

The Impact of Strategic Vigilance in Achieving Organizational Merit in Private Banks in Iraq

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Abstract

The current study is an attempt to examine the effect of strategic vigilance that includes (environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, technological vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance) in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq. A sample of the public administrations of private banks operating in Iraq was selected. The study used a questionnaire for data collection. Total of (135) questionnaires were distributed to employees in private banks in Iraq. The total number of responses reached (127) valid questionnaires for analysis, which represents 94% of the number of distributed questionnaires. The results reflected that there is a significant effect of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq. The study recommends the necessity of providing the material, financial and human means to build the organizational merit system. It also recommends private banks in Iraq to follow a strategic vigilance's culture due to its valuable importance in the local and international markets, so that as well as adopting customer suggestions as an input and a new knowledge balance to improve performance.

Keywords: Strategic Vigilance, Organizational Merit, Private Banks, Iraq.

I. INTRODUCTION

Truly, the banking sector is a leading sector in terms of robustness and maturity. The strength of this sector lies in its flexibility and stability due to its attractiveness to shareholders. Moreover, the banking sector enjoys its vital role in the economic development of countries by directing money from savers to investors who create additional wealth in the economy, as the economic activities of any country cannot run smoothly if its banking sector is inefficient. Rather, a profitable banking sector is necessary to overcome the economic challenges. Moreover, a potential banking sector ultimately allows for effective management of funds as well as financial investments and this strengthens the country's economic and financial system. On the other hand, when the banking sector is weak and unstable, it represents a real challenge to economic growth. Recently, the banking sector is operating in a highly

competitive environment as a result of the emergence of new technologies. In this respect, banks are making great efforts to develop their performance as well as maintain their competitive edge. Despite the fact that the banking sector's relative performance has ultimately been a major issue, it is now of paramount importance to researchers and policy makers alike. The continuous change in the environment of business organizations created by information and communication technology and modern knowledge departments made the administrations think and search for unconventional management philosophies and strategies to face these constant pressures and to be able to adapt their capabilities to the requirements and needs of the competitive environment. Hence, the present research carries the context of studies that dealt with the issue of strategic vigilance.

2. Problem Statement:

The banking environment is witnessing strong competition in the local as well as international markets, a significant change in the internal and external environment, along with the increasing demands of stakeholders to fulfill the goals, aspirations as well as profits of banks while providing the best innovations and services to customers. This intense competition and the significant change in the internal and external work environment have brought about an increase in the vigilance and focus of banks towards their banking environment in order to maintain customers and provide advanced performance in the field of competition. Therefore, it was necessary to focus on the strategic vigilance due to the fact that it enjoys its role to maintain the survival and continuity of banks in the banking markets. This forced the banks to search for new technologies and methods and keep pace with technological developments to increase their capacity and competitive capabilities in a way that is closer to sustainability and to a greater avoidance of the dilemmas of progress. Therefore, the current study attempted to investigate the effect of strategic vigilance that includes (environmental vigilance, technological vigilance, marketing vigilance, as well as competitive vigilance) on achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq.

3. Questions:

Based on the foregoing, the study question can be: What is the effect of strategic vigilance that includes (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance) on achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq?

Four sub-questions are derived, as follows:

1. What is the effect of environmental vigilance on achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq?
2. What is the effect of technological vigilance on achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq?
3. What is the effect of competitive vigilance on achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq?

4. What is the effect of marketing vigilance on achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq?

4. Research Significance:

The scientific significance of this study is represented in the lack of Arab literature, studies and research on the subject of the effect of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) on achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq. This study also contributes to highlighting the importance of strategic vigilance systems, including technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance for private banks so that they can survive, grow and compete through the information provided by the strategic vigilance system for private banks.

From a practical point of view, this study has significant implications for the banking sector, managers, stakeholders, employees and business practitioners in order to enhance their knowledge regarding the effect of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq. This study targets the banking sector which is considered an important sector for providing banking service and money circulation in terms of the size of the human element and the vital role in economic development. Consequently, this study enables the banking sectors' decision makers to develop appropriate policies as well as practices that aim at increasing its flexibility and stability on the basis of the highly competitive work environment as well as making more efforts to improve its performance and maintain its competitive edge.

5. Study objectives:

By identifying the problem of the study and its significance, the current study aims to show the effect of strategic vigilance that includes (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) on achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

From this goal, the following sub-objectives emerge:

1. Revealing the impact of environmental vigilance on achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.
2. Demonstrating the impact of technological vigilance on achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.
3. Revealing the impact of competitive vigilance on achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.
4. Highlighting the impact of marketing vigilance on achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

6. Study model:

The model of this study has been formulated according to its theoretical framework and field contents in order to highlight the effect of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance) in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq considering that strategic vigilance, along with its factors (technological vigilance, competitive vigilance, environmental vigilance, and marketing vigilance) is an independent variable, and organizational merit is a dependent variable, based on a comprehensive review of previous studies. The model assumes a set of relationships between the study variables. Figure 1 reflects the study model.

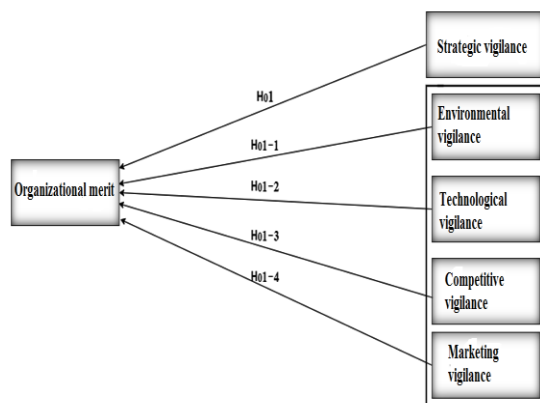


Figure 1: Study model

Source: Prepared by the researcher

7. Hypotheses:

On the basis of the research model, the following hypotheses were stated:

The 1st main hypothesis:

Ho1: There is no significant effect the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of strategic vigilance in terms of its dimensions (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance) in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq. A number of sub-hypotheses are formed:

The 1st sub-hypothesis:

Ho1-1: There is no significant effect at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for environmental vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

The 2nd sub-hypothesis:

Ho1-2: There is no significant effect at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for technological vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

The 3rd sub-hypothesis:

Ho1-3: There is no significant effect at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for competitive vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

The 4th sub-hypothesis:

Ho1-4: There is no significant effect at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for marketing vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

8. Data collection methods:

1- The theoretical aspect: it has been covered through scientific references, sources, letters, books, magazines and periodicals available in various libraries, in addition to reviewing what is available on the Internet, in an effort to obtain information.

2. The field aspect of the study: the data and information were obtained and accessed through the questionnaire, which is an essential pillar in data collection.

9. Theory and previous studies

9.1 Theoretical background:

This section tries to present an overview of the variables of the study, by defining and displaying the importance and dimensions of the variables of the current study, as this study focuses mainly on strategic vigilance that includes (technological vigilance, competitive vigilance, environmental vigilance, and marketing vigilance) and organizational merit.

9.1.1 Strategic vigilance:

Strategic vigilance is a continuous as well as collective process conducted by a number of individuals, either voluntarily or planned, who track and then employ the anticipated information concerning anticipated changes related to the external environment mainly to provide job opportunities and reduce the proportion of risks (Jalod, Hasan & Hussain, 2021). Moreover, strategic vigilance is defined as a continuous collective process implemented by a number of individuals to track and use proactive information concerning changes that are possibly to happen in the external environment of the company, i.e. knowing and discovering all the variables and developments that occur to create job opportunities as well as reduce risks and uncertainty (Karima & Zohra, 2021).

From the perspective of organizations, strategic vigilance is like the two senses of hearing and sight, through tracking important and useful information and monitoring its suitability with the organization's work environment to take correct decisions towards it (AlSayegh, AlShammary & AlKariawy, 2017). The importance of strategic vigilance is evident in that it permits financial vigilance to ultimately achieve abundance, as the information collected has the potential to develop the technical characteristics of the service or product such as cost and quality. In addition, strategic vigilance allows the communication of information across different organizational levels, and its significance is also represented in the fact that it is viewed as an important strategy for organizations (Karima & Zohra, 2021).

Strategic vigilance is an activity concerned with following up and knowing the variables of the work environment surrounding the activities of the organization, alerting and

preparing for all events and using the joints of development that enable the survival and competitiveness of the organization and the competence of decision makers (Taussig Markus, 2018). Strategic vigilance is one of the methods and pillars of vigilant and prudent management to face challenges and ways of progress, continuity and survival in an environment that competes with information and digital technology, to face future risks, prepare for it, keep pace with the external environment and leave the mark of competition and confrontation, and control as much as possible the variables of success.

According to (Lesca, 1997), strategic alertness is known by a number of characteristics: (1) Collective intelligence: This is represented in observing a group of individuals for cues in the environment and comparing them in order to form their own meaning, communication and interaction between members of the group while paying attention to the behavioral rules related to the work. (2) Anticipation: By looking for intuitive features wherein the organization should present clarifications as illumination on the characteristic. (3) Strategy: It is associated with one-time decisions that ultimately do not contain any model, as they are based on experience while taking into account incomplete information. These decisions also enjoy a significant effect on the competitiveness of the organization. (4) Environment: It is not an abstract concept, or in a sense, a statistical thing, but rather it is a set of factors that affect it. Therefore, they are beneficial in practice, particularly in case of targeting strategic vigilance. (5) Volunteering: Strategic vigilance is a voluntary process by searching for information with keen interest. Moreover, strategic vigilance is seen as an uncontrolled behavior. (6) Creativity: this is achieved through the understanding of early cautious signals that can ultimately be interpreted from the information obtained as well as associated with the element of creativity. This information does not ultimately describe any particular event or action that was previously done, but it allows individuals to formulate hypotheses for a deep future vision.

Many researchers and academics in the field of management have pointed out that there are 4 main dimensions related to strategic vigilance: technological vigilance, competitive

vigilance, environmental vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance, as they are discussed in the following sections:

(Bettahar&Aggoun, 2021; Ensaad, Gomeri&Ensaad, 2020; Dugam, H.2015; Hindi & Abdullah, 2020; Jalil& Ahmed, 2020; Mahmood, Faris& Al-Dahan, 2020; Othman, 2021; Sunds, 2016)

1. **Environmental vigilance:** This type of vigilance aims at continuous monitoring. This is done by collecting data concerning all environmental events as well as developments that happen to organizations as well as their surroundings. Implementing environmental vigilance is really a challenging task for all organizations. Thus, organizations must treat the information with great concern in terms of its analysis, processing and transmission to decision makers in order that they can identify basic and important information regarding the environment (Karima& Zohra, 2021). It is considered as one of the important dimensions represented by the general external environment that affects the life and work of the organization and which could be a source of threat that affects the activity or provide opportunities that can be invested. It includes monitoring the laws, legislation and conditions regulating the market, following up and realizing the changes of society within the external environment, social differences, consumption habits and tastes, the displacement of population centers, and keeping in line with a regular and vigilant framework with the political environment and market economies, dealing with them carefully, making them the focus of attention and seizing opportunities for returns from them to achieve goals.(Bettahar&Aggoun, 2021).

2. **Technological vigilance:** This type of vigilance denotes what organizations do concerning monitoring as well as analyzing the scientific and technological environment so as to identify real opportunities and threats. This allows organizations to learn about new technologies concerning their work activity and, at the same time, work to enhance competitiveness in case they are invested through obtaining technological innovations. This is achieved by transferring as well as using scientific and technological information to bring about positive changes in products, services, methods and production. Thus, organizations seek to bring about advantages in production

over their serious competitors (Karima& Zohra, 2021). They are efforts, means and steps taken to collect technical and technological information used by competitors, which are analyzed, treated and developed in a way that positively affects the future and present of the organization. (Sundes, 2016).

3. **Competitive vigilance:** This term denotes an activity that ultimately allows the organization to determine its present and real position and potential competitors as well as the competing environment. This is done by collecting information obtained when analyzing the industry and analyzing the competition. Competitive vigilance can also be defined as the activity through which an organization knows about its current as well as potential competitors and all their policies. It is mainly related to the environment in which the actual competing organization develops. This is done by collecting information classified as quantitative information and qualitative information. Quantitative information relates to competitors' current performance, strategies, new goals, capabilities, and assumptions that govern competitors' actions and decisions. On the other hand, qualitative information relates to research and development efforts, relationships with new suppliers, markets, new products, and new technology. Therefore, organizations are required to ensure competitive information because it allows to determine the direction of their products and services and to identify competitors that most threaten them. (Fadhiela& Ali, 2018). It is the pursuit to ensure survival and continuity, explore opportunities and invest them, follow up and know the changes that occur in competitors' structures of resources and operations, monitor quantitative information about the efficiency and capabilities of competitors and their strategies, as well as qualitative information about the relationships and development of competitors' services and products, to form an abundance of information that allows making decisions with certainty and directed towards target. (Lomjenovic&Stilin, 2017).

4. **Marketing vigilance:** Marketing vigilance refers to the process of searching, processing as well as distributing information concerning the organization's markets. This is achieved by following up on consumer behavior, market development, along with introducing and

presenting new products. Marketing vigilance focuses on the continuous changing needs of customers in the long term, the strengthening of the connection between the organization and customers, the development or development of new products, the development of the relationship between suppliers as well as the organization, and the possibility of the organization obtaining the products requested by the organization from the supplier at a lower cost. Marketing vigilance also seeks to identify current and potential customers and study their needs and aspirations in an attempt to satisfy them better than competitors and seeks to increase the competitiveness of the organization. Marketing vigilance allows discovering new markets, suggesting new products to customers, and following up on new product launches (Fadhiela & Ali, 2018). Marketing vigilance is also a commercial activity concerned with monitoring market developments and consumer behavior, studying the relationship with customers and suppliers, and growth rates to introduce a new product or add improvements to the organization's output to improve performance and maintain competitiveness and customers. (Dugam, H.2015)

9.1.2. The most important advantages of strategic vigilance for business organizations:

- From the financial side, it achieves abundance because the information collected is able to improve the technical characteristics of the product in terms of quality and reduce costs.
- Vigilance allows prediction of future dilemmas and problems that the organization may face, and thus the ability to be vigilant and the possibility of addressing them.
- It allows the circulation and transmission of information across all organizational levels of the organization. It also allows continuous monitoring of their environments.
- A strategic means that helps management in detecting threats and opportunities likely to benefit the organization and through which the organization changes its strategies and competitive position.

9.1.3 Organizational merit:

Organizations develop their capabilities to bring about change in their organizational

strategies to shift from traditional patterns to modern patterns and to sustain the fit between the organizational structure, competencies and processes by demonstrating worthy capabilities and innovative ways to perform tasks and generate ideas and behaviors of value and returns that differ from the performance of peers that achieve organizational efficiency and raise the organization to enhance its logistic position and improve its activities. (Karima, K., & Zohra, D.2021).

Organizational competence is known as the potential to perform efficiently and effectively, as well as the potential to respond to possible changes and challenges that may happen in the work environment (Porter & Trifts, 2014). Organizational competence is also defined as a set of positive factors that make employees suitable for work at the right time and place, such as personal factors and acquired factors from the work environment (HoseinPour & KermanShahi, 2017). The merit of employees comes within the concept of distinguishing one employee from another, and that distinction can only be achieved by relying on the elements of excellence, a sense of responsibility and positive constructive behaviors, including the possession of qualifications, abilities, experiences and skills that other employees do not possess (Porter & Trifts, 2014).

The merit is the unprecedented performance, perception, values and behavior that is different and worthy of superiority among peers in the workplace. According to (HoseinPour & KermanShahi, 2017), there are three main characteristics of organizational merit, as follows:

1. Implicit characteristic: It indicates that merit is positive factors, components and motives that are deep and rooted in the employee's personality in a way that enables him to predict and perform behavior in many situations and job tasks. Merit is considered to have implicit characteristics and qualities of the employee and refers to ways of acting, thinking or generalizing across situations and employing them in the practical aspect, and is characterized by its stability for a reasonable period of time.
2. The causal relationship characteristic which indicates that merit can cause or predict behavior and performance. It predicts motives,

traits, and self-concept of behavioral skills. Thus, it predicts the results of work performance. Merit always includes individual intentions and is the motive that causes behavior in the direction of an outcome. For example, merit always includes information and skills that serve as the engine or driving force for information or skill that is used within the work environment such as the cause and effect relationship, accidents or expectations that the worthy employee follows to explain cases and find the appropriate path that he will adopt to achieve stability and success.

3. The normative reference characteristic: This characteristic indicates that the merit can predict the person or persons who are good or not good at doing a job, according to a specific scale, standard or specification. The normative reference is a very important matter in its definition of merit, as the characteristic is not considered merit unless it reports something that has an important meaning for organizations, as the characteristic that does not lead to a difference in performance is not merit and should not be used to evaluate individuals as it is considered as a standard of progress for the level of performance and job requirements for showing executive excellence.

9.2 Previous Studies:

1. Jalod, Hasan & Hussain, 2021): This study attempted to manifest the effect of strategic vigilance (marketing vigilance, technological vigilance, environmental vigilance as well as competitive vigilance) on the performance of entrepreneurship (management structure, strategic orientation, resource orientation, reward philosophy, as well as entrepreneurial culture) for managers in the (Ur) Iraqi public company. The study sample included (123) managers in that company. It found a list of results, most notably that there is a significant impact of strategic vigilance on the performance of entrepreneurship. Moreover, the Iraqi public company's departments (Ur) are concerned with the requirements of strategic vigilance. The study emphasized that the company should effectively adopt a modern information system with advanced technologies capable of collecting data related to customers and updating them continuously to support decision makers with information that enhances the state of vigilance, caution and attention to them and

interpreting weak signals coming from the environment at all times with high accuracy.

2. (Alshaer, 2020): This study attempted to highlight the impact of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance) on organizational prowess in Jordanian commercial banks. Moreover, a random sample of (217) managers was selected. The study tool was applied to the sample and (171) questionnaire copies were retrieved. It concluded with a number of results, most notably the presence of a positive impact of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) on organizational prowess. It recommended that organizations employ committees as well as teams specialized in strategic vigilance. They should also provide them with all the necessary resources and technology.

3. (Hamid & Ibrahim, 2019): This study attempted to know the connection that links competitive intelligence with entrepreneurship performance through strategic vigilance (marketing vigilance, technological vigilance, competitive vigilance, environmental vigilance) as a mediating variable for a sample of civil colleges in Baghdad. The study sample targeted 10 Iraqi private colleges, consisting of (133) members of the Colleges Council. Research data was collected by means of a questionnaire as a data collection tool. Moreover, the study found a list of results, most notably that there is a strong impact of competitive intelligence as well as strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, competitive vigilance, marketing vigilance, environmental vigilance) on entrepreneurship performance, in addition to the role of strategic vigilance (technology vigilance, marketing vigilance, competitive vigilance, environmental vigilance) as a mediating variable between competitive intelligence and entrepreneurial performance.

4. (Fadhiela & Ali, 2018): Due to developments and changes in the marketing and competitive environment and economic, political and environmental variables, this study attempted to highlight the role of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) in operational performance in the banking sector. Four banks were selected: the

North Bank, the Arabian Gulf, the Middle East, and the National Bank for Investment and Finance. The descriptive approach was used on an objective sample of managers of departments and sections in these banks. (40) questionnaire copies were distributed to the research sample. Moreover, (37) copies were retrieved, while there were (3) invalid questionnaires due to lack of information. The results of the research reflected the existence of an effect of strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) on operational performance.

5. Idris & Al-Rubaie, 2013): The mission of this study is to examine the effect of strategic learning on strategic vigilance (environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance) at Elba House in Jordan. The data were ultimately collected through a questionnaire. The number of respondents was (55) individuals. The results of the study indicated that strategic learning (knowledge distribution, knowledge creation, knowledge interpretation, and knowledge implementation) has a significant impact on strategic vigilance (environmental vigilance and competitive vigilance) in Elba House in Jordan.

10. Discussing the relationship, distinction and difference of the study from previous studies:

1. Previous studies included the two topics of strategic vigilance and organizational merit separately and did not combine them in an independent study.
2. Previous studies dealt with strategic vigilance and its sub-factors and dimensions, as this is an indication of the consistency and overlap of the research variables that were identified in its scheme.
3. This study differed from previous studies as it is the first study to link these two variables.
4. It also differs from previous studies regarding the goals that it sought and the different topics that it dealt with and included.

11. Methodology:

This study used a questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire included employees of private banks in Iraq. The size of the current study sample was (135) workers in private banks in Iraq. Consequently, (135) questionnaires were distributed to workers in private banks in Iraq. The total number of responses was (127) valid questionnaires for analysis, which represents 94% of the number of distributed questionnaires. The questionnaire questions were developed through a comprehensive review of relevant previous studies. Furthermore, all questionnaire questions were ultimately measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

12. Data analysis and study results:

The current study adopted the descriptive analytical method in order to analyze the data as well as information of the study. The analysis included three main tests: analyzing the answers, testing the tool reliability, and testing the study hypotheses, for the purpose of determining the results and identifying the most prominent indicators to test the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses as follows:

12.1 The answers to the study questions: An analysis

This part embodies a description of the study variables and items including strategic vigilance (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance) and organizational merit. The statistical methods include arithmetic mean, standard deviation as well as the relative importance concerning each paragraph of the questionnaire which was calculated in order to know the real attitudes of the sample members towards the variables of the current study model, as follows:

First: Strategic Vigilance

Strategic vigilance in the current study is an independent variable, as it includes four main dimensions: technological vigilance, competitive vigilance, environmental vigilance, as well as marketing vigilance. Table 1, 2, 3, 4 shows the analysis of the answers related to the dimensions of strategic vigilance, as follows:

Table No. (1): Analysis of the answers to the study questions related to environmental vigilance

No.	Paragraph	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance
1	Decision makers watch for random, unexpected or weakly signaled events.	3.90	1.026	High
2	Bank management acts in a conscious response to situational events.	3.98	911.	High
3	The management of the bank adapts to the state's ideology, economic philosophy and the prevailing laws.	4.00	1.145	High
4	The Bank seeks to contribute effectively to the protection of the environment through participation in environmental conferences and seminars.	3.98	970.	High
5	The Bank bears a social and environmental responsibility that enhances customers' confidence in the Bank.	4.18	839.	High
6	The Bank seeks to achieve sustainable environmental and social performance.	4.51	690.	High
Total mean		4.09	0.704	High

Table (1) reflects the relative importance concerning the general mean of the environmental vigilance paragraphs, as all of them were high and with a mean (4.09), and a standard deviation of (0.704).

Table No. (2): Analysis of the answers related to technological vigilance

No.	Paragraph	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance
1	The Bank monitors all that is new in the field of banking service provision.	4.26	752.	High
2	The Bank is working to bring about positive changes and modern methods of providing banking services using the best scientific methods.	4.08	920.	High
3	The bank's management is keen to continuously train employees on new technologies.	4.32	843.	High
4	The bank seeks to purchase the latest technologies to speed up customer transactions.	4.12	848.	High
5	The bank seeks to obtain the latest technological developments in its field.	3.74	1.187	High
Total mean		4.10	0.627	High

Table (2) shows the relative importance of the general mean of the items of technological vigilance, as all of them were high, with a mean (4.10), and a standard deviation of (0.627).

Table No. (3) Analysis of the answers related to competitive vigilance

No.	Paragraph	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance
1	The bank's management carefully monitors the movements of other banks and works to be proactive in providing banking services.	4.26	775.	High
2	The bank's management is characterized by the ability to maintain and pay attention and not ignore competitors' moves.	4.04	943.	High

3	The Bank's management evaluates its services with reference and corrects them.	4.20	922.	High
4	There is competitive intelligence in the bank to know the direction of audience and competitors.	4.14	990.	High
5	The bank's management uses competitive strategies (lower cost, differentiation, higher quality, faster delivery) depending on the situation.	4.15	811.	High
Total mean		4.15	0.727	High

Table (3) reflects the relative importance of the general mean of the paragraphs of competitive

vigilance, all of which were high. They got a mean (4.15), and a standard deviation (0.727).

Table No. (4): *Analysis of the answers to the study questions for marketing vigilance*

No.	Paragraph	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance
1	The Bank has sufficient financial resources to meet its various obligations.	4.12	803.	High
2	The Bank's management has the ability to identify the gap between its services and market needs.	3.93	864.	High
3	The Bank seeks to adopt methods of providing services that meet the requirements of customers.	4.11	788.	High
4	The bank must be flexible in its efforts and energies towards those target markets, avoiding competitive viewpoints.	4.12	858.	High
5	The bank shall develop a marketing strategy for each of the target groups in the competitive market.	4.18	842.	High
Total mean		4.06	0.614	High

Table (4) shows the relative importance of the general mean of the paragraphs of marketing vigilance, all of which were high. They got a mean (4.06), and a standard deviation (0.614).

Organizational merit in the current study is a dependent variable. Table (5) reflects the analysis of the answers to the study questions for the organizational merit variable.

Second: Organizational Competence:

Table No. (5) *Analysis of the answers to the study questions of organizational merit*

No.	Paragraph	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance
1	There are procedures and processes in place to control and locate costs details.	4.08	791.	High
2	Company management relies on procedures to provide services faster than competitors.	3.89	1.132	High
3	The use of information technology helps in making decisions as quickly as possible.	4.10	689.	High
4	The Bank's management has the ability to make changes in its operations and service designs in response to changing customer needs.	4.09	836.	High
5	The Bank's management adopts a clear and reliable quality policy.	4.13	853.	High
6	There are procedures and processes for quality control.	3.79	922.	High

Total mean	4.01	0.599	High
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Table (5) shows the relative importance concerning the general average of the items of organizational merit, as they were all high. They got a mean (4.01), and a standard deviation (0.599).

10.2 Reliability:

The study tool’s reliability was confirmed by calculating the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient as shown in Table (6).

Table No. (6) *the internal consistency coefficient’s values for the paragraphs of the study tool*

No.	Dimension	Cronbach's alpha
1	Environmental vigilance	0.843
2	Technological vigilance	0.710
3	Competitive vigilance	0.874
4	Marketing vigilance	0.727
5	Strategic vigilance	0.916
6	Organizational merit	0.768

The results shown in Table No. (6) undoubtedly reflect that the values of the stability coefficient for the paragraphs of the current study ranged between (.925) and (.944). It is also noted that all Cronbach Alpha values exceeded the minimum acceptable percentage for the purposes of statistical analysis.

10.3.Hypotheses Testing:

This section of the study deals with hypotheses testing, as shown in Table (7):

Table (7): *Results of the study's hypotheses testing*

Hypothesis	Dependent variable	Model		ANOVA		Coefficient				
		R	R ²	F	Sig F	Details	B	Standard error	T	Sig t
Ho1	organizational merit	0.837	0.700	682.784	0.000	strategic vigilance	0.906	0.035	26.130	0.000
Ho1-1	organizational merit	0.653	0.426	216.778	0.000	environmental vigilance	0.556	0.038	14.723	0.000
Ho1-2	organizational merit	0.719	0.517	312.313	0.000	technological vigilance	0.687	0.039	17.672	0.000
Ho1-3	organizational merit	0.758	0.574	393.781	0.000	competitive vigilance	0.625	0.031	19.844	0.000

Ho1-4	organizational merit	0.614	0.410	203.243	0.000	marketing vigilance	0.552	0.044	14.256	0.000
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It is evident from Table No. (7) that:

- The first main hypothesis: Ho1: The results shown in the above table prove that the value of (R = 0.837) and that the value of (F) reached (682.784) at a level of confidence (Sig = 0.00). As it appears from the coefficients table that the value of (B = 0.906) with a standard error (0.035) at a confidence level (Sig = 0.00). Therefore, we reject the first main null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that: There is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for strategic vigilance in terms of its dimensions (technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, competitive vigilance, and marketing vigilance) in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

- First sub-hypothesis: Ho1-1: The results of the table prove that the value of (R = 0.653) and that the value of (F) reached (216.778) at a level of confidence (Sig = 0.00). It also appears from the coefficients table that the value of (B = 0.556) with a standard error of (0.038) at the level of confidence (Sig = 0.00). Thus, we reject the first sub-null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that: There is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for environmental vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

- Second sub-hypothesis: Ho1-2: The results of the table indicate that the value of (R = 0.719) and that the value of (F) reached (312.313) at a confidence level (Sig = 0.00). It also appears from the coefficients table that the value of (B = 0.687) with a standard error of (0.039) at the level of confidence (Sig = 0.00). Therefore, we reject the second sub-null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that: There is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for technological vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

- Third sub-hypothesis: Ho1-3: The results of the table indicate that the value of (R = 0.758) and that the value of (F) reached (393.781) at a

confidence level (Sig = 0.00). It also appears from the coefficients table that the value of (B = 0.625) with a standard error of (0.031) at the level of confidence (Sig = 0.00). Therefore, we reject the third sub-null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that: There is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for competitive vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

Ho- Fourth sub-hypothesis: Ho1-4: The results of the table indicate that the value of (R = 0.614) and that the value of (F) reached (203.243) at a confidence level (Sig = 0.00). It also appears from the coefficients table that the value of (B = 0.552) with a standard error of (0.044) at the level of confidence (Sig = 0.00). Thus, we reject the fourth sub-null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that: There is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for marketing vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

13. Conclusions and Recommendations:

First: Conclusions

1. The results of the analysis showed a significant effect of strategic vigilance concerning all its dimensions (technological vigilance, competitive vigilance, environmental vigilance, and marketing vigilance) in achieving organizational competence in private banks in Iraq.
2. The results reflected a significant effect of environmental vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.
3. The results reflected a significant effect of technological vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.
4. The results reflected a significant effect of competitive vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.

5. The results of the analysis showed a statistically significant effect of marketing vigilance in achieving organizational merit in private banks in Iraq.
6. The study reflected the contribution of strategic vigilance and its consistency with the aspirations of managers in the surveyed banks in achieving a fit between organizational capabilities and the reality of competition in achieving organizational merit.
7. Achieving organizational competence requires a comprehensive perspective on the dimensions of vigilance and its components, and the use of informatics in a way that contributes to building organizational competence.
8. The private banks in Iraq are concerned with the requirements of all kinds of strategic vigilance.
9. Private Banks in Iraq monitor and follow up on situational events. This is done through the environmental information they obtain, as well as by working to evaluate their risks and confront them.
10. The private banks in Iraq follow up the movements of other competing companies as well as identify their strengths and weaknesses so as to guarantee their effective presence in the arena of legitimate competition and ultimately achieve excellence over competitors in serving their customers.

Second: Recommendations:

Based on the foregoing, some recommendations can be suggested, which are as follows:

1. The necessity of providing the physical, financial and human means to build the organizational merit system.
2. The private banks in Iraq must follow a culture of strategic vigilance due to its great benefit in the local and international markets.
3. Private Banks in Iraq should adopt a modern information system that has advanced technologies which are capable of collecting data concerning customers as well as updating them on a continuous basis to support decision makers with information that enhances a state of vigilance, caution, self-efficacy and attention to

them and the interpretation of weak signals coming from customers.

4. The necessity of the commitment of private banks in Iraq to be vigilant, to activate their activities on a permanent basis, as well as to conduct development programs and courses for employees and for all levels of the administrative hierarchy, including programs and methods of strategic vigilance.
5. Banks must periodically activate a strategy for evaluating their performance, accepting the views and suggestions of customers, and adopting them as a stock of knowledge that is traded to improve performance and raise competitiveness.
6. Bank administrations should attach the dimension of technological vigilance as an important dimension in the search to reach new and developed work systems, considering the information as a source of strength and a competitive balance through which organizational merit can be achieved.
7. One of the pillars of strategic vigilance is to attract experts and follow the philosophy of developing the talents and creative energies of the bank's employees, and adopting this approach to achieve integration of outputs.

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