 2016). Further the 4 Ps are 'less useful in emerging market business conditions as under such conditions there is commonly heterogeneous and fragmented demand, resource shortages' (Dadzie *et al.,* 2017) as well as competition coming from unbranded products or services, consumption being based far more on make versus buy decision and less about what brand to buy' (Sheth, 2011). Indeed the 4 Ps of marketing have been the standard by which every marketing strategy has been developed in the past, but the distinctiveness of rural consumers means that something different was and is required. The 4 As of marketing—affordability, availability, awareness, and acceptability— have evolved as a more customer-oriented solution in BOP-SM contexts to designing an appropriate marketing strategy for rural markets (Kashyap, 2016). The 4 As are provided as follows:

- **Acceptability:** Acceptability for the offering considers how the offering meets or exceeds customer expectations on the functionality and psychological acceptability of the product;
- **Affordability:** Affordability refers to the purchasing power of the consumers in terms of willingness and ability to pay and pertains to psychological as well as economic affordability;
- **Availability:** This refer to the availability and convenience of accessing offerings, including spatial factors, and time;
- **Awareness:** This considers the consumer being informed, provided with understanding, knowledge, educated and persuaded by the offering (Kripanithi & Ramachander, 2018; Kashyap, 2016; Sheth & Sisodia, 2012).

In fact, the 4 As framework is seemingly more viable for BOP-SM contexts, as it seemingly fits in better with what is provided by Chikweche & Fletcher (2012a) in the 'creation of a marketing mix which is unique and tailored to the local market that is both culturally sensitive and economically feasible'. Further the 4 As are 'a more customer-oriented solution to designing an appropriate marketing strategy for rural markets' (Kashyap, 2016) and further the 4 As are 'the four distinct values customers seek in the market as knowledge seekers (awareness), as users (acceptability), as buyers (accessibility), and as payers (affordability) and the 4 As are a rich construct measured strictly from the customer's perspective' (Pels & Sheth, 2021).
The 53 characteristics identified for rural agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing economies are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Rural agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SM contexts in developing economies[43]

Relational
Trust
Social networks
Loyalty development focused
Brand loyal
Exchange focused
Non-economic exchange
Adaptive by local context and location
Flexible
Variable
Versatile
Agile
Heterogeneous
Suitability
Innovative
Consumer critical needs focused
Distribution focused
Consumer-entrepreneur duality
Empathy sensitive
Cultural sensitive
Societal sensitive
Traditional norms sensitive
Religious sensitive
Community sensitive
Language and dialect sensitive
Visual sensitive

[43] If a characteristic was found from the various sources of literature at least three times (triangulation) this would provide for a valid and reliable characteristic.

Oral sensitive
Information and communication technology focused
Communication for awareness development
Communication for educating
Two-way communication and interactivity focused
Partnership focused
Partnerships with customers, NGOs, Public sector
Needs value based
Aspirational value based
Social interdependence for consumption
Co-creation of value
Locally produced value creation
High level of customization
Acceptability
Affordability
Availability
Awareness
Win-Win outcome focused
Entrepreneurial
Rural and urban and rurban
Developmental
Informal
Formal
Elastic
Quasi -commercial
Holistic
Commercial

(Source: Dash *et al.,* 2020; Hakhroo, 2020; MOE, 2020; Ngqangweni *et al.,* 2020; Das, 2018;Khaleel, 2018; Kripanithi & Ramachander, 2018;Nunna, 2018;Achrol & Kotler, 2017; Ahmed, 2017;Bhanot, 2017; Gosavi & Samudre, 2016; Kashyap, 2016; Tutorials Point, 2016;Ahmed, 2013; Jha, 2012; Modi, 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Modi, 2009;Ramkishen, 2009; Velayudhan, 2007;Singh & Pandey, 2005; Vaswani *et al.,* 2005)

Discussion

From the findings what emerged was 69 characteristics of agri-food marketing, 53 characteristics of rural agri-food marketing and the 42 characteristics of urban agri-food marketing. These were compared and this comparison can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Comparing agri-food marketing with rural and urban agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing economies

Agri-food marketing characteristics[44]	**Rural agri-food marketing characteristics**[45]	**Urban agri-food marketing characteristics**[46]
Micro level sensitive	Relational	Micro sensitive
Meso level sensitive	Trust	Meso sensitive
Macro level sensitive	Social networks	Macro sensitive
Informal	Loyalty development focused	Informal
Formal	Brand loyal	Formal
Networks	Exchange focused	Cultural
Social networks	Non-economic exchange	Social
Adaptive by local context and location	Adaptive by local context and location	Networked
Heterogeneity	Flexible	Relational
Suitability	Variable	Partnerships
Innovative	Versatile	Collective
Flexible	Agile	Customized
Variable	Heterogeneous	Loyalty focused
Versatile	Suitability	Consumer concentration
Agile	Innovative	Sales on credit
Relational	Consumer critical needs focused	Competitive
Trust	Distribution focused	Linkages
Market demand knowledgeable	Consumer-entrepreneur duality	Planned
Consumer critical needs research	Empathy sensitive	Short
Customer relational	Cultural sensitive	Integrated
Consumer-entrepreneur duality	Societal sensitive	Dynamic
High level of customization	Traditional norms sensitive	Intensive
Social interdependence for consumption	Religious sensitive	Frequent
Loyalty development focused	Community sensitive	Modern
Partnerships with customers, NGOs, Public sector	Language and dialect sensitive	Traditional
Two-way communication and interactivity	Visual sensitive	Complex
Empathy sensitive	Oral sensitive	Variable
Cultural sensitive	Information and communication technology focused	Adaptable
Societal sensitive	Communication for awareness development	Versatile
Traditional norms sensitive	Communication for educating	Agile
Religious sensitive	Two-way communication and interactivity focused	Uncertain
Community sensitive	Partnership focused	Isolated

[44] Source based on: Hilmi, 2022; Hilmi, 2021b; Hilmi, 2020; Mathur *et al*., 2020; Kashyap, 2016; Viswanathan *et al*., 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Mulky, 2010; Weidner *et al*., 2010; Velayudhan, 2007.

[45] Source based on: Dash et al., 2020; Hakhroo, 2020; MOE, 2020; Ngqangweni et al., 2020; Das, 2018;Khaleel, 2018; Kripanithi & Ramachander, 2018;Nunna, 2018;Achrol & Kotler, 2017; Ahmed, 2017;Bhanot, 2017; Gosavi & Samudre, 2016; Kashyap, 2016; Tutorials Point, 2016;Ahmed, 2013; Jha, 2012; Modi, 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Modi, 2009;Ramkishen, 2009; Velayudhan, 2007;Singh & Pandey, 2005; Vaswani et al., 2005.

[46] Source based on: Hilmi, 2022; Hilmi, 2020; Mathur *et al*., 2019; MOE, 2020; World Bank & FAO, 2018; Wiskereke, 2015; Moustier & Renting, 2015; Brown *et al*., 2014; FAO, 2012; FAO, 2008; FAO, 2005; FAO, 2003; FAO, 1999.

Language and dialect sensitive	Partnerships with customers, NGOs, Public sector	Insular
Visual sensitive	Needs value based	Closed system
Oral sensitive	Aspirational value based	Resource scarce
Information and communication technology focused	Social interdependence for consumption	Services
Communication for awareness development	Co-creation of value	Awareness
Communication for educating	Locally produced value creation	Affordability
Needs value based	High level of customization	Acceptability
Value creation	Acceptability	Availability
Aspirational value based	Affordability	Public interventions
Co-creation of value	Availability	Subsidized
Acceptability	Awareness	
Affordability	Win-Win outcome focused	
Availability	Entrepreneurial	
Awareness	Rural and urban and rurban	
Win-Win outcome focused	Developmental	
Risk-taking	Informal	
Self-confidence (calculated risk taking)	Formal	
Low production costs (resource constrained)	Elastic	
Distribution focused	Quasi -commercial	
Process focused	Holistic	
Operations focused	Commercial	
Product choice		
Production		
Managing production		
Harvesting		
Handling		
Sorting		
Packaging		
Storing		
Transporting		
Processing		
Financing		
Associating		
Deciding how to sell		
Where to sell		
When to sell		
Costing		

The first comparison, as per Table 4 above, was provided between rural agri-food marketing and agri-food marketing. The findings can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: The rural agri-food marketing characteristics within agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing economies

Relational
Trust
Social networks
Loyalty development focused
Adaptive by local context and location
Flexible
Variable
Versatile
Agile
Heterogeneous
Suitability
Innovative
Consumer critical needs focused
Distribution focused
Consumer-entrepreneur duality
Empathy sensitive
Cultural sensitive
Societal sensitive
Traditional norms sensitive
Religious sensitive
Community sensitive
Language and dialect sensitive
Visual sensitive
Oral sensitive
Information and communication technology focused
Communication for awareness development
Communication for educating
Two-way communication and interactivity focused
Partnerships with customers, NGOs, Public sector
Needs value based
Aspirational value based
Social interdependence for consumption
Co-creation of value
Acceptability
Affordability
Availability
Awareness
Win-Win outcome focused
Informal
Formal

As from Table 5, 40 rural agri-food marketing characteristics were found within the 69 characteristics identified of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. This provides that circa 58 percent of rural agri-food marketing characteristics were found within agri-food marketing characteristics. This outcome provides that, within the boundaries of the research, there is a fair degree of confidence in stating that rural agri-food marketing is a component of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM context in developing economies. This finding leads to provide that in fact within BOP-

SM contexts in developing economies, rural marketing is considered when marketing food and agricultural products. In others words rural to rural marketing is considered within agri-food marketing. This consequently reaffirms what has already been provided, for example by Jha (2012), Ramksihen (2009) and MOE (2020).

However, and interestingly, within the main literature sources devoted specifically to agri-food marketing, the majority of these did not mention rural agri-food marketing in any manner at all. This was found, for example, as per: Malcom *et al.,* 2005; Norwood & Lusk, 2008; Padberg *et al.,* 1997; Ritson, 1997; Padberg, 1997; Meulenberg, 1997; Rhodes & Dauve, 1998; Khols & Uhl, 2015; Barker, 1989; Purcell, 1995; Gardner & Rausser, 2001; Hirst & Tresidder, 2016; de Veld, 2004; FAO, 1997; van Trijp & Ingenbleek, 2010; Schaffner *et al.,* 1998. But one source of literature was found on agri-food marketing, Hammad (1990), that did refer to rural markets and their difference to urban markets as well as rural distribution systems. But this source of literature did not mention rural marketing in specific.

In terms of urban agri-food marketing and agri-food marketing, the second comparison, as per the above Table 4, can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: The urban agri-food marketing characteristics in agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing economies

Micro level sensitive
Meso level sensitive
Macro level sensitive
Informal
Formal
Cultural
Social
Networked
Relational
Partnerships
Customized
Loyalty focused
Traditional
Variable
Adaptable
Versatile
Agile
Collective
Awareness
Affordability
Acceptability
Availability

As per Table 6, 22 urban agri-food marketing characteristics were found within the 69 characteristics identified of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. This provides that circa 32 percent of urban agri-food marketing characteristics were found within the agri-food marketing characteristics. This outcome provides that there is some degree of confidence that urban agri-food marketing is a component of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM context in developing economies. This goes some way to provide further confidence to that provided by, for example, MOE (2020), Kasper *et al.,* (2017), Wiskereke (2015) and Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan (2011) in terms of the need to consider urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing.

However within the main literature sources devoted specifically to agri-food marketing, the majority of these did not mention urban agri-food marketing specifically in any manner at all. This was found, for example, in : Malcom *et al.,* 2005; Norwood & Lusk, 2008; Padberg *et al.,* 1997; Ritson, 1997; Padberg, 1997; Meulenberg, 1997; Rhodes & Dauve, 1998; Khols & Uhl, 2015; Barker, 1989; Purcell, 1995; Gardner & Rausser, 2001; Hirst & Tresidder, 2016; de Veld, 2004; FAO, 1997; van Trijp & Ingenbleek, 2010; Schaffner *et al.,* 1998.

Consequently and from the comparisons provided in Tables 5 and 6, there seems to be more rural agri-food marketing than urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts within developing countries. In fact agri-food marketing is very much tied to rural areas as per the very nature of the products provided. However, the findings on urban agri-food marketing is somewhat surprising. The growth in urbanization over the past decades and the growing and pressing need of feeding urban areas, would seemingly deem for far more urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries as well.

However and as provided by the findings of the research, there are interlinkages between rural agri-food marketing and urban agri-food marketing, which may go some way to increase confidence that there is also more urban agri-food marketing in agri-food marketing than that provided previously. In fact in a comparison of the characteristics of both, see Table 7, this seems to be the case.

Table 7: A compassion between the characteristics of rural agri-food marketing and urban agri-food marketing

Informal
Formal
Cultural
Social
Networks
Relational
Partnerships
Collective
Customized
Loyalty focused
Variable
Adaptable
Versatile
Agile
Awareness
Acceptability
Availability
Affordability

From Table 7, 18 characteristics were found that were common to both rural agri-food marketing and urban agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. Seeing the 53 characteristics of rural agri-food marketing and also considering the 42 characteristics of urban agri-food marketing, these 18 characteristics represent circa 34 percent of rural agri-food marketing characteristics and in terms of urban agri-food marketing characteristics represent circa 43 percent. This provides that in fact there are interlinkages between the two, but also seemingly substantiates further the role of urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries.

As provided by this research, both rural and urban agri-food marketing are distinct, but are related disciplinary areas and are most relevant especially from an agri-food marketing perspective. This not only on a geographical point of view, for example, but on numerous factors, such as for example differing types of consumer typologies found in rural and urban areas, differing types of consumer behaviour, differing physical distribution concerns and so forth.

Conclusions

The findings from the research provided that there were, in fact, both rural and urban agri-food marketing components within agri-food marketing in BOP SM contexts in developing countries. In particular the research found characteristic commonalities between agri-food marketing and rural agri-food marketing: in particular 40 rural agri-food marketing characteristics within the 69 characteristics identified of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. This providing for circa 58 percent of rural agri-food marketing characteristics within agri-food marketing characteristics. This can consequently provide, with a fair degree of confidence, that rural agri-food marketing, within

the boundaries of this research, is part of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries.

However, and somewhat paradoxically, in the main sources of literature on agri-food marketing specifically, the evidence on rural agri-food marketing was thin, if not inexistent. This is a 'gap' that should be fully taken into consideration as provided from this research, as there are a fair degree of commonalities between the two subject matter areas in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. Thus, there is seemingly a need for consideration in terms of 'streamlining' rural agri-food marketing and making rural agri-food marketing as a 'main stay' within specific agri-food marketing main sources of literature.

What also emerged from this research, was that urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries is a component, but to a lesser degree, as found within the boundaries of this research. The research found 22 urban agri-food marketing characteristics within the 69 characteristics identified of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. This provides that circa 32 percent of urban agri-food marketing characteristics were found within the agri-food marketing characteristics. This provides for some degree of confidence that urban agri-food marketing is also a component of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM context in developing economies. But also here, in the main sources of literature devoted to agri-food marketing specifically, evidence of urban agri-food marketing was also inexistent. Consequently also urban agri-food marketing should be considered further in terms of 'streamlining' and making urban agri-food marketing as a 'main stay' within specific agri-food marketing main sources of literature.

What also emerged for the research is further evidence to suggest that rural agri-food marketing and urban agri-food marketing are distinctive disciplines, but at the same time are interrelated. Indeed as provided by Meserole (1938), for example, urban and rural are terms that are at 'opposite ends of a common scale and that no line of sharp demarcation can be struck through it dividing justly that which is rural from that which is urban. The transit from rural to urban-or from urban to rural, is a shading process: one imperceptibly melds into the other, however there is a vast difference when these are applied by marketers'. This all provides that further research should be considered in terms of both rural and urban agri-food marketing and their evident interlinkages.

Interestingly from this research what also emerged, was the finding of 'rurban' as provided by Jha (2012) and Berdegué *et al.,* (2014). Rurban is essentially 'small towns and areas on the periphery of large towns, with pretensions of an urban agglomeration but with distinct rural characteristics and cannot be treated as rural or as urban; they share elements of both, and are distinct from both and may be considered to be distinct societies' (Jha, 2012; Berdegué *et al.,* 2014). Consequently on this finding, further and more research should also be considered specifically in terms of rurban agri-food marketing.

Further, what emerges also from this research, is that agri-food marketing in developing economies and in particular within BOP-SM contexts, needs to consider a variety and diverse number of factors that are, for example, political, economic, social and cultural as provided previously in the research. This, as provided by this research also, requires agri-food marketing to be adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile. However, what seems to emerge from this, is that there is a need to consider to a far greater degree agri-food marketing in a perspective specific to a BOP-SM developing country context. On this point, for example, and for marketing in general and not specific to agri-food marketing, Sheth (2011) provides for making marketing less 'colonial'. Also Viswanathan (2020) considers this in terms of taking a more 'bottom-up approach to marketing in BOP-SM contexts. This seemingly points to marketing, and in particular agri-food marketing, needs to be thought out again from a completely new perspective and not just being adapted to BOP-SM developing economies. There is some evidence that suggests this in terms of marketing taking a completely new perspective as per Sheth (2011) and Viswanathan (2020) as provided previously and from this research also. Indeed marketing in general and agri-food marketing in specific, are based on a specific heritage, within a well-defined geographical, historical, economic, social and cultural evolutionary context. But even though marketing is apt for being adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile, however it still seemingly needs a consideration for a different fundamental perspective, if not notion and concept, of marketing and in particular to agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries in specific. Hence also here further research should be considered.

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