CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT OXFAM
GREAT BRITAIN - KENYA

BY
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has never been presented in any other University/College for the award of degree/diploma/certificate.

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Date: 11/11/2009

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

Signature: Dr. Zachary A. Bolo
Date: 13/11/2009
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family and friends for their love, support, understanding and encouragement to me during the whole study period. My sons Ian Owen and Wayne for their patience all the times I was away from home working on the project and the times I could not be the mother you wanted.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest gratitude is to the Almighty God, Lord and Saviour, who deserve all the honour, glory and praise, for He has led me all through and has done it all.

The (Master and Business Administration) MBA program has been a very long, taxing and challenging journey, the successful completion of which has been the result of the support and encouragement from many quarters. I am indebted not only to people who gave me the inspiration to take up this program but also to those who gave me the guidance and assistance on what I have reported here.

My heartfelt gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor Dr. Zachary Awino Bolo who conscientiously and patiently guided and encouraged me throughout the project. His advice, support, and constructive criticism throughout the study enabled me complete my project in time. I am convinced that without his support, this study would not have been a success.

Most especially, I am grateful to the management of Oxfam Great Britain (GB)-Kenya for granting me the permission to do my study in the organization. More specifically, my big “Thank You” goes to the management and staff who agreed to share their experiences and opinions; and patiently answered all questions. Their time and effort are acknowledged with gratitude. I wish them God’s blessings. Whereas I acknowledge input from all these persons in the research project, I take responsibility of any deficiencies and flaws therein.
Strategy implementation is the process of transforming strategic intentions into actions, then into acceptable results. Successful strategy implementation is as critical and difficult as the strategic choice. It requires consideration of the resources to be used, human resource requirements, structure, systems, and other variables. This study focused on the Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector and within the context of a multi-programme international NGO: Oxfam GB-Kenya. Among strategic management studies that have been done, very few have focused on the implementation aspect. Furthermore, these few ones have laid their focus more on other contexts other than the multi-programme NGO context. This study was designed to answer the questions: what are the strategy implementation practices adopted by Oxfam GB-Kenya in implementing its strategies?; and what are the challenges that Oxfam GB-Kenya faces during the implementation of its strategies? Consequently, it purposed to achieve two objectives: to establish the strategy implementation practices adopted by Oxfam GB-Kenya; and to identify the challenges encountered by Oxfam GB-Kenya in implementing its strategies. The major findings of the study were that Oxfam GB-Kenya adopts various practices in implementing its strategies. Embedded in the organization's broad action plans and strategic thrusts are practices such as planning and control systems, employee empowerment, developing policies, putting in place optimum systems and procedures, setting performance targets, and mobilization and sensitization of local communities. The study established that whilst the practices that Oxfam GB-Kenya uses support its strategies, inadequate resources, unsupportive aspects of organizational structure, high employee turn-over, lack of involvement of strategy implementers during strategy formulation, most staffs not willing to work in harsh environments, some resistance to change by staffs, resistance from local communities to some project typologies, systemic failure of protocol within the organization, and donor conditions and/or different priorities among others were major obstacles to successful strategy implementation in the organization. This study is presented in five chapters each with various sections through which the researcher has tried to discuss the above issues. This study is especially helpful to Oxfam GB-Kenya and other similar organizations operating in Kenya. It should be particularly helpful to the organizations' strategic teams and managers of multi-programme NGOs whose responsibilities include formulating and implementing strategies.
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>GB</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
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<td>PEST</td>
<td>Political, Economical, Social and Technological</td>
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<td>ERP’S</td>
<td>Enterprise Resource Planning System</td>
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<td>HR</td>
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<td>CV</td>
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<td>KAS</td>
<td>Knowledge, Attitudinal and Skills</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
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<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Commission Humanitarian Office</td>
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<td>OFDA</td>
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<td>ICPAK</td>
<td>Institute of Certified Public Accountants</td>
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<td>HCM</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Organizations, whether for profit or non-profit, private or public have found it necessary in recent years to engage in strategic management in order to achieve their corporate goals. The environments in which they operate have become not only increasingly uncertain but also more tightly interconnected. This requires a threefold response from these organizations. They are required to think strategically as never before, need to translate their insight into effective strategies to cope with their changed circumstances and lastly, to develop rationales necessary to lay the groundwork for adopting and implementing strategies in this ever-changing environment (Bryson, 1995).

1.1.1 The Strategic Management Process

Strategic management refers to the managerial process of forming a strategic vision, setting objectives, crafting a strategy, implementing and executing the strategy, and then over time initiating whatever corrective adjustments in the vision, objectives, strategy, and execution are appropriate. Strategic management is a process in the sense that strategies are the outcomes of careful objective analysis and planning (Lynch, 2000). It has been considered by Hofer (1984) as a process which deals with fundamental organizational renewal and growth with development of strategies, structures, and systems necessary to effectively manage the strategy formulation and implementation process. A strategy thus entails managerial choices among alternatives and signals organizational commitment to specific markets, competitive approaches, and ways of operating (Thompson and Strickland, 2003).

As a process, strategic management consists of different phases which are sequential in nature (Kazmi, 2002). These phases include: establishing the hierarchy of strategic intent, formulation of strategies, implementation of strategies, and performing strategic evaluation and control (Andrews, 1971). Strategic management involves three broad considerations: strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategy implementation. Strategic analysis assesses the nature of the environment; takes an audit of environmental influences; the organization’s competitive position as well as key opportunities and threats. Strategic choice includes identifying bases of strategic options to determine the strategic direction. Finally, strategy implementation deals with the translation of strategy into action (Pearce and Robinson, 2000).
Strategies are a critical element in organizational functioning, but whereas most organizations have good strategies, successful strategy implementation remains a major challenge. The notion of strategy implementation might seem quite straightforward; a strategy is formulated and then implemented. In the contrary, transforming strategies into action is a far more complex, difficult and challenging undertaking and therefore not as straightforward as one would assume (Aaltonen and Ikavalka, 2001). Because implementation of strategies remains the greatest bottleneck, many organizations are not able to address their goals adequately.

Pearce and Robinson (2003) view strategy implementation as a set of decisions and actions that result in the translation of the strategic thought into organizational action where an organization moves from planning its work to working its plan in order to achieve the set objectives. It is viewed by Thompson and Strickland (1989), as acting on what has to be done internally to put the chosen (formulated) strategy into place and achieve the targeted results. Hunger and Wheelen (1995), see it as the process by which management translates strategies and policies into action through the development of programs, budgets, and procedures. This process might involve changes within the overall culture, structure, and/or the management system of the organization. Its purpose is to complete the transition from strategic planning to strategic management by incorporating adopted strategies throughout the relevant system (Bryson, 1995).

Organizations today face major unpredictable changes that make strategy implementation more difficult and complex than in the past (Harvey, 1988). Holman (1999), writing on the importance of strategy implementation points out that 80% of organization directors believe that they have good strategies but only 14% believe that they implement them well. Research by Mintzberg and Quinn (1991); David (1997); and Wang (2000) among others, also indicate that a considerable proportion (over 65%) of organizational strategies fail to get implemented effectively. Researchers (Alexander, 1991; Giles, 1991; Aosa, 1992; Lares-Mankki, 1994; Galpin, 1998; Beer and Eisenstat, 2000; Koske, 2003; and Muthuiya, 2004 among others) have revealed a number of problems in strategy implementation. These include weak management roles, lack of communication, lacking commitment to strategy, and unawareness or misunderstanding of the strategy. Other problems are unaligned systems, structures, and resources; poor coordination and sharing of responsibilities, inadequate capabilities, competing activities, and uncontrollable factors in the external environment.
Pearce and Robinson (1997) observe that the transition from strategy formulation to strategy implementation gives rise to four interrelated concerns. These concerns include identifying action plans and short-term objectives; initiating specific functional tactics; communicating policies that empower people in the organization; and committing to continuous improvement. Just being able to conceive bold new strategies is not enough. An organization’s management must also be able to translate the organization’s strategic vision into concrete steps that ‘get things done’. Strategy implementation, as viewed by Thompson and Strickland (1998), is acting on what has to be done internally to put the chosen (formulated) strategy into place and achieve the targeted results.

Whereas strategy formulation is largely entrepreneurial activity, implementing strategy is largely an internal administrative activity. Whereas successful strategy formulation depends on business vision, market analysis, and entrepreneurial judgement; successful implementation depends on working through others, organising, motivating, culture building, and creating strong fits between strategy and how the organization does things. Implementing strategy is a tougher, more time-consuming challenge than crafting strategy. It entails converting the strategic plan into action then into results. Implementation is successful if the company achieves its strategic objectives and targeted levels of financial performance. What makes it so demanding is the wide sweep of managerial activities that have to be attended to, the many ways managers can tackle each activity, the skill that it takes to get a variety of initiatives launched and moving, and the resistance to change that has to be overcome (Thompson and Strickland, 1993)

1.1.2 Overview of Oxfam GB Kenya
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be essentially defined as organizations that are constituted outside the state but that act in the public sphere. The very generic and all-encompassing term-NGO is derived from that historically, state or government organizations that have been the ones discharging public duty or public policy. NGOs, therefore, constitute of a variety of very dissimilar organizations that are tied together by their ‘public duty’ and by not being part of government (Ndegwa, 1993).
Oxfam GB started its operations in Kenya as an international NGO way back in 1963 when Kenya earned her independence. Oxfam supports local partners working with subsistence farmers in Western Kenya and the Coast, pastoralists in northern Kenya, and in informal urban settlements in Nairobi and Mombasa. It also responds to emergencies in these areas where the need arises. Over the years, Oxfam has been very active in formulating and implementing programs in Kenya that are geared toward improving the quality of life of the marginalized communities and groups of people. Hence, the organization has programs in a number of areas including Pastoralism, Peace-building and Conflict Management, Humanitarian Assistance, Education, and Sustainable Livelihoods. In implementing these programmes, Oxfam works with government, private sector, civil society and communities to significantly reduce, poverty, inequity and vulnerability in Kenya.

Oxfam’s Pastoralist Programme was started in the early 1980s as a disaster response in northern Kenya. Today the programme focuses on empowering pastoralist communities to overcome poverty and insecurity. With respect to peace building and conflict management, Oxfam has been implementing peace-building and conflict management activities in northern Kenya since the early 1990s. The organization’s humanitarian assistance entails providing emergency assistance to people affected by food shortages resulting from an ongoing drought in the northern and north eastern parts of Kenya. It is now scaling up as the situation deteriorates further. To promote and enhance sustainable livelihoods, Oxfam works with partners to help poor farming communities improve their livelihoods, by improving farming methods, environmental conservation, supporting alternative income generating activities and improving access to markets which remain inefficient due to poor infrastructure and lack of good market research. Oxfam works to give children in poor urban settlements and children in pastoralist communities access to basic education through Urban Education Programme and Pastoralist Education Programme. The organization comes up with strategies that should be implemented in order to achieve acceptable results in each of these areas.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

Just being able to conceive bold new strategies is not enough. An organization’s management must also be able to translate the organization’s strategic vision into concrete steps that ‘get things done’. Whereas successful strategy formulation depends on business vision, market analysis, and entrepreneurial judgement; successful implementation depends on working through others, organising, motivating, culture building, and creating strong fits between strategy and how the organization does things. Lack of these ingredients makes strategy implementation more challenging than strategy formulation.

The presence and operations of international NGOs in Kenya continue to have considerable impact in the socio-economic and political development in the country. The role played by these organizations cannot be downplayed, and hence, the NGO sector in general have come in to fill the gap between the private and public sectors in offering service to the public. However, the context in which these organizations operate has become more dynamic than ever before so much so that individual organizations like Oxfam need to position themselves appropriately in order to effectively deliver on its mission. According to Kiruthi (2000), “all organizations must grapple with the challenges of the changing environment in which they operate”. Various organizations develop and/or formulate their strategies in different ways. Whatever the methods, each organization ends up with what is called a strategy.

Whereas strategic management process has been widely researched by management scholars in Kenya (Aosa, 1992; Kombo, 1993; Kangoro, 1998; Gekonge, 1999; Bwibo, 2000; Awino, 2001; Warsame, 2002; Koske, 2003; Muthuiya, 2004; Michael, 2004; Waruhui, 2004, Machuki, 2005; Wambugu, 2006 among others), only a few studies (Aosa, 1992; Awino, 2001; Koske, 2003; Musyoki, 2003; Muthuiya, 2004, Machuki, 2005; and Wambugu, 2006) have been done on the component of strategy implementation in Kenya, yet it is a crucial aspect in organizational strategic management process. Also, most studies in strategic management in Kenya have dealt with for-profit organizations with a few considering the non-profit organizations, including NGOs.

In general, strategy implementation in international NGOs has not received the same attention as the other components of strategic management and hence significant gaps exist in knowledge, which this study aims at bridging. In view of the fact that strategy implementation
is a key component of strategic management process, increased research in this area to unveil problems associated with implementation of organizational strategies is important. This study focuses on the challenges to strategy implementation at Oxfam because of the multiplicity of its programmes that touch on different sectors of the economy. This is coupled by the fact the organization has adopted a “one programme approach” in which all the programmes are carried out as a package. Specifically, this study seeks to answer two questions. First, what are is the of strategy implementation process at Oxfam GB Kenya?, and second, what are the challenges that Oxfam GB Kenya faces when implementing its strategies?

1.3 Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study were:

i. To determine the strategy implementation process at Oxfam GB Kenya,

ii. To determine the challenges encountered by Oxfam GB Kenya in implementing its strategies.

1.4 Importance of the Study
The findings of this study may go towards filling existing information gap on strategy implementation and its challenges in international NGOs in Kenya. More specifically, it is envisaged that the study will: (1) Provide information to future scholars who might need to research on the challenges to strategy implementation international NGOs in Kenya and beyond, (2) Bridge the gap in knowledge on strategy implementation among international NGOs in Kenya and where necessary make recommendations for further research, (3) Provide vital information to facilitate international NGOs in Kenya to design appropriate methods geared towards improving their strategy implementation, and (4) Inform the management of Oxfam GB Kenya on how to successfully implement its strategies and how it could mitigate the challenges it faces if any.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature that is pertinent to the subject under study. Both theoretical and empirical literature that relate to strategic management in general and strategy implementation in particular is presented with a view to provide the basis for identifying the variables of study.

2.2 The Concept of Strategic Management

Thompson and Strickland, (2003) define strategic management as the managerial process of forming a strategic vision, setting objectives, crafting a strategy, implementing and executing the strategy, and then over time initiating whatever corrective adjustments in the vision, objectives, strategy, and execution that are appropriate. According to Pearce and Robinson (1997), strategic management as a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve a company’s objectives. According to Ansoff and McDonnel (1990), strategic management is a systematic approach of managing strategic change which consists of positioning of the firm through strategy and capability planning, real-time strategic response through issue management and systematic management of resistance during strategic implementation.

Johnson and Scholes (2002) look at strategic management from the perspective of what it includes. According to them, strategic management includes strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategy implementation. Strategic analysis is concerned with understanding the strategic position of the organization in terms of its external environment, internal resources and competences, and expectations and influence of stakeholders. Strategic choice involves understanding the underlying basis guiding future strategy, generating strategic options for evaluation and selecting from among them. Strategic implementation is concerned with translation of strategy into organizational action through organizational structure and design, resource planning and management of strategic change.

Strategic management is concerned with strengthening the long-term viability and effectiveness of an organization in terms of both substantive strategy and management capacity. It integrates all other management processes to provide a systematic, coherent, and effective approach to establishing, attaining, monitoring, and updating an organization's
strategic objectives. It is integrative in the sense of focusing attention across functional
divisions and throughout various organizational levels on common goals, themes, and issues;
tyling internal management processes and program initiatives to desired outcomes in the
external environment; and linking operational, tactical, day-to-day decisions to longer run
strategic objectives (Poister and Streib, 1999).

2.3 Strategic Management Practices
Strategic management is a process of determining the long-run direction and performance of
an organization by ensuring careful formulation, proper implementation, and continuous
evaluation of the strategic plan (Byars and Rue, 2005; Pearce and Robinson, 1997). It is a way
of considering; deciding and realizing already formulated strategies. Strategic management
can also be seen as "... the ongoing process of ensuring a competitively superior fit between
the organization and its ever-changing environment" (Teece, 1984).

The development and refinement of strategy is achieved through the constant interplay
between planning, doing and evaluation. The organization has to act, has to go beyond
whatever is given and has to try new ways of giving effect to its vision and of impacting on its
context. It has to monitor its actions, learn from its successes and failures, and even learn
what is meant by success and failure. These things are not given at the outset. It has both to
see what works and what does not work well as to reflect in depth about what it means by its
discernable impact, and what, perhaps unforeseen consequences this impact releases (Kaplan,
1998). Given such evaluation it has to rethink, re-plan, re-strategize, improve and adapt its
methodology as well as its understanding of its context, its vision, and its relationships with
others.

Strategic management consists of strategic planning, capability planning and management of
change (Ansoff and McDonnell, 1990). It is also a combination of intuition, experience, and
analysis as well as power and politics (Karemu, 1993). The goal of strategic management is to
build and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage (Porter, 1980). Practicing strategic
management does not ensure that an organization meets all change successfully, but it
increases the chance. Strategic management process is composed of three major phases:
Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation.
2.3.1 Formulation

Strategy formulation is the entire management function of establishing organization direction, setting objectives, and devising a managerial game plan for the organization to pursue (Thompson and Strickland, 1989). According to Bowman (1987), strategy formulation is a decision making process which is primarily concerned with: the development of organization’s objective, the commitment of its resources, and environmental constraints; so as to achieve its objectives. Hunger and Wheelen (1995), view it as the development of long-range plans for the effective management of environmental opportunities and threats in light of corporate strengths and weaknesses, up to and including defining the corporate mission, specifying achievable objectives, deciding strategies, and setting policy guidelines.

There are various views of strategy. The rational analytical view regards strategy formulation as a formal and disciplined process leading to a well defined organizational wide effort aimed at the complete specification of organizational strategies (Hax and Majluf, 1991). This view (also called design school) has been supported by other authors like Ansoff (1984) and Porter (1980), where strategy is regarded as a deliberate effort, which is formalized with the objective of defining the long-term direction of an organization.

The emergent view of strategy (also called the process school) considers strategies as emerging from the environmental conditions and circumstances and thus strategy is constantly adjusted with time in what Mintzberg and Waters (1985) refer to as "strategic learning". Mintzberg et al (1998) draw a distinction between planned or deliberate strategies and emergent ones. They argue that deliberate strategy focuses on control, making sure that managerial intentions are realized in action while emergent strategy emphasizes on learning; coming to understand through the taking of actions. Thus, the process of emergent strategy can continue until the organization converges on the pattern that becomes its strategy.

Strategy formulation process has been viewed by Hofer and Schendel (1978), as a special kind of problem solving process for defining an organization’s strategy. Their review of major prescriptive strategy formulation models indicates that they all include, either explicitly or implicitly, the following steps: environmental analysis, resource analysis, gap analysis, strategic alternatives, strategy identification, strategy evaluation, and finally strategic choice.
Formulating strategy is not just a one-task event. It is a process that is carried out through the tasks of: developing a strategic vision, establishing objectives, and finally crafting a strategy.

**Developing a Strategic Vision:** A strategic vision is a roadmap of an organization's future; providing specifics about technology and customer focus, the geographic and product markets to be pursued, the capabilities it plans to develop, and the kind of organization that management is trying to create. It thus reflects management's aspirations for the organization and its business, providing a panoramic view of "where we are going" and giving specifics about its future business plans. Drawing a carefully reasoned conclusion about what the organization's long-term direction should be pushes managers to take a hard look at the organization's external and internal environment and form a clear sense of whether and how its present business needs will change over the next five years and beyond. After the Vision Statement, management should come up with the organization's **Mission Statement**; that which broadly describes an organization's present capabilities, customer focus, activities and business makeup (Thompson and Strickland, 2003).

**Situational Analysis:** This seeks to understand an organization's current strategic position. Managers must monitor both the societal and task environment to detect strategic forces that are likely to have a strong impact on their organizations' success or failure (Wheelen and Hunger, 1995). Situational analysis comprises the external analysis and internal analysis of an organization (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). The simplest way to conduct environmental scanning is by SWOT analysis (Wheelen and Hunger, 1998). SWOT analysis is the process of carefully inspecting the business and its environment through the various dimensions of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

According to Pearce and Robinson (1997), strengths are key competitive distinctions that would give an organization an edge over other organizations with the same product lines, while weaknesses are considered to be a lack of or limit to resources that are necessary to accomplish the objective at hand. Opportunities are "grossly favorable situations" upon which a firm could capitalize and improve their standing. Threats are situations that can be detrimental to the organization.

Another tool for situational analysis is the PEST (Political, Economic, Social, and Technological) analysis. It is a tool to understand the environment in which an organization
operates. PEST analysis enables managers to summarize the most important influences of the business environment and to evaluate the potential impact of these influences on the organization. The Five Forces Analysis established by Porter (1980) is also used in situational analysis. It identifies the forces that affect the level of competition in an organization's industry. According to Porter (1980), whether an industry produces a commodity or a service, or whether it is global or domestic, competition depends on five forces namely: the threat of new entrants; the existence of substitute products or services; the bargaining power of suppliers; the bargaining power of customers or buyers; and existing rivalry within the industry. Out of the situational analysis, the managers identify key strategic issues facing the organization around which objectives are established.

**Establishing Objectives:** Objectives are an organization's performance targets— the results and outcomes it wants to achieve. They function as yardsticks for tracking an organization's performance and progress. The purpose of setting objectives is to convert managerial statements of strategic vision and mission into specific performance targets. Objectives represent a managerial commitment to achieving specific performance targets within a specific time frame; they are a call for results that connect directly to the organization’s strategic vision and core values. Managers of best performing organizations tend to set objectives that require stretch and disciplined effort. The challenge of trying to achieve bold, aggressive performance targets pushes an organization to be more inventive, to exhibit some urgency in improving both its financial performance and its business position, and to be more intentional and focused in its actions (Thompson and Strickland, 2003).

Objective setting is required of all managers. Every unit in an organization needs concrete, measurable performance targets that contribute meaningfully toward achieving organizational objectives. When organization-wide objectives are broken down into specific targets for each organizational unit and lower-level managers are held accountable for achieving them, a results-oriented climate builds throughout the organization. Organizations require two very distinct types of performance yardsticks: those relating to financial performance and those relating to strategic performance. Financial objectives relate to financial performance targets management has established for the organization to achieve while strategic objectives relate to outcomes that strengthen an organization's overall business position and competitive vitality.
Thompson and Strickland (2003) posit that objective setting needs to be more of a top-down than a bottom-up process in order to guide lower-level managers and organizational units toward outcomes that support the achievement of overall business and organizational objectives.

**Crafting Strategy:** According to Thompson and Strickland (2003), an organization’s strategy deals with how to make management’s strategic vision for the organization a reality. It represents the game plan for moving the organization into an attractive business position and building a sustainable competitive advantage. A strategy thus reflects managerial choices among alternatives and signals organizational commitment to particular products, markets, competitive approaches, and ways of operating the organization.

Strategy making brings into play the critical managerial issue of how to achieve the targeted results in light of the organization’s situation and prospects. Objectives are the “ends” and strategies are the “means” of achieving them. The “how’s” of an organization’s strategy are typically a blend of (1) deliberate and purposeful actions, (2) as needed reactions to unanticipated developments and fresh market conditions and competitive pressures, and (3) the collective learning of the organization over time; not just insights gained from its experiences but, more important, the internal activities it has learned to perform quite well and the competitive capabilities it has developed. The strategy making task thus involves developing an intended strategy; adapting it as events unfold (adaptive/reactive strategy); and linking the firm’s business approaches, actions, and competitive initiatives closely to its competencies and capabilities. (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985; Hamel and Prahalad, 1990).

Therefore, an organization’s strategy evolves over time, emerging from the pattern of actions already initiated, the plans managers have for fresh moves, and the ongoing need to react to new or unforeseen developments. An organization’s actual strategy usually turns out to be both more or less than the planned strategy as new strategy features are added and others are deleted in response to newly emerging conditions (Thompson and Strickland, 2003).
2.3.2 Implementation

Pearce and Robinson (2003) look at strategy implementation as a set of decisions and actions that result in the translation of the strategic thought into organizational action where an organization moves from planning its work to working its plan in order to achieve the set objectives. It is viewed by Thompson and Strickland (1989), as acting on what has to be done internally to put the chosen (formulated) strategy into place and achieve the targeted results. Hunger and Wheelen (1995), see it as the process by which management translates strategies and policies into action through the development of programs, budgets, and procedures. This process might involve changes within the overall culture, structure, and/or the management system of the organization. Its purpose is to complete the transition from strategic planning to strategic management by incorporating adopted strategies throughout the relevant system (Bryson, 1995).

Strategy implementation includes considerations of who will be responsible for strategy implementation; the most suitable organizational structure that should support the implementation of strategy (Pettigrew, 1988; Lynch, 2000); the need to adapt the systems used to manage the organization (Johnson and Scholes, 2002); the key tasks to be carried out and desirable changes in the resource mix of the organization as well as the mandate of each department in the organization and the information systems to be put in place to monitor progress and resource planning (Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Implementation may also take into account the need for retraining the workforce and management of change (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).

Implementing strategy is largely an administrative activity and successful implementation depends on working through others, organizing, motivating, culture building, and creating strong fits between strategy and how the organization does things (Thompson and Strickland, 2003). It calls for alteration of existing procedures and policies. In most organizations, strategy implementation requires a shift in responsibility from strategists to divisional and functional managers (Kazmi, 2002). It is therefore important to ensure successful implementation. The implementers of strategy should therefore be fully involved in strategy formulation so that they can own the process.
Pearce and Robinson (1997) observe that the transition from strategy formulation to strategy implementation gives rise to four interrelated concerns. These concerns include identifying action plans and short-term objectives; initiating specific functional tactics; communicating policies that empower people in the organization; and committing to continuous improvement.

Action plans and short-term objectives translate long-range aspirations into current year’s actions. If well developed, these objectives provide clarity, a powerful motivator and facilitator of effective strategy implementation. Functional tactics translate organizational strategy into daily activities people need to execute. Functional managers participate in the development of these tactics, and their participation in turn, helps clarify what their units are expected to do in implementing the organization’s strategy. Policies are empowerment tools that simplify decision making by empowering operating managers and their subordinates. Policies can empower the “doers” in an organization by reducing the time required to decide and act. Finally, continuous improvement is a quality-oriented issue where functional managers seek best practices in each area’s activities which keeps organizations current, competitive, and value oriented (Pearce and Robinson, 2005).

In as much as managers’ approaches need to be tailor-made for the situation, Thompson and Strickland (2003) point out that there are certain bases that have to be covered no matter what the organization’s circumstances: building an organization capable to carry out the strategy successfully; developing budgets to steer ample resources into those value chain activities critical to strategic success; establishing strategy supportive policies and procedures; instituting best practices; installing information, communication, e-commerce, and operating systems; tying rewards and incentives to the achievement of performance objectives and good strategy execution; creating a strategy-supportive work environment and corporate culture; and exerting the internal leadership needed to drive implementation forward and keep improving on how the strategy is being executed.

2.3.3 Evaluation and Control
This is the process by which an organization’s activities and performance results are monitored and actual performance compared with desired performance. Control and evaluation processes help to monitor continuously the organization’s progress toward its long-range objectives and mission. Control and evaluation enable an organization to examine how
its strategy has been implemented as well as the outcomes of the strategy (Coulter, 2005). The strategic management process should also be examined; its strengths and weaknesses noted, and modifications suggested to improve the next round of strategic planning (Bryson, 1995). Control is needed to assure that performance is as expected. Control involves the periodic review of the inputs, activities, and outputs undertaken throughout the strategic management process. If change in the strategic plan is needed or redeployment of resources is necessary, change should be made as quickly as possible, even to reworking the entire strategic plan (Johnson, 2003). Strategic control is concerned with tracking strategy during implementation, detecting problems or changes and making necessary adjustments (Pearce and Robinson, 2005). It is a crucial phase for purposes of attaining a successful organizational goal.

Evaluation is judgment on the effectiveness of an organization’s strategy. It concerns itself with such questions as: did the strategy meet the objectives or should revision be made? Where are problems likely to occur? There is need for constant surveillance by the intelligence unit and feedback to the interested parties (Johnson, 2003). This is important so that corrective action can be taken. Ultimately, if there is a gap between the actual and the desired objectives, it should be closed according to the strategy. Continuous evaluation and responding to internal and external environmental changes is what strategic management is all about.

2.4 The Concept of Strategy Implementation

Implementation research has devised prescriptions based on logic, developed administrative tools, studied factors that influence adoption, and explored how changes are put into effect (Nutt, 1986). The prescriptive approach (e.g. Bennis, 1973; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979) advocates the use of particular mechanisms to make changes. For example, Bourgeois and Brodwin (1984) presented commander, change, collaborator, cultural, and coercive models as alternative implementation approaches for executives. Nutt (1983) offered a contingency model that defined sixteen environments in terms of differences in climate and fitted implementation approaches described in the literature to each environment. The prescriptive literature has offered many useful ideas for implementation, but these ideas are based on logic rather than on data that supports the use of specific guidelines, recommendations, and assertions.
A brilliant strategy that cannot be implemented creates no real value. Effective implementation begins during strategy formulation when questions of “how to do it?” should be considered in parallel with “what to do?” Effective implementation results when organization resources and actions are tied to strategic priorities, and when key success factors are identified and performance measures and reporting are aligned (Deloitte and Touche, 2003). Implementing strategy is largely an administrative activity and successful implementation depends on working through others, organising, motivating, culture building, and creating strong fits between strategy and how the organization does things (Thompson and Strickland, 2003). It calls for alteration of existing procedures and policies. In most organizations, strategy implementation requires a shift in responsibility from strategists to divisional and functional managers (Kazmi, 2002). It is therefore important to ensure successful implementation. The implementers of strategy should therefore be fully involved in strategy formulation so that they can own the process.

Management issues on strategy implementation include establishing annual objectives, devising policies, allocating resources, altering an existing organization structure, restructuring and reengineering, revising reward and incentive plans, minimizing resistance to change, matching managers with strategy, developing a strategy supportive culture, developing an effective human resource function, and if necessary, downsizing (David, 2003). Aosa (1992) points out that once strategies have been developed, they need to be implemented; they are of no value unless they are effectively translated into action. However, poor implementation of an appropriate strategy may cause that strategy to fail (Kiruthi, 2001). An excellent implementation plan will not only cause success of an appropriate strategy, but can also rescue an inappropriate strategy (Hunger and Wheelen, 1994). Strategy implementation is therefore crucial to effective management (McCarthy et al., 1996).

The implementation process of a strategy typically impacts every part of the organization structure, from the biggest organizational unit to the smallest frontline work group (Thompson and Strickland, 1998). They point that every manager has to think through the question “what has to be done in my area to implement our part of the strategic plan and what should I do to get these things accomplished?” All managers therefore become strategic implementers in their areas of authority and responsibility and all employees should be involved.
Transforming strategies into action is a far more complex and difficult task. Implementing strategy is a tougher, more time-consuming challenge than crafting strategy. It entails converting the strategic plan into action then into results. Similarly, it is always more difficult to do something (strategy implementation) than to say you are going to do it (strategy formulation) (Thompson and Strickland, 2003; Aaltonen, 2001; David, 2003). It does not therefore automatically follow strategy formulation; it exhibits its own resistance, which can invalidate the planning efforts (Ansoff and McDonnell, 1990). Implementation is successful if the company achieves its strategic objectives and targeted levels of financial performance. What makes it too demanding is the wide sweep of managerial activities that have to be attended to, the many ways managers can tackle each activity, the skill that it takes to get a variety of initiatives launched and moving, and the resistance to change that has to be overcome (Thompson and Strickland, 2003).

Clearly, the implementation of a strategy is not a straightforward process, as one would assume. Bryson (1995) asserts that the earlier steps in the strategic management process are designed to ensure as much as possible that adopted strategies and plans do not contain any major flaws, but it is almost inconceivable that some important difficulties will not arise as strategies are put into practice. Alexander (1985) identifies inadequate planning and communication as two major obstacles to successful implementation of strategies. Others are ineffective coordination of implementation activities, insufficient capabilities of employees, inadequate training given to lower level employees, lack of clear responsibility being fixed for implementation, lack of support from other levels of management etc (Al-Ghamdi, 1998; Okumus, 2003; Sterling, 2003; Awino, 2001, Koske, 2003; Muthuiya’ 2004; Michael, 2004).

Thompson and Strickland (2003) state that strategy implementation challenge is to create a series of tight fits between strategy and the organization’s competencies, capabilities and structure; between strategy and budgetary allocation; between strategy and policy; between strategy and internal support systems; between strategy and reward structure; and between strategy and the corporate culture. However, the problems of strategy implementation relate to situations or processes that are unique to a particular organization even though some problems are common to all organizations. The key decision makers should therefore pay regular attention to the implementation process in order to focus attention on any difficulties and on how to address them.
2.5 Approaches to Strategy Implementation

There are many treatments of implementation in the literature based on cognitive style (Churchman & Schainblatt, 1965), incentives (Daft & Becker, 1978), predicting when change will occur (March & Simon, 1958), designing organizations in which change prospects are enhanced (Burns & Stalker, 1971), and describing an environment in which innovation seems likely (Zaltman, Duncan, & Holbek, 1973). To select an implementation approach, Nutt (1983) pointed out that the implementation agent should assess the climate in which implementation takes place. Climate is defined by four organizational or work unit characteristics: centralization, complexity, production, and efficiency. An implementation approach is made up of a technique reinforced by the use of power to encourage plan adoption. Power bases and techniques are applied to aid the implementer in managing the planning process. Implementation techniques can be unilateral, manipulative, and delegated as identified and discussed by Nutt (1983).

A unilateral approach requires the implementer merely to announce the plan and to specify the behaviour needed to comply. Unilateral techniques can be used in either the planner or the change agent managed planning process. The implementer can draw on his/her power and announce the change overtly, prescribing the expected behaviour. They move through four phases. The next phase is enacted if a former phase fails to achieve the desired results. The implementer begins by issuing an official edict by memoranda, formal presentation, or on-the-job instruction. Edicts are task-oriented, assuming that people are rational and will see how the change benefits the organization.

If problems are encountered, demonstration and persuasion (Greiner, 1970) are used. Attempts are made to show the reticent that the plan works and (implicitly) that it falls within the authority of the implementer to require plan adoption. When this demonstration is made, acceptance often rises. When people remain reticent, or fail to comply, stronger measures are required. According to Greiner (1970), a replacement approach follows the edict and removes people who are blocking implementation. There are two types of premises behind the replacement tactic. First, making examples of a few may coax others into line. Second, problems may be centred in just a few people who irrationally will resist the change and must be removed. If replacement fails, the implementer can resort to structural changes in the organization. The formal organization's or unit's structure is redesigned so that people who are
likely to support the change are moved into key positions within the structure. Manipulative techniques are more subtle, seeking to illuminate a problem and then steer users toward new practices. These techniques must be applied through a change agent managed process. There are two manipulative approaches: the game scenario and the unfreeze-refreeze technique. Either can be used in a change agent managed process. The game scenario (Bardach, 1977) construes the implementation process as a game. The metaphor of a game is used to identify the players so that their stakes, conditions for winning, and definitions of fraud (which indicates notions of fair play) can be visualized. Any or all of these factors may come into play during a particular implementation attempt. Games are described to dramatize opportunities to distort the process of implementation and to provide insight into how to deal with each type of game. Games have been classified by Bardach as resource based, objective modifying, evasion of control, and incomplete adoption.

The unfreeze-refreeze technique stemmed from the work of Lewin and Schein and has been shaped over the years by OD specialists (Huse, 1975). The procedure has three steps: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Unfreezing introduces a disequilibrium into a current situation seen as stable. The change step (which encompasses planning stages one to four) provides new information and ideas so that those affected can form new perceptions, gain new skills, and adopt a new set of behavioural patterns. To refreeze, these new behavioural patterns are reinforced to create a new stability. Four change mechanisms are used by the change agent to take the implementation group through each step. These factors are objectives, social ties, self-esteem, and motives. The change agent acts on each factor during each step of the process.

Delegative/Participative techniques permit those affected to help formulate the terms of the plan, hoping to co-opt the participants. Participation managed planning is involvement based, using a shared or delegated role for participants to enhance plan acceptance. Participation is voluntary in a participative technique but mandatory in a manipulative technique, making these processes incompatible. Delegative/participative techniques call for partial (or full) involvement of those affected by planning, seeking to co-opt them. Acceptance is promoted by having key individuals participate in planning groups or by canvassing plan users, sponsors, managers, and others early in the process to determine their concerns or demands. Suggestions from stakeholders are sought, including participation in creating solutions, hoping to get their acquiescence if not their wholehearted acceptance.
2.6 Practices of Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is not a one-touch activity in any organization. The process of implementing strategy in organization is executed through a number of practices. The practices can be said to be the controls on the firm's operations thus they either hinder or help in translation of strategy into action. In reality, a blend of these practices operates but some may dominate others. In organising for success, structure is one of the key ingredients. However, regardless of any structure, organizations cannot work effectively without the formal and informal organizational strategy practices (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). These practices include direct supervision, planning and control systems, performance targets, market mechanisms, social cultural processes, and self control and personal motivation.

Direct supervision entails the direct control of strategic decisions by one or a few individuals. This is a process commonly found in small organizations though can also exist in larger organizations experiencing little change, and where the business complexity is not too great for small number of managers to control from the centre (Feurer and Chaharbaghi, 1995). It is usually found in family businesses and parts of public sector known to have hands-on political environment. This process may also be appropriate when there is a major change like major transformation taking place in the business environment. This threatens the organization's survival thus calling for autocratic control through direct supervision.

Planning and control systems involves where the successful implementation of strategies is achieved through systems that plan and control the allocation of resources and monitor their utilization (Freedman, 2003). A plan covers all parts of an organization showing clearly in financial terms the level of resources allocated to each unit as well as the detailed ways in which the resource was to be used. Various ways in which planning supports strategy include: Top down planning accompanied by standardization of work processes or output; Use of IT through the introduction of Enterprise Resource Planning Systems (ERPs) which aim to integrate the entire business systems; Use of a formula for controlling resource allocation within organization where some room for bargaining and fine tuning around the formula may be used as need arises. Performance targets relate to the outputs of an organization or part of it such as product quality, prices or its outcomes such as profit (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Unlike the planning process where targets tend to be about resource inputs, performance
targets relate to outputs. An organization's performance is judged either internally or externally based on its ability to meet the targets, though within specified boundaries it remains free on how targets should be achieved. This approach may be appropriate in situations where the corporate centre controls the strategies and performance of business units to ensure that corporate objectives are achieved. Performance targets are usually measured using performance indicators, which should be both quantitative and qualitative in nature (Pechlaner and Sauerwein, 2002).

Market mechanisms involve some formalized system of contracting for resources or inputs from other parts of an organization and for supplying outputs to other parts of an organization. It has been a dominant process through which organizations relate to their external suppliers, distributors and competitors in most sectors of free market economics (Freedman, 2003). This may begin in a small way in competitive bidding such as the creation of an investment bank or top sliced resources held at the corporate centre and the business units can bid for additional resources for their projects. It is a successful process for supporting innovative ventures especially during the early stages.

Social cultural processes are concerned with organizational standardization of norms. The historical formal processes of coordination might have been successful in the slower moving, less complex environment (Sterling, 2003). However, these may be inadequate to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The social processes and self-controls within organizations are of major importance and they help in delivering successful strategies. They are particularly important in organizations facing complex and dynamic environments because the fostering of innovation is crucial to survive and succeed in these circumstances. It should be allowed to flourish through the social processes, which exist within and between the informal processes whereby individuals and groups interact to share and integrate their knowledge.

Lastly, self control and personal motivation achieve the integration of knowledge and coordination of activities by the direct interaction of individuals without supervision (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Motivation of individuals and their self-control has become increasingly important to performance due to the rapidity of change, increasing complexity and the need to exploit knowledge. Managers need to ensure that individuals have the channels to interact, such as IT and communication infrastructure, and that social processes created by this interaction are regulated to avoid rigidities.
2.7 Challenges of Strategy Implementation

Challenges that occur during the implementation process of a strategy are an important area of research because even the best strategy would be ineffective if not implemented successfully. Despite the fact that challenges to successful strategy implementation have not been widely investigated, there are some issues that have surfaced in many studies (Muthuiya, 2004). Over 15 years ago, Alexander (as in Al-Ghamdi, 1998) claimed that the overwhelming majority of the literature has been on the formulation side of the strategy and only lip service has been given to the implementation side.

The most important problem experienced in strategy implementation in many cases is the lack of sufficient communication. Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001) state that the amount of strategic communication in most of the organizations is large, both written and oral communication is used in form of top down communications. However, a great amount of information does not guarantee understanding and there is still much to be done the field of communicating strategies. According to Wang (2000), communication should be two-way so that it can provide information to improve understanding and responsibility, and to motivate staff. Also, they argue that communication should not be seen as a once-off activity focusing on announcing the strategy. It should be an on-going activity throughout the implementation process. In many cases it is not so and therefore communication still remains a challenge to strategy implementation process.

Before any strategy can be implemented, it must be clearly understood. Clear understanding of a strategy gives purpose to the activities of each employee and allows them to link whatever task is at hand to the overall organizational direction (Byars et al., 1996). Lack of understanding of a strategy is one of the obstacles of strategy implementation (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2001). They point out that many organizational members typically recognize strategic issues as important and also understand their context in generic terms. However, the problem in understanding arise when it comes to applying strategic issues in the day-to-day decision making. Al-Ghamdi (1998) identified barriers to strategy implementation which include: Competing activities that distract attention from implementing the decision; Changes in responsibilities of key employees not clearly defined; Key formulators of the strategic decision not playing an active role in implementation; Problems requiring top management involvement not communicated early enough; Key implementation tasks and activities not
sufficiently defined; Information systems used to monitor implementation are inadequate; Overall goals not sufficiently understood by employees; Uncontrollable factors in the external environment; Surfacing of major problems which had not been identified earlier; Advocates and supporters of the strategic decision leaving the organization during implementation; and implementation taking more time than originally allocated.

Meldrum and Atkinson (1998) identified two problems of implementation: a flawed vision of what it means to be in a strategic position within an organization; and a myopic view of what is needed for successful management of operational tasks and projects within a strategic brief. Studies by Okumus (2003) found that the main barriers to the implementation of strategies include lack of coordination and support from other levels of management, and resistance from lower levels and lack of or poor planning activities. Freedman (2003) lists out of a number of implementation pitfalls: strategic inertia; lack of stakeholder commitment; strategic drift; strategic dilution; strategic isolation; failure to understand progress; initiative fatigue; impatience; and not celebrating success.

Sterling (2003) identified reasons why strategies fail as: Unanticipated market changes; Lack of senior management support; Effective competitor responses to strategy; Application of insufficient resources; Failure of buy-in, understanding, and/or communication; Timeliness and distinctiveness; Lack of focus; and Bad strategy poorly conceived business models. Sometimes strategies fail because they are simply ill conceived. For example business models are flawed because of a misunderstanding of how demand would be met in the market.

Awino (2001) identified four problem areas affecting successful strategy implementation: Lack of fit between strategy and structure; inadequate information and communication systems; and failure to impart new skills. Koske (2003) observes that there are many organizational characteristics, which act to constrain strategy implementation. He identified most challenges as concerning: connecting strategy formulation to implementation; resource allocation; match between structure with strategy; linking performance and pay to strategies; and creating a strategy-supportive culture. Organizational structure refers to the shape, division of labour, job duties and responsibilities, the distribution of power and decision-making procedures within the company (Okumus, 2003). It simply means the formal framework by which job tasks are divided, grouped, and coordinated (Robins and Coulter, 2002). Organizational structure is a major priority in implementing a carefully formulated
strategy. It helps people pull together in their activities that promote effective strategy implementation. The structure of an organization should be compatible with the chosen strategy and if there is incongruence, adjustments will be necessary either for the structure or the strategy itself (Koske, 2003). However, Mintzgerg and Quinn (1991) argue that the central problem in structuring today is not the one on which most organization designers spend their time by dividing up tasks. It is one of emphasis on how to make the whole thing work.

Kariuki (2004) noted that organizations implement their strategies through their organizational structures. For a successful implementation of a business strategy, a supporting organization structure is critical. He found out that the positioning of the functions in the organization structure is equally important as it sets more focus on key functions whose performance is critical to the success of the business strategy and institutionalizes the decision making of the heads of these functions. When the business strategy changes, organization structure is received in light of the changes in strategy to maintain the relevance of the structure.

Whilst the strategy should be chosen in a way that it fit the organization structure, the process of matching structure to strategy is complex (Byars et al, 1996). The structure that served the organization well at a certain size may no longer be appropriate for its new or planned size. The existing structures and processes in the organization support the current ways of doing things if the strategy indicates that the organization need to behave in different ways, there is likely to be problems should the existing structures be used to implement the changes (Campbell et al, 2002). The current structures may as well distort and dilute the intended strategy to the point where no discernible change takes place. According to McCarthy et al (1996), creating that structure and the attendance behaviour changes is a formidable challenge. The fundamental challenge for managers is the selection of the organization structure and controls that will implement the chosen strategies effectively.

Cultural impact underestimation is yet another challenge to strategy implementation. Organizational culture refers to the set of assumptions (often unstated) that members of an organization share in common (Pearce and Robinson, 2002). Robins and Coulter (2002) define culture as a system of shared meaning and beliefs held by organizational members that determines, in large degree on how they act. An organization culture provides the social
context in which an organization performs its work. It guides the organization’s members in decision making, determining how time and energy are invested, in deciding which options are looked on favourably from the start and which types of people are selected to work for the organization, and in particular everything else that is done is the organization (Goodstein et al., 1992).

Culture affects not only the way managers behave within the organization but also the decisions they make about the organization’s relationships with its environment and its strategy (McCarthy et al., 1996). According to Thompson and Strickland (1989), it is the strategy implementer’s task to bring the corporate culture into alignment with the strategy and keep it there once a strategy is chosen. Culture can either be a strength or a weakness.

As strength, culture can facilitate communication, decision-making, and control, and can create co-operation and commitment. As a weakness, culture may obstruct the smooth implementation of strategy by creating resistance to change (Pearce and Robinson, 1988). Aosa (1992) stated that it is important that the culture of an organization be compatible with the strategy being implemented because where there is incompatibility between strategy and culture, it can lead to a high organizational resistance to change and de-motivation which in turn can frustrate the strategy implementation effort. However, when culture influences the actions of the employees to support current strategy, implementation is strengthened.

The implementation of a strategy often encounters rough going because of deep-rooted cultural biases. It causes resistance to implementation of new strategies especially in organizations with defender cultures. This is because they see change as threatening and tend to favour “continuity” and “security” (Wang, 2000). It is the strategy maker’s responsibility to choose a strategy that is compatible with the “sacred” or unchangeable parts of prevailing corporate culture (Thompson and Strickland, 1989). Aosa (1992) observes that lack of compatibility between strategy and culture can lead to high organizational resistance to change and de-motivation, which can in turn frustrate the strategy implementation. Resource insufficiency is another common strategy implementation challenge. Organizations have at least four types of resources that can be used to achieve desired objectives, namely: financial resources, physical resources, human resources, and technological resources (David, 2003). Resource (budgetary) allocation is the process of ensuring that all necessary time, financial,
skills and knowledge are made available (Okumus, 2003). Once a strategic option has been settled upon (in the strategic selection stage), management attention turns to evaluating the resource implications of the strategy (Campbell et al., 2002). The operating level must have the resources needed to carry out each part of the strategic plan (Harvey, 1998). It should therefore be possible to implement a strategy with the resources available and it is not possible to implement a strategy which requires more resources than can be made available.

David (2003) argues that allocating resources to particular divisions and departments does not mean that strategies will be successfully implemented. This is because a number of factors commonly prohibit effective resource allocation. These include: overprotection of resources, too great emphasis on short-run financial criteria, organizational policies, vague strategy targets, reluctant to take risks, and lack of sufficient knowledge. Also established organizations may experience changes in the business environment that can make a large part of their resource base redundant and unless they are able to dispose off those redundant resources, they may be unable to free sufficient funds to invest in the new resources that are needed and their cost base will be too high (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).

Changes do not implement themselves and it is only people that make them happen (Bryson, 1995). Selecting people for key positions by putting a strong management team with the right personal chemistry and mix of skills is one of the first strategy implementation steps (Thompson and Strickland, 1998). Assembling a capable team, they point out, is one of the first cornerstones of the organization-building task. Strategy implementation must determine the kind of core management team they need to execute the strategy and then find the right people to fill each slot. Staffing issues can involve new people with new skills (Hunger and Wheelen, 2000). Bryson (1995) observes that people’s intellect, creativity, skills, experience and commitment are necessary towards effective implementation. However, selecting able people for key position remains a challenge to many organizations.

Organizations often find it difficult to carry out their strategies because they have executive compensation systems that measure and reward performance in a way that ignores or even frustrates strategic thinking, planning, and action (McCarthy et al, 1996). Most incentive programs are designed only for top management and lower levels of management and operative employees do not normally participate (Byars et al, 1996). If strategy
accomplishment is to be a really top priority, then the reward structure must be linked explicitly and tightly to actual strategic performance (Thompson and Strickland, 1998). Bryson (1995) asserts that people must be adequately compensated for their work. At its simplest, strategy is all about managing change and resistance to change can be considered the single greatest threat to successful strategy implementation. The behaviour of individuals ultimately determines the success of failure of organizational endeavours and top management concerned with strategy and its implementation must realize this (McCarthy et al, 1996). Change may also result to conflict and resistance. People working in organizations sometimes resist such proposals and make strategy difficult to implement (Lynch, 2000).

Organizational politics remains another key challenge in strategy implementation. Organization politics are tactics that strategic managers engage in to obtain and use power to influence organizational goals and change strategy and structure to further their own interests (Hill and Jones, 1999). Wang (2000), states that it is important to overcome the resistance of powerful groups because they may regard the change caused by new strategy as a threat to their own power. Top-level managers constantly come into conflict over what correct policy decisions would be and power struggles and coalition building is a major part of strategic decision making. According to them, the challenge organizations face is that the internal structure of power always lags behind changes in the environment because in general, the environment changes faster than the organization can respond.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This research methodology chapter presents a description of how the study was approached. It presents the plan of the research, that is, the research design, how data were collected and from whom, and the data analysis technique that was adopted to analyze the data in order to generate the findings of the study.

3.2 Research Design
The study was conducted through a case study design. It involved an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon of strategy implementation and its challenges in a multi-programme international NGO- Oxfam GB-Kenya. This research design has been successfully used by similar studies (Awino, 2001; Koske, 2003; Muthuiya, 2004; Machuki, 2005; Wambugu, 2006).

Oxfam GB-Kenya is one of the major international NGO operating in various parts of Kenya with a number of programmes/projects on different sectors in the economy. Oxfam GB-Kenya was selected because of its large portfolio of programmes/projects that require unique implementation approaches and that are likely to be characteristically challenging during implementation.

3.3 Data Collection Method
The study used primary data that were collected by way of personal interviews guided by an interview guide which was developed to solicit information in line with the objectives of the study. The study targeted fifteen (15) respondents who were drawn from the support office and at programme level. They included five respondents from the support office (Logistics, Donor Compliance, Systems Administration, Human Resource, and Finance); two programme coordinators and two Programme Officers from the Wajir and Turkana programmes; four Programme Advisors and two Programme Officers from Nairobi. The data were recorded by writing the responses as provided by the respondents. The study also made use of secondary data where necessary.
3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed by way of Content Analysis. This is because the study sought to solicit data that is qualitative in nature and given that respondents were drawn from a single organization but from different levels of management and programmes, each group of respondents' was responding to different sets of questions. The data were compared with theoretical approaches cited in the literature review to enable the researcher arrive at informed interpretations and conclusions.

Analysis also involved thematic comparisons of data obtained from the various programme officers to enable a more detailed investigation to determine whether the strategy implementation practices and challenges faced are similar or otherwise across programmes. This type of analysis does not restrict respondents on answers and has potential of generating more information with much detail.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The study adopted personal interview to collect the data, which was recorded by way of writing the responses. The study intended to achieve two objectives: to establish the strategy implementation practices at Oxfam GB-Kenya and to determine the challenges of strategy implementation at Oxfam GB-Kenya. The data that were collected through personal interviews were analyzed by way of content analysis. This involved organizing the data under major thematic areas on the basis of the study objectives. The findings were then discussed under the various subthemes in each of the key thematic areas. The analysis involved examination of meanings and implications emanating from respondents' information coupled with documented data regarding strategy implementation. Consequently, this chapter presents the findings of the study with regard to the objectives and discussions of the same under the two major thematic objectives and various sub themes.

The respondents in this study were drawn from two levels of management at Oxfam GB-Kenya: Support Office (Headquarter-Nairobi) level and Programme level. From the Support Office, respondents were drawn from Human Resource, Finance, Donor Compliance, Systems Administration, Logistics, and Communications. From Programmes, the respondents were the Programme Advisors, Coordinators and Officers. The targeted respondents have been involved in the implementation of strategies in Oxfam GB-Kenya. Majority of the respondents hold same positions across the programmes while the rest, mostly from the Support Office level hold positions whose line of authority and scope span across the programmes.

4.2 Strategy implementation at Oxfam GB Kenya

Oxfam GB-Kenya has spelt out in its Strategic Plan the major strategic thrusts and action plans to pursue. The plan provides broad guidelines from which each programme draws its unique plan and action plans which, upon implementation leads to the attainment of the overall Oxfam GB-Kenya objectives and goals. To establish strategy implementation practices at Oxfam GB-Kenya, respondents at support office level were asked to indicate whether there exist documented strategies for their respective functional areas, action plans to implement the strategies, and the practices adopted in the carrying out of the action plans.
4.2.1 Strategy implementation at Support Office Level

The Support Office Level functional areas that participated in the study include the Human Resource, Finance, Donor Compliance, Systems Administration, Logistics, and Communications and the findings on each functional are discussed in this order. The findings of the study show that each functional area has documented strategies and action plans for the implementation of the strategies. Also each of the functional areas was found to adopt various practices to carry out the action plans.

Human Resource

In the Human Resource functional area, it was established that there exist HR strategies which are documented. According to the respondents, a HR corporate strategy is developed in the head office and then countries develop one by aligning the key result areas based on the corporate HR strategy. In an effort to implement the documented HR strategies, the organization structure has been developed in such a way that it has an integrated team that looks at issues as a “one programme” approach. Enhancing cost-effectiveness in the programme is upheld with trainings and development of plans on how to achieve this. In promoting cost-effectiveness the Kenya programme has considered decentralization, planning together and enhancing flexibility in systems. Efforts are made to ensure that the staffs have the tools to implement the strategy. HR staffs are trained on how to effectively deliver the strategy. There is provision of a budget to implement the same.

It was also established that Oxfam GB Kenya has a recruitment policy that supports strategy implementation by ensuring that it is aligned to the overall country strategy. This ensures that there is the right staff establishment at the right time with the required qualifications. The respondents indicated that a database of good Curriculum Vitae CV’s is retained to ensure that the recruitment scan is done very quickly without necessarily having to advertise especially during the implementation of emergency projects. They further pointed out that there is extensive involvement of the line supervisors in recruitment so that they are able to select the best candidate. Managers are also trained managers on how to recruit and identify potential at interview level.

When recruiting new employees, it was established that the human resource team assesses their competency so that they are compatible with the new strategy. Here the study
established that at Oxfam GB-Kenya there are job profiles with requisite competencies potential employees should possess and these act as a guide to the HR team during recruitment and final selection. Working closely with the line managers, Job Description are developed to reflect the role and to ensure that it delivers based on the current strategy. There is matching of the key competencies and skills for the role with the person to be recruited. Using the JD, questions are generated that will be able to identify if the candidate is suitable for the post. Other modes of interviews included written tests; group interviews and competency tests that are administered using a consultant.

The study established that the organization has a performance appraisal (PA) system that is designed to help staff be as effective as possible in performing their duties at Oxfam GB-Kenya. It was pointed that a performance management system is not optional at Oxfam GB-Kenya. Therefore, whatever the location and whatever the status of employees, (permanent, part-time or on a fixed-term contract), a performance management and appraisal system is a mandatory part of working at Oxfam GB-Kenya. This involves setting clear objectives with line managers to ensure that staffs know what they are expected to achieve, and where the focus of their activities should be. It may be that staff objectives require them to develop their existing skills, knowledge, or ways of working so that they can achieve the right results. Objective setting and personal development go hand-in-hand. These gives staff more confidence, pride and satisfaction in their work. It also improves working relationships with colleagues, enhance career prospects, and help to have a real sense of purpose every day.

The PA system starts with objective setting whereby staffs set objectives based on deliverables which are aligned to the strategy. The objectives are reviewed regularly during monthly one to ones followed by a formal annual review. Regular reviews ensure that the program stays on track and aligned to strategy objectives. The system is closely linked to staff development. During appraisal the supervisors are able to identify any weak areas that staffs may have and recommend necessary training to ensure that they are able to deliver. Appraisals also help to improve working relations amongst staff as the appraisal has room for staffs to appraise supervisors on how they felt they were managed.

It was established that there exists a training program for Oxfam GB-Kenya’s employees. It was established that this program, as encapsulated in the organization’s Learning and Development (L&D) strategy supports the implementation of other strategies pursued by the
organization. The L&D strategy is based on the linkages between existing organizational HR systems and processes and partnering with programme initiatives. The strategy uses different learning routes and interventions to bridge the skills, knowledge and competency gaps as identified by the programme team.

The study established that there is a dedicated budget for training as a policy at Oxfam GB-Kenya to support staff development. This is developed after the appraisal supervisors and staffs agree on identified training needs. This allows staffs to attend training and/or workshops to acquire the required skills. Other modes of staff development that were identified include secondments where staffs are seconded to another program to perform duties of other staffs of higher responsibility while they are on leave, coaching and mentoring, in-house trainings, encouraging staffs to read materials on the Intranet and to borrow other useful materials (CDs, books etc) from the resource centre.

Further, Oxfam GB-Kenya staffs are empowered to implement the organization’s strategy through being given technical skills needed for the implementation of new strategies. To ensure congruence, first technical skills audits are carried out after which specific technical training is facilitated to address any existing gaps. To this end, the study established that the organization has set up a Staff Development Fund that seeks to support organizational objectives through individual performance development within Oxfam through enabling eligible staff to consolidate learning, expand their role, and improve their career prospects.

The study established that the organization has a database of existing skills and experience which is regularly updated in order to support strategy implementation. The respondents pointed out that after the development of the National Change Strategy, the key KAS (Knowledge, Attitudinal & Skills) gaps were determined for the programme. It was also pointed out that the retained staff skills and experience database is tied closely to the people planning strategy. This involves succession planning where staffs are trained and prepared for the next level position to ensure that there are no gaps and that staff are promoted from within to save time on recruitment time and motivate the staff. The skills database is updated on a needs basis as staffs acquire new skills.

The study established that the need for Oxfam GB-Kenya to retain high quality staff necessitated the development of a reward policy. The respondents pointed out that Oxfam
GB-Kenya recruits, develops, and retains staffs whose skill, knowledge, and commitment is all it needs. On this course, Oxfam GB-Kenya’s Strategic Review identified the behaviours and attitudes that should characterize the way in which its employees should work. Oxfam GB manages staff performance and reward good performance and manages poor performance.

Additionally, it was established that Oxfam GB-Kenya has a pay and benefits system which drives and is driven by the organization’s values and supports its desired organizational culture, encourages and enables management accountability, enables career progression, recognizes achievement, and supports and enables recruitment and retention of the right people. The reward policy, according to respondents, ensures that Oxfam GB-Kenya remains competitive in the market by paying at 75% percentile. The increments are also tied to performance appraisal which makes staff work harder thus attaining set targets. The staffs remain motivated and have energy to implement the strategy.

On investigating whether the senior management team of the organization is in the forefront in providing leadership to enable effective strategy implementation, the study established that there is overwhelming senior management support in strategy implementation. This is evidenced by the weekly Senior Management Team’s (SMT) meetings where pertinent issues in all departments are raised, discussed and addressed by management. The SMT is also involved in strategy finalisation after it has been formulated.

Finance
The study established that there exist documented financial management strategies. According to respondents, Oxfam GB has globally set financial strategies that individual countries draw from, with support and engagement of Head and Regional offices. When staffs are recruited they are expected to have sufficient skills relevant to the accounting and financial management process. However, each staff upon recruitment is equipped with knowledge and awareness (access to information too) of Oxfam GB financial management process and adequate training(s) conducted whenever there’s new development.

On whether the strategies are general or specific to each programme, it was established that Oxfam GB financial strategies are general. However where there are donors with specific sub-strategies e.g. ECHO, EC and OFDA these are taken into account and the requirements of the
same adhered to. Oxfam GB strategies are usually more stringent than for most of the donors and therefore complying with Oxfam GB strategies instils confident that the others have been complied with. At programme level, the respondents observed that the strategies are a hybrid of both general and specific to the various programmes. This is because Oxfam GB Kenya has to ensure that it remains within Oxfam GB’s overall strategy, while at the same time tailor them specifically to specific programme needs.

The study established that Oxfam GB-Kenya maintains financial management systems to ensure proper utilization of funds, accountability, financial monitoring, and efficient reporting, all geared towards strategy implementation. To ensure that the systems are efficient and effective, it was established that various measures are put in place. These include: ensuring that each month detailed and accurate reconciliations are done, as well as budget and expenditure analyses of all projects being run in the programme; paying regular visits to the areas of implementation by Programme Managers and Project Officers accompanied by the Finance Officer to ensure that expenditure on the ground is in line with agreed parameters and to ascertain the authenticity of the report and accuracy of figures as presented; deployment of staff at the higher levels (Country, Regional Centre) to ensure Donor Reports are submitted when due, as well as monitor the broader level Programme expenditure; standardized system in use across Oxfam GB worldwide that allows anyone to access and review information. However, there is limited access to system depending on roles ensuring segregation of duties whilst at the same time ensuring accountability for action. Each user has a password which should not be shared and there’s audit trail of who has done what within the system; ensuring a job-skills match whereby staff identify their specific areas of growth in relation to financial management and addressing the gaps identified; undertaking regular systems review to ensure efficiency and effectiveness through field visits, monitoring and evaluation, internal and external projects audits; and carrying out constant reviews of partner reports as well as partner visits to ensure that the costs charged are legitimate and are in line with signed agreements.

To translate the documented financial strategies into action, the study established that a number of activities are undertaken, most of them inclined towards empowering the staffs with the requisite skills. The respondents pointed out that there exist departmental action plans with a mixture of internal and external sourcing including sending staff for general and financial management specific trainings and workshops on compliance. Other activities include encouraging regular information sharing and reviews, doing regular field visits to
support staff at the respective work stations and also have a feel of challenges faced, proposing more practical strategies other than those on the manual e.g. use of per diem system as opposed to a float system to ease on staff time and also not to compromise staff integrity, engagement with regional finance staff and other contacts within the region and Oxfam family on regular basis to keep abreast of changes and developments and sharing the same with the rest of the team members, and attending sessions organised by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK) to keep abreast with the goings on within the profession.

The study established that the action plans are implemented through regular team planning sessions and information sharing, secondments, job rotation, and job shadowing in order to attain different skills and exposure, and convening regular review sessions for team members and giving input to the objectives of the individual team members.

Effective strategy implementation also calls for adequate resource allocation. The study sought to establish respondents’ views on overall resource mobilization in terms of access to and utilization of the resources to enhance implementation of strategies at Oxfam GB Kenya. It was established that resource mobilization in terms of access to and utilization of the resources has improved greatly in the last few years, more so because the communities have been educated on the vision and purpose of Oxfam GB, as well as the reasons for its ways of working. The team now plans together i.e. Project implementers, Logistics and Finance Staff, to ensure that there is smooth running of all aspects of the projects. The respondents, however, observed that the resources are scarce for all donors and therefore not abundant. This is despite the commonly expressed view that NGOs live in luxury. The resources availability here is measured relative to the needs and channelling of resources is not often optimal with because decisions are based on other factors including political pressure, government caveats or support, other than need. These and other factors impede adequate access to resources sufficient to cater for existing needs.

Donor Compliance

The study found out that there are documented donor compliance strategies whose major emphasis is to ensure that donor requirements are met as much as possible and building
capacity for the same. The strategies mostly concern developing a complete and regularly updated database of all donors that Oxfam GB-Kenya engages with or is likely to engage with. This exercise benefits a lot from the support and engagement of Head and Regional offices. Consequently, Oxfam GB-Kenya ensures that there are staffs with sufficient skills, knowledge and awareness through access to information of donor compliance issues. There are strategies that ensure wider dissemination of donor requirements within the organization and the needed compliance. In this way, optimum systems, tools and procedures to enhance compliance have been put in place. These systems, tools, and procedures are subjected to consistent application, evaluation, and timely correction in order to accommodate any new developments. It was further established that Oxfam’s partnership management strategies cover a number of compliance issues. Most of them are general with specific sub-strategies for European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), European commission (EC) and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

To implement the donor compliance strategies, the study established that departmental action plans are developed and executed. These action plans cover both staff capacity building and operational activities. Some of them include sending staff for general and donor specific training and workshops on compliance, regular information sharing and reviews, and engagement with funding team and donor contacts on regular basis to keep abreast of changes and developments. Some operational activities include data collection, analysis, storage and dissemination, evaluation of status against information for each donor and/or location and addressing the gaps identified, systems review to ensure effectiveness and adequacy, monitoring and evaluation, and replication in partner organisations.

**Systems Administration**

It was the intention of the study to establish whether Oxfam GB Kenya has specific systems that support the implementation of its programmes and if so which ones are they. The study established that Oxfam GB Kenya has a system application called PeopleSoft which is the main application used in the organization. This system, the study established, is used for Programme Management (Project Implementation Plans and Restricted Funding), Supply Chain Management (purchasing and inventory), Financial Management (accounts payable, accounts receivable, billing, general ledger and shop systems), and Human Capital Management (HCM). In addition, the PeopleSoft system is a tool that brings together the organisation, which is, it is a central hub of information, supports in achieving set milestones.
through ensuring adherence to business rules on implementation of programs, monitoring, evaluation, learning and control. To ensure successful design and implementation of Oxfam GB's systems strategies, the study established that there exist specific action plans that have been developed. These include recruitment of the right staff, in-depth staff induction programs, and ongoing staff training and development to address existing gaps as well as build capacity to take on increased responsibilities. These action plans are implemented through strict adherence to performance management system to ensure that arising or existing gaps are met through training and development of staff.

**Logistics**

The study established that the role of Logistics office at Oxfam GB Kenya is to develop Kenya Programme Logistics Strategy; lead in procurement planning, budget proposals and capacity build staff in logistics. The office also ensures that the regional logistics strategic action plans are implemented and any challenges addressed. The study established that through the logistics office, specific procedures that guide Oxfam GB Kenya in the implementation of its programmes are put in place by ensuring that the organization is entirely guided by policies in each department. These include Logistics, Purchasing and Supply Policy, Financial Procedures and Policy, Humanitarian Guidelines and Procedures, Human Resources Guideline and Procedures. Others are the security guidelines, authorisation levels in procurement, and transport policy. These procedures were found to be mandatory for the organization since they guide the operations of the different departments.

It was further established that specific action plans have been developed to ensure that appropriate procedures are put in place to match Oxfam's logistics strategies. These include annual operating action plans, internal and external audit action plans, and internal monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance. It was found out that these action plans are developed through involvement of staff and ensuring that the strategies are well understood and communicated to those who come up with the procedures.

In order to ensure effective execution of the action plans, the study established that specific monthly and weekly milestones are set and commitments made to achieve them. Further, tasks in the action plans are incorporated in the job descriptions and objectives that are set annually.
Communications

The study established that the communication office has documented strategies documented in an annual work plan, which is developed from the overall communications objectives for the year as well as the annual organizational objectives and priorities. It was also established that the senior management team was found to be at the forefront in providing leadership for the implementation of strategy. This happens especially through convening of regular meetings with the Regional Management Team to share updates about work progress and pointing out the challenges faced.

Other programme staffs were also supportive of strategy implementation efforts by providing the necessary skills and expertise. Respondents pointed out the most of the programme staffs are competent therefore provide sound support towards successful programme implementation. It was established that most of the staffs are qualified in their programme areas, and provide support to partner organizations. Whereas there is effort to integrate programmes to enable transfer of skills, this is sometimes hampered by the fact that all programmes must meet their separate objectives.

It was also established that Oxfam GB-Kenya works closely with different stakeholders in implementing its programmes. This however was found to depend on the nature of the campaign being carried out and the time when it is being carried out. The partner organizations have direct contact with communities, whereas many of them have the skills for day to day programme implementation, they have to be supported very closely on managing programme quality, for example monitoring and evaluation systems and reporting.

The study established that there are aspects of organization structure that are not supportive of the strategy. Respondents pointed that there is high concentration of staff at higher management levels, but low concentration in lower levels that deal with the day to day support of partners. This means that in some instances the organization runs the risk of not being attuned to the needs at grass root level. In the humanitarian programme, Oxfam GB-Kenya implements the programme directly, so there is more cohesion between implementation and the needs of the community. Emanating from the issues of organization structure are some aspects of the organizational culture that are not supportive of effective strategy implementation. Respondents pointed out that given a hierarchical, and as such,
many strategic decisions are made using top-down approach. Therefore, in some instances some mid-level staffs feel that their opinions are not adequately taken into consideration, which makes them less able to internalize the strategy. Instead, they implement the strategy only as part of their objectives in line with the performance management system.

With regard to action plans, it was established that the communication office has documented action plans for information production and dissemination, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building plans for partners on communications, awareness and publicity on key events such as the World Poverty Day, Peace Day, International trade fair, and NGO Day among others. To successfully undertake these action plans, the study established that the communication office adopts a number of practices. The office adopts the use of a customized monitoring and evaluation tool for periodic inspection on progress of the work plan implementation. There is also a communication framework to ensure that any plans are shared within the entire programme for feedback. There is also publicity and media events which are carried out in support of the other programmes, and as such encourage their continual participation. Additionally, the communication office undertakes capacity building for both decision-makers and action plan implementers.

4.2.2 Strategy implementation at Programme Level

This level comprises of programmes officers, programme advisors, and programme coordinators. It was established that action plans are developed to implement the various programmes undertaken by Oxfam GB-Kenya. Respondents were asked to respond to various aspects with respect to strategy implementation. These aspects include senior management, programme staffs and other stakeholders’ support in strategy implementation, the appropriateness of organization structure and culture, and resource allocation.

On the support of senior management and other programme staffs’ support in strategy implementation, the respondents pointed out that there is such support. They observed that it is because of the support that there is effective and efficient delivery of programme deliverables within the agreed timeframes. This acts as the driving force behind the implementation of every project by staff. Oxfam GB has procedures and systems, guidelines and performance objectives to compel all despite of their position in the organisation leadership echelons. The senior management support implementation efforts through direct management at the field level and dotted line management from program advisors.
It was established that the support of other programme staffs is in terms their skills towards enabling successful programme implementation. Respondents indicated that the team in Oxfam is skilled but also are exposed to trainings for enhancement of the same. Respondents observed that the Oxfam GB recruitment procedures ensure that the staffs have the required skills in their various specializations, experiences and knowledge on different projects, which enable them deliver the programme as expected of them while being keen on timely delivery of programme targets. Oxfam GB ensures also that the skills of staff are improved through various trainings and provision of guidelines to staff to perform their duties effectively and objectively.

Respondents also pointed out that various other stakeholders have supported Oxfam GB-Kenya’s strategy implementation efforts. The communities have been very supportive by providing enabling environment though stand offs do exist between the organization and community due to high expectations and dependency created over the years as a result of unconditional freebies during emergencies. The government through their district level representatives also play a big role in coordination of the activities despite the limited capacity, mainly financial though sometimes they form stumbling blocks due to their vested interests in the implementation. Other stakeholders like the operational agencies play a key role in ensuring harmonized program implementation thus avoiding duplication and improving program quality.

The respondents were quick to note that the skills of other stakeholders need support and that is why Oxfam highly supports capacity building initiatives for successful implementation. They observed that there is still need to build capacities of beneficiary communities and some government personnel to be able to deliver their activities as expected of them. Majority of the donors have guidelines and contract regulations which need to be followed in the implementation of the funded programmes.

With regard to organization structure, respondents indicated that the current structural design is appropriate for the implementation of strategy at the early stages of the new strategy. However, as the programme grows there will be need to review the structure. Other respondents observed that even though the current Oxfam GB –Kenya structure in supporting the strategy implementation, some important positions have to be created to bridge the glaring
gap in the deliver of the strategy. To narrow it down to Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASAL) Programme the structure has to be reviewed urgently to enable the programme various components achieve their desired strategy objectives. The study established that the overall organizational culture at Oxfam GB- Kenya supports strategy implementation to a large extent. Respondents pointed out that the culture is highly participatory, transparent and accountable to both primary and secondary stakeholders (communities, donors, government, and programme staff). Respondents however pointed out there are aspects of resistant to change and people are always sceptical of anything new though it depends mainly on how it is initiated. The current strategy being implemented is viewed by many as nothing new and may not necessary bring the desired change in the long run reverting o business as usual. Additionally, the strategy may not really improve programme quality despite the massive resources invested in the process.

The study also sought to establish whether the resources allocated to various programmes are adequate for successful implementation of the programme activities. The findings indicate that resource allocation depends on the extent to which donors are willing to fund particular projects. Some respondents indicated that it all depends on the agenda for which a programme has been designed to pursue. Therefore, some agendas could be easier in getting support than others. Other respondents observed that resources are not sufficient particularly for long-term development projects which require substantial amounts of funds for programmes to realise the intended impact among the vulnerable members of the community. It was established that for those programmes which are fully donor funded, resource allocation is an issue because such programmes are very independent of other programmes in Oxfam.

In ensuring programme specific action plans that are put in place to implement the overall Oxfam strategy, the study established that these action plans are developed through a number of ways. Respondents pointed out planning together, having a comprehensive annual action plan, shared monitoring and evaluation tool and constant consultations across the team. It was also established that the formulation of the programme activities is in line with the Overall Oxfam strategy. Further, respondents indicated that sustainability and exit strategy for every programme was clearly drawn and communicated to project beneficiaries. It was noted that many programmes are donor funded and therefore fall under different funding decisions and thus the programme action plans are usually aligned with the strategy at the proposal stage. To ensure successful execution of the action plans, particular practices are adopted most of which
are community based development approaches. These practices entail active participation of all the primary stakeholders in the programme delivery. The practices also include facilitation of the communities to be in the centre stage of making decisions about issues affecting their lives. Consequently, a standard development approach which is democratic is adopted. Central to this approach is mobilisation and sensitisation of the local communities which are crucial in this approach more especially where communities need to be thoroughly grounded and informed of the project objectives, funds, implementation strategy, sustainability, and their role as beneficiaries.

4.3 Challenges of Strategy Implementation at Oxfam GB-Kenya

The intention of this study was to establish the challenges of strategy implementation at Oxfam GB-Kenya. To achieve this objective respondents at both the support office and programme levels were asked to state the challenges they face during strategy implementation. It was established that some of the challenges were the same across the various offices even though they manifested in different ways.

4.3.1 Challenges at Support Office Level

As earlier pointed, this level constitutes various functional areas. Therefore, strategy implementation challenges are discussed as per each functional area. These include Human Resource, Finance, Donor Compliance, Systems Administration, Logistics, and Communications.

Human Resource

The key challenge to strategy implementation at this functional area was established to be budget constraints. The respondents pointed out resource inadequacy as the key challenge in the implementation of strategy at Oxfam GB-Kenya. They observed that the many activities that require to be undertaken in order to effectively implement the documented strategies cannot be undertaken because of limiting budget lines. The respondents also pointed out high employee turn-over as yet another overarching challenge to effective strategy implementation. They observed that the high turnover is especially concentrated on the highly qualified people working in the field because they are on high demand and once better opportunities open up, they leave Oxfam. It was observed that the situation gets worse when there is no immediate replacement because some activities stall and hence implementation takes longer than was
anticipated. Even though it was established that Oxfam staffs are given the required technical skills, the respondents noted that implementation of strategy is hampered by inadequacy of technical skills in some areas especially public health. Another challenge that was pointed out is a tendency of most staffs not willing to work in harsh environments where Oxfam has most of its operations. This greatly curtails Oxfam’s efforts to effectively achieve its mission.

Finance
At this functional area, it was established that the implementation of strategy was faced with a number of challenges. According to the respondents, there is initial resistance to change especially if the strategy has not been fully explained to the beneficiaries. Staffs do not appreciate the importance of compliance and therefore there is lack of cooperation. Another challenge is associated with conflicting workloads whereby there is no clear indication on which roles and duties that an individual is capable of handling at a particular time.

The respondents also pointed out a systemic failure of protocol within the organization as a major challenge of strategy implementation. This mostly manifests in lack of clear reporting relationships, more especially with staffs based in different locations that have immediate line managers yet technically their reporting should be elsewhere. This results into conflicting and unclear reporting relationships and inability to apportion responsibility for failure.

While respondents indicated that there are clear budget lines that guide allocation of resources required for effective strategy implementation, they were however quick to point out that the resources are inadequate and limited access to some others e.g. computers and the internet. Some respondents pointed out lack of adequate staffs to undertake various activities during strategy implementation.

Donor Compliance
Respondents pointed out the challenges faced in the process of implementing the action plans. These include resource limitations and hence the scarce resources means for example no funds spared for capacity building, donor information not readily available, ambiguous contract limiting access to pertinent information, unrealistic demands and expectations from donors, staffs not appreciating the importance of donor compliance, hence lack of cooperation. Others include conflicting workloads and protocol breaches within the organization resulting into unclear reporting relationships.
Systems Administration
Respondents pointed out the lack of timeliness in responding to critical issues due to the tall structure of the organization although there is decentralisation in decision making. Another challenge is related to pressure of having to meet the needs of the organisation at large while operating from “different” country contexts. Lastly, the respondents pointed out that unidirectional communication (from top to bottom) in the organisation is a source of challenges to effective implementation of strategy because it slows down information flow and sometimes leads to inadequacy of information to the supposed implementers of strategy.

Logistics
On logistics, respondents indicated that a number of challenges arise that stand on the way of effective implementation of the action plans. These include the changing context in which the implementation takes place, inadequate human capital in terms of capacity and skills, unrealistic objectives/goals to achieve in specific time period, and inadequate funds and other resources for executing the plans as required. Some respondents observed that there are instances of the organization strategy not being well understood as a result of lack of involvement of the strategy implementers during its formulation. They also pointed out lack of sufficient preparation of some of those involved in the implementation of the strategy as a challenge.

Communications
The study established that a number of challenges are faced during the implementation of the action plans for this functional area. These include conflicting priorities which leads to confusion and lack of accountability, some lack of management buy-in and support, inadequate human and financial resources, lack of cooperation by some of the other programme staff, lack of adequate coordination between the regional programme and the Kenya Programme, and the continual shifting of priorities by the management which makes it difficult to adhere to plans.

4.3.2 Challenges at Programme Level
Respondents at programme level were asked to point out the challenges faced in implementing both the programme and overall Oxfam strategy. The respondents pointed out
that among other challenges, work over-load and partner expectations which are pretty high. Other respondents pointed out that this challenge, when coupled with funding constraints and donor priorities, implementation of programme action plan for the best benefit of the intended beneficiaries becomes an uphill task. This is compounded when donors impose implementation approaches to development which in most times differ from those adopted by Oxfam GB- Kenya. It becomes a daunting challenge in trying to harmonize donor regulations and Oxfam strategy because each has different timelines and objectives. Strategies especially change, unsettle employees thus drastically reducing output.

The study also found out that sometimes it becomes challenging to implement a strategy when the community needs are not in line with the strategy of Oxfam. There is a lot of resistance more especially when it concerns the typology and objectives of the project. For example pilot projects that are meant for experimentation are in total disharmony with the needs of vulnerable communities who are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.
5.1 Introduction

Strategy implementation is concerned with both planning how the choice of strategy is put into effect, and managing the changes required. This process is laden with complexity and challenges. The objectives of this study were to determine the practices that Oxfam GB-Kenya adopts in the implementation of its strategies and establish the challenges faced. The practices adopted by Oxfam GB-Kenya and factors that hinder effective strategy implementation were studied. In this chapter, the findings of the study are summarized and conclusions drawn. The chapter also includes recommendations for policy and practice as well as suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary

The first objective of the study was to determine the practices of strategy implementation used by Oxfam GB-Kenya to implement its strategies. The study revealed that the organization uses a blend of strategy implementation practices in its strategy implementation process. The major implementation practices used include the development of action plans and annual work plans, employee empowerment, developing policies, putting in place optimum systems and procedures, setting performance targets, and mobilization and sensitization of local communities.

The second objective was to determine the challenges faced by Oxfam GB-Kenya in its efforts of implementing its documented strategies. The results of the study show that the major challenges encountered include inadequate resources, unsupportive aspects of organizational structure, high employee turn-over, lack of involvement of strategy implementers during strategy formulation, most staffs not willing to work in harsh environments, some resistance to change by staffs, resistance from local communities to some project typologies, systemic failure of protocol within the organization, inadequate human capital in terms of capacity and skills in some areas such as health, conflicting priorities which leads to confusion and lack of accountability, lack of adequate coordination between the regional programme and the Kenya Programme, and some donor conditions and/or different priorities.

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5.3 Conclusions

The overall results show that the practices adopted by Oxfam GB-Kenya in its strategy implementation are quite elaborate and to a large extent effective. However, these practices have been to some extent affected by the challenges the organization is currently facing. The findings indicate that Oxfam GB-Kenya is facing challenges associated with resource inadequacy (financial and human), structure, resistance to change, conflicting priorities, inadequate coordination, and donor conditions.

It is evident from the study that the challenges mentioned affect Oxfam GB-Kenya’s programmes in the Kenya and the region and that they apply to other international NGOs operating in Kenya and the region especially those operating in the marginalized and ASAL areas. The implication is that most of these NGOs are being faced with similar challenges. This can be attributed to the fact that they are operating in the same environment. It can therefore be concluded that like other NGOs, Oxfam GB-Kenya is facing strategy implementation challenges.

5.4 Implications for Policy and Practice for Oxfam GB-Kenya

The findings of this study have various implications for policy and practice for Oxfam GB-Kenya. It is apparent that the organization faces a number of challenges in the implementation of its strategies. It is, therefore imperative that Oxfam GB-Kenya rises up to de-bottleneck the challenges in order to implement its documented strategies effectively. It should specifically consider undertaking appropriate measures in order to mitigate the challenges it faces.

In as much as most of the programmes are donor funded, Oxfam GB-Kenya should seek ways for mobilizing adequate resources in order to ensure that all the programmes’ activities are carried out without disruption and/or discontinuation due to lack of resources. To achieve long-term impact, the various programmes have to be sustainable and, therefore, resources become an integral part in ensuring this sustainability. There is also need to adopt staff retention management strategies in order to curb the problem of high employee turnover. On the same note, there is need to enhance the skills inventory in some deficient areas such as health in order to ensure all programmes activities are professionally carried out.
Oxfam GB-Kenya should ensure internal buy-in of the strategy by all the staffs by clearly communicating the strategy to all and creating awareness of the targeted performance. There is also need to involve those involved in strategy implementation during strategy formulation in order to create ownership of the strategy among the entire Oxfam GB-Kenya workforce. There is need to consult widely internally and clearly to find out if there is need for a new strategy before initiating it. This ensures buy in from the staff leading to undivided support and success implementation. This will also prepare staff psychologically for any eventualities, which may occur due to the change. This should also a long way in reviewing the organizational structure in order to embrace more flexibility in decision-making and sort out issues of systemic protocol failure.

Further, it is important for Oxfam GB-Kenya to study the specific communities where strategies are planned to be implemented, because the communities are different from one another and therefore have unique requirements. There is need to communicate with the communities, and jointly come up with the strategy, as this creates ownership of the project, hence ready acceptance. Consequently, Oxfam GB-Kenya should adopt community driven strategies, whereby strategies are developed based on the priorities identified by communities and not the headquarters decisions.

Programmes should be implemented in a holistic way so that there is synergy and resources work towards achieving the overall good, instead of separation of sectors. Review of strategies should be based on the implementation of the current strategies, and not internal pressure to make changes. Therefore, there is need for Oxfam GB-Kenya to start planning as a team, involve stakeholders as much as possible in the strategy development and have close monitoring of the same to ensure that they keep in track. The organization should also limit experimentation projects during humanitarian situations at the height of the disasters.
5.5 Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study should be interpreted with the following limitations in mind.

First, there are limitations of measurement, which are common to social researches. Respondents’ perceptions may change over time and across different personalities. Also respondents may give biased or dishonest answers.

Secondly, the study was limited to the NGO sector and specifically Oxfam Gb-Kenya and may not apply to other organizations or even the entire NGO sector organizations.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

It is generally an axiom that no research is an end in itself. Therefore, what this research has achieved in this area can only be considered to be little hence requiring further research work. From the insights gained in the course of the study, the researcher offers the following suggestions, which should act as a direction to future researchers.

i. There is need to undertake further research in strategy implementation in International Humanitarian and Development NGOs in Kenya. A cross-sectional study should be conducted so that comparisons can be made between these organizations.

ii. A replication study should be done after sometime to find out if there are any changes that have taken place and comparison with the current study be done. From this, a more definite and valid recommendation should be made.
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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

Support Office

Human Resource

1. Does Oxfam GB-Kenya have documented HR strategies?
2. In an effort to implement them, what action plans are put in place?
3. Does the organization have a recruitment policy? How does the policy (if any) support strategy implementation efforts in the organization?
4. When recruiting new employees, how does the human resource team assess their competency so that they are compatible with the new strategy?
5. Does the organization have a performance appraisal system? How does the system (if any) support strategy implementation?
6. Does the organization have a training program for its employees? How is this program geared towards strategy implementation?
7. Are Oxfam GB-Kenya staffs given technical skills needed for the implementation of new strategies? How is this done to ensure congruence?
8. Does the organization have a database of existing skills and experience? How often/regular is it updated in order to support strategy implementation?
9. Does the organization have a documented reward policy? How does the policy (if any) support the implementation of strategies?
10. Is the senior management team of the organization in the forefront in providing leadership to enable effective strategy implementation?
11. What practices does the organization employ in implementing the action plans that are documented in the HR strategies?
12. In implementing the action plans, what challenges do you normally face?
13. What suggestion(s) would you give that will help NGOs avoid or minimize strategy implementation challenges?
14. Please give any other comment you may have regarding the subject of this research.
Finance

1. What role do you play in Oxfam's strategic planning?
2. Do you have documented financial strategies?
3. Are the strategies (if any) general or specific to each programme?
4. Does Oxfam GB-Kenya maintain financial management systems to ensure proper utilization of funds, accountability, financial monitoring, and efficient reporting, all geared towards strategy implementation? Comment briefly on how each of these aspects is ensured.
5. In order to achieve the strategies mentioned/ documented, what are the action plans that are to be executed?
6. How do you implement these action plans (if any)?
7. What is your general comment on overall resource mobilization in terms of access to and utilization of the resources to enhance implementation of strategies?
8. What challenges do you encounter in the process of implementing the action plans?
9. What suggestion(s) would you give that will help NGOs avoid or minimize strategy implementation challenges?
10. Please give any other comment you may have regarding the subject of this research.

Donor Compliance

11. What role do you play in Oxfam's strategic planning?
12. Do you have documented donor compliance strategies? If yes what are they?
13. Are the strategies (if any) general or specific to each donor and/or programme/project?
14. In order to achieve the strategies mentioned/ documented, what are the action plans that are to be executed to ensure compliance?
15. How do you implement these action plans (if any)?
16. What is your general comment on overall resource channelling in terms of abundance and control of the resources by the donors? How does this enhance and/or impede the implementation of programmes?
17. With regard to donor compliance, what specific challenges do you encounter in the process of implementing the action plans?
18. What suggestion(s) would you give that will help NGOs avoid or minimize strategy implementation challenges?
19. Please give any other comment you may have regarding the subject of this research.

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**Systems Administrator**

1. What is your role in Oxfam’s strategic planning process?
2. Does the organization have specific systems that support the implementation of its programmes? If yes, what are they?
3. What specific action plans that the organization comes up with to ensure successful design and implementation of its systems strategies?
4. What practices do you adopt in executing these action plans?
5. What challenges do you meet during execution?
6. What suggestion(s) would you give that will help NGOs avoid or minimize strategy implementation challenges?
7. Please give any other comment you may have regarding the subject of this research.

**Logistics**

1. What is your role in Oxfam’s strategic planning process?
2. Does the organization have specific procedures that guide the implementation of its programmes? If yes, what are they?
3. What specific action plans that the organization comes up with to ensure appropriate procedures that are put in place match Oxfam’s strategies?
4. How do you execute the action plans?
5. Do you face any challenges during the execution of the action plans? What are they?
6. What suggestion(s) would you give that will help NGOs avoid or minimize strategy implementation challenges?
7. Please give any other comment you may have regarding the subject of this research.
Programmes

Program Advisors, Coordinators and Officers

1. What role do you play in Oxfam’s strategic planning process?
2. Do you have an annual work plan for your programme that you always refer to when planning to execute programme activities?
3. Is the senior management team of the Oxfam GB-Kenya in the forefront in providing leadership to enable effective programme implementation?
4. How would you describe the support of the programme staff in terms of their skills towards enabling successful programme implementation? What about other stakeholders? (communities, government, donors etc)
5. What will you comment on the current Oxfam GB-Kenya’s structure in terms of its support of the strategy implementation process?
6. What will you comment on the overall organizational culture in terms of its support for strategy implementation?
7. Do you find the resources allocated to your programme adequate for successful implementation of the programme activities?
8. As a programme, what specific action plans do you put in place so as to implement the overall Oxfam strategy?
9. What practices do you adopt to ensure successful execution of the action plans?
10. As a programme, what challenges do you face in implementing both the programme and overall Oxfam strategy?
11. What suggestion(s) would you give that will help NGOs avoid or minimize strategy implementation challenges?
12. Please give any other comment you may have regarding the subject of this research.
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter, 

Registration No: D6I P858801

is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student of the University of Nairobi.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate if you assist him/her by allowing him/her to collect data in your organization for the research.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

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