

Exploring The Impact of Marketing Agility on Marketing Excellence: The Mediating Role of Marketing Teams Study in a number of first-class hotels in Iraq

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Abstract

Five-star Iraqi hotels are exposed to many environmental pressures, including the security situation in Iraq, as well as the fluctuating economy, which has affected their work and the nature of tourism in the country, which prompted these hotels to adopt marketing agility and clearly in their marketing strategies, but Unevenly, as it appeared that these hotels focused on the marketing aspects for the purpose of enhancing their competitive position and thus obtaining a market share commensurate with their current situation.

Keywords: first-class hotels; Marketing Excellence; Marketing Teams

Introduction

Nowadays, the business environment in general is characterized by dynamism and constant change as well as the unpredictability of the market (Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998). In such circumstances, organizations, including hotels, face challenges from different market forces, for example, the constant changes in customer needs and behaviors, constant and complex competition, technological developments, and government regulations (Kumar, 2018). In the same context, these hotels operate in complex markets, as new business opportunities can arise anywhere and everywhere (Teece et al., 2016).

And if we traced the impact of these environmental variables on the nature of the work of marketing managers, we would find that their impact is that market forces continuously and directly affect marketing as a job, because it is too powerful to be ignored, and therefore marketers identify new opportunities in the market and respond by engaging in new activities, which It ultimately creates better customer offers and benefits for all market stakeholders (Kumar, 2018). This is what prompted marketing managers to find new strategies and mechanisms for adaptation and the ability to invest. Perhaps the most effective of these mechanisms and the ability to apply is marketing agility.

Firms seek to maintain their competitive edge by adapting to rapidly changing market conditions (Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998). Specifically, marketers want to be agile enough to keep up with the ever-changing expectations of their customers, which are driven by external forces with their various variables (Lewnes, 2021). Flexibility has therefore emerged as a major determinant of corporate excellence in dynamic environments (Haeckel, 1999) (Teece, 2016) (Zaheer & Zaheer, 1997). This coincided and as a result of the adaptation of the practical aspect and administrative research, the emergence of many administrative models that called for the need to develop new and flexible organizational models that addressed an important aspect that marketing should be “fast-moving” (Lemon and Verhoef 2016; Moorman 2020). Accordingly, marketing thought began to address marketing agility (MA) as a major priority for achieving marketing excellence (Homburg, Theel, and Hohenberg 2020).

On the other hand and on the same line, the past years have witnessed great progress in understanding the sources and benefits of marketing excellence, yet the progress in knowledge hardly keeps pace with the profound transformations in practice that have been enabled through the digitization of marketing activities, the emergence of deep marketing analytics, and the evolution towards more organizational structures openness. In terms of results, several research papers have examined the role that marketing agility plays in distinguishing companies from competitors in the marketplace. For example, (Asseraf et al., 2019) believes that marketing agility helps companies gain advantage in new products and facilitate market performance (Zhou et al., 2019). In addition, marketing agility can affect the financial performance of companies, and the effect mitigates market turmoil (Li et al., 2019) Marketing agility helps facilitate the quality of companies' exports, and this positive effect is stronger in the service industry (Khan, 2020).

In light of this, and in line with the challenges and strategies that can be considered a solution to these challenges, organizations, including hotels, can be individuals who work within marketing teams that usually represent the organizational resources combined and compatible to accomplish a specific task or goal, bearing in mind that the customer is always What looks for value (Webster, 1992), therefore it is necessary here to form marketing teams that center around the needs of customers (Zenger et al., 1994). Thus, the advantage of marketing teams depends on the presence of more resources allocated to work according to their needs, and this confirms that the entry of marketing teams as a key variable in helping to achieve marketing agility to achieve marketing excellence. As a result of what was mentioned, it can be said that the technological, economic, social and cultural fluctuations adopted by the disturbances of the external environment cast a shadow on the marketing side of organizations, and these organizations are looking for mechanisms to survive. Market and growth, and perhaps marketing agility, is one of these strategies that help organizations to stay in the market and reach marketing excellence, taking into account the reliance on the mechanisms of marketing work teams, and therefore the main objective in this paper is to determine the extent to which organizations can achieve marketing excellence through Adopting the mechanisms of marketing agility and the intervention of marketing work teams, which has become an important model in the world of marketing, taking into account the excellent hotels in Iraq as competitive organizations seeking to achieve excellence in their marketing work.

Theoretical Background

Marketing Agility

The term agility refers to the ability of the marketing team, marketing leader, and marketing officer to work quickly and accordingly it is correct to call agility, in its most basic form, often observed at the individual level. Commonly, 'agility' is used to describe the intelligent movements of athletes, warriors, and animals (Walsh 1995).

Strategically, (Doz & Kosonen, 2008: p.14-15) introduce the concept of strategic agility, addressing it intertwined in strategic management and see it as “redirecting and/or reinventing the core business without losing momentum”. Thus given the importance of agility for companies that provide their services in rapidly changing environments, the concept has been expanded to include: human resource management according to studies (Ahmed et al., 2020) (Cunha et al., 2020), international business according to the study of (Fourn et al., 2014), Tourism and Hospitality according to what was presented by him (Kale et al., 2019), Organizational behavior when dealt with (Carmeliet al., 2017) and mergers and acquisitions according to a study (Junni et al., 2015).

Accordingly, marketing agility can be addressed as those companies that have high flexibility in marketing and maintain a high participation in determining market requirements (Poolton et al.,

2006), as well as the ability of companies to deal with competition in the marketplace by reconfiguring, integrating and activating resources and capabilities (Accardi-Petersen, 2011), as well as the company's ability to sense and respond to multiple variables. market, thus helping the company to bring innovation to market (Zhou et al., 2019), which is also a flexible, rapid and multi-responsive approach to market changes, and this is done by having the ability to sense the needs of the market and reconfigure the internal business capabilities in a way that suits the multiple and accelerating market requirements (Hagen et al., 2019).

In view of the convergence of the concept of marketing agility with several other concepts related to agility, the researcher has identified a (Table 1) in which it shows the overlap and convergence of marketing agility with other types of agility according to four variables that are considered qualities and criteria in which all concepts are interrupted in agility, namely (decision-making, sensing, speed, modify marketing decisions).

Table (1). Marketing agility and similar concepts

Term	Definition	Focus on				
		decision-making	sensing	speed	modify marketing decisions	
Marketing agility	Adaptive marketing capabilities	The mindful metaphor of market, experiment, and open marketing that hoards partner resources and makes them more flexible (Day 2011)	yes	yes	No	yes
	Market-focused strategic flexibility	The company's ability and determination to create real options for creating or re-creating more value propositions for customers (Johnson et al., 2003)	yes	yes	No	No
	Market orientation	crowd out market information related to current and future customer needs, disseminate information across departments, and respond to them superiorly (Kohli & Jaworksi, 1990)	yes	yes	No	No
	Market-based organization learning	A core competency related to the external environment which is less evident than most intrinsic learning competencies (Sinkula,1994)	yes	yes	No	No
Agility in organizational areas	Strategic agility	The ability to exploit and configure different patterns of resource exploitation in a deliberate, fast and intelligent manner, rather than being held hostage to pre-determined plans and existing business models (Doz, 2020)	No	yes	yes	yes
	Organizational agility	Dealing with rapid and uncertain changes to try to advance and thrive in a constantly competitive environment (Lu & Ramamurthy, 2011)	No	yes	yes	yes
	Agile manufacturing	A manufacturing process focused on smaller scale, agile processes capable of handling turbulent and accelerating environments (Cao & Dowlatshahi, 2005)	No	yes	yes	yes
	Supply chain agility	The supply chain adapts and responds in an intelligent way to meet an accelerating and changing market environment (Swafford et al., 2006)	No	yes	yes	yes
Organizational concepts related to marketing agility	Software development agility	Full readiness of the software team to respond efficiently and effectively to changes in user requirements" (Lee & Xia, 2010)	No	yes	yes	yes
	Dynamic capabilities	The use of resources and specifically the integration, reconfiguration and acquisition of resources for the purpose of matching and effecting market change (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000)	No	yes	yes	No
	Ambidexterity	The ability of an organization to effectively manage current business requirements while adapting to changes in the environment (Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008)	No	Yes	No	No
	Improvisation	The degree to which formation and execution converge in time (Moorman & Miner, 1998)	No	yes	yes	yes
Design thinking	Creativity and Excellence Centered on: Holistic Perspective, Human Focus, and Creative Focus (Beverland et al., 2015)	yes	yes	No	yes	

This leads to marketing agility referring to the company's ability to anticipate and sense changing customer needs in the markets and respond in a timely manner by reconfiguring marketing tactics, which enables the company to gain competitive advantages over competitors. Accordingly, the company is supposed to be highly flexible in the market, proactive and reactive. Being proactive means being able to detect changing market needs and identify opportunities and threats, or even become the leader of the trend that creates changes in the market. Reactivity refers to the ability to respond quickly to better meet customer demand (Eckstein et al., 2015) (Roberts & Grover, 2012). Definitions of marketing agility by different scholars are summarized in (Table 2).

Table (2). The concept of marketing agility

Researcher and year	Concept	Focus area
Khan, 2020	The dynamic ability of an organization that enables it to find opportunities in a changing environment and respond quickly by reconfiguring marketing strategies.	exploring opportunities
Zhou et al., 2019	The ability of companies to sense, respond, predict and proactively discover marketing opportunities	Sensing, responding, forecasting
Poolton et al., 2006	The ability to participate in a continuous and influential way in learning about market needs	the market and its needs
Accardi-Petersen, 2011	Outperform competitors by reconfiguring business systems and reallocating resources	resources and systems
Homburg et al., 2020	The strategic means that enable the company to achieve growth, including operations and infrastructure, and make decisions very quickly	growth and decision making
Kalaignanam et al., 2020	The degree to which companies view the market and adjust their marketing strategies to adapt to rapid iteration between markets	adaptation

Therefore, it can be said that marketing agility is a combination of a set of components, as (Khan, 2020) argued that marketing agility consists of proactive and reactive elements that include proactive market sensing, velocity, responsiveness, and flexibility. (Osei et al., 2019) suggested that strength, responsiveness, and proactivity are three important components for companies to achieve marketing flexibility. (Shirhi et al., 2007) suggested that speed, flexibility, responsiveness, integration, culture of change, and low complexity are important characteristics of agility. (Kalaignanam et al., 2020) suggested that marketing satisfaction consists of sensory making, frequency, velocity, and marketing decisions.

This study defines marketing agility as the company's ability to sense and respond to market-based opportunities quickly and flexibly in order to create value for customers. This definition may seem less specific than the modern definitions, and it sheds light on a group of research that was dealt with by researchers in agility, as shown in (Table 3).

Table (3). The most prominent studies in agility

Construct	Journal	Year	Authors
Social media agility	Industrial Marketing Management	2020	Chuang
International marketing agility	International Marketing Review	2020	Gomes et al.
Customer agility	Industrial Marketing Management	2020	Hajli et al.
Marketing agility	Journal of Marketing	2020	Homburg et al.
Marketing agility	Journal of Marketing	2021	Kalaignanam et al.
Customer agility	Journal of Business Research	2012	Roberts & Grover
Marketing agility	Industrial Marketing Management	2019	Zhou et al.

The Importance of Marketing Agility for Organizations

Eastern organizations respond proactively to accelerating market demands, thus gaining a greater advantage and having a higher market share. Moreover, agility allows organizations to make better use of asset exploitation processes (Jacobs et al., 2011). Also, agility allows organizations to exploit creative potential to obtain greater financial advantages (Roberts & Grover, 2012).

Agile organizations are distinguished by their unique ability to mobilize and use scarce management resources, technology and personnel in a timely manner to respond to changes in the business environment (Bernardes & Hanna, 2009). Accordingly, agility has been suggested as one of the main dynamic capabilities of the company (Brannen & Doz, 2012).

According to the above, it can be argued that the development of marketing agility can be vital for companies in the market to navigate institutional spaces (Cunha et al., 2016). In the same, (Golgeci & Gligor, 2017) (Zhou et al., 2018) found a positive relationship between marketing performance and agility, and therefore agility is a vital tool in creating a successful competitive advantage and creating value for customers, as well as that agility provides tremendous assistance in managing market-related changes such as escalating competition, innovative customer requirements, and launching new products and rapid technological development. (Gligor, 2017) asserted that marketing agility will enable the organization to develop demand by promptly adjusting strategies, tactics and operations according to environmental fluctuations. Moreover, the use of marketing agility is a mechanism of “incubating change” that makes the organization more caring of market needs and enables the organization to master innovation, thus allowing it to succeed (Osei et al., 2019).

Marketing Agility and Organizational Components

The role of leaders in expanding and working with marketing agility cannot be overemphasized. Existing research indicates that marketing leaders are likely to need three sets of characteristics to drive (Doz & Kosonen, 2008) to operate according to the marketing agility approach, which are: *First*: they must have Senior leaders strategic sensitivity: sharpness of perception, intensity of awareness and interest in strategic development. *Second*: there must be unity among senior leaders to make bold and quick decisions, without indulging in the politics of “win and lose” *Third*: senior leaders must have the ability to reconfigure capabilities and rapidly reallocating resources (Doz & Kosonen, 2008).

With regard to organizational factors and their suitability for applying marketing agility in organizations, the main criterion for measurement is the extent to which leaders or marketing departments possess the structural strength required to mobilize or redirect resources, and thus advance the degree of marketing agility in their organizations (Feng et al., 2015). According to (Rajgopal & Srivastava 2020) the lack of structural strength of marketing leaders may be a source of impediment to the process of attracting and exploiting resources for implementing marketing flexibility, in addition to the low structural strength of marketing executives often have narrow lines of responsibility (less expert power), which It increases the need for coordination with other executives and slows down marketing decisions.

The agile marketing environment may require the ability of managers to communicate with the IT department that enables the collection, integration, security and access of company

data, the chief marketing officer typically managing the analysis and interpretation of marketing-related data and software development (Whitler et al., 2017). Oftentimes, digital customer-related activities are divided between information technology and marketing, effectively dividing the decision-making process between the two functional leaders and thus ease of application of marketing agility and its multiple programs.

As for the relationship of the organization and its ability to apply marketing agility and employees, a basic question arises in mind, which is (What are the characteristics of employees who are likely to thrive in an organization that deals with marketing agility?), although there is little specialized research on this subject, we can believe that knowledge Using the tools of technology will be necessary, and given the importance of making decisions in the face of uncertainty, we can conclude that individuals in the Big Five personality traits “openness to experience” will be a natural fit for marketing agility given that openness is linked to curiosity and an appreciation for novelty (McCrae & Costa 1987) . It is also important to understand how employees respond and deal with the ambiguous and stressful situations inherent in an agile environment. Previous research has identified a variety of ways in which people respond to stress, including problem-focused coping, targeted problem-solving, and emotion-focused coping, with the goal of alleviating negative feelings associated with the situation (Lazarus & Folkman 1984).

Dimensions of Marketing Agility

Since marketing agility was introduced as a term, scholars have conducted many researches on this topic, and the majority of these researches focused on many factors that affect marketing agility, such as marketing analysis techniques (Ghasemaghaei et al., 2017), and organizational capabilities (Felipe et al., 2016), human resource management (Nijssen & Paauwe, 2012) and lean production (Alves et al., 2012), see (Bolton et al., 2006) that applying the strategic understanding of agility helps organizations maintain marketing agility. Whereas (Asseraf et al., 2019) show that marketing planning and the ability to maintain agility are critical for organizations to develop marketing agility, while (Lee et al., 2021) that the organization's information processing ability enhances marketing agility. (Table 4) summarizes many important studies on the dimensions and criteria that depend on marketing agility.

Table (4). Dimensions of marketing agility according to researchers' proposals

Dimensions	Author and year
Proactiveness, Responsiveness, Speed, Flexibility	(Zhang, 2011) (Zhou et al., 2019) (Khan, 2020)
Robustness, Responsiveness, Proactiveness	(Osei et al., 2019)
Flexibility, Responsiveness, Speed, Culture of change, Integration and low complexity	(Sherehiy et al., 2007)
Sense making, Iteration, Speed, Marketing decisions	(Kalaignanam et al., 2020)

This gives a perception about the agreement of a number of researchers about certain dimensions that can be considered basic dimensions of marketing agility, and this is what was emphasized by (Osei at al., 2018) when he addressed the dimensions of marketing agility according to three attempts, which are (Robustness, Responsiveness, and Proactiveness) and Figure (1) illustrates this.

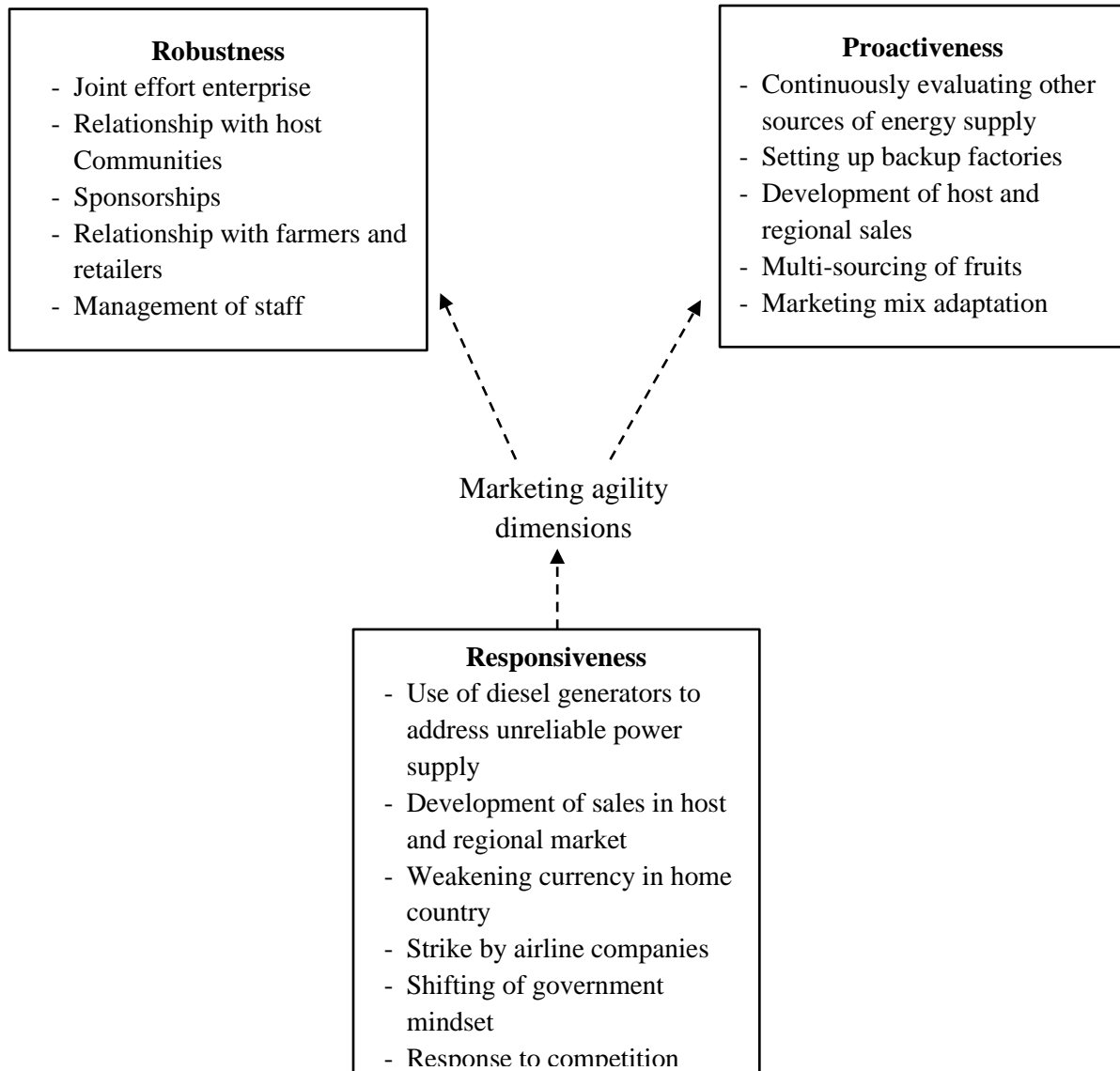


Figure (1). *Dimensions of marketing agility*

Marketing Excellence

There have been many attempts to address marketing excellence, and most of these attempts centered around a specific aspect, which is the ability of marketing to achieve specific goals in the organization to achieve success. Among the most comprehensive and clear of these attempts was to address marketing excellence as “a superior ability to perform basic activities facing customers.” (Moorman & Day 2016, p. 6). This concept of marketing excellence resulted from an agreement by (MacInnis, 2011) (Strauss & Corbin 1998) (Zaltman, et al., 1982), to integrate both managers' understanding of marketing excellence and other concepts of excellence such as operational excellence and excellence in mergers and acquisitions, resulting in this Comprehensive concept of marketing excellence.

On the other hand, a counter-current appears to address marketing excellence according to a different perspective, which is the assumption that managers understand marketing excellence as a means to achieve organic growth. : Increasing revenue or decreasing cost, as this idea is also reflected in the literature on excellence (Peters & Waterman, 2004) (Porter, 1996).

On the other hand, many studies revealed that focusing on marketing excellence and its specific definition can result in a set of activities that fall mainly into three categories: the priority of the marketing ecosystem, the priority of the end user, and the priority of marketing flexibility. These results are mainly related to the nature of marketing excellence as a type of strategy. According to this approach, achieving marketing excellence revolves around three basic facts: (1) achieving excellence is difficult, (2) marketing is primarily related to organic revenue growth, and (3) marketing excellence is a strategy of the organization (Homburg et al., 1999) (Morgan et al., 2019).

From another Gantt (Pitts & Les, 1996, p. 55) marketing excellence is the organization's exploitation of its internal strengths in the performance of its own activities, so that it creates value in the performance of its activities that the rest of the competitors cannot achieve. This was confirmed by (Berry et al., 1991) in defining marketing excellence as a process of systematic, periodic, objective and comprehensive examination of the organization's readiness to market services and its current effectiveness along the dimensions of marketing orientation, marketing organization, marketing to new customers, current marketing to customers, internal marketing, and quality the service. While (Peters & Waterman, 1982) stated that characteristics of marketing excellence can be considered as a bias for marketing actions that include; Close to the client Independence and Entrepreneurship. productivity through people; hands-on value; Stick to Skirting Knitting is too heavy for the management structure; and concurrent bulk properties.

Based on the foregoing, the researcher believes that marketing excellence is the uniqueness of the organization through the production of goods and services of high quality, efficiency and effectiveness in a distinctive manner that is difficult for other organizations to imitate because of their ability to employ new methods that are more efficient and effective than those used by competitors, and this was also confirmed by (Jassim, 2022).

The Importance of Achieving Marketing Excellence

The importance of marketing excellence is represented in the following: 1. Supporting the mental image of the organization and increasing customer loyalty, 2. Achieving market share and high profitability, 3. Ensuring the organization's survival and continuity in the market, 4. Excellence in resources, as well as excellence over competitors, 5. Quality products and lower costs (Jassim, 2022).

Marketing excellence is an effective factor in the success of any organization, because excellence includes focusing on the aspirations, needs and opinions of customers (Bitran & Gurumurthi, 2004), in addition to that marketing excellence expresses the unique capabilities and characteristics of the organization that can enhance its leadership position in the market and in the minds of customers compared to Competitors (Osu, 2011) From this point of view, marketing excellence was known as creating superior value to the customer that suits his changing needs in the market and developing new solutions (Cass & Ngo, 2012:126).

Marketing excellence is considered fundamentally related to multiple strategic concepts, and if we follow previous marketing strategy research and how to link it to marketing excellence, we see that it links marketing excellence with strategy in terms of being considered a source of competitive advantage and the scope of the company's activities across the organization, market and environment (McAlister et al. 2016). Marketing excellence focuses on growth through new revenue streams and thus derives its source of competitive advantage from differentiation rather than cost leadership. This focus is somewhat similar to traditional

marketing strategy ideas, such as Porter's differentiation strategy, Mims and Snow's prospector strategy, market orientation and capabilities Marketing (Saboo & Grewal 2012), the scope of the difference of marketing excellence from strategy is more on adapting the company to achieve superior performance (Vorhies & Morgan 2005)



Figure (2). *The relationship of marketing excellence to strategy*

Dimensions Of Marketing Excellence

(Smith, 2007) classifies excellence in marketing according to four stages: identifying and understanding markets, making strategic choices, delivering value, and controlling value. Since most definitions of excellence emphasize the relative superiority of an organization over its peers, true marketing excellence must include excellence in all four stages to a clearly and functionally greater degree than the competition. Thus, marketing excellence strategy can be inferred as a type of marketing strategy in which a firm makes an effort to include superiority in understanding markets, selecting strategy, delivering value, and controlling value over competitors (Ohmae, 1982) (Peter & Waterman, 1982) (Saunders & Wong, 1985).

Marketing excellence can be achieved through the availability of the following sources: (McGahan, 1994): Perceived value to the customer, Exclusivity in performance, Market entry and exit strategy, Information derived from market conditions, Approaching customers and getting to know them, Opportunities to provide a new service, and Strategic capabilities.

Marketing Teams

The formation of work teams and the gathering of human resources to work together leads to achieving strong competitive leverage (Shapiro, 1987) and accordingly, the use of marketing teams can be a profitable strategy (Deeter-Schmelz & Ramsey, 1995). This opportunity occurs in an environment where buyers' expectations from sellers are rising, and marketers are challenged to differentiate and extend the use of their products (Webster, 1992). At the same time, buyers' needs have become increasingly complex, requiring buyers and sellers to have the ability to exchange information quickly. Thus, marketing teams as a competitive advantage are now widely reported (Cuneo, 1995).

On the other hand, the resources of the organization can be directed collectively in alignment with the mutually important organizational goals of buyers and sellers, this diversity indicates that marketers may become more fluid across organizational boundaries (Prabhaker

et al., 1995) as they expand marketing teams to include employees from a variety of internal (finance, accounting, productivity) and external (customer) sources (Webster, 1992).

Marketing Team Effectiveness

The management of organizations often seeks the reason for the success of the work of its teams, especially marketing (Varney, 1989). This calls, of course, to the need to achieve efficiency in the exchange of information within the framework of the team, which in turn requires a set of communication channels that include the efficiency of this communication (Parker, 1994). Having multi-disciplinary members in marketing teams provides many benefits, for example creating the ability to consolidate the roles of each team member as well as factors of each of (size, proximity to members, border management, cost, member empowerment, organizational support, performance evaluation Accountability, complex membership, and getting people to work together) are key criteria for successful marketing teams (Monaghan, 1995).

Marketing teams' problems revolve around how effectively the team solves basic interaction problems and corresponds to the key role that communication plays in the success of failure teams (Reiste & Hubrich, 1995). Accordingly, team formation (Cespedes, 1996) as well as physical, psychological, and responsibility barriers may all interfere with team communication, and thus team performance.

Contextual Background and Hypothesis Development

Several studies have called for the need for new and flexible organizational models and realized that marketing must be agile (Lemon & Verhoef 2016). This new form of marketing leads to achieving marketing excellence (Homburg et al., 2020). On the other hand, (Hohenberg, 2020) identified marketing agility as a key dimension of marketing excellence and conceived it as a strategic means of the company to carry out growth activities by the marketing organization and its members through simplified structures and processes, quick decision making, trial and error learning. These ideas lead to a basic hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant impact of marketing agility on marketing excellence

When the term marketing agility grew, many questions related to this aspect came to mind, and perhaps the most common of these questions are (What are the appropriate organizational structures to enable marketing agility in organizations?) One of the main requirements for the answer is that the independence of teams and the exploitation of knowledge integration across Organization: Instead of a hierarchical or cross-sectional organizational structure that groups employees based on job experience, small cross-functional teams can be used. The core organizational unit is an independent "team" responsible for a separate aspect of the product (Mankins & Garton 2017). These ideas lead to a basic hypothesis:

H2: There is a significant impact of marketing agility in marketing teams

Marketing teams represent a strategic and formal decision to ensure appropriate resource support for a given project (Al Ansari et al., 1993). In light of this, the individuals who compose teams typically represent the combined and aligned organizational resources to accomplish a particular mission or objective toward excellence. In line with the fundamental claim that the customer is looking for value (Webster, 1992), marketing teams must be formed around customer needs (Zenger, et al., 1994). Thus, the advantage of buyers' marketing teams

depends on having more resources dedicated to working on their own needs. This connection between the buyer and the seller is manifested in a variety of strategic applications that lead to the success of the organization's work, leading to marketing excellence (Gillooly, 1994). These ideas lead to a basic hypothesis:

H3: There is a significant impact of marketing teams on marketing excellence

Based on the above intellectual propositions related to both marketing satisfaction, marketing excellence and marketing teams, the organizations that work according to a marketing strategy seek through achieving marketing agility, of course, it is an important bridge to achieve marketing excellence, but this needs auxiliary factors that accelerate this distinction and increase its effectiveness and perhaps the marketing team is one of the most important of these factors. These ideas lead to a basic hypothesis:

H4: There is a significant impact of marketing agility on marketing excellence through marketing teams

Methodology

The impact of marketing aspects on corporate performance is a topic of ongoing debate in the hotel industry, because the results obtained in the empirical literature have been inconclusive. Some studies indicate that some marketing strategies, including marketing agility, have positive effects on company performance (Zhang & Xie, 2021) while other papers have not found this positive relationship (Claver-Cortés et al., 2007). Therefore, further analysis is needed to identify and describe the factors that may be behind this relationship (Aragon-Correa & de la Torre-Ruiz, 2015). It may include achieving distinguished marketing performance in hotels that depend on other side marketing variables, so we will focus in this study on the marketing aspects in Iraqi hotels, which are one of the important competitive industries that have not been extensively studied, and based on the idea that the development of marketing practices may help hotels on gaining competitive advantages and improving their long-term marketing performance (Pereira-Moliner et al., 2015).

Our goal in this study is to study marketing agility as dynamic capabilities that are used continuously and fundamentally in developing marketing strategies that most organizations, including hotels, seek to achieve, and perhaps marketing excellence is one of these strategies. The hotel industry operates in a global market characterized by high dynamism and uncertainty (Pereira-Moliner et al., 2021). Despite the high clarity of hotel strategies that make competitors able to quickly imitate their innovations (Fraj et al., 2015), to achieve this goal hotels have to innovate, and develop new ideas, which may include organizational changes (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018). and changes in processes, products, and services (Fraj et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2007). Hotels must be agile so that they acquire and develop, through innovation, new cognitive features and practices that contribute to the development of their marketing performance (Gouda & Tiwari, 2022)

Creating cross-functional marketing teams is a mainstay in marketing (Lynch & West 2017) and may lead to new product development and CRM (Peltier et al., 2013). On this basis, previous research suggested that marketing teams lead to discovering and testing new marketing ideas and reaching distinct marketing goals (Gilson and Shallley 2004). This results in a second main objective of this study, which is to know the impact of marketing teams in

achieving marketing excellence for hotels. Thus, the presence of effective marketing strategies represented by marketing agility that leads to achieving marketing excellence may be more effective in the presence of marketing work teams that help in the integration of this role and its gradual increase.

Research Design

The Theoretical Model

The research model started from a basic idea that marketing agility is a decisive and influential factor in achieving marketing excellence for Iraqi hotels, and that the presence of an auxiliary factor such as marketing teams is an essential and important component of the model that helps to strengthen and enhance this influential role. the figure (3) illustrates this.



Figure (3). Research model

Data Collection

This paper focused on the hotel industry as a major industry for the Iraqi economy, where the hotel industry is characterized by its important contribution to the country's economic growth, but also by its impact on the economy and the nature of tourism in the country. Accordingly, the researcher relied on five-star hotels in Baghdad, and the number of them was (3) hotels, and the table (5) illustrates this.

The researcher relied on the questionnaire as a basic tool for collecting information. The questionnaire included three axes. The first axis included general information about the respondent (gender, age, education) (Table 6) and the researcher targeted (managers, assistant managers, directors of departments, divisions and units) who work in these hotels, and the questionnaire was distributed by filling out a questionnaire directly or via e-mail. The research sample consisted of (88) officials in selected hotels.

Table (5). Research community (five-star hotels in Baghdad)

Date of Establishment	Location	Hotel
1956	Al-Saadoun Street, Baghdad	Baghdad International Hotel
1980	Salhiya Street, Baghdad	Al-Mansour Hotel
1982	Al Jaderiya, Baghdad	Babylon Rotana Hotel

Table (6). Research sample properties

Variable	Indicator description	Frequency	% of respondents
Gender	Male	73	83
	Female	15	17
Age range (years)	Under 20	0	0
	20–30	11	12.6
	31–40	25	28.4
	41–50	42	47.7
	51–60	10	11.3
	Above 60	0	0
Education	Junior high school or below	5	5.7
	High school	7	7.9
	Junior college	18	20.5
	Bachelor	42	47.7
	Master's degree or above	16	18.2

Variable Measurement

Reaching an accurate scale that measures the research variables is very accurate and important, and this is what the researcher emphasized by relying on the replays that were agreed upon by the majority of researchers in order to represent the basic research variables, which are represented in the table (7).

Table (7). The variables and dimensions adopted in the research and their sources and coding

Reference	Code	Dimensions	Variable
(Osei et al., 2018)	R1	Robustness	Marketing Agility MA
	P	Proactiveness	
	R2	Responsiveness	
(McGahan, 1994)	SC1	Seller-customer exchange	Marketing Excellence ME
	SC2	Service creativity communication	
	CC	Competitor competence analysis	
	MC	Market-driving capability	
(Edwards et al., 2011)			Marketing Team MT

Result

Measurement Validation

In order to verify the validity of the scale used in the research as well as its validity for measurement, the researcher used SPSS and AMOS to perform special analyzes, as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value and Bartlett test must be tested to determine whether the sample data are suitable, and Table (8) and (9) gives results.

Table (8). KMO and Bartlett spherical test results

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's Test	
		XX ²	Sig.
Marketing Agility (MA)	0.955	3381.113	0.000
Marketing Excellence (ME)	0.883	295.007	0.000
Marketing Team (MT)	0.810	265.852	0.000

It appeared that all the value of (KMO) has increased from (0.70), and this confirms that the sample that was used to answer the research scale is a sufficient and appropriate sample as well as an indication. Of these values, the values of (Sig.) were less than (0.05).

The measurement model in the table (9) shows that the (NNFI) index (0.932, 0.900, 0.884), the (CFI) index (0.992, 0.901, 0.932) and the (GFI) index (0.902, 0.910, 0.922), which are greater than the recommended limit of 0.9, and that (AGFI) (0.872, 0.881, 0.877) are all results that meet the requirements for the quality and suitability of the scale to measure.

Table (9). Search scale quality tests

Variable	NNFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	χ^2/df	RMSEA
Marketing Agility (MA)	0.932	0.992	0.902	0.872	2.642	0.053
Marketing Excellence (ME)	0.900	0.901	0.910	0.881	2.401	0.059
Marketing Team (MT)	0.884	0.932	0.922	0.877	2.221	0.063

Research Hypothesis Test

After confirming the quality of the research scale and the suitability of the data for the questionnaire for analysis and measurement, the research hypotheses will be tested as follows:

Hypothesis Test (H1, H1-1, H1-2, H1-3, H1-4)

In this paragraph, the researcher seeks to prove the first main hypothesis, and the hypotheses branching from it through the table (10), which gives the results of these hypotheses by extracting the values of each of (F, R^2 , Sig., β , t, P-value).

Table (10). The results of the first hypothesis and its subsidiary hypotheses

Hypothesis	Paths	β	t	P-value	Model
					R^2 , F, Sig.
H1	R1 >>> ME	0.229	3.228	0.000	$R^2= 0.326$
	P >>> ME	0.193	2.542	0.001	F= 17.842
	R2 >>> ME	0.042	0.584	0.255	Sig.= 0.000
H1-1	R1 >>> SC1	0.152	2.002	0.002	$R^2= 0.295$
	P >>> SC1	0.227	3.100	0.000	F= 12.990
	R2 >>> SC1	0.181	1.992	0.044	Sig.= 0.000
H1-2	R1 >>> SC2	0.331	4.032	0.000	$R^2= 0.373$
	P >>> SC2	0.118	2.040	0.005	F= 19.003
	R2 >>> SC2	0.052	0.902	0.529	Sig.= 0.000
H1-3	R1 >>> CC	0.240	3.000	0.000	$R^2= 0.227$
	P >>> CC	0.139	2.003	0.002	F= 11.203
	R2 >>> CC	0.088	0.772	0.331	Sig.= 0.000
H1-4	R1 >>> MC	0.183	2.182	0.001	$R^2= 0.242$
	P >>> MC	0.221	3.009	0.000	F= 9.853
	R2 >>> MC	0.099	0.992	0.088	Sig.= 0.000

Through Table (10), it is stated that there is no clear significant effect of the variable (marketing agility), its three dimensions, on marketing excellence in general. The significance of this effect is shown through The value of (F) which reached (17.842) which is higher than its tabular value and therefore it can be said that it is a significant effect, and the value of (R^2) has reached (0.326), and this confirms that the percentage (32.6%) of the changes that occur in marketing excellence can be explained in terms of marketing agility. Regarding the values of

(β), they were all influential, except for (Responsiveness), and its effect was not clear on marketing excellence. This confirms that hotel managers' response to environmental changes continuously and effectively did not play a clear role in achieving marketing agility and thus achieving marketing excellence. Through the above results, it is possible to prove the validity of the first hypothesis (H1).

On the other hand, the rest of the other sub-hypotheses came close to the main hypothesis, and we find that (H1-1) achieved an effect of the dimensions of marketing agility in the dimension of (seller-customer exchange) and confirms the significance of this effect, the value of (F) whose value was (12.990) which is greater than the tabular Thus, it can be said that the effect is significant, and that the value of (R^2) reached (0.295) and this confirms that the change in marketing excellence can be explained in terms of the dimensions of marketing agility with a percentage of (29.5%). These results prove the validity of the first sub-hypothesis (H1-1), This case applies to the other sub-hypotheses (H1-2) (H1-3) and (H1-4), which showed that there is a significant effect of each of the dimensions of marketing agility on each of (Service creativity communication, Competitor competence analysis, and Market-driving capability) respectively, through the (F) values that They were all values higher than their tabular values and amounted to (19.003, 11.203, 9.853) respectively, and therefore the above sub-hypotheses can be proven correct.

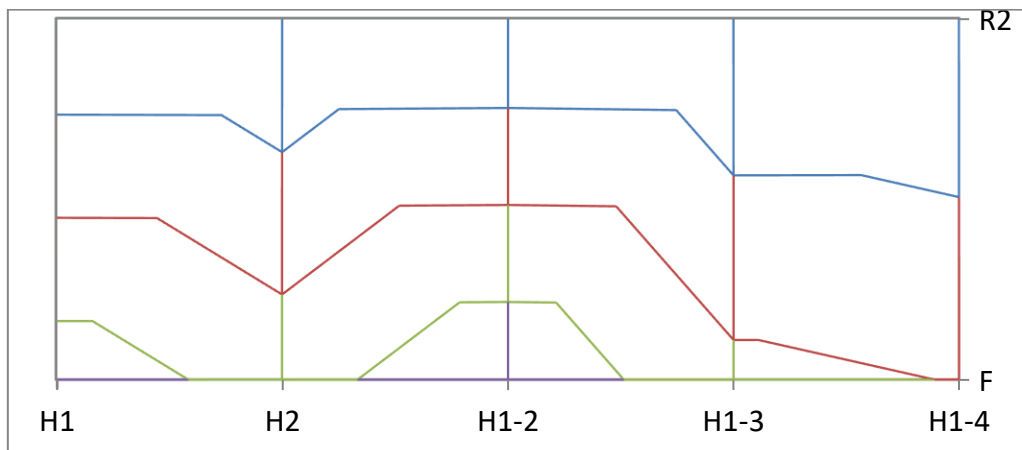


Figure (4). Research hypotheses in the form of a diagram

Hypothesis Test (H2)

In order to benefit from the proof of the second hypothesis related to the effect of marketing agility on the marketing teams, the table (11) shows the results of this hypothesis.

Table (11). The results of the second hypothesis

Hypothesis	Paths	β	t	P-value	Model
					R^2 , F, Sig.
H2	R1 >>> MT	0.332	4.276	0.000	$R^2 = 0.442$
	P >>> MT	0.120	2.001	0.000	F= 22.943
	R2 >>> MT	0.118	1.994	0.033	Sig.= 0.000

The results of the table (11) show that there is a significant effect of marketing agility on the marketing teams, as the table shows that the value of (F) reached (22.943) which is greater than its tabular value, and this confirms the significance of the effect, and regarding the value of (R^2) it reached (0.442) and this confirms that the changes that occur In the marketing

teams, it can be explained through marketing agility and by (44%), and at the level of dimensions, all dimensions of marketing agility were influential in the marketing teams and this is clear through the values of each of (β , t, P-value). These results can be inferred through to prove the acceptance (H2).

Hypothesis Test (H3)

This hypothesis is a condition for testing the validity of the mediating variable. The mediating variable is treated once as a dependent variable as in the hypothesis (H2) and is treated again as an independent change as in this hypothesis, and the table (12) shows this.

Table (12). *The results of the third hypothesis*

Hypothesis	Paths	β	t	P-value	Model
					R ² , F, Sig.
H3	MT >>> ME	0.339	4.054	0.000	R ² = 0.396 F= 19.042 Sig.= 0.000

The results shown in the table (12) show that there is a clear and significant effect of the marketing difference on the marketing excellence. The value of (F) (19.042) is greater than its tabular value, and this confirms the significance of the effect. Regarding the value of (R²) it reached (0.396) and this confirms the reason that changes in Marketing excellence can be explained in terms of marketing teams and a percentage of (39.6%)

Hypothesis Test (H4)

Table (13) shows the results of the last hypothesis test in which the marketing teams entered as a mediating variable in the influence of marketing agility on marketing excellence, after the validity of the entry of marketing teams as a mediator variable in the relationship was previously tested.

Table (13). *The results of the fourth hypothesis*

Hypothesis	Paths	β	CR	P-value	Model	ΔR^2
					R ² , F, Sig.	
H4	R1 >>> ME	0.229	2.879	0.000	(H1)	0.081
	P >>> ME	0.193	2.332	0.001	R ² = 0.326	
	R2 >>> ME	0.042	0.331	0.255	F= 17.842 Sig.= 0.000	
	MA >>> MT >>> ME	0.388	3.870	0.000	(H4)	
	R1 >>> MT	0.332	3.186	0.000	R ² = 0.407	
	P >>> MT	0.120	1.885	0.000	F= 23.992	
	R2 >>> MT	0.118	1.300	0.033	Sig.= 0.000	

The results of the table (13) show that the mediating variable (marketing teams) had a clear effect on the relationship between marketing agility and marketing excellence. The value of (R²) of the model (H4) reached (0.4007) which is greater than the value of (R²) of the model (H1) and the difference between them reached ($\Delta R^2 = 0.081$) and this confirms that there is an amount of (8.1%) increase. These results confirm that the mediating variable increased the significance and value of the influence of marketing agility on marketing excellence. Therefore, the hypothesis can be proven to be accepted (H4).

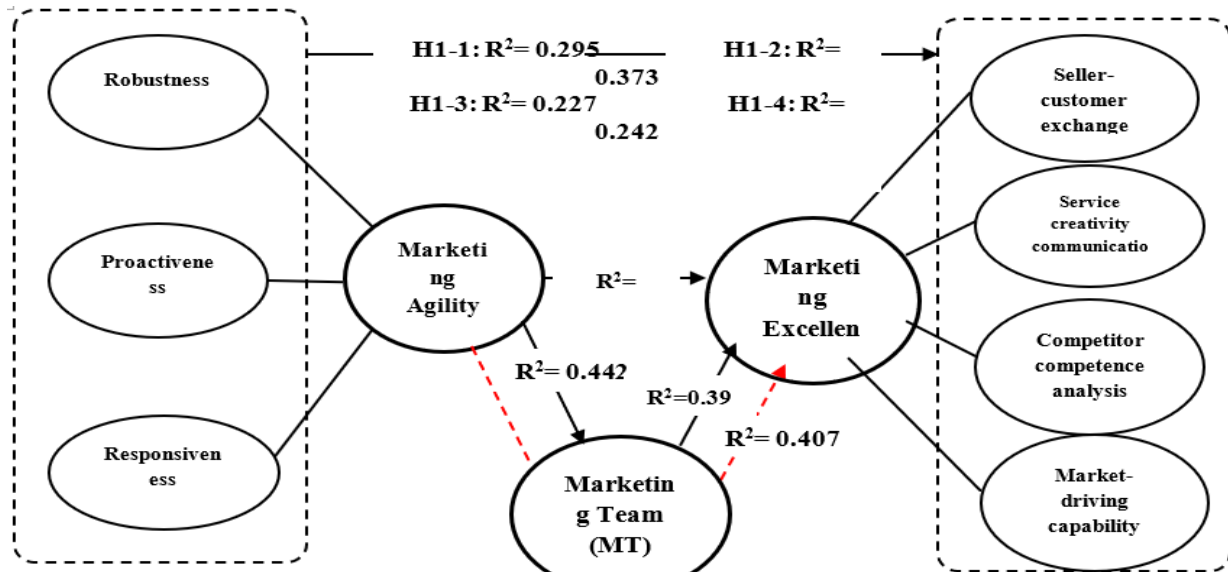


Figure (5). *The final form of the search*

Conclusions

Five-star Iraqi hotels are exposed to many environmental pressures, these hotels were unable to achieve marketing excellence, because the marketing strategies used were not in the required form, but it was found that following marketing agility as a marketing strategy for these hotels enhanced their ability to achieve marketing excellence, and since marketing teams are among the effective strategies Also, which turned out to be new strategies for these hotels, but they worked with them and were not aware of the nature of this strategy, as these hotels employed many teams that increase the efficiency of their marketing work, which can be said that marketing teams, these teams played a decisive role in the hotels orientation towards marketing agility Which in turn led to achieving marketing excellence.

This important role of the marketing teams was shown through the change in the value of the interpretation coefficient, higher than when this intermediate variable was not entered as an aid factor in the relationship between these two variables.

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