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Marketing Agility as An Adaptive Marketing Capability: A Qualitative Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract−Marketing agility has emerged as an important organizational capability for responding to turbulent markets, technological change, and increasing environmental uncertainty. However, existing research remains conceptually fragmented, particularly regarding its antecedents, mechanisms, contextual contingencies, and outcomes. This study aims to synthesize the development of marketing agility research and build an integrated conceptual understanding of the construct. A qualitative systematic literature review was conducted using the Scopus database. Following a transparent study selection process adapted from the PRISMA logic, 51 English-language journal articles published between 2019 and August 25, 2026, were analyzed through thematic synthesis. The findings conceptualize marketing agility as a recursive adaptive capability involving sensing, deciding, acting, and learning. Its development depends on the interaction of organizational routines, market orientation, knowledge, entrepreneurial capabilities, digital and data resources, and decision-making arrangements. Marketing agility functions as a bridging mechanism that translates environmental information and internal capabilities into adaptive marketing actions through program adaptation, innovation, resource reconfiguration, crisis response, and market shaping. Its effectiveness is contingent on market turbulence, technological dynamism, institutional conditions, organizational culture, and resource availability. The study's central theoretical contribution is to reposition marketing agility from a static, reactive responsiveness capability to a recursive adaptive capability in which learning feeds back into sensing, deciding, and acting, thereby explaining how adaptive marketing capability is built and renewed over time rather than merely deployed. The study further offers an integrated framework and identifies future research priorities concerning cognition, learning, artificial intelligence, SMEs, emerging markets, configurational dynamics, and outcomes beyond financial performance.

Keyword: Marketing Agility; Dynamic Capabilities; Digital Capability; Market Turbulence; Organizational Adaptation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary marketing operates in an environment characterized by rapidly changing customer preferences, fragmented customer touchpoints, technological development, and intensified market turbulence. Under these conditions, conventional marketing processes based on relatively linear planning cycles may constrain a firm's ability to interpret emerging information and translate it into timely action. Marketing agility has therefore become increasingly relevant as a capability that connects market understanding with rapid, iterative marketing decisions and execution (Kalaignanam et al., 2021). The construct is important not simply because firms must act quickly, but because speed must be combined with relevance, flexibility, and the capacity to learn from changing market information.

The foundational conceptualization of marketing agility emphasizes rapid iteration between making sense of the market and executing marketing decisions to adapt to market changes (Kalaignanam et al., 2021). Subsequent research has extended this perspective into international markets, crisis management, entrepreneurship, innovation, big data analytics, digital marketing, artificial intelligence, and service innovation (Asseraf et al., 2019; Figueiredo et al., 2026; Gomes et al., 2020; Moi & Cabiddu, 2022; Tarn & Wang, 2023). This expansion demonstrates the relevance of marketing agility across diverse settings, but it also creates conceptual fragmentation. The construct is discussed as a marketing capability, a dynamic or meta dynamic capability, a component of broader strategic agility, and a mechanism through which firms adapt resources and marketing programs.

This fragmentation is compounded by inconsistencies in the empirical evidence, much of which is quantitative. The consequences of marketing agility are contingent rather than universally uniform: market turbulence can alter the relationship between marketing agility, innovation capability, and financial performance (Zhou et al., 2019); technological dynamism can strengthen the performance and innovation effects of marketing agility (Agag et al., 2026; Jun et al., 2024); and deep uncertainty, institutional intervention, and digitization shape how agility is enacted and evaluated (Eckstein, Shrestha, Sassenberg, et al., 2025). Cultural and organizational conditions may likewise constrain or facilitate agile behavior, as demonstrated in high power distance contexts and intergenerational family businesses (Friend et al., 2026; Mihotić & Pfajfar, 2026). Because these studies differ in how they define and operationalize marketing agility, which contingencies they test, and which outcomes they measure, their results cannot be directly compared or aggregated. A review that cannot explain why effects differ across studies leaves the field with accumulated but unreconciled findings.

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Resolving these inconsistencies requires a systematic qualitative approach rather than standard bibliometric mapping. Bibliometric techniques, such as publication counts, citation analysis, co-citation clustering, and keyword co-occurrence, describe the structure and growth of a field, but they treat articles as bibliographic records and do not examine what those articles actually claim. They can show that research on marketing agility is expanding and which themes cluster together, yet they cannot determine whether divergent findings stem from different conceptual definitions, measurement choices, boundary conditions, or contextual settings. Mapping therefore documents the fragmentation without reconciling it. A systematic literature review using thematic synthesis addresses this limitation in three ways. First, it examines the substantive content of each study, allowing conceptualizations of marketing agility to be compared and differentiated from related agility constructs. Second, it treats contingent conditions, such as market turbulence, technological dynamism, institutional context, and organizational culture, as explanatory evidence for why results differ, rather than as noise. Third, it connects antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes across studies that were designed to test them separately, thereby revealing relationships that are not visible through descriptive analysis. Combined with a transparent and replicable selection process, this approach builds a coherent conceptual foundation from evidence that quantitative studies and bibliometric mapping alone leave fragmented.

This study makes three primary contributions to the development of the marketing agility literature. First, this review strengthens the conceptual understanding of marketing agility by synthesizing it as a recursive adaptive capability that unfolds through a sequence of sensing, deciding, acting, and learning processes. This perspective extends the prevailing interpretation of marketing agility, which has tended to emphasize organizational speed in responding to market changes. Second, this study offers a conceptual contribution by integrating disparate elements in the literature namely antecedents, mechanisms, contingent conditions, and outcomes of marketing agility into a unified conceptual framework. This integration enables a more systematic understanding of the relationships between driving factors and the processes that shape marketing agility, while also explaining how marketing agility translates environmental changes and information into adaptive marketing responses and organizational outcomes. Third, this study identifies several research opportunities that can enrich the future development of the marketing agility literature. The proposed research agenda includes deepening the processes of sensing and interpreting market changes, developing capabilities that enable organizations to influence or shape markets, leveraging intelligence and digital technologies as drivers of agility, and testing the marketing agility concept in the contexts of developing countries and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Marketing Agility as a Sense and Respond Capability

Marketing agility is fundamentally concerned with shortening the distance between market understanding and marketing action. The construct is the extent to which an entity rapidly iterates between making sense of the market and executing marketing decisions to adapt to market changes (Kalaignanam et al., 2021). This definition establishes a recursive rather than linear process: information is sensed, interpreted, translated into a decision, executed, and then reconsidered as new market information becomes available. The literature also demonstrates that agility is multidimensional. International marketing studies emphasize market sensing, decision making flexibility, and marketing adaptability (Thoumrungroje & Racela, 2022), while emerging market research highlights responsiveness, proactiveness, and robustness (Arslan et al., 2024).

2.2 Dynamic Capabilities Perspective

The dynamic capabilities view provides the strongest theoretical foundation across the reviewed literature. From this perspective, marketing agility represents a capability through which firms sense environmental changes, seize opportunities through timely decisions, and reconfigure resources and marketing processes. The relationship is evident in studies connecting marketing agility with dynamic capabilities, digital resource reconfiguration, entrepreneurial marketing capabilities, and market driving capability (Khan, Mavondo, et al., 2025; Weng et al., 2024; Wilopo et al., 2026). This perspective also clarifies why marketing agility should not be treated as an isolated marketing technique. It depends on underlying resources, knowledge, organizational arrangements, and learning processes.

2.3 Contingency of Marketing Agility

The value of agility depends on context. Market turbulence, technological dynamism, market complexity, deep uncertainty, institutional pressures, and cultural conditions can alter the way agility is enacted and the benefits it produces. Market turbulence conditions the relationship between marketing agility, innovation capability, and financial performance (Zhou et al., 2019). The importance of marketing agility for emerging market firms operating in advanced markets, where market complexity creates additional adaptation requirements (Khan, 2020). Recent work further shows that technological dynamism and structural flux can strengthen the effects of marketing agility in hospitality, whereas high power distance can constrain customer facing enactment of agile practices (Agag et al., 2026; Friend et al., 2026).

This study adopts a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The review follows a transparent process of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion adapted from the PRISMA logic. PRISMA is employed here to document study selection rather than to support descriptive bibliometric analysis. The literature search was

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conducted in the Scopus database on August 25, 2026. The search used the keyword "marketing agility" within article titles, abstracts, and keywords, and was limited to publications from 2019 through August 25, 2026. Database filters restricted articles to the subject areas of Business, Management, and Accounting; journal articles; English language publications; final publication stage; and journal sources. The initial search yielded 691 records. After applying database filters, 235 records proceeded to the title and abstract screening stage. A total of 180 additional records were excluded due to insufficient alignment with the review's focus, leaving 55 records for retrieval and eligibility assessment. Four records were excluded after retrieval because they lacked substantial relevance to marketing agility within the selected research domain. The final corpus comprised 51 studies.

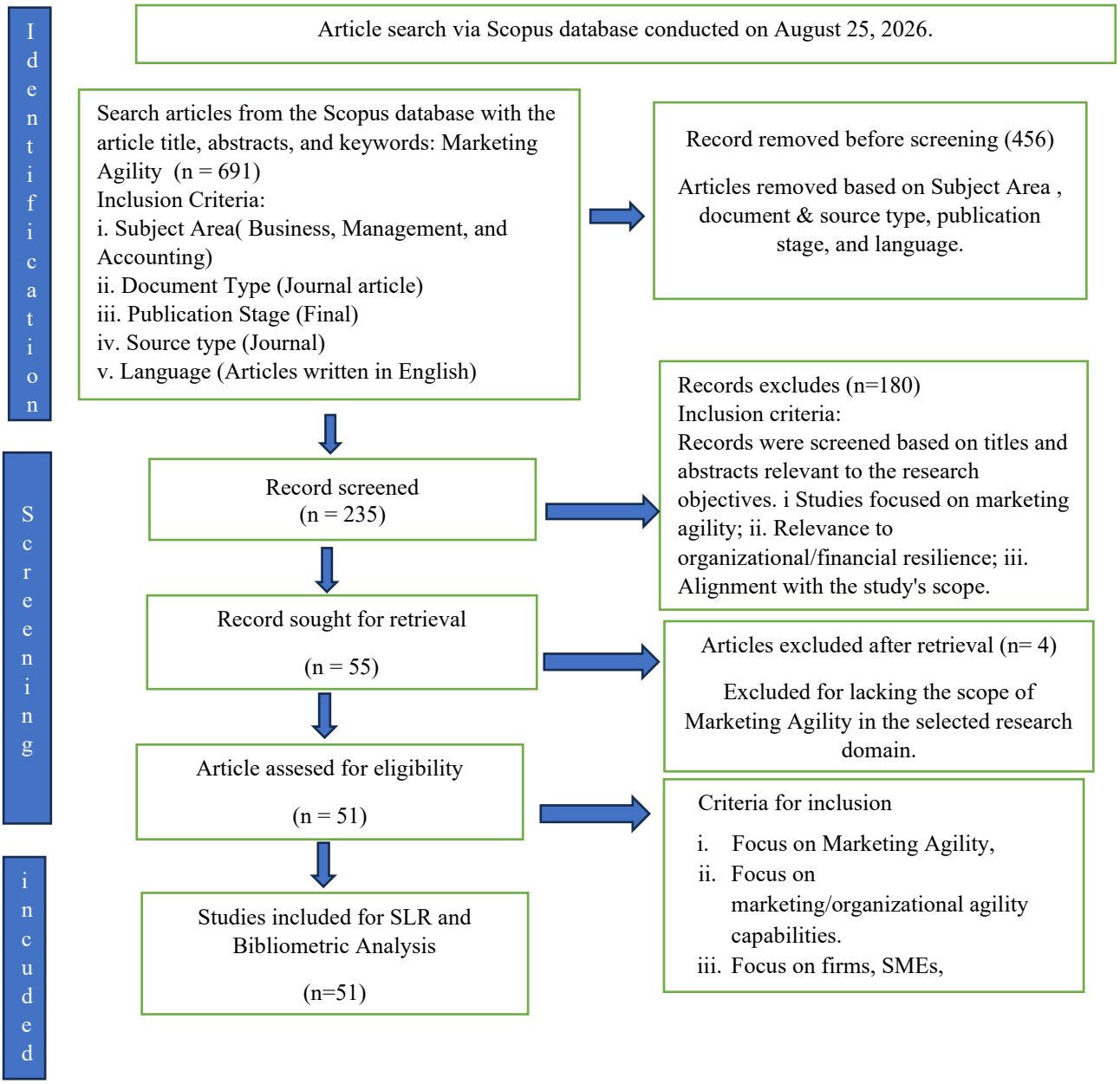


Figure 1. PRISMA for Data retrieval and selection of articles
Source: Author, 2026.

Figure 1 summarizes the data retrieval and article selection process, which followed the PRISMA logic. The 51 eligible studies were analyzed using thematic qualitative synthesis. The procedure consisted of five iterative stages. First, each study was familiarized through its title, abstract, theoretical orientation, context, methodological design, and reported findings. Second, evidence relevant to the review questions was extracted into analytical categories covering the conceptualization of marketing agility, antecedent capabilities, enactment mechanisms, outcomes, and contextual conditions. Third, open coding was used to identify recurring concepts such as market sensing, responsiveness, decision making flexibility, adaptation, innovation, digital resources, knowledge, crisis response, and market turbulence. Fourth, related codes were compared across studies and consolidated into higher order themes. Fifth, the themes were integrated into a conceptual model explaining the relationships among environmental triggers, enabling capabilities, marketing agility, adaptive mechanisms, and outcomes.

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The synthesis emphasized conceptual convergence and divergence rather than study frequency. Quantitative, qualitative, conceptual, and review studies were all treated as sources of substantive theoretical evidence, while the method used in each study was considered when interpreting the strength and nature of its contribution. The resulting model is therefore a conceptual integration of the literature rather than a statistically estimated model.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Marketing Agility as a Recursive Sense–Decide–Act–Learn Capability

Across the corpus, the most consistent conceptual pattern is that marketing agility links market sensing with timely decision making and flexible marketing execution. Kalaignanam et al. (2021) provide the clearest foundational formulation (Kalaignanam et al., 2021), while Gomes et al. (2020) and Thoumrungroje and Racela (2022) extend it to international settings (Gomes et al., 2020; Thoumrungroje & Racela, 2022) .The evidence suggests that agility is not equivalent to responsiveness alone. Responsiveness describes a desired behavioral outcome, whereas agility captures the organizational capability that repeatedly produces such responsiveness.

The synthesis further indicates that agility contains a recursive learning element. Data analytics studies show that firms use information to generate market knowledge and support sense and respond processes (Tarn & Wang, 2023). Research on big data emphasizes information and technology quality as foundations for agility, with decision making roles influencing how those resources are converted into usable information (Haverila, Haverila, Gani, et al., 2025). In deep uncertainty, sensemaking becomes especially important because market signals are ambiguous and decision makers must interpret incomplete information before acting (Eckstein, Shrestha, & Russo, 2025).

Table 1. Conceptualization and Differentiation of Marketing Agility

Study	Evidence focus	Key finding represented in the corpus	Synthesis implication
(Kalaignanam et al., 2021)	Conceptualization	Marketing agility is rapid iteration between making sense of the market and executing marketing decisions to adapt to change.	Core construct is recursive and capability based, not merely speed.
(Gomes et al., 2020)	International marketing	Extends agility into international marketing and emphasizes adaptive decision processes across changing markets.	Shows transferability of the sense and respond logic to international contexts.
(Thoumrungroje & Racela, 2022)	SME internationalization	Highlights market sensing, decision making flexibility, and marketing adaptability in SME international marketing.	Supports a multidimensional view combining cognition and action.
(Arslan et al., 2024)	Underdog entrepreneurship	Emphasizes responsiveness, proactiveness, and robustness under difficult market conditions.	Adds proactive and resilient dimensions to the construct.
(Tarn & Wang, 2023)	Data analytics	Data analytics supports the sense and respond process by converting information into market knowledge.	Demonstrates the information processing basis of recursive agility.
(Eckstein, Shrestha, Sassenberg, et al., 2025)	Deep uncertainty	Sensemaking is critical when signals are ambiguous and decisions must be made from incomplete information.	Learning and interpretation are essential dimensions of agility.

Table 1 shows that the reviewed studies converge on conceptualizing marketing agility as a capability that links market sensing, flexible decision making, and adaptive marketing execution, rather than as speed or responsiveness alone. This theme leads to a refined interpretation: marketing agility is best understood as a dynamic capability of repeated market interpretation and adaptive action. Speed is necessary but insufficient. Effective agility requires the ability to determine what information matters, make a timely decision, execute flexibly, and learn from the resulting market response.

3.2 Organizational, Knowledge, and Entrepreneurial Enablers

The second theme concerns the organizational foundations that make marketing agility possible. Early evidence identifies organizational elements and human resource competencies as contributors to marketing agility (Geetha & Rekha, 2019). The Blue Skies case further demonstrates that agility develops through organizational processes and accumulated capabilities rather than through isolated marketing activities (Osei et al., 2019). These findings imply that agility is partly embedded in organizational routines, coordination, and employee capabilities.

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Market orientation and knowledge are another important foundation. Research on multinational subsidiaries positions responsiveness and marketing program standardization as complementary capabilities for balancing local adaptation and global consistency (Özsomer et al., 2023). Big data research similarly indicates that business, marketing, relational, technological, and technology management knowledge contribute to marketing agility, with deployment level affecting these relationships (Haverila, Haverila, Gani, et al., 2025).

Entrepreneurial capabilities provide a further enabling layer. Entrepreneurial marketing capabilities, resources, absorptive capacity, entrepreneurial resilience, and entrepreneurial experience are connected with marketing agility in different contexts (Khan, Khan, et al., 2025; Mejeed et al., 2025; Vaillant & Lafuente, 2019). The common pattern is that firms require more than information access: they need the capacity to interpret, recombine, and mobilize resources in response to opportunities and threats.

3.3 Digital and Data Enabled Foundations

A salient recent development is the growing role of digital and data driven resources in enabling marketing agility. Organizational routines, coordination mechanisms, employee competencies, market orientation, and knowledge provide foundational capacity; entrepreneurial capabilities facilitate resource mobilization and opportunity recognition; and digital and data capabilities enhance the granularity of sensing and support for decision making.

Table 2. Organizational, Knowledge, Entrepreneurial, and Digital Enablers

Study	Enabler domain	Key finding represented in the corpus	Synthesis implication
(Geetha & Rekha, 2019)	Organizational/human resources	Organizational elements and human resource competencies contribute to marketing agility.	Agility requires organizational routines and employee capability.
(Osei et al., 2019)	Organizational processes	Blue Skies shows agility developing through accumulated organizational processes and capabilities.	Agility is embedded in routines and coordination, not isolated campaigns.
(Özsomer et al., 2023)	Market orientation	Market orientation and marketing program standardization support responsiveness and adaptation in subsidiaries.	Knowledge and market orientation help balance consistency with local adaptation.
(Haverila, Haverila, & McLaughlin, 2025)	Big data knowledge	Business, marketing, relational, technological, and technology management knowledge relate to agility; deployment level matters.	Information quality must be converted through knowledge and decision roles.
(Khan, Khan, et al., 2025)	Entrepreneurial marketing capabilities	Outside in and inside out entrepreneurial marketing capabilities, resources, and agility are linked to entrepreneurial firm performance.	Entrepreneurial capability provides a mobilization layer beyond information access.
(Weng et al., 2024)	Digital resource reconfiguration	Digital resources can become malleable and reconfigurable in developing marketing agility.	Digital agility depends on resource reconfiguration, not technology ownership alone.
(Figueiredo et al., 2026)	Digital marketing capability	Digital marketing capability is linked to marketing agility and service innovation.	Digital capability strengthens agility when integrated with marketing processes.
(Iyer et al., 2025)	Artificial intelligence	Marketing agility mediates the link between AI adoption/sales management transformation and sales team performance.	AI is an emerging enabler whose value depends on capability development.

Table 2 shows that marketing agility is enabled by a combination of organizational, knowledge-based, entrepreneurial, and digital factors rather than by any single resource. Marketing analytics can strengthen the ability to identify patterns and generate real time responses (Akter et al., 2022; Tarn & Wang, 2023). Longitudinal evidence links data driven innovation capabilities to marketing agility and competitive advantage, with marketing agility functioning as an important explanatory mechanism (Alghamdi & Agag, 2024).

Digital marketing capability, digital resource reconfiguration, and digital platforms further extend this logic. Versatile digital resources can become malleable and reconfigurable in the development of marketing agility (Weng et al., 2024), digital marketing capability connect with marketing agility and service innovation in hospitality (Figueiredo et al., 2026). Recent research also points to artificial intelligence as an emerging enabler in sales management, where

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marketing agility helps translate AI adoption into sales team performance (Iyer et al., 2025). Metaverse related technology adoption and absorptive capacity similarly appear in emerging work connecting digital adoption with international marketing agility and firm performance (Shahzad & Zhang, 2025).

The synthesis nevertheless suggests that digitalization should not be treated as synonymous with agility. Technology creates the potential for faster sensing and action, but organizational knowledge, decision rights, task technology fit, and the ability to reconfigure resources determine whether that potential becomes actual marketing agility.

3.4 Adaptive Mechanisms: From Agility to Marketing Action

The literature identifies several mechanisms through which marketing agility produces value. One prominent mechanism is marketing program adaptation. Khan (2020) shows that marketing agility influences firm performance partly through marketing program adaptation in complex advanced market environments (Khan, 2020). International marketing research similarly links agility with the ability to balance standardization and adaptation across markets (Li et al., 2019; Özsomer et al., 2023).

Innovation is another central mechanism. Zhou et al. (2019) position innovation capability as an ordinary capability through which marketing agility contributes to financial performance (Zhou et al., 2019). Startup evidence shows that marketing agility enhances new product creativity and new product performance, particularly under technological turbulence (Jun et al., 2024). Business model innovation also becomes relevant in emerging market international businesses, where international marketing agility forms part of the capability configuration surrounding adaptation and international performance (Christofi et al., 2024).

Resource reconfiguration and market driving activities constitute a further mechanism. Digital platforms can reconfigure resources for marketing agility (Weng et al., 2024), while recent SME research connects strategic agility, marketing agility, and market driving capability (Wilopo et al., 2026). These findings extend the traditional view of agility from reacting to market change toward potentially shaping market conditions and creating new opportunities.

3.5 Outcomes: Performance, Customer Value, Innovation, Resilience, and Survival

The literature supports a process chain in which environmental information is sensed and interpreted, converted through marketing agility into timely decisions, and enacted through marketing program adaptation, innovation, resource reconfiguration, international adaptation, crisis response, or market driving activity. Outcomes consequently extend from financial and market performance to customer value, innovation, resilience, and survival. Marketing agility is best positioned as the bridging capability in this chain rather than as a simple direct predictor of performance.

Table 3. Mechanisms linking environmental information to adaptive action and outcomes

Study(s)	Mechanism/outcome pathway	Key finding represented in the corpus	Synthesis implication
(Khan, 2020)	Marketing program adaptation → performance	Marketing agility contributes to performance partly through adaptation of marketing programs in complex advanced market environments.	Adaptive marketing execution is a key transmission mechanism.
(Li et al., 2019; Özsomer et al., 2023)	Standardization–adaptation	Agility supports balancing global consistency with local market adaptation.	Agility converts market information into context sensitive program decisions.
(Zhou et al., 2019)	Innovation capability → financial performance	Innovation capability functions as an ordinary capability through which marketing agility contributes to financial performance.	Agility creates value partly by activating innovation capability.
(Jun et al., 2024)	New product creativity/performance	Startup marketing agility improves new product creativity and performance, especially under technological turbulence.	Innovation outcomes are strengthened when agility matches environmental conditions.
(Weng et al., 2024)	Resource reconfiguration	Digital platforms enable reconfiguration of resources for marketing agility.	Reconfiguration links digital resources to adaptive action.
(Wilopo et al., 2026)	Market driving capability	Strategic agility, marketing agility, and market driving capability are connected in SME performance.	Agility can move beyond reaction toward market shaping.
(Agag et al., 2026)	Customer and firm outcomes	Marketing agility is associated with customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, loyalty intentions, and hotel performance.	Value creation includes customer facing outcomes, not only financial results.

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Study(s)	Mechanism/outcome pathway	Key finding represented in the corpus	Synthesis implication
(Golgeci et al., 2025; Moi & Cabiddu, 2022)	Crisis response, resilience, survival	Agile marketing supports crisis response and is connected with resilience and survival under disruption.	Agility provides adaptive capacity when continuity is threatened.

Table 3 shows that marketing agility creates value by translating environmental information into adaptive action rather than by directly predicting performance. Firm performance remains the most consistent outcome across the literature, but the meaning of performance is broad. Evidence covers financial performance, market performance, competitive advantage, international performance, service innovation, new product performance, customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, and loyalty intentions. Marketing agility is associated with financial performance under certain levels of market turbulence (Zhou et al., 2019), with international market performance among exporters (Asseraf et al., 2019), and with competitive advantage when combined with data driven innovation capabilities (Alghamdi & Agag, 2024).

Customer facing outcomes are increasingly visible in recent research. Agag et al. (2026) show that marketing agility can improve customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, and loyalty intentions alongside hotel performance (Agag et al., 2026). This suggests that agility creates value not only through internal operational responsiveness but also through the ability to adjust customer facing activities in ways that remain relevant over time.

The literature also reveals resilience and survival as important outcomes under disruption. Case evidence from Italian B2B firms demonstrates how agile marketing strategies support firms across different stages of pandemic crisis response (Moi & Cabiddu, 2022). Research on underdog entrepreneurs and immigrant entrepreneurs similarly connects marketing agility with survival and resilience in volatile or institutionally challenging environments (Arslan et al., 2024; Golgeci et al., 2025).

3.6 Contextual Contingencies Shape the Value of Agility

The final theme concerns boundary conditions. Four major boundary conditions emerge: environmental turbulence and ucertainty; technological dynamism and digitization; institutional and cultural conditions; and organizational/temporal context. The principal research gaps are therefore not only additional antecedents, but explanations of how agility is configured and developed over time.

Table 4. Contextual Contingencies

Study(s)	Contextual issue	Key finding represented in the corpus	Research implication
(Zhou et al., 2019)	Market turbulence	The performance implications of marketing agility vary with environmental turbulence.	Agility is contingent on environmental intensity.
(Jun et al., 2024)	Technological turbulence	Technological turbulence strengthens the relationship between startup marketing agility and new product outcomes.	Technology dynamics can amplify the value of agility.
(Eckstein, Shrestha, & Russo, 2025)	VUCA/deep uncertainty	Ambiguous information, digitization, and institutional intervention shape how agility is enacted.	Sensemaking and contextual fit are central under uncertainty.
(Smirnova & Golovacheva, 2026)	Dysfunctional environment/configuration	Different configurations of agility components can be associated with better performance in dysfunctional environments.	Configurational rather than purely linear explanations are needed.
(Khan, 2020; Osei et al., 2019)	Emerging markets/institutional conditions	Institutional voids and market complexity create adaptation requirements and different capability building conditions.	Context changes the resources and routines required for agility.
(Friend et al., 2026)	Culture/power distance	High power distance can constrain customer facing enactment of agile practices.	Decision rights and empowerment are boundary conditions.
(Mihotić & Pfajfar, 2026)	Temporal/family business context	Marketing agility can develop across generations and crises in family businesses.	Agility has a temporal and developmental dimension.
(Wilopo et al., 2026)	SMEs/market driving	SME research connects strategic agility, marketing agility, and market driving capability.	Future work should examine when agility becomes proactive market shaping.

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Table 4 shows that the value of marketing agility is contingent on four groups of boundary conditions. Market turbulence is one of the earliest and most persistent contingencies. Environmental turbulence changes the performance implications of marketing agility (Zhou et al., 2019). Technological turbulence also matters, strengthening the relationship between startup marketing agility and new product outcomes (Jun et al., 2024). More recent evidence introduces structural flux, VUCA conditions, deep uncertainty, and dysfunctional environments as increasingly complex settings in which the effectiveness of agility depends on configuration rather than on a single linear relationship (Agag et al., 2026; Eckstein, Shrestha, & Russo, 2025; Smirnova & Golovacheva, 2026).

Institutional and cultural contexts represent a second boundary condition. Emerging market firms may need agility to overcome institutional voids and market complexity, but the resources and routines supporting agility may differ from those in advanced economies (Khan, 2020; Osei et al., 2019). High power distance can constrain the enactment of agility by customer facing employees, demonstrating that organizational culture affects the translation of capability into action (Friend et al., 2026). Family business succession introduces another temporal dimension, showing that agility can evolve across generations and crises (Mihotić & Pfajfar, 2026).

3.7 Integrated Conceptual Model

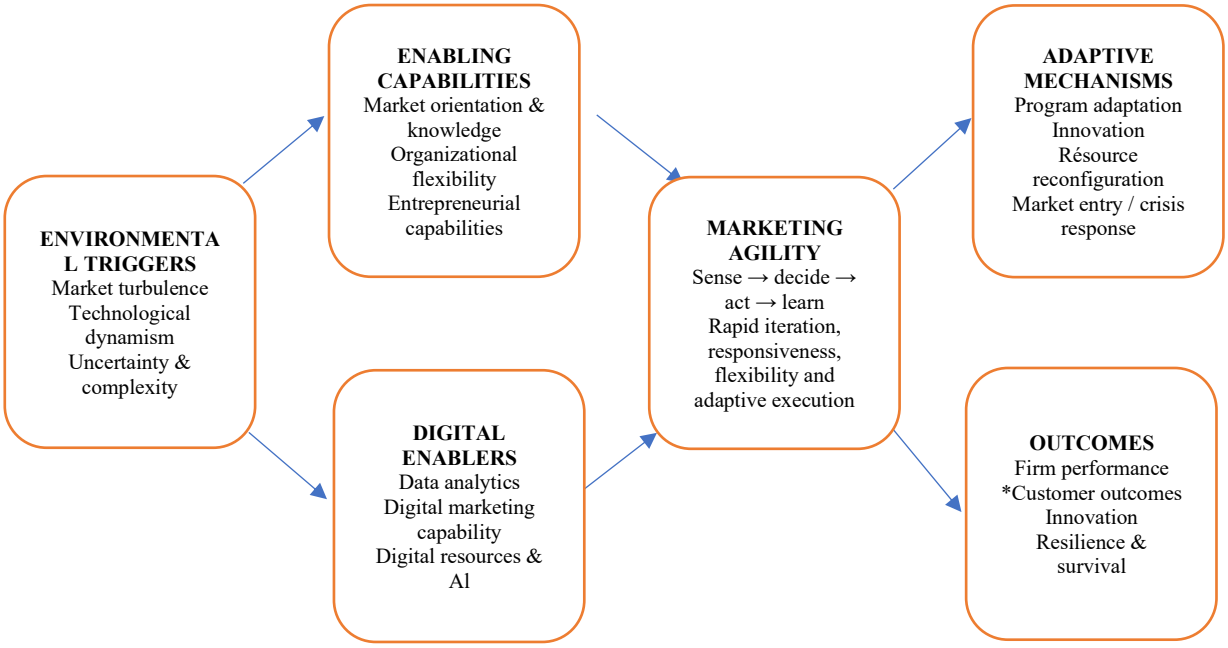


Figure 2. Integrated conceptual model of marketing agility derived from the qualitative synthesis.

Figure 2 shows the conceptual model integrates the six themes into a process oriented framework. Environmental triggers such as market turbulence, technological dynamism, uncertainty, and complexity create the need for rapid adaptation. These triggers do not automatically produce agility. Instead, firms require enabling capabilities, including market orientation and knowledge, organizational flexibility, entrepreneurial capabilities, and digital/data capabilities.

Marketing agility occupies the central position because it converts these foundations into a recursive sense–decide–act–learn process. The capability then operates through adaptive mechanisms such as marketing program adaptation, innovation, resource reconfiguration, international market entry, crisis response, and market driving activities. These mechanisms generate outcomes including firm performance, customer outcomes, innovation, resilience, and survival. Contextual contingencies,particularly institutional conditions, culture, organizational level, market complexity, and technological change shape the strength and form of these relationships.

The model also clarifies the relationship between strategic agility and marketing agility. Strategic agility operates at a broader strategic level, while marketing agility translates adaptive strategic intent into market facing decisions and execution. Thus, marketing agility can function as a bridging capability between organizational level strategic adaptation and functional marketing action (Vaillant & Lafuente, 2019; Wilopo et al., 2026).

3.8 Research Gaps and Future Research Agenda

The reviewed literature indicates that research on marketing agility still leaves considerable scope for conceptual and empirical deepening. Identified research gaps include conceptual boundary clarity; understanding of cognitive and learning processes; the role of market shaping capabilities; the utilization of digital intelligence and artificial intelligence (AI); SME and emerging market contexts; configurational and temporal dynamics; culture and governance; and organizational outcomes beyond financial performance. A review of prior studies also shows that while some of these aspects have begun to be addressed, available findings remain fragmented and have not yet coalesced into an integrated understanding of how marketing agility is built, enacted, and generates value across different environmental contexts.

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These gaps provide the basis for formulating a future research agenda aimed at developing a more comprehensive understanding of the dimensions, mechanisms, contextual conditions, and consequences of marketing agility.

Table 5. Research Gaps and Future Research Agenda

Research gap	What the reviewed literature indicates	Priority for future research
Configurational and temporal dynamics	Most studies examine linear relationships or single contingencies at a single point in time. How combinations of antecedents and contingencies evolve, and how the recursive sensing-deciding-acting-learning cycle develops over time, remains largely untested.	Highest priority. Use longitudinal designs, process studies, and configurational approaches (e.g., fsQCA) to identify alternative pathways to effective agility, how these pathways change as learning accumulates and conditions shift, and which configurations are equifinal or fragile.
SMEs and emerging markets (MSMEs in developing countries)	Evidence exists but remains context-specific and fragmented. Findings from large firms in advanced economies cannot be assumed to hold under resource scarcity, informal institutions, and weak infrastructure.	Highest priority. Study capability-building pathways in MSMEs under resource constraints, institutional voids, and market uncertainty. Examine how agility is achieved with limited digital and data resources, the role of owner-managers' cognition and networks, and how agility develops across growth stages. Use comparative and multi-country designs to test the boundary conditions of the framework.
Conceptual clarity	Boundaries among marketing agility, agile marketing, strategic agility, organizational agility, and related adaptive capabilities remain unclear.	Secondary priority. Develop multidimensional conceptualizations that distinguish sensing, decision flexibility, execution adaptability, and learning, together with validated measures.
Sensemaking and learning	Limited attention to how managers interpret ambiguous signals and learn from repeated market responses.	Secondary priority. Study recursive sensemaking, learning loops, managerial cognition, and information quality, ideally over repeated response cycles.
Market driving capability	Recent work connects agility with market driving capability, but the proactive role remains underdeveloped.	Secondary priority. Examine when agility shifts from reacting to shaping customer expectations, channels, and market rules.
Digital intelligence and AI	Digital and AI-enabled agility is emerging, but evidence is concentrated in specific industries and adoption settings.	Secondary priority. Investigate AI-enabled sensing, decision augmentation, experimentation, personalization, and reconfiguration, including in resource-constrained MSMEs.
Culture and governance	Cultural and decision right conditions can constrain agility.	Secondary priority. Examine empowerment, hierarchy, coordination, and cross functional governance as boundary conditions.
Outcomes beyond financial performance	Customer, innovation, resilience, and survival outcomes are increasingly visible but less integrated.	Secondary priority. Develop broader outcome frameworks connecting customer value, innovation, resilience, and sustainable performance.

The synthesis reveals several research gaps, summarized in Table 5. Two of them warrant the highest priority because they limit the field's ability to explain when and where marketing agility produces value. First, the dynamics of configurations over time remain largely unexamined. Most reviewed studies test linear relationships or single contingencies at one point in time, which cannot show how combinations of routines, resources, and decision arrangements evolve, or why different combinations lead to equally effective agility. Given that the proposed framework treats marketing agility as a recursive process in which learning feeds back into sensing and action, longitudinal and configurational designs are the most direct way to test it. Second, the context of MSMEs in developing countries is the setting where the evidence is thinnest and the theoretical stakes are highest. Resource constraints, institutional voids, and market uncertainty may require different capability-building pathways than those documented in large firms in advanced economies. The remaining gaps are important, but they are best pursued in relation to these two priorities.

4. CONCLUSION

This literature synthesis indicates that marketing agility is a dynamic and integrative capability that enables organizations to recognize and interpret environmental changes, make responsive decisions, execute marketing actions flexibly, and engage in continuous learning and resource reconfiguration. Marketing agility reflects not only speed of response but also involves the interplay between strategic and organizational capabilities, the utilization of knowledge and digital technologies, cognitive processes and organizational learning, and environmental conditions encompassing market

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turbulence, technological dynamics, uncertainty, complexity, and institutional constraints. Marketing agility functions as a bridging mechanism that translates internal capabilities and environmental information into adaptive marketing actions, ultimately supporting the achievement of organizational outcomes. The practical development of marketing agility requires strengthening market sensing routines, accelerating decision making, enhancing cross functional coordination, establishing data governance, investing in technology alongside improvements in human resource competencies, and implementing feedback based experimentation and learning. SMEs can develop agility incrementally by leveraging affordable technologies, fostering entrepreneurial learning, strengthening market networks, and maintaining flexibility in resource allocation in line with available capacities. Research limitations should be acknowledged, as the articles included were sourced exclusively from Scopus, focused on English language publications, and employed relatively specific search terminology, potentially excluding studies that use different conceptual labels. Future research should expand the range of databases and search terminologies and deepen investigations into the roles of cognition, learning, digital technologies, and environmental contexts in shaping effective configurations of marketing agility.

5. DECLARATIONS

5.1 Author Contributions

Conceptualization: R. F. S., L. K., and S. H.;
Methodology: R. F. S.;
Software: R. F. S.;
Validation: R. F. S.;
Formal Analysis: R. F. S.;
Investigation: R. F. S.;
Resources: R. F. S.;
Data Curation: R. F. S.;
Writing Original Draft Preparation: R. F. S.;
Writing Review and Editing: R. F. S.;
Visualization: R. F. S.;
All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

5.2 Data Availability

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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5.4 Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

5.5 Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

5.6 Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

5.7 Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in The Writing Process

The authors used Generative AI to improve the writing clarity of this paper. They reviewed and edited the AI-assisted content and took full responsibility for the final publication.

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