

Article

Examining the relationship between strategic vigilance and strategic drift in tourism organizations

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Abstract: The tourism sector in the Aseer region of Saudi Arabia is experiencing significant growth and development, aligning with the country's Vision 2030 strategic framework. However, rapid growth can lead to strategic drift if not managed with vigilance. This study aims to examine the role of strategic vigilance in reducing strategic drift in the tourism sector. The study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 220 staff and directors from the tourism sector. The questionnaire measures the level of strategic vigilance and the level of strategic drift. The study hypothesizes a statistically significant positive relationship between strategic vigilance and reducing strategic drift. Data analysis involves exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The findings are expected to provide insights into the effectiveness of strategic vigilance in mitigating strategic drift and offer recommendations for enhancing the tourism sector's resilience and adaptability to accelerated environmental changes.

Keywords: strategic vigilance; competitive vigilance; technological vigilance; environmental vigilance; commercial vigilance; strategic drift; tourism organizations; Saudi Arabia's vision 2030

1. Introduction

The tourism sector in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the Aseer region, is experiencing significant growth and development in alignment with the country's Vision 2030 strategic framework. However, rapid growth and changes in the business environment can potentially lead to strategic drift if not managed effectively. This study aims to examine the role of strategic vigilance in reducing strategic drift in tourism organizations in the Aseer region.

Strategic vigilance refers to an organization's ability to proactively monitor and analyze changes in both internal and external environments (Rumman, 2022), enabling adaptation and maintenance of strategic direction (Cruz, 2017; Eshael, 2017). It encompasses competitive, technological, environmental, and commercial dimensions of vigilance (Abdulridh et al., 2023; Fadhil et al., 2021). On the other hand, Strategic drift occurs when an organization's strategy gradually deviates from the changing business environment (Dwyer et al., 2024; Voronov et al., 2022), potentially leading to deteriorating performance if not addressed (Gajere, 2018; Johnson, 1988). While previous research has explored strategic vigilance and strategic drift separately, there is limited empirical evidence on the relationship between these concepts, particularly in the context of the tourism sector in Saudi Arabia. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how strategic vigilance practices can help mitigate strategic drift

in tourism organizations. The research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire distributed to 220 staff and directors from the tourism sector in the Aseer region. The study measures the level of strategic vigilance across four dimensions (competitive, technological, environmental, and commercial vigilance) and the level of strategic drift across four dimensions (strategic planning, organizational culture, resistance to change, and deterioration of performance).

By examining the relationship between strategic vigilance and strategic drift, this study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of strategic vigilance practices in maintaining strategic alignment in a rapidly changing business environment. The findings are expected to offer practical recommendations for enhancing the resilience and adaptability of tourism organizations in the face of accelerated environmental changes.

This research contributes to the limited literature on the relationship between strategic vigilance and strategic drift in the Arab context. It also provides valuable insights for policymakers and tourism sector leaders in Saudi Arabia as they work towards achieving the goals outlined in Vision 2030. The study's focus on the Aseer region offers a localized perspective that can inform strategic management practices in similar developing tourism destinations.

In this research, we want to use strategic vigilance as a concept to counter strategic drift and as a third eye for organizations. This raises the following key question:

What is the role of strategic vigilance in reducing strategic drift in the tourism sector in difficult regions?

The objective of this study is to achieve a set of specific objectives that are closely linked to the topic, namely, to verify the level of strategic vigilance in all dimensions (competitive, technological, environmental, and commercial vigilance) in the tourism sector with difficulty. Measuring tourism employees' level of awareness and awareness of strategic drift. In addition to measuring the impact of strategic drift on operations in the tourism sector. Furthermore, diagnosis of the nature of the relationship between strategic vigilance and strategic drift.

Achieving innovative and effective recommendations that contribute to reducing strategic drift by enhancing the effectiveness of strategic vigilance.

2. Theoretical background

Organizations face the challenges of transformation and rapid change in the environment (Hussein, 2024; Rumman, 2022). Where there are constant changes and developments, and to adopt a dynamic relationship with its environment, the organization must seek ways to enhance its ability to understand the external and internal environments and enable it to predict the future. The role of strategic vigilance is reflected as it is an important key to organizations' success in meeting this challenge, enabling the organization to benefit from internal and external information and predict the future; To make the right strategic decisions, adapt to environmental transformations, maintain strong competitiveness (Cruz, 2017; Fadhil et al.,2021; Jaz and Jamal,2021; Rumman,2022)

2.1. Concept of strategic vigilance

Although the concept of vigilance is modern, the multiplicity of concepts is due to organizations' increasing attention to this concept in light of subsequent changes; some definitions review this concept in many respects:

According to Jaaz and Jamal, 2021 strategic vigilance is defined as proactive strategic thinking, and formal and structured organizational processes carried out consciously by business organizations to monitor ongoing changes in the environment, improve and address vulnerabilities, strengthen strengths, exploit opportunities, and avoid threats to organizations.

Strategic vigilance has also been defined as an ongoing collective process by a group of individuals to track and track predictive information (Hussein, 2024), and they use this expected information to understand potential changes in the organization's external environment, identify opportunities, and minimize risks as much as possible, with the aim of achieving the excellence of the organization (Ahmed and Mgid, 2019). According to Huynh et al. (2019), strategic vigilance is one of the intangible assets that an organization is building and maintaining; it plays an important role in the sustainability and survival of the organization (Rumman, 2022), enables it to attract the highest standards of efficiency, and enhances the organization's ability to achieve its goals, enhance its performance, and avoid strategic drift (Alshaer, 2020).

Based on the foregoing, strategic vigilance can be defined as a collective act requiring the adoption of an ideological manifestation that reflects its core values and principles, manifested through its reliance on the three-sight theory through monitoring and anticipating the internal and external environments. This holistic approach allows it to demonstrate its ideological commitment, which reflects its intellectual and strategic orientation and ability to adapt to changing challenges and opportunities in the environment (Abdulridh et al., 2023; Choi and Kim, 2019).

Strategic vigilance links the organization to its external environment, providing essential information for competition and predicting changes in advance (Alshaer, 2020; Thneibat et al., 2023). This enables the Foundation to capitalize on opportunities and avoid threats. Vigilance, through its various functions, offers continuous environmental monitoring, contributing to sustainability and the anticipation of future obstacles and risks. It facilitates the seamless flow of information across organizational levels, supports sustained strategic monitoring, identifies influential areas, and aids in gathering relevant information for strategic decision-making (Jalod et al., 2021, Thneibat et al, 2023).

Organizations face strategic drift, a gradual and often unnoticed deviation from their original strategy. This drift can result from external environmental changes, an inability to adapt quickly, or poor communication between leadership and staff. Strategic drift misallocates resources, reduces efficiency, and causes missed strategic opportunities. If not identified and corrected early, it can deteriorate performance and prevent the organization from achieving its goals.

2.2. Strategic drift concept

Strategic drift, introduced by Johnson in 1988, is a complex concept involving the gradual misalignment between an organization's strategy and its external

environment. Johnson (1988) described strategic drift as a series of small, periodically evaluated decisions influenced by external stimuli and managerial understanding of the environment, relying on consistent and rational ideas. It occurs when leaders and managers fail to respond promptly to minor environmental changes, exacerbating performance issues and often leading to organizational failure (Alshebli, 2016). Gajere (2018) defines strategic drift as the contradiction between strategy changes and the external environment, while Zafirova (2014) describes it as the gradual failure of a strategy to meet competitive challenges due to the complexity and dynamism of the external environment and inaccurate management perceptions.

Strategic drift occurs when an organization adopts practices that divert it from external trends and challenges, leading to a temporary sense of internal comfort (Musa and Lafta, 2021; Stjerne et al., 2024). Over time, this immersion and solidification result in a gradual decline as the organization loses communication with external factors and ignores environmental changes (Dwyer et al., 2024). Ultimately, this leads to the organization’s failure to adapt to external transformations and survive in a competitive environment.

After reviewing the theoretical concepts of the study variables, the study hypotheses can be expressed as follows

Following a review of the theoretical concepts of the study variables, the hypotheses can be expressed as follows.

Main hypothesis

H1: A statistically positive relationship exists between strategic vigilance and reducing strategic drift at the morale level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

The main assumption is derived from the following sub-hypotheses:

H1.1: A positive statistically significant relationship exists between competitive vigilance and reducing strategic drift at a morale level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

H1.12: Technological vigilance has a statistically positive relationship with reducing strategic drift at a moral level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

H1.3: There is a statistically positive relationship between environmental vigilance and reducing strategic drift at a morale level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

H1.4: A statistically positive relationship exists between commercial vigilance and reducing strategic drift at the morale level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

The following **Figure 1**, No. (1-1) shows the study model as follows:

Independent variable: dependent variable

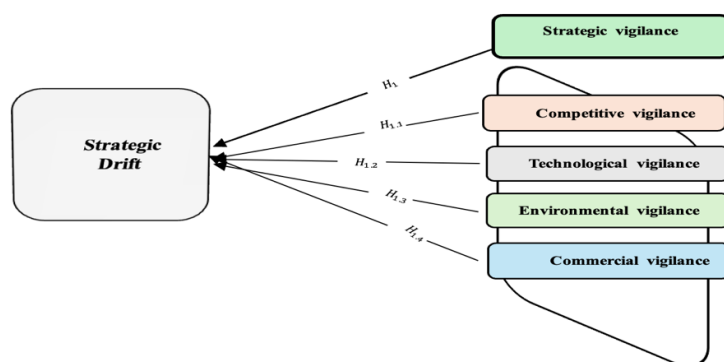


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on previous studies.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Community and sample study

The study community consisted of 220 staff and directors from the tourism sector.

Sample Size Determination

A simple random sample similar to the research community was withdrawn, and this type was selected because it carries out the process of selecting search vocabulary in a way that gives equal opportunity to all units (vocabulary) and a known possibility of selection (Noor et al., 2022).

Using the Richard–Geiger equation (Ruggeri et al., 2021), the appropriate study sample size was determined:

$$n = \frac{\left(\frac{Z}{d}\right)^2 \times (0.50)^2}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left[\left(\frac{Z}{d}\right)^2 \times (0.50)^2 - 1\right]}$$

where: {*n*: represents the size of the study sample, *N*: represents the size of the members of the study community

Z represents the standard score corresponding to the indicator level (0.95) and equal (1.96). *D*: Represents error ratio; (0.05)}

After applying the previous equation to determine the size of the study sample, the researcher found that the appropriate sample size of the study community was 110 individuals, but the number of responses resulted in 107 identifications; therefore, the questionnaires that were not suitable for analysis were deleted up to 105 resolutions that were capable and valid for analysis. It is a full sample size, which contributed to the response to the study’s hypotheses and was thus used to achieve the study’s objectives.

3.2. Characteristics of sample research

To identify the most important characteristics of the study sample, the repetitions and percentages of the study sample characteristics and results are calculated in the following tables: (See **Table 1**)

Table 1. Distribution of research sample members according to sex, type Job and administrative level.

Variable classes	Number	%
male	60	57.14
female	45	42.86
Variable classes	Number	%
Executive Director	7	6.70%
Head of Department	10	83.80%
employee	88	9.50%
Category	Number	%
Senior Management	11	10.48%
Middle Management	44	41.90%
Operational Management	50	47.62%
Total	105	100%

3.3. Research tools

The research tool was the identification designed to build on the theoretical framework, research, and previous studies relevant to the research topic, the role of strategic vigilance in reducing strategic drift in the tourism sector in the difficult region.

The preliminary identification consisted of two main parts: Part I. The initial data of the members of the research community are represented in (sex, job, scientific qualification, years of experience, and administrative level). Part II: (40) consists of a phrase distributed among the following axes and dimensions: first, strategic vigilance (competitive vigilance, technological vigilance, environmental vigilance, and commercial vigilance): 20 is a phrase. Second theme: Strategic drift (strategic planning, organizational culture, resistance to change, and performance degradation): 20 phrases. The distribution of averages of the approval level for the Lycert pentameter was also relied upon.

3.4. Data analysis

The psychometric indicators of identification were identified as follows:

Believe the search tool: This includes the following reliability methods:

The researcher’s statistical analysis of data relied on modelling methods of constructive equation (SEM (Structural Equation Method Modeling) using SmartPLS4, as well as SPSS v26 for the preparation of Factor Analysis (Exploratory) and Cronbach (Cronbach) “Alpha”

I. Analysis of strategic vigilance paragraphs.

The KMO and Bartlett tests evaluate all available data together. A KMO value of over 0.5 and a level of importance for the Bartlett test below 0.05 indicates a significant correlation in the data. An overlapping linear relationship indicates the strength of a single variable’s association with other variables. Values above 0.4 are considered suitable. The KMO scales can also be calculated for each variable. Values above 0.6 Acceptable.

Table 2. Shows the exploratory factor and load values (saturations) of the factors extracted from the strategic vigilance paragraphs.

boomer	Paragraph markup	Load values	Cronbach Laboratories	Latent root	Explained variance (%)	χ^2	Cronbach Laboratories	KMO Test
Mindfulness Competitiveness	A1.1	0.844	0.833					
	A1.2	0.843	0.801					
	A1.3	0.806	0.783	3.063	61.262	207.417	0.837	0.814
	A1.4	0.789	0.799					
	A1.5	0.606	0.781					
Technological Vigilance	A2.1	0.852	0.831					
	A2.2	0.843	0.853					
	A2.3	0.829	0.836	3.305	66.109	255.537	0.870	0.814
	A2.4	0.780	0.830					
	A2.5	0.757	0.861					

Table 2. (Continued).

boomer	Paragraph markup	Load values	Cronbach Laboratories	Latent root	Explained variance (%)	χ^2	Cronbach Laboratories	KMO Test
Environmental vigilance	A3.1	0.868	0.876					
	A3.2	0.864	0.855					
	A3.3	0.848	0.855	3.474	69.488	284.006	0.889	0.853
	A3.4	0.801	0.880					
	A3.5	0.784	0.861					
Commercial vigilance	A4.1	0.842	0.834					
	A4.2	0.808	0.817					
	A4.3	0.806	0.815	3.157	63.132	217.533	0.851	0.819
	A4.4	0.758	0.834					
	A4.5	0.755	0.804					
Overall average				3.249	64.998	241.123	0.861	0.825

Table 2 presents the results of the core component method analysis (post-varimax rotation) for strategic vigilance dimensions. The lowest load value was 0.606 in factor A1.5 (competitive vigilance), and the highest was 0.868 in factor A3.1 (environmental vigilance), both exceeding the minimum loading value of 0.3. **Table 2** details the latent root values and variance percentages for each factor. Kaiser's criterion, which accepts factors with latent root values greater than one, was met, as all factors had values exceeding this threshold. The variance interpretation showed that competitive vigilance had the lowest variance at 61.262%, while environmental vigilance had the highest at 69.488%, indicating the factors' strength in explaining variance. A variance interpretation threshold of 50% is deemed acceptable, with higher values preferred. The KMO test confirmed data suitability for analysis, with all values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.50, specifically above 0.60, indicating data adequacy.

The SPSS 4 output displays the Rotated Component Matrix, which lists factor loads for each variable on each factor. This matrix, derived post-rotation, is similar to the component matrix but includes adjustments. Loads below 0.4 were excluded as specified. Without this setting or adjusting the threshold to 0.4, the output changes. Variables are sorted by loading size, a requested format that differs from the default. Variable labels were omitted in most parts of the output for space but included here for clarity.

Comparing this matrix to the unrotated solution reveals that pre-rotation, most variables loaded heavily on the first factor, leaving others unexplored. Rotation clarified four distinct factors, each with variables loading primarily on one factor, except certain questions. Suppressing loads below 0.4 and sorting by load size simplifies interpretation by eliminating the need to scan for base loads.

II: Analysis of paragraphs of strategic deviation (see **Table 3**).

Table 3. Load values (saturation) for factors extracted from paragraphs strategic drift.

M	Paragraph markup	Load values	Cronbach Laboratories	Latent root	Explained contrast	χ^2	Cronbach Laboratories	KMO Test
Planning Strategic	B1.1	0.799	0.795					
	B1.2	0.772	0.752					
	B1.3	0.768	0.764	2.823	56.470	69.001	0.805	0.725
	B1.4	0.748	0.766					
	B1.5	0.663	0.758					
Culture Regulatory	B2.1	0.849	0.803					
	B2.2	0.784	0.813					
	B2.3	0.765	0.762	2.973	59.468	96.401	0.828	0.774
	B2.4	0.741	0.799					
	B2.5	0.71	0.790					
Resistance Change	B3.1	0.770	0.703					
	B3.2	0.745	0.711					
	B3.3	0.733	0.729	2.589	51.786	22.3931	0.762	0.766
	B3.4	0.699	0.739					
	B3.5	0.646	0.711					
deterioration performance	B4.1	0.859	0.840					
	B4.2	0.828	0.851					
	B4.3	0.798	0.844	3.262	65.245	246.398	0.866	0.811
	B4.4	0.788	0.819					
	B4.5	0.761	0.832					
Overall average				2.912	58.242	183.548	0.815	0.769

The matrix was compared to the unrolled solution. Initially, most variables loaded heavily on the first factor, leaving others unexamined. However, worker structure turnover clarified that there are four factors, with variables primarily loading on one, except for some on the second factor. Suppressing loads below 0.4 and organizing variables by load size simplifies interpretation, eliminating the need to scan the matrix for base loads.

The interpreted variance values show the common variance per factor relative to the number of paragraphs constituting the factor. The lowest variation value achieved was 51.786%. A higher differentiation of factors indicates the strength of the paragraphs saturating this factor in variance interpretation, highlighting their significance. Thus, interpreting 50% of the variance is considered acceptable, with higher values preferred.

The KMO test assesses the data's adequacy for analysis, with values ranging from zero to one. A result above 0.50 is deemed acceptable. All table results exceeded 0.50, indicating adequacy and appropriateness.

3.5. Reliability

The researcher used the (smart PLS) software to accomplish the affirmative factor reliability of the paragraphs that make up the independent and dependent variables, and it is known that the quality of the data collected is important in verifying it as it reflects the extent of reliance on the study tool and our confidence in the results resulting from it (see **Figure 2**).

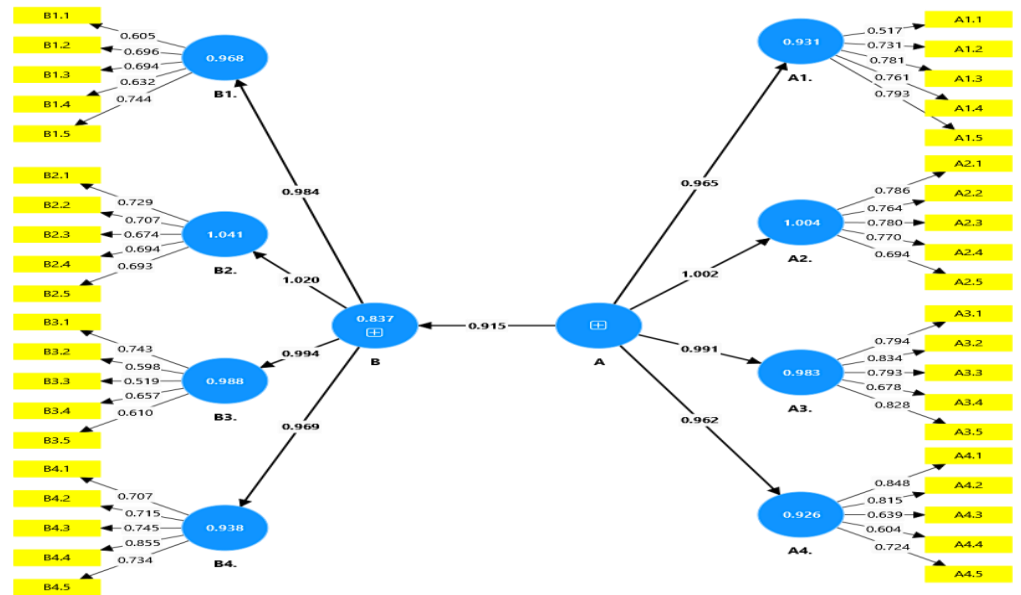


Figure 2. Results and values of loading the dimensions of the study.

Table 4. Quality test indicators of the emphatic factor analysis model for the relationship between strategic vigilance (A) and strategic drift (B).

Pointer	Calculated values
Chi-square	57.983
P value	0.003
Chi2/df	1.705
RMSEA	0.066
GFI	0.980
AGFI	0.905
CFI	0.988

* Statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 4 reveals that the kai box value of the model reached 57.983 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating statistically significant differences and a lack of conformity between the survey data model (Real) and the default model. The GFI was 0.980, within the acceptable range, reflecting a high level of data matching quality. The CFI value was 0.988, indicating a high quality that aligns with the RMSEA value, which was below 0.066 Chi2/df. Thus, given that all four quality indicators align with the study data model, the data exhibits a high matching quality for the study application.

3.6. Data results

The relative importance index of the equation was calculated as follows (Sakhare and Chouguule, 2019):

$$RII = \sum \frac{W}{AN} \times 100 = \frac{5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1}{5N}$$

$$0 < RII \leq 1$$

The RII value ranges from 0 to 1, excluding 0. RII's appreciation indicates the phrase's significance. Comparing RII with measurements highlights the importance of the conversion matrix. Relative Importance Index (RII) = computational average \times 20%. Results are shown in the following tables.

Statistical indicators of computational averages and standard deviations show the overall average of the strategic vigilance axis is 4.0015 to 5 with a standard deviation of 0.856, confirming high strategic vigilance in the tourism sector (88% of the sample). Computational averages for strategic vigilance range from 3.89 to 4.10, indicating the practice degree varies from medium to high.

The first dimension, competitive vigilance standard, with the phrase "the Authority shall collect information concerning its current and potential competitors regularly" (A1.1), is the most important. Conversely, the phrase "The Authority constantly evaluates market growth rates and relevant tourism sector trends" belongs to the fourth dimension, commercial vigilance.

For the competitive advantage axis, calculation averages, standard deviations, and relative weights in **Table 4** show the following results: the overall average is 2.65 to 3 with a standard deviation of 0.579, supporting high cognitive measurement (92% of the sample). Computational averages for competitive advantage range from 2.53 to 2.78, indicating a high to very high degree of practice.

With the order of importance for each phrase in the first order, the most important phrase is the first dimension (strategic planning), which is the first phrase B1.1 which stipulates: "The Authority shall establish a clear vision for the future and determine the optimal strategic direction of the tourism sector." In contrast, the thirteenth phrase, which belongs to the fourth dimension (deteriorating performance), states: "Employees of the Authority seek to maintain the current situation in the tourism sector without adopting any initiatives for change and improvement".

Results of the Research Hypotheses:

Based on the results of the statistical analysis of the study hypotheses, we find the results of the first sub-hypothesis, which states that there is a positive relationship of statistical significance to competitive vigilance in reducing strategic drift at a moral level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

A statistically significant positive relationship (*) ($0.000 < 0.005$) between competitive vigilance and strategic drift is β 0.788, which is a statistically significant value based on T (12.497). From the calculation of $F2$ and $R2$, the relationship can be described as an intermediate but very strong effect relationship.

Results of the second sub-hypothesis

which states that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between technological vigilance and reducing strategic drift at a moral level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

A statistically significant positive (expulsive) relationship at the moral level (0) ($0.000 < 0.005$) between technological vigilance and strategic drift is β 0.879), a statistically significant value based on T (21.703). From the calculation of $F2$ and $R2$, the relationship can be described as an intermediate but very strong effect relationship.

Results of sub-hypothesis 1.3: Which states that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between environmental vigilance and reducing strategic drift at a moral level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

A statistically significant positive (expulsive) relationship at the moral level (0) ($0.000 < 0.005$) between environmental vigilance and strategic drift is β 0.843, a statistically significant value based on T (18.159). From the calculation of $F2$ and $R2$, the relationship can be described as an intermediate but very strong effect relationship.

Results of sub-hypothesis 1.4: A statistically significant correlation (expulsion) at the moral level (0) ($0.000 < 0.005$) between commercial vigilance and strategic drift is β (0.980), which is statistically significant based on T (0.985). From the calculation of $F2$ and $R2$, the relationship can be described as an intermediate but very strong effect relationship.

Results of the main hypothesis: There is a positive statistically significant relationship between strategic vigilance and reducing strategic drift at a moral level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$).

A statistically significant correlation (expulsion) at a moral level (0) ($0.000 < 0.005$) between the strategic vigilance axis and strategic drift was β (0.934), a statistically significant value based on the T value (43.066). From the calculation of $F2$ and $R2$, the relationship can be described as an intermediate but very strong effect.

4. Discussion

The paper presents a significant contribution to strategic management research in the tourism sector, focusing on Saudi Arabia's Aseer region. By examining the relationship between strategic vigilance and strategic drift using a quantitative approach, the study addresses a critical gap in the literature. The research employs advanced statistical analysis to provide empirical evidence on the importance of strategic vigilance in mitigating strategic drift within the tourism industry. This approach enhances the reliability of the findings and offers a solid foundation for future research in this area.

The study's practical implications are particularly noteworthy, as they provide actionable insights for tourism organizations and policymakers. By highlighting the importance of strategic vigilance in avoiding strategic drift, the research offers valuable guidance for developing resilient and adaptable strategies in the tourism sector. The focus on the Saudi Arabian context adds to the study's relevance, providing locally applicable findings that can inform decision-making processes in the region.

The conceptual framework presented in the paper serves as a useful tool for future research, potentially extending the study's impact beyond the immediate context of Saudi Arabia's tourism industry. This framework could be adapted and applied to other geographical regions or sectors, allowing for comparative studies and broader insights into strategic management practices.

The quantitative approach employed in this study provides a robust methodology for examining the relationship between strategic vigilance and strategic drift. By utilizing advanced statistical techniques, the researchers have been able to establish a clear correlation between these two concepts, offering a more nuanced understanding of how organizations can maintain their strategic focus in a rapidly changing environment.

This study examines leaders and employees of strategic centers in the Aseer region's tourism sector to assess strategic vigilance and its role in mitigating strategic drift. Unlike previous studies on strategic vigilance, such as Al-Ghanim (2024), which focused on public and private sector hospital employees in Kafr al-Sheikh, and Gachanja (2018), which targeted all insurance companies in Kenya, this research is unique in its focus. It is the first to investigate the role of strategic vigilance in reducing strategic drift within the Saudi tourism sector. The study's significance lies in the unique economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the Saudi environment, necessitating a precise understanding of this relationship in the Aseer region. This research addresses a gap in existing literature, providing novel insights relevant to the realities of the tourism sector in Asir and Saudi Arabia. Previous studies on strategic vigilance (Altarawneh, 2023; Fadhil et al., 2021; Mohsin et al., 2023) and strategic drift (Gachanja, 2018; Gajere and Nimfa, 2021) have not been conducted within Saudi Arabia, focusing instead on other countries' environments and contexts.

Previous studies on the independent variable (strategic vigilance) differ in application location: Fadhil et al. (2021) and Mohsin et al. (2023) focused on Iraq, while Gachanja (2018) studied Kenya. This study, conducted in Nigeria (Gajere and Nimfa, 2021), examines strategic vigilance through four dimensions: competitive, technological, environmental, and commercial vigilance. It aims to reduce strategic drift, a dependent variable with dimensions including strategic planning, organizational culture, resisting change, and deteriorating performance. These dimensions differ from previous studies as follows: Altarawneh (2023) and Fadhil et al. (2021) explored technological, competitive, marketing, and environmental vigilance, whereas Ismail et al. (2023) included economic, social, technological, and competitive vigilance. For strategic drift, Gachanja (2018) addressed organizational culture, leadership, strategic planning, and innovation, while Gajere and Nimfa (2021) focused on strategic flexibility, organizational flexibility, and management culture.

Management implications

This study aimed to enhance the understanding of strategic vigilance in mitigating and leveraging strategic drift in the tourism sector through a systematic literature review and applied research. The key management findings of this research highlight the importance of organizations maintaining a strong connection with their external environments. Internally isolated and strategically inattentive organizations are at significant risk of losing touch with their dynamic surroundings. To avoid strategic drift, it is essential for organizations to realign themselves with these dynamic environments, which requires adapting management and leadership methods and incorporating new ideas within their operational frameworks.

The analysis underscored the pivotal role of human resources in reducing strategic drift. For organizations seeking to expand their core competencies and capitalize on new opportunities, it became evident that transformative changes alone, even those aligned with Saudi Arabia's tourism vision, are insufficient to address their challenges. Contemporary organizations must evolve through changes in staff, knowledge, customer base, and shareholder value while maintaining synchronization with their external environment. Innovation within organizations hinges on resources and capacities shaped by strategic vigilance and a keen awareness of environmental changes. The findings emphasize the importance of balancing managed and unmanaged strategies while promoting transparency and integration.

To strengthen resilience and adaptability to rapid environmental changes, the study recommends actionable strategies for the tourism sector and the Development Authority. A development authority should adopt one of two strategies to sustain success: achieving a technical breakthrough that redefines sector competition or expanding into new areas. Both strategies necessitate high levels of flexibility and competitiveness to navigate environmental challenges. Strategic vigilance enables organizations to maximize their resources, prepare for future challenges, and prevent strategic drift, thereby granting tourism decision-makers a competitive edge on the international stage. It is imperative for the Development Authority to align policies, planning, product development, and marketing strategies with future environmental trends that influence tourist behavior. By keeping pace with cutting-edge research, organizations can effectively address external forces, innovate in operations, and avoid strategic drift.

Strengthening strategic vigilance in the tourism sector requires enhancing mechanisms for information collection and analysis across competitive, technological, environmental, and commercial domains. This approach improves the sector's ability to proactively monitor and respond to environmental changes. Developing early warning systems is vital for the early detection and intervention of strategic deviations, ensuring that the sector maintains its strategic objectives. Promoting resilience within the tourism sector enables rapid adaptation to market changes and trends. Regular updates to strategic planning are necessary to ensure alignment with the evolving environment. Effective change management practices play a critical role in facilitating necessary transformations, minimizing resistance among workers, and ensuring successful strategic changes.

Investing in workforce competencies and skills is another critical component of enhancing strategic vigilance and adaptability. By improving the sector's ability to predict and respond to changes, organizations can better prepare for emerging challenges. Establishing effective communication channels is essential to ensure the smooth flow of information across administrative levels, fostering a shared understanding of strategic direction and coordinated efforts among stakeholders. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of strategic performance indicators help organizations identify and address potential deviations promptly, maintaining alignment with strategic goals.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of learning within the tourism sector encourages the exchange of insights, best practices, and lessons learned, which enhances decision-making and strengthens sector resilience. Aligning organizational structures,

processes, and resource allocation with strategic objectives helps reduce the risks of deviation and ensures compliance with strategic goals. Regularly updating the strategic risk management framework enables organizations to address emerging threats and opportunities, enhancing their resilience and ability to adapt.

The study also highlights the importance of increasing female representation in the workforce to diversify perspectives and experiences, thereby fostering innovation and development. Balancing the functional distribution of employees ensures optimal allocation of tasks and responsibilities, which improves organizational efficiency. Finally, continuous professional development, especially for employees with limited experience or lower qualifications, is crucial for refining skills, enhancing efficiency, and contributing to the achievement of sector objectives. By implementing these strategies, the tourism sector can strengthen its strategic vigilance, enhance resilience, and secure its position in an ever-changing global landscape.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the role of strategic vigilance in reducing strategic drift in the tourism sector of the Aseer region in Saudi Arabia. Strategic vigilance, a proactive approach to monitoring and analyzing changes in internal and external environments, enables organizations to adapt and maintain their strategic direction. The study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire distributed to 220 staff and directors from the tourism sector. It measures the level of strategic vigilance across four dimensions (competitive, technological, environmental, and commercial vigilance) and the level of strategic drift across four dimensions (strategic planning, organizational culture, resistance to change, and deterioration of performance). The study hypothesizes a statistically significant positive relationship between strategic vigilance and reducing strategic drift. Data analysis involves exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The findings are expected to provide insights into the effectiveness of strategic vigilance in mitigating strategic drift and offer recommendations for enhancing the tourism sector's resilience and adaptability to accelerated environmental changes.

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