

Strategic agility in international business

By: Shlomo Y. Tarba, Jędrzej George Frynas, Yipeng Liu, Geoffrey Wood, [Riikka M. Sarala](#), Stav Fainshmidt

Tarba S. Y., Frynas, G. J., Liu, Y., Wood, G., Sarala, R. M., & Fainshmidt, S. 2023. Strategic Agility in International Business. *Journal of World Business*, 58(2). DOI: 10.1016/j.jwb.2022.101411



This work is licensed under [a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).

Made available courtesy of Elsevier: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2022.101411>

Abstract:

It has become something of a truism to say that companies face challenges in coping with the rapid rate, and increasing complexity, of environmental, social, political and economic change (Fernhaber & Zou, 2022). What sets the present time apart is that such changes are likely to be of an unprecedented scale and scope, with past recipes for coping often no longer being tenable, hence highlighting the importance of strategic agility (e.g., Ahammad, Basu, Munjal, Clegg, & Bazel-Shoham, 2021; Boojihawon, Richeri, Liu, & Chicksand, 2021; Montiel, Cuervo-Cazurra, Park, Antolín-López, & Husted, 2021). Strategically agile firms develop new ways to manage business transformation and renewal, developing learning and knowledge transfer skills founded on an adaptive corporate culture. While the literature on strategic agility has been growing rapidly in recent years, research on the subject in the dynamic context of emerging and transitional markets is rather more limited. Although there is an emerging body of conceptual and applied research, it is based on the experience of a limited range of countries, and many opportunities remain for further theoretical development (see, for example, Shams, Vrontis, Belyaeva, Ferraris, & Czinkota, 2021; Sampath, Bhattacharyya, & Krishnamoorthy, 2021; Adomako et al., 2022). Yet, it can be argued that the importance of strategic agility is even greater in emerging and transitional markets than in developed ones, given the more fluid nature of the former's institutional supports and their lower availability of systemic resources suited to deal with grand challenges.

Keywords: strategic agility | international business

Article:

1. Introduction

It has become something of a truism to say that companies face challenges in coping with the rapid rate, and increasing complexity, of environmental, social, political and economic change (Fernhaber & Zou, 2022). What sets the present time apart is that such changes are likely to be of an unprecedented scale and scope, with past recipes for coping often no longer being tenable, hence highlighting the importance of strategic agility (e.g., Ahammad, Basu, Munjal, Clegg, & Bazel-Shoham, 2021; Boojihawon, Richeri, Liu, & Chicksand, 2021; Montiel, Cuervo-Cazurra, Park,

Antolín-López, & Husted, 2021). Strategically agile firms develop new ways to manage business transformation and renewal, developing learning and knowledge transfer skills founded on an adaptive corporate culture. While the literature on strategic agility has been growing rapidly in recent years, research on the subject in the dynamic context of emerging and transitional markets is rather more limited. Although there is an emerging body of conceptual and applied research, it is based on the experience of a limited range of countries, and many opportunities remain for further theoretical development (see, for example, Shams, Vrontis, Belyaeva, Ferraris, & Czinkota, 2021; Sampath, Bhattacharyya, & Krishnamoorthy, 2021; Adomako et al., 2022). Yet, it can be argued that the importance of strategic agility is even greater in emerging and transitional markets than in developed ones, given the more fluid nature of the former's institutional supports and their lower availability of systemic resources suited to deal with grand challenges.

In other words, it can be argued that, in the presence of less predictable and less effective institutions, firm-specific advantages such as agility matter more; particularly if a firm engages both in international collaborative partnerships and in mergers and acquisitions (M&As) (Brueller, Carmeli, & Drori, 2014; Junni, Sarala, Tarba, & Weber, 2015b).

Strategic agility has emerged as a vibrant research stream, with the concept having also received attention in the practitioner community (Doz & Kosonen, 2008a; Doz & Kosonen, 2008b; Weber & Tarba, 2014; Ferraris, Degbey, Singh, Bresciani, Castellano, Fiano, & Couturier, 2022). Strategic agility, in general, relates to a firm's ability to constantly adapt to changing and uncertain environments (Goldman et al., 1995). More specifically, Doz and Kosonen (2008a, 2008b) suggested that strategic agility consists of three meta-capabilities—namely, strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity. Strategic agility requires the invention of new business models and new categories of products and services, rather than the mere rearranging of old ones (Wilson & Doz, 2011). Hence, strategically agile companies focus on new ways to manage business transformation and renewal, the development of learning and knowledge transfer skills, an adaptive corporate culture, and other such core competencies (Doz & Kosonen, 2008a; Doz & Kosonen, 2010; Weber & Tarba, 2014).

The strategic agility challenge lies in matching a firm's strategy with its resources—such as capital, human resources, intellectual property, advanced manufacturing and information technologies—transferring knowledge, building a post-acquisition integration capability, developing the relevant coordination mechanisms between multinational headquarters and their subsidiaries, adapting the CEO's leadership style to the ever-changing business environment, preparing the organization to reverse any ineffective strategic decisions, finding the optimal market position, and devising the best product/service mix (Combs, Ketchen Jr, Ireland, & Webb, 2011; Nadkarni & Herrmann, 2010; Shimizu & Hitt, 2004; Nyamruna & Freeman, 2021).

These challenges, which are commonly encountered by firms in today's highly competitive global environment, necessitate a deeper understanding of strategic agility, its theoretical underpinnings, its potential micro-foundations, and its implications for firm performance (Weber and Tarba, 2014). In order to attain strategic agility, it is important for organizations to develop the key capabilities needed to accelerate the renewal and transformation of their existing business models (Bock, Opsahl, George, & Gann, 2012). For instance, human resource management (HRM) practices may be conducive to governing any tensions associated with organizational change and transformation (Burgess, Strauss, Currie, and Wood, 2015; Junni, Sarala, Tarba, Liu, & Cooper, 2015a). Furthermore, the leadership's ability to manage strategic paradoxes may enable strategic agility (Lewis, Andriopoulos, & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2014). Strategic agility, in turn, can

strengthen the positive effects of technological capability on explorative innovation in a firm (Zhou & Wu, 2010).

The literature on strategic agility, which is extremely wide-ranging, encompasses all the functional areas of management. In this conceptual paper, which introduces this special issue, we focus on two crucial functional areas, the first of which is HRM. First, in a rapidly changing and increasingly unpredictable world, what firms do with their internal resources and capabilities, and how they enhance them, is of strategic importance (for a recent review, see Ererdi et al., 2020). If, on their own, most firms can do little to mitigate global grand challenges, they may become better able to cope with them by developing the skills, human capital, and combined cognitive capabilities of their workforce. The second functional area is marketing. In a fast-changing world, the old methods used to analyze markets and design marketing plans have become less effective (Whalen & Holloway, 2012a), with even the largest global firms suffering from relatively high rates of new product failure (Castellion & Markham, 2013) and the marketing function being sometimes rather overshadowed by more predatory mechanisms aimed at extracting value through the liquidation of accumulated assets and financial engineering (Lazonick & Shin, 2019). Exogenous shocks have challenged far flung value chains and raised doubts about the sustainability of some major consumer industries (Kano & Hoon Oh, 2020). This may force firms to rapidly reappraise what they sell, to whom and how they sell it, and the mechanisms they employ to draw in new customers and retain their existing ones. In turn, this may compel firms to become more entrepreneurial—and agile—in their marketing strategies (Vaillant & Lafuente, 2019).

Finally, the nature and extent of agility is linked to local, national, and regional contexts, which all provide organizations with opportunities and capabilities, and limit and shape their strategic choices. Hence, a key concern in taking the literature on strategic agility forward in the context of international business is taking fuller and more nuanced account of the effects of context on an organization's ability to modify and remodify what it does.

2. International strategy and agility

Multinational enterprises (MNEs) are not exempt from the need to possess the entrepreneurial capabilities suited to compete successfully on the global landscape (Teece, 2014; Shams et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2019). Strategic agility may make it easier for MNEs to capture any opportunities presenting themselves across emerging and established markets in today's increasingly connected global world (Fourné, Jansen, & Mom, 2014) characterized by increased VUCA forces (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). In addition, firms need to possess the resources and capabilities suited to interact with multiple non-market actors in order to gain competitive advantages (Mellahi et al., 2016). Furthermore, novel forms of government involvement provide both opportunities and challenges for firms. These include the rise of Sovereign Wealth Funds, increased state support and bailouts for firms, quantitative easing, and the engendering of an ecosystem made up of firms occupying oligopolistic or monopolistic market positions and fulfilling outsourced or privatized state and infrastructural functions; all examples of what has been referred to as the 'new statism' (Wood & Wright, 2015).

Strategic agility may have an important bearing in enabling MNEs to cope with the aforementioned instances of complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity. Indeed, MNEs may be in a better position to take advantage of any environmental shocks and fluctuations specific to their host countries, as they are able to adjust and relocate activities and/or transfer resources among

subsidiaries (Christofi et al., 2021) as long as the costs linked to the global coordination of their operations do not negate the benefits of agility (Tong & Reuer, 2007).

Agility in international strategy has been the subject of growing interest. Although space precludes a full review of the undeniably diverse literature on the topic, key issues include how it might be enabled by internal organizational vis-a-vis contextual dynamics and the role played by the managerial team in bringing it about (Ahammad et al., 2021). Other work has highlighted the relatively eclectic and sometimes superficial theorization of this phenomenon, and the potential for drawing insights from other fields (Christofi et al., 2021). Gomes et al. (2020) argued that much of the literature is event-driven, highlighting how firms respond to particular challenges. Meanwhile, Shams et al. (2021) noted that effective stakeholder relations are central to the development of the dynamic capabilities necessary for agility. It has further been argued that agility mediates the relative capacity of an organization to make effective usage of its knowledge resources across national boundaries (Cheng et al., 2020). A common strand in this literature addresses the need to effectively cope with changes in markets both within and between contexts, and the usage of internal capabilities—most notably, human resources—in rising to any challenges driven by systemic changes.

Internationalization is a key international business concern in which strategic agility plays an important role. This is especially salient for collaborative internationalization modes to and from emerging and transitional markets such as M&As (e.g. Junni et al., 2015b; Madhok & Keyhani, 2012). For instance, by bridging national cultural differences, human resource flexibility facilitates sociocultural integration and knowledge transfer in international M&As (Sarala, Junni, Cooper, & Tarba, 2016), while learning flexibility facilitates the identification of opportunities in acquisitions as well as the transfer of knowledge from them (Madhok & Keyhani, 2012). Moreover, different types of M&As can facilitate strategic agility (Brueller, Carmeli, & Drori, 2014; Junni et al., 2015b).

Other important themes related to international strategy and agility include home- and host-country institutions, MNE subsidiaries, global IT infrastructures, and supply chain/distribution channels in global value chains, just to mention a few (for reviews, see Christofi et al., 2021; Shams et al., 2021). In the next two sections, we discuss two key themes and crucial functional areas—strategic agility and international marketing—and the HRM aspects of strategic agility.

3. Strategic agility and international marketing

Strategic agility has increasingly influenced the international marketing field, starting from its core conceptualization and assumption to the trends and dynamics more recently observed in international marketing practices (Vaillant & Lafuente, 2019). In this section, on the basis of a literature review, four salient dimensions will be discussed to illustrate the important role played by and the interaction between strategic agility and international marketing—namely (1) strategic aspects and performance, (2) the emerging market perspective, (3) international marketing agility, and (4) crisis and marketing agility.

Either explicitly or implicitly, strategic agility has been intertwined with marketing theories and practices from the strategic perspective (Johnston, 2009). A recent paper has provided an updated overview outlining the concept and antecedents of marketing agility and has presented a promising research agenda (Kalaignanam, Tuli, Kushwaha, Lee, & Gal, 2021). Marketing agility may be defined as the extent to which an entity rapidly and iteratively cycles between making sense of the market and enacting marketing decisions aimed at adapting to it (Kalaignanam et al.,

2021: 35). The marketing agility concept relates to multiple levels of analysis, including the organizational, team, marketing leadership, and employee ones. Furthermore, in implementing marketing agility, firms may face challenges such as ensuring brand consistency, scaling agility across the marketing ecosystem, managing data privacy concerns, pursuing marketing agility as a fad, and hiring marketing leaders. Notably, marketing agility requires cautious planning and execution because it may not fit all firms or all marketing activities. It is important to notice that several subfields adjacent to marketing also refer to the notion of strategic agility. For instance, service marketing agility emphasizes the service marketing domain and articulates the extent to which this particular context may influence the manifestation of strategic agility (Tabataba'i-Nasab & Mohammadian Yazd, 2019). In a similar vein to the original conceptualization of strategic agility, performance implication is regarded as an important metric to determine the effectiveness of strategic agility in the marketing domain. For example, the relationship between marketing agility and financial performance under different levels of market turbulence is nuanced and complex (Zhou, Mavondo, & Saunders, 2019). Furthermore, the multicultural strategic marketing model can affect the variation of agile innovation in family businesses (Thrassou, Vrontis, & Bresciani, 2018).

What are seen as the distinctive features of emerging and transitional economies may significantly shape the manifestation of strategic agility and international marketing. Notably, degrees of institutional environment comprehensiveness and of limitations in regulatory frameworks have been seen as major discriminating factors between emerging and mature markets (Liu & Meyer, 2020), although the rapid progress observed in some of the former and the existential crises unravelling in a few notable instances of the latter may make such easy distinctions less tenable in the future. When emerging market firms venture into advanced economies (Liu & Vrontis, 2017), marketing agility can play an important role in their rapid comprehension of the international business environment and in the swiftness with which they take appropriate marketing action (Khan, 2020). Different trajectories and pathways require emerging market firms to hold open mindsets, fresh perspectives, and perhaps even greater improvisation in securing marketing agility (Hughes & Chandy, 2021). For example, in digital products and services, there is a need to rapidly and iteratively cycle between making sense of markets and executing marketing decisions suited to adapt to changing market assessments, which is the essence of marketing agility. Furthermore, in emerging markets, marketing agility requires strategic vision and foresight that go beyond rapid interaction due to the fast-changing needs and demands of customers. Many emerging markets are in the process of building the framework conditions and enacting the institutional transformation suited to afford firms with unique opportunities to act as 'rule makers', instead of 'rule-takers' (Xing, Liu, & Cooper, 2018). For instance, in Chinese overseas acquisitions, brand management requires a multi-level and dynamic perspective suited to (re)deploy the brand as a strategic asset—rather than as a liability—in globalization endeavors (Liu, Öberg, Tarba, & Xing, 2018). Similarly, in the context of emerging and transitional economies, developing and deploying marketing agility requires not only a standardization-adaptation balance, but also creativity and innovation aimed at realigning strategic motives and operational imperatives (Boojihawon et al., 2021; Osei, Amankwah-Amoah, Khan, Omar & Gutu, 2019).

International marketing agility can play an important role in influencing the international strategies of both international entrepreneurial ventures and MNEs. For instance, marketing through customer and partner interaction plays an important role in achieving strategic agility in entrepreneurial internationalization because customer- and market-centric thinking needs to be

built in a key set of business processes and capabilities suited to cope with temporal, relationship, and functional dependencies (Hagen, Zucchella, & Ghauri, 2019). As a nascent and emerging concept that combines international marketing and strategic agility, international marketing agility is multifaceted in nature, with its development and dynamics being driven by a range of factors—while it, in turn, can affect a variety of performance outcomes for the international business organizations involved (Asseraf, Lages, & Shoham, 2019). For instance, the international propensity of those serial entrepreneurs who demonstrate ambidextrous strategic agility is revealed as a precursor to international marketing agility (Vaillant & Lafuente, 2019). Furthermore, international marketing agility can influence the export quality of emerging market enterprises (Li, Liu, & Bustinza, 2019). Notably, collaborative partnerships—which are an important organizational form in international marketing (Liu, Sarala, Xing, & Cooper, 2017)—emphasize interactions among multiple stakeholders from the international marketplace, including distributors, customers, and suppliers (Liu, 2017, 2020b). Thus, international collaborative partnerships may present both opportunities and challenges for the planning and implementing of international marketing agility. Therefore, to further advance our understanding of it, it is important to uphold concept clarity while, at the same time, seriously considering the relevant contextual factors—namely, when, why, where, how, and under what conditions strategic agility and international marketing may co-evolve and mutually benefit each other.

The crucial role played by strategic agility in conjunction with international marketing can foster international business operation resilience under extreme conditions and in crisis situations. In fighting the global health threat posed by COVID-19—and likely future pandemics—strategic agility is essential for organizations to mobilize their resources and develop appropriate capabilities in a timely manner. For instance, the observation of Asian business and management practices suggests that the important role played by strategic agility in the early prevention and control of COVID-19 pandemic helped to ensure business continuity in spite of the disruption affecting global supply chains (Liu, Lee, & Lee, 2020). In regard to fast fashion brands and in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, both marketing agility and e-commerce agility can enable business organizations to amend their marketing practices rapidly and resiliently (Kannappan, 2020), regardless of the practical and ethical concerns raised in relation to the sustainability of the fast fashion industry (Miotto & Youn, 2020). In the field of public management, Singapore's whole-of-government approach in handling the COVID-19 crisis largely relied, in both scale and speed, on strategic agility via collaborative partnerships between the public and private sectors (Lee, Lee, & Liu, 2021).

Furthermore, the notion of resilience is closely linked to agility in the context of crises and extreme situations (Liu, Cooper, & Tarba, 2019). In dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, entrepreneurs and their teams need both agility and resilience to navigate through any setbacks and failures (Xing, Liu, Boojihawon, & Tarba, 2020), especially in the international business environment. Entrepreneurship is arguably an essential engine for post COVID-19 economic recovery in the wake of the unprecedented global health crisis and associated societal challenges faced by both emerging and developed economies (Meyer, Prashantham, & Xu, 2021). Therefore, we argue that strategic agility and international marketing can play an important role in the fight of international business organizations against crises or extreme conditions while enabling both new entrepreneurial ventures (Liu, 2020a) and incumbent and rising MNEs in both emerging and advanced economies to build resilience at the individual-, organizational-, and societal-levels.

To conclude this section, we identify several promising research directions on strategic agility from the marketing science perspective. Given the fast-changing and highly dynamic nature

of emerging markets, four dimensions identified from our review will become even more salient. As for the macro-level context, the institutional environment and institutional transformation can play an important role in affecting strategic agility. In particular, the emerging market perspective will not only affect emerging market MNEs, but also the incumbents from advanced economies. Global competition and competitiveness in what has been termed the slow globalization period (Gorynia, 2020) demands agility in reacting quickly to changing market environments. As for the organizational level, firm performance requires an inclusive approach encompassing both the financial and other performance indicators, such as the social and environmental ones. Consumers may be enticed to buy the products and/or services of socially responsible firms. Thus, marketing expertise in non-financial areas may significantly advance agility research.

At the individual level, the behavioral micro-foundations of international marketing agility can present promising research opportunities linked to the international marketing performance of both entrepreneurial ventures and MNEs' FDI activities. Furthermore, some salient concepts, such as resilience, collaborative partnerships, and entrepreneurship, hold particular importance in relation to advancing agility and marketing research, especially given that the world is recovering from the unprecedented global health crisis caused by COVID-19.

4. Strategic agility and human resource management

Strategic agility may be founded on being sensitive to anything that might necessitate a change in strategy, clarity in leadership, and sufficiently flexible resources (Doz & Kosonen, 2010; Ahammad, Glaister & Gomes, 2020). The existing literature suggests that strategic agility in HRM thus depends on managerial capabilities and skills and organizational design (Doz, 2020). Supplementing the HR literature on organizational capabilities and design (e.g. Jamrog et al., 2006; McCann, 2004; Pina e Cunha et al., 2020) and, more recently, on the micro-level of analysis—looking, *inter alia*, at the person-environment fit, agile leadership and entrepreneurial teams (e.g. Parker et al., 2015; Xing et al., 2020; Salmen & Festing, 2021)—is a very large body of literature on international HRM that points to the challenges and opportunities of managing people across national boundaries, the effects of country of origin and domicile institutions on HRM practices, the usage of different categories of expatriates, and, indeed, the type of HRM practices associated with—and sometimes pioneered by—emerging market MNEs (Gorynia, 2020). Four salient aspects will be discussed in this section to illustrate how one may develop an international and comparative perspective to strategic agility in HRM—namely, (1) a cross-national perspective, (2) the prevalence of institutional discontinuities, (3) HRM practices in MNEs, and (4) the roles played by improvisation and intra-organizational tensions.

From a cross-national perspective, it is worth considering those events that require firms to develop capabilities related to strategic agility. There is little doubt that large and potentially system-challenging events are taking place with increasing regularity at a global level (e.g., Phan & Wood, 2020). However, we must remember that such events—such as macro-economic instability and growth—have uneven effects along spatial and temporal lines (Jessop, 2021; Wood & Schnyder, 2021; Boyer & Gaudelierre, 2021). It has traditionally been held that emerging economies have historically experienced more system-challenging events than developed ones (e.g., Cespedes, 2013; Kandil, 2018), thus making firms from the former particularly prone to develop more innovative HRM practices (e.g. Som, 2012; Takeuchi et al., 2009)—although it could be argued that recent political events within the US and the UK challenge such easy assumptions.

When system-challenging events occur, HRM is quite central. For example, in times of economic turbulence, HR managers have to square the circle between encouraging commitment and the development of organization-specific human capital, and having to make painful decisions around hiring and firing (Ererdi et al., 2020). As another example, climate change poses new challenges for the viability of industries, nations, and regions, causing HR managers to have to contend with problems of industrial growth and decline (c.f. Fiedler et al., 2021). In some contexts, it may be challenging or difficult to maintain existing production paradigms, and the climate-necessitated moving of the geographically more vulnerable mega cities remains on the cards (Phan & Wood, 2020). Such challenges have manifested themselves around the world, but have been more or less pronounced in different national settings. Indeed, from a cross-national perspective, it may be the case that some national systems are more capable of generating the basis of broad social consensus and delivering on the social contract—and are hence in a better position to address certain global societal challenges (Schmid & Kwon, 2020). For example, the coordinated markets of Western Europe and Scandinavia have made much more progress toward the large scale generation of renewable energy than the Anglo-Saxon liberal market economies; this has implications for the relative competitiveness of different firms and industries between the two sets of countries (Wood et al., 2020). Accordingly, while the apparent increase in the number and intensity of system-challenging events may make the case for greater strategic agility in HRM, what is actually needed is likely to vary greatly among national contexts.

The literature on varieties of capitalism—and, more generally, on comparative institutionalism—has enjoyed growing influence in the international business field (Jackson & Deeg, 2019), as well as in the international and comparative HRM one (Goergen et al., 2012; Mayrhofer et al., 2019). However, a limitation of this literature has been a tendency to treat the firm as a black box or transmission belt mediating the relationship between formal institutional features and socio-economic outcomes (Alchian & Woodward, 1988; Wood et al., 2014). In response, HRM scholars have used surveys (Mayrhofer et al., 2019; Goergen et al., 2012) or case studies (Thompson, 2011) to gain an understanding of the intervening role played by the firm.

Rather than viewing matters in a strictly path-dependent manner, the most recent comparative institutional literature has highlighted the prevalence of discontinuities (Jackson & Deeg, 2019), with actors choosing to conform to practices in order to solve any coordination problems (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Jackson & Deeg, 2019). Institutional changes may be driven by actors taking a long view or acting opportunistically (Dore, 2001). Any activities carried out by norm entrepreneurs may snowball, leading to a broad drive for systemic change (Dore, 2001). Organizations and managers that are strategically agile may be particularly well equipped to act as norm entrepreneurs (Teece et al., 2016). In other words, the literature on strategic agility may help us better understand norm entrepreneurship, and vice versa. A caveat is in order here; not all norm entrepreneurship ends well.

The national context may also help shape the type of strategic agility that emerges: as a coping strategy; as an instance of outright opportunism that may impose costs on wider society, the economy, and polity; or as something that can contribute to renewing national institutional orders, benefitting the economy at large. In some contexts, individuals may be more farsighted or, indeed, altruistic, while, in others, there may be a recklessness in driving change in the interests of short-term personal wealth accumulation. Changes may lead either to renewed stability and growth or to sustained periods of open-ended crisis. There is also a body of work that explores how MNEs may serve to evangelize their country-of-origin model—for good or ill (Gooderham, 2006). Nonetheless, there is much debate around the scale and scope of such changes (ibid.; Brewster et

al., 2008). Much of this debate remains around stylized ideal types and hypothetical tendencies (Teece et al., 2016); however, it is clear that any changes made to firm practices in response to institutional transformation, occurring either home or abroad, are often most visible in terms of HRM (Doellgast et al., 2018). Understanding strategic agility is central to such processes but, at the same time, it would challenge the view of strategic agility being necessarily benign or a universal panacea.

So far, we have made the case for taking strategic agility into account in comparing HRM practices between settings. However, there is the further dimension of strategic agility within organizations that cross national boundaries. As Morgan and Kristensen (2006) alerted us, MNEs are only partially embedded in any national context, and are thus freer from the institutional constraints imposed on their single-country counterparts. It may well be in their interest to seek to fit in with their single-country peers within a national context in order to benefit from the institutional complementarities encountered there. This would include adopting the specific HRM practices proven to be effective within a national or regional specific production regime (Morgan & Kristensen, 2006). Hence, MNEs may, in some instances, be more cautious, and, indeed, less agile, than their single-country peers, who may take systemic benefits for granted, and be ever conscious of systemic shortfalls (Brookes et al., 2017). Indeed, based on transnational survey evidence, Brookes et al. (2017) concluded that MNEs are less likely than their single-country peers to depart from nationally dominant HR practices; in brief, rather than undermining any existing prevailing HRM paradigms, they may reinforce them.

Alternatively, the HRM practices enacted in MNEs may be more footless and seek to shed the constraints of the home country when operating in contexts with fluid or weaker institutions. It is often held that, in entering emerging markets, MNEs face greater challenges in navigating any institutional voids and so forth (Doh et al., 2017). Alternatively, more agile MNEs may find chances for greater opportunism or even predatory practices, as the numerous labor scandals involving Western MNEs will evidence (Stringer et al., 2018)—unethical behavior is not something imposed by context, it also involves real choices made by managers. Firms may seek to keep any HRM controversies—and poor labor standard ones—at arm's length by outsourcing, while reaping the benefits of low wage costs (Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018). As global value chains come under increasing scrutiny, the abrogation of social responsibility around the HRM practices employed by sub-contractors has increasingly become difficult to justify and sustain, although this has yet to deter many larger players (*ibid.*). Again, while strategic agility may be associated with flexibility, resilience, or innovation, it is not always a benign phenomenon.

Finally, and supplementing its contextual drivers, agility may be driven by organization-specific cultures, resources, ambidexterity, and knowledge (Christofi et al., 2021). Rather than institutional approaches, which view HRM as an outcome of the agility afforded by contextual circumstances, such work views it as an input factor—even if, in turn, agilities may result in HRM itself being redefined. In other words, rather than maximizing the opportunities afforded by the rules or the (lack of) constraints found in the countries of domicile, MNEs may build on existing intra organizational agilities, which may encompass HRM related factors such as teamworking, talent management, empowerment, codetermination, and individual and organizational learning (Salmen & Festing, 2021). Such factors comprise both individual agilities and collective and organizational ones.

It has further been argued that HRM practices may promote greater flexibility, accordingly enhancing agilities through investment in training and effective performance management (Christofi et al., 2021; Salmen & Festing, 2021). Some studies have addressed individual- and

team-level agility and flexibility in MNEs, suggesting that agility equips expatriates and other employees with the ability to adapt, operate, and respond effectively in diverse cross-cultural settings (Ang et al., 2007; Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012; Shin et al., 2007; France et al., 2019). A recent review article has suggested a ‘fine-grained investigation of potential psychological micro-foundations of incumbent executives and employees that enable achieving strategic agility’ (Christofi et al., 2021) as a very promising potential direction for future research. In turn, individual-level capabilities may enhance the organizational ones of MNEs, enabling them to rapidly adjust to any changes taking place in the existing contextual circumstances and/or when entering new international settings (Salmen & Festing, 2021; Zhang et al., 2019).

To conclude this section, we identify several additional promising research directions on agility from the HRM perspective. First, viable new HRM practices may emerge through improvisation, serendipity, or simply by exhausting all known alternatives (e.g., Pina e Cunha et al., 2020). In other words, what, in retrospect, might appear to be shining examples of strategic agility may in fact be the product of the kind of tinkering that comes from desperation, ad hoc adjustments, or simply bungling. The best laid plans for attaining and practicing strategic agility may become derailed through the course of events and by blowback or unexpected consequences from earlier, seemingly successful, interventions (cf. Teece et al., 2016; Phan & Wood, 2020). HRM immediately affects a core stakeholder—a firm's people—and serendipity and failure hence affect the internal life of the organization and its future prospects. Future research could usefully explore in greater depth the role played by serendipity and failure in developing new HRM practices. Second, the development of capabilities related to strategic agility may result in intra-organizational tensions within MNEs, as it gives rise to greater differences between headquarters and subsidiaries in terms of mindsets, routines, strategic logics, goals, and organizational sub-systems (Fourné et al., 2014). As the effectiveness of HRM practices in helping address these tensions remains an under-researched area, future studies could usefully unpack the appropriateness of different HRM practices to this end.

5. New directions for strategic agility in IB

Based on the discussion above, Table 1 presents some of the crucial areas for future research on agility.

The articles in this Special Issue focus on the strategies and operations of firms operating in transitional and emerging economies, which requires them to address various aspects of strategic agility.

As such a complex, widespread, and growing phenomenon as strategic agility may require the incorporation of multidisciplinary, multi-level, and cross-cultural models and analyses, our special issue solicited papers suited to offer novel insights in terms of the performance implications of strategic agility, the relative importance of its antecedents and their interaction effects, and the influence of different contexts (intra-firm, inter-firm, and network) and different levels of analysis (firm level, business-unit level, top management team, and individual) in relation to the promotion of theoretical synthesis, and suggest new venues for future research. Although each article provides genuinely novel insights, we can observe some common themes that revolve around the impact of human capabilities within and between firms and agility, the relations between firms and their customers, and the sustainable governance of global value chains, which connects to the themes alluded to earlier in this overview. While the first two articles focus on strategic agility from the

Table 1. Selected directions for future research on agility.

<i>Levels of analysis</i>	Marketing	HRM	International Strategy
Macro-level context	<p>Institutional environment and institutional transformation</p> <p>Emerging market perspective</p> <p>Global competition and competitiveness in the slow globalization</p>	<p>Institutional effects on agility and HRM in different national contexts</p> <p>Impact of countervailing owner power and managerial choices on functional flexibility</p> <p>National training and education systems, skills, and strategic agility by managers and workers.</p>	<p>Differences in agile strategies across different geographic markets and regions</p> <p>A firm's agile strategic responses to regional and global external “shocks”</p> <p>Cultural contingency and the challenges of agile strategies</p> <p>Agility in state-owned firms</p> <p>Overcoming the liability of foreignness through agility</p>
Organization	<p>An inclusive approach to performance, encompassing both financial and other performance indicators (e.g., social, and environmental performance)</p> <p>Consumers may be enticed to buy a firm's products and/or services due to its social responsibility</p>	<p>The role played by serendipity and failure in the development of new HRM practices</p> <p>The appropriateness of HRM practices to address internal tensions in MNEs</p>	<p>The strategic agility of emerging market MNEs, springboard MNEs, vs. mature MNEs</p> <p>The agile practices of ‘born globals’</p> <p>The ‘dark’ side of agility: unsustainable and unethical practices as sources of agility in global value chains</p> <p>Agile firm internationalization processes: the role played by entry modes and their various combinations in creating and sustaining agility in the internationalization process</p> <p>The role played by experience and learning processes in agile strategizing</p> <p>New kinds of agile organizational structures and systems for the global firm</p> <p>Building agility across the entire value chain through, e.g., agile sourcing, distribution, networks, and ecosystems</p> <p>Agility as a structural and relational capability of the MNE</p>
Individual	<p>The behavioral micro-foundations of international marketing agility</p> <p>The salient concepts that hold particular importance for advancing agility and marketing research (e.g., resilience, collaborative partnerships, entrepreneurship)</p>	<p>The psychological micro-foundations of executives and employees that enable agility</p>	<p>Employee and managerial agility as a foundation for agile strategizing</p>

The first paper in the special issue, by Ahammad, Basu, Munjal, Clegg, and Bazel-Shoham (2021), contributes by elucidating how emerging market firms pursue exploitation and exploration processes in order to attain strategic agility, and how strategic agility, in turn, influences the international performance of emerging market firms. This study adds to our understanding of the strategic aspect and performance dimension of the marketing conversation.

In the second study, Nyamrunda and Freeman (2021) explain how relational dimensions (i.e., communication, social bonds, and knowledge), impacted by the meta-capabilities (strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity) embedded in micro-foundational activities, facilitate trust building in the context of small business cross-border buyer-seller relationships in transitional economies. The novelty to the literature lies in its illustration of the complex influence mechanisms that surround strategic agility in the underexplored context of African transitional economies. This study also implies a potential contribution to the marketing conversation regarding international marketing agility.

The third paper, by Soundararajan, Sahasranamam, Khan, and Jain (2021), contributes by showing how advanced economy multinational enterprises cope with the idiosyncratic challenges associated with the management of their emerging market supply chains. The article underscores the role played by agile sustainability governance mechanisms while facing the COVID-19 pandemic and other disruptions. This study contributes to the marketing conversation by highlighting the role played by agility in dealing with crises.

Finally, the findings of the fourth, and concluding, study, by Ferraris, Degbey, Singh, Bresciani, Castellano, Fiano, and Couturier (2022), show that subsidiary CEO tenure in emerging markets and the cognitive characteristics of CEOs (individual-level micro-foundations) increase the strategic agility of developed economy MNEs in their emerging market operations. The aforementioned relationship is moderated by subsidiary embeddedness. This study adds to the marketing conversation regarding both emerging markets and international dimensions.

6. Conclusion

Strategic agility represents an important asset that enables firms to cope with an uncertain and changing world. At the same time, there is much opportunity to develop this concept in order to understand its relative compatibility with theories that seek to understand the connections between structure and change within organizations, and in the wider socio-economy. A second element is the need for a better understanding not only of when and where strategic agility may work, but what might still go wrong in deploying it for those organizations that have genuinely attained it. We hope that, taken together, the papers in this special issue will provide valuable insights into the existing body of research in the strategic agility domain and will stimulate future studies of this important phenomenon.

References

- Adomako et al., 2022 S. Adomako, J. Amankwah-Amoah, F. Donbesuur, M. Ahsan, A. Danso, M. Uddin Strategic agility of SMEs in emerging economies: Antecedents, consequences and boundary conditions *International Business Review* (2022), Article 102032
- Ahammad et al., 2021 M.F. Ahammad, S. Basu, S. Munjal, J. Clegg, O.B. Bazel-Shoham Strategic agility, environmental uncertainties and international performance: The perspective of Indian firms *Journal of World Business*, 56 (4) (2021), Article 101218

- Ahammad, Glaister and Gomes, 2020 M.F. Ahammad, K.W. Glaister, E. Gomes Strategic agility and human resource management *Human Resource Management Review*, 30 (1) (2020), Article 100700
- Alchian and Woodward, 1988 A.A. Alchian, S. Woodward The firm is dead; long live the firm a review of Oliver E. Williamson's the economic institutions of capitalism *Journal of Economic Literature*, 26 (1) (1988), pp. 65-79
- Ang et al., 2007 S. Ang, L. Van Dyne, C. Koh, K.Y. Ng, K.J. Templer, C. Tay Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance *Management and Organization Review*, 3 (3) (2007), pp. 335-371
- Asseraf, Lages and Shoham, 2019 Y. Asseraf, L.F. Lages, A. Shoham Assessing the drivers and impact of international marketing agility *International Marketing Review*, 36 (2) (2019), pp. 289-315
- Bennett and Lemoine, 2014 N. Bennett, G.J. Lemoine What a difference a word makes: Understanding threats to performance in a VUCA world *Business Horizons*, 57 (2014), pp. 311-317
- Bock, Opsahl, George and Gann, 2012 A.J. Bock, T. Opsahl, G. George, D.M. Gann The effects of culture and structure on strategic flexibility during business model innovation *Journal of Management Studies*, 49 (2) (2012), pp. 279-305
- Boojihawon, Richeri, Liu and Chicksand, 2021 D.K. Boojihawon, A. Richeri, Y. Liu, D. Chicksand Agile route-to-market distribution strategies in emerging markets: The case of Paraguay *Journal of International Management*, 27 (1) (2021), Article 100740
- Boyer and Gaudillière, 2021 R. Boyer, J.P. Gaudillière From the theory of regulation to capitalisms put to the test by the pandemic *Mouvements*, 1 (2021), pp. 161-177
- Brewster, Wood and Brookes, 2008 C. Brewster, G. Wood, M. Brookes Similarity, isomorphism or duality? Recent survey evidence on the human resource management policies of multinational corporations *British Journal of Management*, 19 (4) (2008), pp. 320-342
- Brookes, Brewster and Wood, 2017 M. Brookes, C. Brewster, G. Wood Are MNCs norm entrepreneurs or followers? The changing relationship between host country institutions and MNC HRM practices *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28 (12) (2017), pp. 1690-1711
- Brueller, Carmeli and Drori, 2014 N.N. Brueller, A. Carmeli, I. Drori How do different types of mergers and acquisitions facilitate strategic agility *California Management Review*, 56 (3) (2014), pp. 39-57
- Burgess, Strauss, Currie and Wood, 2015 N. Burgess, K. Strauss, G. Currie, G. Wood Organizational ambidexterity and the hybrid middle manager: The case of patient safety in UK hospitals *Human Resource Management*, 54 (S1) (2015), pp. 87-109
- Caligiuri and Tarique, 2012 P. Caligiuri, I. Tarique Dynamic cross-cultural competencies and global leadership effectiveness *Journal of World Business*, 47 (4) (2012), pp. 612-622

- Castellion and Markham, 2013 G. Castellion, S.K. Markham Perspective: New product failure rates: Influence of argumentum ad populum and self-interest *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 30 (5) (2013), pp. 976-979
- Cespedes, 2013 L. Cespedes The impact of uncertainty shocks in emerging economies *Journal of International Economics*, 90 (2013) 10.1016
- Cheng, Zhong and Cao, 2020 C. Cheng, H. Zhong, L. Cao Facilitating speed of internationalization: The roles of business intelligence and organizational agility *Journal of Business Research*, 110 (2020), pp. 95-103
- Christofi et al., 2021 M. Christofi, V. Pereira, D. Vrontis, S. Tarba, A. Thrassou Agility and flexibility in international business research: A comprehensive review and future research directions *Journal of World Business*, 56 (3) (2021), Article 101194
- Combs et al., 2011 J.G. Combs, D.J. Ketchen Jr, R.D. Ireland, J.W Webb The role of resource flexibility in leveraging strategic resources *Journal of Management Studies*, 48 (5) (2011), pp. 1098-1125
- Doellgast, Lillie, & Pulignano, 2018 V. Doellgast, N. Lillie, V. Pulignano From dualization to solidarity V. Doellgast, N. Lillie, V. Pulignano (Eds.), *Reconstructing solidarity: Labour unions, precarious work, and the politics of institutional change in Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford (2018), pp. 1-41
- Doh, Rodrigues and Saka-Helmhout, 2017 J. Doh, S. Rodrigues, A. Saka-Helmhout International business responses to institutional voids *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48 (2017), pp. 293-307
- Donaghey and Reinecke, 2018 J. Donaghey, J. Reinecke When industrial democracy meets corporate social responsibility – A comparison of the Bangladesh accord and alliance as responses to the Rana Plaza disaster *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 56 (1) (2018), pp. 14-42
- Dore, 2001 R.P. Dore *Social evolution, economic development and culture* Cheltenham Edward Elgar Publishing (2001)
- Doz, 2020 Y. Doz Fostering strategic agility: How individual executives and human resource practices contribute *Human Resource Management Review*, 30 (1) (2020), Article 100693
- Doz and Kosonen, 2008a Y. Doz, M. Kosonen The dynamics of strategic agility: Nokia's rollercoaster experience *California Management Review*, 50 (3) (2008), pp. 95-118
- Doz and Kosonen, 2008b Y.L. Doz, M. Kosonen *Fast strategy: How strategic agility will help you stay ahead of the game* Pearson Education (2008)
- Doz and Kosonen, 2010 Y.L. Doz, M. Kosonen Embedding strategic agility: A leadership agenda for accelerating business model renewal *Long Range Planning*, 43 (2-3) (2010), pp. 370-382
- Ezerdi et al., 2020 C. Ezerdi, A. Nurgabdeshev, S. Kozhakhmet, Y. Rofcanin, M. Demirbag International HRM in the context of uncertainty and crisis: A systematic review of literature (2000–2018) *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33 (12) (2020), pp. 1-39

- Fernhaber and Zou, 2022 S.A. Fernhaber, H. Zou Advancing societal grand challenge research at the interface of entrepreneurship and international business: A review and research agenda *Journal of Business Venturing*, 37 (5) (2022), Article 106233
- Ferraris et al., 2022 A. Ferraris, W.Y. Degbey, S.K. Singh, S. Bresciani, S. Castellano, F. Fiano, J. Couturier Microfoundations of strategic agility in emerging markets: Empirical evidence of Italian MNEs in India *Journal of World Business*, 57 (2) (2022), Article 101272
- Fiedler et al., 2021 T. Fiedler, A.J. Pitman, K. Mackenzie, N. Wood, C. Jakob, S.E. Perkins-Kirkpatrick Business risk and the emergence of climate analytics *Nature Climate Change*, 11 (2) (2021), pp. 87-94
- Fourné, Jansen and Mom, 2014 S.P.L. Fourné, J.J.P. Jansen, T.J.M. Mom Strategic agility in MNEs: Managing tensions to capture opportunities across emerging and established markets *California Management Review*, 56 (3) (2014), pp. 13-38
- France, Booyesen and Baron, 2019 T. France, L. Booyesen, C. Baron Cross-cultural professional experiences of female expatriates: Finding success through agility, resilience and essential relationships *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 26 (4) (2019), pp. 522-545
- Goergen, Brewster, Wood and Wilkinson, 2012 M. Goergen, C. Brewster, G. Wood, A. Wilkinson Varieties of capitalism and investments in human capital *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, 51 (2012), pp. 501-527
- Goldman, Nagel and Preiss, 1995 S.L. Goldman, N. Nagel, K. Preiss Agile competitors and virtual organizations: Strategies for enriching the customer Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, NY (1995)
- Gomes, Sousa and Vendrell-Herrero, 2020 E. Gomes, C.M. Sousa, F. Vendrell-Herrero International marketing agility: Conceptualization and research agenda *International Marketing Review* (2020)
- Gooderham, Nordhaug and Ringdal, 2006 P. Gooderham, O. Nordhaug, K. Ringdal National embeddedness and calculative human resource management in US subsidiaries in Europe and Australia *Human Relations*, 59 (11) (2006), pp. 1491-1513
- Gorynia, 2020 M. Gorynia Will COVID-19 kill globalization? Eds Marinov M., Marinova S. (Eds.), *Covid-19 and international business*, Routledge, Abingdon (2020), pp. 66-73
- Hagen, Zucchella and Ghauri, 2019 B. Hagen, A. Zucchella, P.N. Ghauri From fragile to agile: Marketing as a key driver of entrepreneurial internationalization *International Marketing Review*, 36 (2) (2019), pp. 260-288
- Hall and Soskice, 2001 P.A. Hall, D. Soskice An introduction to varieties of capitalism Eds Hall P.A., Soskice D. (Eds.), *Varieties of capitalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford (2001), pp. 21-27
- Hughes and Chandy, 2021 N. Hughes, R. Chandy Commentary: Trajectories and twists: Perspectives on marketing agility from emerging markets *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (1) (2021), pp. 59-63
- Jackson and Deeg, 2019 G. Jackson, R. Deeg Comparing capitalisms and taking institutional context seriously *Journal of International Business Studies*, 50 (1) (2019), pp. 4-19

- Jamrog, Vickers and Bear, 2006 J. Jamrog, M. Vickers, D. Bear Building and sustaining a culture that supports innovation *People and Strategy*, 29 (3) (2006), pp. 9-19
- Jessop, 2021 B. Jessop Internal relations in global capitalism *International Relations*, 35 (1) (2021), pp. 153-157
- Johnston, 2009 K. Johnston Extending the marketing myopia concept to promote strategic agility *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 17 (2) (2009), pp. 139-148
- Junni et al., 2015a P. Junni, R.M. Sarala, S.Y. Tarba, Y. Liu, C.L. Cooper The role of human resource and organizational factors in ambidexterity: A state-of-art review *Human Resource Management*, 54 (S1) (2015), pp. 1-28
- Junni, Sarala, Tarba and Weber, 2015b P. Junni, R.M. Sarala, S.Y. Tarba, Y. Weber The role of strategic agility in acquisitions *British Journal of Management*, 26 (2015), pp. 596-616
- Kalaignanam et al., 2021 K. Kalaignanam, K.R. Tuli, T. Kushwaha, L. Lee, D. Gal Marketing agility: The concept, antecedents, and a research agenda *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (1) (2021), pp. 35-58
- Kandil, 2018 M. Kandil Determinants and implications of cyclicalities: Contrasting evidence across developed and developing countries *International Economic Journal*, 32 (4) (2018), pp. 669-697
- Kannappan, 2020 S. Kannappan Marketing agility and E-Commerce agility in the light of COVID-19 pandemic: A study with reference to fast fashion brands *Asian Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 3 (4) (2020), pp. 1-13
- Kano and Hoon Oh, 2020 L. Kano, C. Hoon Oh Global value chains in the post-COVID world: Governance for reliability *Journal of Management Studies*, 57 (8) (2020), pp. 1773-1777
- Khan, 2020 H. Khan Is marketing agility important for emerging market firms in advanced markets? *International Business Review*, 29 (5) (2020), Article 101733
- Lazonick and Shin, 2019 W. Lazonick, J.S. Shin *Predatory value extraction: How the looting of the business corporation became the US norm and how sustainable prosperity can be restored* Oxford University Press (2019)
- Lee, Lee and Liu, 2021 C. Lee, J.M. Lee, Y. Liu Catalysing innovation and digital transformation in combating the Covid-19 pandemic: Whole-of government collaborations in ICT, R&D, and business digitization in Singapore *Public Money & Management* (2021), 10.1080/09540962.09542021.01966197
- Lewis, Andriopoulos and Smith, 2014 M.W. Lewis, C. Andriopoulos, W.K. Smith Paradoxical leadership to enable strategic agility *California Management Review*, 56 (3) (2014), pp. 58-77
- Li, Liu and Bustinza, 2019 R. Li, Y. Liu, O.F. Bustinza FDI, service intensity, and international marketing agility the case of export quality of Chinese enterprises *International Marketing Review*, 36 (2) (2019), pp. 213-238
- Liu, 2017 Y. Liu Born global firms' growth and collaborative entry mode: The role of transnational entrepreneurs *International Marketing Review*, 34 (1) (2017), pp. 46-67

- Liu, 2020a Y. Liu Contextualizing risk and building resilience: Returnees versus local entrepreneurs in China *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 69 (2) (2020), pp. 415-443
- Liu, 2020b Y. Liu The micro-foundations of global business incubation: Stakeholder engagement and strategic entrepreneurial partnerships *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 161 (2020), Article 120294
- Liu, Cooper and Tarba, 2019 Y. Liu, C.L. Cooper, S.Y. Tarba Resilience, wellbeing and HRM: A multidisciplinary perspective *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30 (8) (2019), pp. 1227-1238
- Liu, Lee and Lee, 2020 Y. Liu, J.M. Lee, C. Lee The challenges and opportunities of a global health crisis: The management and business implications of COVID-19 from an Asian perspective *Asian Business & Management*, 19 (3) (2020), pp. 277-297
- Liu and Meyer, 2020 Y. Liu, K.E. Meyer Boundary spanners, HRM practices, and reverse knowledge transfer: The case of Chinese cross-border acquisitions *Journal of World Business*, 55 (2) (2020), Article 100958
- Liu, Öberg, Tarba and Xing, 2018 Y. Liu, C. Öberg, S.Y. Tarba, Y. Xing Brand management in Mergers and Acquisitions: Emerging market multinationals venturing into advanced economies *International Marketing Review*, 35 (5) (2018), pp. 710-732
- Liu, Sarala, Xing and Cooper, 2017 Y. Liu, R.M. Sarala, Y. Xing, C.L. Cooper Human side of collaborative partnerships: A microfoundational perspective *Group & Organization Management*, 42 (2) (2017), pp. 151-162
- Liu and Vrontis, 2017 Y. Liu, D. Vrontis Emerging-market firms venturing into advanced economies: The role of context *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 59 (3) (2017), pp. 256-261
- Madhok and Keyhani, 2012 A. Madhok, M. Keyhani Acquisitions as entrepreneurship: Asymmetries, opportunities, and the internationalization of multinationals from emerging economies *Global Strategy Journal*, 2 (1) (2012), pp. 26-40
- Mayrhofer, Gooderham and Brewster, 2019 W. Mayrhofer, P.N. Gooderham, C. Brewster Context and HRM: Theory, evidence, and proposals *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 49 (4) (2019), pp. 355-371
- McCann, 2004 J. McCann Organizational effectiveness: Changing concepts for changing environments *People and Strategy*, 27 (1) (2004), pp. 42-51
- Mellahi, Frynas, Sun, & Siegel, 2016 K. Mellahi, J.G. Frynas, P. Sun, D. Siegel A review of the nonmarket strategy literature: Towards a multi-theoretical integration *Journal of Management*, 42 (1) (2016), pp. 143-173
- Meyer, Prashantham and Xu, 2021 K.E. Meyer, S. Prashantham, S. Xu Entrepreneurship and the post-COVID-19 recovery in emerging economies *Management and Organization Review* (2021), pp. 1-18
- Miotto and Youn, 2020 G. Miotto, S. Youn The impact of fast fashion retailers' sustainable collections on corporate legitimacy: Examining the mediating role of altruistic attributions *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 19 (6) (2020), pp. 618-631

- Montiel et al., 2021 I. Montiel, A. Cuervo-Cazurra, J. Park, R. Antolín-López, B.W. Husted
Implementing the United Nations' sustainable development goals in international business
Journal of International Business Studies, 52 (5) (2021), pp. 999-1030
- Morgan and Kristensen, 2006 G. Morgan, P.H. Kristensen The contested space of multinationals:
Varieties of institutionalism, varieties of capitalism *Human Relations*, 59 (11) (2006), pp.
1467-1490
- Nadkarni and Herrmann, 2010 S. Nadkarni, P. Herrmann CEO personality, strategic flexibility,
and firm performance: The case of the Indian business process outsourcing industry
Academy of Management Journal, 53 (5) (2010), pp. 1050-1073
- Nyamrunda and Freeman, 2021 F.C. Nyamrunda, S. Freeman Strategic agility, dynamic
relational capability and trust among SMEs in transitional economies *Journal of World
Business*, 56 (3) (2021), Article 101175
- Osei et al., 2019 C. Osei, J. Amankwah-Amoah, Z. Khan, M. Omar, M. Gutu Developing and
deploying marketing agility in an emerging economy: The case of Blue Skies International
Marketing Review, 36 (2) (2019), pp. 190-212
- Parker, Holesgrove and Pathak, 2015 D.W. Parker, M. Holesgrove, R. Pathak Improving
productivity with self-organised teams and agile leadership *International Journal of
Productivity and Performance Management*, 64 (1) (2015), pp. 112-128
- Phan and Wood, 2020 P.H. Phan, G. Wood Doomsday scenarios (or the black swan excuse for
unpreparedness) *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 34 (4) (2020), pp. 425-433
- Pina e Cunha et al., 2020 M. Pina e Cunha, E. Gomes, K. Mellahi, A.S. Miner, A. Rego Strategic
agility through improvisational capabilities: Implications for a paradox-sensitive HRM
Human Resource Management Review (2020), 10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.100695
- Salmen and Festing, 2021 K. Salmen, M. Festing Paving the way for progress in employee
agility research: A systematic literature review and framework *International Journal of
Human Resource Management* (2021), 10.1080/09585192.2021.1943491
- Sampath, Bhattacharyya and Krishnamoorthy, 2021 G. Sampath, S.S. Bhattacharyya, B.
Krishnamoorthy Microfoundations approach to strategic agility–Exploration to
operationalization *Journal of General Management*, 46 (2) (2021), pp. 103-128
- Sarala, Junni, Cooper and Tarba, 2016 R.M. Sarala, P. Junni, C.L. Cooper, S.Y. Tarba A
sociocultural perspective on knowledge transfer in mergers and acquisitions *Journal of
Management*, 42 (2016), pp. 1230-1249
- Schmid and Kwon, 2020 J. Schmid, S. Kwon Collaboration in innovation: An empirical test of
varieties of capitalism *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 157 (2020), Article
120099
- Shams et al., 2021 R. Shams, D. Vrontis, Z. Belyaeva, A. Ferraris, M.R. Czinkota Strategic
agility in international business: A conceptual framework for “agile” multinationals *Journal
of International Management*, 27 (1) (2021), Article 100737
- Shimizu and Hitt, 2004 K. Shimizu, M.A. Hitt Strategic flexibility: Organizational preparedness
to reverse ineffective strategic decisions *Academy of Management Executive*, 18 (4) (2004),
pp. 44-59

- Shin, Morgeson and Campion, 2007 S.J. Shin, F.P. Morgeson, M.A. Campion What you do depends on where you are: Understanding how domestic and expatriate work requirements depend upon the cultural context *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38 (1) (2007), pp. 64-83
- Smith, 2014 W.K. Smith Dynamic decision making: A model of senior leaders managing strategic paradoxes *Academy of Management Journal*, 57 (6) (2014), pp. 1592-1623
- Som, 2012 A. Som Organisational response through innovative HRM and re-design: A comparative study from France and India *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23 (5) (2012), pp. 952-976
- Soundararajan, Sahasranamam, Khan and Jain, 2021
- V. Soundararajan, S. Sahasranamam, Z. Khan, T. Jain Multinational enterprises and the governance of sustainability practices in emerging market supply chains: An agile governance perspective *Journal of World Business*, 56 (2) (2021), Article 101149
- Stringer and Michailova, 2018 C. Stringer, S. Michailova Why modern slavery thrives in multinational corporations' global value chains *Multinational Business Review*, 26 (3) (2018), pp. 194-206
- Tabataba'i-Nasab and Mohammadian Yazd, 2019 S.M. Tabataba'i-Nasab, R. Mohammadian Yazd Service marketing agility, conceptualization and scale development *Journal of Business Administration Researches*, 11 (21) (2019), pp. 347-371
- Takeuchi, Chen and Lam, 2009 N. Takeuchi, Z. Chen, W. Lam Coping with an emerging market competition through strategy-human resource alignment: Case study evidence from five leading Japanese manufacturers in the People's Republic of China *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20 (12) (2009), pp. 2454-2470
- Teece, Peteraf and Leih, 2016 D. Teece, M. Peteraf, S. Leih Dynamic capabilities and organizational agility: Risk, uncertainty, and strategy in the innovation economy *California Management Review*, 58 (4) (2016), pp. 13-35
- Teece, 2014 D.J. Teece A dynamic capabilities-based entrepreneurial theory of the multinational enterprise *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45 (1) (2014), pp. 8-37
- Thompson, 2011 P. Thompson The trouble with HRM *Human Resource Management Journal*, 21 (4) (2011), pp. 355-367
- Thrassou, Vrontis and Bresciani, 2018 A. Thrassou, D. Vrontis, S. Bresciani The agile innovation pendulum: A strategic marketing multicultural model for family businesses *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 48 (1) (2018), pp. 105-120
- Tong & Reuer, 2007 T.W. Tong, J.J. Reuer Real options in multinational corporations: Organizational challenges and risk implications *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38 (2) (2007), pp. 215-230
- Vaillant and Lafuente, 2019 Y. Vaillant, E. Lafuente The increased international propensity of serial entrepreneurs demonstrating ambidextrous strategic agility: A precursor to international marketing agility *International Marketing Review*, 36 (2) (2019), pp. 239-259

- Weber and Tarba, 2014 Y. Weber, S.Y. Tarba Strategic agility: A state of the art California Management Review, 56 (3) (2014), pp. 5-12
- Whalen and Holloway, 2012
- S.P. Whalen, S.S. Holloway Traditional marketing planning is wrong for your new venture Harvard Business Review - HBR.org blog post (2012) 10/25/2012, available at <https://hbr.org/2012/10/why-traditionalmarketing-is-w> accessed August 30, 2022
- Wilson and Doz, 2011 K. Wilson, Y.L. Doz Agile innovation: A footprint balancing distance and immersion California Management Review, 53 (2) (2011), pp. 6-26
- Wood and Wright, 2015 G. Wood, M. Wright Corporations and new statism: Trends and research priorities Academy of Management Perspectives, 29 (2) (2015), pp. 271-286
- Wood and Schnyder, 2021 G. Wood, G. Schnyder Intro: Comparative capitalism research in emerging markets—A new generation New Political Economy, 26 (4) (2021), pp. 509-513
- Wood, Finnegan, Allen and Allen, 2020 G. Wood, J.J. Finnegan, M.L. Allen, M.M. Allen The comparative institutional analysis of energy transitions Socio-Economic Review, 18 (1) (2020), pp. 257-294
- Wood, Dibben and Ogden, 2014 G. Wood, P. Dibben, S. Ogden Comparative capitalism without capitalism, and production without workers: The limits and possibilities of contemporary institutional analysis International Journal of Management Reviews, 16 (4) (2014), pp. 384-396
- Xing, Liu, Boojihawon and Tarba, 2020 Y. Xing, Y. Liu, D.K. Boojihawon, S. Tarba Entrepreneurial team and strategic agility: A conceptual framework and research agenda Human Resource Management Review, 30 (1) (2020), Article 100696
- Xing, Liu and Cooper, 2018 Y. Xing, Y. Liu, S.C.L. Cooper Local government as institutional entrepreneur: Public–private collaborative partnerships in fostering regional entrepreneurship British Journal of Management, 29 (4) (2018), pp. 670-690
- Zhang, Xie, Li and Cheng, 2019 X. Zhang, L. Xie, J. Li, L. Cheng ‘Outside in’: Global demand heterogeneity and dynamic capabilities of multinational enterprises Journal of International Business Studies (2019), pp. 1-14
- Zhou, Mavondo and Saunders, 2019 J. Zhou, F.T. Mavondo, S.G. Saunders The relationship between marketing agility and financial performance under different levels of market turbulence Industrial Marketing Management, 83 (2019), pp. 31-41
- Zhou and Wu, 2010 K.Z. Zhou, F. Wu Technological capability, strategic flexibility, and product innovation Strategic Management Journal, 31 (5) (2010), pp. 547-561