



Building Strategic Agility in International Startups: A Systematic Literature Review of Dynamic Marketing Capabilities, Information Intelligence, and Global Growth

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ABSTRACT. *International startups operate in highly dynamic global markets characterized by technological turbulence, uncertainty, changing customer preferences, and intense competition. This qualitative systematic literature review examines how dynamic marketing capabilities (DMCs) and information intelligence contribute to strategic agility and global growth in international startups. The review synthesizes relevant theoretical and empirical literature on dynamic capabilities, international marketing, information management, knowledge management, and startup internationalization. The findings indicate that DMCs enable startups to sense market changes, adapt marketing strategies, and reconfigure market resources, while information intelligence facilitates the acquisition, interpretation, and strategic utilization of market and environmental information. Their interaction strengthens strategic agility by enabling faster sensing, decision-making, market adaptation, and resource reconfiguration. Strategic agility consequently emerges as an important mechanism connecting capability development with international performance and sustainable global growth. The review proposes an integrated capability-orchestration framework and identifies opportunities for future empirical research across diverse international startup contexts.*

Keywords *Dynamic Marketing Capabilities; Information Intelligence; Strategic Agility; International Startups; Global Growth*

INTRODUCTION

International startups operate in increasingly volatile and interconnected markets where rapid technological change, shifting customer preferences, intensified competition, and institutional differences create substantial challenges for sustained international growth. Unlike established multinational firms, startups generally face severe resource constraints, limited international experience, and high levels of uncertainty while attempting to identify and exploit opportunities across national borders. Consequently, the ability to respond rapidly to environmental changes and reconfigure scarce resources has become critical to their international competitiveness. From the dynamic capabilities perspective, firms achieve sustained performance not merely through valuable resources but through their ability to sense opportunities and threats, seize emerging opportunities, and transform their resource configurations in response to changing environments (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2007). This perspective is particularly relevant to international startups because their growth depends on continuous adaptation under conditions of environmental dynamism.

Within this context, dynamic marketing capabilities (DMCs) represent an important organizational mechanism through which startups can achieve strategic agility. DMCs enable firms to continuously sense market developments, adapt marketing strategies, reconfigure customer relationships, and respond to changing competitive conditions. Previous research demonstrates that dynamic marketing capabilities contribute to international new venture performance by strengthening innovation and enabling firms to respond to environmental dynamism (Buccieri et al., 2020). Similarly, international marketing research indicates that adaptive and dynamic marketing capabilities can improve firms' international performance by facilitating foreign-market adaptation and product development (Reimann et al., 2021; Ciszewska-Mlinarič et al., 2024). Thus, DMCs can be understood as an important foundation of strategic agility because they allow startups to rapidly translate market changes into strategic and marketing responses. Islamic marketing strategies, including Islamic branding and halal marketing, significantly contribute to building consumer loyalty and business sustainability (Santoso, S., & Ruslaini, 2022).

However, marketing agility alone may be insufficient when international startups operate in information-intensive global environments. The ability to acquire, interpret, integrate, and strategically utilize information is increasingly important for identifying emerging opportunities, understanding foreign-market conditions, and making timely decisions. Strategic information management supports organizational learning and decision making by transforming dispersed information into strategically relevant knowledge. Scuotto et al. (2022) emphasize the relationship between dynamic capabilities and international marketing knowledge management, while Stefia et al. (2024) demonstrate that the integration of dynamic marketing capabilities and strategic information management can enhance startup agility, market responsiveness, strategic decision-making, and international performance. In this study, this information-oriented capability is conceptualized as information intelligence, emphasizing the capacity to convert market and environmental information into actionable strategic insights. Equity volatility and leverage have a strong relationship with a company's investment decisions, both directly and indirectly (Chaidir, M., et al, 2024).

The interaction between DMCs and information intelligence may therefore constitute a critical foundation for strategic agility and global growth. International

startups must not only detect market signals but also interpret them rapidly and transform them into appropriate strategic actions. Information intelligence can strengthen the sensing dimension of dynamic capabilities, while DMCs facilitate the conversion of market intelligence into adaptive marketing and competitive actions. Existing evidence suggests that international startups possessing stronger dynamic capabilities are better positioned to overcome resource constraints and achieve superior international performance (Buccieri et al., 2021). Moreover, marketing capabilities, technological turbulence, and international market knowledge have been associated with variations in international new venture performance (Martin et al., 2020; Scuotto et al., 2022). Sustainability, innovation, and dynamic factors are important capabilities for multi-finance companies that need to be strengthened and developed (Patricia, M. C, 2023).

Despite these contributions, the literature remains fragmented across dynamic capabilities, international entrepreneurship, marketing capabilities, knowledge management, and strategic information management. Much existing research examines these capabilities separately or emphasizes quantitative relationships between capabilities and performance. The recent meta-narrative review by Stefia et al. (2024) provides an important foundation by demonstrating the complementary role of DMCs and strategic information management in international startup success. Nevertheless, a systematic qualitative synthesis specifically explaining how dynamic marketing capabilities and information intelligence jointly build strategic agility and support global growth remains necessary.

Therefore, this qualitative systematic literature review seeks to synthesize and critically interpret existing research on the relationship among dynamic marketing capabilities, information intelligence, strategic agility, and global growth in international startups. By integrating fragmented theoretical and empirical perspectives, the study aims to identify recurring mechanisms, conceptual relationships, contextual conditions, and research gaps that explain how startups develop strategic agility in international markets. The review ultimately contributes to international entrepreneurship and strategic management literature by positioning strategic agility as a connecting mechanism through which information-driven marketing capabilities can facilitate sustainable global growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on international startups increasingly emphasizes the importance of dynamic capabilities in explaining how young firms respond to rapidly changing global environments. Dynamic capabilities refer to organizational abilities to integrate, build, and reconfigure resources in response to environmental change (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2007). For startups, these capabilities are particularly important because resource limitations, uncertainty, technological turbulence, and limited international experience make conventional resource advantages difficult to sustain (Bitencourt et al., 2020; Teixeira et al., 2021). A systematic examination of prior studies therefore suggests that strategic agility is closely associated with the capacity to continuously sense environmental changes, seize emerging opportunities, and transform organizational resources.

Dynamic marketing capabilities constitute a central component of this adaptive process. DMCs enable firms to identify changing customer needs, monitor competitors, adapt market strategies, and reconfigure marketing resources as market conditions evolve (Ribeiro et al., 2023; Chatterjee et al., 2022). Empirical evidence indicates that marketing capabilities positively contribute to international new venture performance, although their effects may depend on technological turbulence and marketing communication processes (Martin et al., 2020). Buccieri et al. (2020) further demonstrate that dynamic marketing capabilities are associated with international new venture performance alongside international entrepreneurial culture and ambidextrous innovation. Similarly, Reimann et al. (2021) find that dynamic and adaptive marketing capabilities contribute to the performance of Portuguese SMEs operating in international B2B markets.

The internationalization literature provides further evidence that dynamic capabilities facilitate global expansion. Ledesma-Chaves et al. (2020) identify dynamic capabilities as an important mechanism in international expansion, while Puthusserry et al. (2020) show that learning through international networks contributes to post-entry growth among rapidly internationalizing SMEs from emerging markets. Buccieri et al. (2021) also establish the relevance of dynamic capabilities to the performance of emerging-market international new ventures and demonstrate the importance of international entrepreneurial culture. These findings indicate that global growth is not

simply a consequence of entering foreign markets but depends on a firm's ability to learn, adapt, and reconfigure its resources as international conditions change.

A second stream of literature highlights the strategic importance of information, knowledge management, and intelligence. Information management enables organizations to collect, process, integrate, and utilize information for decision-making and customer relationships (Lis et al., 2020; Gupta & Panigrahi, 2023). Nascimento et al. (2020) demonstrate that knowledge management, strategic foresight, and emerging technologies interact dynamically, suggesting that information-related capabilities can strengthen organizational responsiveness to uncertain environments. In international marketing, Scuotto et al. (2022) emphasize the development of dynamic capabilities for international marketing knowledge management, indicating that knowledge acquisition and utilization are closely connected to adaptive international marketing processes. Accordingly, information intelligence can be conceptualized in this review as the organizational capacity to transform relevant market, customer, competitor, technological, and environmental information into actionable strategic knowledge.

The strongest evidence for integrating these streams is provided by Stefia et al. (2024), whose meta-narrative analysis of international startup research identifies a synergistic relationship between DMCs and strategic information management. Their findings indicate that the combination of dynamic marketing capabilities and strategic information management enhances startup agility, market responsiveness, strategic decision-making, performance, and international success. The study is particularly relevant because it demonstrates that marketing dynamism and information management should not necessarily be examined as isolated capabilities. Rather, their interaction can create a stronger organizational foundation for responding to international market complexity.

The digital environment further strengthens this relationship. Wang (2020) demonstrates the importance of digital marketing capabilities in international firms, while Liu et al. (2020) establish the relevance of internet marketing capabilities to international market performance. Kim and Lim (2022) similarly highlight international dynamic marketing capabilities among emerging-market small businesses operating through e-commerce. Franco et al. (2021) connect dynamic capabilities with business-model

innovation in the digital era, suggesting that digital transformation can increase the need for continuous resource and business-model reconfiguration.

Nevertheless, the existing literature remains fragmented. Most studies examine individual capabilities, international performance, or specific contexts rather than explaining how DMCs and information intelligence jointly generate strategic agility and contribute to global growth. The literature also contains substantial contextual diversity involving SMEs, international new ventures, exporters, digital firms, and emerging-market enterprises (Ciszewska-Mlinarič et al., 2024; Deng et al., 2020; Weaven et al., 2021). Therefore, this qualitative systematic literature review seeks to integrate these fragmented findings and identify the mechanisms through which dynamic marketing capabilities and information intelligence build strategic agility and facilitate sustainable global growth among international startups. Such synthesis can clarify the theoretical relationships among the constructs and identify important gaps for future international entrepreneurship and strategic management research.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative systematic literature review (QSLR) to systematically identify, evaluate, interpret, and synthesize existing knowledge concerning the relationships among dynamic marketing capabilities, information intelligence, strategic agility, and global growth in international startups. A systematic review is appropriate because the relevant literature is multidisciplinary and conceptually fragmented across international entrepreneurship, strategic management, marketing, knowledge management, and digital transformation; systematic reviews can consolidate such fragmented evidence while providing a transparent basis for identifying theoretical patterns and research gaps (Snyder, 2019).

The review follows the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework, which provides updated guidance for transparent reporting of the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of studies in systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA 2020 includes a 27-item checklist and revised flow diagrams designed to improve transparency in the reporting of systematic-review processes. The review focuses primarily on peer-reviewed journal articles published from 2020 to 2025, while seminal

studies such as Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) and Teece (2007) are retained to establish the theoretical foundations of dynamic capabilities.

The literature search is conducted through major scholarly databases, using combinations of keywords such as “international startups,” “international new ventures,” “dynamic marketing capabilities,” “marketing capabilities,” “information intelligence,” “strategic information management,” “strategic agility,” “dynamic capabilities,” and “global growth.” Search strings are constructed using Boolean operators and/or to capture variations in terminology. Following Snyder (2019), the search strategy is specified before study selection to reduce arbitrary inclusion and improve methodological consistency.

Studies are included when they (1) are peer-reviewed scholarly publications, (2) address startups, international new ventures, SMEs undergoing internationalization, or closely comparable entrepreneurial firms, (3) examine at least one of the principal constructs, and (4) provide theoretical, empirical, or conceptual evidence relevant to international adaptation, strategic agility, or growth. Studies unrelated to entrepreneurial or international contexts, non-scholarly publications, duplicates, and papers without sufficient relevance to the research questions are excluded. The identification and screening processes are documented using a PRISMA flow diagram to demonstrate the number of records identified, screened, excluded, and ultimately included (Page et al., 2021).

Data extraction focuses on author and year, research context, theoretical foundation, methodology, key constructs, principal findings, relationships among variables, and identified research gaps. The extracted evidence is then subjected to qualitative thematic synthesis. Studies are coded into recurring themes concerning (1) dynamic marketing capabilities, (2) information intelligence and knowledge utilization, (3) strategic agility, (4) internationalization and global growth, and (5) interactions among these constructs. The synthesis emphasizes similarities, differences, contextual conditions, and theoretical mechanisms rather than statistical aggregation, consistent with the purpose of qualitative literature synthesis (Snyder, 2019).

Finally, the findings are integrated into a conceptual framework explaining how dynamic marketing capabilities and information intelligence contribute to strategic agility and, subsequently, global growth in international startups. This approach enables the

review to move beyond descriptive summarization toward theoretical integration and identification of future research directions, which is one of the principal purposes of systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021).

RESULTS

The qualitative synthesis identifies four interconnected themes explaining how international startups build strategic agility and achieve global growth: (1) dynamic marketing capabilities as an adaptive mechanism, (2) information intelligence as a strategic knowledge mechanism, (3) strategic agility as an integrative capability, and (4) global growth as an outcome of capability orchestration. These themes indicate that international startup growth is not generated by a single organizational capability but by the interaction and continuous reconfiguration of market-oriented, information-based, and strategic capabilities.

The first major finding is that dynamic marketing capabilities (DMCs) constitute a fundamental mechanism through which international startups respond to environmental dynamism. The literature indicates that DMCs enable firms to sense changing customer preferences, identify market opportunities, adapt marketing strategies, and reconfigure marketing resources in response to competitive and technological changes (Buccieri et al., 2020; Chatterjee et al., 2022). Buccieri et al. (2020), based on 286 high-technology international new ventures, found that international entrepreneurial culture contributes to innovation and dynamic marketing capabilities, which subsequently support international venture performance. Similarly, evidence from 277 Polish exporting manufacturers shows that international dynamic marketing capabilities improve international performance during environmental shocks, with foreign-market adaptation and product-development capability functioning as important mechanisms (Ciszewska-Mlinarič et al., 2024).

The second finding is that information intelligence strengthens startups' ability to transform environmental information into strategically useful knowledge. The literature on international marketing knowledge management indicates that knowledge acquisition and utilization are closely connected with dynamic capabilities, particularly the ability to adapt to rapid environmental changes (Scuotto et al., 2022). In the context of international startups, information intelligence can therefore be interpreted as the ability to acquire,

interpret, integrate, and apply market, customer, competitor, technological, and environmental information for timely strategic decisions. The synthesis further indicates that information capabilities become particularly valuable when startups operate under high uncertainty because timely information can improve opportunity recognition, market responsiveness, and resource reconfiguration.

The third and most important finding is that strategic agility emerges from the interaction between dynamic marketing capabilities and information-oriented capabilities rather than from either capability independently. Stefia et al. (2024) provide direct evidence for this relationship through a meta-narrative analysis of 20 Scopus-indexed studies, concluding that the integration of DMCs and strategic information management enhances startup agility, market responsiveness, strategic decision-making, growth, and competitive advantage. This finding suggests a complementary relationship: information intelligence strengthens the sensing and interpretation of market signals, while DMCs strengthen the conversion of those signals into adaptive marketing actions. Consequently, strategic agility can be conceptualized as the organizational outcome of rapidly connecting information acquisition, interpretation, decision-making, and resource reconfiguration.

The fourth finding is that strategic agility provides an important pathway toward international and global growth. International startups operate in environments characterized by technological turbulence, institutional differences, competitive uncertainty, and rapidly changing customer requirements; therefore, growth depends on the ability to adapt rather than merely exploit existing resources (Buccieri et al., 2020; Teece, 2007). Evidence also indicates that dynamic marketing capabilities can improve international performance through adaptation to foreign markets and product development (Ciszewska-Mlinarič et al., 2024). Digital marketing capabilities and international marketing knowledge further expand this adaptive capacity by enabling firms to respond to geographically dispersed markets and rapidly changing information environments (Wang, 2020; Scuotto et al., 2022).

Overall, the systematic synthesis produces a capability-orchestration model in which information intelligence enables international startups to detect and interpret market signals, dynamic marketing capabilities transform these insights into adaptive market actions, and strategic agility connects these processes to international adaptation

and global growth. This interpretation extends the findings of Stefia et al. (2024) by positioning strategic agility as the connecting mechanism between information-driven capabilities and global growth, rather than treating startup success simply as a direct consequence of DMCs or strategic information management. The resulting framework suggests that international startups achieve more sustainable growth when they continuously integrate information intelligence, dynamic marketing capabilities, rapid decision-making, and resource reconfiguration.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this qualitative systematic literature review indicate that strategic agility in international startups is best understood as an integrative capability emerging from the interaction between dynamic marketing capabilities (DMCs) and information intelligence rather than from either capability independently. This interpretation is consistent with the dynamic capabilities perspective, which emphasizes sensing, seizing, and transforming resources as mechanisms through which firms respond to environmental change (Teece, 2007), and is strongly supported by Stefia et al. (2024), who found that the integration of DMCs and strategic information management enhances startup agility, market responsiveness, strategic decision-making, and international performance.

First, the findings confirm that DMCs represent a critical antecedent of strategic agility and international performance because they enable startups to adapt marketing strategies, customer relationships, and market offerings to environmental changes (Buccieri et al., 2020; Chatterjee et al., 2022). Buccieri et al. (2020), using evidence from 286 high-technology international new ventures in India, found that international entrepreneurial culture influences innovation and DMCs, which subsequently contribute to international venture performance under environmental dynamism. This finding is consistent with the present synthesis but extends it by suggesting that DMCs should be viewed not only as a direct performance capability but also as part of a broader agility mechanism involving information interpretation and strategic response.

Second, the findings are consistent with Wang (2020), who conceptualized digital marketing capabilities from a relational dynamic-capabilities perspective and found that DMCs positively contribute to the performance of international firms, with entrepreneurial orientation strengthening their effective utilization. However, the present

review goes beyond Wang (2020) by emphasizing that marketing capability alone does not fully explain strategic agility; rather, its effectiveness depends on the organization's capacity to obtain and transform information into timely strategic action.

Third, Liu et al. (2020) similarly found that internet marketing capabilities contribute positively to international market performance and are connected with market-oriented and entrepreneurial behaviors. The present findings complement this result by interpreting digital and internet-based marketing capabilities as mechanisms that increase the speed and breadth of market sensing, while information intelligence provides the analytical foundation for interpreting those market signals and deciding how resources should be reconfigured.

Fourth, the findings reinforce Scuotto et al. (2022), who demonstrated that marketing knowledge management is strongly related to individual dynamic capabilities involving problem solving, adaptation to rapid change, and changing how problems are addressed. Their findings are particularly important for the present study because they establish a theoretical bridge between knowledge management and dynamic capabilities, supporting the proposition that information intelligence should not be conceptualized merely as information availability but as the ability to convert knowledge into adaptive organizational action.

Fifth, Puthusserry et al. (2020) provide complementary evidence from ten rapidly internationalizing Indian ICT SMEs, showing that internal and external learning including networks, international clients, experiential learning, and trial and error supports product and market knowledge, geographic diversification, and post entry growth. Compared with this finding, the present review identifies information intelligence as a broader strategic mechanism through which such dispersed knowledge can be interpreted and transformed into actionable intelligence, thereby strengthening strategic agility during international expansion.

Sixth, Ledesma-Chaves et al. (2020) found that DMCs mediate the relationship between the expansion of international markets and firm performance and that DMCs generate learning effects that differ between gradual internationalizers and international new ventures. This evidence supports the present finding that DMCs connect international expansion with performance, but the systematic synthesis extends the argument by

positioning strategic agility as an intermediate organizational mechanism through which information and marketing capabilities are translated into adaptive international growth.

Seventh, Ciszewska-Mlinarič et al. (2024) provide particularly relevant evidence from 277 Polish exporting manufacturers during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating that international dynamic marketing capabilities improve international performance and that this relationship is mediated by foreign-market adaptation and product-development capability. This finding strongly supports the present review's argument that DMCs become particularly valuable under environmental turbulence, while the proposed framework adds information intelligence as a complementary capability that enables firms to detect and interpret environmental changes before adapting markets, products, and strategies.

Eighth, the findings of Buccieri et al. (2021) further indicate that dynamic capabilities help emerging-market international new ventures overcome resource constraints and legitimacy challenges, with international entrepreneurial culture providing an important context for capability development and international performance. In comparison, the present synthesis suggests that resource constraints should not be considered only a limitation but also a reason why international startups need to develop information intensive and highly flexible capability configurations that enable rapid strategic adaptation.

Taken together, these eight studies reveal a consistent pattern but also an important theoretical gap: previous research has generally examined DMCs, digital marketing capabilities, knowledge management, learning, or dynamic capabilities as relatively distinct explanatory mechanisms, whereas the present systematic review integrates them into a strategic agility pathway. The proposed interpretation is therefore that information intelligence strengthens sensing and interpretation, DMCs convert intelligence into market responses, strategic agility enables rapid reconfiguration, and these interconnected processes contribute to global growth and international performance. This integrated interpretation also extends Stefia et al. (2024), whose meta-narrative review established the importance of combining DMCs and strategic information management but did not specifically position strategic agility as the central mechanism linking these capabilities to global growth.

Accordingly, the principal contribution of this review is the proposition that global growth among international startups is fundamentally a capability-orchestration process rather than the consequence of a single marketing or information capability. Strategic agility emerges when startups continuously integrate information acquisition, knowledge interpretation, market sensing, adaptive marketing, rapid decision-making, and resource reconfiguration in response to international environmental change.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative systematic literature review concludes that strategic agility is a critical mechanism through which international startups can transform dynamic marketing capabilities and information intelligence into sustainable global growth. The synthesis indicates that dynamic marketing capabilities enable startups to sense market changes, adapt marketing strategies, reconfigure customer relationships, and respond to competitive turbulence, while information intelligence strengthens the acquisition, interpretation, and utilization of strategic information for timely decision-making (Buccieri et al., 2020; Scuotto et al., 2022; Stefia et al., 2024). The interaction between these capabilities enables startups to respond rapidly to international market uncertainty, supporting international adaptation, performance, and growth (Ledesma-Chaves et al., 2020; Ciszewska-Mlinarič et al., 2024). Thus, the review proposes that global growth is not primarily the outcome of an individual capability but of capability orchestration, in which information intelligence supports sensing and interpretation, dynamic marketing capabilities facilitate market response, and strategic agility connects these processes to international growth (Teece, 2007; Stefia et al., 2024). This synthesis extends previous literature by explicitly positioning strategic agility as the connecting mechanism among information intelligence, dynamic marketing capabilities, and global growth.

LIMITATION

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the conclusions depend on the databases, keywords, publication periods, language restrictions, and inclusion criteria used in the systematic search, meaning that potentially relevant studies may have been excluded. Second, the reviewed literature is methodologically and contextually heterogeneous, covering international new ventures, startups, SMEs, exporters, and

digital firms, which limits direct comparability across studies (Puthusserry et al., 2020; Ciszewska-Mlinarič et al., 2024). Third, information intelligence is used as an integrative conceptual construct derived from literature on strategic information management, knowledge management, and marketing intelligence; therefore, not all reviewed studies operationalize this construct explicitly. Finally, the qualitative synthesis identifies theoretical relationships rather than establishing causal effects. Future research should therefore empirically test the proposed relationship among information intelligence, dynamic marketing capabilities, strategic agility, and global growth across different industries, institutional environments, and emerging and developed markets.

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