



FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AMONG LOCAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN KENYA: A SURVEY OF NGOS IN NAIROBI COUNTY

MURIITHI Patrick¹, MURIUKI Moses², KINYANJUI Martin³

¹MBA Student: Kenya Methodist University

²Lecturer: Kenya Methodist University

³Lecturer: Kenya Methodist University

Abstract: Globally, many organizations have slowly embraced strategic planning but the implementation process remains a challenge, resulting in well-formulated strategies that fail at the implementation stage. No known study has been done on factors affecting strategy implementation among local Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya, Nairobi County. This study therefore sought to fill this gap by investigating the factors affecting the implementation of strategic plans in non-governmental organizations. The study also sought to establish the effect of management styles, communication, organizational culture and organizational resources on the implementation of strategic plans in non-governmental organizations. The study used cross sectional survey research design and the target population of the study was the local NGOs in Nairobi in sectors of health, youth, welfare, micro-finance and relief registered in Nairobi County. The study used stratified random sampling technique to select a sample of 163 local NGOs in Nairobi County. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaire while data analysis was done using frequencies and descriptive statistics. The results indicated that the most common management style used by most NGO was democratic style chosen by majority of the respondents while bureaucratic style was the least used. The findings also show that flow of communication in most NGOs used a top-down approach. However, this is a concern for this study since lack of clear multi-directional flow of communication may be a hindering factor affecting implementing of strategic plans. The study also established that employees in the various NGOs widely use meetings and newsletters as a means of communicating their strategic implementation plans meaning that meetings and newsletters form the main channels of communication. The results further indicate that organizational culture influences the implementation of strategic plans. In addition, all goals in organizational resources had a positive mean showing that they all had an effect in strategy implementation. It can be concluded that all the five independent variables had a positive effects of the dependent variable, data collection instruments has been proved to be valid for this study. The study recommends that various NGOs should use better management styles that incorporate all employees like the democratic style where all employees are associated in achieving set strategic objectives. In addition, NGOs should have a more defined culture that allows training and professionalism and rewarding of more performing employees to motivate them to implement and attain the strategic objectives easily.

Introduction

The concept and practice of implementing strategic plans has been embraced worldwide and across various sectors because of its perceived contribution to organizational effectiveness (Thompson & Strickland, 2004). Today, organizations both public and private have taken seriously to the practice of

implementing strategic plans to guide the performance of those organizations. Bourgeois and Brodwin (2004) noted that the framework for formulating and implementing strategies requires a strong backbone in the formulation process. However, he observed that due to the misunderstanding of the factors that affects the implementation process, adoption of strategic management often leads to incomplete implementations. Strategic Plans are therefore a means to the end of achievement of organization objectives. Non-implementation therefore renders strategic plans valueless.

Although clear plans and sound organization may set the stage for strategic plan implementation, a manager must also provide leadership if the people in his/her organization are to work together to achieve its goals and mission. In Kenya corporate leadership has drawn the attention of various stakeholders and organizations making them notice, rethink and embrace their various organizational concepts in order to implement strategic plans that are vital in a very competitive atmosphere (Mulube, 2009).

Communication is another key factor considered in the implementation of strategic plans. Communication is the key to gaining people's involvement and significantly reducing their level of uncertainty in the activities of an organization (Burnes, 2004). It is the lifeblood of an organization and without communication the pattern of relationships that we call organizations will not serve anyone's needs. Communication should be a regular rather than a one-off exercise and should be pursued through various channels that management deem fit to access the employees of an organization. People need to be involved in the strategic plan implementation and hence a continuous message effectively communicated will energize people into fully participating in the organization activities. Further, organizational culture influences communication, which may in turn influence implementation of strategic plans. Awino (2007) found out that corporate culture requires collective identity and togetherness in order to determine day-to-day communications, acceptable/non-acceptable behavior as well as power/status allocation.

Another factor playing a major role in the implementation of strategic plans is organizational resources. Resources create a leading edge for an organization and they are normally difficult to replicate across any given sector. Johnson and Sholes (1999) indicated that management linkage may source for similar resources and other best practices but it is always difficult to have some resources with replication for example, employee skills, practiced cultural values, time management skills and financial savings ability. This leads to great discrepancies in the implementation of seemingly similar strategies among organizations. Kidombo (2007) observed that knowledge resources, material wealth and coordination ability are key to successful implementation of strategy. If the organization's resources are not utilized to the organization's advantage, the resources become a waste and burden that hinders strategy implementation. Adequate number of employees alone is not enough to drive forward an implementation plan. There is need to have good leadership and well trained managers that will coordinate the usage of organization resources which are normally scarce and very costly to get. Regardless of what means were used to acquire the organization resources, stakeholders will always want to compare the amount of resources used with the success of a given strategy implementation (Korten, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Greenley (2006) observes that a frequent complaint about the strategic planning process is that it produces a document that ends up collecting dust on a shelf – the organization ignores or fails to make

good use of the precious information depicted in the strategic planning document. African context studies noted that many firms created strategic plans which are rarely implemented according to the planned schedules. Even though Aosa (1992) looked into the implementation issue, he mainly took focus of large manufacturing private firms whose set up is very different from that of non-governmental organizations which are specifically non-profit making organizations.

There is evidence of gaps in the implementation of strategic plans within Kenyan NGOs. In its 5th Corporate Plan, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK, 2009) noted that implementation of strategy was ineffective, and created a planning, monitoring and evaluation department to ensure effective planning and implementation of the plans. In a similar move, the Young Women's Christian Association of Kenya (YWCA) created Oversight teams to monitor implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011, after realizing a huge carry-over of plans, implying challenges in implementation (YWCA, 2008). Similarly, lack of implementation of strategic plans in their entirety, impacts negatively on effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of NGOs. Okumus (2003) studied the environment under which NGOs fail to implement their strategic plans but did not directly scan the other factors that affect NGO strategic plan implementation. Aosa (1992) focused on managerial involvement related to strategy implementation in manufacturing firms. That represented one aspect of factors that affects implementation leaving a gap to be pursued by other scholars.

Thompson and Strickland (2004) proposed further studies on management in instilling high levels of commitment to strategic success, lack of detailed planning to support goal achievement, poor communication and coordination, as well as strategy and culture misalignment as reasons for failure at strategic implementation. This study therefore sought to find out the factors affecting implementation of Strategic Plans in NGOs operating in Kenya.

The objectives of this study were:

- i. To find out how management styles affect implementation of strategic plans in Kenyan NGOs.
- ii. To find out how communication affects implementation of strategic plans in NGOs.
- iii. To find out how organizational culture affects implementation of strategic plans in NGOs.
- iv. To find out how organizational resources affect implementation of strategic plans in NGOs.

Theoretical orientation

A theory is defined as a set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining or predicting the Phenomena (Otley, 2001). This study is based on systems theory. The system theory was developed by biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy Little John (1983) defines a system as a set of objects or entities that interrelate with one another to form a whole. System theory is basically concerned with problems or relationships, of structures, and of interdependence, rather than with the constant attributes of object. The systems theory views an organization as a social system consisting of individuals who cooperate within a formal framework, drawing resources, people, finance from their environment and putting back into that environment the products they produce or the services they offer.

This theory is based on the view that managers should focus on the role played by each part of an organization, rather than dealing separately with the parts (Sterling, 2003). The systems theory maintains that an organization does not exist in a vacuum. It does not only depend on its environment but it's also part of a larger system such as the society or the economic system to which it belongs. The systems approach is concerned with both interpersonal and group behavioral aspects leading to a system of cooperation (Otley, 2001). An NGO is a complex system consisting of the staff, and numerous stakeholders. The system theory emphasizes unity and integrity of the organization and focuses on the interaction between its component parts and the interactions with the environment. It suggests that organizations must be studied as a whole taking into consideration the interrelationships among its parts and its relationship with the external environment. NGOs are open systems hence they respond to the external influences as they attempt to achieve their strategic objectives.

Management Styles and Implementation of Strategic Plans

In a study by Cater and Pucko (2010) on the activities for and obstacles to strategy execution on a sample of 172 Slovenian Companies, their findings were that managers mostly rely on planning and organizing activities when implementing strategies, while the biggest obstacle to strategy execution is poor leadership. Moreover, the results revealed that greater obstacles to strategy execution in the forms of inadequate management skills. Hunger and Wheelen (2005) argues that most managerial problems have physical, psychological social and economic aspects. By bringing together a team with a variety of backgrounds, new and advanced approaches to old problems are often obtained. The scientific mind from each discipline attempts to extract the essence of the problem and relate it structurally to other similar problems. Greenley (2006) observed that in order to have all workers attaining the necessary understanding of the company vision and goals provide commitment and actively get involved in translating the strategic plans into implementable activities with measureable results, strong and decisive leadership is needed to drive the course. Taylor contends that strategic leaders manage radical change to achieve dramatic improvements in organizational activities. Such leaders communicate internally and externally with an open management style, trying to build a new culture in which employees can feel involved.

In his study "an empirical investigation of aspects of strategic formulation and implementation with large private manufacturing firms in Kenya," Aosa (1992) observed that managerial involvement had little impact on strategy implementation among local companies but significant among foreign companies. Although strategic plan implementation is perceived to be associated with good firm performance, the organizational leadership could influence the attainment of anticipated results. Mulube (2009) in his study on "effects of organizational and competitive strategy on the relationship between human resource management orientation and firm performance" noted that for most organizations in Kenya, an emphasis is always placed on democratic leadership characterized by maximizing participation and involvement of group members together with empowerment for decision making. Thus an effective strategic plan implementation, with the ultimate goal of realizing improved organizational performance requires embracing factors that will entice leadership to motivate their employees in order to enhance implementation practices.

Communication and Implementation of Strategic Plans

Communication should be a regular rather than a one-off exercise and should be pursued through various channels that management deem fit to access the employees of an organization. People need to

be involved in the strategic plan implementation and hence a continuous message effectively communicated will energize people into fully participating in the firm activities (Aosa, 1992). Managers must select those to be involved in communication of organizational needs to avoid skeptics or spoilers who would otherwise bend the intended aim as stipulated in the strategic plan. This will involve drawing discussions and debates about the right timing plus the freedom to have open talk on how efficient a plan is being implemented. Robinson and Pearce (2007) have observed that miscommunication occurs between the point where communication starts and the point where it is received. More so, the interpretation of that communication plays a vital role which requires managers to be enforcing a strong culture that embrace clear understanding of communications from all corners of the organization. This means that managers must be aware of people's beliefs, attitudes, behavior, demands and arguments in order to communicate effectively the message of strategic plan implementation to the employees (Burnes, 2004).

Organizational Culture and Implementation of Strategic Plans

Organizational culture has been defined as the basic beliefs commonly-held and learned by a group, that govern the group members' perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions, and that are typical for the group as a whole (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 2004). It represents a complex pattern of beliefs, expectations, ideas, values, attitudes, and behaviors shared by the members of an organization that evolve over time. Empirical investigations suggest that the promotion of an innovation enabling culture requires senior leaders' support and involvement. Galbraith and Schendel (2002), for example, suggest that fostering failure tolerance is an important means of promoting an innovation enabling culture.

In an entrepreneurial culture members of the organization identify opportunities and risks based on their perceptions of the internal and external organizational environment, integrate available resources, and bring in other individuals to enable them to undertake creative and innovative ventures. Bounded delegation leaders also foster innovation by creating a sharing culture that facilitates interaction and information sharing among individuals across the organization (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2001). The culture of an organization is expected to be supportive of and consistent with the strategy being implemented (Johnson & Scholes, 1999). Corporate culture gives employees a sense of how to behave and act and hence influencing employees to support current strategy in order to strengthen its implementation. Since it is managers who were involved in developing strategic plans, it is part of their leadership tasks to bring the organization's culture into alignment with strategy and keep it there.

Organizational Resources and Implementation of Strategic Plans

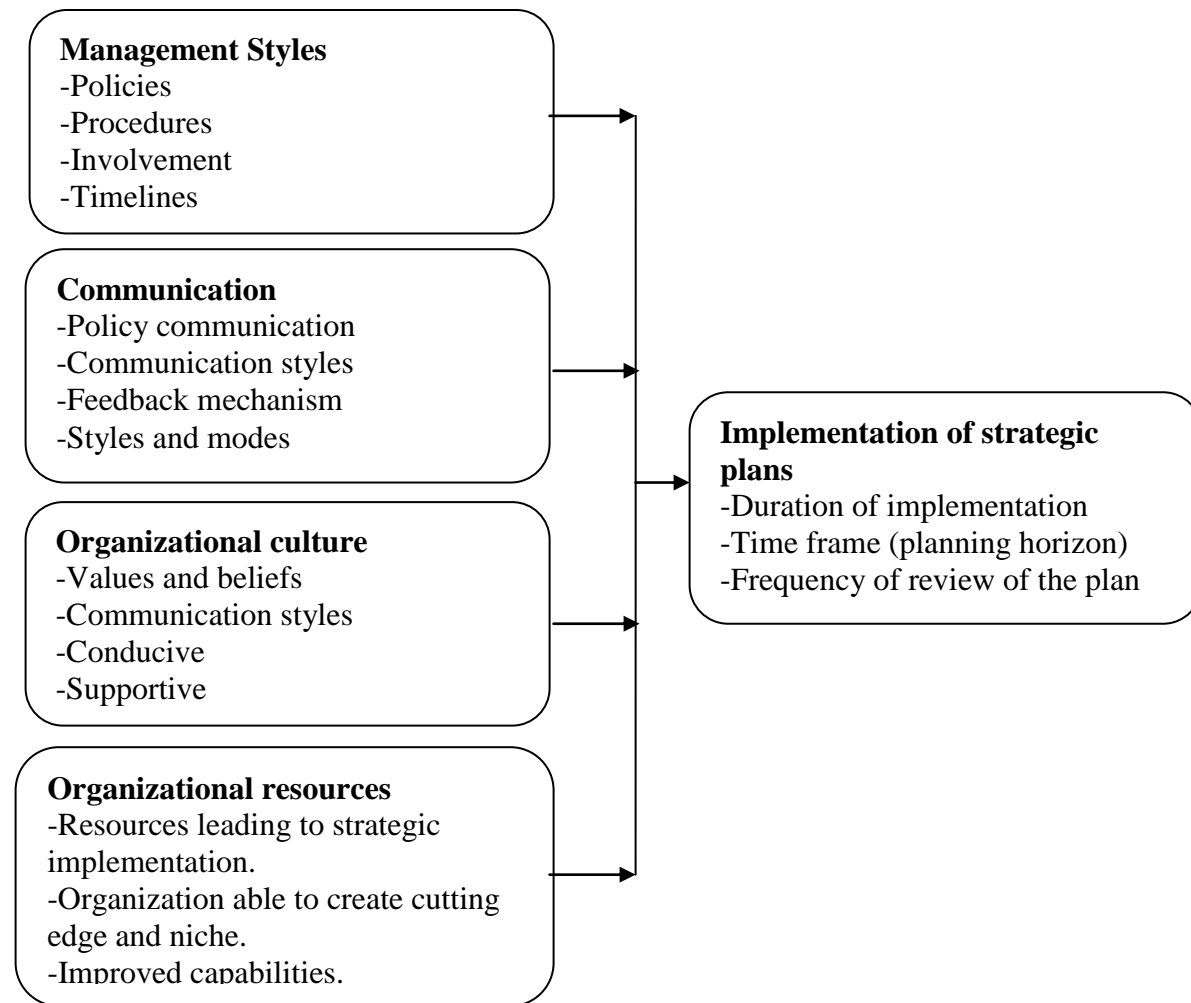
NGOs in Kenya have been involved in many workshops and training programmes but are normally blamed for not keenly implementing strategies and pooling resources in cases of proximity and common activities in a given area. In his study "An analysis of organizational learning process in donor agencies in Nairobi. Burnes (2004) observes that this has led to sometimes wastages in resource usage especially in relief organizations during food distribution for long term plans. The need to recognize shortage of resources and the objective to develop both the existing and expected new resources is critical in compelling leaders and managers to motivate the organization towards effective strategic plan implementation.

This study explored two major resources in NGOs, human resource and finances. There is no one particular variable that is indispensable of each other but the human resource and financial resources

are always ranked higher than the rest. It is through good training and development of human resource that other resources become viable and closely monitored to achieve strategic goals (Pearce & Robinson, 2007). If employees are offered high job security through motivation, empowerment, modern and reliable working systems and a free environment to be innovative they will tend to guard organization resources and hence work towards achieving long term goals as found in the strategic plans (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 2004). Clearly, for effective implementation of strategic plans, employees require to be at particular work stations for a period of good time long enough for implementation to take place. Job security, motivation and empowerment clearly work towards retaining employees over a long period fit enough to participate fully in implementation of strategic plans. The organization with adequate resources will most likely achieve a higher retention of staff if all other variables are not a hindrance.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on four independent variables and one dependent variable as represented diagrammatically in Figure 1. The independent variables were management styles, communication, organizational culture and organizational resources as shown in figure 1.



Independent variables

Dependent variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The research design that was used in this study was cross sectional survey. The target population of the study was 1632 registered local NGOs in the sectors of health, welfare, micro-finance, youth and relief across the country. Out of the 1632 NGOs within Nairobi County 10 per cent sample of 163 was drawn using a stratified random sampling. The goal of stratified random sampling was to achieve the desired representation from various sub-groups in the population.

Table 1: Sample Size

Sector	Target population	Sample size
Youth	200	31
Relief	306	41
Micro-Finance	95	19
Welfare	341	46
Health	690	81
Total	1632	163

The study relied on primary data which was collected through administering semi-structured questionnaires comprising of closed and open-ended questions. The targeted staff in these NGOs included accountants, finance officers, operations officers and programme managers or external relations directors. The received questionnaires were first checked for completeness. The researcher then coded the respective responses as per the research questions using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22) to derive the desired output on the adopted Likert scale. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations).

Research Findings and Discussion

Out of the 163 questionnaires issued a total of 124 responses were obtained representing a 76% response rate. This is a high response rate and is comparable to previous scholar's works for example, Cater and Pucko (2010) had a response rate of 49% and Awino (2007) attained 57%. The statistical authors have recommended a response rate of at least 30% to be adequate. The response rate was therefore fit enough for carrying out study analysis.

Implementation of Strategic Plans

The study sought to establish if the NGOs developed strategic plans regardless of whether they participated in their planning and development process. Results in table 2 showed a large majority (99.2%) of the respondents indicated that implementation plans do exist, while only 0.8% cited lack of strategic implementation plans. From the finding, it was therefore possible to analyze all the questionnaires for the five independent variables and the main dependent variable.

Table 2 Development of strategic plans

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	1	0.8
Yes	123	99.2
Total	124	100.0

Duration of Implementation of Strategic Plans

The study sought to establish the length of time that the NGOs have been implementing strategic plans in order to gauge the experience of those NGOs in the field of strategic implementation. Results in table 3 indicate that a majority (65.3%) have practiced for between 6 and 10 years, 31.5% have practiced for between 1 and 5 years and 3.2% have practiced for over 10 years. This is an indication that the NGOs sampled had adequate knowledge and experience of understanding and practicing strategic implementation plans.

Table 3: Duration the organization has been implementing strategic plans

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	31.5	31.5
6-10	65.3	65.3
11-15	3.2	3.2
Total	124	100.0

Planning period for implementation of strategic plans

The study sought to establish the planning horizon, review periods and the anticipated time of implementation of organizational activities. The results in table 4 indicate that majority of the respondents (56.1%) practiced medium term plans followed by short term strategic plan implementation (22.8%) and long term strategic plans (21.1%). The results show that most of the NGOs in Nairobi County practice medium term plans. These study findings are therefore in line with other scholars' findings (Awino, 2007) who noted that for implementation to occur, a planning horizon must be set.

Table 4: Timeframe for the organization strategic plans

Period	Frequency	Percentage
Short term	28	22.8
Medium term	69	56.1
Long term	26	21.1
Total	123	100.0

Planned activities in the implementation taking place in time

This question sought to establish whether implementation time frames were achieved. Respondents were therefore asked about time frame of implementing activities, and results indicated in table 4.11 that 90.2% of the respondents said activities were carried out within the anticipated time, while 9.8% said that activities were not carried out within anticipated time frame. However, Awino (2007) and Drazin and Howard (2002) found that some activities were not carried out on time, indicating that indeed a time frame affects implementation of strategic plans in NGOs. Delay in the implementation of strategic plans. The findings therefore support time frame as having an influence on implementation of strategic plans.

Table 5: Planned activities in the implementation taking place in time

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	12	9.8
Yes	110	90.2
Total	122	100.0

Factors Hindering Achievement of Anticipated Implementation Time Frame

The respondents indicated several reasons why timely implementation did not occur as indicated in table 6. From the findings, 95.2% cited political interference, 1.6% cited environmental factors and lack of resources and 0.8% cited government interference and shortage of adequate finances were some of the hindrances to timely implementation of strategic activities. These findings are in line with the studies carried out by Johnson and Scholes (2002) and Kelleher (2007) both who have observed that funds and resources play some role in the timely implementation of strategic plans. The study findings also support Mullins (2005) who pointed out that political and government interference are the greatest hindrance to timely strategy implantation.

Table 6: Factors hindering timely implementation of strategic plans

	Frequency	Percentage
Political interference	118	95.2
Environmental factors	2	1.6
Government interference	1	0.8
Lack of resources	2	1.6
Non-availability of funds	1	0.8
Total	124	100.0

Management Styles and Implementation of Strategic Plans

The first objective of the study was to investigate whether management styles is a factor influencing the implementation of strategic plans in NGOs in Kenya.

Management Level in Strategic Plans Implementation

The respondents were asked to indicate the most effective management level in NGOs. From the findings, most of the respondents (79.5%) perceived that leadership and control took place at the top management level, 16.4% indicated middle level management, 3.3% indicated functional level leadership while 0.8% could not pinpoint clearly where leadership and control for implementation of strategic plans was mainly concentrated. These findings show that leadership and control took place at the top management level. The findings are in line with Thompson and Strickland (2004) who have observed that involvement of all management levels for implementation is necessary and that it brings good coordination or harmony amongst implementation staff.

Table 7: Management Level in Strategic Plans Implementation

	Frequency	Percentage
Impossible to tell	1	0.8
Functional level	4	3.3
Middle level	20	16.4
Top level	97	79.5
Total	122	100.0

Existence of a strategic implementation policy

As shown in table 8 most of the respondents agreed that strategic implementation policies exist in their organization (95.5%) while only a 4.5% said that strategic implementation policy does not exist in their organizations. This implies that most of the NGOs had strategic implementation policies.

Table 8: Existence of a strategic implementation policy

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	5	4.5
Yes	105	95.5
Total	110	100.0

Involvement of Various People in Strategic Plans Implementation

The respondents were asked to indicate the level of involvement of different people at the NGO in strategic plans implementation. The responses were based on a five likert scale where 1 was strongly disagree, 2 was disagree, 3 was neutral, 4 was agree, and 5 was strongly agree. The respondents strongly agreed with a mean of 4.553 and a standard deviation of 0.670 that the CEO was in guiding strategic implementation process. In addition, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.783 and a standard deviation of 1.014 that business/functional staff were involved in guiding strategic implementation process. Further, the respondents were neutral the involved of board/directors in guiding strategic implementation process as shown by a mean of 3.041 and a standard deviation of 1.113. Also, the respondents were neutral on the Involvement of Consultants in guiding strategic implementation process as indicated by a mean of 2.925 and a standard deviation of 0.831. However, the respondents disagreed with the statement that the subordinate staff were involved in guiding strategic implementation process as shown by a mean of 2.116 and a standard deviation of 0.971. Awino (2007) observed the importance of having middle level and functional managers involved in championing the implementation of strategic plans. Similarly, Thompson and Strickland (2004) have emphasized on the need to involve all levels of management.

Table 9: Involvement of Various People in Strategic Plans Implementation

Management level	Mean	Std. Deviation
Involvement of Board/directors in guiding strategic implementation process	3.041	1.113
Involvement of CEO in guiding strategic implementation process	4.553	0.670
Involvement of Business/functional staff in guiding strategic implementation process	3.783	1.014
Involvement of Subordinate staff in guiding strategic implementation process	2.116	.971
Involvement of Consultants in guiding strategic implementation process	2.925	.831

Management Styles in Strategic Plans Implementation

The respondents were requested to indicate the management style most suitable in the implementation of strategic plans. According to the findings, the most suitable management style was democratic (77.4%), followed by Laissez Faire (12.9%), authoritarian style (8.9%) and bureaucratic style (0.8%). According to Mintzberg (2003), different management styles will suit particular moments.

Table 10: Management style that would lead to the implementation of the Strategic plan

Management style	Frequency	Percentage
Authoritarian	11	8.9
Democratic	96	77.4
Laissez Fare	16	12.9
Bureaucratic	1	0.8
Total	124	100.0

Communication and Implementation of Strategic Plans

The second objective of the study was to find out the influence of communication on the implementation of the implementation of strategic plans.

Flow of Communication in Organization

The respondents were asked to indicate the flow of communication used in their organizations. From the findings, most of the respondents (82.0%) chose top-down communication flow, 4.1% cited bottom-top communication and 13.9 % cited multi-directional communication flow. This indicates that top-down communication flow is the most prevalent in organizations as opposed to multidirectional communication flow which. This is a concern for study objective since many scholars including Burnes (2004), Mulube (2009) and Drazin and Howard (2002) have concluded that lack of clear multi-directional flow of communication was a hindering factor in implementing strategic plans. The study findings imply that most NGOs could be having problems with their implementation due to lack of multidirectional communication flow.

Table 11: Flow of communication in NGOs

Flow of communication	Frequency	Percentage
Multi-Directional	17	13.9
Bottom-UP	5	4.1
Top-Down	100	82.0
Total	122	100.0

Communication Channels

The study sought to find out the channels of communication applied in NGOs to disseminate and receive information on strategic objectives. From the findings, majority (76.9%) of the respondents indicated that they got communication on strategic implementation from meetings they attended, 20.5% indicated that they mainly used newsletters and 2.6% indicated that they used posters for communication. The findings indicate that meetings and newsletters form the main channels of communication. The findings are in line with other scholars' findings including Robinson and Pearce (2007) and Kidombo (2007) all concluded that strategic plan implementation require clear channels of communication inculcated into the culture of the organization.

Table 12: Communication Channels

Channels	Frequency	Percentage
Meetings	90	76.9
Posters	3	2.6
Newsletters	24	20.5
Total	117	100.0

Level of Communication of strategic plan implementation

The respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which strategic plan implementation is clearly communicated. From the findings, 53.3% of the respondents indicated that strategic plan implementation was communicated moderately, 44.3% indicated to a high extent and 2.5% indicated to a very high extent. This implies that strategic plan implementation is clearly communicated.

Table 13: Level of Communication of strategic plan implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Moderate	65	53.3
High	54	44.3
Very high	3	2.5
Total	122	100.0

Identifiable gaps and challenges of communication in NGOs

From the findings, poor communications was thought to be a gap and challenge to strategy implementation by 81.1% of the respondents. Other identifiable gaps and challenges include too many rules and policies (93.4%), no or limited advancements potential (95.1%), not feeling valued (90.2%), lack of training and development (92.6%) and unclear company strategy (98.4%). The findings are in line with other scholars' findings including Robinson and Pearce (2007) and Kidombo (2007) all concluded that gaps and challenges of communication can affect strategic implementation plans.

Table 14: Identifiable gaps and challenges of communication in NGOs

Gaps and challenges	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Poor communication from management is an identifiable gap and challenge of communication in the organization.	99	81.1	23	18.9	122
Too many rules or policies are identifiable gap and challenge of communication in the organization.	114	93.4	8	6.6	122
No or limited advancement potential is an identifiable gap and challenge of communication in the organization.	116	95.1	6	4.9	122
Not feeling valued is an identifiable gap and challenge of communication in the organization.	110	90.2	12	9.8	122
Lack of training and development is an identifiable gap and challenge of communication in the organization.	113	92.6	9	7.4	122

Effect of Communication on strategic objectives realization

The respondents were asked to indicate the level to which communication affects strategic objectives realization. From the findings, 57% of the respondents indicated that communication affects strategic objectives realization to a very high extent, 37% indicated to a high, 11% indicated to a moderate, 8% indicated to a low extent and 1% indicated to no extent at all.

Figure 15: Effect of Communication on strategic objectives realization

Extent	Frequency	Percent
None	1	0.88
Low	8	7.02
Moderate	11	9.65
High	37	32.46
Very high	57	50.00
Total	114	100.00

Measures to Improve Communication of Strategic Objectives

The respondents were asked to indicate what needs to be done to improve communications on strategic implementation and fill the gaps and challenges encountered. The commonest suggestion from 33.0% of respondents was that more meetings and reviews by staff should be hosted. More communication channels was suggested by 18.5% of respondents, multi-directional communication was suggested by 16.9% reflecting what Mulube (2009), Drazin and Howard (2002) and Barnes (2004) recommended for improved implementation of objectives. In accordance with other scholars including Awino (2007), the findings indicate that there was need to have improved communication aspects. Some of identified improvements include more meetings, training and adaptable learning equipment, teamwork approach to implementation and less bureaucracy with more devolved governance. These findings were found to be fit for further inferences.

Table 16: Measures to Improve Communication of Strategic Objectives

Suggested solutions	Frequency	Percentage
Breakdown everyone's role in implementation	11	8.9
Frequent meetings	41	33.0
Involve everyone in the implementation.	2	1.6
Involvement of staff in decision making	6	4.8
More channels of communication	23	18.5
More e-mails with latest policies, directives	3	2.4
More multi-direction communication	21	16.9
More Newsletters	7	5.6
More posters	2	1.6
Others	8	6.5
Total	124	100.0

Organization Culture

The third objective was to find out the effect of organizational culture on the implementation of strategic plans in NGOs in Kenya.

Culture and Implementation of Strategic Plans

The respondents were asked to indicate the culture that best described the working conditions in their NGO in relation to implementation of strategic plans. There were four choices for the perceived conditions that included conducive, not conducive, effective and non-effective. From the findings, the most common positive condition was “conductive” with a 75.4% while “effective” condition was the next most prevalent with a 9.8%. This indicates that most NGOs have a conducive and effective culture. The conducive condition favors strategy implementation but the low score for effective condition means that implementation cannot be well achieved. This study demonstrates what scholars like Letting (2009) concluded by observing that culture requires a conducive and effective environment that is supportive of the employees involvement in implementation.

Table 17: Culture and Implementation of Strategic Plans

Culture	Frequency	Percentage
Not effective	12	9.8
Effective	12	9.8
Not conducive	6	4.9
Conductive	92	75.4
Total	122	100.0

Why organization culture supports achievement of strategic implementation objectives

From the findings, 42.7% of respondents indicated that culture and people are one and the same and people are the implementers hence the support of strategic implementation plans. In addition, 33.1% of the respondents reported that organization's culture is in people hence implementation becomes easy, 6.5% of respondents indicated that organization culture is based on organization itself, while 4.8% of the respondents indicated that if culture does not support the implementation process the whole exercise can collapse. The findings are supportive of what other scholars including Robinson and Pearce (2007) and Awino (2007) have cited. The scholars indicated that organizations have their own culture and individuals could find it supportive or not supportive. It is therefore right to use the study findings for making further inferences on the effect of culture on strategy implementation.

Table 18: Organization culture and achievement of strategic objectives

Suggested reasons	Frequency	Percent
Because if it does not, the whole exercise can collapse	6	4.8
Because organization's culture is in people hence implementation becomes easy	41	33.1
Culture and people are one and the same and people are the implementers	53	42.7
Organization culture is based on organization itself.	8	6.5
Others	16	12.9
Total	124	100.0

Areas where culture does not support achievement of strategic objectives

The respondents were also asked to indicate the areas where culture does not support achievement of strategic objectives. From the findings, 32.3% of respondents indicated “where culture is not in line with the proposed strategies”, 30.6% indicated “where there is conflicts between the proposed

strategies and the existing organizational culture”, 19.4% indicated “where there is no proper communication”, 3.2% indicated “being too liberal will make the organizational existing culture not to support strategy implementation” and 1.6% indicated that “where the proposed strategy implementation does not give detailed description of everyone’s role in implementation of strategic plans”. The findings are supportive of what other scholars including Robinson and Pearce (2007) and Awino (2007) have cited. The scholars indicated that organizations have their own culture and individuals could find it supportive or not supportive. It is therefore right to use the study findings for making further inferences on the effect of culture on strategy implementation.

Table 19: Areas where culture does not support achievement of strategic objectives

Suggested areas	Frequency	Percentage
Being too liberal	4	3.2
Does not give detailed description of everyone role in Implementation of strategic plans.	2	1.6
Where culture is not in line with the proposed strategies.	40	32.3
Where there is a conflict	38	30.6
Where there is no proper communication	24	19.4
Others	16	12.9
Total	124	100.0

Organizational Resources and Implementation of Strategic Plans

The fourth objective of the study was to establish the effect of organizational resources on the implementation of strategic plans in NGOs in Kenya.

Resources in Achieving Particular Goals in Organization

In this objective, the research sought to find the extent to which organization’s resources helped in achieving general goals of an organization that improve implementation of strategic plans.

Table 20: Role played by resources

Roles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Competitive edge over competitors	4.674	.620
Power in the environment of operation	3.588	.698
Value-creation and Efficiency in accomplishing organization goals and objectives	3.588	.743
Sustainability of the organization	3.806	.728

According to the findings, the respondents strongly agree with a mean of 4.674 and standard deviation of 0.620 that organizational resources are a competitive edge over competitors. In addition, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.588 and a standard deviation of 0.698 that organizational resources are power in the environment of operation. Further, the respondents indicated with a mean of 3.588 and a standard deviation of 0.743 that organizational resources ensure value-creation and efficiency in accomplishing organization goals and objectives. Lastly, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.806 and a standard deviation of 0.728 that organizational resources ensure sustainability of the organization. This study is in line with the findings of Aaltonen and Ikavalko, (2001) and Mulube (2009) who have indicated that differences in implementation of strategic plans are due to unique

resources possessed by organizations and that those unique resources can improve or reduces the effect of particular goals in the organization if well utilized or underutilized respectively.

Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that the most suitable management style was democratic chosen by majority of the top employees of NGOs in Kenya while bureaucratic style was the least used. This goes to show that various management styles will suit particular moments. The findings have confirmed that various management styles are favored by organizations for their implementation of strategic plans. In addition, the study can conclude that mostly used flow of communication was the top-down communication flow while only a few of the respondents cited bottom-top communication. This indicates that top-down communication flow is the most prevalent in organizations as opposed to multidirectional communication flow. The study further concludes that employees in the various NGOs widely use meetings and newsletters/memos nowadays to communicate their strategic implementation objectives. Meaning that meetings and newsletters form the main channels of communication were most commonly used channels of communication in NGOs in Kenya. From the findings the study can conclude that effective communication improves understanding and interpretation of strategic objectives through many aspects like decision making, interpersonal relationships, morale, commitment and participatory capacity.

The study also concludes that most NGOs have a conducive and effective culture. In addition, the conducive condition favors strategy implementation but the low score for effective condition means that implementation cannot be well achieved. Therefore, by observing that culture requires a conducive and effective environment that is supportive of the employee's involvement in implementation. It can be concluded that a show of supportive culture is by having training and professionalism in attaining or implementation of strategic objectives. Lastly, the study concludes that can conclude that different organizations have different unique resources that help implementation of strategic plans. Differences in implementation of strategic plans are due to unique resources possessed by organizations and that those unique resources can improve or reduces the effect of particular goals in the organization if well utilized or underutilized respectively.

Recommendation

From the findings, the study recommends that various NGOs should use better management styles that incorporate all employees like the democratic style whereby all employees are associated in achieving set strategic objectives. In addition, NGOs should enhance frequent meetings, breakdown of everyone's role in implementation process, involvement of staff in decision making and opening of more channels of communication to improve communication of the organization's strategic implementation process. The study also recommends use of more multi-directional flow of communication to involve each and every employee in the organizations in implementing and attaining the strategic implementation objectives.

The study further recommends that NGOs should have a more defined culture that allows training and professionalism and rewarding of more performing employees to motivate them to implement and attain the strategic objectives easily. To present a more conducive and effective environment, the study recommends that supporting of communities and using multicultural working teams will be more effective. The study also recommends attaining and retaining of unique resources whether human labor or materials that can assist in attaining a successful implementation of strategic objectives.

Areas for further Research

In Kenya today, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are increasingly being recognized by governments as potent forces for social and economic development, important partners in nation building and national development and hence many NGOs have taken seriously to the practice of implementing strategic plans to guide their performance. Bearing this in mind there is need to also conduct a performance survey per non-governmental organization as a way of encouraging many more others to join in Kenya.

The study also recommends the following areas for scholars with interests in this area:

1. Challenges faced by different NGOs in the country.
2. Impacts of NGOs in the economy.
3. Factors that influence donor funding of the various NGOs in the country.

References

- Aaltonen, P. & Ikavalko, H. (2001). Implementing Strategies Successfully. *Review of Strategic Management*, 2(10), 73-91.
- Aosa, E. (1992). An empirical investigation of aspects of strategy formulation and implementation within large, private manufacturing companies in Kenya. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*. University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland.
- Awino, Z. B. (2007). Purchasing and Supply Chain Strategy: Benefits, Barriers and Bridges. *An Independent Conceptual Study Paper in Strategic Management*, School of Business, University of Nairobi September 2002.
- Bourgeois, L.J. & Brodwin, D.R. (2004). Strategic implementation: five approaches to an elusive phenomenon, *Strategic Management Journal*, 5, 241-64
- Burnes, B. (2004). *Managing change – a strategic approach to organizational dynamics*. (4th ed.). Cambridge: Prentice Hall.
- Cater, T., & Pucko, D. (2010). Factors of effective strategy implementation: Empirical evidence from Slovenian business practice. *Journal for East European Management Studies*, 15(3), 207-236.
- Drazin, R. & Howard, P. (2002). Strategy implementation: a technique for organizational design, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 34 No.3, pp.465-85.
- Galbraith, C. & Schendel, D. (2002). An empirical analysis of strategy types. *Strategic Management Journal*, 4, 153-73.
- Greenley, G.E. (2006). Does strategic planning improve company performance, *Long Range Planning*, 19, 101-9.
- Hunger, J.D. & Wheelen, T.L. (2005). *Strategic Management*. 5th ed. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, USA.
- Johnson G. & Scholes (2002). *Exploring Corporate Strategy*. 6th New Jersey: Prentice Hall, USA.
- Kidombo, H. J. (2007). Human Resource Strategic Orientation, Organizational Commitment and Firm Performance in Large Private Manufacturing Firms in Kenya. *Unpublished PhD Thesis*. University of Nairobi
- Mintzberg, H. (2003). *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

- Mulube, J. (2009). Effects of organizational culture and competitive strategy on the relationship between human resource management strategic orientation and firm performance. *Unpublished PhD Thesis*, University of Nairobi.
- Okumus, F. (2003). A framework to Implement Strategies in Organizations Management. *Decisions*, 41, 1-9.
- Otley, D. (2001). Extending the boundaries of management accounting research: developing systems for performance management. *British Accounting Review*, 33, 243-61.
- Pearce, J.A. & Robinson, R.B. (2007). *Strategic Management: Implementation and Control*, 3rd Ed, Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Sterling, J. (2003). Translating Strategy into effective Implementation; Dispelling the Myths and Highlighting what works, Strategy and Leadership. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12, 34-39.
- Thompson, A.A. & Strickland, A. (2004). *Strategic Management Concept and Cases* edition, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Young Women's Christian Association. (2008). *National Board Strategic Planning Workshop Report*.