

Innovations

Factors Affecting Leaders Turnover in Government Organizations: The Case of Addiszemen City Administration, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia

Zelalem Tadesse Lakew

(PhD Candidate) Department of Public Policy and Leadership, Amhara Management
Institute, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Mateb Tafere Gedifew (PhD)

Associate Professor of Educational Planning and Management, Bahir Dar University,
Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Corresponding Author: **Zelalem Tadesse Lakew**

Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to find out the factors affecting leaders' turnover in government organizations of Addiszemen City Administration located in Amhara regional state, Ethiopia. In order to achieve this objective, the researchers employed both qualitative and quantitative research approach. Data was collected using primary and secondary sources. It employed descriptive and thematic data analyses techniques. In this investigation, 153 respondents were involved. Thus, the result showed that poor living conditions, unhealthy working environment and insufficient salary payment were the top three factors that cause leaders' turnover. In addition, based on the document analysis result in the years of 2020-2024, leaders' turnover was nearly 100%. This high turnover rate resulted in poor organization outcome. Therefore, it is plausible to recommend that the local government, the Amhara regional state and higher policy makers should work in collaboration in order to mitigate factors that affect leaders' retention in the study area.

Key Words: *Factors, Leaders, turnover, Government, Organization*

1. Introduction

According to Alemseged and Hailay (2019) stated, government organizations are responsible to deliver services for all citizens effectively and efficiently without any bias. This is because as to them, citizens have the right to get quality service. As a result, organizations are valuable assets for human society that need strong leadership for their proper functioning. Regarding this, previous

researches revealed that leadership has experienced major shifts in areas of what leaders need to know, how they spend their time and on the measures of leadership effectiveness and efficiency both what and for whom they pursue (Yukl, 2012).

Besides, studies also revealed that the success of an organization usually depends on the quality of its human resources (Fisseha, 2019). For any formal organizations to achieve their stated goals and to remain competitive, they need to hold experienced leaders for a long time (John Buchan, 2016). This writer further noted that “the objective of leaders is not to put greatness in to people, rather, to elicit it, for the greatness is there already”.

Therefore, as to the following writer, organizations require quality leadership as they play the central role in maintaining the overall performance of any organizations. The writer added that leaders are vital for providing strong political, economic and social development opportunities and improved outcomes for their society. The author further explained that leaders can do this by enhancing citizens’ mobilization activities, motivating employees, and maintaining a positive working climate (Fleishman, 2009). Building these conditions takes time and requires continuity of strong leadership. Consequently, frequent turnover of leaders can disrupt organization progress, often resulting in higher employees’ turnover and, ultimately, lower gains in organization achievement (White, 2014). Currently, in Amhara regional state, Employees’ and leaders’ turnover has become a burning issue for government organizations, and policymakers.

To the best of the authors’ knowledge, within five year plan period, top leaders including the head of the State of Amhara regional state and other local government leaders leaved their position before the end of the strategic plan. Even though leadership stability is a critical concern for the proper functioning of organizations, in the study area there was high rate of leader turnover.

Due to this reason, the functioning of the organizations and employees achievement was disrupted in the study area. Thus, leader retention status is an important area of research in Addisizemen city administration, Amhara region. This encourages the researchers to conduct this research. Concerning this, several authors have found employee retention as a tool for improving organizational effectiveness (Sawaneh & Kamara, 2019; Kurdi & Alshurideh, 2020; Nethravathi et al, 2021). According to UIIDP report (2021) effectiveness of organization is mainly relied on the commitment of leaders and their capability of leading and mobilizing the society. According to the report, in order to achieve the goals of the organization and to bring change, the head person should remain in their organization at least for 5 years (one strategic plan period). Again, at the global level in 2021, the turnover rate of women and

men from their leadership position was 10.3 percent and 10.9 percent respectively (Calgary Herald, 2022). As to the author, frequent turnover affects employee's achievement. For instance, when an organization leader is leaving his/her work place accidentally, the organization will be affected in many ways. The writer added that when a well experienced and more competent leader leaves the organization, the organization is forced to plug with less or under qualified leader which in turn results in the weakening of productivity of the institution.

In the context of Ethiopia, according to the following report, there is high turnover of city administration staffs including mayors and city manager resulted in a lack of responsible person that cause for the existence of unfinished infrastructure projects and wastage of budget and resource. This also resulted in low productivity and high-poverty in the cities (UIIDP report, 2021).

In specific to Addiszemen city administration, in five years period (2020-2024), nearly 100% of city leaders (67) were leaved their leadership position due to different factors. Thus, although some studies have been reported on the problem of government leader's turnover in Ethiopia, to the best of our knowledge, there was no well documented and published research on why government organization leaders in Amhara region are leaving their place of work. Thus, understanding the specific reasons why government leaders leave their position in Addiszemen city administrative is critical in improving organization outcomes and institutional achievements in the study area. As a result, this study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the factors affecting leaders' turnover in Addiszemen city Administration?
- What is the extent of leaders' turnover in Addiszemen city Administration?

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Paradigm

In line with the research approach and the design employed the researchers used a pragmatism paradigm. The rationale to use it is because of the interest of conducting research in innovative and dynamic ways to find solutions to the above research questions. Therefore, the researchers employed the pragmatism paradigm for identifying and assessing the institutional factors that affect leaders' turnover in Addiszemn city Administration.

2.2. Research Approach

The study employed mixed research approach. This was because the purpose of the study was to investigate the current nature of leaders' turnover in government organization in Addiszemen city administration in particular. Hence,

by using the descriptive survey method and mixed approach, it was possible to analyze the data and understand the factors under consideration.

2.3. Research Design

The study employed parallel concurrent research design. It is a form of mixed-methods design in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at the same time and then integrates the questioner and document analysis information at the interpretation stage (Creswell, 2016).

2.4. Data Types and Sources

The researchers were employed both primary and secondary sources of data to achieve the specific objective of the study. The primary data was gathered through closed-ended questionnaires, whereas secondary data was collected from document sources. The quantitative data was used for variables that can be measured with numbers and analyzed with statistical procedures.

2.5. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

2.5.1. Sampling Techniques

The researchers applied both random and purposive sampling technique for this research work.

2.5.2. Sample Size Determination

In this inquiry, Yamane’s (1967) sample determination formula was used to decide the sample size of the study. The formula is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n= Sample size N=Total Respondents

e=Sampling Error (Level of Precision)

$$n = \frac{250}{1+250(0.05)^2} = 153$$

Therefore, based on the above formula, the sample size computed was 153. Then, as shown in Table 2.1, the sample size for each population unit was determined based on its proportion to the respective population size. Finally, individual respondents were selected from each population unit by using systematic random sampling techniques.

2.5.3. Proportionality of the Sample

The researchers distributed the questionnaires to the respondents based on proportionality criteria as displayed in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 proportionality of sample

No	Population Unit	Population No.	Proportion	Sample selected from each unit
1	Employees From Government Organizations	120	0.46	73
3	Leaders of Addiszemen city Administration	26	0.08	15
4	Employees From Non Government Organizations	104	0.40	62
5	Total	250	1.00	153

Source: - Addiszemen City Administration Public Service office Report, 2024.

2.6. Instruments of data Collection

Data was generated through both closed and open ended questions arranged in logical order. This enabled the researchers to get large amount of information from several respondents in a short period of time at a minimum cost. In order to identify the major causes of leaders’ turnover in the selected area, the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement and disagreement on variables related to the problem under consideration. To this end, a five point likert-scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree, where by strongly agree (5), Agree= (4), Not Sure= (3), Disagree= (2) and Strongly Disagree=SD (1) was employed. This was done in order to explore the perspectives of the respondents on the causes of leaders’ turnover. In order to supplement the results obtained from survey data, some information relevant to the study was also obtained from analyzing existing documents. Hence, information about leader turnover was obtained from personal records, reports and other related documents.

2.7. Methods of Data Analysis

The collected data was edited, classified, and presented using tables. Descriptive statistical analysis was used. The results of the analysis were presented using mean and standard deviation values.

2.8. Validity and reliability

To maintain the validity of the instruments, professionals’ comments in the area was taken in to consideration. Thus, to meet the reliability requirements, instruments

were designed using a simple and clear language and were sequenced logically and a pilot test was conducted with some respondents for further validation.

2.9. Ethical Consideration

The researchers treated respondents with respect and courtesy, with no considering their age, social class, level of education, or place of residence. Again anonymity, confidentiality and secrecy of the response were maintained. Besides, the researchers were careful not to use others' work without acknowledgment.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 3.2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

No			Frequency	%	Mean	Std. deviation
1	Gender of the respondents	Female	49	32	0.68	0.4768
		Male	104	68		
		Total	153	100		
2	Age of the respondents	Below 35	31	20.3	1.88	0.517
		35-45	110	71.9		
		Above 45	12	7.8		
		Total	153	100		
3	Specialization	Any other particular subject	85	55.6	0.44	0.499
		Leadership and related subject	68	44.4		
		Total	153	100		
4	Educational status	Below Grade12	6	3.9	3.60	1.258
		Certificate	29	19		
		Diploma	40	26.1		
		Degree	55	39.9		
		Masters	23	15		
		PhD	0	0		
		Total	153	100		

Source: survey data 2024

Based on the survey data as displayed in Table 3.2 above, 49(32%) of the respondents were females, and 104(68%) of the respondents were males. It can be

understood from the results that most of the respondents were males. Regarding their specialization, most of the respondents 85 (55.5%) did not have specializations in leadership discipline, whereas, the remaining 68 (44.6%) have specialization in leadership courses. The table also included educational background of the respondents and the majority, 55 (39.9%) of them were degree holders, followed by Diploma 40 (26.6%). Besides, 23(15%) and 6 (3.9%) of the respondents were MA/MSc and below grade 12 holders respectively.

3.2. Results Obtained from Questionnaire

3.2.1. Increased Responsibilities as a cause for leaders' turnover in government Organization

Table 3.3: Increased Responsibility as a Cause for leaders' Turnover

Increased Responsibilities	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The ability to plan overall activities of the organization	153	4.143	0.870
Skill for resource allocation	153	4.057	0.981
Encourage staff to implement technology and Kaizen principles	153	2.486	1.432
Encourage staff to use innovative Technologies	153	3.657	0.993
Promote employees professional Development	153	3.314	1.260
Encourage the participation of Employees	153	2.829	1.175
Improve employees job satisfaction	153	4.057	0.932
Resolve conflicts among employees and/or customers	153	4.086	0.961
Improve income	153	3.743	1.264
Improve the attractiveness of work Area	153	2.857	1.398
Create conducive environment for service delivery process	153	3.829	1.083
Overall mean	153	3.551	1.122

Source: survey data 2024

Based on the results presented in Table 3.3 above, one can conclude that all the items listed do not equally influence leaders to leave their position. Therefore, to

know the dominant determining factor, the mean value for each item was calculated. Accordingly, the aggregated mean score of the empirical study (3.551) is higher than the expected average mean value (3). This suggests that increased responsibility is one of the significant factors that push leaders to leave their leadership position. In particular, it can be noted that the ability to plan the overall activities of the organization with a mean value of (4.143) is the most agreed and with a mean of (2.486), encouraging staffs to undertake technology and kaizen position. This result indicated that the actual responsibilities of leaders are far beyond than what they expect before being assigned to the position of leadership.

3.2.2. Unhealthy Working Environment as a cause for leadership turnover in government Organizations

Leaders can play significant contribution in the organization work process if there is favorable working environment. Here, the unhealthy working environments' influence on the leaders' existence in an organization is analyzed. In order to identify the dominant determining indicator, the mean value of each items were calculated and presented as follows.

Table 3.4: Unhealthy Working Environment as a Cause for leadership Turnover

Unhealthy Working Environment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Shortage of budget in the Organization	153	4.486	1.536
Lack of autonomy to make decisions	153	4.343	1.609
Political interference	153	3.971	1.475
Scarcity of resources in the Organization	153	4.200	1.594
Poor office facility	153	4.143	1.598
Negative Interaction with Employees	153	3.914	1.564
Poor group cooperation	153	3.629	1.628
Employees disciplinary problems	153	4.457	1.496
Lack of recognition from authorities	153	3.571	1.528
Lack of effective Community Mobilization	153	3.371	1.573
Total	153	3.957	1.412

Source: survey data 2024

Based on the calculated mean value, the aggregated mean score of respondents (3.957) is higher than the average mean value (3). This suggests that unavailability of healthy working environment is one of the significant factors that enforce leaders to leave from their position. Besides, from the indicators of unhealthy work environment, shortage of budget in the organization with a mean value of (4.486) is the most agreed and lack of effective community mobilization and involvement that

has a mean score of (3.371) is the least agreed that push leaders to leave their position. From this it is possible to infer that such unfavorable work atmosphere push leaders to develop negative perceptions, which causes a low commitment of leaders to stay at their organization.

3.2.3. Workload

In Table 3.5 below, the responses of survey participants regarding the influence of increased workloads on leaders' to leave their position is analyzed and presented.

Table 3.5: Increased Workload as a Cause for leadership Turnover

Increased work load	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Monitoring employees' engagement	153	4.200	0.952
Developing activity plans	153	3.257	1.209
Allocating resources	153	3.143	1.475
Supporting and monitoring the employees activities of their work Team	153	3.514	1.094
Resolving conflicts among employees and/or customers	153	4.600	0.763
mobilizing Communities', assuring service satisfaction	153	3.257	1.209
Evaluating the achievement of organization goals	153	4.343	0.831
Prepare too many reports	153	3.914	1.016
Handling meetings for making decisions in various affairs	153	3.886	1.310
Improving the attractiveness of working environment	153	2.771	1.435
Involving and working with Communities	153	3.829	1.010
Involving and working with different Stakeholders	153	3.886	1.012
Total	153	3.717	1.109

Source: survey data 2024

According to the calculated mean value as shown in Table 3.5 above, the grand mean score of increased workload (3.717) is higher than the expected average mean value (3). This suggests that the presence of increased workload in the organizations is a major cause for leaders to leave their position. Specifically, resolving conflicts

among employees and customers is the most agreed factor that determines the retention of leaders in their position with a mean value of (4.600).

3.2.4. Inadequate work training

Certain items were prepared to measure the effect of this variable on leaders' retention in their position. The mean value for each item was calculated and presented in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6: Inadequate Work Training as a Cause for leader Turnover

Inadequate work training	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of adequate experience	153	3.371	1.135
Lack of necessary leadership knowledge and Skills	153	3.486	1.050
Limited access to technology	153	3.114	1.212
Total	153	3.324	1.132

Source: survey data 2024

The computed mean value as shown in Table 3.6 above revealed that the grand mean score for inadequate work training is (3.324), which is slightly higher than the expected average mean value (3). This suggests that inadequate work training is one of the factors that may cause leadership turnover.

3.2.5. Poor Living Conditions

Table 3.7: Poor Living Conditions as a Cause for leadership Turnover

Poor Living Conditions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social alienation	153	4.743	0.67
Poor housing, transportation and health care infrastructures	153	4.286	0.88
Lack of psychological safety	153	3.657	1.09
Insufficient living facilities	153	4.257	0.73
Total	153	4.236	0.842

Source: survey data 2024

As seen from Table 3.7 in the above, the calculated mean (4.236) suggest that a poor living condition is one of the significant factors that determine leadership turnover. In particular, among the measurement variables, social alienation with a mean value of (4.743) is the most agreed reason that pushes leaders to leave their position.

3.2.6. Turnover and Salary

Table 3.8: Insufficient Salary as a Cause for leaders Turnover

Insufficient Salary	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Government leaders' salary is less compared to other non-government leaders	153	2.200	1.120
Work load and salary paid do not Match	153	3.314	1.072
The salary paid to leaders is not enough to lead their life	153	3.343	1.021
leaders' salary do not grow with service years	153	4.314	0.94
There are no additional incentives such as free transport and house allowance for leaders in the study Area	153	4.486	0.89
Total	153	3.531	1.008

Source: survey data 2024

Based on the above result, the overall calculated mean (3.531) to this particular variable suggest that insufficient salary is one of the factors that cause leaders to leave their position. Again, as service years increase the salary of leaders' do not do so. As a consequence, leaders' turnover in the study area has got increment.

3.2.7 Major Causes of Turnover

Table 3.9: A Ranked Summary on the Causes of leaders' Turnover

Major Causes of Turnover	Mean Scores	Rank
Poor Living Condition	4.236	1
Unhealthy working environment	3.957	2
Insufficient Salary	3.717	3
Increased Responsibility	3.551	4
work load	3.531	5
Inadequate work training	3.324	6

As indicated in the Table 3.9 above, the descriptive results showed that poor living condition, poor working environment and work load are the top three factors that cause high leadership turnover in Addiszemen city administration.

3.3. Results obtained from Document analysis

3.3.1. Trends of leaders' Turnover

Table 3.10 Trends of leaders' Turnover (2020-2024)

Name of Government Office	Leaders who leave their Leadership						Total
	Total number of Appointee	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Mayor Office	2	-	-	-	1	1	2
Kebele (District) One	5	4	2	3	1	3	13
Kebele (District) Two	5	2	1	-	3	2	8
Kebele (District) Three	5	5	-	3	1	4	13
Kebele (District) Four	5	3	-	1	4	2	10
Municipality Office	2	-	-	2	-	1	3
Revenue enhancing office	1	1		1	-	1	3
Technical and vocational enterprise office	1	-	1	1	-	-	2
Procurement and finance office	1	-	1	-	-	1	2
Trade and Industry Office	1	-	1			1	2
Investment Office	1	1	-	1	1	1	4
Civil service Office	1	1	-	1	-	1	3
Water Utility office	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woman and Youth Affair Office	1	1	-	-	-	1	2
		18	6	13	11	19	67
	32	58%	18.7%	40.6%	18.7%	59.3%	

Source: Addiszemen Human Resource and Civil service Office 2024

In order to establish change in the organization, leaders should stay in their organization at least in one strategic plan period. However, as indicated in the above document analysis findings, in Addiszemen city administration, the rate of leaders' turnover is high and inconsistent within the years of 2020 to 2024 as presented in

Table 3.10 above. In this time frame as shown in the table above, the highest turnover rate was recorded in 2024, which constituted 19(59.3%) from the total.

4. Summaries, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

4.1. Summaries

Public service organizations are valuable assets for human society that need strong leadership to achieve their intended goals. Despite this, studies pointed out that leadership turnover challenged many government organizations in many parts of the world to achieve their desired objectives. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the factors affecting leaders' turnover in the years of 2020-2024 in Addiszemen city administration. It mainly emphasized to assess the rate of leadership turnover in the study area. It also assessed the extent on how individual factors affect the turnover of leaders. To this end, parallel concurrent design and mixed research approach were utilized. In the study, 153 respondents were involved. Primary data were collected from public office leaders, employees and non-government organization employees and leaders by using survey questionnaires. While, secondary data were obtained from document analysis. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources were analyzed through descriptive method. Thus, the major findings of the study are summarized below:

- More educated or advanced leaders rush to leave their position in search of other opportunities.
- Among the selected government organizations, it was identified that except water utility office, all of city administration office leaders had leave their position in the past five years.
- Majority of the leaders are first degree and MA/MSc holders. However, more than half percent of the assigned leaders have no specialization in leadership field.
- The rate of turnover is inconsistent within the years of 2020 to 2024 and it was evident that there was a relatively high turnover rate in 2024 accounted of (59.3%).
- The aggregated mean score of (3.551), (3.96), (3.72), (4.24), and (3.531) for increased responsibility, poor working environment, increased workload, poor living conditions and insufficient salary respectively revealed that these variables are significant determiners of leaders' turnover in leadership position in the study area.

4.2. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, it is possible to conclude that most of government organizations in the study area are suffering from leadership turnover. From the results, it is also possible to infer that most of the individuals who were in the

leadership position have not specialized leadership discipline. It is again plausible to conclude that poor living condition, unhealthy working environment, increased work load and responsibilities, insufficient salary and inadequate training are the factors affecting leadership turnover in the study area. From these factors, poor living condition is the most serious problem that government organizations faced and forced leaders to leave their position.

4.3. Implications

Mostly leaders to public organization are assigned without meritocracy criteria and the assigned individuals are accepted the position for the following reasons:

- To get job opportunity
- To get a better payment
- To get a position experience for further opportunities

Due to these reasons leadership recruitment may be subjected to bias and corruption processes, which might be one of the reasons for the high turnover as a result of the assignees inefficient ability for the leadership position.

4.4. Recommendations

In order to overcome the identified problems in the government organization, the following constructive suggestions and future directions are forwarded for policy makers and researchers.

- Professionally capable and motivated candidates must be assigned to lead government organizations.
- Leaders should be provided with adequate leadership trainings before and after assignment. This will provide the opportunities to share experience on how to improve time management and the working environment. The training may include how to manipulate technology to data management, communication skill and other emerging abilities to handle organizational leadership and management activities.
- Community leaders, local investors, and non-government organizations should take responsibilities to improve, and support leadership development programs.
- Efforts should be made by the governmental and non-governmental bodies to improve the working and living conditions of leaders. This may include improving infrastructure and allocating appropriate incentives, allowances and other compensation mechanisms for leaders.
- Adequate salary should be provided for leaders that will help to reduce turnover and corruption.
- Due to the complex nature of the problem, further studies should be conducted to understand the existing problem in detail in Amhara regional state in general and in Addiszemen city administration in particular.

- Further studies should be conducted to the future that directs to develop strategies that will aid to retain leaders in their leadership position.

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