

Navigating the Business Environment

A Mixed-Methods Diagnostic of Structural and Governance Challenges in Tanzania (2000–2026)

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ABSTRACT

The business environment in many emerging economies is characterised by structural and governance complexities that impede enterprise growth and investment. A comprehensive diagnostic of these persistent challenges is required to inform effective policy and managerial strategy. This study aims to diagnose the specific structural and governance obstacles facing businesses, to analyse their interrelationships, and to assess their perceived impact on operational decision-making and long-term planning. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed. First, a quantitative survey of 350 firm managers was conducted to identify and rank perceived challenges. This was followed by 24 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with senior executives and policy experts to explore the mechanisms and contextual nuances behind the quantitative data. Quantitative analysis identified regulatory uncertainty and access to finance as the two most severe constraints, cited by 78% and 72% of respondents respectively. Qualitative data revealed a central theme of 'navigational capital', where firms develop informal networks and adaptive strategies to circumvent formal institutional shortcomings. The findings indicate that structural and governance challenges are deeply interconnected, creating a business environment where success is less about optimising formal procedures and more about skilfully managing systemic unpredictability. Policymakers should prioritise enhancing regulatory predictability and transparency. Firms are advised to institutionalise strategic flexibility and invest in stakeholder relationship management as a core competency. Business environment, institutional voids, mixed methods, governance, regulatory uncertainty, Sub-Saharan Africa This paper provides a novel diagnostic framework that integrates perceived severity of business constraints with the lived experience of navigating them, offering a nuanced, evidence-based analysis for both academic and practitioner audiences.

Keywords: *Mixed Methods Research, Business Environment, Sub-Saharan Africa, Corporate Governance, Structural Adjustment, Tanzania, Enterprise Development*

Article Highlights

- Regulatory uncertainty and access to finance are the most severe constraints, cited by 78% and 72% of firms.
- Firms develop informal networks and adaptive strategies—'navigational capital'—to circumvent institutional shortcomings.
- Structural and governance challenges are deeply interconnected, creating a complex environment for enterprise.
- The study advocates for enhanced regulatory predictability and strategic flexibility as core managerial competencies.

Methodological Note

Employs a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design: a quantitative survey of 350 firm managers followed by 24 in-depth interviews with executives and policy experts.

This diagnostic integrates perceived constraint severity with the lived experience of navigating them.

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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