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Original Article

Influence of Marketing Agility on Marketing Performance of Commercial Banks in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to establish the influence of marketing agility on the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The study was founded on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and the target population was the 39 commercial banks licensed to operate in Kenya by the Central Bank of Kenya. A census of the target population was done because it was relatively small. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, and data was collected using the key informant method from marketing managers using a semi-structured questionnaire. 37 commercial banks responded, and this led to a 95% response rate. Data analysis was done using simple regression analysis, and the regression results indicated that marketing agility explained 51.1 % of the variation in the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The regression coefficients also revealed that marketing agility had a positive and significant effect on Marketing performance ($\beta = 0.668$, $t = 6.043$, $p = 0.000$). These results led to the rejection of the study's null hypothesis, which stated that marketing agility has no significant effect on the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Based on the results of the regression analysis, the study concluded that marketing agility has a positive and significant influence on the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The study recommended that marketing managers ensure that business firms have simplified organizational structures and processes that have short learning cycles as well as breaking down departmental barriers to enhance the firms' ability to act faster and be more flexible in response to market changes. Management should also ensure that organizational resources are tied to overarching objectives instead of pre-planned activities. Management should develop a system that will ensure that it is possible to reallocate resources quickly within the firm so that they can move with speed in exploiting a marketing opportunity or avoiding a business threat.

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INTRODUCTION

The current business environment is very unpredictable, with market changes that expose business firms to challenges such as rapid technological advancement, frequent changes in customer preferences, as well as increased competition. Failure to respond effectively to these environmental changes may lead business firms to record poor performance (Zhou *et al.*, 2019). Marketing practitioners agree that the marketing environment has become increasingly uncertain and therefore, the ability of a business firm to quickly sense and respond to changes in the market has become extremely important (Kalaignanam *et al*., 2021), and this has led to the need for marketing agility to enhance marketing performance. The concept of marketing agility was initially proposed by Poolton *et al*. (2006) and was more recently conceptualized by Kalaignanam *et al.* (2021) who defined it as the extent to which a business entity can iterate between making sense of the market and executing marketing decisions that enable the firm to adapt to market changes. This is a perspective that views marketing agility as an iterative process that enables businesses to efficiently adapt to a changing environment. Another definition of marketing agility is given by Homburg *et al*. (2020) as the capability that makes it possible for business firms to quickly sense and respond to changes in the market.

Marketing agility is necessary since it enables firms to cope with uncertainty caused by frequent market changes (Teece *et al.*, 2016). According to Accardi-Petersen (2011), marketing agility enables business entities to adapt their marketing activities and efforts quickly and effectively to respond to changes in customer needs, market conditions, and strategic growth demands. This implies that firms with a high level of marketing agility can plan and cope with market changes better than those lacking marketing agility. Zhou *et al*. (2019) argue that marketing agility involves proactivity, where firms anticipate changes in the market and adapt their marketing activities accordingly. It also includes active marketing research activities, which are done to identify current and potential customer needs (Poolton *et al.*, 2006). This study adopted the definition that marketing agility is the ability of a business firm to proactively anticipate and sense marketing opportunities, and be able to respond quickly and in a flexible manner to satisfy customer needs better. The extant literature indicates that marketing agility has four facets, which are proactiveness, responsiveness, speed, and flexibility (Zhang, 2019). This study adopted these four facets in the conceptualization of marketing agility. Proactiveness is the ability of a firm to utilize marketing approaches to anticipate changes in customer needs and stimulate demand. Responsiveness is about the firm being able to identify the changes in customer needs and market opportunities and reacting accordingly to exploit the changes. Speed refers to the time a firm takes to anticipate and respond to market opportunities and threats effectively. Flexibility is viewed by Kearney

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(2012) as the ability of a firm to efficiently and effectively produce different product combinations at quantities matched to the needs of the market.

Marketing performance is key to business success, and it is defined by Farris *et al*. (2010) as the outcomes or results of a firm's marketing operations in the form of changes in market share, profit, customer satisfaction, and total sales. It is also defined by Homburg (2017) as the efficiency and effectiveness of a firm's marketing activities about its market-related goals and objectives, such as growth in revenues, sales, market share, and brand awareness. There is no consensus among authors on how marketing performance should be measured. Traditionally, marketing performance has been measured using financial measures such as profit, return on investment, and sales revenue. However, there is apprehension about the use of financial measures only since they do not consider the long-term effects (Eccles *et al.*, 2010). Non-financial measures such as customer loyalty, brand awareness, and customer satisfaction have gained popularity among researchers because they tend to indicate a firm's future financial performance better than lagged financial measures (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). This implies that financial indicators tend to indicate only what the firm has achieved in the past and not the future. Given these arguments by scholars, this study adopted the use of both financial and non-financial measures of marketing performance which include revenue growth, brand awareness, new customer acquisition, customer loyalty, and sales growth.

Commercial banks in Kenya and other countries offer a range of financial services to individuals and corporate customers to enable them to carry out financial transactions securely. Commercial banks in Kenya are regulated by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), and the banking industry employs more than 30,000 people, according to the Kenya Bankers Association state of the banking industry report of 2024. Commercial banks are essential to the economic success of a country through the various roles they perform, such as promoting savings and investments among the population, growth of entrepreneurship by providing capital to entrepreneurs, wealth creation, credit creation, and funds transfer both locally and internationally. Commercial banks are critical organizations in modern economies that act as economic growth engines, financial service providers, and financial stability guardians (Jaiswal & Tripathi, 2024). The Kenyan banking industry is highly competitive, with 39 banks currently licensed to operate by CBK. It is characterized by changes in customer needs and preferences due to economic fluctuations as well as competition from mobile lending apps as well as savings and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs). This implies that marketing agility is required to help banks handle the market changes effectively while remaining competitive. The objective of this study was to establish the influence of marketing agility on marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya.

Research Problem

Existing literature indicates that business firms have had to adapt their marketing activities due to frequent changes in the business environment (Anggoro & Sudarto, 2024). The concept of marketing agility has been presented in the literature as a capability that makes it possible for business firms to react to market changes faster, leading to improved performance. Despite the importance of marketing agility in contributing to better marketing performance, research studies are scarce on the marketing agility and marketing performance relationship, especially in volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments. This position is supported by Vesterinen *et al.* (2024), who argued that there is still a dearth of research on marketing agility concepts and practices in dynamic environments, especially in developing countries. Similarly, there are not many studies on marketing agility that have been done in Kenya. Past studies have been done in Pakistan by Abbas and Ali (2024) and Khan (2020), in Turkey by

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Zengin and Yukselen (2023), Zhou *et al.* (2019) in Chinese food processing firms, and Al-Rassol *et al.* (2023) in a clothing factory in Iraq. This represents a geographical gap, and there is a need to replicate these studies in Kenya. There is also a contextual gap since the existing studies have been done in different industries such as Exporting firms, ICT firms and pharmaceuticals, food processing firms as well as clothing factories. There is a need for this study to be done in the Kenyan banking industry since it has been largely ignored by previous researchers despite its critical contributions to a country's economic stability, and this represents a contextual gap. This study sought to address both the geographical and contextual gap by conducting the study in Kenya with a focus on commercial banks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

This study was founded on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) that was proposed by Teece *et al.* (1997). It states that firms can maintain a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing business environment by adapting, integrating, and reconfiguring their resources and capabilities. It is an extension of the Resource-Based Theory, and it emphasizes that business firms not only need valuable resources but also need the ability to leverage these resources effectively to respond to changes in the market. The resource base of an organization includes tangible resources such as machinery and equipment, and intangible resources such as the brand name. Dynamic capabilities refer to the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure its internal and external competencies to address changes in the environment (Teece, 2014). Dynamic capabilities are formed when teams in an organization use their skills and knowledge to acquire, combine, and transform the available resources within the firm so that it can cope effectively with environmental changes. Teece *et al.* (2016) further stated that core aspects of dynamic capabilities include being able to identify and assess a marketing opportunity (Sensing capability), mobilizing resources to exploit the opportunity (Seizing capability), and the ability to continue renewing the resources (Transforming/reconfiguring capability). Firms need to develop dynamic capabilities because they enable the business to go beyond current routines and solve problems in evolving environments, and hence, they are future-oriented high-order capabilities (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). The DCT was relevant for this study because marketing agility is considered to be a dynamic capability, as it captures the sensing and seizing aspects of dynamic capabilities. On the same note, Poolton *et al.* (2006) argued that marketing agility encourages firms to reconfigure their resources quickly and flexibly according to customer needs and competitor actions, and therefore, DCT is the most appropriate foundation for marketing agility.

Marketing Agility and Marketing Performance

Marketing agility, which is a new example of dynamic meta-capability, has emerged as a significant topic of interest for scholars and marketing practitioners (Khan, 2020). Business firms that adopt marketing agility respond to market changes faster than competitors without marketing agility and, in so doing, they gain a larger market share. Maitlis and Christiansen (2014) stated that marketing agility leads to better asset usage by firms, and this makes it possible for these firms to achieve better results in terms of marketing performance. Several studies have been done on the marketing agility and marketing performance relationship. Anggoro and Sudarto (2024) studied the impact of marketing agility on the marketing performance of small and medium enterprises in Indonesia. Data analysis was done using structural equation modelling, with the results indicating that marketing agility had a positive effect on the marketing performance of the SMEs. Another study by Al-Rassol *et al. (*2023) on the influence of marketing agility on the marketing performance of a men's clothing factory in Najaf, Iraq. Data

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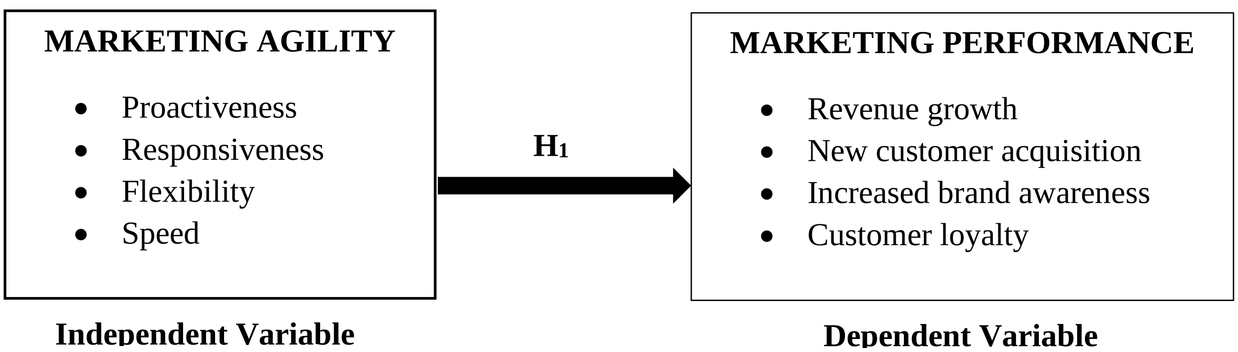
analysis was also done using structural equation modelling, and results indicated a positive and significant effect of marketing agility on the marketing performance of the men's clothing factory. Zhou *et al*. (2019) also conducted a study on the relationship between marketing agility and financial performance under different levels of market turbulence using Chinese food processing firms. The results of the structural equation modelling showed a positive effect of marketing agility on the financial performance of the food processing firms. In Turkey, Zengin and Yukselen (2023) studied the effect of marketing agility on financial performance. The target population included ICT firms, pharmaceutical firms, and Chemical processing firms. Structural equation modelling results also showed a positive effect of marketing agility on the financial performance of these firms. From the empirical studies reviewed, there is a contextual gap and a geographical gap since the previous studies on marketing agility and marketing performance have not been done in the banking industry, which is a service industry, or in a developing country like Kenya. Countries like Turkey, China, and Indonesia are more developed compared to Kenya, and there is a need for studies to be done in a developing country whose environmental forces may be significantly different from those of developed countries. This study sought to address the contextual and geographical gaps identified from the empirical review. The conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: *Author (2025)*

Based on the literature review, the study hypothesis was developed as;

H_1: Marketing agility has no significant influence on the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted cross cross-sectional research design because data on the study variables were collected at a single point in time. The target population consisted of all the commercial banks licensed to operate in Kenya by the Central Bank of Kenya. Data from CBK (2024) indicated that there are 39 commercial banks in Kenya. Since 39 banks are a relatively small number, a census study was conducted. Data collection was done using a semi-structured questionnaire using the drop-and-pick-up later method with the help of several research assistants. The key informant approach was used, where the marketing managers of the commercial banks were chosen as the respondents because of their knowledge and expertise in the areas under study. Marketing agility was measured using the scale items adopted from Zhou *et al.* (2019), while marketing performance was measured using scale items adopted from Khan (2020). All the items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 =

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Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Data analysis was done using regression analysis, and therefore, the data collected was subjected to the tests of the assumptions of regression analysis. Linearity was checked using the values of significant deviation from linearity, normality was checked using Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, autocorrelation was tested using the Durbin–Watson test, while the reliability of the research instrument was established using the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient with a cut-off point of 0.7.

FINDINGS

The response rate for the study was 95% since 37 of the 39 commercial banks responded by filling in the questionnaires. This very high response rate was because the target population was relatively small, and the drop-and-pick-up later method that was used to administer the questionnaires allowed the respondents ample time to provide the data required. Table 1 presents details of the gender, educational level, and work experience of the respondents of the study.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender of the respondents	Male = 22	Male = 59%
	Female = 15	Female = 41%
	Total = 37	**Total = 100%**
Highest level of education	PhD = 0	Masters = 41%
	Masters = 15	Bachelors = 59%
	Bachelors = 22	
	Diploma = 0	**Total = 100%**
	Certificate = 0	
	Other = 0	
Work experience	Less than 10 years = 8	22%
	10 to 20 years = 24	65%
	Over 20 years = 5	13%
		Total = 100%

Source: *Research Data (2025)*

Data from Table 1 indicates that women were well represented at 41 percent compared to males at 59 percent, and this was expected because a report by McKinsey & Company in 2024 revealed that the financial services sector in Kenya was showing a trend of relatively high representation of women in managerial positions. This can be attributed to the fact that many firms in Kenya, both in the public and private sectors, are taking steps to address the underrepresentation of women in the workplace through the implementation of policies focused on gender diversity. In terms of the highest level of education, the majority of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, and this indicated that they had the required knowledge to take part in the study. Similarly, 65% of the respondents had worked in the banking sector for between 10 to 20 years, and this was sufficient for them to have knowledge and experience concerning the study variables. In terms of the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for marketing agility was 0.86, and that for marketing performance was 0.79 which indicated that the measurement scales for the two variables were reliable. Concerning the tests of the assumptions of regression analysis, the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests had p-values greater than 0.05, and this indicated that the data collected on the study variables were normally distributed. Linearity was confirmed with the values of significant deviation from linearity being greater than 0.05. The Durbin-Watson test for autocorrelation had values close to 2, which was a

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confirmation that autocorrelation was not present in the data collected on the study variables.

Testing the Influence of Marketing Agility on Marketing Performance

The influence of marketing agility on marketing performance was tested using simple regression analysis. Table 2 provides the results of the model summary.

Table 2: Model Summary of the Influence of Marketing Agility on Marketing Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.715[a]	.511	.497	.46650

a. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing agility
Source: Research Data (2025)

From Table 2, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.511 and this implied that marketing agility explained 51.1% of the variation in the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The remaining 48.9% was attributed to other factors that were not covered by this study. The relationship between marketing agility and marketing performance was positive and strong, with a correlation coefficient of R = 0.715. Table 3 provides the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of marketing agility and marketing performance.

Table 3: ANOVA[a] Results of the Influence of Marketing Agility on Marketing Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.947	1	7.947	36.519	.000[b]
	Residual	7.617	35	.218		
	Total	15.564	36			

a. Dependent Variable: Marketing performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing agility
Source: *Research Data (2025)*

The ANOVA results in Table 3 indicated that the regression model was significant (F = 36.519, p = 0.000). This implied that the regression model was robust enough to explain the influence of marketing agility on the marketing performance of commercial banks. Table 4 provides the regression coefficients of the influence of marketing agility on marketing performance.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of the Influence of Marketing Agility on Marketing Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.507	.419		1.211	.234
	Marketing agility	.668	.111	.715	6.043	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Marketing performance
Source: *Research Data (2025)*

The results in Table 4 indicated that t = 6.043 and p = 0.000, which implied that marketing agility positively and significantly affected the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The unstandardized regression coefficient also indicated that marketing agility was significant ($\beta = 0.668$, p = 0.000). Therefore, these results led to the rejection of the study's null hypothesis, which stated that marketing agility has no significant influence on marketing performance. These results add to the evidence from studies around the world that

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marketing agility affects marketing performance positively.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Findings of this study indicated that marketing agility had a positive and significant influence on the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. This finding is in tandem with that of Abbas and Ali (2024), whose study also found a positive and significant effect of marketing agility on the marketing performance of Fintech companies in Pakistan. The findings of the current study are also similar to those of Al-Rassol *et al*. (2023), whose study results indicated a positive and significant effect of marketing agility on the marketing performance of a men's clothing factory in Iraq. Other studies that have also found a positive effect on marketing agility of firms are Khan (2020), Zengin and Yukselen (2023), and Anggoro and Sudarto (2024). The findings of the current study also support arguments of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which states that to avoid organizational inertia, firms have to continually reconfigure their capabilities. To achieve this, firms have to sense and seize marketing opportunities, avoid environmental threats, and maintain competitiveness by enhancing and reconfiguring organizational resources. Marketing agility captures the seizing and responding aspects of dynamic capabilities and also the aspect of transforming or reconfiguring organizational assets quickly to cope with environmental changes. This confirms that when firms are proactive, responsive, flexible, and move with speed to exploit marketing opportunities or to avoid environmental threats, marketing performance will be influenced positively. Firms that possess marketing agility can proactively scan the business environment and use the marketing information collected to redesign product or service offerings in a way that enables the firms to cope with various changes in customer needs and competitors' actions in the marketplace.

CONCLUSION

The regression coefficient of marketing agility indicated that marketing agility has a positive and significant influence on the marketing performance of commercial banks. Based on this finding, this study concluded that marketing agility has a positive and significant influence on the marketing performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The market sensing element of marketing agility allows business firms to identify market opportunities and threats and then guide the marketing department personnel and management in redesigning the existing marketing strategies to suit current and future market needs. The process of organizational marketing program adaptation requires flexibility, responsiveness, and speed (Efrat *et al*., 2017). This implies that marketing agility enables business firms to remain competitive by adapting the products, pricing, distribution, and promotional strategies in ways that reduce costs, provide value to customers, increase brand awareness, and attract new customers. Marketing agility is therefore critical to the success of organizational marketing activities.

Recommendation

To be able to quickly sense and respond to market changes effectively, this study recommends that business firms adopt simplified organizational structures and processes that have short learning cycles and incorporate a lot of customer feedback. Management should also develop its marketing function in a way that can be adjusted on short notice. This is supported by Homburg *et al.* (2020), who opined that organizations should break down departmental barriers so that they can act faster and be more flexible. Similarly, management should also ensure that organizational resources are tied to overarching objectives instead of pre-planned activities. Management should develop a system that will ensure that it is possible to reallocate resources quickly within the firm so that it can move with speed in exploiting a marketing opportunity or avoiding a business threat.

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Suggestions for Further Study

Future studies should consider the possibility of doing a qualitative study to establish if the findings would be similar. Additionally, digital transformation in the world has affected marketing activities of business firms, and future studies may consider studying the effect of digital transformation on marketing agility of business firms.

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