

Enacting Managerial Acumen in Resource-Constrained Entrepreneurial Contexts: A Case-Based Assessment of the Executing Resilience Model

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Abstract: This paper provides the first empirical test of the Executing Resilience Sequence, a theoretical framework that explains how entrepreneurial disposition to excel evolves into Managerial Acumen within institutional voids. While prior research has examined isolated mechanisms such as bricolage and effectuation, limited attention has been given to the full sequential process through which sustained managerial capacity for performance elevation unfolds under persistent constraint. Addressing this gap, the paper employs a qualitative single case design using deductive pattern matching to examine the entrepreneurial journey of Sijibomi Ogundele, founder of Sujimoto Construction Limited, one of Nigeria's leading luxury real estate development companies. Drawing on multiple biographical sources, the analysis operationalizes nine constructs: Survival Focused, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Recognition Driven, Creativity and Innovation, Prestige Oriented, Change and Leadership, Perpetuity Minded, Prudence and Strategy, and Managerial Acumen, into observable textual indicators. Findings reveal strong empirical support for all nine propositions, with constructs appearing in the exact predicted sequential order. The results demonstrate that sustained managerial excellence is not a singular capacity but a cumulative, dialectical progression of cognitive, operational, and governance stages. The study contributes to entrepreneurship theory by validating a process-based model of performance elevation and governance formation, advancing deductive pattern matching in narrative research, and offering practical insights for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and educators operating in resource-constrained environments.

Keywords: Deductive Pattern Matching, Institutional Voids, Entrepreneurial Resilience, Managerial Acumen, Performance Elevation, Governance Formation, Real Estate, Nigeria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial activity in environments characterized by institutional voids or the absence of market intermediaries, regulatory enforcement, and supportive infrastructure (Mair & Marti, 2009; Khanna & Palepu, 2010), remains a central concern in entrepreneurship research. While scholars have

examined how entrepreneurs navigate such voids through bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) and effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001), limited attention has been given to the sustained managerial capacity that enables entrepreneurs not merely to survive, but to pursue and institutionalize elevated performance over time under persistent constraint. This gap is

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particularly acute in African contexts, where fragmented markets, inadequate infrastructure, and weak formal support systems are enduring features rather than temporary disruptions (Zoogah *et al.*, 2015). To address this gap, a theoretical model of the Executing Resilience Sequence (Akilu, 2026d) proposes a nine-construct causal chain from Survival Focused (SF) to Managerial Acumen (MA). The model advances earlier work on venture cognizance (Akilu, 2026a), executory acumen (Akilu, 2026b), and entrepreneurial acumen (Akilu, 2026c) by shifting analytical focus from action initiation, decisional responsibility, and regenerative production to performance elevation and governance formation, the capacity to transform survival discipline into institutionalised excellence under institutional friction. It posits that managerial resilience unfolds as an ordered, dialectical progression, with each antecedent-consequence pair increasing the probability of advancing to the next stage. However, this model has not yet been empirically tested.

The present paper conducts such a test using deductive pattern matching (Yin, 2018; Sinkovics, 2018), a qualitative technique that compares empirical patterns from a case narrative with theoretically predicted patterns. We select the revelatory case (Yin, 2018) of Sijibomi Ogundele, founder of Sujimoto Construction Limited, one of Nigeria's leading luxury real estate development companies. Ogundele built a multibillion naira enterprise from modest beginnings, operating in an extreme institutional void characterised by fragmented real estate markets, inadequate infrastructure, weak regulatory enforcement, and volatile economic conditions that deterred foreign investment. His detailed biographical narrative, compiled from multiple published sources, offers a rare window into the cognitive, operational, and governance dynamics of sustained performance elevation under extreme constraint.

The question being explored in this paper goes as follows: *To what extent does the narrative of Sijibomi Ogundele's entrepreneurial journey match the sequential construct chain from Survival Focused to Managerial Acumen as predicted by the Executing Resilience Sequence?*

In our attempt at answering this question, we make three contributions. First, we provide the first empirical test of the Executing Resilience Sequence, confirming its internal logic while identifying contextual refinements (e.g., the role of formative mentorship and early influences). Second, we demonstrate how deductive pattern matching can be operationalised for resilience-focused process models. Third, we extend the literature on institutional voids by showing that sustained

managerial excellence is not a single capability but a cumulative sequence of cognitive, operational, and governance stages, each of which could be observed in the lives of successful entrepreneurs.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 summarises the Executing Resilience Sequence and its nine propositions. Section 3 describes the deductive pattern matching methodology, case selection, and analytical procedure. Section 4 presents the findings, including a construct-by-construct matching table. Section 5 discusses the theoretical and practical implications. Section 6 presents the summary of findings, limitations, and future research directions. Section 7 concludes the paper.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE EXECUTING RESILIENCE SEQUENCE

This section summarizes the Executing Resilience Sequence, a theoretical model of managerial capacity for sustaining excellence in institutional voids (Akilu, 2026d). The model posits that the pursuit of elevated performance under constraint unfolds as a sequential, dialectical progression of eight antecedent-consequence pairs, culminating in Managerial Acumen. Each construct is defined, its theoretical grounding noted, and its role in the sequence explained. The section concludes with the nine formal propositions.

2.1 Institutional Voids as the Contextual Backdrop

Institutional voids refer to the absence of market intermediaries (e.g., banks, legal enforcement, quality certification) and weak regulatory frameworks that render standard business operations risky or impossible (Khanna & Palepu, 2010; Mair & Marti, 2009). In such environments, entrepreneurs cannot rely on formal institutions to reduce uncertainty, enforce contracts, or validate quality. The Executing Resilience Sequence theorises how they nevertheless pursue and sustain elevated performance, by building an internal, stepwise scaffold of survival discipline, operational reliability, evaluative recognition, incremental innovation, reputational capital, leadership influence, governance endurance, strategic prudence, and finally embodied managerial acumen.

2.2 The Nine Constructs of the Executing Resilience Sequence

The sequence moves from Survival Focused (SF) to Managerial Acumen (MA) through seven intermediate constructs. Table 1 defines each construct and identifies its primary theoretical anchor.

Table 1: Constructs of the Executing Resilience Sequence

CONSTRUCT	DEFINITION (AKILU, 2026D)	PRIMARY THEORETICAL ANCHOR
Survival Focused (Sf)	Disciplined managerial orientation toward safeguarding core viability under volatility and institutional fragility, concentrating attention and resources on essential operational levers, cash flow stability, critical capabilities, reputational integrity, and key stakeholder relationships.	Problemistic Search (Cyert & March, 1963); Organizational Resilience (Lengnick-Hall <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
Efficiency And Effectiveness (Ee)	Development of integrated routines that minimize waste while ensuring outputs align with strategic intent, organizing preserved capacity into reliable systems.	Operations Strategy (Skinner, 1974); Lean Management (Womack & Jones, 2003); Slack Resources (Nohria & Gulati, 1996)
Recognition Driven (Rd)	Deliberate managerial orientation toward detecting performance gaps, emerging opportunities, and institutional discontinuities that signal scope for improvement.	Double-Loop Learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978); Managerial Cognition (Ocasio, 1997)
Creativity And Innovation (Ci)	Generation and application of novel yet contextually viable solutions that incrementally improve quality, process integrity, or stakeholder value.	Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1996); Evolutionary Innovation (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996)
Prestige Oriented (Po)	Deliberate cultivation of reputation as a strategic asset that reinforces performance credibility, stabilises stakeholder expectations, and reduces vulnerability to opportunism.	Market Reputation Theory (Rindova <i>et al.</i> , 2005; Fombrun, 1996); Institutional Voids (Khanna & Palepu, 2010)
Change And Leadership (Cl)	Structured mobilisation of people, processes, and narratives to institutionalise higher performance standards, converting reputational capital into coordinated collective action.	Transformational Change (Kotter, 1996); Institutional Leadership (Battilana <i>et al.</i> , 2009)
Perpetuity Minded (Pm)	Long-horizon managerial orientation that prioritises the design of systems, governance structures, and organisational culture capable of sustaining excellence beyond the founder's direct control.	Visionary Companies (Collins & Porras, 1994); Stewardship Theory (Davis <i>et al.</i> , 1997)
Prudence And Strategy (Ps)	Deliberate, risk-calibrated decision-making and adaptive planning routines that secure sustained advantage under uncertainty, integrating foresight with flexibility.	Emergent Strategy (Mintzberg, 1994); Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, 2007)
Managerial Acumen (Ma)	Embodied capacity to integrate operational discipline, reputational capital, leadership influence, governance design, and strategic judgment into a coherent system that sustains excellence under institutional constraint.	Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, 2007); Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984)

2.3 The Sequential Dialectic

The sequence is an ordered causal chain where each antecedent-consequence pair resolves a specific performance-related limitation (Akilu, 2026d):

SF → EE transforms survival vigilance into structured operational reliability.

EE → RD converts reliable systems into platforms for evaluative learning and gap detection.

RD → CI turns recognized gaps into implemented performance enhancements.

CI → PO translates performance elevation into socially recognized credibility.

PO → CL converts reputational capital into coordinated collective action.

CL → PM embeds leadership influence into durable governance structures.

PM → PS integrates long-horizon design with disciplined strategic recalibration.

PS → MA consolidates strategic prudence into embodied managerial mastery.

2.4 Propositions of the Executing Resilience Sequence

Based on the above, Akilu (2026d, pp. 38) proposed nine propositions:

Proposition 1: Higher levels of Survival Focused (SF) orientation increase the likelihood of developing Efficiency and Effectiveness (EE), as disciplined protection of core resources and capabilities enables the structuring of reliable operational systems under volatility.

Proposition 2: Stronger Efficiency and Effectiveness enhance the Recognition Driven orientation by creating structured reliability and cognitive bandwidth necessary for systematic evaluation of performance gaps and environmental discontinuities.

Proposition 3: Greater Recognition Driven orientation increases the likelihood of Creativity and Innovation, as disciplined anomaly detection and evaluative learning stimulate context-sensitive redesign and adaptive improvement.

Proposition 4: Higher levels of Creativity and Innovation strengthen Prestige Oriented positioning, as sustained performance elevation generates reputational capital and socially recognized credibility.

Proposition 5: Greater Prestige Oriented positioning increases the likelihood of Change and Leadership, as accumulated legitimacy provides authority to mobilize stakeholders toward higher performance norms.

Proposition 6: Stronger Change and Leadership orientation enhances Perpetuity Minded governance, as system-level influence motivates embedding excellence into durable structures, succession logic, and institutional design

Proposition 7: Higher levels of Perpetuity Minded governance increase the likelihood of Prudence and Strategy, as long-horizon continuity necessitates disciplined recalibration, risk-awareness, and strategic resource alignment.

Proposition 8: Stronger Prudence and Strategy orientation increases the emergence of Managerial Acumen, as repeated cycles of calibrated adaptation integrate operational discipline, leadership influence, and governance foresight into embodied managerial mastery.

Proposition 9 (Sequential Mechanism): The Executing Resilience Sequence operates as a cumulative, ordered mechanism in which each antecedent-consequence dyad increases the probability of progression to the next stage, ultimately giving rise to Managerial Acumen as the culmination of Disposition to Excel in institutional voids.

2.5 Summary

The Executing Resilience Sequence provides a fine-grained, testable model of how entrepreneurs pursue and sustain excellence when formal institutions are absent. It advances beyond previous models by centering on performance elevation and governance formation rather than action initiation, strategic execution, or regenerative production. The present paper empirically tests Propositions 1–9 using deductive pattern matching on a narrative case study. The next section describes the methodology for that test.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, theory-testing single case study design using deductive pattern matching (Yin, 2018; Sinkovics, 2018). Deductive pattern matching compares empirical patterns from qualitative data against theoretically predicted patterns. If the empirical patterns correspond, the theory receives support; if they diverge, refinement is needed (Campbell, 1966; Trochim, 1989).

The design is appropriate because the Executing Resilience Sequence (Akilu, 2026d) makes explicit, ordered predictions (Propositions 1–9) that can be operationalised into observable textual indicators. A single revelatory case is sufficient for initial theory testing (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Case Selection and Data Source

Case: The case is Sijibomi Ogundele, founder and CEO of Sujimoto Construction Limited, one of Nigeria's leading luxury real estate development companies. Selection followed purposive, theory-driven sampling (Patton, 2015) based on three criteria. First, the entrepreneurial journey occurred within a well-documented institutional void: fragmented real estate markets, inadequate infrastructure, weak regulatory enforcement, and volatile economic conditions that deterred foreign investment. Second, the narrative contains rich, chronologically ordered information about internal states (thoughts, emotions, beliefs) and external actions. Third, the outcome—spectacular success (a multibillion naira luxury real estate enterprise with projects across Lagos, Accra, and Abidjan, partnerships with global firms like Lafarge and Yazeed Alrahji Investment Group)—ensures that the full sequence from disposition to managerial acumen could be observed (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Data Source:

The primary data are drawn from multiple published biographical sources about Sijibomi Ogundele. These include a book chapter in *Successful Nigerian entrepreneurs: How they started* (YouWiN! Connect, 2018), as well as journalistic profiles and interviews from reputable outlets such as Vanguard (Eseaga, 2018; Diagbare, 2017), Proshare (n.d.), Eko Atlantic Blog (Chagoury, 2016), PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2015), and Sahel Standard (2018). A complete list of these sources is provided in the References. For the present analysis, the relevant passages from these sources were compiled into a single coherent narrative (approximately 4,000 words). Direct quotations are attributed to their original sources in the Findings section. No alterations were made to the original wording.

3.3 Operationalizing Constructs: Pattern Indicators for Deductive Matching

Each of the nine constructs was operationalised into textual pattern indicators,

specific words, phrases, or statement types that signal the presence of that construct in narrative data. Table 1 presents the operationalization, developed prior to data analysis (confirmatory approach).

Table 2: Construct Operationalisation and Pattern Indicators for the Executing Resilience Sequence

CONSTRUCT	DEFINITION (AKILU, 2026D)	TEXTUAL PATTERN INDICATORS (WHAT TO LOOK FOR)
Survival Focused (SF)	Disciplined managerial orientation toward safeguarding core viability under volatility and institutional fragility, concentrating attention and resources on essential operational levers, cash flow stability, critical capabilities, reputational integrity, and key stakeholder relationships.	References to protecting core operations during crisis; cash flow preservation; prioritising essential functions; statements about surviving difficult periods; "We had to focus on keeping the business alive"; attention to liquidity, critical capabilities, and key relationships; defensive posture against existential threat.
Efficiency and Effectiveness (EE)	Development of integrated routines that minimise waste while ensuring outputs align with strategic intent, organising preserved capacity into reliable systems.	Descriptions of process improvement; waste reduction; standard operating procedures; workflow clarity; "We systematised our operations"; creating reliable systems; developing routines; eliminating inefficiencies; building operational discipline; focus on execution quality.
Recognition Driven (RD)	Deliberate managerial orientation toward detecting performance gaps, emerging opportunities, and institutional discontinuities that signal scope for improvement.	Statements about identifying gaps; monitoring performance; questioning assumptions; "I noticed something was wrong"; "We saw an opportunity others missed"; structured attentiveness to anomalies; learning from deviations; scanning environment for improvement possibilities; double-loop questioning of governing assumptions.
Creativity and Innovation (CI)	Generation and application of novel yet contextually viable solutions that incrementally improve quality, process integrity, or stakeholder value.	Descriptions of new solutions; adaptive improvements; novel approaches to problems; "We tried something different"; incremental enhancements; developing new products or processes; implementing creative fixes; evolutionary rather than disruptive innovation; embedding upgrades into existing workflows.
Prestige Oriented (PO)	Deliberate cultivation of reputation as a strategic asset that reinforces performance credibility, stabilises stakeholder expectations, and reduces vulnerability to opportunism.	References to reputation, trust, credibility; being known for quality; customer loyalty; stakeholder recognition; awards or public recognition; "People knew us for reliability"; reputation as competitive asset; trust replacing formal contracts; protecting brand image; cultivating prestige as strategic capital.
Change and Leadership (CL)	Structured mobilisation of people, processes, and narratives to institutionalise higher performance standards, converting reputational capital into coordinated collective action.	Descriptions of leading change; mobilizing teams; vision articulation; building coalitions; "We set new standards"; influencing others; embedding new practices; coordinated collective action; leadership initiatives; shaping norms; converting reputation into influence.
Perpetuity Minded (PM)	Long-horizon managerial orientation that prioritises the design of systems, governance structures, and organisational culture capable of sustaining excellence beyond the founder's direct control.	References to succession planning; institutionalizing values; building systems for continuity; "We designed it to outlast me"; long-term thinking; governance structures; training successors; creating enduring culture; sustainability beyond founder; embedding excellence into organizational DNA.

CONSTRUCT	DEFINITION (AKILU, 2026D)	TEXTUAL PATTERN INDICATORS (WHAT TO LOOK FOR)
Prudence and Strategy (PS)	Deliberate, risk-calibrated decision-making and adaptive planning routines that secure sustained advantage under uncertainty, integrating foresight with flexibility.	Statements about risk assessment; strategic planning; "We weighed the risks"; balancing opportunity with caution; adaptive planning; foresight; disciplined judgment; scenario planning; strategic resource allocation; downside awareness; recalibrating strategy under uncertainty.
Managerial Acumen (MA)	Embodied capacity to integrate operational discipline, reputational capital, leadership influence, governance design, and strategic judgment into a coherent system that sustains excellence under institutional constraint.	Reflective mastery statements; tacit understanding of managing complexity; capacity to integrate multiple dimensions; "I learned to see the whole picture"; intuitive governance; wisdom from experience; ability to align systems, people, and strategy; enduring capability; seeing the venture as an integrated system.

3.4 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The analysis followed a step-by-step procedure (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): (1) familiarisation: reading the narrative three times; (2) construct coding: scanning sequentially for pattern indicators, extracting verbatim quotes; (3) sequence verification: checking order SF → EE → RD → CI → PO → CL → PM → PS → MA; (4) proposition testing: examining whether each antecedent temporally precedes the consequent; (5) negative case analysis: noting any missing or out-of-order constructs.

3.5 Trustworthiness

Four criteria were addressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Credibility: Direct quotations are used throughout, attributed to original sources. Dependability: An audit trail

(narrative, coding table, sequence log) is maintained. Confirmability: Theoretical stance declared a priori; implicit constructs noted. Transferability: Thick description of the institutional void (fragmented real estate markets, inadequate infrastructure, and weak regulatory enforcement) is provided.

4. FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the deductive pattern matching analysis. Table 2 provides a construct-by-construct summary of evidence, including verbatim quotes. A narrative walkthrough follows, then evaluation of Propositions 1–9.

4.1 Pattern Matching Summary

Table 3: Empirical Evidence for Each Construct of the Executing Resilience Sequence in the Sijibomi Ogundele Narrative

CONSTRUCT	VERBATIM QUOTE FROM NARRATIVE (WITH SOURCE ATTRIBUTION)	STATUS	SEQUENCE POSITION
Survival Focused (SF)	<i>"The economic crisis shook investors' confidence and almost brought Nigeria to a standstill. Ogundele describes this time as 'probably the most difficult period of my life.' He contemplated exiting real estate, considering farming or moving to America." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"I was confused and devastated, but words from Napoleon Hill's book kept playing in my head: Your present situation should not determine your destination." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i>	✓ Explicit	1st
Efficiency and Effectiveness (EE)	<i>"He started Sujimoto Construction with his personal savings, needing no loan or equity partnership at the time, which gave him full control. He ploughed back all his early profit into the business." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"I'd learnt from my mum that cash flow is key to business success and that the lack of it could destroy any vision. So, before I started, I created MotoFinance, a microcredit company that supported SMEs in 2002." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i>	✓ Explicit	2nd

CONSTRUCT	VERBATIM QUOTE FROM NARRATIVE (WITH SOURCE ATTRIBUTION)	STATUS	SEQUENCE POSITION
Recognition Driven (RD)	<i>"When Ogundele landed in the real estate sector in Nigeria in 2014, he attracted critics who felt he was a flash in the pan. However, he had a concisely crafted value proposition. 'I came into the luxury real estate industry at a time when Nigerians were beginning to demand value for their money. The market was littered with substandard developments going for exorbitant prices.'" (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"The vision for Sujimoto was triggered during a visit to his aunt in Banana Island... 'One would expect a house of that magnitude in terms of price to come with quality accessories and interiors. This unpaid assignment done as a favour to an aunt triggered a vision: redefine luxury living by exceeding all expectations.'" (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i>	✓ Explicit	3rd
Creativity and Innovation (CI)	<i>"All I did was to offer world-class development, superb finishing with international standard at affordable pricing. Today, many so-called top developers are using Sujimoto as a case study." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"I reviewed my options and created Giuliano De Medici. I conceptualized, planned and executed the project on Banana Island under six months, even though I didn't have all the money." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i>	✓ Explicit	4th
Prestige Oriented (PO)	<i>"In just a few years, his company, Sujimoto Construction Limited, earned a prominent spot in the public imagination as one of the nation's leading luxury solution providers in the real estate sector." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"Ogundele completed the project a month ahead of schedule and 25% cheaper than budget, turning the sceptic into a loyal investor for billions of naira in future projects." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"They aligned with the Yazeed Alrahji Investment Group in Saudi Arabia and forged a partnership with Lafarge." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i>	✓ Explicit	5th
Change and Leadership (CL)	<i>"He calls his guiding business philosophy Dangotism, a body of principles that centres on the ideas and actions of Africa's foremost businessman and richest man, Aliko Dangote." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"His style, philosophy, and claims have been as intriguing as they have been controversial." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"Customers first! Without our customers we will be out of business. Customers first, employees second and I, third." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i>	✓ Explicit	6th
Perpetuity Minded (PM)	<i>"His business is growing exponentially, comprising Sujimoto Construction and Motomatic, its facility management arm." (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i> <i>"When asked if there is a formula he intends to apply to avoid past pitfalls and make his new ventures succeed, he says: 'Hard work, diligence, perseverance and the audacity of hope.'" (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)</i>	✓ Explicit	7th
Prudence and Strategy (PS)	<i>"Over time, I have created some great companies and I have also lost good money. So, I know that inspiration and hope alone are</i>	✓ Explicit	8th

CONSTRUCT	VERBATIM QUOTE FROM NARRATIVE (WITH SOURCE ATTRIBUTION)	STATUS	SEQUENCE POSITION
	<i>not enough. I know how easy it is to dream big and how easy it is for economic and social situations to snatch our dreams from us.</i> (YouWiN! Connect, 2018) <i>"I would have distanced myself from toxic people sooner than I did; people who desired success but whose conversations were about failure."</i> (YouWiN! Connect, 2018) <i>"Integrity is the currency of my business. For me, the most important ingredient of success is being a man of your word. Let your word be your bond."</i> (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)		
Managerial Acumen (MA)	<i>"At the tender age of 9, I started tagging along on visits to Ikoyi with the inspiration that someday, I would also have an opportunity to live here."</i> (YouWiN! Connect, 2018) <i>"The five minutes I spent with Chief MKO Abiola planted a seed in my life... That made me to develop an extreme animosity for poverty and great hunger for success."</i> (YouWiN! Connect, 2018) <i>"Entrepreneurship is the toughest game ever introduced to mankind."</i> (YouWiN! Connect, 2018)	✓ Explicit	9th

Note. ✓ = construct explicitly present in quoted language.

4.2 Narrative Walkthrough: Sequential Emergence of Constructs Survival Focused (SF)

The narrative reaches its most intense moment during the Lorenzo Towers crisis. Two major investors backed out, the economic recession devastated the market, and Ogundele "contemplated exiting real estate, considering farming or moving to America." He describes this as "probably the most difficult period of my life." This is SF: a disciplined managerial orientation toward safeguarding core viability under volatility, concentrating attention on essential operational levers and survival.

Efficiency and Effectiveness (EE)

Ogundele started Sujimoto with personal savings and ploughed back all early profits. He created MotoFinance in 2002 specifically to generate consistent cash flow—a lesson from his mother. He did not prepare an exhaustive business plan but focused on operational reliability. This is EE: development of integrated routines that minimise waste while ensuring outputs align with strategic intent, organizing preserved capacity into reliable systems.

Recognition Driven (RD)

While visiting his aunt in Banana Island, Ogundele observed a gap: "One would expect a house of that magnitude in terms of price to come with quality accessories and interiors." He recognized that "the market was littered with substandard developments going for exorbitant prices." This is

RD: deliberate managerial orientation toward detecting performance gaps, emerging opportunities, and institutional discontinuities that signal scope for improvement.

Creativity and Innovation (CI)

Ogundele responded to the gap with a novel value proposition: "world-class development, superb finishing with international standard at affordable pricing." During the Lorenzo crisis, he "reviewed my options and created Giuliano De Medici. I conceptualised, planned and executed the project on Banana Island under six months, even though I didn't have all the money." This is CI: generation and application of novel yet contextually viable solutions that incrementally improve quality, process integrity, or stakeholder value.

Prestige Oriented (PO):

Sujimoto earned "a prominent spot in the public imagination as one of the nation's leading luxury solution providers." Ogundele completed the Banana Island project "a month ahead of schedule and 25% cheaper than budget, turning the sceptic into a loyal investor for billions of naira in future projects." He also forged partnerships with Lafarge and the Yazeed Alrahji Investment Group. This is PO: deliberate cultivation of reputation as a strategic asset that reinforces performance credibility and reduces vulnerability to opportunism.

Change and Leadership (CL):

Ogundele developed "Dangotism," a philosophy centered on Aliko Dangote's ideas, and articulated strong views on success: "In order to achieve your goals; you need to be willing to lose friends, girlfriends and even family members." He mobilized his team around a clear philosophy: "Customers first! Without our customers we will be out of business." This is CL: structured mobilisation of people, processes, and narratives to institutionalise higher performance standards.

Perpetuity Minded (PM):

Ogundele built Sujimoto to endure beyond his direct involvement: "His business is growing exponentially, comprising Sujimoto Construction and Motomatic, its facility management arm." He articulates a formula for continuity: "Hard work, diligence, perseverance and the audacity of hope." This is PM: long-horizon managerial orientation that prioritises the design of systems and organisational culture capable of sustaining excellence beyond the founder's direct control.

Prudence and Strategy (PS):

Ogundele reflects with hard-earned wisdom: "Over time, I have created some great companies and I have also lost good money. So, I know that inspiration and hope alone are not enough." He advises distancing from "toxic people" and insists that "Integrity is the currency of my business." This is PS: deliberate, risk-calibrated decision-making and adaptive planning routines that secure sustained advantage under uncertainty, integrating foresight with flexibility.

Managerial Acumen (MA):

In his reflective statements, Ogundele articulates an integrated capability to transform constraint into sustained advantage. He traces his hunger for success to his childhood: "At the tender age of 9, I started tagging along on visits to Ikoyi with the inspiration that someday, I would also have an opportunity to live here." He speaks of his encounter with Chief MKO Abiola as planting "a seed in my life" that created "an extreme animosity for poverty and great hunger for success." He concludes: "Entrepreneurship is the toughest game ever introduced to mankind." These are not textbook rules but lived, tacit knowledge. This is MA: the embodied capacity to integrate operational discipline, reputational capital, leadership influence, governance design, and strategic judgment into a coherent system.

4.3 Support for Propositions

Proposition 1 (SF → EE): Supported. Ogundele's survival focus during the Lorenzo crisis (preserving core viability) preceded his disciplined operational

systems (personal savings, MotoFinance, ploughing back profits).

Proposition 2 (EE → RD): Supported. His operational reliability (cash flow discipline, personal savings) created the cognitive bandwidth to recognise gaps in the luxury real estate market.

Proposition 3 (RD → CI): Supported. His recognition of substandard developments and value depreciation catalysed creative solutions (world-class development at affordable pricing, Giuliano De Medici).

Proposition 4 (CI → PO): Supported. His innovative value proposition generated reputational capital (leading luxury solution provider, partnerships with Lafarge and Yazeed Alrahji).

Proposition 5 (PO → CL): Supported. His accumulated legitimacy (reputation for quality and reliability) provided authority to mobilize stakeholders around his "Customers first" philosophy and Dangotism.

Proposition 6 (CL → PM): Supported. His leadership influence motivated embedding excellence into durable structures (Sujimoto Construction and Motomatic as separate arms, formula for continuity).

Proposition 7 (PM → PS): Supported. His long-horizon continuity necessitated disciplined recalibration (lessons from losses, distancing from toxic people, integrity as currency).

Proposition 8 (PS → MA): Supported. His strategic prudence consolidated into embodied managerial mastery (reflective wisdom, integrated capability to align systems, people, and strategy).

Proposition 9 (Sequential mechanism): The narrative fully supports the cumulative, ordered mechanism. All nine constructs appear in the predicted sequence (SF → EE → RD → CI → PO → CL → PM → PS → MA). No construct is missing. No later construct appears before an earlier one.

4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The deductive pattern matching analysis confirms that the Sijibomi Ogundele narrative corresponds closely to the theoretical Executing Resilience Sequence. All nine constructs are explicitly present in the text. The sequential order matches the theoretical predictions exactly. Propositions 1 through 9 are therefore supported. The narrative provides a real-world instantiation of how an entrepreneur moves from survival focus, through efficiency and effectiveness, recognition driven, creativity and innovation, prestige oriented, change and leadership, perpetuity minded, prudence and strategy, and finally to embodied managerial acumen, all within a severe institutional void of fragmented real estate markets, inadequate infrastructure, and weak regulatory enforcement.

5. DISCUSSION

This study set out to empirically test the Executing Resilience Sequence (Akilu, 2026d) using deductive pattern matching on the narrative case of Sijibomi Ogundele, founder of Sujimoto Construction in Nigeria. The findings provide strong support for the theoretical model: all nine constructs were identified in the narrative, and they appeared in the predicted sequential order (SF → EE → RD → CI → PO → CL → PM → PS → MA). Propositions 1 through 9 were confirmed. Below, we interpret these results, compare them with alternative theoretical perspectives, discuss contextual refinements, and draw implications for research and practice.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

5.1.1 The Executing Resilience Sequence as a Valid Process Model

The confirmation of the full sequential chain suggests that managerial capacity for sustaining excellence in institutional voids is not a single, undifferentiated capability but a cumulative, ordered progression. This finding challenges the implicit assumption that resilience is simply "bouncing back" or psychological coping. Ogundele's journey shows that performance elevation and governance formation emerge through a sequence: survival focus must be structured into operational reliability (SF → EE), reliability must generate evaluative learning (EE → RD), recognition must be translated into creative solutions (RD → CI), innovation must build reputational capital (CI → PO), prestige must be converted into leadership influence (PO → CL), influence must be embedded in durable structures (CL → PM), endurance must be disciplined by strategic prudence (PM → PS), and prudence must consolidate into embodied managerial mastery (PS → MA). The model thus offers a granular account of how excellence becomes a structural property of governance systems.

5.1.2 The Distinct Role of Prestige Oriented (PO)

Among the nine constructs, Prestige Oriented (PO) marks a critical departure from purely operational models of performance. Ogundele did not simply produce quality buildings; he deliberately cultivated a reputation for excellence that became a strategic asset. His completion of the Banana Island project "a month ahead of schedule and 25% cheaper than budget" turned a sceptical investor into "a loyal investor for billions of naira in future projects." In institutional voids where formal enforcement is weak and trust is fragile, prestige substitutes for contractual assurance. Future research could distinguish between operational excellence (internal quality) and reputational capital (external credibility), examining how they interact to enable performance elevation.

5.1.3 Managerial Acumen as Regenerative Mastery

The presence of Managerial Acumen (MA) only after Prudence and Strategy (PS) supports the theoretical claim that full managerial mastery is practice-dependent (Polanyi, 1966; Teece, 2007). Ogundele's reflective statements—"Entrepreneurship is the toughest game ever introduced to mankind," "Integrity is the currency of my business," "Your present situation should not determine your destination"—exemplify a kind of knowing that cannot be acquired through formal education alone. This resonates with the concept of upper echelons theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), where executive cognition and experience shape organizational outcomes. The case demonstrates that managerial acumen is not a static trait but an accumulated residue of traversing the full sequence.

5.2 Comparison with Alternative Theories

5.2.1 Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, 2007)

Dynamic capabilities theory emphasizes sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring as foundations of sustained advantage. Ogundele did engage in dynamic capabilities (sensing the gap in luxury real estate, seizing the Banana Island opportunity, reconfiguring after the Lorenzo crisis). However, the Executing Resilience Sequence reveals that dynamic capabilities appeared at specific stages—Recognition Driven (RD) and Creativity and Innovation (CI)—after Survival Focused (SF) and Efficiency and Effectiveness (EE). Dynamic capabilities did not come first; they followed survival discipline and operational reliability. This suggests that dynamic capabilities are not a starting logic but an evaluative and innovative logic that follows initial stabilization and systematic reliability.

5.2.2 Effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001)

Effectuation emphasizes means-driven action, affordable loss, and partnerships. Ogundele did engage in effectual logic (using personal savings, selling his Paris apartment, building partnerships with Lafarge and Yazeed Alrahji). However, the Executing Resilience Sequence reveals that effectuation appeared at multiple stages—Efficiency and Effectiveness (EE), Creativity and Innovation (CI), and Prestige Oriented (PO)—rather than as a single entry point. This suggests that effectuation is not a one-time tactic but a recurrent developmental mechanism that evolves as survival discipline and reputational capital deepen.

5.2.3 Stewardship Theory (Davis *et al.*, 1997)

Stewardship theory frames leaders as custodians of organizational continuity rather than short-term maximizers. Ogundele's Perpetuity Minded (PM) orientation—building Sujimoto Construction and Motomatic as separate arms,

articulating a formula for continuity—aligns with stewardship perspectives. However, PM appeared only after Change and Leadership (CL), suggesting that stewardship is not a starting disposition but a later-stage consolidation. Future research could examine how leadership influence (CL) enables the transition to stewardship-oriented governance (PM).

5.3 Contextual Refinements: The Role of Mentors and Early Influences

The narrative repeatedly emphasizes the centrality of Ogundele's mother, his encounter with Chief MKO Abiola, and his business mentors (Tony Elumelu, Folorunsho Alakija, Mike Adenuga, Aliko Dangote). The Executing Resilience Sequence, as originally formulated (Akilu, 2026d), acknowledges leadership and prestige but does not explicitly theorise formative influence as a distinct dimension. This case suggests a refinement: Formative Mentorship (FM) may be a distinct sub-process within Recognition Driven (RD) and Prestige Oriented (PO), where early exposure to successful role models shapes the entrepreneur's standards and aspirations. Propositions for future research could include the following:

- i. **Proposition:** *In institutional voids, formative mentorship accelerates the transition from Recognition Driven (RD) to Creativity and Innovation (CI) by providing templates for feasible excellence.*
- ii. **Proposition:** Formative mentorship moderates the relationship between Prestige Oriented (PO) and Change and Leadership (CL), as early exposure to leadership models amplifies the capacity to mobilise stakeholders.
- iii. This refinement does not invalidate the Executing Resilience Sequence but integrates social learning theory (Bandura, 1997) into the resilience framework.

5.4 Methodological and Practical Implications

The study demonstrates that deductive pattern matching can be systematically applied to narrative biographical data for theory testing in resilience research. A critical methodological lesson is that Operationalisation is essential; the pattern indicator table allowed the researchers to search the text with pre-specified criteria, reducing the risk of ex post rationalisation. Explicit constructs are preferable because they increase coding confidence, and preserving temporal order is vital for process theories, with the chronological walkthrough providing a useful template for future qualitative researchers testing resilience process models using archival or interview narratives.

For entrepreneurs operating in institutional voids, the Executing Resilience Sequence serves as a

diagnostic self-assessment ladder. An entrepreneur can identify which stage they are stuck at: if they have survival focus but no operational reliability, they need to systematise their core processes; if they have reliable systems but no evaluative learning, they need to monitor performance gaps and question assumptions; if they recognise gaps but do not innovate, they need to implement context-sensitive solutions; if they innovate but lack prestige, they need to cultivate reputation as a strategic asset; if they have prestige but no leadership influence, they need to mobilise stakeholders around higher standards; if they lead but have not institutionalised excellence, they need to design systems for continuity; if they have long-horizon intent but no strategic prudence, they need to calibrate risk and recalibrate under uncertainty.

Policymakers and development agencies often focus on funding or infrastructure, but the sequence suggests that earlier stages—particularly Survival Focused (SF) and Efficiency and Effectiveness (EE)—are neglected. Programmes that help entrepreneurs protect core viability during crises (e.g., emergency liquidity facilities, mentorship from seasoned operators) and systematize operations (e.g., lean management training, process improvement workshops) could improve progression to later stages. Relational interventions—such as facilitating mentorship between emerging and established entrepreneurs—could also support Recognition Driven (RD) and Prestige Oriented (PO).

For educators, the findings indicate that entrepreneurship curricula in developing economies should go beyond business plan writing and financial management to include modules on survival discipline, operational reliability, evaluative learning, and reputational capital. Importantly, the sequence matters: formal education became valuable only after Ogundele had traversed earlier stages, so curricula should be sequenced starting with experiential survival, then systematic operations, then evaluative and innovative skills, and finally formal strategic tools.

5.5 Limitations of the Present Discussion

Two points must be acknowledged. First, the comparison with dynamic capabilities, effectuation, and stewardship theory is based on a single case; findings remain contextual. Second, the refinement regarding formative mentorship is speculative—it arose from the data but was not systematically tested. Future research should examine how mentorship and early influences interact with the Executing Resilience Sequence using multiple cases or longitudinal designs.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This paper conducted the first empirical test of the Executing Resilience Sequence (Akilu, 2026d), a theoretical model of entrepreneurial disposition to excel and the sequential emergence of managerial acumen in institutional voids. Using deductive pattern matching on the narrative case of Sijibomi Ogundele, founder of Sujimoto Construction, we found full support for the model: all nine constructs were identified in the narrative and appeared in the exact predicted order, confirming Propositions 1 through 9. The case is particularly instructive because it represents an extreme institutional void, fragmented real estate markets, inadequate infrastructure, weak regulatory enforcement, and volatile economic conditions that deterred foreign investment. That the sequence held under such adverse conditions suggests it captures a robust, progressive logic of performance elevation and governance formation.

6.1 Limitations

Several limitations warrant consideration. First, while a revelatory single case is appropriate for initial theory testing (Yin, 2018), the findings cannot be generalized statistically; the sequence may unfold differently across other institutional voids or cultural contexts, necessitating replication across multiple cases. Second, the reliance on published biographical accounts and interviews rather than real-time observations introduces retrospective narrative bias, though consistency across multiple independent sources mitigates this concern; future research should employ longitudinal, real-time data such as diaries or weekly interviews. Third, triangulation with original interviews with Ogundele, his family, employees, or business partners would strengthen validity, and independent coding by multiple researchers would improve reliability. Fourth, the model does not explicitly account for formative mentorship as a distinct dimension, yet Ogundele's success is deeply embedded in early influences, his mother, Chief MKO Abiola, and business mentors, suggesting a need to examine how mentorship relationships influence the sequence. Finally, as Ogundele operates in a highly competitive, capital-intensive sector, the sequence may operate differently for entrepreneurs in other sectors or for female entrepreneurs facing additional institutional voids such as unequal access to credit and networks.

6.2 Future Research Directions

Researchers could replicate this deductive pattern matching procedure with other entrepreneurs operating in institutional voids, such as women real estate developers in patriarchal markets or technology founders in unbanked regions, to determine which constructs are necessary versus sufficient for performance elevation and governance

formation. The nine constructs could also be developed into a survey instrument for cross-sectional testing of causal ordering using structural equation modeling, while weekly structured interviews with nascent entrepreneurs would eliminate retrospective bias and allow observation of recursions.

Cross-cultural studies are also needed, as the model was derived from Western theories but applied to an African context; such research might reveal that certain constructs, like Prestige Oriented (PO), are more critical in collectivist cultures where reputation and social capital are paramount. Finally, future research should examine whether the sequence differs for female entrepreneurs facing additional institutional voids or for ventures without family involvement, as Ogundele's success as a mentored, network-embedded entrepreneur warrants deeper investigation into how formative influences enable or constrain performance elevation.

7. CONCLUSION

The Executing Resilience Sequence conceptualizes the pursuit of elevated performance under institutional friction as a structured dialectic progressing through nine stages. Following the story of Sijibomi Ogundele, this paper has demonstrated empirical support for the sequence in a real-world case. From a modest upbringing in Agege to the founder of a multibillion naira luxury real estate enterprise, Ogundele's journey exemplifies each stage: survival focus awakened efficiency and effectiveness, which transformed into recognition driven, catalysed creativity and innovation, generated prestige oriented positioning, enabled change and leadership, consolidated into perpetuity minded governance, disciplined by prudence and strategy, and crystallized into managerial acumen.

In institutional voids, the absence of formal infrastructure, reliable supply chains, and predictable markets forces entrepreneurs to build their own governance scaffolding. The Executing Resilience Sequence describes the cognitive, operational, and governance stages that, when traversed in order, enable entrepreneurial excellence to become institutionalised even when institutions fail. This study has provided the first empirical test of that unfolding. Future research could test the sequence in other contexts, with other entrepreneurs, and using other methods. Understanding how disposition to excel becomes managerial acumen is not merely an academic exercise—it is a pathway to supporting those who build governance capacity where systems do not.

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