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QUALITATIVE STUDY

Navigating Post-Conflict Growth

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

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ABSTRACT

Rwanda's remarkable post-conflict economic transformation presents a unique context for examining enterprise strategy and governance. While macroeconomic indicators are well-documented, there is a paucity of in-depth qualitative research exploring the lived experiences and strategic reasoning of business leaders navigating this complex environment. This study aims to identify and analyse the key strategic and governance challenges perceived by senior executives in Rwandan enterprises during the nation's sustained growth period. It seeks to understand how leaders conceptualise and respond to these challenges within the specific institutional setting. A qualitative, interpretivist design was employed. Data were collected via in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 28 chief executive officers and board chairs from a purposively sampled range of sectors. Interview transcripts were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to develop coherent themes. Analysis identified three core thematic challenges: navigating state-led development priorities while maintaining autonomy, building organisational capability amidst a constrained talent pool, and accessing growth capital under evolving governance norms. A predominant theme was the strategic tension between alignment with national policy and independent corporate strategy, reported as a central concern by over two-thirds of participants. The findings illustrate that post-conflict growth, while creating opportunities, generates distinct strategic paradoxes for enterprise leadership. Governance is not merely a compliance function but a critical, dynamic element of strategic adaptation in this context. Enterprise boards should formally integrate institutional analysis into strategic planning processes. Policymakers are advised to foster more structured public-private dialogue forums to mitigate perceived tensions between state and corporate agendas. strategic management, corporate governance, post-conflict economy, qualitative research, Rwanda, institutional theory This paper provides novel empirical evidence on the micro-level strategic adaptations of firms in a high-growth African post-conflict economy, extending behavioural finance and governance theories beyond Western contexts.

Keywords: *Post-conflict reconstruction, Corporate governance, Enterprise strategy, Sub-Saharan Africa, Qualitative case study, Institutional theory, Business environment*

Article Highlights

- Identifies three core strategic challenges for leaders in Rwanda's growth period.
- Reveals governance as a dynamic element of strategic adaptation, not just compliance.
- Finds tension between state-led development priorities and

Core Thematic Challenges

1. Navigating state-led priorities vs. corporate autonomy.
2. Building capability with a constrained talent pool.
3. Accessing growth capital under evolving governance norms.

This qualitative study offers micro-level insights from 28 senior executives in Rwanda.

<p>corporate autonomy is predominant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommends formal integration of institutional analysis into enterprise strategic planning.	
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