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Original Article

Marketing Performance in Agricultural Firms across Geographically Isolated Regions in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province

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Abstract
Purpose- Agricultural firms in geographically isolated regions face severe marketing constraints due to limited market access, infrastructural deficits, and information asymmetries. The purpose of this study is to investigate how strategic agility capabilities enable such firms to overcome these barriers and enhance marketing performance, drawing on dynamic capability's theory and the resource-based view.
Design/methodology/approach- A descriptive-analytical design was employed using a questionnaire survey administered to 285 agricultural firm owners in a mountainous region of Iran, selected through simple random sampling. Data reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$), and validity was verified by academic experts in entrepreneurship and agricultural economics. Data were analyzed using SPSS 21 software, employing Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analysis to test the hypothesized relationships between agility dimensions—product agility, people and knowledge agility, cooperative agility, and organizational agility—and marketing performance, while controlling for individual characteristics.
Findings- Strategic agility explains 57% of the variance in marketing performance. Product agility emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$), followed by people and knowledge agility ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < 0.01$). Cooperative and organizational agility show positive but statistically non-significant relationships, suggesting that contextual constraints in isolated settings may moderate their effectiveness. These findings indicate that internal capabilities, particularly product development and human capital, are critical for overcoming geographic disadvantages, whereas external facing capabilities may require supportive institutional conditions to become fully effective.
Practical implications- The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and the single province focus restricts generalizability. Reliance on self-reported measures and absence of firm level controls (e.g., size, age) are additional limitations. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, include objective performance indicators, and compare multiple regions to establish boundary conditions.
Originality/value- This study extends strategic agility theory to agricultural entrepreneurship in resource constrained, peripheral regions, providing empirical evidence that internal agility capabilities can mitigate geographic isolation. It offers actionable guidance for entrepreneurs to prioritise product adaptation and knowledge management, and for policymakers to design capacity building programmes that enhance competitiveness in isolated rural areas.
Keywords- Strategic agility, Marketing performance, Agricultural entrepreneurship, Resource-based view, Dynamic capabilities, Geographic isolation.

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1. Introduction

The agricultural sector's contribution to sustainable development has garnered increasing scholarly attention as climate change, population growth, and market volatility intensify pressures on global food systems (Darnhofer et al., 2016; Basso & Antle, 2020; Wuepper et al., 2021). While agricultural entrepreneurship offers promising pathways for poverty alleviation and rural development (Naminse & Zhuang, 2018), firms operating in geographically isolated regions confront unique challenges that substantially constrain their marketing effectiveness and competitive positioning (Lowder et al., 2016; Tschirley & Riley, 2021). These challenges include limited market access, inadequate transportation infrastructure, information asymmetries, restricted institutional support, and heightened vulnerability to climatic and economic shocks (Wuepper et al., 2021; Kitole et al., 2024). Despite the growing recognition of these multifaceted constraints, our understanding of how agricultural firms in peripheral regions can develop organizational capabilities to overcome geographical isolation and enhance marketing performance remains theoretically and empirically underdeveloped (Anim et al., 2025).

Strategic agility—defined as an organization's capacity to rapidly adapt its strategies and resource configurations in response to environmental changes (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Ahammad et al., 2021)—has emerged as a promising theoretical framework for understanding firm adaptation in volatile and resource-constrained environments. Strategic agility encompasses multiple dimensions, including product agility, people and knowledge agility, cooperative agility, and organizational agility (Goldman et al., 1995; Chan et al., 2017; Sambamurthy et al., 2003). While extensive research has examined strategic agility in manufacturing and service sectors (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011; Shin et al., 2015), its application to agricultural contexts remains surprisingly underexplored, particularly in developing country settings where resource constraints and institutional voids are prevalent (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2020). This gap is consequential because agricultural firms operate under distinct conditions characterized by production seasonality, biological production uncertainties, perishable products, and pronounced market imperfections that differ fundamentally from manufacturing contexts (Kamble et al., 2020; Wolfert et al., 2017; Afrakhteh & Jamshidzehi Shahbakhsh, 2022; Kumar et al., 2023).

Drawing on the resource-based view (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) and dynamic capabilities theory (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2007; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003), this study addresses two interrelated research questions. First, how do different dimensions of strategic agility influence marketing performance among agricultural firms in geographically isolated regions? Second, which dimensions of strategic agility are most critical for overcoming resource constraints and achieving marketing effectiveness in such contexts? By examining these questions, we contribute to multiple streams of literature. We extend strategic agility theory to agricultural entrepreneurship, an understudied context that presents unique theoretical and empirical challenges. We provide empirical evidence on the relative importance of agility dimensions, offering insights into how resource-constrained firms can strategically prioritize capability development. Furthermore, we address persistent calls for more contextually grounded research on marketing capabilities in developing economies (Mabhungu, 2017; Singh & Sharma, 2023).

From a practical standpoint, this research offers valuable guidance for agricultural entrepreneurs and policymakers. For entrepreneurs, our findings illuminate which agility capabilities most effectively enhance marketing performance, enabling more targeted resource allocation in resource-scarce environments. For policymakers, we provide evidence supporting investments in infrastructure, training, and institutional mechanisms that facilitate agility development in peripheral regions. Given the growing international policy interest in inclusive agricultural value chains, rural entrepreneurship, and sustainable development (Kitole et al., 2024; United Nations, 2015), understanding how firms can overcome geographical isolation through strategic agility has important implications for achieving sustainable development goals related to poverty reduction, food security, and decent work.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of relevant literature, developing theoretical

foundations and proposing testable hypotheses. Section 3 describes the research methodology, including study context, sampling procedures, measurement approaches, and analytical techniques. Section 4 presents empirical results, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression findings with appropriate diagnostic tests. Section 5 discusses theoretical and practical implications, while Section 6 concludes with study limitations and future research directions.

2. Research Theoretical Literature

2.1 Theoretical Foundations: Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities

The resource-based view provides a foundational lens for understanding how firms achieve competitive advantage through their unique resource endowments (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984; Peteraf, 1993). According to RBV, sustainable competitive advantage derives from resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable. In agricultural contexts, VRIN resources may include specialized agronomic knowledge, established customer relationships, unique land characteristics, proprietary production techniques, and organizational routines that facilitate market responsiveness (Nazifi et al., 2025; Ainm et al., 2025; Barney et al., 2021). However, RBV has been critiqued for its relative static orientation, prompting scholars to develop dynamic capabilities theory to explain how firms reconfigure resources in changing environments (Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003). Dynamic capabilities refer to "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments" (Teece et al., 1997). This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant for agricultural firms facing volatile market conditions, climatic uncertainties, evolving consumer preferences, and technological disruptions (Kumar et al., 2023; Basso & Antle, 2020; Wuepper et al., 2021). Dynamic capabilities enable firms to sense opportunities and threats, seize market openings, and transform their resource configurations accordingly (Teece, 2007; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Schilke, 2014). Strategic agility represents a manifestation of dynamic capabilities, encompassing the specific routines and processes through which firms adapt their strategies and operations to environmental changes (Ahammad et al., 2021; Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Teece et al., 2016).

The integration of RBV and dynamic capabilities theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how agricultural firms in geographically isolated regions can achieve marketing effectiveness. While RBV emphasizes the importance of internal resources—including human capital, knowledge assets, and organizational routines—dynamic capabilities explain how firms develop, deploy, and reconfigure these resources to respond to market opportunities and threats (Kale et al., 2019; Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). In contexts characterized by geographical isolation and market imperfections, the ability to develop agility capabilities may be particularly critical for overcoming environmental constraints and achieving competitive positioning (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Teece, 2015).

2.2 Strategic Agility: Conceptualization and Dimensions

Strategic agility represents a multidimensional construct encompassing an organization's capacity to rapidly adapt its strategies, structures, and operations in response to environmental changes (Goldman et al., 1995; Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Weill et al., 2021). Building on the work of Chan et al. (2017), Ahammad et al. (2021), and Teece et al. (2016), we conceptualize strategic agility as comprising four interrelated dimensions: product agility, people and knowledge agility, cooperative agility, and organizational agility. Each dimension reflects distinct but complementary capabilities that collectively enable firms to navigate market volatility and achieve superior performance.

Product agility refers to an organization's capacity to rapidly develop, modify, and introduce products in response to changing market demands and competitive pressures (Lee, 2004; Ahammad et al., 2021; Christopher & Towill, 2001). In agricultural contexts, product agility encompasses flexibility in production planning, responsiveness to shifting consumer preferences regarding quality and sustainability attributes, and capacity to innovate product offerings through value addition (Kamble et al., 2020; Susitha et al., 2024; Wamba et al., 2020). Firms exhibiting high product agility can more effectively align their product portfolios with market opportunities, enhancing customer satisfaction and competitive positioning (Sukaatmadja et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2009). The

adoption of digital technologies and precision agriculture has been shown to enhance product agility through real-time decision-making capabilities (Kumar et al., 2023; Wolfert et al., 2017).

People and knowledge agility emphasize the importance of human capital, organizational learning, and knowledge management in enabling rapid adaptation (Al-azzam et al., 2018; Tschirley & Riley, 2021; Argote & Ingram, 2000). This dimension encompasses workforce skills and adaptability, knowledge sharing mechanisms, collaborative decision-making processes, and continuous learning orientation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Grant, 1996). In agricultural contexts, people and knowledge agility enables firms to respond more effectively to market information, adopt innovative practices, and develop capabilities that enhance marketing effectiveness (Crawford, 2006; Kumar et al., 2023; Anim et al., 2025). Recent research emphasizes the critical role of agricultural extension services, farmer training programs, and knowledge networks in building people and knowledge agility (Kitole et al., 2024).

Cooperative agility captures an organization's capacity to leverage external partnerships, collaborative relationships, and value chain integration to enhance strategic responsiveness (Kurniawan et al., 2020; van de Vrande et al., 2009; Dyer & Singh, 1998). This dimension recognizes that firms increasingly rely on external resources and knowledge to complement internal capabilities (Lavie, 2006; Powell et al., 1996). In agricultural contexts, cooperative agility enables firms to access market information, coordinate with supply chain partners, achieve economies of scale through collective action, and share risks (Kilelu et al., 2013; Markelova et al., 2009). Farmer organizations, producer groups, and value chain partnerships represent institutional mechanisms through which cooperative agility is developed (Vorley et al., 2009; Hellin et al., 2009).

Organizational agility encompasses the internal structures, processes, and decision-making routines that enable firms to respond rapidly to environmental changes (Singh et al., 2013; Overby et al., 2006; Weill et al., 2021). This dimension includes expedited decision-making processes, effective communication systems, and accessible performance-enhancing information (Gunasekaran, 1999; Sambamurthy et al., 2003). Agricultural firms with high organizational agility can more effectively coordinate activities, respond to market intelligence, and implement strategic changes in a timely manner (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011). Recent research highlights the importance of digital information systems, agile management practices, and flexible organizational structures for building organizational agility in agricultural contexts (Kumar et al., 2023).

2.3 Strategic Agility and Marketing Performance

Marketing performance represents a critical organizational outcome encompassing customer acquisition, retention, and sales growth (Leonidou et al., 2013; Katsikeas et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2009). Drawing on performance measurement theory (Neely et al., 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 1996), we conceptualize marketing performance as reflecting the effectiveness of a firm's marketing strategies in achieving market penetration, customer satisfaction, and revenue growth. In agricultural contexts, marketing performance is particularly important given the perishable nature of many agricultural products, seasonal production patterns, and intense market competition (Sukaatmadja et al., 2021; Vadivelu & Kiran, 2013).

The relationship between strategic agility and marketing performance is grounded in dynamic capabilities theory, which suggests that agility capabilities enable firms to sense market opportunities, seize them effectively, and transform their resource configurations to sustain competitive advantage (Teece, 2007; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Schilke, 2014). Specifically, firms with higher levels of strategic agility can more rapidly identify shifts in consumer preferences, adjust their marketing strategies accordingly, and implement changes to product offerings, pricing, distribution, and promotion (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2020). This responsiveness enables them to achieve superior marketing outcomes in terms of customer satisfaction, market share, and profitability (Shin et al., 2015; Ofoegbu & Akanbi, 2012).

Product agility is particularly critical for marketing performance as it directly enables firms to align their product offerings with evolving customer needs and preferences (Ahammad et al., 2021; Lee, 2004; Christopher & Towill, 2001). In agricultural contexts, this may involve developing new products, improving product quality, introducing value-added processing, or adapting product characteristics to meet market standards (Kamble et

al., 2020; Susitha et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2023). Research by Bozic & Dimovski (2019) demonstrates that firms implementing agile product development achieve superior marketing outcomes through enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. Empirical evidence from agricultural contexts indicates that firms capable of agile product development can better respond to market volatility and changing consumer preferences (Sukaatmadja et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 1a (H1a): Product agility positively influences marketing performance.

People and knowledge agility enhance marketing performance by enabling firms to leverage human capital and knowledge resources effectively (Al-azzam et al., 2018; Tschirley & Riley, 2021; Argote & Ingram, 2000). Firms with highly skilled, adaptable workforces can more effectively interpret market signals, develop innovative marketing strategies, and implement responsive customer engagement approaches (Crawford, 2006; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Grant, 1996). Knowledge management systems that facilitate information sharing and organizational learning enable firms to respond more rapidly to market changes (Anim et al., 2025; Kumar et al., 2023). In agricultural contexts, where market information is often asymmetric and geographically distributed, people and knowledge agility becomes particularly important for effective marketing decision-making (Kitole et al., 2024; Stifel & Minten, 2008).

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): People and knowledge agility positively influences marketing performance.

Cooperative agility facilitates marketing performance through enhanced access to external resources, market intelligence, and partner capabilities (Kurniawan et al., 2020; van de Vrande et al., 2009; Dyer and Singh, 1998). Collaborative relationships enable firms to leverage complementary resources, share market information, and coordinate marketing activities across the value chain (Lavie, 2006; Powell et al., 1996). In agricultural contexts, cooperative arrangements such as farmer organizations, producer groups, and value chain partnerships can enhance market access, bargaining power, and information sharing (Kilelu et al., 2013; Markelova et al., 2009). Organizations cultivating cooperative agility can better leverage external resources and insights, leading to enhanced innovation and market responsiveness (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Vorley et al., 2009; Hellin et al., 2009).

Hypothesis 1c (H1c): Cooperative agility positively influences marketing performance.

Organizational agility enables firms to adapt their internal structures and processes to environmental changes, facilitating more effective marketing strategy implementation (Singh et al., 2013; Overby et al., 2006; Weill et al., 2021). Firms with expedited decision-making processes and effective communication systems can respond more rapidly to market opportunities and threats (Gunasekaran, 1999; Sambamurthy et al., 2003). In agricultural contexts, where production and market conditions can change rapidly, organizational agility enables firms to coordinate activities, allocate resources, and adjust strategies in a timely manner (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011; Teece et al., 2016).

Hypothesis 1d (H1d): Organizational agility positively influences marketing performance.

2.4 Contextual Factors: Geographic Isolation and Resource Constraints

Geographic isolation represents a critical contextual factor shaping the relationship between strategic agility and marketing performance in agricultural contexts (Stifel & Minten, 2008; Lowder et al., 2016; Tschirley & Riley, 2021). Firms in geographically isolated regions face unique challenges, including limited market access, inadequate infrastructure, restricted information flows, and reduced institutional support (Roumiyani et al., 2017; Wuepper et al., 2021). These constraints may moderate the effectiveness of agility capabilities in several ways.

First, geographic isolation may amplify the importance of product agility, as firms have limited options for market diversification and must therefore optimize their product offerings for available markets (Kamble et al., 2020; Basso and Antle, 2020; Kumar et al., 2023). Second, isolation may increase the criticality of people and knowledge agility, as firms cannot easily recruit external expertise and must therefore develop internal human capital capabilities (Crawford, 2006). Third, cooperative agility may be particularly important in isolated contexts, as firms must develop collaborative arrangements to overcome market access constraints and achieve economies of scale (Kilelu et al., 2013; Markelova et al., 2009). Fourth, organizational agility may be constrained in isolated contexts due to limited

institutional support and infrastructure, potentially weakening its relationship with marketing performance (Singh et al., 2013; Overby et al., 2006).

Based on these contextual considerations, and drawing on prior research suggesting differential effects of agility dimensions (Ahammad et al., 2021; Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2020), we propose the following additional hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Product agility and people and knowledge agility have stronger positive effects on marketing performance than cooperative agility and organizational agility in geographically isolated agricultural contexts.

While we expect all agility dimensions to positively influence marketing performance (H1a-H1d), we hypothesize that product agility and people and knowledge agility will demonstrate stronger effects in geographically isolated contexts. This is consistent with resource-based logic, suggesting that internal capabilities may be more critical when external resources and institutional support are limited (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984; Peteraf, 1993). Furthermore, it aligns with dynamic capabilities theory, which emphasizes the importance of internal reconfiguration capabilities in resource-constrained environments (Teece, 2007; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Schilke, 2014).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

This study was conducted in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, located in southwestern Iran. The province is characterized by mountainous terrain as part of the larger Zagros Mountain range, with elevations exceeding 4,000 meters. This topography creates diverse microclimates influencing agricultural practices while simultaneously constraining transportation and infrastructure development (Gheiji et al., 2020). The province includes several valleys and plateaus providing arable land, but village geographic isolation complicates market access and essential service delivery, reinforcing cycles of economic deprivation.

The selection of this study context was purposive, based on several criteria. First, the province exhibits characteristics typical of geographically isolated agricultural regions in developing countries, including limited market access, infrastructure constraints, and economic vulnerability (Stifel and Minten, 2008; Lowder et al., 2016; Tschirley and Riley, 2021). Second, the predominantly agricultural economy, with crops including wheat, barley, and various fruits, alongside livestock farming, represents a context where marketing performance is critical for rural livelihoods. Third, the region's challenges—including climatic fluctuations, market volatility, and limited adoption of modern agricultural practices—reflect conditions common in many developing country agricultural contexts (Sow et al., 2023). This context enables investigation of how strategic agility capabilities can help firms overcome geographical isolation and achieve marketing effectiveness.

3.2. Methodology

This research employs a cross-sectional survey design, which is appropriate for examining relationships among variables and testing hypotheses (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The study population comprised 1,100 gardeners actively engaged in agricultural production in the province. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size determination, we selected 285 respondents through simple random sampling to ensure representativeness (Cochran, 1977). This sampling approach minimizes selection bias and enables generalizability of findings to the broader population of agricultural firms in similar contexts.

Data were collected through face-to-face structured interviews using a standardized questionnaire. This approach was selected for several reasons: high illiteracy rates in rural areas precluded self-administration; face-to-face interviews enabled clarification of questions and ensured response completeness; and the approach facilitated building rapport with respondents in traditional rural communities. Interviews were conducted by trained enumerators familiar with the local context and agricultural practices.

The questionnaire comprised three sections addressing marketing performance, strategic agility dimensions, and demographic characteristics. All multi-item measures employed Likert scales with established validity and reliability in prior research. Table 1 provides comprehensive measurement details.

Table 1. Construct Measurement and Reliability Analysis

Construct	Items	Definitions	Loading range	CR	AVE	Alpha
Product Agility	9	It encompasses the community's interest in conversion industries, commitment to value addition, quality of information received from agricultural experts, innovation in service offerings, and the trust and cooperation among suppliers and customers. This agility enables gardeners to respond proactively to market demands and optimize their business strategies, ultimately driving economic success within the agricultural sector. 9 Likert scale items determine the responsiveness and adaptability of gardeners in a community regarding their ability to effectively engage with market opportunities, enhance product offerings, and foster sustainable relationships with stakeholders.	0.52- 0.79	0.91	0.53	0.91
People and Knowledge Agility	7	This agility reflects the community's overall ability to adapt, grow, and improve through open communication, collective efforts, and supportive networks, ultimately fostering a resilient agricultural environment. It is measured using a survey instrument consisting of seven statements, each evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to determine the capacity of gardeners within a community to effectively share knowledge, collaborate in planning and decision-making, adhere to cooperative regulations, engage in expert-led training, recognize the value of development initiatives, receive timely compensation for damages, and access skilled horticultural workers.	0.71- 0.80	0.91	0.59	0.92
Cooperative Agility	4	This agility reflects the collaborative capabilities of the gardening community to respond to market needs, emphasizing strategic timing, product integrity, and customer engagement as critical components for fostering a competitive advantage and sustaining growth in the agricultural sector. The variable is measured by 4 Likert scale items measuring the ability of gardeners within a community to effectively time their offerings, introduce products to the market early, maintain commitment to quality, and establish strong customer relationships.	0.57- 0.80	0.83	0.55	0.85
Organizational Agility	4*	Encompasses the responsiveness, flexibility, and the capacity of	0.54- 0.80	0.74	0.50	0.72

Construct	Items	Definitions	Loading range	CR	AVE	Alpha
		agricultural organizations in a community to make swift decisions, provide accessible performance-enhancing information, and effectively communicate strategies to gardeners to adapt to evolving circumstances, optimize operational performance, and ensure enhancing overall productivity and efficiency in agricultural practices. Organizational Agility is evaluated through three statements, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), reflecting Expedited Decision-Making Processes, Accessibility of Performance-Enhancing Information, and Effective Communication of Gardening Strategies.				
Marketing Performance	3	Emphasizes the ability of businesses to track customer acquisition, retention rates, and sales growth, providing a comprehensive understanding of marketing impact on overall business performance on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always).	0.84-0.88	0.90	0.75	0.83

Abbreviations: AVE, average variance explained; CR, composite reliability.
Notes: Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended a CR value of 0.60 or more and an AVE greater than 0.4. Following the factor analysis, one item from organizational agility was excluded from the analysis due to low factor loadings.

a) Marketing Performance

Agricultural marketing performance was measured using Leonidou et al.'s (2013) three-item scale assessing: (1) customer acquisition relative to previous year, (2) customer retention rates, and (3) sales growth percentage. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never/strongly decrease to 5 = always/strongly increase). This measure captures key dimensions of marketing effectiveness, including market penetration, customer loyalty, and revenue growth (Katsikeas et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2009). Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 indicates good internal consistency.

b) Strategic Agility

Following Goldman et al.'s (1995) framework and subsequent operationalizations (Chan et al., 2017; Ahammad et al., 2021; Sambamurthy et al., 2003), strategic agility was measured across four dimensions:

Product agility (9 items): Assessed community interest in conversion industries, commitment to value addition, quality of information from agricultural experts, innovation in service offerings, and trust and cooperation among suppliers and customers (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$).

People and knowledge agility (7 items): Evaluated open knowledge sharing, team-based planning, cooperative rule adherence, expert-led training, perception of development initiatives, compensation receipt, and access to trained horticultural workers (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$).

Cooperative agility (4 items): Measured strategic timing of offerings, early market introduction, commitment to high-quality chemical-free products, and customer relationship maintenance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$).

Organizational agility (4 items, with one excluded after confirmatory factor analysis due to low factor loading): Captured expedited decision-making processes, accessibility of performance-enhancing information, and effective strategy communication (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.72$).

Items were rated on 5-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.74 to 0.91, and average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.50 to 0.75, exceeding recommended thresholds (CR $\geq$ 0.60; AVE $\geq$ 0.40) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

c) Control Variables

Consistent with prior research on organizational performance (Kale et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2015), we controlled for respondent characteristics that might influence marketing performance: gender, age, education level, agricultural experience, and income dependency on gardening. These controls account for potential confounding effects of individual and firm characteristics on the relationships of interest.

Because all variables were collected via a single questionnaire from the same respondents at one time, common method bias (CMB) was assessed. Harman's single-factor test was conducted using unrotated principal component analysis on all measurement items. The first factor accounted for 39.9% of the variance, which is below the 50% threshold, suggesting that CMB is not a serious concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Face validity was established through expert panel evaluation, with agricultural marketing experts and academics reviewing the questionnaire for item relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness. Adjustments were made based on their recommendations to ensure each item effectively evaluated intended constructs (DeVellis, 2017).

Construct validity was assessed through expert panel review, corrected item-to-total correlations, and principal-axis factor analysis. One item from organizational agility was excluded due to a low factor loading (<0.40). Retained items loaded on their intended constructs, and reliability and AVE values were acceptable (Table 1).

Discriminant validity was assessed using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion, with the square root of AVE for each construct exceeding inter-construct correlations (Table 4). This confirms that constructs are distinct and measure different aspects of strategic agility and marketing performance.

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process. Prior to interviews, informed consent was secured from each participant, who received comprehensive explanation of study objectives and involvement specifics. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without repercussions. Interview duration was monitored and maintained within reasonable limits to respect participant boundaries.

All collected data were anonymized to prevent individual identification. Personal information was stored securely and kept separate from data analysis files. Identifying information was removed from transcripts and reports to ensure responses could not be traced to participants. These precautions maintained ethical standards and built trust between researchers and participants, creating respectful environments for sharing perspectives.

d) Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in several stages. First, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, summarized respondent characteristics and variable distributions. Second, Pearson correlation analysis examined bivariate relationships among variables. Third, multiple regression analysis tested hypothesized relationships, with marketing performance as the dependent variable and agility dimensions as independent variables, controlling for demographic characteristics. Collinearity diagnostics (tolerance and variance inflation factor) assessed multicollinearity. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 21 software (Field, 2018).

4. Research Findings

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

Table 2 presents demographic characteristics of the 285 respondents. The sample is predominantly male (88.8%), reflecting gender patterns in agricultural entrepreneurship in the study region. Average respondent age is 51.7 years (SD = 12.3), indicating experienced agricultural practitioners. Education levels are relatively high for a rural developing country context: 38.3% hold bachelor's degrees or higher (30.2% bachelor's, and 8.1% master's degrees), while 29.5% hold a diploma and 13.3% hold an associate degree. However, 18.9% have no formal education, reflecting continuing educational challenges in rural areas. Notably, 36.5% of respondents are government retirees engaging in horticulture as a second occupation, suggesting agricultural entrepreneurship as a supplementary income source.

Agricultural experience averages 20.7 years (SD = 9.8), with 47.7% possessing 11-20 years and 29.5% possessing over 21 years of experience. This extensive experience suggests accumulated knowledge and skills that may enhance decision-making and innovative practices. Regarding income dependency, 27.7% derive less than 10% of income from gardening, 32.6% derive 10-30%, 29.5% derive 30-50%, and 10.2% derive over 50% of income from gardening activities. The substantial reliance on gardening for over half of respondents

(10.2%) underscores horticulture's livelihood significance, while the diversity of income dependency suggests differentiated support strategies may be necessary.

Table 2. Demographic landscape of the Respondents

Criteria	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	253	88.8%
	Female	32	11.2%
Education	No Education	38	13.3%
	High School Diploma	54	18.9%
	Associate Degree	84	29.5%
	Bachelor's Degree	86	30.2%
	Master's Degree	23	8.1%
Age	30 years and younger	56	19.6%
	31-45 years	49	17.2%
	46-55 years	130	45.6%
	56 years and older	50	17.5%
Experience in Agriculture	5-10 years	65	22.8%
	11-20 years	136	47.7%
	21 years and more	84	29.5%
Gardening Income Dependency	Lower that 10%	79	27.7%
	10-30%	93	32.6%
	30-50%	84	29.5%
	Upper than 50%	29	10.2%

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Agility Dimensions

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for strategic agility dimensions and individual items. Across dimensions, mean scores range from 2.51 to 3.88, indicating moderate to relatively high levels of agility. The highest overall means are observed for cooperative agility (mean range 3.57-3.73) and product agility (mean range 3.52-3.88), while organizational agility items receive the lowest scores (means 2.51-2.56). This pattern suggests that while agricultural firms exhibit relatively strong collaborative and product development capabilities, organizational structures and processes may be less agile.

Within product agility, "Value of Cooperation in Problem-Solving" (M = 3.88, SD = 0.97) and "Promotion of Value Addition by Officials" (M = 3.80, SD = 1.05) receive highest ratings, indicating recognition of collaboration and value addition importance. "Efforts to Identify New Profitable Services" (M = 3.52, SD = 1.02) receives lowest rating, suggesting opportunities for enhanced market orientation and service innovation. The coefficient of variation (CV) ranges from 0.25 to 0.31, indicating relatively consistent responses.

In people and knowledge agility, "Team-Based Planning for Harvest" (M = 3.47, SD = 1.10) and "Encouragement of Open Sharing of Feedback" (M = 3.29, SD = 1.06) receive highest ratings, suggesting collaborative planning emphasis. "Receipt of Compensation for Damages" (M = 3.02, SD = 1.08) and "Expert-Led Training on Pests and Diseases" (M = 3.09, SD = 1.09) receive lowest ratings, indicating gaps in compensation systems and professional development. CV ranges from 0.32 to 0.36, reflecting moderate variability.

Cooperative agility demonstrates consistently high ratings, with "Maintaining Customer Relationships" (M = 3.73, SD = 1.06) and "Importance of Early Market Introduction" (M = 3.69, SD = 1.05) receiving highest scores. This suggests strong emphasis on customer engagement and market timing. Organizational agility items receive substantially lower ratings, with "Accessibility of Performance-Enhancing Information" (M = 2.51, SD = 0.80) and "Effective Communication of Gardening Strategies" (M = 2.51, SD = 0.85) indicating significant organizational constraints. These findings suggest that while agricultural firms demonstrate collaborative and product agility, they face challenges in decision-making speed and

information accessibility—critical organizational capabilities for strategic responsiveness.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of SA Dimensions in Agricultural Practices

SA dimensions	Criteria	Mean*	SD	CV
People and Knowledge Agility	Encouragement of Open Sharing of Feedback	3.29	1.06	0.32
	Team-Based Planning for Harvest	3.47	1.10	0.32
	Adherence to Cooperative Rules and Regulations	3.20	1.05	0.33
	Expert-Led Training on Pests and Diseases	3.09	1.09	0.35
	Perception of Development and Training Initiatives	3.25	1.16	0.36
	Receipt of Compensation for Damages	3.02	1.08	0.36
	Access to Trained Horticultural Workers	3.12	0.98	0.32
Product agility	Interest in Conversion Industries	3.60	1.04	0.29
	Promotion of Value Addition by Officials	3.80	1.05	0.28
	Perception of Information Provided by Supervisors	3.60	1.02	0.28
	Efforts to Identify New Profitable Services	3.52	1.02	0.29
	Perception of Responsiveness of Respected Organization	3.57	1.01	0.28
	Value of Cooperation in Problem-Solving	3.88	0.97	0.25
	Trust in Major Suppliers	3.59	1.10	0.31
	Preference for Long-Term Contracts with Suppliers	3.62	1.04	0.29
	Importance of Long-Term Customer Relationships	3.67	0.91	0.25
Cooperative Agility	Favorable Timing of Offerings	3.57	1.14	0.32
	Importance of Early Market Introduction	3.69	1.05	0.28
	Commitment to High-Quality, Chemical-Free Products	3.57	1.13	0.32
	Maintaining Customer Relationships	3.73	1.06	0.28
Organizational Agility	Expedited Decision-Making Processes	2.56	0.82	0.32
	Accessibility of Performance-Enhancing Information	2.51	0.80	0.32
	Effective Communication of Gardening Strategies	2.51	0.85	0.34

* Mean ranges 1-5.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 4 presents means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations among study variables. Marketing performance demonstrates significant positive correlations with all strategic agility dimensions: product agility ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), people and knowledge agility ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$), cooperative agility ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$), and organizational agility ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). These bivariate relationships provide preliminary support for hypotheses H1a-H1d, suggesting that higher agility levels are associated with superior marketing outcomes.

The strongest correlations with marketing performance are observed for people and knowledge agility and product agility, consistent with Hypothesis 2's expectation that these dimensions would demonstrate stronger effects. Cooperative and organizational agility, while significantly correlated with marketing performance, exhibit somewhat weaker bivariate relationships. This pattern suggests that internal capabilities (people, knowledge, and product development) may be more critical than external collaboration and structural agility in geographically isolated agricultural contexts.

Inter-correlations among agility dimensions range from 0.30 to 0.70, with all significant at $p < 0.01$. The strongest inter-dimension correlation is between product agility and cooperative agility ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting complementarity between internal product development capabilities and external collaborative arrangements. Organizational agility correlates moderately with people and knowledge agility ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that organizational structures may enable or constrain knowledge management and human capital development. The diagonal elements in Table 4 present square roots of AVE, exceeding all inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. Means, standard deviations, correlations, and product moment correlations between Marketing Performance, and the SA components.

Variable	Means (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing Performance	3.53 (0.85)	0.56				
Product Agility	3.64 (0.77)	0.62**	0.28			
People & Knowledge Agility	3.20 (0.88)	0.64**	0.45**	0.34		
Cooperative Agility	3.63(0.91)	0.53**	0.70**	0.37**	0.30	
Organizational Agility	2.52 (0.66)	0.52**	0.35**	0.60**	0.30**	0.25

Note: N= 285 listwise comparisons. Mean ranges 1-5. Standard deviations are given in parentheses. The diagonal values mentioned in bold represent the square root of AVE.
** $p < 0.01$.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test hypotheses, with marketing performance as the dependent variable and strategic agility dimensions as independent variables, controlling for demographic characteristics. Collinearity diagnostics confirmed acceptable levels: tolerance values exceeded 0.10 (range 0.30-0.72) and variance inflation factors (VIF) remained below 5 (range 1.39-3.32), indicating minimal multicollinearity concerns (Hair et al., 2010). The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.02 confirmed independence of errors.

Table 5 presents regression results. The overall model is highly significant ($F = 31.52$, $p < 0.001$), with an R-value of 0.76 and adjusted R^2 of 0.57, indicating that strategic agility dimensions collectively explain 57% of variance in marketing performance. This substantial explanatory power suggests that strategic agility is a critical driver of marketing effectiveness in geographically isolated agricultural contexts.

Supporting Hypothesis 1a, product agility emerges as the strongest predictor of marketing performance ($\beta = 0.440$, $p < 0.001$). This finding reinforces the critical importance of rapid product development and adaptation capabilities for achieving marketing effectiveness. Consistent with dynamic capabilities theory (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2007), agricultural firms with higher product agility can more effectively align offerings with market demands, achieving superior customer satisfaction and sales growth. The magnitude of this effect suggests that product agility represents the most impactful capability for marketing performance in this context.

Supporting Hypothesis 1b, people and knowledge agility demonstrate a significant positive relationship with marketing performance ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < 0.01$). This finding underscores the importance of human capital, knowledge management, and collaborative decision-making for marketing effectiveness. Agricultural firms investing in workforce development, knowledge sharing systems, and collaborative planning can better interpret market signals and implement responsive strategies (Al-azzam et al., 2018; Tschirley & Riley, 2021). The coefficient magnitude, while smaller than product agility, confirms that people and knowledge agility is a meaningful driver of marketing performance.

Hypothesis 1c, proposing a positive relationship between cooperative agility and marketing performance, receives no support. The coefficient for cooperative agility is positive ($\beta = 0.106$) but not statistically significant at conventional levels. This suggests that while cooperative arrangements may contribute to marketing effectiveness, their impact is relatively modest compared to internal capabilities in this context. Several explanations are plausible: geographic isolation may limit the effectiveness of external collaborations; smallholder agricultural firms may have limited capacity to develop and leverage cooperative relationships; or measurement of cooperative agility may not fully capture collaborative dynamics relevant to marketing performance in this context.

Hypothesis 1d, proposing a positive relationship between organizational agility and marketing performance, also receives partial support. The coefficient for organizational agility is positive ($\beta = 0.136$) but not statistically significant. This finding suggests that internal organizational structures and decision-making processes may be less influential than product and people capabilities for marketing performance in geographically isolated agricultural contexts. Constraints such as limited infrastructure, institutional voids, and management capacity may reduce organizational agility's effectiveness (Singh et al., 2013; Overby et al., 2006).

The pattern of coefficients is descriptively consistent with Hypothesis 2, as product agility and people/knowledge agility show larger coefficients than cooperative and organizational agility (β = 0.440, 0.254, 0.106, and 0.136 respectively). However, because the latter two are not statistically significant and no formal test of coefficient equality was conducted, Hypothesis 2 should be interpreted cautiously and not as fully statistically supported.

Control variables show mixed associations with marketing performance. Education level demonstrates a significant positive association (β = 0.15, $p < 0.05$), consistent with human capital theory suggesting that education enhances marketing capabilities. Agricultural experience shows a positive but non-significant relationship (β = 0.08, ns), while income dependency on gardening demonstrates a negative but non-significant association (β = -0.06, ns). Gender and age are not significantly associated with marketing performance.

Table 5. Multiple linear regression analyses of Marketing Performance onto Product Agility, People and Knowledge Agility, Cooperative Agility, and Organizational Agility.

Variable	*β*	F	R	R^2
Product Agility	0.440**	31.52**	0.76	0.57**
People and Knowledge Agility	0.254**			
Cooperative Agility	0.106ns			
Organizational Agility	0.136ns			
Education	0.15*			
Agricultural Experience	0.08 ns			
Income Dependency	-0.06 ns			
Gender	-0.02 ns			
Age	0.01 ns			

*** p<0.01, * p < 0.05, ns: not significant*

5. Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between strategic agility dimensions and marketing performance among agricultural firms in geographically isolated regions. Our findings offer several theoretical and practical contributions while raising important questions for future research.

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

This research extends strategic agility theory to agricultural contexts, demonstrating its applicability in a sector characterized by distinct operational conditions including production seasonality, biological uncertainties, and pronounced market imperfections (Kamble et al., 2020; Wolfert et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2023). The explanatory power of our model (R^2 = 0.57) suggests that strategic agility dimensions collectively account for substantial variance in marketing performance, validating the relevance of agility capabilities for agricultural firms. This extends prior research focused predominantly on manufacturing and service sectors (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011; Shin et al., 2015) and responds to calls for more contextually grounded agility research (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2020).

First, why does product agility emerge as the strongest predictor (β = 0.440)? In isolated agricultural contexts, firms face severe market access constraints and cannot easily diversify across geographies. Product agility—the capacity to rapidly adapt product offerings, improve quality, and pursue value addition—directly addresses the most immediate bottleneck: matching what is produced to what available markets demand. Unlike organizational or cooperative agility, product agility is largely under the firm's internal control and does not depend on external institutional support or partner reliability. This aligns with resource-based logic: when external resources are scarce, firms must leverage internal, controllable capabilities (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993). Moreover, dynamic capabilities theory suggests that sensing and seizing opportunities manifest most tangibly in product-level changes (Teece, 2007; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Schilke, 2014). In isolated regions, where market information is imperfect and transport costs are high, the ability to modify products—through processing, grading, or timing—becomes the primary lever for achieving marketing effectiveness. This finding contradicts studies in less constrained contexts where organizational or cooperative agility often rival product agility (e.g.,

Kurniawan et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2013), suggesting that geographic isolation moderates the relative importance of agility dimensions.

Second, why is organizational agility non-significant (β = 0.136)? Prior research in manufacturing and service sectors has consistently found organizational agility—expedited decision-making, effective communication, and information accessibility—to enhance performance (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011; Shin et al., 2015). However, in isolated agricultural regions, organizational agility may be constrained by infrastructure deficits, institutional voids, and limited managerial capacity. Even if a firm's internal decision-making is agile, external bottlenecks—poor roads, unreliable information networks, and weak market institutions—can prevent agile decisions from translating into marketing outcomes. Additionally, our measurement of organizational agility focused on internal communication and information access; in isolated settings, these may be necessary but insufficient conditions. This finding supports contingency perspectives (Ahammad et al., 2021) and suggests that organizational agility's effectiveness is contingent on complementary external infrastructure. It also contradicts studies that report universal benefits of organizational agility (Weill et al., 2021), highlighting the need for contextual boundary conditions.

Third, why does cooperative agility fail to reach significance (β = 0.106)? Cooperative arrangements are widely promoted as a remedy for smallholder market access (Markelova et al., 2009; Kilelu et al., 2013). Yet in geographically isolated regions, potential partners are also isolated, resource-poor, and often lack the institutional support to sustain collaboration. Cooperation may occur, but without market linkages or bargaining power, it may not translate into measurable marketing performance. Moreover, trust and enforcement mechanisms are weaker in remote areas, increasing transaction costs. Our findings contrast with studies in better-connected regions where cooperative agility significantly enhances performance (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Vorley et al., 2009). This suggests that geographic isolation moderates the cooperation–performance link, consistent with emerging research on contextual contingencies in strategic agility (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). It also implies that policy interventions promoting cooperatives must simultaneously address infrastructure and market access to be effective.

Fourth, this study contributes to entrepreneurship research by examining how resource-constrained entrepreneurs in peripheral regions leverage organizational capabilities to overcome environmental constraints (Naminse and Zhuang, 2018). Our findings suggest that strategic agility serves as a mechanism enabling agricultural entrepreneurs to navigate isolation and achieve competitive advantage, extending understanding of entrepreneurial capability development in constrained contexts.

These findings contribute to theory by demonstrating that strategic agility is not universally beneficial across all dimensions; its effects are context-dependent. In resource-constrained, peripheral regions, internal capabilities (product and people/knowledge agility) are more potent than external-facing capabilities (cooperative and organizational agility). This extends dynamic capabilities theory by specifying that in isolated contexts, sensing and seizing capabilities are best manifested through product innovation and human capital development, while transforming capabilities (organizational agility) may require supportive institutional conditions to become effective. It also responds to calls for more contextually grounded agility research and provides a nuanced counterpoint to studies that assume all agility dimensions are equally impactful.

5.2 Practical Implications

Our findings offer several implications for agricultural entrepreneurs and small business owners. First, the strong effect of product agility suggests that firms should prioritize developing capabilities for rapid product development and adaptation. This may involve investing in market research, developing flexible production systems, building relationships with input suppliers that enable quick adjustments, and cultivating organizational routines for product innovation. In geographically isolated contexts, where market access is limited, optimizing product offerings for available markets becomes particularly critical.

Second, the significant effect of people and knowledge agility indicates that human capital development and knowledge management deserve strategic priority. Agricultural entrepreneurs should invest in workforce training, develop knowledge sharing systems, encourage collaborative planning, and build learning-oriented organizational cultures. In isolated contexts where external expertise is

limited, developing internal capabilities becomes essential for effective marketing.

Third, although cooperative and organizational agility were not statistically significant in our model, their positive coefficients suggest they may still contribute to marketing performance, particularly when combined with other capabilities. Entrepreneurs should not neglect these dimensions but should recognize that their effectiveness may depend on contextual conditions. Developing cooperative relationships that directly enhance market access and product quality, and improving decision-making processes and information systems, may yield benefits when aligned with product and people capabilities.

Fourth, policymakers and development practitioners should consider strategic agility development as a mechanism for enhancing agricultural competitiveness in peripheral regions. Infrastructure investments, training programs, and institutional reforms that facilitate product development and knowledge management may be particularly effective. Programs supporting market research, value addition, and product quality improvement can enhance product agility. Training initiatives focused on marketing skills, knowledge sharing, and collaborative decision-making can strengthen people and knowledge agility.

5.3 Contextual Implications for Geographically Isolated Regions

The study's focus on a geographically isolated region offers specific insights for rural development and agricultural entrepreneurship in peripheral areas. The substantial variance in marketing performance explained by strategic agility suggests that organizational capabilities can help firms overcome geographic disadvantages. This is encouraging for policy and practice, as it suggests that investments in capacity building can mitigate isolation effects.

The strong effect of product agility in this context suggests that value addition—processing raw agricultural products to increase their value and marketability—represents a particularly promising strategy. Given limited market access, firms that can differentiate products through quality improvements, processing, or branding may achieve competitive advantage. This aligns with value chain upgrading strategies advocated in agricultural development literature (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001).

The importance of people and knowledge agility suggests that training, education, and knowledge management systems are critical for overcoming information asymmetries and skill gaps prevalent in isolated regions. Investment in agricultural extension services, farmer field schools, and peer learning networks may enhance marketing capabilities (Crawford, 2006; Kumar et al., 2023). Digital technologies enabling information access and distance learning may be particularly valuable in geographically dispersed contexts (Wolfert et al., 2017).

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting our findings. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. While our theoretical framework posits that strategic agility causes marketing performance, reverse causality or omitted variable bias cannot be ruled out. Longitudinal research tracking firms over time would provide stronger evidence of causal relationships.

Second, the study's focus on a single province in Iran may limit generalizability. While this context provides valuable insights into geographically isolated agricultural regions, findings may not fully extend to other settings. Comparative studies across regions with different geographic, institutional, and market conditions would help establish boundary conditions of our findings.

Third, reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response bias, although face validity assessment and reliability checks mitigate this concern. Future research could incorporate objective performance indicators, such as sales data or market share statistics, to complement perceptual measures.

Fourth, although Harman's single-factor test indicated that common method bias was not severe (the first unrotated factor accounted for 39.9% of the variance, below the 50% threshold), all variables were collected through a single questionnaire from the same respondents at the same time. Common method bias therefore cannot be completely ruled out. Moreover, because the study employed Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression rather than structural equation modelling, the common latent factor and marker variable techniques were not applicable. Future research using SEM should incorporate these procedures to provide stronger evidence regarding common method bias.

Fifth, although our control variables account for individual characteristics, we lack firm-level control variables such as firm size, age, and ownership structure. These factors may influence both agility and marketing performance. Future research should include comprehensive firm-level controls.

Sixth, our measurement of strategic agility, while based on established frameworks, may not capture all relevant dimensions. Emerging technologies, digital capabilities, and sustainability practices represent potential agility dimensions that could influence marketing performance in agricultural contexts (Kamble et al., 2020; Wolfert et al., 2017; Wamba et al., 2020). Future research should explore these dimensions.

Seventh, the non-significant findings for cooperative and organizational agility may reflect measurement issues or contextual particularities rather than actual absence of effects. Qualitative research could explore how firms develop and leverage these capabilities in practice, identifying mechanisms and contingencies not captured in our quantitative model.

Future research should address several promising directions. First, investigation of moderating factors—such as market dynamism, competitive intensity, and institutional quality—would help establish boundary conditions for agility effects. Second, longitudinal research could examine how agility capabilities evolve over time as firms develop and markets change. Third, research exploring the micro-foundations of agility capabilities—the individual skills, routines, and processes that constitute agility—would provide more actionable guidance. Fourth, research on the relationship between agility, innovation, and long-term performance would illuminate sustainability implications. Fifth, cross-cultural and comparative research could identify how national contexts influence agility development and effectiveness.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between strategic agility dimensions and marketing performance among agricultural firms in geographically isolated regions. Drawing on resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theory, we hypothesized that four agility dimensions—product agility, people and knowledge agility, cooperative agility, and organizational agility—positively influence marketing performance, with internal capabilities demonstrating stronger effects in resource-constrained contexts.

Our empirical findings from 285 agricultural firms in a mountainous region of Iran provide support for these propositions. Strategic agility explains 57% of variance in marketing performance, demonstrating its critical importance for agricultural firms in geographically isolated regions. Product agility emerges as the strongest predictor, underscoring the primacy of product development capabilities. People and knowledge agility demonstrates significant positive effects, reinforcing the importance of human capital and knowledge management. Cooperative and organizational agility show positive but non-significant relationships, suggesting their effectiveness may be moderated by contextual constraints.

These findings contribute to strategic agility theory by extending it to agricultural contexts and identifying the relative importance of different agility dimensions. They also offer practical guidance for agricultural entrepreneurs and policymakers seeking to enhance marketing performance in peripheral regions. The strong effects of internal capabilities suggest that investments in product development and human capital should be prioritized, while cooperative and organizational capabilities may require supportive institutional conditions to achieve their full potential.

As agricultural systems face increasing pressures from climate change, market volatility, and global competition (Darnhofer et al., 2016; Basso and Antle, 2020; Wuepper et al., 2021), developing strategic agility capabilities becomes imperative for firm survival and growth. This is particularly true for firms in geographically isolated regions, where isolation compounds environmental challenges. Our findings suggest that strategic agility offers a pathway to overcome these challenges, enabling agricultural entrepreneurs to achieve marketing effectiveness and sustainable competitive advantage.

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Conflict of Interest

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Original Article

عملکرد بازاریابی در بنگاه‌های کشاورزیِ واقع در مناطق جغرافیایی دورافتاده در استان کهگیلویه و بویراحمد

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چکیده مبسوط

۱. مقدمه

بنگاه‌های کشاورزی در مناطق کم‌دسترس و دورافتاده جغرافیایی ، به‌دلیل محدودیت دسترسی به بازار، ضعف زیرساخت‌های حمل‌ونقل، نابرابری در دسترسی به اطلاعات و محدودیت حمایت‌های نهادی، با چالش‌های متعددی در زمینه بازاریابی و رقابت‌پذیری مواجه‌اند. این شرایط، به‌ویژه در مناطق کوهستانی و برخوردار از منابع محدود، ضرورت توسعه قابلیت‌های سازمانی برای سازگاری با تغییرات محیطی و بهبود عملکرد بازاریابی را دوچندان می‌کند. چابکی راهبردی به‌عنوان توانایی بنگاه در انطباق سریع راهبردها، محصولات و منابع با تغییرات محیطی، می‌تواند سازوکاری مؤثر برای مواجهه با این محدودیت‌ها باشد. با وجود توجه روزافزون به چابکی راهبردی در مطالعات مدیریت، نقش ابعاد مختلف آن در عملکرد بازاریابی بنگاه‌های کشاورزی مناطق دورافتاده کمتر بررسی شده است. ازاین‌رو، پژوهش حاضر با هدف تحلیل تأثیر ابعاد چابکی راهبردی بر عملکرد بازاریابی بنگاه‌های کشاورزی در استان کهگیلویه و بویراحمد انجام شده است.

۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

مبانی نظری پژوهش بر دو رویکرد «دیدگاه مبتنی بر منابع» و «نظریه قابلیت‌های پویا» استوار است. بر اساس دیدگاه مبتنی بر منابع، مزیت رقابتی بنگاه از منابع و قابلیت‌های ارزشمند و متمایز آن ناشی می‌شود؛ درحالی‌که نظریه قابلیت‌های پویا بر توانایی بنگاه در شناسایی فرصت‌ها، بهره‌برداری از آن‌ها و بازآرایی منابع متناسب با تغییرات محیطی تأکید دارد. در چارچوب این دو رویکرد، چابکی راهبردی در چهار بُعد شامل چابکی محصول، چابکی افراد و دانش، چابکی همکاری و چابکی سازمانی بررسی می‌شود. چابکی محصول به توانایی اصلاح و توسعه محصولات و ایجاد ارزش افزوده متناسب با نیاز بازار اشاره دارد؛ چابکی افراد و دانش، یادگیری، تبادل اطلاعات و توسعه سرمایه انسانی را دربرمی‌گیرد؛ چابکی همکاری، ناظر بر بهره‌گیری از روابط مشارکتی و ظرفیت‌های بیرونی است؛ و چابکی سازمانی، انعطاف‌پذیری فرایندها، سرعت تصمیم‌گیری و دسترسی به اطلاعات را منعکس می‌کند. بر این اساس، انتظار می‌رود هر چهار بُعد بر عملکرد بازاریابی، شامل جذب و حفظ مشتری و رشد فروش، تأثیر مثبت داشته باشند؛ بااین‌حال، در مناطق جغرافیایی منزوی، قابلیت‌های درونی بنگاه، به‌ویژه چابکی محصول و چابکی افراد و دانش، ممکن است نقش برجسته‌تری ایفا کنند.

۳. روش تحقیق

پژوهش حاضر از نظر هدف، کاربردی و از نظر روش، توصیفی ـ تحلیلی با رویکرد کمی و طرح پیمایش مقطعی است. جامعه آماری پژوهش شامل ۱۱۰۰ باغدار فعال در استان کهگیلویه و بویراحمد بود که بر اساس جدول کرجسی و مورگان، ۲۸۵ نفر از آنان با استفاده از روش نمونه‌گیری تصادفی ساده انتخاب شدند. داده‌ها از طریق مصاحبه‌های ساختاریافته حضوری و پرسش‌نامه استاندارد گردآوری شد. ابزار پژوهش، چابکی راهبردی را در چهار بُعد یادشده و عملکرد بازاریابی را بر اساس شاخص‌های جذب مشتری، حفظ مشتری و رشد فروش اندازه‌گیری کرد. روایی ابزار با نظر متخصصان و پایایی آن با استفاده از ضریب آلفای کرونباخ ارزیابی شد؛ مقادیر آلفا برای سازه‌های پژوهش در دامنه ۰/۷۲ تا ۰/۹۲ قرار داشت. برای تحلیل داده‌ها از آمار توصیفی، ضریب همبستگی پیرسون و رگرسیون خطی چندگانه با کنترل متغیرهای جنسیت، سن، تحصیلات، سابقه فعالیت کشاورزی و میزان وابستگی درآمدی به باغداری در نرم‌افزار SPSS نسخه ۲۱ استفاده شد.

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۴ .یافته‌های تحقیق

نتایج تحلیل توصیفی نشان داد که میانگین چابکی محصول و چابکی همکاری به‌ترتیب ۳/۶۴ و ۳/۶۳ از پنج و میانگین چابکی نیروی انسانی و دانش ۳/۲۰ است؛ در مقابل، چابکی سازمانی با میانگین ۲/۵۲ پایین‌ترین سطح را داشت. همچنین، همبستگی پیرسون بیانگر رابطه مثبت و معنادار عملکرد بازاریابی با چابکی محصول (r=۰/۶۲)، چابکی افراد و دانش (r=۰/۶۴)، چابکی مشارکتی (r=۰/۵۳) و چابکی سازمانی (r=۰/۵۲) بود (در همه موارد، p<۰/۰۱). نتایج رگرسیون چندگانه نیز معناداری کلی مدل را تأیید کرد (p<۰/۰۱؛ F =۳۱/۵۲) به‌گونه‌ای که ابعاد چابکی راهبردی در مجموع ۵۷ درصد از تغییرات عملکرد بازاریابی را تبیین کردند (R2 تعدیل شده= ۰/۵۷). چابکی محصول با ضریب استانداردشده ۰/۴۴۰ (p<۰/۰۱) قوی‌ترین پیش‌بین عملکرد بازاریابی بود و پس از آن، چابکی نیروی انسانی و دانش با ضریب ۰/۲۵۴ رابطه مثبت و معناداری نشان داد (p<۰/۰۱). در مقابل، ضرایب چابکی مشارکتی (۰/۱۰۶) و چابکی سازمانی (۰/۱۳۶) مثبت، اما از نظر آماری غیرمعنادار بودند. همچنین، سطح تحصیلات با عملکرد بازاریابی رابطه مثبت و معناداری داشت (β =۰/۱۵، p<۰/۰۵)، درحالی‌که سایر متغیرهای کنترلی رابطه معناداری نشان ندادند.

۵ .بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

یافته‌های پژوهش نشان می‌دهد که چابکی راهبردی در تبیین عملکرد بازاریابی بنگاه‌های کشاورزی مناطق جغرافیایی منزوی اهمیت دارد؛ بااین‌حال، ابعاد مختلف آن از قدرت تبیین یکسانی برخوردار نیستند. برتری چابکی محصول را می‌توان با اهمیت انطباق ویژگی‌های محصول، ارتقای کیفیت، توسعه فعالیت‌های فرآوری و ایجاد ارزش افزوده با نیازهای بازارهای در دسترس توضیح داد. همچنین، اثر معنادار چابکی افراد و دانش بر ضرورت تقویت سرمایه انسانی، آموزش تخصصی، یادگیری مستمر و تبادل اطلاعات در محیط‌های محدود از نظر دسترسی به دانش و تخصص بیرونی تأکید دارد. غیرمعنادار بودن ضرایب چابکی همکاری و چابکی سازمانی، با وجود همبستگی مثبت آن‌ها با عملکرد بازاریابی، نشان می‌دهد که روابط دومتغیره لزوماً به معنای اثر مستقل و معنادار در مدل رگرسیونی نیستند. محدودیت زیرساخت‌ها، ضعف پیوندهای بازار و ناکافی بودن حمایت‌های نهادی می‌توانند از عوامل احتمالی این وضعیت باشند؛ بااین‌حال، نقش تعدیل‌گری این عوامل در پژوهش حاضر مستقیماً آزمون نشده است. بر این اساس، پیشنهاد می‌شود بنگاه‌های کشاورزی بر بهبود کیفیت و تنوع محصولات، فرآوری و ارزش افزوده، شناخت نیازهای بازار و ارتقای مهارت‌های بازاریابی و دانش فنی تمرکز کنند. همچنین، سیاست‌گذاران توسعه روستایی با تقویت زیرساخت‌های ارتباطی و حمل‌ونقل، گسترش خدمات ترویجی و آموزشی، تسهیل دسترسی به اطلاعات بازار و حمایت از سازوکارهای همکاری مؤثر، زمینه بهره‌گیری بیشتر از قابلیت‌های راهبردی را فراهم آورند. با توجه به مقطعی بودن پژوهش و تمرکز آن بر یک استان، تعمیم نتایج باید با احتیاط انجام شود و بررسی‌های طولی و تطبیقی در مناطق مختلف برای تبیین دقیق‌تر روابط علّی و شرایط اثرگذاری ابعاد چابکی راهبردی ضرورت دارد.

کلیدواژه‌ها: چابکی استراتژیک، عملکرد بازاریابی، کارآفرینی کشاورزی، دیدگاه مبتنی بر منابع، قابلیت‌های پویا، انزوای جغرافیایی.

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