

2016

The BOP Energy Challenge and Pro-Poor Responses: Strategic Entry Pathways for Entrepreneurs

Felix Motekah Tang
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Felix Motekah Tang

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

The BOP Energy Challenge and Pro-Poor Responses: Strategic Entry Pathways for
Entrepreneurs

by

Felix Motekah Tang

MFA, George Mason University, 2003

BA, University of Yaoundé, 1993

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2016

Abstract

Many large multinational energy company leaders lack strategies to successfully enter and thrive in bottom of the pyramid (BOP) markets. The purpose of this single case study was to explore strategies using a purposeful selection of 7 senior managers from a U. S. based global multinational energy leader with experience in BOP markets in the Republic of Cameroon. The BOP concept served as the conceptual framework for the study. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with senior managers, relevant websites, and government publications. Several themes emerged that were narrowed through categorical aggregation to identify strategies. Major themes included BOP readiness for social entrepreneurship, field knowledge to facilitate partnerships, and customer service. Findings suggest multinational energy company leaders seeking BOP opportunities should create internal corporate structures dedicated to the BOP markets. Leaders should know how businesses operate and thrive in the BOP, especially when working with BOP governments and a poorly informed population. Equally important is product choice, quality, and reliability for the BOP market. Customer service and satisfaction metrics are necessary to support brands. Participants highlighted the need for positive social change to improve lives, which could occur through capacity building, entrepreneurship, job creation, enhanced governance, increased wealth, and improved quality of life for local people.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Daniel and Elizabeth Tang, who raised me to understand the necessity of having a purpose-driven life. Mum's greatest pleasure was derived from making positive changes in the lives of others in her own little ways. Mum, Dad, and the entire family, I say thank you as I strive to continue in the same light.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Leaders of large multinational energy companies seeking entry into the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) market opportunities need the right business strategies to facilitate a smooth and sustainable pathway to success (Payaud, 2014; Schrader, Freimann, & Seuring, 2012; Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2012). I conducted this study to identify sustainable market entry strategies that multinational energy business leaders can use to increase profitability in BOP markets as evidenced in the Republic of Cameroon, West Africa. I expected the study outcome would provide a better understanding of real-life management, strategic, and organizational processes from the in-depth probe I undertook (Ridder, 2012). The case study involved the largest electric company in Cameroon, a subsidiary of a multinational energy company based in Arlington, VA. A large energy multinational from the United Kingdom currently owns and controls the subsidiary since its takeover in 2012. Section 1 provides the foundation for the study.

In Section 1, I present the (a) background of the problem, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose statement, (d) nature of the study, (e) research question, (f) conceptual framework, (g) definition of terms, (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, (i) significance of the study, (j) review of professional and academic literature, and (k) transition and summary. In Section 1, I explain why this study was relevant, identify gaps in the literature, and provide a conceptual framework to ground the study.

Background of the Problem

Leaders of global energy multinational companies have the technology, capital, and expertise to invest in bottom of the pyramid (BOP) markets, but they need the correct

strategies to profit sustainably from such investments. The uncertainty involved in balancing investment risk and profitability is a business challenge worthy of consideration prior to any investment decision (Owusu & Habiyakare, 2011). Over the years, the number of consumers at the bottom of the world economic pyramid have increased and acquired substantial spending power to purchase goods and services, but business leaders have been reluctant to provide them with the goods and services due to the challenges of availability, affordability, acceptability, and product awareness (Anderson & Billou, 2007). In Cameroon, more than 80% of the population lives in poverty (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). Despite the alarming figure, business opportunities exist for large multinationals.

Reevaluating multinationals' BOP strategy and Cameroon's energy mix appeared to have a high potential for improving energy cost, increasing the number of business entrepreneurs, reducing poverty among the population, and improving profitability for investors. Specifically, in the period prior to my study, Cameroon's leading electric company had been in operation for decades, but the company had focused only on providing traditional hydroelectric power as the primary source of lighting. Leadership efforts were nonexistent to introduce solar energy, clean coal technology, wind power, geothermal power, and biogas, which multinational energy companies have the ability to implement. This business atmosphere created the need for a case study on BOP market entry strategies.

Problem Statement

At the current population growth rate and access to electricity, projections show that a greater number of sub-Saharan Africans will lack electricity in 2030 than in 2009 (International Energy Agency, 2014; Prasad, 2011). Powerful energy multinationals are necessary for large energy ventures in sub-Saharan Africa (Kaseke & Hosking, 2013; Owusu & Habiyakare, 2011; Szulecki, Pattberg, & Biermann, 2011). Indeed, full electricity access by 2030 will require approximately a 13% annual growth in electricity production as opposed to the 1.7% experienced over the last 2 decades (Bazilian et al., 2012). I classify the business problem under general and the specific.

The general business problem was that multinational energy leaders have been uncomfortable with the lack of effective institutions, transparent governance, good business models, and legal and regulatory networks in BOP markets (Bazilian et al., 2012). The specific business problem was that some multinational energy company leaders lack strategies to maintain sustainable profitability in BOP markets (Owusu & Habiyakare, 2011) such as the Republic of Cameroon, West Africa.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that large multinational energy leaders can use to sustain profitability in BOP markets in the Republic of Cameroon, West Africa. The case study was a multinational energy company based in Arlington, VA, that successfully operated the largest electric company in Cameroon despite challenges on the ground. Based on the strategies from a successful case, the outcome is a set of strategies through which multinational entrepreneurs can

enter BOP markets. Through findings from this single case study, business leaders can identify and embrace new ways of solving operational problems in BOP markets, resulting in improvements in policy, applied business research, and innovation.

I conducted the study using a qualitative research method and a single case study design. Data came from carefully selected individuals who were involved in the decisions and management of the company from 2001 to 2012. The geographical locations were the United States and Cameroon. The outcome of this study is useful in effecting social change by encouraging social entrepreneurial ventures in BOP markets to improve the living conditions in BOP communities.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative approach was the best method of inquiry for this in-depth investigation of a real-life contemporary phenomenon. Qualitative methods involve certain philosophical assumptions, strategies, methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The methods rely heavily on text, images, and unique steps in data handling (Myers, 2013). Qualitative research methods, unlike quantitative methods, provide researchers with the flexibility to purposefully choose participants who will facilitate an understanding of the research problem (Chenail, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). In order to obtain valid findings from an applied research study and to contribute to better business practices in the setting, the choice of research method was critical. For this study, a qualitative method was the best approach to answer the research questions. Researchers use quantitative methods to collect empirical data (Bansal & Corley, 2011) to test a theory or hypothesis; therefore, a quantitative approach was inappropriate for this

study. Mixed-methods research involves a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods (Caruth, 2013), which was not needed to answer the research questions in this study.

The appropriate qualitative design for answering the questions in this study was a single case study. Case-study researchers explore an issue within a closed system through in-depth data collection from many sources including observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, and reports (Dawson, 2013; Ridder, 2012; Yin, 2014). In this study, I analyzed a unique situation in business within a real-life context. The other qualitative designs were not appropriate for this study.

Research Question

In qualitative research, the central question guides the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Suri, 2011; Yin, 2014). The central question in this study was as follows: What strategies do large multinational energy leaders use to sustain profitability into BOP markets?

Interview Questions

Researchers may formulate qualitative interview questions and introduce them at random in a semistructured manner during interviews (Cachia & Millward, 2011). I designed the interview questions to facilitate the interview process and extract as much information as possible from the participants. Follow-up questions enabled further exploration of the topic (Yin, 2011). The following interview questions were used to answer the research question:

1. Why did you decide to do business in a country like Cameroon?

2. How worried were you about business risk and business failure?
3. What were your company's business strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?
4. How do you approach sustainability?
5. How do you handle challenging business relationships with consumers?
6. How do you handle recruitment, training, and retention of employees?
7. What is your experience with the choice of product, implementation, innovation, and service differentiation?
8. What is the impact of government regulations on business?
9. How good was the financial outcome in the business venture?
10. What suggestions do you offer entrepreneurs willing to follow in your path based on lessons learned?
11. What else would you like to share about your overall bottom of the pyramid (BOP) experience?

Conceptual Framework

The BOP concept served as the framework for this study. In 2002, Hart and Prahalad brought the concept to the attention of business leaders. Hart and Prahalad argued that the world's most exciting and fastest-growing new market was unexpectedly at the bottom of the pyramid. Billions of poor people in the world have immense untapped buying power that business leaders should consider as a means to increase profitability. Enlightened business leaders who learn how to market and serve those at

the BOP may experience increased profits. Additionally, leaders will be helping millions of the world's poorest people to transition out of poverty.

Scholars and business practitioners developed the BOP concept by seeking new business models to target profitably the world's population that lives on less than \$2.50 a day. University professors S. Hart of Cornell University and T. London of the University of Michigan, along with the United Nations, promoted the BOP concept. Hart and Simanis (2006) pushed the concept further by advocating a partnership with the poor as a means of eradicating poverty. The BOP concept remains popular despite opposing statements against Prahalad's position by a University of Michigan professor (Karnani, 2007) who argued that the poor should be relegated to producers and not consumers. Today, speakers at academic and professional conferences promote the BOP agenda.

The key tenets of the BOP concept aligned with the case under study by requiring a detailed analysis of a unique BOP situation in business practice within a real-life context. The concept further applies to multinationals. Their leaders seek business strategies to sustainably partner with the BOP markets for mutual benefits (Kahn, 2011).

Definition of Terms

Bottom of the pyramid or base of the pyramid (BOP): The people who constitute the poorest populations on earth located in developing countries in Africa, Asia, South America, and the Pacific (Prahalad & Hart, 2002).

Fuelwood: An energy source for cooking that comes from tree branches, stumps, and trunks (Gasparatos et al., 2015). Most people in the developing world use fuelwood and consider it to be an unsustainable environmental pollutant (Gasparatos et al., 2015).

Reverse innovation: Occurs when an innovative process starts in a poor country before adoption by a developed country (Govindarajan & Ramamurti, 2011).

Social entrepreneurship: The quest for sustainable business solutions to the ignored problems of the poor, to create conditions for positive externalities (Santos, 2012). Leadership in organizations may create benefits primarily to target beneficiaries by applying market-based solutions to social problems as well as using resources and compassion to venture for others (Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012). In this context, established types of entrepreneurs operate, and the significant opportunity lies in comprehending the unique nature of processes, missions, and leveraged resources in social entrepreneurship (Montgomery, Dacin, & Dacin, 2012).

Sub-Saharan Africa: The area of the African continent south of the Sahara away from the Arabs in the North, and particularly referring to Black Africa minus the Republic of South Africa (Spies, 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions of the Study

Research assumptions are concepts or facts that researchers consider true without verification. The assumptions provide relevant conclusions to consider prior to the findings (Bennell, Snook, Macdonald, House, & Taylor, 2012). Assumptions in this study included the following:

1. All study participants would respond openly and honestly to all questions.

2. Multinational business leaders are not well versed in market entry strategies to serve the poorest people on earth to access the enormous profit potential that they possess.
3. The BOP population resents energy poverty, the use of dirty energy sources, and their poor living conditions.
4. The local population would embrace cheaper, cleaner, and more reliable energy alternatives.
5. There would be a significant decrease in environmental degradation if large energy multinational leaders would collaborate in sustainably providing energy.
6. The outcome of the study would encourage business leaders and policymakers to consider implementing relevant changes through their decision-making processes.

In single case studies, focusing on a real-life event through a carefully selected case normally results in a better understanding of a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). I carefully selected the unique case in this study to provide market guidance for new BOP market entrants. However, the study had some limitations.

Limitations

Limitations are circumstances that are beyond the researcher's control (Simon & Goes, 2011). Potential limitations of this qualitative single case study existed in light of the internal validity and reliability of the findings. The research design was limited to a qualitative case study inquiry to determine an effective business strategy. A multiple

case study might have provided more information, but because of a lack of viable cases, I selected the best case for this study. A remedy to this problem included collecting data from the best participants.

The location of interviewees in the United States and Cameroon was a limitation to the study. Participants were hard to reach and very busy business professionals. Because participants were difficult to meet with in face-to-face semistructured interviews, I addressed this limitation by conducting telephone and email interviews.

In this study, avoiding biases was a challenge for me as a researcher. I had a fraternal relationship in the community where the case study occurred. I could have chosen another community, but the advantages and ease of researching this community affected my choice. Given the differences that exist from a sociocultural and economic viewpoint, various communities might have arrived at different solutions to the same problems. Self-separation from identified biases strengthened my research process despite my background.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to factors, variables, and constructs that a researcher intentionally excludes from the study. A delimitation is what the researcher would not do by clearly outlining what he or she would do within a confined boundary (Denscombe, 2012). Furthermore, research delimitations consist of well-defined boundaries for the inquiry as decided during the planning stage of the study (Simon & Goes, 2011). I narrowed the bounds of this study to a few relevant interviewees in the top management of the single company under study.

I imposed limits to the scope of this study to produce a more reliable study. The decisions of inclusion or exclusion aligned with the background of the study, methodology, conceptual framework, and chosen participants (Simon & Goes, 2011). The following measures were applied to narrow the bounds of this study: (a) the choice of a single case despite the existence of many possible multinationals operating in BOP communities, (b) the choice of the energy sector to the exclusion of others, and (c) the choice of location in a small African nation with insufficient access to grid-tied electricity. These choices were necessary to help me explore reliable business strategies that contribute to business practice in BOP communities.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may contribute to business practice, reduce gaps in business research, lead to sustainable business practices, and contribute to positive social change. The rationale behind this study was to seek market entry strategies for multinational company leaders moving into BOP markets. Existing literature showed evidence of business opportunities for multinationals in BOP markets as well as their desire for profitable global expansion. Additionally, the BOP concept encouraged partnerships between multinational business leaders and BOP communities for mutual benefits (Kahn, 2011; Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2012; Szulecki et al., 2011). This study's outcome was to provide strategies to facilitate BOP market entry for multinational firms.

Contribution to Business Practice

Business value. Multinational business leaders are reluctant to do business with BOP communities because of the lack of market entry strategies (Anderson & Billou,

2007; Bazilian et al., 2012). Previous studies indicated that, with new BOP entry strategies, multinational business leaders would be more comfortable entering BOP energy markets. This would help smaller business entrepreneurs increase their customer base leading to job creation in the affected communities. The knowledge and understanding that would emerge from such findings may provide direction for policy formulation and influence applied business practice for quick decision-making.

Through this qualitative single case study, I expected to provide more information on BOP energy market entry strategies by multinational business leaders. Careful planning and execution lead to a successful business outcome (Drucker, 2013). Furthermore, modern marketers aim at knowing and understanding the customers so well that the proposed products or services fit the customers' environment and are easy to sell (Chikweche, 2013). Additionally, purchasing power in an economy depends on income, prices, savings, debt, and the availability of credit. Multinational business leaders may gain planning, marketing, and strategic management insights into BOP entrepreneurship through documented strategies from this study.

A strategic understanding of the field is necessary before business practitioners can enter a market to sell products or services in a profitable and sustainable manner. Building trust between stakeholders and business decision-makers can bring about loyalty as well as positive social change in the impacted communities (Azmat & Ha, 2013). I intended to provide a better understanding of the status quo and prepare for the problems ahead using the case under study. Because of this study, I expected to generate a clearer

understanding of the BOP market system, including products, services, processes, consumers, as well as market entry strategies.

Another business value for this study was that I intended to provide strategies to fill the existing void in the energy sector of Africa's BOP countries. Full electricity access by 2030 for these communities requires approximately 13% annual growth in electricity generation, which contrasts with the 1.7% growth over the last 2 decades (Bazilian et al., 2012). The specific business problem in this study was that little was known about sustainable strategies that multinational energy leaders can use to succeed in BOP markets (Owusu & Habiyakare, 2011). The results of this study may lead to the best strategies for large energy multinationals business leaders to use in BOP markets.

Reduction of Gaps

The literature has inadequately addressed multinational energy business leaders' strategic entry in BOP markets as they continuously show interest in the changes that occur daily in these markets. Small changes in a system can lead to large or even radical transformational changes in an organization (Stacey, 2011). The change in the perception of BOP markets by multinational business leaders warrants business research to accommodate the change. I expected the outcome of this study to fill that gap and contribute to the body of existing literature.

More specifically, existing academic literature does not address multinational energy strategies in Cameroon. The outcome of this study may assist multinationals seeking to do business in the country by providing a valuable tool to facilitate decision-

making and business strategy. The study may also benefit different audiences, including policymakers, local business managers, entrepreneurs, and researchers.

Finally, existing business literature has not addressed the BOP strategies of the multinational energy company under study. I expected this study to be the first of its kind for business leaders of the company to look back and learn from the findings. Other business leaders may benefit from the outcome, which may encourage similar business research for their companies and activities to promote business practice.

Implications for Social Change

In the 21st century, business leaders agree that creating wealth through superior financial performance alone is an outdated approach (Smith & Sharicz, 2011); encouraging sustainability is a modern approach (Gobble, 2012; Robinson, Kleffner, & Bertels, 2011). Engaging in sustainable improvement of lives in impacted communities creates a favorable business environment and increases the local economic power while providing an avenue for profit. This approach benefits both parties in the partnership.

This study promotes positive social change and brings immediate benefits to the local population, policymakers, and business entrepreneurs who operate in BOP communities. Community members may see improvement in their social life. Business leaders may expect to reap the benefits of sustainable practices for long-term use and protection of natural resources (Gobble, 2012; Robinson et al., 2011). In such a favorable atmosphere, business continuity will be a necessity for both parties. The resulting positive social change may increase prosperity, sustainability, and wellness in the impacted local communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

I researched various sources for information to identify, analyze, and synthesize the relevant themes for the research question and topic. The sources included academic journals, dissertations, reports, government sources, libraries, websites, and seminal books. The efforts emanating from academic research are for solutions toward solving a business problem. I seriously took into consideration the need for properly organizing literature during the process.

I organized the literature review process after I identified the different themes that emerged in the study. Conducting research for a professional body interested in applying findings to practice requires the ability to apply findings (Kot & Hendel, 2012; Marais, 2012). As a result, I properly planned the literature selection and review. I searched the Walden library databases (Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM, Thoreau multiple databases, Emerald) and many books on qualitative case study research. I also researched academic and professional journals, articles on conducting qualitative interviews, business research studies, BOP articles, several dissertations, and RSS-emails. Peer-reviewed and scholarly journal article publications used in the literature review included *The Leadership Quarterly*, *Global Strategy Journal*, *Journal of Technology Management*, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *World Development*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Emerald Group*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal Of Business Ethics*, *Thunderbird International Business Review*, *Journal of Global Management Studies Professional*, and *Challenge*.

I chose key words based on the actors involved, business challenges, business locations, possible problems, and processes. Phrases included *global multinationals*, *energy multinationals*, *BOP experience*, *bottom of the pyramid*, *BOP markets*, *sub-Saharan Africa*, *energy challenge*, *sustainable energy*, *lighting Africa*, *energy strategy*, *African business environment*, *Cameroon*, *Cameroon energy*, *Cameroon entrepreneurship*, *Cameroon business policy*, *alternative energy*, and *global business leadership*. Other keywords included *business research*, *BOP concept*, *corporate social responsibility*, *business risk management*, *change theory*, *qualitative research method*, *business case study research*, *SWOT analysis*, and *energy economics*.

I reviewed many articles and selected 219 relevant references; 197 were publications within the last 5 years, and 22 were older than 5 years. The articles less than 5 years old represented 90% of my references, and 10% were older than 5 years. Among the dissertations I reviewed, I cited seven of them in this study; two were older than 5 years. My references also included 25 seminal books and one website. The literature review included 192 peer-reviewed articles (88%). All of these efforts in selecting the appropriate literature helped inform the business research direction to provide a solution to applied professional practice with a focus on researching successful strategies for multinational entrepreneurs interested in BOP market opportunities. See Figure 1 below for the literature map.

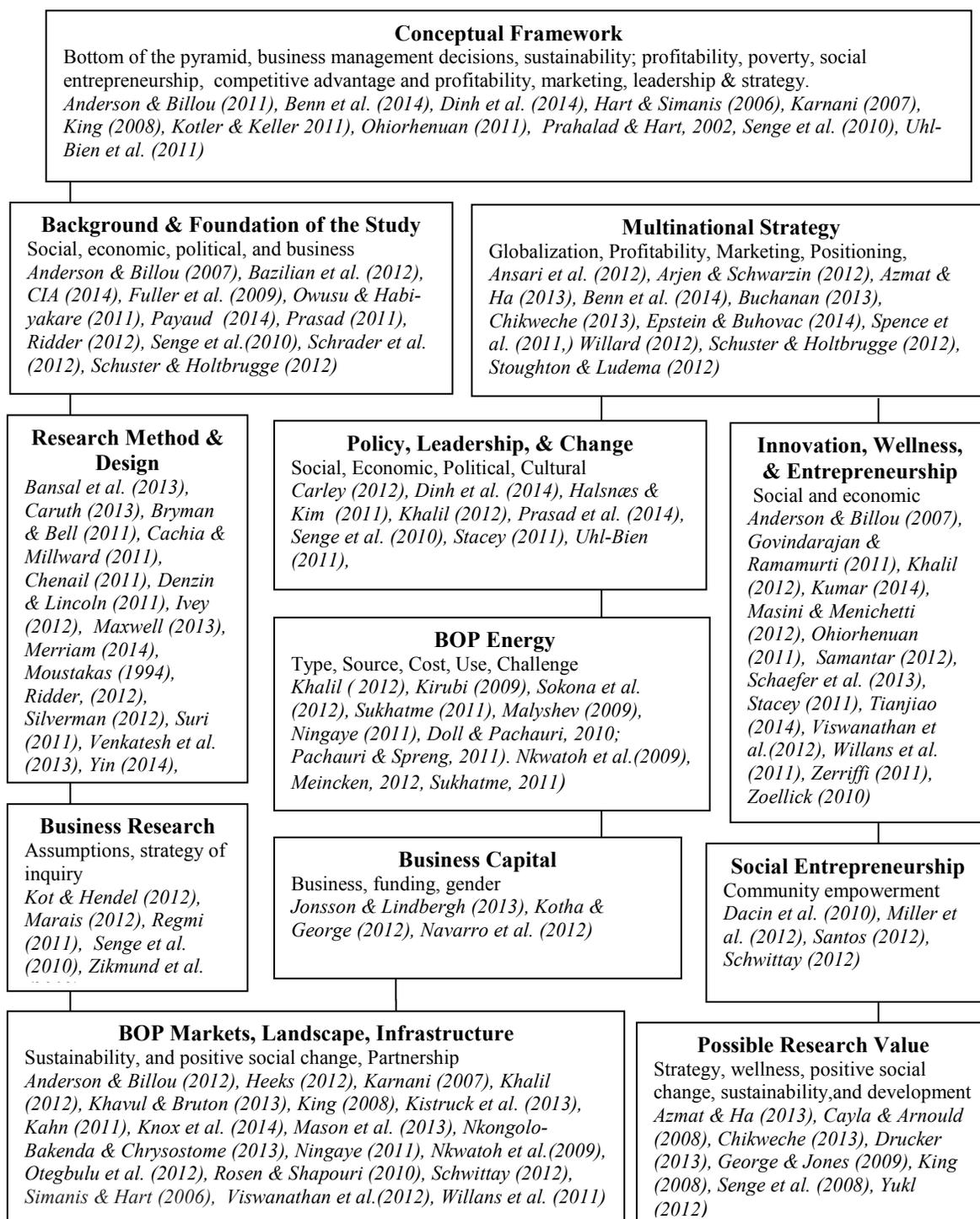


Figure 1. Literature map.

The previous table provided a summary of the literature in this study. It includes the names of authors as well as the year of publication. The table below is a numeric summary of the literature review. Out of 219 references, 192 are peer-reviewed and amount to 88% of the total.

Table 1

Literature Review Table Summary

Literature Review Citations	
Total references	219
Number of references used that are 5 or less years old	197
Percentage of references used that are 5 or less years old	90%
Total number of peer-reviewed references	192
Percentage of peer-reviewed references	88%

Sample Study

Scholars, businesses, and policymakers alike have advocated for the rural poor, but none of them has come up with a profitable strategy for business decision-makers. A research gap exists in the works of Kirubi (2009) and Muhoro (2010). The University of Michigan published Muhoro's 2010 dissertation, and it is an exemplary research model on a topic that led to improved business practice. I will describe the research findings from Kirubi (2009) in a later subsection. Muhoro (2010) explored the literature on a theoretical model, project studies, the choice of the population, previous research methods, and groups that researchers need to study. The context of the study included essential literature. Muhoro conducted a mixed-methods case study design to identify off-grid electricity access strategies in facilitating and supporting the microenterprise in

rural areas of Uganda not connected to the grid. Muhoro combined quantitative and qualitative methods, including informal surveys, intrabusiness energy allocation studies, and historical analysis to analyze off-grid electricity access among microenterprises in rural western Uganda (2010).

In collecting data, Muhoro (2010) used qualitative methods to allow new insight and prioritization of concepts to emerge from the research work instead of from theory. The data collection process was successful from a qualitative standpoint. The data collection differed from Kirubi's study in terms of geographical area with varying characteristics, realities, and other challenges. However, due to Muhoro's perceived limitations of qualitative data collection, Muhoro collected and analyzed quantitative data to enhance the study.

Muhoro (2010) found limited information on rural communities and their energy plight. Muhoro also expressed a need for a greater focus on businesses as opposed to needy families in the community, and on microenterprises in rural communities. Muhoro probed the lived experience of off-grid microenterprises in rural areas of Uganda. Muhoro investigated both the qualitative and quantitative impacts of off-grid electricity access on microenterprise growth in the regions under study. Yin (2014) asserted that a case study describes a single situation, event, or person, and has boundaries. Muhoro did not adequately justify the mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The use of the qualitative open-ended questions dominated the study. Muhoro found the qualitative methodology in combination with an entrepreneur perspective to be essential not only for

raising issues as they emerge from practice as relevant for the study but also for allowing continuous checking of the meaning of the findings.

To solve the business problem in my study from a business perspective, I decided a single case study would be effective in identifying strategists to help BOP entrepreneurs. By investigating the case identified through a detailed qualitative single case study research design, I would be able to identify emerging themes from open-ended questions, data sources, existing literature, and government sources. The information could serve experts in developing or perfecting strategies to deal profitably with the energy challenge in BOP markets.

Bottom of the Pyramid Markets

Bottom of the pyramid markets, also referred to as missing markets (Mason, Chakrabarti, & Singh, 2013), are the most challenging and underserved markets in the world. Entry barriers, low purchasing power, and presence in developing countries, especially sub-Saharan Africa, characterize BOPs (Ozaki, 2011; Willans, Christiansen, & Munro, 2011). Most of these markets do not quickly benefit from advances in business and finance models, which continue to remain outside their reach. They are poor communities struggling to come out of depravity as they strive to produce positive, social, and economic changes in their way of life. Agency costs in product distribution continue to rise due to poor distribution infrastructure (Kistruck, Sutter, Lount, & Smith, 2013). Most of the people suffer from energy poverty, poor living conditions, and living on less than \$1.25 a day (Anderson & Billou, 2012; Brew-Hammond, 2012).

BOP communities exist in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, also known as the “BRICs countries.” These countries have high growth economies and will soon become the world’s largest economy by 2030 (Kahn, 2011). In 2007 Goldman Sachs’s economists in the United States, using a variety of economic indicators, predicted the rise of BRICs economies by 2050 to become larger than the G7 (United States, Japan, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Canada, and Italy) and a major force in the world (Knox, Agnew, & McCarthy, 2014). These projections clearly indicate a future need for energy to meet the demands of the emerging economies. As a result, a good case study can provide business leaders with reliable BOP market entry strategies to profit from the emerging opportunities.

Some government leaders from the BOP communities solicit international investors by using creative strategies like inviting the diasporas as investors. They are industry experts, have access to capital, and can become foreign direct investors in their home countries (Nkongolo-Bakenda & Chrysostome, 2013). Existing research indicates that diaspora international entrepreneurship occurs due to the following: (a) the level of personal motivation, (b) the need for social recognition, (c) the entrepreneurial opportunities, (d) the friendliness and receptivity of the home country, and (e) a full integration and support by the host country (Nkongolo-Bakenda & Chrysostome, 2013). Due to the difficulties involved in engaging the diaspora, large multinational business leaders have an opportunity to take on large investment projects like the BOP energy challenge.

The Energy Challenge

Energy poverty continues to be a global challenge for struggling communities in BOP markets despite recent improvements in sustainable energy sources, which businesses expect to bring a breakthrough to the challenge. Global energy poverty accounts for more than one quarter of the world's population without electricity, and an estimated 2.6 billion people use charcoal, fuelwood, agricultural waste, and animal dung to meet their energy needs for heating and food preparation (Malyshev, 2009). Arresting the potentially devastating impact of climate change in poor countries around the world requires investments in programs that promote development while addressing climate change concurrently (Malyshev, 2009). Countries in sub-Saharan Africa spend less than 3% of their gross domestic product in the energy sector, with operating costs amounting to 75% of the total spent (Sokona, Mulugetta, & Gujba, 2012). With such low spending, they cannot raise the capital to invest in the needed large energy ventures.

Solving the global energy and climate challenges also calls for rich and poor nations to develop equitable and sustainable policies. Ironically, sub-Saharan Africa's top 10 hydrocarbon companies should be able to generate \$4 trillion between 2007 and 2030, with Nigeria and Angola expecting revenues of \$3.5 trillion (Malyshev, 2009). However, most of the citizens in these countries remain energy poor, with three quarters of them relying on dirty sources of energy for cooking (Kaygusuz, 2011), particularly in Benin, Nigeria, Ghana, and Cameroon. Strategies documented from a successful case study in Cameroon might provide a direction for addressing the energy crisis in BOP markets.

In Cameroon, cultural practices have had an impact on the energy challenge. Ningaye (2011) argued that modeling the multidimensional nature of poverty from a population's cultural conditioning can inform better policy evaluation. Two findings provided insights regarding the differences in perception and the differences in poverty determinants. Based on the needs of the population, decentralized, participatory, and cautious approaches can lead to poverty alleviation (Ningaye, 2011). Focusing on improving the energy infrastructure will make an important difference in the lives of Cameroonians. However, the input from the people in policymaking capacities as well as their participation in the solution is necessary. This single case study may provide insights into the phenomenon.

Existing literature indicates that poverty and energy challenges in struggling communities are connected, and researchers can approach them simultaneously. Energy shortage in general and electricity scarcity in particular are important indicators of poverty (Doll & Pachauri, 2010; Pachauri & Spreng, 2011). Over a 10-year period, nighttime satellite image data was collected to capture rural electricity access in sub-Saharan Africa to understand issues surrounding electrification efforts (Doll & Pachauri, 2010). The findings proved that extremely low per capita income, low population density, and high population dispersion affected the slow progression in energy expansion (Doll & Pachauri, 2010). These challenges raise awareness on how to extend sustainable electricity access to these households (Sokona et al., 2012).

Even the most advanced societies evolved through the years with challenges in energy. Electricity access first came to Europe in the mid-19th century, but in 2012,

many areas of the developing world were still struggling to light their first bulb (Doll & Pachauri, 2010). Many utility companies face financial challenges; hence, stakeholders must consider other off-grid solutions to the crises. Multinational business leaders see the challenges of financing rural electrification, as a problem if they were to invest large sums of money in communities may not be economically viable. However, until the right kind of investment in their energy infrastructure occurs, many rural communities that are economically viable will remain stagnant. Large multinational companies can fill this void (Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2012), but lack the right strategies to do so profitably.

In a study area located in Lagos, Nigeria, Otegbulu (2011) examined the planning and construction of sustainable housing developments in the context of neighborhood infrastructure provision to mitigate energy cost in households. The findings reveal the need to improve deplorable infrastructure provisions in the study area, leading to expensive, unsustainable choices (Otegbulu, 2011). Another study on electric bulb choices led to the discovery that most people, because of poverty and lack of exposure to alternatives, choose cheaper but inefficient light bulbs (Otegbulu, Odekoya, & Johnson, 2012). These challenges are rampant in communities where the government provides little help for the people, who then rely on business entrepreneurs to solve their pressing problem. With a focus on sustainable urban services in housing and development, there will be a reduction of slum formation, poor sanitation, and deteriorating neighborhoods (Otegbulu et al., 2012). Energy choices, infrastructure, and poverty are the challenges that affect sustainable business decision-making. Their understanding and consideration are helpful in making investment decisions.

The BOP energy challenge has an effect on sustainable choices by business leaders and consumers. Multinationals should consider renewable energy sources in the energy mix for the BOP markets. Renewable energy is easy to replenish and comes from natural sources like the sun, wind, water, ocean, biomass, geothermal, and rain (Khalil, 2012; Zerriffi, 2011). Renewable energy can be an alternative to conventional fuel in the following areas:

- Power generation.
- Hot water production.
- Transportation fuels.
- Rural electrification, and off-grid energy services (Khalil, 2012).

A cross-national examination of forest and environmental use in sub-Saharan Africa revealed that forest resources are decreasing at an alarming rate (Maathai, 2011). Drawing from a mixed study research in Nigeria and South Africa, Maathai (2011) showed the need to improve efforts in community-based environmental and conservation training programs as a major strategy to fight against unsustainable forest exploitation practices. Whether exploring for game, minerals, or energy sources such as wood, developers need to consider sustainability and environmental protection. Environmental degradation is another issue that negatively affects energy sustainability for rural electrification. Business leaders should include such issues in their investment decisions as they seek to include rural electrification in their coverage efforts.

Rural Electrification

In his 2009 doctoral dissertation, Kirubi focused on community-based microgrids in the country of Kenya located in East Africa. Kirubi grounded his research through theories of collective action to explore the limits and potential of such grids to increase power production through rural electrification in sub-Saharan Africa. Kirubi's major contribution was showing the circumstances under which micro-grids in communities can improve rural development as well as conditions under which people can start, promote, and be part of such projects. Kirubi mentioned the benefits of electricity use at home and work for businesses as well as individuals, resulting in better productivity and income. The author also mentioned the availability of suitable sites and the possibilities of setting up a mini hydro-electric generating plants for the benefit of the immediate and surrounding communities. Kirubi concluded that business leaders take advantage of existing local groups, microfinance agencies, government, development partners, and distribution channels to produce and better distribute electric benefits to communities. Relating to the current study, Kirubi reaffirmed the need to use some of the existing infrastructures to meet energy demand. However, he failed to address the importance of multinationals, which possess the right skills, capital, and technical knowledge to create a bigger energy impact through innovative and sustainable large-scale investments in electricity generation.

Business leaders must understand the dynamics involved in rural electrification before any significant investment for the purpose. Scholars, businesses, and policy-makers have brought the case for the rural poor forth, but as Kirubi (2009) and Muhoro

(2010) argued, none has come up with a profitable strategy for business decision-makers. The success of micro-grids in some communities with different economic advantages might not work in others with a lower per capita income. Questioning case participants through a qualitative single case study research design could provide more information on what people expect and can maintain in a profitable and sustainable manner.

Disparity in BOP Electrification

Poverty and population density affect the effectiveness of rural electrification as witnessed in sub-Saharan Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. Nighttime satellite imagery shows the lack of acceptable electricity access in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa and relates to the scarcity to low population density, high dispersion rate, and low per capita income needed to make such investments in electricity (Doll & Pachauri, 2010). Doll and Pachaur (2010) noted the importance of considering the dynamics in the field as evidenced in the spatial distribution of the unelectrified world populations before choosing the best option to provide them with electric access. From a practical perspective, this is a good way of approaching the problem and seeking a solution. However, Doll and Pachauri did not look at the problem from a business leader's perspective, nor did they propose any practical business strategies.

The need for rural electrification is urgent, and diverse energy solutions are necessary to increase electricity access because grid-tied electricity alone might not be suitable for all scenarios (Doll & Pachauri, 2010; Khavul & Bruton, 2013). This statement emphasizes the need for a qualitative inquiry into the chosen case study to set better strategies on products, pricing, associated technologies to the products,

maintenance, distribution, and sustainability. Clearly, until a researcher conducts a case study to know what the people might embrace, business managers cannot conclude on energy strategies to satisfy their needs, be it is solar, minihydro, geothermal, grid-tied or off-grid electricity, fuel wood, or other existing sources.

The need for large multinationals in the BOP energy debate remains important (Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2012). External and internal funding, effective mobilization, innovative policy decisions, effective implementation, and emphasis on productive uses of energy for income generation can create between 50% to 100% achievement rate to modern energy services by 2030 (Brew-Hammond, 2010). The design of this research study is to offer an avenue to creating wealth, alleviating poverty, and providing sustainable market entry strategies. Rather than a lofty expectation to deprived communities, this project is a way of moving them forward. However, the difficulties remain in convincing leaders of large energy businesses to invest capital and effectively reach the people who are most in need of energy to improve their living conditions.

The poor are the most vulnerable to paying higher energy costs (Khavul & Bruton, 2013). Indeed, BOP communities suffer more energy poverty than wealthy nations, culminating with a government monopoly of the energy sector (Doll & Pachauri, 2010; Kaygusuz, 2011; Pachauri & Spreng, 2011). Most of sub-Saharan Africa stands as evidence.

In 2005, efforts in rural electrification were less than 10% in sub-Saharan Africa (Bazilian et al., 2012). Recommendations to improve the situation include breaking up established monopolies for a competitive playing field, creating a new set of innovative

players, and emulating innovative regulatory tools from other continents to address the problem (Kaygusuz, 2011; Pachauri & Spreng, 2011).

Consumers and business practitioners should look for ways to affect communities positively in relation to product type, pricing, affordability, marketability, and need (Anderson & Billou, 2007). A decision on the correct approach calls for an understanding of a successful business case study for business leaders to bring their help through profitable investments and partnerships. Good planning and policy stand a chance to reject or entice large multinational entrepreneurs to the BOP markets.

Energy Policy

For BOP countries seeking multinational partners, priorities for policy-makers can be energy deregulation, fighting monopolies, and encouraging energy entrepreneurs. Some scholars have recommended open market approach toward monopolistic behaviors (Doll & Pachauri, 2010; Pachauri & Spreng, 2011). These positions call for more research to understand how to make better strategic moves. The solution to crafting strategies to serve new market entrepreneurs better may reside in conversations with successful business leaders.

Deregulation has a significant role in fighting monopolies and promoting competition amongst business entrepreneurs. Economic deregulation of electricity production that guarantees a fair rate-of-return changes the business competitive landscape for most companies trying to enter the energy industry (Kim, 2011). Kim's (2011) findings came from 6 years of data, and showed that on the average, wholesale electricity generation has a link with a lower probability of entry into opportunities for

renewal energy generation. With deregulation, traditional monopolies will have to implement strategies of differentiation and cost leadership to stay competitive. In deregulation, there is a move from a guaranteed rate-of-return protection of the capital invested, to an open market competition and antitrust (Kim, 2011). While this might stifle innovation and investment incentives, deregulation sets the pace for new horizons.

Demand-side management experience from western countries can serve as a foundation for energy strategy in developing countries. Carley (2012) described the status of demand-side management (DSM) model in the United States and explored how it affects electricity operations. Decades ago, DSM operations were partly the responsibility of the government alongside utility companies, but today the government's role is increasing in DSM due to climate change, efficiency-level mandates, and to implement effective policy mechanisms (Carley, 2012). Using a methodological approach aimed at minimizing the selection bias inherent in nonexperimental research design, Carley tested the relationship between DSM policy and program efforts as well as the quantity of saved electricity. The findings confirmed (a) state DSM initiatives account for electricity savings nationwide; (b) energy efficiency portfolio standards and performance incentives were effective in promoting electricity savings, and (c) the DSM model has emerged over state policy to the era as a promising decarbonization policy strategy amongst all possible carbon mitigation options. However, public benefits funds lacking the backing of other DSM policies are not serious drivers of DSM program participation of total DSM electricity savings (Carley, 2012).

Van Kooten and Wong (2010) highlighted the constant interruptions characteristic of national grid in developing countries and the struggle by business leaders dependent on them to seek other more reliable sources of energy for manufacturing, processing, and other uses. In their research, Van Kooten and Wong developed a stochastic simulation of a small wind-generated power grid that connected to an unreliable national grid to test for effectiveness and cost reduction. There were two generators to provide backup power when necessary. From the findings, the authors proved that electricity costs could drastically reduce while consumers enjoying a more reliable system with many advantages to the environment. The major setback was the limited supply of wind throughout the year.

Van Kooten and Wong's (2010) demonstrated that one size does not fit all. While some scholars advocate the use of solar as a stand-alone solution, others have recommended minihydro grids as the way to solve the energy crisis in developing countries. To the chagrin of environmentalists, some customers can profit by using wind power and diesel generators as a third solution. From a business standpoint, it would be important for van Kooten and Wong to have investigated what worked best for the people as well as entrepreneurs in their words before seeking a lasting solution. Price reduction as a basis for solving the energy crisis is part of the solution but may not be sustainable. Other success factors may vary in different communities and must be investigated properly through research and beginning with open-ended questions from a successful case study.

Information Technology

Technology is an important engine for large multinationals in business growth in today's business environment. Creating a green economy does not only require investments in energy, but also granting access to information communication technologies (ICTs) using renewable energy sources with hopes of transforming societies (Samantar, 2012). Miller and Shrum (2012) observed that despite the global increase in the use of various ICTs, average and professional women in most emerging communities do not have the same access as men have. The need for a balanced approach to sustainable ICT use can be an important factor to create awareness in improving the quality of life in struggling communities and open doors to a new market of opportunities. ICT solutions break barriers and provide information about the every aspect of the global community (Samantar, 2012). Without reliable energy supply, ICT access will be impossible for many living in remote areas.

Despite the gender disparity in ICT access, large populations of the BOP market need the benefits of technology, which together with energy can be rewarding to both investors and the community. Multinational high-tech companies have been creating an enabling environment to new consumers in BOP markets as a way to alleviate poverty (Schwittay, 2012). Hewlett-Packard (HP) leaders engaged in eradicating poverty through profit at the bottom of the pyramid by sustainably investing in information technology entrepreneurship as evidenced in rural poor Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Central Europe (Schwittay, 2012). In Kuppam, India, community information center operators and village photographers promoted ICT services; created an opportunity for the

government to reach and serve the rural population; and created electronic entrepreneurs who were valuable in spreading awareness of HP's products as they became electronic entrepreneurs (Schwittay, 2012). A good understanding of HP leaders' successes and failures in this case can help other business leaders seeking entry into BOP markets around the world to replicate and improve the strategies.

The Energy Transition Theory

The energy transition theory is the expectation by some scholars that families in developing countries have to go through different levels of energy use based on income, hence moving from the use of dirty energy sources like fuelwood to the use of better sources such as solar or liquefied natural gas (Sokona et al., 2012). Hiemstra-van der Horst and Hovorka (2008) examined from a practical perspective, the relevance of the energy transition theory through a case study conducted in Maun, Botswana, as well as using existing reports from available literature. The findings reveal that despite the existing link between modern fuel consumption and socioeconomic development nationally, *transition* did not adequately reflect the energy consumption pattern at the lower level (Hiemstra-van der Horst & Hovorka, 2008). Because of income and social realities affecting the bottom lower level of the population in the Botswana case study, expectations are different, and the transition does not occur partly due to cost and income disparities.

Policies around the use of fuelwoods should be carefully drafted to reflect the expectations and affordability of the lower levels of the aggregation (Bouget, Lassauce, & Jonsell, 2012; Hiemstra-van der Horst & Hovorka, 2008). Proponents of the energy

transition theory need to recognize the challenges of people who have to decide whether to buy food and medicine or upgrade to modern energy sources and deal with the expenses of acquiring associated hardware up front. While energy transition is a necessity, it will not happen to every segment of the population as evidenced in developing countries.

Most of sub-Saharan Africa still finds it expensive to transition to cleaner energy sources like electricity, liquid natural gas, and renewable energy. In the Buea municipality of the Republic of Cameroon, more than 80% of sampled households supplement domestic energy with dirty sources like fuelwood, sawdust, rubber, and charcoal (Nkwatoh, Manga, Yinda, Iyasa, & Nkwatoh, 2009). Despite the low cost of acquisition, these sources are pollutants to the environment and can produce negative consequences to the health of the consumers. Other inconveniences include longer cooking times, smoke inhalation, darkening of walls, and equipment damage (Nkwatoh et al., 2009). This phenomenon relates directly to income levels and spans through most communities in sub-Saharan Africa (Hiemstra-van der Horst & Hovorka, 2008). The use of sawdust and fuelwood in the Buea municipality as the preferred energy source due to lower incomes is responsible for the gradual but steady dilapidation of the rich mountain forest around the community (Nkwatoh et al., 2009). Thus, past research suggests a qualitative case study of the energy consumption experience in developing countries will be helpful in positively influencing sustainable energy planning to benefit the entire community.

Energy Planning

Nations with BOP communities should embark on strategic energy planning. It is a roadmap geared to meet and satisfy the energy needs of a nation and accomplished through multiple factors like technology, the economy, the environment, and the society's impacting energy issues (Prasad et al., 2014). From previous energy transitions, energy and development are context-specific thus requiring different BOP nations to chart their energy transition pathway for the future (Sokona et al., 2012). Energy planning should include the public and private sectors taking into consideration the needs of the communities to impact (Prasad et al., 2014). Countries and policy-makers have the responsibility to deal properly with the challenges of reliable, safe, sustainable and secure energy supply for the people they represent (Khalil, 2012; Sokona et al., 2012). Sub-Saharan Africa as a developing subcontinent should learn from the mistakes of the developed world and instead of relying on fossil fuels to solve energy problems, they should inculcate renewable energy strategies wherever possible (Meincken, 2012). Addressing the energy mix continues to be a challenging factor for most African countries who must import at least one element of their energy need (Khalil, 2012). This is especially true in medium to large construction projects all over sub-Saharan Africa.

In today's global construction industry, building energy-efficient design and materials are important in deciding energy efficiency of a house (Essie & Christian, 2012; Taneja, 2011). Essie and Christian (2012) conducted research in the commercial district of Kumasi, Ghana, and showed inefficient glazing types and recommends the use of highly shaded reflective glazing for higher energy gain. Planning prior to construction

and using energy efficient building products to match the elements in Kumasi will be beneficial in reducing energy demands (Essie & Christian, 2012). In addition to construction, planning is essential in other sources of energy like the harvesting of fossil fuels.

Struggling communities affected by crude oil exploration before, during, and after the process must undertake energy planning initiatives. Crude oil exploration is unsustainable and has made environmental protection a challenge to many struggling communities around the world due to contamination and ways of exploration (Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur, & Schley, 2010). Communities that rely on servicing the crude oil industries and their workers will face a tough economic downturn when the oil wells run dry. Most of the people in oil exploration communities lack enough education about the unsustainable nature of crude oil; hence, a need for diverse business initiatives (Tipton, 2011). For most of these communities, innovation in drilling technology and petroleum exploration could bring about financial success in the community (Tipton, 2011). The Permian Basin in New Mexico has seen a continuous reduction in crude oil production due to the wells drying out (Tipton, 2011). Communities with declining oil production should embrace and not reject disruptive innovation that might bring cost-effective ways to generate power from wind and solar (Tipton, 2011). With the right education, leaders and economic operators in such communities will be able to make informed adjustments when oil exploration declines (Tipton, 2011). This justifies the need to include community education as part of a country's energy planning initiatives.

Energy planning should consider all sectors that include residential, commercial, agricultural, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and construction use. An emerging economy like India has an estimated per capita need of 1840 kilowatt-hour (KwH) per year (Sukhatme, 2011). On the other hand, the per capita value for most western countries is greater than 10,000 KwH per annum (Sukhatme, 2011). At the current economic growth rate, India expects to reach 2000KwH of per capita consumption per annum in 20 years (Sukhatme, 2011). These numbers make the case of sub-Saharan Africa looks grim when it comes to growth in energy production considering the struggling economies of the subcontinent. In addition to traditional energy sources, renewable sources to consider in future planning include solar, wind, biomass, marine current, ocean thermal, wave energy, and tidal energy (Sukhatme, 2011). For sub-Saharan Africa to be globally competitive there has to be a serious change in the general awareness of its population requiring properly coordinated multi-level success programs to bring about changes in worldview leading to sustainable development (Spies, 2011). Communities will hardly reach development goals without planning to have the right infrastructure in place.

The Infrastructure Challenge

Poor infrastructure is a serious challenge in BOP communities. Policy improvements are recommended to help microenterprises of the informal economy to become engines of economic growth and also graduate from limiting buyer-seller exchanges in socially embedded informal environments (Viswanathan, Sridharan, Ritchie, Venugopal, & Jung, 2012). Access to better infrastructure is an important engine

for improving the economy (World Bank, 2015), but for Sub-Saharan Africa, the poor state of its infrastructure stands in the way to economic prosperity. While efforts are continuous to invest in infrastructure, the state of most infrastructures in developing countries is deplorable (Viswanathan et al., 2012) because of poor design and lack of proper maintenance (Essie & Christian, 2012; Taneja, 2011). If policymakers can improve conditions to ease the access of firms to improved transportation or energy infrastructure, for example, it will be a very effective approach to stimulating economic growth (Donaldson, Spocter, du Plessis, & van Niekerk, 2012).

Moving goods and services in BOP markets is more profitable with the right infrastructure in place. The infrastructure will promote reduced supply chain complications, sustainable costs, and quality management (Zerriffi, 2011). Quality management and supply chain management must evolve from the traditional product-focused mindset to accommodate a more tolerant interfirm cooperation in upstream and downstream chains for competitive advantage (Soltani, Azadegan, Liao, & Phillips, 2011). This is contrary to the position that the lack of basic infrastructure in governance results in significant delays and backlogs for entrepreneurs doing business in developing countries (Azmat, 2013). An understanding of the business environment in developing countries is a beginning point to understand what kind of sustainable efforts are necessary to tackle the problem. The efforts may balance the socio-political, technical, economic, and environmental interactions in developing countries as they make plans to improve their infrastructure (Ngara, 2011). The community development goals will have an opportunity to progress positively. Recently, consumer responses influence offshoring of

products and services in the developed economies (Grappi, Romani & Bagozzi, 2013). For the BOP market to benefit from offshoring, improvements to their infrastructure is necessary for community development.

Energy, Poverty, and Community Development

The role of energy in sustainable community development and human well-being is important as a productivity enhancement factor (IEA, 2014; Rosnes & Vennemo, 2012). The concept of development in most struggling communities can be more successful using a proactive way of conducting business (Senge et al., 2010). In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, historical changes in the epistemological foundations of development thinking have an effect on how Africans view and manage development (Ohiorhenuan, 2011). Poverty alleviation in Africa cannot end through reliance on foreign aid or playing the role of a victim in international development (Dees, 2014; Ohiorhenuan, 2011).

Achieving business success alongside sustainable community development requires integrating policy goals related to energy, climate, and sustainability (Khalil, 2012; Sokona et al., 2012). African leadership should set challenging but attainable goals for the next few decades to include poverty eradication, transparent governance, public accountability, innovation, improved standard of living, and global competitiveness (Ohiorhenuan, 2011). Thus, economic growth in poor communities might emerge through the integration of policy goals and the practice of reverse innovation to affect the global community positively (Govindarajan & Ramamurti, 2011).

Community development. The implementation of a community-centric approach to the BOP concept should undergo an evaluation for societal impact on business-driven ventures (Ansari, Munir, & Gregg, 2012). The evaluation for the advancement of capacity building and retention should include: (a) whether the community's social capital is preserved, and (b) whether there is an enhancement of the social capital between the community in question, and a network that is richer in resources (Ansari et al., 2012). Other frameworks emerged previously towards the development of BOP communities.

Achieving sustainable community development is a multidimensional challenge that includes time and space, as well as social and environmental challenges (King, 2008; Spence, Gherib, & Ondoua, 2011). The sustainable value framework addresses sustainability using four quadrants that help place an organization's activities in perspective to creating and maintaining value while staying relevant (King, 2008). As shown in Figure 2, the quadrants, each with its own strategy and intended corporate payoffs, include pollution prevention leading to cost and risk reduction; product stewardship leading to reputation and legitimacy; clean technology leading to innovation and repositioning; and a sustainable vision leading to a sustainable growth trajectory (King, 2008).

Figure 2 below is an example of a sustainable value concept. It addresses pollution prevention, clean technology, product leadership, and a sustainable vision. Expectations include cost and risk reduction; innovation and repositioning; reputation and legitimacy; and sustainable growth.

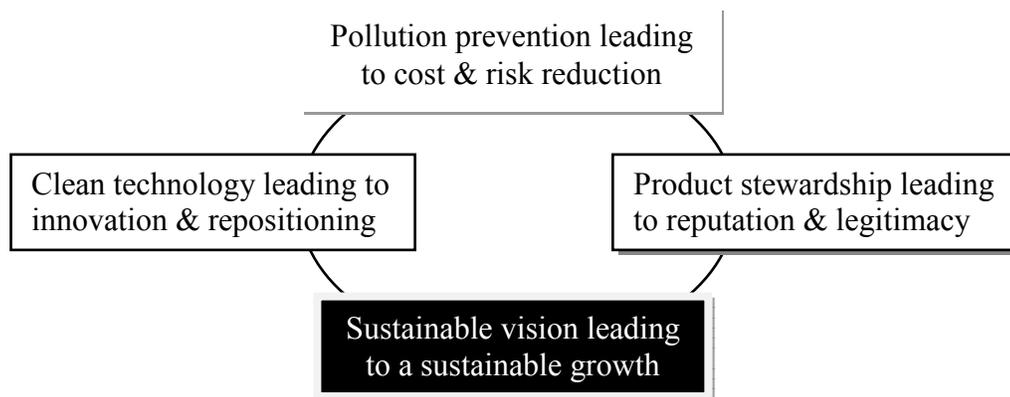


Figure 2. The sustainable value concept.

Making an investment decision following a sustainable value concept raises questions from business leaders about the viability of the investment. First is a two-stage model that examines if behavioral factors have a measurable effect on the investor's decision to consider energy projects, and whether, in return, the energy side of the portfolio resulting from such decisions gets reflected in the portfolio performance (Masini & Menichetti, 2012). As previously discussed, most business leaders are not interested in investing in poor communities as evidenced due to risks, chances of failure, and fear of political machinations (Anderson & Billou, 2007). The need for incentives, a strong commitment to social change, and a possibility for profitability will make a difference in investor behavior. An investor's trusts in what technology to invest in, as well as the efficiency of market mechanisms, play a major role in decision-making (Masini & Menichetti, 2012).

Sustainable energy infrastructure. The optimal infrastructure planning for energy should be sustainable in BOP markets. Olarewaju (2011) highlighted the need for

renewable energy in general and solar in particular amidst the challenges of handling the technology, to relieve 86% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa with no access to electricity, potable water, health care services, and education. Despite the benefits of solar technology, Olarewaju insisted on the necessity for capacity building in solar technology to keep pace with the rate of installation and avoid system failure or costly states of disrepair. Olarewaju validated the need for capacity development to sustain the renewable energy technology sector in Africa by showing how the latter was ill-prepared, through a qualitative research method, through open-ended interviews with 60 respondents in Lagos-Nigeria and Texas. The Texas experiment tried to deliver solar electricity while the Lagos experiment tried to deliver knowledge about solar electricity to reach the same successful goal as seen in the Texas experiment (Olawaju, 2011). The challenges in the African experiment included the lack of preparation, limited information about the technology, lack of consumer awareness, inadequate workforce skills to support solar systems, limited stake and community participation in energy choices, and price comparison with other energy alternatives. Sustainability should not only relate to energy systems, but building designs as well.

Sub-Saharan Africans usually design buildings without energy efficiency in mind. Otegbulu (2011) studied the case of the city of Lagos, Nigeria, to analyze the need for environmentally sustainable green designs. After passing questionnaires to more than 1,000 households in eight metropolitan local government areas, Otegbulu was able to determine the problems in power generation and the overwhelming use of private generators to make up for insufficient energy supply in the city. The findings showed

that the country had not yet embraced the *green concept* in infrastructure design and environmental management. The dirty fumes from substandard generators as opposed to sustainable clean options leads to poor health and shows how the population is not exposed to or ready to embrace sustainable design and construction practices (Otegbulu, 2011). The results suggest the need for innovative measures is achievable by large energy multinationals to reduce the problem.

The case for promoting renewable energy sources should occur in a sustainable manner that looks at a holistic approach from conception to the end. Maathai (2011) argued that for sustainability to succeed there must be a holistic balance in our political, social, economic, technical, and environmental interactions. In handling the energy infrastructure challenge, energy partnerships should go through careful analysis for efficiency and effectiveness (Szulecki et al., 2011). More important is to research effective strategies to influence the influx of large international partners.

A country without a reliable infrastructure may not be able to accommodate large foreign investors seeking to improve business processes. Infrastructure in countries around the world has a direct relationship to their energy development, production, and export capabilities (Senge et al., 2010). In sub-Saharan Africa, a reliable infrastructure may be an underlying requirement and precondition affecting successful export trade, with varying results by industry based on differences in industrial sectors. Rural market infrastructure is an area of neglect that needs investment in sub-Saharan Africa (Kaseke & Hosking, 2013; Rosen & Shapouri, 2010), and the infrastructure most needed includes telecommunications, transportation, and energy sectors. Analysts at the International

Finance Corporation (2010) estimate that annual investments in African road infrastructure to be \$10 billion which amounts to approximately 50% of its need for sustainable economic growth to occur. Understanding the case under study can better inform decision-makers to make the right sustainable choices for needy communities.

Energy and Food Security

Sustainable improvements in energy and food security are essential to the survival of most people in poor African communities. Global food security could potentially deteriorate over the next 10 years, and worse in sub-Saharan Africa based on the current trend in agricultural output, foreign trade, and population (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). Regional governments, international donors, and improved grain yields will bring about improvements while investment and the use of technology will remain a challenge (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). Harsh weather leads to a shortage in food production, and the lack of foreign exchange is a barrier to increasing imports for offsetting mediocre harvest (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). Countries like Cape Verde, Eritrea, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone saw grain losses ranging between 16 to 50% with Zimbabwe reaching 78% below trend (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). In 2010, African countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Kenya, and Somalia had 80-100% vulnerability in food security while current projections for 2020 estimate 500 million people or 59% of the population will consume less than half of the nutritional estimate (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). According to the nutritional standard of 2,100 calories per person per day, 70 poor developing countries, including 37 in sub-Saharan Africa, will have a future nutritional gap needing a solution (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010).

Energy abundance will be vital in agriculture and food processing. Solving the food crises in sub-Saharan Africa requires (a) strategies for raising yields which are currently among the lowest in the world, (b) seeking local and international donors, and (c) being proactive in adopting technology for farmer owning one to five hectares of land who lack the technology to properly maximize production (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). The amount of output per unit of total factor used for production (TFP) in the area has seen improvements mainly from efficiency gains than to changes in technology whose contribution was zero in 10 out of 30 countries studied (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). The gains came from crop selection and fertilizer use on the most performing crops which lead strategists to put their efforts towards exposing small farmers to improved technology. Sub-Saharan Africa got two-thirds of total world food aid as recorded in 2008 which amounted to four million tons (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010) despite the vast land area it occupies. Rosen and Shapouri (2010) argued technology costs could experience a reduction by investing in human capital formation and training in agriculture. The shortage of water and expensive cost of using fertilizers has made sub-Saharan Africa use the least fertilizer in the world. Cheap energy for irrigation will alleviate the problem.

Irrigation provides enough water to justify the use of fertilizers for improved agricultural output, variety, and profitability. Only 4.3% of arable land experience irrigation in sub-Saharan Africa compared to a 19% world average (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). However costly the investment might seem, expanding irrigation to other arable areas creates the possibility of increased profits. Alternatively, investments could be

made in drought-mitigating and water harvesting techniques to manage farming risks effectively through adopting drought and pest resistant crops designed for rain-fed farms (Rosen & Shapouri, 2010). Addressing the challenges in Africa over the next few decades should include an African development narrative from the people and its leaders with a commitment to turning the continent's destiny to withstand global competition (Ohiorhenuan, 2011). Additionally, business entry strategies are necessary to entice large multinational leaders to invest capital and innovative technology in BOP markets (Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2012).

Sustainability

The definition of sustainability has evolved from balancing growth with environmental health to meeting environmental, economic, and social goals as failures in one of them can significantly threaten the others (Arjen & Schwarzin, 2012; King, 2008). The social challenge of sustainability efforts raises difficulties in reducing the environmental impact of economic growth primarily because a larger portion of the world's population has not benefitted from economic growth. Residents of some of the BOP communities who live in abject poverty rely heavily on improving their condition using whatever benefits their environment can produce through hunting, deforestation, agriculture, gathering, and more. The economics of sustainability can find and implement ways to improve the economic condition and standards of living of disadvantaged communities to facilitate the reduction of negative environmental consequences of economic activities (Khavul & Bruton, 2013; King, 2008).

Business leaders of the 21st century do better when they have sustainability in their model (Arjen & Schwarzin, 2012; Buchanan, 2013; Stoughton & Ludema, 2012). In today's competitive landscape, many large corporations are going global and looking for ways to improve sustainability and financial performance (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014; Spence et al., 2011; Willard, 2012). Decisions that positively affect the environment lead to continuity and our ability to thrive in our environment. A stakeholder approach, with the inherent values of freedom, responsibility, justice, inclusion, participation, and mutual dependence in service of creating value for different actors, offers the best hope of effecting the pursuit of global as well as organizational sustainability (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014). Although the law does not prescribe sustainability, it guarantees continuity for future generations and make a company look good from public perception.

Sustainable management expertise can exist under four categories. They include those being (a) messengers, (b) scientists, (c) artists, and (d) storytellers (Tang, Robinson, & Harvey, 2011). Their talents relate to expertise, values, inspiration, strategic thinking, empowerment, and social contribution as key meaning (Tang et al., 2011). As a result, recruitment efforts by business leaders can attract sustainability talents and witness the growth of individual managers and the firm at large.

The benefits of sustainable practices by business leaders are increasingly doubling with public awareness. Many organizations are discovering that expanding the boundaries of their thinking towards a circular economy opens up strategic opportunities as well as reduce waste (Arjen & Schwarzin, 2012; Senge et al., 2010). Humans can resolve the inability of the environment to replenish raw materials to meet demand

through the circular economy. This alternative industrial system reduces waste by converting usable by-products and re-using them for ongoing production or sending them back to regenerative sources. The first by-products are the “natural nutrients” that are biodegradable and move back into nature's regenerative resources (Senge et al., 2010). They include compostable food wastes, compostable clothing made from organic fiber, and water coming from converting hydrogen into electricity in fuel cells for renewable energy products. The second type of usable by-product is “technical nutrients” consisting of materials that can circulate back into manufacturing like soda cans, bottles, computers, and automobile components (Senge et al., 2010). Other examples include by-products of manufacturing, like waste heat or chemical wastes.

Tracy and Mills (2011) conducted a study in the country of Kenya at a poultry farm to determine the most affordable way to light up the facility and pass on the savings to the farmers. The energy sources for electricity production in the study included kerosene, fluorescent bulbs, and LED lighting systems. The controlled test result at the full-scale chicken production setting revealed that revenue could increase by converting to off-grid electric lighting systems (Tracy & Mills, 2011). By eliminating the use of kerosene, Tracy and Mills found LED systems produced the most illumination, were more affordable, and were environmentally cleaner. Additionally, workers benefited in other ways. Tracy and Mills showed that by replicating such a model in most developing countries suffering from an energy shortage, more saving would be possible while satisfying the energy needs of communities. Due to the overreaching effects of human activities, the limited quantity of nonrenewable energy resources (crude oil, water, wood,

and minerals) faces a significant threat (Swilling, 2012). The problem of water supply and distribution is a concern. For the government to ensure sustainable communities, new regulations should protect water resources (Mackenzie, 2011). The benefits of introducing sustainable solutions strategy to a community can be better from a qualitative case study of successful business leaders.

The sustainable value framework demonstrates the relationship between sustainability and the core functions of any business while helping people place an organization's activities in perspective, and shows how work can be carried out for value creation and maintenance as well as simplifies the strategic decision making (Senge et al., 2010). The global landscape of risks and opportunities is rapidly changing, and business leaders are interested in understanding how to accommodate the changes in sustainability innovation while staying profitable in today's marketplace. Sustainability should be about making a profit in a responsible and continuous way that does not compromise the needs of the future as we struggle to improve our living conditions (Benn, Dunphy & Griffiths, 2014; King, 2008). Creating shareholder value requires performance on multiple dimensions. Systems thinking as a component of sustainable thinking, is simply stepping back and seeing patterns that are intuitive and easy to grasp when seen clearly (Senge et al., 2010; Xinyue et al., 2012). System thinking helps companies understand unintended side effects by helping them think of the whole picture and not on parts of the whole. While industries have been so successful and disastrous at the same time, a radical shift in thinking will bring sustainable solutions to global challenges (King, 2008). Our larger natural world includes living non-regenerative and regenerative resources that

can sustain human activities indefinitely. Unsustainable resources that do not regenerate include oil, minerals, the industrial system's generated waste from extracting and harvesting, and the larger social system of communities, families, schools, and culture that accommodates the industrial system (King, 2008). These resources will only diminish over time and need protection.

In today's competitive landscape, many large corporations are going global and looking for ways to improve their firm's financial performance with sustainability in mind (Arjen & Schwarzin, 2012; Benn, Dunphy, & Griffiths, 2014; Buchanan, 2013; Stoughton & Ludema, 2012; Willard, 2012). As Epstein and Buhovac (2014) argued, global sustainability demands business attention for four reasons:

1. Government regulations: The existence of government regulations with serious consequences for non-compliance leading to legal costs, inspections and productivity loss, the possible closure of operations, and damage to corporate regulation.
2. Community relations: The community, NGOs, and environmental activists constantly understand sustainability and the impact corporations have on the environment, the society, and the economy. Business leaders must understand the socioeconomic and environmental challenges that are important to key stakeholders in order to foster loyalty and trust.
3. Cost and revenue imperatives: The good reputation of a corporation with a successful, sustainable policy can greatly increase revenues and lower costs.

Lowering costs can emerge through efficient use of resources, products and process improvement, and a decrease in regulatory fines.

4. Societal and moral obligations: Business executives and corporations must maintain acceptable corporate sustainability strategies. Business leaders should integrate the concept of sustainability into the relationship between businesses and the society with a positive social, economic, and environmental impact.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Porter (2008) contributed to management practice and sustainability theory by proposing a hands-on guide through the process of achieving sustainable goals and objectives from a combination of ideological positions and systems designs. The article initially addresses the existence of a gap between the intentions of organizations to adopt corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies and their provision of a clear strategy as well as practical management tools for realizing such intentions. The author further recommended three principal contributions to address the gaps identified. They include initially defining CSR, sustainability, and their practical relationship; developing a typology of CSR standpoints that incorporates a number of other classifications; and offering a menu of practical methods and measurement metrics based on interpretive and complex adaptive systems (CAS) perspectives.

Corporate social strategy attracts and retains quality personnel while enhancing corporate image and reputation amongst other benefits (Sousa & Farache, 2011).

Through a qualitative study of four Brazilian firms – two retail and two energy businesses

– higher social performance emerged as valuable in successful corporate governance.

The competitive advantage stemming from the corporate social strategy emerges through employee motivation, talent retention, additional value, higher economic performance, innovation and higher environmental performance. Research in the Khama Rhino Sanctuary in Botswana showed that the sanctuary has been successful in attracting visitors and increasing its bottom-line through community participation (Stone & Stone, 2011). The results suggest that community participation is important for CSR to be effective.

The chief executive officer of the General Electric Company in the United States, Jeffrey Immelt, announced that to improve business profitability and stay competitive, his company would implement innovation, social policies, and environmental policies (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014). From a production standpoint, the plan was to use products at the end of their life-cycle to reproduce new ones. However, in terms of addressing social and economic factors, business leaders must learn sustainable practices from the experience of successful practitioners.

Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA)

A life-cycle assessment is a method to evaluate the environmental burdens related to a product, activity, or system by identifying and describing in a quantitative or qualitative manner, the consumed energy and materials as well as wastes released to the environment, and then assess the energy impacts (Senge et al., 2010; Takano et al., 2014). The life-cycle assessment (LCA) identifies processes and systems as well as ingredients that are significant contributors to environmental impact, compared options within a

process with hopes of lowering impact on the environment; and guides decision-makers to strategically plan for the long term for product design trends and material (Senge et al., 2010). For materials, products, or services, LCA provides a balance that is both material and energy by assessing its environmental impact and determining its interaction.

For an LCA, work should be strategically positioned so everyone included in the process can move quickly and easily between the different stages, and a more detailed analysis of certain services and products can be performed (Senge et al., 2010; Takano et al., 2014). The life-cycle assessment approach shown in Figure 3 is designed to identify and quantify the environmental implications of an industry throughout the lifetime of their services, as well as the direct and indirect economic, environmental, and sustainability implications of their actions.

Implications of Life-Cycle Assessment

Implications of the LCA in the services, as shown in figure 3, provide an exposure to the need for action in making choices that align with sustainable outcomes. In building construction, life cycle assessments and life-cycle energy assessments are necessary in large and small buildings alike in both cities and suburbs for a reliable impact analysis (Cabeza et al., 2014). The business entity leaders' construction activities as illustrated, does not promote decisions on what products would better sustain the environment (Olander, 2012). Leaders in the construction business work on acquiring cost-effective products to maximize profit because lower costs to the client are the basis for contract awards.

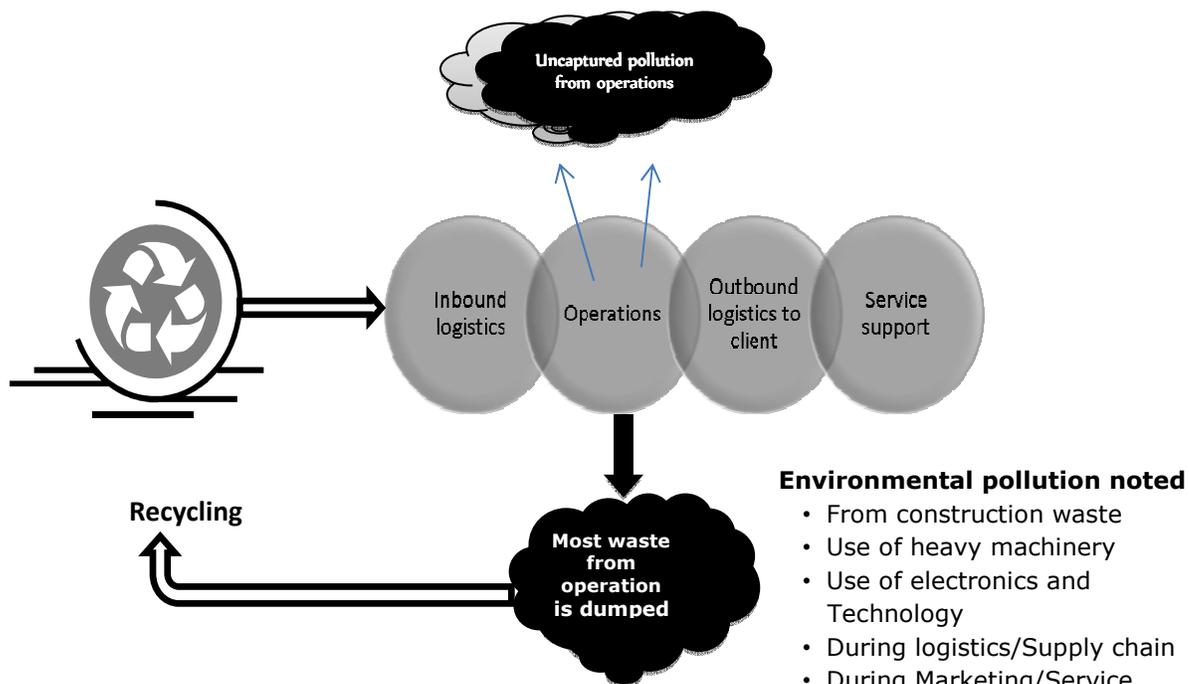


Figure 3. Life-cycle assessment diagram.

On the other hand, clients, such as government bodies that are supposed to be looking out for the people's interests, should make efforts to promote companies that are more inclined to sustainability as a step to get them involved in a circular economy (Spence et al., 2011). Investing with sustainability in mind brings success for both investors and the community. Miller, Grimes, McMullen, and Vogus (2012) proposed that integrative thinking, and social entrepreneurship objectives include (a) innovating revenue streams to increase sustainability efforts for ambitious company leaders who provide solutions to societal problems, and (b) rethinking BOP communities members as customers and partners instead of gifts recipients. Bechtel USA, for example, is well

positioned to lead the construction industry toward sustainability thinking, given its position as a construction and engineering industry leader.

The implications of the life-cycle analysis, increase the need for research to better understand the service industry. The study of sustainable thinking has offered new insights and approaches towards a sustainable economy and environment by focusing mostly on manufacturing and the evolution of the industrial sector. In the United States, services compose of about 75% of the gross domestic product of leading industries in banking, trade, and retail, generating less pollution in production, but are indirectly responsible for the majority of pollution and resource use through their value chain. A greater understanding of the full economic, social, and environmental impact of the service industries is necessary to formulate a strategy for a sustainable outcome. The opportunities for environmental improvements of service sector outputs, in particular, can lead to better evaluation and given more exposure.

System Changes

Small changes in a system can lead to large, or even radical transformational changes in an organization (Stacey, 2011). The sciences of complexity suggest that systems are dynamic, can transition into complexity, and have their grounding in systems thinking (Stacey, 2011). The complexity theory framework has seen a number of developments in the theory of systemic behavior, namely chaos, dissipative structures, and complex adaptive systems (Stacey, 2011). Chaos theory is a theory of systems focusing on the same level of description like system dynamics and on the level of the system as a whole, making assumptions about a system's entities and their interaction

with the environment (Stacey, 2011). The assumption is that the system entities and their interactions are average or normally distributed around an average. Dissipative structure theory develops the notion of self-organization and emergence, and then models the system of interest in terms of nonlinear mathematical equations governing state changes at the macro level of the system similar to that of chaos and system dynamics (Stacey, 2011). This theory displays the phenomenon of self-organization as a collective response of the whole system and takes the form of correlations and resonances between entities comprising the system that emerge as a new pattern or order. The complex adaptive system theory, model interaction between many agents that comprise a system and sets out the logical structure of algorithmic, digital-code-based interaction, deriving the properties of such interaction through a computer simulation method (Stacey, 2011).

Whatever the complexities are to reach sustainability goals, the human factor cannot be understated. The interaction with, and understanding of each community to impact is essential. Attaining sustainability at the different levels of engagement between the public sector, private sector, and community members can be successful through strong, but competent leadership (Spence et al., 2011). Power in this case should not confuse leadership.

Leadership

Power. It is important to understand power in relation to leadership, due to the leadership challenge encountered in BOP markets between business leaders and local policymakers. Power refers to one party having the ability to command and control another party, things, events, attitudes, and behavior (Yukl, 2012). Position power is a

combination of legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, information power, and ecological power while personal power deals with only referent power and expert power (Yukl, 2012). Personal power is more important because of its positive correlations and success in influencing subordinates. Combining power with effective leadership strategies leads to organizational success.

In our daily lives, people believe in the importance of leadership and its relevance to achieving desirable goals (Bryman, 2013). Leadership events are segments of actions that created meaning by actors interacting through a set of innovative methods for capturing and analyzing contextually driven processes (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). Thus, one can recognize leadership through the independent actions of the actors, irrespective of whether they are complex systems or people. The notion of leadership theory adapts and transcends with different actors in interactive spaces between people and ideas. With a focus on how leadership may occur in any interaction, this new perspective dramatically expands the potential for creativity, influence, and positive change in an organization (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). By introducing new knowledge, action preferences, and need for behavior changes, complexity theory is at this moment provoking organizations to become more adaptive. Leadership in an organization, therefore, comprises the actors who, as one unit, bring about positive organizational changes through adaptation on a case-by-case situation. By viewing organizations as complex adaptive leadership systems, the innovation process as well as leadership can have a positive or negative effect.

Adaptive leadership helps individuals, organizations, communities, and societies to develop the capacity to handle change in an ever-changing global environment (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2010). The uncertainty and difficulties in predicting random changes in the marketplace require structured, but creative thinking skills for personal development and understanding (Heifetz et al., 2010). Most important to adaptive leadership is individual development, sound judgments, skill mastery, and nonnegotiable core-values.

Intelligence leadership. Complexity can be relativistic and is in the mind of the beholder in the human world, leading humans or human organization to perceive some complex spaces through a relativistic complexity dynamic order encompassing order, relativistic order, and complexity (Liang, 2013). Liang (2013) further addressed the transformation in leadership and management thinking as well as the essence of strategy for all categories of human organizations that focus on intelligence - the new critical factor. Intelligence leadership, a new science, or art of leadership helps to lead using the more intelligent and knowledge intensive human complex adaptive systems (CAS). Liang argued that the transformation was necessary to ensure the continual survival of the entire humankind in a more complex and nonlinear environment. Through his theoretical intelligence leadership model, Liang offered a more accurate glimpse into the highly complex traits and dynamics of future leadership strategy. Liang highlighted the interdependent nature of effective leadership and constructive self-organization in intelligent human organizations. Through the processes and an understanding of the dynamics of a system, with a special focus on intelligence at all levels, new leadership

emerges (Liang, 2013). Liang further argued that new leadership requires a more in-depth comprehension of the complex and nonlinear dynamics of complex adaptive systems and organizing around intelligence. Liang recommended shifting from high predictability to the necessity for a smart and well-prepared evolver and cautioned how critical it is that the quality of the intelligence-to-intelligence linkages exists as the foundation of the new intelligence leadership strategy.

Strategic leadership and innovation management. Strategic leadership and innovation management can support and grow the existing business portfolio; create and grow new opportunities; and improve a company's technological know-how (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014; Willard, 2012). Strategic leadership can stimulate valuable creativity from subordinates to the extent of generating positive ideas for business success (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014). Strategic managers should be able to influence creativity and innovation for growth without changing internal rules of an organization through organizational culture, customer relations, as well as functional areas. Innovation management from a strategic standpoint needs to be conceptually autonomous due to its direct relationship with change management (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014).

Change initiatives. Change is always guaranteed to happen at different intervals in business, and preparing for change should be properly accommodated. Change initiatives usually have a 70% failure rate due to poor preparation, while 29% of such initiatives begin without any formal planning (Blanchard, 2010). This means that most leaders who try to implement change without adequate preparation and know-how will

start failing as soon as they launch their change initiative. Blanchard (2010) identified six stages of concern when effecting change:

1. Explaining to the people why there should be change, how it will happen, and how fast it will occur.
2. Identifying individual benefits if they embraced the proposed change and will they be able to make it successfully happen
3. Planning what individual employees will be doing during the change implementation process, for how long, using what systems, and if they will be getting any help.
4. Answering if there will be any value or benefits after the change occur and how much of a difference will it be.
5. Deciding if it is successful, how will collaboration exist with other staff and how will other lagging employees get to catch up.
6. Addressing the issue of refinement and continuous improvement that idea generation is important for everyone involved in the change process.

Change management. Change management can be possible using a number of formal strategies (Blanchard, 2010; Navarro et al., 2012). When leadership faces resistance to change, arising from uncertainty, lack of education, fear, cultural barriers, and outright denial, a proactive leadership approach is necessary (Smith, 2010). Nine leadership strategies that can bring about successful change include:

- Expand involvement and the influence of the people in question while responding to their concerns.

- Explore possibilities ahead of time to avoid disastrous consequences and involving customer-facing employees in the process
- Select and align a leadership team made of people with opposing ideology that can work together with a unified and inspiring voice for change.
- Explain the reason for change from a business perspective in a non-revolutionary way that reflects building on past successes as opposed to a rejection of past failure.
- Portray a clear vision for a bright, inspiring, and a new future while adding a few individuals in different roles to gain their support.
- Ensure proper alignment by bringing down barriers separating departments, subunits, and people.
- Support and encourage people using coaches for instruction to implement change, as well as get the early adopters to talk about their experiences.
- Execute and endorse change by holding leaders and staff accountable, with expectations of feedback, as well as success stories.
- Embed and extend the new goal of sustainable change, share practical results, offer mentoring and cross-training opportunities, look for new challenges, and celebrate your success (Blanchard, 2010).

From the above, it is clear that small system changes can lead to large or even radical transformations in an organization within a complexity theory framework. In today's global environment, leadership theory must transition to new perspectives that account for the complex adaptive needs of organizations (Lichtenstein et al., 2006).

Traditional, hierarchical ways of leadership are becoming less useful and less competitive in the current marketplace and support systems are gradually gaining popularity. Modern business executives should promote the relationship between understanding complex systems and the evolution of leadership practices. Funding practices are of great importance for powerful leaders to achieve sustainable objectives and plans.

Business Funding

Most entrepreneurial ventures need financing to be successful in a challenging BOP environment. The financing of markets that do not have structured credit ratings and verification systems in place leads to tough decision-making by investors (Anderson & Billou, 2007). Startups find it difficult to raise money because they are unknown and untested, and there is a risk involved in competing with established firms (Kotha & George, 2012; Jonsson & Lindbergh, 2013). Most new entrepreneurs use their sources of personal financing to include personal funds, money from friends, money from relatives, and money from bootstrapping (Jonsson & Lindbergh, 2013). Bootstrapping is looking for ways to avoid unnecessary borrowing through cost-cutting measures that are creative, thrifty, and show ingenuity (Jonsson & Lindbergh, 2013). Despite the availability of loans to some sectors of the market, business-funding experience gender disparities.

Gender inequality. Gender inequality is still noticeable around the globe in the funding of basic business ventures in emerging economies (Saparito, Elam, & Brush, 2013). In Brazil, for example, women entrepreneurs are at a disadvantage in securing loans or making a profit as men, leading to the need for programs addressing this

deficiency (Williams & Youssef, 2013). Men enter into entrepreneurial ventures out of the endeavor while women do out of necessity earning lower even in situations where they have higher education and work harder than men (Williams & Youssef, 2013). With this reality existing around the world, the route to equality with men through small business ownership still stands as an illusion (Loscocco, 2012; Saporito et al., 2013). As Popescu (2012) argued, the younger generation female entrepreneurs operate their businesses differently from the older generation irrespective of financing. While existing literature on firms' financial constraints has provided little exposure on financing woman-owned firms, the gender gap is alarming in sub-Saharan Africa (Asiedu, Kalonda-Kanyama, Ndikumana, & Nti-Addae, 2013). With this continuous pattern, it is unacceptable that women-owned firms with access to credit are more likely to pay higher interest rates or put up more collateral than men. This depicts redlining, which has a negative impact on entrepreneurial finance. One argument for high interest rates is that microfinance enterprises offering low subsidized interest rates to entrepreneurs may become unsustainable if they do not get grants or other funds to sustain their operations. The shortage or lack of equality in lending will provide a negative impact on the problem of energy poverty in BOP markets for the economy to emerge globally.

Emerging markets. Globalization is increasingly providing pro-poor solutions by bringing international business opportunities to the world's poorest population as in a microlending study in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic (Bruton, Khavul, & Chavez, 2011). Building from the ground up resulted in success, as did giving a voice to the individual borrower to provide an understanding of their stories, patterns, and their

decision-making process (Bruton et al., 2011). International microlenders can make a good income investing in BPO communities despite the limited risks involved.

In emerging markets that do not have structured credit rating and verification systems in place, lenders have to make a tough decision whether to lend money or restrain from doing so. The financing decision of new businesses is important due to their important economic role in employment growth, competition, innovation, and export potential (Saparito, Elam & Brush, 2013). Business leaders should embrace innovative new forms of growth for a better product-market environment performance (Jonsson & Lindbergh, 2013; Navarro et al., 2012). Pro-poor microlending that is limited to favoring one gender over the other is another problem that needs correction as it negatively affects entrepreneurial success.

Equal lending. Equal lending consists of making loans available to businesses and individuals without any favors to any particular group. An issue that stands out is the dilemma for loan officers to understand and implement the advantage of equal lending opportunities to developing markets. Prior to seeking financing, the business owner must determine with precision the amount of money needed, the most appropriate type of financing, and to develop a strategy for engaging potential investors (Jonsson & Lindbergh, 2013; Navarro et al., 2012; Saparito et al., 2013).

Obtaining financing becomes a determining factor in holding or losing the business, successes, or failure. The advantage of financing will provide instant liquidity for the company to grow rapidly. When entrepreneurs lose ownership at more than 50% they become a minority decision-maker, which can lead to a change in business vision

(Kotha, & George, 2012). With all the financing hurdles taken out of the process, emerging market entrepreneurs will have the ability to strategize properly to stay competitive. Improvements in lending practices have a significant role in improving markets in pro-poor communities.

Marketing Strategy

With the world economy getting tighter due to globalization and technology, staying competitive is becoming a serious challenge to marketing professionals. On the one hand are practitioners and on the other are theorists. Some strategies for blurring the line between the two include people-based strategies, knowledge and inquiry-based strategies, and dissemination, communication and publication-based strategies (Rowley, 2012). Whether a marketing mix occurs online or in the field will depend on the circumstances and practitioner's decision with the success in mind.

Marketing for the BOP calls for strategies that carefully align with the environment due to insufficient exposure to global trends and ways (Chikweche, 2013; Payaud, 2014). Relating to the variables of products, price, promotion, and distribution, marketing offerings aimed for BOP markets should adapt to existing differences in culture (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012; Payaud, 2014). For multinationals seeking BOP market entry, research outcome from a successful case study will provide strategic guidance for competitive entry.

Competitive advantage and profitability. Business leaders wishing to stay relevant and harness maximum competitive advantage both globally and online need to implement the concept of the 5 P's of the marketing mix: product, price, place,

promotion, and people (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Competition without corporate social responsibility (CSR) is facing a serious challenge in local supply chains in developing countries, despite proven success in developed countries (Azmat & Ha, 2013). Kotler and Keller (2011) argued that marketers in the 21st century should understand consumer marketing trends and be prepared to act effectively and preemptively to meet these demands to stay relevant as well as competitive. Managing the marketing mix in the era of personalized mobile marketing makes it mutually profitable for businesses offering products and services based on what is already known of a consumer (Tang, Liao, & Sun, 2013). This engages the marketer in a relevant, effective, and efficient endeavor.

With the changes in the usage of individual marketing mix variables due mainly to technology and internet use, companies must adapt their marketing approaches in order to achieve competitive advantage taking into consideration product, price, place, promotion, and people in the 21st-century marketing environment (Kotler & Keller, 2011). For large businesses in developed countries to be competitive in the context of developing countries, CSR practices, customer loyalty, and trust must be achieved (Azmat & Ha, 2013; Benn et al., 2014) through understanding the case under study.

Personalized marketing. Using a consumer's information for personal advertising is popular in the United States and gaining grounds around the world. Despite differences in consumers' perception of the practice due to culture, few empirical studies investigate the practice. The concept of personalized advertising and its outcome are of great significance regarding a decision to apply the findings of the practice to this study. Thoughtful companies can turn customers into clients to create strong bonds by

personalizing and individualizing relationships to bring significant benefits to companies (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Amongst many benefits that companies can reap from personalized marketing are higher prices for the products or services, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, better response rates, and differentiation from competitors (Tang, Liao, & Sun, 2013; Watson, McCarthy, & Rowley, 2013). Customers will also enjoy a good experience, matching preferences, better services and products, and better communication.

Pull technologies seem promising for personalized mobile marketing. Mobile marketing is gradually undergoing acceptance when it includes strategies like (a) seeking permission from users, (b) building trust, (c) creating a sense of customer control, and (d) providing useful web content (Watson et al., 2013). With continuous growth, practitioners are witnessing a shift in the marketing arena. Relating to the energy challenges in BOP markets, personalized mobile marketing remains a business challenge due to the challenging infrastructure.

When leaders in firms develop their marketing plans, they should consider the distinctions between customers and clients. Customers may be nameless to the institution, serve as part of a larger segment or group, and receive service from anyone who happens to be available to serve, while companies identify clients by names, assign them a service professional, and serve them on an individual basis (Kotler & Keller, 2011). To maintain a common framework, which should include value for the customer, and value for the marketer, involved parties in personalization should understand each other (Tang, Liao, & Sun, 2013; Watson et al., 2013).

Relationship marketing. The failure and challenges of reaching consumers that marketers face in traditional marketing tactics has increased reliance on relational marketing campaigns to promote goods and services (Ashley, Noble, Donthu, & Lemon, 2011). Although firms spend millions of dollars each year to maintain relationship marketing with clients, obstacles relating to choice and privacy are proving to be challenging (Ashely et al., 2011). The chosen single case study will address such issues pertaining to customer retention.

Brands and consumer reality in business research. The BOP profit potentials can invite unethical marketing practices where consumers have no control on branding processes (Crockett, Downey, Firat, Ozanne, & Pettigrew, 2013). Non-BOP firm leaders face the temptation to engage in deceptive and unethical marketing to unprotected consumers (Gupta & Pirsch, 2014). Such practices can lead to a negative brand association and negative consumer-generated publicity for MNCs at the BOP market comprised of the poor and the very poor (Gupta & Pirsch, 2014). It is important for business leaders to understand the BOP business environment to position themselves properly (Chikweche, 2013). Corrective measures are necessary to serve the poor properly with ethical marketing considerations.

In this section, I explored consumers' thoughts concerning the business efforts of decision-makers to penetrate a new market. Knowing their thoughts was an important tenet of qualitative market research. An in-depth probe in their mind and not from superficial interview responses (Barnham, 2012) should seek the thoughts of the consumer of a product or service. Qualitative researchers must probe into the structures

and processes that affect a consumer's thought (Barnham, 2012). This understanding leads us to better envision the branding process from a consumer's perspective. Probing into the experience of practitioners who dealt with a phenomenon improves the understanding of how to do better business in similar environments.

Cyberspace. Cyberspace can be used for agency, transaction cost analysis, social exchange, and relationship marketing provide benefits to producers and consumers by adding value in both producer and consumer value chains as long as they continually have cyber access. As some scholars have stated, the idea of the world undergoing an information revolution is outdated (Betz & Stevens, 2011). While it may seem outdated in the developed world, most of the BOP is far from easily accessing cyberspace, therefore difficult to reach through cyber marketing. Energy producers and brokers dealing with kerosene, candles, and firewood in BOP markets are not able to take advantage of cyberspace. Through proper business-to-business (B2B) relations, policy-makers and business leaders might be useful in retraining existing energy brokers who want to make a transition to broker the innovative energy products.

Through the influence of globalization, major trends that have characterized the modern business landscape include the advancement of e-commerce technologies and the rapid global expansion of firms. Technological advances in computers, communication, transportation, and shipping have facilitated business efforts to market worldwide as well as given consumers the ability to self-education and get the best value for their money anywhere in the world (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Benn et al. (2014) argued the value chain from manufacturer to the end user has also changed radically due to the development of

the internet. Increasingly, American retailers and manufacturers are using the skills, suppliers, and low paid workers in developing countries to improve competitiveness thanks to cyber-intermediaries who facilitate exchanges (Benn et al., 2014).

Additionally, huge investments go into technology to access the ever-changing global value chain.

Global marketplace. Business leaders need to nurture trust and commitments as they engage in interactive communication to improve business performance, (Viswanathan et al., 2012). As practitioners compete with practice and theories, it is important to contrast the traditional ways of doing business to the challenges of “when” and “how” to use the internet as a marketing tool. In some cases, internet-marketing portals fit specific target markets (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012). Traditional marketing models are the best ways to reach the remaining population that is not technology-oriented. This statement further highlights the need to inquire about the traditional four P’s of marketing in the Internet age. This might lead to new theories demanding a hybrid of approaches to specific markets like those in BOP countries with little or no web access.

Emerging markets. The term *emerging markets* refer to nations with social or business activity experiencing rapid growth, economic improvements, and industrialization. Some of them include the countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - referred to as BRICs countries (Kearney, 2012). Other emerging markets are found in Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, Egypt, South Korea, Poland, and Turkey.

Notably, the community under study displays characteristics requiring pro-poor solutions similar to most in emerging BOP economies.

A review of the literature suggests additional research is a necessity on B2B marketing in emerging markets. Some gaps identified in the literature include emotional elements of branding in market relationships, the lack of branding by B2B firms for competitive advantage, and the lack of understanding of what motivates B2B buyers (Leek & Christodoulides, 2011). By further investigating these gaps, new theories might emerge to improve managerial applications in the field of B2B marketing especially in developing markets.

Emerging markets provide an opportunity for innovative market research. With increased marketing challenges and limited budgets, a creative approach is to do more with less money using online tools and online groups (Troch, 2012). Innovating with online research communities will do more with less and make a difference in the budget (Troch, 2012). The lessons emerging from leveraging capital can inform strategy in BOP communities around the world for transformational growth.

Transformational Growth Trajectory

Transformation in struggling communities begins with committed local people and institutions. In Africa BOP countries, for example, economies can transform from producing and exporting raw materials to producing manufactured goods and services. Africa needs an economic transformation to include building skills and technological capabilities, using competitive industries to invite domestic and foreign investors, promoting quality agriculture, and diversifying exports (Amoako, 2011). With the

exception of South Africa, Mauritius, and the tourism industry, over the last 30 years no African country has come up with a globally competitive manufacturing sector that goes above primary agricultural products and minerals (Amoako, 2011). Realities that are not sustainable in Africa include commodity price increases, profit from economic liberalization, new discoveries in natural resources, and increase in inflation -adjusted foreign financial assistance (Amoako, 2011). All of these do not really bring about the sustainable transformation. As global participants that can stand on their own, Africans should avoid viewing themselves as victims in their rise to face international competition (Ohiorhenuan, 2011). Technology enhancements and better services are necessary for the continent's economic prosperity.

Structural transformation calls for moving the production base from producing only primary commodities to industrial manufacturing and knowledge-based service offerings while using technology to enhance agricultural production on a high growth trajectory (Amoako, 2011). By moving from "agriculture and resources" to "manufacturing and societies," African economies have the potential to boost exports, earn money, and finance investments to transform the continent (Amoako, 2011). Learning from the experience of other continents would be helpful in bringing about faster transformation.

Asia's transformation started 40 to 50 years ago and offers six lessons for Africa's BOP countries to emulate (Amoako, 2011):

1. Create a national vision where leaders focused on long-term as opposed to short-term growth - usually preferred for personal gains.

2. Government policies considered competitive advantage, diversification, and ease of industrial upgrade. Success stories include Singapore and Hong Kong's success as world financial centers while succeeding as a leader in information technology.
3. While strengthening economic policies, Asia created entities specialized in national development strategies as seen in India, Malaysia, and Singapore.
4. To prepare citizens for success, technical and professional skills can emerge through promoting mass literacy at the highest level.
5. The governments can boost agricultural productivity through irrigation and rural infrastructure.
6. Finally, in the late 1970s, China promoted private sector entrepreneurship in towns, villages, and special economic areas that attracted more than 200 million peasants from farming and through public-private collaboration, industrial upgrade has occurred (Amoako, 2011).

Field Efforts and Milestones

New technologies hardly reach the poor at the “bottom of the pyramid markets,” and traditional business models geared to maximize profit have little or no interests in those markets (Schwittay, 2012; Willans et al., 2011). Willans et al. (2011) analyzed the Energy for Opportunity Community Charging Station (CCS) model in Kamabai, Bombali District, Sierra Leone, through a social enterprise model. The model was a focal point in the community to introduce solar-powered products, create employment, and generate revenue over a 12-month period. The use of active participants, unstructured interviews

with project participants, and quantitative analysis of the project's financial records were successful. As a result, Willans et al. (2011) concluded that nonprofits as well as for-profits can come together to meet their objectives while improving the lives of the poor and vulnerable. Based on these experiences, African governments may work with and support the private sector, embark on a long-term economic transformation agenda, make progress in education and technology skills, and build accountable leadership that can stop playing "victim" and focus on nation-building.

Implementing "smart" solutions in information technology (IT) and mobile tower infrastructure industries in developing countries can be achieved through three imperatives: (a) enabling new business models, (b) applying differentiation in customer experience, and (c) showing continuous improvement in operating efficiencies (Dua, 2012). Some of India's telecom operators realized that transitioning to accept renewable energy sources brought about serious optimization in operating costs, but the management is better through a separate company (Dua, 2012). Such an effort helps in fulfilling corporate social responsibility for more environmentally friendly operations.

With more than 750,000,000 people in Africa competing within itself and the global economy, there must be a deliberate, integrated, and concerted effort towards modernizing or upgrading its infrastructure, including the setting up of an African continent's electric power grid network to meet the demands of the 21st century (Sebitosi & Okou, 2010). While the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) embraced such initiatives, in this age of smart grid technology, storage and distribution pose a century challenge (Sebitosi & Okou, 2010). In Cameroon and most developing

countries, by constantly failing grid-tied electric power hampers industrial energy production, leading industries to employ power self-generation, thus increasing production costs more than five times (Tatiêtse, Kemajou, & Diboma, 2010). Sub-Saharan Africa can adopt a better model that includes consumer participation.

Social Entrepreneurship

Some scholars hold the view that the main difference between social entrepreneurship and commercial entrepreneurship is that the former is interested in creating value for the society while the latter seeks value for itself (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010; Miller et al., 2012; Santos, 2012). Profit-oriented entrepreneurs faced with externalities will not act on them as long as it does not capture the necessary value (Santos, 2012). For-profit entrepreneurs can help society through corporate social responsibility practices like internalizing externalities in the communities they affect (Santos, 2012). This raises the notion of value creation on the one hand and value capture on the other.

As evidenced in India, Hewlett Packard (HP) managers set up a pilot study of community information centers and trained photographers using its products as a social entrepreneurial venture (Schwittay, 2012). At a financial disadvantage, they supplied HP printers, cameras, copiers, and information systems to serve the community successfully as well as the local government. American trainers provided support and training to women photographers who could now serve as documented evidence-providers to insurance companies needing verification of claims as well as government investigators. Entrepreneurship increased and the community enjoyed better coordination through an

integrated communication system (Schwittay, 2012). The next chief executive officer of HP cancelled the program partly because it was not a profitable venture, raising the question of how a company properly enters and sustains a service or product in BPO communities. An understanding of the strategies emanating from the case under study will guide entrepreneurs to understand better the areas needing value, the quality of services needed, and the appropriate product-design for the market to sustain profitably.

Leadership Theory

Leadership theory has evolved significantly over the last decade and attracted the interest of outstanding scholars and practitioners alike. At issue is revolutionizing the leadership phenomena, understanding general leadership processes and how microprocesses such as perceptions, emotions, and cognition; and macroprocesses such as the social-relational context dynamically affect the follower and leader outcome (Dinh et al., 2014). With the different theories come the challenges of modern leadership choices. Regardless of the outcome of any research study, leadership has to be effective to produce the expected results (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2011). Instead of summarizing the different theories, it is important to highlight a fundamental process-centered issue for all of them.

A question of interest is how leadership theory and research have contributed to an understanding of the stages through which past elements affect outcomes related to leaders, followers, or organizational phenomena (Dinh et al., 2014). Of the 66 different theoretical domains and a wide variety of methodological approaches, no unified theory of leadership currently exists. The statement might sound intimidating to practitioners

who rely on scholarly research outcomes to lead their organizations better. However, leadership theories emphasize the perception of leaders and how they affect unit performance; include group members' and formal leaders' actions, events, dyads, individuals, groups, organizations, and political systems; focus on immediate and delayed effects; and often include contextual differences (Dinh et al, 2014). Future leaders have the opportunity to lead using inspirations from lessons learned in leadership research.

Looking Forward

Business leaders in BOP markets have an opportunity to emerge rapidly if they properly manage the right mix of policy, opportunity, products, and services. The developing world is becoming a significant driver of the global economy in a world in transition (Zoellick, 2010). Asia's purchasing power rose from 7% in 1980 to 21% in 2008 with its stock market accounting for 32% of global market capitalization, the American market at 30%, and the European market at 25% (Zoellick, 2010). Developing countries account for more than half of the increase in world import demand since 2000. Noticeable growth patterns include a rise in GDP from 34% in 1980 to 43% in 2010 with robust growth expected over the following 5 years and beyond (Zoellick, 2010). Though Africa missed the manufacturing revolution that lifted East Asia's economy from poverty, the continent could blossom by removing import barriers while introducing policies and conditions for international investors to shift production to the continent (Zoellick, 2010). Notably, Africa could not be successful in manufacturing without the right energy mix.

Schuster & Holtbrügge (2012) argued that knowledge and experience-based factors are the facilitators of multinational business entry into the BOP markets. Other factors they put forward for successful entry include embeddedness and partnership with nonmarket partners. The partnerships include (a) agreeing on mutual objectives and vision, (b) building consensus on responsibilities, and roles, and (c) agreeing on resource commitments (Schuster & Holtbrügge, 2012). Large energy multinational relating to this study can probe into these limited recommendations emanating from observing a few European firms over a short period. The authors in the article highlight that strategic partnership and market embeddedness can turn BOP market entries into profitable ventures that help alleviate poverty (Schuster & Holtbrügge, 2012). Such can promote social entrepreneurship and value creation for mutual benefits.

It is appropriate to take a more serious look at developing countries regarding market participation in today's global economy. Leaders in developing markets do not only focus on charity or solidarity from the West but are becoming serious importers of goods and services as well as capital goods (Schaefer, Kim, & Florance, 2013; Zoellick, 2010). These countries want to focus on early childhood development, productive investment in infrastructure, free markets, jobs, improved productivity, and growth (Zoellick, 2010). While developing countries are becoming providers of aid and expertise some still view them as recipients of aid and victims of the "aid concepts," (Zoellick, 2010). Evidence of this exists in the sovereign and pension funds seeking to invest jointly with the World Bank Group in Africa as an emerging form of financial intermediation for good returns (Zoellick, 2010).

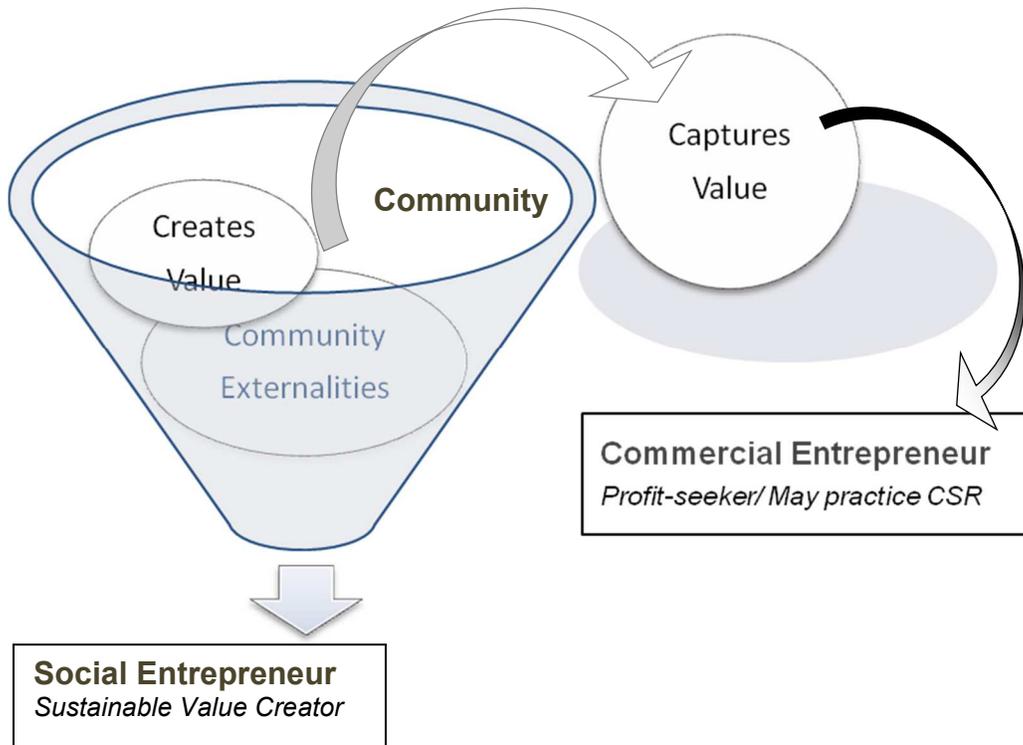


Figure 4. Social entrepreneurship and value creation.

Firms deploying a strategic intent to internationalize with the rights to a proprietary technology, invest in international customer support capabilities to facilitate their operations, satisfy the demands of their most important international customers, and maintain a competitive edge (Khavul, Peterson, Mullens, & Rasheed, 2010). Through research from 173 new ventures from emerging economies, Khavul et al. (2010) concluded that when leaders of entrepreneurial firms from emerging economies invest in continuous support of important international customers associated with improved organizational learning and performance, globalization becomes both profitable and

relevant. Firm leaders from emerging markets met consumer demands by enhancing human capabilities and offering low cost services on an on-going basis.

Africa's population of almost 800 million may increase to over 2 billion by 2050 and have the world's youngest population with only 10% over the age of 60 (Lyakurwa, 2009). It is important to include poor rural farmers and women in Africa's policy-making and governance (Lyakurwa, 2009). Amongst under-represented groups, women and rural farmers are significant stakeholders whose contribution and participation in governance and the policy-making process can positively affect changes to poverty reduction (Lyakurwa, 2009). Good inclusive governance stands as a pre-requisite for sustainable development in most developing countries and struggling communities. With good governance, government can place priority on poverty eradication, human improvement, productive employment, social integration, and sustainable economic regeneration (Lyakurwa, 2009). Other forces that will shape Africa's governance over the next 17 years include

Indo-Chinese-Africa relations; China and India's role in Africa's economic governance; foreign aid; rates of economic growth; demographic changes; the role of the diaspora; conflict; the role of private sector and democracy; investment; social empowerment; access to energy; science and technology; climate change adaptation; pro-poor growth; and productivity. (Lyakurwa, 2009, p. 2)

For a resilient pro-growth economic landscape that can compete globally 20 years from now, African leaders need to start planning today. Ngara (2011) argued that Africa should no longer be looking at trickle-down economics as it rises from the ashes due to

the need for concentrated and accelerated scientific endeavors to encourage innovative growth.

Innovation Culture

Innovation, whether radical or incremental is key to economic change (Bradley, McMullen, Artz, & Simiyu, 2012; Chen, Chen, & Zhou, 2014). Few academic papers have elaborated on the complex notion of “innovation culture”. The concept of innovation culture can exist under the framework of understanding innovation from a cultural differences perspective (Kumar, 2014). The following approaches should be helpful when categorizing culture and innovations: (a) characteristics of innovation, (b) adoption of, or propensity to adopt innovations, (c) geographical innovation, (d) market characteristics, (e) learning effect, and (f) organizational functions (Kumar, 2014). These perspectives and approaches may provide unique insights for multinationals looking to innovate at the BOP market levels.

At the BOP markets, product management is a serious and innovative business decision (Griffith & Rubera, 2014; Tianjiao, 2014). The top corporate level at a firm decides on product diversification strategy and marketers at all levels execute the decision thereafter. An understanding of the market performance of product diversification will help marketers globally to better direct the firm’s efforts as well as improve the role of marketing (Tianjiao, 2014). The concept has since evolved to a larger spectrum.

Innovation through sustainability is gradually increasing in the BOP communities despite the challenge poverty poses. For this to be successful, Khavul and Bruton (2013)

argue that sustainability enhancing innovations should take into consideration local networks, customers, and business ecosystems. Some of the cases in need of innovation include mobile communications, residential electrification, fuel-saving cooking stoves, good sanitation, and clean drinking water (Khavul & Bruton, 2013).

The concept of innovation in the 21st century recommends thinking globally, which is our finite space and having an open mind (Heeks, 2012; Viswanathan & Sridharan, 2012). Using a new mindset to view the poor will require a display of compassion to engage them in social entrepreneurial ventures (Miller et al., 2012). The world should not see the poor from a begging and the helpless perspective, as is the case with most development charities, but as agents in their own development (Viswanathan & Sridharan, 2012). With this way of seeing, comes the recognition of BOP innovation.

Reverse innovation. Reverse innovation happens when rich countries adopt innovation emanating from a poor underdeveloped country, which raises the question to research the kind of innovation emerging economies might produce as well as possible global effects (Govindarajan & Ramamurti, 2011). Success in reverse innovation exists in the sectors of wireless telecommunications, Grameen Bank micro-finance, Nokia's inexpensive cell phones, and more (Govindarajan, & Ramamurti, 2011). Due to reverse innovation, the findings of a qualitative probe into the lived experience mentioned in this study can greatly enrich and extend mainstream innovation theories as well as globalization.

Deficiencies in the existing business literature exist due to the lack of a scholarly connection between business practice, poverty, poverty alleviation, and energy. Though

poverty and energy shortage have been linked (IEA, 2015), little research has been done in BOP markets linking the two, and showing strategies to eradicate the energy crisis through large energy multinational business involvement. Additionally, very little academic literature exists on designing a sustainable strategy to entice large energy multinational companies who have the capital, expertise, and experience to invest profitably in BOP markets (Schuster, & Holtbrügge, 2012). Through this single case study design, policy makers and business leaders have an opportunity to inform business practice. Most of the researchers who have addressed the subject of BOP market entry strategies touched on a social as opposed to a business problem. Seeking pro-poor responses to the energy challenge requires practitioners and researchers to do this differently through innovative business strategies (Schuster, & Holtbrügge, 2012; Viswanathan & Sridharan, 2012) as experienced in the single case in this study. The research findings may provide more captivating strategies for large energy multinational business leaders to collaborate with BOP communities for mutual benefits.

Transition and Summary

Leaders of multinationals, seeking entry into BOP markets, require sound business strategies (Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2012). Brew-Hammond (2010) presented arguments toward achieving a 50% to 100% success rate in solving the rural electrification problem identified in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite prescriptions and lofty goals, Brew-Hammond came short of researching the problem from a strategic business perspective involving business practitioners. Prasad (2011) concluded that, at the current electricity access and population growth rate, more of the population of sub-Saharan

Africa will lack electricity in 2030 than in 2009. This statement does not suggest how to solve the problem, but it emphasizes the need for attention to a serious socioeconomic, political, and business problem. Using the BOP concept by any of the researchers would have helped in providing a business solution to the problem, but this was not the case as noted above. Schuster and Holtbrügge (2012) recommended a few strategies for large multinational BOP entry, but were not detailed or industry specific as observed in this study.

In the following two sections, I will describe the research project I undertook to unfold sustainable strategies for large energy multinational business success, as evidenced in the Republic of Cameroon. Section 2 also addresses the purpose of the research; the role of the researcher; the participants; the chosen research methodology over other methods; the research design; the chosen population and sampling; ethical research practices; data collection instruments, techniques, organization, and analysis; data reliability, and validity. Section 3 focuses on the findings and implications for professional practice and social change. I also present recommendations for action, further study, and reflections on my overall research experience.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2 of the project, I present the research plan in detail. I describe the three research methods I considered, including the rationale behind choosing a case study. Additionally, the section includes the following subsections: (a) purpose statement, (b) role of the researcher, (c) choice of participants, (d) research method, (e) research design, (f) population and sampling, (g) ethical research, (h) data collection technique, (i) data analysis technique, and (k) reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to document sustainable strategies that large multinational energy leaders can use to sustain profitable BOP market entry, as evidenced in the Republic of Cameroon, West Africa. The case under study was a multinational energy company based in Arlington, VA, which has successfully operated the largest electric company in Cameroon despite the challenges on the ground. This study outcome provided strategies that may facilitate the entry of multinational energy entrepreneurs to BOP markets. Through this single case study, business leaders can identify and embrace new ways of solving operational problems in BOP markets. I anticipated the study would have a positive effect on policy, applied business research, and innovation.

The study data came from carefully selected individuals who were involved in the decisions and management of the company from 2001 to 2012. The geographical bounds were the United States and Cameroon. This case study may influence positive social

change by encouraging social entrepreneurial ventures in BOP markets and improving the socioeconomic conditions of the affected communities.

Role of the Researcher

According to the Belmont Report, researchers must ensure justice, beneficence, and respect for participants while conducting academic research (Institutional Review Board, 2014). My role as a researcher complied with the Belmont report recommendations. Moustakas (1994) stated that a researcher should undertake the following methods and procedures to meet the expectations of a disciplined, organized, and systematic study:

- Figure out the topic and question, addressing social meanings as well as the significance to research.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of academic, professional, and available literature on the topic.
- Build a set of criteria to find and understand appropriate coresearchers.
- Update coresearchers on the research purpose, the need for ethical research considerations, and informed participant consent.
- Develop a set of topics or questions to direct the interview process.

I conducted the research in the most ethical manner possible. Bryman and Bell (2011) asserted that too little attention has been devoted to the role of ethics in conducting management research, but management researchers have borrowed from the codes of ethics that accountants, business associations, public relations practitioners, and marketing executives use to regulate their behavior. Yin (2014) suggested that

investigators should avoid using research tactics that will wrongly enable them to pursue or advocate a particular issue.

I selected a sample of seven former employees who participated in the business operations of AES Corporation in Arlington, VA, and subsidiaries from 2001 to 2012 in Cameroon. Participants were above 21 years of age, had management experience, and included two males and five females. The chosen participants possessed ample knowledge about the case under study.

I reminded all participants of my research management role and took measures to eliminate perceived coercion to participate. I told participants in writing about their right to withdraw from the research at any time. I provided additional explanations to participants when necessary to avoid conflicts of interests.

I avoided biases in research by separating myself from my African roots while focusing on data collection. Avoiding biases is imperative in conducting research (Yin, 2009). Researchers should eliminate biases when inquiring on a topic to avoid the possibility of getting a wrong finding (Yin, 2014). Self-separation from identified biases strengthened my research process outcome.

To ensure that researchers follow procedural and ethical guidelines, the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB, 2014) approved the research design, including considerations of the procedures and processes necessary for research approval. Ethical considerations I deployed included avoiding harm to participants, maintaining their dignity, seeking their informed consent, maintaining their privacy, maintaining their confidentiality, protecting anonymity, avoiding deception, declaring affiliation, showing

honesty and transparency, encouraging the reciprocity of research benefits on both sides, and avoiding misrepresentation (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Respecting the rights of participants continues to improve in ethical research. The IRB (2014) has clear guidelines I implemented to show the required respect for human rights:

- Ensure participants are clear as to the purpose of the study.
- Ensure data collection tools are appropriate.
- Ensure the criteria for inclusion and exclusion are just.
- Address confidentiality issues.
- Manage potential conflicts of interest.
- Ensure recruitment procedures promote voluntary and noncoerced participation.
- Put in place appropriate procedures for obtaining informed consent from participants.

The following general ethical considerations addressed in the research design helped me identify and eliminate personal assumptions, attitudes, and biases:

- Ensure that the research respect participants are autonomous agents.
- Minimize risks to subjects.
- Protect the human rights of the participants.
- Ensure that those researched benefit from the research.
- Avoid bias and discrimination in the research.

An author's worldview has an influence on the choice of research strategies, research design, and research methods as he or she tries to understand a phenomenon (Maxwell, 2013). The experience of growing up in an African postcolonial era has had an effect on my worldview, which can be challenging when it comes to avoiding bias in academic research. I was trained to avoid biases by staying out of the problem and maintaining the limited role of the researcher.

An interview protocol is necessary in qualitative research due to the need for the researcher to use noncognitive but valuable skills such as ethical judgment and empathy (Perkins, Burton, Dray, & Elcock, 2013). In addition to using cognitive skills to interview study participants, I was sensitive and creative in the process. This was important due to the senior corporate positions of the interviewees. The interview protocol for data collection began with me as the principal data collection instrument using cognitive and noncognitive skills (Perkins et al., 2013) as follows:

- For face-to-face interviews, I made myself available at the interview location ready to operate a recording device.
- I met and greeted the respondent and made sure we sat in a relaxed manner.
- I operated the sound recording devices to run independently while I took notes from the interviews.
- I made sure all devices were on before the recording began.
- I conducted semistructured interviews covering themes and topics in a random order using follow-up questions to understand further the phenomenon.
- With paper and pen in hand, I took field notes.

- Upon completion, I requested any additional information and kept the data inside my secured leather briefcase as I took it to a safer location.
- For phone and internet interviews, I did not use an assistant. I set up my recorder during the interview while I took notes from the comfort of my home office. I did not conduct text or email interviews.

Participants

The choice of a single case in a case study design is appropriate if it is representative of others in the same industry (Draper & Swift, 2011; McMullen & Adobor, 2011; Yin, 2014). I selected seven qualified individuals who participated in the business operations of AES Corporation or its subsidiaries from 2001 to 2012. They were of legal age with at least three years of management experience. AES Corporation qualified for this study because (a) it is a Fortune 200 company that has been in the global energy business for more than 30 years, (b) it is a financial leader with operational excellence, and (c) it provides a diverse mixture of energy solutions. The company exists in more than 18 countries, with a strong presence in BOP countries, and employs more than 18,500 people (AES,2015). The company is representative of other large multinationals trying to penetrate the BOP markets. The company's leaders understand the BOP concept and practice social entrepreneurship in a profitable manner, leading to over \$17 billion in annual revenue. The company proclaims its mission is to improve lives by providing safe, reliable, and sustainable energy solutions. For these reasons, it fit the BOP concept and clearly aligned with this research study.

Difficulties exist in reaching and maintaining contacts with research participants. Web-based technologies have greatly enhanced researchers' ability to contact hard-to-reach participants (Close, Smaldone, Fennoy, Reame, & Grey, , 2013; Wilkerson, Iantaffi, Grey, Bockting, & Rosser, 2014). The use of Facebook advertising, recruitment websites, and tracking of recruitment referral sources can increase and maintain contact with research participants (Close et al., 2013). Gaining and maintaining access demand that the researcher abide by the interviewees' schedule and availability (Yin, 2014). I leveraged technology and abided by the schedule of interviewees to gain and maintain access for data collection. The ethical consideration also aligned with the appropriate research method and design.

Research Method and Design

The research method and design should clearly indicate methods of inquiry, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The choice of methodology should not be predetermined but rather chosen based on the research topic (Nolen & Talbert, 2011; Wynn & Williams, 2012; Yin, 2014). Three types of research methods I had to choose from were qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Factors that influenced my selection of a particular method included the topic, the nature of the business research problem under study, my personal experiences as a researcher, and the audience for this study.

Qualitative Method

I conducted this study using a qualitative research method because I inquired about one or two central questions and a series of subquestions, sought answers for

questions of “how” and “what” of the subject of interest, and used general and broad questions to give participants the ability to communicate their ideas. The qualitative method advances different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiries; and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Maxwell, 2012; Nolen & Talbert, 2011). Furthermore, qualitative designs rely heavily on text, image data, with unique steps in data handling (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this study, I probed the experiences of a few leaders of a multinational energy company with the goal of understanding strategic moves for BOP market entry.

Other benefits of the methodology justified the choice. Researchers use exploratory qualitative methods when the variables and theory base are unknown (Bansal & Corley, 2011). The research problems have several characteristics: (a) immature concepts because of a lack of research and conspicuous theory, (b) a perception of bias and discrepancies on available theory, (c) the need to describe and explore the phenomena and develop theory, or (d) the nature of the phenomenon may not be ready for quantitative measures (Bansal & Corley, 2011). Furthermore, the hallmark of qualitative research is particularity (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). I found the other research methods to be inappropriate for this study.

Weakness of the quantitative method. The quantitative research method was premature and insufficient to answer the research question in this study. In quantitative research methods, a research question helps to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Bansal & Corley, 2011), which was not the case in

this study. A hypothesis helps to confirm the expected relationship between variables and does not facilitate the exploration of an in-depth phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Furthermore, variables are described, categorized for comparison, and measured separately to test the predictions. The quantitative method did not fit this study due to the need to make in-depth inquiries into a contemporary phenomenon in business.

I designed this study to explore the stories and experiences of a select group of people involved in the case under study. As a result, I rejected the quantitative research method. I chose open-ended questions to probe business practice as the best way to start the inquiry in understanding the organization and the phenomenon under study.

Weakness of the mixed-methods approach. The irrelevance of the quantitative method to this study automatically eliminated the need for a mixed method of inquiry. The mixed-methods (hybrid) design involves a mixture of philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiries; and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that arise from quantitative and qualitative research methods (Caruth, 2013). As research methods continue to evolve, more researchers have been combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods can be useful for examining a complex research problem in depth (De Silva, 2011).

Mixed-methods research includes both qualitative and quantitative designs to examine the research problem (Caruth, 2013; De Silva, 2011). A mixed-methods design involves a more holistic approach to the problem statement, with the first phase question presented to arrive at findings that set the foundation for the next phase. In the second phase, the researcher asks follow-up research questions (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala,

2013). I decided a mixed-methods approach would have been inappropriate for this study because it would have required more researchers, time, energy, endurance, resources, and patience (Venkatesh et al., 2013).

Research Design

The classic case study design is usually limited to a single case to avoid compromising the depth and context of the insight inherent in utilizing a case study method (Yin, 2013). A qualitative single case study design can be justified if the case is representative of other cases within the industry (McMullen, & Adobor, 2011). The philosophical foundations underlying different types of research are valuable in choosing the design and implementation of a study (Maxwell, 2013). The right design is an initial step that will facilitate the researcher's ability to perform data collection and saturation.

Data saturation is an important goal for a research design. Data saturation in a qualitative case study occurs when no new information emerge from continuous research data collection (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). However, some scholars have challenged the validity of the unquestionable acceptance of the concept by qualitative researchers (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). The choice of a research design in a systematic inquiry must correspond to the research question to reach data saturation (Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012). For case study interviews, as little as a single source maybe enough to answer the research question, provide complete data to reach saturation, and facilitate analysis (Draper & Swift, 2011). I interviewed seven qualified individuals and implemented member checking for quality control to improve the credibility, validity, and accuracy of recordings during the study interview process (Harper & Cole,

2012). During the transcript review process, I conducted follow-up interviews for in-depth data (Harper & Cole, 2012; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014) and member checking and transcript review as part of the collection technique for data saturation.

Researchers can choose to examine either cause or effect, predict, or describe some attributes among a people, and, in some cases, uncover the meaning of a phenomenon for those who were part of it (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 2014). The interest arose for me as a researcher under these conditions to analyze a case that was useful in drawing strategic conclusions to inform challenges in similar BOP markets. I designed this study to probe strategies to help multinational business leaders' access to BOP markets. To determine the best design for the study I had to reject any arbitrary, self-imposed categories and instead systematically pursue knowledge (Maxwell, 2013) using the best approach to qualitative data collection. The three most appropriate types of qualitative designs for business research are the phenomenological inquiry, ethnographic analysis, or case study analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Zikmund et al., 2012). I analyzed all the three designs before making the final design selection for this study.

A case-study research is the study of an issue explored within a closed system through an in-depth data collection from many sources – audiovisual material, documents, interviews, observation, and reports (Yin, 2014). A phenomenological inquiry describes the meaning of the lived experience of a concept or phenomenon for many people as seen in a situation where people suffered from anger, grief, or a medical condition (Moustakas, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Ethnographic research focuses on entire cultural groups; involves many people over time; describes and interprets shared

and learned patterns of values, behaviors, and beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

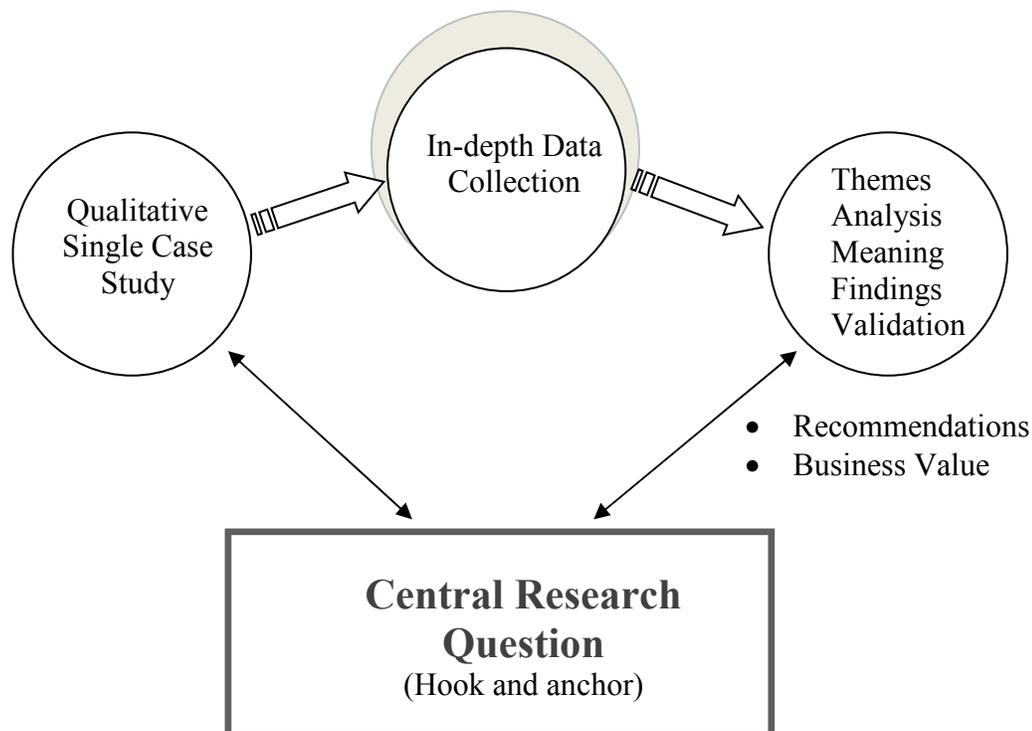


Figure 5. Research design.

There are five types of qualitative research designs. The three most appropriate for the Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) research are phenomenology, ethnography, and case study analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The other designs are grounded theory and narrative designs (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Dimmock & Lam, 2012; Rennie & Nissim, 2014). I used a qualitative single case study design for this study.

The narrative approach is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines and deals with storytelling, use biographical or historical information, and represent an informal collection of topics or focused on one individual (Dawson, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Dimmock & Lam, 2012). Other qualitative methods, such as ethnography, narrative approach, and grounded theory did not fit this study because they would not have elicited the necessary responses needed to answer the research questions. The narrative approach did not fit this study.

I also considered analyzing the phenomenological design for use in this study. Phenomenological inquiry describes the meaning of the lived experience of a concept or phenomenon for many people as seen in a situation where people suffered from anger, grief, or a medical condition (Myers, 2013). In phenomenology, the experience of exclusion, the meaning of life, and longing to belong somewhere are sensitive topics for analysis (Moustakas, 1994). The importance and reliability of qualitative research have seen an increase in medical research (Shuval, 2011). The study and understanding of phenomenological design require an accurate understanding of what the process requires. Moustakas (1994) offered these recommendations:

- Long interviews.
- Facticity and meaning.
- Epoché.
- Phenomenological reduction: bracketing, horizontalization, delimited horizons, invariant qualities and themes, individual textural descriptions, and composite textural descriptions.

- Imaginative variation: vary possible meanings, develop structural themes, individual structural descriptions, composite structural descriptions, and synthesis of composite textural and composite structural descriptions.
- Member checking and peer debriefing (Moustakas, 1994).

Some scholars have made more efforts in further analyzing the phenomenological research design. Psychological phenomenology transcended more from the researcher's interpretation of the experiences of participants (Moustakas, 1994). The focus on bracketing – a situation wherein researchers remove their views from the phenomenon under examination – helps them to view everything as if for the first time. However difficult this may seem, successful researchers describe their experiences with the phenomenon and later bracket out their views before proceeding with the views of participants. Chenail (2011) further defined phenomenology as a body of research methodologies that facilitates inquiry into a person's experience and makes meaning in their lives. This is achieved through probing into relationships, distinguishing what happened, and how the people have come to comprehend the experiences (Chenail, 2011). This design was not appropriate for this study because it dealt with a lived experience.

Ethnographic research was not appropriate for this study because it focuses on entire cultural groups; involves many people over time; describes and interprets shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, and beliefs; and examines the language of a culture-sharing group (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Sangasubana, 2011). The design

focuses more on culture and society (Down, 2012; Warren, 2012). I did not analyze a cultural group's shared patterns of behavior.

The grounded theory approach moves beyond description to the discovery of a theory grounded in the data, with theory development expected to explain practice or provide a framework for further study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Dimmock, & Lam, 2012; Rennie & Nissim, 2014). Grounded theory variants are useful in social constructivist perspectives, as well as systematic procedures (Rennie & Nissim, 2014). These designs were not appropriate for this study because the business doctorate is action-oriented and the DBA research outcome is for improving business practice.

The other two qualitative research approaches are the narrative approach and the grounded theory approach (Bansal, 2011). These two approaches were not appropriate for this study because the business doctorate (DBA) is action-oriented and its research outcome is for improving business practice. The narrative approach is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines; deals more with storytelling; could be biographical or historical; and represent an informal collection of topics, or focused on one individual (Bansal, 2011; Dawson, 2013). The grounded theory approach goes beyond description to start a theory with participants familiar with the process, and theory development expected to explain a practice, or provide a framework for further study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Dimmock & Lam, 2012; Rennie & Nissim, 2014). Finally, grounded theory variants are useful in social constructivist perspectives and systematic procedures.

This study solved a business problem through strategy, marketing, leadership, and competitive agility at the global level. Qualitative research remains an effective

research method in marketing research for business practitioners. Scholars can research and comprehend brands in a specifically qualitative way because they are best understood through such a methodology (Barnham, 2012), and the effectiveness of the methodology derives from the rich details collected through direct interactions with participants (Crockett et al., 2013). The case under study reflected other multinational experiences in the industry (McMullen, & Adobor, 2011). Based on the above analysis, a qualitative single case study research design was the most appropriate design for my study as I probed into a detail case analysis of a unique situation in business within a real-life context.

Population and Sampling

As previously stated, the selected participants for this study came from a Fortune 200 company that has been in the global energy business for more than 30 years. The company is a financial leader with operational excellence, and runs a diverse mix of energy solutions. The company exists in over 18 countries with a strong presence in BOP communities and employing more than 18,500 people. The choice of a single case in a case study design is appropriate if it is representative of others in the same industry (McMullen & Adobor, 2011; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2014). The company I studied was representative of other large multinationals whose leaders want to penetrate the BOP markets. The company's leaders understand the BOP concept and practice social entrepreneurship as well in a profitable manner, accounting to over \$17 billion dollars in annual revenue. The company's stated mission is to improve lives by providing safe,

reliable, and sustainable energy solutions. For these reasons, it fit the BOP concept and clearly aligned with this study

A purposive sample of participants informed this study. Purposive sampling focuses on a small number of participants who can provide the most information about the phenomena under study (Draper & Swift, 2011; Trotter, 2012; Yin 2014). A participant qualified for this study because of their management involvement in the affairs of the chosen multinational under study, AES Arlington and its subsidiaries, between the period spanning 2001 to 2012. The geographical bounds were in the United States and Cameroon. Gender or race did not apply in the selection process.

For sample size, Yin (2011) recommended that qualitative researchers could use a single organization with a few knowledgeable participants in the same setting to explore insights into how they cope, operate, thrive, and innovate. Furthermore, the basis for a sample size in qualitative research is at the discretion of the researcher (Adler & Clark, 2011; Draper & Swift, 2011; Yin, 2011). As little as a single source may be enough to answer the research question, provide complete data for a research study, and facilitate analysis (Draper & Swift, 2011). Seven participants participated in this study.

Individuals needed to have experienced the phenomenon under study and to have been able to articulate their case-specific experience to me (Adler & Clark, 2011; Bansal & Corley, 2011; Haghshenas, Davidson, & Rotem, 2011; Suri, 2011; Yin, 2013). A researcher chooses whom to interview, on what topic, when, why, and how (Maxwell, 2013). Criterion-based selections are important in successful purposive sampling.

In a qualitative purposive sampling approach, a researcher freely selects a case and individuals to study in order to understand a central phenomenon (Haghshenas et al., 2011; Suri, 2011). I selected seven qualified individuals who participated in the business operations of AES Corporation or its subsidiaries from 2001 to 2012. They were of legal age, with at least one year of management experience.

To carry out a credible qualitative study, the researcher must properly document the interview setting in his or her writing to bring the reader into the location where the data existed, while remaining a part of the story by showing a presence in the text as a character (Yin, 2014). The geographic areas of the study were the United States and the Republic of Cameroon, located in sub-Saharan Africa. While the company exists in the United States, the operations took place in Cameroon. The chosen participants possessed enough knowledge about the case under study. Purposive sampling helped me as a researcher to focus on a small number of participants who could provide the most information about the phenomenon under study (Adler & Clark, 2011; Maxwell, 2013; Trotter, 2012; Yin 2014). I expected the selected participants to provide enough data for an understanding of their business participation in the phenomenon.

Data saturation in a qualitative case study occurs when no new information emerge from continuous research data collection (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Data saturation can occur with as little as a single source of information (Draper & Swift, 2011). For this study, I interviewed seven qualified individuals from the single case under study.

Ethical Research

Researchers must address ethical issues while conducting research (Drake, Gerde, & Wasieleski, 2011; Wester, 2011). Bryman and Bell (2011) warned of ethical issues that can arise in the research problem, in the purpose and questions, in data collection, in data analysis and interpretation, as well as in writing and disseminating the research. Other considerations include avoiding harm to participants, maintaining their dignity, seek their informed consent, maintain their privacy, maintain their confidentiality, protect anonymity, avoid deception, declare affiliation, show honesty and transparency, reciprocity of research benefits on both sides is encouraged, and misrepresentation should be avoided (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Researchers who are willing to address ethical issues have the best chance to collect reliable data.

Participation in the current study was voluntary, noncoercive, and without any compensation. I identified study participants online, and upon IRB approval, I contacted them by email and provided them with a research consent form. At the time of recruiting participants, I informed them both in writing and orally about their rights through the consent form (see Appendix B). They could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants had access to the research study once completed. However, I will seal the data for 5 years, after which I will destroy the information.

When a researcher is evaluating criteria for data collection relating to methodological issues, a critique of research methods must be from within a theory of science and not because of an empiricist theory (Englander, 2012). The main evaluative criteria in this regard included the selection of participants, the number of participants

chosen, the interviewer and questions to be asked, and the data collection procedure. Throughout the data collection process, the interviewer has to keep the descriptive criterion in mind.

Qualitative researchers have more data collection choices such as email messages and online data gathering in addition to interviews or observational protocols. Data collection, analysis, and writing go well together in qualitative research (Gordon, 2012; Perkins et al., 2013; Yin, 2012). Data collection occurs after locating a site, selecting participants, and the following steps: (a) gain permission to conduct research, (b) conduct a good qualitative sampling strategy, (c) develop the means for recording information digitally and on paper, (d) store the data properly, and (e) anticipate ethical issues that may arise in the process and resolving them (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

I followed strict ethical guidelines in conducting academic research and dealing with participants. Some ethical rules I considered included avoiding harm to participants, maintaining their dignity, seeking their informed consent, maintaining their privacy, maintaining their confidentiality, protecting anonymity, avoiding deception, declaring affiliation, showing honesty and transparency, encouraging the reciprocity of research benefits on both sides, and avoiding misrepresentation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The likelihood of abuse was almost inexistent in this study. The study had legal limitations. I assured all study participants that their identities were to remain anonymous after during and after the study.

Respecting the rights of participants continues to improve in ethical research (Drake et al., 2011). I implemented certain guidelines to show the required respect for human rights. They included the following:

- Ensure participants are clear as to the purpose of the study.
- Ensure data collection tools are appropriate.
- Ensure the criteria for inclusion and exclusion are just.
- Address confidentiality issues.
- Manage potential conflicts of interest.
- Ensure recruitment procedures promote voluntary and non-coerced participation.
- Put in place appropriate procedures for obtaining informed consent from participants.

Several general ethical considerations were present in my research design that helped me identify and eliminate personal assumptions and attitudes, as well as biases. They included (a) ensuring the autonomy of all research participants, (b) minimizing risks to participants, (c) protecting the human rights of the participants, (d) ensuring that those researched benefit from the research, (e) avoiding bias and discrimination in the research (The Institutional Review Board, 2014).

The above synopsis clearly underscores the ethical considerations in conducting research. It also met the requirements of the IRB for respecting human participants in research. It aligned with my chosen research methodology and design for a better research outcome.

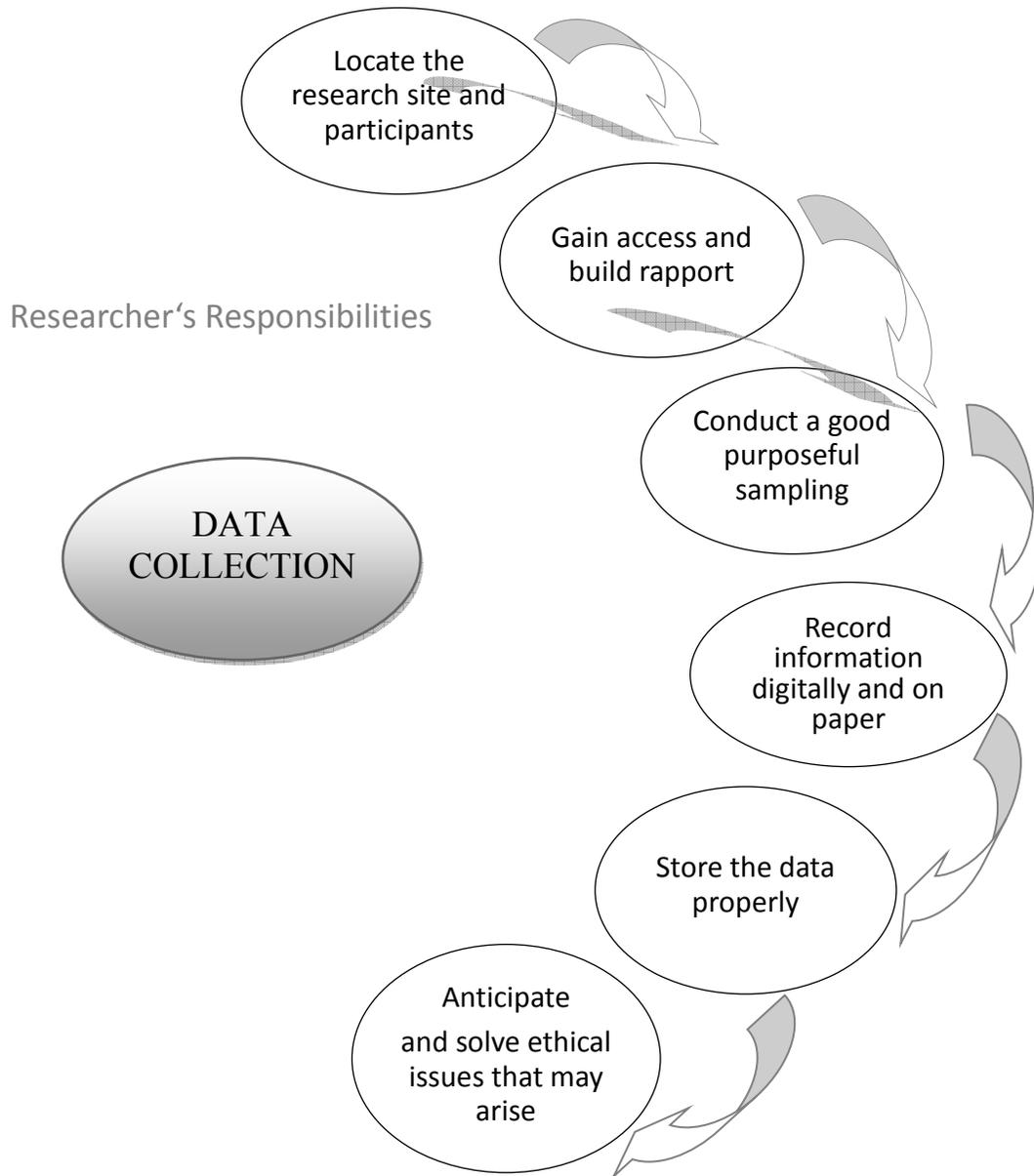


Figure 6. Researcher's responsibility for data collection.

Data Collection

I collect research data in the most professional manner possible. I later organized the data for analysis and interpretation. I shared a two-page summary of findings with participants.

Instruments

In qualitative research, humans are the primary instrument of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Merriam, 2014). I was the primary data collection instrument. I sought permission from the appropriate parties to collect data through paper, in-depth semistructured interviews, archival documents, government records, business records, industry publications, electronic media, and video recordings (Gordon, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

I used myself as the principal instrument in the data collection process (Cachia & Millward, 2011; Merriam, 2014). For face-to-face interviews, I made myself available at the interview location, and greeted the respondents and made sure we are in a relaxed manner. With paper and pen to take field notes, I made sure all devices are on for recording to begin (Warren, 2012; Yin, 2009). I operated the sound recording device and transported all the data in my leather briefcase for a safer location. For phone or internet interviews, an assistant was unnecessary. I set up my computer and phone to record the interview while I took notes from the comfort of my home office.

Data collection (see Appendix D for the interview protocol) was primarily through semistructured interviews at the convenience of the respondents. Through semistructured interviews, the researcher can obtain more information by covering

themes and topics in a random order using follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Cachia & Millward, 2011; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Rabionet, 2011). A few corporate and institutional sites provided additional data.

I used triangulation to strengthen the validity of the study. Data source triangulation strengthens the validity of a case study research (Yin, 2013). I executed the data collection process to eliminate errors that could have compromised reliability and validity (Boateng, 2012; Gordon, 2012; Yin, 2012). The data collection occurred in the most professional manner possible without breaching any processes. Using the right instruments, process, and protocol enhanced reliability and validity (Merriam, 2014; Perkins et al).

Data Collection Technique

I considered investigating available sources of data to include (a) documentation, (b) archival records, (c) interviews, (d) direct observation, and (e) participant observation. Various sources of data collection in case study research include documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts (Warren, 2012; Yin, 2014). Other sources may include video recordings, photographs, films, and videotapes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Upon approval by the IRB, an informal pilot study was unnecessary due to the reliability of my research instruments. A pilot study may include the use of three participants to test and validate the ease of a process. The use of such participants may (a) validate questions for clarity and accuracy, (b) expose ambiguities, and (c) suggest possible improvements. I did not conduct a pilot

study in this research. I identified and addressed any issues with internal validity prior to the field research.

The first technique I used for data collection was to create a relaxed but trusting atmosphere (Rabionet, 2011). I then asked open-ended questions and follow-up questions in a semistructured manner (Cachia & Millward, 2011; Rabionet, 2011). I used open-ended questions where most of them were “how,” “why,” and “when” open-ended questions. I eliminated further questions on my list that the respondent might have already answered through a comprehensive account of the phenomenon.

Second, I asked for information on any existing source of additional data that could have enhanced my study outcome. I implemented three principles that stand out for data collection: using many sources of evidence, creating a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence (Yin, 2014). Collecting qualitative data in research requires a comprehensive interview on the subject (Moustakas, 1994; Xu & Storr, 2012). Honest and comprehensive responses should emerge in a relaxed and trusted atmosphere when researcher and respondent come face-to-face. In conducting face-to-face interviews, I took handwritten notes while asking questions and maintaining eye contact.

I used ethical ways to protect participants from stigmatization, maintain confidentiality, and get the most honest responses out of respondents (Drake et al., 2011; Ivey, 2012). Through physical observation, I took field notes on the participants’ nonverbal behavior, like facial expressions, posture, as well as the setting (Warren, 2012). In my research, aliases were unnecessary to protect participants from government

reprisals. However, due to the business nature of my research, I used pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants.

The quality of data collected is a deciding factor in the research study outcome. As expected from most student researchers, it is important that researchers learn to indulge in high quality data and analysis (Xu & Storr, 2012). Existing quality data came from the company's existing documents (Draper & Swift, 2011; Yin, 2014). I used government and industry documents relating to the phenomena under study.

This data collection technique helped bring forward the most information possible for my study (Moustakas, 1994; Xu & Storr, 2012) and reach a data saturation point as expected from the number of people I interviewed, as well as archives. On the other hand, a few disadvantages of the technique are noted. Some people do not like being on camera. I avoided asking questions that made the interviewees feel uncomfortable.

In addition, I used member checking to verify and confirm that their transcripts are accurate (Harper & Cole, 2012; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Member checking creates an opportunity for the researcher to conduct follow-up interviews for in-depth data collection (Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012; Harper & Cole, 2012). McConnell-Henry, Chapman, and Francis, (2011) suggested member checking serves as a means for inexperienced researchers to cover up poor interview techniques or the lack of understanding of the methodology that grounds the study. Most scholars find it to be a reliable technique because it validates the researcher's interpretations and conclusions with the interviewee (Houghton et al., 2013; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Member

checking provides trustworthiness as required in qualitative case studies (Elo et al., 2014; Harper & Cole, 2012). Thus, I used member checking for a more reliable study outcome.

Data Organization Techniques

In documenting and organizing data, researchers may follow basic procedures. These procedures include (a) keeping a journal during the study, (b) asking study participants to keep a journal or diary during the study, (c) collecting personal letters from participants, (d) analyzing public documents, (e) examining biographies and autobiographies, (f) taking photographs or videos of participants; chart audits, and (g) collecting records where necessary (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Regular data backups should occur during and after data collection to mitigate accidental loss (Cliggett, 2013; Yin, 2014). I identified and protected all backups from unauthorized access (Cliggett, 2013).

Data organization covers both electronic and physical raw data collected for the case study. I used a case study database to keep track of data for easy retrieval and storage (Cliggett, 2013; Yin, 2014). I organized the field notes used for interviews by categories and themes to document responses properly (Ritholz et al., 2011).

I will save data both electronically and physically in a safe (Cliggett, 2013). All data will undergo proper labeling and storage for 5 years, after which I will personally execute their destruction (Ritholz et al., 2011). Regardless of their form or content, the protocols for data storage will facilitate future access by authorized individuals (Yin, 2014). Any third party accessing the data will need to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Data Analysis Technique

In the interview process, I prepared myself to operate a Samsung Galaxy Note 4 device for audio recording, a laptop, and a secure key-locked leather briefcase to transport data. I used a computer with recording abilities for long distance interviews. I used a Samsung Note 4 phone to make and record calls. All audio recordings had a 16-bit stereo sound quality. Data analysis involves examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, and recombining evidence for empirical findings to emerge (Yin, 2014). I conducted this study using a qualitative single case study design. Data analysis helps to seek promising patterns, insights or concepts (Yin, 2014). The data analysis strategy assures a thorough scrutiny of the credibility of the study evidence (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Tsang, 2013). This was an important step for reliable BOP market leadership findings to emerge.

Triangulation is an important tool in case study data analysis. Different types of triangulation include methodological triangulation, data source triangulation and multiple triangulation (Azulai & Rankin, 2012). Methodological triangulation enables a researcher to study a phenomenon through different methods and confirming findings with more comprehensive data (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Heale & Forbes, 2013). Research data in this study came from a qualitative single case study design.

I analyzed the data using categorical aggregation to find issue-relevant meaning (Ritholz et al., 2011). Through theme analysis, I aggregated research information into large clusters of ideas with details to support the themes (Englander, 2012). A balance should exist between theory and data by showing the data rather than talking about it, but

care should happen carefully to avoid presenting too much data with insufficient interpretation (Lee & Chavis, 2012). There must be a rigorous review of the transcribed interviews and research journal notes and separating keywords and meaningful statements come next, before clustering themes and meanings from it. The choice of a qualitative method of inquiry provided me with an understanding of the phenomena under study.

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is becoming popular in supporting data analysis efforts (Bergin, 2011; Carcary, 2011; Rademaker, Grace, & Curda, 2012; Yin, 2014). Qualitative data analysis include the following five phases: (a) labeling and compiling, (b) disassembling and assigning codes, (c) reassembling the previous codes, (d) interpreting for understanding, and (e) drawing conclusions from the entire study (Yin, 2011). The compiling phase includes identifying and grouping keywords and phrases. The use of spreadsheets is helpful to tabulate and label emerging themes and patterns for further analysis. After a detailed comparison of NVivo 10 and Atlasti for suitability, reliability, and ease of use, I decided to use NVivo 10 for my data analysis. NVivo 10 for Windows software facilitates easy views and retrieval of the data under analysis and interpretation. The software was helpful in my literature review and was instrumental in helping me organize and analyze my data (Bergin, 2011). NVivo 10 is a helpful tool that facilitates the justification of research findings, the uncovering of subtle connections in the data, and the ability to share my work effortlessly. However, proper operation is required for optimal output.

Researchers have to use their judgment in using computers. The use of computer software is to facilitate the data analysis. However, successful data interpretation depends on the researcher's own judgment (Bergin, 2011; Carcary, 2011; Yin, 2014). The last phase in data analysis is the drawing of conclusions from the study from the interpreted data. Proper conclusions should revert to the research question, while relating to themes, patterns, and concepts running through the study (Yin, 2011). The key themes identified in this case would have correlated with the literature.

Reliability and Validity

The importance of the concepts of reliability and validity in research findings traditionally present a modest definition distinction in qualitative research findings (Yin, 2014). The research design in this study started many years ago as an approach to understanding people's view of occurrences and experiences of a case (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Research conducted using the best standards of qualitative research and modern validity standards leads to the conclusion that qualitative research is as truthful as quantitative research and the fear that qualitative research is subjective may put researchers on the defensive and greatly discount the need for reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014). Because qualitative researchers seem to cluster as one, disregarding which paradigm they align themselves with, future support of qualitative research depends on how the postmodernists handle reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The reproduction of a study can be measured scientifically through reliability while validity confirms the extent of success in the research (Ihantola

& Kihn, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Understanding the factors that affirm reliability is crucial for this study.

Dependability. Dependability and confirmability came from the audit trail and reflexivity. An audit trail provides rigor by outlining the researcher's decisions during the research process to create a rationale for the judgments in methodology and interpretation (Houghton et al., 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Watkins, 2012). NVivo 10 served both as a data management tool and provided a full audit trail to demonstrate my decisions during the entire research process (Houghton et al., 2013).

Creditability. I ensured credibility (Watkins, 2012) through member checking, prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing. The two reasons for triangulation are to confirm data and to verify and ensure completeness through gathering different perspectives from a variety of sources for an understanding of a phenomenon (Houghton et al., 2013). Peer debriefing allows the researcher's colleagues or a group of experts to analyze the data and see if they agree with the data labels and paths leading to the labels (Houghton et al., 2013). The self-awareness of the researcher as a data collection instrument should justify reflexivity (Houghton et al., 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Transferability. Transferability ensured research rigor in my qualitative research study (Watkins, 2012). Transferability has to do with the adequate description of the original context of the research for conclusive judgments (Houghton et al., 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). It is the researcher's responsibility to provide detailed description s

for his audience to decide freely on the transferability of the findings to the readers' specific contexts (Houghton et al., 2013; Watkins, 2012).

Confirmability. Confirmability is an alternative element of rigor for qualitative researchers (Watkins, 2012). It implies that enough distance exists between the researcher and the observed. This minimizes the risk of the data-influence by the observer. To strengthen confirmability I was reflexive by documenting my research role, acknowledge personal assumptions and biases that can compromise data collection (Houghton et al., 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Watkins, 2012).

Reliability

Three prominent factors to measure reliability include stability over time, internal reliability, and interobserver consistency (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For qualitative reliability to occur, the researcher's approach should be consistent across different projects and different researchers (Watkins, 2012). Qualitative researchers should document case study procedures as well as the steps involved in the process (Watkins, 2012; Yin, 2014). For the research to be reliable, the researcher must avoid compromising mistakes in data collection. For example, during an interview, a researcher should properly calibrate and use state of the art equipment for optimum performance and reliability. However, each participant may use the duration they find appropriate to answer open-ended questions and the equipment should be able to record the data. In this study, I adhered to the following procedures that ensured reliability:

- Crosschecked all field notes and transcripts to identify and eliminate possible errors

- Properly defined codes and properly matching data with the corresponding codes to avoid any drifts in code definition and use.
- Identified codes to be reviewed (Yin, 2014).

Reliability is a confirmation of a credible study (Watkins, 2012; Yin, 2014).

Elimination of doubts and strict adherence and respect for research protocol will result in a reliable outcome (Gordon, 2012; Svensson & Doumas, 2013). A reliable study has to satisfy validity.

Validity

Every quality research must address and pass validity protocols. Validity comes from confirming accurate findings by the researcher, participant, and the readers (Halkier, 2013; Wynn & Williams, 2012; Yin, 2014). Validity is a strength of qualitative research and has different connotations in qualitative as opposed to quantitative research.

Researchers must employ all available procedures to check for research validity.

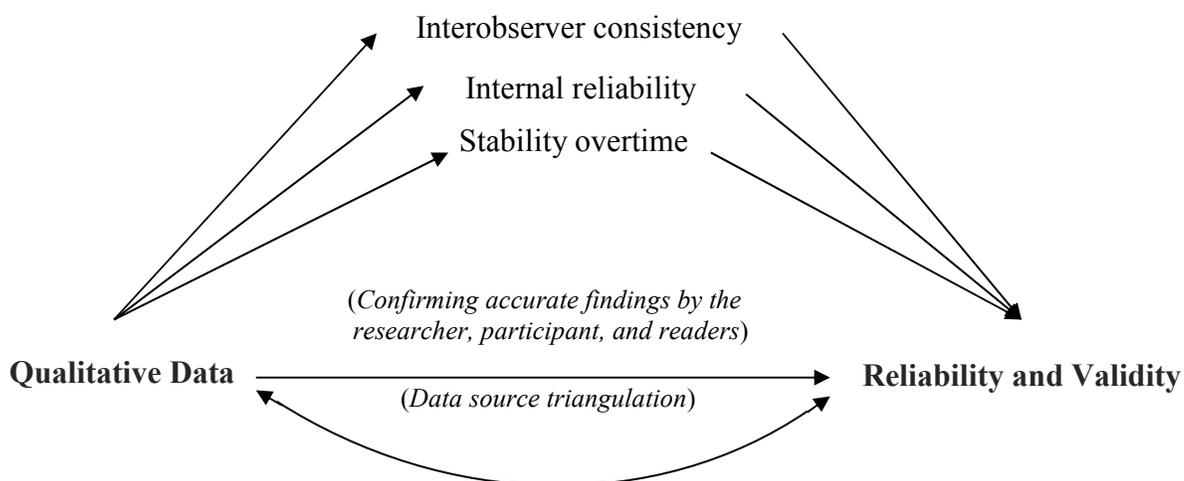


Figure 7. Ensuring reliability and validity.

Strengthening validity increases the quality of the research. An approach to strengthen validity is to conduct and document every occurrence as observed in a local setting as an important part of the data collection process (Erickson, 2012; Maxwell, 2012; Yin, 2013). It is critical to use the right instrument for proper collection and reporting of data, with the researcher as the primary and most important instrument.

Rigor in qualitative research establishes consistency of the methods for the future and it is accurately representative of the population under study (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Watkins, 2012). Rigor gives room for the replication of the study with different research samples (Watkins, 2012). The research instruments and questions must correspond to what is normal in the real world without causing any unintended distractions. The tools and questions have to be appropriate enough to provide relevant information on the research topic (Yin, 2012). The right selection of participants helped me avoid biases. Relating to the external validity of the study, I expected that the outcome of my study would be applicable to similar communities in sub-Saharan Africa as well as other struggling communities with the same challenges. Although it is not advisable to generalize, research findings, the characteristics noted in this selected geographical area of study is typical of most areas in the developing BOP world. With the analysis put forward, this study was poised to enjoy creditability, address confirmability, and address transferability in relation to readers and future research.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 provides details on the project I undertook towards a sustainable and profitable solution to the problems identified. The topics in Section 2 included (a) the

purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) choice of participants, (d) research method, (e) research design, (f) population and sampling, (g) ethical research, (h) data collection technique, (i) data analysis technique, and (j) reliability and validity. Section 3 focuses on the outcome of the research and its applicability. After the introduction, I will present the findings as well as the implications for professional business practice and social change. Recommendations for action and further study emerged, as well as reflections on my experience as a researcher.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies that large multinational energy leaders can use for a successful BOP market entry. In this section of the research study, I elaborate on the following topics: (a) the presentation of findings, (b) application to professional practice, (c) implications for social change, (d) recommendations for action (e) recommendation for further research, (f) reflections, and (g) conclusion. When analyzing and interpreting the themes, I identified strategies that may help large energy multinational business leaders succeed in BOP markets.

According to the data I collected, analyzed, and interpreted, large multinational energy leaders have many strategies they can use to enter and sustain profitability in BOP markets. Strategies emerged from 79 initial themes that were narrowed down to six major and 25 supporting themes. The major themes included the following: (a) BOP readiness, (b) field knowledge, (c) partnerships, (d) product differentiation, (e) customer service, and (f) social entrepreneurship. Interpreting the emerging themes produced success strategies for the BOP marketplace.

In the presentation of findings, I describe ways in which the findings disconfirm, confirm, or extend knowledge in business practice. I compare findings with other peer-reviewed studies on the topic. I also present ties that exist between the findings and the conceptual framework of the study. Lastly, I use my findings to support or dispute strategies in existing literature on effective business practice.

Presentation of Findings

I conducted this qualitative single case study to explore sustainable strategies that large multinational energy business leaders can use for a successful BOP market entry as evidenced in the Republic of Cameroon, West Africa. I included a purposive sample of seven qualified participants with middle to top management positions. All participants had at least a college degree in their field of expertise.

I used NVivo 11 Plus, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) due to its effectiveness to support my data analysis efforts (Bergin, 2011; Carcary, 2011; Rademaker et al., 2012; Yin, 2014). NVivo 11 Plus facilitated my handling of the five phases recommended for qualitative data analysis: (a) labeling and compiling, (b) disassembling and assigning codes, (c) reassembling the previous codes, (d) interpreting for understanding, and (e) drawing conclusions from the entire study (Yin, 2011).

In qualitative research, the central question serves as the element to guide the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Suri, 2011; Yin, 2014). The central question in this study was as follows: What strategies do large multinational energy leaders use to sustain profitability into BOP markets? From the research question, I generated interview questions.

I formulated qualitative interview questions in a semistructured manner during the study interviews (Cachia & Millward, 2011). I introduced a few follow-up questions when necessary to explore the topic further (Yin, 2011). Table 3 shows interview questions, theoretical proposition, and emerging themes.

Table 2

Interview Questions, Theoretical Proposition, and Coded Themes

#	Interview questions	Theoretical proposition	Coded themes
1.	Why did you decide to do business in a country like Cameroon?	Competitive corporate strategy	Social entrepreneurship, globalization, profit, positioning, experience.
2.	How worried were you about business risk and business failure?	BOP corporate and field risk analysis	Risk management, field knowledge, funding, politics, renegotiations.
3.	What were your company's business strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?	Entrepreneurial abilities for BOP entry, operation, and exit	Capital, experience, leadership, safety, vision, information technology, customer service.
4.	How do you approach sustainability?	Corporate social responsibility	Values, mission, community development.
5.	How do you handle challenging business relationships with consumers?	BOP operations and customer strategies	Communication, politics, collection, resentment, culture, infrastructure.
6.	How do you handle recruitment, training, and retention of employees?	BOP leadership and human capital	Transition, partnerships, favoritism, backstabbing, dissatisfaction.
7.	What is your experience with the choice of product, implementation, innovation, and service differentiation?	BOP products, service leadership strategies, weaknesses and overlooked opportunities	Infrastructure, product life cycle, replication, technology, innovation, reliability, profitability.
8.	What is the impact of government regulations on business?	Government partnership, and control	Policy, consumer protection, conflicts of interest, partnerships.
9.	How good was the financial outcome in the business venture?	BOP profitability versus social entrepreneurship	Profit and loss, market exit, energy tariffs.
10.	What suggestions do you offer entrepreneurs willing to follow in your path based on lessons learned?	Some recommendations for BOP market success for entrepreneurs	Consumer challenges, corporate social responsibility, marketing, recruitment, language.
11.	What else would you like to share about your overall bottom of the pyramid (BOP) experience?	Open dialogue for emerging themes to inform BOP strategies	Empowerment, wellness, missed opportunities, BOP readiness, positive social change, diversity.

Emerging Themes

The themes in this study emerged from a preliminary literature review and participant responses from the in-depth qualitative interview transcripts. The themes connected with the BOP concept that grounded this study as well as the main research question as evidenced in Table 3. I narrowed the themes to a few major themes to facilitate strategy formulation.

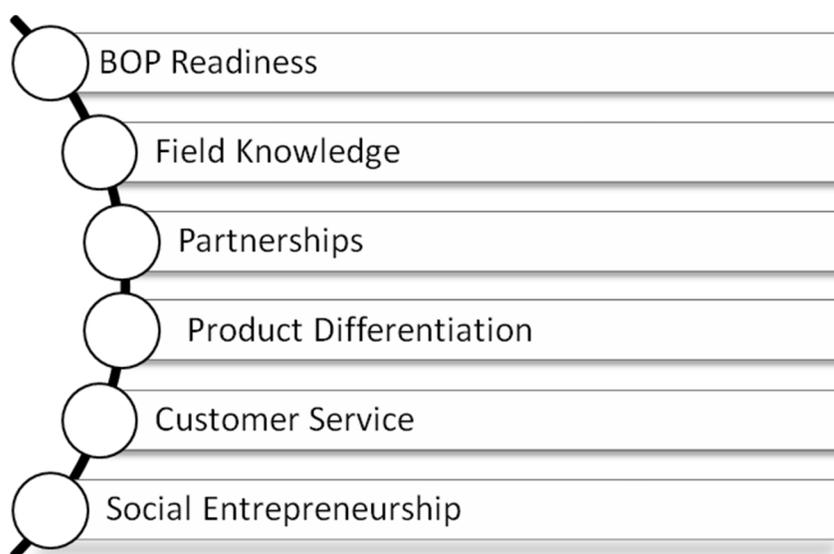


Figure 8. Final themes.

In this subsection I elaborate on the six major themes identified during data analysis: (a) BOP readiness, (b) field knowledge, (c) partnerships, (d) product differentiation, (e) customer service, and (f) social entrepreneurship. The tables that follow each theme analysis illustrate emerging themes, keywords, and phrases from the interviews. The next two columns indicate the number of interviewees who articulated the words or phrases, and the number of times data sources referenced the words or phrases respectively during the data collection process.

The themes emerged from interviewing participants who came from both African and Western backgrounds. Participants all had excellent education and business experience. They all had at least 10 years of corporate for-profit experience with a good understanding of business. All the African participants had international experience.

Figure 8 below contains information on the backgrounds and gender of study participants.

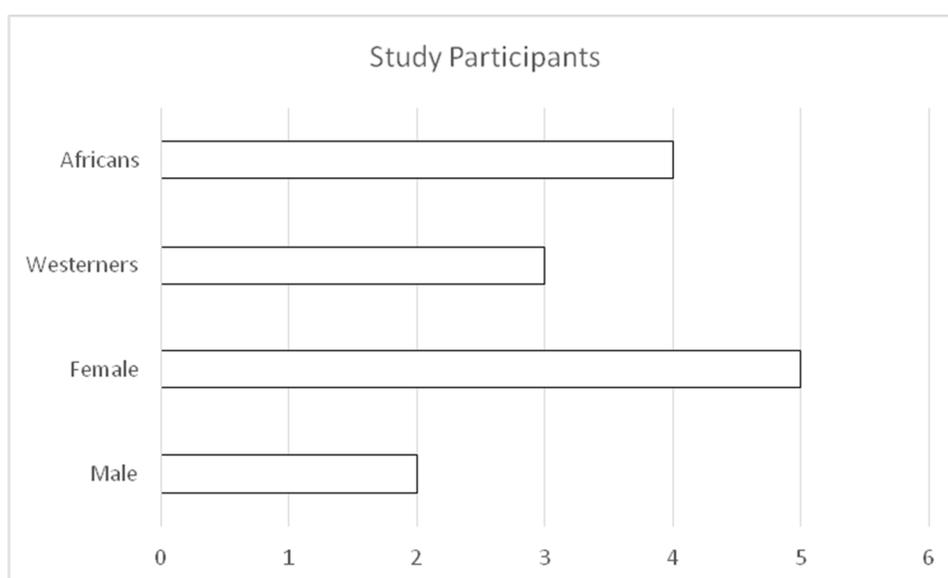


Figure 9 Study participants.

Theme 1: BOP Readiness

Leaders of large multinational companies must be prepared to design a plan for different sets of challenges before entering BOP markets. Participant 2 highlighted the importance of having a corporate vision and structure that allows for “a good working relationship between the corporate team and the local team,” a strength evidenced in the case under study. Participant 1 added that you “have to have very strong stakeholder management relationship.” All participants agreed that the mindset of multinational

business leaders should be to make a modest profit while improving lives in the BOP markets. Participants expressed that business leaders should prepare for differences in culture, business practice, field challenges, BOP opportunities, and threats. They should be ready to implement corporate social responsibility, change management, and morality. Participant 7 commented that “entrepreneurs—whether they are small or large organizations—need to have certain moral convictions and certain determination beyond merely trying to make a profit.” Participant 1 added that “some companies are in and out and earn money and get out. I don’t think that was the way the company approached it.” The company leaders under study maintained a very high corporate social responsibility model as they do business in BOP markets. However, while practitioners can replicate such a model around BOP markets, business operations and strategy models may not be successful if applied across the entire BOP market.

A dedicated internal corporate BOP department should fine-tune models to specific BOP scenarios. The idea of replicating a particular model from one BOP market in another BOP market might not always succeed. Participant 7 asserted the following:

AES was drawing upon their experiences they’ve had in Brazil, in Chile, in Panama, and Argentina, and other parts of the world; and basically attempting to replicate to a degree the electricity-generation practices in business in Cameroon that they were doing elsewhere.

Participant 6 added that “they probably took one of the models in India and probably parts of China, as a role model for the business to manage the company in Cameroon.”

Participant 1 said “it is not a one-size-fits-all,” and Participant 5 expressed the following

Some strategies from other countries may be a weakness because some of these assumptions we hear about different countries are almost like treating those countries with a one size-fit-all approach. So you may think to yourself that because we did this in Nigeria, we can do the same in Cameroon. So what we seem to have understood about how they do business elsewhere is to try to replicate at 100%. Whatever they did in Latin America and it worked so perfectly, when they came into Cameroon with that system, there were all kinds of problems.

Based on these assertions, business leaders should consider reevaluating one-size-fits-all business models for entrepreneurship with BOP countries as part of their BOP readiness stage.

Business leaders should clearly consider the company culture when drafting a BOP business model. Any failure to do so may result in financial failure among other consequences. Strategic leadership and innovation management can be used to support and grow the existing business portfolio, create and grow new opportunities, and improve a company's technological expertise (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014; Willard, 2012).

Referring to corporate culture, Participant 5 responded as follows:

Having worked for AES, I can't tell you that I will fit with AES corp. There is nothing about AES Cameroon that resembles AES Corp because there is hardly any level of interaction where staff from AES had to come and do stuff in Cameroon and build in a way that even when it came to training that was compatible with headquarters.

While it is challenging to find quality employees for BOP operations, business leaders should have policies in place to promote the company's mission, values, and culture.

Participant 5 expressed the following:

The company hired consultants who had never worked for the company or understand its culture, then bring them on some expatriate contracts signed from London or signed from any other country, and the next day they are talking AES, and representing a company they do not even know.

BOP literature further suggests that the variables of products, price, promotion, distribution, and marketing offerings aimed for BOP markets should be adapted to existing differences in culture (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012; Payaud, 2014). It is vital that business leaders address company culture and human capital in relation to the company's BOP modeling.

Business leaders should consider planning for market risks that may threaten BOP success. The company under study had to renegotiate and amend an initial contract despite 3 years of price increases because vital sections became inapplicable and presented serious threats for failure (AES, 2015). Despite this threat, Participant 5 stated "the company was not worried about risks and failure due to their ability to handle similar challenges encountered around the world." Participant 1 affirmed that "risk assessment and scenario analysis ensures that business decisions that are made are made from a robust perspective." Participant 2 said business risks were understood and could be mitigated. Participant 7 saw threats only at the geopolitical level that was under

control by the entrepreneur. Planning before entering BOP markets provides advance knowledge and warnings for business leaders to succeed.

Table 3

BOP Readiness

Major theme	Key Words or Phrases	Participant	References
Theme 1:	Strength and vision	7	29
BOP readiness	Company culture and business modeling	7	22
	Recognition of BOP opportunities	7	28
	Risk management	7	23
	Business leadership	6	11
	Morality	2	4
	Threats	5	11
	Safety	3	7
	Corporate social responsibility	7	18

Theme 2: Field Knowledge

As most of the participants stated, a multinational energy company leader trying to do business in the BOP country of Cameroon should have a detailed understanding of the business landscape in which the company will operate. The BOP concept suggests that enlightened business leaders who learn how to market and serve those in the BOP market may experience increased profits while helping millions of the world's poorest people transition out of poverty (Hart & Prahalad, 2002). The subthemes that emerged from my data analysis included (a) knowledge of the local culture, (b) politics, (c) marketing, (d) management transitions, and (e) language barriers. Understanding the business landscape includes knowledge of the local human capital management practices, recruitment, training, employee satisfaction, favoritism, employee backstabbing, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction. All of these affect productivity, profitability, and the corporate brand.

Regarding business field knowledge, all participants agreed that it was important to know your market environment. Participant 2 commented that,

All companies would go for a risk analysis and a scenario analysis. Companies will do their due diligence to assess political risks, what is the market risk, what's the people risk, what's the economic risk. Of course all of those factors tie-in.

And particularly if you're a Fortune 200 company.

Participant 1 also confirmed this theme by stating, "people, before they enter any market, they need to know the state of the infrastructure." Participant 3 said that the country was stable, "virgin", and "a feasibility study is very vital." This step is important for successfully completing the business venture for profitability and improvement of lives.

Participants responding to question 6 regarding human capital, had a lot to reveal on the need for business leaders to understand how delicate it is to address jobs, recruitment, training, and retention of quality employees. Participant 7 responded that "recruitment, training, and retention of employees – were challenging for AES," and that "it begins with having a local management, local representatives throughout the company." Participant 2 who also worked as an expatriate from the United States, stated that "I think for everyone who worked down there, including me, it was a very exciting thing to work on" and recommended local partnerships. A third respondent – participant 1 said "I think you have to have very strong stakeholder management relationships." Participant 3 said the company did direct recruitment through job postings for the first three years and then started using recruiting agencies because "there were certain responsibilities and risks, and everything they transferred to the agency." At this point

we can tell that the company was not doing their best in human capacity building, recruitment, management, training, and retention. Understanding the right recruitment protocol in BOP markets can help improve business success.

Training is an important success factor for BOP success. Business leaders should consider training facilities locally and internationally for capacity building. Participants 3, 4, and 5 agreed the company was very successful in training employees. Additionally, participant 3 stated, “for training, they did introduce training facilities for their employees,” and “employees had the opportunity to do exchange training overseas, in the United States of America, and all over.” While training is important, business leaders should focus on training employees they can retain and who have the right moral, professional, as well as ethical values others can emulate.

Participant 2 stated “the philosophy you try to treat your employees well, and in return they’ll treat you well.” While this is reflective of business practice in the developed economies, it does not really apply in all of the BOP due to corruption, favoritism, and backstabbing. According to participant 6,

The company started with job postings but unfortunately the local “guys did everything to pull it apart because it wasn’t to their favor. They were known to be incompetent, not having the right qualifications. They found themselves in high positions because they had top connections.

Participant 5 confirmed “there were a lot of horror stories of how you get appointed to positions” and participant 6 confirmed that a lot of opportunities and benefits for the local African employees “were blocked by their own brothers as usual.” For the company

leaders to meet their benchmarks in the BOP there should be strong leadership to deal with corruption, favoritism, and backstabbing.

Employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be tricky in the BOP. The evidence existed in employee compensation. Participant 5 stated that,

One interesting challenge for human resource management was the fact that it was okay for the locals when higher salaries were earned by white expatriates and not okay when black Africans earned the same amounts. It was just not okay when they were Cameroonians earning that much while other Cameroonians were not. It was some kind of colonial mentality because they did not complain about the white people who came from AES Corp and expatriates who earned good salaries. They complained about the Cameroonians who earned good salaries. The grumbling has not quite gone away. It is something that is still there.

Participant 6 added that the American expatriates realized “we were trying to kill or hurt ourselves, they took advantage of that” and whatever benefits they wanted to provide like salary increases or whatever, they just put it aside and said “these guys are fighting among themselves and it is a money problem to themselves so why bother?” Business leaders who care about productivity and profitability should recognize this reality, understand the nature of the problem, and prepare to manage it competently.

An understanding of how to work around the local language and culture is a strategic benefit for business leaders in BOP markets. According to participant 3,

The business leaders found it very difficult because they had that language barrier, AES Corporation was more on English, and they came to a French dominated country where so much communication were misinterpreted.

However, the leaders found favor “with the peaceful culture and stability of the people in Cameroon. Practitioners should consider language and culture during business modeling because they could turn out favorably or provide negative outcomes to an investor. In addition to language and cultural challenges, business leaders should understand how the local politics and government policy affect business outcomes.

Table 4

Field Knowledge

Major theme	Key Words or Phrases	Participants	References
Theme 2: Field knowledge	Human capital management practices	7	37
	Recruitment and training	7	46
	Favoritism and backstabbing	3	20
	Employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction	3	13
	Productivity, profitability	7	40
	Local culture and language	2	10
	Local politics and government	6	22

In BOP markets, it is common to hear government promise free or affordable electricity that cost money to generate. Someone has to pay the bill. Participant 2 stated that the government “also need to look out for the people of Cameroon and make sure that their rates aren’t very high.” While this is true, participant 5 looks at it from a political perspective and stated that “you have situations where campaign promises are made and villages are told they are going to have free light. Where is the free light coming from?” Despite all losses the power producer might have suffered, participant 7 maintained, “there was a good relationship between the government of Cameroon and the

company”. Business leaders should avoid any forms of naiveté to this kind of practice and prepare a small margin in their financial projections to offset such unexpected losses if they arise in a BOP partnership as evidenced with AES and the government of Cameroon.

Theme 3: Partnerships

Partnerships are very crucial for BOP entry and success. The BOP concept recommends partnership between multinational business leaders and BOP communities for mutual benefits (Kahn, 2011; Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2012; Szulecki et al., 2011). In this study, the main partnership was a public-private-partnership between AES and the government of Cameroon. Other partners included international financial institutions, staffing agencies, and local entrepreneurs. On the government’s side, EDC acted as the country’s asset manager; ARSEL was the energy sector regulator; MINEE was the energy policy-maker; and AER promoted rural electrification (Minee, 2015). Other stakeholders included energy users’ watchdog associations, related government ministries like finance, environment, and the economy (MINEE, 2015). A review of the partnership data between the parties in this study provided themes relating to (a) capital, (b) funding, (c) government policy, (d) conflicts of interest, (e) consumer protection, and (f) missed opportunities. Partners focused on the country’s energy potential, demand, access, production, tariffs, and stakeholders. Referring to a partnership approach, participant 1 commented, “it is doing a really good stakeholder analysis and understanding the needs the stakeholders need across-the board.” This approach facilitates a good relationship

with stakeholders and prevents retaliatory changes in government regulation and enforcement that can make a BOP experience unprofitable.

The initial partnership occurred in 2001 between AES and the republic of Cameroon with a 56% and a 44% share respectively of the country's only hydropower monopoly – Sonel, to generate, transmit, and distribute up to 1000 Megawatts (MW) of electricity nationwide in 20 years (AES, 2015). The new independent power producer – AES-Sonel enjoyed government support, a monopoly, and had to provide electricity access to at least 50,000 connections annually in exchange for a fair return based on approved tariffs with the government (AES, 2015). Participants 3 and 6 stated that given that the government had a share in the business, they were working hand-in-hand with a supportive government to avoid going out of business. The company was reaching its full production capacity before the end of the 20 years concession, which ARSEL was overseeing as the regulating body. As a result, it operated independent firms to produce additional power. As Participant 4 asserted,

AES now had different Independent power producers (IPP) working in Cameroon under different names like KPDC, DPDC, and they continued generating. The IPPs were given concessions and durations of licenses to operate.

This strategic move provided an opportunity for the business leaders to increase production and profitability in a lawful manner.

Capital availability and business funding play a significant role in BOP markets. Fund producers included the International Finance Corporation, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, EXIM Bank China, FMO, and a few local banks. Participant 7

stated that they were crucial for “making investments, building power plants, and renovating the existing infrastructure.” Participant 4 agreed that “if an entrepreneur is coming in, they should be ready to invest...” Participants 3 and 6 also agreed that capital and funding played an important role for the energy producer. As Participant 7 concluded, the cost of upgrading the existing infrastructure and investing in new products “was much more costly than anticipated upon going into Cameroon.” Having a good capital as well as funding sources should be a requirement for large multinational energy business leaders seeking success in BOP markets.

The government designed policies to protect the interest of the country in which the energy producer generated, transmitted, and distributed electricity where the government was a 44% business shareholder. Participant 5 stated that “managing sensitive relationships with the government as shareholder and regulator has proven to be a very delicate task for investors.” While an investor might have profit as a priority, the government might just need stability, and to avoid civil unrest. Participant 5 continued,

You might be shareholders, but your interests are different and divided. When the business generates the electricity and the government offer it for free someone has to endure the cost. Though the government is part shareholder, it is usually the biggest debtor to the energy entrepreneur. If an individual does not pay utilities, they will lose service but if the government does not pay, nothing happens to them and they continue to consume energy at the entrepreneur’s cost.

Business leaders should consider the challenges BOP government face with their people and consider projections for small losses that can hurt their investments.

Cameroon has experienced many missed opportunities due to the current energy shortage. A company called Alucam consumes about 34% of the energy produced in the entire country. As Participant 4 affirmed, a business group “came to the country and wanted 300 megawatts of energy before investing in mining, but were told it was impossible” so they left with their capital. This was a missed opportunity for social entrepreneurship, community empowerment, and social wellness. Efforts for increases in energy production will attract investors in other fields to develop the BOP economy and improve lives.

Another missed opportunity was in the area of human capital. Business leaders can save a lot of money and have a lot accomplished when they hire staff from the diaspora and bringing them back to their country of origin. Participant 4 commented that they spent a lot on expatriates’ salaries but “if the nationals handle key positions, they know that this is my country, so they will want to manage it even better.” This was evident at a certain point in operations where the company under study implemented the measure and saw an improvement in performance. Participant 5 confirmed that they “went out of their way to attract quality talent. They took extra steps to make sure they attracted Cameroonian talent from the diaspora with good compensation packages.” This strategy helped with retention and improved productivity.

Table 5

Partnerships

Themes	Key Words or Phrases	Participants	References
Theme 3:	Partnership structure	7	48
Partnerships	Capital and funding moves	6	27
	Government policy and conflicts of interest	7	29
	Consumer protection	2	6
	Missed opportunities	3	6

Theme 4: Product Differentiation

The bottom of the pyramid market provides an opportunity for business leaders to compete with products of different quality and pricing. However, prior to differentiation, business leaders have to analyze the market conditions and project an outcome. This is because modern marketing aims at knowing and understanding the customers so well that the proposed products or services fit the customers' environment and are easy to sell (Chikweche, 2013). Participant 3 acknowledged that:

If they want to come into a country, it is for them to have their product consumed by the people. So first, they should make it possible for all the various classes to benefit from their product. They should make it in a way that even the least privileged will have that opportunity to explore. So if they are doing costing, they should consider costing for the various classes. People of the high class, middle class, and lower class should not be exploited the same. So the product has to be done such that it fits the environment and it fits the people.

Participant 1 agreed that it is not a one-size-fits-all while participant 4 recommended a mix of energy sources to include more hydro, wind, and solar. An analysis of the existing infrastructure was also important for the company.

Experts analyzed all existing local infrastructure for improvements and obsolescence before investing in new ones. With every new infrastructure, the investor took into account the product lifecycle to prepare ahead for another round of investments. Participant 2 stated that “before people enter any market, they need to know the state of the infrastructure”. Participant 3 added that:

The energy quality was one of their fights because the machines or the instruments that they met and all the other old infrastructures. They had to do first investments in doing an upgrade. They had to change a lot of them. Maintenance too, so that was so much risk. That was a business risk.

AES considered innovative products and product lifecycles as they invested in the local energy infrastructure. Participant 4 stated:

They had to rebuild the generators that were constructed in the 50s, they changed all of them and increased their capacity in Edea. In some of the power plants, they did some renovation work. They did a lot of renovation even in Edea where I was, a lot there.

Participant 4 concluded by recommending that investors should “have a good action plan to replace most of our rotten wooden poles because most of our accidents are caused by these poles”. Participant 6 criticized the limited investment by stating that:

I don't think they were ready to invest long term because if you are not going to stay long, you want to get your short term investments you know. You want to get the cash coming back in as fast as possible.

Innovative products and services can make a positive difference in a BOP environment as business leaders compete for market dominance. As Makadok and Ross (2013) stated, the presence of government regulations encourage business leaders to attain market power through product differentiation. Referring to AES, they introduced innovative products, technologies, and services that the local people did not have before their arrival. Participant 3 stated that:

Given the rapid growth of the population they had to come in with other means. You had the gas. You had the thermal. They had the different production facilities. They had the hydro plants, they did do thermal plants, and gas. So they created the thermal and the gas plants, which we did not have. They were trying to improve the quality of energy supply, so they did a lot of the investment that had made an impact. That way attracting more potential big customers to be their clients, you know. They also created a strategy of reducing the bottleneck of payments. They introduced money, mobile money. Thanks to them mobile money was brought to Cameroon.

Similar to participant 6 above, participant 4 concurred that

for innovative products, they did lots of thermal power plants which were short term projects. If they really wanted to stay here for long they should have built hydro power plants. They invested a lot in thermal power plant. So we had an increased capacity in the country which was a good thing. When you have those plants, they are so expensive running them using heavy fuel and low fuel – that is LFO/HFO. It's very expensive, and it's not sustainable. They could have

invested a little bit on may be wind or solar and just a little bit on hydro and just a little bit on thermal.

Innovation was also experienced in field operations and billing technology. Participant 2 stated that they introduced power plants that were independent of the utility. Participant 6 stated:

They went into a short investment for a while for transmission lines, sub-stations, they did a lot of sub-stations, and changing transformers. They did put in some kind of safety around the plants and they did become very much more safety-aware of what was going on in the environment.

AES leveraged technology for maximum corporate profitability. They improved their billing platform to meet local advancement in wireless technology. Customers were able to pay utility bills using a cell phone from the comfort of their home, something that has never existed. They also had the option to prorate and pay future bills based on past consumption. As Participant 5 stated:

Problems with people having different billing cycle meaning you could be a situation where you and your neighbor don't necessarily need to pay your bills on the same day. They staggered the billing cycles in a way that the agency could be less crowded and then have their own different billing dates and billing cycles highly computerized. You can run the situation in a way that you can probably on the basis of your previous bills, pay your future bills and stuff like that.

Renewable sources of energy are helpful to the environment and may require a mix of energy sources, but an investor may see it differently for its lack of a viable

financial outcome. At the BOP markets, product management is a serious and innovative business decision (Griffith & Rubera, 2014; Tianjiao, 2014). AES produced energy using a combination of sources like hydro, gas, and thermal. This raised the question why they ignored other popular sources like wind, solar, and geothermal. Participant 3 said they did not have solar yet and had not explored the system while participant 4 wished the company had invested a bit on wind or solar. However, it was not a financially viable option at the time. Participant 5 stated that,

There were discussions about other energy sources from solar to wind, but given the short duration of the licenses, the producers engaged in what was a real financially viable solution.

Table 6

Product Differentiation

Themes	Key Words or Phrases	Participants	References
Theme 4:	Products analysis	6	21
Product	Infrastructure and product lifecycle	7	49
differentiation	Innovation	7	18
	Information technology	4	11
	Renewable energy alternatives	3	3

Theme 5: Customer Service

The theme of customer service in this study covers consumer challenges, communication services, collections, and customer resentment. When AES got into Cameroon initially, they faced many problems because the people were not used to a new entity. Participant 4 stated that,

there was always a lot of problems working with consumers in a country with a

lot of power outages. Some of the challenges included collecting unpaid bills from delinquent debtors. Participant 4 further stated that there were customers who consumed a lot. Sometimes AES went out on campaigns to get back their money from clients owing \$60,000 or \$80,000.

Participant 7 related that AES had to put a fair amount of emphasis on billing customers and collecting those receipts in order to reinvest in the business going forward. The company had to create a balance between services, income, and customer satisfaction. Participant 3 stated that,

They faced a lot of problems because Cameroonians then, were not used to a new face. AES created a relationship with the customers and made the customers to have their values you know? To know how important they are. They put the importance of the customers as their priority. You know, putting safety first, customer satisfaction, meeting the people and talking to them, satisfying them by building schools. You have to reach out to the consumers.

Customer care through good communications practice helped AES access consumers in Cameroon. Amongst many benefits that companies can reap from personalized customer care are better prices for its products or services, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, better response rates, and differentiation from competitors (Tang, Liao, & Sun, 2013; Watson, McCarthy, & Rowley, 2013). Though the company initially faced communication challenges, they later made corrections and improvements in customer service. Participant 3 confirmed that,

The people did not like the service. Their weakness was the communication and the manner of communicating. They didn't manage it properly, yes. They didn't know how to sensitize the public on certain things. When you put into place the communication aspect too, it is very important how your communication is being done for your product, or when a new person is coming into the market, what do you need to do? You have to really understand how you're going to explore this aspect. Once they start consuming a product, you have to make them understand that they are part of that product.

Damage control was initially missing in AES's efforts towards customer service. AES had difficulties managing the transition when they took over the energy monopoly. The country experienced repeated blackouts during the takeover by AES. The people believed that the company did not properly plan the transition. They saw this as reckless and a threat to their security. Communication was important but missing. As Participant 3 asserted:

During the first three years the rate at which the energy outage occurred was really alarming, as the people did not ever had this before. What AES was supposed to do was to come in, do some kind of a testing, and then do planning. And they didn't do proper planning. I think they would have successfully gone through the transition without people having that feeling you know, without having the impact of disappointment, you know? There was instability. They caused a bit of instability in security. And people were so angry until they were like even threatening to send them away.

Collecting unpaid bills came with serious challenges requiring specific BOP strategies. It was commonplace for people or corporate clients to owe large sums of money amounting to thousands of dollars. At times, delinquent debtors agreed on short payoffs. This included the private sector and individuals. Participant 4 remarked that “you always needed to negotiate with them. Let’s say if they are owing AES 30 million Francs CFA, they can pay in installments through an agreement.” However, some clients were more challenging to collect from, considering a combination of factors to include political connections or inability to pay. After AES concluded negotiations with debtors, it was a lot easier to have the local partners go after them for payment. They had a better understanding of the local terrain.

Collecting money that the government, also a shareholder, owed was challenging. The government was the biggest debtor. As Participant 5 asserted:

When it comes to collection, the government is the biggest debtor. An investor cannot just go and strong-arm the government because when they do, there are other consequences that will follow. The villages that are consuming electricity for free either due to campaign promises or political connections are costing the investor.

AES outsourced some of the collection work to contracting third parties. These companies contracted with the energy producer for limited powers to collect unpaid utility bills. Participant 6 stated that “they made a contract and the contract gave them limited powers as far as collecting is concerned. Everything was drawn up so collections could be done.”

Table 7

Customer Service

Themes	Key Words or Phrases	Participants	References
Theme 5:	Consumer services and communication	6	32
Customer	Consumer challenges	6	19
service	Collections	3	3
	Resentment	5	18

Theme 6: Social Entrepreneurship

The keywords that emerged under this theme included BOP investing for social change, entrepreneurship and empowerment, community development, positive social change, sustainability, and wellness. Existing BOP literature promotes integrative thinking through social entrepreneurship as a way for business leaders to make a profit while improving lives of struggling people in emerging economies. Social entrepreneurs are interested in creating value for the society while commercial entrepreneurs seek value for themselves (Miller et al., 2012; Santos, 2012). Business leaders should look for ways to affect communities positively through product type, pricing, affordability, marketability, and need (Anderson & Billou, 2007; Miller et al., 2012). As Participant 7 expressed,

There needs to be a desire at the outset for new entrepreneurs entering Cameroon to really want to do the right thing for the people of the country, the citizenry, who would benefit from their products or services. AES's real goal and motivation was to improve the lives of others. What was important to them was to basically improve the life and the well-being of people in underdeveloped countries, like Cameroon and like many other places in the world where AES

decided to undertake projects. So the idea was “Let’s do it again.” The opportunities were to make a modest profit in doing so, given that they were the only electricity-generating company, as it turned out, in Cameroon.

The investment by AES in Cameroon aligned with their community empowerment strategy. The company increased the power supply of the country to contract levels before departing. In the words of participant 4,

At least before they left, we were at about 1,050 megawatts. When they came in we were at about 600 or 650 megawatts. You know before they left they told us of the strategic alignment of their businesses. They wanted to streamline the number of countries where they operate so that they can invest more and concentrate to provide quality services wherever they invest.

On the entrepreneurial level, participant 2 commented AES was the first Independent Power Producer in Cameroon, a model that existed in other parts of the world but not in Cameroon. Participant 1 concurred that they brought their expertise and therefore, they enabled businesses to be successful in Cameroon. The opportunity was beneficial to the government as well as to local entrepreneurs. Most African governments find revenue potential in the electricity trade (Rosnes & Vennemo, 2012). Participant 3 stated that the government enjoyed tax revenues from the energy investments. More benefits were the availability of more electricity than before, opportunities for local subcontractors, and electronic bill payment through mobile phones called “mobile money” (Participant 3). Local citizens were empowered through business opportunities

from the company and through training. Participant 4 added that regarding training, most often lots of Cameroonians went abroad for training.

AES was committed to its community development efforts. This was helpful to the environment and the community at large. Participant 1 highlighted,

It was about developing sustainable business models and also doing things to support the environment and the community through programs and initiatives and to look at different ways to be operationally excellent and also from an environmental standpoint was well. Some companies are in and out and earn money and get out. I don't think that was the way the company approached it.

Other participants agreed with participant 1. There were serious improvements in social aspects of impacted communities. The investment had a positive effect to the public, and the economy. Participant 4 highlighted heavy investments in safety, the environment, and corporate social responsibility. Participant 3 stated that,

There was an improvement on the social aspect because so many rural areas had the facilities of electricity so people, hospitals, schools, individuals, had electricity, which made life very easy for them. You have to make money and fulfill certain conditions. The social aspects and the environmental aspects too. However, it's still like, I mean the entrepreneurs need to understand the interest of the people, which is very vital.

AES had a great commitment to sustainability. For large businesses in developed countries to be competitive in the context of developing countries, corporate social responsibility practices, customer loyalty, and trust must be achieved (Azmat & Ha,

2013; Benn et al., 2014). Participants upheld the positive sustainability efforts of AES leaders. Participant 1 highlighted,

It's more about that core competence in working in a difficult market and being able to be operationally successful and make those businesses sustainable in the long-term. It was about developing sustainable business models and also doing things to support the environment and the community through programs and initiatives and to look at different ways to be operationally excellent and also from an environmental standpoint was well.

Participant 2 supported that sustainability was really something that AES values very highly. Participant 3 referred to the company's successful efforts towards local environmental awareness and protection. Participants 5,6, and 7 agreed that they made good sustainable efforts in their operations.

However, participant 4 had some reservations on AES's choice of products and their impact on the environment. The participant expected better choices from the company when it comes to leveraging renewable sources of energy. Participant 4 considered the use of heavy fuels for energy production to be a weakness in AES's energy production efforts. Here are the statements from participant 4:

AES's approach for me was not the best because they invested more on thermal power plants, which after three or four years of exploitation, you cannot exploit them anymore. The production rate dropped a lot and it is also not very sustainable. For sustainable projects, you talk about hydro, wind, solar, etc. We spent a lot on fuel for those thermal power plants. When you have those plants,

they are so expensive running them using heavy fuel and low fuel – that is LFO/HFO. It's very expensive, and it's not sustainable. Sustainability, if you invest a lot in thermal power plants, you cannot be environmentally friendly because they use a lot of fuel and generate a lot of waste. They are not really major spills but when you go around you look on the floor, you always see some patches of fuel on the floor, which is not very friendly to us. They could have invested a little bit on may be wind or solar and just a little bit on hydro and just a little bit on thermal. Build more hydropower plants. They should be ready to have sustainable projects.

Table 8

Social Entrepreneurship

Themes	Key Words or Phrases	Participants	References
Theme 6: Social entrepreneurship	BOP investing for social change	7	116
	Entrepreneurship and empowerment	6	17
	Community development	4	13
	Positive social change	5	12
	Sustainability	7	37
	Wellness	4	10

Conclusions from Themes

Strategies emerged from theme analysis. As previously mentioned in the literature review section, bottom of the pyramid markets are the most challenging and underserved markets in the world; the BOPs face difficulties in market entry, infrastructure, and operations (Mason, Chakrabarti, & Singh, 2013; Ozaki, 2011; Willans, Christiansen, & Munro, 2011). Theme analysis helped me formulate strategies that large multinational energy leaders can use to enter and survive BOP markets. Participants'

responses to interview questions provided the necessary themes that included (a) BOP readiness; (b) field knowledge; (c) partnerships; (d) product differentiation; (e) customer service; and (f) social entrepreneurship. Narrowing the themes down to a few major themes made it easy for strategies to emerge. The strategies include the following:

- Multinational business executives need to change their attitudes and misconceptions about BOP markets and consider a more inclusionary business model.
- Company leaders should embrace structural changes that include research and development sub-units dedicated to the BOP markets.
- Business leaders should have a detailed understanding of the business landscape in which they will operate, including possible risks and benefits.
- Leadership can align company vision with BOP strategies for success.
- Leadership should clearly define BOP entry and exit plans to the understanding of all division managers.
- BOP business models should include corporate social responsibility, change management, and morality.
- Human capital managers should consider implementing job postings, equal employment opportunities, and engaging employees from the diasporas.
- Employee training should be a continuous process to improve competency and productivity levels.
- Leadership should plan on identifying and eradicating all human inefficiencies, bottlenecks, as well as corruption.

- BOP business models should provide what consumers need at the price they can afford, while ensuring profitability for a sustainable business. This may mean sacrificing product quality or add-on services.
- Not all existing business models may apply across the entire BOP market. Where business leaders cannot replicate existing business models, they should implement changes to fit the market scenario.
- BOP operations should include partnerships with other knowledgeable entities, local groups, and some non-governmental organizations.
- Choose your local partners wisely and prepare for possible losses that may arise.
- Diversify, innovate, and differentiate on products and services for profitability.
- Plan to create a market for new products like geothermal, wind, and solar after a careful study and local research.
- Possess capital and funding sources to stir up local entrepreneurship relating to your products as well as build strong alliances with them.
- Leverage technology as much as possible for optimum services and profitability.
- Have clear customer service strategies to deal with damage control, corporate image, brand relevance, field management complexities, customer care, and communication.
- Invest time and money for the local community empowerment, development, positive social change, sustainability, and wellness.

Applications to Professional Practice

Below, I will initiate a discussion on the applicability of the findings with respect to the professional practice of business. This major sub-section will provide information on why and how the findings are relevant to improved business practice. The goal will be to inform and enhance modern business practice relating to BOP market entrepreneurship.

This study provided strategies for large multinational energy leaders seeking entry into BOP markets. A review of BOP literature revealed that multinational business leaders are reluctant to do business with BOP communities due to the lack of sustainable market entry strategies (Anderson & Billou, 2007; Bazilian et al., 2012). As a result of identifying themes, I found several BOP market entry and operation strategies that large multinational business leaders can undertake to improve their chances of success. A business practitioner would benefit from being able to prepare a sustainable BOP entry plan that addresses important topics like (a) getting the business ready for the BOP market; (b) acquiring enough field knowledge before any BOP market entry; (c) making strategic BOP partnerships; (d) finding the right BOP products with the right quality and price; (e) planning for good customer service, brand identity protection, and damage control; and (f) planning to genuinely practice social entrepreneurship with the goal of making a positive difference in the lives of the local population.

Business practitioners should prepare their companies for BOP market entry by addressing certain areas of operations in the company that would be dedicated to BOP operations. Practitioners should include the following strategies in their preparation

stage: (a) there should be a change in attitudes and misconceptions about BOP markets in favor of a more inclusionary business model; (b) embrace corporate structural changes that include research and development sub-units dedicated to the BOP markets; and (c) consider planning for market risks that may threaten BOP success. Additionally, business practitioners should understand the BOP terrain.

Business practitioners should research their business environment and understand all nuances prior to making any commitments. Schuster and Holtbrügge (2012) argued that knowledge and experience-based factors are the facilitators of multinational business entry into the BOP markets. Modern business practice calls for business leaders to know and understand the customers enough that all proposed products and services fit their environment and can sell easily (Chikweche, 2013). This is consistent with the need to balance product and price in relation to the client (Porter, 2008).

This study highlights the importance of making strategic BOP partnerships for success. In existing literature, scholars argue that in handling the energy challenge, partnerships should go through careful analysis for efficiency and effectiveness (Szulecki et al., 2011). It is true as witnessed in this study outcome. Business practitioners should consider the strategic importance of BOP market partnerships and make their choices wisely. They should also create the possibility of revising partnership contracts where necessary as witnessed in the case under study.

Finding the right BOP products with the right quality and price is a good strategy for business leaders at the BOP. As shown in the literature review, business leaders can exhibit a unique value proposition for market superiority by improving on strategies like

product differentiation, cost leadership, and focus (Porter, 2008). Despite the availability of many energy sources AES could have implemented, they made choices that were financially viable for business success. Though some participants recommended wind and solar energy sources, the company did not find it to be suitable for the market at the time. Based on the results, I recommend that business professionals at the BOP match the right products with the right people and at a suitable price point. This will increase product acceptance, growth, strong brand identity, and possible customer satisfaction.

The study results suggest that a good customer service strategy is important at the BOP. Business leaders should plan for a market-appropriate customer service strategy that includes brand identity protection, and damage control. While scholars have addressed different BOP market strategies, very little is known about BOP customer service strategies. Business practitioners should leverage technology as much as possible for optimum services and profitability. Clearly defined customer service strategies will help business leaders improve corporate image, brand relevance, deal with field management complexities, provide customer care, and satisfy communication challenges.

This study outcome confirms the need for sustainable social entrepreneurship as part of a successful BOP market model. In today's competitive landscape, many large corporations are going global and looking for ways to improve sustainability and financial performance (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014; Spence et al., 2011; Willard, 2012). Business professionals willing to operate at the BOP must genuinely do so with the goal of making a positive difference in the lives of the local population. Through capacity building, training, empowerment, and social wellness, a social change initiative can occur

at the individual level. At the community level, practitioners should emphasis on (a) sustainable community development efforts, (b) encouraging local entrepreneurship, and (c) focusing on a positive social change agenda.

Finally, this study also provides strategies for business entrepreneurs looking to enter the country of Cameroon based on the AES experience. Business leaders can use these strategies to better serve the community, collaborate with the government where necessary, and understand the business landscape. It also provides information on human resource challenges, and how business leaders can make a difference in hiring, training, as well as retention decisions.

Critics of the BOP concept may agree that the BOP strategies from this study provide a proper direction for BOP market entry and success. One of the critics argued that the poor should be limited to the role of producers and not consumers (Karnani, 2007). Findings from this study prove the opposite. The poor have a strong and ever increasing buying power and economic growth potential. Business entrepreneurs can do well at the BOP markets by strategically leveraging the right products, price, management, capital, partnerships, service, and sustainability.

The above analysis has provided a detailed discussion on the applicability of the findings with respect to the professional practice of business. The study outcome will serve as a relief to multinational energy leaders of uncertainties relating to the lack of effective institutions, transparent governance, good business models, and legal as well as regulatory networks in BOP markets (Bazilian et al., 2012). The arguments on the

relevance why and how the findings are relevant to improved business practice are comprehensive.

Implications for Social Change

This study outcome has implications in terms of tangible improvements to individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies as the findings could affect social change and community behaviors. As existing literature suggests, a stakeholder approach, with the inherent values of freedom, responsibility, justice, inclusion, participation, and mutual dependence in service of creating value for different actors, offers the best hope of effecting the pursuit of global as well as organizational sustainability (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014). This study shows business leaders how engaging in sustainably improving the lives of the impacted BOP communities where they conduct business will create a favorable business environment and increase the local economic power hence providing an avenue for more profit.

The local BOP population may benefit from an implementation of this study outcome in many ways. Large multinational business leaders can help alleviate poverty through the promotion of sustainable local entrepreneurship and job creation. Additionally, encouraging sustainability is a modern realization that will benefit all stakeholders in a BOP business partnership (Gobble, 2012; Robinson, Kleffner, & Bertels, 2011). In the 21st century, business leaders agree that creating wealth through superior financial performance alone is of the past (Smith & Sharicz, 2011).

Entrepreneurship may increase locally through an implementation of this study outcome. When large energy multinational leaders invest in a community, they provide

avenues for capacity building, increased cashflow, and sub-contracting. This has the tendency of translating into the creation of a new business by local and emerging entrepreneurs and may result in bringing a positive social change to the community.

Evidence in this study suggests that an increase in energy production to more people in the BOP will bring about community empowerment and rural development. More entrepreneurs and large businesses will emerge than ever existed. Businesses can operate in the night with increased hours and students can stay up longer to study. People will be more enlightened and the quality of life will improve.

Based on the results, I recommend improving local infrastructure for accident reduction. The fencing of sub-stations and replacement of rotten electric poles will reduce accidental deaths in the community. The increased safety will improve community well-being and life expectancy in the impacted communities.

Culturally, more people may be watching television and movies due to an increase in electricity. There may be an increase in electric stoves, refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, and other electronics. This will bring a shift in the local culture and affect the community either positively or negatively. The effect will influence behaviors and demand for new but different products due to a shifting awareness.

The implications for social change may have a positive effect for the government and entrepreneur as well. The study includes highlights that positive social change like an increase in reliable electricity supply helps the image of local politicians in office during elections. As participant 5 implied, when the population is happy, uprisings decline, peace prevails, and politicians remain in office. Regarding the energy

multinational business leaders, they can enjoy a strong brand identity, sector monopoly, government favors, and increased profits.

Recommendations for Action

Market entry and operation at the BOP can be successful using the outcome of this study and can benefit stakeholders like entrepreneurs, the BOP communities, institutions, and business practitioners. The outcome of this study proposed strategies derived from major themes that include (a) BOP readiness; (b) field knowledge; (c) partnerships; (d) product differentiation; (e) customer service; and (f) social entrepreneurship. The strategies provide important steps to useful actions for improving business practice and the lives of all stakeholders.

Large multinational business leaders entering the BOP should change their attitudes and misconceptions about BOP markets and consider a more inclusionary business model. They should embrace structural corporate changes that include research and development sub-units dedicated to the BOP markets. Other strategic actions are that:

- Business leaders should have a detailed understanding of the business landscape in which they will operate, including possible risks and benefits.
- Company business strategies can align with BOP opportunities for success.
- Leadership should clearly define BOP entry and exit plans to the understanding of all division managers.
- BOP business models should include corporate social responsibility, change management, and morality.

- Human capital managers should consider implementing job postings, equal employment opportunities, and engaging employees from the diasporas.
- Employee training should be a continuous process to improve competency and productivity levels.
- Leadership should have measures in place to eradicate all identified human inefficiencies, bottlenecks, and corruption.
- BOP business models should provide what consumers need at the price they can afford, while ensuring profitability for a sustainable business. This may mean sacrificing quality or add-on services.
- Not all existing business models may apply across the entire BOP market. Where business leaders cannot replicate existing business models, they should implement changes to fit the market scenario.
- BOP operations should include partnerships with other knowledgeable entities, local groups, and some non-governmental organizations.
- Choose your local partners wisely and prepare for possible losses that may arise.
- Diversify, innovate, and differentiate on products and services for profitability.
- Plan to create a market for new products like geothermal, wind, and solar after a careful study and local research.
- Possess capital and funding sources to stir up local entrepreneurship relating to your products as well as build strong alliances with them.

- Leverage technology as much as possible for optimum services and profitability.
- Have clear customer service strategies to deal with damage control, corporate image, brand relevance, field management complexities, customer care, and communication.
- Invest time and money for the local community empowerment, development, positive social change, sustainability, and wellness.

Useful actions for the local BOP communities should include strategies to facilitate entry for social entrepreneurs who seek a modest profit to bring about a positive social change. Such actions include: (a) being welcoming and tolerant to possible mistakes of entrepreneurs; (b) putting up the best efforts to facilitate the entrepreneurs' entry and operations; (c) understanding the cultural differences that may exist between the entrepreneur and the local community including possible language challenges; (d) treating entrepreneurs with honesty and integrity so they do not run out of business; and (e) helping with feedback for service or product improvement to spur reverse innovation for community advancement.

The local BOP government and policy-makers can take certain actions to facilitate business at the BOP. The outcome of this study proves that it is beneficial for policy-makers to amend contracts and regulations that can put a social entrepreneur out of business. Policy-makers should understand to what extent they can let an investor maintain a monopoly and when to bring in competition. Avoiding conflicts of interest should be encouraged when government leaders occupy roles of regulator, politicians,

and shareholder. All parties should understand business economics and strongly protect investors' return on investment to assure business continuity. Government leaders should stir up other areas of economic growth to improve the community's purchasing power in order to extent electricity access to more challenging areas of the country seeking energy.

Lending institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, and other lending partners should seek better ways of funding opportunities that bring about economic growth and a positive social change. As stated in the research interview, global investors trying to do business in the BOP were unable to do so due to the lack of electricity. Existing literature states that full electricity access in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 will require approximately a 13% annual growth in electricity production as opposed to the 1.7% experienced over the last 2 decades (Bazilian et al., 2012). Financiers should conduct studies to seek partners and ways to solve this problem sustainably.

The outcome of this study should empower business scholars and practitioners who are interested in understanding large multinational business strategies at the BOP in general and Cameroon in particular. The strategies will facilitate BOP modeling for business practitioners and prevent costly mistakes as evidenced in this study. Considering that conferences, seminars, and discussions on the BOP are on the rise, it will as well add to the body of knowledge relating to the BOP markets.

The outcome of this study will constitute a new material for business conferences. I will publish the findings in academic outlets and BOP conferences. Some of the journals I expect to publish the findings include *The Leadership Quarterly*, *Global*

Strategy Journal, Journal of Strategic Marketing, Strategic Management Journal, Journal of Small Business Management, International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal, Leadership & Organization Development Journal, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Global Management Studies Professional, and Challenge. I will also use the information to train entrepreneurs seeking entry into BOP markets. Other avenues include sharing the findings with community leaders, government policy-makers, non-profits, and entrepreneurs. With increasing investment opportunities at the BOP, business consultants might benefit from this study.

Recommendations for Further Study

Opportunities for further study exist regarding large multinational energy companies' BOP market entry and success in areas that include (a) different geographic locations for research, (b) using different research methods, (c) BOP market exit strategies, (d) customer service at the BOP, and (e) leveraging wind, solar, and geothermal at the BOP. Business scholars have already researched some of these areas. However, due to the evolving market changes in products and prices, continues research should also occur.

Researchers could carry out further studies on this topic using a different research methodology. The research design was limited to a qualitative case study inquiry to explore effective business strategies. A change in methodology might produce a slightly different outcome. A multiple case study research might provide more data but I believe enough data saturation occurred with a single case study design. A direction for further

research would be to conduct a mixed method research to test variables derived from the outlined strategies.

Research opportunities exist in other communities with the same challenges and having a different culture. Due to the differences and disparities that exist from a socio-cultural and economic viewpoint, various communities might come up with different solutions to the same problems. Researchers can greatly reduce the chances of biases in a different geographical setting for a different research outcome.

Researchers know very little about market exit strategies for large multinational energy companies doing business at the BOP. This research aims at providing strategies to enter and operate in the BOP market. The research falls short of recommending exit strategies to help business decision-making. While I think the focus should be to know how to enter and operate in the BOP, individual company leaders should choose when to transition out of an investment opportunity.

Existing literature has very little information about customer service and care in BOP markets. This research outcome demands that multinational energy business practitioners pay attention to customer service. Not only does it help to make a brand stronger, it also improves the image of a business. This may lead to increased profits and a successful social agenda.

Lastly, researchers should conduct new BOP research to determine a suitable implementation of other renewable sources of energy like wind, solar, and geothermal. Participants in this study stated that many years ago AES conducted studies on the subject. They found the products to be expensive and unsuitable at the time. With the

current improvements in product quality and decrease in price per watt of electricity, research on existing small-scale operations might provide updated information for a new investment opportunity.

Reflections

When I started this doctoral program, I was more inclined to solving social problems in my research endeavor. It led me into a social agenda more than a business one. By the fourth year in the program and after many residencies, I realized I had to focus on solving a business problem and not a social one. This was a clear demarcation between understanding social entrepreneurship and conducting a social study.

Earning a doctorate as a business practitioner requires self-discipline and I had to embrace one direction only. I started analyzing the business problems of the BOP relating to energy through an exhaustive review of academic literature. I realized that by researching a business problem I could contribute in reducing some of the social challenges by producing practical solutions to the problems. Hence, I thought of business leaders in social entrepreneurship as community problem-solvers.

Considering the alarming deficit in energy production in the sub-Saharan African section of the BOP, I decided to investigate the challenge to facilitate market entry and operations by large energy multinationals that happen to be the best choice for a faster solution. This led me from one challenge to another. There was the choice of methodology, conceptual framework, dealing with biases, and research data collection amongst others.

For this study, I had to choose from three research methods. The quantitative methodology was premature due to the lack of reliable variables to research. I found the mixed method to be cumbersome and unnecessary. Due to insufficient research material on the topic, I found it most appropriate to conduct a qualitative research. The reliability of case studies in business research, led to the design of a single case study research.

The search of a conceptual framework led to the choice of the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) concept to ground the study. This was necessary to make the case that it was time for large multinational business leaders to change their perception of the BOP. The choice recommends that opportunities at the BOP provided for reverse innovation, strategic partnership, an opportunity for a positive social agenda, and room for a modest profit at the minimum. Better still, BOP diaspora and manpower has the ability to perform in a satisfactory manner. However, I could not ignore the thought of biases.

The existence of biases could play a positive or negative role depending on the players involved. Hiring employees from the diaspora might be a good thing as they enjoy returning to the community from which they grew up. They usually have a point to prove as evidenced in this study. As a result, they usually will provide their best efforts. On the other hand, researchers can make a mistake and be biased if they do not remove personal biases during data collection. I had to challenge myself to do the right thing and rise above possible biases.

The data collection process was very challenging to me. All of the participants were active business executives or middle to senior managers. The selection process was very thorough due to the need for them to display an excellent understanding of the case

under study. Appointments were hard to make and in most cases I had to reschedule multiple times. Fortunately, when I had my opportunity, the participants were able to provide all the time I needed for questions. Notably, business practitioners unlike other professions have multiple tasks to undertake daily. As a result, I exercised much patience with my participants.

Overall, I am happy with the time I spent studying for this highest level of business scholarship. Initially I thought I could finish the process in 3 to 4 years but realized I would be rushing. I learned so much from exercising patience and gradually going through the process. The maturity level I have attained by being patient and steady puts me in a different level of facing business challenging. These days, I feel more comfortable seating and sharing ideas in business meetings and boardrooms.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Existing literature highlights that at the current population growth rate and access to electricity, projections show that a greater number of sub-Saharan Africans will lack electricity in 2030 than in 2009 (IEA, 2014; Prasad, 2011; USAID, 2015). Furthermore, providing electricity to Sub-Saharan Africa over a 10-year period requires an investment of between 160 and 215 billion U.S. dollars; will be cost-efficient overall as well as provide a high return to African countries (Rosnes & Vennemo, 2012). The literature further provided that leaders of large multinational energy companies seeking entry into BOP market opportunities need the right business strategies to facilitate a smooth and sustainable pathway to succeed (Muthuri et al., 2012; Payaud, 2014; Schrader, Freimann, & Seuring, 2012). This study provides those strategies and hope they will help to

facilitate the entry as well as the operations of such large energy entrepreneurs to the BOP market opportunities. Without the intervention of large energy multinational leaders using practical business strategies, the energy challenges will remain unresolved.

Through this study, I have a better understanding of the BOP market system – partnerships, products, services, processes, consumers, as well as market entry strategies for large energy multinational business leaders. The study outcome facilitates the understanding of a real-life management, strategic, and organizational processes (Ridder, 2012) from an in-depth probe into the operations of a large energy multinational company in the BOP. It satisfies the essence of a business case study with applicable solutions for practitioners.

Through this study, different BOP stakeholders and business practitioners can understand the responsibilities that await them to guarantee market success. Lenders have a clear understanding of what everyone expects of them. The local population understands their roles to facilitate the operations of solution providers. The government and related institutions understand how to leverage legislation and partnerships. Finally, business entrepreneurs have a better pathway to a successful social agenda and outcomes.

Section 1 of this research project laid the foundations of the study. In this section, I made the case why this study was relevant, identified gaps in the literature, and provided a conceptual framework upon which I grounded the study. In Section 2 of the project, I discussed the 3 different research methods, with a rationale behind the choice of a qualitative single case study design. Additionally, the section included the following subsections: (a) purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) choice of

participants, (d) research method, (e) research design, (f) population and sampling, (g) ethical research, (h) data collection technique, (i) data analysis technique, and (k) reliability and validity. In section 3, I elaborated on (a) the presentation of findings, (b) application to professional practice, (c) implications for social change, (d) recommendations for action (e) recommendation for further research, and (f) reflections on the study. The strength, reliability, and validity of the process provided the outcome of this academic work addressing BOP market success strategies for large multinational energy company leaders.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

The following interview questions contribute knowledge to the research question:

1. Why did your leadership decide to do business in a country like Cameroon?
2. How worried were you about risk and failure?
3. What were your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?
4. How did your leaders approach sustainability?
5. How did you handle challenges with consumers?
6. How did you handle recruitment, training, and retention of employees?
7. What was your experience with the choice of product, implementation, innovation, and service differentiation?
8. What was the impact of government regulations?
9. How was the financial outcome?
10. What social entrepreneurial benefits did the community enjoy?
11. What suggestions do you offer entrepreneurs willing to follow in your path based on lessons learned?
12. What else would you like to share about your overall bottom of the pyramid (BOP) experience?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research case study of your company's involvement with Cameroon, called "The BOP Energy Challenge and Pro-poor Solutions: *Strategic Entry Pathways for Entrepreneurs*". The researcher is seeking participants who were involved with the operations of AES Corporation Arlington, Virginia or subsidiaries in the Republic of Cameroon between 2001-2012. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

The Study:

The purpose of this qualitative single case study is to document sustainable strategies that large multinational energy leaders can use to facilitate profitable BOP market entry as evidenced in the Republic of Cameroon, West Africa. There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Felix Tang, a business doctoral student at Walden University. There are no conflicts of interest.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to document multinational energy company entry and operations in the Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) market of Cameroon.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Make yourself available at the appointed time
- Have a recording done on your responses with an audio recording device, and paper.
- I will appreciate any existing data from you that might inform my study.
- I will gladly sign any confidentiality agreement to access any relevant data you may provide.
- I plan to take field notes during the interview process incidentally to help me better understand your words.
- The interview may last 30 minutes or a bit longer to collect qualitative data.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Walden University will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as renewing any bad memories from questions on your experience with poor countries dealing with inadequate energy supply. Being in this study would not pose any risk to your safety or well-being.

This study aims to address both general and specific business problems identified in BOP academic literature and provide entrepreneurial entry strategies into BOP energy markets for

mutual benefits. The study outcome is expected to inspire investors to consider sustainable energy partnerships to address the lack of adequate, inexpensive, and sustainable energy supply to BOP communities, while making profit at the same time.

Payment:

There will be no payments made for participating. However, you will get a copy of the final publication upon request.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Due to privacy concerns, the interview will occur in a private setting with only the researcher and participant.

Data will be kept secure by encrypted electronic equipment. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via 001-703-926-2880 or tangfe007@yahoo.com for email. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210 (for US based participants) OR 001-612-312-1210 (for participants outside the US). Walden University's approval number for this study is **09-17-15-0183788** and it expires on **September 16, 2016**.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep or you may print and keep a copy.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix C: NIH Certificate of Completion



Appendix D: Confidentiality

Name of Signer: _____

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: “The BOP Energy Challenge and Pro-Poor Solutions: *Strategic Entry Pathways for Entrepreneurs*”, I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant’s name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification, or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I am officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

The interview protocol for data collection will begin with me as the principal data collection instrument using cognitive and non-cognitive skills. I will display an understanding of empathy and ethical judgment (Perkins et al, 2013) as follows:

- For face-to-face interviews, I will make myself available at the interview location and be ready to operate a multimedia recording device.
- I will meet and greet the respondent and make sure we sit in a relaxed manner.
- I will personally operate the sound recording devices that can run independently while I am taking down notes from the interviews.
- I will make sure all devices are on for recording to begin.
- I will do semistructured interviews covering themes and topics in a random order using follow-up questions to understand further the phenomenon at the convenience of the respondents.
- With paper and pen in hand, I will take field notes.
- Upon completion, I will request for any additional information I may collect or access for documentation. All the data I collect will be safe inside my leather brief case as I take it to a safer location.
- For phone or internet interviews, I will not use an assistant. I will set up my computer and phone to record the interview while I take notes from the comfort of my home office. I do not expect to conduct any text or email interviews, but had a reflection about the option.