


**STRATEGIC VIGILANCE: AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM IN ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE - A STUDY OF A SAMPLE OF ALGERIAN INSTITUTIONS**

Khawla Ouali<sup>A</sup>, Meriem Ouali<sup>B</sup>



ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b>  <b>Received:</b> May, 10<sup>th</sup> 2024  <b>Accepted:</b> July, 12<sup>th</sup> 2024</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> This article addresses the role of strategic vigilance in building and enhancing competitive advantage and sustainability in organizations; In order to monitor its external environment and predict future changes to strategic decision-making and achieving its objectives, the article aims to research the reality of the implementation of strategic vigilance and its role in sustaining the competitive advantage in the organization.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b>  Vigilance;  Strategic Vigilance;  Competitive Advantage;  Sustainability of Competitive Advantages.</p> 	<p><b>Methodology:</b> A comprehensive review of the literature and the analysis of studies that dealt with the subject of strategic vigilance and competitive advantage, and the analytical descriptive approach to familiarity with the subject, and the SPSS statistical program were used, by studying a sample of Algerian institutions.</p> <p><b>Results:</b> The results indicate the need to adopt the strategic vigilance system to monitor and analyse strategic information to exploit opportunities and confront threats, and that achieving sustainable competitive advantage is an important strategic direction for organizations that seek leadership and success, which are achieved through knowledge and capabilities of human resources.</p> <p><b>Practical Implication:</b> The study proposes several practical measures for the decision-makers in the institutions, through which it can enhance the competitive advantages of it, including the creation of an independent structure that performs the function of strategic vigilance in the organization, and the attention to the external environment of the institution by following all the transformations in it. To study it, then adapt and coexist with it, as well as the continuous encouragement of individuals to be creative and to provide the appropriate conditions that allow the establishment of continuous competitive advantages for the institution. The recommendations aim to create a suitable environment for activating the strategic vigilance system.</p> <p><b>Originality/Value:</b> This article contributes to highlighting the growing need to adopt a strategic vigilance system that maintains an institution's position and contributes to its competitiveness, in addition to revealing the level or indicators of the practice of strategic vigilance, and guidance. The attention of decision-makers in Algerian institutions is the importance of investing in building a strategic vigilance system as ways to build sustainable competitive advantages.</p> <p>Doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i8.4888">https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i8.4888</a></p>

<sup>A</sup> PhD in Economy. Badji Mokhtar- Annaba University, Faculty of Economics, Commerce and Management Sciences, Economic Intelligence and Sustainable Laboratory. Algeria. E-mail: [khawla.ouali@univ-annaba.org](mailto:khawla.ouali@univ-annaba.org)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9089-5243>

<sup>B</sup> Master in Economy. Badji Mokhtar - Annaba University, Faculty of Economics, Commerce and Management Sciences, Economic Intelligence and Sustainable Laboratory. Algeria. E-mail: [meriem.ouali@univ-annaba.dz](mailto:meriem.ouali@univ-annaba.dz)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1742-486X>

**VIGILÂNCIA ESTRATÉGICA: UM MECANISMO EFICAZ PARA AUMENTAR A VANTAGEM COMPETITIVA SUSTENTÁVEL - UM ESTUDO DE UMA AMOSTRA DE INSTITUIÇÕES ARGELINAS****RESUMO**

**Objetivo:** Este artigo aborda o papel da vigilância estratégica na construção e aprimoramento da vantagem competitiva e da sustentabilidade nas organizações; Para monitorar seu ambiente externo e prever mudanças futuras na tomada de decisões estratégicas e no alcance de seus objetivos, o artigo tem como objetivo pesquisar a realidade da implementação da vigilância estratégica e seu papel na sustentação da vantagem competitiva na organização.

**Metodologia:** Foi utilizada uma revisão abrangente da literatura e a análise de estudos que abordaram o tema da vigilância estratégica e vantagem competitiva, e a abordagem descritiva analítica para familiarização com o assunto, e o programa estatístico SPSS, estudando uma amostra de instituições argelinas.

**Resultados:** Os resultados indicam a necessidade de adoção do sistema de vigilância estratégica para monitorar e analisar informações estratégicas para explorar oportunidades e enfrentar ameaças, e que alcançar vantagem competitiva sustentável é uma direção estratégica importante para organizações que buscam liderança e sucesso, os quais são alcançados por meio do conhecimento e das capacidades dos recursos humanos.

**Implicações Práticas:** O estudo propõe várias medidas práticas para os tomadores de decisão nas instituições, por meio das quais podem aumentar as vantagens competitivas da mesma, incluindo a criação de uma estrutura independente que desempenhe a função de vigilância estratégica na organização e a atenção ao ambiente externo da instituição, acompanhando todas as transformações nela ocorridas. Estudá-la, então adaptá-la e coexistir com ela, bem como o incentivo contínuo dos indivíduos a serem criativos e a fornecer as condições adequadas que permitam o estabelecimento de vantagens competitivas contínuas para a instituição. As recomendações visam criar um ambiente adequado para ativar o sistema de vigilância estratégica.

**Originalidade/Valor:** Este artigo contribui para destacar a crescente necessidade de adotar um sistema de vigilância estratégica que mantenha a posição de uma instituição e contribua para sua competitividade, além de revelar o nível ou indicadores da prática de vigilância estratégica e orientação. A atenção dos tomadores de decisão em instituições argelinas é a importância de investir na construção de um sistema de vigilância estratégica como formas de construir vantagens competitivas sustentáveis.

**Palavras-chave:** Vigilância, Vigilância Estratégica, Vantagem Competitiva, Sustentabilidade das Vantagens Competitivas.

**VIGILANCIA ESTRATÉGICA: UN MECANISMO EFICAZ PARA MEJORAR LA VENTAJA COMPETITIVA SOSTENIBLE - UN ESTUDIO DE UNA MUESTRA DE INSTITUCIONES ARGELINAS****RESUMEN**

**Propósito:** Este artículo aborda el papel de la vigilancia estratégica en la construcción y mejora de la ventaja competitiva y la sostenibilidad en las organizaciones; con el fin de monitorear su entorno externo y predecir cambios futuros en la toma de decisiones estratégicas y el logro de sus objetivos, el artículo tiene como objetivo investigar la realidad de la implementación de la vigilancia estratégica y su papel en el sostenimiento de la ventaja competitiva en la organización.

**Metodología:** Se realizó una revisión exhaustiva de la literatura y el análisis de estudios que abordaron el tema de la vigilancia estratégica y la ventaja competitiva, y se utilizó el enfoque descriptivo analítico para el conocimiento del tema, y el programa estadístico SPSS, mediante el estudio de una muestra de instituciones argelinas.

**Resultados:** Los resultados indican la necesidad de adoptar el sistema de vigilancia estratégica para monitorear y analizar la información estratégica para explotar oportunidades y enfrentar amenazas, y que lograr una ventaja competitiva sostenible es una dirección estratégica importante para las organizaciones que buscan liderazgo y éxito, los cuales se logran a través del conocimiento y las capacidades de los recursos humanos.

**Implicaciones Prácticas:** El estudio propone varias medidas prácticas para los tomadores de decisiones en las instituciones, a través de las cuales se pueden potenciar las ventajas competitivas de la misma, entre ellas la creación de una estructura independiente que desempeñe la función de vigilancia estratégica en la organización, y la atención al entorno externo de la institución siguiendo todas las transformaciones en ella, para estudiarlo, luego adaptarse y coexistir con él, así como el estímulo continuo de los individuos para que sean creativos y proporcionen las condiciones adecuadas que permitan el establecimiento de ventajas competitivas continuas para la institución. Las recomendaciones apuntan a crear un entorno adecuado para activar el sistema de vigilancia estratégica.

**Originalidad/Valor:** Este artículo contribuye a destacar la creciente necesidad de adoptar un sistema de vigilancia estratégica que mantenga la posición de una institución y contribuya a su competitividad, además de revelar el nivel de indicadores de la práctica de la vigilancia estratégica y la orientación. La atención de los tomadores de

decisiones en las instituciones argelinas es la importancia de invertir en la construcción de un sistema de vigilancia estratégica como forma de construir ventajas competitivas sostenibles.

**Palabras clave:** Vigilancia, Vigilancia Estratégica, Ventaja Competitiva, Sostenibilidad de las Ventajas Competitivas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Amid contemporary economic transformations and global economic integration, organizations operate in a dynamic and complex business environment characterized by numerous variables, significant technological advancements, and intense local and international competition. These challenges and transformations compel institutions to continuously and consistently enhance their performance to adapt to competitive pressures and secure a distinguished market position. To achieve this goal, institutions must adopt modern management methods that align with contemporary demands, as their ability to grow and survive is tied to their skills in predicting and adapting to external changes. Institutions must be constantly aware of these changes to achieve a competitive edge, which cannot be accomplished solely by reducing costs or restructuring but through rapid adaptation and response to market needs and optimal utilization of various available human resources.

This highlights the importance of establishing a system that enables institutions to monitor and detect weak signals and continuously surveil their environment. This system is represented by strategic vigilance, which facilitates the monitoring of strategic information that enables institutions to overcome intense competition by acquiring sustainable competitive advantages. Given that an institution's survival and competitiveness depend on the availability of an effective strategic vigilance system that monitors all environmental changes, it has become imperative for Algerian institutions to recognize the importance of this system amid increasing market competition across various sectors. This underscores the role of strategic vigilance and its impact on sustainable competitive advantages, which is the subject of this study. The research problem can be outlined in the following main question:

- To what extent does strategic vigilance contribute as an effective factor in sustaining the competitive advantage of an institution?

From this main question, the following sub-questions arise:

1. what are the characteristics of strategic vigilance and the requirements for activating its system?
2. what are the methods for achieving sustainable competitive advantage?

3. how does strategic vigilance contribute to the sustainability of competitive advantages?
4. what is the current state of the application of strategic vigilance in Algerian institutions?

**Study Hypotheses:** The study hypotheses are as follows:

- **first hypothesis:** there is a statistically significant correlation at a significance level of ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between strategic vigilance and sustainable competitive advantage;
- **second hypothesis:** there is a statistically significant impact of digital marketing tools on improving the marketing performance of the bank under study at a significance level of ( $\alpha=0.05$ );
- **third hypothesis:** the institutions under study are committed to applying strategic vigilance as a strategic method for information monitoring.

**Importance of the Study:** The importance of this study lies in the increasing need to implement and adopt a strategic vigilance system that ensures the preservation of the institution's position and enhances its competitiveness in an era of intense competition at both local and global levels. Additionally, the study aims to reveal the level or indicators of strategic vigilance practice in these institutions and to direct the attention of decision-makers in Algerian institutions to the importance of investing in building a strategic vigilance system as a means to develop sustainable competitive advantages.

**Study Methodology:** The research problem and the formulated hypotheses necessitate the use of the descriptive-analytical method. This method is employed to collect data and information about the phenomenon under study, describe the results obtained, and analyse and interpret them. Furthermore, the SPSS program was used to apply the theoretical aspect to reality. A sample of Algerian institutions operating in various sectors was selected to study their interest in strategic vigilance as a mechanism for monitoring information that allows them to sustain their competitive advantages in a highly competitive environment.

## 2 A CONCEPTUAL INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC VIGILANCE

Economic institutions strive for continuity and development, which necessitates the effective acquisition and utilization of information. This is achieved through organized activities that create opportunities and address threats via strategic vigilance. Strategic vigilance serves as a mechanism for monitoring the environment and predicting future changes. To elucidate this concept, we will explore the notion of strategic vigilance and its various dimensions.

## 2.1 THE CONCEPT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIC VIGILANCE

Despite its recent emergence, the concept of strategic vigilance has been defined in various ways due to the significant attention it receives from institutions and the global changes taking place. For example:

H. Lesca defines strategic vigilance as "a continuous collective process carried out by a group of individuals voluntarily, where they track and monitor anticipated information regarding potential changes in the external environment of the institution, aiming to create business opportunities and reduce risks and uncertainty in general." (Redjda, 2017, p. 14)

According to Salguero et al., strategic vigilance refers to a set of essential practices that enable institutions to obtain information from the organizational environment, influenced by the sustainability revolution (Altarawneh, 2023, p. 52).

It is the institution's ability to remain sufficiently aware and alert to detect changes in the surrounding environment, aiming to exploit opportunities and avoid threats by collecting, analysing, and sharing information both internally and externally to achieve the institution's goals with maximum efficiency and effectiveness (Hadi & Mazhar, 2020, p. 31)

Jean Michel Ribault views it as the comprehensive and intelligent monitoring of the institution's environment to gather essential information that focuses on the institution's future. This involves listening to the external environment to seize new opportunities in a timely manner and to avoid or mitigate threats (Alshaer, 2020, p. 83).

Additionally, it is defined as a strategic process that provides the institution with information enabling it to face competition more effectively by relying on scientific foundations and standards. The institution can monitor its markets and competitors through the function. Therefore, institutions must pay significant attention to the development of strategic vigilance to sustain and continue their activities (Alhadani & Alkshali, 2021, p. 674).

From the above, strategic vigilance can be defined as an informational process through which information is tracked to predict potential changes in the external environment of the institution. The aim is to create business opportunities and reduce risks through strategic monitoring of changes to lower uncertainty and anticipate the future.

## 2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIC VIGILANCE

Strategic vigilance requires institutions to manage and utilize information effectively to create competitive advantages that allow them to outperform competitors and adapt to external environmental developments. To succeed, institutions must understand the characteristics of this process, which include the following elements:

- **strategy:** strategic vigilance emphasizes making non-repetitive decisions that lack previous models, taking into account highly incomplete information, and recognizing the significant impact these decisions can have on the competitiveness, survival, and continuity of the institution (Boulifa et al., 2003, p. 06);
- **social intelligence:** this involves a group of individuals observing signs or signals in the environment, comparing them, and attributing specific meanings to them. This process is based on collective work involving appropriate communication and interaction while respecting the behavioural rules of teamwork (Aggoun, 2016, p. 271);
- **prediction:** strategic vigilance focuses on forecasting and detecting changes, a process known as providing information about the future. This involves anticipating changes that may occur in the institution's environment and that are related to its future;
- **creativity creation:** the information from strategic vigilance interprets early warning signals. It does not merely describe past events and actions but allows for the formulation of hypotheses and the creation of a forward-looking, creative vision;
- **voluntariness:** strategic vigilance is not a mandated practice but a voluntary action stemming from the institution's management. It is followed by effective activities that turn this willingness into a critical success factor for strategic vigilance, enabling the acquisition of proactive information (Dawood & Abbas, 2018, p. 04).

## 2.3 TYPES OF STRATEGIC VIGILANCE AND THE ADVANTAGES OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Institutions adopt a strategic vigilance system to support their decisions and use strategic information to predict developments and attempt to control them intelligently. This enables them to exploit opportunities before competitors, thereby gaining a strong competitive position to achieve their objectives and lead in their field.



### 2.3.1 Types of strategic vigilance

The complexity of environmental variables and their interrelationships have driven institutions to adopt a strategic vigilance system. Each institution seeks to determine the type and level of vigilance necessary to achieve its goals in line with its capabilities.

- **technological vigilance:** as a component of strategic vigilance, technological vigilance refers to the efforts made by institutions to detect technological and technical developments. It involves monitoring and analysing the scientific, technical, and technological environment and the current and future economic impacts to anticipate risks, threats, and development opportunities. Technological vigilance is generally dedicated to understanding technological advancements related to the institution's activities, transferring and utilizing them to effect positive changes in products and production methods (Jalod et al., 2021, p. 95). Therefore, institutions must seek ways to monitor their technological environment to achieve sustainable knowledge. Technological vigilance allows institutions to collect scientific, technical, and technological information to use in technological innovations, identify opportunities to exploit, and determine threats to avoid. It also helps institutions understand the technologies or techniques used by competitors, focus on technological advancements, scientific discoveries, and innovation in goods and services, and improve manufacturing methods and the emergence of new products (Mahmood et al., 2020, p. 578-579);
- **competitive vigilance:** this activity enables institutions to understand their current and potential competitors from economic and financial perspectives (e.g., number, brands, investments, ongoing projects). It allows for continuous comparison of strengths and weaknesses across various areas with those of competitors, facilitating appropriate decision-making to improve market position. Effective competitive vigilance involves acquiring tools and methods for analysing competition, enabling institutions to gather and select information on competitors' strategies, objectives, performance, product development, supply sources, distribution channels, production processes, and technology. The focus of competitive vigilance is on identifying all information related to competitors, including market segments targeted by them and customer perceptions of their offerings. Additionally, it involves benchmarking against leading global companies and conducting SWOT analyses to identify competitors' strengths and weaknesses (Gerry & Kevan, 2000, p. 164);

- **environmental vigilance:** this includes elements within the institution's environment that are as important as those previously mentioned, such as legislative, financial, political, geopolitical, and cultural vigilance. Environmental vigilance is a challenging task for institutions, requiring careful selection, analysis, and processing of information before it is sent to decision-makers to identify essential and critical information in this type of vigilance (Al-Maliki, 2016, p. 59).

### 2.3.2 Advantages of implementing strategic vigilance

Strategic vigilance is a strategic process that economic institutions cannot afford to ignore. It provides essential information that enables them to better confront competition by addressing various aspects of the environment, including threats and opportunities. Strategic vigilance necessitates that economic institutions effectively manage the necessary information to improve their position and strategic practices and enhance their competitive advantage. The benefits of strategic vigilance for economic institutions include:

- strategic vigilance allows for financial savings as the collected information can improve the technical characteristics and quality of products while reducing costs;
- it ensures smooth information flow across various organizational levels and enables continuous monitoring of the institution's environment;
- it provides warnings and predictions about future challenges the institution may face;
- strategic vigilance identifies areas of influence, threats, and opportunities, enabling the institution to adjust its strategy and competitive stance in the market;
- it facilitates better decision-making by providing strategic information about the institution's environment, ensuring appropriate responses to customer needs and identifying new markets;
- it enhances the institution's ability to quickly respond to changes, ensuring it is not caught off guard by technological, competitive, or social shifts.
- continuous environmental monitoring allows the institution to understand and evaluate its current and future competitive position, enabling future scenario forecasting;
- it ensures the continuous improvement of goods and services, thereby strengthening relationships with customers and suppliers;
- strategic vigilance fosters the development of the institution's creative capacities;



- it provides broad access to knowledge and options for achieving the best understanding and forecasting of competitors' current and future behaviours (Fadhil et al., 2021, p. 969).

### **3 STRATEGIC VIGILANCE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

This section focuses on defining sustainable competitive advantage and highlighting its relationship with strategic vigilance.

#### **3.1 DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Sustainable competitive advantage can be envisioned as a "superior market position" that leads to higher value perception among customers and/or allows the institution to produce at lower costs than competitors. When applied in the market, this results in dominance over competitors and translates into higher financial outcomes.

Eloy Gil-Cordero and others emphasize that for institutions to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, they must propose innovative product ideas, adapt to the constantly evolving market requirements, and continuously develop new products or services to enhance product innovation perceived as unique. Innovation, combined with strategic flexibility in the institution's functional operations, plays a crucial role in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Gil-Cordero et al., 2023, p. 08).

Sustainable competitive advantage refers to the unique characteristics that distinguish an organization from its current and potential competitors. It also encompasses new advantages that the organization acquires for the longest possible time, which cannot be imitated or replicated by other organizations. (Abbas, 2015, p. 141) Egberi Onyeyime Edith links sustainable competitive advantage with achieving the highest returns, implying that the organization's ability to generate superior returns on investment and maintain this progress is a strategy for profit-making that enables growth and continuity in operations, making it a leader in its field. (Egberi, 2023, p. 201)

Competitive advantage is defined as the institution's superiority over its competitors by creating a strategic position for itself. This can result from applying strategic cost management techniques. Thus, competitive advantage reflects the institution's ability to

maintain superior performance over the long term compared to its competitors in the market (Adigbol et al., 2022, p. 143).

It is also seen as the outcome of implementing a value-creation strategy for customers that no potential or current competitor can duplicate or imitate (Kurniawan & Nuringsih, 2023, p. 218).

According to Setyaningrum and Muafi, it reflects the internal capabilities used by the institution to identify and improve weaknesses and seize opportunities, thus achieving an edge over competitors.

It is defined as the institution's ability to demonstrate relatively significant value compared to its competitors, highlighted by the creativity of its human resources (Setyaningrum et al., 2022, p. 03).

Donald and Sanderson define sustainable competitive advantage as "a set of capabilities and efforts made by the organization to achieve its strategic goals, which include achieving superior profitability and satisfying internal stakeholders" (Boumedjane & Grichi, 2018, p. 183).

The competitive environment in which institutions operate requires each institution to have an explicit or implicit competitive strategy that reflects how it faces competition and the objectives and policies necessary to achieve competitive advantage. An institution can achieve sustainable competitive advantage by adding value that competitors cannot disseminate or imitate (Obeidat et al., 2020, p. 1331-1344).

Sustainable competitive advantage is the institution's ability to learn faster than its competitors, enabling it to develop a unique niche to continuously face and excel in competition. (Suwandana, 2023, p. 248) It reflects the institution's efficiency and quality performance, leading to improved performance and differentiation from competitors.

Sustainable competitive advantage is defined as the development of a strategy that adds value unavailable to competitors and serves as a tool for the company to deal with competitors effectively. Institutions aiming to gain sustainable competitive advantage must consider several aspects, including quality strategy, customer service, innovation and creativity, team development, flexibility in activities and operations, and market responsiveness. (Novitasari & Agustia, 2023, p. 2018) Porter explained that building sustainable competitive advantage requires institutions to formulate clear objectives, strategies, and processes that align with the institution's culture and values. Through extensive research in various institutions, Porter identified three ways an institution can achieve sustainable competitive advantage: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus (Satai Al-Azhar, 2023, p. 40).

In conclusion, sustainable competitive advantage reflects the institution's superiority over its competitors through its distinctive positioning, which makes it difficult for competitors to imitate or replicate the characteristics and qualities of its products or services. This enables the institution to maintain continuity and achieve long-term returns.

### 3.2 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The resource-oriented model discusses four factors that help in developing and maintaining competitive advantage:

- **innovation:** this refers to the institution's tendency to support new ideas, experimentation, and create processes earlier than competitors. Innovation enables the institution to improve existing product lines, introduce new products to the market, and utilize better production techniques or equipment that enhance productivity. Many researchers have highlighted its importance in enabling the institution to gain sustainable competitive advantages that ensure superiority over competitors (Fattouche & Hedjazi, 2018, p. 370-371);
- **cost:** this dimension refers to the ability to provide a service or product at the lowest possible cost to satisfy external or internal customers of the process. Reducing costs requires designing and operating processes to make them efficient, using comprehensive analysis of the workforce, methods, overheads, and other factors such as investments in new facilities or technologies to reduce unit costs, (Kadi & Kouadria, 2022 p. 96-97) reduce employee wages, and control resources (Boudiaf et al., 2022, p. 228). In this context, Porter (1985) indicates that any institution can gain sustainable competitive advantage by following a cost leadership strategy or a differentiation strategy under cost leadership. Institutions should offer the same services or products as their competitors but at a lower cost (Boudiaf, 2017, p. 344);
- **flexibility:** this is the ability to respond to rapid changes and events that institutions face, leading to a transition from one service to a better one according to customer needs and desires. Flexibility is measured by the time taken for the transition process. It can increase the ability of operations to produce a wide range of products for different customers using economies of scale to avoid high costs resulting from a significant diversity of products (Slack et al., 2013, p. 52);

- **quality:** many institutions emphasize quality as the most important value, considering it a crucial factor in satisfying customers and gaining sustainable competitive advantage. (Raewf et al., 2021, p. 569). The concept of quality refers to the ability of a product or service to meet customer needs and indicates systems that deliver products or services well to the customer, satisfying them in the present and future. (Kadi & Kouadria, 2022, p. 96). Thus, institutions that do not offer high-quality products and services capable of meeting customer needs and expectations cannot survive and succeed in a highly competitive environment (Kadi & Kouadria, 2022, p. 96);
- **quick response:** this means that institutions can quickly bring new or improved products or services to the market or provide current products and services promptly upon request. It also involves quickly addressing customer complaints through rapid decision-making and swift movement of materials and information within the institution (Yahyaoui & Mouloudi, 2023, p. 182). A high level of responsiveness requires the institution to identify customers and meet their needs. As a result, the perceived value for customers will bring a sustainable competitive advantage to the institution (Fattouche & Hedjazi, 2018, p. 370-371). Fast delivery is also a key competitive element among institutions, focusing on reducing lead times and speeding up the design and delivery of new products, as well as the level of service performance and its quick delivery to customers as soon as possible (Yahyaoui & Mouloudi, 2023, p. 182);
- **accountability:** this reflects the institution's adoption of accountability practices in its operations and activities towards customers, ensuring their requests are met and treated with respect within a competitive environment. It also involves the absence of any negative practices within the institution and its commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities towards its customers, contributing to gaining a sustainable competitive advantage regardless of the nature of its activities or the products/services it offers (Benbedra et al., 2022, p. 552).

### 3.3 THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC VIGILANCE IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The importance of strategic vigilance lies not only in providing information but also in how it is utilized to create added value. Information, like other resources, needs to be invested in. Given

that information is one of the most crucial intangible internal resources that help institutions achieve sustainable competitive advantage, investing in vigilance offers several advantages:

- encouraging creativity and innovation: creativity and innovation are key dimensions of sustainable competitive advantage. Studies have found a positive correlation between investment in information and creativity and innovation. This investment helps free individuals from routine tasks;
- creating suitable conditions for integration: it facilitates the connection and integration between departments within the institution, between the institution and its widespread branches, and between the institution and other organizations, through computer networking, internet, and other communication devices;
- supporting strategic objectives: it reduces administrative costs significantly and enhances overall performance (Zouaoui, 2017, p. 12);
- outperforming competitors: institutions that adopt strategic vigilance can outperform competitors, leading the market and opening new investment opportunities before others (Houda et al., 2022, p. 885);
- offering indispensable products and services: this gives the institution a strong negotiating position with its customers and suppliers, enabling it to create new market opportunities and enhance the institution's image (Bensaad & Toual, 2021, p. 1201);
- enhancing competitive position: successful institutions often possess one or more competitive elements that allow them to perform better than their competitors. These elements can range from developing new products to customer service, with information being a crucial input for these components;
- managing distribution channels: investment in information ensures quicker delivery to customers, fewer delivery problems, and transactional advantages. The expertise gained from learning to use distribution channel management systems can also be a significant barrier to new entrants in the industry;
- building brand loyalty: institutions often invest substantial amounts in advertising and promoting their brand. This task can be managed and accomplished better through investment in marketing information systems, particularly customer relationship and brand management systems, which pose significant barriers to new competitors;
- enhancing production processes: information systems have become essential in managing production operations. Automated systems are the most cost-efficient method for organizing large-scale production processes. These cost-related benefits can

significantly hinder new competitors' entry into the industry, in addition to enhancing the ability to produce according to customer demand. This flexibility can increase profit margins and enhance customer satisfaction;

- achieving differentiation: investment in information technology is crucial for using advanced technology such as computer-aided design. These systems facilitate rapid product development and enhance the introduction of new products, distinguishing the institution's products from those of competitors and ensuring their quality. This leads to product differentiation, increasing the costs for customers to switch to another institution;
- enhancing stability: investment in information contributes to the stability of institutions that have successfully invested in information. They achieve better opportunities for interaction with customers, suppliers, and related parties, resulting in more stable performance in their activities (Zouaoui, 2017, p. 12-13).

## 4 PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

Building on the concepts highlighted in the theoretical section, which emphasized the importance of institutions adopting the concept of strategic vigilance and operating according to its principles and foundations, this section aims to determine whether the Algerian institutions under study apply this concept in its various dimensions and how it reflects on creating a sustainable competitive advantage that ensures their leadership and pre-emption in their field of activity. This section will define the study population and tool, and then present the validity and reliability of the study tool, leading to the testing of hypotheses and discussing and interpreting the results.

### 4.1 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The study population consists of Algerian institutions. A simple random sample was chosen, with 60 questionnaires distributed and 57 questionnaires retrieved. Three questionnaires were excluded due to their unsuitability for statistical analysis, resulting in 54 valid questionnaires for analysis. Below is a description of the personal variables of the study sample:



**Table 1***Description of the Personal Variables of the Study Sample*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	33	61.1
	Female	21	38.9%
<b>Age Group</b>	20-29 years	8	14.8%
	35-45 years	26	48.1%
	40-49 years	19	35.2%
	50 years and above	1	1.9%
<b>Education Level</b>	Secondary	1	1,9%
	Higher Technical	10	18,5%
	University	40	74,1%
	Postgraduate	3	5,6%
<b>Job Title</b>	General Manager	0	0%
	Deputy or Assistant GM	3	5,6%
	Department Head	29	53,7%
	Division Head	22	40,7%
<b>Years of Experience</b>	Less than 1 year	4	7,4%
	1-5 years	25	46,3%
	6-10 years	23	42,6%
	11-15 years	2	3,7%
	More than 15 years	0	0%

Source: Based on the outputs of SPSS V25.

**Statistical Analysis Methods:** The data were subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (**SPSS: V25**). We employed various statistical methods as follows:

**Table 2***Statistical Tools Used in Questionnaire Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing*

Statistical Tool	Description
<b>Frequency, Percentage, and Graphs</b>	Used to describe the study sample and their responses to the questionnaire statements.
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	Tests the reliability of the questionnaire using the pilot study data.
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient</b>	Measures the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables. It is used to verify the validity of the questionnaire and test the hypothesis of the relationship.
<b>Arithmetic Mean</b>	The average of a set of values, or the sum of the studied values divided by their number, used to understand the average responses of the respondents to the questionnaire and compare them to the hypothetical mean estimated at (03) since the scoring ranges from (01) to (05). The mean helps determine the level of study variables.
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	Measures the extent of deviation in the responses of study participants towards each item or dimension, ensuring the model's validity for hypothesis testing. A value close to zero indicates concentrated responses and less dispersion, resulting in more credible and higher quality results. It also helps rank items based on the least dispersion when the weighted arithmetic mean is equal.
<b>Regression Coefficient</b>	Used to test the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable.
<b>One-Sample T-Test</b>	Used to test the study hypothesis.

Source: Prepared by the students based on SPSS V25 outputs.

**Validity and Reliability of the Study Tool:** To ensure the psychometric properties of the study tool, we calculated both the validity and reliability. The results are presented in the following sections.

**Internal Consistency Validity:** We calculated the correlation coefficients between each dimension of the scale and the total score of the scale itself to determine the internal consistency validity, as shown in the following tables:

#### 4.1.1 First: strategic vigilance

**Table 3**

*Internal Consistency Validity for the Strategic Vigilance Variable*

Statement Number	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Statement Number	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Statement Number	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
1	,753**0	11	,480**0	21	,736**0
2	,351**0	12	,292*0	22	,272*0
3	,363**0	13	,570**0	23	,511**0
4	,483**0	14	,586**0	24	,777**0
5	,456**0	15	,758**0	25	,526**0
6	,399**0	16	,806**0	26	,380**0
7	,762**0	17	,807**0	27	,634**0
8	,778**0	18	,583**0	28	,751**0
9	,550**0	19	,400**0	29	,362**0
10	,639**0	20	,668**0	30	,696**0

**Rule: If the error probability value (Sig. or P-value) is less than or equal to the significance level of 0.05, there is a significant correlation between each item of the scale and the total score of the scale.**  
**\*\* Significant at 0.01 level**  
**\* Significant at 0.05 level**

Source: Based on SPSS V25 outputs.

The table above shows that all the correlation coefficients between the statements and the total score for each dimension are statistically significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.272 to 0.807. This confirms the internal consistency validity of the statements with the total score for the strategic vigilance variable.

#### 4.1.2 Second: Competitive Advantage

**Table 4**

*Internal Consistency Validity for the Competitive Advantage Variable*

Statement Number	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Statement Number	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Statement Number	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
1	,713**0	6	,587**0	11	,541**0
2	,572**0	7	,650**0	12	,679**0
3	,753**0	8	,559**0		,291*0
4	,715**0	9	,672**0	13	
5	,522**0	10	,732**0		

**Rule: If the error probability value (Sig. or P-value) is less than or equal to 0.05, there is a significant correlation between each item of the scale and the total score of the scale.**  
**\*\* Significant at 0.01 level**  
**\* Significant at 0.05 level**

Source: Based on SPSS V25 outputs.

The table above shows that all the correlation coefficients between the statements and the total score for each dimension are statistically significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.291 to 0.732. This confirms the internal consistency validity of the statements with the total score for the competitive advantage variable.

**Reliability of the Study Tool:** Reliability refers to the consistency and accuracy of the results that can be obtained repeatedly. It measures how consistent the scores are when the experiment is repeated. To verify the reliability of the tool used in the study, we calculated Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, as shown in the following table:

**Table 5**

*Reliability of Questionnaire Dimensions Using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient*

Questionnaire Dimension	Number of Statements	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Strategic Vigilance	30	0.920
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	13	0.85

Source: Based on SPSS V25 outputs.

It is evident from Table 5 that the reliability coefficient values obtained through Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire dimensions exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Therefore, the questionnaire used in the study is characterized by a high degree of reliability and consistency.

#### 4.2 TESTING THE STUDY HYPOTHESES

In this study, we will test three main hypotheses to determine the extent to which the institutions under study are concerned with strategic vigilance as a mechanism for monitoring information. Additionally, we will examine the relationship and impact between the study variables using the Pearson correlation coefficient and simple linear regression model, respectively.

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant correlation at a significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between strategic vigilance and sustainable competitive advantage.

**Table 6**

*Results of Testing the Relationship between the Independent Variable (Strategic Vigilance) and the Dependent Variable (Sustainable Competitive Advantage)*

Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
<b>0.763</b>	0.000

Source: Based on SPSS V25 outputs.

To test this hypothesis, we used Pearson's correlation coefficient. As shown in Table 6, the correlation coefficient is 0.763, and the significance value (Sig) is 0.000, which is less than the significance level (0.01). This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between strategic vigilance and sustainable competitive advantage, thus confirming this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant impact of the dimensions of strategic vigilance on enhancing the sustainable competitive advantage of the institutions under study at a significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

To test the validity of this hypothesis, we used simple regression analysis to analyse the relationship between the independent variable (strategic vigilance) and the dependent variable (sustainable competitive advantage), as summarized in the following table:

**Table 7**

*Results of Simple Linear Regression Test to Measure the Impact of the Independent Variable (Strategic Vigilance) on the Dependent Variable (Sustainable Competitive Advantage)*

Independent Variable	Constant Value	Regression Coefficient	Tests	
			Value	Significance
<b>Strategic Vigilance</b>	0.276	0.965	0.931	0.000
<b>Overall Model Significance</b>	F Value – Significance	0.000		
<b>R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient</b>	R <sup>2</sup> Coefficient	0.752		

Source: Based on SPSS V25 outputs.

From Table 7, it is evident that the  $R^2$  coefficient value is 0.752, meaning that the independent variable "strategic vigilance" explains 75.2% of the variance in the dependent variable "sustainable competitive advantage." The remaining variance is attributed to other factors not included in the model. Given the F value, the regression model is significant at a level less than 0.05.

Moreover, the regression coefficient for the independent variable "strategic vigilance" is 0.965, indicating a significant impact between this variable and the dependent variable "sustainable competitive advantage." This means that any one-unit increase in strategic vigilance leads to an increase of 0.965 in sustainable competitive advantage. The simple regression model between the two variables can be represented as follows:

$$Y = 0.276 + 0.965 X_1 \quad (1)$$

where:

$X_1$  = Strategic Vigilance,

$Y$  = Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

The T-test result also indicates that this effect is significant and statistically significant, with a significance level less than 0.05. Based on the above, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant impact of the dimensions of strategic vigilance on enhancing the sustainable competitive advantage of the institutions under study at a significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), thus confirming this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: The institutions under study are concerned with applying strategic vigilance as a strategic method for monitoring information.

**Table 8**

*Test of the Extent of Interest of the Institutions under Study in Applying Strategic Vigilance as a Strategic Method for Monitoring Information*

Variable	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	T Value	Significance Level
<b>Strategic Vigilance</b>	3.84	0.45	13.65	0.000

Source: Based on SPSS V25 outputs.

Table 8 shows that the arithmetic mean for the strategic vigilance variable is 3.84, which is high, with a standard deviation of 0.45, less than one, indicating the convergence of the opinions

of the study sample members. Given the T value of 13.65, which is significant at a significance level of 0.05, this confirms the hypothesis that the institutions under study are indeed concerned with applying strategic vigilance as a strategic method for monitoring information.

#### 4.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Based on the results obtained, it is evident that the institutions under study have not established a specific department or unit for strategic vigilance. It was observed that the concept and system of strategic vigilance are not widely prevalent in some Algerian economic institutions. Most institutions indicate that strategic vigilance practices are implicitly integrated into other functions of the institution. These practices occur through various operations such as environmental monitoring, information gathering, processing, and utilization, which are part of vigilance activities. However, these are carried out informally as part of the employees' duties and within the framework of different departments or divisions, each according to its function and the general strategy or programmed plans of the institution.

It is worth noting that the institutions under study place significant importance on technological vigilance, focusing on technological innovation and everything related to modern technological and scientific techniques, technical information, and new knowledge in the field. This includes various indicators related to technical and technological areas that help the institution identify key strategic elements and variables and gather comprehensive information to build its plans and programs. As for commercial vigilance, it also receives considerable attention from the institutions in the study sample due to its significant role in monitoring strategic commercial information and everything that affects their commercial relationships with customers. This includes understanding customer needs and their evolution, relationships with suppliers and their offers. Most experts attribute the increased interest in commercial vigilance to its profitability in the short term.

In addition, these institutions pay great attention to environmental vigilance, which allows them to monitor and track various information, such as financial laws, tax developments, and all changes that might affect their activities. Environmental vigilance also involves gathering strategic information of a legal and legislative nature, indicating the institutions' keen interest in keeping up with legal changes and developments that significantly impact their activities. Due to the competitive environment in which these institutions operate, characterized by intense competition, most institutions are driven to be vigilant and monitor information



related to competitors, including their strategies, products, and prices. This comprehensive competitive intelligence allows the institution to have sufficient knowledge about its competitive environment.

Regarding the role of strategic vigilance in achieving and enhancing sustainable competitive advantage, the results demonstrate that adopting a strategic vigilance system ensures optimal use of the information needed to identify opportunities and build and develop competitive advantages. The role of strategic vigilance in enhancing and sustaining competitive advantage is evident through its various dimensions. Competitive vigilance contributes to achieving efficiency and quality, while technological vigilance fosters innovation and renewal. Commercial and environmental vigilance positively impact customer responsiveness and monitoring all developments in the external environment.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the increasing intensity and severity of competition in the global economic environment and the shift towards knowledge societies make acquiring and efficiently using information a central issue. Consequently, economic institutions have realized that the key factor keeping them in the race for leadership and providing them with sustainable competitive advantage is the effective attention to the fundamental requirements for building strategic vigilance. This has become a prominent concern for various countries and institutions due to the benefits it offers in enhancing competitive capabilities by focusing on how to search for and process useful information to adapt and increase their influence in their external environment.

Based on the theoretical study of the subject and its practical application to a sample of Algerian institutions, we have reached several findings and recommendations, as follows:

### Findings:

- strategic vigilance contributes to providing information to the institution in a scientific and systematic manner, allowing it to make strategically significant decisions;
- the success and continuity of the strategic vigilance system depend on the material and human resources provided by the top management and the collective efforts of the institution's employees. It also requires strong management and patience from everyone, as the results may not be immediate;

- building and enhancing the sustainability of competitive advantages fundamentally relies on the capabilities of human resources, which depend on information and knowledge;
- knowledge and creativity represent a strategic transformation in approaches to sustaining competitive advantage by leveraging strategic information for success and leadership;
- the institutions under study are concerned with collecting information related to changes in their external environment, especially competitive ones, and taking necessary measures accordingly. This information is very useful, accurate, up-to-date, and timely.
- the institutions under study focus on diversifying the sources of their competitive advantage to make it difficult for competitors to imitate or replicate, thereby ensuring effective competitive performance in their field of activity.

#### Recommendations:

- pay special attention to the external environment of the institution by monitoring all emerging changes, studying them, and then adapting to and coexisting with them;
- establish an independent structure to perform the function of strategic vigilance within the institution;
- continuously encourage individuals to innovate and provide the appropriate conditions that allow for the creation of sustainable competitive advantages for the institution;
- equip the institution with modern technology, especially information technology, due to its effective role in practicing vigilance activities and all other institutional activities to ensure high competitive performance.

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