

# Navigating the Business Environment

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

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## ABSTRACT

{ "background": "The strategic and governance landscape for enterprises in Uganda has undergone significant transformation, influenced by regional integration, technological change, and evolving regulatory frameworks. Prior research has often focused on macroeconomic indicators, leaving a gap in nuanced, context-rich analysis of managerial experiences and adaptive strategies within this dynamic environment.", "purpose and objectives": "This study aims to provide an in-depth, qualitative exploration of the principal strategic challenges and governance issues faced by business leaders in Uganda. It seeks to understand how these actors perceive, interpret, and navigate the complex institutional and operational terrain to sustain their enterprises.", "methodology": "A qualitative, multi-case study design was employed, utilising purposive sampling to select 28 senior executives from diverse sectors. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis approach to identify patterns and construct meaning.", "findings": "Analysis revealed a central tension between formal governance structures and informal, relational practices. A predominant theme was the strategic reliance on personal networks to mitigate institutional voids, with approximately two-thirds of participants describing this as a critical, daily operational necessity. Regulatory unpredictability was consistently cited as a more significant constraint than access to finance.", "conclusion": "The findings illustrate that effective business navigation is characterised by a hybrid governance model, where formal compliance is strategically blended with informal relationship management. This adaptive capability is a key determinant of organisational resilience in the face of persistent environmental uncertainty.", "recommendations": "Policymakers should prioritise enhancing regulatory clarity and consistency to reduce the perceived necessity of reliance on informal networks. Business support programmes should develop training to help firms formalise and professionalise their strategic relationship management without losing adaptive agility.", "key words": "Strategic management, corporate governance, institutional voids, qualitative research, East Africa, business environment", "contribution statement": "This paper provides a novel, empirically grounded framework of 'hybrid strategic navigation', offering a nuanced understanding of how Ugandan business leaders synthesise formal and informal systems to manage governance challenges, which has not been previously

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

### Article Highlights

- Reveals a central tension between formal governance structures and informal, relational practices.
- Identifies regulatory unpredictability as a more significant constraint than access to finance.
- Proposes a novel 'hybrid strategic navigation' framework for business leaders.

### Methodological Insight

A qualitative, multi-case study of 28 senior Ugandan executives, analysed through reflexive thematic analysis to construct context-rich meaning.

*This analysis provides a nuanced, manager-centric view of strategic adaptation in a dynamic institutional environment.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finds adaptive capability is key to resilience amid persistent environmental uncertainty.</li></ul>	
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## ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

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