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Indonesian Journal of Public Policy Review
Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
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Table Of Contents

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Indonesian Journal of Public Policy Review
Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

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The Role of Strategic Monitoring in Enhancing Strategic Response: An Analytical Study of the Opinions of a Sample of Managers in a Number of Delivery Companies in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq.

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Abstract

General Background Strategic management increasingly emphasizes organizational capability to respond to dynamic and uncertain environments, particularly within service sectors such as delivery companies. **Specific Background** Delivery firms in the Kurdistan Region–Iraq face challenges in addressing evolving customer demands, technological changes, and competitive pressures, requiring stronger strategic response mechanisms. **Knowledge Gap** Despite recognition of strategic monitoring as a modern managerial approach, limited empirical evidence exists on how its dimensions contribute to strategic response in delivery companies. **Aims** This study aims to examine the role of strategic monitoring comprising strategic intelligence, strategic thinking, and strategic vigilance in strengthening strategic response, including resource fluidity, business process maturity, reactive response, and proactive response. **Results** Using a descriptive-analytical approach and data from 66 managers analyzed via SMART PLS and SPSS, findings indicate that organizations demonstrate moderate levels of strategic monitoring and strategic response, with strong vigilance and proactive response but weak strategic intelligence and resource fluidity. **Novelty** The study provides an integrated empirical model linking strategic monitoring dimensions with multiple facets of strategic response within delivery companies. **Implications** The findings suggest that organizations should adopt proactive monitoring systems to improve adaptability, maintain competitive advantage, and strengthen operational resilience in rapidly changing environments.

Highlights:
- Moderate Adoption of Monitoring Practices Alongside Satisfactory Responsiveness to Environmental Changes
- Strong Vigilance and Forward-Looking Actions Contrasted With Limited Intelligence Systems and Resource Flexibility
- Need for Systematic Monitoring Approaches to Support Organizational Adaptability and Resilience

Keywords: Strategic Monitoring, Strategic Response, Strategic Intelligence, Strategic Vigilance, Delivery Companies

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1. Introduction

Despite the importance of the services sector, with its various organizations and their diverse operations, and its role in developing the economic sector and providing services to society particularly delivery companies and their significant contribution to serving community members, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic—these companies, in all their forms, still suffer from a weak response to the changing and evolving demands, needs, and preferences of customers. This is compounded by the challenges these organizations face in the external environment, such as the introduction of new and diverse services by competitors, the development of new technologies, and other factors [1].

Therefore, in this study, we focus on the concept of strategic response and the extent to which delivery companies adopt this concept in their operations. This concept is crucial because of its significant role in strengthening an organization's competitive position and providing it with a sustainable competitive advantage. It does so by enabling organizations to address unexpected events and reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty that pervades the external environment due to the numerous and rapid changes it is experiencing [2].

This necessitated the development of the necessary administrative skills, methods, and tools to confront, mitigate, and adapt to these events, challenges, ambiguity, and uncertainty. Among the most important of these skills are strategic monitoring, which enables anticipating the future. Strategic monitoring is a crucial administrative skill that business leaders must possess, thus requiring companies to cultivate and enhance their strategic monitoring capabilities to achieve effective strategic response [3].

In this context, the concept of strategic monitoring emerged as one of the most important approaches in strategic management literature. Business organizations utilize their strategic intelligence, thinking, and vigilance to prepare for the demands of the external environment, including both opportunities and challenges. This places businesses in a state of continuous research, investigation, exploration, and evaluation, enabling them to adapt, develop, and reformulate their plans and restructure their human and financial resources to achieve maximum alignment between their internal environment and external factors to achieving strategic response. This makes strategic monitoring a subject of interest and focus for all strategic managers in business organizations [4].

1.1 The Study Problem

To identify the research gap and subsequently explore appropriate mechanisms to enhance the positive effects of the relationship between the studied variables, the researcher selected delivery companies in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as a suitable field of study, focusing on the managers within these companies as the study population. Within this framework, the researcher chose to employ the concept of strategic monitoring, a modern strategic concept that can enhance strategic responsiveness in the organizations under study. To frame the research problem, the following main question was posed: To what extent does strategic monitoring contribute to enhancing strategic responsiveness in the organizations under study? This main question is further divided into the following sub-questions:

First question: Do the organizations under study adopt the concept of strategic monitoring in their work?

Second question: Do the dimensions of strategic monitoring have an impact on enhancing strategic responsiveness?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Strategic Monitoring

The concept of strategic monitoring has emerged and its activities have developed as a crucial function for organizations in the modern era. This is due to globalization and the resulting disruption and changes in the organizational environment, as well as the new and significant importance that information has acquired as a primary economic resource for organizations. Strategic monitoring is a continuous, proactive, or predictive collective process that aims to enable members of the organization to track, collect, and utilize information related to the external environment and its accompanying changes. This information predicts the likelihood of a future event that could have a positive or negative impact on the organization. The goal is to adapt to developments and changes in the environment, identify suitable opportunities to capitalize on them promptly, and recognize and mitigate potential risks, thus reducing the risk of uncertainty in general [5].

Strategic monitoring is defined as a set of continuous processes aimed at tracking and analyzing data and variables related to an organization's activities. This ensures a sound understanding of environmental data and signals, structuring and building upon them into integrated information that is shared with decision-makers. The goal is to develop or adapt strategies in a way that allows for the flexible achievement of objectives, thereby achieving a competitive advantage that enables the organization to survive and thrive [4].

Strategic monitoring is also defined as a systematic and continuous process throughout the project's duration, aimed at collecting data and transforming it into information presented to stakeholders [6]. Furthermore, it is defined as a process of continuous monitoring and evaluation, based on information gathered from the organization's internal and external environment. This process begins with environmental surveys, needs identification, highlighting changes, and analysis, and concludes with the use and evaluation of the information provided to stakeholders within the organization [7]. Strategic monitoring is defined as a mechanism for maintaining an organization's strategic direction and making it a system that

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
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adapts rapidly to events. This leads to the early and agile detection of the effects of risks and opportunities that have not yet been identified or discovered before their scheduled occurrence, due to the complexity and variables of the environment. This facilitates appropriate decision-making at the right time [4]. Mahdi defined it as the process of identifying the internal and external environmental factors of the organization, analyzing their characteristics and trends, and assessing opportunities and risks to analyze functional and institutional performance [8]. Vahidi & Bagheri defined it as the continuous and systematic monitoring of the extent to which activities align with the strategy and correcting them based on this assessment [9]. Van Rees et al. added that the strategic monitoring process can be learned through research and development and by improving methodologies and practices over time [10].

2.2 The Importance of Strategic Monitoring

The importance of strategic monitoring is highlighted as a crucial source for interpreting and reassessing information based on the accumulated knowledge and experience of administrative leaders. It builds a foundation of expertise, knowledge, and learning from past experiences, integrating these into public practices and policies. Furthermore, it contributes to securing the needs and aspirations of stakeholders and subsequently preparing reports related to achieving organizational goals and progress rates within a specific timeframe [11] [12]. It also plays a fundamental role in the continuity of the strategic process to achieve a competitive advantage. Additionally, it helps diagnose the organization's strengths and weaknesses, thereby enhancing its standing and value and improving its performance [13]. Strategic monitoring aims to leverage past experiences to improve processes and activities, increase future knowledge, and track and monitor the internal and external environment for resource utilization and follow-up on achieved results [14]. In addition to informing stakeholders and providing the organization's management with accurate and systematic information to achieve its goals and policies [15].

Strategic monitoring is a crucial evaluation tool, providing the organization with a solid foundation for competing in a changing environment.

2.3 Strategic Monitoring Practices and Stages

Numerous tools and processes help define different strategic monitoring practices. These processes and tools collectively involve obtaining monitoring data for analysis, diagnosis, and presentation. Although these processes and tools vary depending on the nature and type of monitoring required, some practices are more effective and comprehensive, as indicated in the monitoring guide below [16]:

a. Monitoring data should be focused on specific people or uses (only what is relevant and necessary).

b. Monitoring must be systematic and based on pre-defined assumptions and parameters.

c. Monitoring must look for any anticipated changes in the organization's operations.

d. The timing of monitoring should be appropriate to ensure the information is readily available and easily accessible for use in operations.

e. Sharing monitoring among key stakeholders and different levels within the organization is crucial for effective information gathering and monitoring. Because strategic monitoring is an information race that begins with the search for information and ends with its interpretation and use to secure a sound understanding of the environment and the organization's position within it, this race starts from within the organization and moves outwards. This allows the organization to identify the operational mechanisms that the strategic monitor can employ during the monitoring process. Therefore, strategic monitoring can be divided into three stages, according to the research team of Humbert Lesca, as follows:

a. Stage One: Information Search

b. Stage Two: Information Analysis and Processing

c. Stage Three: Using Information in Improvement and Decision-Making Processes

2.4 Dimensions of Strategic Monitoring

a. Strategic Intelligence

Robinson et al. defined strategic intelligence as an innovative and new mechanism for handling and providing information in a timely, high-quality, and sufficient quantity to make sound decisions and chart a clear roadmap for the future [17]. Sadalia et al. define organizational capability as the ability of administrative leaders to handle business information [18]. They process environmental information to create knowledge that supports decision-making. The leaders use this knowledge to predict upcoming changes and develop flexible responses to environmental shifts. In addition, Hussein et al. indicated that it encompasses all the capabilities possessed by leaders that enable them to build a suitable future for the organization, efficiently and effectively utilize all capabilities and resources, seize opportunities, and avoid threats as much as possible or transform them into suitable opportunities [19]. Moreover, it is defined as the ability to adapt to constantly changing environmental conditions and anticipate the future through strategic analysis of internal and external environmental factors, to help organizations formulate appropriate strategies for dealing with environmental changes [20]. Furthermore, Kuosa

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

defined strategic intelligence as the process that involves gathering, processing, analyzing, and sharing information which holds materials of significant strategic importance [21]. Additionally, according to Al-Daouri & Atrach organizations with advanced strategic intelligence capabilities can forecast future trends while creating their optimal target vision [22]. Furthermore, organizations achieve their operational success and growth by conducting strategic analyses which examine both their internal operations and external environmental factors [23].

b. Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking is a tool for preparing for the future by utilizing experience, personal skills, creativity, and strategic information and knowledge. It involves understanding all environmental variables and the ability of strategic leadership to cultivate strategic thinking among all subordinates at all administrative levels by involving them in and being open to strategic issues.

Amanah et al. indicate, that strategic thinking serves as an essential element for developing effective strategic plans [24]. The process requires which people need to follow specific steps to achieve their goals through creating new strategic options which they can use throughout their planning activities. The study shows that people need the ability to evaluate information critically which helps them find opportunities and challenges that arise during organizational operations while they need to identify proper measures which lead to their goals

Strategic thinking works as a vital system which organizations use to prepare for future challenges through their assessment of past experiences and their current employee skills and their innovative solutions and their successful handling of vital organizational data. The method enables organizations to forecast upcoming developments while providing them with the tools to develop effective strategic plans and discover new business prospects. The method establishes a structured procedure which produces useful information and shared advantages that benefit individuals and teams and organizations. The process requires organizations to define their targets and choose essential tasks which will help them reach their goals through specific execution techniques. On the other hand, strategic thinking requires developing a strategic mindset that allows individuals to seek out and embrace new things, identify patterns, interpret environmental diversity, investigate new options, and handle large amounts of data [25]. Al-Qaisi indicated that strategic thinking is thinking about predicting the future and charting the organization's course through innovation and creativity, leading it to capitalize on opportunities and anticipate future risks and obstacles to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage [26]. This is accomplished by developing appropriate plans that translate vision into reality, understanding the environment, and mitigating ambiguity and uncertainty in the decision-making process, which helps achieve goals.

c. Strategic Vigilance

The procedure involves continuous environmental monitoring together with ongoing information collection, which helps to detect potential opportunities and threats that need protection from their damaging effects. Strategic vigilance functions as a complete system because it tracks organizational activities, gathers input from all relevant stakeholders, and analyzes data to support the organization in making strategic decisions that promote long-term excellence. [27].

The definition refers to a group of people who work together to gather information that they will use to assess changes occurring in their external environment. This process enables them to identify business opportunities while decreasing their operational risks. Organizations require effective methods to monitor their environment because these methods enable them to strengthen their information sources which leads to better competitive advantages [28]. This justifies the existence of a strategic intelligence system aimed at monitoring everything related to competitors, customers, and other external variables [29]. Strategic intelligence has also been defined as an information process through which an organization actively listens to and anticipates proactive information about its environment, identifies opportunities, and reduces uncertainty.

Furthermore, strategic intelligence refers to a number of capabilities that anticipate the appropriate time when potential partners are expected to have cooperative intentions and predict the factors behind these intentions [30]. It has also been defined as a set of activities based on monitoring and analyzing the environment in a way that helps in disseminating, processing, and selecting information, and then making appropriate decisions related to the organization's long-term future, decisions of a strategic nature [31]. Jaaz & Jamal defined strategic vigilance as proactive strategic thinking and a systematic, organized, and practical approach that organizations deliberately and consciously adopt to monitor and control ongoing changes in the environment [32]. This allows them to avoid and address weaknesses, strengthen their strengths, seize opportunities, and minimize threats. Fadhil et al. further defined it as proactive capabilities for identifying competitive information in the environment, allocating resources to optimize opportunities, avoid threats, ensure survival and growth in early business areas, provide goods and services that satisfy customers, and ultimately achieve organizational goals [30].

Dawood & Abbas explained that strategic vigilance is an organization's activity of collecting and analyzing data about its external environment to provide the necessary information to enable the organization to exploit opportunities and avoid threats to maintain survival and growth [33]. It is an activity that seeks to understand business and anticipate changes by leveraging information and communication technologies. Therefore, strategic vigilance significantly contributes to organizational success through the following:

a. Predicting future challenges or obstacles that the organization will face:

b. Allows the organization to anticipate and outperform competitors, enabling it to develop a number of competitive advantages through continuous improvement of goods and services, as well as its relationships with customers and

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
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suppliers.

c. Ensures a good response to customer needs and the discovery of new markets.

d. Adapts the product to new changes, as well as improves the product's technical characteristics and quality, and reduces its cost.

2.5 Strategic Response

2.5.1 The Concept of Strategic Response

Strategic response is defined as an organization's reaction to environmental changes or disturbances by aligning its resources and activities with its operating environment (Rose, 2011). Strategic response is viewed as a key driver for addressing environmental challenges and responding to customer needs [34]. Charles et al. added that strategic response comprises actions taken to address environmental challenges [35].

Barney and Hesterly explained that strategic response is part of competitive strategy, and that organizations with rapid responsiveness and adaptability can continuously meet the growing needs of their customers [36]. Ansoff and MacDonnell emphasized that organizations unable to survive in an uncertain environment have failed to develop appropriate strategic responses [37]. Tjemkes et al. indicated that strategic response is a set of unique responses that organizations use to deal with situations contrary to their objectives [38]. Nyokabi defined strategic response as a set of actions and decisions that enable an organization to formulate and implement the necessary plans to achieve its goals [39]. It focuses on the organization's survival in a turbulent environment by adopting new strategies that adapt to environmental changes.

Lafky et al. defined it as a change in thinking about how work is done, seeking new methods to accomplish tasks, and the ability to keep pace with competing organizations that may be surpassed by those that remain stagnant due to their failure to respond to rapid environmental changes [40].

Yun et al. indicated that strategic response is an organization's ability to accurately and quickly reconfigure its resources and processes to adapt to or respond to the demands of the business environment [41].

Naranjo et al. stated that strategic response is an organization's attempt to establish a framework upon which it can rely when crises and other challenges occur [42].

2.5.2 The Importance of Strategic Response

The topic of strategic response has garnered significant attention from numerous writers and researchers in the field of strategic management, particularly following the emergence of a substantial body of recent academic studies and research. These studies have identified strategic response as one of the most crucial roles of managers in formulating procedures specific to organizational activities and practices during times of change. Furthermore, they have highlighted the role of strategic response in revealing the extent of an organization's capabilities, flexibility, strategies, and adaptability to any emerging situation in the business world. These studies also emphasize the importance of building a knowledge base about an organization's potential and its capacity to capitalize on opportunities or mitigate future challenges [43].

As a result of the evolution of strategic management as a distinct system for managing business, driven by three key forces—intense competition, globalization, and information and communication technologies—business organizations have been compelled to reorganize their operational methods to exploit opportunities in the business environment while addressing the threats posed by these forces [44]. Uncertainty and challenges also compel business organizations to adopt strategic responses to these challenges, enabling them to develop the necessary strategies to gain a competitive advantage [45].

The importance of strategic response is highlighted by Green et al., who argue that business organizations face a complex, changing, volatile, and dynamic environment that significantly impacts their ability to remain competitive in the market [46]. Therefore, organizational management must develop plans to respond to environmental changes, which constitute the organization's strategy.

Kong et al. believe that society considers the organizations operating within it to be the most important means of societal development and progress [47]. It is therefore crucial for society that its organizations remain capable of confronting and adapting to changes, leading to continued social cohesion and integration. Thus, strategic response for organizations is important and offers numerous benefits, according to Kong, including:

a. When responding to any changes, the organization works to respect the environment by avoiding harmful and polluting practices and adopting an environmentally friendly approach to its operations.

b. The organization's strategic response reveals changes in the customs, traditions, and cultures of the community it serves and attempts to adapt to them without resisting them.

c. Responding to the community the organization serves is important because it involves recognizing changes in the human element that comprises the community, and consequently, changes in social tastes and needs. Therefore, the organization works to respond to these social changes.

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

2.5.3 Factors Influencing Strategic Response

The world is witnessing a series of rapid changes that have made it completely different from what it was just a few years ago. Scientific advancements are racing to solve the world's problems, and all global organizations are in a fierce competition to ensure their survival [48]. Motanya stated that there are many important and influential factors in choosing a strategic response, such as survival, market share growth, profitability, and others [49]. The results of Nyokabi, study revealed that strategic responses are influenced by managerial efficiency, organizational structure, organizational culture, control processes, resource availability, the use of new technologies, increasing customer needs, government restrictions, market volatility, and other factors [39]. DaSilva & Bynoe added that there is a set of factors that influence the selection of the appropriate strategic response, including environmental standards and changes, which can be classified as follows [50]:

a. Geographical Expansion: This is a crucial factor in an organization's response to potential changes, ultimately determining its survival. Geographical reach enhances knowledge acquisition by allowing for greater exposure to diverse environments. Njari & Muathe argue that geographic reach is important for an organization by reducing threats and increasing returns, directly contributing to improved performance [51]. It is a significant factor influencing an organization's ability to achieve strategic responsiveness.

b. Preferential Trade Ranking: An organization's ranking is affected by the advantages it offers in terms of the costs associated with responding to environmental changes and standards.

c. Economic Attractiveness in Foreign Markets: The size and clarity of foreign markets are undoubtedly economic factors that influence the efforts required to respond to and adapt to the environment.

d. Local Market Conditions: Increasing supply in the local market to avoid strategic alignment costs is a tactic employed by small organizations lacking the resources and capabilities to adapt and respond to rapidly evolving environmental changes. Griffith argues that market conditions increase an organization's perception of uncertainty and enhance its competitiveness by providing a clear understanding of evolving customer needs [52].

C. Organizational Size and Market Experience: Large organizations often have integrated operations throughout the supply chain, from production to export, which facilitates strategic responses to environmental changes. Organizational size and market experience are crucial factors in implementing information technology and increasing responsiveness by fostering innovation and establishing strategic alliances that enhance the organization's ability to adapt to environmental changes [53]. Many researchers have attempted to determine whether organizational size affects its responsiveness to the environment. Some believe that organizational size and market experience are critical factors in performance, as they provide the resources necessary for investment in technological development, which in turn improves organizational performance [54].

2.5.4 Dimensions of Strategic Response

Different writers and researchers identify the dimensions of tourist attractions, due to the difference in their point of view and the nature of the study and the vision that interests them, as Al-Taie and Muhammad considers the purchases of tourism options to be an important administrative approach among the most important organizations through which they achieve their future goals through the preferred forms of previous changes in the internal environment and confront them through the privileges they possess, and the goal of measuring strategic tourism investment is the extent of knowledge of its applications in the fields of work, and a study by Al-Taie and Muhammad taught [55]. A model that includes four dimensions: (strategic objectives, technology, processes, and procedures). While Mavengere referred to it as the strategic choice, it is evidence of the organization’s ability to start its operation in a way that enables it to re-act or influence emergencies, as it was able to return a model to defining strategic reputation by dividing it into two directions towards the internal direction and the direction of the two destinations directly after these two at all (resource fluidity, business processes arise, to purchase the entire business, and the rest of the direct business directly) [56].

In our current study, we have allocated a model Mavengere whose dimensions are unreasonable and most prominent and relevant to the field of the current study, and can be clarified through the following [56]:

a. Resource fluidity

This refers to an organization's ability to reallocate available resources to achieve its objectives by capitalizing on strategic opportunities. This, in turn, helps reduce costs and increase profits. Resource fluidity includes the timely formation and redistribution of resources and the restructuring of business systems after considering internal capabilities and the requirements of the external environment [56].

b. Business Process Maturity

Business process maturity refers to the degree to which a series of business activities are efficient, controllable, and predictable [56]. It includes the information technology services necessary for strategic response. These are developmental tools for systematically assessing and improving capabilities (such as skills or competencies) to achieve business excellence [57]. Many organizations recognize the importance of processes in delivering high-quality products and services. However,

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
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managing this function remains a challenge for businesses, as it is a key enabler for maintaining organizational existence [58]. Operations are defined as a set of main tasks comprised of interconnected and interactive sub-tasks, all striving towards a common goal: transforming inputs into products or services beneficial to the customer. Therefore, they are specific actions and activities whose execution leads to the smooth functioning of the organization, enabling its survival, prosperity, and growth [59].

c. Business Response to the Environment (re-active response)

This refers to the organization's ability to capitalize on and respond to changes in the external environment by making a series of decisions to achieve its desired objectives [60]. It is the ability to mobilize various resources that enable the organization to successfully offer innovative products or develop its production processes [61]. Similarly, Kilubi & Rogers emphasized the necessity for organizations to possess the required technical and scientific competencies to design new technologies, solutions, processes, and products to enhance their long-term sustainability [62]. This ensures they are prepared to respond quickly and adapt appropriately and innovatively to any unforeseen events they may encounter.

d. Business proactivity in the environment (pro-active response)

refers to a set of internal actions and efforts undertaken by an organization's management to develop policies and objectives to address environmental changes and compete with rivals. It is an attempt to guide and lead the market, enabling it to enhance its external response [56]. Business proactivity in the environment also refers to the ability to understand, analyze, and predict what will happen in the overall business environment, and thus the ability to do new things and do old things in new ways [63].

2.5.5 The Relationship Between strategic monitoring and Strategic Responsiveness

Recent research on strategic management now recognizes strategic monitoring as a dynamic managerial capability which helps organizations develop effective strategic responses while maintaining their competitive edge during market disruptions. The main relationship addressed in this study assumes that strategic monitoring has a positive and significant impact on strategic response because systematic environmental scanning and interpretation lead to better decision-making and increased adaptability and responsiveness [64][65]. The study Strategic Monitoring and Its Impact on Strategic Dexterity: An Analytical Study in Baghdad Health Directorates provides empirical evidence which demonstrates that strategic monitoring enables organizations to respond flexibly and promptly to environmental changes. Mahdi confirmed that strategic monitoring practices lead to competitive advantages which monitoring helps organizations develop their ability to handle competition and maintain their edge over rivals [8]. Strategic intelligence enables organizations to gather and process essential market data together with information about competitors and technological advancements which improves their resource flexibility while enabling them to respond to market changes and plan for future developments [66][67].

Strategic thinking helps organizations develop their strategic response because it enables managers to combine various data sources for their future planning while their organization uses its existing resources for their extended goals [68][69]. Strategic vigilance operates as an early warning system which detects emerging signals and sudden environmental changes to decrease unexpected events while improving an organization capacity to handle immediate situations and maintain its active defensive operations through forward-looking planning and new development [70][71]. The three components of strategic intelligence, strategic thinking and strategic vigilance work together as a unified strategic monitoring system which improves strategic response by enabling resource flexibility and helping organizations reach process development goals while maintaining a balance between their immediate needs and forward-looking activities which benefits delivery companies in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Based on the above discussion the following main hypothesis are proposed:

H1: Main Hypothesis: strategic monitoring statistically significant effects of on the strategic response. This leads to the following sub-hypothesis:

$H1_a$: Strategic Intelligence has significant effects of on the strategic response.

$H1_b$: Strategic Thinking has significant effects of on the strategic response.

$H1_c$: Strategic Vigilance has significant effects of on the strategic response.

3. Research Method

3.1 Overview of the Proposed Conceptual Framework

The objectives and research questions of the current study led to the creation of a conceptual framework which explains how the variables of the study connect. The proposed framework establishes a direct link between strategic monitoring and strategic response which shows how organizations use their strategic monitoring methods to improve their capacity for responding to environmental changes.

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of strategic monitoring in enhancing strategic response in delivery companies operating in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq. The study utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
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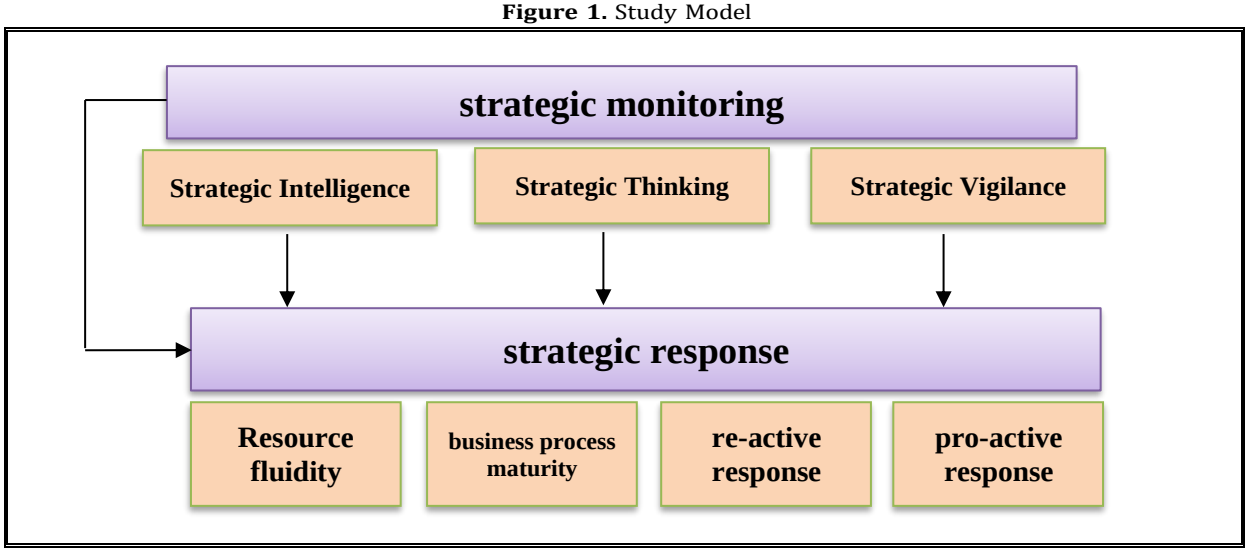
(PLS-SEM) with Smart PLS software (4.1.1.7) to test the conceptual model because this method suits studies with small samples that require prediction [72].

The study established its model through Figure1 which shows the proposed independent variable and dependent variable relationships of the study.

Figure 1. Study Model



3.2 Data Collection and Sample Selection

The research study required specific data which researchers obtained through their structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to department managers working in a number of delivery companies in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, as they are considered the most appropriate respondents due to their direct involvement in strategic monitoring and decision-making processes. The questionnaire required two language versions English and Arabic to achieve its purpose of delivering clear and understandable content. The participants received sufficient time to finish the questionnaire. A total of 66 usable questionnaires were collected and deemed valid for statistical analysis. The research team assigned unique codes to the collected questionnaires before entering them into their database system. The researchers used SPSS (Version 29) to perform preliminary data analysis and Smart PLS (Version 4.1.1.7) to conduct measurement and structural model testing through multiple systematic analytical procedures described in subsequent sections of the study.

3.3 Data Measurement

The selection process for appropriate data analysis methods requires researchers to comprehend measurement levels. The researchers applied an ordinal scale to assess the study variables in their research. The response options assigned numerical values from 1 to 5 which windowed participants into ordered response categories instead of showing true measurement distances. All measurement items required assessment through a five-point Likert scale which extended from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The research research established five-point Likert scale because Robson and Newman demonstrated that this scale produces results which researchers can trust and understand in social and management studies.

4. Data analysis and Results

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondent Profile

The study sample included respondents whose demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1. The table summarizes the distribution of respondents according to gender, age, academic qualification, and years of job experience.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 66)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	41	62.1
	Female	25	37.9
	Total	**66**	**100.0**
Age	30 years and below	13	19.7
	31–40 years	41	62.1

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

	41–50 years	12	18.2
	Total	**66**	**100.0**
Academic Qualification	Diploma	16	24.2
	Bachelor's degree	18	27.3
	Master's degree	32	48.5
	Total	**66**	**100.0**
Job Experience	1–3 years	20	30.3
	4–7 years	28	42.4
	8 years and above	18	27.3
	Total	**66**	**100.0**

Source: SPSS Output

The demographic analysis shows that male respondents constituted the majority of the sample (62.1%), while female respondents represented 37.9%. The age distribution shows that 62.1% of respondents belong to the 31-40 years age group which indicates that most of the sample consists of managers who are currently working at their peak career point. The study results show that 48.5% of respondents possess a master's degree while 27.3% hold a bachelor's degree and 24.2% have a diploma. The study design required researchers to exclude all PhD holders from the research sample. The study results show that 42.4% of respondents have 4 to 7 years of experience while30.3% have 1 to 3 years of experience with 27.3% having 8 years or more experience which indicates that respondents have enough experience to share their expert views about monitoring strategies and strategic response evaluation.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

The researchers used descriptive statistics to calculate mean values and standard deviation values for study variables because they needed to determine how respondents perceived strategic monitoring and strategic response and their associated dimensions.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of study variable

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategic Monitoring	**99**	**3.7886**	**0.69901**
Strategic Intelligence	99	1.7354	0.59716
Strategic Thinking	99	3.7131	0.97150
Strategic Vigilance	99	3.8970	0.82332
Resource Fluidity	98	1.8082	0.56123
Business Process Maturity	99	4.1758	0.65545
Reactive Response	99	3.7313	0.75223
Proactive Response	99	4.2141	0.62090
Strategic Response	**99**	**3.7556**	**0.71802**
Valid N	**99**		

Source: SPSS Output

The research showed that Kurdish delivery companies used strategic monitoring practices at a moderate high level which resulted in a mean value of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.70 as shown in Table 2. The managers believe their organizations possess adequate capabilities to observe strategic information and track changes in the external environment. The strategic response assessment produced a mean score of 3.76 with a standard deviation of 0.72 which shows that organizations respond positively to strategic challenges and environmental changes. The companies surveyed possess satisfactory capabilities to react to strategic signals which customer needs and competitors in the market.

The strategic monitoring dimensions showed that strategic vigilance achieved the highest mean score of 3.90 which demonstrates strong organizational ability to detect both opportunities and threats. The strategic thinking practice showed a mean score of 3.71 while the higher standard deviation showed that respondents had different opinions about how well strategic thinking appears in their organization.

The strategic intelligence assessment showed a low mean score of 1.74 which demonstrates that organizations conduct their

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

intelligence work at a weak level because they lack structured methods to gather and assess strategic data. The companies surveyed seem to lack formal intelligence systems which create proper intelligence frameworks. The organizational processes of strategic response dimensions reached business process maturity which showed a high mean score of 4.18 because organizations had developed their processes according to standardized practices. The proactive response variable reached a mean score of 4.21 which showed that companies usually predict upcoming environmental shifts and implement their strategic plans.

The overall mean value for strategic monitoring reached 3.79 with standard deviation 0.70 which demonstrates delivery companies in the Kurdistan Region maintain moderate strategic monitoring practices. The managers perceive their organizations as able to monitor strategic information and environmental changes with sufficient capability. The strategic response assessment found that organizations achieved a 3.76 mean value with standard deviation 0.72 which shows their ability to respond positively to strategic challenges and environmental changes. The surveyed companies show satisfactory performance in their capacity to react to strategic signals. The strategic monitoring dimensions test showed strategic vigilance as the highest dimension with a mean score of 3.90 which demonstrates organizations maintain strong alertness toward both opportunities and threats. Organizations maintain a high level of strategic thinking which has a mean score of 3.71 while the standard deviation indicates that participants had different opinions about how often strategic thinking occurred. The resource fluidity assessment produced a low average score of 1.81 which shows organizations have restricted capacity to shift their resources between different uses. The mature processes in place at the organization will face decreased effectiveness because of this limitation. The organizations showed moderate use of reactive response with a mean score of 3.73 which indicates they still depend on reactive measures but their use of proactive strategies has increased.

4.3 Measurement Model Assessment

The researchers used Hair et al. guidelines to evaluate measurement model performance by testing all structural relationships through validation of construct reliability and validity [73]. The assessment included indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability,

The data in Table (3) shows that all retained indicators display factor loadings which exceed the 0.70 threshold because their values range from 0.700 to 0.968. The Strategic Intelligence loadings showed values which ranged from 0.733 to 0.895 and Strategic Thinking indicators showed loadings which extended from 0.733 to 0.833. The Strategic Vigilance indicators achieved strong loadings which ranged from 0.801 to 0.922.

The strategic response dimensions show that Resource Fluidity achieves acceptable loadings which range between 0.700 and 0.844 while Business Process Maturity shows high loadings that extend from 0.709 to 0.968 and Reactive Response displays loadings between 0.749 and 0.867 while Proactive Response shows loadings that extend from 0.754 to 0.845. The researchers eliminated indicators with factor loadings below 0.70 during the initial analysis stage to improve measurement model reliability. After this item purification process all remaining indicators met the recommended criterion which confirmed adequate indicator reliability for all constructs included in the study.

4.3.1 Internal Consistency Reliability

The results in Table 3 demonstrate that all used indicators for analysis show factor loadings which exceed the 0.70 minimum standard because their values range from 0.700 to 0.968. The Strategic Intelligence loadings ranged from 0.733 to 0.895 whereas the Strategic Thinking indicators produced loadings which extended from 0.733 to 0.833. The Strategic Vigilance indicators showed strong loadings that extended from 0.801 to 0.922.

The researchers used Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) to assess internal consistency reliability because these two methods serve as standard techniques for measuring indicator consistency within the same construct. The research standards require researchers to achieve values above 0.70 for both exploratory and confirmatory research purposes [74]. The results presented in Table (3) indicate that all constructs achieved satisfactory levels of internal consistency reliability. The constructs show Cronbach's alpha values which range from 0.81 to 0.88 and composite reliability values that start at 0.87 and end at 0.92 which surpasses the essential approved value.

Strategic Intelligence showed a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.86 and a composite reliability score of 0.90 whereas Strategic Vigilance showed high reliability scores of $\alpha = 0.88$ and $CR = 0.92$. The strategic response constructs which include Business Process Maturity ($CR = 0.92$) and Proactive Response ($CR = 0.90$) showed high levels of internal consistency. The results demonstrate that all measurement items for each construct show both internal consistency and reliability.

4.3.2 Convergent Validity

The research team evaluated convergent validity through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measurements which determine how well a construct accounts for its indicator measurements. A construct reaches adequate convergent validity according to Hair et al. when its AVE value exceeds 0.50 because this threshold enables the construct to account for more than half of its indicator measurement variance [74]. The constructs in Table 3 demonstrate AVE values which exceed the 0.50 threshold because their values range from 0.58 to 0.71. Strategic Vigilance achieved an AVE of 0.70 while Business Process Maturity reached 0.71 and Proactive Response showed an AVE of 0.65 which all demonstrate strong convergent validity. Resource Fluidity (AVE = 0.58) and Reactive Response (AVE = 0.59) both met the minimum requirement for convergent validity which confirms their acceptable status despite their lower AVE values. The AVE results show that all

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

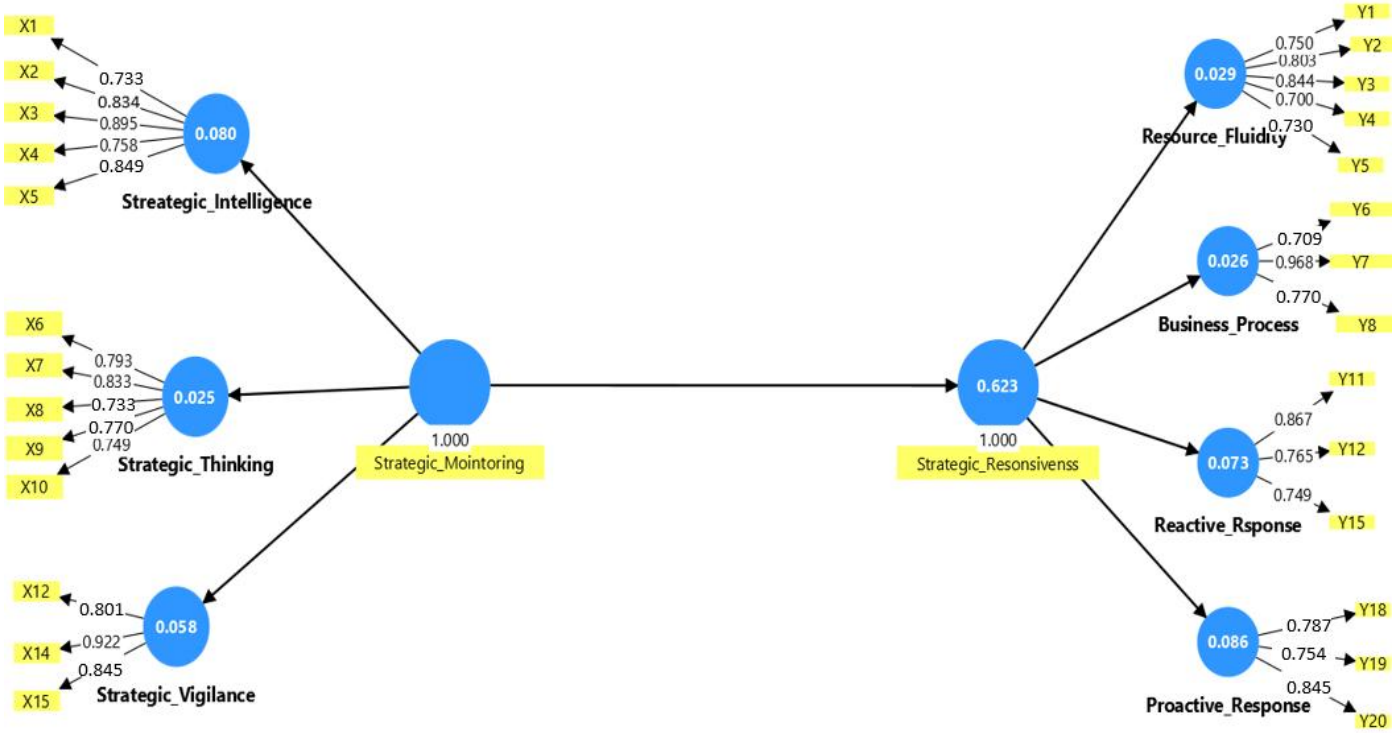
measurement model constructs reach sufficient convergent validity which proves the measurement model works accurately and allows assessment of the structural model to continue.

Table 3. Factor Loading, Reliability, Convergent Validity

Construct (Item)	Code	Factor Loading	Alpha. C	Composite Reliability	AVE
Strategic Intelligence	SI1	0.733	0.860	0.900	0.640
	SI2	0.834			
	SI3	0.895			
	SI4	0.758			
	SI5	0.849			
Strategic Thinking	ST1	0.793	0.840	0.890	0.610
	ST2	0.833			
	ST3	0.733			
	ST4	0.770			
	ST5	0.749			
Strategic Vigilance	SV1	0.801	0.880	0.920	0.700
	SV2	0.922			
	SV3	0.845			
Resource Fluidity	RF1	0.750	0.810	0.870	0.580
	RF2	0.803			
	RF3	0.844			
	RF4	0.700			
Business Process Maturity	BPM1	0.709	0.880	0.920	0.710
	BPM2	0.968			
	BPM3	0.770			
Reactive Response	RR1	0.867	0.820	0.880	0.590
	RR2	0.765			
	RR3	0.749			
Proactive Response	PR1	0.787	0.850	0.900	0.650
	PR2	0.754			
	PR3	0.845			

Source: Smart Pls Output

Figure 2. Assessment of Measurement Model



4.3.3 Discriminant Validity

The researchers used the Fornell-Larcker 1981 criterion to evaluate discriminant validity. The results in Table 4 show that each construct's square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeds its correlation values with other constructs. The results demonstrate that each construct exhibits more shared variance with its related indicators than with any other constructs in the model which establishes sufficient discriminant validity.

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
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Table 4. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)
Table 4. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	SI	ST	SV	RF	BPM	RR	PR
Strategic Intelligence (SI)	**0.800**						
Strategic Thinking (ST)	0.612	**0.781**					
Strategic Vigilance (SV)	0.574	0.638	**0.837**				
Resource Fluidity (RF)	0.489	0.526	0.544	**0.762**			
Business Process Maturity (BPM)	0.631	0.604	0.678	0.559	**0.843**		
Reactive Response (RR)	0.518	0.487	0.566	0.491	0.603	**0.768**	
Proactive Response (PR)	0.654	0.629	0.701	0.574	0.688	0.612	**0.806**

Source: Smart Pls Output

4.4 Structural Assessment Model

The structural model assessment results from Smart PLS testing show complete results in Table 5. The R^2 value of 0.623 shows that strategic monitoring together with its various components explain 62.3% of strategic responsiveness variability because of its moderate-to-substantial explanatory power [74].

The strategic monitoring system controls organizational responsiveness through its major role which results in a very large effect on strategic responsiveness (f^2 = 1.651). The three strategic dimensions of strategic intelligence and strategic vigilance and strategic thinking show small impacts that help strategic monitoring create its total effects [75].

The Q^2 value of 0.418 begins at zero which is the minimum requirement and it shows strong predictive power because it exceeds that limit which predicts strategic responsiveness in delivery companies operating in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq [76][77].

The proposed model demonstrates strong explanatory power together with meaningful effect sizes and high predictive relevance according to these results which support the study's theoretical framework.

Table 5. Structural Assessment Summary

Assessment Criterion	Construct / Predictor	Statistic	Value	Interpretation / Benchmark
Explanatory Power	Strategic Responsiveness	R^2	0.623	Moderate–Substantial ($R^2 \geq 0.50$)
	Strategic Responsiveness	Adjusted R^2	0.619	Stable explanatory power
Effect Size (f^2)	Strategic Monitoring	f^2	1.651	Very Large effect ($f^2 \geq 0.35$)
	Strategic Thinking	f^2	0.026	Small effect ($f^2 \geq 0.02$)
	Strategic Vigilance	f^2	0.062	Small effect ($f^2 \geq 0.02$)
	Strategic Intelligence	f^2	0.087	Small effect ($f^2 \geq 0.02$)
Predictive Relevance	Strategic Responsiveness	Q^2	0.418	Strong predictive relevance ($Q^2 > 0.35$)

Source: Smart Pls Output

4.5 Hypotheses Testing and Path Coefficients

The bootstrapping procedure was used to test hypotheses through analysis of structural paths in SmartPLS. The assessment relied on path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesized relationships. According to Hair et al., a hypothesis is supported when the t-value exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 [74].

Table 6. Hypotheses Test and Path Coefficient

H	Hypotheses Path	Path Coefficient	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
H1	Strategic Monitoring -> Strategic Responsiveness	0.789	0.041	19.366	0.000
$H1_a$	Strategic Thinking -> Strategic Responsiveness	0.256	0.065	3.044	0.001
$H1_b$	Strategic Vigilance -> Strategic Responsiveness	0.321	0.048	3.984	0.000

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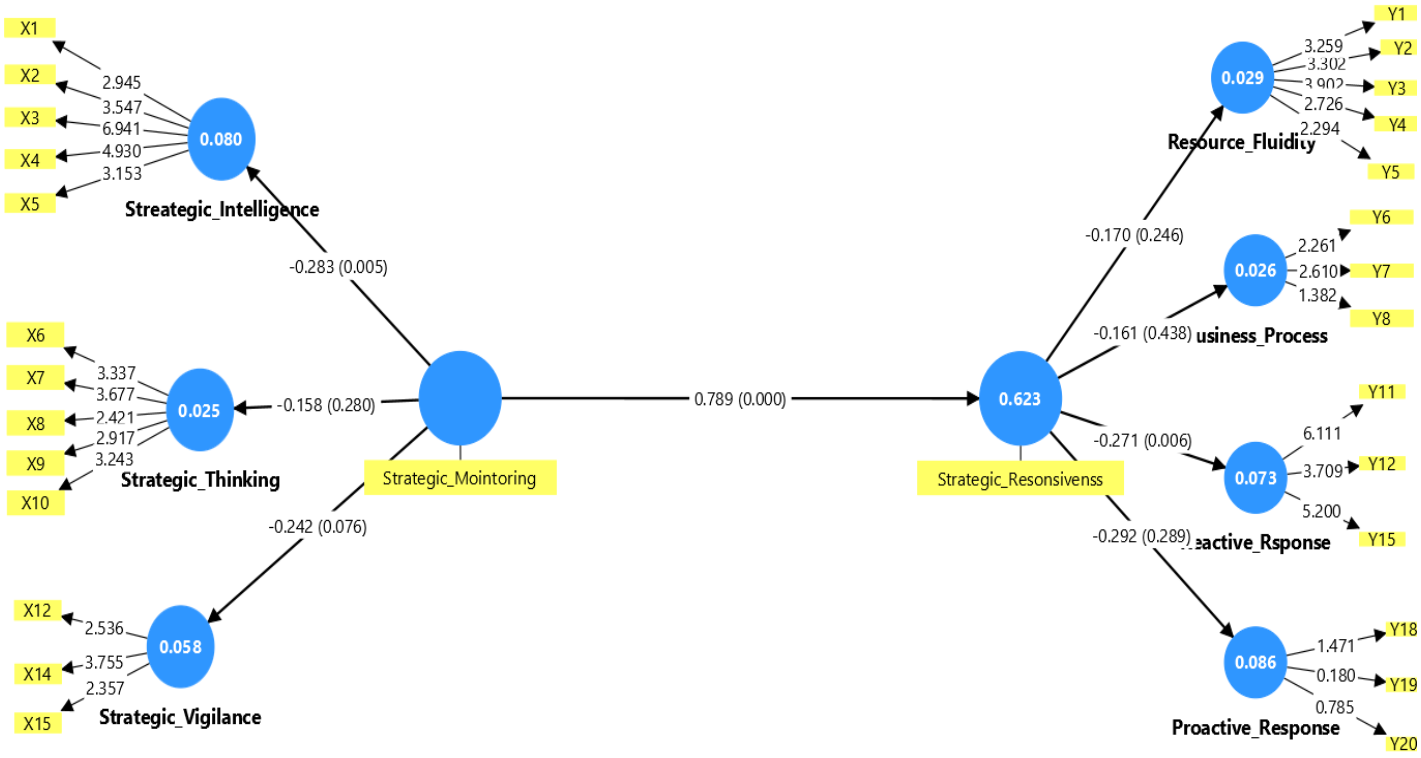
Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

$H1_c$	Strategic Intelligence -> Strategic Responsiveness	0.401	0.051	4.044	0.000

Source: Smart pls Bootstrapping Output

Figure 3 Hypothesis Test



The results presented in Table 6 and Figure 3 provide strong empirical support for the proposed hypotheses.

Main Hypothesis (H1)

The path coefficient between strategic monitoring and strategic responsiveness shows a value of β = 0.789 which has a t-value of 19.366 and a p-value that falls below 0.001. The relationship between these two variables shows a strong positive connection that reaches statistical significance which proves that strategic monitoring helps delivery companies in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to improve their strategic responsiveness. The evidence supports H1 with strong backing.

Sub-Hypotheses (H1a–H1c)

The Strategic Thinking → Strategic Responsiveness relationship in H1a shows a positive relationship which reaches statistical significance because of a coefficient value of β = 0.256 and t-value of 3.044 and p-value of 0.001. The results show that organizations gain better operational efficiency through the use of analytical and forward-looking thinking methods.

H1b (Strategic Vigilance → Strategic Responsiveness) demonstrates a stronger positive influence (β = 0.321, t = 3.984, p < 0.001), indicating that continuous environmental scanning and alertness enhance an organization's ability to respond effectively to changes.

H1c (Strategic Intelligence → Strategic Responsiveness) records the highest effect among the dimensions (β = 0.401, t = 4.044, p < 0.001), highlighting the importance of information analysis and strategic insight in supporting responsive strategic actions.

The dimensions of strategic monitoring prove their impact on strategic responsiveness because all sub-hypotheses received confirmation.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study found a positive and significance relationship between strategic monitoring and strategic responsiveness. The study results show that strategic monitoring ability which businesses use to track their plans will help them improve their capacity to implement planned responses. The dynamic managerial capability Teece and Elbanna et al. established provides organizations with increased capacity to adapt to situations and respond to changes [64][65]. Organizations obtain strategic agility through environmental scanning which enables them to predict future developments and discover new possibilities while reducing potential dangers.

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
DOI: 10.21070/ijppr.v27i1.1490

The research findings match the existing evidence. The research conducted by Rahhal and Hamid demonstrated that organizations which implement strategic monitoring achieve higher levels of operational flexibility within Baghdad's healthcare sector [78]. Organizations which implement strategic monitoring achieve competitive advantages according to Mahdi [67]. The research demonstrates that delivery companies in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq achieve operational advantages through their increased ability to adapt and manage resources which enables them to react promptly to changing conditions [79][80][81][82].

Strategic monitoring includes three operational elements which include strategic intelligence and strategic thinking and strategic vigilance. Strategic intelligence provides organizations with tools to gather data and evaluate information which enables them to make better decisions [66] [67]. Strategic thinking helps managers anticipate scenarios, align objectives with capabilities, and strengthen proactive strategies [68][69]. Strategic vigilance functions as an early-warning system which identifies weak signals to enable organizations to develop fast responses and long-term innovative solutions [70][71].

Overall, the strategic monitoring function operates as a complete system which leads to process maturity development by maintaining a balance between reactive and proactive methods while it strengthens organizational capacity to withstand challenges. The fast-changing market conditions of Kurdistan demand companies to develop these abilities because they need to remain competitive and respond to their planned strategies effectively.

6. Implications of the Study

The study results create both theoretical and practical value for research and its application in real-world situations. The results show that strategic monitoring functions as a vital element for organizations to improve their ability to respond strategically to changing conditions through their use of strategic intelligence and strategic vigilance and strategic thinking capabilities. The research provides empirical data about the delivery industry operating in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This research fills a gap because there has been minimal research about emerging market research activities. The results indicate that managers need to develop monitoring systems which operate systematically while they should allocate resources to strategic intelligence systems and environmental monitoring and department managers should receive training on strategic thinking development to achieve better strategic responses which handle both planned and unplanned business challenges in fast-changing market conditions.

7. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

The study presents its main findings to researchers while it demonstrates its weaknesses through two limitations which create pathways for further research. The study results face two limitations because researchers used a cross-sectional design, which restricts their ability to determine causal relationships and the study sample included only delivery companies from one specific region. The research framework needs to expand through two main processes which include extending the sample to different sectors and geographical areas and assessing various variables which include leadership styles and digital capabilities and organizational culture as they relate to strategic monitoring and strategic responsiveness.

8. Conclusion

This study set out to examine the role of strategic monitoring in enhancing strategic responsiveness among delivery companies in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The research findings show through Smart PLS and structural equation modeling that strategic monitoring leads to better strategic responsiveness results. The research findings show that organizations use strategic intelligence and strategic vigilance and strategic thinking to respond effectively to changes in their environment. The findings show that organizations need to implement proactive monitoring systems to develop their ability to adapt to changing conditions while maintaining their competitive advantage and operational resilience.

The study demonstrates both theoretical and practical value through its development of empirical evidence which shows that strategic monitoring functions as an essential organizational capability needed for success in volatile business environments. The research establishes a foundation for future studies which will explore ways to improve strategic responsiveness and organizational adaptive capacity.

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Vol. 27 No. 1 (2026): January
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