

CULTIVATING RECOGNITION

**A Classic Grounded Theory
of E-learning Providers
Working in East Africa**



By TITUS TOSSY

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University of Cape Town

**Cultivating Recognition: A Classic
Grounded Theory of E-Learning Providers
Working in East Africa**

By

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Department of Information Systems

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Supervisor:

Prof. Irwin Brown

FEBRUARY, 2012

Declaration

I hereby declare that

**Cultivating Recognition: A Classic Grounded Theory of E-Learning
Providers Working in East Africa**

is my own work, and all sources have been acknowledged through referencing.



T.TOSSY

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"... rather than debate {the} relative merits of the Grounded Theory {approaches}, {it is} suggest{ed} that novice researchers need to select the method that best suits their cognitive style and develop analytic skills through doing research" (Heath & Cowley, 2004:1)

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God bless you all!

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and examine the main concern amongst e-learning providers tasked with e-learning activities (design, delivery, implementation, etc) in East Africa, including Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. In this study the Classic Grounded Theory research methodology was used in order to identify the main concern of e-learning providers in these countries. In the course of repeated encounters with e-learning providers, this study found the concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" to emerge as the main concern or core variable amongst these e-learning providers. The core variable within the Classic Grounded Theory research method is the main entity that accounts for most of the variation in the data. . The e-learning providers were shown to be continually striving to resolve the issue of how to cultivate recognition from those who sponsor and monitor the projects with which they are tasked. Without proper recognition from their various stakeholders, the e-learning providers were unable to successfully deliver e-learning programs to the targeted learners.

The research discovered that there were two key sub-core variables that enabled the "*Cultivation of Recognition*": "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*". The process of "*Legitimizing*" involves convincing the e-learning stakeholders that the e-learning programs and projects will be delivered in a timely, valid and sustainable manner. "*Credentializing*" aims to enhance the stakeholders' belief in the e-learning provider's competence prior to the start of the e-learning project, given that sponsors and stakeholders would be unwilling to commission a project if they believe an e-learning professional's ability to deliver in terms of both financial and operational quality parameters is in question.

In addition to the findings, two main implications emerged from the research. Firstly, for those working within the context of e-learning delivery within East African countries, it is not sufficient for e-learning providers simply to possess or demonstrate a high level of technical competence. They need also to be trained and mentored in how to cultivate the recognition of potential stakeholders before they canvas for e-learning projects. Secondly the possibility exists for career academics in any discipline to enhance their own research funding prospects by mastering the process of Cultivating Recognition.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the four most important people, present and past, in my life.

To my wife, **Mpe Paulo**, who has stood beside me for many difficult years and never wavered in her love and support of all that I strived to do. You are truly my hero. Without you, this research would not have been possible. Thank you, my love.

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To my only Mom, the late **Catherine Tossy**. Your love and support for me during my early years and belief in me were my inspiration. Your personal struggles to care for seven children left to you by your late husband and the complications and hardships you endured provided me with an early understanding of the importance of this research and the choice of research methodology. I love you and miss you terribly!

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

CAI	-	Computer Assisted Instruction
CBL	-	Computer-Based Learning
CBT	-	Computer-Based Training
CD-ROM	-	Computer Disc Read Only Memory
CGT	-	Classic Grounded Theory
CGTM	-	Classic Grounded Theory Methodology
CTAL	-	The Commission on Technology and Adult Learning
DfES	-	Department of Education and Skills
EA	-	East Africa
EAC	-	East African Community
EGT	-	Evolved Grounded Theory Approach
GT	-	Grounded Theory
HEI	-	Higher Education Institutions
IBL	-	Internet Based Learning
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technologies
IS	-	Information Systems
MOODLE	-	Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment Organization

PDA	-	Personal Digital Assistant
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
WB	-	World Bank
WBI	-	Web-Based Instruction
WBL	-	Web-Based Learning
WBT	-	Web-Based Training

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background to the Study

1.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction and background to the study. The chapter has six main sections. As shown in Figure 1 below, the first section of this chapter provides an historical background to the East Africa (EA) region which is the focus of the study. The second section provides a brief overview of the status, challenges, failures and problems of e-learning in Higher Learning Institutions (HEIs) in EA, The third section will discuss different types and models of e-learning research so far , both inductive¹ and deductive² models. The fourth section will present a discussion of the research objectives, examining the various types of Grounded Theory approaches, focusing on the one used by this study, in order to justify the relevance and importance of this study in terms of the phenomenon of e-learning in EA and the predominant types of e-learning research which has and is being done in this area. The fifth section of the chapter will explain the researcher's professional concerns. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the structure of the thesis. All the

¹ An inductive approach is a research type which is a bottom-up approach, moving from specific observation, patterns, and a tentative hypothesis, to a broader generalisation and theories (Burney & Mahmood , 2006; Trochim, 2006)

² A deductive approach is a research type which is a top-down approach, moving from the general (theory) to the specific. (Burney & Mahmood , 2006; Trochim, 2006)

sections of the chapter are carefully linked in order to provide a comprehensive and coherent background and motivation for this study.

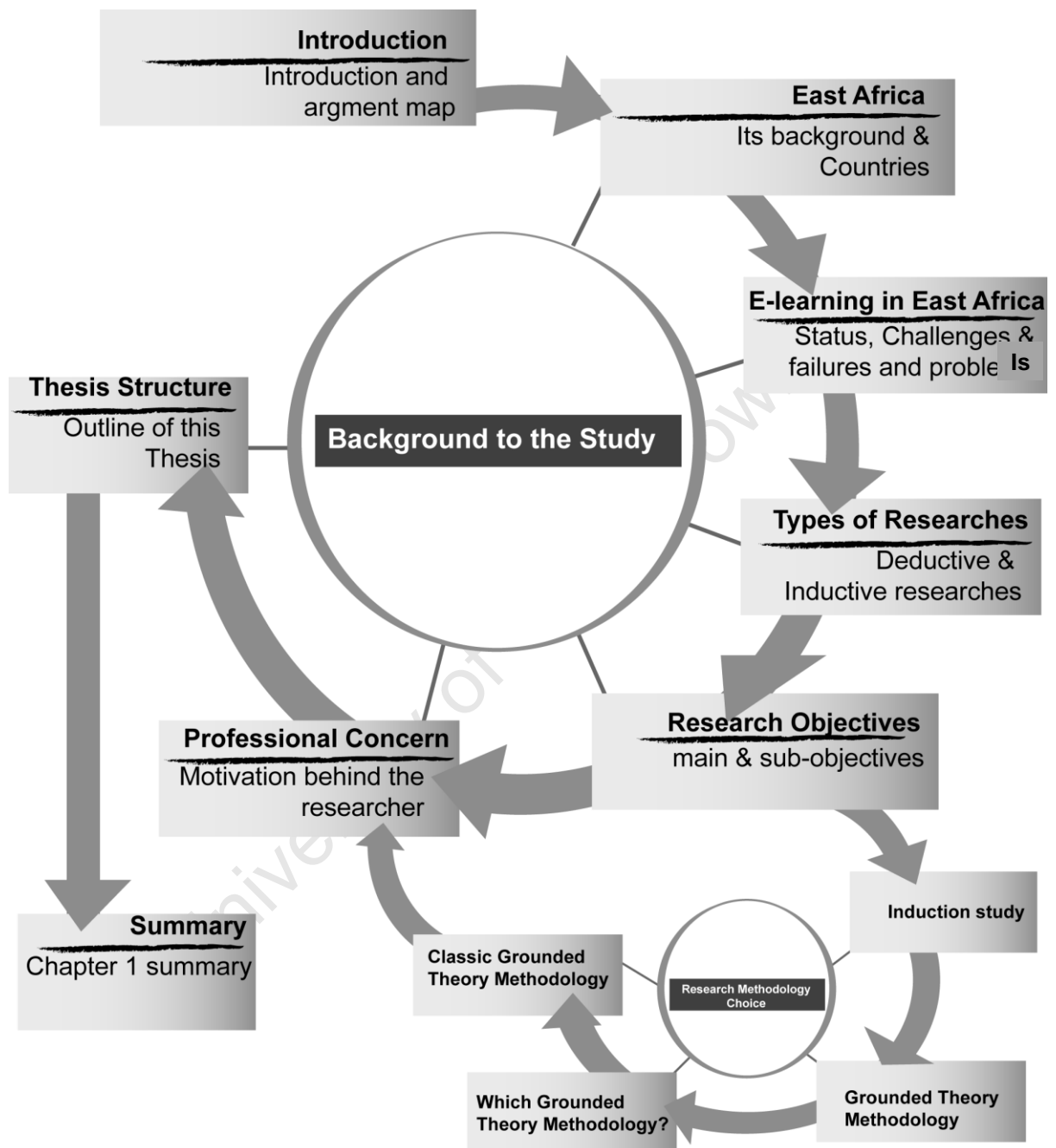


Figure 1: The Argument structure of Chapter One

1.2. Background to the study

1.2.1. East Africa

The East African Countries targeted for this study were the Republic of Kenya, Republic of Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The choice of such countries within the East Africa region was based on the existing East African Community (EAC). As noted by EAC (2001) in the Treaty Establishing the East African Community, article 3 (1):

"... the members of the community in this treaty referred to as the partner states shall be the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania ..."

Historically the three countries have been economically and diplomatically linked since 1919 (EAC, 2011). Such links have included:

- Customs Union between Kenya and Uganda (1917).Tanzania joined this union in 1927
- East African High Commission (1948-1961)
- East African Common Services Organisation (1961-1967)
- East African Community (1967-1977)
- East African Cooperation (1993-2000)
- East African Community (2000- Present)

The three states enjoy historical, commercial, industrial, cultural and other ties (EAC, 2001).

1.2.2. Higher Learning Institutions in East Africa

Included in the process of integrating the East Africa Community region was the establishment of Inter-university Councils for East Africa (EAC, 2001) for the purpose of broadening and increasing interaction among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the region. In East Africa regional higher education interaction and cooperation initiatives were founded during the period 1930 to 1960 during the pre-independence era when Makerere University College in Uganda was the only higher education institution in the region and which, in addition to Ugandan students, served students from Kenya, the then Tanganyika, and Zanzibar (IUCE, 2001). At that time HIEs such as Makerere University College in Uganda existed as campuses under the control of, and certificated by, various colonizing countries. For example, Makerere College in Uganda was offering degrees from the University of London (Chacha, 2009). During the process of regional integration, and towards the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, HEIs in the region were experiencing significant transformation. For example, due to a series of financial crises in many East Africa (EA) countries during this time, the HEIs in the region could not be adequately financed to cater for the ever-increasing student enrolment (Chacha, 2009). During this period donors began to reduce funding. For example, the World Bank (WB³) reduced the proportion of funds allocated to HEIs in African countries from 17% between 1985-1989 to a mere 7% between 1995 and 2001 (Chacha,

³ World Bank, a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world, available at www.worldbank.org

2009). In addition most HEIs in the region lacked rapid expansion plans to cope with the increasing demand for higher education. In the late nineties Sifuna (1998:7) observed that:

“There has been no planning in university education for a considerable length of time. The increasing demand for higher education is also seen to have contributed to the lack of planning.”

Sifuna (1998) reveals that rapid expansion of university education was a spontaneous rather than a planned response to the high demand for higher education. With the increasingly large flows of students from schools, popular demand for higher education increased. People seemed to be investing a lot of hope in higher education as a means of economically enriching and developing the next generation. Such an increase in the demand for higher education required an increase in the number of HEIs in the EA region. The rapid expansion of university education has resulted in a number of challenges. According to a UNESCO⁴ World Conference on Higher Education (1998), the low level of funding from the exchequer limited access in relation to the population level, and increased enrolment without a commensurate improvement in available facilities. Gender inequality and limited research capacity were just some of the problems facing universities in the region at the end of the 20th century. These problems led to fears on the part of e-learning receivers that the quality of education was following a downward trend in most of these universities. Indeed, Chacha (2009) argues that there was, and continues to

⁴ UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations, available at www.unesco.org

be, a serious shortage of public funds for expansion, especially for physical infrastructure and teaching materials.

1.2.3. Information and Communication Technologies in East Africa

In a contemporary setting, in the 21st century, it is unlikely that there is a sector in East Africa, including the education sector, which functions without integrating Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into its operations. There is increased use of ICT in every aspect of the economy in East Africa (Sife, et al. 2007). It does not take an ICT specialist to see that there is ongoing ICT use and development in East Africa. ICT use is concentrated more in urban areas than in rural areas due to the availability of supporting infrastructure, such as electricity and ICT expertise (Ndume et al. 2008). Sife et al. (2007) argue that, due to lack of infrastructure (electricity, internet access, bandwidth and others), the use of ICTs in rural areas is yet to reach a level which compares with that in urban areas. There are ongoing debates about the use of ICTs in various sectors, not excluding the education sector, and including conferences and other forums. The education sector has witnessed rapid growth in the use of ICTs in comparison with other sectors such as agriculture (Sife et al. 2007). The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in teaching and learning opens new vistas to education and its accessibility (Galagan, 2000). Olatokun (2008) argues that ICTs have become a potent force in transforming social, economic, educational, and political life both globally and in East Africa and other developing regions. ICTs provide an opportunity for educational institutions to harness and use technology to complement and support the teaching and learning process.

1.2.4. E-learning

E-learning is an example of the use of these ICTs to support teaching and learning. Wentling et al. (2000:5) defined e-learning as:

“The acquisition and use of knowledge distributed and facilitated primarily by electronic means. This form of learning currently depends on networks and computers but will likely evolve into systems consisting of a variety of channels (e.g. Wireless, satellite), and technologies (e.g. Cellular phones, PDA⁵s) as they are developed and adopted. E-learning can take the form of courses as well as modules and smaller learning objects. E-learning may incorporate synchronous or asynchronous access and may be distributed geographically with varied limits of time.” (Wentling et al., 2000:5).

The use of e-learning can be via CD-ROM⁶, a communication network, or the Internet (Yieke, 2005) and has the added value of flexibility (“anywhere, anytime, anyplace”). ‘E-learning’ captures a wide range of terms (Albert & Mori, 2001) referred to as ‘labels’ which have been used to describe the concept of e-learning. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, these labels include, but are not limited to, Web Based Learning (WBL), Web Based Instruction (WBI), Web Based Training (WBT), Internet Based Training (IBT), Online Resource Based Learning (ORBL), Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL), Tele-Learning (T-L), Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL), Mobile Learning (M-learning or ML), Nomadic Learning, Off-Site

⁵ PDA- Personal Digital Assistant; A small handheld computer used to store information such as addresses and telephone numbers and for simple word processing and use of spread sheets.

⁶ CD-ROM - Compact Disc-Read Only Memory, CD-ROM drives or optical drives are CD players inside computers that can have speeds in the range of 1x and beyond, and have the capability of playing audio CDs and computer data CDs.(www.computerhope.org)

Learning (Collis, 1996; Khana, 2005; Yieke, 2005; Bates, 2001; Dam, 2004; Goodear et al., 2001; Pegler & Littlejohn, 2007; Dabbagh et al., 2000; Barbara, 2002, 2004; Cramer, et al., 2000; Salzbert & Polyson, 1995; Schreiber, et al., 1998; Schank, 2001 and Singh, 2003). These labels will be examined in detail in Chapter 4.

For the purpose of setting parameters to, and refining, the definition, the study will use the term e-learning, eLearning, and eLearning interchangeably throughout this thesis. E-learning facilitates both learner engagement and the engaging of experiences (Uys, 2004; Meyen, 200; 2002). Omwenga et al. (2004) demonstrate how e-learning helps to overcome the traditional barriers to education delivery. These barriers include lack of physical infrastructure, lack of qualified teaching staff, absence of adequate education budgets, and the failure of traditional pedagogy and curricula. East African countries are characterised by these barriers (Ndume et al, 2008; Omwenga et al., 2004). The failure of the government's efforts in building physical classrooms has created an opportunity for innovative education delivery via e-learning (Yieke, 2005).

Integration of ICTs in East African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is taking place despite the various constraints. The HEI sector in East Africa has witnessed the rapid spread of the use of ICTs in teaching and learning. The utilisation of ICTs differs from one HEI to another and from one country to another. The swiftness of the development of ICTs, their increasing spread and availability, the nature of their content, and their affordability have major implications for learning. Chacha, et al. (2004:4) argue for the importance of ICTs in education:

"There is a need to tap the potential of ICTs to enhance data collection and analysis, and to strengthen management systems in educational institutions; to

improve access to education by remote and disadvantaged communities; to support initial and continuing professional development of teachers; and to provide opportunities to communicate across classrooms and cultures"

Limited access to ICTs in the East African region is due mainly to financial constraints which result in an education system that has too few physical classrooms and a shortage of teaching and training professionals. Also most HEIs in East Africa have very limited access to modern computing and communications technology, and thus it is increasingly difficult for teachers and students to keep abreast of current developments in their academic areas.

Chacha, et al. (2004) argue that low investment in ICT infrastructure, coupled with the high cost of connectivity and bandwidth, are two major problems that hinder the effective use of the resources available on the Internet. Most HEIs in East Africa are facing these problems, thus making the integration of ICT into teaching and learning more difficult. Suddaby & Milne (2008:31) point out the political dimension of this:

"Due to the profound implication of the digital divide...discussions on the integration of ICT have almost always taken a political turn".

Because of these problems e-learning in East Africa has manifested either slow delivery or unrealized potential. While Ngugi (2006) has argued that the use of e-learning becomes inevitable where conventional alternatives no longer exist, there is a range of factors in East Africa which contribute to the slowness of ICT delivery: high population numbers, lack of education physical infrastructure, lack of ICT infrastructure and the lack of adequate professional educators. Ironically this in turn

intensifies the need for e-learning implementation. Alavi and Leidner (2001) insist that the importance of e-learning will increase across the education spectrum from primary schools to HEI in East Africa. E-learning has the potential to streamline the learning delivery process by reducing the number of teaching professionals that have so far been thought to be required, as well as having the potential to transform the way we learn, and to bring high quality, accessible learning to everyone. Ndume et al. (2008) argue that the failure of traditional education delivery is in fact crucial to the expansion of e-learning. Pegler & Littlejohn (2007) argue that the existence of a high population eligible for education forces the education sector to move towards students using computers for self-directed study. Charles Clarke (2003:9) in his report to the Department of Education and Skills (DfES⁷) in the United Kingdom (UK) argued that the 21st century education system should:

- *Offer flexible provision to a diverse range of learners;*
- *Support and enable the development of a professional workforce, creating skilled graduates capable of problem solving and creative thinking;*
- *Empower learners to make choices about how, when and where they learn and with what and whom;*
- *Give better value for students in supporting their learning in ways best suited to their particular needs and goals and in timely and cost-effective ways and;*

⁷ DfES- Department of Education and Skills in United Kingdom

- *Support creativity and innovation not only in mainstream research activities, but also in approaches to teaching and the support of learning.*

As has been mentioned, Alavi and Leidner (2001) were of the opinion that e-learning's importance will grow right across the educational spectrum from primary to higher education institutions (HEIs). This prediction has been borne out in the United States, where in 2007 the market for 'wholly online' degrees was estimated to be worth 17.2 billion US\$ compared to 5 billion US\$ in 2004, with an estimate of 4 billion US\$ online tutoring at the growth rate of 10 -15% annually. However, in the UK in 2004 the Higher Education Funding Council for Education (HEFCE) announced the effective demise of the £50 million UKeU online university project. The project had been originally planned to provide 'wholly online' courses for undergraduate, postgraduate, continuing professional development and continuing education and training students along the lines of the traditional structure of UK universities. Various individuals and bodies, including the CHEMS, blamed the failure of UKeU on its largely supply-driven, rather than demand-led, approach, arguing that:

"There was no systematic evaluation of the markets, no thorough and robust market research and no understanding of consumer demand. This was typical of UkeU's supply-driven rather than demand-led approach."
(*Education_and_Skills_Committee*, (Clarke, 2003:17))

The failure of UKeU and other e-learning initiatives (see Table 1) indicates that e-learning implementation should be demand-led and carefully planned from a provider's point of view. Li (2009) stated that a clear understanding of both e-learning providers (University e-learning teaching and training professionals) and customers (e-learners) was required. Many governments are encouraging Higher

Education Institutions (HEIs) to embed e-learning in their individual strategies, making HEIs become individually responsible for their own e-learning delivery and design (Ndume et al., 2008), and thus individually or in consortia representing their respective countries in the global markets for online learning.

Due to the fact that most of the HEIs in East Africa get trapped in getting funding and consultants from developed countries, the e-learning projects of these countries tend to be copied or replicated by the developing countries (Ndume et al., 2008). Failure of e-learning projects in HEIs in East Africa has direct implications for the countries or institutions from which an e-learning project has been copied or replicated. As such the failure of many e-learning projects in East Africa has not been documented. Table 1 below details the failed e-learning initiatives in developed countries, many of which represent the sources or models of most of the e-learning projects being implemented in East Africa and which also inevitably fail.

Institution	Country	Years in Operations	No. of Years in Operation	Total Amount Spent	Types of Initiative	Education Level
UK e-University	UK	2000-2004	4	£50M	Political	University
US Open University	USA	1998-2002	4	\$27M	Institutional	University
Alliance for Lifelong Learning	USA & UK	2000-2006	6	\$12M	Consortium	Further Education
IT Forneb	Norway	1998-2001	3	€9M	Political	Further Education
The Scottish Interactive University	UK	2002-2007	5	£2.3M	University	University

Table 1: List of Failed Institutions Sorted by Money Spent

(Source: Keegan et al., 2007)

While Table 1 above highlights the failure of e-learning project investment in developed countries, there are various e-learning projects in East Africa which have failed, but have not been documented. Unfortunately governments have learned little from these failures. It is failures such as these which motivated the researcher

to undertake this study. Paulsen (2003) argues that a successful e-learning project should be both robust and sustainable. E-learning education offered so far has been transient, unsuccessful and far from sustainable (Table 1). Keegan et al. (2007) list these failures according to type of initiative and reasons for its failure:

- *Many governmental online education initiatives have not been sustainable*
- *Online education consortia are often not sustainable*
- *Many commercial and investor-driven online education initiatives have failed*
- *Boardroom initiatives often fail*
- *Several high profile international ventures have been discontinued*

Even existing e-learning efforts are characterized by shortcomings. While on the one hand Salomon (1993) argues that effective use of ICT is essential to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, Urdan & Weggen (2000), argue that the level of ICT skills in Africa is still very low. This has implications for the effective use of ICTs for education delivery. Nunan (1996,) citing the 1999 UNDP⁸ reports, describes the slow internet connectivity and costly internet access of poor communities in East Africa. While the literature indicates clearly that developed countries have been participating in e-learning for many years, East African countries are still in the initial e-learning implementation stages. Most of the e-learning projects in these countries face challenges due to inadequate knowledge or understanding of ICTs (Ndume et al., 2008; Khan, 2005; Bebee, 2004; Omwenga et al., 2004; Allen, 2002 and Alexander, 2001). Aranda (2007) and Allen (2007) have shown how conflicting agendas in terms of the appropriate use of technology, the application of pedagogy

⁸ UNDP :United nations Development Programme

and delivery of the curriculum, lack of resources, lack of well-trained knowledgeable staff, lack of management support and poor infrastructure have exacerbated hindrances to e-learning implementation. Issues related to institutional, management, technological, pedagogical, ethical, interface design, resources and design have been cited by Khan (2005) as issues which need to be addressed at all stages of e-learning implementation, operation and evaluation processes.

According to Clarke (2003) the shortcomings of e-learning implementation are due to the lack of both systematic evaluation of the market and thorough and robust market research. Macpherson et al. (2005) suggest that understanding of such shortcomings can be enhanced through developing the "*navigation skills*" to evaluate specific contexts before determining the best course of action to take in implementing e-learning. Navigation skills include understanding the main concerns of e-learning recipients as noted by Letch (2006:32):

"Lack of a clear understanding of both e-learning providers' (e-learning providers that include lecturers) and customers' (e-learners) main concerns to the implementation of e-learning was required"

Scott (2007) researched the main concerns from the e-learner's perspective, and discovered "*The Temporal Integration of Connected Study into a Structured Life*" to be the main concern of online learners. Scott (2007) focused on understanding the main concerns of online learners and how these concerns are processed in order to suggest new ways of designing support strategies for e-learners. Other e-learning research studies from both inductive and deductive perspectives are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Government cost constraints and limited household budgets have disenfranchised large numbers of people in East Africa who have the potential to benefit from education at all levels. To meet this challenge universities are turning to e-learning (whether it is partially conventional learning or wholly e-learning) to ensure that all eligible members of the population have equal access to education. However any e-learning strategy will have to be skilfully designed and implemented with great expertise because experiences in other countries have shown that very few e-learning delivery models have been effective. In order to be able to implement an effective e-learning process it is essential to understand the main concern of e-learning providers and how that concern is processed and addressed in order to improve practice.

While there are many well documented research studies, using various research methodologies (as discussed in detail in chapter 4), on various ICT topics, there is no documented research where the main concerns from the perspective of e-learning providers have been investigated. The relevance and persistence of the e-learning field has been clearly indicated from the phenomenon of e-learning in HEIs in East Africa. While there is work being done by leading researchers and practitioners in the field, most of these researchers have used reductionist research methodology. In view of the recent history of the ineffective introduction of e-learning in EA, a strong case can be made for employing a new research approach. This study has focused on the perspectives of the e-learning university professionals, the providers of the service, rather than on the various e-learning modes and IT involved in its implementation. It aims to fill the research gap by means of developing an understanding of the main concern of the e-learning university professionals working in East Africa, and how that concern is addressed, in order to deliver more effective

and sustainable e-learning provision in practice through the use of an inductive research methodology.

1.3. Research Objectives

Considering the detailed identified gaps in the previous sections, the research objectives were therefore as follows:

- 1. To identify the main concerns of e-learning providers in East Africa*
- 2. To discover the most important and challenging issues that e-learning providers face in East Africa*
- 3. To understand how their main concerns are processed and resolved in order to inform better e-learning provision in practice*

The research objectives outlined above were found to be of most important to uncover and recommend ways for successful e-learning implementations in East Africa. The East African universities have been and are struggling to implement e-learning projects. Some of these projects fail, some are approved, and of these only a few have managed to survive. Therefore, the research objectives managed to discover the reasons for this failure in the context of the government's attempts to encourage the universities to implement e-learning (Ndume et al., 2008)

Leitch (2006) argues for the need to know the main concerns and issues of e-learning providers and how these are addressed and resolved by them. It is hoped that interrogation of the core issues facing the e-learning providers will provide new insights for improving e-learning implementation in the East African region in particular.

Due to the nature of the objectives of this thesis, the choice of research method was entirely pragmatic, based on the everyday realities of the researched community. To discover the main concern of respondents as regards providing e-learning required a thorough investigation of “real-life” situations relevant to the specific problem (Gasson, 1998). The research methodology was chosen on the basis of its allowing the investigation of the real-life situations relevant to the main concern of the e-learning university professionals working in East Africa. Due to lack of inductive studies in this research area, it was decided that there exists a need to do a pure inductive study. Among the inductive research methodologies available, it was decided that the grounded theory (GT) research methodology was the most appropriate for the purposes of this thesis. Due to the existence of many GT research methodologies, the question that needed to be asked was “*Which Grounded Theory research methodology should be used and why?*” This question is discussed in detail in section 1.3 below.

1.4. Which Grounded Theory Methodology and Why?

In 1967, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss discovered the Grounded Theory (GT) research method. Anselm Strauss with Julie Corbin (1990) later came up with another research method that they also called grounded theory. Since 1990 various grounded theory approaches have come into existence. Most recently, Matavire and Brown (2011) have demonstrated the existence of different GTM approaches in Information Systems (IS) research. Such approaches include the "Classic" GT (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1996; 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2009; 2011), "Evolved" GT,(Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1989),

"Analytical" GT (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and "Mixed" GT Method (Mingers, 2001; Eisenhardt, 1989; Baskerville and Pries-Heje, 1999), as shown in Table 2 below.

Approach	Typical References
Classic	Glaser & Strauss (1967); Glaser (1992), and other works by Glaser
Evolved	Strauss & Corbin (1990, 1998), including possible references to Glaser's works
Mixed Methods	Mingers (2001); Eisenhardt (1989); Baskerville and Pries-Heje (1999).
Analytical	Variety, but most often Strauss's works.

Table 2: Four Grounded Theory Approaches

(Source: Matavire & Brown, 2011)

As Matavire & Brown (2011) state:

The predominant mode of usage in IS research has been the application of grounded theory analysis techniques, followed by the evolved grounded theory approach, mixed methods and then classic method (Matavire & Brown, 2011).

"Classic" Grounded Theory Methodology (CGTM) approach is accepted as being faithful to the original formulation and follows the original tenets of Glaser & Strauss

(1967). It has been further elaborated and refined by Glaser (1978; 1992; 1996; 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2009; 2011). CGTM is a general inductive research method designed to reveal deep seated latent patterns of human behavior and how the main concerns are being continually being resolved (Glaser, 1978).

The "Evolved" Grounded Theory (EGT) approach originated primarily from Strauss & Corbin (1990), and involved some modification of and departure from the CGTM. EGT approach is also labelled as "Straussian" [Strauss & Corbin (1990) grounded theory method] (Matavire & Brown, 2008; Van Niekerk & Roode, 2009). Hernandez (2006), amongst others, points out that the Strauss and Corbin (1990) method (evolved) differs fundamentally from the CGTM of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Shortly after the publication of Strauss and Corbin (1990), Glaser (1992) wrote various requests, without success, to Strauss to either re-write the book or change the label of their new method to something other than grounded theory. The two fundamental differences between CGTM and EGT methodology concern the difference between the ideas of 'emergence' versus 'forcing', and whether grounded theory is a qualitative or general research method. Glaser (1978, 1992, 2008, and 2009) argues that the Strauss & Corbin (1990) method, the EGT method, changes the research method from one of emergence to one of forcing. It allows the researcher to use deductive logic rather than analytic induction to move to the final stage of CGT analysis. Consequently, according to Glaser (1982), all research based on the Strauss and Corbin (1990) method (EGT) can only ever deliver detailed situation specific description. Glaser (1982) further asserts that it cannot deliver high level conceptual explanations of latent patterns which transcend both time and location. This method is neither emergent nor transcendent he argues.

Glaser (2008) argues that CGTM is a general research method and can and has been used with all types of data, including quantitative data, whereas the EGT approach position is a sub set of qualitative data analysis. Thus, the EGT approach of Corbin & Strauss (1990, 1998) is just another subsection of the QDA research approach which borrows the powerful jargon of the Classic GT method without the same academic rigour (Glaser, 1992). More critiques on of the EGT approach are included in Appendix A.1 (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and Appendix A.2 (Locke, 2001).

The "Mixed" method approach attempts to combine the GT research method with other research methods (Mingers, 2001; Eisenhardt, 1989; Baskerville & Pries-Heje, 1999). Among the most popular combinations are grounded action research (Baskerville & Pries-Heje, 1999; DeLuca et al, 2008) and the grounded case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989). Glaser & Holton (2004) are against combining classic GTM with other research methods. Such combinations, they believe, may erode the ability to generate conceptual theory (Glaser, 1992, 1998, 2001; Glaser & Holton, 2004).

When using the "Analytical" GT approach, the researcher does not necessarily follow either the evolved or the Classic GT approach. The researcher only uses the GTM techniques such as open and/or axial and/or selective coding (Matavire & Brown, 2011). When using the analytical GT approach, there is no evidence for following principles of CGT, rather than simply using GT for the purpose of analysis (Matavire & Brown, 2011). It merely follows the tools of CGT but does not utilise its tenets. As a result, the "Mixed" approach does not develop and augment theory. Glaser (1978, 1992) argues that mixing CGTM with other research methods neither delivers theory nor discovers the main concern of the substantive area of research.

Due to the existence of these many GT approaches, Van Niekerk and Roode (2009) argue that a choice of the GT research approach must be approached with care and done within the specific context of the research. The choice of research methodology should have a rationale, and such rationale should be justified in terms of the researcher's preference of methodology over other research methodologies.

Heath & Cowley (2004:1) argue that:

"... rather than debate the relative merits of the 'GT approaches', it is suggested that novice researchers need to select the method that best suits their cognitive style and develop analytic skills through doing research".

Firstly, being fully aware of what has been suggested by Heath & Cowley (2004), it was decided that the Classic Grounded Theory (CGT) Research Methodology (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was the most appropriate for this thesis.

Secondly, the CGTM was chosen because it claims to deliver the main concerns of e-learning providers in East Africa, the key research objective in this study. Prior research in the field of e-learning implementation has been more concerned with comparing received wisdom of existing theories with practitioner behaviour (Scott, 2007). Most research tends to view the data from the perspective of a prior theory rather than from those subjects being researched (Scott, 2007). CGTM is an approach which ensures that the contributions to knowledge in and of the area are not generated from existing theories but are grounded in the data collected from one or more empirical study (Gasson 2004; Adolph et al., 2008). CGT is designed to foster and develop skills of conceptual analysis that many researchers do not realize

they have (Glaser, 1992), and requires the researcher to be able to maintain analytic distance while at the same time drawing upon theoretical knowledge and astute powers of assimilation of data, which in turn allows those concepts, which the patterns of the data indicate, to emerge. Thus, CGTM fits both the nature of the phenomenon being researched (E-e-learning providers) as well as the key research question (the main concern) and follows Lowe's (1996:1) description of CGT as being designed to:

“Develop and integrate a set of ideas and hypotheses in an integrated theory that accounts for behaviour in any substantive area”

Thirdly, the choice of CGTM over other theories, methods and approaches was due to two aspects of the uniqueness of the Classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1978, 1992) approach related to this specific study:

- The theory is based upon patterns found in empirical data, not on inferences, prejudices, or the association of ideas,
- There is constant ongoing comparison between emergent theory (codes and constructs) and new data. Constant comparison confirms that theoretical constructs are found across and between data samples, thus driving the collection of additional data until the researcher feels that “theoretical saturation” (the point of diminishing returns from any new analysis) has been reached.

A fourth reason for the choice of CGTM was because it provides a flexible set of inductive strategies for collecting and analysing data, is a comparative and interactive method, starts with gathering focused data and stays close to the data-

developing concepts that synthesise and conceptualise the collected data. Glaser (1992) and Glaser & Strauss (1967) have outlined the key distinguishing characteristics of the CGTM research methodology as follows:

- a. Simultaneous involvement in the data collection and analysis phases of research
- b. Developing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived hypotheses
- c. Constructing middle-range theories to understand and explain behaviour and processes
- d. Memo-writing, that is, analytic notes to explicate and fill out categories
- e. Making comparisons between sets of data, data and concept, and between different concepts
- f. Theoretical sampling, that is sampling for theory construction to check and refine conceptual categories, not for representativeness of a given population
- g. Delaying the literature review until after the emergence of a core variable.

In order to abide with all tenets of CGTM, the researcher was accessible to CGTM mentoring throughout the research process. The researcher was accessible via a number of methodology publications, interactions with leading IS Scholars, face-to-face meetings with mentors and a vibrant on-line CGT research community. Thus, both the distinguishing characteristics of CGTM and the researcher's

accessibility to a CGT mentoring process, have made it the most appropriate research methodology for a study of the main concerns of e-learning providers in East Africa.

1.5. The Researcher's Professional Concern

Two of the researcher's professional concerns as enumerated by Glaser (1999b) motivated the researcher to embark on this study and to choose classic Grounded Theory methodology. Firstly, for the past many years, the researcher had lacked the ability to conceptualize data, the ability to tolerate certain confusions in his career and the ability to tolerate the regression attendant on this confusion. Therefore the researcher was looking for a research methodology which held the possibility of developing such abilities in his future career. After an extensive search for a methodology to help develop such abilities, the researcher recognized Classic Grounded Theory methodology as being such a methodology. To sum up with the argument of Glaser (1999b:836-845), the motivation behind those using Classic Grounded Theory among others is to develop three things:

1. *Ability to conceptualise data*
2. *Ability to tolerate some confusion*
3. *Ability to tolerate confusion's attendant regression.*

Glaser (1999b:836-845)

The researcher came progressively to learn and understand classic Grounded Theory and to the decision to use this methodology in this study.

Secondly, in 2007 the Government of Tanzania appointed the researcher as the just Associate Director of e-learning based at the Open University of Tanzania. One of the contributions made by the researcher to the Government of Tanzania in e-learning was to write a successful e-learning funding proposal, which was accepted by the Swedish Program for ICTs in Developing countries (SPIDER) for funding. The funding helped the researcher to establish a national e-learning centre. The centre was officially opened by the Deputy Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Dr Mau Daftari, in May 2007.

The researcher was able to witness how the universities have been and are struggling to implement e-learning projects. Some of these projects fail, some are approved, and of these only a few have managed to survive. The researcher was keen to discover the reasons for this failure in the context of the government's attempts to encourage the universities to implement e-learning (Ndume et al., 2008) in spite of the insistence of Alvi and Leidner (2001) that the importance of e-learning will grow right across the education spectrum from primary to higher learning institutions (HEIs) in developing countries (East African being one of them). The increase in the number of institutions implementing e-learning in East Africa has not been matched by an increase in the professionalism and competence required to ensure the effective delivery of sustainable e-learning projects. Even taking into consideration that all the states of East Africa have large populations and very limited education infrastructures, and are supported by even fewer E-learning providers to teach in such institutions, the benefits of both e-learning and on-line learning are self-evident. The researcher come progressively to begin to understand the main concern of e-learning providers working in East Africa, and this embryonic understanding was the beginning of this study.

1.6. Thesis Outline

This thesis will comprise of eight chapters. Chapter 2 presents an explanation of and justification for the use of CGT in the study. This will cover the stages and procedures of CGT, the basic philosophical underpinnings of CGT, substantive versus formal theory, ontology and epistemology, GT labelling confusion, and the characteristics of CGT. How transparency is maintained in CGT research and the criteria for evaluating CGT research will be outlined. In Chapter 3, the Research Design and Approach based on Classic Grounded Theory Methodology will be comprehensively analysed. In Chapter 4, the contextual literature on e-learning will be comprehensively analysed. In Chapter 5, the emergence of the Theory of Cultivating Recognition will be discussed by examining all the emerged variables. Chapter 6 details the comparative literature review of the emerged theory, "Cultivating Recognition" theory. In chapter 7, a critical evaluation of the research methodology used will be presented, including all the possible pitfalls and how these were monitored and resolved. Finally, Chapter 8 will detail the contribution of the study to the existing knowledge of e-learning and its implementation.

1.7. Summary

This chapter forms the introduction and background to the study. The first section covers issues related to the background to the study. The second section presents a discussions of which Grounded theory is used in this study and why. The final section details the researcher's professional concerns relating to this study. The following chapter will constitute a detailed explanation and discussion of Classic Grounded Theory Methodology (CGTM).

Chapter 2

Classic Grounded Theory Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The chapter provides an explanation of and justification for the use of Classic Grounded Theory Methodology (CGTM) in this study.

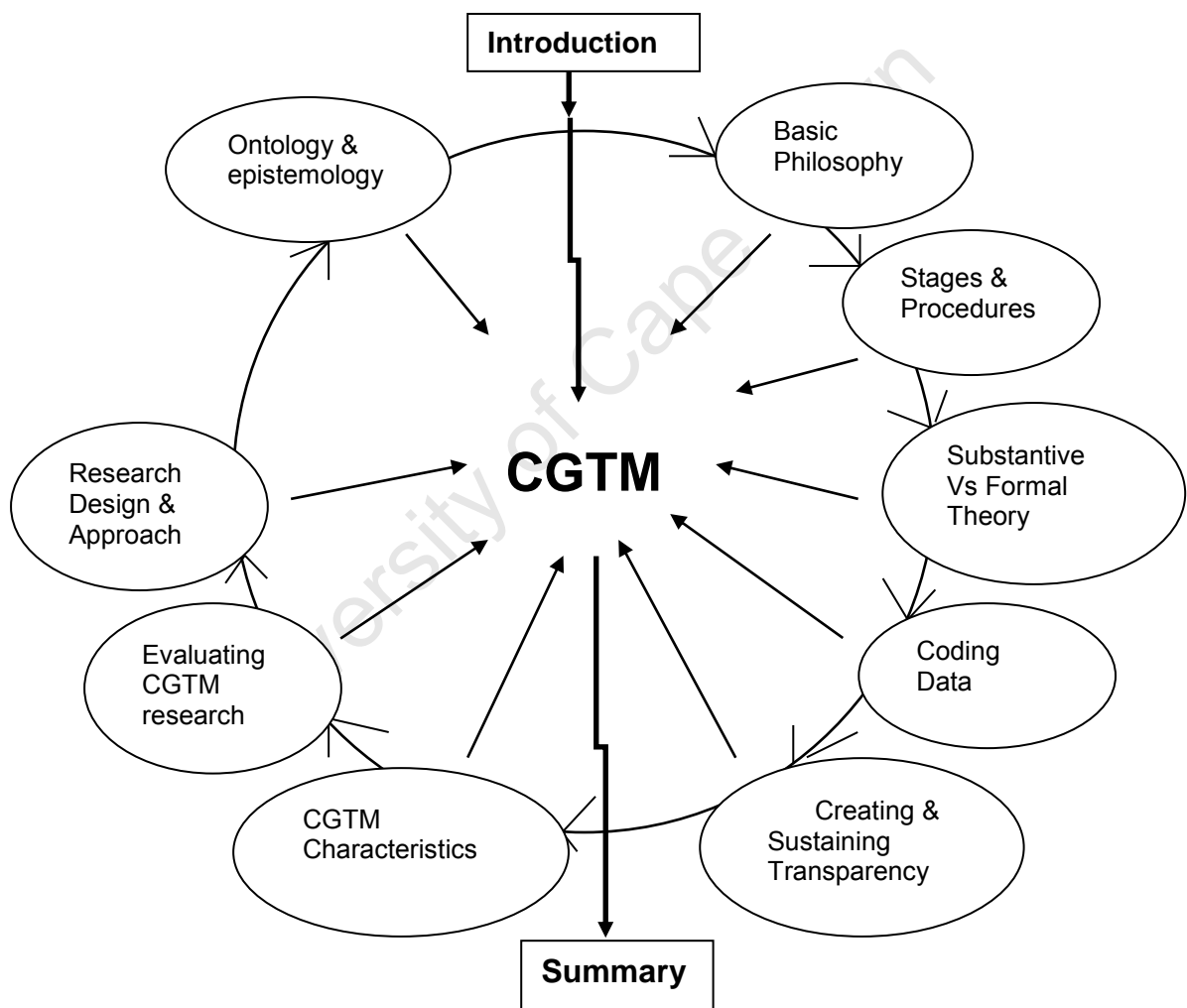


Figure 2: Argument Structure of Chosen Research Methodology

As Figure 2 above shows, the chapter has ten main sections. It will begin with an explanation of ontology and epistemology related to this study. The second section consists of a brief discussion of the basic philosophy underpinning the theory and methodology. The third section will outline the stages and procedures involved and followed using CGTM. The fourth section of the chapter will discuss the merits and pitfalls of using CGTM substantive theory versus formal theory. In the fifth section the specific characteristics of CGTM will be described and clarified. The sixth section will present the method of coding data in the process of using the CGTM approach to research. The seventh section will describe ways of creating and sustaining transparency in the process of using CGTM. The eighth section details and clarifies certain legitimate criteria for evaluating CGTM research. This chapter draws substantially from Glaser's work including Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978; 1992; 1996; 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2009; 2011)

2.2. Ontology and Epistemology: Classic Grounded Theory Philosophical and Methodological Questions

Since the discovery of CGTM in 1967, many authors have explained and discussed ontological and epistemological stances, labelling such research paradigms positivism⁹, interpretivism¹⁰ and criticalism (Burton-Jones 2009;

⁹ Positivism is an epistemology and a research paradigm which builds on the ontological realist assumptions of existence, where the subjective reality and the subjective techniques of enquiry about the truths are dismissed, and instead an objective reality is assumed (Burke, 2007)

¹⁰ Interpretivism asserts that reality, and our knowledge thereof, is a social product and hence incapable of being understood independently of the social actors (including the researchers) that construct and make sense of that reality. (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991: 13)

Campbell & Russo 2001; Cupchik 2001; Mingers 2001; Burrell & Morgan 1979; Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998b; Adolph, et al., 2008)).

Ontology is the term for an assumption or group of assumptions about 'perceived reality' (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998). This means that Ontology is the study of being - essentially studying questions of what kinds of entities exist. Ontology is viewed as a formal representation of 'knowledge' by a set of concepts within a domain, and the relationships between those concepts (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998). The ontological question is whether 'reality' is objective, single and external to the individual, or in other words, a given, or taken-for-granted 'out there' in the world, or whether it is subjective, with multiple realities that exist as subjective constructions of the mind (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998).

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the "nature of knowledge its possibility scope and general bias"(Honderich 1995, p.242). Epistemological questions are grounded in knowledge and on communicating this reality that exists out there in the world. Positivism as an epistemology and a research paradigm, builds on the ontological realist assumptions of existence, where the subjective reality and the subjective techniques of enquiry about the truths are dismissed. Instead an objective reality is assumed (Burke, 2007). Positivism is premised on the supposed '*existence of the existence of a prior relationships within phenomena*' (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991:5). Positivism is aligned with experimental and quasi-experimental design, using the rules of formal logic and the rules of deductive logic (Howcroft & Trauth, 2005). It often follows hypothesis formulation and the testing of theories, focusing on enabling predictions and generalisations about a phenomenon (Myers, 1997).

Primarily epistemological concerns	Primarily ontological concerns
The researcher's theoretical lens	The research problem
The researcher's skills	The degree of uncertainty surrounding the phenomena
Academic politics	

Table 3: Epistemological and Ontological Concerns

(Source: Myers, 1997)

Fitzgerald & Howcroft (1998) argue that the realism¹¹, positivism¹², and the nomothetic¹³ beliefs of a researcher position the researcher as a positivist, while nominalism, antipositivism, and ideographic beliefs constitute an interpretivist view of reality or the world. While logical positivism and post-positivism are two versions of the positivist school, critical theorists and constructivists belong to the interpretivist school, constructing four major research paradigms with their respective purists (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998).

The rapid increase in the use of the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) in Information Systems (IS) research (Matavire & Brown, 2011), raises more confusion

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¹² Positivism as an epistemology and a research paradigm, builds on the ontological realist assumptions of existence, where the subjective reality and the subjective techniques of enquiry about the truths are dismissed, and instead an objective reality is assumed (Burke, 2007)

¹³ Nomothetic research attempts to discover what those systems of laws or principles are, while ideographic research is interested in describing only a single event, person, or situation. Since it is interested in discovering the laws or principles that govern aspects of reality, nomothetic research cannot depend on information that describes a single individual (Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998).

around its ontological and epistemological assumptions. This could be as a result of GTM being applied in different ways and for different purposes in the IS field, ranging from the use of the method as it is classically understood, to combining Grounded Theory techniques with other methods (Urquhart, 1997). Charmaz (2006), and Laird (1985) argue that these confusions are associated with the method's ontological and epistemological underpinning as discussed in following sections on the position

Glaser (1978, 1992, 2002) has criticised grounded theory claims that contradict the openness of the classic grounded theory. While classic grounded theory is presented as a general method, which can use any type of data and is not attached to any one theoretical perspective; such claims (i.e. constructivist grounded theory, etc.) predetermine one particular lens through which to analyse data.

CGT is essentially ontologically and epistemologically neutral. As such, Glaser (2005) has argued that discussions of ontology (what we believe about the world) and epistemology (how we can come to know what we know) are moot within classic grounded theory. Christiansen (2005:81-84) argues that classic GT is an "*ontology free and epistemology free methodology*". Glaser (1978) furthermore reiterates that ontological assumptions have no place in the use of Classic GT since GT is grounded in data. Such an argument would consider epistemology (the theory of knowledge pertaining to knowing or 'recognizing'), as a mental activity and therefore having little place in the application and use of CGTM. Within social research, however, this position proves somewhat problematic, where there is an increasing expectation that researchers are explicit about their philosophical position (Grix, 2002).

Glaser's assertions that classic grounded theory is epistemologically and ontologically neutral have therefore been attacked as non-committal, naive and as perpetuating an "epistemological fairytale" (Bryant, 2009, para.13).

Glaser (2004:76) argues that:

*"It is only a question of applying a rigorous and systematic method for discovering and explaining these patterns. Thus, **just do it.**"*

Glaser (1978:45) explains further that in the CGTM methodology all ontological and epistemological suppositions are irrelevant and are not useful:

"... logical conjectures or preconceptions that pre-frame the research, and pre-framing has to be avoided in any CGTM work, in order to keep close to what the data has to say, and to discover and name emergent latent patterns in the data."

The CGTM approach minimizes the influence and potential distorting effect of preconceptions, logical deductions and elaborations and ungrounded assumptions (Glaser, 1978). As a result, a researcher using CGTM is free from both ontological & epistemological assumptions.

While in CGT it is generally understood that substantive codes and categories emerge from the data – that is, they are not predetermined by a specific research question, extensive review of literature or rigid interview protocols – researchers have found it more difficult to grasp the notion of theoretical emergence (Holton, 2007). Rather than assuming a theoretical perspective in advance of the study, the classic grounded theorist stays open to theoretical codes from multiple theoretical

perspectives with which to organise the emergent theory (Glaser, 2005). Thus, for example, the constructivist view is only one way of looking at the data. While a constructivist perspective may be highly appropriate for particular studies, it must emerge to have relevance rather than being predetermined at the outset. Thus, “where grounded theory takes on the mantle for the moment of prepositivist, positivist, postpositivist, postmodernism, naturalism, realism etc, will be dependent on its application to the type of data in a specific research” (Glaser, 2005, p. 145). In classic grounded theory, the theoretical perspective is thus specific to each study, unlike the constructivist version which pre-frames the lens through which data are processed.

While the CGT methodology is not defined by one particular theoretical perspective, the emergent theoretical product of a study will be situated within a particular perspective based on the emergence of appropriate theoretical codes. Typically, theoretical perspective is implicit within the presentation of classic grounded theory studies. Although there is increasing expectation within the qualitative domain that researchers are explicit about the philosophical position of their studies, within classic grounded theory, as a general inductive methodology that strives for abstract conceptualisation, this is not considered necessary (Holton, 2007). Within the current climate of social research, this philosophical position will undoubtedly continue to be subject to much debate. It is certainly a debate in which classic grounded theorists need to be more involved. Amidst such debate, however, it is important to note that a preoccupation with the ontological and epistemological issues of grounded theory may distract from the simplicity of its purpose: to generate a theory from the data that fits, works and is relevant within the area from which it was derived. As such, Bryant (2009) has suggested that the epistemological

differences between grounded theory versions may be reconciled if researchers focused less on the nature of the process, and more on the product:

the key issue becomes the extent to which their substantive research produces conceptual innovations and theoretical insights that prove useful ...the ultimate criterion for good research is that it makes a difference (para. 102).

This is indicative of a wider concern with the pragmatics, rather than the philosophy, of research. Although this is another area in which there is much debate, particularly surrounding the ontological compatibility of different perspectives, there is a rapidly growing interest in the use of mixed methodologies which seek to combine different philosophical positions as a means of best answering research questions (Duncan & Nicol, 2004). In light of this current progression towards a combinist approach in research, particularly in health, the potential for classic grounded theory to assume any theoretical perspective may soon be more willingly embraced. In attempting to address the real concerns of participants, using whatever perspectives and methods will best address the purposes of the research, classic grounded theory is perhaps more aligned with the direction in which modern healthcare research is travelling; seeing philosophical positions not as discrete, incompatible opposites, but as offering multiple and complementary approaches to understanding social phenomena. In summary, Glaser (2005, pp5-6) argues that:

“The quest for an ontology and epistemology for justifying GT is not necessary. It will take these on from the type of data it uses for a particular research FOR THAT RESEARCH ONLY. GT is simply an inductive model for research. It is a paradigm for discovery of what is going on in any particular arena. It provides a global view by “providing a method of solving the puzzle

of viewing human experience and of structuring reality.” Wendy Guthrie, “Keeping Client In Line” (1998).. Whether GT takes on the mantle for the moment of prepositivist, positivist, postpositivist , postmodernism, naturalism , realism etc, will be dependent on its application to the type of data in a specific research” (pp 5-6)

However, if researchers choose to use other methodologies, ontological and epistemological diversity would be acceptable.

The contribution made in this thesis to CGTM is summarized in two key issues raised by Glaser in terms of potential problems with GT (Glaser, 1978:1998):

- (1) To delimit the study to the main concern and its recurrent solution to the e-learning providers(the core variable), and
- (2) To prevent the researcher’s preconceived professional concerns from masking or distorting what actually goes on in the field of study.

The first point provides a particular solution to the problem of the “many equally justifiable interpretations of the data” (Glaser, 1978). The second point refers to how the determination is accomplished. Christiansen (2005) cites Hartman (2001:37) in support of point (2) by pointing out that:

“Inductive principle applied in orthodox GT is not the usual one, or the inductive principle used in other qualitative or in hermeneutic research approaches. The induction applied in orthodox GT is basically assumption-free and only assumption-based when these assumptions are grounded in the

data, i.e. are tantamount to what already has emerged as more or less stable patterns in the data”

This means that there is “a Classic GT form of induction”, which is different to other approaches that have claimed to be using GT and which further explains how point (2) is accomplished. Glaser (1978) considers that the procedure of “conceptualizing while constantly comparing” may be the most important single principle in CGTM. The application of this principle makes points (1) and (2) operative as parts of procedures or as stages of research, and it also makes their interrelationships operative. Thus, when compared to qualitative or qualitative-descriptive-analytic or hermeneutic research procedures, CGTM differs significantly with regard to the collection and treatment of qualitative data. The points of dissimilarity of CGTM to a priori-deductive and hypo-deductive research approaches are equally obvious and need no further explanation. That the CGTM is itself a grounded theory also means that the methodology has itself been inductively developed rather than being logically derived or “thought up”(Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998).

In theoretical sampling deduction is only based on what the data so far has to say and it is done to enable conceptual elaboration (Glaser 1978). In theoretical coding deduction is a question of recognizing known theoretical codes in the data. However, a possible theoretical code is only included if it is indicated in the data by interchangeable data indicators. Glaser (1992) argues that it is a mistake for any CGTM researcher to consider her or himself as being “objective”: no person can become a “tabula rasa”. Minimizing pre-understanding and logical deduction does not mean eliminating or excising these factors. It means suspending them

temporarily, or at least attempting to prevent, or minimise their interference with what the data indicates. The mind-set of the researcher needs to be open like that of an innocent and humble child, but should at the same time be highly sensitive theoretically (Glaser 1978). Subconscious processing on the part of the researcher may also play a role. The ability of a researcher to generate theory from data is the key tenet of CGTM. Allowing space for the main concern of the participants to emerge is paramount, as is allowing its related sub-patterns to emerge. Ideally these patterns will emerge whilst the researcher is skilfully analysing and synthesising the data. However, such emergence can only occur if the researcher allows it to happen naturally (Glaser, 1998). If the main focus is not on theoretical pre-understanding regarding concepts and their relationships, emergence can take place. Intervening preconceptions can take the researcher's focus and awareness away from what the data has to say. These preconceptions should be consciously suspended and should not be allowed to intervene and distort what the data is able to reveal (Glaser 1978, 1992, 1998).

A CGTM is asymptotic, meaning that the theory, the outcome of the methodological treatment is grounded in data (Glaser 1992). New data may move the asymptote higher or closer to the "truth line". CGT is modifiable and it is meant to be modifiable (Glaser, 1998, 2006). It is a methodology to facilitate the progress of understanding the main concern and how it is resolved from no understanding, or pre-understanding, to ever higher levels of post understanding, through recurrent cycles of understanding (Glaser, 2007). CGTM research is a never-ending process (Glaser, 1978) because even when a robust core variable does emerge new data could be discovered which could mean that the original core variable will have to be modified. The credibility of the interrelated hypotheses of a generated grounded

theory is based on their integration and grounding in data, and thus is dependent on the extent and reliability of the grounding. Glaser (1992) argues that the core variable must be able to account for most of the variation in the data and should also be modifiable. Its modifiability also gives it inherent potential to increase understanding of the substantive area. Modifiability of a core variable is not the same as its being made groundless. If the latter is the case it is indicative of something having gone wrong in the research process (Glaser, 1992). If methodological treatments of new data for emergence fit with the grounded theory, this may start the process of modification. Concepts generated in the course of a CGTM research project are often of such a composition that they have to be considered as multidimensional and multivariate qualitative variables (Glaser, 1992). Most qualitative variables can be conceived in mathematical or mathematical-statistical terms. We may even talk about a kind of qualitative mathematics. For example, a very simple and very clear-cut social norm could be conceived as a one-dimensional qualitative or ordinal scale variable with a certain average and certain standard deviation. Not to be deviating may mean to be observed within a given “confidence interval” (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998). A more complex social norm could be conceived of as having many dimensions. Each of these dimensions may be conceived of as a kind of “qualitative” or ordinal scale variable. Thus, a grounded theory may be conceived of as a multivariate theory: as a highly complex theory (Glaser, 2006). However, in classic grounded theory only those dimensions that directly emerge from the sampled data are specified. This makes it possible to handle the inherent complexity of the data. As a predominantly inductive methodology, with some deductive elements, the CGT methodology may share

some of the traits of some other methodologies that may be different from it in most other respects (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2007).

2.3. The Basic Philosophy Underpinning Classic Grounded Theory Methodology

Classic Grounded Theory Methodology (CGTM) was founded by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. At the time they considered this new research methodology to be a necessary challenge and alternative to the ungrounded and unquestioned “great men” theories being presented to students at academic institutions:

“Many of our teachers converted departments ... into mere repositories of “great man” theories and taught these theories with a charismatic finality that students could seldom resist. Currently, students are trained to master “great-man” theories and to test them in small ways, but hardly to question the theory as a whole in terms of its position or manner of generation...some theories of our predecessors, because of their lack of grounding in data, do not fit, or do not work, or are not sufficiently understandable to be used and are therefore useless in research, theoretical advance and practical application” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:10-11).

In 1998 Glaser developed and expanded his theoretical position of the sixties, putting the case for a grounded theory which was more reliable than previous theories, was designed to minimize preconceptions and assumptions and to address “the main concern”:

“A methodology was needed that could get through and beyond conjecture and preconception to exactly the underlying processes of what is

going on so that professionals and laymen alike could intervene with confidence to help resolve the participants' main concern surrounding learning, pain and profit. In this sense, grounded theory has put vested social structures in some jeopardy, because the dependent variables are vital to work with; hence, it is hard to ignore grounded theory results.” (Glaser, 1998:5)

Glaser (1998:115) argued that a researcher using Grounded Theory

“... tries to understand the action in a substantive area from the point of view of the actors involved. This understanding revolves around the main concern of the participants whose behaviour continually resolves their main concern. Their continual resolving is the core variable”.

The main objective of CGTM is to discover a robust empirically derived hypothesis or core variable through a specific process. The core variable articulates the main concern of the respondents. It is so called because the core variable is able to explain most of the variations in the data. The particular feature of the CGTM is that it is transcendent of both time and place (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2008, 2009). According to Glaser this is made possible due to the fact that CGTM delivers a conceptual explanation rather than a low level descriptive context-based narrative. Thus the emerged grounded theory must ‘pay its way’ by being able to demonstrate that it represents the main concern of those participants who are the subjects of the research. Glaser (1992:15) outlines and explains the four central characteristics of CGT, emphasising the value to the research process of its “modifiability”:

*"There are only four central criteria with which to evaluate CGT: **fit, work, relevance and modifiability**. If a grounded theory is carefully induced from the substantive area its categories and their properties will fit the realities under study in the eyes of the subjects, practitioners and researchers in the area. If a grounded theory works it will explain the major variations in behaviour in the area with respect to the processing of the main concerns of the subjects. If it fits and works the grounded theory has achieved relevance. The theory itself should not be written in stone or as a 'pet'; it should be readily modifiable when new data present variation in emergent properties and categories. The theory is neither verified nor thrown out; it is modified to accommodate by integration the new concepts. When these four criteria are met, then of course, the theory provides a conceptual approach to action and changes and accesses into the substantive area researched."* (Glaser, 1992:15)

Glaser (2009) expresses regret that some researchers claim to be using CGTM, whereas they have simply borrowed the powerful language of CGTM in order to legitimise their work without following all the tenets of CGTM. This has given rise to and perpetuated confusion among researchers, sponsors and institutions as to how to evaluate CGTM research based projects.

Glaser (1998) explains the ways in which CGTM is a latent pattern indicator. It achieves this by revealing respondents' deep seated habitual tendencies. These tendencies will exist in respondents whether or not they participate in the research. These tendencies are difficult to reveal because the respondents are often unaware of them, even though they may constitute an important part of their daily behaviour.

According to Glaser (1998), CGTM is a multivariate process which happens sequentially, subsequently, simultaneously, serendipitously and in a scheduled manner. It is the systematic generation of theory from data acquired by a rigorous research method (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2008, 2009). In essence grounded theory is an integrated set of conceptual hypothesis, i.e. probability statements about the relationship between concepts. The hypothesis is generated through constant coding and analysing of data. CGTM is a general research method which is not evidence based (Glaser, 1978, 1998). This is because the use of evidentiary data presupposes that a deductive hypothesis based research method is being employed. Thus CGTM is a general research method which is mainly inductive. Glaser explains why it is inappropriate and unproductive to treat CGTM as though it were evidence based:

"The credibility of the theory should be won by its integration, relevance and workability, not by illustrations as if it were proof. The theory is an integrated set of hypotheses, not of findings. Proofs are not the point."
(Glaser, 1978:134)

2.4. Classic Grounded Theory Methodology Stages and Procedures

Although there are very specific stages through which the CGTM researcher must go, the order of doing them will change according to what emerges from the data. This kind of flexibility in terms of sequence and process is necessary in order to reveal certain deep seated patterns of human behaviour. The structure of CGTM will be outlined in the Section 2.4.1 to 2.4.8 below.

2.4.1. Generating Theoretical Sensitivity

It is essential that the researcher, prior to embarking on any CGTM research, develop theoretical sensitivity. What this entails is explained by Glaser (1978). Since there are already in existence literally hundreds of patterns of human behaviour, having a repertoire of these before embarking the research is absolutely essential. The following are some of the examples of theoretical codes:

- Causal consequence models (cause, consequences, contexts, contingencies, co variances and conditions)
- Process models (stages, phases, polarity, progressions, temporal pacing and cycling)
- Degree models (cutting points, probability, polarity, continuum and intensity)
- Asymptote models (mathematical models for getting as close as possible)
- Isomorphism (mathematical models how one established theory can trigger a new theory)
- Moment capture (business models which explain how many financial services operate)

If armed with a repertoire of theoretical codes it is easier for the CGTM researcher to start making sense of data.

2.4.2. Theoretical Sampling

This is a form a sampling in which it is both inappropriate and impossible, prior to doing the research, to state exactly what data will be needed (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2006). This is because the sampling process can only cease once the core variable has emerged. The researcher samples data until s/he discovers the main concern of the respondents. The researcher then samples within a chosen group and demographic area for integrating into the research the newly emerged concept. Once the researcher reaches the point where no further patterns emerge, the data is said to be saturated and the core variable to have emerged (Glaser, 1978, 1998).

According to the CGTM, theoretical sampling is a process of data collection for generating theory whereby the researcher simultaneously generates, codes, analyzes and synthesizes data and uses this as a basis to decide what data to collect next and where to find them (Glaser, 1978). The researcher begins by selecting a context for the research. A series of short conversations with a small number of respondents is then set in motion. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, a high level of rapport must be established between the researcher and respondent(s) so that trust and respect can develop. This cannot happen easily with single encounters. Secondly, the researcher should not make use of any form of recording or note taking throughout the whole process of conversation/research with the respondent(s) encounter (Glaser, 1978). This both deepens the researcher/respondent trust and also increases the level of the researcher's concentration. Immediately following all encounters with respondents, the researcher should document the interaction using theoretical memos (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978).

2.4.3. Theoretical Memos

This section highlights the theoretical memos as has been discussed by Glaser (1998). Theoretical memos as described by Glaser (1978:83) are *“the theorising write up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding”*.

They are the means to abstraction and ideation and can be used continually throughout the CGTM process. Initially a theoretical memo may consist of a short sentence, but as the analysis proceeds, the memo is updated and developed and can be several pages long (Glaser, 1998). Theoretical memos are a crucial part of the GT method for six main reasons. Firstly, the theoretical memo is a device which allows the researcher to use both deductive and inductive logic in order to reveal the deep seated latent patterns of human behavior which the GT method is designed to reveal. Secondly, theoretical memos encourage the researcher to enter into a dialogue with her/his data. This means that GT researcher can interrogate the data to assess the veracity of emerging theoretical concepts. Thirdly, the theoretical memo enables the GT researcher to move from low level descriptive coding to higher level theoretical coding. The transition from description to conceptual coding cannot happen without theoretical memo-ing. Fourthly, theoretical memos are very important because they are the main means by in which the GT researcher can understand how to carry out the most appropriate theoretical sampling strategy. Theoretical sampling is necessary in the GT research process because it ensures that the researcher looks beyond the obvious descriptive narrative to an understanding of what the main concerns of those being researched are. Fifthly, the GT method, for the researcher, is a delayed action phenomenon because it is

impossible for any researcher to immediately understand all aspects of his/her data on a single examination of the data. In other words, the process during which the GT researcher is engaged in the simultaneous writing of several theoretical memos allows the researcher's own thought processes to reach insights in those partially completed theoretical memos which s/he is not currently involved in writing. This is because the mind is highly discursive and is always attempting to make sense of phenomena; but this takes time. Sixthly, when the researcher is engaged in the simultaneous writing of theoretical memos the possibility of the cross fertilization of new ideas and concepts is stimulated or triggered. This serendipitously stimulates the discovery of new ideas and concepts (Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998).

In short any research which claims to have used the GT research method and does not make full use of the theoretical memo will have failed to accurately or substantially reveal the main concerns of those being researched (Glaser, 1978).

2.4.4. Substantive Coding

These are the very first attempts at highlighting those data which the analyst believes may have importance for the research beyond the simple description of the context of the data (Glaser, 1978:1998). These codes are labelled and often 'gerunded' (Glaser, 1978). In other words the researcher converts the substantive code label into a verb ending in "ing". The purpose of this is to sensitise the researcher to the processes and patterns which may be revealed at a later stage (Glaser, 1978; 1998; 2006). Gerunding is effective because it introduces momentum into the data.

2.4.5. Theoretical Coding

This is a conceptual code. It arises from the synthesis of the substantive codes. To move from substantive codes to theoretical codes is a tricky and often elusive process (Glaser, 1978). This synthesis can be effected by examining the interplay between the theoretical memos. This process is known as the constant comparison method (Glaser, 1978). At this point the researcher has to engage both intellect and intuition to achieve a shift in perspective from low level context based description, to higher level conceptual abstraction.

2.4.6. The Constant Comparison Method

When using the constant comparison method the researcher has to painstakingly look across all data in all theoretical memos to look for various types of indicators which might reveal previously hidden connections and patterns (Glaser, 1978; 1998). There is a hierarchy of processes involved in this research method. It starts with the recording of raw data in the theoretical memos and proceeds to substantive coding which is then fractured into categories and sub categories. These in turn have different properties (Glaser, 1998). The term "properties" is not strictly relevant in the context of explaining the constant comparison method. "Properties" is a more appropriate descriptor to apply to the writing of theoretical memos (Glaser, 1978). If the researcher believes that some elements of an emergent pattern might be approaching the brink of discovery s/he could return to the data [or perhaps the respondent for another encounter] and try and establish what the properties of a particular concept concerned are. For instance the properties of *"legitimizing"* in this research were *"reciprocity"*, *"asymmetry"* and *"networking"*. So properties are another word for characteristics and as such are not exclusively linked with the

constant comparative method. Thus both the categories, as well as the properties, are constantly compared across all the theoretical memos. As this process begins to gather momentum theoretical codes begin to emerge. What begins as a property of a category of a substantive code sometimes emerges as a theoretical code in its own right. Only through a process of constantly comparing the data for differences and similarities can theoretical codes emerge (Glaser, 1978). The exceptions to this are those rare occasions when the respondent is an articulate conceptualizer and is able to step back from personal context and give an authentic explanation of the main concern (Glaser, 1978, 1998).

2.4.7. Sorting

This is an iterative process which occurs at the later stages of the CGTM process. Sorting will ensure that the emerging theoretical codes have earned their place in the emergent process of theory creation (Glaser, 1978). If sorting does not take place several times it is unlikely that the research will move much beyond low level narrative description (Glaser, 1978, 1998). The principle aim of sorting is to ensure that the emerging core variable has been fully saturated and has earned its place in the research process (Glaser, 1978).

2.4.8. The Emergence of the Core Variable

The core variable is so called because it is able to account for most of the variation in the data (Glaser, 1978). It is the main concern of the respondents translated and carried on to the conceptual level. There are frequently also sub-core variables which feed into the core variable (Glaser, 1978, 1998).

2.5. Substantive versus Formal Theory

Glaser (1978:142-157) warns on the dangers of using CGTM in a substantive rather than a delimited research area:

CGTM is mostly applied in research within a delimited area of human concern – or within a delimited substantive area. To use the methodology to generate a more formal theory that covers many substantive areas could be more problematic, but not impossible.

It is possible to apply CGTM to generate macro-economic or macro-sociological theories and there are various examples of this, including Sorokin (1937:25-29; 2006), who managed to find a core variable in a study of the social and cultural dynamics of civilisations through time. Because of the core variable, the theory is characterised by both parsimony and scope as Lee (2002a, 2002b) demonstrated when CGTM was used within the context of macroeconomics, thus contributing to a GT through identification of the core variable.

2.6. Special Characteristics of Grounded Theory

The two main “hallmarks” of the CGT methodology are: (1) “finding the core variable first” and then delimiting the rest of the work to what is closely related to the core variable, and (2) “the special Classic GT form of induction”, which is used constantly and in all tasks with the exception of theoretical sampling and recognition of theoretical codes (Glaser, 1978; 1998). Then there is a third element: the pivotal procedure (3) involving “constantly comparing while coding (conceptualising)”, which in a sense also applies in memo writing and sorting, and which is always used in conjunction with (2). Then there is a fourth (4), the procedure of “memo writing”, and

(5) the procedure of “sorting” (Glaser, 1978). Many other features are involved in a CGTM process, such as “interchangability of indices” and “explication de text”. Glaser (1998:24-25) describes the circumstances of his exposure to ‘explication of text’ at the University of Paris, for him “a major root in the discovery of grounded theory” and explains the process and purpose of explication of text’ in grounded theory. It involves:

“... reading closely line by line to ascertain what exactly the author is saying without imputing what was said, interpreting it or reifying its meaning.....Explication de text helps the researcher who is doing constant comparisons to generate concepts that closely fit without imputation as to what is going on in the substantive area, while at the same being able to claim the authorship of the concept he generated”..... So the message I received was to read and compare line by line and then to take credit for one’s generated, emerged concepts – not disavow it and give it away. .

2.7. Coding Data for Emergent Fit with Previously Grounded Theory

Classic GT as explained by the co-originator of GT Dr Barney Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998) is a latent pattern identifier. It is not evidence based but instead these latent patterns are revealed by the discovery of the main concerns of those being researched. These main concerns are continually being resolved by the respondents whether they have been revealed by research or not. The main concerns are not the respondents’ narratives per se, but rather their motivations behind their narratives. Because of this the use of the Classic GT method means that emergent theory is transcendent of both time and place. The theoretical

explanations of human behavior which GT reveals will also be applicable across a wide range of different contexts. The product of any GT research project is a robust hypothesis which can be modified as new data comes to light. As a result CGTM has two basic models for studies discussed in Glaser(1978):

- *The first model is by pure discovery of all the concepts by going thorough the prescribed procedures; and*
- *The second model is “starting from scratch”.*

Glaser (1978)

The first model is the emergent fit model and applies the same procedures as the second model, but does not “start from scratch”. It proceeds from a previously generated CGT and its substantive concepts. The second model is especially suited to an advanced user of a generated CGT who would want to scrutinise the extent to which a theory, which has been generated from a given set of data from a given substantive area, fits his/her data from the same or another substantive area. The use of this second model requires a minimum level of familiarity with the CGTM. For advanced users of Classic GTM in business (e.g. business consultants, who have been trained in the use of the methodology), the modification and refinement of any generated CGT may be applied within any area of study including the area of business. The second model may become an option for a researcher in the business field, as well as a ‘funnelling down’ on some company-specific issues. Use of this second model needs to be embarked upon with care since potential pitfalls exist. In the case of an analyst who has some basic knowledge from data gathered from research and analysed, and that has already generated and wishes to extend, or use

some grounded formal theory to analyse the data, Glaser & Holton (2005:18) sound a warning. They caution those following rigidly a research model through with “pre-emergent analytic thinking” without reassessing and making constant comparisons throughout the process:

“The second model looks a bit like deductive, logical elaboration, but it is not, providing the analyst follows the grounded approach. S/he does not start “empty” or “non-preconceived” as in the first model. S/he engages in pre-emergent analytic thinking, and sampling before approaching the field. But once in the field, s/he starts correcting early thoughts and follows the grounding in subsequent theoretical sampling. And s/he ends up as s/he would in the first model, searching for comparison groups, as it becomes clearer and clearer where to go for fit as the theory develops” (Glaser & Holton (2005:18)

The second model equates to a GTM which begins with some pre-framed view on the part of the researcher who starts by trying out a particular set of interrelated concepts, while data is collected and constantly compared. The second model saves time because large amounts of time will have been spent by the researcher using the first model.

2.8. Transparency in Classic Grounded Theory Methodology

Throughout the process of CGTM research a researcher needs to maintain transparency. This section will posit ways of maintaining transparency during the research process. The five factors to be borne in mind by a researcher in attempting

to maintain transparency during CGTM research will be discussed in the following section.

2.8.1. Generating Theoretical Sensitivity

Research which has used CGTM has revealed the extent to which the researcher prior to starting the project has been exposed to theoretical sensitivity. This sensitivity will become apparent from the skill with which the researcher deals with data (Glaser, 1998).

2.8.2. Theoretical Sampling

The researcher has to explain clearly and specifically how and why her/his theoretical sampling has been constructed. There must be a clearly stated logical argument as to the main reasons for any choice of data. There should be no note taking or recording during the encounters with respondents (Glaser, 1998).

There are four main reasons why real-time note taking during the interactions with the respondents is to be avoided in CGTM. Firstly, the absence of note taking allows the respondents to feel more relaxed and less threatened by their encounters with the researcher. Secondly, because the researcher is not taking any notes at the meeting s/he will have to make each encounter with a respondent fairly brief. This kind of time arrangement significantly assists the process of theory generation because it allows the researcher time to examine data reflectively before planning and arranging subsequent meetings. Thirdly, the CGTM is a delayed action process for both the respondent and the researcher. Thus having a series of brief interactions with the same respondent permits the development of concepts rather than generating simple descriptions. Fourth, the researcher is encouraged to make

notes immediately following the encounter with respondents rather than in real time, thus forcing the researcher to increase levels of concentration during the encounter rather than passively going through a check list of pre-determined questions with the respondent (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2006).

2.8.3. Theoretical Memos and coding

Although there is no standard template to which all theoretical memos must adhere, there are some basic issues which all theoretical memos must address (Glaser 1998). If these are not made explicit then the memos would not be transparent to the reader nor would they be a legitimate indicator of how the researcher progressed from raw data to an emerged core variable. According to Lowe (1996), novice GT researchers should try to ensure that their memos contain the following to meet transparency requirements:

- (1) *Memo Tile*
- (2) *Summary of any substantive codes, categories and properties*
- (3) *Conceptual indicators [the important links that form the bridge from substantive description to conceptual explanation]*
- (4) *Emergent theoretical codes, categories and properties*
- (5) *A statement as to the type of data the researcher believes has been given to him/her by the respondent [Baseline¹⁴, Properlined¹⁵, Vague¹⁶,*

¹⁴ Baseline data - the respondent is being as truthful as possible, as far as the interviewer can gauge

Zero¹⁷, or interpreted¹⁸ data]. It actually does not matter at all when doing CGTM what type of data the researcher has because everything is data. If people are being untruthful for example that is probably more interesting than if they were being honest. What is of the utmost importance is that the researcher fully understands the type of data.

(6) A clear separation of empirical data from conjecture data. Both are important in CGTM but they are quite different types of data and need to be treated accordingly.

(7) How has the data been fractured? Which conceptual theoretical perspectives has the researcher used to better understand the latent patterns embedded in the data?

(8) What links to other memos from the researcher's bank of memos have been highlighted?

¹⁵ Properlined data - the respondent deliberately edits the data so that it is not in conflict with the official line of argument of his employing authority.

¹⁶ Vague data - the respondent deliberately gives an indistinct version of reality to try and confuse the researcher, obfuscate the issue and throw the researcher off the scent.

¹⁷ Zero data - the respondent refuses to say anything at all in order to avoid saying anything which s/he might later regret.

¹⁸ Interpreted data- the respondent is filtering his/her messages either to deliberately complicate or to simplify her/his responses.

(9) What unanswered questions arising from the data will the researcher use in his next meeting with the respondent?

(10) How have the theoretical concepts in each memo been constantly compared and then sorted?

2.8.4. The Constant Comparison Method and Sorting

The reader of a CGTM thesis should easily be able to understand how and why both the constant comparison and sorting process have been operationalised (Glaser, 1998). There are now commercially available computer software packages which are designed to “speed up” these processes. However Glaser (1996) strongly advises researchers to avoid their use. This is not for reactionary reasons: that in Glaser’s (1996) view the use of computer packages is “a creative cop out” (Glaser 1996). He gives four main reasons why the use of computer software should be avoided when using CGT. (1) Computer packages are excellent for dealing with very large volumes of data. If the research is using CGTM correctly there should be no need for very large volumes of data because latent patterns can be detected from fairly small amounts of data, (2) In Glaser’s (1996) view sorting done manually takes time, time that can be used creatively and productively by the researcher to reflect on the data itself. The CGTM is a delayed action phenomenon both for the researcher as well as the respondent, (3) when a CGTM researcher is faced with having to analyse a mass of data manually it can seem overwhelming and can create a degree of anxiety in the researcher. This anxiety can result in fear or some psychological regression. Thus the CGTM researcher needs to develop skills to cut through the uncertainty so that the authentic latent pattern emerges rather than being forced. To date computer packages are unable to do this, (4) none of the

currently available computer software packages have been written by those who fully understand the CGTM process.

2.8.5. The Emergence of the Core Variable

It must be possible for the researcher to demonstrate a pathway through data, showing how the raw data emerge as the core variable (Glaser, 1978). Data in themselves should not be treated as evidence. Data should instead be presented in a transparent way so that the reader of the research can immediately understand how the core variable emerged (Lowe, 1998).

2.9. Criteria for Evaluating Classic Grounded Theory Methodology research

The grounded theory research method is a general inductive methodology which can be applied to all types of data, both quantitative and qualitative, or the combination thereof as has been outlined by Glaser (1978, 1998). GT is not a subset of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). Therefore QDA criteria are inappropriate for the evaluation of research done using the grounded theory research method (Glaser, 1978).

Glaser (1978, 1998, 2000, and 2001) gives explicit examples of the four main criteria with which to evaluate grounded theory study: fit, workability, relevance and modifiability. These criteria will be explored in the following section.

2.9.1. Fit

If a concept can be said to be a 'fit' it means that the concept adequately reflects the data that it purports to express. The categories of the emerged core variable

must fit the data used to create the theory. Ungrounded assumptions and data which have been forced to fit into preconceived concepts derail fit in CGTM, as well as invalidating the theory (Glaser, 1978). Although fit would appear to correspond to positivistic validity, it is fit in terms of CGTM action and usage, not as a result of testing (Glaser, 1998). Unlike research based on preconceptions, such as research conducted in order to test an hypothesis, in CGTM data which cannot be forced are discarded rather than used to correct the emerging categories. With CGTM only data 'sorted' and used for developing theory can be said to constitute a fit (Glaser, 1978, 1998). The fit could be expressed as a 'refit or an 'emergent fit'. During research categories emerge fast, so the need arises to refit them to the data as the research proceeds and to be sure that they fit all of the data they purport to indicate, thus increasing and ensuring transparency. Categories can emerge between data and pre-existent categories (Glaser, 1978).

2.9.2. Workability

How the core variable accounts for the respondents' continual resolution of their main concern is a key issue. The emergent GT must clearly explain what is happening, and the process of its happening, and by so doing should be able to predict future behaviour (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2001).

2.9.3. Relevance

How the emerged core variable has been received by the members of the constituency from which the data was drawn is also pertinent. Prior to the research it is very likely that respondents would be unable to articulate their main concern.

Once they have read the research they should instantly be able to recognize the emerged core variable as being authentic (Glaser, 1998).

2.9.4. Modifiability

The CGT is considered to be modifiable if it is easy for subsequent CGTM researchers to be aware of what research has been done so far in the area, and to proceed to modify or refine the theory as they collect and code new data (e.g. code new data for emergent fit), without invalidating the theory.

Various IS researchers posed certain questions on the issue of transparency when using CGTM (Ndume et al 2008), these include: *“How can research using CGT have a chain of ‘legitimate’, ‘accurate’ evidence? How can one reconcile this with the approach of not recording or taking notes in interviews? How does one demonstrate, or substantiate the chain of evidence in the process of moving from data to concept/theory?”* Such questions assume accuracy in the collection of evidence based data as a requirement for ‘accurate’, ‘reliable’, ‘legitimised’ research (Ndume et al. 2008).

Since CGTM is an inductive research methodology it is appropriate to use a legitimate set of evaluation criteria as outlined by the CGT’s co-ordinator Glaser (1978). However there must be total transparency when using CGTM so that it can easily and clearly be seen how the emergent core variable arose.

Glaser (2007:41-42) explains the reasons for the persistence of a level of misunderstanding of the CGTM amongst many academics and researchers: they continue to fail to distinguish clearly between "conceptual generalisations" and "descriptive generalisations":

"The constant comparative method [at the heart of CGT] was originated in 1967 to generate concepts by constantly comparing indicators of a latent pattern. After several comparisons the result is conceptually naming the pattern and its properties.....The category is abstract of time, place and people. The conceptual categories apply with emergent fit. The Formal CGT research generates categories that relate to each other as generalizations.

In contrast descriptive comparisons are as old as research itself. They just compare differences and similarities and a sum of description of people's social actions in a unit of time. The concern is always accuracy, that is, the researcher has worrisome accuracy to constantly contend with. Generalisations are difficult to make from one unit to another and even within the unit studied. These are the problems of accuracy of external and internal validity respectively of descriptive generalizations.

Conceptual generalizations do not have this validity problem. They just apply within a context applied to with modification. For example, controlling clients by pseudo-friending simply varies for client types and client conditions."

Glaser (2009:15) gives a robust response to the continuing misconceptions regarding CGTM, as articulated by Bryant & Charmaz (2007:120), in particular the "worrisome accuracy" associated with data analysis and the failure of researchers to appreciate the value of the conceptual level of CGTM:

"Data worries dominate the GT jargonizing of QDA issues in the Handbook. And why shouldn't it? Worrisome accuracy is the central issue of

QDA. QDA research has to yield accurate description, which puts an emphasis on analyzing the data used in any research every which way to see what, indeed, is being described and is verifiable. And furthermore how fast will the description get stale-dated and if it can be momentarily discursively generalized. This is a perennial, non-solvable problem. It totally neglects the conceptual level of GT, which is free of and abstract of place, time and people and hence free of worrisome accuracy. Comparisons generate a GT's constant concept modifiability."

Transparency of a fully grounded theory will be achieved only when the reader is able to clearly see how the researcher progressed from raw data to the final integrated core variable (see section 2.8).

2.10. Critique of Classic Grounded Theory Methodology

Since the discovery of Classic Grounded Theory methodology in 1967, it remains to be a methodology of debate by the academic community. The most common criticism comes from academics who are practitioners of Symbolic Interactionism [SI]. These academics make the claim that while the CGT method uses interpretivist and constructionist tools, it stems from positivism/objectivism. It therefore suffers from internal misalignment (Bryant, 2002). Other points of criticism include naive inductionism (Bryant, 2002; Goulding, 2001), limitations on a priori knowledge (Bryant, 2002; Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2001), phenomenalism (Goulding, 2001), the paradox of 'theory' (Bryant, 2002; Charmaz, 2006), limited theoretical generalisation (Burawoy, 1991; Nasirin, Birks, & Jones, 2003; Charmaz, 2006) and the epistemology and ontology stance (Charmaz, 2006; Burton-Jones 2009; Campbell & Russo 2001; Cupchik 2001; Mingers 2001; Burrell & Morgan 1979;

Fitzgerald & Howcroft, 1998b). Due to such critic, it has resulted in multiple modifications (including that of Strauss and Corbin of 1990) and approaches as discussed in section 1.3.

Researchers have had differing ideas on the philosophical orientation of Classic Grounded Theory methodology (Matavire & Brown, 2011). Some view it as a positivist/objectivist method, due to the language used by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their book titled 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory'. Terms like 'emergence' and 'discovery' suggest an objective realist perspective, accepting only one 'true' reality (Locke, 2001). The main reason for this assumption probably lies in the fact that Glaser and Strauss established a strong argument for a structured method of qualitative analysis. As Charmaz (1990, p. 253) argues that:

“ Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) work was revolutionary because it challenged (a) arbitrary divisions between theory and research, (b) views of qualitative research as primarily a precursor to more "rigorous" quantitative methods, (c) claims that the quest for rigor made qualitative research illegitimate, (d) beliefs that qualitative methods are impressionistic and unsystematic, (e) separation of data collection and analysis, and (f) assumptions that qualitative research could produce only descriptive case studies rather than theory development”.

In 1990, Strauss and Corbin introduced grounded theory which differs from the original method (see appendix A.1). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) introduced Grounded Theory as an institutional icon in the modernist paradigm. This finding may have been heavily influenced by the date of publication of the original monograph in 1967. That year lay well within Denzin and Lincoln’s (2000) espoused second movement. It

may also have been informed by Glaser's strong positivist background, a view supported by Charmaz (2003).

In contrast to the critics, Glaser (2005) maintains that the many critiques of the CGT method have done so by misunderstanding what GT is. There is a dominant paradigm called Symbolic Interactionism (SI) which is widely adopted by those who carry out Qualitative Data Analysis research. The QDA researchers who are also critics of the CGT method have incorrectly assumed that CGT is a sub set of QDA and therefore is based on Symbolic Interactionism. The mistake they have made is that just because CGT sometimes makes use of qualitative data that the CGT method must also be a QDA method. This perception is wrong as explained in detail by Glaser (2005:4):

“The Strauss origination of GT using SI has a pretty heavy impact and dominance which given the above discussion, is hard to resist, but GT is just not an SI in possession... GT is just a relatively simple inductive model that can be used on any data type and with any theoretical perspective. It is just a general inductive model , or paradigm..no one theoretical perspective can possess it”

Glaser (2005) tended to be ambivalent about the position of Grounded Theory and stated that Grounded Theory is intended as an alternative to all paradigms: “[Grounded Theory] is not an either/or method. It is simply an alternative to positivistic, social constructionist and interpretive qualitative data methods” (Glaser, 2001, p. 6). Glaser (2001) emphasizes that a method's selection is to be guided by the needs of the research, rather than by any one paradigmatic bias:

“My bias is clear, but this does not mean I rubber stamp ‘ok’ or indite any method. The difference in perspectives will just help any one researcher decide what method to use that suits his/her needs within the research context and its goals for research” (Glaser, 2001, p. 2).

The CGT research method is not without its own shortcomings though, as has already been highlighted elsewhere in this thesis [chapter 7]. There are three main types of weaknesses of the CGT research method, open doors to critics and debate:

2.10.1. Methodological issues

- The dense level of language used by Glaser in his original explanations of the CGT method as outlined in Glaser (1978).
- The CGT method is highly experiential and requires input from CGT mentors as well as texts.
- The CGT method is language based so this may be problematic when carrying transnational research projects.

2.10.2. Researcher based issues

- i. The problem is that not all researchers are naturally skilled in being able to move from description to to conceptualization. Therefore the number of researchers that will be able to use CGT will always be limited.
- ii. The ability for the researcher to be comfortable in tolerating confusion. Again most researchers will not wish to gravitate towards a research method which has this inherent difficult embedded within its procedures.

- iii. To be an effective CGT researcher requires more tenacity when using the CGT method than other more dominant paradigms. This is because the CGT researcher has to be able to address the academic prejudice shown by some gatekeepers who are either unwilling or able to embrace research paradigms other than those with which they are familiar.
- iv. Effective research which involves the use of the CGT method often requires high levels of access to people, which is sometimes problematic.

2.10.3. Academic institutional issues

- (i) Many academic institutions make the assumption that PhD thesis structures will be based on deductive based research methods. Since the CGT research method is a general inductive method it does not always make an easy fit into what many academic institutions have previously decided is an appropriate research structure.
- (ii) Often those academics reviewing CGT based research often do not either understand its tenets or criteria for their evaluation. This can sometimes restrict the publication prospects of some research which is based on the CGT method.
- (iii) Sections of the academic community incorrectly miscast the CGT method as being a sub set of the QDA research method which is dominated by symbolic interactionism. The CGT research method is a concept indicator model where all is data and is not constricted by either epistemological or ontological issues. Glaser (2005:3) states:

“GT is a general inductive method possessed by no discipline or theoretical perspective or data”

Despite the many dimmed weaknesses of the CGT research method it remains a robust and useful method. The principle reason for this is because the latent patterns which it reveals are both real and transcendent of time, place and people. It is because of these benefits that most CGT researchers do find that the struggle will be well rewarded once a robust core variable is revealed.

2.11. Summary

This chapter has detailed issues on the basic philosophy underpinning CGTM, the stages and procedures of a CGTM study, substantive versus formal theory, ontology and epistemology, problems arising from giving the same label to very different methodological approaches, coding data for an ‘emergent fit’, the special characteristics of GT, how to create and sustain transparency when using CGTM and the criteria for evaluating CGTM. The following chapter will outline and discuss the research design and approach.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Approach Based on Classic Grounded Theory Methodology

3.1. Introduction

As detailed in chapter 2, this study used Classic Grounded Theory by Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978; 1992; 1996; 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2009; 2011). As a result this chapter explains the research design and approach used by this study by following all tenets of Classic Grounded Theory. Section one will discuss the research population. Section two will detail the data collection process. Section three discusses data analysis.

As discussed in chapter 2, the Classic Grounded Theory (CGT) is a general research method. It is not limited to any single ontological and epistemological stance (Glaser, 1978, 1998). The use of Classic Grounded Theory methodology in this research revealed the main concerns of e-learning providers working in East Africa and how those concerns were continually being resolved in an ongoing process.

3.2. Research Population

The data in this Classic Grounded Theory study was drawn from e-learning providers working in East Africa. Following the Classic Grounded Theory Methodology (as detailed in chapter 2), the number, scope and range of those being interviewed were determined in an ongoing process based on the emergent data as shown in Appendix A.4, A.5, and A.6.

3.3. Data Collection

A total of 24 e-learning providers respondents from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda were interviewed on several occasions. This meant that the researcher had a total of 101 respondent encounters. All the respondents were e-learning providers working in East Africa with successful career track records, ranging from directors and e-learning stakeholders (consultants etc.) to e-learning lecturers and tutors. The meetings with respondents were scheduled after the researcher submitted a request for permission letter to the respective authorities to allow the researcher to meet the e-learning providers within the organization. Permission to meet the staff was granted verbally from the authorities. The appointment to meet the staff was made, scheduling date, time and location. This was accomplished either through a personal secretary or a phone call to the staff data collection department. Three types of data collection techniques were used: interviews, observation and secondary data as discussed in the next section below.

3.3.1. Interviews / Meetings / Respondent Encounters

Data was collected through oral conversations, defined by Payne and Payne (2004) as “data collection in face-to-face settings”. The most important aspect of these interviews was that they were of short duration, conducted without tape recordings, and were followed immediately by detailed memo writing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). The round of interviews was conducted with 24 people and each interview started from a respondent’s perspective. Respondents were e-learning providers at various institutions in East Africa, including Higher Learning Institutions.

As per Glaser (1978), no notes or tape recordings were used in any of the respondent encounters. There were no semi-structured interview questions. Instead the researcher concentrated in the initial conversations on establishing rapport and making the respondents feel comfortable and unthreatened. These were deliberate strategies recommended by Glaser (1978). The rationale for this was that the respondent encounters should be more like normal conversations where both parties felt sufficiently relaxed to participate in a candid exchange of ideas. Immediately following each respondent encounter the researcher made very detailed notes that were later converted into theoretical memos. The Grounded Theory research method is known as a “delayed action phenomenon” (Glaser, 1978). This is because it takes some time for both the researcher and the respondent to consider what is and has been said. For this reason it is essential not to attempt to collect all the data first and then proceed to attempt to analyse it. It is essential in CGTM that the researcher follow wherever the data leads. This is because the GT researcher has to be able to move from the low level realm of contextual description to the higher level of theoretical explanation.

Once the researcher had completed at least six initial interviews with different respondents, appointments for subsequent interviews were made with respondents. Prior to the next round of respondent encounters more theoretical memos were written. The focus of the respondent encounters shifted and followed the issues emerging from the most recent iteration of theoretical memos. Although there is no standard template which all theoretical memos must adhere to, there are some basic issues which all theoretical memos must address. If these are not present there will be no transparency in terms of how the researcher progressed from raw data to an

emerged core variable. In order to meet transparency requirements all memos included the following:

- 1) Memo title
- 2) Summary of any substantive codes, categories and properties
- 3) Conceptual indicators [These are important links that form the bridge from substantive description to conceptual explanation]
- 4) Emergent theoretical codes, categories and properties
- 5) A statement as to the type of data the researcher believes has been given to him or her by the respondent [Baseline, properlined vague, Zero, or interpreted data]. It actually does not matter when doing CGT what type of data the researcher has because everything is considered to be data. If, for example, people are untruthful in encounters, this would probably be more interesting and significant for the researcher than if they were being honest. What is of the utmost importance is that the researcher fully understands what type of data s/he has, rather than worry about accuracy.
- 6) A clear separation of empirical data from conjecture data. Both are important in CGT but they are very different types of data and need to be treated and used accordingly.
- 7) How has the data been fractured? Which conceptual theoretical perspectives has the researcher used to better understand the latent patterns embedded in the data?

- 8) What links have been highlighted in other memos from the researcher's bank of memos?
- 9) What unanswered questions arising from the data will the researcher use in his/her next meeting with the respondent?
- 10) Have the theoretical concepts in each memo been constantly compared and then sorted, and by what process?

Once a critical mass of data had been generated this researcher had to use a combination of constant comparison and analytic induction to tease out the main issues of concern as expressed by the respondents. Two competing main issues or core variables emerged. The researcher then followed the specific guidance given by Glaser (1978:93-100): to re-enter the field and investigate which of the two variables proved to be more 'robust'. This situation occurred for them when Glaser and Strauss were writing *the Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), where two variables emerged. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) did, the researcher had to re-enter the field to investigate which of the two core variable candidates was more robust. First the researcher returned to the data and laboriously and constantly compared these across all the theoretical memos to see which of the two candidates for the core variable was more prominent. "Cultivating Recognition" began to emerge across all the data whilst the other core variable candidate only featured occasionally. The researcher re-entered the field and met with four respondents from the original cohort of respondents. A total of 101 respondent encounters were theoretically sampled for "Cultivating Recognition". Cultivating Recognition was then instantly acknowledged by the respondents as their key issue or concern. Prior to this final wave of interviews the respondents had repeatedly been talking about their

concern with regard to the lack of respect on the part of some of their clients. Although it worried them considerably it turned out to be the symptom of something much more important and pervasive. It was a symptom of a general lack of recognition. Thus "*Cultivating Recognition*" emerged as the core variable. Figure 27 explains how "*Cultivating Recognition*" emerged as the core variable.

As has been outlined above, each of the interviewees was re-interviewed several times until latent patterns of behaviour began to emerge. Once these patterns emerged the second stage of interviewing took place with more university professionals as well as other constituencies identified by the interviewees as being important people to speak with concerning this issue. As key concept indicators emerged theoretical sampling was the feature of the second stage of interviewing. The interviewing and memo writing and sorting continued until no more new patterns emerged. When this happens the data is said to be 'saturated': no more data is required because predictable patterns have begun to emerge.

The meetings with respondents were scheduled at least two weeks before meeting them to ensure a respondent was free. Each meeting was introduced with an explanation. It was made clear to the respondent that the research focus was to reveal, understand and explain what the main issues were which confronted these professionals in the execution of their role as e-learning providers in the implementation of on-line learning projects. Respondents were encouraged to let the researcher know if they felt uncomfortable about any line of enquiry. The absence of any tape recording or note taking during these encounters helped to make the respondents feel more relaxed. This made it possible to transform the nature of these encounters from an interview to something akin to a normal conversation

during which both interviewer and respondent were able to pose questions to each other. All encounters were kept deliberately brief so that the researcher was able to make detailed notes immediately after the conclusion of each meeting. The purpose of the series of meetings was to discover the respondents' main concerns regarding online learning including the challenges, how they solve problems and what they consider to be achievements and successes in the course of their daily working lives. It was considered vital to schedule several meetings with each respondent as this would give each respondent the time and space to reflect on subsequent encounters and enabled the researcher to encourage a respondent to think more deeply about what their real concerns were.

Following this incremental process of having several interviews with each respondent ensured that in each case the respondent's agenda emerged rather than that of the researcher. The choice of the locations was an important consideration. The idea was to try and ensure that the respondents felt relaxed. Thus a variety of locations, other than their own offices was selected. These included restaurants, university canteens, meeting rooms, public bars, walking in the street and driving in the car.

The meetings generated a huge amount of data through the notes from the 101 respondent encounters, each set of notes being recorded within 24 hours of each conversation. A summary of some of the different kinds of raw data collected in the course of this process follows:

As part of the process of the grounded theory [GT] method the researcher has immediately to be aware of the types of data which emerge from conversations with

respondents. During the process, there were five types of possible data derived in any encounter with respondents:

1. **Base line data** – the respondent is being as truthful as possible, as far as the interviewer can gauge.
2. **Interpreted data** – the respondent is filtering his/her message either to deliberately complicate or simplify her/his responses
3. **Properlined data** – the respondent deliberately edits the data so that it is not in conflict with the “official” line of argument from his employing authority
4. **Vague data** – the respondent deliberately gives an indistinct version of reality to try and confuse the researcher, obfuscate the issues and throw the researcher ‘off the scent’
5. **Zero data** – the respondent refuses to say anything at all in order to avoid saying anything which he might later regret.

From a GT perspective it does not matter which type or types of data the respondent delivers because each type of data has the potential to communicate or contribute something of interest and value to the research.

3.3.2. Observation

Higher Education professionals engaged in e-learning activities were observed during their daily activities. These observations were systematically documented in the course of writing theoretical memos. The researcher observed e-learning patterns first by using substantive coding and then by theoretical coding until the core variable emerged.

3.3.3. Secondary data sources

A review was done of written existing documents in the higher education institutions such as those dealing with e-learning contexts and trends, performance ratings, program logs, tally sheets, and other existing indicators. This contributed to an analysis of the main concerns relating to e-learning by university professionals. Much of this data was sourced from the Ministry of Higher Education, universities and other governmental and non-governmental sources.

3.4. Data Analysis

The Grounded Theory research method is a general research method which treats everything as data, whether quantitative or qualitative (Glaser, 1992). Grounded Theory primarily uses an inductive research approach in which the researcher has to be subordinate to the data. Grounded Theory is not a sub-set of Qualitative Data Analysis [QDA]. This is because QDA values accuracy above all within a narrow research context whereas Grounded Theory is mainly concerned with the discovery of latent patterns of human behaviour which are transcendent of the original context of the data (Glaser, 1978).

The following Grounded Theory Research process was followed as outlined by Glaser (1978, 1992):

[1] Theoretical sampling and substantive coding

[2] Theoretical coding

[3] Theoretical memo writing

[4] Constant comparison between and within memos

[5] Sorting codes

[6] Data saturation

[7] Emergence of the core variable

Although the above is represented in a linear format, in practice the exact sequence varied according to what patterns seemed to be emerging from conversations with respondents. The reason for this is that GT is a process, not a unit based approach (Glaser, 1992). The data was simultaneously, subsequently, and sequentially collected, analysed and synthesized. Once most of the variations in the data were explained in terms of a key concept, the data was said to be saturated and therefore there was no further need to collect more data since the core variable could be said to have emerged. The sequence of the research process, although as already mentioned, not a linear one, was as follows:

- a. Gaining access and carrying out the first few interviews with e-learning providers.
- b. GT skill development on the part of the researcher in memo writing, substantive coding and theoretical coding using the data from the series of interviews with the initial group of interviewees.
- c. Managing the transition from substantive to theoretical coding, achieved by using a combination of the constant comparison method, cutting point analysis and grounding (as detailed in chapter 2).

- d. The emergence of latent patterns following another series of interviews with e-learning providers. The data yielded was sorted so that conceptual indicators could help clarify these emergent latent patterns.
- e. Once the data could be said to be saturated the core variable emerged
- f. The core variable was then used as a basis for a comparative literature review.
- g. The findings are published in the form of this PhD thesis.

3.5. How Principles of Theoretical Sampling have been used in this Study to Aid the Researcher's Progressions

Glaser (1978:36) defines the theoretical sampling process in the following terms:

“Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory where by the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (p. 36)

Theoretical sampling is exclusively controlled and guided by the emergent theory as it arises. As an inductive approach, it is not constrained from the outset and is able to follow the data to the existing latent patterns embedded within it. In this study, the four most important principles involved in the use of theoretical sampling are as follows; it is a non-linear process, it is a combination of induction and deduction, the data is always in control of the direction of the research and the

essential relationship between the data and the theory is the conceptual code (Glaser, 1978).

A non-linear process

Throughout the research process, the researcher was always mindful that whenever insights arose the researcher would immediately have to write a theoretical memo about it. Frequently these insights would arise when the researcher was doing a quite unrelated tasks and at inconvenient times. Theoretical sampling enabled the researcher to examine right across all the data so that the emergent theory could be discovered.

A combination of inductive and deductive logic

The CGT method is mainly an inductive research method. Inductive logic comes into play because the theoretical sampling process is designed to reveal embedded latent patterns. It was not possible for the researcher to know in advance precisely what to sample and where it might lead. This is why the use of induction was essential. This allowed the researcher to discover the connections between the emergent substantive codes. These latent patterns in which the substantive codes are configured are called theoretical codes. Once the theoretical codes started to emerge the researcher was able to use deduction to figure out where to go next in order to sample for more data to generate the theory.

The data is always in control

As theoretical codes emerged the researcher kept on returning to the theoretical memos and any other data to see how prevalent they were. This also meant that once theoretical codes had emerged I went to respondents with a much more focussed approach. I was only sampling for the emergent theoretical codes. Those codes which were robust were found in all respondent encounters. Sometimes this meant returning to a respondent and asking them to give ever more detailed examples of issues which were of most concern to them in their work. Obviously the researcher never coached the respondents for specific responses instead the encounters were always open and we would often discuss many other things. Once the respondents became more relaxed they also became more candid about their work situation. At this point the researcher had to concentrate very hard because throughout this process notes were taken within 24 hours after the respondent encounters.

The Essential Relationship between the data and the theory is the conceptual code

After following the principles of theoretical sampling two distinct theoretical codes were persistently present. These were “asymmetrical collaboration” and “cultivating recognition”. At this point the researcher was very confused. To clear confusion the researcher was advised to re-read the section entitled core categories in Glaser (1978:94-100). Glaser (1978:94-100) explains in detail how and why this possibility will often occur. He also provides an 11 point explanation (see Table 4) as to how the researcher can discern which of the completing theoretical codes is the core variable. After re-reading this chapter I returned to my data and applied the 11 point

guide lines. In addition I also arranged more respondent encounters and only one of the two theoretical codes finally emerged as the core variable. It did so because it was able to explain most of the variation in the data.

Table 4 : Selective criteria for Core Category

(Source: Glaser (1978, p.93-100))

- central
- reoccur frequently
- more time to saturate
- connections not be-forced
- clear & grabbing implication for formal theory
- carry through
- completely variable
- is also a dimension of the problem
- prevent to other sources of establishing a core
- see the core category in all relations
- it can be a kind of theoretical code

The Figure 3 below demonstrates how the theory of “cultivating recognition” emerged from the data.

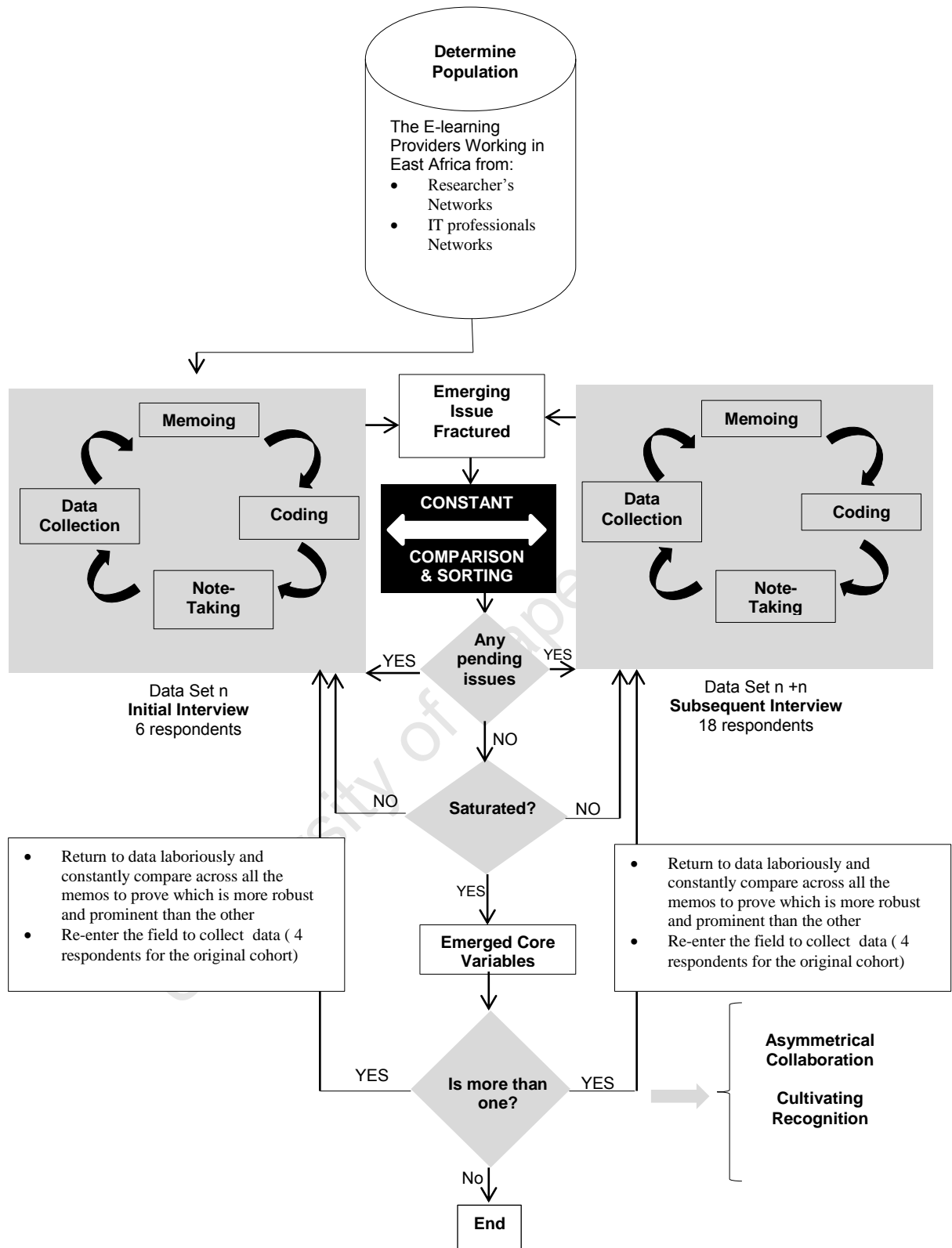


Figure 3 : How the Principle of Theoretical Sampling have been used in this Study to aid the Researcher's Progression

Using Figure 3 above, this study began with determining the population through the researcher's networks and IT providers' networks. Following this, e-learning providers working in east Africa were chosen. As Glaser (1978) argues after determining the population, the theoretical sampling process will involve initial data collection and analysis. This study did an initial data collection using 6 respondents. After fracturing the data collected, detailed memos were written. In initial stages of analysis, codes were elicited rapidly through a joint process of theoretical sampling and memo-writing. Through this process, codes were corrected, trimmed, and continually fitted to the data (Glaser, 1978). The memo writing enabled the researcher to conceptualise the boundaries and properties of each category and illuminated gaps in the emerging theory, thus highlighting where to sample next and for what theoretical purpose (Glaser, 1978). The memo writing included all basic issues detailed in section 3.3.1 (see sample memos in Appendix A.7 and A.8).

The constant comparison of codes yielded a provisional set of conceptual categories, from which point new categories emerged and new incidents were fitted and re-fitted into existing categories. The researcher sampled for both theoretical similarity and difference in order to expound the properties of each category, and attempted to saturate all categories until the emergence of a core category (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Once latent patterns were discovered, the researcher had to return to the data and see how wide spread across all the data the emerging phenomena actually was. At this point there were no more categories emerging- it was saturated. As soon the categories were saturated, the study realized that two competing core variable candidates did emerge. As has been explained earlier in 3.5 after applying the 11 criteria (see Table 4) which distinguished between competing core theories, the core variable emerged.

3.6. Summary

This chapter has detailed issues on research design and approach. It has covered research population, Data collection methods and process, and Data Analysis. The chapter has taken care of Classic Grounded Theory Methodology principles and procedures in its research design and approach (as explained in chapter 2). The following chapter will provide a contextual Literature Review.

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Chapter 4

Contextual Literature in E-learning

4.1. Introduction

This chapter details the contextual literature in e-learning. The discussion follows the argument map in Figure 3 below.

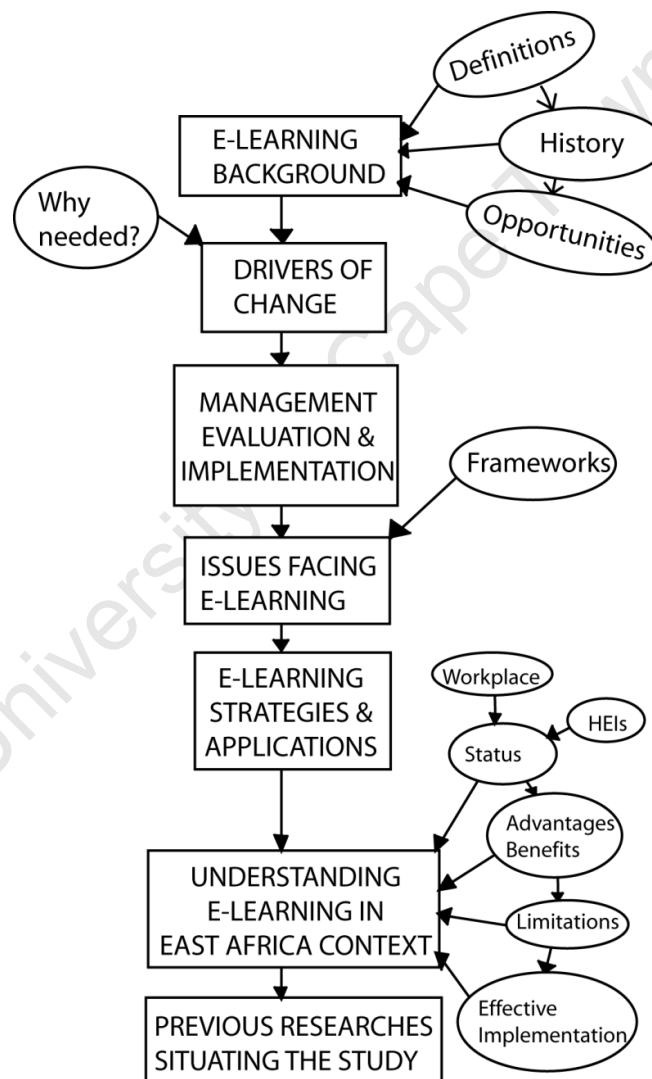


Figure 4: The Argument Structure of Contextual Literature Review in E-learning

As indicated in Figure 4 above, the chapter will begin with an examination and review of the e-learning background, looking at various definitions of e-learning, its history and its possibilities. Secondly, the chapter will identify and discuss the drivers of change in the e-learning field. Thirdly, this chapter will examine the management, implementation and evaluation of e-learning. The fourth section presents a discussion of the issues facing e-learning and provides a framework perspective. The fifth section describes and explains e-learning strategies and applications. The sixth section of the chapter looks at how e-learning is perceived and understood in the East African context, looking at the status of e-learning in the region, its advantages, limitations and degree of effective implementation. The final section looks at previous research in this area in order to situate this study in the body of the contextual literature reviewed and discussed.

4.2. E-learning Background: Definitions and History

4.2.1. A broad view of e-learning and its definitions

There exists a variety of e-learning definitions and terms. While Moore (1998) sees e-learning as involving the use of the computers or electronic devices in some way to provide training education or learning materials, Wentling et al. (2000:5) offer a broader, more detailed definition which includes a projection of the future scope of e-learning:

“E-learning is the acquisition and use of knowledge distributed and facilitated primarily by electronic means. This form of learning currently depends on networks and computers but will likely evolve into systems consisting of a variety of channels (e.g. Wireless, satellite), and technologies

(e.g. Cellular phones, PDAs) as they are developed and adopted. E-learning can take the form of courses as well as modules and smaller learning objects. E-learning may incorporate synchronous or asynchronous access and may be distributed geographically with varied limits of time.”

The Wentling et al. (2000) definition focuses mainly on defining the technology on which e-learning is based. It included elements of learner engagement, engaging e-learning experience constructs and pace of rapid technology changes. Telematica Instituut (2001:4) defines it thus:

“E-learning is the use of internet technology for the creation, management, making available, security, selection and use of educational content to store information about those who learn and to monitor those who learn, and to make communication and cooperation possible. The purpose is to support, expand, and increase the adaptability of the transfer and advancement of knowledge and skills.”

This definition details several functions of e-learning and the potential it has to fulfil both now and in the future. One assumes that education institutions and organizations would choose to use a particular e-learning service based on their particular educational needs and the functions they want it to provide. They would therefore check whether the applications fit the current and future information infrastructure of their organization or institution and the particular needs of their ‘customers’ (students). Ndume, et al. (2008:3) highlight the flexibility of e-learning in terms of geographical location, time and individual needs. They see e-learning as:

“...learning done at a computer usually connected to a network, giving one the opportunity to learn anytime, anywhere, allowing knowledge to be brought to the learners, wherever they may happen to be, allowing the pace and content of education to be tailored to the individual needs.”

According to this definition e-learning not only allows learners to learn when ever or where ever they want or need to but makes it possible for them to tailor their learning to their individual needs.

These definitions share the core characteristics of e-learning as a technology offering education and training in electronic form using electronic devices, where a candidate may not necessarily be in class but needs to be connected to the Internet and browse through the courses in the electronic form known as Web Based Training (WBT) or the use of Computer Based Training (CBT). Charles Clarke's (2003:7) report to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) of the United Kingdom argues for the transformative potential of e-learning, particularly in terms of being accessible to all:

“E-learning has the power to transform the way we learn, and to bring high quality, accessible learning to everyone – so that every learner can achieve his or her full potential.” (Clarke 2003:7).

As detailed in Figure 4 below from Clarke (2003), e-learning could be seen to measure up to the goals and ideals he advocates for a 21st century education system. These goals and ideals include learners empowered, creativity and innovation, flexible provision, better value for learners and a professional workforce (see Figure 5). E-learning claims it has the potential to fulfil these criteria.

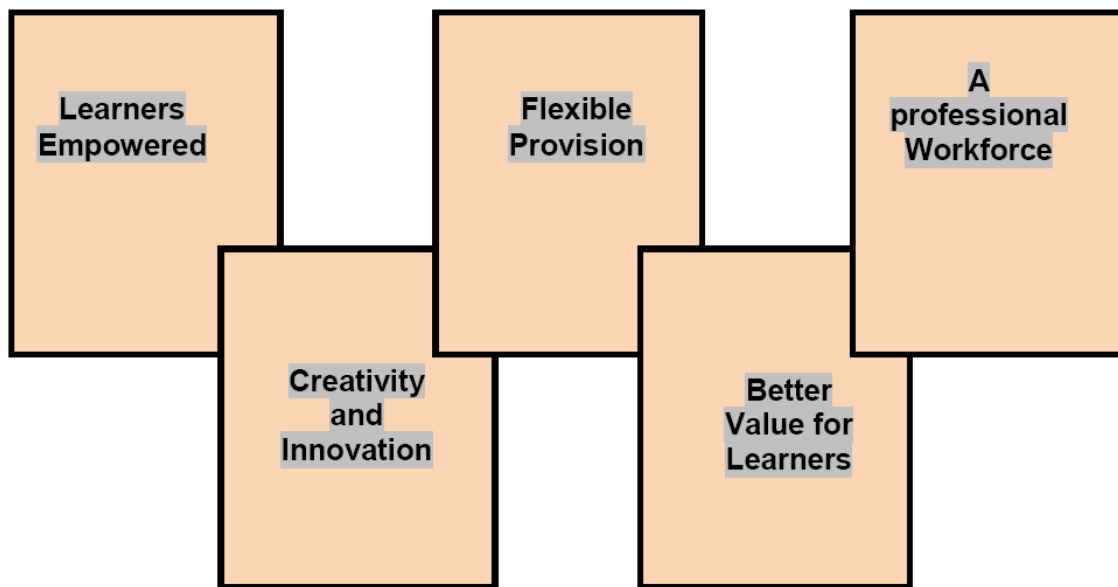


Figure 5: A 21st Century Education System Goals and Ideals

(Source: Clarke (2003:2))

The Commission on Technology and Adult Learning in UK (2001:9 -10) seems to define e-learning within a more restricted and rigid framework: “. *E-learning as instructional content or learning experiences is delivered or enabled by electronic technology, (CTAL, 2001).* . *The delivery of e-learning depends on availability of technology infrastructures. E-learning can only be achieved through the use of technology.* Hall (2001:4) defined e-learning as “the process of learning via computers over the internet and intranets”. The components of infrastructure such as computers, internet and others, could be drivers of the delivery of e-learning. Many authors define e-learning within a wide range. Anolina (2005) and Albert & Mori

(2001) argue that there are many e-learning definitions. Table 5 below summaries a wide range of e-learning definitions.

Table 5 : E-learning Definitions with Citations

E-LEARNING DEFINITION	SOURCE(S)
<p>an open and distributed learning environment that uses pedagogical tools, enabled by the internet and web-based technologies to facilitate learning and knowledge building through meaningful action and interaction</p>	<p>Dabbagh & Dannan-Ritland(2000:15)</p>
<p>an innovative approach for delivering well-defined learner-centred interactive and facilitated learning environment-to anyone, anyplace, anytime by utilising the attributes and resources of various digital technologies along with other forms of learning materials suited for open, flexible and distributed learning environment</p>	<p>Khan(2005:3)</p>
<p>instruction that is delivered electronically, in part or wholly – via a Web browser, through the Internet or an intranet, or through multimedia platforms such as CD-ROM or DVD</p>	<p>Hall (2001:18)</p>
<p>any program that uses information and communicational technology to enhance the learning process. It is a particular use of internet and the web in teaching and learning process</p>	<p>Bates (2005:32).</p>

<p>refers to the use of ICTs to enhance and support teaching and learning processes. It is the instructional content or learning experiences delivered or enabled by electronic technologies and it incorporates a wide variety of learning strategies and technologies</p>	<p>Sife, et al. (2007:3)</p>
<p>referred to the intentional use of networked information and communications technology in teaching and learning</p>	<p>Naidu (2006:7-12)</p>
<p>to learn with the help of electronics. However e-learning most commonly refers to learning online via a web based learning platform. This means that if you have a computer and Internet access, you can take e -learning courses at your home, office, and anywhere else that has an Internet connection and a computer</p>	<p>Edland (2011:46)</p>
<p>The delivery of a learning, training or education program by electronic means. E-learning involves the use of a computer or electronic device (e.g. a mobile phone) in some way to provide training, education or learning material</p>	<p>Stockley(2003:4; 2006:11)</p>
<p>the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance</p>	<p>Rosenberg(2001:28)</p>
<p>Web-based training (WBT), also known as e-learning and on-line learning, is training that resides in a server or host computer that is connected to the World Wide Web</p>	<p>Rossett & Sheldon (2001:23)</p>

<p>a broad combination of processes, content, and infrastructure to use computers and networks to scale and/or improve one or more significant parts of a learning value chain, including management and delivery</p>	<p>Adrich (2004:15)</p>
<p>just-in-time education integrated with high velocity value chains</p>	<p>Drucker (2000:7)</p>

According to Table 5 above, some of the definitions are fairly general and similar in their focus on the quality of accessibility of e-learning, while some are focused on the technologies used in e-learning. Inclusion of co-evolution, the social and emergent nature of e-learning, in many of the definitions is indicative of the fact that people and technology drive e-learning. Goodear (2001) suggests a way of facilitating the success of e-learning. All definitions of e-learning seem to be in agreement that e-learning, through the use of technology, offers just-in-time delivery (Khan, 2005) and its provision involves the search for cost-effective ways to meet the learning needs of a globally distributed population (Urdan and Weggen 2000). For the purposes of this study, the researcher created the following e-learning definition:

E-learning is the use of modern networks, electronic devices, channels (wireless, satellite, etc.), internet and web technologies in teaching and learning processes, offering the opportunity to learn or teach anywhere, anytime and to include any content. It includes the design, creation, delivery, storage, management and evaluation of educational content, as well as the development of learners and trainers.

The definition above captures the up-to-date definition of technologies used, and the purpose of e-learning providers' theory. It has been gleaned from other definitions, collecting and incorporating all the elements and purposes of e-learning into one definition. The definition is an expanded one with an understanding of current and future technologies such as mobile learning, and others. As a result this definition will be used throughout and will inform this thesis.

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Table 6: Labels Used to Describe the Same Concept of E-Learning

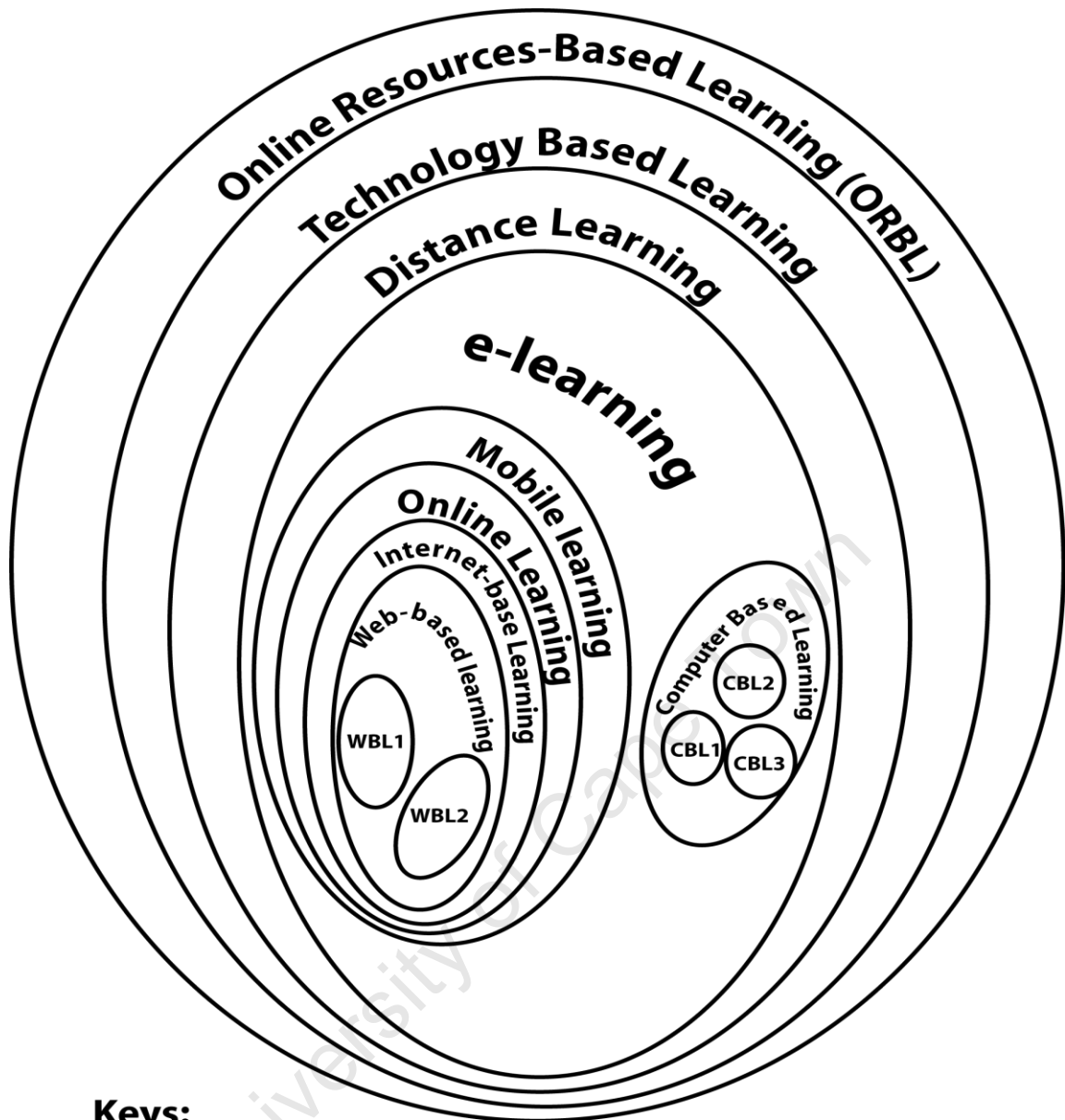
Label	Meaning	Source(s)
Online Learning (OL)	Encompasses a range of technologies such as the world-wide-web, email, chat, newsgroups, and text, audio and video conferencing delivered over computer networks (local area networks, intranets or the public Internet) which deliver education and training, both to remote locations and in the classroom.	Bloom (1968:4), Khan (2005), Malopinsky et al. (2000), Schank (2001), Albert & Mori (2001)
Computer Based Learning (CBL)	An interactive instructional approach in which the computer, taking the place of an instructor, provides a series of challenges to the student ranging from questions to be answered to choices or decisions to be made.	Bates (2001), Yieke (2005), Anolina (2005), Albert & Mori (2001), Block (1971), Bloom (1968).
Web Based Learning (WBL)	Learning materials delivered in a web browser, including materials packed on a CD-ROM or other media.	Khan (2005), Yieke (2005), Driscoll (2002), Albert & Mori (2001)

		Rosenberg (2000).
Web Based Instructions (WBI)	Teaching and learning supported by the attributes and resources of the Internet.	Khan (2005), Khan (2001), Albert & Mori (2001) Khan (1997), Relan & Gillami (1997).
Web Based Training (WBT)	Courses delivered on the intranet, extranet or internet and that are linked to learning resources outside the core course, such as references, electronic mail, and discussion and video conferencing.	Khana (2005), Yieke (2005), Driscoll (2002), Rosenberg (2000), Schank (2001), Horton (2000), Collis (1996).
Internet Based Learning (IBL)	Any process in which a learner is provided with access to courseware stored on the campus or the Internet, from either location.	Anolina (2005), Khana (2005), Yieke (2005), Driscoll (2002), Laurillard (1995).
Online Resources Based Learning (ORBL)	The use and application of available assets to support varied learning needs across contexts via online.	COL (2002), Khan (2005), Barbara (2002, 2004), Cramer, et al. (2000)
Technology based Learning	Any training through media other than the classroom, including computers,	Dam (2004), Goodear. (2001), Pergler &

(TDL)	television, audio, tape and others	Littlejohn (2007).
Distance Learning	A way of providing learning opportunities that is characterised by the separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or in both time and place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face-to-face meetings; and a specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses. The variety of labels used for Distance Learning, include Distance Education, Distributed Learning, and Remote Education	COL (2002), Khan (2005), Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland (2005), Yieke (2005), Barabara (2002, 2004), Cramer, et al (2000)
Mobile Learning, M-learning	Any educational provision where the sole or dominant technologies are handheld or palmtop devices. Mobile learning could include mobile phones,	Dam (2004), Goodear. (2001), Pergler & Littlejohn

	smartphones, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and their peripherals, perhaps tablet PCs and laptop PCs, but not desktops in carts and other similar technologies.	(2007) Khana (2005), Yieke (2005), Driscoll (2002), Schank (2001).
Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)	The use of educational software to enhance the mastering of educational concepts or standards without the involvement of a teacher.	iNACOL (2011), Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland (2005), Yieke (2005), Barbara (2002, 2004), Cramer, et al (2000)

Unusually rapid change in the development of technologies drives the burgeoning of e-learning terms and labels. The e-learning labels, and what is included under the labels as outlined in Table 6 above, will be used to construct a subset of relationships between the labels (Anolina, 2005). Understanding this relationship will provide a more complete picture of e-learning labels, their links and divergences. Figure 6 below demonstrates these e-learning label relationships and interrelationships in schematic form.



Keys:

WBL1 -Web-based Instruction

WBL2 - Web-based Training

CBL1- Computer-Based Training

CBL2- Computer-Based Education

CBL3- Computer-based Instruction

Figure 6 : The Subset of Relationships Between the various E-learning Labels

(Modified version of Anolina (2005))

According to Figure 6 above, there are four categories of labels and keywords which include: Online Resources-Based learning, Technology-Based Learning, Distance Learning and E-learning categories. At no time can the definition of one

category be identical to a definition which crosses the line or the boundary of another category. Several definitions offered by different authors of a term from one category should relate to other categories, which contain similar terms and keywords (Anolina, 2005). An e-learning category can include more labels and terms than any other category, ranging from computer-based learning, Internet-based learning, web-based learning, and online based learning, to mobile based-learning.

4.2.2. A brief E-learning History

Aranda (2007) traces e-learning history back to when the computer was developed. The concept and practice of distance learning predates the computer era by almost 100 years. The range of distance learning delivery media over the media is vast. Distance learning can range from a text delivered by postal mail to various kinds of material in the form of video tapes, radio and TV programs. E-learning was first conceived of as an aid for the classroom instructor. As soon as personal computers came in the early 1990's, the idea of online classes was explored, albeit with some resistance from the education traditionalists at the time (Aranda 2007). The traditional teaching culture of E-learning providers, together with a lack of infrastructure, combined to create resistance to the use of technology in teaching and learning (Ndume, et al. 2008). According to Aranda (2007) improvements in e-learning technology and the possibility of creating virtual classrooms and learning environments (VLEs) has gradually broken down resistance. The power and presence of information technologies has resulted in a transformation of these technologies from potentially strategic resources into commodity factors of production in the teaching and learning environment (Carr 2003). Mersham and Viviers (2007) have noted that a plethora of new jargon and

terminological confusion around the delivery of e-learning to students has developed. These terms include 'open' and 'flexible' learning, 'computer-aided' and online learning and 'contact' or 'centred' learning. The problem is that these terms have often been used interchangeably and the differences in meaning, content and intent are sometimes blurred or unresolved (Khan, 2005; Ndume, et al. 2008; Aranda 2007).

In spite of the jargon and terminology confusion around it, e-learning is still on the agenda for many enterprises and governments and constitutes an important technology category for emerging economies. The adoption of e-learning at a faster pace than any other more traditional learning delivery methods (Ndume, et al., 2008) has meant that e-learning can be applied in any country as the need for education and training is universal. E-learning has already begun to transform education systems worldwide. E-learning providers are becoming available anywhere and at any time. While East Africa in the 21st century has joined the information and communication technology revolution, it faces the challenges of institutionalising the development of Information and Communication Technology (Ndume, et al. 2008) and allocating its benefits to schools and universities (Flinn & Lawrence 2003). As this history has shown, the growth of the e-learning 'industry' in the last decade has been rapid and its transformative influence on education dramatic. This raises the question: what have been and are "the drivers of change?".

4.2.3. Drivers of Change

The history of using technology for learning is replete with promises and disappointments (Rosenberg, 2001), indicating the need for identifying and understanding the drivers of the e-learning revolution. The use of various media

technologies including film, radio, television, video tapes and others, has the potential to replace textbooks and classroom teaching as a form of learning. However, while, as Salomon (2001) points out, although there may be differences between a media technology revolution and an e-learning revolution, Castells (1996) argues that e-learning should be part of any technology revolution. At the same time as the technology revolution has transformed the social landscape (McAdam, 2003; Meredith & Newton, 2003), Information Technology has transformed, and is transforming, the global economy. The transformation is rapid due to the rapid rate of change of these technologies. E-learning is part of this rapid transformation. As Figure 7 below, shows there are many factors driving the e-learning revolution.

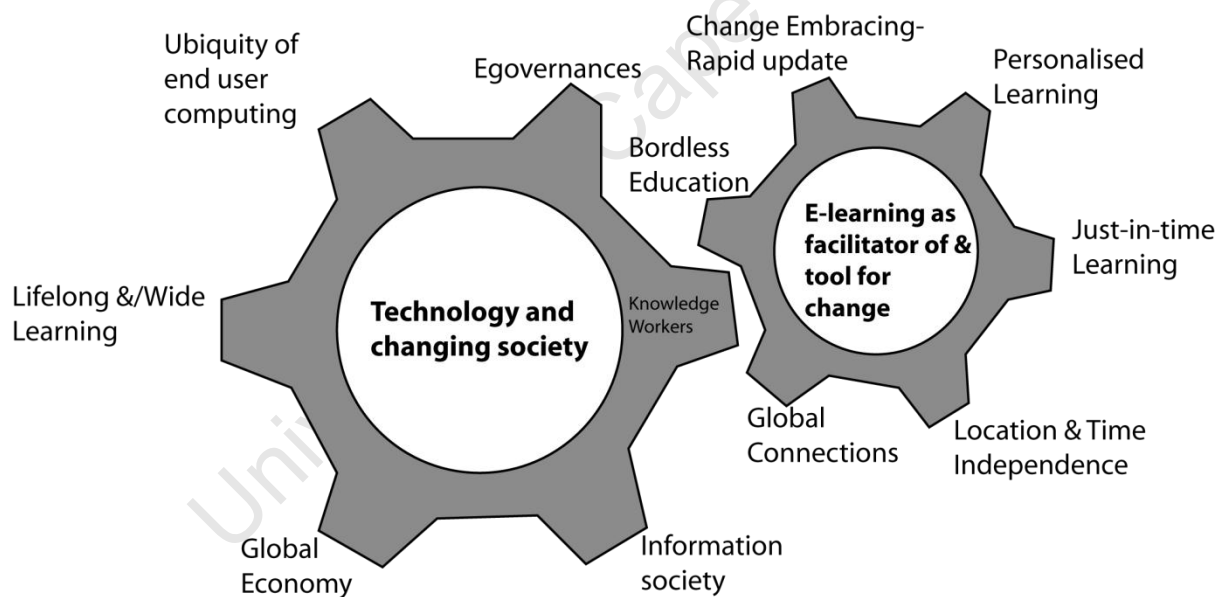


Figure 7: Drivers of the e-learning revolution

(Source: Meredith & Newton, 2003)

E-learning is both a result of the rapid technological change and a response to the changes taking place in culture and society. E-learning has the potential to facilitate a shift from discrete units of teaching and learning to continuous learning

(Salomon, 2001). In summary, as Figure 7 shows, various reasons for the emergence and rapid growth of e-learning are provided by the literature review. Reasons given for this process by some of the researchers in the field include economic, educational, and population growth factors:

“The rapidly changing economy as a main driver for e-learning increase”
(Johnston, 1987:6).

“...The failure of traditional education delivery is crucial to the expansion of e-learning” (Ndume et al. 2008:2-3)

“... The existence of an eligible population for education forces the education sector to move towards students using computers for self-directed study” (Pergler & Littlejohn 2007:21-23)

4.3. Implementing, Managing and Evaluating e-learning

It has been found that many efforts made to implement e-learning fail at a very early stage. The process of implementing e-learning is not a simple one and requires comprehensive knowledge of the context related to the implementation of e-learning. It is essential that any approach to implementing e-learning takes into account the context in which e-learning is to take place. As Ndume, et al. (2008) noted, in order to successfully implement e-learning the country should take into account:

- The context: an analysis of cultural, political, demographic, technological and social issues must be done, as well as of the main concerns of professionals in the field,

- Specific learning technologies and software: learning management systems (LMS) should be selected on the basis of whether they fit the needs of a particular community (e.g. rural and urban, education community, business community, etc) and whether it is possible to opt for readymade software or open source software. In the case of developing countries the best option would be the kind of open source software which fits the particular consumer, client or participants or receivers of e-learning (e.g. Moodle¹⁹, etc.).
- Efforts must be invested in analysing the LMS to be used and to be developed and expanded into the future. The advantages of a systematic approach to e-learning are as set out in Table 7 below.

¹⁹ Moodle is an abbreviation of Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment; is a free and open source e-learning software platform (available at www.moodle.org)

Table 7 : Advantages of a Systematic Approach to E-learning and its Implementation

(Source: E-learning India, 2006)

Allows individuals other than the instructors, such as learners or students wishing to take up the course, to view and weigh up the content.
Guarantees the examination of vital theories through opposite presentation and pertinent ²⁰ learning
Makes objective assessment of the quality of e-learning possible
Makes the e-learning process more transparent, thereby adding quality
Significantly helps students participating in online programs by means of quality content presentation and interactive sessions
Renders distance learning more effective due to its interactive nature and its transparency in comparison to conventional distance learning programs
Provides students with the liberty to opt for the instructional framework of their choice instead of the instructional framework governing student's choice of course in classroom learning.
Builds a comfortable link between pedagogy and technology
Facilitates a process of creative blending of the material offered by different instructors and different courseware

4.4. Issues Facing E-learning: e-Learning Framework Perspectives

According to Singh (2003) a variety of issues need to be addressed in order to create a meaningful and sustainable e-learning environment. Khan (2005) has outlined eight issues in his octagonal framework: institutional, pedagogical, technological, interface design, evaluation, management, resource support, and ethical issues (see Figure 8).

²⁰ Pertinent refers to having clear decisive relevance to the matter in hand (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

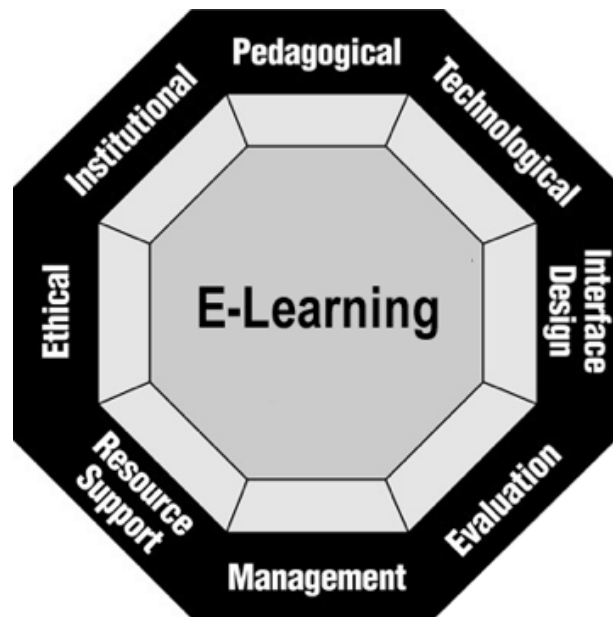


Figure 8 : A Framework for E-learning

(Source: Khan 2001a)

Each dimension in the framework represents a category of issues that need to be addressed for successful implementation of e-learning. These issues help to organize and conceptualise the thinking around the planning of implementation and to ensure that the resulting learning program results in an effective and meaningful learning experience.

Khan (2007b, 2001b, 2005a) categorises the pedagogical dimension of e-learning in terms of teaching and learning. This dimension addresses issues concerning analysis of the content of an e-learning program, audience analysis, goal analysis, media analysis, design approach, organization and methods and strategies in the context of e-learning environments. An e-learning provider needs to understand the pedagogical dimensions to creating effective and meaningful learning experiences for users.

The technological dimension of the e-learning framework involves examining issues of technology infrastructure in e-learning environments. This includes infrastructure planning as well as choice of hardware and software (Khan 2001b).

According to Khan (2001a) the interface design refers to the overall look and feel of e-learning programs. The Interface design dimension encompasses page and site design, content design, navigation, and usability testing. While the evaluation of e-learning includes both assessment of learners and the evaluation of the instruction and learning environment, the management of e-learning refers to the maintenance of the learning environment and the distribution of information (Khan 2001b).

Khan (2001a) sees the function of the resource support dimension of the e-learning framework as being to monitor and make provision for the online support and resources required to foster meaningful learning environments. The ethical considerations of e-learning relate to social and political influence, cultural diversity, bias, social class, income levels, geographical diversity, learner diversity in terms of age and social class, information accessibility, etiquette, and legal issues. The institutional dimension is concerned with those issues of administration, academic matters and student services related to e-learning (Khan 2001a).

Understanding the factors and issues involved in the eight dimensions of the e-learning framework can provide guidance in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of flexible, open and distance learning environments, in addition to helping those involved in the process to face the challenges, both new and old, which e-learning has to confront. Saint's (2001:3) outline of these old and new challenges facing e-learning is summarised in Table 8:

Old e-learning Challenges	New e-learning Challenges
Expanding access Stabilising and increasing financing. Preserving and boosting quality. Maintaining relevance Promoting equity Strengthening management Renovating facilities	Knowledge-based economic growth Information/communication revolution Global labour market Competition from abroad Competition from private providers HIV/AIDS Political conflict and instability

Table 8 : Old and New Challenges confronting e-learning

The eight issues or challenges outlined by Khan (2007) need to be taken into consideration in the process of implementing e-learning, particularly in developing countries. In the context of East Africa, for example, HIV/AIDS has been one of the newer challenges to the implementation of e-learning. The numbers of e-learning experts who succumb to the disease or who leave the education sector diminish the hopes of implementing e-learning effectively (Ndume, et al 2008). As Khan (2005a) pointed out, the role people play in e-learning, and in the process of creating quality e-learning materials, evaluating them and making them suitable for and available to a specified audience is crucial. Figure 9 shows the role played by people in the process:

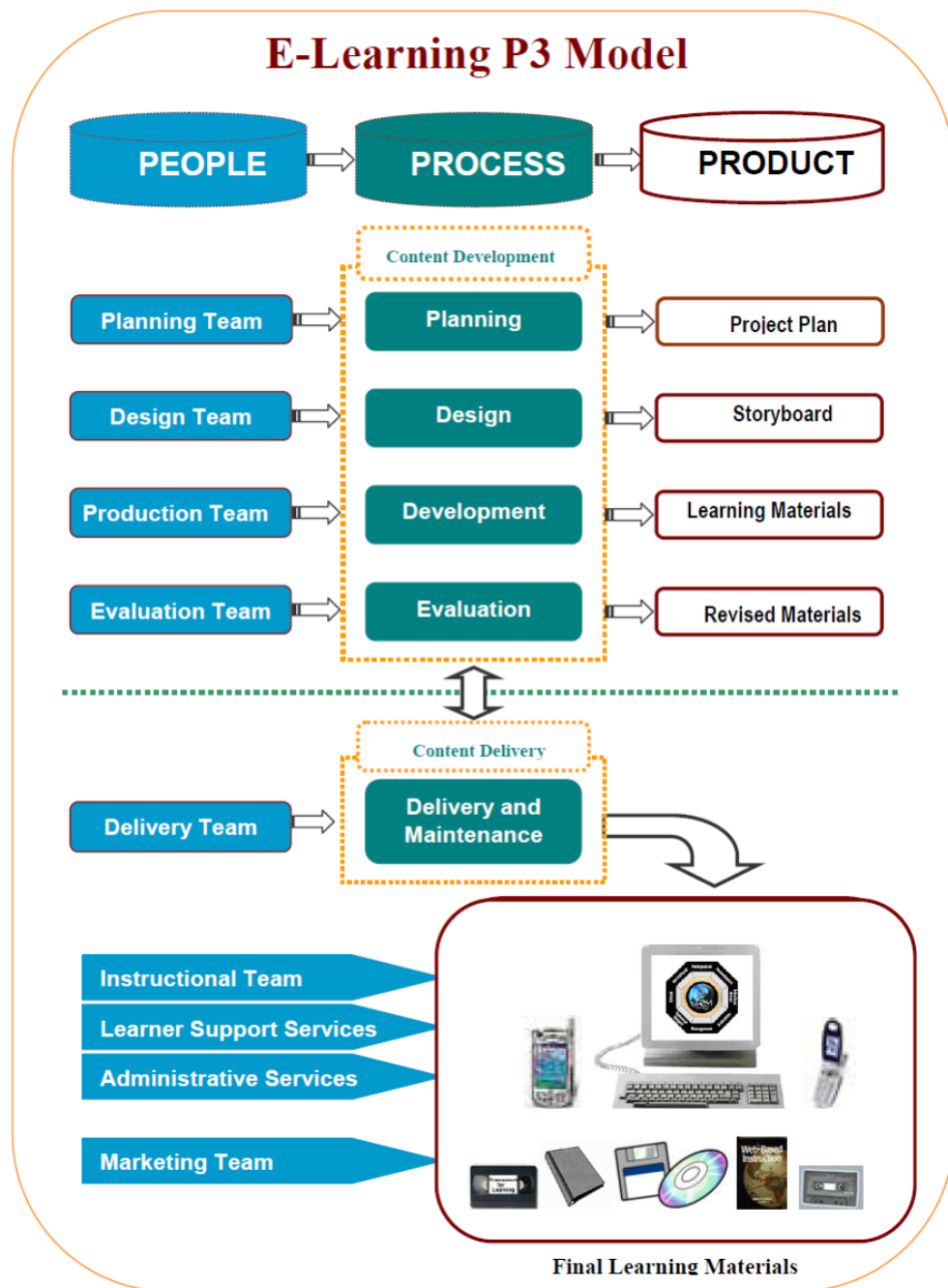


Figure 9 : The People-Process-Product (P3) E-learning Continuum Model

(Source: Khan (2005a))

Figure 9 above shows that the quality and success of the entire e-learning process depends on the number and quality of the people who participate in and

manage it. It is the people involved who are responsible for providing various e-learning and blended learning products within the process. People involved in e-learning can be referred to as the E-Learning Team responsible for producing e-learning materials.

The e-learning process can be divided into two main phases: (1) content development, and (2) content delivery and maintenance (See Figure 10 below).

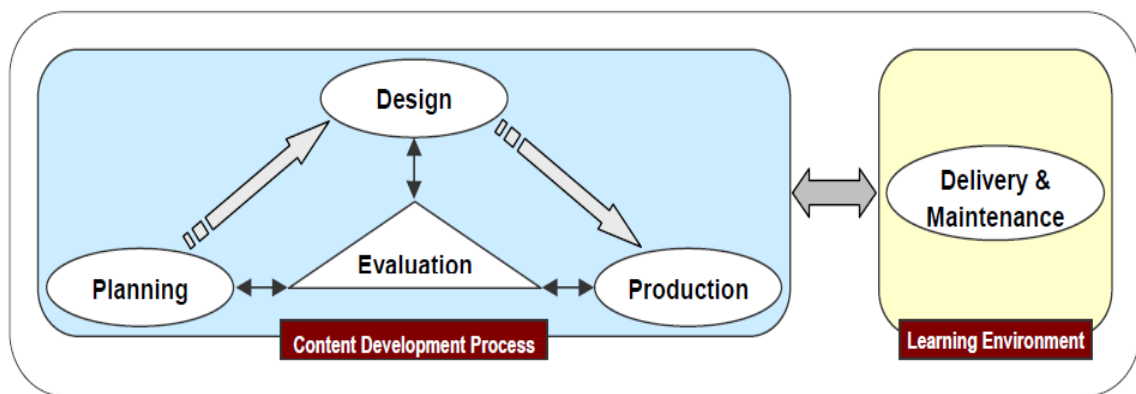


Figure 10 : The Iterative Process of E-learning

(Source: Khan (2005a))

A typical e-learning process includes the planning, design, development, evaluation, delivery, and maintenance stages. Khan (2001a, 2005a) sees the nature of the e-learning process as iterative (Khan 2001a, 2005b). Although evaluation as shown in Figure 10 is a separate stage of the e-learning process, ongoing formative evaluation for improvement (i.e. revision) should always be embedded within each stage of the e-learning process (Khan 2007b). Thus individuals involved in various stages of the e-learning process should be in contact with each other on a regular basis and collaborate in revising materials whenever this is required. Depending on

the size and scope of the project, the number of individuals involved in the various stages of an e-learning project may vary (Khan 2005a). Some roles and responsibilities may overlap, as many e-learning tasks are interrelated and interdependent. A large e-learning project requires the involvement of various individuals. This puts people at the centre of the success of any e-learning project, hence the importance of finding out the main concerns of professionals. Each individual participating in the implementation of an e-learning programme has certain responsibilities and a role to play. Such roles can be directly or indirectly related to specific stages of the e-learning process. For example, an instructional designer is generally involved during the content development process, whereas services from a technical support person are needed mainly during the content delivery stage.

4.5. E-learning Strategies and ICT applications

In order to make maximum use of the various members of the e-learning delivery chain a wide variety of learning strategies and ICT applications for exchanging information and gaining knowledge have to be used (WB, 2007). ICT applications include television, radio, Compact Discs (CDs) and Digital Versatile Discs (DVDs), video conferencing, mobile technologies, web-based technologies, and electronic learning platforms. These are detailed and defined in Table 9 below.

Table 9 : E-learning Strategies and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Applications for Exchanging Information and Gaining Knowledge

(Source: Sife, et all, 2007)

ICT application	Explanation and definition
Television(TV)	A receiver displaying visual images of stationary or moving objects both live or pre-recorded, accompanied by sound electronically captured.
Compact Discs(CDs) and Digital Versatile Discs (DVDs)	Laser technology for writing and reading data; large amounts of multimedia training materials can be stored and made available to users using these technologies.
Video Conferencing	Two or more participants at different locations can see and hear each other in real time; an interactive video communication over high-speed internet connection. It provides an opportunity for data sharing (e.g. Skype)
Mobile Learning	The use of portable computers for learning, such as personal digital assistants, handheld computers, cell phones or combinations of such devices

Worldwide Web	The standard that allows for distribution of information stored on a server and connected to the Internet
E-learning platforms	Learning management systems, used for delivery of learning content and facilitation of learning process, offers electronic access to course materials

Every e-learning technology has its pedagogical, technical and cost implications as detailed in Table 10 below:

Table 10 : Pedagogical, Technical and Cost Implications for E-learning Technologies, (Source: Sife et al. (2007: 2)

e-learning technologies	Pedagogical implications	Technical implications	Cost implications
TV/Radio	Effective use of TV/radio depends on three key moments in the application: before, during and after the viewing session and on giving instructions, explanations, questions or evaluation before and after each moment.	Various kinds of equipment are needed depending on the objectives and the scope of the training application these include audiocassette, video camera, PCs, editing software, distribution channels and receiving and displaying equipment.	Costly in terms of TV/radio production which includes: animation and graphic designers, hardware, access to the broadcast network.

CD/DVD	Simulation for self-study used with the presence or remote support of the trainer.	Hardware that meets learners' specifications - graphic screens, MPEG2 cards, CD or DVD reader and appropriate software.	Costs are higher than for printed materials; - replication, downloading free products or buying ready-made products can lower costs.
Web-based technologies	Permanent accessibility (24 hours, all days of the week); speedy, direct communication; links to related topics and up-to-date notes.	Fast computers with sound cards and reliable Internet connection are required. The following team is needed for implementing web-based training: (a) An instructional designer familiar with computer delivered instruction, (b) A programmer or author competent in the use of the authoring tool, (c) A graphic artist, (d) A subject matter expert, (e) A webmaster for maintaining the programme on the server.	Hardware, technical expertise and Internet affordable subscription costs to most people.

Video conferencing	Requires new pedagogical methods to provoke interaction; also requires small groups. Both trainers and learners require some basic training.	Equipment required: (i) Sound proofing and controlling of the lighting conditions, (ii) Audio-visual peripherals – TV monitor or video projector, camera(s), microphone(s) and sound playback, (iii) Video conferencing codec (iv) Multimedia PC (with PCI-based as well as software based video conferencing codec) and (v) More bandwidth is needed for higher-quality images.	There are two types of costs: setting up the video conferencing system and affordable operational costs.
E-learning platforms	Adding and changing content as a course progresses. Template for inclusion of course content. Support multimedia presentation of course content. Complex structuring of content allowing for multiple links and cross-reference possibilities.	(i) Requires server platform hardware ,(ii) Requires client platform hardware ,(iii) Operating system/cross platform, (iv) organization/ registration/ administration, and (v) The learning content should be in standard formats that can easily be stored, accessed and distributed. Such formats include HTML, PDF, RTF, GIF, JPEG and MPEG.	Hardware cost implications; Cost of maintenance; Operational costs (technical and administrative support-low costs) License fee (annual fee).

E-learning providers use a combination of the technologies. The suitability of each technology depends on the choice of the e-learning provider and the target learners. For example, if the target learners are in rural areas where the Internet is less accessible, then the use of DVD/CDROM is more successful. Most HEIs campuses use a combination of the technologies, and this has been found to be effective (Ndume, et al. 2008). Uys (2005) and Meyen et al. (2002) emphasise the ability of e-learning to facilitate both learner engagement and to provide engaging experiences for the learner. Omwenga et al. (2004) demonstrate how it helps overcome the traditional barriers to education delivery. These barriers include lack of physical infrastructure, lack of qualified teaching staff, the absence of adequate education budgets, and the failure of traditional pedagogy and curricula. East African countries are characterised by these barriers (Ndume et al., 2008; Omwenga et al., 2004). The failure of government efforts to build an adequate number of physical classrooms suggests that the only area of innovative education available is that of e-learning (Yieke, 2005).

The literature indicates that developed countries have been participating in e-learning for many years while some developing countries, including those in East Africa, are still in the initial stages of e-learning implementation. Most of the e-learning projects in these countries face challenges largely due to poor perceptions on the part of e-learning providers of e-learning as a means of teaching and learning effectively (Ndume et al., 2008; Khan 2005; Omwenga, 2004; Allen, 2003, and Ajzen 1998). Some factors, such as inappropriate use of technology, pedagogy and curricula, lack of resources, lack of knowledgeable staff, lack of management

support, and poor infrastructure have exacerbated the delay in e-learning implementation. Issues related to institutional management, technology, pedagogy, ethical issues, interface design, resources and design are cited by Khan (2005a) as issues which need to be addressed at all stages of the e-learning implementation, operation and evaluation processes.

4.6. Understanding E-learning in East Africa

There are various e-learning implementation initiatives in East Africa involving many different stakeholders, including universities and non universities (other education institutions such as colleges and schools). Universities in East Africa are investing heavily in e-learning as a means of enhancing teaching, learning and research, and in an attempt to find a solution to some of the problems in higher education in the region and to tap the benefits of e-learning. Some of these initiatives are beginning to close the digital gap (Ndume et al., 2008).

4.6.1. Contribution of E-learning to the East Africa Economy

That education is the corner stone of development in East Africa countries is a given. It has been shown to have significant positive effects on economic growth, earnings and productivity (WB, 2001). Education enables people to acquire new knowledge in the areas of the production and selling and in developing related activities which stimulate socio-economic growth. E-learning can have a beneficial impact on teachers, teacher organizations and on learners. Despite the many e-learning challenges, Flinn & Lawrence (2002) have predicted positive implications of e-learning for the future of the East African economy.

Through e-learning teachers can afford to develop their skills, are able to work flexibility, collaborate with local and international counter-parts to develop their subject area knowledge, and to reduce the volume of administration. Organizations deploying e-learning are able to minimize the requirements of physical space in the form of infrastructure and classrooms, to reduce the costs of course delivery, widen learner and teacher participation, and accommodate people from all walks of life including disabled people, workers and the unemployed (Ndume et al., 2008). Learners can access e-learning material and study “anywhere, any time and any place”. For example adult learners can study while working. East Africa has been investing huge amounts of money in building classrooms. If e-learning is adopted money will be saved simply by teachers and learners making use of the available ICT infrastructure. However, as this study is investigating, successful e-learning implementation requires an understanding of the main concerns of university professionals involved in the implementation and delivery of e-learning.

E-learning can increase access to and improve the quality of education in a relatively cost-effective way (Flinn & Lawrence 2003). The number of young people eligible to attend higher education places is high throughout the EA region. E-learning is a potential innovative strategy to meet these challenges. E-learning offers convenience and portability, cost and selection, budget and design and learning flexibility, collaboration, global opportunities and higher retention rates of students within the e-learning education systems in comparison with the traditional schooling systems. E-learning can improve the quality of instruction and create flexibility in the design and delivery of curriculum content. Understanding the main concerns of the e-learning university professionals could be one of the ways forward in promoting successful and sustainable e-learning implementation in East Africa.

4.6.2. The market for E-learning & the Drivers of Change

While e-learning is not a new phenomenon in the developed world, it may be new to some developing countries. Its market is rapidly increasing globally. According to Merrill Lynch (2003:3-4), the size of the online market in the US alone stood at \$7 billion in 2003, e-learning being the fastest growing sector in the US education and training market at \$40.2 billions in 2005. The USA is followed by Europe and the rest of the developed world. Developing countries are making extensive use of distance learning. For example, the Open University of Tanzania has 25,000 students. Africa has made progress in establishing an African virtual university. Many countries in Africa are striving to establish e-learning in universities. Doughty et al. (2001) and Saint (1999) have documented the rise of the virtual university in Africa.

There are many e-learning initiatives in progress in Africa, such as Schoolnet (Ndume, et al., 2008) and others. Similarly there are some initiatives in Tanzania, such as the e-learning centre at the Open University of Tanzania (Sife et al., 2007), the African Virtual University and others. In spite of these initiatives the implementation of e-learning has remained problematic in Tanzania, because, in developing an approach to implementing e-learning, planners have not taken into consideration one which fits the context (cultural, technological and demographic). The increase in the demand for higher education is one of the driving forces for implementing e-learning. The rate of student enrolment in higher education globally is expected to increase from 48 million enrolments to 159 million in 2025. With an annual growth rate of 3.5% at present, the projected annual growth rate for Africa is 5.8%, and for Tanzania 4.6%. This is above that of many other countries in Africa. Higher population growth, lower education costs, increased access to education, and

higher participation rates in higher education changes the way firms organize work and cost-effectiveness and are factors driving the implementing of e-learning in Tanzania (Ndume et al., 2008).

4.6.3. E-learning at HEIs in East Africa

Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan (2001:9), President of the Commonwealth of Learning, argued that:

“One would be foolish to question the importance of the internet and www for education in this new decade; at worst it has the ability to connect communities of learners and teachers and at its best it could very well be the tool that education has been waiting for these past thousands of years; its promise is only limited by the imagination and capacity of the people who can apply and benefit from it”.

This kind of vision of a future electronically driven and inclusive education has been a driving force for HEIs in East Africa and has provided the spur to implement e-learning. As is the case with other African countries, the rate of implementation of e-learning platforms in East Africa is still very slow despite the potential opportunities provided by open source technology and the conducive environments created by the respective governments. There have been some initiatives on the part of governments to develop ICT policies as a way forward in the implementation of e-learning. In addition there have been different round table conferences and recently the formation of the EAC Common Trade has fostered a debate on a common education delivery. For example, Tanzania has abolished all taxes related to

computers and related equipment and reduced licence fees and royalties payable by the telecommunication operators (Morrison & Khan, 2003 and McPherson & Nunes, 2008).

The more established public universities, including the University of Dar es Salaam, Nairobi University, Kampala University, Makerere University, Kigali University and others, have managed to implement e-learning platforms in East Africa. They are implementing these using either open source or customised platforms such as WEBCT, Blackboard, Moodle, Joomla, etc. Other universities in the region have started the basic process of ICT infrastructure expansion to include local area network implementation, Internet, computer labs and other facilities, as a way forward to the establishment of e-learning (Sife, et al., 2007).

In spite of the fact that most of these universities are public universities and receive yearly funding from the budgets of their respective countries, other e-learning obstacles remain. Some of them are faced with software licensing problems (Sife, et al. 2007). This issue is dealt with through the use of open source software such as Moodle, KEWL and others. Many conferences are organized with the deployment of open source software with the purpose of enhancing the process of implementing e-learning. An increasing number of e-learning programmes are being used in different universities in East Africa. While some are pilot projects, others call for new ventures to cater for the growing population. In all these ventures there is a need to learn and discover the main concerns of e-learning providers involved, as a way of improving e-learning practices.

4.6.4. General Advantages of E-learning

Khan (1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007a, 2007b) argues that e-learning offers a wide range of advantages for learners and educationists. Firstly, it offers flexible learning and training, enabling the learner to fit his/her learning into her/his daily schedule. Secondly, e-learning increases education access, and finally it offers better quality education and at a lower cost.

In Table 11, adapted from the World Bank Report (2001:15) on e-learning, shows how the advantages of e-learning are viewed differently by the different members or constituencies in the e-learning delivery chain.

GROUP	E-LEARNING ADVANTAGES
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhances skills development• Flexible to meet limited time available• Can reuse collaboratively prepared course material• Reduces the amount of administration
Establishments or Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimizes the need for physical spaces (infrastructure, classrooms, etc.)• Reduces the cost of delivering courses• Affords wider participation in courses on a global scale• Suits all ages, thus increasing numbers

Learners or Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can study anywhere as long as there is access to a computer with internet connection • Flexibility to join discussions any hour of the day • Can work at own pace • Can accommodate different learning styles through different activities
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Table 11 : Advantages of Implementing E-learning Learning in education Institutions from different perspectives

(Source: WB, 2001)

Sife et al. (2005) show the various ways in which e-learning can improve the quality of instruction and learning. It creates greater flexibility in the design and delivery of curriculum content, makes it possible to adapt the program to suit specific student needs or work requirements, uses standardised materials developed by subject experts, and provides lecturers and teachers with increased access to the latest information, syllabi and teaching aids. Finally e-learning is cost-effective (Mihhailova, 2006).

4.6.5. E-learning Benefits in the East Africa Context

For Africa, e-learning offers a number of potential benefits as a means of increasing access to and improving the quality of education in Africa including Tanzania. It addresses the access to and quality of education delivery in a relatively cost-effective way (Flinn and Lawrence 2003:3). Table 12 below summarises and identifies additional benefits from e-learning:

Table 12 : Identified Benefits of E-learning in East Africa Context

BENEFIT	DESCRIPTION
Convenience and portability	Accessible 24/7 Does not require physical attendance Self-paced (not too slow, not too fast) Unbound by time and place Opportunity to study anywhere (at home, at workplace, etc.)
Cost and Selection	Choose from a wide range of courses to meet your needs Optimum level of certification at your fingertips
Budget and Flexibility	Accommodate your preferences and needs Student-centred Choose instruction-led or self-study course Jump and take what you want Suit your particular learning style
Greater Collaboration	Facilitate collaboration with a large community Facilitate discussion
Global Opportunity	Global learning opportunities are at your fingertips
Higher Retention	Draws one to a topic you enjoy Activates memories and relates to industry

E-learning offers the best way to increase access to higher education through delivering education to learners with limited financial resources who need to study in their own time while they remain at work. It effectively reaches those learners who

are often denied access to education, such as women, young people who fail to gain direct access, and economically disadvantaged or isolated communities.

4.6.6. E-learning Limitations and Challenges in HEIs in East Africa

Despite scattered e-learning projects in East Africa, challenges and limitations remain in the process of undertaking e-learning implementation. Such challenges and limitations are categorized in terms of campuses with technological infrastructure compared with traditional campuses, design, personal and other limitations. Such limitations and challenges include:

- **Conflict with the curriculum:** Changing from a traditional face to face curriculum to an online, learner-centred curriculum has generated conflict. This changeover has caused some lecturers to resist the change to new technology. E-learning, to be successfully implemented, needs a match between curriculum and available technology, and vice-versa (Omwenga et al., 2004) and for all education actors to come to the party in order to avoid the 'not invented here' syndrome. The alignment of curriculum with technology, and vice-versa, includes the use of multimedia, reorganization of content and the inclusion of certain courses. Sometimes the need to modify technology to suit the curriculum includes changing the Internet bandwidth. This has been one of the challenges facing HEIs in East Africa. This study will help to reveal the main concerns of those professionals who are the key stakeholders in curriculum development.
- **Lack of technical experts and support:** Like most African regions, East Africa has to face the reality of a lack of technical expertise to support e-

learning implementation. While Omwenga et al. (2004) argue that limited resources means that the region has neither the local capacity to develop the necessary human resources in this field, nor the means to attract highly skilled and expensive experts from abroad, Sife, et al. (2001) claim that there are very few e-learning technical experts in East Africa to implement e-learning projects. Local experts are not generally trusted or sufficiently competent to install, operate, maintain, administer and secure the network. Most e-learning projects fail due to lack of planning, especially concerning the issue of technical support (Sife et al. 2007). Both learners and instructors face critical challenges in the use of e-learning due to this lack of technical support. Often they need to learn how to troubleshoot problems themselves, in turn increasing resistance to e-learning on the part of lecturers. Thus appropriate plans and strategies need be put in place to solve this problem.

- **Existing infrastructure:** The existing infrastructure in developing countries, including East Africa, is poor (Omwenga et al. 2004). In rural areas the development of technological infrastructure is critical. Internet access is concentrated in urban areas and in a few higher learning institutions. There are frequent electric power cuts and Internet connection is unreliable. Omwenga et al. (2004) describe the slowing down of technology-supported instructional methods used in different universities in East Africa.
- **Financial Resources:** Financial resources are key to the successful implementation of e-learning in East Africa (Sife et al., 2007). Opportunities to reap the benefits offered by e-learning are limited by lack of financial resources. While there are initiatives to search for open source software, the

start up cost is such that HEIs tend not to adopt e-learning practices. Omwenga et al. (2004) point out that the price of hardware and software, although constantly decreasing, remains too high for the budgets of many educational institutions in most developing countries, East Africa being no exception. Most HEIs are under-equipped in terms of the necessary facilities such as servers, computers, CD-ROMs and the appropriate software. In addition the cost for maintaining e-learning, including upgrading and maintenance, hinders the process of reaping the benefits from e-learning.

- **Content Development:** Poor content development in e-learning has been due to a lack of technical experts and professionals in the region. This dearth has hindered the development of quality content, resulting in most online learners dropping their studies and changing their attitudes to and perceptions of e-learning (Omwenga et al. 2004)]. Lack of e-learning content remains a cause for concern in the region.

Additional challenges include lack of ownership, issues of security and quality assurance, cultural influences, professional and competent staff development, lack of awareness and negative attitudes towards e-learning, transformation of higher education, lack of administrative and management support and of a systematic approach to implementation (Sife et al., 2007; Omwenga et al., 2004; Ndume et al., 2008; Allen, 2007; MacFadzean & Newton, 2005; Bates, 2001; Manville, 2004).

The various limitations and challenges outlined in this section are summarised in Table 13 below in order to provide a comprehensive picture of e-learning limitations and challenges in East Africa.

Table 13 : Summary of E-learning Limitations and Challenges in East Africa.

Category	Issue(s)	Source(s)
Technological	Lack of hardware such as computers	Kathawala, Abdou & Elmutti (2003), Hiltz (1997), Sife, et al., 2007), Ndume, et al. (2008), Materi & Fahly (2004), Kearsley (1996), Broadbent (2003), Rumble (2000).
	Lack or low level of Internet penetration and access in rural areas	Ndume et al. (2008), Uys (2003).
	Limited Internet bandwidth	Chadha & Kumail (2002), Collins (2000), Lee & Al-hawamdeh (2001), Sife et al., (2007), Ndume et al. (2008).
	Lack of finances or limited budgets	Sife et al. (2007), Ndume et al. (2008), Khan (2001a, 2002, 2005b).
Human	Lack of preparation and orientation and training for newcomers	Kember et al. (2001), Ndume, et al. (2008).

resources or Manpower	Lack of ICT skills	Carr (1999), Angelina (2002a, 2002b), Hamid (2002), Ndume et al. (2008).
	Lack of initiative and self-discipline, lack of self-motivation	Kearsley (1996), Rivera & Rice (2002), Schott et al. (2003), Yum, Kember and Siaw (2001).
	Poor writing skills	Smith & Rupp (2004).
Limitation compared to traditional campuses	Lack of face-to-face physical interactions, feeling of isolation	Schott et al. (2003)
	Lack of facilities such as those on traditional campuses, internships, volunteer opportunities, access to physical libraries or book stores, career development counseling.	McCraken (2004); Vernon (2002); Bourne, Harris & Mayadas (2005).
	Difficulty teaching compared to being in physical classroom due	Angelina (2002a, 2002b); Strauss (2003); Kearsley (2000); Wang (2003); Calvert (2001); Levy

	to lack of familiarity with technology.	(2003);, Pachnowski (2003); Rogers (2000); Ndume et al. (2008).
Design Limitation	Poor and/or unfriendly design courseware.	Ivergard & Hunt (2005); Howel, Williams & Lindsay (2003).
	Difficulties involved in designing courseware	Sife, et al. (2007); Ndume et al. (2008).
Other	Time consuming	Kathawala, Adbou & Elmutti (2002),
	Lack of e-learning staff Promotion Schemes	Schifter (2004); Dringus (2003).
	Lack of Academic honesty, "digital cheating"	Angelina (2002b); Lau (2002); Patalong (2003); Schott et al. (2003).
	Lack of certification and recognition of online courses	Kathawal, Abdou & Elmutti (2003);, Kearsley (2000); Baker (2003).
	Difference in time zones	Rourker & Anderson (2002).

4.7. Previous Research: Situating the Study within the Existing E-learning Literature: Critical evaluation

In order to understand the e-learning implementation process, it is necessary to evaluate the work of the leading authors in the e-learning field using a contingency table. This will help to give an overview of the range of discussions within the e-learning field and other associated fields. Table 14, the contingency table, includes types of authors across the vertical axis, the key main concepts shown below the table, and the types of methodologies on the horizontal axis, demonstrating how existing work in e-learning has been carried out.

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	INDUCTION	DEDUCTION	DEDUCTION THEN INDUCTION	INDUCTION THEN DEDUCTION	NO METHOD SPECIFIED
ACADEMIC	Scott (2007) ^{10, 11, 16, 17, 22}	Dreyfus (1999) ²⁵ Jones(2002) ^{14, 17} Hsbollah & Idris (2009) ¹⁶ Puteh (2008) ^{2, 3, 22} Juhary (2005) ³ Viviers & Mersham(2007) ^{12, 13, 12, 18} Ndume et al. (2008) ^{13, 16} Alexander (2001) ^{3, 6, 17} Mihhailova (2006) ^{10, 11, 16, 18, 20, 22} Ettinger et al. (2006b) ^{10, 11, 20} Netteland et al. (2007) ^{1-9, 19} Li (2009) ¹⁰⁻¹¹ Luambano & Nawe (2004) ^{10, 11, 16}	Brusilovsky (2003) ¹³ Suddaby & Milne (2008) ^{3, 18, 22} Mitchell & Honore (2009) ^{12, 18} Ettinger et al. (2006a) ^{10, 11, 16} Bednarek, - Michalska & Wolodko 2007) ^{17, 19} Kavulya (2007) ^{20, 22} Hinson (2006) ^{17, 21}	Omwenga, et al. (2004) ¹⁰⁻¹⁵ Aroyo & Dicheva (2004) ^{11, 20} O'Regan (2003) ¹⁶ Lujara (2008) ^{5, 21} Abouchedid & Eid (2004) ^{18, 19} Macpherson et al. (2005) ¹⁻¹¹ Barron (2006) ^{10, 11} Ennew & Pernandez-young (2006) ¹⁻²⁴ Muyinda (2007) ^{2, 3, 23}	Njenga & Fourie (2008) ¹⁻²⁴ Lujara, et al. (2007) ^{3, 5} Levy (2003) ¹⁻⁴ Gunga & Ricketts (2007) ^{20, 22}
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	GOVERNMENT REPORT				MoST (2003) ^{1, 24} MoST (2002) ¹⁻²⁴	MoST (2006) ^{2, 3} IUCEA (2001) ²⁴ InfoDev (2005) ¹⁻²⁴
	GURU					Zhang et al. (2004) ^{3, 10, 11} Khan(2005) ¹⁻²⁴

Key to Attribution of Main Concepts to Authors:

- ¹ Technological Drivers of E-Learning Development
- ² Institutional Drivers of E-Learning Development
- ³ Pedagogical Issues Of E-Learning Development
- ⁴ Ethical Issues of E-Learning Development
- ⁵ Resources Issues of E-Learning Development
- ⁶ Interface Design Issues of E-Learning Development
- ⁷ Social-Cultural Barriers Slowing Down Development E-Learning
- ⁸ Infrastructure Barriers Slowing Down Development E-Learning
- ⁹ Economical Barriers Slowing Down Development E-Learning
- ¹⁰ Learner Engagement
- ¹¹ Engaging E-Learning Experiences
- ¹² Blended Learning
- ¹³ Adaptive Learning
- ¹⁴ E-Learning Technologies
- ¹⁵ Educational Drivers of E-Learning Development
- ¹⁶ Perceptions And Acceptance of E-Learning
- ¹⁷ Models For E-Learning Development
- ¹⁸ Collaborative Networks of public-private partnerships for e-learning
- ¹⁹ Benefits/advantages of e-learning
- ²⁰ Challenges of e-learning
- ²¹ Content barriers slowing down development of E-learning
- ²² ICT policies/strategies related to e-learning
- ²³ Technical Expertise barriers slowing down development of E-learning
- ²⁴ Quality Assurance and Evaluation issues of e-learning
- ²⁵ Dangers of education on the internet

Table 14 : Contingency Structure Table Showing Type of Author and Methodologies Used

Table 14 above shows that most leading research has used deductive research methodologies. Scott (2007) was unique in his use of an inductive research methodology, specifically Classic Grounded Theory. Scott's (2007) grounded theory thesis was focused on adult learners who were the recipients of e-learning. The

study revealed the basic social psychological process of temporal integration²¹ as being the method by which the main concern is continually processed. The research revealed how adult learners were able to integrate e-learning into part of their everyday lives by means of temporal integration. The three stages of this iterative process are juggling, engaging and evaluating. Scott (2007) suggests new ways of designing research for supporting determination: and offers connected learners and tutors strategies for managing the temporal integration process.

The main weakness of having a large body of research based knowledge, which is confined to the use of deductive research methodologies, is that there may be a lack of new insights and new theories of e-learning. One of the main motivations for this thesis is to redress that imbalance and discover the main concerns of e-learning providers working in East Africa.

Apart from Scott (2007), all previous research in this field has been carried out according to the agendas of the research community. It is quite possible that many of the main concerns and best practices of the practitioners themselves may have been overlooked. While Scott (2007) used CGT, looking on the side of receivers of e-learning, this study used the Classic GT research method, focused from the delivery perspective (the e-learning provider) and in the context of tertiary education (Universities), whereas Scott (2007) was mainly concerned with those on the receiving end of e-learning (the e-learners themselves) and adult learners specifically (Lifelong Learning learners).

²¹ Temporal Integration refers to the process (main concern) of online learners through which the problem of fitting study into a learner's life is achieved, more or less successful.

Use of the CGT method not only reveals important and deep seated issues but it does so in a transcendent manner. In other words, the core variable revealed by the CGT method, as detailed and explained in chapter 5, has the potential to be of relevance across a wide range of different e-learning contexts and is not limited to the context from which the data originated.

The possibility exists that the lack of knowledge concerning e-learning implementation could be as a result of the lack of theory informing the e-learning implementation process. The researcher hopes in this study to develop a theory which will inform e-learning implementation practices in a more constructive and thorough way than has been the case so far. It is hoped that the theory developed in the course of the study will also augment the literature on e-learning dealing with theory.

4.8. Summary

This chapter has examined and reviewed contextual literature concerning e-learning prior to the use of Classic Grounded Theory. A wide range of e-learning definitions has been examined and discussed in order to develop a description of e-learning which is comprehensive and up-to-date. Issues arising from critical evaluation of leading authors in the e-learning field have been identified, and information systems and e-learning in the specific context of East African have been identified and discussed. The following chapter will develop a theory of Cultivating Recognition.

Chapter 5

The Emergence of the Theory of “*Cultivating Recognition*”

5.1. Introduction

This chapter describes and explains the process of the emergence of the theory of “*Cultivating Recognition*”. The chapter has two main objectives. The first is to reveal the scope and complexity of the empirically generated Classic Grounded Theory of “*Cultivating Recognition*”. The second objective is to explain how, using the Classic Grounded Theory research methodology, the theory of “*Cultivating Recognition*”, emerged from the raw data collected and memo-writing in the course of the study as detailed in Appendix A.7 and Appendix A.8. The chapter has thirteen sections. While the first section is an introduction, the second section explains the process in which cultivating recognition emerged as a core variable. The third section discusses the main concepts of the theory of “*cultivating recognition*”. The fourth section details the two primary sub core variables of “*cultivating recognition*”. The fifth section further explains the six secondary sub core categories revealed by and in the course of this research. Section six provides an explanation of the five secondary sub core categories revealed by and in the course of this research. Section seven outlines the process of the transition from the raw data to the emerged theoretical concepts. The eighth section presents an overview of the “Cultivating Recognition” model, together with its primary and secondary sub core variables. Section nine provides a commentary on the emergent theoretical codes. Finally, more discussion on the lower level concepts involved in triggering the

cultivation of recognition are discussed in section ten to twelve. Chapter concludes with summary in section thirteen. All the sections are based on finding from data (Glaser, 1978) as detailed in Appendix A.7 and A.8.

5.2. Process in Which "*Cultivating Recognition*" Emerged as Core Variable

The concepts emerged from theoretical memos (see Appendix A.7) which were written after a series of respondent encounters. The process was a much more subtle one than simply counting the number of times respondent X made Y comments. This is because at the heart of the theoretical memo several things are going on at the same time. As Glaser (1978:134) argues:

"The credibility of the theory should be won by its integration, relevance and workability not by illustrations as if were proof. The theory is an integrated set of hypotheses not findings. Proof is not the point."

The stages in the "*Cultivating Recognition*" theory emergence process are represented in Figure 11 below.

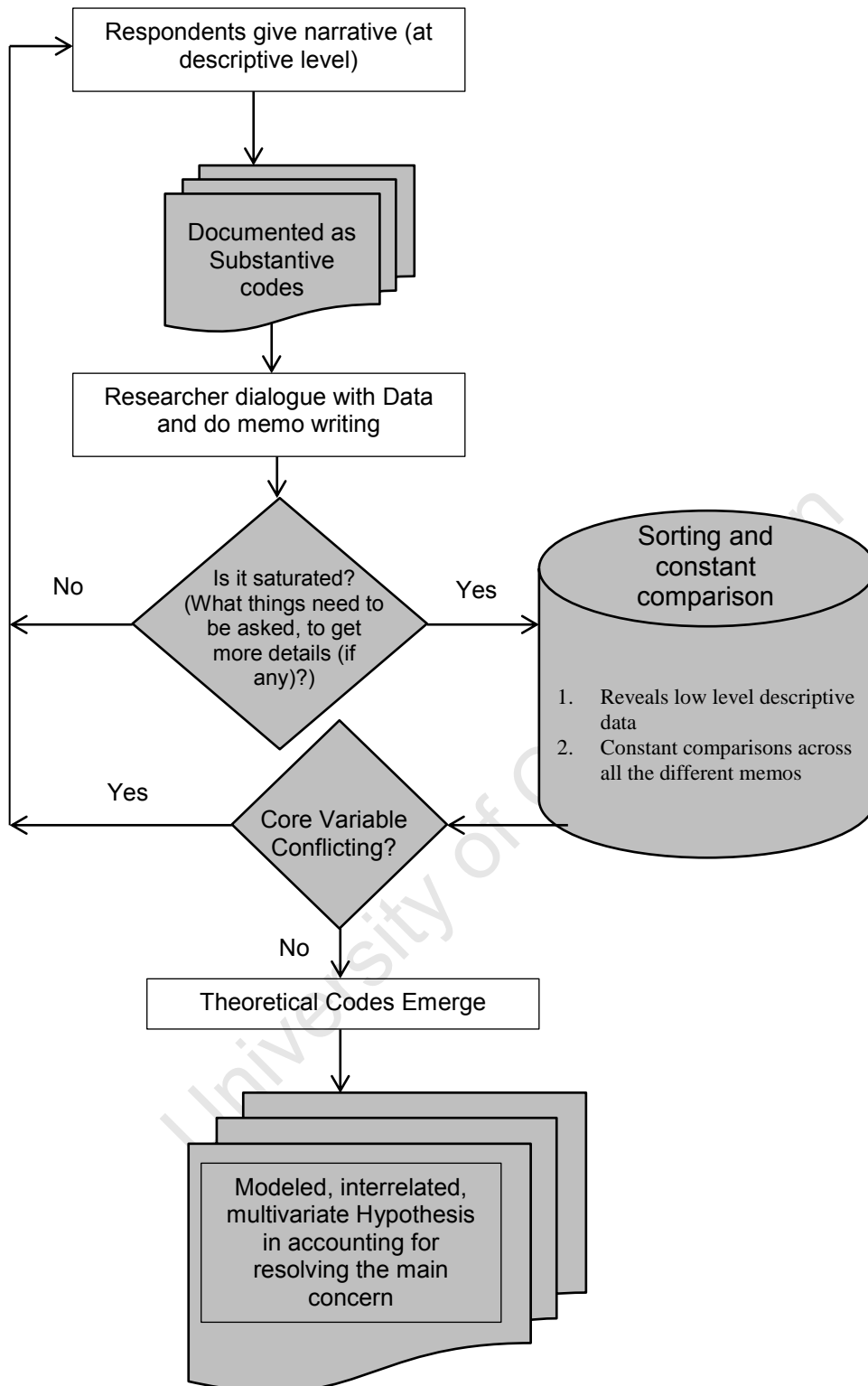


Figure 11 : The Process in Which "Cultivating Recognition" Emerged as Core Variable

The emergence of "*Cultivating Recognition*" as a core variable (Main concern) of e-learning providers took place through the following process:

- 1) The respondent presented his/her own narrative at the descriptive level in terms of what s/he thought was going on regarding problems experienced in the delivery of e-learning. For example "*I feel unrecognized for my skill and abilities by those commissioning IT work*". This account could be seen as narrative, and did not immediately reveal the respondent's main concern. Instead, at this point, the respondent was expressing his frustration without articulating how to resolve this frustration. The research process in due course revealed that his frustration could be overcome by "*Cultivating Recognition*"
- 2) Within the depth of each theoretical memo (See Appendix A.7) the researcher had also to dialogue with the data in order to establish what kinds of questions he needed to pose in subsequent respondent encounters. There came a point when each of the respondents kept revealing the same conceptual codes. At the point when these conceptual codes evolved into an interrelated multivariate model the moment of data saturation occurred. When data saturation happened there was no further requirement on the part of the researcher to collect more data since the 'latent pattern' had emerged.
- 3) The theoretical memo first revealed to the researcher the low level descriptive data: "*I feel unrecognized*". By means of constant comparison across all the different memos certain theoretical codes started to emerge. Theoretical codes implicitly conceptualize how the substantive codes related to each other as a modelled, interrelated, multivariate hypothesis in accounting for

resolving the main concern. The main concern in this thesis was not being recognized as such. It was resolved by "*Cultivating Recognition*"

Another example from respondents involved in the whole process outlined in Figure 11 above is the frustration of "*being disrespected*" by management and other stake holders. "*Being disrespected*" was a low level description because it was not able [by itself] to explain why the frustration arose or how it could be resolved. Following more respondent encounters and more theoretical memos, several theoretical codes were revealed. These theoretical codes were subjected to the process of constant comparison until a latent pattern was discovered. This latent pattern [so called because although it was always there it was not possible to see without the intervention of the GT process embedded in the theoretical memo-ing] revealed the core variable of "*Cultivating Recognition*". "*Cultivating Recognition*" was the core variable because it accounted for most of the variation in the data and it was also the mechanism which was chosen repeatedly by the respondents to resolve their main concern, that of "being disrespected".

The only legitimate basis on which a GT of "*Cultivating Recognition*" used in research could be evaluated is whether it is a robust interrelated hypothesis and one which does account for how the respondents continually attempt to resolve their main concern.

5.3. Main Concepts of the Theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

The study discovered "*Cultivating Recognition*" to be an emergent core variable, amongst e-learning providers who participated in this research, who were based in East Africa and had continually to resolve the issue of "*Cultivating Recognition*" in order that e-learning projects could be successfully implemented. The concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" emerged as the core variable because it was able to explain most of the variations in the data. The core variable of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is defined by the researcher as follows:

The recurrent creation and recreation of gaining acknowledgement of achievement in order to both commission and implement e-learning initiatives.

This definition of "*Cultivating Recognition*" explains in conceptual terms the perpetual process in which e-learning providers have to engage in order to secure the necessary financial support for their e-learning projects to be commissioned and implemented.

The process by which the concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" emerged as a core variable is explained in Table 15 below.

1. The study resulted in twenty four respondents
2. The two concepts, "*Cultivating Recognition*" and "*Asymmetric Collaborating*" emerged continuously during the process of writing up the theoretical memos.
3. The researcher, using the constant comparison method, in the course of 101 respondent encounters, and after going back for more interviews, found that the concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" was repeatedly emerging as a main concern across all the theoretical memos and thus the concept of "asymmetric collaborating" was discovered to be a less important concept in terms of the constant comparison method because it was subsequently found to be one of the ways in which the concept of "*Legitimizing*" could be operationalised. In other words "asymmetric collaboration" is a sub set of one of the sub core variables and not the main concern of the respondents, see Figure 18.
4. The concepts of "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*" later emerged as the two main enabling mechanisms which facilitated "*Cultivating Recognition*", or 'allowed' it to happen.

Table 15: The Process by which the Concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" Emerged a Core Variable

"*Cultivating Recognition*" was found to emerge in a variety of different contexts and business relationships in which e-learning providers were working, including providers²²-to-government, government-to-providers, community-to-providers, providers-to-community, providers-to-funding bodies, funding bodies-to-providers, manager-to-employees, employee-to-manager, peer-to-peer, and providers-to-partners, partners-to-providers. The two sub core variables ["*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*"] of "*Cultivating Recognition*" are discussed in Section 5.4 below.

²² 'Providers' here refers to people engaged/participating in e-learning provision- e.g. universities, consultant bodies, e-learning companies, university professionals, etc

5.4. The Two (2) Primary Sub Core Variables of “*Cultivating Recognition*”

This section of the chapter details the ways in which e-learning providers “*Cultivate Recognition*”. It shows how they do so by being “*Legitimized*” and “*Credentializing*”, see Figure 12 below.

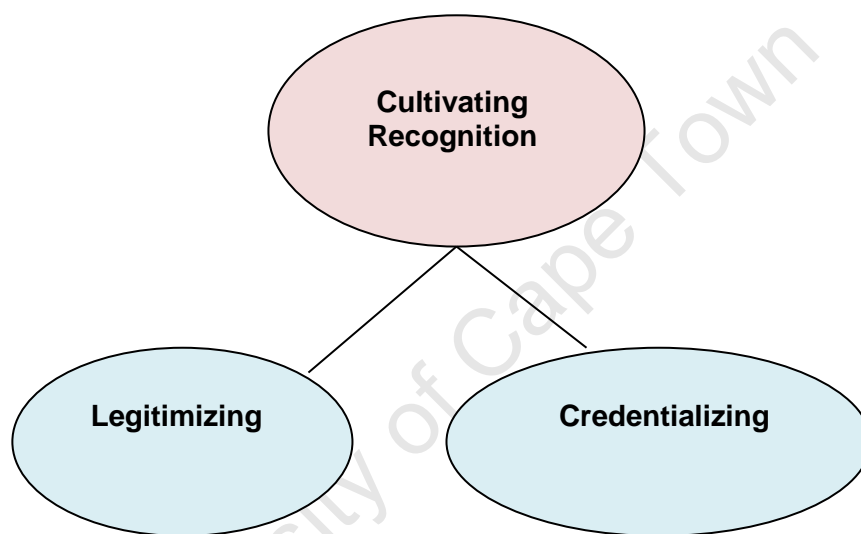


Figure 12: The Sub Core Primary Variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

Both these concepts, "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*", are sub core variables. If either of these variables is absent then the process of “cultivation of recognition” cannot take place. Both concepts emanate from the external endorsement by key professionals.

As Figure 12 above demonstrates, "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*" are the two primary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*". They constitute a theoretical code that connects them. This indicates the two primary sub core

variables to constitute the process necessary to the emergence of "*Cultivating Recognition*". The two primary sub core variables and their associated secondary core variables processes are briefly detailed below.

"*Legitimizing*" is defined in this context by e-learning providers as the process of ensuring the project is delivered, valid and sustainable. This is achieved by the accumulation of social credit bestowed on the e-learning providers by their peers and clients.

"*Legitimizing*" is the process of ensuring the e-learning activities (e.g. designing, delivery, evaluation) are delivered, and such deliverables are valid and sustainable. The validity and sustainability of the project is ensured and maintained due to the "*Legitimizing*" process, which is an ongoing and perpetual process. Thus for their projects to be continuously sought after, E-learning providers need to ensure a project is legitimized by a client or funder and is accorded respect throughout the process. The main symptom of and reason for a lack of legitimization is the lack of respect shown to e-learning providers by some clients and funders. A "*Legitimizing*" process is undertaken by e-learning providers as they need to gain respect from their clients. The process of "*Legitimizing*" involves three main activities or processes: "*Collaborating*", "*Referral Networking*" and "*Strategic Alliances*" (see Figure 13).

At the start of this legitimizing process e-learning providers collaborate with other experienced e-learning partners prior to a formal funding submission for their e-learning projects. This collaboration can be either with partners who have a considerable degree of influence and power (asymmetric collaboration) or with partners with a similar or equal level of power and influence (reciprocal collaboration). Secondly, they make full use of their existing referral networks so that

the potential client or funder is more likely to have confidence in the proposal. Finally, e-learning providers are more successful if they have already entered into formal strategic alliances with other respected partners and these inform, and are integrated into, the proposal document. Successful e-learning providers are able gain more traction in their projects when they are able to simultaneously synchronise several different projects. This is because of the potential for sustainability from one project to another that synchronicity could deliver. The details of each sub secondary core variable of "*Legitimizing*" (see Figure 13) are outlined in brief below:

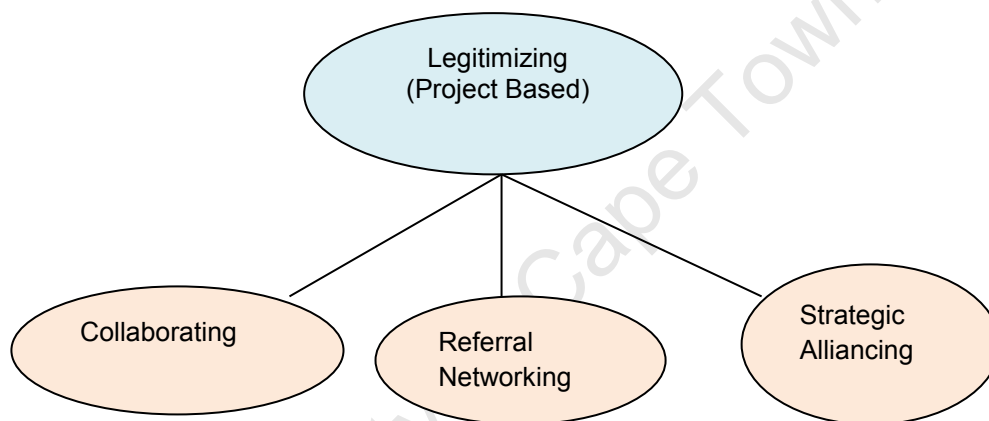


Figure 13: Sub-core Variables of "*Legitimizing*"

As shown in Figure 14 below, "*Collaborating*" is built by "*asymmetrical Collaborating*" and "*Reciprocal Collaborating*" as its sub-core variables. "*Collaborating*" is defined by a researcher as"

"the process of creating business opportunities through the advantages of partnerships"

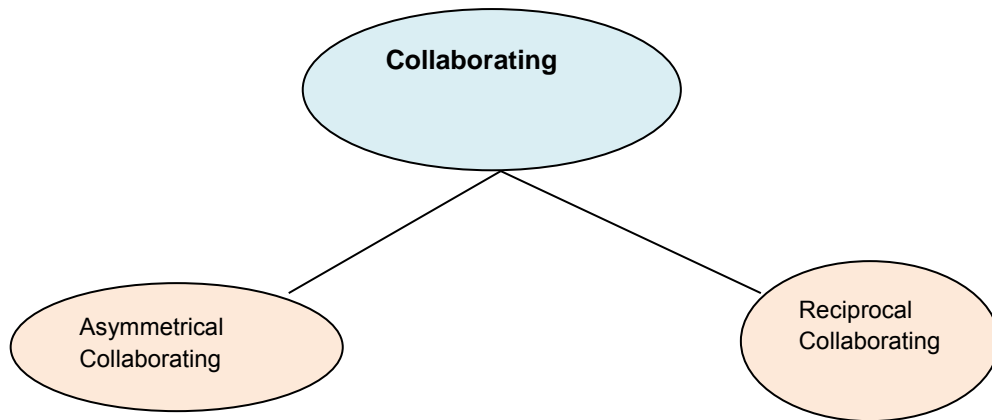


Figure 14: Sub Core Variable of “Collaborating”

"Collaborating" partners are of two types: (1) those who are "Asymmetrically Collaborating" and (2) those "Reciprocally Collaborating". "Asymmetrical collaborating" is a concept which explains how the weaker party in the collaboration is able to obtain the benefits that collaboration brings (e.g. funding opportunities, scholarships) whilst skilfully avoiding being dominated by the more powerful partner.

"Reciprocal Collaborating" is the process of generating mutual benefit for the parties by sharing power and status. The power comes from funding opportunities and decision making. The collaborating parties in reciprocal collaboration tend to share power equally regarding the implementation of the e-learning project. The benefits from the e-learning project are shared equally between the "Reciprocal Collaborating" partners.

"Referral Networking" is a process of stimulating existing, and creating new, contacts. These connections and networks can be useful for endorsing e-learning projects, thereby increasing their legitimacy. "Referral Networking" can be of value to

the e-learning providers in terms of capturing more opportunities for funding, collaboration, and for increasing the popularity of the online programs. "*Strategic Alliancing*" is defined as the mutually beneficial process of working together for the purpose of delivery of online courses or securing funding. "*Strategic Alliancing*" is a medium to long term process of connecting with other parties in a particular field. This includes matching the strategic objectives of one institution to the other.

"*Credentializing*" refers to the creation of increased client belief in the e-learning providers' competence to execute a project on time and within budget, and according to the required specifications. This is achieved by the endorsement both by members of the e-learning providers' peers and by their client. "*Credentializing*" involves the creation of increased client belief in the e-learning provider's competence to execute an e-learning project on time and within budget". Figure 15 shows the three elements or criteria necessary for the "*Credentializing*" process to ensure the belief of the client in the e-learning providers' competence.

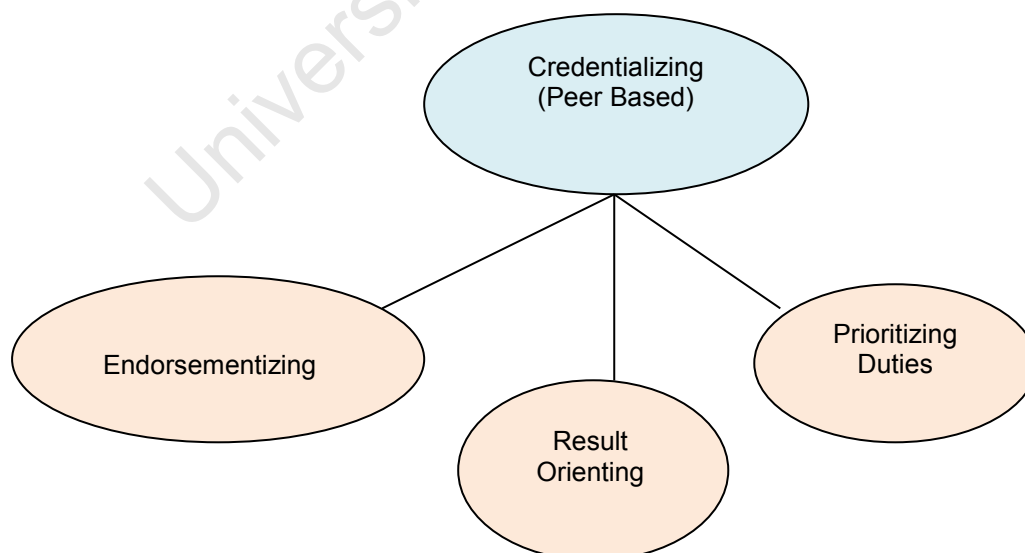


Figure 15 : Sub Core Variables of "Credentializing"

According to the above process the outcomes are: firstly, all claims and statements of accomplishments and achievements made by the e-learning providers are only seriously considered when endorsed by respected external third parties; secondly, the e-learning providers are able to both understand and execute project priorities by the skilful accomplishment of the process of prioritizing. Finally, the e-learning providers are able to develop a results-orientated mindset by cultivating the skills involved in result-orienting. These three key processes (shown in Figure 15 above) are elaborated below:

"Endorsementizing" is defined as a process whereby the e-learning provider presents his professional work experience and academic qualifications to the client in a format which the client can easily comprehend, and which are perceived by the client to be relevant. Such a process makes the e-learning professional tailor each curriculum vitae presented specifically to meet the needs of a particular client. *"Result Orienting"* can be defined as the process of ensuring concrete results and achievements ensue from the planned e-learning project so that clients can recognise such efforts. *"Result Orienting"* is achieved by means of the process of *"Visualizing"*, *"Professionalizing"*, *"Role Delineating"* [ensuring the role of each e-learning provider is clear and understood], and *"Focalizing"*, or being obsessive about details and the use of professionalism and competence so that unforeseen crises such as conflict gaps can be dealt with effectively (see Figure16 below)

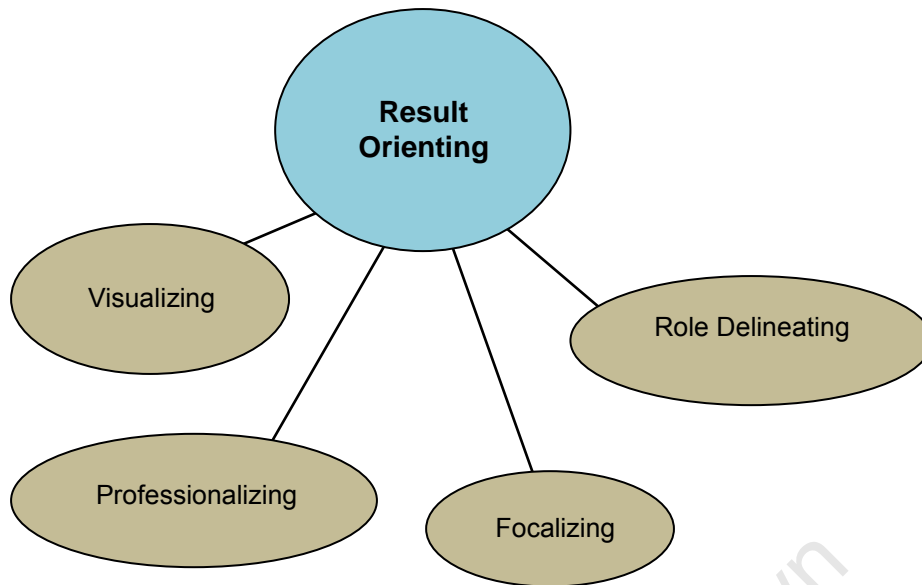


Figure 16: Sub-core Variables of “*Result Orienting*”

The processes shown in Figure 16 above will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter

"Prioritizing duties" (Figure 16) is defined as the process of ensuring that all tasks are sequenced in order of importance to ensure the project's successful completion (i.e. the process helps to increase competence and recognition).

In the next section 5.5 of this chapter the sub core variables and the associated secondary sub core variables of legitimizing and Credentializing will be explained in more detail. In this study all variables emerged using the grounded theory process. The raw data was transformed first into substantive codes and then into theoretical codes.

5.5. The Six Secondary Sub Core Variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

The two primary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*" are "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*" each emerged and were found to contain three sub core variables (See Figure 17 below).

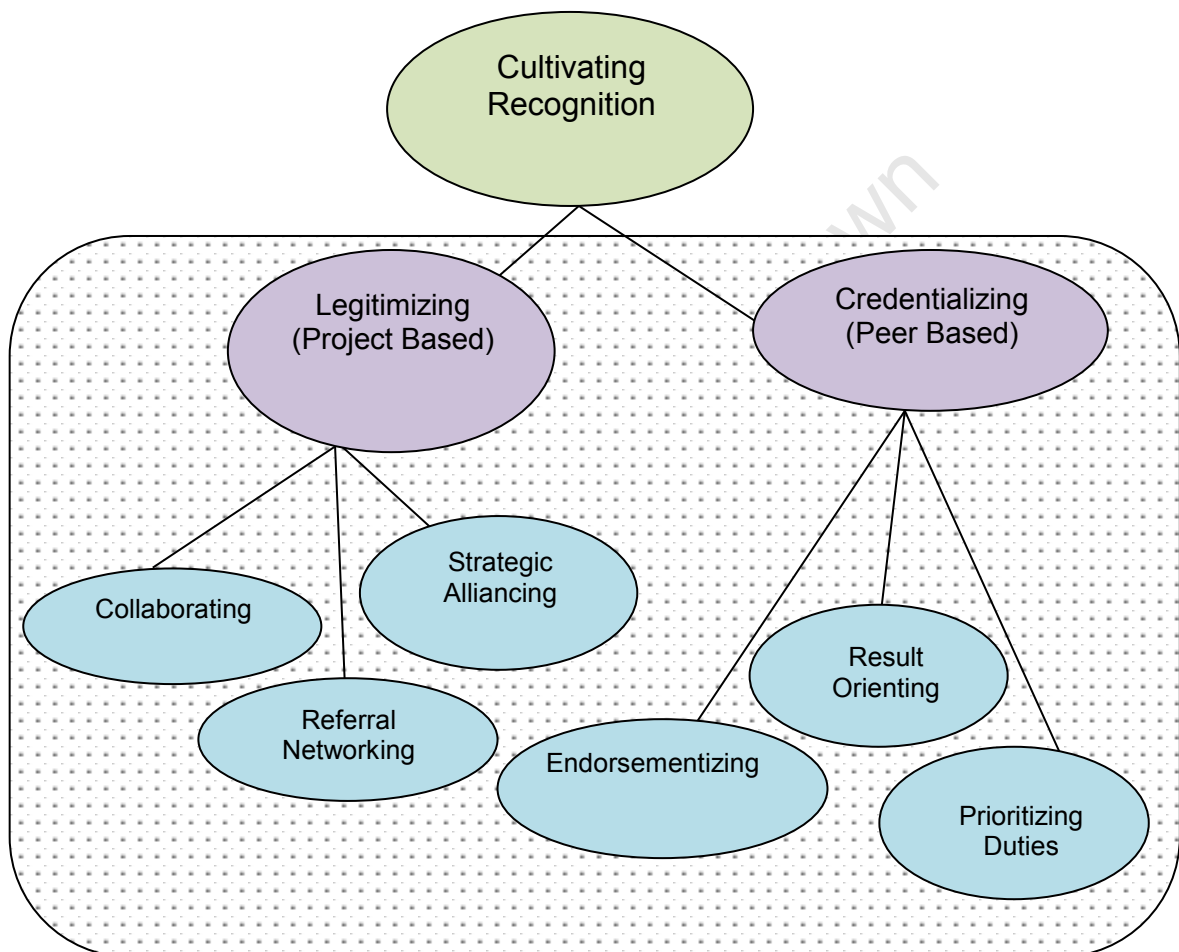


Figure 17 : Sub Core Variables of "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*"

As Figure 18 shows, the "Legitimizing" process can emerge by means of "Collaborating" with partners (either asymmetrical collaborating or reciprocal collaborating), "Referral Networking" and "Strategic Alliancing".

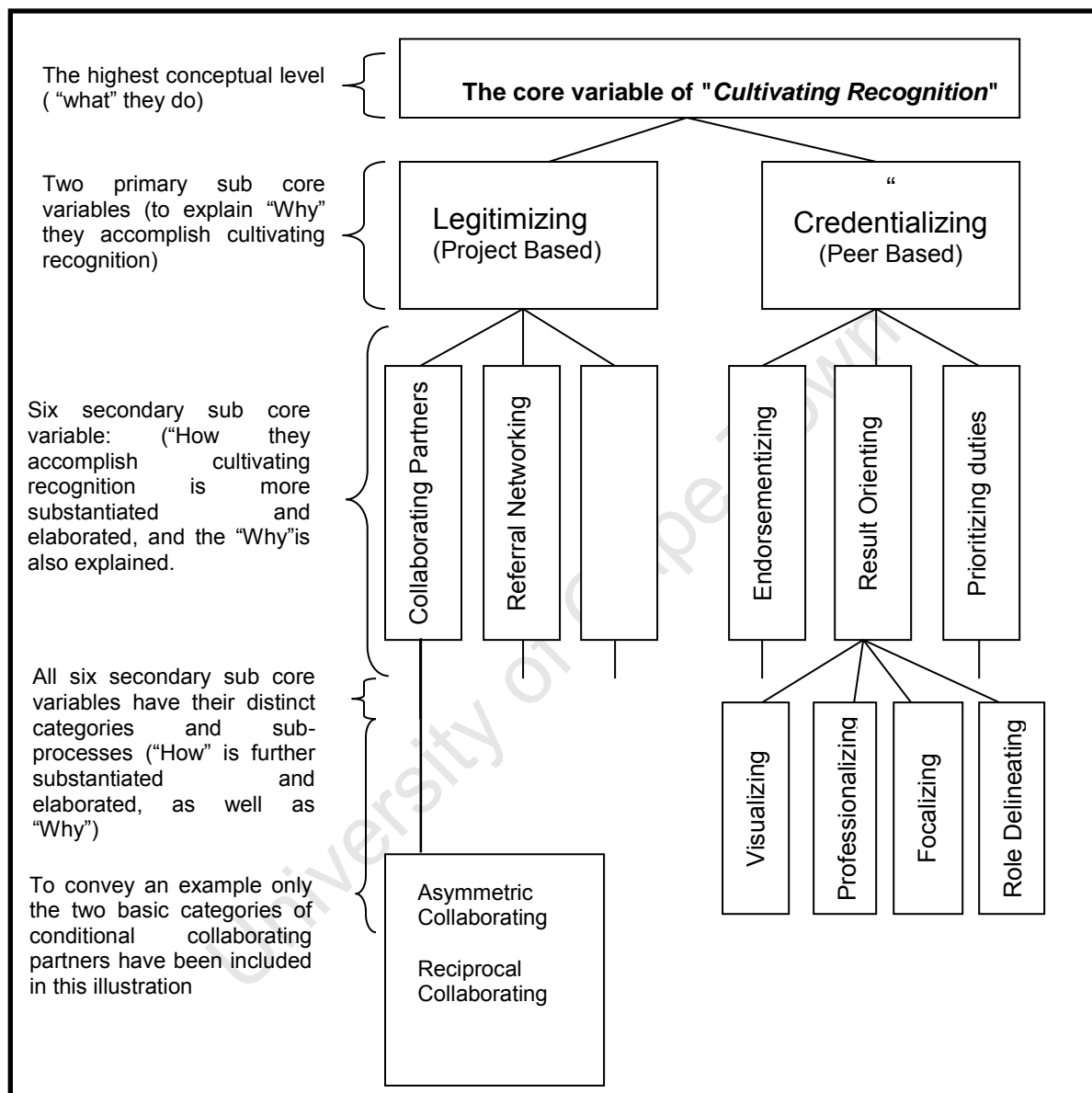


Figure 18 : An Overview of the Conceptual Hierarchy of Levels (Vertically) and some of the Characteristics of the Concepts (Horizontally)

"*Credentializing*" arises from the joint link of "*Endorsementizing*", "*Result Orienting*" and "*Prioritizing Duties*". The six secondary sub core variables have their distinct categories and sub-processes as detailed below:

'*Collaborating Partners*' involves creating a working together agreement in such a way as to ensure each partner gains from the agreement. The process of collaborating with partners can be either asymmetrical or reciprocal. These two labels were derived by researcher due to his deep understanding of Theoretical Sensitivity by Glaser (1978). "*Asymmetrical Collaborating*" is a form of collaboration in which the weaker party in the collaboration is able to obtain the benefits that the collaboration brings, whilst skilfully avoiding being dominated by the more powerful partner. However the weaker partner is potentially always more vulnerable. The more leverage the powerful partner has, the more this partner will strive to ensure that the project is implemented. In "*Asymmetric Collaborations*" the aim of the weaker partner is to manage to skilfully extract resources and finances from the dominant party without being overwhelmed. The e-learning providers ideally should attempt to transform the "*Asymmetric Collaboration*" to one characterised by a reciprocal relationship wherever possible. The reason for this is that asymmetric relationships tend to be limited or reduced to being contractual relationships whereas reciprocal relationships always have a greater potential for developing beyond a single project. Glaser (1978) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) states several types of temporal properties including cyclical, spasmodic, perpetual. Cyclical refers to the event occurring in defined interval repeating. Spasmodic refers to occurring once within the process and perpetual refer to the properties occurring frequently (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). The temporal properties of "*Asymmetrical Collaborating*" and other forms of collaborating are detailed in Table 16 below.

Table 16 : Temporal Characteristics of the Secondary Sub Core Variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

Secondary Sub core Variables	Temporal Characteristics (Dynamics)
Asymmetric Collaborating Partners	Several different temporal characteristics: cyclical, spasmodic and perpetual
Reciprocal Collaborating Partners	spasmodic
Referral Networking	perpetual
Strategic Alliancing	perpetual
Endorsing	perpetual
Result Orienting	perpetual and cyclical
Prioritizing duties	cyclical

“Reciprocal Collaborating” has been defined as a process providing mutual benefit for the parties in terms of sharing power and status. The process involves two parties coming together to achieve agreed objectives by contributing different and unique skills and investment to the partnership. For e-learning providers to share the right of ownership of e-learning projects equally, they have to manoeuvre themselves into a position of parity. To ensure this, e-learning providers have been designing and signing various agreements and memoranda of understanding. All parties are obliged to sign such agreements to enter into the collaboration. The parties coming into a reciprocal collaboration expect to have equal power and status. However, if

one partner gains a higher status and greater power than the other in the collaboration, the collaborating process will change to an asymmetrical collaboration, thus ceasing to be a reciprocal collaboration. The collaboration tends to be entered into by the partners in order to secure funds, the strengthening of the programs and recognition.

Referral networking has been defined as the process of both stimulating existing, and creating new, contacts. These connections and networks can be used for endorsing online learning projects, thereby increasing their credibility. This networking process is undertaken in order to capture more opportunities for e-learning providers in terms of funding and further collaboration, and for increasing the popularity of the online programs. Clients tend to believe in networking as soon as they see more e-learning providers' networks for the same project and they tend to commission the program more willingly. One of the pre-requisites for securing funding from donors is to be part of and activate referral networks. Such networks should be strong and well known in their host country. Successful e-learning providers work hard to capture and build referral networking to ensure that they get recognized and in turn capture more funding. The referral networking process is ongoing and perpetual. E-learning providers are looking for new networks all the time to ensure a project is recognised and sustainable. The need for referral networking is more urgent when the party seeking resources or influence is lacking in credibility and experience. The process of referral networking is dynamic and fluid and changes as a member's credibility and influence increases or diminishes. Referral networking may begin with the weaker party being vulnerable but at later stages, as this party demonstrated more competence, the receiver of credibility and

influence can become the bestower of resources and influence. It is a continuous and reciprocal rather than a one way process.

"*Strategic Alliancing*" occurs when a party or parties enter into a medium to long term process of connecting with other parties in order to secure the completion of a project with mutually beneficial outcomes. It is a process of working together for the purpose of delivery of online courses or to secure funding. Such processes include matching of the strategic objectives of one institution with the other. When matches are found, the parties whose objectives 'match' each other form such alliances to ensure that all benefit from the alliance. Strategic alliances can increase the rate of program delivery, recognition, secure credibility, popularity, recognition, project quality, and funding opportunities. A strategic alliance helps both institutions grow and design sustainable programs. Most funders tend to require a strategic alliance configuration (e.g. a university-university partnership) as a precondition of funding. Such alliances can be made and cemented through exchange of programs and staff. The 'alliancing' institutions have reciprocal alliancing characteristics in that they have equal power and status in the management of the project. They tend to sign agreements to ensure smooth delivery of the program. Strategic Alliancing usually takes place prior to the commencement of a project and is usually triggered by the client's wish to reduce uncertainty and risk which can take the form of lack of secure funding, loss of students and of marketing access. The greater the perceived uncertainty and risk of the online learning project on the part of the client, the greater the need for strategic alliancing.

"*Endorsing*" is the process of presenting professional work experience and academic qualifications to the client in a format which the client can easily

comprehend and perceive to be relevant to the particular needs of the client or clients. Endorsing's purpose is to create trust on the part of the client. The presentation of the professional's qualifications, experience and accumulated social credit is aimed at reducing the perceived risk to potential strategic partners and as a form of reassurance. E-learning providers use this process for proving their capability, competence and ability to ensure that the implementation and use of the product will go smoothly and the project will be effective. In addition e-learning providers use this professional endorsement strategy with the aim of creating confidence in their clients in terms of delivering projects on time and of the desired quality. The e-learning providers should first believe in themselves besides demonstrating a high level of knowledge and expertise in e-learning. If e-learning providers are able to do this they are more likely to gain the approval and confidence of their clients (e.g. funders, donors). In order to demonstrate this they should be able to provide proof of their ability to solve any and all e-learning implementation problems as well as displaying high levels of self confidence in their decision making. All of these are made more possible through the kind of endorsement derived from strategic alliances (as discussed in Section 5.5 above). This endorsement by respected third parties in turn increases their credibility in the eyes of senior managers.

"Result orienting" is the "process of ensuring there are concrete results and achievements in the planned project so that clients can clearly recognize and acknowledge such efforts.

It involves perpetual concentration on all key issues relating to the project, including synchronizing e-learning with conventional learning. This is achieved by

doing four things: visualizing, role delineating to avoid conflicts, focalizing, or being obsessive about details, and professionalising. The skilled e-learning professional tends to be very aware of what the successfully delivered project will look like long before any project has begun or is in its planning stage. In a few cases the process of result orienting happens cyclically. As soon one project is completed, the e-learning professional needs to look for another, thus making this a continuous and cyclical process. To ensure more funding, support, and promotion, e-learning providers try to ensure positive results from the previous projects. In order to activate recognition they tend to be result oriented.

"Prioritizing Duties" involves a process of ensuring that all tasks are sequenced in order of importance to ensure the project's successful completion.

The process helps to increase both competence on the part of those involved, as well as recognition. This process, like that result orienting, is usually cyclical and dynamic. It starts when a tendency of a failure to recognize the e-learning professional starts to become apparent. Sometimes prioritizing happens spasmodically [i.e at intervals]. The prioritizing process is usually triggered by the obvious lack of respect or recognition on the part of the top managers of respective institutions. When an e-learning provider does not receive recognition from top managers for what he/she is doing, s/he tends to prioritize his/her duties in order to increase results and reclaim recognition.

These six secondary sub core variables are of vital importance in the process of resolving the main concern of e-learning providers, that of cultivating recognition. Embedded within the six secondary sub core variables is a number of important

concepts which help to explain the dynamics of the process of cultivating recognition. These will be discussed in the next section.

5.6. The Lesser Concepts of Cultivating Recognition

The lesser, or lower level, concepts in the cluster of concepts around cultivating recognition are so called because, although important to the overall process of recognition, they form part of the third tier of the hierarchy of the respondents' main concern (See Figure 19). Each will be discussed in turn.

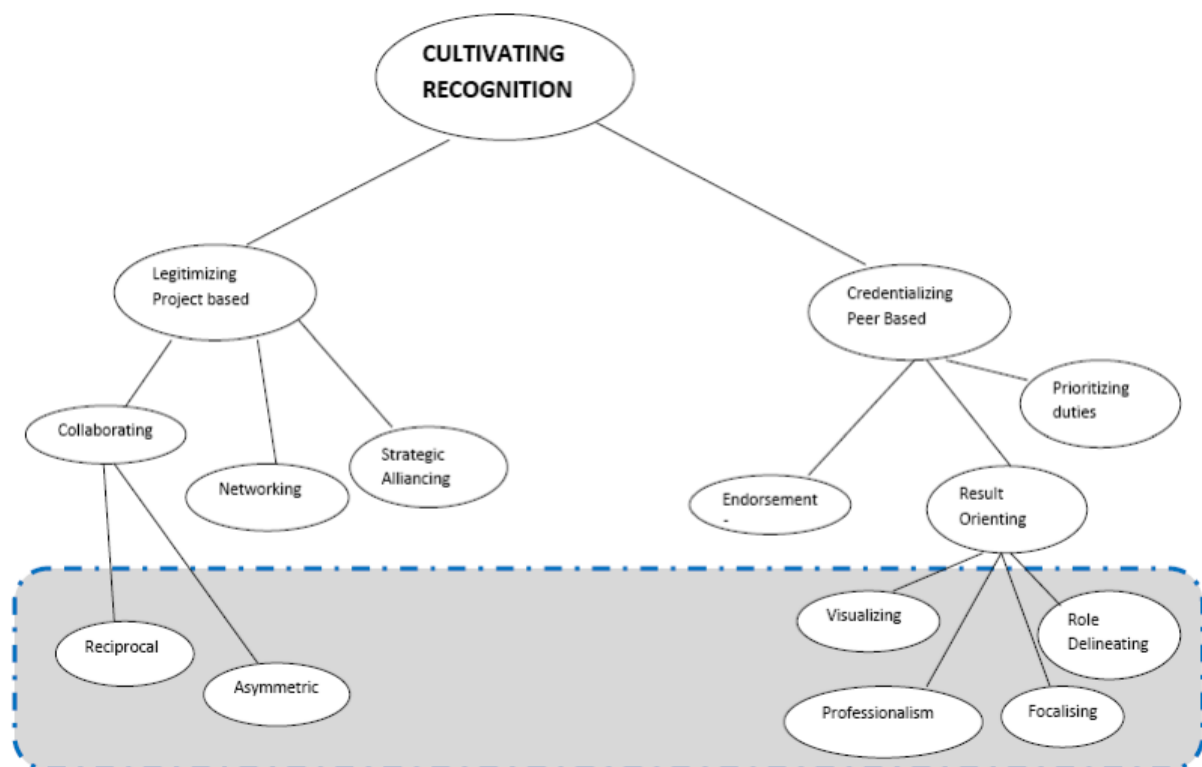


Figure 19 : The Lesser Concepts of "Cultivating Recognition" (contained in the highlighted area)

Asymmetrical Collaborating was defined earlier as a concept that explains how the weaker party in the collaboration is able to obtain the benefits that collaboration with a stronger partner brings. Asymmetrical Collaborating is achieved by the weaker partner skilfully avoiding being dominated by the more powerful partner. In all collaborations each partner will have a slightly differing agenda from the other partner. The weaker partner is potentially always more vulnerable. The more leverage the powerful partner has, the more s/he will strive to ensure that the project is implemented. In asymmetric collaborations the weaker partners often skilfully manage to extract resources and finances from the dominant party without being overwhelmed.

Reciprocal Collaborating was defined in section 5.5 as the process of achieving mutual benefit for the parties in the sharing of power and status in a collaborative partnership by contributing their different and unique skills and investments to the project. E-learning providers will attempt to transform an asymmetric collaboration to a reciprocal relationship or collaboration wherever possible. The reason for this, as has been pointed out, is because asymmetric relationships tend to be limited to being contractual relationship (mainly involving signing of agreements), whereas reciprocal relationships always have a greater potential for development beyond a single e-learning project.

Result Orienting has been defined in 5.5 as the process of ensuring there are results and achievements in the planned project so that clients can clearly recognize such efforts and its four elements: visualizing with clarity and in detail prior to the commencement of the project what its final outcome will be. . . Role Delineating was described in Section 5.5 as the process of defining the specific duties and

responsibilities of each partner in the project in order to avoid conflicts, achieved by instituting and policing role delineating regimes to avoid conflicts.

Focalizing was defined in terms of e-learning providers of staying attentive and having an obsessive attention to detail in designing and implementing a project. Professionalizing, the process of e-learning provider showing professionalism, and experience order to boost the e-learning provider's credibility.

5.7. The transition from raw data to the emergence of concepts

The most critical factor in the transition from raw data to full conceptualization in the research process is the researcher's ability to remain open while at the same time being highly focused in following the processes intrinsic to the GT process. To be able to achieve this transition from raw data to conceptualization requires the researcher to be trained in theoretical sensitivity (Glaser 1978, 1998, 2006). This involves the researcher, prior to the research taking place, being fully aware of the many different types of theoretical coding possibilities that could reveal the latent patterns within the data. The first stage of transitioning from data to concepts involves writing detailed theoretical memos immediately following each encounter with a respondent. Initially this reveals low-level descriptive codes or substantive codes. The second stage involves teasing out the theoretical codes. Finally the more 'robust' theoretical code emerges, whereupon both past and future respondent encounters are sampled for this theoretical code. This is known as theoretical sampling. The transition from substantive codes to theoretical codes can only take place after several theoretical memos have been written. The researcher then constantly compares the substantive codes across all the theoretical memos. To

facilitate the emergence of these theoretical codes, both the theoretical memos and their substantive codes are sorted. Once some theoretical codes have begun to emerge, they too are subjected to the twin processes of constant comparison and sorting. There then comes a moment when the more robust theoretical codes emerge and these can then be used as a basis for theoretical sampling across subsequent respondent encounters. Following on from this, delimiting takes place. This is the process whereby the researcher focuses increasingly on the particular theoretical code that appears at this stage to be explaining or accounting for most of the variation in the data. The GT researcher has to be alert to the possibility of the emergence of more than one core variable candidate. In this study two theoretical codes presented as potential candidates for the core variable. The first candidate that emerged was asymmetric collaboration (AC). Figure 19 outline the memo sorting of AC. AC concept properties include:

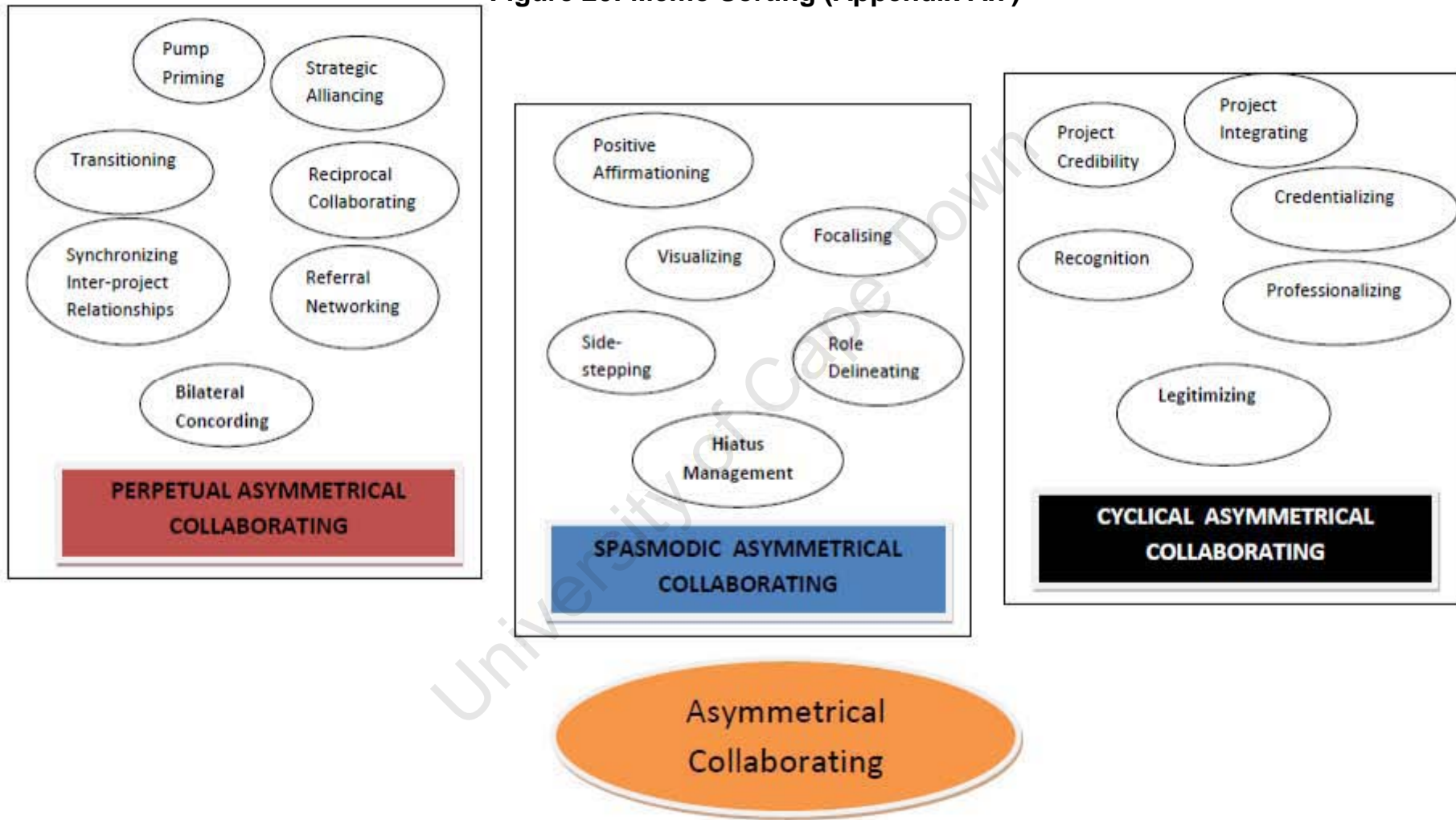
- *Being recognized and increasing credibility*
- *Increased and known intellectual property over ownership*
- *New Operation expansion*
- *Quality control and assurance*
- *Project sustainability and growth*
- *Attracting more donors and funding*

After careful comparing of the AC concept properties, another core variable, "*cultivating recognition*", emerged. The key to unlocking the core variable of cultivating recognition presented itself after the researcher returned repeatedly to all

the theoretical memos (see Appendix A.7) which were then constantly compared and sorted. What emerged was that all respondents were repeatedly expressing concern about not being fully appreciated or recognized by their various types of clients. After more sorting and comparing of these concepts and properties it became obvious that this lack of respect from the people commissioning a project was in fact a symptom of these e- learning professionals not being recognized. The researcher then returned to the data and theoretically sampled them for “*cultivating recognition*”. Following more constant comparison and sorting “cultivating recognition” emerged as the respondents’ main concern.

University of Cape Town

Figure 20: Memo Sorting (Appendix A.7)



The emergent theory represents the way in which the knowledge and understanding was derived from a combination of both observed data and the subsequent writing and sorting of many theoretical memos. The application of the procedures for the generation and grounding of concepts from the qualitative data come close to something that related to direct observation of the concepts together with their properties and data indicators. This was achieved through constantly comparing properties emerging from memos, through the application of the practice of 'explication de text', and through taking into account the interchangeable data indicators and properties of the concepts (Glaser 1978, 2006). More details relating to Figure 20 are shown in Table 17 below and Appendix A.7:

Table 17 : Explanations on the Preliminary Memos from Figure 20

Memo	Explanations
Transitioning	The process undergone by the university E-learning providers who have been managing the changes. During the implementation of IT projects university professionals underwent a process of transition. In the course of these changes, they combined face to face learning with online learning to ensure a successful transition.

Asymmetric collaborating	This concept explains how the weaker party in collaboration is able to obtain the benefits of collaboration whilst skillfully avoiding being dominated by the more powerful partner. In all collaborations each partner will have slightly differing agendas. The weaker partner is potentially always more vulnerable
Focalizing	Focalizing is the tendency of online professionals to concentrate on their main responsibility in order to ensure the project has been done well. To institutionalise online programs, E-learning providers tend to focus on one course for conversions from direct learning to blended learning to partial online learning.
Pump Priming	Being derived from researchers deep understanding of Theoretical Sensitivity by Glaser (1978), pump priming is the process of making IT projects recognized and funded by other external donors and funders
Reciprocal Collaborating	Reciprocal collaboration is a process of mutual benefit to the parties in sharing power and status. All parties entering in such collaborations have the same or equal power and status in the collaboration.

Visualizing	The process of conceptualizing and achieving clarity and understanding of the final outcome of the project in realistic terms. The E-learning providers needs to have a vision to sustain IT project within their universities, the success of the projects depends on the creative thinking
Positive Affirmationing	A process of having positive confirmation and verification of online learning: a change from negative thinking to positive thinking.
Side Stepping	Side stepping is a conflict avoidance strategy. Misunderstandings arise due to lack of trust from the top management in terms of including s idea from E-learning providers towards development of a project.
Strategic Alliancing (SA)	This is a medium to long term strategy for connecting with, or forming alliances with, other parties in order to secure the completion of a project with mutually beneficial outcomes. It is a process of working together for the purpose of delivery of online courses or securing funding. Most universities in East Africa tend to alliance in order to increase program delivery, recognition, quality, and funding opportunities.

Referral Networking	The process of creating contacts and networks for the purpose of endorsing online learning projects and increasing their credibility. It is done with the object of capturing more opportunities in terms of funding, collaboration, and increasing the popularity of the online programs.
Credentializing	Credentializing is the creation of increased credibility by the skilful use and promotion of the professional qualifications, experiences and accumulated social credit of an online professional to diminish the perception of risk. Online learning staff have been using this technique to ensure that their clients believe that they are fully able to deliver projects on time and of the desired quality.
Legitimizing	On-line professionals find it problematic to communicate clearly to their collaborative partners exactly what it is they are doing. These problems are caused by a barrier of IT technical jargon which the client partner rarely understands.
Recognizing	It is the process of gaining credibility.

Project Credibility	This is the process of creating trustworthiness in the process of delivering the project to reassure the client concerning its reliability and credibility. In order to be sustainable and to grow successfully the project needs to build its integrity and its standing with the clients, donors and partners.
Synchronizing Collaborative Relationships	For the online learning project being delivered in the context of a collaborative relationship to prosper it needs to be coordinated and to harmonize with other projects within other collaborative relationships at the university.
Professionalizing	The process of bringing professionalism, experience and competence to the project for the purpose of managing hiatus and boosting the IT professional's credibility.
Bilateral ConCORDING	The process involved in two parties reaching agreement on how to run the project to ensure the success and sustainability of the project.
Role Delineating	The process of defining the role of each partner in the project in order to avoid the development of conflicts within the project.

Project Integrating	A process of putting together different projects, regardless of their background within the university, for the purpose of increasing their sustainability and success, and ensuring support from the entire body of university online professionals.
Hiatus Management	<p>It was derived from the Researcher's deep Theoretical sensitivity. Hiatus means "a break" (dictionary.com). When there is break in continuity and a fracturing of harmonious relationships, feelings of uncertainty on the part of those involved in the design and implementation of an online project arise and an hiatus in the smooth running of the operation results.</p> <p>Since a hiatus has the potential to escalate into conflict, hiatus strategies are needed to manage the situation. Online staff have a difficult time when they have side stepped a problem instead of confronting and managing it.</p>

5.8. The Core Variable of "Cultivating Recognition"

Previous sections have discussed the process involved in the discovery of the "*Cultivating Recognition*" theory. This section will present a discussion of the theory in more detail.

The "*Cultivating Recognition*" process involves the recurrent creation and recreation of attempts on the part of professionals to gain public acknowledgement of achievement in order to both commission and implement ongoing e-learning implementation.

In the research process "*Cultivating Recognition*" represents a latent pattern found everywhere in the data and which emerges during constant comparison of the properties of theoretical memos.

In the course of the study, as has been outlined, the "*Cultivating Recognition*" pattern emerged during the constant comparing of the collected data according to the following criteria for "*Cultivating Recognition*":

(1) *as the most stable meaning that underlies nearly every one of the compared elements of the data,*

(2) *as the best abstraction (conceptualization) that fits almost every one of the compared overt behaviour incidences*

(3) *as the briefest and most concise explanation of the most important and most problematic issue for the people whose behaviour incidences have been compared. In essence, it is the conceptualization which 'best fits' their main concern.*

"*Cultivating recognition*" represents:

(a) a commonality within the wide variation in behaviour of the e-learning providers. It integrates practically all the e-learning providers' practices that have been compared and coded.

(b) a huge variation in behaviour that can be explained by a few distinctions within the same underlying meaning.

"*Cultivating Recognition*" as a core variable is highly stable in its core meaning and highly variable due to its representation of, and its accounting for, high variation in behaviour. "*Cultivating Recognition*" is the main concern of the e-learning providers, representing the essence of relevance reflected in the data as seen from the perspective of the participants. "*Cultivating Recognition*" shows how the main concern is resolved. "*Cultivating Recognition*" is basically what these e-learning providers engage in on a continual basis. They gain "public acknowledgment" by "*Legitimizing*" projects and by "*Credentializing*" their professionalism.

5.9. The Emergence of Theoretical Codes from Substantive Concepts

It is important to reiterate the main differences between two types of codes, the Substantive and Theoretical codes. Substantive coding represents the very first attempts to highlight those data which the analyst believes may have importance beyond the simple description of the context of the data. These codes are labelled and often gerunded in order to sensitise the researcher to the processes and patterns which are likely to be revealed at a later stage in the research process.

The theoretical coding represents the conceptual code or codes that arise from the synthesis of the substantive codes. To move from substantive codes to theoretical codes is a tricky and often elusive process. It was achieved by examining the interplay between theoretical memos. The main mechanism for this is known as the constant comparison method. According to this methodology the researcher

engaged both the intellect and intuition to achieve a shift in perspective from low level context based description to higher level conceptual abstract

The theoretical codes arise from the synthesis of the substantive codes. Both substantive concepts and theoretical codes are the building blocks of "*Cultivating Recognition*" theory. Various names have been used at different conceptual levels to name substantive concepts (Glaser 1998). These include "core variable", "sub core variables", "categories", "sub-categories". In previous sections, the core variable concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" has been explained, and the two primary and the six secondary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*" have been briefly introduced. The substantive concepts that are on a lesser conceptual level of "*Cultivating Recognition*" have also been introduced.

"*Cultivation of Recognition*" can be explained in terms of "basic social processes" (BSP). This BSP connects substantive concepts (the six secondary sub core variables), and the theoretical code into two inseparable three-in-one structure (Glaser 1978). This is briefly explained with reference to the two primary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*". The attachment of theoretical codes (e.g. processes, sub-processes, loops) to substantive concepts (variables, categories) within the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" can be explained as follows:

Without the gaining of external acknowledgement recurrently taking place, the very survival of both e-learning providers and e-learning projects may be at stake. Thus people in e-learning instinctively have a pivotal sensitivity and alertness to the importance of the emergence of "gaining external acknowledgement". The "achievement of external acknowledgement", of many kinds and types is their pivotal

main concern. Thus, "*Cultivating Recognition*" as a main concern issue occurs in many guises and in many facets and sub-facets.

"Gaining of acknowledgement" does not occur by accident. It emerges from a series of deliberate activities on the part of those seeking to gain acknowledgement for their services. Accordingly, people involved in e-learning business deliberately seek and sustain public acknowledgement. This process is ongoing even during a period which is unfavourable for "gaining public acknowledgement". Opportunities are continually being re-created or remodelled by e-learning providers to gain an edge over competitors in e-learning practice and delivery. Essential to this process is "*Cultivating Recognition*" which is also the recurrent, pivotal and prime solution to the problematic nature of the main concern.

Thus, "*Cultivating Recognition*" drives and directs behaviour. In this sense "*Cultivating Recognition*" as a concept partly explains itself and its own variation. It explains certain problems occurring in achieving e-learning objectives and gives the reasons why e-learning providers pursue a certain course of action or non-action and how they do this.

As has been described, *Cultivating Recognition's* theoretical and substantive codes signify the two main emerging features of *Cultivating Recognition*. One feature of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is the problematic nature of the main concern of the participants being studied, together with the problematic nature of its potential resolving. This feature is represented by its variables, categories and properties.

The other feature of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is that of accounting for the actual resolving of the main concern. This feature is modelled by the emerging theoretical

codes or theoretical concepts. On the primary sub core level an “inseparable two-in-one structure” is emergent. On the secondary sub core level and below, the principal theoretical codes emerge as varieties of a basic social process that forms a loop. The secondary sub core process-loop has been called the core process-loop of "*Cultivating Recognition*". This core process loop has its sub-processes which may in turn have sub-processes. "*Cultivating Recognition*" emerges as a concept in many guises in the data and can be conceived of as a multivariate variable with many dimensions, being highly variable and dependent. Conditions and context can easily cause variations (Glaser, 1978), yet is unchangeably omnipresent in the data. . The main dimensions can be conceived of as the two primary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*" as well as being conceived of as the six secondary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*". Compared to "*Cultivating Recognition*" as the core variable, the six secondary sub core variables represent the concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" as more specific and less general (at a lesser conceptual level) patterns of it. These six secondary sub core variables represent distinct, stable and exhaustive stereotypes of variability. Yet, these six secondary sub core variables can also themselves be conceived of as multivariate variables with many dimensions. These dimensions constitute the categories, or sub-categories, or sub-sub-categories of "*Cultivating Recognition*".

The main dimensions of "*Cultivating Recognition*" can be conceived of in terms of its main sub-processes which can also themselves be conceived as multivariate processes with many dimensions thus making "*Cultivating Recognition*" a highly complex multivariate theory. Much of the process of the fitting of the multivariate concepts or substantive and theoretical codes in a Classic GT can be conceived of

as the practising of a kind of “qualitative mathematics” (Glaser 1978). By a process of grounding in the data collected from the e-learning providers, being studied, these qualitative variables or theoretical concepts are made specific. Their fit, their use in the process of explaining the main concern, and their relevancy to e-learning implementation have been verified repeatedly by properties and interchangeable indices in the data during the process of grounding. The two features of "*Cultivating Recognition*" are semantically identical in the definition of "*Cultivating Recognition*". Their actual linking is seen recurrently in the data. The emergence of convenient and accessible practices to users of e-learning practices is the pivotal main concern and these also emerged from a series of deliberate activities on the part of e-learning providers. "*Cultivating Recognition*" as a main concern recurrently attaches itself, for example, to the requirements inherent in a two-in-one structure, or a basic social process for the resolving of the main concern (Glaser, 1978). The common properties of the substantive variables, and the variety of emerging theoretical codes, indicate how this processing of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is being triggered. Some of these common properties are, for example, "*Credentializing*" and "*Legitimizing*". Because "*Cultivating Recognition*" possesses these two features, both the problem and its actual resolution, it is not so much a theory describing “what” e-learning providers do, as a theory that conceptually accounts for “why” they accomplish, or do not accomplish, the task or project. Its variables and categories as well as its processes and sub-processes, conceptually explain “how” "*Cultivating Recognition*" is carried out, basically “how” e-learning providers manage to gain recognition on a continuous basis.

5.10. "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*", the two Primary Sub Core Variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

In section 5.4 of the thesis, the properties and characteristics of both "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*" were explained. In this section the importance of these two primary sub core variables will be outlined.

5.10.1. "*Legitimizing*" - a project based variable of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

"*Legitimizing*" has been defined as the process of ensuring that a project is delivered, valid and sustainable. The process of "*Legitimizing*" is a fairly tricky one for e-learning providers to achieve. "*Legitimizing*" can only happen with the approval of respected third parties. These third parties sometimes have difficulty prior to the project's commencement understanding the full implications of e-learning in terms of increasing educational effectiveness and quality. One of the main barriers experienced by these third parties is the inability to understand clearly the technical jargon employed by e-learning providers working in this field. E-learning providers also often find it problematic to communicate clearly and precisely to their collaborative partners what it is they are doing. In order to reduce the potential for misunderstanding they have to legitimize their actions.

As soon as the "legitimizing" has been achieved, the project gains greater acceptance, which in turn leverages future funding. As was described in previous sections of chapter 5, "legitimizing" is a perpetual process throughout which the e-learning providers have to ensure the project is legitimized and is respected (See Appendix A.7). The main symptom of the lack of legitimization is the lack of respect

shown to e-learning providers by some clients and funders. The instances of increased respect from top managers has been shown to be more frequent when e-learning providers employ three strategies in the course of working with partners: "*Collaborating*" "*Referral Networking*" and "*Strategic Alliancing*". These processes need to be present if legitimizing is to be successful.

Firstly e-learning providers need to collaborate asymmetrically or reciprocally with other experienced partners prior to the formal submission of funding submissions, as well as initiating the process (e.g. proposal writing, feasibility study,). Secondly, they need to make full use of their existing referral networks so that the potential client or funder has more confidence in their proposal. Finally, e-learning providers are more successful when, prior to and as part of the proposal document, they have already entered into formal strategic alliances with partners respected in the field.

It has also been found that successful e-learning providers are able to gain more acceptance in their e-learning projects when they are able to simultaneously synchronize several different e-learning projects due to the potential for sustainability from one project to another that synchronicity could deliver.

5.10.2. "*Credentializing*" - a Peer Based Variable of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

"*Credentializing*" has been defined as the creation of increased client belief in the e-learning providers' competence to execute a project on time and within budget. In order to successfully accomplish the "*Credentializing*" process, e-learning providers need to skilfully articulate three key processes, as discussed here below.

Firstly, all the claims and statements of accomplishments and achievements, made by the e-learning providers must be endorsed by respected external third parties.

Secondly, the e-learning providers must be able to both understand and execute project priorities by the skilful accomplishment of the process of "*Prioritizing*".

Finally, the e-learning providers must develop a results orientated mindset by cultivating the skills involved in "*Result Orienting*".

5.11. The Six Secondary Sub Core Variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

The data collected in this research focused on the main concern of e-learning providers working in East Africa, namely that of "*Cultivating Recognition*". "*Cultivating Recognition*" was achieved by e-learning providers by means of the systematic integration of several different variables. In the previous section 5.10 of this chapter the two main primary sub core variables were explained. This section of the chapter will show how each of these primary sub core variables are derived from two groups of three secondary sub core variables.

The primary sub core variable of "*Legitimizing*" is created by the interaction of three secondary sub core variables: "*Collaborating*", "*Referral Networking*" and "*Strategic Alliances*". The primary sub core variable of "*Credentializing*" occurs when the following three secondary sub core variables are present: "*Results Orienting*", "*Prioritizing Duties*" and "*Endorsing*".

5.11.1. "*Collaborating*"

The research has discovered that "*Collaborating*" with partners can happen in two different ways, either asymmetrically or reciprocally. This is because in all collaborations each partner will have a slightly differing agenda. Where there is a power imbalance between the parties "*Asymmetrical Collaborating*" will manifest. Where there is a greater degree of power equity between the parties, "*Reciprocal Collaborating*" will occur. It always requires more skill on the part of the weaker party in an asymmetrical collaboration.

As been described, in asymmetric collaborations the weaker partners skilfully manage to extract resources and finances from the dominant party without being overwhelmed. E-learning providers who are part of a collaboration tend to attempt to transform the collaboration from an asymmetric to a reciprocal relationship wherever possible. The reason for this is that asymmetric relationships tend to be limited to being contractual relationships.

"*Asymmetric Collaborating*" is likely to have several different temporal characteristics. The temporal characterises can be cyclical, spasmodic and also perpetual. "*Asymmetric Collaborating*" occurs because, once a project is completed, the collaborating partners start again on a new e-learning project. Thus the process becomes cyclical as the need for change arises. For example, when it is necessary to convert direct learning to e-learning, this becomes the trigger for "*Asymmetric Collaborating*". Such a change is facilitated or triggered by lack of physical infrastructure and resources in the direct learning or face to face learning situation. During the implementation process the need for more partners will often arise. This

in turn will trigger more collaboration within the e-learning project. Other factors which facilitate the refining of such collaboration can be the rapid changes in technology and the availability of funding and of e-learning experts. A change involving one or more of these factors will lead to the start of a new e-learning collaboration or agreement, or to a process of refining the current e-learning collaborations. This in turn rejuvenates the e-learning project. As soon as the junior e-learning partner is able to stand, the e-learning provider tends to start e-learning projects running in tandem with partnering projects and with new e-learning partners. This research has revealed the following to be properties of "*Asymmetrical Collaborating*":

- 1) *Recognized and increased credibility,*
- 2) *Increased and known intellectual property over ownership,*
- 3) *New operation expansion, quality control and assurance,*
- 4) *Project sustainability and growth,*
- 5) *Attracting more donors and funding.*

As has been described in previous sections, "*Asymmetrical Collaborating*" tends to be spasmodic when certain relationships create unanticipated problems and necessitate the putting of strategies in place to deal with the unforeseen problems. Asymmetric relationships can also be perpetual. Even in harmonious relationships conflict of interest can exist, or agenda priorities differ. To avoid and deal with these issues it is also quite feasible that "*Asymmetric Collaborating*" will also have to be perpetual.

As has been described, "*Reciprocal Collaborating*" involves mutual benefit accruing to the e-learning provider parties in the sharing of power and status, both

contributing different and unique skills and investment and having a greater potential for development beyond a single e-learning project. For e-learning providers to share equally the right of ownership of e-learning projects, they have to manoeuvre themselves into a position of parity. To ensure this, e-learning providers design and sign various agreements and memoranda of understanding and so enter into the collaboration. While the parties in such an arrangement are accorded equal power and status, should one e-learning partner acquire higher status and power than any or all of the others, the collaborating relationship changes to an "*Asymmetrical Collaboration*" and ceases to be reciprocal.

This research has revealed that "*Reciprocal Collaborating*" is spasmodic, can happen at any stage of the project and initially tends to be for the purposes of securing funds and strengthening the programs and their recognition. As soon as such goals are achieved, the process ends. At this point the relationship tends to evolve into new e-learning collaborations as the situation changes.

On the one hand, while rapid changes in technology result in an increase in the numbers of students attending universities resulting in increased pressure on the government to enrol as many students as possible, thus creating a situation in which reciprocal relationships flourish, on the other hand, the lack of qualified staff and expertise triggers the process of the universities looking for partners in order to start staff exchange programs to develop the staff and secure sufficient numbers of experts. One of the criteria for a university to receive funding for a particular project, is to have a collaborating partner. However the completion of the project will signify the end of the Reciprocal Collaboration. This research has revealed the creation of

more referral networks, and an increase in the degree of mutual benefits derived in the process, to be the properties of "*Reciprocal Collaborating*".

5.11.2. "*Referral Networking*"

:

"*Referral networking*" has been defined as the process of stimulating existing networks and creating new contacts for the harmonious implementation of a project.

One of the pre-requisites for securing recognition and success (e.g. funding from donors) is for the e-learning provider to possess and to activate referral networks. Such networks should be strong and be recognised in their respective countries. Successful e-learning providers work hard to capture and build "*Referral Networking*" in order to ensure that they get recognized and are able to capture more funding. "*Referral Networking*" processes are ongoing and perpetual. E-learning providers continually search for networks to ensure their projects are sustainable. The need for "*Referral Networking*" is more urgent when the party seeking resources or influence is short of credibility and experience.

The process of "*Referral Networking*" is dynamic and changes as credibility and influence fluctuates. A "*Referral Networking*" process may begin with the weaker party being vulnerable but at a later stage, as more competence is demonstrated and recognition gained, the receiver of credibility and influence can become the bestower of resources and influence. It is not a one way process. This research has discovered that the creation of more connections can be the catalyst for receiving

more project funds. It also ensures a higher level of client confidence through the process of legitimization.

5.11.3. "Strategic Alliancing"

"*Strategic Alliancing*" has been defined as a medium to long term process of connecting with other parties in order to secure the completion of a project with mutually beneficial outcomes.

It is a process in the course of which parties work together for the purpose of delivering online courses, or for securing funding. Such processes include the matching of the strategic objectives of one institution to the other. When two parties find a 'match' they form an alliance in such a way as to ensure that all parties benefit from the alliance. Most e-learning providers in East Africa tend to form strategic alliances with the purpose of increasing program delivery, recognition, securing credibility, popularity, project quality, and funding opportunities with other e-learning providers (e.g. universities, consultants,) in Africa or abroad.

"*Strategic Alliancing*" helps both institutions to develop and ensure sustainable programs and most potential funders tend to require a "*Strategic Alliancing*" configuration as a precondition of funding. Such alliances can be made and cemented through exchange of programs and staff. The alliancing institutions have "*Reciprocal Alliancing*" characteristics in that they have equal power and status in the management of the projects. They tend to sign agreements to ensure smooth delivery of programs. Strategic alliancing usually happens prior to the commencement of a project and is triggered by the desire of the clients to reduce uncertainty and risk. The greater the perceived uncertainty and risk of the e-learning

project by the client, the greater the need for strategic alliancing. This research discovered that increased collaboration and funding tend to lead to increased legitimization.

This research has revealed that "*Legitimizing*" must take place in order for e-learning providers to "*Cultivate Recognition*" and cannot happen unless the e-learning providers are also able to credentialize themselves. The three secondary sub core variables involved in the achievement of "*Credentializing*": "*Endorsing*", "*Results Orienting*" and "*Prioritizing Duties*" have been mentioned.

5.11.4. "*Endorsing*"

"*Endorsing*" was defined as the process by which the e-learning provider presents his or her professional work experience and academic qualifications to the client in a clear and comprehensible format so as to demonstrate the professional's level of skill and competency.

Endorsement by respected third parties bestows credibility on the professional e-learning provider. E-learning providers are required to prove to their clients, their communities and their donors that they are capable of implementing and sustaining a project before obtaining their trust and support. Endorsement helps e-learning providers find ways to create trust and confidence by means of demonstrating their professional competence to their clients through a combination of their qualifications and prior experience.

5.11.5. "Result Orienting"

"*Result orienting*" has been defined as the process of ensuring that there are measurable deliverables pre-planned within the project. This allows the clients to recognize whether these agreed stages in the project have been fulfilled. The skilled and successful e-learning provider will be aware of what the successfully delivered end project will look like long before it has begun. The issue for the e-learning provider is how to communicate this clearly to the client and partners prior to the start of any project.

This can be achieved by the e-learning provider doing four things. Firstly, s/he should be skilled in the process of "*Visualizing*" involving clearly envisaging the successfully completed project prior to its commencement. Secondly, s/he should institute and police or monitor "*Role Delineating*" regimes in order to avoid conflicts. Thirdly s/he should not hesitate to be obsessive about details within each stage of the project. This ensures the ongoing concentration of all involved in the project on all key issues relating to the e-learning project, including synchronizing e-learning with conventional learning. Finally s/he should demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and competence throughout so that unforeseen crises such conflict hiatus can be dealt with timeously and effectively.

The more skilled the e-learning professional is in this process the more likely staff will work together to ensure the intended results are achieved, which is the necessary prerequisite to "*Cultivating Recognition*". For example, some teachers are reluctant to introduce or incorporate e-learning in their teaching. This reluctance can be as a result of a lack of result orienting on the part of these teachers who then

to fail to be recognized. Those who tend to be result oriented, and are prepared to sacrifice their time and energy and "volunteer" their services, manage to achieve their teaching goals. They do not only volunteer to participate in new ventures, but they also are also strongly attuned to "*Result Orienting*" and are recognized for their achievements.

"*Result Orienting*" is a perpetual process. E-learning providers get recognition benefits from the leverage which result orienting brings. To attract more partners and clients one needs endorsement from trusted partners. That means that, as soon as one project is completed, the e-learning professional needs to start searching for another, thus engaging in a continuous cyclical process. E-learning providers and e-learning projects tend to lack recognition, while the demand for recognition in this field is growing, thus triggering result orienting as a way of gaining recognition. To ensure more funding, support, and promotion, both those involved in e-learning projects and e-learning providers need to ensure positive results from their previous projects. Thus being more result oriented initiates and ensures recognition.

5.11.6. "*Prioritizing Duties*"

"*Prioritizing Duties*" means ensuring that all tasks in the delivery of a project are sequenced in order of importance to ensure the project's successful completion, as well as increasing the competence of staff and securing recognition for the provider.

E-learning providers make use of prioritizing as a way of "*Credentializing*" their work. This process starts when there is a failure on the part of potential clients to recognize a particular e-learning provider. Sometimes "*Prioritizing*" happens

spasmodically. A lack or absence of a prioritizing process in the design and implementation of a project can trigger various negative responses from an existing or potential client. These include lack of respect for or recognition of the provider.

The acceptance and implementation of the innovative ideas of e-learning providers by their clients and by respective institutions, underpins and reinforces their professionalism. Thus all of the three secondary sub core variables have to be present in order to ensure that the E-learning providers are able to gain effective "*Credentializing*".

5.12. The Core Variable of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

Appendix A.3 explains the core variable of "*Cultivating Recognition*" in more detail. "*Cultivating Recognition*", the main concern of respondents, and the core variable of this thesis, comprises of 14 interlocking elements. These include two primary and six secondary sub core variables and six lesser-level concepts. .

5.13. Summary

This chapter covered the emergence of the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*". Starting with process in which the "*Cultivating Recognition*" emerged as a core variable. Also discussed were the concepts that comprise the respondents' main concern, the process involved in the transition from raw data to the emerged theoretical concepts, the concepts and properties of the core variable, detailed the process from substantive codes to theoretical codes, the five secondary sub-core categories and all issues including concepts which emerged in "*Cultivating Recognition*". The next chapter will use "*Cultivating Recognition*" as the basis for a comparative literature review.

Chapter 6

A Comparative Literature Review of “*Cultivating Recognition*”

This comparative literature review of "*Cultivating Recognition*" has four main sections. The first section exemplifies the objectives of the comparative literature review. The second section highlights certain apposite comparisons with other Classic GT studies. The third section will provide comparisons with another established 'cultivating of recognition' theory found in the literature. The final section demonstrates where this author's model of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is situated within the existing body of literature.

6.1. Exemplification of the comparative literature review objectives

The body of literature within Information Systems (IS), business management and other related areas is enormous and continues to grow. It is highly diverse in terms of context, origin of data, theoretical perspectives, and research methodologies. Glaser (1978) suggests that any Classic Grounded Theory literature review should be open for literature comparison outside the fields of enquiry (to include, for example, the natural sciences). As a result the potential offered in the literature to draw comparisons within that which features the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is almost limitless.

The purpose of this comparative review is to situate the generated GT of "*Cultivating Recognition*" within the body of extant knowledge and to assess its

position and place within the main body of relevant literature. Such comparison should be conceptual in nature (i.e. the focus should be on the comparison of concepts), rather than contextual (i.e. should not be based on the background to or origin of the data). This suggests a selective comparison (Glaser, 1978).

The data and core variable in this thesis does not obviously, at first glance fit into traditional Information Systems (i.e. within Information Systems generally, electronic learning, business, and others. The new substantive concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is partly comparable to substantive concepts used within existing IS theories. The theoretical code of "*Cultivating Recognition*" seems to be partly or wholly incomparable to theoretical codes used within the existing IS theory.

"*Cultivating Recognition*" is an example of the theoretical code of "the inseparable two-in one structure" that connects the two primary sub core variables. The existence of this theoretical code would suggest that much existing theory cannot be compared with the model of "*Cultivating Recognition*", at least at the present conceptual level of the model of "*cultivating recognition*". Since the comparison has nothing to do with the question of which is better, it would be quite unreasonable to require that this literature review should encompass all the main literature within the Information Systems (IS) area. It would, on the other hand, be reasonable to expect that some comparison would be made with literature that has never, or rarely, been cited within the literature of Information Systems. In any case, to compare every single piece of literature that has been written on some particular concept to establish if it is potentially related to some concept within the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" would be impossible.

It is also impossible and unnecessary to make comparisons with the literature dealing with each emergent concept or every indicated conceptual relationship found within the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*". As was described in the previous chapter, the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is an integrated theory, based on its core variables, which are on three different conceptual levels (core, primary sub core and secondary sub core), and the conceptual relationships among these core variables, as well as their lesser-level categories. Each concept and each conceptual relationship is accorded significance according to its place in the integrated theory, that is according to its relationship to each of the other concepts and each conceptual relationship. For example, if one of the six secondary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is omitted, the five remaining secondary sub core variables will lose most of their meaning. The reason for this is the level of importance of the indirect and direct relationships between these variables in terms of explaining the meaning of "*Cultivating Recognition*" in all its facets. Whatever is to be compared within the literature will have a definite place and significance in an integrated theory, although the comparing of one concept with another will to some degree involve other related concepts. In order to fully understand the conceptual delimiting of this literature review, it is necessary to fully understand the delimiting of this study. Thus some points explained in previous sections will be briefly repeated.

Due to the choice of research methodology, this research has been delimited to discovering respondents' main concern and continuously resolving this concern for the subjects of this research. In generating the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*", the researcher has taken the approach of delimiting the findings in terms of what is of particular importance to, and problematic for, these e-learning providers working in

East Africa. The agenda and substantive interests of those being studied set the agenda for and ground the research outcomes in this agenda. Use of this particular research methodology has up to this point been rare, and in a sense “contrary” to ‘mainline’ research methodology in its avoidance of many of the elements of traditional research methodology, such as a pre-framed “professional interest” perspective, favouring the “a priori” over the “a posteriori” regarding fit of concepts, and delivering research that is grounded in the agendas of the established professional research communities rather than in the agenda of those being studied (Glaser, 1992). Thus when a comparison is drawn, the standard “professional interest” approach for delimiting a research project is substantially different to the GTM. The standard approach essentially delimits the research to what is seen as professionally important, and hence appropriately professionally problematic, for the researcher and the research community involved. This may be due to a long standing attachment to a particular research methodology, or to an adherence to a particular research program. Thus in standard methodology, the agenda of the researcher and/or his/her research community sets the agenda for the research by preframing it from the perspective of their own research community, and results in researchers delivering research outcomes that are grounded in a particular research agenda. While it cannot be denied that all research is in some way ‘grounded’, Classic GTM as it is used in this study is based on a different concept of grounding to that used in standard research methodology, one that has little or nothing to do with the standard meaning of the concept of grounding (Glaser, 1978; 1998). CGTM cannot be said to be informed by a pre-framed grounding in pre-existent literature, or by a pre-determined theoretical perspective and in terms of predetermined conceptual usage (Glaser, 2001). In standard research methodology there is a

significant amount of “a priori” in place before the start of research and the “a posteriori” requirements are fulfilled by statistical testing or data description. This can in turn result in the criteria for a literature review of such research themselves becoming standardized.

These particular standards for a literature review cannot apply to a Classic GT study (Glaser, 1978). The particular research approach of Classic GT methodology means that the outcomes of the research may be conceptually very different from those that are pervasive in the literature. This also means that the scope for discursive and meaningful comparison with other literature may become restricted due to some degree of incommensurability (Glaser, 1998). It is unlikely that I will find in standard research theory and methodology literature, within the context from which my research data has been derived, exactly the same concepts as those in the literature on emergent theories of “Cultivating Recognition”. This delimiting also makes it more possible to achieve ‘saturation’ in the literature comparison process. Saturation point is reached when the addition of new pieces of literature to the literature review does not provide new or noteworthy conceptual properties, insights or perspectives in terms of the specifics of one’s research. Literature reviews of classic GT studies tend to be much shorter than those of more traditional studies (Glaser, 1978). Firstly, this GT literature is delimited to emergent concepts. Secondly, through saturation the comparison delimits itself. Besides being conceptual, a comparative Classic Grounded Theory literature review should be discursive in nature; it should not follow a ‘passive’, uncritical, descriptive or listing process (Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998). Discursive comparing implies a comparison that is characterised by some form of analysis, argument and critical evaluation (Glaser,

1992). It may question pre-existent literature according to ground indications, and it may offer directions for new research, including evidentiary research (e.g. statistically testing, qualitatively corroborating, or hypothetical-deductive research) (Glaser, 1978). A discursive comparison of the literature also involves finding indications of fits to concepts in the pre-existent literature that may indicate usability in terms of "Cultivating Recognition" theory . It also means finding indications of how an emergent concept of the theory of "cultivating recognition" could be modified or not modified in the light of a particular concept, hypothesis or theory found in the literature. As mentioned before, "fit" is another term for validity, but according to CGT it means fit 'in action' and usage, as part of an ongoing process, not simply fit by testing. In a discursive comparison it may become necessary whenever possible to synthesize much of the literature, and thus, in a sense, to 'transcend' it. This synthesizing may be carried out in different ways. It may for example, be carried out by delimiting a comparison to a group of paradigms or research programs. It may also occasionally also be carried out by comparing just one particular piece of representative literature (article or book) that could be said to be representative of a much larger body of literature. A discursive and conceptually delimited comparison of the literature also implies a process that is coherent from topic to topic (Glaser, 1992). It will become unavoidable to exclude some issues that some researchers may find relevant, and to include some issues that others may find less relevant, depending on the theoretical or methodological perspectives of those evaluating the research. This also means that some literature will be reviewed without being included or referred to in the research. The bypassing of this literature does not mean that it is considered of less merit or as having less relevance to the research. It simply means that this literature is not considered important in the given context of

conceptual comparison, a comparison which follows the chosen methodology (Glaser, 1992). Thus, the literature review and comparison will be conceptually and not contextually delimited. Conceptual delimiting means comparing emergent concepts - substantive codes, theoretical codes, conceptual hypotheses - to pre-existent concepts and hypotheses such as those in existing literature (Glaser, 1992; 1998; 2001). No comparison will be made with literature where conceptual relatedness cannot be found. The potential literature to be compared is not restricted to the contextual literature on Information Systems and related subjects; it includes subject areas and disciplines as contextually distant as the natural sciences. In a sense, the compared literature can be seen as new “data” to be constantly compared with the emergent theory. This new “data” may modify or refine the theory, or provide new perspectives on the emergent theory and its potential role in the literature, as well as requiring other views from other positions in the research community. The structure of this chapter is as follows: First, some examples and brief explanations are given to illustrate and highlight the difference between a conceptual comparison and a contextual comparison. Second, a comparison is made with other Classic GT studies within business and related fields. A justification for such a comparison is also the relative uniformity of methodological approach as well as similarity of research fields. Third, a conceptual comparison is made with other literature that has been selected by applying two main selection procedures: (1) a variety of search criteria have been used to find conceptually related literature and a comparison has been made with whatever emerged from this search, (2) comparison is made with other more or less known and recognised literature that was selected because it had some obvious conceptual relatedness. Fourth, the whole model representation of

Cultivating Recognition is conceptually compared with other models within and outside the realms of the social sciences.

6.2. Examples of the differences between conceptual and contextual delimitating in literature reviews

'Partner collaborating' is a "burning" topic among e-learning providers working in East Africa. Various local and international conferences have endlessly deliberated on this concept. They conceive of it as a highly dependent variable, which it obviously is. Also, most scholars in the field seem to concur that without strategic collaborating, there can be no e-learning successes, due to the fact that, as Ahmed (2004:47) argues, they "could provide the alternative way for cost sharing and for leveraging access to education". According to this view it could be argued that concept should be the main focus of a comparative literature review. It could also be argued that a review of some of the hypothetical-deductive research be concerted carried out within the African and international contexts. The following sections will explain why such comparisons may not be the ones most relevant to this and similar studies.

6.2.1. Pre-framed theory-building with a high focus on the concept of "*Partner Collaborating*"

Regardless of whether the concept of "*Partner Collaborating*" is connected to the emergent core variable, it does not take the position of core variable in Classic Ground Theory research methodology. The core variable will remain the core variable and secondary sub-core variables will remain secondary sub-core variables, and can never work interchangeably with each other. In this study, "*Cultivating*

Recognition" emerged as the core variable, and partner collaborating as the secondary sub-core variable. "*Cultivating Recognition*" is the "what" of "*Partner Collaborating*", and not so much the "how" of "*Partner Collaborating*". "*Cultivating Recognition*" is defined as "gaining public acknowledgement of achievement" for the purposeful pursuit of partner collaborating for both commissioning and implementing the project. According to this definition of "*Cultivating Recognition*", "*Partner Collaborating*" [both asymmetrical and reciprocal collaborating] could also be understood as "*Strategic Collaborating*" that ensures and sustains the commissioning and implementing of the project. The visible main concern, as well as the means of "gaining public acknowledgement of achievement", was "*Legitimizing*" by collaborating, "*Referral Networking*" and "*Strategic Alliances*", but the other related six secondary sub core variables of "*Cultivating Recognition*" and their categories were no less important in explaining "*Cultivating Recognition*" and "how" "*Cultivating Recognition*" was or could be accomplished.

6.3. Comparison with other Classic Grounded Theory Research in Related Fields

The Classic Grounded Theory studies within the area of Information Systems or business and management are few in number. It may be useful to start the essential literature review with a comparison of the majority of these studies. The focus of these studies is on special issues within business and management, while the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" focuses on general issues to do with Information Systems, management and business.

6.3.1. "*Cultivated Relationship*" as Core Variable

In 1972, Odis Bigus carried out a study of a home delivery milk business (Bigus, 1972: 131-165). The title of this study, "The Milkman and His Customers: Cultivated Relationships", dates it. Today most milk is sold in supermarkets. Although the context of Bigus's study is the US over 40 years ago, it is concerned with understanding how people in a service environment use 'Cultivating Techniques' for their own personal benefit. Bigus (ibid) argued that, for the balance of power to be one of high power asymmetry because of the low demand for the service and high supply of the commodity, different cultivating techniques should be employed. Bigus (ibid) describes this process as follows:

"Cultivating techniques are employed with the intent of either directly or indirectly gaining a reward (usually monetary). Cultivated relationships are relationships which are carried out with the primary intent of gaining such a reward...They are usually asymmetrical, with the less powerful party utilizing cultivating tactics to bring relationships closer to a state of symmetry"

However, Bigus (ibid) who did not use Classic Grounded theory (he used social Anthropological Methodology), discovered the core variable to be "*Cultivated Relationships*" and that it processes through a number of stages or cycles. Bigus (1972:137-142) highlights three stages in the acquiring of new customers:

- 1) *Detecting [canvassing amongst friends and associates]*
- 2) *Soliciting [personalizing and dealing]*

3) *Trust-inducing tactics [the sincerity act, contrived disclosure, situational mitigation, accentuated honesty and predicting credit worthiness]*

Bigus (1972: 142-145) reveals some more subtle ways in which trust can be further cultivated:

Nurturing pseudo friending

Effecting obligation

Favouring

Bigus (1972: 144-145) then goes on explain how it proved to be a wise strategy to deliberately avoid certain types of customers by decultivating relationships by means of:

[1] Inhibiting conduct

[2] Terminating tactics

In the final section of Bigus's (1972:147) paper he observes that "*High-expertise service occupations, particularly the professions, seem to involve a lower amount of cultivating activity than low expertise occupations. Cultivating in such relationships seems to be directed mainly at trust maintenance*".

A critique or evaluation of Bigus's (1972) paper reveals:

1) *The quality of his line of argument is compelling.*

2) *The development and synthesis of concepts are very clear*

- 3) *The analysis of his data is difficult to assess because he has not been very transparent with his data sources, but the discussion of his research is clear and convincing.*
- 4) *The conclusions of his research are very plausible and widely applicable*
- 5) *It has both content and construct validity*
- 6) *Its reliability is not possible to assess because he has not been totally transparent with his data*
- 7) *Its main strength is at the conceptual level*

Within the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*", E-learning providers in this study specifically, were also in an inferior status and position vis-a-vis their clients [the universities and the government sponsors]. Expressed in Bigus (1972:136) terms, the twin "Coping Strategies" were "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*". Even though, in this study, in a "*Cultivating Recognition*" situation specific factors were very different from those of Bigus's research, respondents in both studies shared the need to cultivate relationships. The people in Bigus's research had to cultivate relationships in order to gain monetary reward. According to the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" in this study, e-learning providers had to "Cultivate Recognition" before they could obtain any monetary rewards. In both cases the process of cultivation took place.

All the trust-inducing techniques for Cultivating Relationships that Bigus (1972) explains have their correspondence to "*Credentializing*" within the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*". "*Credentializing*" involves the creation of trust by means of

“*Endorsementizing*”, resulting in the “*Orienting*” and “*Prioritizing of Duties*”. Bigus (1972) describes one of the trust inducing techniques as the “sincerity act” (“*Result Orienting*”), “contrived disclosure” (transparency), “situational mitigation” (“*endorsementizing*”), and “accentuated honesty” (“*Prioritizing Duties*”).

As noted briefly in previous paragraphs, this researcher would agree with Bigus (1972) concerning the importance of trust cultivation in professional relationships. However Bigus (1972) only indicates “WHAT” is likely to be of importance in the gaining of trust and not “HOW” that trust can be both gained and sustained. It could be argued that this study builds on and goes beyond Bigus (1972) because it was able to demonstrate not only WHAT professionals have to do to gain trust, but also HOW they are able to do this by means of “*Cultivation of Recognition*”. The study also shows how and why cultivation is just as important in high expertise occupations or enterprises [East African E-learning providers and their clients] as in low expertise occupations or enterprises, the main difference being the greater emphasis on the maintenance of trust. The main weakness of the Bigus (1972) research [which uses Social Anthropological Methodology] is that it was published before sufficient knowledge and understanding of CGT had emerged and thus all he was able to do was to create an insightful description and explanation of Cultivating Relationships without being able to state which, of all the variables he cited, was the core variable. This study was able to identify the core variable by facilitating the emergence of the “*Cultivation of Recognition*” core variable.

6.4. Comparing Related Literature to Concepts Within the Theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

As outlined above, it is necessary to create a term for the pattern of "*Cultivating Recognition*". The study found no word in the English language to signify or represent this pattern even although this pattern of behaviour has always been there. This pattern is not restricted to kinds of behaviour that may be labelled under the same or similar heading. It may simply have implications for a more general theory that is not restricted to Information Systems or to business in general. The concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*" is based on the gaining of public acknowledgement. What follows is an eclectic collection of quotes or 'sayings', by a random selection of people over time, to do with "*Cultivating Recognition*" which may clarify and reveal the latent understandings of the concept.. Almost all these quotes conceive of gaining public "acknowledgement" and "recognition" as something which has to be actively sought and earned, and as something to be valued highly.

We have come through a strange cycle in programming, starting with the creation of programming itself as a human activity. Executives with the tiniest smattering of knowledge assume that anyone can write a program, and only now are programmers beginning to win their battle for recognition as true professionals... *Gerald Weinberg*

Appraisals are where you get together with your team leader and agree what an outstanding member of the team you are, how much your contribution has been valued, what massive potential you have and, in recognition of all this, would you mind having your salary halved... *Theodore Roosevelt*

The first step towards amendment is the recognition of error... *Seneca*.

A theatre receives recognition through its initiative, which is indispensable for first-rate performances... *Franz Lisztz*.

Recognition is the greatest motivator... *Gerard C. Eakedale*

People may take a job for more money, but they often leave it for more recognition... *Bob Nelson*

Even the recognition of an individual whom we see every day is only possible as the result of an abstract idea of him formed by generalization from his appearances in the past... *James G. Frazer*

What every genuine philosopher (every genuine man, in fact) craves most is praise – although the philosophers generally call it ‘recognition’... *William James*

**Table 18: Some Quotes to do with Recognition and
Acknowledgement: for Illustrative Purposes**

(Source: BrainyQuote (2011) and QuotationsPage.com & Moncur (2011))

It can be stated with certainty that the concept and the meaning of the pattern of "*Cultivating Recognition*", as it has been defined and explained in this study, has not been applied before as a concept of any significance in any theory building process within Information Systems, Business, Management, Economics or Social Sciences in general. When one searches for this concept or for synonyms or key-words, or terms in titles, or under frequently used words in electronically available texts, it is not possible to find directly relatable terms or literature. The same applies to the set of two primary sub core variables and the set of six secondary sub core variables. This means that there is little or virtually nothing in the literature to which it can be directly or usefully compared.

This means that an indirect literature review comparison has to be attempted. Such an indirect review can lead to indications or explanations in terms of how this particular study can make a contribution to the literature on e-learning providers, CGTM, and "*Cultivating Recognition*". In the search for such literature in order to make comparisons, the search criteria or key words used have been terms such as "*Cultivating Recognition*", "gaining recognition", and "public acknowledgement", or "public acknowledgement creation". A small body of literature within Information Systems, Business, Management and related fields has been found. Besides being sparse, this literature is characterized by the frequent use of the terms "acknowledgment" or "recognition". The next section details the outcomes of the review.

6.4.1. Comparing Literature That May Have Relatedness due to Similarity in Conceptual Vocabulary

A search for literature dealing with "*Cultivating Recognition*" using the keywords, "*Cultivating recognition*", "*Gaining Recognition*", and "*Public Acknowledgement*" or reverse wording, such as "*Public Acknowledgement Creation*", yielded a few journal articles and a couple of books. This literature mostly uses terms such as "recognition" or "gaining recognition" or "public acknowledgement" as part of a cluster of auxiliary descriptive terms and not as part of a basic substantive or theoretical concept. For example, within the study of entrepreneurship, the term "*Opportunity Recognition*" has often been used for contextual descriptive or focusing purposes and not as a pivotal concept in a theory (e.g SWOT analysis). In spite of the remote and occasion absence of conceptual relatedness, a comparison will be attempted.

One Classic Grounded Theory thesis showed "*Connected Learning*" (Scott, 2007) as focussing on the main concern of the recipients (receivers) of e-learning. Although Scott's (2007) thesis helped to clarify the main concerns of e-learning recipients), it never broached the main concerns of those charged with delivering those services. Thus, unlike Scott's 2007 study, this study has revealed the main concern of the e-learning providers who were the respondents in the study.

Another model pertaining to campus based learners is Tinto's (1993) model of institutional departure. The institutional departure study looked at how campus based learners struggle to gain knowledge. This study has gone beyond Tinto's (1993) work in looking at online and e-learning providers and challenges Tinto's (1993) contention of the centrality of the role itself of the online learning providers, and

explains that "*Cultivation of Recognition*" is of greater significance to online learning providers than simply fulfilling a role. This study has enriched Kember's (1999) model for student persistence, replacing it with this Classic Grounded Theory. Kember's (1999) model is based on Tinto's (1993) model but is criticised in this study for misunderstanding the role of e-learning providers in successful implementation of e-learning. Further Kember's (1999) claim to have conducted data analysis according to the grounded theory research method is disputed since the explanation offered falls short of the coherent explanation of the relationships between variables, a relationship which is an integral part of Classic Grounded Theory. Woodley et al. (2001) dispute Kember's (1999) model from a quantitative perspective.

The professional literature on attrition and retention in e-learning is extended by a conceptual framework with which to understand the relationships between those variables which impact on online and e-learning providers. This study offers a framework with which to organise future research efforts. In distinguishing between the temporal nature of persistence and that of academic success it becomes clear that academic success is dependent upon the success and strength of the providers. This study goes beyond Simpson's (2004) notion of a 'maximum possible increase in retention', in the case of learners withdrawing from a course because of a change in their personal commitment structures. It adds that retention could be facilitated from the providers' side and be due to a lack of "*Cultivating Recognition*". Lastly, in postulating that reducing the cost of integration and increasing the value of the learning opportunity will increase a learner's propensity to study, this study goes beyond Yorke's (2001) contention that improving conditions for students will increase

persistence rates, by arguing that "*Cultivating Recognition*" is of more significance to the success of online and e-learning projects than the upgrading of conditions.

The most exciting contributions of the research of this thesis are those opportunities it provides to inform practice. Different aspects of the theory are of value and relevance to different stakeholders. Providers of connected learning will be the ones most interested in the concept of '*Cultivating Recognition*'. The development of e-learning programs depends on the providers, such as higher learning institutions and other stakeholders. The success of such institutions will depend on how they cultivate recognition.

The Leitch (2006) report on skills called for institutions of higher education to provide a flexible response to the needs of employers in the provision of demand led vocational learning. This study supports Leitch's (2006) call for providers to change from a supply-driven approach to a demand-led approach to the provision of vocational learning. From the point of view of the vocational learners of this study, the providers need to offer learning opportunities which are relevant and useful for the learners they are serving and to design for persistence. In a fast changing, technology driven world, and to the extent that the needs of employers and employees coincide, providers of connected learning will need to remain up to date and to be flexible in the sense of providing programs which are flexible for learners rather than for the providers.

6.4.1.1. Research on "*Legitimizing*"

Only a few IS studies which involve and discuss legitimization have so far been carried out (Brown, 1995; Keable et al., 1998). While Elsbach & Sutton (1992) saw

"*Legitimizing*" as focussing on organization objectives, artefacts, and activities, Klein and Hirschheim (1989) related legitimization directly to IS success or failure and defined legitimization as "a social process by which institutions, practices and ideas gain social acceptance" (Klein & Hirschheim 1989: 7). All of these studies included discussion on how IS projects in organizations are unlikely to succeed unless they have gained legitimization from their users. According to Banville (1991) these authors have only mentioned legitimization as a general concept and have not systematically discussed legitimization strategies or types of legitimization. Brown (1998), and Kohl & Kettinger (2004) argue that little is known about the process of legitimization-seeking in IS, and the strategies that can help achieve the required legitimization from users are discussed by Flyn & Zalid (2003). This dearth of detailed studies on "*Legitimizing*" makes this study an important contributor to literature on "*Legitimizing*".

Flynn & Hussain (2004) used structuration theory and activity theory to come up with a Legitimization Activity Model (LAM). LAM consists of a number of actions, each of which has a goal. Figure 19 below shows the LAM and explains the process of gaining legitimization. The LAM process involves various stages which include: constructing the target, identifying the learning process, closing the gap, learning the norms, granting legitimization, comparing targets and monitoring legitimization.

Flyn & Du (2004) discussed the various activities involved in the process of seeking and maintaining legitimization. Figure 19 below shows three activities: gaining legitimization, evaluating and monitoring legitimization and maintaining and/or repairing legitimization. Oliver (1991) argues that IS managers can apply many tactics to gain legitimization for a new IS and many of these tactics fall into two

basic categories: conformity and manipulation. Conformity means that, when introducing a new IS, managers conform to the dictates of organizational stakeholders and, if necessary, and, according to Suchman (1995), manipulate only the characteristics of the IS necessary to achieve such conformity. With the manipulation approach, managers take a more active role in influencing organizational stakeholders and in creating new legitimating criteria.

None of the authors outlined above is able provide an answer to the question: "How does the process of legitimization occur?"

This is in stark contrast to the Classic Grounded Theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" which has emerged in this thesis. "*Cultivating Recognition*" explains in detail how "*Legitimizing*" happens through a combination of "*Partner Collaborating*", "*Referral Networking*" and "*Strategic Alliances*"

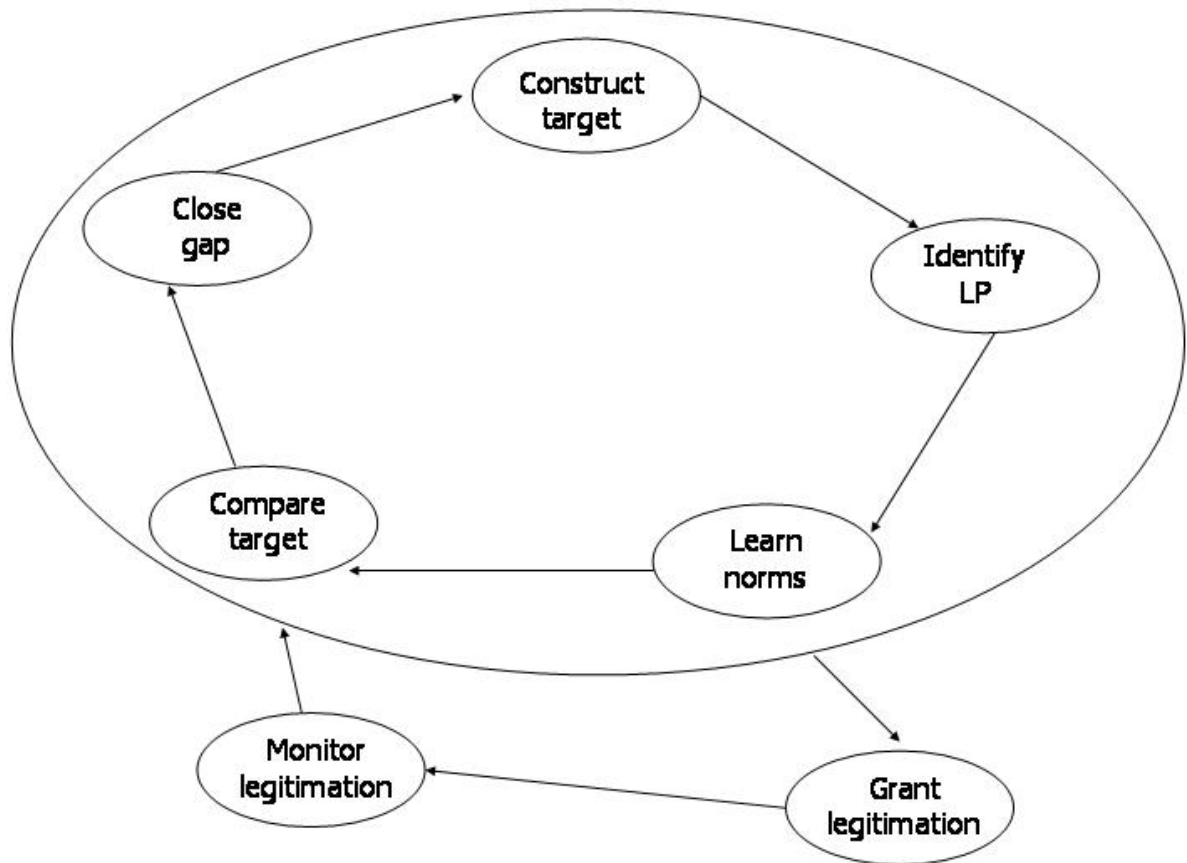


Figure 21 : Legitimization Activity Model

(Source: Flynn & Hussain (2004))

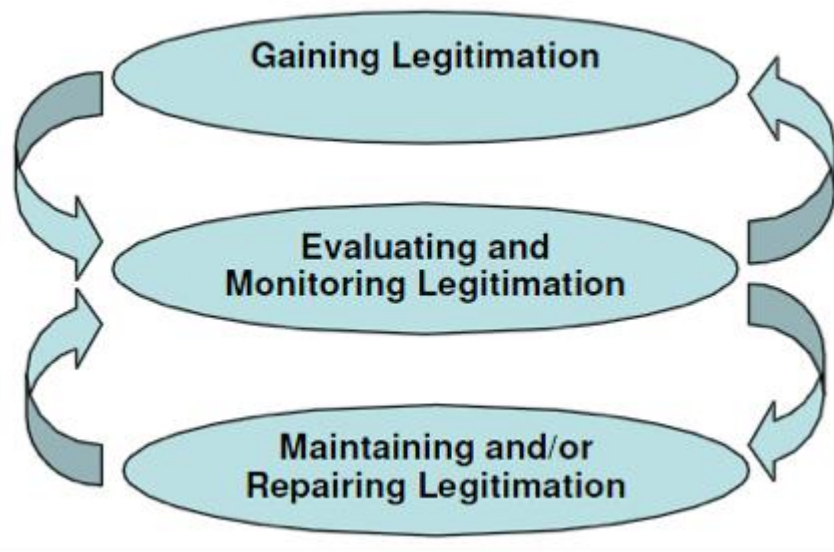


Figure 22 : Integrated Legitimation Activity Model

(Source: Flynn & Hussain (2004))

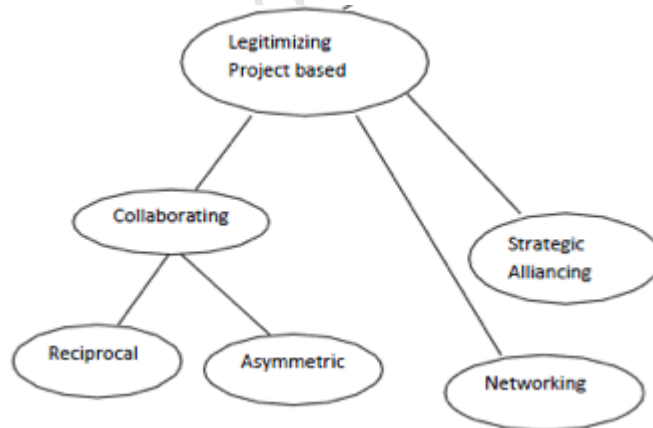


Figure 23 : "Legitimizing" According to "Cultivating Recognition" Theory

6.4.1.2. Research on "*Partner Collaborating*"

While public agency directors define collaboration as the act or process of "shared creation" or discovery which involves the creation of new value by doing something new or different (Gummersson, 2002a), Thomson (2001:23) defines it as:

"... a process in which autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interaction."

This definition suggests a higher-order level of collective action than cooperation or coordination. The extensive literature on collaboration does not agree on the terms included in the process, drawing as it does from a wide variety of perspectives, including inter-organizational relations: Alexander (1995); Ring and Van de Ven (1994); Warren et al. (1975); Alter and Hage (1993); O'Toole (1997); O'Toole, Meier, and Nicholson-Crotty (2005); Powell (1990), and the logic of collective action (Ostrom, 1990). However Thomas and Perry (2006) outlined the Process Framework of Collaboration (Figure 24 below)

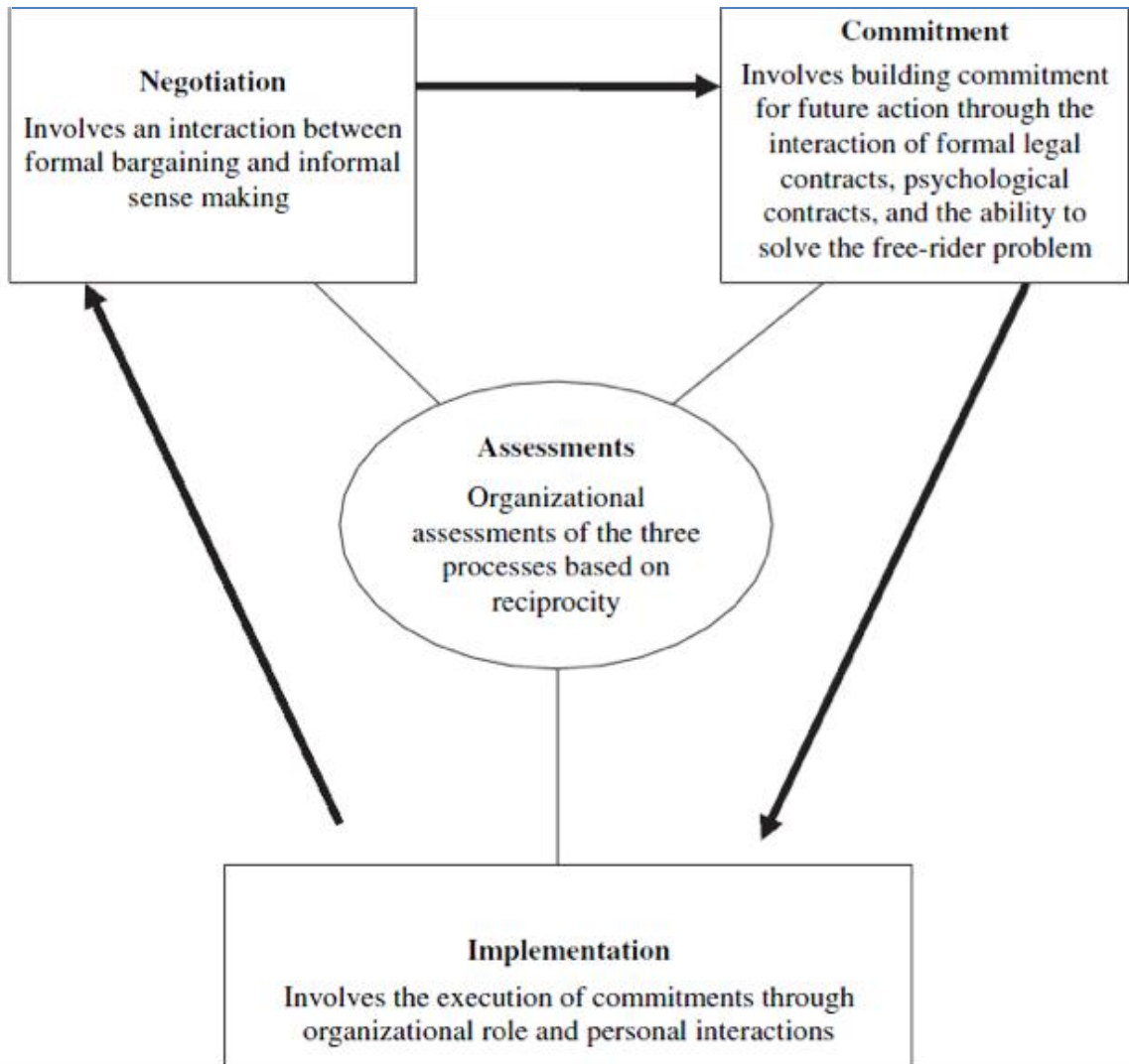


Figure 24 : A Process Framework of Collaboration

(Source: Thomas and Perry (2006))

Thomas and Perry (2006) deliver an interesting context based descriptive framework although they are unable to explain how the process of partner collaborating actually happens. This is in contrast to the grounded theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" in this thesis, which explains how the process of collaboration actually occurs, demonstrating how the process of collaboration occurs in both "*Asymmetrical Collaborating*" and "*Reciprocal Collaborating*" forms.

6.4.1.3. Research on "*Strategic Alliancing*"

Effective strategic alliances can have important performance implications for higher learning institutions. Such strategic alliances require recognition that they are embedded in the strategies of each of the partners in the alliance. The success of the alliance increases when the symmetry in the strategic exploitation/exploration intent of the partners is present at the start and is re-calibrated and maintained over time (Koza & Lewin 2000).

Koza & Lewin (2000) in a paper titled "Managing Partnerships and Strategic Alliances: Raising the Odds of Success", outlined a framework for considering the strategic decisions for entering into an alliance and some of the key issues involving the management process of alliances. In Figure 25 below, various reasons are shown for business entering into alliances. Such reasons include gaining access to a restricted market, or overcoming barriers to entry, gaining market power, maintaining market stability, acquiring new technology products and/or new skills, pooling resources, reducing uncertainty, sharing risky research and development projects, speeding up entry into new markets, and deriving new incremental sources of revenue from combining complementary assets (Hitt et al., 1997).

Market	Reason
Slow Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain access to a restricted market Establish franchise in a new market Maintain market stability (e.g. establishing standards)
Standard Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain market power (reduce industry overcapacity) Gain access to complementary resources Overcome trade barriers Meet competitive challenge by other competitors Pool resources for very large capital projects Learn new business techniques
Fast Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed up new goods or service entry Speed up new market entry Maintain market leadership Form an industry technology standard Share risky R&D expenses Overcome uncertainty

Figure 25 : Reasons for Strategic Alliances by Market Type

[Source: Hitt et al. (1997)]

Koza & Lewin (2000) argue for three types of alliances, see Figure 26 below.

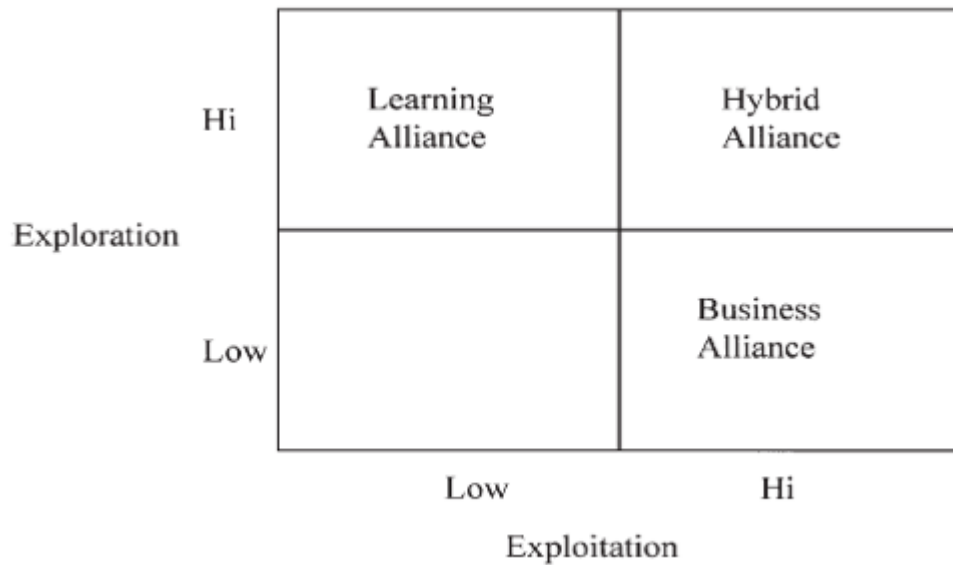


Figure 26 : Three Types of Strategic Alliances

[Source: Koza & Lewin (2000)]

These alliances have as their primary strategic intent the reduction in ignorance of the partners (Balakrishnan and Koza 1993 and Dierickx and Koza 1991). Such alliances can reveal new information and insights about (1) markets, including local competition, regulations, customer tastes and habits, marketing infrastructure, and the like; (2) new core competencies such as just-in-time processes, negative working capital, one-on-one marketing, and mass customization, and (3) new technologies, such as competency innovations, new complementary technologies, as well as franchising capabilities such as the Pizza Hut brand. The critical success factor in alliances is the ability of the partners to design, manage and continuously adapt organizational processes and informal linkages which keep the alliance on track (Koza & Lewin 2000).

Each of the strategic alliance types has different management characteristics. See Figure 27 below:

	Learning alliance	Business alliance	Hybrid alliance
Loyalty	Parent	Child	Parent (transformed)
Control mechanism	Behaviour and process	Output	Behaviour and process and output
Ability to absorb knowledge	High	Lowest	Highest
Time horizon	Limited term (learning cycle)	Open-ended (industry cycle)	Multiple time horizons
Success criteria	Pacing the partner	Performance	Transformation

Figure 27 : Managerial Characteristics of Strategic Alliances

[Source: Koza & Lewin (2000)]

Various Doz (1996) and Smith & Van de Ven (1994) outline the stages in the alliance process (Figure 28).

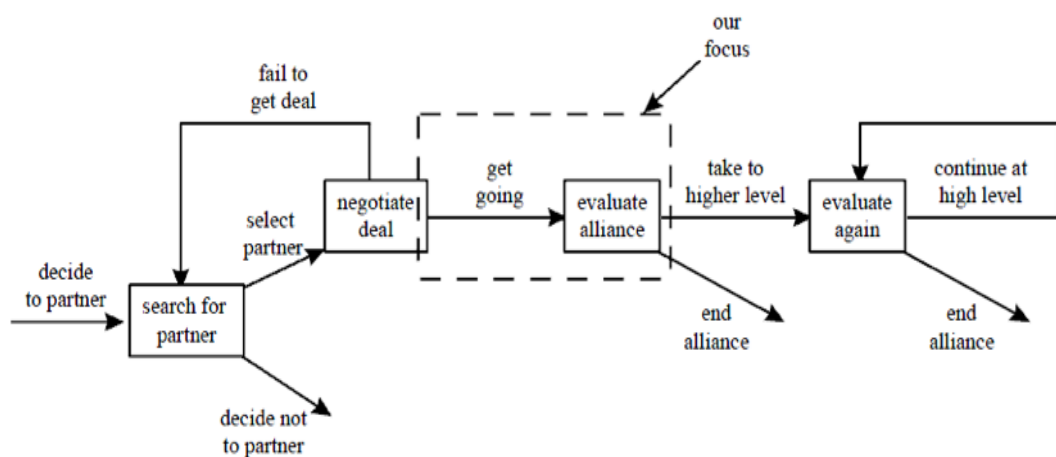


Figure 28 : The Alliance Process

[Source: Mackenzie & Callahan (1999)]

From the above explanations and graphic representations, one can see that creating recognition theory withstands and reveals the important concept of strategic alliancing. The grounded theory of creating recognition, described and discussed in this thesis, explains that strategic alliancing is part of the process of legitimizing the project.

6.4.1.4. Research on "*Referral Networking*"

In the context of SME and internationalizing businesses, Dana (2001), using a multi-case descriptive study, analyses the role of networks in creating business opportunities. Networking among small companies and large businesses involving smaller businesses in networks, has apparently become very important, especially given the increasing necessity of operating across state borders (Dana, 2001). Within the theory of cultivating recognition, networking is a property of the concept of Legitimizing, possibly a property of some importance since a network may involve many different patterns, and each of these patterns may offer very different potentials for the creation and sustaining of business opportunities.

In the 21st century networking has played an important role in capturing more businesses and opportunities. Given the rapid growth of technology, for the business to remain competitive in the midst of change, networking has become more important. The increase in 'knowledge workers' (i.e. those involved in 'knowledge management') in turn increases the importance of networking among businesses. Rapid technological changes, and the increasing speed of change, have increased the pressure on businesses and providers to restructure networks, and for these networks to transcend globally. This could lead to some concrete operative solutions

to business problems instead of researchers and consultants delivering theoretical outcomes.

6.5. Comparison of the whole model of "*Cultivating Recognition*"

So far, while any kind of literature comparison indicates no pressing need to modify the theory, some of the insight gained in this literature review may lead to some refinements of the theory. Subsequent comparisons will focus on the whole model of "*Cultivating Recognition*". It will be ascertained whether university curricula include the concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*". This process may indicate whether the theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" still withstands theoretical and practical viability.

6.5.1. Relevance to University Curricula

Given the methodology used, the focus in this thesis has been on relevance in terms of substantive interests as seen from the perspective of e-learning providers working in East Africa: their main concern and its recurrent solving. This view of relevance is in contrast to that which reflects a main concern and its recurrent solving amongst members of professional research communities as with pre-framed research.

The suggestion of the e-learning providers that "*Cultivating Recognition*" is of "substantive interest", although not necessarily "professional interest has not been taught or disseminated widely in universities. Although many core concepts, or 'hard core' concepts, have been used in universities teaching and research, none of them seems to directly address the concept of "*Cultivating Recognition*".

6.6. Summary

This chapter has engaged in a comparative literature review of cultivating recognition. In the course of this discussion four main sections were identified: comparative literature review objectives were exemplified; certain points of comparison with other Classic GT studies were identified; comparisons with other established theories of cultivating of recognition found in the literature were made. Finally, an attempt was made to demonstrate where this author's model of cultivating recognition is situated within the existing body of literature. The final chapter will provide a more detailed evaluation of the contributions of this thesis to research, focusing on the seven knowledge claims.

Chapter 7

Critical Evaluation of Classic Grounded Theory Methodology: Researcher's Perspective Highlight of Challenges and Problems Faced during Research

Although this chapter is short, it is one of the most important parts of this thesis. In three years of research this study has explored almost every important angle of Classic Grounded Theory (CGT) and facing various challenges and problems. It is obviously crucial to the validity of the process and findings of the research to critically evaluate CGTM, since, as with all research methods, there are certain challenges and problems with CGT and its application in research. In the course of the research the researcher encountered five main problematic issues which he considers himself to have resolved, and as a result to have made effective and productive use of CGT as a research methodology. This chapter will discuss the five problematic issues encountered in the course of the research, factors which could be seen to influence the 'objectivity' and outcomes of the research: the dominant use of the English language, loss of cultural nuances through inaccurate translation between languages, problems with the researcher's ability to suspend his preconceptions, heavy reliance on the quality of the researcher's own skills, the influence of the researcher's particular perspective on the process of searching in the comparative literature stage of the research and use of extremely dense and highly conceptual language.

7.1. The Dominant use of the English Language

If a researcher's mother tongue is not English certain problems will inevitably arise which have to be addressed. Researchers who are native English speakers also face problems in trying to understand all the nuances of the CGT method as is evidenced by the number of "trouble shooting" CGT method seminars taking place around the world. Although since Glaser's (1978) 'discovery' and development of CGT, it has increasingly become a research methodology of choice and can be seen as a remarkable achievement, his explanation of the theory assumes a sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of the theory equal to his own as well as a high level of competency in the English language. He seems to find difficulty explaining clearly and in detail every nuance of the CGT method since in his earlier work he describes and documents the research method from his own perspective rather than from that of the novice researcher. This could be the reason he has published several later books which go into greater detail and explain those aspects of the methodology which were not clear to his readers from his original texts. This makes it more possible for non-native speakers of English to understand the theory and methodology.

7.2. Lost in Translation

The second main issue is concerned with the loss of cultural nuances. Although it has been said that people share more similarities than differences, this researcher has found that differences in perspective often persist at the cultural level. Some of these cultural differences resist accurate translation. Throughout this research the Swahili language was used in all of the encounters with the 23 respondents. This

meant that the researcher had to be continually mindful when converting the respondents' comments from verbal Swahili (with the occasional English words) to written English in the memos. These difficulties were overcome to a large extent by the large number of repeated encounters with the same respondents.

7.3. The Researcher's Limitations in the Suspension of his Own Preconceptions

The CGT researcher may find him or herself carrying out research in an area of which s/he has limited knowledge and understanding and finds him or herself having to carry out elaborate procedures to overcome this problem. Some researchers may find this very difficult or almost impossible to do. This researcher made a conscious effort during the research process, as far as he was able and aware, to suspend his detailed knowledge of the use of IT in East African Higher learning institutions by formally acknowledging these issues and at the same time consciously keeping a professional distance from them. The researcher found that use of the CGT method assisted in this process because in none of the initial encounters with respondents were there any agenda issues to do with the researcher's professional concerns. Instead the researcher consciously encouraged the respondents to voice their own concerns rather than responding to those of the researcher.

7.4. Candidate Research Skills: Heavy Reliance on the Researcher's Own Research Skills

It is quite possible that two researchers faced with the same data when using the CGT method could come up with different explanations as to the main concern of the

respondents they have been researching. This can happen in a case where the CGT researcher has not been sufficiently well trained and mentored in the use of the methodology. The CGT research Method recognizes that the human condition is both complex and multivariate (Glaser, 1978). This means that, without being trained in CGT, a novice researcher could fail to note the emergence of the core variable and incorrectly elevate a sub core variable to core variable status. In order to avoid this in this thesis the researcher was guided by a fellow of the CGT institute who had already successfully supervised seven PhDs, all of which used the GT method.

7.5. The Comparative Literature Phase

The same concept can be assigned different labels by different CGT researchers. This is partly because CGT researchers around the world have different levels of English language competence. When the CGT researcher is engaged in a comparative literature search s/he has to be careful to make sure that s/he goes beyond simple direct comparisons based only on vocabulary. This can place extra demands on the CGT researcher in terms of making sure that comparisons go beyond simple labels of concepts to penetrate and understand the meanings behind the concepts. In the course of the search process this researcher did not solely use 'cultivating recognition' as the key word when searching the literature for previously published academic works in this area. In addition to '*Cultivating Recognition*' the following phrases were also widely used in the search process:

- "*Legitimizing*"
- "*Credentializing*"

- "Cultivating Relationship"
- "Strategic Alliancing"
- "Referral Networking"
- "Collaborating Partners"

In addition to searching the above words and terms the researcher interrogated the literature for any of the words shown below and which form part of the explanations of "Cultivating Recognition":

"The recurrent creation and recreation of gaining acknowledgement of achievement in order to both commission and implement projects" (Cultivating recognition definition from this thesis, (chapter 5)

7.6. Use of Extremely Dense and Highly Conceptual Language

Due to the use of extremely dense and highly conceptual language, the CGT researcher is likely to mis-interpret the emerging concepts. The researcher was able to cope with this by being mentored by Dr. Andy Lowe Fellow of Grounded Theory Institute. There are two main reasons why the writings by Dr Glaser about GT are both dense and complex. The first reason relates to Dr Glasers own academic training. The second reason is because any research method that seeks to go beyond the low level of narrative description will be necessarily not easy to explain.

Following the first publication of Glaser & Struass(1967) Glaser realized that the methodology that they used to discover an awareness of dying was more important

than what the book explains. This was because he understood that the research method they employed was in fact another and more important discovery. The discovery of grounded theory had to be clearly communicated to the research community at large. Dr Glaser's first main attempt to deconstruct this methodology came in his title "Theoretical Sensitivity". Although this is an important book about the CGT method it was written in a very succinct style. This was because part of Dr Glaser's academic training was in analytic statistics, a discipline known for rather complex explanations in a few words. As Glaser began to give CGT seminars all over the world he discovered that many of his readers were very confused about how to use the GT method. Since the publication of Theoretical Sensitivity in 1978 Glaser has gone on to publish 10 more titles in an attempt to ensure that the academic world will continue to use the GT method correctly after he dies. His latest title which was published this year in 2012 is called "Writing GT". Glaser will probably continue to write throughout his life to make sure that researchers who seriously want to use the GT method in an authentic way will understand what they have to do.

Those experienced in the use of the CGT method understand that it is insufficient merely to have an intellectual understanding of the principles of this method. This is because doing the CGT method is also experiential. An example of this is how the GT researcher learns to deal with the initial confusion in the early stages of the process. Most researchers will try to avoid confusion but the CGT researcher has actually to learn how to deal with confusion. If the researcher does not learn how to deal with confusion there is a danger that the researcher will force the data into logical patterns rather than let the latent patterns in the data emerge naturally.

Given these inherent difficulties in explaining how to use the CGT method it is not surprising that Dr Glaser, who is now in his 80s, still finds the time and energy to travel the world giving intensive CGT trouble shooting seminars.

7.7. Summary

This chapter has detailed the various problems which can be encountered by the researcher using CGT, particularly if s/he is not thoroughly trained in the use of the Classic Grounded Theory and methodology, and the possibility these contain for distorting the research process and outcomes. Language, cultural perspective and the researcher's preconceptions can influence both methodology and results, particularly in encounters with respondents and in the process of a search and comparative review of the literature on CGT. The researcher has described the various strategies he used to attempt as far as possible to resolve these problems. The next chapter discusses the contribution of this research to knowledge, learning outcomes and its implications for future research.

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Chapter 8

Contributions of the Research to Knowledge, Learning Outcomes and Implications for Future Research

This chapter has six main sections. The chapter begins by discussing the contribution of the study to the knowledge. The second section explains how the core variable of cultivating recognition and the CGT analysis can advance e-learning in East Africa. The potential contribution of the research to e-learning practices in East Africa is discussed in section three. The fourth section highlights the main learning outcomes of this novice classic grounded theorist. The fifth section is self-critique; detailing things could be done better in this study. Finally the sixth section highlights the implications for further researches.

8.1. Contribution to knowledge

The main contribution made by this study to existing knowledge in the area of e-learning is the way in which the Classic Grounded Theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" was used in exploring and establishing the main concern of e-learning Providers working in East Africa. The researcher considers this to be a substantial contribution to knowledge in the substantive area of online and e-learning because the study revealed both how and why "*Cultivating Recognition*" is the main concern of those e-learning providers engaged in e-learning implementation.

This Classic Grounded Theory is a credible overarching theory pertaining to the "*Cultivating of Recognition*" among e-learning providers. Whilst there is a wealth of

research focussing on e-learning recipients and campus based learners, there is considerably less research that has been and is being done which focuses specifically on the behaviour of e-learning providers. The researcher considers research done in this study to have gone some way towards bridging this gap.

In chapter five of this thesis the process from the analysis of the raw data to the final emergence of the core variable, following the tenets of Classic Grounded Theory by Glaser & Strauss(1967) and Glaser (1978; 1992; 1996; 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2009; 2011), was comprehensively explained and documented. In that chapter the researcher demonstrated that all of Glaser's (1998:235-254) four criteria for evaluating an Classic Grounded Theory -*Fit, Workability, Relevance* and *Modifiability*, - had been applied and followed in the research process.

Glaser (1998) posed the question regarding the relationship between "fit" and the conceptualising process and the necessity for ongoing comparison within the data:

"Fit is another word for validity. Does the concept adequately express the pattern in the data which it purports to conceptualise? Fit is continually sharpened by constant comparisons" Glaser (1998:18).

In these terms the study could be seen to have achieved "fit" gradually and through continual reflection and comparison, rather than by '*forcing*' a fit with the data. This study should be evaluated in terms of whether the concepts adequately express the data. In the researcher's view this Classic Grounded Theory study has been conducted with patience and care within the substantive area of e-learning providers working in East Africa.

Workability means do the concepts, and the way they are related to the hypotheses, sufficiently account for how the main concern of participants in a substantive area is continually resolved?" Glaser (1998:18)

Throughout the thesis, the comprehensive way in which it organized and explained the literature has demonstrated the workability of this grounded theory.

"Relevance makes the research important because it deals with the main concerns of the participants involved. To study something that interests no-one really, or just a few academics or funders, is probably to focus on non-relevance or even trivia for the participants. Relevance, like good concepts, evokes instant grab." Glaser (1998:18).

In the researcher's view this study has dealt with the main concern of the participants involved. Both "Legitimizing" and "Credentializing" continually arose as effective mechanisms for addressing and resolving the main concern of "Cultivating Recognition". Prior to this research it was not well known that the absence of both "Legitimizing" and "Credentializing" was a problem for e-learning providers in "Cultivating Recognition". This research has demonstrated that the absence of both legitimization and credentialization amongst e-learning providers can give rise to major stumbling blocks in the way of successful implementation of their e-learning projects. This is the main reason why the Classic Grounded Theory of "Cultivating Recognition" has major relevance to and value for e-learning providers in East Africa.

"Modifiability is very significant. The theory is not being verified as in verification studies, and thus never right or wrong.it just gets modified by

new data to compare it to.... New data never provides a disproof, just an analytic challenge." Glaser (1998:19).

Because all of the tenets of Classic Grounded Theory were used in this thesis, the researcher believes that the use of Classic Grounded Theory of "*Cultivating Recognition*" has delivered a contribution to knowledge in the area of e-learning. The Classic Grounded Theory of the cultivation of recognition is sufficiently robust to incorporate new data, data that other researchers might discover in the future, to fine tune, refine and generate more modifications of the Classic Grounded Theory of "*Cultivating recognition*".

8.2. How the Core Variable [Cultivating Recognition] and CGT analysis can Advance E-learning in East Africa

This section will discuss two issues (1) How core variable [cultivating recognition] can advanced E-learning in East Africa and (2) How CGT analysis can advance E-learning in East Africa. The two issues are discussed below.

8.2.1. How the Core Variable [Cultivating Recognition] can advanced E-learning in East Africa

As noted earlier, various e-learning implementation efforts failed in East Africa. The emergence of Cultivating recognition will help avoid such failures. It will help to advance the implementation of e-learning in East Africa through creating collaborating partners, strategic alliances, etc.

8.2.2. How CGT Analysis can advanced E-learning in East Africa

Firstly, CGT is a low tech and low cost research method (Glaser, 1978). This means in places such as East Africa, where economic resources for research are very limited, it has enormous potential to be used more widely. E-learning failures in East Africa, have caused lack of funding in this region (Ndume, et al 2008). As a result there is little done towards advancing e-learning research due to lack of funding. Use of CGT will help more researchers to embark on research. Although the GT research method involves a low level of costs prior investment in GT research seminars and workshops are a vital prerequisite before any future major GT research should take place in this region. This is because it is very difficult to understand the GT research by only referring to the published works of its co-founder Dr Glaser. Dr Glaser's publications are very densely written and they need to be interpreted by other experienced and skilled GT practitioners.

Secondly, the e-learning researchers in East Africa have concentrated more on the technical part of e-learning technologies (Lwoga et al 2007), forgetting the social concerns of the people involved. The CGT research method is a powerful tool towards discovering the social concerns [main concerns] (Glaser, 1978). As a result it is thought to be a potential tool towards filling the gap.

Thirdly, CGTM has made e-learning qualitative inquiry legitimate. CGTM provides the means to conduct a systematic and detailed analysis of the data, and thus gives researchers ample evidence to back up their claims. Considered particularly useful in this respect are the techniques of constant comparison and theoretical sampling, encouraging a constant interplay between data collection and analysis. Overall, the detailed guidance may provide a certain level of comfort that the data are being analysed in a systematic and rigorous manner - especially for novice researchers (Myers, 2009; Fendt & Sachs, 2008)

8.3. Potential Contribution of the Research to E-learning Practices in East Africa

There are three main reasons why this thesis has the potential to contribute towards e-learning implementation practices in East Africa. Firstly, the research is sought as a way forward for successful implementation of e-learning. E-learning providers can make use of cultivating recognition theory to advance e-learning practices in East Africa. Through this research, the e-learning providers are shown as able to create partners, collaborations, referral networks and credentialize their operations.

Secondly, the research has activated the use of CGT in research in East Africa. As noted in the previous section, CGT is low a cost effective research method. This means that it will help East Africa to conduct make more research in various disciplines.

The third main reason why this research is of importance to the introduction of e-learning to East Africa is to do with those who are part of the delivery system; the IT experts and the funders of the e-learning process. This thesis demonstrates that it is not sufficient for the IT professional just to have technical competence in e-learning implementation. It is of equal importance that that these professionals invest time and energy to understand the decision making processes involved by those with the power to authorize funding. They can do this by cultivating recognition.

Even if the IT professional manages to cultivate recognition sufficiently to ensure the funding of e-learning projects it should be understood that if further CGT research is to be carried out by others more investment in CGT seminars is required.

In chapter 7 comments have been made of the complexities of the CGT method and the rather densely written books on the CGT method by Dr Glaser. Novices to using the CGT method are often confused. Doing the CGT method cannot ever be simply restricted to reading the research methodology books by Glaser. There are many nuances and experiences which can only be learnt by experience. This is why the introduction of a series of CGT trouble of seminars is an essential prerequisite to extend the use and understanding of the CGT method in East Africa.

8.4. The Main Learning Outcomes for this Novice Classic Grounded Theorist

The Classic Grounded Theory presented and used in this study has been limited by the researcher's own lack of expertise as a novice classic grounded theorist. While this researcher has made every effort to present and apply a coherent Classic Grounded Theory approach in his research, his inexperience has reduced the clarity and scope that a more experienced professional Classic Grounded Theory researcher might have been able to achieve with the same data. There were four key issues to which the researcher, with hindsight, should have paid greater attention.

Firstly, prior to doing any formal classic grounded research, the researcher should have invested more time and energy in developing his own theoretical sensitivity. As a novice Classic Grounded Theory researcher he should not have begun to generate any data until he had reached a more comprehensive awareness and understanding of many more of the different types of theoretical coding families than he was able to do.

Secondly, while acknowledging that the novice classic grounded theorist needs to develop skills in theoretical memo writing in a short time, this novice classic grounded theory researcher found this very difficult to do because of his lack of exposure to the full range of theoretical coding possibilities prior to writing the memos. Memo writing is very tricky because the researcher has, within a short space of time, to be able to move from the substantive narrative contained in the raw data towards theoretical understanding of the data, without forcing the data. This transition from the context of the research to the discovery of deep-seated latent patterns of human behaviour is a very subtle one. If the researcher tries to force the data, rather than allow the data to reveal the main concern of the respondents, all that will be yielded is an elaborate context based description rather than an authentic transcendent classic grounded theory.

Thirdly, this novice classic grounded theorist would have benefited immeasurably from participating in one of the “trouble shooting Classic GT seminars” run by the Grounded Theory Institute. Not having the financial budget to travel to the USA or Europe to do so could be said to have slowed down the whole Classic Grounded Theory process. The best example of this was that very early in the research all of the respondents in this study were complaining repeatedly about not being respected by either their professional clients or by government sponsors. If this novice researcher had been exposed to interaction with several other classic GT researchers at an international CGT research seminar it would not have taken him as long as it did to realize that the issue of “not being respected” was in fact a symptom of the respondents’ failure to be able to cultivate recognition. Finally, the researcher has begun to understand that in research everything can be seen as

data, not only quantifiable statistics, and that even the most apparently trivial things have the potential to yield significant patterns and outcomes.

8.5. Self-critique: Things that Could be done better

With the benefit of hindsight there are five key issues that would have impacted positively on this research. Firstly, I would have tried harder to obtain more financial resources so that I could have attended at least two of the international trouble shooting seminars for GT researchers. These GT seminars, underwritten by the Grounded Theory Institute, are held in the US, Europe and Asia at least three times each year. They provide an invaluable opportunity to present one's research to date to a critical audience within a supportive environment. The absence of participation definitely slowed down my understanding of the GT process.

Secondly, I would have invested more time in developing my own theoretical sensitivity prior to having any respondent encounters. By having a well formed base of understanding of the many types of latent patterns, before doing the research, would have quickened my ability to cut through the respondents' narratives to discover concepts with greater ease.

Thirdly, if I had changed the research design so that that there were fewer respondents with whom I spent shorter and more frequent interactions I believe that my research outcomes would have evolved more efficiently. Now as a more experienced GT researcher I have become to understand what theoretical sampling really means. It is not about either coverage or representation. The CGT method is all about the discovery of theory by finding out the main concern of the population being researched.

Fourthly, the next time I do research involving the CGT method I will write many more theoretical memos. This is because without a large bank of detailed theoretical memos it is difficult to be able to both sort the memos and delimit what emerges.

Finally, if possible I believe that if had been able to incorporate more participant observation in the research design even more insight would have emerged. The CGT researcher has to be flexible enough in the research design to incorporate as many research techniques as possible so that more opportunities for data generation are feasible.

8.6. Implications for Future Research

The study's substantive area of research was that of e-learning providers and from the beginning the focus was on these providers rather than on the e-learning receivers (e-learners) and other University management. As was described in Chapter 3 the data came from various sources including:

- Face to face discussions with the online and e-learning providers
- Discussions using email and
- Discussions and observations from e-learning providers' work

However, in spite of its main focus, the theory does have relevance for other e-learning providers (e.g. University staff, management). The theory could be developed in several ways.

8.6.1. Aspects of the Classic Grounded Theory of "Cultivating Recognition" which have the Potential for Future Research Development

More research is needed in both of the two sub core variables of cultivating recognition: "*Legitimizing*" and "*Credentializing*". The complex processes involved in "*Legitimizing*", as it has been described in this study, need further investigation so that people who need to be more skilled in this process can be formally trained. The processes of "*Collaborating partners*", both reciprocally and asymmetrically, in particular need to be better understood. This could be achieved by researchers doing a more extensive cutting edge analysis of new data to find out how existing negative and ineffective asymmetrical collaborative relationships could be transformed into more positive reciprocal relationships. Secondly, within the process of "*Credentializing*" more data and more analyses are needed in order to better understand the interactions between the four elements of "*Results Orienting*", namely "*Visualizing*", "*Professionalizing*", "*Focalizing*" and "*Role Delineating*". Amongst these four main aspects of "*Credentializing*" this researcher believes that more research into the intricacies of "*Visualizing*" holds the most promising potential for further development. This kind of research has the potential to make the process of visualizing accessible and of value to a wider range of constituencies other than those at present involved in the delivery of e-learning implementation in East Africa. This would also be of value to those tasked with making complex decisions whose outcomes are uncertain: they could benefit from honing and strengthening their visualizing skills.

The ultimate goal and ideal of any grounded theorist is to be able to discover a formal classic Grounded Theory which is completely transcendent of the time, location and context from which the data originates.

“A formal Grounded Theory is a theory of a SGT [Substantive Grounded Theory] core category’s general implications generated from, as wide as possible, other data and studies in the same substantive area and in other substantive areas.” Glaser (2006:34).

A formal theory of “*Cultivating Recognition*” could be developed using more and various kinds of data which would address not only how online and e-learning providers can successfully implement their e-learning projects, but also how career academics could develop their professional careers.

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Appendices

A.1. Critique on Strauss & Corbin (1990) ["Evolved" or "Straussian"] GT Approach

The Evolved GT Approach is the fruit of Strauss & Corbin's (1990, 1998) research and is an approach which extensively uses the paradigm model (Kelle, 2005) where the researcher starts with a research question, which is a statement about the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and follows a procedure of increased prescription and formal elaboration of operational procedures (Locke, 2001), comprising an open, axial and selective, coding respectively (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) and coding-for-process (Urquhart et al, 2010). There have been many debates on evolved theory, especially from the co-originator of Grounded theory, Dr Barney Glaser. Glaser (1992) argues that the use of a paradigm model produces forced 'conceptual description' rather than emergent categories and grounded theory, as in classic GTM. As regards contextual conditions, Glaser & Holton (2004) argue that context must emerge as a relevant category or as a theoretical code like all other categories in a classic GT research methodology. The intensive and rigid use of a paradigm model promotes deductive as compared to the inductive reasoning of Classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1992). While evolved theory starts out with a pre-defined research question or problem, Glaser (1978, 1992) and Van Niekerk & Roode (2009) assert that in classic GTM the 'researcher does not start with a research question. Similarly, coding procedures in evolved theory are different from those in Classic Grounded Theory. Glaser (1992) points out that going through such a procedure (i.e. increased prescription and formal elaboration of operational procedures) will result in over-conceptualization of data incidents. In

summary, the evolved GT approach developed by Corbin and Strauss (1990, 1998) in their book titled "*Basics of Qualitative Research*", according to Glaser is an erroneous approach when compared to the original GT for several reasons as detailed in the next paragraphs.

The evolved GT approach developed by Corbin & Strauss (1990, 1998) is just another subsection of the QDA research approach which borrows the powerful jargon of the Classic GT method without applying the same academic rigour. The main problem with the evolved approach is that it has confused many researchers because the developers of this approach label this version of QDA as being GT. The evolved method approach is appropriate if used as a low level descriptive analysis technique rather than an inductive approach for discovering the respondent's main concern, as with the Classic GT method.

When the Corbin and Strauss (1990) book came out, Dr Barney Glaser (1992) asked Strauss to either withdraw the book or change its title because it was a gross misrepresentation of the Classic GT research method (Glaser 1992). Strauss was old and ill at the time and he declined to do so. The evolved GT method is a legitimate research method but it should be called something other than GT because what Strauss and Corbin (1990) have described is a QDA approach. Whereas the Classic GT method is a general inductive research method designed to reveal deep seated latent patterns of human behavior and how their main concerns are being continually being resolved, the evolved GT approach is a sub set of the overall category of the QDA approach. The evolved GT approach method is not Classic GT as explained below:

Introduction of the "Axial Code"

- 1 The evolved GT Approach introduces a new step [which is nothing to do with the Classic GT method] which fits in between substantive and theoretical coding which they called "axial coding". Its purpose is to form a bridge between the descriptive or substantive phase of the process. Although it may seem logically appealing it lets the researcher off the hook intellectually because the researcher no longer needs to allow the latent patterns emerge. The use of "axial coding" by the researcher is to allow him/her to force the data instead of allowing the latent patterns in the data to emerge. This approach is very similar to the Qualitative Data Analysis approach because the researcher is encouraged to use deductive reasoning, whereas the Classic GT approach is a mainly inductive approach through theoretical sampling and the use of the constant comparison method until data saturation is reached.

Forces the researcher to use deduction rather than induction

- 2 One of the very negative consequences of using the Evolved method is that it reduces the amount of uncertainty the researcher normally experiences when using the Classic GT method. Uncertainty is a necessary part of the Classic GT process. Although when the researcher does not force the data in the early stages of analysis and everything appears to be rather confusing, this confusion can be seen as the threshold of understanding of the latent patterns of human behaviour. The

use of the Evolved method has the effect of killing any possibility of serendipity or intuition occurring in the course of the research.

No theoretical memos used to discover the respondent's main concern

- 3 The Evolved GT approach does not make great use of the theoretical memo because the axial coding replaces this function. Without any theoretical coding no main concern of the respondent will arise and how the respondent repeatedly seeks to resolve this is never discovered.

The data is forced rather than allowed to emerge

- 4 The product of the Evolved approach is a descriptive narrative which has been forced from the data. The main problem with this is that research using the Evolved approach will always be context specific. This means that the approach produces findings based on contextual data rather than the discovery of deep seated latent patterns of human behaviour which are transcendent of time and place. This has very limited utility because it is an evidentiary based narrative description rather than a transcendent explanation. The Evolved approach is unable to either reveal the main concern or the core variable
- 5 The Evolved method never reveals either the main concern of the respondent or the way in which this main concern is continually being resolved. In other words the evolved approach does not have a core

variable which has been induced from the data; instead it has an evidence based deductive findings which are context specific only.

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A.2. Critique of Locke's (2001) Book on the "Application of Grounded theory in Management Research"

Locke (2001), in her book on the application of Grounded Theory in Management Research declares her intention "*to reveal more fully the grounded theory approach in organization and management studies*" (Locke 2001:33-91) This she attempts to do by elaborating on the Strauss & Corbin (1990) evolved version of GTM, explaining how different adaptations have been made to the procedures. She does not alert readers to the potential pitfalls of the research procedures of GTM. While Locke (2001) explains many of the procedures of the methodology, she omits both the pivotal role of the core variable and the procedure of sorting. In other words she does not explain or emphasise the relationship between the rationale for the choice of methodology and the actual use of a set of research procedures that can adequately comply with this rationale.

Other researchers, such as Strauss & Corbin (1990), besides Locke (2001), fail to adequately address or fully explain Glaser's emphasis on the avoidance of any pre-framing or preconceiving of the research from the angle of any one particular theoretical perspective. More recently Matavire and Brown (2011) appear to follow Locke (2001) in their failure to give any serious recognition to Glaser's clear position on the dangers of preconception and pre-framing. While Glaser (2005) argues that the Strauss and Corbin (1990) version of GT constitutes an entirely different methodology to the classic GT, Locke (2001:71) fails to appreciate that GT is both epistemologically and ontologically free.

It appears that one of Locke's missions is to pre-frame or pre-fix any prospective grounded theory research according to one particular theoretical and methodological perspective, namely the perspective of symbolic interactionism. Such a preconception from one particular theoretical perspective would contradict the rationale for employing CGTM, as originally conceived by Glaser in the 1960s, and maintained by Classic Grounded Theory researchers since. As Glaser carefully explains, symbolic interactionism is not the foundational theoretical perspective of GTM which cannot be claimed or labeled by any one specific theoretical perspective:

"Grounded theory is a general inductive methodology possessed by no discipline or theoretical perspective or data type" (Glaser, 2005:141-160).

GTM labelling confusion is pervasive across many disciplines. Glaser (1998) and Locke (2001) refer to two very different methodologies, both of which have been labeled "grounded theory". Mills et al. (2006) refer to CGTM and evolved GTM to make the distinction between "Glaserian" GTM and "Straussian" GTM, as a way of distinguishing between the two (Van Niekerk and Roode, 2009).

Glaser (1998:32) gives an account of how his acquaintance with the Chicago school of symbolic interaction through Anselm Strauss gave him "*a chance to analyze qualitative data by applying my quantitative ideas to qualitative data*". This gave him the chance to learn once again that a human being is a meaning-making interpretive animal (Glaser, 1998).

The process of fully comprehending Glaser's insight and its implications for research constitutes an important step for a researcher exposed and accustomed to exclusively quantitative research procedures, although this does not necessarily

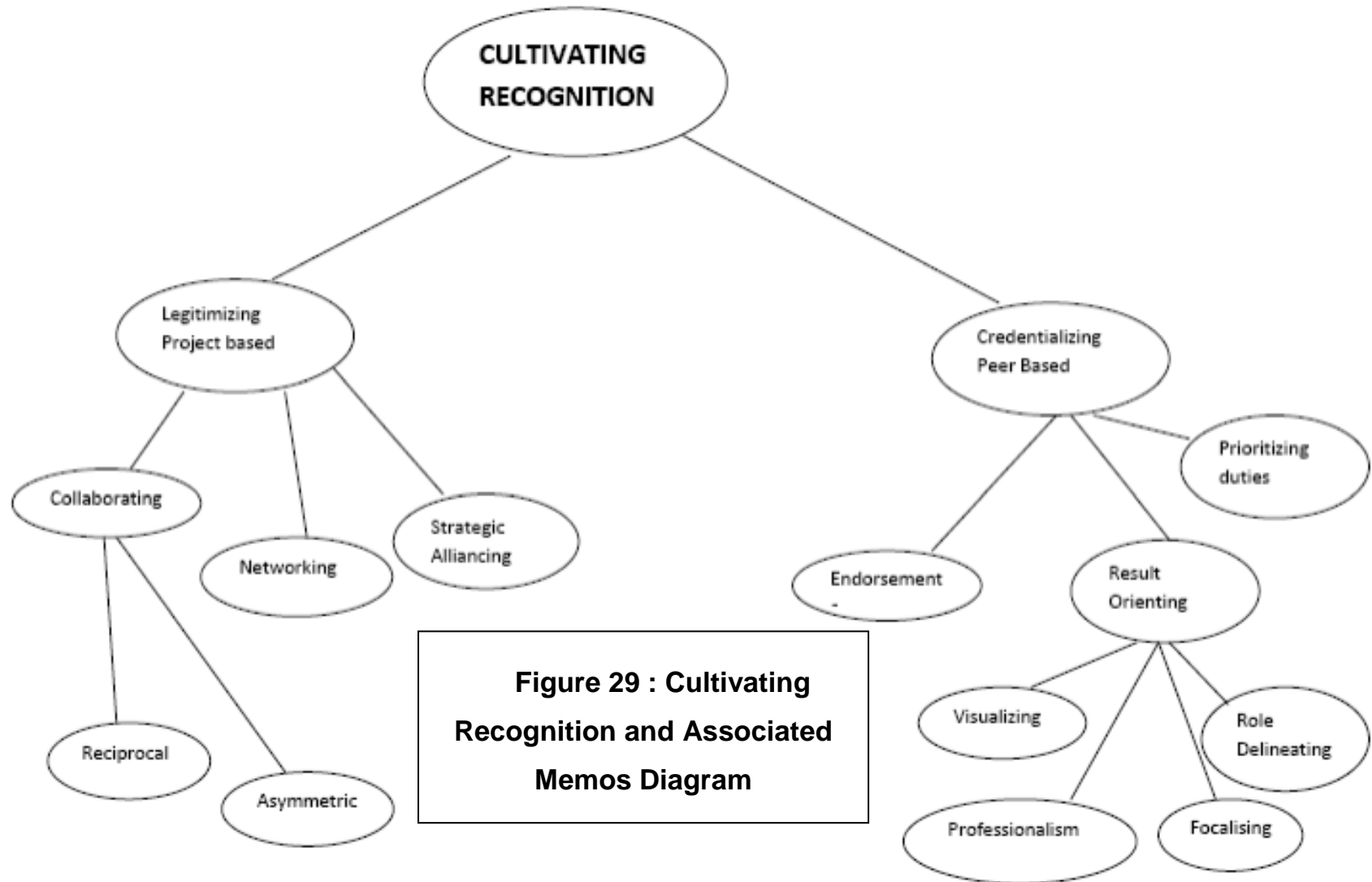
imply exclusive adherence to the methodological and theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. Glaser (1998; 2001) posited the idea that the role played by symbolic interaction in grounded theory methodology is one concerned with consistency. While this leaves the way open for scholars to further contribute to grounded theory methodology, it is important to be clear that “grounded theory” is a label that has become attached to at least two, possibly many more, very different and distinct methodological approaches (Matavire and Brown, 2011).

For the purposes of clarity and consistency it is necessary for a researcher using Grounded theory to:

- *explain the original rationale for choosing and using grounded theory and*
- *show how this research rationale is consistent with the research procedures of the original approach;*
- *clearly explain the modifications of this original rationale vis-à-vis the modified research procedures and*
- *show in what particular ways these modifications constitute another and different research methodology.*

(Glaser 1978, 1998)

A.3. Cultivating Recognition and Associated Memo Diagram



A.4. Scheduling Meetings with Respondents

The meetings were scheduled with the respondents at least two weeks before meeting them to insure the respondent was free. Before the meetings commenced, an introduction to the process explained that the research aim and focus was to reveal, understand and explain the main issues which confronted these professionals in the execution of their role as IT experts in the implementation of on-line learning projects. The respondents were encouraged to let the researcher know if they felt uncomfortable about any line of enquiry. The absence of any tape recording or note taking during these encounters helped to make the respondents feel more relaxed. This was able to transform the nature of these encounters from an interview to something akin to a more normal conversation during which both interviewer and respondent were able to ask questions of each other. All encounters were kept deliberately brief so that the researcher was able to make detailed notes immediately after the conclusion of each meeting. In this was a series of encounters with respondents happened so that incremental progress was made.

The purpose of the meetings was to discover the respondent's main concerns about online learning including challenges, interesting, how they solve and any achievements from their daily working life. Several meetings with each respondent was vital because it allowed the respondent to reflect between each of the encounters and enabled the researcher to encourage the respondent to think more deeply about what were their real concerns

By following this incremental process of having several interviews with each respondent it ensured that the respondents' agendas emerged rather than the agenda of the researcher. The choice of the locations was an important consideration. The idea was to try and ensure that the respondents felt the most relaxed. To achieve this a variety of locations, other than that of their own offices,

was chosen. These included restaurants, university canteens, meeting rooms, public bars, walking in the street and whilst driving in the car.

A.5. Detailed List of Respondents With the Locations, Dates and Durations of Meeting

RESPONDENT	COUNTRY	DATES	LOCATION	DURATION (AVERAGE)
X ₁	Tanzania	Thursday 24 th September 2009, Thursday 1 st October 2009, 19 th February 2010, 7 th April 2010, 25 th July 2010	office/University canteen/walking in street/meeting rooms	30-45 minutes
X ₂	Tanzania	25 th September 2009, 19 th February 2010, 6 th April 2010, 25 th July 2010	office/Canteen/public bar	30-35 minutes
X ₃	Kenya	14 th October 2009, 11 th March 2010, 16 th May 2010, 7 th August 2010	Meeting room/Whilst driving in car	30-40 minutes
X ₄	Kenya	15 th October 2009, 11 th March 2010, 16 th May 2010, 6 th August 2010	University canteen/restaurants	30 minutes
X ₅	Kenya	15 th October 2009, 16 th May 2010	office/meeting room/restaurant	30-40 minutes
X ₆	Kenya	16 th October 2009,	walking in	25-30

		15 th March 2010, 12 th May 2010	street/office	minutes
X ₇	Uganda	14 th November 2009, 20 th March 2010, 26 th May 2010, 14 th August 2010	Restaurant/office	30-45 minutes
X ₈	Uganda	14 th November 2009, 20 th March 2010, 24 th May 2010	public bar/meeting room/office	40-50 minutes
X ₉	Uganda	15 th November 2009, 21 st March 2010, 25 th May 2010	walking in street/office/whils t driving in car	37-40 minutes
X ₁₀	Tanzania	25 th September 2009, 19 th February 2010, 9 th April 2010	office/university canteen	30-35 minutes
X ₁₁	Kenya	16 th October 2009, 16 th May 2010	office/meeting room	30-45 minutes
X ₁₂	Kenya	16 th October 2009, 14 th March 2010, 17 th May 2010, 8 th August 2010	restaurant/public bar/office	30-45 minutes
X ₁₃	Uganda	16 th November 2009, 22 nd march 2010, 17 th August 2010	meeting room/walking in street	30-45 minutes
X ₁₄	Kenya	17 th October 2009, 16 th March 2010,	whilst driving in car/restaurant	30-45 minutes

		11 th May 2010		
X ₁₅	Tanzania	17 th September 2009, 23 rd February 2010, 7 th April 2010, 26 th July 2010, February 2011	restaurant/office	20-40 minutes
X ₁₆	Tanzania	10 th December 2009, 17 th February 2010, 10 th April 2010, 25 th July 2010, 17 th February 2011	canteen/ office/public bar	30-45 minutes
X ₁₇	Tanzania	16 th December 2009, 24 th February 2010, 9 th April 2010, January 21, 2011	restaurant/meeting room	30-45 minutes
X ₁₈	Tanzania	16 th December 2009, 10 th April 2010, 26 th July 2010	office/university canteen	30-45 minutes
X ₁₉	Tanzania	17 th December 2009, 7 th July 2010, 25 th July 2010, February 15, 2011	walking in street/office	30-45 minutes
X ₂₀	Tanzania	17 th December 2009, 6 th April 2010, February, 16 2011	office/canteen	30-45 minutes
X ₂₁	Tanzania	18 th December 2009, 19 th February 2010, 23 rd July 2010	public bar/office	30-45 minutes

X ₂₂	Kenya	17 th October 2009, 16 th May 2010, 8 th August 2010, January 7th, 2011	university canteen	30-45 minutes
X ₂₃	Uganda	15 th November 2009, 22 nd March 2010, 18 th August 2010	office/restaurant	20-35 minutes
X ₂₄	Uganda	15 th November 2009, 22 nd March 2010, 19 th August 2010	whilst driving in car/office	30-45 minutes

A.6. Sample of Data Collected

The meetings generated a huge amount of data through taking notes from the 101 respondent encounters within 24 hours after having conversations. Here is just summarized sample of some of the raw data collected. As part of the process of the grounded theory [GT] method the researcher has immediately be aware of the type of data which the respondents are giving. From a GT perspective there are five types of possible data to be derived in any encounter with respondents:

- Base line data – the respondent is being as truthful as possible
- Interpreted data – the respondent is filtering his message to either Deliberately complicate or simplify his responses
- Properlined data – the respondent deliberately edits the data so that it is not in conflict with the “official” line of argument from his employing authority
- Vague data – the respondent deliberately gives an indistinct version of reality to try and confuse the researcher and throw him off the scent
- Zero data – the respondent refuses to say anything at all to avoid saying anything which he might later regret.

From a GT perspective it does not matter which type or types of data the respondent delivers because each type of data has the potential to communicate things if value. Below are some of the questions which were used to stimulate conversations with the respondents. Although there was no formal schedule of questions with which to ask each respondent, it was necessary to create an environment where the respondent could freely talk about his main concerns. The questions asked below were designed to fulfil this objective.

Interviewee: X₂

Q1. What is the most interesting thing about your job on e-learning/online education? Why?

The most interesting is “new challenges” “unpredictable events/services/problems”. Most of the time there are so many challenges in online education or e-learning. Sometimes when you arrive in the morning, you find somebody asking for something which completely new and not documented anywhere. As an expert I need to solve it- this has been so challenging. You don’t predict what tomorrow looks like.

Why? – because e-learning is new technology in Tanzania, and most of this professors and lecturers they don’t know exactly what is all about.

Q2. What is the most frustrating thing about your job? How did you solve when it happen? Give an example

Lack of recognition from the top management or lack of administrator understanding about e-learning and what is all about. Due to lack of e-learning knowledge among administrator and top management it is very hard for them to approve budget and any type of purchase. For example today, I went to see finance manager to approve budget for payment of content developers, but the finance manager asked me what is e-learning, how do we benefit , it is seems not cost effective and sort of questions. It took almost days for him to approve the budget.

Q3. Assume we are in perfect world, what single thing if changed will have impact in your job?

Immediately I will change the hiring procedures for those involved in e-learning. All top managers heading e-learning sections should have knowledge of computers or information technology and e-learning in general . This will help to implement e-learning. Currently hiring procedures are so poor, so long somebody is a professor in any field even if is in agriculture they will just recruit and be the director of one of the section. As soon as I change the hiring procedures then will help to implement e-learning.

Q4. Imagine that your boss has asked you to change your job descriptions, what would you like to change?

I will add the e-learning awareness and training part. That means to be involved in creating awareness about e-learning among professors and other people. This will actually help to make them aware of what is happening and the importance of e-learning.

Q5. For having been in this job for so many years, what is the most achievement you did and you are proud of about e-learning?

I am so proud of making e-learning be in the university map! It is now being implemented, and eventually now we have 3 courses online. And now the university and the country at whole understand what is happening and value e-learning.

Type of Data: Mixed type of data

Interviewee: X7

Q1. What is the most interesting thing about your job? Why?

Bringing knowledge to African students and professionals through ICTs. Helping Africa to enter the era of knowledge is the most interesting thing with distance education.

It is interesting to me because of my passion for education. Bringing new programs, new technology and the interaction between African across linguistic barriers are some of the reasons I have stayed so long in this profession. Contributing to poverty reduction in providing skills to young Africans so that they can get decent jobs and contribute to the social economic development of their countries.

Q2. What is the most frustrating thing about your job? How did you solve when it happen? Give an example

Technological nightmare: When a live session is interrupted by either a power outage, or lack of insufficient bandwidth, or site cannot get sound or see the powerpoint.

The way to solve it is either cancel the class and reschedule it, or have the site watch the playbacks or help the site back and running by troubleshooting the problem

Q3. Assume we are in perfect world, what single thing if changed will have impact in your job?

Every learner would have his or her own computer and sufficient bandwidth to provide good Internet connection

Q4. Imagine that your asked to change your job descriptions, what would you like to change?

Peace maker: I am interested in post conflict countries. How can e-learning provide peace and development in post conflict zones

Q5. For having been in this job professional for so many years, what is the most achievement you did and you are proud of about e-learning?

I can name few achievements:

1. The technological innovation brought by the African virtual university to its Partner institutions such as satellite broadcast, internet delivery network such as WebCT, Interwise, Elluminate

Helping African students getting degrees from renowned Universities and seeing the graduates entering the workforce in Africa is one of the greatest achievements

2. African integration: bringing 24 Universities from 17 countries in Senegal in 2008 for the ACEP (the African virtual university Capacity Enhancement Program) Workshop

3. The African Virtual University Teacher Education Project with 10 countries has created unprecedented successes with the creation on 73 modules developed by African experts, a creation of community of practice in distance education.

Type of Data: Baseline (Truth)

Interviewee: X4

Q1. What is the most interesting thing about your job on e-learning/online education? Why?

Availability of support anytime and anywhere. Also it saves money and time. Student study where they are, also I help them while anywhere- such as at home, at the office, in the bus, etc. I get to help my students with all they need anywhere and anytime, communicating with them too. Why?- because technology allows things to be done anywhere at anytime. In addition it saves money, time and risk of travelling

Q2. What is the most frustrating thing about your job? How did you solve when it happen? Give an example

Recognition, negative perceptions on e-learning and poor attitude on e-learning or use of technology in teaching and learning. There no recognition of online candidate compare with face to face candidate. Even online professional to be recognized with the society takes time. For example it took so many years for people to recognize my presence.

Q3. Assume we are in perfect world, what single thing if changed will have impact in your job?

Awareness and understanding on e-learning.

Q4. Imagine that your boss has asked you to change your job descriptions, what would you like to change? *I will add sensitization and awareness duties*

Q5. For having been in this job for so many years, what is the most achievement you did and you are proud of about e-learning?

Managed to create centres in upcountry for student to get help and people to understanding what is e-learning.

Type of Data: Mixed Type of Data

From the sample of raw data generated from the respondent encounters the researcher then had to use the GT research method to transform from low level descriptive conversations to higher level conceptual explanations. On occasions the respondents would immediately offer conceptual explanations but more usually they would just tell the researcher about descriptive events in their work. GT is designed to move the research beyond the narrative of the lives of respondents so that their deep seated main concerns can be revealed. The jargon of how this is accomplished has been described below. Essentially it involves moving from raw data to substantive coding and finally to theoretical coding until eventually the core variable or main concern of the respondents is revealed. The transition from substantive to theoretical coding is mainly achieved through the use of the theoretical memo. The researcher starts with the respondent's narrative and then through a series of follow up encounters with the respondents begins to reveal some of the concepts behind the narrative of people's lives. Once concepts start to emerge all subsequent encounters with respondents are probed to discover the veracity ideas for further clarification. This process is called theoretical sampling. Chapter 2 given a brief overview of how the GT process works. Unlike most research methods it is not a linear process. In other words sometimes back tracking is needed and it is also sometimes necessary to pursue new ideas which have

occurred by constantly comparing concepts which have arisen across a range of different memos.

A.7. Overall Outcome of Data Analysis

After all meetings, data was critically analysed and synthesized using Classic Grounded theory. From the 101 respondent encounters 20 main concepts were revealed. Below are the 20 theoretical memos which explain these concepts. Memos are the building blocks of GT. They should be regarded as the researcher's work in progress. A memo could be one line or several pages. Glaser (1978:83) calls them "Ideational notes"

When memo writing the researcher can use a number of approaches to analyze and synthesize the data. These include the following:

Memo title and definition

Substantive coding [descriptive]

Theoretical coding [conceptual]

Cutting point analysis helps to reveal the dynamics of the revealed concepts

Data fracture by discovering the memo properties

Data synthesis by revealing the main categories of each concept

The researchers own conjecture

Links to other memos

Memo 1-Transitioning

Definitions (from data)

The process of how university E-learning providers have been managing changes. During the implementation of IT projects, university professionals underwent transitions. During such changes, they have mixed face to face learning as well as online learning to ensure successful transition. They did not change a whole range of courses to online, but incrementally from one course to another, as soon as they see one course is successfully changed to online, then they start another course-this depends on availability of resources such as funding, collaboration and the rest.

The client perception of online courses has much lower status than that of traditional methods of delivery

Definition (Conjecture):

Transitioning helps to ensure that the online learning programme runs smoothly. IT university professionals have recognized the lack of physical infrastructure to expedite this process. To solve such problems they believe it is necessary to make the transition from face to face to online learning. They make these transitions in a systematic manner. The speed of transition is not only financial resource dependent. Collaborating with other universities is also vital. Such collaborations can range from equal partner collaboration [reciprocal collaboration] to collaboration with government departments [asymmetrical collaboration]. The popularity of courses is one of the key properties in a successful conversion from traditional learning to online learning. To ensure its sustainability a transition happens gradually. This is a possible explanation as to why no university is wholly online in East Africa.

Why Perpetual?

Transitioning is happening all the time due to the fact that university professionals tend to keep looking for new ways to change as soon as the change has started. As soon as the change of one course has started, then they will keep looking how change more courses to online learning. This is one of the keys for sustainability.

When does Transitioning become cyclical?

The length and timing of each transition cycle is dependent on the availability of financial resources from sponsors. The transition cycle occurs when an existing course loses funding and partner opportunities. It forces the cycle to start again, making the transition cycle to continue. This has happened in a few courses at the University of Dar es Salaam, especially the introduction of WEBCT as the online learning platform. It was funded by DAAD. After they lost such funding they stopped, but after securing other funding from World Bank they started again, making it to be cyclical.

What are the triggers involved in transitioning?

The start of the transitioning process is triggered by collaborating partners and availability of funding or recognition. Most E-learning providers started such initiatives when they sensed the availability of funds and collaborating partners. For example the partnership of UDSM and Nairobi Universities and other universities to form the African Virtual University-which is still blended learning. As soon as the funding or recognition stops, then courses tend to change or stop. Funding could be from the third part or from students- if more students get enrolled in the course. Transitioning facilitates the role of recognition in attracting more funding.

Properties of Transitioning

- Partial not total change
- Speed of change depends on availability of funds
- Change needs collaborating parties
- Change seems to be motivated by external recognition
- All changes must be sustainable
- Change seen as a driver to boost enrolment
- Change without loss of control

Memo 2-Asymmetric collaborating

Definition (From the Data):

This concept explains how the weaker party in a collaboration is able to obtain the collaborative benefits whilst skilfully avoiding being dominated by the more powerful partner. In all collaborations each partner will have slightly differing agendas. The weaker partner is potentially always more vulnerable.

The more powerful partner has an edge in ensuring the project is implemented. An example of an asymmetric collaboration is when the university is collaborating with the government. The government is always more powerful than the university. In asymmetric collaborations the weak partners skilfully manages to extract resources and finances from the dominant party without being overwhelmed. The IT professionals attempt to transform the asymmetric collaboration to a reciprocal relationship wherever possible. Reciprocal collaboration is the processes whereby all parties have equal power over making decisions and managing the project.

Researcher's conjecture:

Asymmetric collaborating is the type of collaboration which is likely to have both passive and active characteristics. Whether active or passive, asymmetric collaboration is likely to be cyclical.

Why Cyclical?

Asymmetric collaborating is likely to have cyclical characteristics because once a project is completed a new project starts.

When could asymmetrical collaborating be spasmodic or perpetual?

After a relationship has been established it is conceivable that problems will occur and they will have to be managed if the relationship is to endure. In such situations it is reasonable to expect asymmetric collaboration to be spasmodic.

Even in harmonious relationships conflicts of interest or agenda priorities could differ. To avoid and deal with these issues it is also quite feasible that asymmetric collaborating will also have to be perpetual.

What are the triggers which make Asymmetric collaborating become cyclical?

When the need for change arises on converting direct learning to online learning, becomes the triggering force of asymmetric collaborating. The change is facilitated by the lack of physical infrastructure and resources in the direct learning or face to face learning. During the implementation of such projects, need for more partners will trigger collaboration within the project. Other factors facilitate the refining of such collaboration is the rapid change of technology, funding and availability of online experts. Every time there is a change, such factors will lead to the start of a new collaboration or agreement or refining of the current collaborations, in order to

renovate the project. As soon as the junior partner is able to stand on their own, the IT professional tends to start a project running in parallel with the partnering projects.

Properties of Asymmetrical Collaborating

- Being recognized and increased credibility
- Increased and known intellectual property over ownership
- New Operation expansion
- Quality control and assurance
- Project sustainability and growth
- Attracting more donors and funding

Memo 3-Focalising

Definition (From Data)

Focalising is the process of staying attentive or alert to the IT professional's main concerns. Online professionals tends to concentrate on the main concern until it is solved. For example they tend to work in one course to convert it to online learning before they go to the other. In other hand, E-learning providers tend to focus on their main responsibilities to ensure success and be recognized for promotions. When they concentrate on their main responsibilities, they tend to do it better and have acceptable solutions for the respective problem. By focalising, the E-learning providers tend to help themselves to synchronize the online learning with the direct learning. Keeping Focussed helps them to ensure quality and control over the intellectual property, as well as making their professional work recognized. For example one of the IT professional concentrated solely on his responsibility to ensure they recognized him for the good work. In a few months, they promoted him

to the next salary level. When they focus on one course, as soon it takes off, they move to another new course.

Definition (from Conjecture):

Focalising is also the tendency to concentrate on the main responsibility, to ensure the project has been done well. To institutionalize the online programs, the E-learning providers tend to focus on course for conversions from directly learning to blended learning-partial online learning. This helps to have efficiency and effectiveness. After implementing one course and it is fully running and has gained recognition, then E-learning providers tend to go to the next course. They do this incrementally. For example, when University of Dar es Salaam wanted to establish online programs, they first concentrated on only computer courses, because the belief of clients was computer courses can be studied online, and they concentrated only on Bachelor courses not Masters programs, because also clients believed Master programs cannot be online- focusing helped them to officially start the programs successfully. Another example, is when the officials tended to focus on their professionals to safeguard their recognition. To be able to focus , they follow phase by phase approach . For example, The African Virtual university implemented its program phase by phase - phase one was for East African countries, phase two was the whole of Africa. Even securing partners, the African Virtual University used a phase by phase approach. Collaborating is the great area of focus for many universities in East Africa.

Why is it cyclical?

Focalising is a cyclical dynamic it begins and starts again and again. For example, when the University of Dar es Salaam started a course, after implementing it they started the other and the other and the other while also focusing on the renovation of other running courses due to the change of technology. In few cases

the process is perpetual. This happens when several courses are happening in parallel.

What triggers focalising?

The rise of need or opportunity to expand enrolment in a program, becomes the start of focalizing. For example, when a funding door opens, the university will urgently focalize to capture it. Such moment capture opportunities could be the availability of funding, change of technology, more clients, availability of partners and networks. The focalizing will help to increase recognition of the university. When the project has been executed, focalizing ceases, but will restart with the next new project. The change of technology will trigger the change of focus and vision of the project. For example when the operating systems change the university would like to change to new operating systems. The first step is to change the focus to be able to implement the change. Not only it end when the project is implemented, but also when it fails to continue due to lack of resources.

Properties of Focalizing

- More opportunities are captured
- More projects running with strong partners
- Enrolment increases
- Better quality programs
- Rapid change of Technology
- Increased synchronizations with other projects
- Increase recognition and support

Memo 4-Pump Priming

Definition (From Data)

The intelligent use of modest resources in order to create exponential benefits, to ensure credibility of online learning, more momentum and support from third parties. Most IT projects need endorsements to gain credibility. Without credibility and without endorsements from recognized parties the funding of IT projects is very hard. Regardless of how good a project, without credibility or endorsements from highly respected authorities, the project will not be commissioned. Pump priming increases the recognition of the project. Also the E-learning providers becomes more recognized for promotion. For example, the e-learning centre project at the University of Dar es Salaam, for it to gain popularity, was endorsed by the Minister and The World Bank. After such credibility, it secured much money from DAAD and other international organizations.

Definition (From Conjecture)

Pump priming is the process of making IT projects recognized and funded by other external donors and funders. As soon as the project gets such credibility, they attract more partners. For example the African Virtual University-after being endorsed by Minister of Education in Kenya, attracted partners from other African countries as well as World Bank for funding. Pump priming also helps to increase synchronization of the project for its sustainability and growth, allowing donors to give more money.

Why Perpetual?

Pump priming is perpetual because most IT projects benefit from the leverage which pump priming brings. To attract more partners and clients needs endorsement from the trusted partners. It happens all the time. In few cases it happens cyclically. That means as soon one endorsement goes, the university needs to look for the other, making it to be a continuous cyclic process.

What triggers pump priming?

Universities are always short of funds yet the demand on these funds is always growing, making it to be the start of Pump Priming to enable the start of the new project(s). At any initiation of a project, universities tend to need funds to ensure the sustainability of the project, activating the universities to start looking for funds before the implementation of the project, during the implementation of the project. Endorsements also facilitate the start of the project, hence activating pump priming. Pump priming will end as soon as the project ends and needs no more funding.

Properties of Pump priming

- Project Credibility and acceptability
- Project recognition
- Funding securing
- Project endorsement
- Project Credentials

Memo 5- Reciprocal Collaborating

Definition (From the Data)

Two parties come together to obtain agreed objectives by contributing different and unique skills and investments. The parties tend to share equally the right of ownership of IT projects. It is mutually beneficial between the parties or done in return. No part is under the other part and they have equal status and power to manage the project. To ensure there is equal status and power, E-learning providers have been designing and signing various agreement and memorandum of understanding. All parties do sign such agreement to enter into the collaborating. For example, during establishment of African virtual university, after the project had been endorsed by the Minister of Education, every partner was supposed to sign an agreement to ensure mutual benefits for all

From Conjecture:

Reciprocal collaboration is the process of mutual benefit for the parties in sharing powers and status. All parties entering in such collaborations, have same or equal power and status. There is no one above the other. If one partner will be above the other, then the collaborating will be asymmetrical collaborating and no longer reciprocal collaboration. The asymmetrical collaborations happen when one partner has got more resources than the other. For example, when the Open University of Tanzania collaborated with the Coventry university (UK), the UK partner was more powerful than Open University of Tanzania, due to having enough resources, and such collaboration was no long reciprocal collaboration. As soon as the weaker partner gains more power, it tends to change the type of collaboration.

Why Reciprocal Collaborating is Spasmodic?

The reciprocal collaborating for the same project, happens once, and ends when the project ends. The collaboration tends to be for securing funds, strengthening the programs and recognition. As soon as such goals are achieved, the process ends there. However it tends to build new collaborations in other areas.

What triggers reciprocal collaborating to begin and end?

Due to rapid change of technology, increased number of students attend universities and there is pressure from government to enrol as many students as possible. It causes one partner to look for other partners. For example, the University of Dar es Salaam was supposed to increase enrolment, but the physical infrastructure was not enough, and the only way was to go for technology use, but due to lack of funding they decided to look for partners in various countries to collaborate. The lack of qualified staff or expertise also triggers the university to look for partners, so that they can start staff exchange programs to develop the staff and have enough expertise. Another case, is when the university would like to apply for funding. The funding criteria is for the university to have collaborating partners, then the university will need to look for collaborators. The end of the project, will trigger the end of reciprocal collaborating.

Properties of Reciprocal Collaborating

- Referral networks creation
- Degree of mutual benefits

Memo 6- Visualizing

Definition (From Data)

The process of having the clarity and understanding of what the final outcome of the project will realistically be. The E-learning providers need to have a vision to sustain IT projects within their universities. The success of the projects depends on creative thinking. E-learning providers tend to see the success of the project positively. Most universities set visions before a launch of the projects, but also E-learning providers tend to concentrate on their visions to implement online learning programs. They tend to have vision on what their career is all about, to ensure maximum implementation of online programs. For example, Dar University professionals, for them to be able to get what they thought will work, such as implementation of online programs, they created strong vision and positive thinking. They do this to overcome the negative attitude of clients and the project students, who have very negative attitudes on the use of technology for learning.

Definition (From Conjecture)

Visualizing is a process of clearly visualising the successful outcomes of project planning, implementation prior to the commencement of the project. Online professionals do that to ensure they have positive thinking towards the project, and to encourage themselves to overcome the negative perceptions on the use of technology for learning. Also they visualize helping to synchronize the project development with the other projects within the university. Due to the fact that most people have negative attitude to technology being used for learning, professionals tend to strengthen their visions. For example, one of the IT professional said “only through having strong visions, is when you can gain recognition and support from donors and top management”.

Why Visualizing is cyclical?

Visualizing is a continuous process, which repeats after a certain interval of time. It repeats when there is a change of sustainability factors. The cycle of visualizing ensures the sustainability of the project. Some of the factors which facilitate the cycle of visualizing include change of technology, change of management, change of project timeline and funding opportunities. The universities have been refining the visions of their projects over certain intervals, to ensure the project success. It helps to manage funds, gain trust, partners, increase recognition and credibility.

What triggers the beginning and end of Visualizing?

The frequency of cycles of visualizing appear to be stimulated by the absence of trust and credibility. The greater degree of trust and credibility in the project and its leader the less frequent the visualization cycle becomes.

Properties of Visualizing

- Degree of attitude and perception
- Degree of Trust and credibility
- Project synchronizing
- Referral building and sustaining
- Creating more trust and recognition

Memo 7- Positive Affirmationing

Definition (From Data)

A process of having positive confirmation and verification on online learning, it is a change from negative thinking to positive thinking. Most communities in East Africa have negative thinking about learning using technology, that is online learning. To overcome such thoughts, the E-learning providers remain positive and keep doing what is thought to be good for the benefit of using technology in learning and training. For example, various universities in Tanzania when starting implementing online programs, encounters resistance, and anybody who was taking such programs was viewed negatively and lowering the quality of certificates from such learning, but professionals kept doing it, and now the community view it positively and more people are enrolled in the programs. E-learning providers tend to have positive thinking on how they are perceived by top management on their work- when they get no promotion as other type of professionals, and eventually at the end they get promotions too. Professionals manage to keep this through creating self-confidence, and maintain it through creating networks, referrals, collaborations, endorsementizing and synchronizing what they do with direct learning.

Definition (From Conjecture)

The process of overcoming the negative attitude or perceptions about online learning. While the clients think it is not possible to learn online, the E-learning providers remain positive while finding ways to change attitudes. Also when the top management view E-learning providers negatively, these staff tend to have positive thinking while implementing the projects. One of the methods they use is the creation of referral networks, and trusted collaboration partners, as well as endorsement from well recognized bodies. In order for the online professionals to work they need to have positive affirmation. For example one IT professional mentioned that initially no

body was happy with what they were doing, only because they don't trust technology to help in learning, the professional kept positively towards this and finally people were happy

Why is it perpetual?

Positive Affirmation happens all the time, in anything the professional does they need to have positive thinking to succeed. If they need to be accepted by the community, they need to have this characteristic all the time. In a few cases it can be spasmodic-but this depends on the nature of the project.

What triggers Positive Affirmation?

The confirmation on the project planning, implementation and sustaining always becomes the force for positive Affirmation. As soon the idea about the project pops up, it triggers the start of Affirmation. As soon the project is successfully being implemented it will be the end of the positive Affirmation on that respective project, but the start of a new idea based on the success of the project,. Trust created, credibility of the completed project and network created. Positive Affirmation happens throughout the project regardless of if there is failure or success.

Properties of Positive Affirmation

- Not knowing what will happen
- Network creation
- Learning collaborations
- Dual thinking on results(worries)

Memo 8-Side Stepping

Definition (From Data)

Side stepping is a conflict avoidance strategy. Misunderstandings are due to the lack of trust from top management, to include any ideas from IT professional towards development of a project. When there is little trust from the top management, the IT professional tends to be isolated from the project, as a way to keep aside and avoid conflict. E-learning providers uses side stepping as a solution technique to conflicts. For example, IT professionals who had been told to suggest what online platform could be used for implementing online learning, after some research finally suggested a priority order- which one is the best and which one is poor. At the implementation stage, the top management did not follow what this staff recommended and used a completely different platform. When the staff tried to follow up what happened was no reply from the top management. As a result he side stepped- to leave the top management do what they wanted. The only way he could create peace in his heart was to step out from the game and wait and see. After a few months, the program collapsed and that was the recognition of that staff.

Definition (From Conjecture)

When misunderstandings happen conflict avoidance strategy comes in to play. To begin with, both parties have to re-evaluate the situation. This is done especially when there is misunderstanding with top managers or supervisors. Most of the time when the top management does not consider the IT staffs opinions and ideas towards the implementation of the project. It is a solutioning technique, to create recognition. With staff side stepping, they don't involve themselves in the matter for some time until they are re-welcomed

Why is it Spasmodic?

It happens once in a while. Side stepping does not happen all the time. The misunderstandings between the staff and top management to involve their ideas in decision making happens once in a while. No case occurred when it happened all the time or cyclically

What triggers side stepping?

The side stepping is caused by conflicts and misunderstanding between top managers and E-learning providers. When there is conflict, E-learning providers tend to step aside. Such misunderstandings are related to top management not taking into consideration the suggestions from the IT professional or recognizing the opinion and ideas for the implementation of the project from the staff. It ends when the misunderstanding has been solved and the top management clears the conflict and trust ideas from the staff.

Properties of Side stepping

- Lack of professional recognition
- No Involvement in decision making
- Lack of trust from top management
- Transition change

Memo 9- Hiatus Management

Definition (From Data)

When there is a break in the continuity and harmonious relationships, feelings of uncertainty or an hiatus is caused. Since an hiatus has the potential to escalate into conflict, hiatus strategies are needed to manage the situation. Online staff have a difficult time when they have side stepped a problem. This makes them very vulnerable and could possibly result in them losing their job. Some of these staff leave their jobs, seek new jobs or even become ill from the negative pressures of this situation. During this period they tend to manage worries, and fears by looking for new employment opportunities. For example, the Director of Online course development at the University of Dar es Salaam, after the top management did not take into consideration his suggestion on which portal would be more effective for online courses, stepped down. In order to manage hiatus he reverted to concentrating on his main contractual responsibilities[of university lecturer] so that his employers could not use the excuse of poor lecturing performance as grounds for dismissal. At the same time he also vigorously applied for several new positions with other employers. The combination of re-focussing on the legal contractual obligations of his lecturing job, and also searching the job market helped the IT professional to recapture his confidence.

From Conjecture:

When top management does not take into consideration suggestions from the IT professional, discontent and alienation will arise. At the time when they don't involve E-learning providers in these issues they tend to switch their focus from their main duties and start looking for new careers. They tend to concentrate on furthering their professional careers rather than carry out duties they do not agree with.

Why is this process Spasmodic?

Hiatus Managing does not occur in all phases of a project. Some phases of a project are more vulnerable than others.

What triggers Hiatus Management?

The rise of misunderstanding or conflict within the project caused by the different agendas of each party will frequently trigger the hiatus management. Hiatus management will start when IT professionals side step to allow other people do what they want to do, after excluding ideas and suggestion from the professional. It ends when the management re-welcomes the staff to input ideas in to the implementation of the project.

Properties of Hiatus Management

- New opportunity searching
- Career recognition and protections
- Involving E-learning providers in decisions making

Memo 10- Strategic Alliancing

Definition (From Data)

This is a medium to long term process of connecting with other parties in order to secure the completion of a project with mutually beneficial outcomes. It is a process of working together for the purpose of delivery of online courses or securing funding. Most universities in East Africa tend to alliance to increase program delivery, recognition, quality, and funding opportunities. Most funders tend to ask for alliances to fund the project. Such alliances can be done through exchange of programs and staff. For example, the University of Dar es Salaam have strategic alliances with African Virtual University in exchange of programs and delivery. They joined hand together for the purpose of ensuring they capture more funding from donors and funders. For example they managed to get funds from World Bank after having such strategic alliancing. The alliancing institutions have reciprocal alliancing characteristics in that they have similar power and status in the management of the project. They tend to sign agreements to ensure smooth delivery of the program. For example University of Dar es Salaam signed agreements with UNISA for the delivery of various programs.

Definition (From Conjecture)

The process of matching the strategic objectives of one institutions to the other and when it matches, then they form such alliances to ensure all benefit from the alliance. This is the strategic nature of the alliance. Each institution has its own strategy of establishing online programs. When this matches with another institution, and both are interested to share, then they form such alliances. The alliance is to help both institutions grow and have sustainable programs. It helps in securing credibility, popularity and recognition.

Why is it cyclical?

Strategic Alliancing usually happens prior to the commencement of a project

What triggers strategic alliancing?

Strategic alliancing is triggered by the wish to reduce uncertainty and risk. The greater the uncertainty and risk of the online learning project, the greater need for Strategic Alliancing.

Properties of Strategic alliancing

- Program exchange delivery
- Increasing collaboration and funding
- Increased recognition beyond the borders

University of Cape Town

Memo 11- Referral Networking (RN)

Definition (From Data)

The process of creating contacts and networks for the purpose of endorsing online learning projects increases their credibility. It is done to capture more opportunities in terms of funding, collaboration, and popularity of the online programs. The clients and students tend to believe in networking-as soon they see more networks for the same project, they tend to join the program easily. One of the pre-qualifications to get funding from possible big donors is to have referral networks. For example African Virtual University used referral networks to capture World Bank funding them and expand its operations in Africa. Such networks should be strong and well known in their host country. E-learning providers have been working to capture and build referral networking to ensure all get recognized, and capture more funding

Definition (From Conjecture)

Referral networking is the process of getting more connections to help in planning, implementing and maintaining the project. This involves getting funds and recognition by client and donors. They do this to ensure the project is sustainable

Why is it perpetual?

It is happening all the time; the E-learning providers have been looking for the networks all the time to ensure the project is sustainable. They look more and more networks.

What triggers referral networking?

The need for RN is increased when the party seeking resources or influence is short of credibility and experience. The process of RN is dynamic and changes as

credibility and influence increases and diminishes. A RN may begin with the weaker party, being vulnerable, but at later stages as more competence is demonstrated the receiver of credibility and influence can become the giver of resources and influence. It is not always a one way process.

Properties of Referral Networks

- Creating more connections
- Sustainable collaborations
- Successful project implementation
- Attraction of more funds

University of Cape Town

Memo 12 - Credentializing

Definition (From Data)

Credentializing is the creation of increased credibility by the skilful use of professional qualifications, experiences and accumulated social credit to lower the perceived risk. Online learning staff have been using this technique to ensure that their clients believe that they are fully able to deliver projects on time and to the desired quality. The E-learning providers must first believe in themselves. If they have self-confidence that they are able to deliver and they show that they are qualified experts in their profession, they are more likely to be approved of by their clients. This involves showing that they are knowledgeable to solve online problems. That is why they do one course at a time. The most important characteristic for credentializing is high self confidence in their decision making. For example, a coordinator of online programs at the University of Dar es Salaam, used this technique to increase trust with his top manager. His top managers were not E-learning providers, but had degrees in other fields, and they did not believe a person would be able to learn online. Hence to ensure they trusted him he had to show them that he was knowledgeable in the field of online learning and implemented the program through the help of strategic alliances, referral networks, collaborations with other people and endorsements.

Definition (From Conjecture)

The process of proving capability, knowledgeability and power to make things work effectively. To show that you have the right education for the right task. Most E-learning providers have been using this technique to ensure they survive and implement the online programs successfully.

Why is it Perpetual?

It is happening all the time. The E-learning providers need to prove to clients, communities and donors that they are capable of implementing the project before getting their support, whether it be money or simply trust.

What triggers Credentializing?

The wish to minimize risk of the project triggers Credentializing. Credentializing helps E-learning providers find ways to create trust and confidence by demonstrating professional competence through a combination of their qualifications and prior experience.

Properties of Credentializing

- Project Credibility
- Project Endorsement
- Certification recognition
- Knowledge building and proving it
- Creating self-confidence on what is known
- Dealing with Uncertainty

Memo 13 -Legitimizing

Definition (From the Data)

On-line professionals find it problematic to communicate exactly what they are doing to their collaborative partners. These problems are caused by the barrier of IT technical jargon which the client partner rarely understands. To reduce the potential for misunderstanding they have to legitimize their actions. The process of legitimization is achieved by a combination of the IT professional's qualifications, past experiences and endorsed referral from other clients.

As soon as the legitimizing has been achieved, the project gains popularity and more people tend to help it and get funding. For example, the Director of African Virtual Learning was not respected at all during the start of African Virtual University; most people viewed him as wasting his time. Just after securing endorsement from the Ministry of Education in Kenya, he legitimized the program, and more people were now coming to join the program. He worked to rule and legitimize his profession to ensure respect and recognition.

Definition (From Conjecture):

Most E-learning providers are not automatically respected by their prospective clients and funders. Because of this they have to use the process of legitimization. The failure of Universities to have clear guidelines regarding the employment and career structures for E-learning providers have exacerbated the problem. However after the online staff were legitimized through networking, collaborations and endorsement, most universities now amended their regulations and career structures.

Why is it Perpetual?

It happens all the time. The online E-learning providers need to ensure the project is legitimized and is respected all the time, to its maturity stage.

What triggers legitimizing.

When E-learning providers are not fully respected by their clients or customers legitimizing is needed.

Properties of Legitimizing

- Increase of respect from top managers
- Synchronizing of the project with other projects
- Acceptability and recognition of the project

Memo 14-Recognizing

Definition (From Data)

The purpose is to increase trust among the community. Most universities have been struggling to get recognized so that they can get more applications from students, get more partners, get more funding and increase networks. The Open University of Tanzania created various partners and programs to gain recognition for securing more funding, As soon as it was recognized, it captured US\$2.1 Million. The online professionals also tend to find ways to be recognized for their contribution to the development of the university. Some of them tend to initiate new projects on their own, to ensure they get recognized and respected for their contribution. The Institute of Accountancy Arusha(IAA) professionals sought very hard to get partners from Asia to increase recognition. Universities are working hard to get recognized through partnering with other strong universities or partners.

Definition (from Conjecture)

It is the process of gaining credibility. The universities fight to gain recognition to help them get funding, client attention and networks. Gaining recognition helps the endorsement of the project from government authorities. As soon as the university is well known, it tends to capture strong partners, collaborations and networks to work with. This might be considered a halo effect.

Why recognizing is Perpetual?

The gaining of recognition happens all the time. The universities never stop looking for ways in which to gain recognition. They keep looking for recognition in different ways such as increased courses, being the first expert in certain areas of study and investing in attractive campus facilities. Universities always lack funding,

hence always keep looking for funds, always looking for recognition to capture more funds to run its projects.

What triggers Recognizing ?

Universities always lack various resources including funds. For it to get big funding it needs to have high recognition. For this case, it will keep looking for gaining recognition. But also due to high competition on enrolment, the universities are striving to gain recognition in order to get more students- the more recognition the more students enrol. When the programs finish, it is the end of recognition of such programs.

Properties of gaining recognition

- More funding from strong donors
- More enrolment
- More programs

Memo 15- Project Credibility

Definition (From Data)

This is the process of creating trustworthiness in the project to ensure its reliability, and credibility. For the project to sustain and grow successfully it needs to build its integrity and its standing with the clients, donors and partners. The authority of the project necessitates project credibility and trust. Most universities tend to ensure there is trust towards execution of online projects. Where there is limited trust they tend to create it through collaboration and partners. Also they tend to use endorsement to build the credibility of the project.

Definition (From Conjecture)

This is building integrity in the implementation of the project for the purpose of securing funding, partners, and networks. For example the University of Dar es Salaam took time to build its integrity on their online programs for them to secure more students to enrol in the program.

Why Project Credibility is Perpetual?

It is happening all the time to ensure trustworthiness continues. Professionals have been working towards credibility before, during and after the execution of the project

What triggers Project Credibility to begin and end?

When the university needs to expand its operations, gain reputation, and gain trustworthiness in their project development, resulting in greater credibility . Universities are in lack of funding. For them to secure funding, they need to build their credibility which can be through endorsement. It ends when the project has been successfully executed.

Properties of Project Credibility

- Increase of funding opportunities
- More partners in the project
- More enrolment of students
- Credibility is very fragile
- Credibility is hard won and easily lost

Memo 16- Synchronizing Collaborative Relationships

Definition (From Data)

For the online learning project with collaborative relationships to prosper it needs to be coordinated and harmonized with other projects within other collaborative relationships at the university. Most universities tend to have more than one project relationship. Another type of collaborative relationship comes from the need to coordinate to ensure positive impact over other existing relationships. The University of Nairobi had a relationship with University of Dar Es Salaam. The relationship was coordinated through appointing new collaboration coordinators who were solely responsible for the collaboration relationship. Part of this work was to bring into line such collaboration. Similarly the Institute of Accountancy in Arusha [IAA] is collaborating with Coventry University and with universities in Asia. To ensure that there is coordination the IAA has appointed coordinators for the Coventry collaboration and a coordinator for the Asian collaborations. This has helped to ensure there are mutual benefits between the parties.

Definition (From Conjecture)

Ensuring mutual benefit of the relationship is necessary to have a formal organizational initiative in order to bring together the projects within the university. Universities do this through appointing special persons to be the coordinator of the specific collaborative relationship. Such a coordinator is responsible to ensure there is harmonious match up and mutual benefit of the project among the parties.

Why Synchronizing Collaborative Relationships is Perpetual?

Synchronizing collaborative relationships never stops. As soon as the collaboration starts, there is hard work being done by the university to ensure immediately there is coordination too.

What triggers the beginning and end of synchronizing of collaborative relationships?

Any start of a collaboration relationship will be the beginning of synchronizing to ensure the project is coordinated and matches up to the other university projects. It ends when the project is completed.

Properties of Synchronizing of Collaborative Relationships

- Positive project impact
- No conflicts within the project
- Mutual benefits among parties
- Long term collaboration maintained

Memo 17- Professionalizing

Definition (From Data)

The process of providing professionalism, experience and competence for the purpose of managing Hiatus and boosting the IT professional's credibility. When an E-learning provider has side stepped and gone through managing Hiatus, they tend to prove their expertise in the project. This helps them to remain confident and positive towards solving hiatus. For example, an online course developer at the University of Dar es Salaam had sometimes gone through side stepping, due to misunderstanding between him and the Dean of the Faculty on what type of online management system (Software) for delivering online courses. The staff was assigned the work as an expert, to recommend the best software to be used. The staff did recommend the best 10 possible software with strong reasons. Finally the Dean implemented a quite different software which was not suggested at all. When the course developer asked the Dean what happened, the Dean was not happy at all. That was the start of conflict and the start of side stepping by this staff. While he stepped down, the course developer experienced hiatus. During the hiatus period the staff was in great difficulty. However they did manage to overcome the hiatus by the Professionalising process. The result was that the Dean apologized to the staff member. The course developer used Professionalising to manage the hiatus, and also stay comfortable in his job. So many E-learning providers experiencing hiatus tend to leave a job and look for a new career.

Definition (From Conjecture)

Online learning professionals demonstrated their knowledge and skills which helped the project. These professionals, through the intelligent use of Professionalising, managed to capture the trust and confidence from the top managers and donors of the project.

Why professionalising is Perpetual?

When online learning professionals experience hiatus, they tend to be undergoing Professionalising all the time. Professionalising happens continually for the purpose of increasing confidence, trust and reducing worries.

What triggers Professionalising to begin and end?

Disagreement between the online learning professional and top management or client on the issues in the project, will show his expertise in the area. Does this to win the trust from top managers on his ideas.

Properties of Professionalizing

- Working more professional
- Showing his expertise
- Self-confidence
- Create more experts and experience credentials

Memo 18 -Bilateral ConCORDING

Definition (From Data)

In every formal collaboration or partnership there is bilateral agreement done to ensure positive impact of the project to both parties. Parties involved in the partnership tend to sign memorandum of understanding in order to avoid conflicts within the project. The process is designed to minimize conflicts during the execution of the project. Should any conflict arise there is a written procedure on how to solve the conflict. For example the University of Dar es Salaam for every partnership they have built there is a signed memorandum of understanding to

ensure that both parties agree on how to run the project, which includes management of the project. This has helped to reduce the instance of conflicts. When there is no such agreement, many more conflicts can arise within the project.

Definition (From Conjecture)

Bilateral ConCORDING is the process for agreeing on how to run the project between the two parties to ensure success and sustainability of the project. It is done through signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the parties. It is for ensuring no conflicts arise during the execution of the project. It is the way to ensure parties are aware all about the partnerships.

Why Gaining Bilateral ConCORDING is cyclic?

Bilateral ConCORDING tends to be cyclic because it is signed at the beginning of the project and during their execution of project, if there is any change of original terms due to change of technology, and leadership. It tends to be cyclical, to ensure sustainability of the project.

What triggers Bilateral ConCORDING to begin and end?

The greater the risks and more likely the uncertainty in a project, the more useful bilateral ConCORDING becomes.

Properties of Bilateral ConCORDING

- No conflicts within the project
- Mutual benefit of the project
- Well-coordinated project

Memo 19- Role Delineating

Definition (From Data)

The process of defining the role of each partner in the project to avoid rise of conflicts with the project. E-learning providers tend to ensure their role is defined before they start doing their work to avoid misunderstanding among the top management. They have been also using this as a way to manage instances of hiatus. The universities tend to outline their main roles in the collaboration to ensure success of the project. It is the way to solve misunderstandings at work, within the collaborations, and to insure success of the project. For example an IT professional after having a disagreement with his superiors uses the process of role delineating as a means of conflict resolution.

Definition (From Conjecture)

Each party in the project should clearly understand its role. It does this through signing Memorandum of understanding in which there is clear job descriptions of each party.

Why Role Delineating is spasmodic?

It happens only once, normally at the start of the project or work. It happens to ensure clear job descriptions among parties.

What triggers Role Delineation to begin and end?

Within the university there are always misunderstandings between top managers and professionals on their duties, raising the need to have clear job descriptions to ensure such misunderstanding is solved

Properties of Role Delineation

- Professional recognition
- Expertise increase
- Reduced conflicts and misunderstanding

Memo 20 -Project Integrating

Definition (From Data)

A process of putting together different projects regardless of their background within the university for the purpose of increasing sustainability, success and ensuring support from entire university for online professionals. Within the same university there are various projects being executed. To insure they are incorporated, the professionals tend to integrate them. They do this to ensure sustainability. Various projects within the same university need to be coordinated and combined to achieve the university corporate strategic objectives and mission. Always, universities have strategic objectives, vision and mission, which raises a need to have project integrating processes among various projects to fulfill their strategic positions.

Why Project Integrating is Cyclical?

It happens before the incubation of the project to ensure the when it comes it will first the university objectives, and this repeats at certain intervals to ensure real fit.

What triggers Project Integrating to begin and end?

The strategic objectives of the university trigger the beginning of project integrating to ensure the objectives of the university are achieved through such projects in relation with other projects going on. It ends when the objectives are fulfilled.

Properties of Project Integrating

- Clear Strategic objectives
- Harmonious project implementations
- More support from top managers
- Increased awareness from the management
- There are increased opportunities for synergy

Twenty (20) Memos Summary

20 memos emerged from the 101 respondent encounters. The next challenge was to discover which concepts within these 20 memos could account for most of the variation in the data.

Overall Challenges of the Data Collection and Analysis

Various challenges encountered during this long journey of data collection and analysis using Classic Grounded Theory methodology included:

- How to deal with uncertainty and confusion? How to move from low level descriptive narratives towards conceptual explanations? These issues were resolved through the communication with Dr Andy Lowe and Prof. Irwin Brown

- During early encounters with respondents they expressed concern that the researcher was not making notes during these meetings. Gradually they realized that the researcher wanted to have a series of open and frank conversations, rather than expose them to a researcher driven agenda, from which issues of concern would be allowed to arise naturally. The researcher discovered that respondents gradually became more relaxed and open as each encounter developed. The main challenge for the researcher was not to panic and keep calm and relaxed until the key issues of concern eventually did emerge.
- Lack of travel Sponsor (Funding), It has been very hard for the researcher to get to the respondents, and it took the researcher a long time to accomplish sufficient respondent encounters. The research process could have been finished much earlier had funds been available.
- Lack of clear knowledge on specific grounded theory methodology issues. It was resolved through communication with mentor , Dr Andy Lowe

A.8. Assessment of Key Concepts (Emerged Memos)

The research has discovered that cultivating recognition is the core variable, which E-learning providers in East Africa continually have to resolve in order that and e-learning projects can be successfully implemented. Cultivating recognition is the process of gaining public acknowledgement of achievement. Both universities and E-learning providers in East Africa found that the “cultivation of recognition” was the vital prerequisite to the effective implementation of and e-learning projects. By achieving recognition they increased their standing and reputation which in turn led to both the sustainability of existing funding as well as opening up the prospect of future and potentially more significant new sources of funding. Without sustained funding, achieved through cultivating recognition, no matter how skilled the university based IT professional is, the development of on-line and e-learning projects are unlikely to be successful. For the individual IT professional academic it is also the most effective route to personal career development and promotion. The cultivation of recognition can happen in a variety of different contexts [university-to-government, government-to-university, community-to-university, university-to-community, university-to-funding bodies, funding bodies-to-university, manager-to-employees, employee-to-manager, peer-to-peer, university-to-partners, partners-to-university]. This research has revealed that whatever the context of cultivating recognition process it cannot happen unless both legitimizing and credentializing are present.

Legitimizing

Legitimizing refers to the process of ensuring the project is deliverable, valid and sustainable. The process of legitimizing is quite tricky for the E-learning providers to achieve. This is because it can only happen by the endorsement of respected third parties. These third parties sometimes have difficulty, prior to the project's commencement, in understanding the full implications that e-learning can make to increasing educational effectiveness. One of the main barriers these third parties have is to be able to have a good understanding of the meaning of the technical jargon employed by E-learning providers working in this field. On-line professionals also often find it problematic to clearly communicate exactly what they are doing to their collaborative partners. To reduce the potential for misunderstanding they have to legitimize their actions. As soon the legitimizing has been achieved, the project gains more acceptance which in turn leverages future funding. Legitimizing is a perpetual process. The online E-learning providers need to ensure the project is legitimized and is respected throughout the process. The main symptom of the lack of legitimization is the lack of respect shown to E-learning providers by some clients and funders. Legitimizing happens because when E-learning providers are not fully respected by their clients or customers. The increased respect from top managers has been shown to happen more frequently when E-learning providers carry out the following three activities of collaborating partners, referral networking and strategic

alliancing. All of these processes need to be present if legitimizing is to be successful.

Firstly IT project professionals make collaborations with other experienced partners prior to the formal submission of funding submissions. These collaborations can either be asymmetrical or reciprocal. Secondly, they make full use of their existing referral networks so that the potential client or funder has more confidence in the proposal. Finally, E-learning providers were more successful when, as part of the proposal document, they had already entered into formal strategic alliances with other respected partners.

It was also found that successful E-learning providers were able to gain more traction in their projects when they were able to simultaneously synchronize several different projects. This was because of the potential for serendipity from one project to another that synchronicity could deliver.

Collaborating Partners

This research has discovered that collaborating partners can happen in two different ways; either asymmetrically or reciprocally. Asymmetrical collaborating is a concept which explains how the weaker party in the collaboration is able to obtain the benefits that collaboration brings, whilst skillfully avoiding being dominated by the more powerful partner. In all collaborations each partner will have slightly differing agendas. The weaker partner is potentially always more vulnerable. The more

leverage the powerful partner has, the more they will strive to ensure that the project is implemented. An example of asymmetric collaborating is when the university is collaborating with the government. The government is always more powerful than the university. In asymmetric collaborations the weaker partners skillfully manages to extract resources and finances from the dominant party without being overwhelmed. The E-learning providers attempt to transform the asymmetric collaboration to a reciprocal relationship wherever possible. This is because asymmetric relationships tend to be limited to being solely a contractual relationship, where as reciprocal relationships always have a greater potential for development beyond a single project. Asymmetric collaborating is likely to have several different temporal characteristics. They can be cyclical, spasmodic and also perpetual. Asymmetric collaborating happens because once a project is completed it restarts again in the new project. It becomes cyclical when the need for change arises. For example when it is necessary to convert direct learning to online learning, this becomes the trigger for asymmetric collaborating. The change is facilitated by the lack of physical infrastructure and resources in the direct learning or face to face learning. During the implementation process, the need for more partners will often arise. This in term will trigger more collaborations within the project. Other factors facilitate the refining of such collaboration is the rapid change of technology, funding and availability of online expert.

Every time there is a change of such factors it will lead to the start of new collaboration or agreement or refining of the current collaborations. These in turn rejuvenate the project. As soon as the junior partner is able to stand on his own, the IT professional tends to start projects running parallel with the partnering projects with new partners. The research has revealed the following to be properties of asymmetrical collaborating:

- *recognized and increase credibility;*
- *Increased and known intellectual property over ownership;*
- *New operation expansion; Quality control and assurance;*
- *Project sustainability and growth;*
- *Attracting more donors and funding to be properties of asymmetric collaborating.*

Asymmetrical collaborating is spasmodic when certain relationships create unanticipated problems and there will have to be strategies in place to deal with the unforeseen. In such situations it is reasonable to expect asymmetric collaboration to be spasmodic. Asymmetric relationships can also be perpetual. Even in harmonious relationships conflicts of interest or agenda priorities could differ. To avoid and deal with these issues it is also quite feasible that asymmetric collaborating will also have to be perpetual.

Reciprocal collaborating is the process of mutual benefit for the parties in sharing powers and status. Two parties come together to obtain agreed objectives by contributing different and unique skills and investments. For E-learning providers to share equally the right of ownership of IT projects, they have to maneuver themselves into a position of parity. To ensure this, E-learning providers have been designing and signing various agreements and memorandum of understanding. All parties sign such agreements to enter into the collaboration. The parties coming into reciprocal collaborating have same power and status. However, if one partner will be of higher status and power than the other, then the collaborating will change to asymmetrical collaborating [becoming no longer reciprocal collaboration]. The research has revealed that reciprocal collaborating is spasmodic. Reciprocal collaborating can happen at any stage of the project. The collaboration tends to be for securing funds, strengthening the programs and recognition. As soon as such goals are achieved, the process ends there. However the relationship tends to evolve into new collaborations as the situation changes.

On one hand, the rapid change of technology, increased number of students to attend universities and pressure from government to enroll as many students as possible, all make it imperative for reciprocal relationships to flourish. On the other hand, the lack of qualified staff or expertise also triggers the university to look for partners, so that they can start staff exchange programs to develop the staff and have enough experts. When the university would like to apply for funding, the

funding criteria is for the university to have collaborating partners, then the university will need to look for collaborators. The end of the project, will trigger the end of reciprocal collaborating. The research has revealed more referral network creation and increased degree of mutual benefits to be the properties of reciprocal collaborating.

Strategic Alliances

The research revealed that university projects are legitimized through strategic alliances. Strategic alliance (SA) is a medium to long term process of connecting with other parties in order to secure the completion of a project with mutually beneficial outcomes. It is a process of working together for the purpose of delivery of online courses or securing funding. Such processes include matching of the strategic objectives of one institution to the other. When it matches, then they form such alliances to ensure all benefit from the alliance. Most universities in East Africa tend to form strategic alliances to increase program delivery, recognition, secure credibility, popularity, recognition, project quality, and funding opportunities. A strategic alliance helps both institutions grow and have sustainable programs. Most funders tend to ask for a strategic alliance configuration as a precondition of funding. Such alliances can be done through exchange of programs and staff. The alliancing institutions have reciprocal alliancing characteristics that have similar power and status in the management of the project. They tend to sign agreements to ensure smooth delivery of the program. Strategic alliancing usually happens prior to the

commencement of a project. Strategic alliancing is triggered by the client's wish to reduce uncertainty and risk. The greater the perceived uncertainty and risk of the online learning project by the client, the greater need for strategic alliancing. The research discovered that increased collaboration and funding always then led to increased legitimization.

Referral Networking

To further increase the legitimizing of projects, E-learning providers tend to use referral networking. Referral networking is the process of both stimulating existing and creating new contacts. These connections and networks can be used for endorsing online learning projects there by increasing their credibility. It is done to capture more opportunities in terms of funding, collaborations, and popularity of the online programs. The clients and students tend to believe in networking as soon as they see more networks for the same project and they tend to join the program more easily. One of the pre-requisites to secure funding from donors is to have and activate referral networks. Such networks should be strong and well known in their host country. Successful E-learning providers work hard to capture and build referral networking to ensure that they get recognized and capture more funding. Referral networking process is perpetual. E-learning providers are looking for the networks all the time to ensure the project is sustainable. The need for referral networking (RN) is more urgent when the party seeking resources or influence is short of credibility and experience. The process of RN is dynamic and changes as credibility

and influence increases and diminishes. A RN may begin with the weaker party being vulnerable, but at later stages as more competence is demonstrated the receiver of credibility and influence can become the giver of resources and influence. It is not a one way process. The research has discovered that by creating connections which enable more project funds, also ensures a higher level of client confidence through the process of legitimization.

Credentializing

Credentializing is the creation of increased client belief of the IT professional's competence to execute a project on time and within budget by the skilful articulation of three key processes. Firstly, all claims and statements of accomplishments and achievements, made by the E-learning providers, must be endorsed by respected external third parties. Secondly, the IT professional must be able to both understand and execute project priorities by the skillful accomplishment of the process of prioritizing. Finally, the IT professional must develop a results orientated mindset by cultivating the skills involved in result orienting.

Professionalizing

The IT professional must present his professional work experience and academic qualifications to the client in a format with which the clients can easily comprehend and are perceived to be relevant. This means that the IT professional must tailor each CV specifically to meet the needs of each client. The use of standard CVs for

all clients is both unwise and ineffective. The process by which the IT professional is both trusted and respected by the client is professionalizing.

Professionalizing is the process of demonstrating the experience and competence for the purpose of managing Hiatus and boosting the IT professional's credibility. Professionalizing is perpetual because client confidence and trust, needs to be continually nurtured and once lost is very difficult to re-establish. The use of professional qualifications, experience and accumulated social credit is used to lower the perceived risk to potential strategic partners. On one hand, the E-learning providers uses this process for proving capability, competence and power to make things work effectively. On the other hand, online learning staff have been using this technique to ensure that their clients believe that they are fully able to deliver projects on time and to the desired quality. The E-learning providers must first believe in themselves. If they have self-confidence, which they are able to do that and they show that they are qualified experts in their professionals they are more likely to be approved of by their clients. This involves showing that they are able to solve online problems.

Credentializing

The most important characteristic for Credentializing is that the E-learning providers must display high levels of self confidence in their decision making. For example, the coordinator of online programs at the University of Dar es Salaam, used this

technique to increase trust with his senior manager. His senior managers were not E-learning providers; they had degrees in other fields, and they did not believe a person is able to learn online. The process of Credentializing is perpetual. The E-learning providers are required to prove to clients, community and donors that they are capable of implementing the project before getting their trust and support. The wish to minimize risk of the project by the funders triggers Credentializing. Credentializing helps E-learning providers find ways to create trust and confidence by demonstrating professional competence through a combination of their qualifications and prior experience. This research has revealed that the Credentializing process as a way to cultivating recognition cannot happen unless it is endorsed by influential third parties.

Endorsementizing

Hence to ensure they trusted him, he had to demonstrate that he was skilled and competent in the field of online learning. He was able to do this because of the Endorsementizing effect derived from his strategic alliances. This Endorsementizing by respected third parties made him seem more credible in the eyes of his senior manager.

Prioritizing

E-learning providers use prioritizing as a way to credentialize their work. Prioritizing is the process of ensuring that all tasks are sequenced in order of importance to

ensure the project's successful completion. The process helps to increase competence and recognition. The process of prioritizing is cyclical dynamic. It starts when there is a tendency of failure to recognize the IT professional. Sometimes prioritizing happens spasmodically. The Prioritizing process is triggered by the lack of respect or recognition from the top managers.

Their innovative ideas have been accepted and implemented by the top managers and universities, which also underpin their professionalism. Neither high profile endorsing nor skilful prioritizing can guarantee that credentializing will be successful. The IT professional also has to have the ability to be results orientated.

Results orienting

This can be achieved by doing four things. Firstly, the IT professional must be skilled in the process of visualizing. This involves the ability to clearly envisage, prior to the commencement of the project, what the successfully completed project would be like. Secondly, by instituting and policing role delineating regimes to avoid conflicts. Thirdly by focalizing or being obsessive about details. This ensures the perpetual concentration on all key issues relating to the project including synchronizing on-line learning with conventional learning. Finally, by the use of professionalism and competence so that unforeseen crises such conflict hiatus can be dealt with effectively.

Result orienting is the process of ensuring there are results and achievements in the planned project so that clients can recognize such efforts. The skilled IT professional tends to be very aware of what the successfully delivered project will look like long before any project has begun. The issue for the IT professional is how to communicate this clearly to both the client and partners. The more skilled the IT profession is in this process the more likely that staff will work together to ensure the intended results are achieved. The achievement of sustained results is a very effective to cultivate recognition. Some teachers are reluctant to get into online teaching. The ones who have volunteered to venture into have been recognized by their achievements. Result orienting is a perpetual process because most of the IT projects and E-learning providers get recognition benefit from the leverage, which result orienting brings. To attract more partners and clients needs endorsement from the trusted partners. It happens all the time. In few cases it happens cyclically. That means as soon one project is completed, the E-learning providers need to look for the other, making it to be a continuous cyclic process. E-learning providers and IT projects are always short of recognition, yet the demand of recognition is always growing, making it to be the start of result orienting to enable recognition. To ensure more funding, support, and promotion, E-learning providers tend to ensure there is a positive result to the previous projects. They tend to be more result oriented, hence activate recognition. This research has revealed result orienting as a way to credentialize cannot happen unless the IT professional is able visualize the successful project outcome.

Visualizing

Visualizing is the process of having the clarity and understanding of what the final outcome of the project will realistically be. The E-learning providers need to have a vision to sustain IT project within their universities. The success of the projects depends on the creative thinking. E-learning providers tend to see the success of the project positively. They tend to have a vision of what their career is all about. It not only includes maximum implementation of online programs but also to ensure they are able to achieve rapid growth in their personal academic careers. Visualizing overcomes the negative attitudes of clients and the project students, who can have very negative attitudes on the use of technology for learning. Visualizing is a continuous process. It repeats when there is a change of sustainability factors. The cycle of visualizing ensures the sustainability of the project. Some of the factors which facilitate the cycle of visualizing include change of technology, change of management, change of project timeline and funding opportunities. The universities have been refining the visions of their projects at certain intervals, to ensure project success. It helps to manage funds, gain trust, partners, increase recognition and credibility. The frequency of cycles of visualizing appears to be stimulated by the absence of trust and credibility. The greater degree of trust and credibility in the project and its leader the less frequent the visualization cycle becomes. This study has revealed different levels of attitude and perception; degree of trust and credibility.

Project synchronizing stimulates the development of referral networks and creates more trust and recognition.

Focalizing

Focalising is the process of staying attentive and of having an obsessive attention to detail. E-learning providers tend to concentrate on these until they are solved. For example they tend to work in one course to convert it to online learning before they go to the other. On other hand, E-learning providers tend to focus on their main responsibilities to ensure success and be recognized for promotion. When they concentrate to their main responsibilities, they tend to do it more skilfully and have acceptable solutions for the respective problem. By focalising, the E-learning providers tend to help synchronize the online learning with the direct learning. Keeping focused helps them to ensure quality and control over the intellectual property, as well as making their profession recognized. For example one of the IT professional concentrated solely on his responsibility to ensure management recognized him for good work. Within a few months, they promoted him to the next salary level. When IT professionals focus on one course, as soon it takes off, they move to another new course.

Focalising is a cyclical and dynamic process. In few cases the process is also perpetual. This happens when several courses are happening in parallel. When increased demand stimulates enrolment expansion it also triggers the intensity of

focalizing. For example, when a funding door opens, the university will urgently focalize to capture it. Such moment capture opportunities could be the availability of funding, change of technology, more clients, availability of partners and networks. Focalizing will help to increase recognition of the university. When the project has been executed, focalizing ceases, but will restart with the next new project. The change of technology will trigger the change of focus and vision of the project. For example when the operating systems change and the university would like to change to new operating systems. The first step is to change the focus to be able to implement the change. Not only does focalizing end when the project is implemented, but also when it fails to continue due to lack of resources.

Role Delineating

Role delineating is the process of defining the specific duties and responsibilities of each partner in the project in order to avoid conflicts. E-learning providers tend to ensure their role is defined before they start doing their work to avoid misunderstanding among the senior management. Role delineation also defuses hiatus. The universities tend to outline their main roles in the collaborations to ensure success of the project. It is the way to solve misunderstandings at work, within the collaborations and to ensure success of the project. Role delineating is a spasmodic process, normally at the start of the project or work. It happens to ensure both clarity and transparency of all job descriptions among the parties. Within the university there is always the potential for misunderstanding between top managers

and professionals. The study has discovered several role delineating properties including professional recognition, expertise increase, and reduced conflicts and misunderstanding.

In conclusion, the study discovered that cultivating recognition to be the IT professional's main concern that they have to continually resolve. The main concern in the classic grounded theory research methodology is called the core variable. So called because the core variable is the main issue that can account for most of the variation in the data. Cultivating recognition cannot be achieved without the IT professional also being skilled in both legitimizing and credentializing. Legitimizing and credentializing are the sub-core variables.

A.9. Working paper on How to Create and Sustain Transparency when Using the Classic Grounded Theory Research Method

Abstract

The Classic Grounded Theory [CGT] research method reveals latent patterns of human behaviour. It is a general research methodology because it makes use of all kinds of data, whether they be qualitative or quantitative data. CGT's main objective is to discover a robust empirically derived hypothesis or core variable. The core variable articulates the main concern of the respondents. It is so called because the core variable is able to explain most of the variation in the data. The particular feature of the CGT research method is that it is transcendent of both time and place. This is because CGT delivers a conceptual explanation rather than a low level descriptive context based narrative. As the number of researchers using CGT increases so does the potential for more confusion regarding the legitimate criteria for its evaluation. To contribute towards eliminating the confusion, this paper investigates ways of creating and sustaining transparency using the Classic Grounded Theory research method. This will, hopefully, enable researchers, supervisors and respective institutions to make more informed decisions on how to evaluate research, which has used the CGT research methodology.

Keywords: Classic Grounded Theory, transparency, theoretical sensitivity, theoretical memos, Classic Grounded Theory evaluation

Introduction

CGT's main objective is to discover a robust empirically derived hypothesis or core variable. The core variable articulates the main concern of the respondents. It is so called because the core variable is able to explain most of the variation in the data. The particular feature of the CGT research method is that it is transcendent of both time and place (Glaser 1978, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2008, 2009). This is because CGT delivers a conceptual explanation rather than a low level descriptive context based narrative. The emerged grounded theory must earn its way by being able to demonstrate that it represents the main concern of those being researched (Glaser, 1978). There are four main criteria with which to evaluate CGT. They will all be discussed later in this paper in more detail (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2001). Unfortunately, some researchers claim to be using CGT whereas they have simply borrowed the powerful jargon of CGT in order to legitimize their work without following all the tenets of CGT (Glaser, 2006). This has perpetuated confusion among researchers, sponsors and institutions as to how to evaluate CGT research based projects. The expression "transparency" in this paper is taken to mean the degree to which the reader of CGT research has an unambiguous and fully accessible explanation of the CGT researcher's journey from raw data to the main concern of those being researched.

This paper will clarify how transparency can be created and sustained throughout the CGT process.

The paper has four main sections: a clarification of the main purpose of the CGT research method, an explanation of the CGT process, and a detailed outline of how transparency is both created and maintained throughout the CGT process and finally how CGT must be evaluated.

Clarification of the main purpose of the CGT research method

This research method is a latent pattern indicator. It achieves this by revealing the respondents deep seated habitual tendencies. These tendencies will exist whether any research is done or not. They are difficult to reveal because often the respondent's are unaware of them although they constitute an important part of their daily behaviour.

CGT is multivariate (Glaser 1998), process which happens sequentially, subsequently, simultaneously, serendipitously and in a scheduled manner. It is the systematic generation of theory from data acquired by rigorous research method [Glaser (1967, 1978, 1998, 2000, 2007, 2008, and 2009)]. It is an integrated set of conceptual hypothesis, probability statements about the relationship between concepts. The hypotheses are generated through constant coding and analyzing of data. CGT is a general research method which is not evidence based. This is because when using evidentiary data it presupposes that deductive hypothesis based research method is being employed. CGT is a general research method

which is mainly inductive. Glaser (1978:134) explains why it is inappropriate to treat CGT as though it were evidence based.

"The credibility of the theory should be won by its integration, relevance and workability, not by illustrations as if it were proof. The theory is an integrated set of hypotheses, not of findings. Proofs are not the point."

An explanation of the CGT process

CGT is a non-linear process. Although there are very specific stages through which the CGT researcher must go through, the order of doing them will change according to what emerges from the data. This is necessary in order to reveal the deep seated patterns of human behaviour. The orthodox structure of CGT is as follows:

Generating Theoretical Sensitivity

The researcher, prior to embarking on any CGT research, must first develop his theoretical sensitivity. What this entails is explained by Glaser (1978). There are already in existence literally hundreds of patterns of human behaviour. Having a repertoire of these in advance of doing the research is absolutely essential. Here are just a few examples of theoretical codes:

(1) Causal consequence models [cause, consequences, contexts, contingencies, covariances and conditions]

(2) Process models [stages, phases, polarity, progressions, temporalizing and cycling]

(3) Degree models [cutting points, probability, polarity, continuum and intensity]

(4) Asymptote models [maths model for getting as close as possible]

(5) Isomorphism [maths model how one established theory can trigger a new theory]

(6) Moment capture [business model which explains how many financial services operate]

Armed with a repertoire of theoretical codes it is easier for the CGT researcher to start making sense of his data.

Theoretical Sampling

This is a form a sampling in which it is both inappropriate and impossible, prior to doing the research, to state exactly what data will be needed. This is because the sampling process will only cease once the core variable has emerged. The researcher samples his data until he discovers the main concern of the respondents. The researcher then samples within his chosen constituency for this newly emerged concept. Once the researcher reaches the point where no more patterns emerge, the data is said to be saturated and the core variable to have emerged.

Theoretical sampling is a process of data collection for generating theory whereby the researcher simultaneously, generates, codes, analyzes and synthesizes data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them. The researcher begins by selecting a context for the research. He then has a series of short conversations with a small number of respondents. This has to be so for two reasons. Firstly, a high level of rapport must be established between the researcher and respondent so that trust and respect can develop. This can not happen easily with single encounters. Secondly, the researcher must not make use of any form of recording or note taking during the meeting. This both deepened the trust between researcher and respondent and increased the level of the researcher's concentration. Immediately following all encounters with respondents the research must then document the interaction by using a theoretical memo.

Theoretical Memos

Theoretical memos are described by Glaser (1978:83) as *“the theorising write up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding”*.

They are the means to abstraction and ideation and can be used continually throughout the CGT process. Initially they start out as a short sentence but as the analysis moves on, they are up dated and developed can be several pages long.

Substantive Coding

These are the very first attempts to highlight the data which the analyst believes may have importance beyond the simple description of the context of the data. These codes are labelled and often gerunded. In other words the researcher converts the substantive code label into a verb ending in “ing”. The purpose of this is to sensitise the researcher to the processes and patterns which be revealed at a later stage.

Theoretical coding

This is a conceptual code. It arises from the synthesis of the substantive codes. To move from substantive codes to theoretical codes is tricky and often elusive. It can be achieved by examining the interplay between theoretical memos. The main mechanism for this called the constant comparison method. Here the researcher has to engage both the intellect and intuition to achieve a shift in perspective from low level context based description to higher level conceptual abstract.

The Constant Comparison Method

The researcher has to painstakingly look across all his data in all his theoretical memos to look for various types of indicators which might lead him to reveal previously hidden connections and patterns. There is a hierachy at play here. It starts with raw data in the theoretical memos and so on to substantive coding which is then fractured into categories and sub categories. These in term have different properties. Then both the categories as well as the properties get constantly

compared across all the theoretical memos. As this begins to gather pace theoretical codes begin to emerge. What begins as a property of a category of a substantive codes sometimes emerges as a theoretical code in its own right. Only by constantly comparing the data for differences and similarities can theoretical codes emerge. The exceptions to this are those rare occasions when the respondent himself is an articulate conceptualizer and is able to step back from his own context and give an authentic explanation of his main concern.

Sorting

This is an iterative process which occurs at the later stages of the CGT process. The reason this is so is because it will ensure that the emerging theoretical codes really have earned their place. If sorting does not happen several times it is unlikely that the research will move much beyond low level narrative description. The principle aim of the sorting processes is to ensure that the emerging core variable has been fully saturated and has earned its place in the research process.

The Emergence of the Core Variable

The core variable is so called because it is around this variable which can account for most of the variation in the data. It is the main concern of the respondents explained at the conceptual level. Frequently there are also sub-core variables which lead into the core variable.

An outline of how transparency is both created and maintained throughout the CGT process

The difficulties of CGT researchers penetrating the peer review process are threefold. Firstly, the majority of the academic community is polarized. Some have a preference for quantitative research paradigms. Others have a bias towards qualitative research paradigms. Secondly, CGT fits into neither of these two major categories of research methodologies because it is a general research methodology where all is data. Finally, there is a fundamental and widespread misunderstanding that CGT is a qualitative research method. This is characterized by Glaser's (2009) detailed rebuttal of Bryant & Charmaz (2007) categorization of CGT as though it were simply another qualitative research methodology.

The authors of this paper contend that instead of attempting to explain why CGT is neither a quantitative research methodology nor a qualitative research methodology CGT researchers should instead concentrate on making the processes of CGT more transparent to all. In that way uninitiated readers of CGT research will be able to figure out for themselves how the CGT researcher moved from raw data to fully emerged core variable. To achieve this clarity, the CGT researcher should not only follow the tenets of CGT as specified by its co-originator Glaser(1978) but must also be more explicit about the legitimate evaluation criteria for CGT also outlined by Glaser(1978). Failure to do this will result in inappropriate evaluation criteria being applied to CGT research.

Transparency can be achieved by an unambiguous explanation of the researcher's exposure to the development of his/her own theoretical sensitivity. This will assist the reader to better understand the initial processes involved in moving from raw data to theoretical sampling and eventually to the emergence of the core variable. Two examples of the effectiveness of transparency in CGT are to be found in both Guajardo (2004) and Rosenbaum (2008). Guajardo (2004) skilfully reveals her transition from theoretical sensitivity to the emergence of the core variable. Her explanation of how a group of undergraduate students tackled non-routine mathematical problems during a problem solving course by "solutioning" is totally transparent. Rosenbaum(2008) intelligently uses his prior theoretical sensitivity to core indexing to reveal the theory of trapped travel consumption amongst passengers on inter island ferries in the Hawaiian Islands.

Generating Theoretical Sensitivity

Anyone reading a thesis which has used CGT must be able to assess the extent to which the researcher prior to starting the project has been exposed to theoretical sensitivity. This will become obvious by the skill with which the researcher deals with his data.

Theoretical Sampling

The researcher has to very explicitly explain how and why his theoretical sampling has been constructed. There must be a clearly stated logical argument as

to the main reasons for his choice. There should be no note taking or recording during the encounters with respondents.

There are four main reasons why real time note making during the interactions with the respondents is to be avoided in CGT. Firstly, it allows the respondents feel more relaxed and less threatened by the encounter with the researcher. Secondly, because the researcher is not taking any notes at the meeting he will have to make each encounter with the respondents quite brief; this greatly assists the process of theory generation because allows the researcher examine his data reflectively before arranging subsequent meetings. Thirdly, the grounded theory method is a delayed action process both for the respondent and for the researcher. Thus having a series of brief interactions with the same respondent permits the development of concepts rather than just descriptions. Finally, the researcher is encouraged to make notes immediately following the encounter with respondents rather than in real time forcing the researcher to increase his level of concentration during the encounter rather than passively going through a check list of pre-determined questions.

Theoretical Memos and coding

Although there is no standard template which all theoretical memos must adhere to there are some basic issues which all theoretical memos must address. If these are not present then it would not be transparent to the reader how the researcher

progressed from raw data to emerged core variable. All memos should contain the following to meet transparency requirements:

- (1) Memo Title
- (2) Summary of any substantive codes, categories and properties
- (3) Conceptual indicators [These are important links that form the bridge from substantive description to conceptual explanation]
- (4) Emergent theoretical codes, categories and properties
- (5) A statement as to the type of data researcher believes he has been given to him by the respondent [Baseline – reliable, properlined - manipulated, vague – economical with the truth or interpreted data – edited]. It actually does not matter at all when doing CGT what type of data the researcher has because everything is data. If people are being untruthful for example that is probably more interesting than if they were being honest. What is of the utmost importance is the researcher does fully understand what type of data he has.
- (6) A clear separation of empirical data from conjecture data. Both are important in CGT but they are quite different types of data and need to be treated accordingly.

- (7) How has the data been fractured? Which conceptual theoretical perspectives has the researcher used to better understand the latent patterns embedded in the data?
- (8) What links have been highlighted to other memos from the researcher's bank of memos?
- (9) What unanswered questions arising from the data will the researcher use in his next meeting with the respondent?
- (10) How have the theoretical concepts in each memo been constantly compared and then sorted?

The Constant Comparison Method and Sorting

The reader of a CGT thesis should be able to easily understand how and why the both the constant comparison and sorting process were operationalised. There are now commercially available computer software packages which are designed to "speed up" these processes. However Glaser (1996) strongly advises researchers to avoid their use. This is not for reactionary reasons but is rather that the use of computer packages in Glaser's words is "a creative kop out". He says there are four main reasons why the use of computer software should be avoided when using CGT. Firstly, computer packages are excellent for dealing with very large volumes of data. If the research is using CGT correctly then there is no need for very large volumes of data because latent patterns can be detected from rather small amounts

of data. Secondly, Glaser (1996) states that when sorting is done manually it takes time. This time can be used creatively and productively by the researcher to reflect on the data itself. The CGT is delayed action phenomena both for the researcher as well as the respondent. Thirdly, when a CGT researcher is faced with having to manually analyze a mass of his data it can seem overwhelming and can create a degree of anxiety. This anxiety results in fear or psychological regression. However the CGT researcher needs to develop skills to cut through the uncertainty in order that the authentic latent emerges rather than being forced. Computer packages to date are unable to do this. Finally none of the currently available computer software packages have been written by people who fully understand the CGT process.

The Emergence of the Core Variable

It must be possible for the researcher to demonstrate to the reader a pathway through his data showing how the raw data emerged to become the core variable. But it should not be treated as evidence. It should instead be presented in a transparent way so that the reader can immediately understand how the core variable emerged. This can be achieved in a PhD thesis by publishing thin deep slices of data in the appendices of the thesis for all to see.

How CGT must be evaluated

The grounded theory research method is a general inductive methodology which can be applied to all types of data both quantitative and qualitative or the

combination thereof Glaser (1978, 1998). It is not a sub set of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). Therefore QDA criteria are inappropriate for the evaluation of research done by using grounded theory research method.

Glaser (1978, 1998, 2000, and 2001) reiterates the four main criteria with which to evaluate grounded theory study as follows:

(a) Fit

Fit of a concepts means that it adequately reflects the data that it purports to express. The categories must fit the data used to create the theory. Ungrounded assumptions and forcing the data into preconceived concepts derails fit in CGT, as well as the relevancy of the theory. (Fit corresponds to positivistic validity; however, it is fit in action and usage, not by testing.). In comparison with the pre-conceived research such as testing hypothesis, data which can not be forced are discarded, rather than used to correct categories. Data and only data for development of theory makes CGT to be fit Glaser (1978, 1998). The fit could be expressed as refit or emergent fit. The categories during research emerge so fast, raising the need to refit them to the data as the research proceeds to be sure they fit all the data they purport to indicate, increasing the transparency. Categories can emerge between data and pre existent categories (Glaser, 1978).

(b) Workability

How does the core variable account for the respondents' continual resolution of their main concern? The emergent GT must clearly explain what is happening, and the nature of its occurrence and by so doing should be able to predict future behaviour (Glaser 1978, 1998, 2001).

(c) Relevance

How was the emerged core variable been received by the members of the constituency from where the data was drawn? Prior to the research commencing it is very likely that respondents would be unable to articulate their main concern. Once they have read the research they should be able to instantly recognize the emerged core variable as being authentic.

(d) Modifiability

The theory is considered modifiable if it is easy for subsequent CGT researchers to catch up with what has been done so far, and to proceed to modify or refine the theory as they collect and code new data (e.g., code new data for emergent fit), without invalidating the theory.

Questions on the issue of transparency raised by universities such as *“How research using CGT can have chain of evidence? How this reconcile with the approach of not*

recording and not taking notes in interviews? How will you demonstrate the chain of evidence from data to concept/theory?" have an implied assumption of the requirement for accuracy in the collection of evidence based data.

CGT is an inductive research methodology so it is appropriate only to use a legitimate set of evaluation criteria as outlined by the CGT's co-ordinator Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2008). However there must be total transparency when using CGT so the reader can easily and clearly see how the emergent core variable arose.

Glaser (2007:41-42) explains why the level of misunderstanding of the grounded theory research method still persists amongst many academics because they fail to distinguish clearly between "conceptual generalizations" and "descriptive generalizations".

"The constant comparative method [at the heart of CGT] was originated in 1967 to generate concepts by constantly comparing indicators of a latent pattern. After several comparisons the result is conceptually naming the pattern and its properties.....The category is abstract of time, place and people. The conceptual category applies with emergent fit. The Formal CGT research generates categories that relate to each other as generalizations.

In contrast descriptive comparisons are as old as research itself. They just compare differences and similarities and a sum of description of people's social actions in a unit of time. The concern is always accuracy, that is, the researcher has worrisome accuracy to

constantly contend with. Generalizations are difficult to make from one unit to another and even within the unit studied. These are the problems of accuracy of external and internal validity respectively of descriptive generalizations.

Conceptual generalizations do not have this validity problem. They just apply within a context applied to with modification. For example, controlling clients by pseudo-friending simply varies for client types and client conditions."

Finally Glaser (2009:15) gives a robust response to the continuing misconceptions regarding CGT as articulated by Bryant & Charmaz (2007).

"Data worries dominate the GT jargonizing of QDA issues in the Handbook. And why shouldn't it? Worrisome accuracy is the central issue of QDA. QDA research has to yield accurate description, which puts an emphasis on analyzing the data used in any research every which way to see what, indeed, is being described and is verifiable. And furthermore how fast will the description get stale-dated and if it can be momentarily discursively generalized. This is a perennial, non-solvable problem. It totally neglects the conceptual level of GT, which is free of and abstract of place, time and people and hence free of worrisome accuracy. Comparisons generate a GT's constant concept modifiability."

The transparency of a fully grounded theory will be achieved only when the reader is able to clearly see how the researcher progressed from raw data to the final integrated core variable. If the researcher who uses the CGT research method follows the guidelines outlined in this paper then this will be achieved.

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