COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE MODELS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL - SUPPORTED CHURCH PROJECTS IN TAITA-TAVETA COUNTY, KENYA

JORAM KAPALA SALAMA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND BUSINESS STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT OF SCOTT CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

2026

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other University other than Scott Christian University.

Signature: …… Date: ……

JORAM KAPALA SALAMA

MLM/004/2024

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor:

Signature: …… Date: ……

Professor Elijah Siringi

Scott Christian University

Dr. Paul Mulinge

Signature: …… Date: ……

Scott Christian University

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all Child and Youth Development Centers (CYDCs) and Accountability Structure Members (ASMs), and all development workers who desire to experience productivity in their work, ensuring that Child Development Centers (CDCs) prosper for the glory of God.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincere appreciation to my family for their support throughout my studies and in particularly while working on this thesis project. My beloved wife Clemence, your encouragement, and prayers supported and kept me going. I also wish to acknowledge the dedication of all my lecturers and faculty members.

Special appreciations to my supervisors, Professor Elijah Siringi and Dr. Paul Mulinge, for their invaluable guidance, constructive criticism and unwavering support throughout the development of this research project. Their expertise, patience and commitment have greatly shaped the quality and direction of my work. God bless.

ABSTRACT

Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), particularly Compassion International, contribute significantly to holistic child development, caregiver empowerment, food security and livelihood support in Kenya through church partnered programs. Despite these contributions, many donor funded church projects experience sustainability challenges after the withdrawal of external support due to weak governance structures. Existing studies on sustainability of Faith-Based Organizations projects have predominantly focused on donor dependency and financial management, while giving limited attention to the influence of governance models on long-term project sustainability. This study therefore sought to compare governance models and examine their influence on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya. The study was guided by Resource Dependence Theory and Participatory Governance Theory. A comparative multiple case study design employing mixed methods was adopted. Data were collected through document analysis, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and direct observation involving members of accountability structure, partnership facilitators, project directors, social workers, project accountants and 420 project beneficiaries across 14 churches. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that Compassion International-supported church projects employed participatory and hierarchical governance models and demonstrated social, institutional, financial and environmental sustainability. Hybrid governance had the strongest relationship with sustainability, followed by hierarchical governance, then, participatory governance. There was a positive and statistically significant effect of decision making ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.001$), accountability ($\beta = 0.098$, $p = 0.020$), financial practices ($\beta = 0.084$, $p = 0.020$), and contextual factors ($\beta = 0.356$, $p = 0.000$) on project sustainability. Stakeholder participation showed a positive but statistically non-significant effect ($\beta = 0.061$, $p = 0.097$). The study concludes that governance structures significantly enhance the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects. It recommends strengthening participatory governance through greater involvement of beneficiaries, project managers, church leaders and community members in decision-making; enhancing financial sustainability through diversified resource mobilization strategies; investing in leadership development, succession planning and institutional capacity building. The study expands existing literature by examining the role of decision-making, accountability, financial practices, stakeholder involvement and contextual factors beyond traditional focus on donor dependency and financial management.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL ..... **ii**
DEDICATION ..... **iii**
ACKNOWLEDGMENT ..... **iv**
ABSTRACT ..... **v**
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **vi**
LIST OF TABLES ..... **viii**
LIST OF FIGURES ..... **ix**
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ..... **x**
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS ..... **xii**
CHAPTER ONE **1**
1.0 Introduction 1
1.1 Background of the Study 1
1.2 Problem Statement 12
1.3 Justification of the Study 12
1.4 Purpose of the Study 13
1.5 Objectives of the Study 13
1.6 Research Questions 14
1.7 Significance of the Study 14
1.8 Limitations of the Study 15
1.9 Delimitations of the Study 16
1.10 Assumptions of the Study 16
1.11 Chapter Summary 17
CHAPTER TWO **18**
LITERATURE REVIEW **18**
2.0 Introduction 18
2.1 Theoretical Literature Review 18
2.2 Empirical Literature Review 24
2.3 Synthesis of Key Themes & Research Gaps 30
2.4 Conceptual Framework 32
2.5 Literature Summary 36
CHAPTER THREE **40**
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY **40**

3.0 Introduction 40
3.1 Research Design 38
3.2 Target Population 39
3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size 43
3.4 Data collection Methods 44
3.5 Data collection Instruments 42
3.6 Pilot Study 43
3.7 Data Analysis 46
3.8 Inferential Analysis 51
3.9 Ethical Considerations 49
3.10 Chapter Summary 50
CHAPTER FOUR 51
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS 51
4.1 Introduction 51
4.2 Response Rate 51
4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents 52
4.4 Descriptive Data Analysis 55
4.5 Inferential Analysis 63
4.6 Thematic analysis 68
CHAPTER FIVE 80
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 80
5.1 Introduction 80
5.2 Summary of Findings 80
5.3 Conclusions 83
5.4 Recommendations 80
5.5 Contribution to Knowledge 89
REFERENCES 90
APPENDICES 93

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Theories in the Triangulated Model 22
Table 4.2: Gender of Respondents.....52
Table 4.3: Respondents Education Level.....53
Table 4.4: Respondents Denomination.....55
Table 4.5: Descriptive on Governance Models employed in Compassion-supported church projects.....57
Table 4.6: Descriptives on Sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects.....59
Table 4.7: Descriptives on Governance Features in Compassion-supported church projects.61
Table 4.8: Descriptives on Contextual Elements in Compassion-supported church projects .62
Table 4.9: Correlations.....64
Table 4.10: Model Summary 65
Table 4.11: ANOVA.....66
Table 4.12: Coefficients.....66

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework 35
Figure 4.2: Age of respondents 53
Figure4.3: Respondents Experience in Project 54

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AML/CFT	Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CDC	Child Development Center
CI	Compassion International
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DV	Dependent Variable
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHI360	Family Health International 360
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IV	Independent Variable
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
KSH	Kenya Shillings (Kenyan Currency)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MV	Moderating Variable

NACOSTI (Kenya)	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NVivo	Qualitative Data Management and Analysis Software
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development
RDT	Resource Dependence Theory
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WGA	Wycliffe Global Alliance

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Church Project is a planned and structured initiative undertaken by a church in partnership with Compassion International Kenya (CIK), with response to the great commission of releasing children from spiritual, cognitive, social and physical poverty in Jesus name. In this study we look at internal projects within the project that include construction, caregiver empowerment projects and income generation projects (IGAs), education programs and community outreach efforts. It is operationalized through defined partner plans, specific objectives, budgets timelines, implementation strategies and measurable outcomes which include, growth in Christ, integrated well-being, self -sufficiency and youth agency.

Governance Model is a set of structures, policies, and processes by which the church project is led, managed, and kept accountable. The structure includes issues on leadership, decision-making process, accountability, and supervision. In this research, the governance models look into the issues of role clarity, decision-making process, policy compliance, and leadership committees' performance in project management.

Project sustainability is the capability of the church project to sustain itself in terms of performance, gains, and impacts after its initiation. This can be achieved in the form of financial independence, institutional strength, community involvement and adaptability to the environment. Sustainability in the case of the present research has been defined on the basis of certain indicators including project activity continuity, presence of local resources, maintenance process and integration with church and community institutions.

Stakeholder Participation involvement of people or groups with an interest in the church initiative; they include, but are not limited to, members of the church, supporters of the leadership, care givers, participants/beneficiaries and the local community. This study examines the degree of inclusivity in decision-Making, frequency of consultations, level of

contribution (financial, material, or labor) and the extent of shared ownership and responsibility among stakeholders.

Leadership Capacity is the ability of church leaders and project managers to effectively plan, implement and manage church projects. It includes skills, knowledge, experience and competencies in areas such as strategic planning, financial management, communication and team coordination. In the study leadership capacity is weighed through assessment of leader's qualification, training and development, experience, problem-solving ability and effectiveness in mobilizing resources and guiding projects teams.

Beneficiaries/Participants are the children and groups who directly or indirectly receive the intended benefits of a church project. These may include vulnerable children, youth and women. This study identifies target groups, the nature and extent of benefits received, level of satisfaction and measurable outcomes from the project.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research study by providing the contextual foundation upon which the study is built. It presents the background of the study, highlighting the role of faith-based organizations and governance challenges affecting project sustainability. The chapter further outlines the problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives and research questions. In addition, it discusses the significance of the study, as well as its limitations, delimitations and underlying assumptions. The chapter sets the direction and scope of the research by clarifying what the study seeks to achieve and why it is important.

1.1 Background of the Study

Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) have long played a transformative role in global development, complementing government efforts in addressing poverty, inequality and social exclusion. (Clarke & Jennings, 2008; World Bank, 2011). Rooted in religious values and community trust, FBOs contribute significantly to the provision of education, healthcare and social welfare, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. (Oliver & Wodon, 2012; Bompani, 2010). Their close association with the local communities makes it possible for them to be able to interact with those most in need and engage volunteers as well as develop grassroots programs using the existing faith networks. For years now, faith-based organizations have played an increasingly significant role in development activities in different sectors such as children protection, food security, community empowerment and livelihood improvement among others, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa because the churches and other faith-based organizations are socially respected in those communities. Some studies have revealed that faith-based organizations are considered as more trustworthy in their communities (Marshall & Keough, 2004; Haynes, 2007).

The increased role of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) has been enhanced by the incorporation of such initiatives in the global development agenda like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which highlight the need for partnerships between governments, civil societies and faith organizations in the pursuit of sustainable development. The SDG 17 highlights that partnership is one of the mechanisms of mobilizing financial, technological and institutional resources required to achieve sustainable development (United Nations, 2015). With the aid of their strong grass roots, moral credibility and established linkages with the community, FBOs are strategically placed in providing support through partnership by tackling social injustices, promoting social cohesion and building resilience in communities (UNDP,2016; Clarke &Jenning, 2008). Their continued presence in the local communities makes them better suited to deal with development challenges compared to some outside interventions.

In most developing countries, however, there still exists the problem of inadequate finances, institutional and human resources, which makes it difficult for the government to ensure equal access to critical social services. As such, FBs have gradually taken over the role of the government in the provision of education, healthcare, water and sanitation, child protection programs, agricultural extension and livelihood promotion initiatives (World Bank, 2011; Olivier et al., 2015). While many secular development organizations adopt a rather linear development model, FBs tend to take a more integrated approach to development by considering spiritual, physical, emotional and socio-economic dimensions of human welfare (Bompani, 2010; Wodon, 2010).

FBOs have continued to work in tandem with the government and other nongovernmental organizations in addressing socio-economic problems facing vulnerable households and children in Kenya. Schools, clinics, food distribution programs, sponsorship campaigns, and empowering programs for communities are some of the ways through which churches and

faith-based organizations have played a part in bettering the lives of the people in the grassroots level. The Government of Kenya has increasingly acknowledged the role of faith-based organizations in the achievement of the country's development goals under the Kenya Vision 2030 and Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda through collaboration between churches and other nongovernmental entities in service provision.

Among the FBOs, compassion international has emerged as a unique organization because of the development program which is characterized by child development model in partnership with the church. In this model, the churches are empowered to act as major agents of community transformation. As opposed to directly implementing the projects, Compassion International provides financial aid, technical guidance, governance training and monitoring system to partner churches in order to enhance the capacity of the local institutions. (Compassion international, 2023).In the process, the partnership model encourages the churches to establish their own priorities and implement community specific intervention programmes that contribute to child development and empowerment of families. (Compassion International, 2023; Compassion Kenya, 2025). This approach reflects the current development philosophy that emphasizes local ownership as a pre-requisite for sustainable development results. At present, Compassion International has partnered with hundreds of churches in Kenya, thereby showing the increasing involvement of FBOs in community-oriented development projects. As compared to other development agencies, the implementation strategy of compassion international is based on localization where the churches act as major partners for implementing the programs.

Such a strategy ensures ownership at the local level while at the same time ensuring that the institutional capacity of the partnering churches is strengthened through capacity building activities like leadership training, training on financial management, child protection mechanisms and other accountability mechanisms to help church partners manage resources

effectively. Compassion International not only improves the lives of the sponsored children but also strengthens families and communities by addressing the underlying cause of poverty.

In spite of the valuable role played by such interventions, development studies reveal that many of the church-based projects face difficulties in sustaining themselves after cessation of eternal funding. The problem of sustainability has emerged as an important issue, especially for donor-funded projects in communities. Most projects face declining operations, delivery of services or complete failure after termination of donor assistance. It is due to poor governance, dependency on donor organizations, lack of stakeholder participation and inadequate local capacity to mobilize resources. (Froelich, 1999). In most cases, governance structures of church-based projects have centralized decision-making process, ambiguity about roles of leaders, poor participation of project beneficiaries and inadequate mechanisms for transparency and sustainability. These deficiencies limit the capacity of projects in mobilizing local resources.

It is especially visible in community development projects that are sponsored by donors. Several researchers have found out that most of community-based projects decline in their performance once the donor support comes to an end due to inadequate governance practices, diversified funding sources and strategic management needed for sustainability (Lewis & Kanji, 2009; Ebrahim, 2003). Too much reliance on donor funding may result in discouraging local resource mobilization as well as undermining institutional autonomy hence leaving the organizations vulnerable to uncertainties in terms of funding since the priorities of donors keep changing from time to time (Froelich, 1999, Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In addition to financial dependency, governance issues tend to appear in the form of poor accountability system, inadequate strategic management and insufficient stakeholder engagement. As per Cornforth (2012), governance involves proper leadership, clearly articulated organizational roles and accountability. In the same way, Lockwood (2010) maintains that governance structures that

exhibit qualities such as inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability greatly improve the resilience and sustainability of the institutions. In situations where there is inadequate performance of these governance measures, there tends to be reduced stakeholder trust, wastage of resources and inability to sustain program results.

Governance has been identified as one of the key aspects of effective governance in ensuring sustainability of projects by many scholars and development practitioners. Practices of participatory governance, transparency, accountability, leadership and stakeholder's inclusion are linked to sustainability of the projects and community ownership of the same (Lockwood, 2010; Cornforth 2012). Current researches have begun recognizing that governance is not just about administration efficiency but it also involves ethical leadership, legitimacy and community ownership. From an Institutional perspective, adoption of governance practices according to societal expectations is linked to greater organizational legitimacy and stakeholders' commitment in the long run (Scott, 2014). Similarly, from the Resource Dependency Theory perspective, diversity in resource bases and strong internal capabilities help organizations to reduce dependency on external parties for sustainability of the organizations (Pfeffer &Salancik, 1978). Participatory governance in particular has been recognized as a key aspect in building local ownership, accountability and sustainability of development projects. In contrast, top-down approaches to governance tend to have problems related to beneficiary commitment and sustainability. Though various researches have looked into sustainability issues facing non-governmental organizations and donor-funded programs, there is lack of empirical evidence on how various types of governance affect the sustainability of child development programs that are implemented in partnership with churches in Kenya. The existing literature mostly focuses on financial sustainability, donor dependence and organizational performance, while ignoring the interplay between governance models and sustainable outcomes in faith-based organizations. This results into a gap that requires further

analysis especially with regard to church projects supported by Compassion International in Taita-Taveta County.

1.1.1 Global Context

It is a fact that the ability to successfully implement international development initiatives and create sustainable impacts in today's international relations depends on the capabilities and power of NGOs and FBOs to carry out projects that correspond to global and national SDGs. Governance frameworks shaped by entities such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) prioritize accountability, transparency, stakeholder participation and local ownership as core pillars for project sustainability (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014).Across Europe and North America, governance reforms within faith-based organizations have focused in on strengthening board oversight, risk management, financial accountability and strategic planning to enhance organizational suitability (Cornfort, 2012).

The World Bank estimates that faith-based organization deliver a substantial proportion of social services in many developing countries, particularly in Africa and Asia (Marshall & Keogh, 2004; World Bank, 2011) Their deep community roots, moral legitimacy and extensive volunteer networks enable them to reach vulnerable population often underserved by governments and secular organizations (Clarke & Jennings, 2008). In Asia and Latin America, hybrid governance approaches combining centralized oversight with participatory community structures have gained prominence due to their ability to balance accountability with local ownership (Antara & Santoso, 2021). Despite these advances, many donor-funded projects continue to face sustainability challenges after donor withdrawal because of weak governance

systems, limited stakeholders' engagement, inadequate succession planning and overreliance on external funding (Lewis & Kanji, 2009; Ebrahim, 2003)

These global experiences suggest that governance models significantly influence the long-term viability to development interventions. However, there remains limited comparative evidence regarding how governance models impact sustainability within church -partnered development projects in Africa and particularly in Kenya, thereby necessitating the current study.

1.1.2 African Trends and Kenyan Imperatives

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) in sub-Saharan Africa serve as a cornerstone of social service delivery, spanning education, health and child welfare sectors. Their historical embeddedness and intimate ties to local communities grant them exceptional legitimacy and reach, positioning them as indispensable non-state partners in both community-level and national development efforts. (Clarke &Jennings, 2008; Bompani, 2010; Oliver & Wodon, 2012).

Empirical evidence underscores persistent structural threats to the sustainability of FBO initiatives, as documented in recent analyses of civil society dynamics. These threats are evidenced mainly by excessive reliance on volatile short-term donations, and lack of locally sustainable sources of funds, including social enterprises and endowments (Njoroge & Kariuki, 2024). To this are added governance issues of unclear leadership succession, poor financial accountability and inconsistent ethical reporting (Amakobe, 2025). Poor technical skills undermine sustainability, evidenced by poor strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation processes and evidence-based decision making, thus undermining chances of obtaining organizational level of support (Faith to Action Network, 2025a). This study is aware of the fact that governance and sustainability of church-sponsored initiatives depend on social-cultural considerations among African communities. Traditional African communities are

known to practice communalism, shared responsibility, reciprocity, and robust social networks. Usually articulated through the philosophy of Ubuntu (Mbiti, 1969; Tutu, 1999). The above values can help in enhancing community involvement and collective ownership of development projects. Prolonged assistance from donors may unintentionally encourage dependence among beneficiaries and rational organizations, which limits efforts to raise local resources (Moyo, 2009; Easterly 2006).

The longevity of the service provision by FBOs is determined by interconnected aspects including strong internal governance that includes financial accountability and inclusivity in leadership, external collaboration with donors, multilaterals, and governments, and the principle of community ownership that ensures relevancy. The Vision 2030 development policy of the Government of Kenya, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations, requires such collaborations with civil societies and NGOs such as FBOs for transparent and accountable service delivery (Government of Kenya, 2022).

1.1.3 Local Case Study: Taita-Taveta County

In Kenya’s coastal areas such as Taita-Taveta County, faith-based organizations (FBOs) including Compassion International are involved in poverty alleviation, unemployment, and under-productive agricultural activities via church-supported child development programs. These have been found to be ineffective after the donor funding period because of poor governance and dependency, according to the pioneering study by Muthui & Mwangi (2025), and seconded by KIPPRA (2022).

Compassion International's child development centers in Kenya, such as those in Kilome Sub-County, demonstrate sustainability struggles, with nearly 40% of community-based programs failing shortly after funding ends due to poor resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement (Muthui et al., 2025). Muthui et al. (2025) further highlight overreliance on

donors, weak ownership and capacity gaps as key reasons for collapse in similar church-partnered initiatives. This is evident in Taita-Taveta, characterised with post-funding failures that undermine gains in child welfare and community empowerment.

Ethical models help FBOs be resilient throughout the world and Africa, but important governance models such as hierarchical, participatory, and hybrid significantly affect sustainability amidst donor changes and incapabilities (Mofokeng, 2021). The hybrid governance model in African FBO projects combines traditional and modern characteristics, providing flexibility, although the role clarity problem may occur. At the same time, a hierarchical one controlled by churches provides centralized management instead of participation. The participatory one helps gain more commitment of communities through ethics similar to Ubuntu, despite the need for powerful administration to avoid donor dependence (Mofokeng, 2021). Comparative studies reveal that these governance models play a decisive role in NGO-church cooperation results, especially hybrids are promising in terms of sustainability in poor countries such as Kenya.

1.1.3.1 Development role of NGOs and FBOs in Taita-Taveta

Taita-Taveta County faces significant multidimensional poverty, with rates around 24-40% affecting residents amid youth unemployment and human-wildlife conflicts (KIPPRA, 2022; Taita Taveta County Government, 2024; African Philanthropy Forum, n.d.). The county's multidimensional poverty rate stands at approximately 40%, higher than its monetary poverty rate of 32%, with key drivers including education, housing, nutrition and economic activity deprivations (Muthui et al., 2025; Taita Taveta County Government, 2024). This affects vulnerable groups like youth (42% multidimensional poor) and children (32%), exacerbated by arid conditions, water scarcity and socio-economic issues (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2024). KNBS data has also highlighted how such factors compound the risk community development, reflecting wider problems on the Kenyan coast (KIPPRA, 2022).

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) are of vital importance in contributing to socio-economic development in Kenya, more specifically in providing services that the government does not cover, especially in areas of deprivation, such as Taita Taveta County. This coastal county is an excellent example of the success and failures of such programs, where donor programs fail after funding ceases due to the existence of fundamental problems.

There are several persistent problems within the process of implementing the development program within Taita Taveta County, including the lack of good governance, low community ownership and improper handling of finances, causing project failure once funding stops. These issues remain even though there is a presence of FBO and NGOs within this region, in child welfare and empowerment programs. CIDP III of Taita Taveta County (2023-2027) emphasizes partnership and alignment with local priorities (Taita Taveta County Government, 2023).

While organizations like Compassion International support the efforts of the government through collaboration with local churches to offer holistic child development through education, health, and spirituality, the FBOs face difficulties in achieving sustainability as donor oversight reduces. Compassion International's collaborative approach with local churches has been effective in the fight against poverty in Taita-Taveta, including apiary training and tree nurseries benefiting more than 11,200 families in the associated counties. However, the organization’s dependence on external funding makes it susceptible just like other FBOs whose poor local governance is an impediment to sustainability (Wanjiku & Mwangi, 2024). Comparison of governance among partner churches is necessary to ensure maturity of the projects.

A governance comparison study of the partner churches in Taita-Taveta region would be useful in finding resilient models that can help in formulating strategies aligned to CIDP for FBO sustainability. This seeks to address the problem of over-dependency on donations that is systematic within the church sector.

1.1.3.2 Governance and Sustainability Challenges in Donor-funded Projects

FBO projects in education, health care and child welfare financed by donors in Taita-Taveta County represent sustainability problems arising after cessation of funding, owing to poor local governance and dependence on foreign assistance. While the incentives of the PBO Act include tax exemption and procurement preferences, challenges of an unreliable flow of funds persist, hindering the viability of the organization (Kenya News Agency, 2025). The aforementioned demonstrates the necessity to research adaptive governance practices specific to county conditions.

The governance in FBO and NGO development projects can vary greatly from hierarchical and participatory hybrid forms of governing (Brass, 2016). Modern discourses of global governance pay increasing attention to accountability, transparency, and stakeholder involvement in accordance with the criteria of OECD and UNDP (OECD, 2021; UNDP, 2022). Risk management and local ownership are incorporated throughout the process of project management, thus ensuring long-term sustainability of the intervention. In Global North, governance models focus on board level responsibility and strict donor compliance (EU regulations; European Commission, 2020), while Asia prefers more flexible hybrid models combining centralization and localization of governance (multi-site FBO projects; Antara & Santoso, 2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

The sustainability of church projects that are eternally funded in Taita-Taveta County in Kenya still is a concern. This is in spite of a lot of funding provided by international donors and faith-based institutions. These projects are developed to enhance welfare of children, education and livelihoods of households; however, most of them underperform or fail when funds are withdrawn. This negatively impacts the development process and reduces trust between communities and donors. Church partners who are sponsored by Compassion International are provided with interventions aimed at enhancing governance and capacity-building; however, there are significant differences in sustainability of the projects conducted by different churches. Governance practices such as leadership, financial management, stakeholders' participation and organizational management have an impact on the sustainability of projects. However, there is lack of empirical data on the impact of governance structures on the sustainability of donor-funded church initiatives in Taita-Taveta County. There's a dearth of literature on role of stakeholders' participation in governance in sustainability of project after withdrawal of donor support is understudied. Consequently, churches, donors and government cannot adequately develop sustainable governance systems. This study, therefore, compared governance models and their impact on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County.

1.3 Justification of the Study

Compassion International–supported church projects significantly advance child development, education, health and social welfare in vulnerable communities of Taita-Taveta County, Kenya. However, their long-term sustainability post-donor funding withdrawal remains precarious, with variations driven by governance models—evident in challenges like leadership gaps, weak financial accountability and limited stakeholder engagement. Despite these patterns, empirical

research comparing governance approaches and their impact on sustainability outcomes is scarce, particularly for faith-based initiatives.

This study addressed a critical gap in development governance literature by systematically comparing governance models in church-based projects, extending theories of organizational sustainability (e.g., institutional theory and resource dependence theory) to faith-based contexts. While prior Kenyan research focuses on secular NGOs or government programs, this work pioneers analysis of hybrid church-donor partnerships, enriching scholarly understanding of how governance structures mediate sustainability in religious development actors.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a comparative analysis of governance models and their impact on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 General Objective

To compare governance models and their impact on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

i. To establish the effect of the hierarchical governance model on the sustainability of compassion international-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya.
ii. To determine the effect of the participatory governance model on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya.
iii. To analyze the influence of the hybrid governance models on the sustainability of Compassion International supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya.

iv. To determine the moderating effects of contextual factors (Project age, project size, church denomination, and geographic location) on the sustainability of Compassion International- supported church projects in Taita Taveta County, Kenya.

1.6 Research Questions

i. What is the effect of hierarchical governance model on sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya?
ii. What is the effect of the participatory governance model across selected Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya?
iii. How hybrid governance model influence sustainability of Compassion International supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya?
iv. To what extent do contextual factors, namely project age, project size, church denomination, and geographic location, moderate the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita Taveta County, Kenya?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study holds substantial importance for multiple reasons. Its findings will provide valuable insights into governance practices that bolster sustainability, ultimately enabling better project management, greater transparency and long-term continuity. By doing so, the research will help ensure that community welfare programs remain viable and responsive to local needs over time. Furthermore, it may offer evidence-based recommendations to strengthen governance systems in faith-based and NGO-supported development projects. Finally, the study will enrich the existing literature on governance and sustainability within faith-based development interventions in Kenya, serving as a key reference point for future comparative research.

Findings will inform national and county-level policies on faith-based development partnerships, such as Kenya's devolved health and education frameworks. By identifying governance best practices that ensure project continuity, the study supports evidence-based guidelines for donor transitions, reducing dependency and enhancing public-private-faith collaborations amid fiscal constraints.

Partner churches will acquire practical and actionable frameworks specifically designed to strengthen their leadership structures, enhance financial management systems and deepen stakeholder engagement. This will ensure they become more self-sustainable and thus lessen the level of dependency on outside financial support.

The strategy that will be created by this project will be replicable, meaning there will be guidance that will not only apply to churches assisted by Compassion but also for other faith-based projects. This will make it possible for the interventions to create sustainable impacts. This approach will be advantageous to a wide range of inter-connected stakeholders. Policymakers in national and county level will get a practical guide on how to efficiently integrate faith-based actors in the development agenda of their respective nations. Church authorities and their partners in NGOs will get effective ways to promote good governance, establish institutional independence and ensure organizational sustainability. Universities and other research institutions will get well-equipped with data, field cases and theoretical models that will enrich the field of faith-based development. Most importantly, vulnerable groups like children and their families will be able to continue benefiting from essential services without disruption from any external source.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study faced several limitations. The use of mainly self-reports from the project participants could be biased. Limited time and resources available also posed

some limitations on how much could be observed at each site. Finally, different levels of maturity of the projects could have posed some challenges with regard to sustainability indicators used. The lack of access to financial information for confidentiality reasons was also an issue.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This research work was consciously restricted in its scope in order to guarantee that the work remained focused and feasible. This research was only concerned with church projects which received support from Compassion International, which comprised four ACK churches, four AIC churches, four Pentecostal churches, one Kenya Assemblies of God church and one PCEA church in the county of Taita-Taveta while ignoring other religious groups as well as NGO interventions in the area. Only the geographical location of Taita-Taveta County was chosen for this work. In addition, the evaluation of governance and sustainability was based on certain indicators of organizational structure, financial viability and stakeholder involvement and not on all possible aspects of sustainability.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

The study proceeded on the following assumptions: Respondents would furnish honest and accurate information drawn from their direct experiences with the projects; the identified governance models were applied consistently across project activities; sustainability could be reliably evaluated through observable indicators of organizational capacity, financial health, and community engagement; and Compassion International-supported projects adhered to comparable core operational guidelines, thereby enabling valid comparative analysis.

1.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter outlines the background and content of governance and sustainability in Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. It articulates the research problem, emphasizing the sustainability challenges faced after donor withdrawal. The chapter defines the purpose, objectives and highlighted the significance of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an extensive review of the literature that is pertinent to the current study. It looks at theories and empirical evidence concerning governance structures and project sustainability. This chapter considers the theories that are pertinent to the current study. Resource dependence theory, institution theory, and participatory governance theories will be considered. Furthermore, empirical evidence on governance and sustainability will be evaluated and the characteristics and peculiarities of faith-based organizations will be discussed. Moreover, the compassion international partnership model will be evaluated.

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

This chapter discusses the literature behind the study and sets the theoretical background for the proposed research model on post-support sustainability. The study is based on a triangulated research approach through the application of Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), Institutional Theory and Participatory Governance/Community Ownership to comprehend the relationship between external support and governance results (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978; Scott, 2004; Cornwall, 2008).

The study uses the concept of Resource Dependence Theory as the core theory in the study because it explains how dependence on outside funds affects governance, decision-making process and sustainability. This is supplemented by Participatory Governance theories that discuss how engagement and community ownership affect the sustainability of projects post donor departure (Pfeffer &Salancik, 1978; Pretty, 1995; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

As noted by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik, "Organizations are dependent on their external resources and thus, dependence is a significant determinant of organizational behaviour." Similarly, the Participatory development experts highlight the importance of “projects being sustained because the beneficiaries are involved in the decision-making and implementation processes". This gives rise to an excellent analytical framework that would help to explore the governance and sustainability aspects within the context of faith-based development projects.

Indeed, the empirical studies have proved that the strong organizational governance that features transparency, accountability, and inclusion in decision-making is commonly recognized as a crucial precondition for the sustainability in case of NGOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs) (Cornforth, 2012; Lockwood 2010). The empirical findings prove a significant link between strong organizational governance and strategic leadership on one side and the financial/institutional viability on the other (Lewis & Kanji, 2009; Ebrahim, 20023). Nevertheless, there is an important research gap regarding how the multi-level governance structure of global FBO models (e.g., Compassion’s) is adapted and internalized on the local frontline partners' level and how it aligns with local county policy systems (e.g., CIDPs).

2.1.1 Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) and Sustainability (Anchor Theory)

Resource Dependence Theory is the idea that the behavior, structure, and strategy of the organization are influenced greatly by their dependency on external resources for survival and growth (Froelich, 2022). “Organizations are not independent entities but rather are embedded in networks of interdependence with other organizations” (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

The theory captures the connection between the local church project and its resource supplier which is the Compassion International. In particular, financial diversification decreases the dependency on one donor and thus makes the project less vulnerable to funding withdrawal

and capacity building ensures autonomy due to skills and resource development (Kirito et al., 2025). Resource Dependence Theory is vital for comprehending the power dynamics between the international non-governmental organization (INGO) supporter and local church organization. The party that has control over critical resources, such as funding, technical expertise, or legitimacy, influences greatly the dependent partner and leads to uncertainties such as mission drift in the conditions of resource scarcity (Froelich, 2022). Dependency on one donor, such as Compassion International, creates uncertainty and vulnerability, which is a major risk factor for future sustainability in case of withdrawal of the external resource.

In order for sustainability to be promoted, local initiatives will have to develop techniques that can help them overcome their dependency on resources. One of the most important ways is by adopting financial diversification, whereby there is an attempt to get funds from different sources and strategic leadership along with internal capacity development to build self-reliance capabilities (Kirito et al., 2025). Shifting from external dependency to getting diverse funds and resources locally is therefore one of the most crucial applications of resource dependence theory.

2.1.2 Institutional Theory and Governance Legitimacy

According to Institutional Theory, organizations are characterized by adopting organizational structures, policies and procedures that are seen as appropriate, legitimate and desirable within the organization's environment in order to attain societal acceptance and organizational survival. An institution has to interact with others and their environment in a dynamic process. It has to go through an emergent system where interaction is the key agent (Blyth et al 2011). In Scott's words, 'Institutions are comprised of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life' (Scott, 2008: 48). Therefore, church projects within Taita-Taveta will be obligated to follow the formal and informal regulations as dictated by the INGO, Kenyan

government, and the local community based on coercive isomorphism resulting from regulations and demands from the donors and normative isomorphism emanating from professional standards. Generally, NGOs and their projects will be under the pressure of adopting practices similar to those of other organizations—phenomenon referred to as isomorphism. This will take form of coercive pressures as a result of legalities and regulations of the government or particular administration of the donors, and in Kenya, adherence to good governance such as being accountable and transparent will be among the conditions for receiving funds. Normative pressures, on the other hand, will come from professional standards and expectations; church projects will have to follow religious values and ethical principles.

2.1.3 Participatory Ownership Frameworks

Participatory governance and community ownership principles stress the participation of the community, beneficiaries, and local leadership in the decision-making processes of the development programs, whereby participation in the planning and implementation of development activities promotes ownership while the participation in monitoring and evaluation promotes accountability. Such participation is seen as a direct predictor of the post-support sustainability. On the one hand, the efficiency argument sees participation as a tool for achieving better project outcomes. On the other, participation is seen as a process which enhances people's capabilities to improve their own lives and bring forth social change to the disenfranchised (Nelson and Wright, 1995). Active participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring by the communities plays an important role in promoting local ownership and accountability since when the community truly "buys in" or owns the projects, it commits to their sustainability even in the absence of the funding. The use of such strategy promotes alignment of the results with the needs of the community. However, participatory approaches have to overcome numerous barriers that include issues related to power relations, participation problems, and illiteracy; the traditional leaders dominate in making decisions, marginalizing

such groups as the youth and women, what undermines participatory governance and sustainability.

Table 2.1: Theories in the Triangulated Model

Theory	Focus in Project Sustainability	Governance Implication for the Study
Resource Dependence Theory	Vulnerability from overdependence on INGO resources (funding, expertise, political leverage).	The governance model must incorporate resource diversification and capacity-building strategies to reduce reliance on Compassion International.
Institutional Theory	Need for legitimacy, conformity to donor/government expectations and stakeholder trust.	The governance model must adhere to formal accountability structures and normative expectations to be deemed legitimate and attract long-term community/government support.
Participatory Governance	Active community and church involvement in decision-making and project control.	The governance model must embed inclusive, decentralized decision-making to maximize community ownership and ensure post-support continuity.

The proposed study utilizes the strengths of these theories to analyze the complex relationship between external support and local sustainability:

A comparative analysis of this triangulated framework was carried out to analyze how various forms of local governance manage to balance the donor (RDT/ Institutional) pressures with the

requirements of legitimacy (Institutional) and local support (Participatory Governance) for achieving sustainability post assistance.

While the link between governance and sustainability is well established in literature, there are various limitations worth mentioning. The first limitation is that most of the research available is cross-sectional and not longitudinal. Secondly, the majority of the studies tend to be too broad and talk about NGO governance without specifying whether it is FBOs which have different governance structures. For example, the governance framework of an FBO includes issues of faith-legitimacy and volunteering boards and dual mission of providing services and doing evangelism. Lastly, context is a very important variable and the guidelines coming from OECD may not apply to the local African context.

2.1.5 Theoretical Synthesis and Relevance to the Study

Combining Resource Dependence Theory and the Participatory Governance approach allows for a holistic perspective of the sustainability of projects within the faith-based organizations. While RDT describes the structural pressures resulting from external dependency, participatory governance emphasizes the process through which ownership helps overcome such structural pressures. Organizations should be able to manage their dependencies in order to decrease uncertainty and increase autonomy, (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Church projects which depend on external sources for their funding become increasingly vulnerable whenever their interests change or when they withdraw their financial aid. Therefore, organizations have to manage their dependencies. While Resource Dependence Theory sheds light on the perennial vulnerability associated with being donor dependent, Participatory Governance Theory provides additional understanding of the ways in which organizational resilience may be enhanced through participatory governance practices. Participator governance involves participation of stakeholders in planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of development interventions. According to the theory, it becomes possible to achieve

sustainability in development initiatives where the target group is empowered to take part in the governance process. (Cornwall 2008; Fung, 2006). In church based development projects, participator governance promotes collaboration between church leadership, Accountability Structure Members (ASMs), caregivers, beneficiaries, and the whole community in setting priorities, allocation of resources and evaluating the performance of the projects. Through participation, it becomes possible to promote trust and organizational legitimacy and also increase the possibility of sustaining project activities after donor funding ends.

The two theoretical approaches complement each other as they offer solutions to interrelated dimensions of sustainability. While the Resource Dependency theory highlights the importance of the resource environment and organizational measures taken to decrease dependency, the Participatory Governance theory concentrates on the internal process of governance that creates institutional capacities and the feeling of ownership. These approaches imply that sustainable organizations are the organizations which not only decrease their dependency on external resources but also create such governance arrangements that encourage decision-making, accountability and collectivism.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Strong governance, defined by transparency, accountability and inclusive practices, remains a critical determinant of project sustainability in development contexts. Empirical literature increasingly demonstrates that governance structures influence not only project performance but also long-term continuity, particularly in resource constrained environments (Smith & Adebayo, 2023; Mutua et al., 2024). Effective governance enhances institutional effectiveness by promoting responsible leadership, prudent resource management and stakeholder confidence, all of which are essential for sustaining development interventions beyond the period of external support. Conversely, week governance often results in poor decision making,

limited accountability, inefficient utilization of resources and reduced community trust, thereby compromising the sustainability of development project (Cornforth, 2012; Lockwood, 2010)

Empirical evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa further reinforces the relationship between governance quality and project sustainability. For example, studies conducted among community development programmes in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have found that organizations with well-defined governance structures effective leadership and strong accountability system consistently report higher levels of institutional sustainability than organizations characterized by weak governance arrangements (Mutua et al., 2024). These studies also demonstrate that governance influences financial sustainability by encouraging prudent financial management, income diversification and improved resource mobilization. However, many faith-based organizations continue to experience governance challenges, including inadequate stakeholder participation, weak succession planning and excessive reliance on donor funding, all of which threaten long term project continuity. Within Church-partnered development programmes, governance assumes additional significance because churches operate as both spiritual institutions and community development organizations. Church leaders are expected not only to provide spiritual guidance but also to exercise sound organizational leadership characterized by accountability, ethical stewardship and participatory decision- making. Compassion Internationals supported church projects are founded on partnership principles that encourage local ownership, shared leadership and responsible stewardship of resources. Nevertheless, differences in governance practices among partner churches may result in varying sustainability outcomes, highlighting the need to understand how specific governance models contribute to project success.

2.2.1 Governance models in development projects

Empirical studies categorize governance models in development practice into hierarchical (top-down) participatory (bottom-up) and hybrid form (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2025). Hierarchical governance models emphasize centralized authority, clear reporting lines and efficiency in decision making, but often limited stakeholder engagement. In contrast, participatory governance models promote inclusivity, shared decision making and community ownership, which are associated with increased project acceptance sustainability (Smith & Adebayo 2023). Hybrid governance models integrate both approaches, balancing control with flexibility.

In China, Zhou and Dai (2023) investigated collaborative water governance. The study focused on hierarchical versus participatory governance during various project development stages. They found hierarchical governance effective in early collaboration stages, aiding conflict resolution and stakeholder coordination. As collaboration progressed, participatory governance gained importance, empowering stakeholders within a supportive framework. The study concludes that a hybrid governance model, which adapts government involvement to the project's stage, leads to more effective and sustainable collaborative outcomes, as neither governance type alone is sufficient.

Moreover, Young (2021) conducted a comparative analysis of governance in central government through a mixed-methods approach, evaluating Waterfall, Agile, and Hybrid project delivery methods. The survey assessed project professionals' perceptions of governance, revealing themes for case studies across various departments. Semi-structured interviews and secondary data analysis from experts provided a comprehensive view of governance experiences. Findings highlighted the necessity for a governance framework, defining accountabilities, procedures, and controls within hierarchical structures. Agile and Hybrid approaches benefited from delegated authority, enhancing decision-making speed

while emphasizing stakeholder involvement. However, inconsistencies in governance practices arose from insufficient central guidance and a lack of formal governance training.

A study by Hillo et al. (2024) examined public officials' perceptions of collaborative governance in comparison to hierarchical bureaucracy. Utilizing a factorial survey experiment with 932 Finnish central administration officials, it found that collaborative governance did not enhance perceived legitimacy as theorized but rather undermines it. The research analyzed causal relationships between governance modes, key governance traits such as stakeholder support/opposition, and perceptions of legitimacy, challenging existing assumptions on the benefits of collaborative governance.

Paliokaitė and Sadauskaitė (2023) investigated the role of participative and collaborative processes in engaging active citizenry in public policy decision-making, essential for project management. The research highlighted challenges and success factors in implementing these governance approaches. Tension arises in bureaucratic systems where output-focused pressures often overshadow learning and consensus-building. The findings emphasize the importance of leadership, societal consensus, and continuous stakeholder engagement for effective institutionalization. The study proposed a participative governance maturity model for benchmarking governance practices in various projects.

A 2023 study across sub-Saharan Africa found that governance indicators, including civil society participation, significantly correlate with SDG progress ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), emphasizing NGOs' role beyond implementation (Smith & Adebayo, 2023). Similarly, research on East African NGOs highlights board diversity and community oversight as key to fostering trust and resilience (Mutua et al., 2024). However, while these models are widely discussed in NGO contexts, limited empirical work has systematically mapped governance models within faith-based development projects, particularly those implemented through church partnerships.

Mantey et al. (2026) explored governance challenges in two smallholder agricultural carbon projects in Kenya. Their study compared hierarchical governance, which improves coordination and accountability but creates information asymmetries that disadvantage smallholder farmers, with participatory governance, which enhances transparency and inclusion but struggles due to power inequalities, especially for women. They advocate for integrating digital tools to promote participation and monitoring, thereby strengthening accountability and empowering smallholders through a hybrid governance approach.

2.2.2 Sustainability of development projects

Project sustainability is widely conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing social, financial, institutional and environmental dimensions. Empirical evidence demonstrates that projects with strong governance systems are more likely to achieve sustained outcomes across these dimensions.

Social sustainability is reflected in continued community benefits and stakeholder engagement, while financial sustainability involves the ability to generate and manage local resources independently. Institutional sustainability related to governance systems and leadership continuity, whereas environmental sustainability focuses on responsible resource use.

Studies in Africa show that many donor funded projects achieve short term success but fail to sustain outcomes after funding withdrawal due to weak local capacity and governance deficiencies. Faith-based projects, despite their strong community embeddedness, often struggle with financial self-reliance and institutional continuity (Abdil-Rahaman et al., 2025)

2.2.3 Governance Features and Project Sustainability

Empirical evidence from high-impact journals links robust NGO governance—such as independent boards and audit mechanisms—to financial and operational sustainability in developing regions. A 2024 Kenyan longitudinal study (n=156 NGOs) identified board

effectiveness and internal controls as top predictors of sustainability (β = 0.45), while donor dependency eroded viability (Kamau & Njoroge, 2024). In Cameroon, a 2023 cross-sectional analysis revealed weak accountability mechanisms reduced NGO trust and longevity by 35%. Nairobi-based research further confirmed corporate governance practices positively influence financial performance (r = 0.51), urging greater adoption.

Transparent and inclusive decision making enhances stakeholder trust and ownership, while accountability mechanisms improve resource management (Mutua et. al., 2024) stakeholder participation foster community ownership, which is critical for sustaining projects after donor exits (Smith & Adebayo, 2023) Similarly, sound financial practices are essential for long term viability (Kamau &Njoroge, 2024)

A Kenyan longitudinal study found that board effectiveness and internal controls significantly influenced organizational sustainability, while donor dependency negatively affected long term outcomes (Kamau & Njoroge, 2024). However, most existing studies examine these governance features in isolation, with limited focus on how they interact within faith-based governance systems.

2.2.4 Contextual Determinants of Project Sustainability

Beyond governance structures, contextual factors such as project age, projects size, denominational affiliation and geographic location significantly influence sustainability outcome (Mikedadze, 2025). Older projects tend to exhibit more mature governance systems, while larger projects may benefit from greater resource availability but face management complexities.

Denominational affiliation can shape governance practices through organizational culture and leadership structure (Njoroge, 2024) Geographic location, particularly rural versus urban settings, affects access to resources and implementation capacity .Despite recognition of these

factors, empirical studies rarely integrate contextual variables into governance sustainability models, limiting the understanding of how these elements interact to influence project outcomes.

2.3 Synthesis of Key Themes & Research Gaps

2.3.1 Synthesis of Key Themes

The reviewed literature converges on a central tenet: robust governance structures—encompassing board oversight, transparency and internal controls—serve as a foundational enabler of sustainability for both secular NGOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs). This consensus underscores governance not merely as a compliance mechanism, but as a dynamic capability that fosters organizational resilience amid volatile funding landscapes and operational uncertainties.

FBOs however, introduce distinctive assets that amplify their sustainability potential, including inherent community trust, expansive volunteer networks and pre-existing service delivery infrastructures (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2025). Yet, these advantages are tempered by persistent vulnerabilities, notably acute donor dependence, underdeveloped management systems and immature governance frameworks, which collectively heighten risks of mission drift and operational fragility. Empirical studies from sub-Saharan contexts, including Kenya, highlight how such weaknesses manifest in inconsistent program scaling and post-donor withdrawal collapse).

Practical exemplars, such as Compassion International's partnership model, illuminate pathways for remediation through targeted governance capacity-building and multi-stakeholder accountability protocols (Compassion International, 2025). The models illustrate tangible short-term improvements in terms of financial accountability and programmatic efficiency. However, their shortcomings relate to proving sustainable results in the long term

from the grassroots perspective, especially in terms of embedding governance into FBO activities through adaptive learning rather than directive measures.

Sustainability is not only about organization; it is a function of its alignment with the local governance structures. In case of decentralized governance like that in Kenya's counties, interventions by NGOs and FBOs survive only as long as they are aligned with county-level policies and mechanisms of local governance, thus preventing silos and increasing resource co-production (GoK, 2021). This relationship creates an overarching governance system – the one where FBO governance, sustainability needs of NGOs and county-level institutions come together to generate lasting impact.

2.3.2 Research Gaps and Contribution of the Study

Despite extensive literature, several gaps remain:

First, there is limited empirical research that systematically maps and compares governance models within faith-based development projects. This study addressed this gap by categorizing governance models in Compassion international supported church projects.

Second, Existing studies focus narrowly on financial sustainability, neglecting multidimensional sustainability. This study adopted a comprehensive framework incorporating social, financial, institutional and environmental dimensions.

Third, there is limited evidence of how governance features collectively influence sustainability within faith-based contexts (Kamau, 2024) this study analysed these relationships in an integrated manner

Fourth, contextual variables are often overlooked, yet they significantly influence outcomes; this study filled this gap by provide evidence in consideration of these variables

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This study anchors its analysis in a conceptual framework that positions governance models as the primary drivers of sustainability in Compassion International–supported church projects, which explains how organizational norms and structures cultivate enduring practices (Thornton et al., 2022) and multidimensional sustainability models adapted to development contexts, the framework treats governance features—decision-making structures, accountability mechanisms, stakeholder participation, financial management practices and leadership stability—as independent variables These features directly influence sustainability outcomes across four interconnected dimensions: social (ongoing community benefits and cohesion), financial (self-funding after donor exit) and institutional (adaptive organizational capacity) and environmental (resource-efficient practices that minimize ecological harm).

Governance acts as the structural foundation, much like a well-engineered bridge that distributes loads across pillars to endure storms. Robust governance enables projects to adapt, allocate resources wisely and build resilience, shifting from donor dependency to long-term viability. The features work synergistically, as summarized below:

2.4.1 Independent Variables

The independent variables were those concerning the types of governance models and characteristics that existed in the church projects supported by Compassion International. The independent variables were operationalized as follows:

Type of governance model involved in a project referred to the general framework used for managing project leadership and decision-making process and accountability. It was measured at nominal scale depending on the model used – hierarchical or top-down; participatory; shared or networked, or hybrid.

Decision-making process refers to how inclusive is the process of decision formulation and implementation in project management. The following indicators such as level of participation, transparency, timely and evidence-based nature of decisions were measured at ordinal/interval scales using Likert items.

Accountability system referred to the methods and procedures established to ensure responsible leadership and stakeholders' accountability. The indicators include existence of auditing, reporting mechanism, oversight boards, feedback loops, and discipline measures, among others.

Stakeholder participation described the degree of engagement of various stakeholders (e.g., churchgoers, caregivers, and young and community representatives) in the project's planning, implementation, and evaluation process. The variables used to measure this dimension included meeting frequencies, consultations, and involvement in committees on an ordinal/interval scale.

Financial management practices represented the quality of stewardship regarding budgeting, expense management, and reporting. The relevant indicators used were the availability of financial management policies, reporting frequencies, independent audits, and funding allocation transparency on an ordinal/interval scale.

Leadership competence and continuity referred to the strength and consistency of project leadership, considering qualifications and experience, and turnover characteristics. Relevant indicators used were leadership training, years of experience, continuity in position, and succession planning on an ordinal/interval scale.

2.4.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable—sustainability of Compassion International–supported church projects—encapsulated the enduring viability and resilience of these initiatives post-donor

involvement. It was evaluated across four dimensions (social, financial, institutional and environmental), culminating in a weighted composite index measured on an interval scale.

Social sustainability assessed the longevity of community and social gains from the activities undertaken by the program. The indicators were beneficiary retention, volunteering, inclusion and community involvement, which were ranked using the ordinal/interval scale. Financial sustainability focused on the ability to obtain and sustain resources without relying on financing from Compassion. Indicators involved the percentage of locally raised funds, sources of income, accumulation of reserves and financial independence, all using the interval scale.

Institutional sustainability examined the sustainability of internal structures and the governance structures. The indicators involved documented policies, records, local control, succession planning and partnership, and these were ranked on the ordinal/interval scale. Environmental sustainability focused on how well stewardship practices and environmental approaches had been incorporated into the organization. The indicators involved tree planting, waste management and water conservation, among others, and were ranked on the ordinal/interval scale.

2.4.3 Moderating (Control) Variables

The moderating variables captured the contextual elements that might moderate the relationship between the types of governance models and sustainability of projects. The moderating variables were statistically controlled in the study and defined as follows: The age of the project was considered to be the period of operation since inception, where older projects were thought to have well-developed governance mechanisms; it was measured using the ratio scale in years. The size or amount of funding reflected the financial resources of the project, where larger projects might be associated with more sophisticated governance abilities; it was measured using the ratio scale of annual budget in Kenyan Shillings (KES).

The Church denomination was viewed as the religious affiliation of the implementing church, which might influence the governance practices; it was measured nominally (Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal). The geographical location was understood as the operational context of the project either rural or urban, which could influence stakeholders' access to the project activities; it was measured nominally as rural or urban. The staff qualifications reflected the educational and professional background of the project members, influencing their governance and sustainability abilities; it was measured ordinarily.

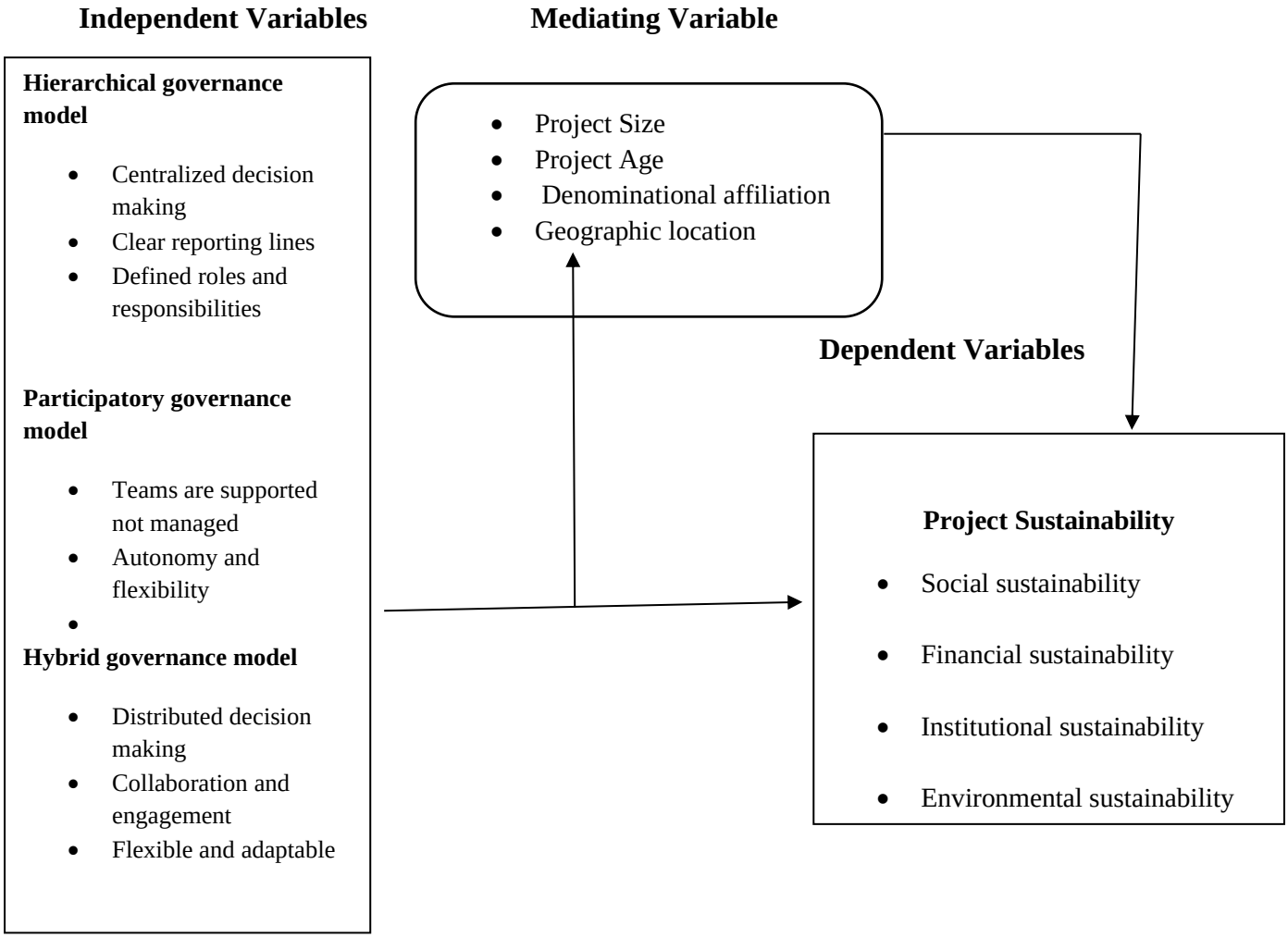

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2025)

2.4.4 Operationalization Summary

This synthesis aligns the operationalization strategy with the study's objectives. Mapping governance models involves examining governance model types through the typology of structures employed—hierarchical, participatory, or hybrid—measured on a nominal scale. Assessing project sustainability requires deriving a composite sustainability index from aggregated indicators encompassing social, financial, institutional and environmental facets, measured on an ordinal/interval scale. Analyzing relationships entails probing governance features—including decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, stakeholder participation, financial management practices and leadership capacity/stability—via Likert-scale responses, measured on an interval scale. Proposing governance recommendations involved synthesizing evidence-based practices qualitatively from correlation and regression outputs.

2.5 Literature Summary

This chapter reviews pivotal scholarship on governance and NGO sustainability, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in development, the Compassion partnership model's accountability mechanisms and county-level policy alignment. While foundational insights abound, critical lacunae exist regarding multi-level governance interplay (global, national, local) and its implications for sustainability in African devolved contexts. The proposed study addressed this gap by investigating governance in FBO/NGO partnerships to achieve sustainable project outcomes in Taita-Taveta County.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter delineates the research methodology that guided the achievement of this study's objectives, namely to conduct a comparative analysis of governance models and their influence on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. As the foundational blueprint for the proposed investigation, the methodology details a robust mixed-methods research design, the purposive selection of the study area and key participants (including project leaders, church officials and beneficiaries), tailored data collection instruments such as surveys, key informant interviews and document reviews and rigorous procedures to ensure data quality, validity and reliability.

By adopting this structured approach, the study systematically explored how varying governance structures—such as hierarchical, participatory, and hybrid models—affected project outcomes, including financial viability, community engagement, and long-term impact. The chapter proceeded as follows: first, it justified the philosophical underpinnings and research design; second, it described the study population, sampling techniques, and data collection methods; third, it outlined the data analysis procedures; and finally, it addressed ethical considerations, limitations, and strategies for trustworthiness. This comprehensive framework enabled a credible and replicable comparative analysis, ultimately contributing evidence-based insights to enhance sustainability in faith-based development initiatives.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed research methodology to comprehensively examine the impact of governance models on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects. This design was appropriate because it allowed the simultaneous collection and separate analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, followed by their integration to generate a comprehensive and corroborated understanding of the complex governance–sustainability dynamics in real-world settings.

3.1.1 Geographical Scope

The study's geographical scope is Taita-Taveta County, Kenya, located in the former Coast Province. This county is strategically chosen as the area of focus due to its significant geographical and socio-economic diversity, which is crucial for maximizing variation in the case studies.

Taita-Taveta County is situated in the Coastal region of Kenya, located at coordinates approximately 3.3161° S, 38.4850° E. It shares borders with Tana River, Kitui and Makueni counties to the North; Kwale and Kilifi counties to the East; Kajiado to the North-west; and the Republic of Tanzania to the South and South-west.

The county spans an area of 17,084.1 km², characterized by a highly unequal distribution of land use. A vast 10,649.9 km² (equivalent to 62% of the county's total area) is comprised of the Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks. According to the 2019 national census, the county's population was 340,671 persons. This relatively small population in a large area results in highly varied population densities, ranging from 14 persons per km² to more than 117 persons per km².

The county encompasses diverse ecological zones, which contribute significantly to the study's comparative potential. The altitude ranges significantly from 500 m above sea level in the plains to 2,300 m above sea level at Vuria peak, which is the county's highest point.

This striking contrast in location (urban/peri-urban centers like Voi and the deep rural Kasigau areas), resource availability and governance complexity across the various sub-counties directly influences community structures and resource management, thereby maximizing the comparative potential of the governance models under study.

3.2 Target Population

The target population comprised of 14 active Compassion International (CI)-supported church partner projects, four (4) ACK Churches, four (4) AIC Churches, four (4) Pentecostal churches, one (1) Kenya Assemblies of God church and one (1) PCEA Church, operating within Taita-Taveta County, Kenya. This population included CDC leadership, program staff who comprise of 14 Project Directors (Adults), 14 Socials workers (Adults), 70 Accountability structured members (Adults) and 4409 registered beneficiaries between ages 3-17 years. As of January 2026, administrative records indicated 14 CDCs serving 4409 registered beneficiaries, providing a comprehensive sampling frame for examining program outcomes and stakeholder perspectives. The target population was summarised in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Target population

Category	Population
Project Directors (Adults)	14
Social Workers (Adults)	14
Accountability Structure Members (Adults)	70
Registered Beneficiaries (Children aged 3–17 years)	4,409
Total Population (N)	**4,507**

Source: Compassion International (2026)

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The beneficiaries and care-givers were recruited via stratified random sampling from CDC registers, stratified by the age groups of the beneficiaries which corresponded to the structure of the program (0-5, 6-12 and 13-18 years), gender and location of the CDC. The sample ensured proportionate representation of all sub-populations, reducing bias and increasing strength of subgroup analysis.

Determination of sample size involved use of finite population correction factor for the entire population of (N=4507). Small population correction factor is used to adjust the sample size.

Yamane (1967) provides a simple formula for determining sample sizes. Use of 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error was 375 respondents.

$n = N / [1 + N (e)^2]$

Where:

n= required sample size

N= population size = 4,507

e = level of precision =0.05 (5% margin of error)

Substitute the values,

n= 4507/ 1+4507 $(0.05)^2$

Calculate e^2

(0.05)2 = 0.0025

Multiply by the Population; 4507 X 0.0025= 11.2675

Add 1; 1+11.0225=12.2675

Therefore n= 4507/12.02675= 374.75. Round to the nearest whole number n=375.

To compensate for an anticipated non response rate, additional respondents of approximately 12.0%, was added.

Calculated as, 420-375=45, 45/375 x100 =12.0%

Therefore additional 45 respondents were included, resulting in a final target sample size of 420 respondents. The final sample targeted n=420 respondents, allocated proportionally across CDC's and strata to accommodate non-response (anticipated at 12.0%).

3.4 Data collection Methods.

Convergent parallel mixed-methods research was conducted in this study by collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time and analyzing them holistically in order to give an overview of the interrelation between the governance model and the sustainability of projects. In other words, five different methods were used in order to ensure methodological triangulation and avoid biases while gaining validity and understanding various dimensions of sustainability.

3.4.1 Structured Questionnaire (Quantitative)

An organized questionnaire provided objective data in the form of scaled quantitative data that was administered to at least 420 individuals benefiting from the program. Based on standard

measures, such as 5-point Likert scale and close-ended questions, the survey tool was used to determine satisfaction, perceptions of sustainability impact, and governance impact and could be analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross-comparison across projects (using, ANOVA). The survey tool underwent pre-testing for reliability ($\alpha > 0.80$) and cultural sensitivity and existed in two languages - English and Swahili.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interview Guides (Qualitative)

The semi-structured interview guide was the main qualitative research instrument and was developed in order to uncover "the whys and hows of governance models" such as hierarchical structures of decision making, local difficulties and crucial factors of success for project sustainability. Such an open-ended but still structured tool made it possible to probe into emergent issues, at the same time maintaining consistency throughout different cases. The instrument was pre-tested before implementation in interviewing 40-50 key informants – church members, Compassion International personnel and county officers – who have strategic perspectives and offer invaluable institutional knowledge. The interviews took place in private settings and lasted 45-60 minutes each, being recorded and analyzed with NVivo.

3.5 Data collection Instruments

Questionnaires with structured questions were used to develop measurable indicators for aspects of sustainability, such as the continuity of services offered, involvement of the community, and financial stability. The questionnaires served as a way of obtaining perceptions from the beneficiaries whose views were necessary to gauge the success and impact of the projects in the long run. Interviews were carried out using persons with firsthand experience on governance in the projects.

3.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to full data collection at one of the Compassion International supported church projects in Kwale County, which is neighboring to Taita-Taveta County and near to the researcher. The pilot study site was purposefully not included in the 14 case sample sites to prevent overlap or contamination, in line with established pilot study guidelines (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The pilot study was used to achieve three important purposes in improving study preparation in a systematic manner. First, it was used to improve the research instruments by testing their clarity, logic, and understandability in context, especially with regard to linguistic and cultural appropriateness. Feedback received from participants was used to improve the research instruments. Second, it was used to fine-tune the logistics of data collection by establishing how long it takes to fill out the questionnaire (20 – 30 minutes) and conduct an interview (45 – 60 minutes). Third, it was used to establish the feasibility of conducting the study by determining access to key informants and project documents.

Initial analysis of the pilot data was performed to establish the reliability of the quantitative tools, where the computation of the alpha of Cronbach (α) was done, where an expected value of 0.70 or higher was considered satisfactory before embarking on the actual research study. This ensured that the research tools had good psychometric qualities, which will be further analyzed in the next section.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity was carefully considered for the purposes of ensuring that the research tools reflected the actual constructs of project governance and sustainability. Regular consultations were made with the research supervisors and other research experts during the process of developing the

research tools for the purposes of ensuring that the questionnaires and interviews reflected the intended variables, hence reducing threats of measurement error and construct underrepresentation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This strategy allowed for quantitative validity to be focused on the questionnaire while qualitative validity was concentrated on the interviews and checklist.

Concerning content validity for the quantitative questionnaire, it was ensured that the instrument had high correspondence to the literature and theoretical concepts on governance and sustainability. In this case, validated measures of institutional capability, financial viability, and the influence of the program were included, using existing frameworks on sustainability including those from UNDP. For content validity, a panel of experts composed of members from Compassion International staff and academicians was used during development of the questionnaire and ICV scores were derived from pilot testing with an expected cut-off point of 0.80. Construct validity was further assessed using exploratory factor analysis during the pilot test to check whether the variables in the questionnaire load on the construct of sustainability and not something like social desirability. Convergent validity was further checked by correlating the results from the questionnaire and document review.

Validity for the qualitative data collection tools, i.e., semi-structured interviews and document review guide was improved using methodological triangulation that involved comparison and cross-checking of the information gathered from the key informants, project beneficiaries, and documents (Denzin, 2017). Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement and persistent observations during fieldwork while member checking allowed participants to validate the interview transcripts and themes. Rich description provided during the process of data analysis helped improve transferability since it included rich descriptions of the socio-economic and political setting of Taita-Taveta County together with the diverse nature of the

14 church projects selected purposively. Dependability and confirmability were strengthened through keeping a research reflexive journal and independent review of the research process.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability was rigorously operationalized to ensure the consistency and dependability of the research instruments, thereby enabling replicable measurements across administrations and analysts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2024). Procedures were tailored to both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study and complemented the validity measures, thereby strengthening the overall trustworthiness of the mixed-methods framework.

For the quantitative beneficiary questionnaire, internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient based on the pilot study data, with a minimum acceptable threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ for multi-item scales measuring constructs such as sustainability perceptions and governance satisfaction. Item-total correlations ($r \geq 0.30$) and "alpha if item deleted" analyses were used to identify poorly performing items. Scales that failed to meet the acceptable reliability threshold were revised through item rewording or deletion before the main data collection exercise, and subsequent testing confirmed improved reliability. In addition, test-retest reliability was assessed by administering the questionnaire to a sample of 20–30 pilot respondents after a two-week interval, with a target correlation coefficient of at least 0.75 to establish temporal stability.

For the qualitative instruments, namely the semi-structured interview guides, reliability was enhanced by emphasizing dependability through the maintenance of a comprehensive audit trail documenting all procedural decisions, modifications arising from the pilot study, and reflexive researcher memos for external review (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Coding consistency was assessed through inter-rater reliability, whereby a second independent coder, blinded to the original coding, analyzed approximately 10–15% of the interview transcripts using NVivo.

Cohen's kappa ($\kappa \geq 0.70$) or percentage agreement ($\geq 80\%$) was used to assess thematic consistency, and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion to refine the coding framework. Similarly, data extracted using the document review checklist were subjected to cross-verification against the original documentary sources to ensure consistency and accuracy.

3.7 Data Analysis

The dataset underwent rigorous qualitative and quantitative analyses, followed by a structured mixed-methods integration phase to generate robust, triangulated insights.

3.7.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and field observation notes were subjected to thematic analysis. All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and imported into NVivo software (or manually coded where necessary) to facilitate systematic open, axial, and selective coding, categorization, and theme development. The analysis prioritized the generation of nuanced descriptions of distinctive governance features and the causal mechanisms through which they either constrained or enhanced sustainability outcomes. Subsequently, a cross-case synthesis was undertaken to compare governance models across the projects.

3.7.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed on the quantitative information collected in the form of surveys from the beneficiaries, and the Sustainability Scoring Rubric using SPSS statistical package (version 28 onwards). The analysis entailed descriptive statistics calculations that provided means, standard deviation, medians, ranges, and frequencies for all sustainability domains scores and governance features indices. The findings were illustrated using tables, graphs, and histograms. Further, inferential statistics were performed either using ANOVA Regression

analyses entailed bivariate correlations (Pearson's r) and multivariate linear to determine the degree, nature and predictive value of the relationship between governance characteristics.

3.7.3 Mixed-Methods Integration

The process of integration used convergent triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) in a unified interpretive model. The quantitative findings of the statistically significant differences in sustainability scores according to the type of governance were compared directly with the qualitative findings. Afterward, the qualitative findings provided explanation to the observed quantitative findings by answering questions such as "why some specific governance characteristics led to high sustainability scores." This step yielded meta-findings and these were presented in an integrative model.

3.8 Inferential Analysis

Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to test for the relationships that were hypothesized in this study, revealing how governance constructs predicted project sustainability in all the 14 cases under consideration, considering possible contextual confounders (Field, 2024). These quantitative findings intersected with qualitative data in the joint presentations.

Correlation analyses were done prior to conducting the modeling analysis to measure linear relations between the constructs of governance (e.g., decision-making freedom) and sustainability (e.g., composite index based on questionnaire scale scores) through Pearson's r coefficient calculations. Interpretation was aided by bivariate scatterplots and tests of normality (Shapiro-Wilk), which had the level of statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. Multicollinearity among predictor variables was assessed with the help of variance inflation factors ($VIF < 5$).

Multiple linear regression was employed to explore predictive effects; a composite Sustainability Index (Y) was set as the dependent variable and five predictors (X_1-X_5)—decision-making procedures, accountability systems, stakeholder involvement, efficiency of financial management, and leadership stability—were regressed on Y. Control variables (Z)—project duration, size/scale, church denomination, and geographical region—were introduced to adjust for variability. The model used was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \beta_6Z + \varepsilon$$

Where: β0 is the intercept, β1 – β6 are coefficients and ε denotes the error term.

Y= Sustainability Index

X1...X5 = Governance features (decision-making, accountability, participation, financial management, leadership stability)

Z = Control variables (project age, size, denomination, location)

E = Error term

Hierarchical entry was used to isolate governance effects, with diagnostic tests conducted to ensure that the assumptions of linearity (residual plots), homoscedasticity (Breusch–Pagan test), independence (Durbin–Watson statistic), and normality (Q–Q plots) were satisfied. Robust standard errors were applied where heteroscedasticity was detected. Standardized beta coefficients and changes in R^2 were examined to identify the dominant predictors, thereby elucidating which governance elements drove sustainability after controlling for the selected covariates. Analyses were conducted using SPSS, and effect sizes (based on Cohen's guidelines) together with 95% confidence intervals were reported to provide generalizable insights into the causal pathways.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered strictly to ethical guidelines and obtained authorization from Scotts Christian University. The researcher also obtained the necessary research permit from Kenya's National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), placing participant welfare and research integrity at the forefront. Formal ethical clearance was secured from Scotts Christian University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and NACOSTI prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

All participants provided informed consent in both written and verbal forms after receiving clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, minimal risks, potential benefits, and their unconditional right to withdraw from the study without any repercussions. Anonymity was guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms and aggregated reporting, ensuring that no identifiable information appeared in publications or presentations, while the confidentiality of participants' responses was maintained throughout the study.

Data protection complied with Kenya's Data Protection Act (2019) and the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), with all research materials stored on encrypted, password-protected devices accessible only to the research team. An ethical compliance log was maintained to monitor adherence to ethical standards throughout the research process. However, setbacks such as delays in obtaining responses from NACOSTI, extensive travel across the county, and occasional data misplacement caused some delays in the research process. Additionally, time constraints and the need to work within a strict timeline posed significant challenges during the study.

3.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter describes the study area (Taita-Taveta County), target population and sampling techniques. It details data collection methods, including structured questionnaires and key informant interviews, document analysis and observations which outlined the governance models and their relationship in project sustainability at compassion sponsored church projects.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study examined governance models and their influence on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. This chapter presents demographic characteristics for respondents. Descriptive analysis, inferential analysis and thematic analysis is then presented. This is done according to the objectives of the study: governance models employed in Compassion-supported church projects, sustainability of selected Compassion-supported church projects, relationships between governance features and project sustainability and effects of contextual elements on project sustainability.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed to the beneficiaries of church projects sponsored by Compassion, out of which 321 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was thus 76%. This concurs with the study by Wu et al. (2022) where the response rate of 50% was identified as adequate and an excellent foundation for data analysis. Similarly, Sammut et al (2021) reveal that a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good, while more than 70% is excellent. López (2023) identifies the 50% response rate as acceptable. In addition, Shiyab et al. (2023) confirm that a 50% response rate is analyzable. Indeed, Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) indicate that a response rate of above 70% is excellent. The response rate is illustrated in Table 4.1:-

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The gender, age, education level, experience in project and denomination of respondents were analyzed.

4.3.1 Gender of Respondents

Results indicated that 153 (47.7%) were male and 168 (52.3%) were female. Thus, the majority of respondents were female.

Table 4.2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	153	47.7
Female	168	52.3
Total	**321**	**100.0**

4.3.2 Age of Respondents

More than half of the participants (177;51.1%) were aged 25-34 years, followed by those aged 35-44 years (92;28.7%), 45-54 years (32; 10.0%) 55 years and above (15;4.6%) and those aged 18-24 years (5; 1.6%) This is presented in Figure 4.2

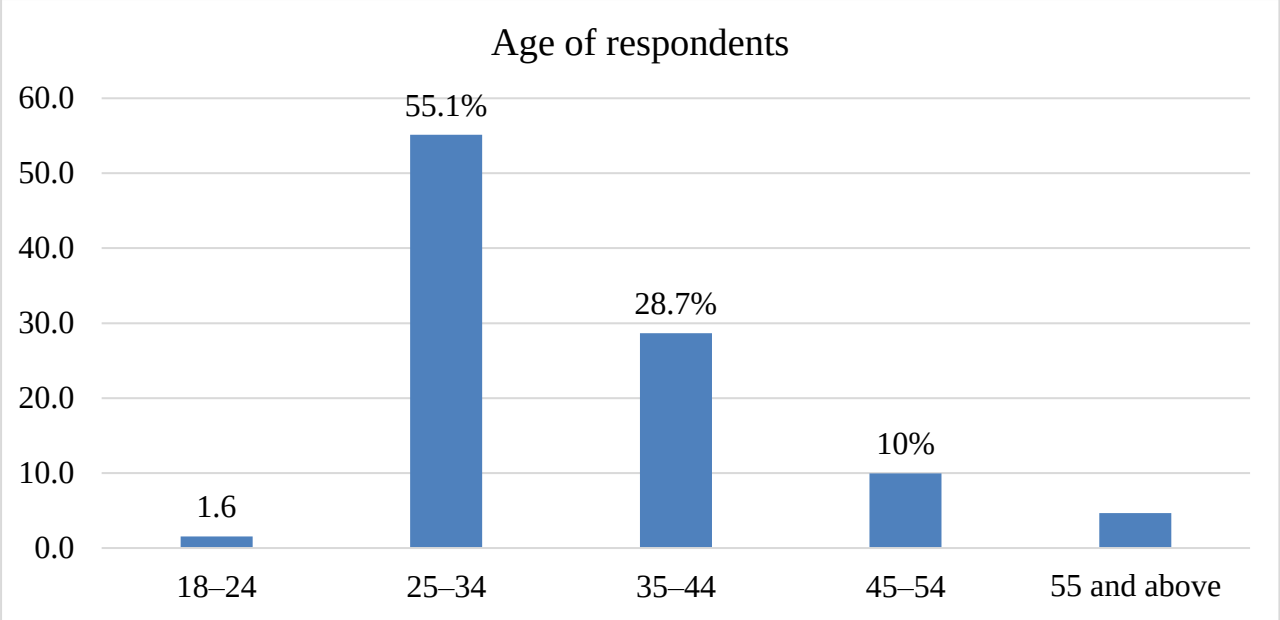

Figure 4.2: Age of respondents

4.3.3 Education Level

The education level of respondents was assessed. A hundred and ninety (59.2%) respondents had university education, 106 (33.0%) had college education, 15 (4.7%) had secondary education, and 10 (3.1%) had primary education. Thus, 92.2% of the respondents had attained college or university education. Their responses could thus be relied on to make credible findings. This is shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Respondents Education Level

Education level	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Primary education	10	3.1
Secondary education	15	4.7
College	106	33.0
University	190	59.2
Total	**321**	**100.0**

4.3.4 Experience in Project

Respondents were required to indicate the length of time they had been part of the church-based Compassion International-supported program. Figure 4.3 indicates that 144 (44.9%) had 1–3 years of experience, 79 (24.6%) had more than 6 years, 58 (18.1%) had 4–6 years and 40 (12.5%) had less than 1 year of experience.

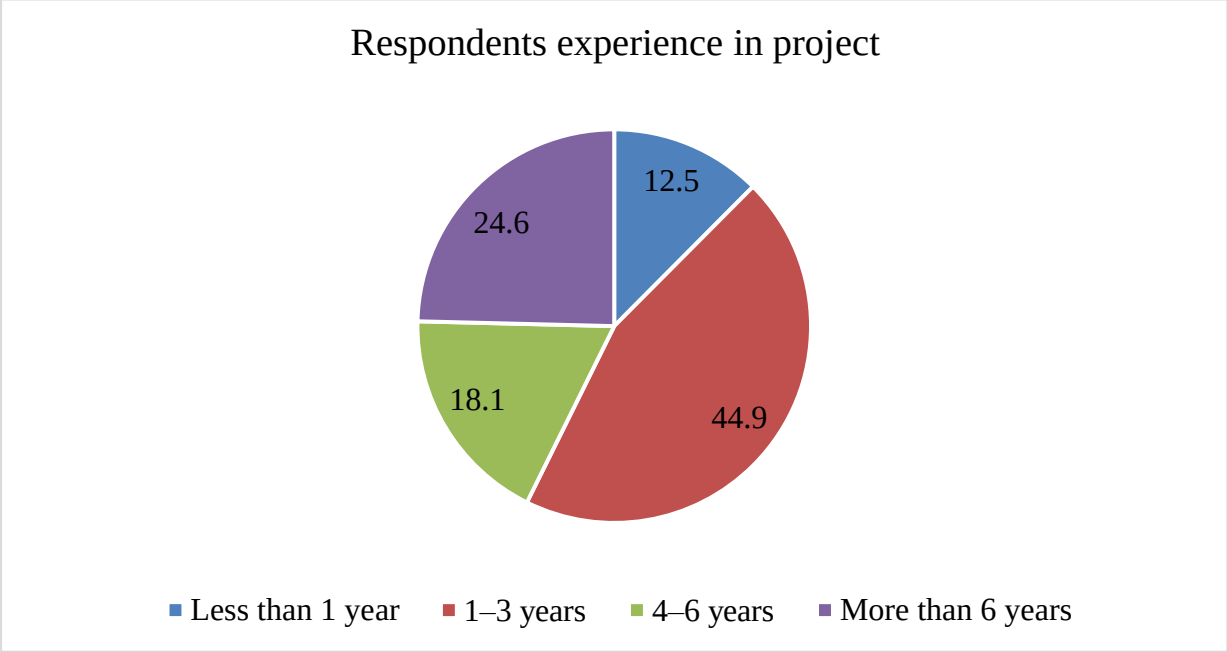

Figure4.3: Respondents Experience in Project

4.3.5 Respondents Denomination

The denomination of respondents was analysed. The respondents were drawn from six church denominations. AIC had 111 (34.6%) respondents, ACK had 85 (26.5%), Gospel churches had 54 (16.8%), PCMA had 37 (11.5%), while KAG and PEFA each had 17 (5.3%) respondents. Table 4.4 summarises this.

Table 4.4: Respondents Denomination

Denomination	Frequency	Percent
ACK	85	26.5
AIC	111	34.6
GOSPEL	54	16.8
KAG	17	5.3
PCMA	37	11.5
PEFA	17	5.3
Total	**321**	**100.0**

4.4 Descriptive Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis, inferential analysis and thematic analysis is then presented. This is done according to the objectives of the study: governance models employed in Compassion-supported church projects, sustainability of selected Compassion-supported church projects, relationships between governance features and project sustainability and effects of contextual elements on project sustainability.

4.4.1 Governance Models employed in Compassion-supported church projects

The study mapped and categorized governance models employed in Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. Descriptive analysis indicates that decision-making in the program was concentrated at the church leadership level (M = 3.64, SD = 1.366). They did not agree that the majority of program decisions were made without consulting recipients (M = 2.36, SD = 1.351). Respondents perceived a clear line of report from beneficiaries to church leaders (M = 3.81, SD = 1.145), that within the program, roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and adhered to (M = 3.81, SD = 1.279), and that power in the program was hierarchically organized and centralized (M = 3.83, SD = 1.107).

The respondents also concurred that those participating in the programme had the latitude to execute the tasks allotted to them (M = 3.40, SD = 1.150), that there was some leeway in the conducting of programme activities (M = 3.86, SD = 1.033), and that the leadership was supportive of self-motivation in teams and beneficiaries (M = 3.79, SD = 1.025). They also agreed that beneficiaries could make choices about their involvement in the program (M = 3.85, SD = 1.061), the program fostered shared responsibility instead of rigid supervision (M = 4.07 amongst a 5-point scale, SD = 0.966), decision making was a shared process with the church leadership, staff, and beneficiaries (M = 4.04, SD= 1.051), and that the whole partnership took part in planning and delivering program activities (M = 3.83, SD = 1.081). They also agreed that adaptation depends on situation (M = 3.88, SD = 0.924), the decision-making process was characterized by strong leaders and active beneficiaries (M = 3.64, SD = 1.197), and tasks were allocated between multiple actors within the program (M = 4.07, SD = 0.921). The aggregate mean of 3.70 indicated that respondents generally agreed with statements on governance structure.

Hybrid governance was the most dominant governance model in Compassion-supported church projects (Mean = 3.92); projects combined formal leadership structures with collaborative decision-making, shared responsibility and stakeholder involvement. Hierarchical governance ranked second (Mean = 3.77); church leadership had significant authority through centralized structures, reporting systems and defined roles. Participatory governance had the lowest average mean (Mean = 3.45), although the findings showed moderate levels of beneficiary involvement, autonomy and flexibility.

Table 4.5: Descriptive on Governance Models employed in Compassion-supported church projects

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Decision-making in this program is concentrated at the church leadership level.	3.64	1.366
Most program decisions are made without involving beneficiaries.	2.36	1.351
There are clear reporting lines from beneficiaries to church leaders.	3.81	1.145
Roles and responsibilities in the program are clearly defined and strictly followed.	3.81	1.279
Authority in the program is formally structured and centralized.	3.83	1.107
Program participants have autonomy in carrying out assigned activities.	3.40	1.150
Flexibility is allowed in implementing program activities.	3.86	1.033
Leadership encourages self-initiative among teams and beneficiaries.	3.79	1.025
Beneficiaries can make decisions related to their participation in the program.	3.85	1.061
The program supports shared responsibility rather than strict supervision.	4.07	0.966
Decision-making is shared between church leadership, staff, and beneficiaries.	4.04	1.051
Different stakeholders collaborate in planning and implementing program activities.	3.83	1.081
The governance structure allows adaptation depending on the situation.	3.88	0.924
There is active engagement between leadership and beneficiaries in decision-making.	3.64	1.197
Responsibilities are distributed among different actors in the program.	4.07	0.921
Mean	**3.70**	

4.4.2 Sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects

The study evaluated the sustainability (social, financial, institutional, and environmental dimensions) of selected Compassion-supported church projects. Descriptive analysis showed that projects strengthened community ties (M = 3.76, SD = 1.173), that beneficiaries felt a sense of ownership of the project (M = 4.14, SD = 0.855), that the project still satisfied community social needs (M = 3.98, SD = 0.880), that the community was mobilized to support

the continuation of the project (M = 4.22, SD = 0.765), and that social cohesion among stake holders had increased as a result of the project (M = 4.00, SD = 0.986).

The respondents also concurred that the project has a reliable source of financial support (M = 4.05, SD = 0.773), the project could go on without external support (M = 3.62, SD = 1.185), the financial means were handled so as to promote continuity over the long run (M = 3.34, SD = 1.245), and that the project was becoming less and less dependent on external donors (M = 3.77, SD = 1.062). In contrast, they did not agree that the local financial resources could be mobilized very well (M = 2.48, SD = 1.358), and that the project was incorporated well into the organizational framework (M = 2.69, SD = 1.165). Respondents agreed that the leadership structure is solid enough to sustain the project into the future (M = 3.95, SD = 0.867), that the project could remain operative even if there was a leadership change (M = 3.75, SD = 0.988), that staff have the necessary skills to keep the project going (M = 4.08, SD = 0.920), and that there are explicit policies that regulate project sustainability (M = 4.43, SD = 0.673).

Respondents were also in agreement that the project was environmentally friendly in its operations (M = 4.06, SD = 1.007), project operations were not environmentally damaging to the immediate area (M = 4.37, SD = 0.747), the project fostered appropriate utilization of natural resources by the community (M = 4.49, SD = 0.699), environmental factors were taken into account during the implementation of the project (M = 4.36, SD = 0.672), and lastly, the project advocated for environmental conservation (M = 4.33, SD = 0.686). The aggregate mean of 3.85 revealed that respondents agreed with statements on project sustainability. This is shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.6: Descriptives on Sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project has strengthened relationships within the community.	3.76	1.173
Beneficiaries feel a strong sense of ownership of the project.	4.14	0.855
The project continues to meet the social needs of the community.	3.98	0.880
Community members actively support the continuation of the project.	4.22	0.765
The project has improved social cohesion among stakeholders.	4.00	0.986
The project has stable sources of financial support.	4.05	0.773
The project is able to continue operating even when external funding reduces.	3.62	1.185
There are effective strategies for mobilizing local financial resources.	2.48	1.358
Financial resources are managed in a way that supports long-term continuity.	3.34	1.245
The project has reduced over-dependence on external donors over time.	3.77	1.062
The project is well integrated into the organizational structure.	2.69	1.165
Leadership structures are strong enough to support long-term operations.	3.95	0.867
The project can continue functioning despite changes in leadership.	3.75	0.988
Staff have adequate skills to sustain the project.	4.08	0.920
There are clear policies that guide project continuity.	4.43	0.673
The project promotes environmentally friendly practices in its activities.	4.06	1.007
Project activities do not negatively harm the local environment.	4.37	0.747
The project encourages proper use of natural resources in the community.	4.49	0.699
Environmental considerations are included in project implementation.	4.36	0.672
The project supports awareness of environmental conservation.	4.33	0.686
Mean	**3.85**	

4.4.3 Governance Features in Compassion-supported church projects

The study evaluated governance features (decision-making, accountability, stakeholder participation, and financial practices) and project sustainability. Descriptive statistics showed that the program's decision-making process included relevant actors at all levels (M = 3.77, SD = 1.117), that the big program decisions were taken in a timely manner (M = 3.98, SD = 1.059), that the beneficiaries took part in the decisions that directly affected them (M = 3.99, SD = 1.098), that the leadership was responsible for ensuring that all participant were informed of the decisions (M = 4.06, SD = 0.998), and that the decision-making procedures were straightforward (M = 3.99, SD = 0.947).

The respondents concurred that program leaders were directly accountable to stakeholders for their conduct (M = 4.04, SD = 1.083), there existed well defined channel to report against abuse of programme resources (M = 3.87, SD = 1.136), leadership often explained how programme funds were spent (M = 4.26, SD = 0.954), input from beneficiaries was utilized (M = 4.17, SD = 0.909), and that trust in program management was enhanced by the effect of the accountability mechanisms (M = 4.36, SD = 0.876).

The respondents also agreed that the beneficiaries participated in the program planning processes (M = 3.87, SD = 1.057), that local community members were welcome to join the program meetings (M = 3.30, SD = 1.283), that all stakeholders had equal right to speak in the panel discussion (M = 3.85, SD = 0.960), that participation of beneficiaries had an impact on program decisions (M = 4.06, SD = 0.879), as well as that the program promoted the full participation of all relevant parties (M = 3.89, SD = 0.985).

The respondents concurred that the program had clear process for managing finances (M = 4.36, SD = 0.942), the program funds were utilized as approved (M = 4.40, SD = 0.793), the financial reports were well prepared (M = 4.64, SD = 0.628), the budgeting was participated

by the relevant parties (M = 4.62, SD = 0.689), and the expenditures of program resources were closely watched (M = 4.41, SD = 0.636).

They additionally agreed that the program leadership was stable over time (M = 3.83, SD = 1.107), changes in leaders were effectively handled (M = 4.01, SD = 0.889), leaders-maintained consistency in program goals (M = 3.80, SD = 1. 145), the leadership team was cohesive (M = 4.01, SD = 0.970), and a consistent leadership team made for easy program execution (M = 4.15, SD = 0.812). The mean score for the entire sample was 4.06, which indicated that Respondents were in general agreement with the corporate governance statements. This is shown in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Descriptives on Governance Features in Compassion-supported church projects

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Decision-making in the program involves relevant stakeholders at different levels.	3.77	1.117
Major program decisions are made in a timely manner.	3.98	1.059
Beneficiaries are involved in decisions that directly affect them.	3.99	1.098
Leadership ensures that decisions are communicated to all participants.	4.06	0.998
Decision-making processes are easy to understand.	3.99	0.947
Program leaders are answerable to stakeholders for their actions.	4.04	1.083
There are clear mechanisms for reporting misuse of program resources.	3.87	1.136
Leadership regularly provides explanations on how program funds are used.	4.26	0.954
Feedback from beneficiaries is acted upon.	4.17	0.909
Accountability systems help improve trust in program management.	4.36	0.876
Beneficiaries are actively involved in program planning activities.	3.87	1.057
Community members are invited to participate in program meetings.	3.30	1.283
Stakeholders have equal opportunity to express their views in discussions.	3.85	0.960
Participation of beneficiaries influences program decisions.	4.06	0.879

The program encourages inclusive involvement of relevant groups.	3.89	0.985
The program has transparent financial management procedures.	4.36	0.942
Program funds are used for their intended purposes.	4.40	0.793
Financial records are properly maintained.	4.64	0.628
Budgeting processes involve relevant stakeholders.	4.62	0.689
There is effective monitoring of how program resources are spent.	4.41	0.636
Program leadership remains consistent over time.	3.83	1.107
Leadership transitions are well managed.	4.01	0.889
Leaders demonstrate continuity in program vision.	3.80	1.145
The leadership structure is well established.	4.01	0.970
Stable leadership contributes to smooth program implementation.	4.15	0.812
Mean	**4.06**	

4.4.4 Contextual Elements in Compassion-supported church projects

The study analysed contextual elements and project sustainability. The respondents also agreed that the project had many beneficiaries in the community (M = 4.45, SD = 0.675), the project had been running in the community for a very long period of time (M = 4.40, SD = 0.658), the project had great denominational support (M = 3.77, SD = 1.127) that had to reach areas had problems with the implementation of the program (M = 3.83, SD = 0.964). The overall mean of 4.10 shows that the respondents agreed with statements about the contextual aspects of the projects.

Table 4.8: Descriptives on Contextual Elements in Compassion-supported church projects

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The program serves a large number of beneficiaries in this community.	4.45	0.675
This program has been operating in the community for a long period of time.	4.40	0.658
The program benefits from strong support from its denominational structure.	3.77	1.127
Remote or hard-to-reach areas face challenges in program implementation.	3.83	0.964
Mean	**4.10**	

4.5 Inferential Analysis

Correlation and regression analysis were conducted to analyze the relationships between governance features, contextual elements and project sustainability.

4.5.1 Correlation analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. Results indicate a moderate, positive and significant correlation between hierarchical governance and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects ($r=0.631$, $p<0.001$). There was a moderate, positive and significant correlation ($r=0.564$, $p<0.001$) between participatory governance and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects. Additionally, a strong, positive and significant correlation ($r=0.693$, $p<0.001$) was found between hybrid governance and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects. There was a strong, positive and significant correlation between decision-making and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects ($r=0.737$, $p<0.001$).

Results showed a moderate, positive and significant correlation between accountability and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects ($r=0.652$, $p<0.001$). There was a moderate, positive and significant correlation ($r=0.641$, $p<0.001$) between stakeholder participation and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects. Additionally, a weak, positive and significant correlation ($r=0.483$, $p<0.001$) was found between financial practices and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects. There was a strong, positive and significant correlation between Leadership Stability and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects ($r=0.698$, $p<0.001$). Results showed a moderate, positive and significant correlation between contextual elements and sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects ($r=0.594$, $p<0.001$).

Hybrid governance had the strongest relationship with sustainability ($r = .693$, $p < .001$), then hierarchical governance ($r = .631$, $p < .001$) and participatory governance ($r = .564$, $p < .001$). Projects combining formal leadership structures, accountability mechanisms and stakeholder involvement achieve stronger sustainability outcomes than those relying exclusively on either hierarchical or participatory approaches. The stronger correlation for hybrid governance indicates that balancing centralized coordination with inclusive participation provides a more effective governance arrangement for sustaining projects over time. Findings are presented in Table 4.9

Table 4.9: Correlations

		Sustainability
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	321
Hierarchical governance	Pearson Correlation	.631**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Participatory governance	Pearson Correlation	.564**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Hybrid governance	Pearson Correlation	.693**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Decision making	Pearson Correlation	.737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Accountability	Pearson Correlation	.652**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Participation	Pearson Correlation	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Financial	Pearson Correlation	.438**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Leadership Stability	Pearson Correlation	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321
Mediating	Pearson Correlation	.594**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	321

4.5.2 Regression analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of governance features, contextual elements and project sustainability. Model results show that, with a 95% confidence level, governance features, contextual elements account for 75.1% of the variance in project sustainability. The correlation coefficient, or R, shows a strong correlation of 0.866. This is summarized in Table 4.10

Table 4.10: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.866[a]	0.751	0.743	0.28786

a. Predictors: (Constant), Contextual elements, Participatory Governance, participation, financial, Leadership Stability, Hierarchical Governance, accountability, Hybrid Governance, Decision Making

b. Dependent Variable: Sustainability

Additionally, ANOVA analysis demonstrated a significant level of 0.000. There was thus a significant relationship between variables. Furthermore, the calculated F-value was greater the critical F-value (103.98 > 1.88), hence the model was reliable, as summarised in Table 4.11

Table 4.11: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	77.543	9	8.616	103.980	.000[b]
Residual	25.770	311	0.083		
Total	103.313	320			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability
b. Predictors: (Constant), Contextual elements, Participatory Governance, participation, financial, Leadership Stability, Hierarchical Governance, accountability, Hybrid Governance, Decision Making

The coefficients for governance features, contextual elements and project sustainability are presented in Table 4.12:-

Table 4.12: Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.574	0.143		4.018	0.000
Decision Making	0.158	0.046	0.238	3.446	0.001
Accountability	0.098	0.042	0.137	2.333	0.020
Stakeholder participation	0.061	0.037	0.085	1.667	0.097
Financial practices	0.084	0.036	0.094	2.329	0.020
Contextual elements	0.356	0.032	0.370	11.201	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability

Table 13 summarizes the model as:-

The specified model is:

$$Y = 0.574 + 0.158X1 + 0.098X2 + 0.084X4 + 0.356Z + \varepsilon$$

Table 12 indicates that decision making had a positive and statistically significant effect on project sustainability ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.001$). The finding is in accordance with Feng et al. (2022), who opined that participative decision-making leads to community ownership and sustainability of development initiatives. In the same way, Song and Hao (2023) also reported

that the involvement of stakeholders in the decisions about projects influences implementation and sustainability of projects. Asiachi et al. (2022) noted that stakeholders' inclusion in decision making enhance project sustainability.

There was a positive and statistically significant effect of accountability on project sustainability ($\beta = 0.098$, $p = 0.020$). This supports Micheni et al. (2025)'s study, which stated that accountability leads to effectiveness in organizations because of the high levels of transparency, trust and sustainability. This was noted by Mignenan et al. (2025), who realized that accountability enhances credibility and sustainability of projects. In contrast, Schmidt and Dedovic (2024) found that accountability improves organizational performance as a result of higher levels of trust, reduced wastage of resources and sustainability.

There was a positive and statistically insignificant relationship between stakeholder participation and on project sustainability ($\beta = 0.061$, $p = 0.097$). Participation of stakeholders alone isn't adequate to ensure sustainability unless backed by effective governance and resource allocation (Kaumbulu et al., 2020). Weak positive correlation between this variable and the dependent variable demonstrates that while this variable contributes to sustainability, its effect is relatively insignificant.

Financial practices had a positive and statistically significant effect on project sustainability ($\beta = 0.084$, $p = 0.020$). This result is consistent with observations of Koroma et al. (2026), on the importance of sound financial planning and control for the success of projects. This is also supported by results of Hashim et al. (2022), who found that sound financial management affects project sustainability. In addition, Brunet et al. (2026) highlight that sound financial management systems promote accountability and sustainability of development projects.

There was a positive and statistically significant effect of contextual elements on project sustainability ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$). This is consistent with the findings by Moshood et al.

(2025) that the project environment affects project performance and viability through affecting stakeholder relations, institutional capacity, and conditions of implementation (Rankohi et al., 2025). This finding is also consistent with the work by Akintan et al. (2026) showing that organizational and environmental variables affect governance and sustainability of projects. Additionally, Soares et al. (2024) stated that contextual factors such as organizational support and external environmental factors influence project governance and project sustainability.

4.6 Thematic analysis

The study conducted interviews with project managers [PMS]. A theme-based analysis was conducted to compare the effect of hierarchical, participatory and hybrid forms of governance on project sustainability. The guide for interviews was pretested prior to data collection. Interviews were conducted with 12 respondents. Respondents were selected due to their involvement in project governance, implementation and sustainability decisions. Interviews were carried out in private and each session took about 45-60 minutes.

The thematic analysis process entailed: familiarity with the transcripts, code generation, grouping of similar codes into themes, review and refining of the themes and interpretation of the results relative to the research objectives. An inductive process was used in addition to a deductive approach that emanated from the research objectives and governance literature.

The revised thematic analysis groups the findings under three models of governance. Hierarchical governance was demonstrated in formal lines of authority, centralization of decision making, accountability systems, reporting systems and role definition. Project managers stated that the leadership of the church and Compassion governed by providing financial approvals, visitation and performance reporting. This was instrumental in increasing accountability, resource control and implementation consistency though this implied dependency on external controls.

Participatory governance evolved as a result of stakeholder consultation, beneficiary participation, community ownership and joint planning. It is indicated that beneficiaries, parents, community members and project committees were involved in decision making and execution processes. As a result, it increased the level of commitment, trust and ownership of the project activity. At the same time, the results indicated that this participation was often limited because of the presence of organizational hierarchy, when the ultimate power was with the church leaders and project managers.

An interviewee explained that their governance model was built on shared responsibility among the church leadership, project staff and project committee. Major decisions are made through consultation with key stakeholders, including parents and project beneficiaries, to ensure that different perspectives are considered. He further reported that, the committee meets regularly to review progress, discuss reports, and make informed decisions. Financial records are carefully examined and approved before any funds are disbursed, promoting transparency in the use of resource. In addition, he noted that Compassion International carries out regular monitoring and support visits, which further strengthen accountability and help ensure that project activities are implemented effectively.

Project managers noted that decisions in projects were through consultations with community members, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The project team held regular meetings, had well defined roles that coordinated project activities. They further stated that financial records were reviewed and approved before funds were utilized, while regular financial and activity reports were submitted to both the church and Compassion to enhance accountability.

Another interviewee observed that all employees have clear understanding of their responsibilities because their roles are well defined and communicated from the onset. This clarity helps staff carry out their duties effectively while minimizing duplication of tasks and

misunderstandings. He continued to explain that, each staff member is aware of what is expected and is accountable for their assigned responsibilities. To promote transparency and accountability, the project prepares regular financial and activity reports, which are shared with both the church leadership and Compassion. Finally, he said that the reports provide updates on project implementation, financial performance, achievements and any challenges encountered during the report period. They also serve as an important basis for monitoring progress and making informed decision.

The respondents analysed sustainability in terms of the social impact, economic viability, institution and the environment. According to the project managers, the projects had made a positive social impact because they contributed to education of children and improving welfare of the families. They noted that the projects have helped build a good relationship between the church and the community as well as beneficiary ownership through participation. They also noted that community members had continued to support and participate in project activities.

The respondent reported that the project had made a noticeable difference in the lives of the children and their families. Many children who might otherwise dropped out of school had been able to continue with their education because of the support they receive. Beyond education, the respondent explained that families had also benefited from programs that strengthen their livelihoods, parenting skills and overall well-being, leading to positive changes within the community.

The respondent, however, reported that financial sustainability remained a challenge. It was noted that while the project had made efforts to diversify its sources of income, it still depended significantly on donor support to meet most of its operational programs costs. To reduce this dependence, the respondent explained that the project had introduced income generating activities for caregivers including Savings Group Ministries (SGMs) which are helping to provide alternative source of income to empower caregivers.

Respondents explained governance systems that were based on the combination of hierarchical coordination with participatory approach, when the strategy authority was vested in church leaders, but at the same time project personnel, committees and beneficiaries were involved into the process of planning and implementation of the project.

Moreover, variations within the results were analyzed. Respondents believed that the governance was effective; financial sustainability was the biggest problem as the projects heavily relied on donors. This applied to participation, which increased the feeling of ownership but did not lead to full decentralization of decision making. Large and old projects had a better governance system owing to experience, process and community; small and remote projects had challenges with infrastructure and transportation. An interviewee explained,

There was also a report from another respondent that the project had helped improve the relations between the church and the community. It was noted that there was ownership by parents and beneficiaries. Financial sustainability is difficult due to inadequate funding…churches mobilize available local sources. Leadership structure has also been consistent. The respondent further explained.

Some respondents explained that good governance had positively affected the sustainability of the projects by proper management of resources, finances and accountability of leaders. The respondents mentioned that involvement of the stakeholders in planning has resulted in increased commitment, while ownership of the projects has increased due to community involvement.

A project accountant stated that, governance affects the quality of project resource management and decision execution. The accountant further noted that it had brought about increased trust from beneficiaries and donors through transparent financial management. Stakeholders were more committed to project activities when involved in planning. Accountability also prevented

the misuse of resources and led to greater efficiency. She described that stable leadership ensured that projects continued even during transitions. Clear communication helped resolve problems quickly before they affect implementation and that good governance had therefore strengthened the sustainability of the project.

The managers further explained that strong governance structures had ensured that roles and responsibilities were clearly understood by all participants. Accountability mechanisms reduced misuse of resources, minimized conflicts and improved project performance;

The managers reported that leadership accountability encouraged prudent use of resources. Beneficiary participation enhanced ownership. Reporting increased confidence among the stakeholders. They further stated that decision-making had improved through consideration of diverse perspectives. This had reduced conflicts and improved project performance.

Accountability Structure Members reported that project age had contributed to stronger systems, established procedures and better relationships with the community over time. They explained that larger projects had more resources and beneficiaries but also required stronger planning and coordination;

For instance one ASM from old project explained that older projects have stronger systems because they had gained experience over many years. She goes on to say that their project had established procedures that guided project implementation and financial management. Larger projects usually have more resources but also require stronger coordination. Denominational support is important because churches provided leadership and administrative oversight. Furthermore she explained that projects located in remote areas experienced transport challenges and higher operational costs. These factors sometimes affected service delivery. Despite these challenges, community support had helped many projects remain active.

Project managers further stated that denominational affiliation influenced the level of leadership, financial, and administrative support available, while projects in remote areas faced transport, infrastructure, and operational challenges that affected service delivery. They went on to explain that the length of time a project had been in operation had helped build trust and strong relationship with the community. As projects mature, it gained valuable experience, established stronger local networks and became better positioned to respond to community needs. Larger projects are able to reach more beneficiaries and provided a wider range of services, although they also require more effective planning, coordination and resource management to operate efficiently. They stated that the level of support received from partner churches often varies across denominations depending on their number of beneficiaries. Geographic location influences project implementation. Projects serving remote communities often face challenges such as poor road networks, long travel distance and limited infrastructure, particularly during rainy seasons. Which can delay activities and increase operational costs. Explained a concerned ASM

Project Social workers recommended improved community involvement, building the capacity of leadership, diversifying sources of income, increasing accountability and encouraging monitoring regular and partnerships would enhance the sustainability of projects. Thus, the projects should strengthen community involvement in planning and decision-making processes, as greater participation fostered a sense of ownership and commitment among beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The social worker note that partner churches should also diversify their sources of income by enhancing local fundraising efforts and developing sustainable income generating activities. She suggested that continuous training in governance and financial management should be provided to project leaders to improve their capacity to manage projects effectively. In addition, robust accountability systems should be maintained to promote transparency and sustain the confidence of stakeholders.

Respondents recommended that dependency on donor finances should be reduced through mobilizing local resources, promoting leadership succession, practicing financial accountability, incorporating environmental protection and collaborating with local actors.

A respondent highlighted that reducing dependence on donor money through the development of local resource mobilization strategies should come first. Beneficiaries should keep taking part in planning and implementing projects because they know local needs. Leadership training should be reinforced to ensure smooth transition and continuity. According to her, financial accountability should be kept as one of the priorities for the purpose of maintaining trust from donors and the community. Environmental conservation should also be included in projects activities. Cooperation with local stakeholders could bring more assistance both technical and financial. In addition, the responded noted that all these measures would enhance the sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects.

The respondent's recommendations are consistent with those of Schmidt and Dedovic (2024), who note that the foundation of sustained success is an active participation of stakeholders, institutional capacity, diversified funding sources, accountability and strategic partnerships. Song and Hao (2023) explain that community participation in the planning and implementation phase promotes community ownership and engagement. Additionally, Brunet et al. (2026) highlight that financial resilience is strengthened by mobilization of resources and other income-generating activities. Good governance and financial accountability build trust among various project stakeholders (Hashim et al., 2022). In addition, the focus on environmental protection, and the partnerships formed with government and additional local partners is consistent with assertions of Feng et al. (2022), who identify multi-stakeholder partnerships and environmentally friendly methodologies as important factors in community development-based projects' sustainability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter provides a summary of findings and conclusions for the study. Policy recommendations, for practice and for further research are presented. The contribution of the study to knowledge is also highlighted.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Governance models employed in Compassion-supported church projects

The study assessed governance models employed in Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County to understand how leadership structure, decision making process, accountability mechanisms and stakeholder participation influence project implementation. Hybrid governance had the strongest relationship with sustainability, then hierarchical governance and participatory governance. The findings indicate that the projects operate under a governance framework that combines structured leadership with participatory decision making. While the church leadership provides overall direction and oversight there is deliberate involvement of staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholder in matters affecting project implementation. The finding revealed that decision-making process in the program was hierarchical; there was guidance from the leadership of the church that also included staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders. There were well-defined lines of accountability, well-defined responsibilities and authorities in the program. The program facilitated the goal of the participants and promoted flexibility and autonomy among participants.

The study also found that the governance systems are supported by clearly defined accountability structures. Roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships are well documented, enabling staff, committee members and church leaders to understand their

respective duties. Financial accountability is reinforced through established reporting procedures, routine financial reviews, oversight by both church leadership and Compassion International. These mechanisms promote transparency in resource management and strengthen confidence among stakeholders. In addition, the governance models promote coordination and collaboration among different actors involved in project implementation. Although authority is vested in the leadership structure, project staff are given sufficient operational flexibility to perform their responsibilities and respond to emerging needs within their areas of work. This balance between centralized oversight and operational autonomy contribute to effective service delivery while ensuring that activities remain aligned with organizational policies and donor requirement. The findings further indicate that beneficiary participation is an important component of project governance. Caregivers, parents, and registered beneficiaries are consulted before decision are made on activities that directly affects them. Their Views are gathered through meetings, forums, and regular engagement sessions, allowing project leaders to understand community needs and incorporate local perspectives into planning and implementing. Such participation enhances ownership and promotes activities and encourages greater commitment from beneficiaries.

Stakeholders participate in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project activities. Their involvement facilitates coordination of resources, strengthens accountability, and promotes shared responsibility in achieving project objectives. It also enables the project to build stronger partnerships within the community and enhances the sustainability on interventions.

5.2.2 Sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects

The study evaluated the sustainability of selected Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. The projects encouraged good relationships in the community, improved ownership, and met social needs as well as fostered social integration. There was a high level

of community participation in the projects, hence making it easy for the projects to have lasting social effects. The financial backing of the projects was consistent but there was struggle following a decline in finances. The local efforts towards raising funds and integrating the projects into organizational structures were not present. Consistent leadership in the projects, operational consistency even after a change in leadership, qualified personnel and policies regulating the projects boosted projects sustainability. Issues relating to the environment were incorporated in the projects through encouraging environmentally friendly practices such as marking world environmental days and sustainable use of natural resources.

5.2.3 Relationship between governance features and project sustainability

The study analyzed the relationships between governance models and sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. Results indicated a positive and statistically significant effect of decision making on the sustainability of projects (β = 0.158, p =0.001). There was a positive and statistically significant effect of accountability on project sustainability (β = 0.098, p =0.020). Results revealed a positive and statistically insignificant relationship between stakeholder participation and on project sustainability (β = 0.061, p =0.097). There was a positive and statistically significant effect of financial practices on the sustainability of the projects (β = 0.084, p =0.020). Project managers practiced good governance through the involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process, good communication and the decision-making process. Accountability was achieved through responsible leadership, good reporting, and good management of resources and dealing with misuse of funds. Beneficiary participation was encouraged through involvement in planning and the decision-making process. Good financial practices were practiced through transparency in recording, involving stakeholders in the budgeting process and good monitoring of the use of resources. The program had stable leadership structures, good management of leadership transitions and good leadership practices.

5.2.4 Effects of contextual elements on project sustainability

The study determined the effects of contextual elements on sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. There was a positive and statistically significant effect of contextual elements on project sustainability ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$). Projects had community members. This shows that they have their presence well established. These projects had benefitted from denominational support systems.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes that Compassion-supported church projects employ hybrid governance, hierarchical governance and participatory governance models. The hybrid governance model had the greatest association with sustainability. Participatory, hierarchical or hybrid models performed differently.

In addition, the study concludes that Compassion-supported church projects are socially, institutionally and environmentally sustainable. Socially, the projects have helped improve the wellbeing of children, families and communities. Institutionally, the projects benefit from established leadership structures, experienced project personnel, sound governance systems and operational policies that support continuity and effective service delivery. From an environment's perspective, many projects have incorporated conservation practices that encourage responsible use of natural resources.

The study concludes that decision-making, accountability is achieved by including all stakeholders in the decision-making process, participation, good leadership, sound resource management and accountability. Stakeholders participate leads to informed decision making due to the contribution made by each one of them using their experience. Sound financial

management practices ensure that project resources are utilized efficiently and for their intended purposes, thereby improving the long- term viability of project interventions.

Additionally, the study concludes that sustainability of a project is dependent on its operational time, the number of beneficiaries, the denominational backing and the geographical area. This determines what kinds of opportunities and problems the projects face. The longer projects operate, the better their governance structures, leadership and community connections become and the better equipped they are to deal with changes.

5.4 Recommendations

Recommendations are organized into policy recommendations, practice recommendations, and recommendations for further research to guide project implementers, partner churches, Compassion international policymakers, and future researchers.

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

Participatory governance should be promoted through a well-established policy framework that promotes active participation of beneficiaries, project managers, church leaders and community members in decision-making process. Project reporting mechanisms should be well-defined for better coordination, accountability and ownership of the project. Church leadership should promote collaborative communication and cooperation of the various stakeholders to facilitate efficient management of the project. Projects should have clear reporting mechanisms for accountability that will outline their respective duties, authority structure and decision-making process.

Financial sustainability of the project should be enhanced through the development of strategies to increase resource mobilization at the local level, income generation and minimal dependency on external sources of financing. The financial accountability of the projects could

be improved through clear budgeting, accurate record keeping, reporting and monitoring of resource utilization. Compassion International should continue to provide guidance on financial management and capacity building. Projects should also expand viable IGAs, social enterprises, agricultural ventures and other appropriate economic activities that can generate additional income to support project operations. Proper budgeting, wise handling of expenses, proper financial record-keeping, regular reporting and financial audit must be done on a consistent basis for purposes of enhancing transparency and good stewardship of project resources. It is important for compassion international to continue offering technical support, financial management training, mentoring and capacity building programs that would help in developing the financial management skills of project personnel.

Leadership development, succession planning and institutional strengthening should be enhanced using a governance and risk manuals, to sustain the project through leadership transition periods. Partner churches should integrate the projects in their church and community structures. Training of the project management teams should also continue. Structured mentorship programmes leadership training, and continuous professional development should be provided to equip project staff, church leaders and project committee members with the knowledge and skills required to manage projects effectively. In addition, church should integrate Compassion supported projects more closely into their exiting church governance and community development structures. Such integration will strengthen institutional ownership and ensure that project activities continue to receive administrative, spiritual, and organizational support even when external circumstances change. Project management teams should also receive regular trainings in governance, financial management, project planning, monitoring and evaluation, child protection and community engagement. Improvement of institutional capacity in the mentioned spheres will help to enhance project efficiency and make its success sustainable beyond the donor period of funding.

The research suggests that Compassion International and its partner churches use sustainability methods that consider the particularities of project environments. It is necessary to adjust project assistance in accordance with the following criteria: project age, organizational development, number of beneficiaries, denominational support, availability of resources and geographical location. In order not to use the same interventions for all projects, it is crucial to consider the particular strengths and weaknesses of each project.

Work in rural or underserved areas deserves special focus as physical barriers to resources, technical assistance, government services, and opportunities for development are often more profound in these locations. Such programs may call for further logistical assistance, capacity building efforts, and enhancement of local institutional ties to promote better service provision and sustained viability.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Practice

Compassion International-supported church projects management should build on participatory governance through ensuring that beneficiaries, project members and church leaders are involved in project planning and implementation. This can be achieved through clarity on roles and responsibilities of different parties and ensuring that the lines of communication are kept open. It is also important to hold periodic stakeholder meetings. It will also be necessary to have management and committee meetings on a regular basis to monitor the progress of projects, discuss problems arising from the project and agree on appropriate corrective measures. Communication channels will also be developed for effective flow of information.

There should be an improvement of sustainability strategies by increasing community involvement, improving support systems and having strong institutional structures. There is need for continued investment in development of human capital, stability in leadership and

sound policy framework to ensure continuity. Environmental sustainability strategies should also be adopted in the project operations through conservation and efficient management of available resources.

Project managers should consider contextual factors during planning and implementation of project activities, to make the projects more sustainable. Projects should benefit from their operational expertise, relationship with the local community and denominational backing for achieving more sustainable outcomes. Furthermore, special attention should be given to projects in remote locations through devising practical approaches to cope with geographical and operational issues.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationship between governance and the sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County. However, there is a need for further studies to broaden the understanding of governance practices and sustainability across different contexts. Future research could replicate this study in other counties within Kenya or in other countries where Compassion-International supported church projects operates. Broadening the geographical coverage will facilitate comparisons of the results and assist in determining the extent of applicability of the findings to other locations apart from Taita-Taveta County.

Project teams should enhance their governance in relation to sustainability by improving on transparency, accountability and finances. It is important for financial reporting, documentation and resource management to be done regularly in order to increase stakeholder confidence. The leadership teams should also develop succession plans.

Selected aspects of governance which include decision making, accountability, participation and financial processes were investigated and it was established that they influence sustainability of projects. However, there are other aspects of governance and organization that can be examined as part of future studies. They include leadership style, organizational culture, strategy formulation, human resources management and risk management. This will offer a comprehensive understanding of the key determinants of sustainability of projects.

Data collection in this study was done from members of the project staff, project beneficiaries, caregivers, ASM and patrons. These are important sources of data regarding governance and sustainability of projects but future studies should use a broad range of respondents. They may include church leaders, community leaders, local government, donors and a group of church facing team.

Possible areas for future research can include adopting longitudinal approaches to analyzing how governance and sustainability change through time. Analyzing how projects develop and change at various stages can shed more light on how governance arrangements change over time, and how these changes affect the performance of projects and sustainability in the long run. This information will be useful for making policy recommendations, especially for Compassion International and partner churches as well as faith-based organizations implementing community development programs.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge as it examines the impact of governance models on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects. It expands existing literature by comparing governance models and their elements (decision-making, accountability, financial practices, stakeholder involvement) and contextual factors beyond traditional focus on donor dependency and financial management. The study employs a mixed-

methods comparative case study approach to provide evidence on governance-sustainability interrelations. These results will help Compassion International, its partner churches and policy makers improve governance practices in their sustainable community development projects.

REFERENCIES

Abdul-Rahaman, A., Issahaku, G., & Abdulai, A.-N. (2025). Determinants of farmer-based organizations' sustainability in peri-urban Ghana. *Journal of Agricultural and Rural Development Studies, 4*(1), 1–18.

Akintan, O. E., Arowoiya, V., Chan, M., van Kan, D., & Yang, W. (2026). Governance Strategies for Execution of Public Building Projects. Journal of Legal Affairs and Dispute Resolution in Engineering and Construction, 18(2). https://doi.org/10.1061/jladah.ladr-1320

Asiachi, V. A., Otinga (Phd), Dr. C. H. N., & Miroga (Phd), Dr. J. (2022). Influence of Project Governance and Resource Mobilization on Sustainability of Community Water Projects in Kakamega County. Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management, 9(1). https://doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v9i1.2201

Banks, R., & Ledbetter, B. M. (2004). *Reviewing leadership: A Christian evaluation of current approaches*. Baker Academic.

Brass, J. N. (2016). *Allies or adversaries: NGOs and the state in Africa*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316411293

Clarke, G., & Jennings, M. (Eds.). (2008). *Development, civil society and faith-based organizations: Bridging the sacred and the secular*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Compassion International. (2025). *Accountability report 2025*. Compassion International.

Compassion International. (2025). *How does Compassion choose churches to partner with?* Compassion International. https://www.compassion.com

Compassion Kenya. (2025a). *Governance guidelines for church partners*. Compassion Kenya.

Compassion Kenya. (2025b). *Governance and accountability framework*. Compassion Kenya.

Cornforth, C. (2012). Nonprofit governance research: Limitations of the focus on boards and suggestions for new directions. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 41*(6), 1116–1135. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764011427959

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K. (2017). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Routledge.

Easterly, W. (2006). *The white man's burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. Penguin Books.

Feng, G., Hao, S., & Li, X. (2022). Project Sustainability and Public-Private Partnership: The Role of Government Relation Orientation and Project Governance. Sustainability (Switzerland), 14(8). https://doi.org/10.3390/su14084724

Field, A. (2024). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Froelich, K. A. (1999). Diversification of revenue strategies: Evolving resource dependence in nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 28*(3), 246–268. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764099283002

Government of Kenya. (2021). *Taita Taveta County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2018–2022*. Government Printer.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.

Hashim, M. Z., Chao, L., & Wang, C. (2022). The role of project managers' attributes in project sustainability management and project performance under China-Pakistan economic corridor. Chinese Management Studies, 16(3), 708–731. https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-08-2021-0333

Hennink, M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code saturation versus meaning saturation: How many interviews are enough? *Qualitative Health Research, 27*(4), 591–608. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344

Hillo, J., Vento, I., & Sjöblom, S. (2024). *Collaboration or hierarchy: Experimental evidence on governance modes and legitimacy perceptions*. *Journal of Public Affairs, 24*(4), e2952. https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2952

Kaumbulu, A. K., Muathe, S. M., & James, R. (2020). Governance Issues, Quality and Sustainability: Fact or Fallacy in Youth Empowerment Project in Kenya. International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management. Retrieved from http://ijecm.co.uk/

Koroma, A. B., Jalloh, I. C., & Turay, S. N. (2026). Embedding Sustainability in Project Management: Empirical Insights on Green Practices, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Performance, and Competitive Advantage. International Journal of Science and Business, 49(1), 57–72. https://doi.org/10.58970/ijsb.2634

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

Lockwood, M. (2010). Good governance for terrestrial protected areas: A framework, principles and performance outcomes. *Journal of Environmental Management, 91*(3), 754–766. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2009.10.005

Mantey, V., Birner, R., Birkenberg, A., Bosch, C., Guesbeogo Yameogo, V., & Mburu, J. (2026). *Governance challenges of smallholder agricultural carbon projects and the potential of digital tools: Insights from Kenya*. *Environmental Management, 76*, Article 96. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-026-02410-7

Marshall, K., & Keough, L. (2004). *Mind, heart and soul in the fight against poverty*. World Bank.

Mbiti, J. S. (1969). *African religions and philosophy*. Heinemann.

Micheni, A. K., Were, Dr. S., & Namusonge, Prof. G. (2025). Influence of the moderating role of legal & regulatory framework on project governance and sustainability of donor-funded projects in the health sector in Kenya. International Journal of Social Sciences Management and Entrepreneurship (IJSSME), 9(1), 88–102. Retrieved from https://www.sagepublishers.com/index.php/ijssme/article/view/853

Mignenan, V., Nandingar, S. M., Moussa, M. A., & Bayock, E. D. (2025). Project Governance Practices: Influence on the Appropriation and Sustainability of the Values of Infrastructure Projects. International Business Research, 18(1), 14. https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v18n1p14

Moshood, T. D., Rotimi, J. O. B., & Shahzad, W. (2025, December 1). Enhancing sustainability considerations in construction industry projects. Environment, Development and Sustainability. Springer Science and Business Media B.V. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-024-04946-2

Moyo, D. (2009). *Dead aid: Why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2014). *Accountability and democratic governance: Orientations and principles for development*. OECD Publishing.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *Applying evaluation criteria thoughtfully*. OECD Publishing.

Paliokaitė, A., & Sadauskaitė, A. (2023). *Institutionalization of participative and collaborative governance: Case studies of Lithuania 2030 and Finland 2030*. *Futures, 150,* 103174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2023.103174

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. Harper & Row.

Rankohi, S., Bourgault, M., Pellerin, R., Coulombe, C., Drouin, N., Gakwaya, M., & Harvey, J. (2025). Where Project Governance and Sustainability Meet? A Review of Literature and Discussion on IPD Governance Structure. In Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering (Vol. 630 LNCE, pp. 58–71). Springer Science and Business Media Deutschland GmbH. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-84224-5_5

Schmidt, C., & Dedovic, S. (2024). Sustainability and governance of the mGov4EU project. In From Electronic to Mobile Government (pp. 165–180). Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-64471-9_10

Soares, I., Fernandes, G., & Santos, J. M. R. C. A. (2024). Sustainability in Project Management Practices. Sustainability (Switzerland), 16(10). https://doi.org/10.3390/su16104275

Song, Y., & Hao, S. (2023). Influence of Project Governance Mechanisms on the Sustainable Development of Public-Private Partnership Projects: An Empirical Study from China. Buildings, 13(10). https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings13102424

Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2022). Institutional logics and organizational change in social enterprises. *Academy of Management Review, 47*(1), 112–135.

Tutu, D. (1999). *No future without forgiveness*. Doubleday.

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *UNDP evaluation guidelines*. UNDP.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Guidance note on impact management for development cooperation*. UNDP.

United Nations Development Programme. (2023). *Governance for sustainable development in Africa*. UNDP.

Wodon, Q. (Ed.). (2010). *Faith-inspired organizations and development*. World Bank.

Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper and Row.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Young, N. (2021). *Governance of Projects: A Comparative Analysis of Project Delivery Approaches.* (Mixed-method comparison of hierarchical, agile and hybrid governance.)

Zhou, L., Dai, Y. (2023) What is the Role of Hierarchical Interventions? Insights from the Evolution of Water Collaborative Governance in China. *Environmental Management* 71, 641–65. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-022-01686-9

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

This questionnaire collects data on governance models and their effect on the sustainability of Compassion International-supported church projects in Tait-Taveta County. Kindly respond to all questions as appropriate.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC/BACKGROUND DATA

1. Indicate your age?

i. ☐ Below 18
ii. ☐ 18–24
iii. ☐ 25–34
iv. ☐ 35–44
v. ☐ 45–54
vi. ☐ 55 and above

2. Indicate your gender?

i. ☐ Male
ii. ☐ Female

3. What is your marital status?

i. ☐ Single
ii. ☐ Married
iii. ☐ Separated/Divorced
iv. ☐ Widowed

4. What is the highest level of education completed?

i. ☐ No formal education
ii. ☐ Primary education
iii. ☐ Secondary education
iv. ☐ College

v. ☐ University

5. How long have you been part of this church-based Compassion International-supported program?

i. ☐ Less than 1 year
ii. ☐ 1–3 years
iii. ☐ 4–6 years
iv. ☐ More than 6 years

6. How did you first become involved in the program?

i. ☐ Registered through church invitation
ii. ☐ Referred by community member
iii. ☐ Self-enrolled
iv. ☐ Through outreach event

7. What type of support do you or your household receive? (Tick all that apply)

i. ☐ Educational support
ii. ☐ Health/medical support
iii. ☐ Food assistance
iv. ☐ Spiritual development activities
v. ☐ Skills/vocational training
vi. ☐ Economic empowerment

SECTION B: GOVERNANCE MODELS

Tick off your level of dis(agreement) to the statements on the Likert scale; Key: 5 is strongly agree, 4 is agree, 3 in not sure, 2 is disagree and 1 is strongly disagree

Statement **Hierarchical Governance Model**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Decision-making in this program is concentrated at the church leadership level.					
Most program decisions are made without involving beneficiaries.					
There are clear reporting lines from beneficiaries to church leaders.					
Roles and responsibilities in the program are clearly defined and strictly followed.					
Authority in the program is formally structured and centralized.					

Statement **Participatory Governance Model**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Program participants have autonomy in carrying out assigned activities.					
Flexibility is allowed in implementing program activities.					
Leadership encourages self-initiative among teams and beneficiaries.					
Beneficiaries can make decisions related to their participation in the program.					
The program supports shared responsibility rather than strict supervision.					

Statement **Hybrid Governance Model**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Decision-making is shared between church leadership, staff, and beneficiaries.					

Different stakeholders collaborate in planning and implementing program activities.					
The governance structure allows adaptation depending on the situation.					
There is active engagement between leadership and beneficiaries in decision-making.					
Responsibilities are distributed among different actors in the program.					

SECTION C: GOVERNANCE FEATURES

Statement **Decision-Making**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Decision-making in the program involves relevant stakeholders at different levels.					
Major program decisions are made in a timely manner.					
Beneficiaries are involved in decisions that directly affect them.					
Leadership ensures that decisions are communicated to all participants.					
Decision-making processes are easy to understand.					

Statement **Accountability**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Program leaders are answerable to stakeholders for their actions.					
There are clear mechanisms for reporting misuse of program resources.					
Leadership regularly provides explanations on how program funds are used.					
Feedback from beneficiaries is acted upon.					
Accountability systems help improve trust in program management.					

Statement **Participation**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Beneficiaries are actively involved in program planning activities.					
Community members are invited to participate in program meetings.					
Stakeholders have equal opportunity to express their views in discussions.					
Participation of beneficiaries influences program decisions.					
The program encourages inclusive involvement of relevant groups.					

Statement **Financial Management**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
The program has transparent financial management procedures.					
Program funds are used for their intended purposes.					
Financial records are properly maintained.					
Budgeting processes involve relevant stakeholders.					
There is effective monitoring of how program resources are spent.					

Statement **Leadership Stability**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Program leadership remains consistent over time.					
Leadership transitions are well managed.					
Leaders demonstrate continuity in program vision.					
The leadership structure is well established.					
Stable leadership contributes to smooth program implementation.					

SECTION D: MEDIATING VARIABLES

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
The program serves a large number of beneficiaries in this community.					
This program has been operating in the community for a long period of time.					
The program benefits from strong support from its denominational structure.					
Remote or hard-to-reach areas face challenges in program implementation.					

SECTION E: SUSTAINABILITY

Statement **Social sustainability**	5	4	3	2	1
The project has strengthened relationships within the community.					
Beneficiaries feel a strong sense of ownership of the project.					
The project continues to meet the social needs of the community.					
Community members actively support the continuation of the project.					
The project has improved social cohesion among stakeholders.					

Statement **Financial sustainability**	5	4	3	2	1
The project has stable sources of financial support.					
The project is able to continue operating even when external funding reduces.					
There are effective strategies for mobilizing local financial resources.					
Financial resources are managed in a way that supports long-term continuity.					
The project has reduced over-dependence on external donors over time.					

Statement **Institutional sustainability**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
The project is well integrated into the organizational structure.					
Leadership structures are strong enough to support long-term operations.					
The project can continue functioning despite changes in leadership.					
Staff have adequate skills to sustain the project.					
There are clear policies that guide project continuity.					

Statement **Environmental sustainability**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
The project promotes environmentally friendly practices in its activities.					
Project activities do not negatively harm the local environment.					
The project encourages proper use of natural resources in the community.					
Environmental considerations are included in project implementation.					
The project supports awareness of environmental conservation.					

THANK YOU

Appendix II: Interview Guide

i. How would you describe the governance model used in Compassion-supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County; what evidence supports this?
ii. How sustainable are these projects on social impact, financial viability, institutional stability and environmental considerations?
iii. How do governance features influence the sustainability of these projects?
iv. How does project age, size, denominational affiliation and geographic location affect how the projects are sustained?
v. What best practices would you recommend to improve sustainability of Compassion-supported church projects?

Appendix III: Letter of Introduction

Joram Kapala Salama,

Scott Christian University

Mobile Number: 0716 477 695

Email Address: joramkapala@gmail.com

I am a Master's student at the Scott Christian University. My research is on "Comparative analysis of governance models and their impact on the sustainability of Compassion International - supported church projects in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya"

This letter requests you to participate in the study. You will be issued with a questionnaire. Kindly answer all the questions. Your participation in the study has no risk. Data will be used for the study's purposes.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



JORAM KAPALA SALAMA

ADM No. MLM/004/2024

Appendix IV: University Clearance

Scott Christian UNIVERSITY
A Dynamic Centre of Academic Excellence

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND POST GRADUATE STUDIES

Our Ref: SCU/RPGS/01/16/06/26 **Date:** June 16, 2026

The Director General-CEO
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)
P.O. Box 30623–00100
Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Sir,

RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR JORAM KAPALA SALAMA (REG. NO. MLM/004/2024) FOR ISSUANCE OF A RESEARCH PERMIT.

This letter serves to confirm that **Mr. Joram Kapala Salama,** Registration Number MLM/004/2024, is a bona fide student at Scott Christian University pursuing a Master's in leadership and management degree. Having successfully completed the coursework component of the programme, the student is currently undertaking the research phase of his studies, which will culminate in the preparation and submission of a Master's Thesis.

The approved research topic is: **"Comparative analysis of Governance Models and their impact on the sustainability of Compassion International - supported church projects in Taita-Taveta county, Kenya."**

The purpose of this letter is to introduce **Mr. Joram Kapala Salama** to your office and request the issuance of a research permit to enable him to collect data and conduct the study in the designated research area.

The University has reviewed and approved the proposed research and is satisfied that it meets the academic requirements for the award of the degree. We kindly request your office to accord him the necessary assistance and facilitate the processing of the research permit.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Elijah M. Siringi PhD
DIRECTOR – RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
SCOTT CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY.

P.O. Box 49-90100, Machakos, KENYA Phone:+254713745404/+254734833832 Email: info@scott.ac.ke Website:www.scott.ac.ke
Building Leadership | Challenging Minds | Growing Faith.

Appendix V: Authorization by churches through the Partnership Facilitator.

INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR DATA COLLECTION

Date: 12/6/2026

To: The Project Director/Church Leadership

RE: DATA COLLECTION FOR MASTER'S RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to introduce **Mr. Joram Kapala**, a Master of Arts in Leadership and Management student at Scott Christian University, who is conducting a research study entitled:

"Impact of Governance Models on the Sustainability of Faith-Based Organization Projects: A Case of Compassion International Supported Church Projects in Taita Taveta County, Kenya."

The purpose of this letter is to kindly request your support and cooperation by granting him access to your project and relevant respondents for purposes of collecting data required for the study. The information obtained will be used strictly for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Your cooperation and support will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Benson Odumbe
Partnership Facilitator- Taita- Taveta Cluster.
Compassion International Kenya

Appendix VI: Research permit by NACOSTI

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **180694**

Date of Issue: **25/June/2026**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr.. JORAM KAPALA SALAMA of Scott Christian University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Taita-Taveta on the topic: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE MODELS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL - SUPPORTED CHURCH PROJECTS IN TAITA-TAVETA COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 25/June/2027.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/26/4191549**

180694

Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions