

## The impact of marketing change capabilities on marketing strategic change

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the impact of marketing change capabilities on marketing strategic change collecting data using a questionnaire from a sample consisting of executives and managers in manufacturing firms. Performing data analysis by SmartPLS software, the results indicate that the three dimensions of marketing change capabilities (micro, meso, and macro change capabilities) exerted significant effects on marketing strategic change. Theoretically, this study fills a considerable gap in marketing literature concerning such effects and identifying 12 marketing-related change capabilities. Empirically, the study calls decision makers in manufacturing firms for start building marketing change capabilities to be ready to face marketing strategy failure due to the changing nature of market arrangements.

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## 1. Introduction

Firms are required to meet the need to change and adapt a marketing strategy in order to convey value for their stakeholders (Fuciu & Dumitrescu, 2018). According to Danciu (2010), organizations should be ready to introduce a strategic shift through carrying out a fundamental change of their marketing strategy, particularly, once a current marketing strategy loss its impact on marketing positive outcomes such as marketing performance. As a dynamic process, marketing strategic change requires specific capabilities (Kunisch, 2017). Generally, the three common types of organizational capabilities include dynamic capabilities (Wu et al., 2012), change capabilities (Schweiger et al., 2016), and marketing capabilities (Keskin et al., 2021). Change capabilities were conceptualized as one type of the organization's dynamic capabilities, by which organizations can understand their external environment, know the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in business environment, being aware of change strategic options, be able to plan and implement change process (Schweiger et al., 2016) in addition to rising the value of their products and service, and managing competition in a well manner (Keskin et al., 2021). In the current study, marketing change capabilities were regarded as indispensable prerequisites for marketing strategic change. Several prior works have emphasized the importance of marketing change capabilities for building marketing strategies (Schweiger et al., 2016). These capabilities allow organizations to recognize the need for change, seize ideas for change opportunities, analyze the organization's strengths, weaknesses, and business opportunities and threats, utilize the organization's skills such as planning and customer segmentation skills to meet customer needs and manage competition, make change-related decisions, in addition to plan and implement such a change (Wu et al., 2012; Schweiger et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2016; Keskin et al., 2021). Reviewing what has been written on marketing strategic change highlights the role that marketing change capabilities play in making marketing strategic change as the latter refers to a

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process in which organizations are required to adjust their marketing strategies through changing the scope of the organizations' products and services, allocating adequate change-oriented resources, making marketing decisions, producing new products, building a change-facilitative organizational culture (Buono & Kerber, 2009; Danciu, 2010; Tarus & Aime, 2014; Thoumrungroje, 2015; Maharani et al., 2024). In fact, these works gave a great emphasis to marketing change capabilities in making marketing strategic change.

However, little is known about the effects of organizational capabilities, particularly marketing change capabilities on marketing strategic change and the most influential capabilities on such a strategic change. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the effects of marketing change capabilities, i.e., micro, meso, and macro capabilities, as categorized by Buono & Kerber (2009), on conducting marketing strategic change, as well as arranging these capabilities based on their degree of effect. As a result, this study contributes to the marketing literature as it fills an extensive gap in the literature concerning prerequisites of marketing strategic change focusing on marketing change capabilities. In fact, no empirical investigations were found in the literature regarding the impact of marketing change capabilities on marketing strategic change. A well, this study calls managers of manufacturing firms to pay a great attention to building marketing change capabilities.

## **2. Literature review and hypotheses development**

### *2.1 Marketing change capabilities*

A firm's capability is its ability to utilize resources through its organizational practices to achieve its objectives (Spanos & Prastacos, 2004). Three common types of organizational capabilities were acknowledged in the literature: dynamic capabilities (Wu et al., 2012), change capabilities (Schweiger et al., 2016), and marketing capabilities (Keskin et al., 2021). Dynamic capabilities enable firms to make valued market strategies and innovations based on their abilities to combine and reconfigure internal resources such as knowledge, rules, and routines (Schweiger et al., 2016). Such capabilities have been conceptualized as scanning capabilities (recognizing adequate issues from various stakeholders), identification capabilities (sensing the external environment to detect opportunities and threats), and reconfiguration capabilities (modifying the organizational routines) (Wu et al., 2012). Change capabilities, as a type of dynamic capabilities with a substantial focus on strategic change implementation, refer to capabilities that empower the firm to distinguish the need for change, develop and seize ideas for change opportunities, make change-related decisions, as well as plan and implement such a change (Schweiger et al., 2016). Schweiger et al. theorized change capability as a construct of six dimensions, which are search (knowledge of external environment), reflection (knowledge of the firm's strengths, weakness and opportunities for improvement), seizing (familiarity with change strategic options), planning (the ability to plan change processes), implementing (the ability to carry out change plans), and strategy making (defining the firm's long-term goals). Finally, marketing capabilities as a set of a firm's organizational capabilities support firms to rise the value of their products and services and manage competition using their information, skills, and resources ensuing market necessities (Day 1994 cited in Keskin et al., 2021, P.39). Strategically, marketing capabilities have been regarded as a distinctive resource by which a firm can determine which customer values to meet on the basis of its planning skills, defined marketing objectives, clear marketing strategies, segmentation skills, and effectiveness of marketing resources distribution (Kim et al., 2016). Combining these concepts in a marketing context results in a new concept named marketing strategic change capabilities, signifying a firm's ability to carry out strategic marketing courses for strategic change purposes utilizing marketing-related change capabilities. It can be defined, based on prior works (Milichovský & Šimberová, 2015; Venter & Jansen van Rensburg, 2014; Jaakkola et al., 2010; Schweiger et al., 2016; Keskin et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2016), as modifying marketing strategy as marketing activities, customer relationships, innovations, market segmentation, targeting, and positioning exploiting change capabilities such as awareness of the need for change, picking ideas for change, recognizing strategic options for change, planning and implementing change.

### *2.2 Marketing strategic change*

Strategic change and strategic renewal are two key concepts of strategic management. Change refers to altering one part of a firm's strategy but not its complete strategy and occur due to two major triggers related to a problem a firm faces or an opportunity a firm seeks to seize, that is, a firm facing a strategic-related problem such as product failure favors strategic exit by discontinuing that product, whereas a firm in front of a market opportunity adopts strategic addition by introducing new activities, developing new technologies or collaborating with new partners (Kirtley & O'Mahony, 2023). As a multifaceted dynamic process, strategic change permits firms to seize opportunities and deal with threats so as to turn out to be or stay competitive in the market environment (Kunisch, 2017). Such a dynamic process has been conceptualized as a change over time of a firm's arrangements in key strategic areas such as resource allocation (Tarus & Aime, 2014). Definitions of strategic change indicate that such a term is related to the cognitive orientation of a firm, new product development, and market diversification (Thoumrungroje, 2015). On the other hand, strategic renewal refers to altering a firm's strategic intent and its principal competencies that are linked with its competitive advantage (Schmitt et al., 2018; Issah et al., 2023). In the marketing domain, marketing strategic renewal encompasses converting a firm's essential capabilities in response to moving market dynamics, whereas marketing change involves making adjustments, either additions, deletions, or extensions (Thoumrungroje, 2015; Maharani et al., 2024). The process of marketing change encompasses three key steps in which a firm should create a new perception based on several activities such as recognizing

problems, doing strategic analysis and feasibility studies, then moving toward making specific decisions to be included in the overall strategic marketing plan (Danciu, 2010). Simply, marketing strategic change refers to changes in the scope of a firm's products and services (Goodstein & Boeker, 1991, cited in Thourunrojro, 2015, P. 4). Consequently, putting a new marketing strategy in place depends on utilizing some specific change capabilities. Building these change capabilities require three key interventions: micro intervention such as knowing and accepting change different approaches and willingness along with ability to conduct change, meso interventions like building a change facilitative arrangements to ensure sufficient resources, and macro intervention to build a facilitative organizational culture and looking forward strategic issues (Buono & Kerber, 2009).

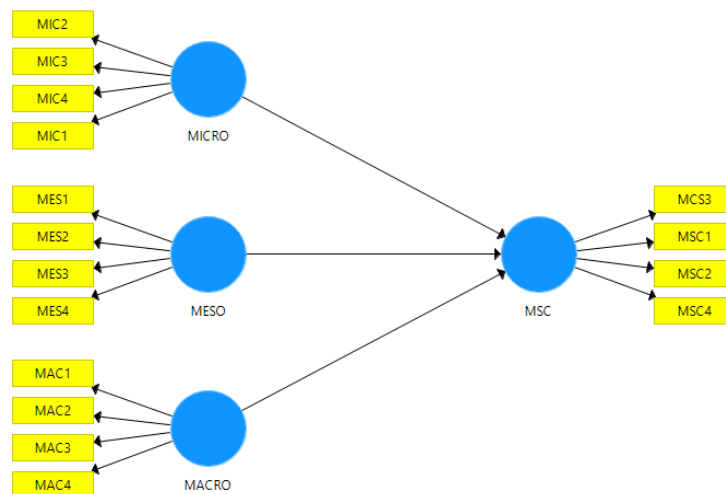
### 2.3 Marketing change capabilities and marketing strategic change

Marketing change is required once a marketing strategy misses its effect on marketing performance and this change should lead to a strategic shift in which a firm adopts a new orientation toward its future (Danciu, 2010). Generally, strategic change incorporates making adjustments to meet specific market dynamics without transforming any core capabilities (Thourunrojro, 2015; Maharani et al., 2024). Similarly, marketing strategic change involves making new alterations in response to changing market dynamics using the firm's current marketing capabilities. Specifically, firms are required to use their marketing change capabilities to handle the intent of strategic change (Schweiger et al., 2016). These types of marketing capabilities are considered a key function of the marketing process in which firms try to decide which customer needs to track (Kim et al., 2016). The influential effect of change capabilities on strategic change can be established through noting that the effective cycle of marketing change involves three essential conditions, which are awareness (recognizing the components of the firm's external environment such as customer needs along with its internal environment such as resources, besides the process of strategy implementation), capability (empowering the change process through providing adequate resources), and will (commitment to implement the change) (Danciu, 2010). Conceptualizing marketing change capabilities as a construct of three dimensions, following Buono and Kerber (2009), which are micro, meso, and macro change capabilities, and expanding these capabilities following Schweiger et al.'s (2016) conceptualization of strategic change capabilities (search, reflection, seizing, planning, implanting, and strategy making) in order to enrich the measurements of marketing change capabilities, accompanied by the above-mentioned studies, it was hypothesized, as portrayed in Figure 1, that marketing change capabilities have significant effects on marketing strategic change (MSC), as stated in the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Marketing strategic change is significantly influenced by micro change capabilities.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Marketing strategic change is significantly influenced by meso change capabilities.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Marketing strategic change is significantly influenced by macro change capabilities.



**Fig. 1.** Research theoretical model

## 3. Research methodology

### 3.1 Research sample

The sample of this study consists of informed participants in organizational strategic issues. Hence, executives and managers from manufacturing firms were selected to collect the required data. Using the five-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree; 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree), research data was gathered from 50 manufacturing firms regardless of their sizes and

specific industries. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to the sample members and 148 responses with a response rate reached 59%.

### 3.2 Research measurements

This paper contains one independent variable; marketing change capabilities, with three dimensions, i.e., micro marketing change capability, meso marketing change capabilities, and macro marketing change capability as categorized by Buono and Kerber (2009), and one dependent variable; marketing strategic change. The questionnaire items, as shown in Table 1, contains 16 items equally distributed on these four variables, micro marketing change capabilities (MIC1- MIC4), meso marketing change capabilities (MES1- MES4), macro marketing change capabilities (MAC1- MAC4), and marketing strategic change (MSC1- MSC4). These items were developed based on previous related works on organizational change capacity (Buono and Kerber, 2009; Schweiger et al., 2016), organizational competencies for change (Kuzmanova, 2012), dynamic capabilities for corporate strategic change (Wu et al., 2012), firm performance and strategic change (Tarus and Aime, 2014), marketing strategic change (Thoumrungroje, 2015), strategic marketing capability (Kim et al., 2016), firm capabilities (Keskin et al., 2021), the marketing concept in the 21 century (Fuciu & Dumitrescu, 2018).

**Table 1**  
Research measurements

Variables	Codes	Items	Reference
Micro marketing change capabilities	MIC1	Recognizing the need to change.	Buono and Kerber (2009); Kuzmanova (2012); Wu et al. (2012); Tarus and Aime (2014); Thoumrungroje (2015); Schweiger et al. (2016); Kim et al. (2016); Fuciu & Dumitrescu (2018); Keskin et al. (2021).
	MIC2	Analyzing market and customers' information.	
	MIC3	Exploring business opportunities and threats.	
	MIC4	Sensing the external environment for innovative products.	
Meso marketing change capabilities	MES1	Enhancing employee competencies to cope with changes.	
	MES2	Allocating adequate resources.	
	MES3	Having effective information and communication systems.	
	MES4	Possessing an efficient distribution system.	
Macro marketing change capabilities	MAC1	Building change-oriented organizational culture.	
	MAC2	Setting long-term goals and programs to achieve these goals.	
	MAC3	Generating new useful marketing strategies and innovations.	
	MAC4	Developing new products to fulfill customer needs.	
Marketing strategic change	MSC1	Changing the organization's product/service scope.	
	MSC2	Processing market information to deliver strategic decisions.	
	MSC3	Modifying and rebuilding the organization's routines.	
	MSC4	Transforming change ideas into new systems and products.	

## 4. Data analysis

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is commonly employed by researchers from different disciplines such as strategic management (Hair et al., 2012), hence, SmartPLS software was used for the current research data analysis purpose, i.e., reliability and validity tests, model fit, and hypotheses testing.

### 4.1 Reliability and validity

As the constructs of the current research model are reflective, reliability and validity were assessed using internal consistency reliability, indicator reliability, convergent reliability, and discriminant validity (Hanafiah, 2020).

**Table 2**  
Results of reliability and validity

Variables	Codes	Factor loadings	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability
Micro marketing change capabilities	MIC1	0.870	0.779	0.934
	MIC2	0.885		
	MIC3	0.893		
	MIC4	0.882		
Meso marketing change capabilities	MES1	0.908	0.741	0.919
	MES2	0.793		
	MES3	0.848		
	MES4	0.890		
Macro marketing change capabilities	MAC1	0.753	0.628	0.871
	MAC2	0.859		
	MAC3	0.719		
	MAC4	0.831		
Marketing strategic change	MSC1	0.862	0.769	0.940
	MSC2	0.912		
	MSC3	0.902		
	MSC4	0.893		

Internal consistency reliability was measured using composite reliability (CR) with a threshold value higher than 0.70 and less than 0.95, indicator reliability was measured via, convergent validity was evaluated by factor outer loadings with a cut-off value of 0.70 and the average variance extracted (AVE) with a value higher than 0.50, as well, discriminant validity was weighed by hetero-trait mono-trait (HTMT) criterion with an acceptable value higher than 0.85 or 1 (Hair et al., 2017; Hanafiah, 2020). The results of reliability and validity of the current research are illustrated in Table 2. It can be noted that the factor loadings of all items were over 0.70, values of the average variance extracted were more than 0.50, and composite reliability values were higher than 0.70, meaning that reliability and validity tests showed acceptable values, hence, the current measures were used to collect research data. The current results were pointed out based on a pilot sample consisting of 30 managers chosen from manufacturing firms.

#### 4.2 Model fit

The determination factor ( $R^2$ ), Cohen's effect size ( $f^2$ ) and Stone-Geisser ( $Q^2$ ) are three common criteria of model fit assessment. The first criterion shows the extent to which independent variable (s) are able to explain variance in the dependent variable, the second one estimates the change in  $R^2$  that would arise if a specific structural path was absent from the research model, whereas the third criterion measures the productive relevance of the structural model. As a measure of the explanatory power of the model, values of  $R^2$  can be interpreted as follows: weak (0.25), moderate (0.50), and substantial (0.75), values of  $f^2$  can be understood as follows: weak effect (0.02), moderate effect (0.15), and large effect (0.35), finally, values of  $Q^2$  should be higher than zero (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2012; Bido et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2019). The results of the current structural model show acceptable values, as marketing change capabilities explain 89 % of the variance in strategic marketing change ( $R^2 = 0.894$ ), marketing change capabilities have moderate effect ( $f^2$  micro = 0.150), small size effect ( $f^2$  meso = 0.145) and small size effect ( $f^2$  macro = 0.102) on strategic marketing change. Also, the model shows a good predictive relevance value ( $Q^2 = 0.706$ ), which is above zero. These results indicate that the current structural model fits the current data well.

#### 4.3 Hypotheses testing

The hypotheses of this research assume that marketing strategic change is significantly influenced by micro change capabilities (H1), meso change capabilities (H2), and macro change capabilities (H3). As shown in Figure 2 and Table 3, it was found that the research hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) were supported, that is, micro, meso, and macro change capabilities exert significant effects on marketing strategic change.

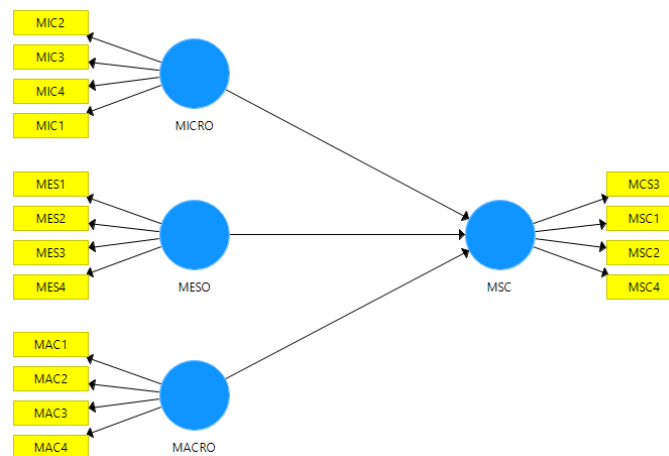


Fig. 1. Research theoretical model

Specifically, micro change capabilities have a significant positive effect on marketing strategic change ( $\beta = 0.358$ ,  $t$ -value = 2.75,  $p$ -value = 0.006), meso change capabilities show a significant and positive effect on marketing strategic change ( $\beta = 0.364$ ,  $t$ -value = 3.99,  $p$ -value = 0.000), and macro change capabilities exert a significant and positive effect on marketing strategic change ( $\beta = 0.254$ ,  $t$ -value = 2.98,  $p$ -value = 0.003) exert significant effects on marketing strategic change.

Table 3

Results of hypotheses testing

Research hypotheses			$\beta$ value	t value	P value	Results	
H1	Micro CC	→	MSC	0.358	2.75	0.006	Supported
H2	Meso CC	→	MSC	0.364	3.99	0.000	Supported
H3	Macro CC	→	MCS	0.254	2.98	0.003	Supported

## 5. Results and discussion

### 5.1 *Micro change capabilities and marketing strategic change*

The first hypothesis on the effect of micro change capabilities on marketing strategic change as perceived by marketing managers was supported. According to Buono and Kerber (2009), micro change capabilities refer to the basic essential capabilities such as understanding the different approaches of change, accepting these approaches along with the organization's willingness and ability to conduct change. Such capabilities represent the organization's aptitude to scan its external environment to recognize its need for change and to explore business opportunities and threats (Wu et al., 2012; Schweiger et al., 2016). This means that organizations with these capabilities have the first condition for marketing strategic change, which is the organization's cognitive orientation toward change (Thoumrunroje, 2015). For the current study, the participants showed that their firms are able to recognize the need to change, to analyze market and customer information, to explore business opportunities and threats, and to sense their environment for innovative products, consequently, such firms meet the first required condition for strategic change through having the required micro change capabilities. Thus, the hypothesized influence of micro change capabilities on marketing strategic change as stated in H1 was supported.

### 5.2 *Meso change capabilities and marketing strategic change*

The second set of change capabilities that the organization requires for strategic change refers to meso change capabilities. These capabilities emphasize building a facilitative infrastructure for change such to allow the organization to allocate appropriate change-oriented resources (Buono and Kerber, 2009), reconfiguring the organizational routines (Wu et al., 2012), and doing strategic analysis and feasibility studies (Danciu, 2010). Examples of meso change capabilities include the organization's ability to allocate change-related adequate resources (Tarus & Aime, 2014), having effective information and communication system (Kuzmanova, 2012), keeping an efficient distribution system (Keskin et al., 2021), and enhancing employee competencies (Schweiger et al., 2016). For the current study, the participants showed that their firms strive to enhance employee competencies, allocation change-related adequate resources, having effective information and communication systems, as well as efficient distribution systems, therefore, H2 on the effect of meso change capabilities on marketing strategic change was supported by the current research data.

### 5.3 *Macro change capabilities and marketing strategic change*

Macro change capabilities characterize the picture on the organization's overall level. It includes several abilities such as building a facilitative organizational culture (Buono and Kerber, 2009), setting the organization's long-term change goals and programs that these goals require (Schweiger et al., 2016), generating new valuable marketing strategies and innovations (Schweiger et al., 2016), in addition to developing new products or services to meet customer needs (Keskin et al., 2021). These capabilities enable organization to make marketing strategic change decisions and actions such as producing new products (Thoumrunroje, 2015), transforming change ideas into new systems and products (Schweiger et al., 2016), carry out marketing plans and customer segmentation as well as setting clear marketing objectives and strategies (Kim et al., 2016). For the current study, the participants showed that their firms have suitable organizational change-directed cultures, have long-term strategic goals, are able to produce useful marketing strategies and innovations, can develop new products to satisfy customer needs, as a result, H3 on the effect of macro change capabilities on marketing strategic change was also supported.

## 6. Conclusion and implications

### 6.1 *Research conclusion*

Based on the aforementioned findings, it was concluded that marketing strategic change is a process that firms require to cope with new market-driven challenges. Such a process assumes that firms have to be able to change the scopes of their products and services, collection and processing market, competitor, and customer information to make relevant decisions, rebuilding their internal organizational routines and transforming strategic change ideas into new business models, systems, and products. To implement this process, firms have to come into control of three change-related capabilities, which are micro, meso, and macro capabilities. Micro capabilities include the firm's ability to understand the need for change, analyze market and customer information, sensing the external environment for business opportunities and innovative products. Meso capabilities signify the firm's ability to enhance employee competencies, allocate adequate resources, and have effective information, communication, and distribution systems. Macro capabilities encompass the firm's change-oriented organizational culture, setting strategic long-term goals, developing adequate programs to attain these goals, making and implementing marketing new strategies.

### 6.2 *Research implications*

To the best authors' knowledge, no previous studies were carried out to empirically investigate the influence of marketing change capabilities on marketing strategic change. Hence, it fills a considerable gap in the literature concerning this effect. Moreover,

marketing change capabilities were categorized, following Buono and Kerber (2009), as a construct of three dimensions, i.e., micro, meso, and macro capabilities. The influence of each dimension on marketing strategic change as an endogenous variable was explored using data from manufacturing firms. Generally, the study contributes to the marketing literature through identifying 12 essential marketing change capabilities that firms need to be ready for marketing strategic change. On the other hand, the empirical contribution of this study is that manufacturing firms are called for building micro, meso, and macro change capabilities to be ready for the need to change their marketing strategies. They should not postpone building such capabilities up to current marketing strategy failure. According to Danciu (2010), a new marketing strategy is urgently required once the current marketing strategy loses its influence on marketing performance.

## 7. Limitations and future work agenda

Limitations of this study are three. First, it investigates the impact of marketing change capabilities on marketing strategic change using a sample selected from manufacturing firms. Therefore, research could carry out new studies selecting samples from other industries. Second, marketing change capabilities as conceptualized in this study contain 12 capabilities equally distributed on three dimensions, micro, meso, and macro capabilities; future studies could increase and refine these measurements as well as the measurements of marketing strategic change. Third, this study was conducted using a cross-sectional design of data collection, meaning that future studies could use longitudinal design to gather research data. New insights for carrying out new studies in this regard implicate investigating the impact of marketing change capabilities on marketing performance.

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