

The Role of Strategic Vigilance in Mitigating Challenges Faced by Startups: A Study of High-Growth Startups

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the capacity of startups to achieve success by employing strategic vigilance and monitoring of opportunities and threats. By examining the specific challenges faced by high-growth startups, the study unveils how strategic vigilance acts as a safeguard. It explores how actively monitoring market shifts, competitor actions, and internal inefficiencies equips startups to adapt and innovate, minimizing the impact of disruptive forces. Furthermore, the research investigates the various tools and techniques that high-growth startups can leverage to cultivate a culture of strategic vigilance, fostering a proactive mindset within the organization. Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of strategic vigilance as a cornerstone for mitigating the inherent risks associated with the startup journey. By equipping themselves with the necessary foresight and adaptability, high-growth startups can navigate the turbulent entrepreneurial landscape with greater confidence, paving the way for long-term success.

Keywords: Strategic Vigilance; Startups; Competitive vigilance; Environnemental vigilance; Technological vigilance; Commercial vigilance.

JEL Classification: I10; M13; I14; I16; I19; I11.

Introduction

The world is currently experiencing one of its most advanced stages, particularly in the field of business. The business environment has become highly reliant on information and its modernity, largely due to rapid technological advancements and the rise of artificial intelligence. Start-ups, being highly impacted by these changes, face the need to swiftly embrace modern information to enhance their products, services, and market understanding in order to establish a competitive position and mitigate external risks. Consequently, it becomes imperative for them to establish a monitoring system that enables them to track and adapt to environmental changes and embrace novelty, ultimately ensuring their survival, continuity, and subsequent growth. From here, we raise the following issue:

What is the role of strategic vigilance and monitoring O/T system in the success of start-ups?

1- The scientific methodology of the study

1-1 Study Sub questions

The lack of strategic vigilance among startups hinders their ability to adapt to environmental changes and seize opportunities, thus limiting their potential for long-term success. To be aware of all aspects of the problem, we have raised the following sub-questions:

- a) To what extent does strategic vigilance contribute to startups?
- b) How can a startup become vigilant technologically?
- c) How can monitoring the O/T system help startups mitigate the challenges they face?

1-2 Study goals

The paper addresses the importance and pitfalls of strategic vigilance and its role in enhancing the performance of startups. The goals of this study lie in the following aspects:

- a) The study aims to explain the importance of strategic vigilance for the success of startups.
- b) The study will investigate how many startups that have been successful in growing and expanding have adopted strategic vigilance.
- c) The study will also explore the factors that influence the adoption of strategic vigilance among startups.
- d) The study aims to provide a comprehensive system for strategic vigilance, specifically tailored for startups, through which they can analyze their internal and external environment and identify opportunities and threats in a timely manner.

1-3 Study importance

The importance of this study is twofold. First, it will help to clarify the role of strategic vigilance in the success of startups. This is important because strategic vigilance is a relatively new concept, and there is still much that we do not know about it. This study will help to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding of strategic vigilance and its impact on startups. The study contributes to enhancing the development of startups. It sheds light on the strategic practices and approaches that can help startups adapt to their environment effectively, leading to sustainable growth.

1-4 Hypothesis

H⁰ Startups that actively practice strategic vigilance are more likely to identify and capitalize on emerging markets.

H¹ Startups must be vigilant technologically to thrive. By adopting agile and iterative approaches to their business processes, they demonstrate higher levels of strategic vigilance, allowing them to respond more swiftly to technological changes and adjust their strategies accordingly.

H² startups should be vigilant commercially to develop by monitoring and analyzing competitor activities and industry trends, which demonstrate higher levels of strategic vigilance, empowering them to anticipate market shifts and make informed strategic decisions.

H³ startups that effectively manage and mitigate risks through strategic vigilance are more resilient and better prepared to navigate external challenges.

1-5 Method of the study

The descriptive analytical method is a rigorous and systematic approach to research. It is also a flexible method that can be adapted to the specific needs of the study. This makes it a good choice for the study that is trying to understand the effect of strategic vigilance on startups. The study follows sequential procedures as a strategy for the mixed methods that have been applied, a combination of descriptive and analytical methods. The descriptive method focuses on describing both variables under study, "strategic vigilance and startups," while the analytical method focuses on analyzing the collected data about successful startups and drawing conclusions. The study aims to understand the relationship between strategic vigilance and the success of startups. We adapt the descriptive analytical method to the specific needs of the study through the following steps:

- a) Define and operationalize variables: Clearly define the variables of interest, which are strategic vigilance and the success of startups, and develop appropriate measurement criteria or indicators for each variable.

This ensures that the study captures relevant aspects of strategic vigilance and success specific to startups.

- b) Interpret and draw conclusions: Based on the analysis, interpret the findings and draw conclusions about the impact of strategic vigilance on startup success. Discuss the strengths and limitations of the study and provide recommendations for startups and practitioners to enhance strategic vigilance practices.

1-6 Study limits

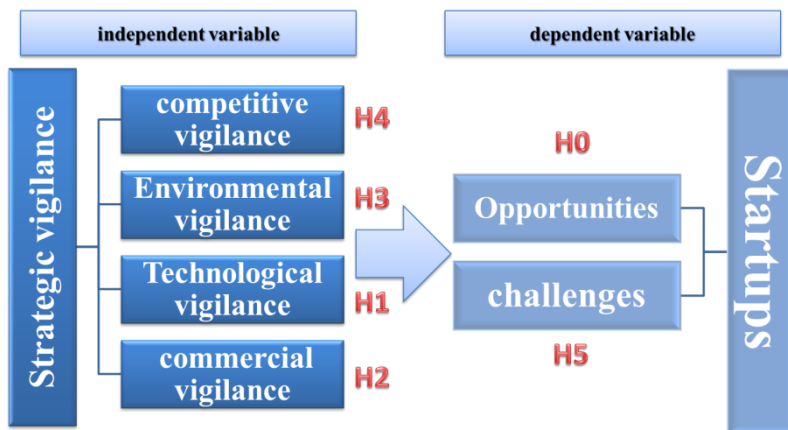
It is important to be aware of the study limits so that the reader can understand the limitations of the study and the implications of the results. The study limited by location and time.

- a) Spatial limits: The study included a group of successful startups that achieved high growth rates, the majority of which were located in Silicon Valley, United States of America.
- b) Time constraints: The study's duration or time frame was between 2005 and 2023.

1-7 Study model

The study model consists of independent variable strategic vigilance with dimensions (competitive vigilance, environmental vigilance, technological vigilance and commercial vigilance) and dependent variable startups. Based on the study problematic a conceptual model (**Figure number (01)**): was designed:

Figure number (01): conceptual framework of the study



Source: developed by author

2- Theoretical background

Strategic vigilance in startups is an essential component for achieving long-term success. Startups operate in a highly dynamic and competitive environment, where the ability to anticipate and respond to emerging challenges is crucial. It is imperative for startups to adopt a proactive and assertive approach towards strategic vigilance.

2-1 Strategic vigilance

Strategic vigilance refers to the proactive monitoring and assessment of the external environment to identify potential opportunities and threats for an organization. It involves being alert to changes in the market, technology, competition, and other relevant factors. The concept of strategic vigilance has been studied in various contexts; strategic vigilance has a positive impact on various organizational outcomes, such as the practical application of electronic management, organizational ambidexterity, and operational performance. It is recommended that organizations employ specialized committees and teams to enhance strategic vigilance and provide them with necessary resources. Strategic vigilance is also found to be related to strategic thinking and strategic success. Overall, strategic vigilance plays a crucial role in helping organizations adapt to changes, identify opportunities, and achieve their goals.

2-2 Definitions

The term Strategic vigilance is defined by (Karima, 2022) “Strategic vigilance is an integrated monitoring and monitoring process system that enables organizations to make strategic decisions and achieve long-term excellence.”

Also according to (Alshaer, 2020) “Strategic vigilance refers to the continuous monitoring of the organization's surroundings to identify opportunities and minimize threats.”

Following (Dawood, 2018) “Strategic vigilance refers to the process of obtaining information about changes in the external environment to make necessary decisions and exploit opportunities while avoiding threats.”

(Hani, 2023) define it “Strategic vigilance is the process that is characterized by continuity and change in order to track the internal and external environment of the institutions in order to collect information about possible changes in them; in order to discover opportunities and reduce risks associated with the institution’s leadership orientations according to an organized method in strategic management”

According to (Noor Kareem Hassan, 2022) “Strategic vigilance is the operations to forecast, observe and analyze an environment after publishing the information specified and selected accurately and treatment

that help with decision making The strategy for the organization and the long-term. And the information may be the same nature: (technology, Legal, Competitive, and Commercial)”

Strategic vigilance involves gathering and analysing information from various sources, such as market research, competitor analysis, customer feedback, industry reports, and emerging technologies. It requires a systematic and disciplined approach to monitoring and interpreting data to make informed decisions and take timely actions.

2-3 Dimensions of strategic vigilance

Strategic vigilance types refer to different approaches or categories of vigilance that are employed in various contexts. The concept of vigilance encompasses mechanisms that protect individuals from deception and misinformation, as well as specialized mechanisms that safeguard against interpretative mistakes and promote understanding (Hamaguchi, 2010) the four types of strategic vigilance are:

- A. **Technological vigilance:** is the systematic monitoring of technological developments that are relevant to an organization's interests. It is a continuous process of gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information about new technologies, emerging trends, and potential threats and opportunities. (Ghandour Hamza, 2022) It refers to the activity through which an organization monitors and analyzes technological advancements, innovations, and trends that are relevant to its industry or sector. It involves keeping a close watch on emerging technologies, research and development activities, patents, and the competitive landscape in terms of technological advancements. (Hafsi Houda, 2023)
- B. **Environmental vigilance:** This is the process of monitoring the external environment of an organization, including the political, economic, social, technological, and legal factors that could affect its operations. Environmental vigilance can help organizations to identify new opportunities, assess risks, and make informed decisions about their strategic direction. (Ghandour Hamza, 2022) Environmental vigilance pertains to the remaining elements of the organization's environment that were not covered in the aforementioned types, such as environmental science vigilance, cultural vigilance, financial vigilance, etc. These types are equally important compared to the previously mentioned types, as they also impact the organization's activities and future. (Hafsi Houda, 2023)
- C. **Competitive vigilance:** This is the process of monitoring the activities of competitors, including their products, services, strategies, and marketing initiatives. Competitive vigilance can help

organizations to stay ahead of the competition, identify new threats, and develop competitive advantage. (Ghandour Hamza, 2022) Competitive intelligence is the activity through which an organization identifies its current and potential competitors. It also focuses on the environment in which competing organizations evolve. This is achieved through gathering information obtained from industry analysis and competitive analysis (identifying strengths and weaknesses), analyzing it, extracting insights, and applying them in decision-making processes. (Hafsi Houda, 2023)

- D. **Commercial “Marketing” vigilance:** This is the process of monitoring the market environment, including customer needs, trends, and competition. Marketing vigilance can help organizations to develop new products and services, improve their marketing strategies, and increase their market share. (Ghandour Hamza, 2022) Commercial vigilance is the activity through which an organization studies the relationship between suppliers/customers, as well as new skills in the market, market growth rate, etc. Commercial vigilance specifically focuses on customers and suppliers to develop products and services, and the information obtained from commercial vigilance intersects with the information from competitive vigilance. (Hafsi Houda, 2023)

By understanding these four factors, organizations can identify the key threats and opportunities that they face. This information can then be used to develop strategies to mitigate threats and capitalize on opportunities.

2-1 Startups

Startup is a newly formed business with particular momentum behind it based on perceived demand for its product or service. The intention of a startup is to grow rapidly as a result of offering something that addresses a particular market gap. Startups operate in a rapidly changing business environment, and being flexible and quick to respond to market shifts is crucial. By staying vigilant and assertive, entrepreneurs can proactively identify when adjustments are needed and take the necessary steps to pivot their business model or strategy.

2-2 Definitions

According to the definition given by Larousse, a "start-up" is a "young, innovative company, especially in the new technologies sector." If we translate this term into French, we can speak of a "jeunepousee." Steve Blank, one of the specialists in this type of company in Silicon Valley in the United States, describes a start-up as "a temporary organization in search of

an industrialisable, profitable business model that allows for growth." (Sid-Ali, 2023)

Following (Amina, 2023) "Startups are newly established businesses that are characterized by their innovative ideas, products, or services. They are often driven by a vision to disrupt traditional industries or create new ones"

According to (Mykhailo Luchko & Stanisław Szmitka, 2019) "Startups are a form of entrepreneurship that offers low costs and allows for experimentation and market research to develop products according to customer requirements. They are considered innovative and competitive business models."

Following (BELAA, 2023) "Startups are early-stage companies that develop innovative solutions with a strong technological base and have the potential for rapid growth in the market. The internationalization of startups is an important strategy for their development and expansion of opportunities"

According to Kienia Trideria (2020), "a startup company is a company that is designed to grow fast and is in a phase of growth and market research, often related to technology."

Startups typically operate in dynamic and competitive environments, seeking rapid growth and scalability. They face challenges such as securing funding, building a talented team, and gaining market traction. Startups leverage technology and digital platforms to create efficient and scalable business models. They often embrace agile methodologies and focus on creating a strong brand and customer experience. The startup ecosystem provides support through incubators, accelerators, investors, and other networks. Startups play a vital role in driving innovation, economic growth, and job creation.

2-2-1 Types of startups

According to (Sara BOUREDJA, 2022), there are five types of startups as follows:

- Small business startups: the majority of the startups are small firms with small team members. These startups are happy to stay startups as they sell products and services. And while they're interested in growth, they grow at their own pace. Such startups are often bootstrapped or selffunded, meaning that there's less pressure to scale as soon as possible or be beholden to the immediate needs of investors;
- Buyable startups: businesses built to be bought out the concept here is that small teams build a business from scratch and sell it to a bigger player in their industry. These types of startups are usually

associated with software and technology. Chances are, you've seen headlines about giants like Amazon or Uber buying out smaller startups. Mergers and acquisitions like this happen all the time;

- Scalable startups: companies that seek capital (or scale themselves) the common thread between all types of startups is the need to scale. Some startups are easier to scale than others. Most consumer and business apps are examples of scalable startups; once they've built buzz and a user base, it becomes easier to acquire new customers. It's a sort of snowball effect. Scalable startups do this by raising capital from outside investors (think: angel investors, venture capitalists, business partners, friends, and family). With newfound cash, they can support growth initiatives to score more customers and eventually grab the attention of folks willing to buy them out;
- Offshoot startups: companies that branch off from bigger corporations Not all types of startups are built from scratch. An offshoot startup is fairly self-explanatory. Simply put, they are startups that branch off from larger parent companies to become their own entities. For example, an offshoot business might be established in an effort by a bigger company to enter a new market or disrupt a smaller competitor. Because these startups act independently of their parent companies, they have the freedom to do business and experiment without drawing as much attention or scrutiny;
- Social startups: nonprofits and charitable companies Startups are sometimes stereotyped as being growth-obsessed and money-hungry. That said, some startups are specifically designed to do good. Social startups, which include charities and nonprofits, scale for the sake of philanthropy. They operate similarly to any other startup, but do so with the help of grants and donors. A shining example of a social startup is Code.org, an organization that's managed to raise nearly \$60 million (from the likes of Google and Facebook) to help give students opportunities in the field of computer science.

3- Role of strategic vigilance in enhancing startups performance

Having a clear vision is vital for startups as it provides a sense of purpose and direction. It serves as a guiding light that helps founders and team members align their efforts and make decisions that are in line with the long-term goals of the startup. A well-defined vision inspires and motivates the team, attracts potential investors and partners, and sets the foundation for the startup's unique identity and value proposition.

Startups face many environmental pressures and increased competitiveness in the context of globalization and the knowledge-based economy based mainly on information. Strategic vigilance is one of the main entrances in the application of e-management in Algerian institutions, primarily to monitor everything related to their environment, exploit opportunities and avoid threats that can affect them to ensure the sustainability of competitive advantages in the sector in which they operate.

3-1 Role of Strategic Vigilance in monitoring O/T

Strategic vigilance is the ability to monitor the environment and identify opportunities and threats. It is a critical skill for startups, as it can help them to stay ahead of the competition and make better decisions. There are many ways for startups to implement strategic vigilance. Some common methods include:

- A. Monitoring the market: Startups should keep an eye on the market for new trends and developments. They should also track the performance of their competitors.
- B. Listening to customers: Startups should talk to their customers to understand their needs and wants. They should also collect feedback on their products and services.
- C. Analyzing the competition: Startups should analyze their competitors' strengths and weaknesses. They should also track their competitors' strategies.
- D. Using technology: Startups can use technology to help them with strategic vigilance. There are many software programs that can help startups to monitor the market, track competitors, and analyze data.

Strategic vigilance is an essential skill for startups. By monitoring the environment and identifying opportunities and threats, startups can improve their chances of success. Here are some specific benefits of strategic vigilance for startups:

- A. It can help startups to identify new opportunities.
- B. It can help startups to avoid threats.
- C. It can help startups to make better decisions.
- D. It can help startups to adapt to change.
- E. It can help startups to stay ahead of the competition.

3-2 Cultivating Strategic Vigilance for Sustainable Growth in High-Growth Startups

Startups should learn more about strategic vigilance and adopt it as a core part of business strategy. It could be the difference between success and failure. strategic vigilance can help startups to avoid challenges by helping them to make better decisions, adapt to change, and stay ahead of

the competition. Here are some specific examples of how strategic vigilance has helped startups avoid challenges:

- A. Netflix: Netflix used strategic vigilance to identify the growing demand for streaming services. This information helped Netflix to develop its own streaming service, which has become one of the most popular streaming services in the world;
- B. Amazon: Amazon used strategic vigilance to identify the growing demand for online shopping. This information helped Amazon to develop its e-commerce platform, which has become one of the largest e-commerce platforms in the world;
- C. Tesla: Tesla used strategic vigilance to identify the growing demand for electric cars. This information helped Tesla to develop its electric cars, which have become some of the most popular electric cars in the world.

By staying alert and attentive, entrepreneurs can anticipate industry trends, analyse consumer behavior, and make informed decisions that give their startups a competitive edge. Strategic vigilance holds significant importance for the long-term success of startups. Here are some key practices according to (Dejun Kong, 2020):

- A. Environmental Scanning: Startups can regularly conduct environmental scans to gather information about market trends, customer preferences, emerging technologies, and competitive landscape. This can be done through market research, competitor analysis, industry reports, and monitoring industry-specific publications and news sources;
- B. SWOT Analysis: Startups can perform a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to identify their internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. This analysis helps in understanding the startup's competitive position and guides strategic decision-making;
- C. Networking and Industry Engagement: Actively participating in industry events, conferences, and networking opportunities allows startups to connect with key stakeholders, industry experts, and potential partners. This helps in gaining insights, building relationships, and staying informed about industry developments;
- D. Technology Adoption: Startups can stay vigilant by keeping up with technological advancements relevant to their industry. By adopting and leveraging emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, or data analytics, startups can gain a competitive edge and capitalize on new opportunities;

- E. Continuous Learning: Encouraging a culture of continuous learning and professional development within the startup helps team members stay updated with industry trends and best practices. This can be achieved through training programs, workshops, online courses, and knowledge sharing sessions;
- F. Customer Feedback and Market Testing: Regularly seeking customer feedback and conducting market testing allows startups to understand customer needs, preferences, and satisfaction levels. This feedback helps in making informed decisions and adapting products or services to meet market demands;
- G. Agile and Iterative Approach: Startups can adopt an agile and iterative approach to their business processes, allowing them to quickly test ideas, gather feedback, and make necessary adjustments. This flexibility enables startups to respond to changing market dynamics and seize opportunities promptly.

By incorporating these practices into their operations, startups can effectively practice strategic vigilance, identify new opportunities, mitigate risks, and enhance their potential for success in a dynamic business environment.

Table number (01): Benchmarking Strategic Vigilance in High-Performance Startups

	competitive vigilance	environmental vigilance
Amazon	Amazon is constantly monitoring its competitors, both current and potential. The company uses a variety of methods to do this, including market research, competitor analysis, and social media monitoring. Amazon is also known for its aggressive competitive strategies, such as predatory pricing and acquisitions.	Amazon is also very vigilant about the environment. The company has set ambitious goals to reduce its environmental impact, such as using renewable energy and reducing packaging waste.
Facebook	Facebook is very vigilant about its competition. The company has a dedicated team of analysts who track the latest trends in social media and identify potential threats. Facebook is also known for its willingness to copy successful features from its competitors.	Facebook is also committed to environmental sustainability. The company has set goals to reduce its carbon emissions and water usage.
Airbnb	Airbnb is constantly monitoring the travel industry for new trends and opportunities. The company also	Airbnb is also committed to environmental sustainability. The company has a number of initiatives

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	partners with other businesses, such as airlines and hotels, to stay ahead of the competition.	in place to reduce its impact on the environment, such as offsetting its carbon emissions and promoting sustainable travel practices.
Uber	Uber is constantly monitoring the ride-hailing industry for new trends and technologies. The company has also been known to acquire other companies, such as Postmates, in order to stay ahead of the competition.	Uber is also committed to environmental sustainability. The company has a number of initiatives in place to reduce its impact on the environment, such as using electric vehicles and promoting carpooling.
Netflix	Netflix is constantly monitoring the entertainment industry for new trends and technologies. The company has been known to acquire other companies, such as House of Cards producer MRC, in order to stay ahead of the competition.	Netflix is also committed to environmental sustainability. The company has a number of initiatives in place to reduce its impact on the environment, such as using recycled materials and reducing energy consumption.
Spotify	Spotify is constantly monitoring the music streaming industry for new trends and technologies. The company has also been known to partner with other businesses, such as Google, in order to stay ahead of the competition	Spotify is also committed to environmental sustainability. The company has a number of initiatives in place to reduce its impact on the environment, such as using recycled materials and reducing energy consumption.
	technological vigilance	commercial vigilance
Amazon	Amazon is a leader in the adoption of new technologies. The company is constantly investing in new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. Amazon is also known for its willingness to experiment with new technologies.	Amazon is always looking for new ways to grow its business. The company has been expanding into new markets, such as cloud computing and e-commerce checkout. Amazon is also known for its aggressive marketing campaigns.
Facebook	Facebook is also a leader in the adoption of new technologies. The company has been at the forefront of the development of social media and mobile technologies. Facebook is also known for its willingness to experiment with new technologies.	Facebook is also always looking for new ways to grow its business. The company has been expanding into new markets, such as messaging and virtual reality. Facebook is also known for its aggressive advertising platform.
Airbnb	Airbnb is also a leader in the adoption of new technologies. The company uses a variety of technologies to improve its	Airbnb is also always looking for new ways to grow its business. The company has been expanding into new markets, such as vacation rentals

	platform, such as machine learning and virtual reality.	and experiences. Airbnb is also known for its innovative marketing campaigns.
Uber	Uber is also a leader in the adoption of new technologies. The company uses a variety of technologies to improve its ride-hailing service, such as machine learning and real-time location tracking.	Uber is also always looking for new ways to grow its business. The company has been expanding into new markets, such as food delivery and freight transportation. Uber is also known for its aggressive marketing campaigns.
Netflix	Netflix is also a leader in the adoption of new technologies. The company uses a variety of technologies to improve its streaming service, such as artificial intelligence and personalization algorithms.	Netflix is also always looking for new ways to grow its business. The company has been expanding into new markets, such as international markets and original content. Netflix is also known for its aggressive marketing campaigns.
Spotify	Spotify is also a leader in the adoption of new technologies. The company uses a variety of technologies to improve its music streaming service, such as artificial intelligence and personalization algorithms.	Spotify is also always looking for new ways to grow its business. The company has been expanding into new markets, such as podcasts and audiobooks. Spotify is also known for its innovative marketing campaigns.

Source: developed by author

Conclusion:

In startups, having a vision and competency that can only come through strong and effective strategic vigilance and monitoring of opportunities and threats (O/T) is particularly crucial. Startups operate in dynamic and competitive environments where the ability to adapt, innovate, and seize opportunities is essential for success. Strategic vigilance is the ability to be aware of and respond to changes in the environment within the context of startups. It involves actively monitoring the business landscape, identifying emerging opportunities, and effectively managing risks. By being strategically vigilant, startups can enhance their potential for success by staying ahead of the curve and making informed decisions.

Startups that practice strategic vigilance are constantly scanning the external environment, keeping an eye on market trends, technological advancements, competitor activities, and customer preferences. This allows them to identify new opportunities that align with their business goals and leverage them to gain a competitive advantage. strategic vigilance also involves mitigating risks and addressing potential threats. Startups need to be proactive in assessing and managing risks associated with market

volatility, regulatory changes, financial constraints, and other external factors that may impact their operations. By anticipating and mitigating risks, startups can minimize potential disruptions and protect their long-term viability.

Results

- The research explores the relationship between strategic vigilance and strategic success in startups;
- The study found that strategic vigilance is the need for startups to monitor the competitive environment;
- Smart small business and startups possess strategic vigilance for excellence in competitiveness and monitoring O/T;
- Strategic vigilance enhance capability of managers is crucial for implementation of the startups;
- The use of AI for strategic vigilance is a promising approach for startups. It can help startups to save money, improve efficiency, and make better decisions.

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