A Review of a Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology

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Abstract- The paper offers a systematic review of applying a qualitative constructivist grounded theory methodology to demonstrate the processes and procedures in conducting a doctoral thesis focusing on the leadership and sustainability of faith-based organizations in Kenya. A constructivist philosophical awareness and paradigmatic approaches underpin the outline of the research design. The study argues that a constructivist grounded theory methodology has the potential for unearthing meanings that go beyond the spoken words, leading to an insightful subjective view of reality. Therefore, the methodology is appropriate for a management doctoral thesis. However, the process could be more demanding and insightful and requires adequate planning and commitment because it requires proper time management.

Indexed Terms- Constructivist, Constant Comparative Analysis, Grounded Theory, Reflexivity, Theoretical Sensitivity

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The paper employed the constructivist grounded theory in order to draw comparison between the ethical principles of deontology to distinguish from right and wrong and to understand the world in which faith-based organizations work towards sustaining their goals, aims and objectives. Concisely, the need to use the method became pertinent, the theory is a well-known methodology employed in many research studies all over the world.

The doctoral thesis focused on acquiring social knowledge of how faith-based organizations work toward the sustainability of their mission. It questioned the significance of leadership given the challenges of being dependent on donor-funded programmes, and whether the restructuring of leadership would facilitate resource mobilization. Faith-based organizations are legislatively recognized in Kenya, and their role is unbeatable. However, they do not qualify for government grants and must argue their cases to be tax exempted. The study recognized the role of faith-based organizations because they work towards alleviating poverty, focusing on the most vulnerable and economically poor, disadvantaged by the social and economic structures of government and society. The study, therefore, focused on collecting data embedded in people's experiences of the lived reality, shared experiences, perspectives, and challenges of being dependent on donor funding for programmes. Such data is dependent on social knowledge, human interaction, and individual perspectives, such as signs of facial expression, body language, gestures, and human behaviour (Husin et al., 2021, p. 114). Mardon et al. (2021, p. 14) confirm the value of analyzing human beings through their actions.

A constructivist grounded theory approach emerged when the researcher was immersed in a faith-based organization during the COVID-19 phenomenon that engulfed the world from 2019 to 2020. Located in the slums of Nairobi, the researcher became interested in people's views, perceptions, and interpretations of meanings derived from the media, the Ministry of Health, the faith groups, and their social groupings regarding COVID-19. The researcher observed that people can construct, re-construct, and deconstruct information about COVID-19. They could also overly reject the objective reality of social distancing and wearing masks, accepting their subjective views of their reality where everyone belongs to everyone else, and therefore, sharing of masks was not an issue to them. Together, they had survived many calamities in the past. The researcher also observed the community's interactions, their methods of passing information, and their mechanism for making meanings of that information. The researcher noted that in a non-formal sector, people have their methods of defining and redefining their values, rules, and regulations regarding interacting with each other and governing their security structures. The researcher

noted that the power of a subjective view of reality brought forth multiple realities of the same scenario. Most people did not question their interpretations or verify the source of information, its authenticity, and how that information was objectified and passed on to others as the truth. As the faith-based organization served the same community, the researcher wondered how such an organization could serve a socially economically deprived community and what sustains the mission. Aware of the issues, the purpose of the study emerged, and the research problem developed with a desire to interpret the phenomenon from those living in it (Bosenbaum et al., 2016).

The study, therefore, identified a research methodology demonstrated by Charmaz and Thornberg (2020) and adopted their simple guidelines for applying a constructivist grounded theory methodology. Hence, the researcher adopted a research design presented by Tie et al. (2019), as discussed in section 3, as a strategy to lead the exploration process. The guidelines demonstrate that a researcher should be aware of a constructivist grounded theory's philosophical underpinnings and unique characteristics, such as the researcher's position and view of the literature within the field (Rieger, 2019; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020). The section that follows, therefore, presents the study's paradigmatic assumptions, the theoretical orientation, and the place of literature review according to Charmaz's constructivist approach (2006, 2014).

II. RESEARCH PARADIGM ASSUMPTIONS

2.1 UNDERSTANDING PARADIGMS

Charmaz and Thornberg (2020) postulate that researchers applying a constructivist grounded theory approach should be cognizant of their position. Kivunja and Kayuni (2017) confirm the same view, arguing that a researcher must articulate the significant philosophical underpinnings of research to conduct a complete study. They argued that paradigms inherently reflect the researcher's beliefs about their world. Therefore, the study explores the assumptions that relate to the methodological approach by engaging the meanings of paradigms, how paradigms relate to the constructivist grounded theory, and the fundamental elements of the research paradigm before examining her paradigmatic approach.

The term paradigm has an ancient Greek origin, *paradeigma, meaning* a pattern (Maharani, 2021, p. 343), a typical example, or a model (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). In the Swahili language, paradigm refers to *mitizamo* (standpoints), which has the same meaning as a *worldview (*Guba & Lincoln, 1994), postulating that paradigm offers guidelines to a researcher or investigator (UGWU et al., 2022). The Biblical perspective refers to a paradigm as a structure for comprehending reality (Bible project, Episode 1). While Kuhn (1977) elaborated that paradigm means a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions a scientific community uses in research (Maharani, 2021, p. 344). The study realized that the term paradigm may be expressed differently, but it is crucial to understand our positions because they inform the study (UGWU et al., 2022). They also determine the integrity of any research activity (Ganiyi et al., 2021, p. 4) and dictate what is studied, how it is studied, and how scholars interpret the findings (Majeeb, 2019). The study, therefore, examined two opposing paradigms, positivism/post-positivism and interpretivism/constructivism because they relate to grounded theory and are essential for the constructivist approach.

The Positivism Paradigm postulates (from an epistemological standpoint) that knowledge is created objectively through observation and measurement (Malau-Aduli & Alele, 2023). The positivism paradigm is applicable in scientific studies that apply quantitative methods. The domain of the positivist approach is 'verification ideology' (Murphy, 2021), that is, creating knowledge through what is quantifiable (Bhattacherjee, 2021). Therefore, such studies apply a hypothesis emerging from known theories (Maksimović & Evtimov, 2023), which call for acceptance or rejection of verification (Keong & Husin, 2023, p. 5859).

The Postpositivism Paradigm emerged due to frustrations with positivism's overemphasis. The post-positivist paradigm focuses on studying issues through human interactions to gather their experiences. It argues that absolute truth is impossible, although it does not disagree with scientific research. It emphasizes the value of understanding the perspectives of the study in multiple ways because there are many contributory factors to a study, and

therefore, the researcher becomes involved with the study process rather than holding personal independence ((Bhattacherjee, 2021, Maksimović & Evtimov,). Hence, post-positivism offers a subjective view of reality.

Interpretivism in social sciences also refers to *Constructivism or Naturalism.* An interpretive paradigm focuses on understanding the how and why of the studied phenomenon, which is different from explaining (Charmaz, 2006; Dunn et al., 2023). Therefore, the interpretivist approach is underlined by a subjective view of reality because human beings cannot be studied like a physical observable fact (Alharahshah & Pius, 2020; Keong & Husin, 2023, p. 5861).

2.1.1 The Fundamental Assumptions of Research Paradigms

The study examined the characteristics of a paradigm by exploring each element: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology (Ulz, 2023; Malau-Aduli & Alele, 2023) as below:

- *Ontology* relates to the nature of being (Walsh, 2020). Its assumption is that of a single reality only (Abbadia, 2022), and it is acknowledged when people assume that something makes sense or factual in the investigated social phenomenon (Kivunja & Kuyuni, 2017, p. 27; Lewis et al., 2019, p. 133, Bruinders, 2021).
- *Epistemology* is about knowledge. It illustrates how knowledge is created and developed (Taheri & Azer, 2021, p. 3). It postulates what can be known, how we get to know, how we know that we know (Kivunja & Kuyuni, 2017, p. 27), and how we know the truth or reality (Maharani, 2021, p. 344). The terminology emanates from ancient Greek, meaning epostēmē (Baruwa & Shutaleva, 2022) and *logos* (reason) (*Encyclopedia Britannica,* 2023).
- *Axiology* has Greek connotations, meaning value. The researcher's values stand out in the research process. According to Kivunja and Kuyuni (2017, p. 27), axiology is an ethical issue when planning a research proposal. The study, therefore, is espoused by the African *Ubuntu* principles, which

align with Biblical perspectives regarding moral stands.

2.1.2 Researcher's Paradigmatic Approach

Undertaking a constructivist grounded theory research requires the researcher to make explicit their underlying assumptions ontologically and epistemologically (Mills et al., 2006); (Tie et al., 2019). Therefore, the researcher acknowledges that although Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory approach reflects relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Rieger, 2019; Mohajan & Mahajan, 2022, p. 12), that did not deter the researcher from her methodological approach by holding a different paradigm and assumption. Thus, the study adopted a social constructionist epistemology and a relational ontology.

The researcher believes in an interconnected world where everything relates to everything else. That does not discriminate her approach from other worldviews, whether in scientific, socio-economic, or political contexts. The researcher believes that people relate to their world in relationship with the cosmos, which offers objective facts and a collaborative method of interacting with their world to solve problems, bringing newness, innovativeness, and creativity, which offers a subjective reality. For example, Glaser and Strauss's (1965, 1967) innovativeness of grounded theory methods is influenced by their backgrounds and experiences. Charmaz's approach is also influenced by her experiences as a former student of both Glaser and Strauss. Therefore, the researcher is also influenced by the African *Ubuntu philosophy* because of its core belief that our existence lies in humanity's collective existence (Fagunwa, 2019). The study, therefore, offers a relational ontology and adopts Charmaz's social constructionism epistemology to explore social knowledge within a particular context.

The Social Constructionist Paradigm emphasizes that multiple realities exist through human interactions with multiple social actors (Zhao, 2020). Therefore, knowledge is social in origin, not predetermined by some natural order, focusing on meanings and human experiences (Sword & Houston, 2021). Epistemologically, social constructionists encourage people to tell their stories and advocate that what people perceive as reality depends on their

shared assumptions, which they develop as knowledge in a social context (Vinney, 2019). The study, therefore, aimed to gather diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives of the research participants concerning the research questions.

Relational Ontology sees social reality as an open system that is highly interdependent, interactive, and characterized by emergent social structures in the constant transformation process (Mussell, 2022). This relational ontology takes a process-oriented form (Mussell, 2022). The study's ontological approach upholds that human beings co-create one another at every moment (Walsh et al., 2021), as do the faith-based organizations in Kenya.

Relational Ontology perceives socially constructed reality as an open, interconnected, correlative, and evolving approach to ever-changing socially constructed structures (Mussell, 2022). This relational ontology takes a process-oriented form (Mussell, 2022). The study's ontological approach upholds that human beings co-create one another at every moment (Walsh et al., 2021), as do the faith-based organizations in Kenya. The Kenya Motto, 'Harambee,' meaning pulling together, is well embedded in a relational ontology characterized by Kenyans responding positively to others' needs. Hence, a relational ontology is part of our kinship established in the African *Ubuntu* philosophy.

2.2 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Although a constructivist grounded theory methodology does not require a philosophical framework, symbolic interactionism is one of its underpinnings. However, it is not the only philosophical framework that can influence research (Tie et al., 2019); it favours the study's purpose because it focuses on how human interactions (Faith-based and donors) create instituted meanings, how they act on those meanings, and how they deal with those meanings through interpretations (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022).

The symbolic interactionism philosophy emerged from Mead (1934). However, other contributors like Blumer (Mardon et al., 2021) took it forward and contributed to interpreting meaning, symbols, socialization, identity, self-development, and group commitment. Thus, the symbolic interactionism theory plays a role in the study because the researcher focuses on the interpretation of meaning, symbols, and group commitment (actors of faith-based organizations), what structures of social institutions anchor the mission's deliberations, and how they interpret their mission (their perspectives and perceptions) (Mardon et al., 2021, p. 21). The study also gives preference on how the beneficiaries (individuals) associate and interact with each other and the institutions and what communication strategies enable them to understand their social world as charitable organizations to explore the significance of leadership and the sustainability of faith-based organizations. Therefore, the study's overall purpose is to extract those meanings created through human interactions with their world through communication, symbols, and actions of their social interactions (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022) to establish a theory of sustainability suitable for its different actors.

2.3 Grounded Theory Methodology

Charmaz and Thornberg (2020) advocate that researchers undertaking a grounded theory approach must understand its requirements. Thus, Charmaz's constructivist approach applies a qualitative methodology, while the original grounded theory applies qualitative or quantitative research methodology (Tie et al., 2019). Grounded theory methodology emanated from two sociologies, Glaser and Strauss (1967), which derived from two academic traditions. Glaser, a graduate of the University of Colombia, came from quantitative traditions with robust positivist approaches to reality (Metelski et al., 2021, p. 2). Strauss was a graduate of Chicago University and had qualitative approaches to research anchored on the philosophy of symbolic interactionism and pragmatism approaches (Rakhmawati, 2019, p. 112). While at the University of California, the two theorists worked together in 1965. They studied the experiences and perceptions of their patients whose status was fatal, and they were aware of their realities. Hence, Glaser and Strauss observed and interpreted that information (Rakhmawati, 2019, p. 111). They also observed the medical caregivers who were aware of their patient's conditions and analyzed their actions and reactions, given what they knew of their patients, opening a new path to grounded theory discoveries. Therefore,

Glaser and Strauss's purpose of the study was to develop a new theory from data inductively obtained from their experiences and observations of the studied phenomenon (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2023).

Glaser and Strauss lived in times that questioned the view that quantitative methodology was the only proper, unbiased way of determining truths about the world (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Tie et al., 2019). Hence, they were moving away from highly theoretical sociology (Jones & Alony, 2011; Mohajan & Mohajan, 2023, p. 35) that dominated social sciences by applying quantitative and deductive approaches of the 1960s (McCall & Edwards, 2021). Today, grounded theory methodology has continued to evolve from its inception to become one of the social sciences' most prominent qualitative approaches (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2023). However, Glaser and Strauss's different traditions resulted in methodological disagreement (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2023, p. 73). The two theorists later split, each taking a different route, working on their version, resulting in the Classical and Straussian grounded theory perspectives (Delmas & Giles, 2023).

Charmaz (2006, 2014), a former student of Glaser and Strauss (Charmaz, 2006) version, maintains a constructivism-grounded theory methodology, which considers multiple realities socially constructed as different from objective reality (Charmaz, 2014; Clarke et al., 2023), upheld by Glaser's pure inductivism approach (Glaser, 1992). She also rejected Strauss' rigidity and reliance on dogmatic methodological adherence to producing theory (Hadley, 2017). However, she adopted symbolic interactionism like Strauss' approaches (McCall & Edwards, 2021). Through Charmaz's collaboration with Bryant, a constructivist grounded theory developed further (Bryant, 2017, 2019; Bryant & Charmaz, 2019), holding on to the epistemological subjective view and relativist ontology. 2006). Charmaz's approach demonstrates that knowledge can be co-constructed by the researcher and the research participants. Through observations, interactions with the collected data, and theoretical knowledge of the topic, the researcher engenders deeper meanings and understanding (Dunn et al., 2023) that contribute to co-creating a new theory (Miller, 2023).

From the problem statement, the researcher engaged literature in the substantive area and realized the controversies in how it is applied in grounded theory. For example, Glaser's (1998) version recommends no literature review in the substantive area to avoid contamination of data (Rakhmawati, 2019, p. 113). Glaser's position shows that the studied phenomenon should reflect the social process. Therefore, researchers should remain objective in allowing data to manifest without human interactions (Rakhamawati, 2019, p. 112). In contrast, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested that a preliminary literature review would help the researcher to contextualize the phenomenon investigated aided by the researcher's familiarity with the nature of the study (Deerings & Williams, 2020, p. 3). According to Strauss and Corbin (2015), researchers should, however, hold an open mind so that existing theories in the literature do not overly influence the researcher (El Hesein et al., 2017). Charmaz's (2006) approach to a review of literature is more in line with Strauss's approach. However, she recommends a three-stage process: Initial, ongoing, and final.

The study adopted Charmaz's (2014) perspectives on literature review and adhered to her caution of bracketing, which might appear throughout the study process (Tufford & Newman, 2012; Mohajan & Mahajan, 2022, p. 6).

The Initial Literature review included documents from different records, such as donors' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the funded organizations, reports, internal and external correspondences, Strategic plans, Minutes of board meetings, financial records, and human resource management.

Continuous literature review (ongoing stage) was constant because of the sampling techniques that guided the study. Therefore, the study applied a constant comparative analysis in the methodology chapter to critique the available literature from journals, printed and Google books, articles, and other internet sources (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022, p. 7). The study focused on leadership and sustainability of not-for-profit organizations with a particular focus on faith-based organizations.

The final phase of the literature review emerges as the new theory develops (Makri & Neely, 2021). The study considers what the data is revealing and what other theories in the studied discourse are offering. Therefore, the researcher evaluates whether the new theory is relevant and what knowledge it is adding to refine the new theory (Metelski et al., 2021).

III. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE
The study considers the application of a research design that fits a constructivist grounded theory underpinned by social knowledge. The process is described by various authors like Miller (2023), Shaheen et al. (2019) and Khanana (2018). It involves determining the research population and the scope, the sampling techniques, the data collection and analysis procedures, the researcher's co-constructing knowledge, and the researcher's capabilities of conceptualizing the received data to generate a new theory. The study also considers the ethical factors and the credibility of the information gathered. The process is demonstrated herewith.
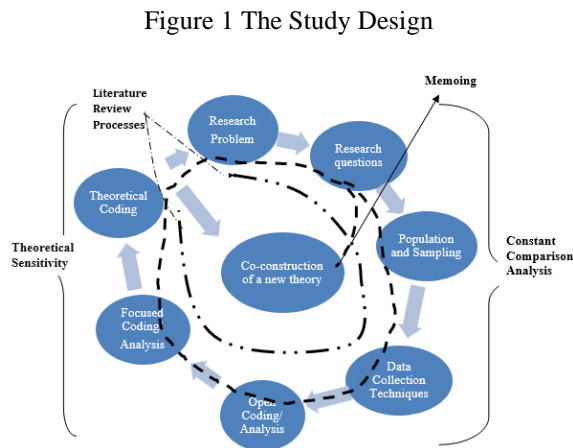
Figure 1 The Study Design

Figure 1: Research Design Outlining Fundamental of Constructivist Grounded Theory Adopted from Tie et al. (2019)

3.1.1 Research Population
The Scope addresses faith-based organizations emanating from expatriate missionaries and receiving funding from the international community for the last five years. The study is geographically spread to five counties: Nairobi, Kiambu, Embu, Nakuru, and Kitui focusing *on funded healthcare, education, social ministries, and other programmes offering psychosocial support, spiritual wellness, and counseling.*

The sampling criteria determine gender and Age Categories, experiences, exposures, and the different categories of participants or persons who would share the reality of faith-based organizations.

3.1.2 Sampling Strategies
The Purposeful Sampling technique provided an entry into the field to get the initial sample from the general population. The researcher assumes the selected population would have rich information about the studied phenomenon (Shaheen et al., 2019, p. 28). *Theoretical sampling* techniques involve an iterative process. The process involved the researcher returning to the field of study to explore some areas that emerged from the purposively selected population. *Sample size* emerged with theoretical sampling but not through the predetermined process in advance (Makri & Neely, 2021). *A homogenous purposive sampling technique is determined to identify the scope of the study and the ministry spread. The researcher applies* expert judgment to support the selection of cases for the ministries and identify those with multiple or single projects within the funded programmes.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES
The researcher considers the processes that would lead to gaining social knowledge and considers primary and secondary data in line with the constructivist grounded theory approach.

Primary data procedures relate to the research design, which focuses on understanding how people build their reality, the meanings they attach to it, and how the social actors relate to that reality (Sandu, 2018, p. 185).

Secondary data included documents and a review of literature in the substantive area. The study focused on published technical and non-technical literature (Birks & Mills, 2015; Tie et al., 2019). Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory upholds a three-pong approach, initial, ongoing, and final, which the literature review adopts.

Observations were most applicable during fieldwork, as the researcher observed the research participants and non-participants within their context. The techniques used included observing people's character, facial expressions, and body language, which included their gestures and other behaviors or reactions, either during one-on-one interviews or focus group activities.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Data collection and analysis are in tandem; they ran progressively toward the three coding methods, namely, initial, focused, and theoretical/advanced coding (Khanal, 2018). The process involved the application of inductive-abductive logic (Charmaz, 2009; Rieger, 2018), and therefore, Codes helped to communicate what data is about (Burns et al., 2022).

Initial/Open Coding occurs from the first interviews. The researcher meticulously analyzes the content of the interviews by sorting them to identify words, phrases, and incidents, then categorizing them, forming similar codes (Santos et al., 2018; Tie et al., 2019).

Focused codes happen through sorting, synthesizing, integrating, and organizing the data into tentative categories (Lindqvist & Forsberg, 2022). The researcher then summarizes the tentative categories to form more significant segments of data (Metelski et al., 2021).

Theoretical coding happens late in the focused codes after developing the tentative categories and their properties (Metelski et al., 2021).

Advanced Coding flows from the focused codes, which brings out the storyline and the theoretical coding process. A storyline is a tool for theoretical integration, conceptualizing the core categories (Tie et al., 2019).

Constant Comparison Analysis is iterative. The study involves switching between data, data to data, codes to codes, and categories to categories.

Theoretical Sensitivity will facilitate the researcher from the data collection and analysis in analyzing

codes to see how they fit the co-construction process of a new theory.

Theoretical Saturation happens when no new data adds new information to the developed categories, which is a mark of theoretical (Shaheen et al., 2019).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 THE DYNAMICS OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 Philosophical Underpinnings

The choice of a qualitative methodological design made the researcher aware that constructivist grounded theory research does not present any correct methods of conducting grounded theory research (Melvin, 2018). However, scholars argue that undertaking the methodology requires the researcher to reflect the study's ontological and philosophical standpoint (Mohajan et al., 2022). Therefore, Charmaz and Thornberg's (2020) guidelines of a constructivist grounded theory enabled the researcher to explore the unique characteristics of her research methodology by developing three pathways to undertake the study. One, how to engage the research paradigm assumptions to suit the studied phenomenon; two, how to engage the studied phenomenon given that little is documented and discussed in the academic world; and lastly, how to consume and interpret the best methodology for data collection and analysis. The results demonstrate the figurative diagram presented in Figure 1 that forms the discussions of this section.

The second pathway emerged as the study engaged the *Theoretical Orientation* underpinned by symbolic interactionism as it relates to the constructivist grounded theory methodology. Thus, the study identified the type of data required for the study and how to acquire social knowledge. Thus, the research purpose emerged due to the researcher's awareness of the research paradigm assumptions. The process led the researcher to determine the literature related to the study's purpose and identify the research process.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The last pathway is related to the first and the second pathways discussed. The researcher realized the

connections between a constructivist paradigm and social constructionist epistemological perspectives in determining the research methodology explored in section 3. The methodology, therefore, is related to the research design already that provides the research questions, the sampling technique, the data collection and analysis procedures, and how to incorporate the researcher's experiences and those of the research participants to comprehend a comprehensive whole toward a co-construction of a new theory.

Research Questions formed the basis for the data collection and the setting of the research design since the study did not start with a hypothesis but formed a hypothesis. The study explored two research questions seeking to know the significance of leadership, and if restructuring it would lead to resource mobilization strategies. The subsidiary questions looked into the unspoken issues and the shared stories, believing these contribute to the innovativeness and creativity of faith-based organizations in terms of the sustainability of the mission. The results provided the possibilities of creating social knowledge through argumentation of the studied phenomenon to understand the experiences and perspectives of those who inhabit it, resulting in the co-construction of a new sustainability theory.

The Target Population involved faith-based organizations within the Catholic Church originating from former expatriate missionaries. The focus areas were only those programmes receiving external funding for at least five years.

The Study's purpose emerged from the researcher's desire to dig deep into the world of faith-based organizations, having engaged with that reality during COVID-19 dark days and the experiences of the gaps in donor funding and mission sustainability.

Sampling Techniques included purposive and theoretical procedures. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to recruit participants who were vital beacons in entering the field of research because the researcher was unaware of what to select and who would provide the required information. Theoretical sampling strategies engaged 56 participants recruited because of the wealth of information, experiences, and positions they held in the faith-based organization. The study applied a *homogenous purposive sampling*

technique to identify the target population and the scope of the study. The researcher's expert judgment enabled the selection of cases, whether multiple or single projects within the funded programmes as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1
The Ministerial Coverage

Progra mmes	Health Care	Social Ministri es	Education al	Oth er
Ministr ies	HIV/AI DS/ Tubercul osis's/ Malaria	Rehabili tation Disabilit y Homes	Special Needs Vocationa l/Skills Training	Arti sts

4.2.1 Data Collection Process
The data collection process involved interviews (in-depth and focus groups) and a reflection from a group of artists.

The initial samples' results provided 15 participants, although only 10 participants, three males, and seven females, fitted the selection criteria.

The in-depth interviews involved 56 participants in face-to-face interviews involving 36 females and 20 males.

Table 2
Participants for In-depth Interviews

Tr us te es	B O M	S e ni o r M gt	A d m in	M e di cs	So ci al M ini str y	Ed uc ati on	S u p p or t St af f	Ben efic iari es	Vo lun tee rs
4	5	7	4	5	13	6	6	5	1

Focus Group Interviews involved 64 participants, 28 males and 36 females, representing two counties: Nairobi, with 38 divided into four groups of 7 and 15, and Nakuru, with 25 participants divided into 7 to 9 depending on group representations, as demonstrated

in Table 2. However, one of the participants dropped out due to a conflict of interest. Therefore, the study would have included his information.

Table 3
Focus Group Participants

Senior Mgt	Admin	Medics	Social Ministry	Education	Support Staff	Beneficiaries	Volunteers	Other
6	4	3	19	9	8	6	7	2

Group participants are artists and former beneficiaries of the faith-based organizations. The group was presented with the research questions and the purpose of the study and recruited to offer the synthesis of the study. The 40 member colleagues were able to conceptualize the study's purpose and demonstrate a leadership model best fitted to the sustainability of faith-based organizations, which the researcher applied as the theoretical sampling processes advanced.

Age categories determined the participants who engaged with the study. The highest age category came from the health sector because it also involved members from the social ministries and those in health-supportive ministries, given the focus on HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. The distribution of age groups shows the following 20-30 (15), 31-40 (25), 41-50 (18), 51-60 (7), and 61-70 (5). Those in 60-70 categories formed the lowest number of participants, representing two males and three females. The new entrants into the world of donor funding were in the age group of 21-30 years, with six male and nine female participants.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS
Data Coding is the primary tool for analyzing data (Lindqvist & Forsberg, 2021; Metelski et al., 2021). The interviewer developed the initial codes from the raw data gathered from the participants.

The initial codes included words, phrases, and sentences that the participants applied during the interviews, which the interviewer picked by highlighting and underlining in different color forms.

The study provided excerpts as examples of the coded data in the doctoral thesis.

Initial codes lead to *focused codes* that the interviewer synthesized to explain more significant segments of data (Khanal, 2018). Therefore, the interviewer looked for the most frequent codes configured, sorted, synthesized, and integrated to see which codes form the most analytical sense to form categories (Khanal, 2018). *The focused codes* progressed to *advanced codes*, where the researcher advanced the coding state to a more abstract form, reflecting the storyline of lots of data reduced into highly conceptual terms (Tie et al., 2019). *Theoretical codes* emerged from the advanced codes, providing a set of interrelated concepts that differed from the themes presented.

Memos served as an analytic tool to pursue and reflect on the data collection procedures and the collected data. Memos enabled the researcher to define a category, explicate its properties, and show the conditions under which a category arose and the relationship of the created category to other categories (Khanal, 2018). Memos enabled the researcher to explore her ideas, compare data, and guide the subsequent data collection cycles (Makri & Neely, 2021) by applying constant comparative analysis. Constructing categories involves the interviewer reviewing all the codes constructed and developing new code categories (Crosley, 2020).

Reflexivity was enhanced by memo writing *as the researcher generated* ideas that identified theoretical categories (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2018; Burns et al., 2022). Constant review of the researcher's assumptions was vital to the reflexive process. The researcher also adhered to reflexivity when examining how the relationships surrounding the research process would influence the study. By being reflexive, the study recognized the sensitivity of what social knowledge could do if taken negatively. The researcher, therefore, ensured that neither the donors nor the faith-based organizations would be negatively affected by the study because that would have an advanced effect on the studied phenomenon. Hence, at the end of every focus group discussion, the group ended with a plenary where everyone shared their experiences and an evaluation of their engagement during the interviewing process. The results show that

participants appreciated the process, and the researcher was able to measure her reflexive adherence.

The Constant Comparative Analysis involved the process from initial to theoretical coding throughout the research design, as demonstrated in Figure 1. It relates to the theoretical memoing process, which applies an abduction form of reasoning. During the analysis process, the interviewer examined data and formed several hypotheses to prove or disapprove concepts (Tie et al., 2019). The results suggested that constant comparative strategies are essential throughout the study to remain focused on the coding, categorization, and memo-writing processes to achieve the meanings arising from the data. The process involves inductive-abductive logic, where the interviewer moves back and forth between the data and conceptualization stages.

Theoretical Sensitivity encompassed the entire research process (Tie et al., 2019), which was central to the data collection and analysis process, particularly when analyzing the emerging codes to see how they fit the co-construction process of a new theory. Through theoretical Sensitivity, the researcher understood and conceptualized the phenomena under investigation in abstract form (Yu & Smith, 2021).

Theoretical Saturation resulted from the researcher reflecting on her written memos, the categories she had developed, and the process of integrating other categories that fit the studied categories at first. Additional literature review informed the process of developing categories, which led to dropping some categories to form the main categories. Finally, no new data added new information to the developed categories, a mark of theoretical Saturation (Shaheen et al., 2019).

4.4 Legal and Ethical Considerations

The study required permission from the National Commission for Science and Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), which the researcher obtained in 2020. Other consents came from the faith-based organizations studied and the research participants. The consent included consent form contained information about the researcher, the purpose of the study, the kind of data required by the

researcher, and the methods for data collection. The study also considered the confidential risks of harm to the studied faith-based organizations and their donor communities and ensured confidentiality at every level by applying pseudonyms rather than the exact names of participants.

CONCLUSION

The paper has demonstrated the fundamentals of a constructivist grounded theory methodological approach for a doctoral thesis in management studies. The study concludes that the methodology is appropriate for exploring social knowledge to acquire a subjective reality of the studied phenomenon but requires planning and adequate preparations for the nuances of human interactions. However, the engagement facilitated the exploration of the research questions through immersion into the field of research. It provided pathways for the co-construction of a new theory of faith-based organization sustainability: *Stewardship in Compassionate Leadership for the Mission*.

The researcher appreciates the value of her engagement with paradigmatic assumptions and the consideration of the theoretical orientation—symbolic interactionism—which fits the study's purpose. Thus, the study is appropriate for a management doctoral thesis that explores an understudied phenomenon and aspires to an in-depth view of reality. Therefore, the methodology is applicable in Management just as it applies to other disciplines like psychology, education, nursing, and social justice studies (Khanal, 2018; Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022, p. 13). The study concludes that the co-construction of a theory practically only happens if research participants also become fully involved in the research process. That marks the difference between applying a theoretical sampling procedure and other sampling techniques. Therefore, the study made meaning of Charmaz's position that data and theory emerge rather than being discovered (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022). What follows, therefore, are the criteria for evaluating the credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness of the methodology, as Charmaz and Thornberg (2020) advocated. However, they argue that constructivism

grounded theory requires its evaluation quality because of its unique features (Berthelsen et al., 2018). The study's credibility demonstrates how the study came about and the development of the research design. The study confirmed that the research topic emerged from the research questions (Rakhmawati, 2019, p. 113) but through conceptualizing the research purpose. The study has demonstrated that through an iterative process, data analysis started after collecting the first data, which involved reading and re-reading each transcript, highlighting the relevant text, and assigning codes. The categories, therefore, emerged from the codes, while theoretical coding involved the final stages of a literature review (Makri & Neely, 2021). Therefore, the study's findings presented the research participants' views rather than the researcher's (Makri & Neely, 2021).

The study's originality runs throughout the study. The process emerges from the researcher's engagement in the studied phenomenon, being immersed into the data-gathering process with the participants through the sampling strategies discussed and the engagement of a group of artists with a capacity to model a new reality for faith-based organizations. Finally, the researcher's capacity to reconstruct meanings and reflexively reflect them to the participants for their worthy responses makes a difference in the methodology.

The resonance of the study is the co-constructed new theory, which is credible to the studied organizations and their stakeholders.

The new theory's usefulness is an answer to faith-based organizations and their stakeholders, particularly the donor communities because it offers a reference point for evaluating the mission's sustainability. The study's findings also demonstrate areas that need particular attention for faith-based leadership, especially in governance and communication and enhancing collaborative partnerships for the mission's sustainability.

The study has reflected that applying a constructivist grounded theory in an understudied area will help gain an in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon. Although the research must address the study's limitations, it acknowledges that the collaborative construction of a new theory is demanding and resource-intensive. It requires holding on to significant values because building trust demands credibility, transparency, and timeliness when exploring the meanings and perceptions of the research participants. Otherwise, the co-construction process is not a walk in the park. It requires rigour and commitment throughout the research process. The researcher's relational ontology facilitated the process that led the participants to participate actively, especially the focus groups and the group interviews.

The paper has demonstrated the fundamentals of a constructivist grounded theory methodological approach and recommends the process as an appropriate strategy for exploring social knowledge to acquire a subjective reality of the studied phenomenon. Therefore, the new theory could form a hypothesis through Glaser's model to offer an objective view of faith-based organizations' sustainability and the significance of leadership for the mission. Glaser's grounded theory is a better option for testing the theory since Charmaz's constructive model emerged from the original grounded theory.

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