

Navigating the Business Environment

A Qualitative Analysis of Strategic Challenges and Governance in Tanzania (2000–2026)

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ABSTRACT

The strategic and governance landscape for enterprises in Tanzania has undergone significant transformation, influenced by evolving regulatory frameworks, market liberalisation, and global economic integration. A nuanced understanding of the persistent and emergent challenges faced by business leaders is required to inform both managerial practice and policy. This study aims to identify and analyse the key strategic and governance challenges confronting senior business executives, and to explore the adaptive strategies they employ to navigate the complex institutional environment. A qualitative, multi-case study design was employed, utilising in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 28 chief executive officers and senior directors from diverse sectors. Data were analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis approach to develop coherent, data-driven themes. Analysis identified four primary thematic challenges: regulatory unpredictability, constrained access to long-term capital, infrastructural deficiencies, and informal competitive practices. A prominent finding was that approximately two-thirds of participants cited regulatory unpredictability as the most significant impediment to strategic planning and investment. The findings illustrate that strategic decision-making is profoundly shaped by a complex interplay of formal governance structures and pervasive informal institutions, requiring leaders to develop highly adaptive and relational capabilities. Policymakers should prioritise enhancing regulatory clarity and consistency. Firms are advised to institutionalise environmental scanning and develop robust stakeholder engagement strategies to mitigate institutional voids. Strategic management, corporate governance, institutional theory, business environment, qualitative research, East Africa This paper provides a novel, empirically grounded framework of strategic adaptation, linking macro-level institutional pressures to micro-level managerial actions within the Tanzanian context.

Keywords: *Qualitative analysis, Strategic management, Corporate governance, Sub-Saharan Africa, Institutional theory, Business environment, Tanzania*

Article Highlights

- Identifies four primary thematic challenges: regulatory unpredictability, capital access, infrastructure, and informal competition.
- Strategic decision-making is shaped by a complex interplay of formal governance and pervasive informal institutions.
- Leaders must develop highly adaptive and relational capabilities to navigate institutional voids.
- Provides a novel framework linking macro-level institutional pressures to micro-level managerial actions.

Policy & Practice Implications

Policymakers should prioritise regulatory clarity. Firms are advised to institutionalise environmental scanning and develop robust stakeholder engagement strategies.

A qualitative, multi-case study based on in-depth interviews with 28 CEOs and senior directors.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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