

The reflex of marketing actions in the Brazilian dominated consumers

Autoria

Bibiana do Lago Warth - mjfonsec@gmail.com
MPGN/UNISINOS - Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos

Marcelo Jacques Fonseca - mfonseca@unisinis.br
MPGN/UNISINOS - Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos

Resumo

The importance of studying consumption at the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) has increased in the past decades. This study sought to identify consumer practices that reflect the influence of the marketing actions at the bottom of the pyramid. For this purpose, a qualitative research was conducted through 25 qualitative interviews with low income consumers. Results were analyzed in view of the different levels of Bourdieu's cultural capital and compared to previous research made in India about that subject (JAISWAL; GUPTA, 2015). Findings suggest meanings associated with brands, influence of celebrity endorsement, susceptibility to sales, problems and risks in prioritization of expenses, and existence of domination in the way people appropriate meaning of consumption. This study provides theoretical contributions about the influence of cultural capital in perception by BOP consumers of the marketing actions. From the market's perspective, this study helps companies to improve segmentation of marketing actions according to level of economic and cultural capital. It also contributes to better understanding of the logics that permeate perceptions of marketing.



ABSTRACT

The importance of studying consumption at the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) has increased in the past decades. This study sought to identify consumer practices that reflect the influence of the marketing actions at the bottom of the pyramid. For this purpose, a qualitative research was conducted through 25 qualitative interviews with low income consumers. Results were analyzed in view of the different levels of Bourdieu's cultural capital and compared to previous research made in India about that subject (JAISWAL; GUPTA, 2015). Findings suggest meanings associated with brands, influence of celebrity endorsement, susceptibility to sales, problems and risks in prioritization of expenses, and existence of domination in the way people appropriate meaning of consumption. This study provides theoretical contributions about the influence of cultural capital in perception by BOP consumers of the marketing actions. From the market's perspective, this study helps companies to improve segmentation of marketing actions according to level of economic and cultural capital. It also contributes to better understanding of the logics that permeate perceptions of marketing.

Key-words: consumer behavior; bottom of pyramid (BOP); marketing; cultural capital.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, population with exceeding income has grown which reflected in increased proportion of population that can be considered consumers. This observation, shown by Prahalad and Hammond (2002), highlights the importance of studying the consumer behavior at the BOP. Due to the enlargement of this market (4 billion people approximately), still not fully explored, knowledge about the BOP consumer has become key to succeed in the international market. According to Prahalad's perspective, by exploring this market, companies and populations would benefit. People would have access to higher quality products and services at lower prices while companies would have access to more consumers, likely increasing sales. In Brazil, a similar phenomenon has taken place in the past decades, called the new middle class ("nova classe média" in Portuguese) which reflects the fast transition of approximately 30 million people from lower economic classes to the middle class (OLIVEIRA-CRUZ e RONSINI, 2016).

The exploration of the BOP market is contradictory (HEMAIS, 2013). On one side, we have Prahalad (PRAHALAD and HAMMOND, 2002; PRAHALAD, 2004) with the perspective of a win-win deal for the poor and the companies, and on the other side there is Karnani (2007) showing it is unlikely that exploring that market would do any good to that target group. The arguments of Prahalad are established on the logic that usually the poor do not have access to quality services. They usually have to pay more in order to buy the same products from small businesses (usually informal) in the slums (CAPLOVITZ, 1968). Supposedly, if big corporations provided services and products in scale they would bring higher quality, lower prices and an immediate increase in the BOP life quality. For Karnani, the only way to help the poor is increasing their income. That could be achieved through the sale of products with lower margins and creation of jobs by those companies. Both perspectives are extreme: on one hand, Prahalad brings the exploration of the BOP market by multinational companies (MNC) as a 10 years plan to extinguish the world's poverty. On the other hand, Karnani believes that MNC would go to poor countries to create jobs and sell products with low or even negative margins, which is also not very realistic. In order to understand the most appropriate way to explore this market, it is crucial to understand the consumer's perspective.

A key concept for understanding the BOP consumer is the criteria classifying this consumer at a lower social class. Classifying population in social classes, and not only economic classes, adds the concept of lifestyle to the logic of classes (WEBER, 1978 apud

HOLT, 1998). Simmel (1957) was the first to demonstrate that social class was important to understand the consumer behavior through the trickle-down theory. It implied that consumers of lower classes would consume to imitate the higher classes consumers, and those would consume in order to be distinguished from them. Bourdieu (2011) brought to this discussion the perspective that not only money (economic capital) can explain the differentiation between classes, but also the levels of social and cultural capital, and how it can help understand the consumer behavior. According to Karnani (2007) the consumers of lower classes usually have lower cultural capital, which makes them more vulnerable to publicity and marketing, but to analyze that theme properly, it is important to get to know more about how the BOP consumers see and reflect in behavior the influence of marketing. With the goal of understanding that, Jaiswal and Gupta (2015) have made a research identifying consumer behaviors that reflect the influence of marketing. They showed the effects of television, combos, influence of store's personnel and celebrity endorsement. However, their research, was not able to go deeper in the perspective of influence of Bourdieu's cultural capital in those behaviors, which is relevant to understanding consumer behavior, like seen in Holt (1998) and in the Brazilian study of Ponte and Mattoso (2013). With the goal of enlarging knowledge about the BOP consumer and influence of cultural capital in consumption, the aim of this study was to answer the following question: "How do the Brazilian consumers at the bottom of the pyramid reflect in their behavior the influence of the marketing?"

The main objective of this research was to understand how the Brazilian consumers of the bottom of the pyramid see and reflect the influence of marketing in their behavior. This main objective was divided in three specific objectives: 1. To understand the differences in logics that permeate consumption between higher and lower cultural capital of BOP Brazilian consumers; 2. To identify existence and to describe consumer behaviors that show the influence of marketing; 3. To compare findings of this study with the results of Jaiswal and Gupta's (2015), evidencing similarities and advances in the influence of marketing in BOP consumer behavior field. To achieve these goals, a qualitative exploratory study was made, with a qualitative interview approach for the collection of data with a structured script based on the one provided by Jaiswal and Gupta, with a few cultural adaptations. The interviewees were divided in two groups: higher cultural capital (HCC) and lower cultural capital (LCC), using the same criteria used by Holt (1998) to make the comparison clear between the groups. The method was chosen because it could give a deeper understanding of how these consumers see the marketing through their point of view and their context and to catch the feelings and memories that permeate their view. It could also help understand how advertisements are seen by people from the same economic class but with different levels of cultural capital and how they are reflected in their consumer behavior.

So, this research is exposed, first, to its subject's theoretical background in order to give a better understanding about the consumption of the BOP stratum. Then, the process of data collection and analysis of the finding is explained through its steps of execution. The results of the study are shown by themes of the different aspects of interactions between marketing and the consumers, and the emerged subjects of prioritization of expenses and domination. The results are summarized in two tables of comparison between Jaiswal and Gupta's (2015) research and this study, and between the behaviors of HCC and LCC consumers.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The increasing population with surplus resources has put the BOP consumer behavior as focus of the consumption studies since Prahalad (2002). The same phenomenon has taken place in Brazil in the past decades (CHAUVEL, MATTOS, 2008) creating a market that represents 45% of the Brazilian internal market. This market has developed their own way of consuming due to its cultural characteristics and social development.

Since 2002, with the economic stability achieved by the country, approximately 30 million people have come from lower social classes to the middle class, which meant that in 2016 almost half of the population was in the so called “middle class” (OLIVEIRA-CRUZ et RONSINI, 2016). According to Jessé de Souza (2012) and Cecilia Mattoso (2010), stabilishing that these people are now part of the middle class considering only quantitative criteria would be naive, because it minimizes the differences inside this social class, disregarding their sacrifices as workers to achieve this status, different from the people who were already born in a better financial and social situation. To solve this problem, the author suggests the term “new worker class” instead of “new middle class”, because that gives a better the understanding of who they are. Also, their consumption behavior must be different, because like ascending people, they have grown in a different situation which can be better described through the different capitals of Bourdieu.

The influence of the social class in the logics of consumption can be seen since the conception of the term “social class” (WEBER, 1978 apud HOLT, 1998) because it meant to add to the financial classification, the concept of way of life. Another perspective of the influence of social class in the consumption was Simmel’s with the trickle-down theory (SIMMEL, 1904 apud CASTILHOS, 2007b), which meant that people of lower classes would consume to feel closer to upper classes, and they would consume to differentiate from lower classes. Bourdieu (1989) goes deeper in this understanding stating that society has structures that go beyond the conscientious level, because the differences between classes are shown in their habitus. This concept is not only in the consumption itself, it is represented in abstract factors and it is objectified in symbols that are capable of approximate and to distinguish agents in a society. Bourdieu (2011) demonstrates that the consumer behavior and the habitus are related to the possession of three different capitals: economic, social and cultural. The economic is the income, financial resources. The social is “the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p.51, BOURDIEU, 2011). The cultural capital is manifested in cultural objects (like books, objects of art, musical instruments), in its institutionalized form, such as diplomas and the level of formal instruction and the implicit knowledge and practical skills.

According to Holt (1998) the cultural capital has direct influence in the consumer behavior as show in his study of people of the same economic level but with different cultural capital. The study shows that in the discourses of people with a higher cultural capital there are abstract meanings to the consumption like memories, reflection, meanings. On the other hand, people with lower cultural capital have described their objects by their features, such as size, comfort, durability, luxury. That makes them buy without a full comprehension of the motivations behind their purchases, and as such, this perception converges with Simmel’s trickle-down theory, with imitation of higher social classes.

Many purchasing choices of the consumers are influenced by marketing, which means that to better understand the consumer behavior at the BOP, it is important to look at the influence of marketing on it. To address this specific subject, the study of Jaiswal and Gupta (2015) interviewed 32 women of the BOP market in India to identify which behaviors reflected the influence of marketing. The results showed impulsive purchase, related to combos (with gifts), promotions, celebrity endorsement and the influence of the stores personnel. As a first study, those findings may reflect cultural factors and also the authors have not considered the influence of cultural capital in the segmentation of the sample. These reasons evidence how it was useful to address this issue by making another study in a different country (preferably an emerging country like India, because of the recent enlargement of the middle class) but with the division of BOP consumers with lower and higher cultural capital, like in Holt’s (1998) study of American consumers.

3. METHOD

The method used in this research has an exploratory qualitative nature (PIOVESAN; TEMPORINI, 1995) and contributed to give a better understanding of the importance of the cultural capital in the perception of the bottom of the pyramid consumer about marketing. The method was based in the post-structuralist approach, because it considers in the study of consumerism the historical, ideological and sociological conformation of an individual. The data collection was made through qualitative interview.

This research was developed in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the metropolitan area of the city of Porto Alegre, the context was chosen, because, similar to other studies about BOP consumers (BARROS, ROCHA, 2007; CASTILHOS, 2007; PANOEIRO, MATTOSO, 2013), big cities give the population bigger access to marketing actions, such as outdoors, flyers, malls, like in the results of the Indian study (JAISWAL, GUPTA, 2015). The 25 interviewees were chosen first by convenience and then with snowball method until the author achieved theoretical saturation. The sample selection criteria was based in the Brazilian Social Classes Criteria (“Critério Brasil”) in order to classify the consumer as BOP. To divide the samples between high and low cultural capital, the criteria was the same used by Holt (1998), considering the level of formal instruction and complexity of job of the interviewees and of their parents.

The research had the objective of giving a better understanding about how this population perceives the marketing and to expose the differences between the perception of people of the same economic class, but with different levels of cultural capital, the same way Holt made in the study of American Consumption. To achieve that, a four-stage research was conducted.

The first stage had the goal of understanding what was already known about the BOP consumer and their understanding about marketing. So, the bibliographic research was about the BOP consumer - the Brazilian BOP, the influence of class in the consumption (which included the capitals of Bourdieu), the way Brazilians consume – and then the influence of marketing in the consumer of the BOP. In the end, based on the Indian article of Jaiswal and Gupta (2015), a new script was created with open questions. The criteria of the sample was made based on the Brazilian Criteria of classification.

In the second stage, to see if the script was suitable for the purpose of the study, two volunteers were selected for the purpose of testing the script. The interviews were conducted in the context of the consumer, their workplace (chosen by them). The interviews took around 30 minutes and were recorded. However, as the questions were very open, the consumers almost did not mention the influence of marketing in their choices and as no category of products was not chosen, they tended to answer with first need products, such as food. So, that data was not very useful and then the script had to be remodeled.

In the third stage, we contacted Jaiswal and Gupta to ask if they could provide their interview script. They sent the questions by e-mail, and it was found that there were some questions that were only applicable to the Indian context (such as the product Fair and Lovely, a whitening cream for the skin) and the category of products was beauty. So, in order to give the interviewees freedom to choose any aspirational products (like electronics and fashion as seen in Castilhos, 2007 and Mattoso, 2013), few changes were made in the questions. After the first interview, it was possible to see that the script was able to collect the data to answer the research question of this study. So 25 interviews were conducted, lasting about 25 minutes each, all recorded. In all cases, the context of the interview was chosen by the volunteer, the idea was to make the interviewee feel more comfortable (WOODSIDE, WILSON, 1995).

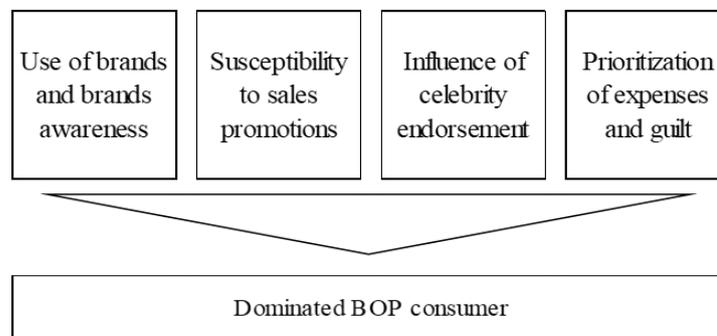
The fourth stage was the analysis, so at first, all the records were transcribed in seventy eight word pages. Then, the answers about the level of instruction and complexity of job of the interviewees and parents were analyzed to separate them in two groups: LCC and HCC. The interviews were read and the categories of results were created to make the description of results

easier and more logical. Next, the results were compared to the ones found in the article written by Jaiswal and Gupta, so the similarities and differences would be made clearer, these results were written and a table was created to digest the first findings. Another analysis was made to understand the differences between the findings in the two groups of consumers (HCC and LCC) and another table was created.

4. RESULTS

The results of this study will be presented categorized in subjects according to the subjects of the interviews. The categorization is similar to the article of Jaiswal and Gupta in order to clarify the advances of this study and to make comparison easier. Along the analysis of the data, another possibility of presenting the results emerged, because the respondents showed a dominated consumer behavior (BOURDIEU, 2013). So, by the end of this section, another subchapter about domination was written to expose the findings about domination in the BOP consumer's perception of marketing. The categories of this study are summarized in the following scheme:

Figure 1: Categories of the study



Source: created by the authors

4.1 Behaviors that reflect the influence of marketing in LCC and HCC Brazilian consumers

4.1.1 Use of brands and brand awareness

Brands are a relevant way to understand the perception of BOP consumers about marketing, because in previous studies (CASTILHOS, 2007; MATTOS, 2007; SOUZA, 2009) the use of brands was known as a status symbol and a distinguishing tool between members of the same social stratum. In both groups of consumers (HCC and LCC) the answers to direct questions about the use of brands were that they were not important in the process of decision. In indirect questions, the interviewees showed a good knowledge about brands and that they were relevant to their consumption.

When questioned about the way of getting to know brands and their products, the main answers were through TV, internet and social media (Instagram and Facebook). The results of the same questioning in Jaiswal and Gupta's (2015) study showed TV as the media they got to know about brands. The difference between results may be related to the younger age of the interviewees of this study. Advancing in the results, adding the comparison between cultural capital levels, through the LCC consumers' view, brands that were on TV were more interesting and the products showed there became objects of desire. HCC consumers answered that TV would make them look for products and get to know more about it, and then decide about the purchase. They exposed skepticism about quality and features shown in advertisement which

was reflected in the behavior of looking for more information – on Google or consumer reviews on the internet -, and then have the intention of the purchase.

The reasoning of choosing international and expensive brands in purchasing was related to quality when asked about their own choices, like in Barros (2007). An exaggerated need to justify these choices of purchase with quality and not status was observed, exposing an intention of demonstrating a good prioritization of expenses. In indirect questions about the subject, the LCC consumers criticized the use of brands as a symbol of status, when these symbols are used between members of the same economic stratum, they were related to as intra-class distinguishing (CASTILHOS, 2007), as observed in the following discourse:

“The bad thing is... as I said, when a person is wearing cheap sneakers, and another is wearing a 1000 reais Nike Shox, or Air Max, that has an average price, they feel as if they were above others. They feel some power, aquisitively talking. Like ‘Oh, that guy is wearing 200 reais sneakers, a simple one... like Topper, and I am wearing a 1000 reais Nike, I am better than him!’ I think it is like this. I’ve already seen, like, well dressed guys, with expensive Nike shoes, look with contempt at people who were dressed in a more simple way.” (Renato, LCC)

In the speaking above, Renato shows familiarity with international brands and products, when talking about sneakers, and he associated brands with quality. In indirect questioning he exposed the association of brands with status and differentiation, making people feel superior to others because of wearing expensive brands.

People with higher cultural capital question the direct relation between brands and quality. Another factor about HCC is that the image of the brands and their products may be affected because of the values of the companies and their market practices. The feeling of exclusion in the discourse (like Renato’s) was not found in HCC interviewees.

“Mary Kay has a practice that I think is very nice... there’s like a respect code between the sales people, in which if you buy from somebody, only that person can sell the products to you. It is like an ethics code. If you sell, you can not sell to another seller’s client, you know? I know people who think that is very nice, besides the fact that the products are very good, they buy because of that, too, because there’s a kind of respect, different from other brands that have been affected by this accelerated consumerism.” (Raissa, HCC).

Raissa shows that her preference for Mary Kay products is influenced by their high-quality products and their Market practices, which she calls “an ethics code”. That result relates to Holt (1998) in which, he found that HCC consumers are capable of adding abstraction to their consumption, besides quality and price. Another way to see the influence of the media in the BOP consumer behavior is through the sales promotions, which will be discussed in the following section about susceptibility to sales promotions.

4.1.2 *Susceptibility to sales promotions*

According to Silva et al. (2016), consumers may be in a higher or lower vulnerability condition in Market relations. That vulnerability may be affected by many factors, including their level of formal instruction and economic condition, reflecting in their capacity of maximizing their well-being with restricted resources. In Jaiswal and Gupta’s (2015) study, susceptibility to sales promotions was observed. In their interview script, they meant to observe

the influence of combos, promotional gifts and smaller packages, which was related the Indian context. In Brazil, according to Mattoso and Rocha (2005), another opportunity of study was identified, by asking about a common practice in the country, which is the use of installments to make low income consumers be able to buy expensive products.

In the speech of the interviewees, the influence of the payment conditions (number of installments) and discounts in their consumption was identified. There were also stories about overspending, impulsiveness and regret in HCC and LCC consumers. The difference was that LCC were not very aware of their susceptibility to promotions and the risks of that. The consequences of the exaggerated expenses will be explored separately in the section of expenses prioritization. It was clear that the respondents tend to answer that they are not influenced about promotions and discounts, but later and in indirect questions, that influence gets more evident. The following story was part of an answer about the experience of spending too much:

“When I left a house and went to live in an apartment we had made a remodeling, and there was no need, at that moment, to buy a TV. And I... because we had at that point, old televisions. And then, I bought televisions to all the rooms of the house, and like, it was more modern, more beautiful. It had 3D, smart... and there was no need to buy three TVs at the same moment. We could have bought one at a time, and I bought three. (...) It was a very difficult moment, financially, this TV situation. And I bought three because I could pay in installments. And the installments would be good, right?” (Daiane, LCC).

In the story above, Daiane said that she bought three TVs knowing that there was no need for that purchase. In another moment of the interview she related that desire to the idea of having a “cinema at her home”. She thought that the installments would fit in her budget, but they did not. That moment preceded a very difficult time in her finances, and she could relate it to the possibility of paying in installments. Another consumer, Sheila (LCC) illustrated the unawareness of their susceptibility to sales promotions. When questioned about paying in installments she answered:

“No, only my house I can remember that I bought because of the payment conditions” Sheila (LCC).

But when I asked her to tell me about one of her last purchases, she told the following story:

“My purchases in the last mega sales were a very happy moment. (...) I planned that because the prices were good, but I did not plan to spend that much. I spent six hundred reais. As, I would pay in installments, I bought everything in six installments, but I made many two hundred receipts. I bought clothes to my dad, my brother, my niece, my god-daughter... I thought about gifts to everybody. I made small installments, because at the end of the month I would pay. Like ‘look, here I can pay two installments of twenty’, but it didn’t happen that way.” (Sheila, LCC)

In her first answer, she said that the payment conditions usually do not affect her purchases, and that the only moment she remembers of a purchase motivated by that was when she bought her house. In the answer about a moment of purchase she told a story of impulsivity motivated by the discounts and the possibility of paying in installments. That evidences her lack of awareness of her susceptibility to this marketing practices.

On the other hand, HCC interviewees showed more consciousness about their susceptibility. They gave answers with stories of impulsive purchases and financial problems because of that, and the changes in their behavior that avoid them to get in similar situations. The respondents with LCC see promotions and installments as an opportunity of having something that is too expensive to their income level, and to achieve dreams – like having a cinema at home. The respondents with higher cultural capital were more conscious about their impulsiveness and the financial problems related to overspending were not as severe as the ones reported by the LCC respondents. The smaller susceptibility to sales promotions showed by the HCC may be understood to the lower intensity of an exclusion feeling demonstrated by LCC consumers, which would make them buy symbols of intraclass differentiation. The desire for that status symbols is sometimes influenced by celebrities, so in the following section, this perspective will be explored.

4.1.3 Influence of celebrity endorsement

According to Simmel (1957) and his trickle-down theory, the poor would consume in way that would make them seem like the social classes above, and the rich would consume wishing to differentiate from them. In Jaiswal and Gupta's research (2015) the BOP consumers showed this behavior by exposing the desire to use the same beauty products used by the movie actresses and celebrities. They said they wanted to look like them. In the present research the respondents (mostly BCC) showed a similar desire.

The BCC consumers pointed idols (soccer players, singers, bloggers) and said that consuming the same products like them, makes them feel honored, because they feel like they have the same taste for clothes, for example. Another feeling was the approximation of classes, because if they could afford the same product that their idol was wearing, then it meant that they were not that bad financially. In the following speech, these feelings are evidenced:

“I think celebrities make people embrace the brand, by having like a soccer player in their advertisements... Neymar, for example, people buy things because of Neymar. (...) For example, football boots... Depending on the player... each model made by Nike, Adidas is made for a certain soccer player. Depending on the player, I will go there and buy it, because I like the soccer player. (...) For example, Neymar, there is a soccer boot that was made for Neymar, that is very cool and I bought it! I bought it because it was made for Neymar and because I liked it. Maybe if it was made for another soccer player I wouldn't buy it. I do not know. And I liked the model. I liked the model and I like Neymar, so I bought it, and I think it influenced me.” (Eduardo, BCC)

When questioned about how he feels when wearing the same product as his favorite soccer players, he answered:

“How would I feel? I'd feel honored! The guy is wearing the same like me! (...) Like D'Alessandro (Brazilian soccer player) wearing the same sneakers... it's cool, because we have the same taste.” (Eduardo, BCC)

At first, Eduardo puts his favorite soccer players as a strong influence to his decisions, because depending on the soccer player he will buy a certain model of shoes or not. However, after that, he said he bought it because he liked the model, which seemed like an attempt to hide the size of the influence of a celebrity in his purchase, by saying that his taste came first. Later, he said that wearing the same sneakers as his favorite soccer player (D'Alessandro) he would feel honored, because they would have the same taste. It seemed contradictory, because the

influence of the celebrity came first in his purchase, and then he said they would have the same taste, which shows unawareness of the cause of the feeling of wanting to look like a celebrity (the trickle-down). Another consumer showed the feeling of belonging by being able to buy the same product that a famous actress was using:

“I think that... I do not know if we would buy only because the celebrities are there on the ads. I do not know if it is like this. But we think ‘oh, if people like us that do not have a lot of financial conditions can buy and have our hair looking better, and even she, who is rich, buys it, why wouldn’t we buy it?’. We also buy because she is in the ads, right?.” (Sheila, BCC).

Sheila exposed the satisfaction of being able to buy the same product that a rich celebrity uses in her hair. This also converges with the theory of Simmel (1957) buy showing the desire of looking like people of higher social classes. However, by believing that celebrities in the advertisements really use the products they are presenting, shows the innocence of Sheila’s interpretation of advertisements. This innocence is lower when interviewees are in a higher cultural capital level. The HCC answers also showed a lower level of the desire to look like their idols. They pointed the desire to be inspired by celebrities they already look like, as seen in the following answer:

“I am not that influenced by that, because I am very authentic. But when I see somebody with a body like mine, like, that is difficult, because usually the advertisements have people in a beauty pattern that is not like mine. But when I see somebody with my body top wearing something beautiful, I like it. I think like that would look good on me, you know?”. So, I think that it would be much better, and I think the brands are already getting it, because they are starting to put different kinds of people in advertisements, for all kinds of people, and directed to every kind of people and not only for the size “s” ones.” (Raíssa, HCC)

This interviewee showed the influence of celebrities on her consumption, but they had to look like them. She also sees that there is a movement of marketing starting to show different types of people in their campaigns is positive in order to make more people have that identity feeling. Another respondent showed the same feeling in her answer:

“I follow many people on Instagram, like Natana De Leon... you don’t know her? She is the biggest blogger of Porto Alegre, of the region, I don’t know. (...) I identify with her, because she is blond, short, like me. Then the clothes she wears, I can see myself wearing them, do you understand?” (Melissa, HCC)

As shown in the answers above, there is a difference in the intensity of the trickle-down effect in BOP consumers between higher and lower levels of cultural capital. In the LCC the feeling it is evident, they relate consumption to the desire of looking like their idols. The HCC respondents showed the influence of celebrities they could identify with, which can be related to their lower feeling of exclusion shown by other interviewees. The feeling of exclusion would cause consumption in an attempt to cross the line between the people who belong to higher social classes and the people who do not. The attempt is reflected in their desire to look like the rich, The HCC have the feeling of looking like celebrities and not the attempt to look like them.

In that kind of consumption, people can make bad decisions in their prioritization of expenses, as may be seen in the following section.

4.1.4 *Prioritization of expenses and guilt*

According to Karnani (2007) the poor are very susceptible to marketing strategies of the multinational companies, and they may spend too much in superfluous products, lacking resources to meet their first needs. In the article of Jaiswal and Gupta (2015), respondents evidenced this risk in indirect questions and when talking about other people of their social class. They also showed the feeling of guilt when spent money in things they did not need and bought because of impulse, promotions (like combos and discounts) and influence of stores' personnel. Although the prioritization of expenses was shown in their research, they did not give focus to this subject. But, as we discussed about the risks of marketing to this social stratum, and as answers about problems caused by this exaggerated consumption started to appear, we decided to dedicate a category of this chapter specifically to this subject.

In the first moments, respondents showed a high awareness of prioritization of expenses, putting the basic needs first and then their superfluous expenses. But when questioned about moments of overspending, they evidenced the feeling of guilt for spending too much motivated by impulse. Although the behavior of overspending motivated by marketing existed in both cultural capital levels, in the HCC it did not lead to big financial problems. On the other hand, the risks and consequences of overspending in conspicuous consumption in the LCC were evident. The story that most attracted attention was Cristiano's (LCC) when asked about moments of overspending:

"I did it! One day I spent my Money in something I did not need, in the same week my little daughter got sick. On that day, I should have bought the medicines, but I had already bought another product before. Think of how I did regret it!" (Cristiano, LCC)

In Cristiano's story, the purchase of something he did not need made him later, lack resources to buy medicines for his daughter. That converges with the vision which is the exaggerated stimuli to consumption may cause severe consequences to BOP consumers. That can be also seen in another consumer's story below:

"My credit card debt was so high that I lost control of it! I had to ask my sister to retain my credit card for one year and pay the bills for me. How did I pay her? When I got fired from my last job and they paid my worker rights. So, the fact that my sister, eleven years younger than me, had to help me pay my bills which I had made in an impulse has given me a reality awareness. For, regarding credit cards, the more you buy, the bigger your limit!" (Daiane, LCC).

Daiane got into big financial troubles, because of buying many TVs, and at one point she had to ask her sister for help. In her speech, we can identify the feelings of regret and shame, because of her past attitudes. She said that the situation she was at had made her think before buying things. In both stories, we can identify the low rationalization in the prioritization of expenses. Karnani (2007) said this problem is due to the low level of cultural capital and criticism of the BOP consumers in general. Agreeing to that, the speeches of HCC consumers, showed that impulsive purchasing, although existed, did not lead them to severe financial problems.

The interviews showed that there was difference between the LCC and HCC consumer behaviors. The LCC gave answers that convey the impression of an exaggerated attempt to demonstrate they could do a good prioritization of resources, such as by saying they chose expensive products and brands because of quality. Nevertheless, in their stories they showed the consequences of overspending episodes motivated by promotions and conspicuous consumption, leading to regret. The HCC showed a better awareness of the risks of overspending and a bigger resistance to the marketing influence. These results lead to a need to analyze the reasons behind those behaviors. For this purpose, in the following section we will analyze the parts of interviews that show the feeling of domination (Bourdieu, 2011).

4.2 The influence of marketing in dominated consumers

Observing the speeches of the respondents, it was clear that there were different aspects that affect their perceptions about themselves and about their consumption. The purchase of products of international brands may seem at the first sight as a reflex of the trickle-down logic. However, it is important to look deeply in order to understand the reasons for those behaviors and perceptions. Eduardo's (LCC) interview shows different perceptions about the use of international brands. In a given moment, he said he buys them because they had models designed for his soccer idols. Yet, when asked about how he feels when using the same products as his idols, he answered as a positive feeling: "How would I feel? I'd feel honored! The guy is wearing the same as me! (...) Like D'Alessandro (Brazilian soccer player) wearing the same sneakers... it's cool, because we have the same taste." (Eduardo, BCC). Yet, in another moment of the interview, when questioned about the brands of his clothing, he made a comment that calls attention:

"Brands? For sneakers, I like Nike, Adidas, Mormaii... I have a pair of sneakers of Mormaii that I like a lot. For pants? Any brand, I can not say. Caps too! I like to buy caps of famous brands. You will think I am slums guy, right? Caps... I do not wear them very often." (Eduardo, LCC)

For him, the idea of wearing clothes of international brands would make him seem like a slums' guy, which is not a positive image for himself. That is different to the first idea of having the same taste for dressing like his idols. That feeling exists, because the use of those items is not enough to give him a higher place in the society. The products become symbols from the moment they are appropriated by the consumer, and that may mean different things depending on who has them and how it is seen by them and by others, even though the products are available to everybody. The classification of individuals in society and the place they occupy is related to meanings that are constantly produced and reproduced. The agents, through their habitus are capable of conferring their position which will be legitimated by their consumption and to the meanings given to these symbols of their position in society (BOURDIEU, 1989).

From that perspective, the acquisition of a pair of sneakers like D'alessandro's or Neymar's will not be enough to confer Eduardo a status similar to his idols. That is because those symbols, when separated from their context, will lose meaning. In this case, the interviewee would feel as if he had a slums guy's image. In another moment of his interview, Eduardo demonstrates his way of understanding that the position that an individual occupies in society is not defined only by his way of dressing. When questioned about the reasons why people in general buy some famous brands, he answered:

"Oh, back to the same subject, when I was talking about the influence of advertisements and stuff. Because there are things that really influence the consumer's head. And also the status in society. I think people sometimes buy

just the brands... it is like everybody says, the poor wear clothes of one thousand reais and the guy who is an entrepreneur and makes much more money will wear much simpler clothes. So, I think is because of that. Many people that have not good financial condition buy these things, it's more because of status, for other people to see and because of the influence of advertisements. I think ads get into the consumers' heads." (Eduardo, LCC)

When he said that the poor wear more expensive clothes that "the entrepreneur", he shows that the position someone occupies in society is only legitimated by products and objects, and not acquired through them. The entrepreneur does not have to legitimate his position through a one thousand reais clothing, the poor try to change their position or try to look like he is in a better position than he really is, through his consumption. Yet, he fails, because the position is not determined by his clothing, his place in society was built by his origin and his level of the three capitals of Bourdieu (economic, social and cultural) (BOURDIEU, 2011).

The attempt of trying to change their position in society is implicit and not rational, that is why often it may be observed the conscious try to justify their consumption and their doubtful prioritization of expenses. Yet, those behaviors are not conducted by rationality, because they are ingrained in the continuous formation and legitimation of the positions in society. Another evident factor that may be seen as a motivation to try to change their place in society is the feeling of exclusion. At some point of the interview, Cristiano (LCC) when asked about the motivations of people in general for the purchase of famous international brands like Nike and Adidas, he exposed the feeling of despising people who can not afford those products:

"The bad thing is... as I said, when a person is wearing cheap sneakers, and another is wearing a 1000 reais Nike Shox, or Air Max, that is their average price, they feel as if they were above others. They feel some power, acquisitively talking. Like 'Oh, that guy is wearing 200 reais sneakers, a simple one... like Topper, and I am wearing a 1000 reais Nike, I am better than him!' I think it's like that. I've already seen, like, well dressed guys, with expensive Nike shoes; looking with contempt at people who were dressed in a simpler way." (Renato, LCC)

In this part of his interview, wearing a 200 reais pair of shoes legitimates the position of being poor and excluded, which makes the hypothetic individual be looked at with despise. That made by the interviewee demonstrates that the situation of being seen with despise makes the poor do their best to acquire things that will bring them the feeling of being in a different social position, although he knows it would not be a legitimate position. In other moments of his interview, Cristiano (LCC) talked about big sacrifices made to buy some of those products:

"The bad thing is... as I said, when a person is wearing cheap sneakers, and another is wearing a 1000 reais Nike Shox, or Air Max, that is their average price, they feel as if they were above others. They feel some power, acquisitively talking. Like 'Oh, that guy is wearing 200 reais sneakers, a simple one... like Topper, and I am wearing a 1000 reais Nike, I am better than him!' I think it's like that. I've already seen, like, well dressed guys, with expensive Nike shoes; looking with contempt at people who were dressed in a simpler way." (Renato, LCC)

The answers given by Cristiano and other similar given by other respondents, were not given with the full conscience of the dimension given to the acquisition of those products. The interviewee does not seem to have the awareness of having put food in lower priority level

compared to famous brands sneakers. The absence of conscience about the search for status symbols gets evident, because in the answers above, Cristiano says he had prioritized clothing and not food, and in another moment, he criticizes that behavior: “Lately I think people have been spending more money in futile products, like cell phones, computers, clothes, and stuff. They spend more on these things than on his own food.” (Cristiano, LCC)

Analyzing the answers above, it was possible to evidence that the influence of celebrities and the international brands consumption are based on the attempt to attain a better position in society (in opposition to the exclusion feeling). Their perception of marketing, brands and the meanings associated to consumption are also affected by their own perception of themselves, like when Eduardo associated his image to a “slums’ guy”. Those effects are permeated by their unawareness of how they reflect these perceptions in their consumption behavior and prioritization of expenses. They also comprehend that the purchase of those symbols will not be able to change their position and feeling of exclusion, because the rich do not even have to dress like that to attest their status.

5. CONCLUSION

Our study focused on identifying the BOP consumer practices that reflect the influence of marketing, and on analysing those behaviours through the perspective of cultural capital and domination. Results showed impulsive and superfluous purchasing influenced by sales promotions, payment conditions, celebrity endorsement and international brands. Those consumption behaviours led to a bad prioritization of expenses and financial problems aggravated by the lower level of cultural capital. This study contributed on the theory field by showing that the perceptions of the consumers about marketing are affected by their level of cultural capital, evidenced in their feeling of exclusion and dominated behaviour.

The marketing actions analysed reflected in behaviours of desire to acquire and the purchasing of superfluous aspirational products. Those behaviours show susceptibility to the influence of marketing which may lead to overspending and financial problems. The level of susceptibility to media and promotions has to do with their level of cultural capital. That means that BOP consumers with higher cultural capital tend to be less susceptible to bad prioritization of expenses and smaller financial problems, and they show a higher awareness of the risks of those behaviours.

The perception of marketing is also affected by the level of cultural capital, meaning that HCC consumers tend to be more sceptic about advertising, care less about brands and avoid overspending compared to LCC. Also, the way they see celebrity endorsement showed that LCC choose idols and are influenced by their taste in an imitational behaviour. On the other hand, HCC are influenced by celebrities that they identify with. The opinion about brands and consumption is also different, because the reasoning behind the LCC purchasing international brands is unclear, contradictory and related to advertising and the product itself. However, the reasoning of HCC about brands is permeated by abstraction and meaning, the way companies work may influence the perception about a brand and its products.

The dominated feeling and behaviour were clearer in LCC consumers, whose speeches showed a feeling of exclusion and bad self-image (such as “looking like a slums’ guy”). Those feelings are behind the behaviours identified which led to actions in order to create a feeling of belonging to a better place in society.

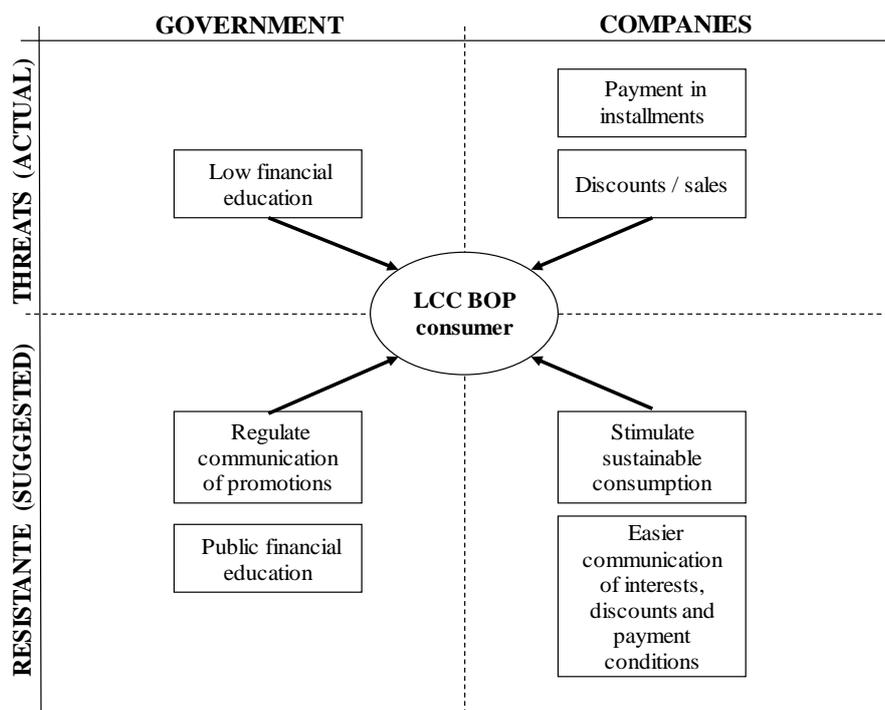
Thus, the perception and consumption behaviours of BOP Brazilians are affected by their level of cultural capital and their level of domination. This advances the knowledge about the influence of marketing in consumer behaviour and the influence of cultural capital in the consumers’ perception of marketing. That shows that even in marketing directed to a social class may be perceived in different ways according to the level of a capital which is cultural and not

economical, bringing a richer perspective about the marketing to BOP consumers and its risks to that population.

In the market field, this study contributes by giving a deeper understanding about the BOP consumers' perceptions and behaviors influenced by marketing. Those results may give companies the opportunity to do better segmentation to marketing actions based on the level of cultural capital of their target consumer. For example, choosing the right celebrities to endorse their products who would converge with the desired consumer profile. Also, the branding strategies may be better drawn by the understanding that different kinds of BOP consumers have different factors affecting their perception of brands, such as the market practices and the exhibition of products on TV.

Although the results could help companies explore this market, they also evidence the risks of the exploration on the BOP market. The impulsive purchasing and overspending influenced by marketing have caused, in many cases, financial problems and bad prioritization of resources. This perspective shows that companies and the government should be careful on marketing actions in order to avoid or minimize those behaviors. Payments in installments were evidenced as influences to impulsive purchasing, and as people did not have enough education on finances, they got into severe debt. To minimize that, companies and the government should act and help those consumers. Taking into account that LCC BOP consumers are in financial risk, due to their low financial knowledge, the government could give classes about that subject in public schools, which would help them get less susceptible and more aware of the installment's risks. Another possibility would be for the government to regulate how companies communicate those promotions, in order to give an easier understanding for this public about the risks taken in the purchase. That action could also be done by the companies, by making communication easier and clearer to consumers. Also, companies could create sustainable consumption programs, offering products that match the needs and the income of their consumers. Those risks and actions are summarized in Figure 2, bellow.

Figure 2: Suggestions of actions to minimize risks for the LCC BOP consumer.



Source: elaborated by authors

One of the limitations of this study is geographical, since all the respondents were from the same region, thus, their answers may have been affected by context and culture. Also, the announcement that the interviews were for an academic research, made some respondents feel shy about not being able to understand or answer properly. It could be noticed that in some moments, they were trying to give “the right” answers.

The suggestions made for marketing communication segmentations are based on the respondents’ answers and opinions about marketing, therefore, we suggest in future research, that similar groups of respondents are exposed to marketing communication with the suggested segmentation in order to verify its effectiveness in the consumers’ perception. The same would be proposed for the actions about reducing the risks of impulsive purchasing influenced by discounts and installments.

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