

**An Investigation of the Nature of Academic staff Turnover:  
The Case of Addis Ababa University**

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The Requirement For The Degree Of Masters In Business  
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*AN INVESTIGATION OF THE NATURE OF ACADEMIC STAFF  
TURNOVER: THE CASE OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY*

*By Meskerem Mitiku*

*Approved by the Board of Examiners*

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this project is my original work it has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the project have been acknowledged.

### **Declared by**

Meskerem Mitiku \_\_\_\_\_ **June, 2010**

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Advisor Signature Date

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### *Abstract*

*The issue of employee turnover is among the basic managerial decision area, as employees constitute the cornerstone of an organization. Thus, the theme of this project is to investigate the nature and extent of employee turnover in case of academic staff of Addis Ababa University, considering the department, professional rank, gender, and seniority of an employee. To collect data for the study, questionnaire was designed and distributed to department heads, and secondary data source for the period covering 2005/6- 2008/9 GC was reviewed, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The result indicates that in Addis Ababa University, academic staff with a rank of lecturers and female academic staff left the university more frequently during the past five years. Thus the responsible body may find these findings worthwhile for corrective action.*

# Chapter One

## 1.1 Background of the study

Employees of an organization are the cornerstones of it, upon which its existence depends. In most cases, the significance of workers is underestimated and other resources like financial and non-financial are given due consideration. But in today's changing technology and working environment it is highly advisable for any organization to audit for its human resource, because an employee may voluntarily or involuntarily leave or enter in to an organization, attributing to the concept known as employee turnover.

Human capital theory suggests that because the knowledge, skills and abilities that people bring to organizations have enormous economic value to the organization; they need to be managed in the same strategic manner that other economic assets (e.g. land, financial capital) are managed (Lee Hsu and Lien 2006 : 2)

During the last five years Addis Ababa University has launched many graduate programs increasing its student's enrolment, and has set a strategic commitment for itself to make itself a center of excellence. And yet anecdotal information indicates that the University is experiencing academic staff shortage which is seriously limiting its growth. The same information indicates that the University is neither attracting new academic staff nor retaining its staff. This study shades some light on the academic staff retention capacity of the University by studying the academic staff turnover.

Employee turnover is one of the areas that are of great interest for managerial decision making. This is because if, for instance, the number of out flow is greater than the number of inflows, then the organization might lag behind its objective and exposed to unexpected and extra costs. Many authors have defined the concept “turnover” in different ways, but in the same context. However, the general definition of employee turnover is the permanent separation of employees from an organization. An employee may voluntarily or involuntarily leave an organization. Involuntary turnover is attributed to those factors that are beyond the control of the person, like death, layoff, dismissal, retirement, and so on while in case of voluntary turnover, employees leave organization based on their personal interest or due to factors such as nature of the job, supervision, relation with their coworkers. The purpose of this project is to provide fresh observation on academic staff turnover of Addis Ababa University

Many authors have tried to address the issue of turnover, but from different perspective. For instance, Odland (2007) has investigated the causes of teachers’ turnover in international school; Rivera (1999) has discovered why personnel leave a career or organization early, which departments are so impacted and concluded that a department which is able to realize the problem early and immediately devises a solution. Tolbert et.al (1995) has conducted a study on the effect of gender composition in academic departments on faculty turnover and reached on a conclusion that, as the proportion of women in a department grew, turnover among women also increased, confirming the prediction that increase in the relative size of a minority will result in increased inter-group competition and conflict.

To allow an informed decision, turnover rates have to be calculated down to department level, to identify which areas are most problematic (Loquercio 2006; 4). The same author argued that, it is necessary to rely on other indicators to monitor problems related to turnover and staff rotation, offering among others the average duration of field missions, vacancy rate and seniority of staff.

Eventhough many studies have investigated the causes of employee turnover in different organizations, there is no study that is conducted on Addis Ababa University to investigate academic staff turnover along these dimensions (perspectives) i.e. from the perspectives of professional achievement (rank), achieved academic rank, discipline, and gender.

Mercer (2004) argued that, the impact of turnover is widely considered to have direct and indirect costs on organizations, with the bill costing anywhere between 50 and 150% of an annual salary (Cited in Loquercio, 2006), Thus this study investigated academic staff turnover of Addis Ababa University and provided with a lucid image of it so that corrective action might be taken by the University Administrators. Moreover the resulting observation will encourage further research.

## **1.2. Background of Addis Ababa University**

Addis Ababa University (AAU) is one of the largest higher learning institutions in Africa that was established at the end of the 1940s. Formerly known as Haile Selassie I University, AAU was established by Ministry of Education in 1949 as a Trinity College with 71 students and 9 academic staff. It was granted a charter in July 1950 as an autonomous higher learning institution under a different name of the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA). This makes AAU one of the oldest, if not the oldest, modern African university.

The Ethiopian government created several institutions since UCAA was established in 1950s. These include a College of Agriculture in Alemaya, Harar, and College of Building Technology in Addis Ababa. In 1961, the different institutions of higher learning came under a central administration to form what is to become then Haile Selassie I University, later renamed AAU. It should be noted that many of the institutions in the country that have now become separate institutions, were part of AAU at one time.

Addis Ababa University is currently undertaking both horizontal and vertical expansion having 105 masters programs, 37 PhD programs, and provides 15 specialties, 1 specialty diploma, 1 postgraduate diploma, and 1 post graduate certificate.

### ***Objectives***

These are stated objectives of the University.

- ❖ To search for, cultivate, preserve, and transmit knowledge

- ❖ To provide education that fully develops the personality and strengthens the respect for human dignity, by promoting mutual respect, understanding, friendship, and tolerance free from ethnic, nationality, sex, religious, and other prejudices
- ❖ To inculcate the dignity of work and dedication for the well being of the society with the view to enhancing the socioeconomic development of the Ethiopian people
- ❖ To provide the country with competent men and women, imbued with a sense of social purpose and trained in sciences, technology, the arts, and various other professionals
- ❖ To conduct research and studies, in an objective and dispassionate way and free from any bias, on different fields and disseminate fruitful results thereof.

### *Gender Issues*

The admission rate for women has been only about 15% for the past several years. Some efforts have been made to improve the rate of admission by lowering the admission cut-off grade point by 0.2 (for example, admitting boys with 3.0 and girls with 2.8 GPA to the same program). This affirmative action has improved women's admission rate, but has not resulted in significant changes; the attrition rate of this group is higher than average. In the new curriculum too there is courage for women so that their participation increases, eventhough it still is lesser than the number of boys.

Source; [www.ethioworld.com/Science.../addisababauniversity.htm](http://www.ethioworld.com/Science.../addisababauniversity.htm)

### **1.3. Statement of the problem**

The role of academic staff in any higher institution is the most principal operational aspect that could not be replaced. The longer time a given academic staff stays in a given department; the more he/she contributes, this means when an academic staff leaves there will be something critical that that department in particular and the university in general loses.

Anecdotal information indicates that, academic staff turnover at Addis Ababa University is chronic, however, but the nature and the extent of this turnover is not yet known, thus the theme of this project is to investigate the nature and extent of employee turnover in terms of their department, Professional achievement (rank), achieved academic level, seniority, and gender of employees emphasizing on the academic staff of Addis Ababa University. It is critical to see employee turnover in this dimensions because, if one considers department, it is deemed to consider as some disciplines are more affected, requiring the decision to discontinue the stream or devise some retention mechanisms. In case of Professional achievement (rank) and seniority, looking at these employees background is indispensable, without which the university's objective of producing high caliber workforce may not be achieved because top ranked staffs are so precious in the country as well as the University. Assessing employees' gender in terms of their turnover rate is also essential upon which affirmative action or other decisions are to be made given that there is a difference between the number and turnover of male and female

staff. In general this project is going to observe whether there is academic staff turnover in the University, taking the mentioned dimensions in to consideration.

#### **1.4. Objective of the study**

The general objective of this project is to investigate Addis Ababa University academic staff turnover, for the period between **2005/6 and 2008/9**. While the specific objective is to see the distribution of academic staff turnover in terms of;

- ✚ Gender of staff
- ✚ Achieved academic level
- ✚ Professional achievement
- ✚ Seniority

#### **1.5. Significance of the study**

The significance of this report is to provide fresh evidence on the issue of academic staff turnover, so that interested researchers may conduct further study on the topic (issue). Addis Ababa University is the other party that is going to benefit from the study because the project may attract attention towards the issue of employee turnover in terms of the specified dimensions which may require further and critical decision.

## **1.6. Scope of the study**

The target population of the project is academic heads of different departments of Addis Ababa University. The turnover phenomenon is considered for the period between 2005 and 2009.

## **1.7. Limitation of the study**

As it is already indicated, the aim of this project is to investigate the academic staff turnover of academic staff at Addis Ababa University. In order to arrive at the expected result, there were many challenges faced, the unwillingness of the respondents to fill the questionnaire, and the unavailability of well organized secondary data that can be easily accessed for the purpose. In addition to the mentioned factors, the arrangement of the University's system by it self is a great problem, this is true because the University is on the expansion phase, both vertically and horizontally. It was planned to collect data covering five years in order to investigate the trend and nature of turnover, but because of the problem just mentioned information regarding turnover for one year is missed. As proposed, seniority was one of the dimensions to investigate turnover, because of the inability of access to this information it is not included as part of the analysis. In trying to show the distribution of staff turnover across faculty versus the staff professional (academic) rank, year1997 is not included because the available data at central administration does not show the rank of staff who left the University during that year.

## **1.8. Operational definition of concepts**

- Employee turnover: the voluntary permanent separation of an academic staff from the University, this also includes staff who have not returned from their studies within the expected time, as per the university's regulation.
- Academic staff; those employees that are engaged on teaching activities.
- Seniority; length of uninterrupted services except for study leave, for example an employee may serve for 1 year, 2 years, 3, 4, 5, or more years.
- Professional achievement (rank); academic rank earned (professorship, associate professorship, assistant professorship, lecturer, graduate assistant).
- Achieved academic level; the last academic degree earned.
- Gender; whether an employee is a male or female.
- Department; a unit or section, in a faculty where an employee works.

## **1.9. Research Methodology**

In order to investigate academic staff turnover, in the case of Addis Ababa University as a source of data, both primary and secondary sources were used. The primary data was collected from academic department heads by distributing a questionnaire that asks about the staff turnover and the secondary data was collected from the central administration. Eventhough data of last five years (1997-2001EC) was proposed to be utilized, only data of four years was obtained (1997-2000EC) from the central administration. Participating units are academic departments i.e. department heads. There are about 60 different

Departments, 8 faculties, 7 in Addis Ababa and 1 at Bishoftu these faculties are considered as a target population but Veterinary Medicine faculty (Bishoftu compass) is not included in this project because of the difficulty of access, and the seven faculties Social science , Education, Medical, Technology, Science, FBE, and Law, are included in the project .

In order to obtain data from this target population, those faculties in Addis Ababa were covered. 55 questionnaires were designed, and distributed of which 38 were returned from these units. Secondary data sources of 4 years (1997-2000 EC) are accessed, collected and analyzed from the central administration. In collecting the secondary data Veterinary Medicine faculty's information was obtained and included in the unit of analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency distributions and percentage) are used to summarize responses of heads of departments on academic staff turnover.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Related Literatures

#### 2.1. Introduction

Employee turnover is normally expected by managers but it is harmful to an organization in many ways, if it is not kept to a minimum. Turnover is an employee behavior and a sole or a series of incidents that result in the employee leaving the company by choice or by the wish of the company that causes it, (Cintron, 2006; 21)

#### 2.2. Definition of turnover

Different authors have defined the term employee turnover in different ways. Some of the definitions are as follows;

- ✚ Turnover is a reduction in the number of employees through retirement, resignation, reassignment, transfer or other means than layoffs, (Mani & Kumar, 2006; 2)
- ✚ Turnover, as per Wikipedia (the free encyclopedia), in a human resources context refers to the characteristic of a given company or industry, relative to rate at which an employer gains and loses staffs
- ✚ Price (1977) defined turnover as the ratio of the number of organizational members who have left during the period being considered divided by the average number of people in that organization during the period, (Cited in Ongor 2007; 49). Frequently, managers refer to turnover as the entire process associated with filling a vacancy: Each time a position is vacated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, a new employee must be hired and trained. This replacement cycle is known as turnover

(Woods, 1995). This term is also often utilized in an effort to measure relationships of employees in an organization as they leave, regardless of reason.

✚ ‘Turnover’; means voluntary cessation of membership of an organization by an employee of that organization. (Morrell et al 2001; 6)

### 3.3. Types of turnover

Griffeth and Hom (2001), offer to focus on the part of turnover that is of real concern to an organization by differentiating between voluntary and involuntary turnover; In other words, did the employee choose to leave the job or was it a decision made by the employer? Then, voluntary resignations are further distinguished between functional (exit of substandard performers) and dysfunctional (exit of effective performers). Finally, unavoidable resignations over which the employer has no influence are also left aside (family move, childbirth, serious illness or death). This leaves the group of avoidable resignations as the key focus.

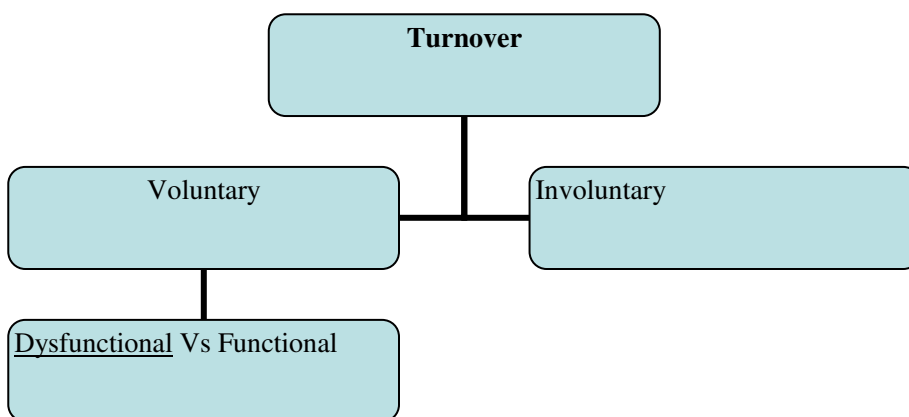


Fig.-1: Types of employee turnover.

Involuntary turnover may occur for reasons which are independent of the affected employee(s), such as the (real or perceived) need to cut costs, restructure or downsize. Inclusion of these cases in a study of 'organization leavers' will mean, any relationship between turnover and a personal characteristic will be significantly diluted. Even where involuntary turnover occurs for reasons associated with an individual employee (such as poor performance), it is likely these cases are more representative of the wider sample of organizational members in relation to the procession dimension of a decision to leave than any sub-sample of organizational leavers would be. Where an instance of turnover is genuinely voluntary, this instance represents the exercise of choice and is the result of a decision process. To this degree, the set of instances of involuntary turnover (where employees have been forced to leave) is likely to be more representative of the totality of organizational members than the set of instances of voluntary turnover (where employees have chosen to leave). To the extent that turnover involves leaving; instances of voluntary turnover also represent a purer social phenomenon, as they catalogue where individuals have chosen to terminate a significant relationship. By way of contrast, in involuntary instances, because these are in some sense owned by an abstract entity (the organization), a relational aspect to turnover namely 'cessation of membership', is lost. Instead other more impersonal considerations such as (remotely defined) utility prevail. In terms of the nature of social science research, study of involuntary turnover is likely to focus on consequential and extrinsic aspects, rather than intrinsic characteristics. (Morrell 2001; 6-7)

Park et al. (1994) defined dysfunctional, as distinct from functional, turnover. In this definition, dysfunctional turnover occurs when an organization loses good performing

employees, whereas functional turnover results from the loss of poor performing employees. Whereas the former is generally inimical to the organization if appropriate replacements cannot be found, the latter might, in fact, be a positive development which gives the organization an opportunity to invigorate itself by finding a more capable substitute, (Cited on Tettey ,2006; 7),

### *3.4. Why study turnover?*

Although one of the implications of a virtuous resource cycle is that organizations are unlikely to ever completely control resorting, it serves to highlight that improvements in management of turnover may have a generative effect. The corollary of this is that the problems caused by high turnover may be compounded by shortages of labour, or other 'knock-on' effects and adverse turnover can lead to a vicious cycle. (Morrell and Clarke, 2001; 16)

Concerns about educator turnover are reported widely as a global phenomenon. In Britain, educator turnover is reported as a national crisis (BBC News Online, 2001; BBC News, 2001). In the USA, teacher shortages as a result of turnover are widely reported in many states. Turnover translates, amongst other things, into shortages in educator supply, costs in recruitment, training and mentoring, poor learner performance due to disruption of planning programs and continuity, as well as overcrowded classes. This poses a challenge to the education system to manage turnover and retain teachers. This is critical to the future of quality education delivery, especially in the light of changes in the system generally and the demands placed on it to deliver education in line with the country's

socio-economic expectations. A teacher turnover and retention strategy that addresses the sources thereof is therefore essential

Teacher turnover manifests itself in many ways and is attributed to many causes. It therefore is imperative that the education system takes cognizance of this and takes steps to address this situation proactively before it reaches critical proportions. (Xaba, 2003; 288)

At present the Ethiopian higher education is experiencing problems expressed in the form of shortage of experienced academic staff, weak research output, and declining educational quality. It is in the middle of these shortcomings that the higher education system in the country is rapidly expanding both in the number of universities and student intake, (Zenawi ,1999:p2).

The effects of teacher turnover necessitate the management thereof. A number of measures have been taken to address teacher turnover in various countries. Among others, aggressive recruitment drives, lowering standards for entry into teaching, provision of allowances as incentives have been employed. However, these measures seem largely to address attracting people in to teaching. Therefore, a holistic approach is needed to manage teacher turnover effectively. This has to address critical sources of turnover, namely, organizational characteristics in the light of the reasons thereof. (Xaba, 2003)

Given the plethora of schools improvement initiatives, it is critically important to acknowledge that one of the most; if not the most important variable for student achievement is the teacher. In and of itself, that fact is neither surprising nor sufficient to justify a study of teacher turnover. In addition to the hard currency costs, teacher turnover provokes a loss of productivity that is difficult to measure, busy administrators are required to spend inordinate time in recruitment effort, colleagues are asked to mentor new hires, and in general a great deal of time and energy is devoted to restoring the program to whether it was before the turnover occurred, (Odland 2007; 20)

A certain amount of mobility is inevitable. Illness, accidents, aging, death, and a variety of personal reasons bring about separations, some of these factors, as well as economic and financial conditions in an organization and in the larger community, occasion termination of employment, layoffs, or internal mobility. However, although some degree of mobility is both inevitable and healthy, too much of it can severely reduce productivity, demoralize incumbents, and damage an organization's public image. On the other hand, too little internal mobility stultifies employee ambition, and too low rate of external mobility (separation of "old hands" and inflow of new blood) can result in a moribund organization. Thus in studying past and current rates of mobility it is important for managers to ask: what kind of employee turnover need to be differentiated? (Pigors and Myers, 1981; 217- 218).

In addition, to allow an informed decision, and identify which areas are most problematic, turnover rates have to be calculated down to department level. To calculate the crude turnover rate the generally used formula is:

Total number of leavers over period x 100

Average total number employed over period

(Loquercio, 2006; 4)

### ***3.5. The relation between turnover and gender, seniority (service year)***

The age, sex, length of service, function, and organizational level of employees who quit are all worth looking in to for clues to reasons for avoidable turnover. Many managers seem to feel that if voluntary separations occur chiefly among young employees (of either sex), women about to get married, unskilled workers, or even skilled workers with less than six months of service, there is relatively little cause for concern. What they worry about is quitting by managerial or professional employees with relatively long service and between ages of 30 and 40. But can managers afford to be unconcerned if any employee is leaving without regret, or to disregard early warning signals that, if they had been heeded, might have indicated needs for preventive action. (Pigors and Myers, 1981; 222).

Studies often link the employee's personal traits and demographic characteristics with their intention to leave. Some researchers like Stohr *et al* (1994) reveal an association of gender, race, education, age, marital status and tenure with employee turnover. Research by (Zhao, et al 1999), point to tenure and rank, which is tantamount to longevity, as the strongest demographic predictors of satisfaction for law enforcement personnel. Interestingly, for both longevity and rank, the relationship tends to be negative, meaning the longer the service and the higher the rank, the more negatively the officer views the

job. Research shows that high ranking senior employees tend to consider their job undesirable, (Cited on Kieckbusch, etal, 2003; 69)

Reviews of turnover research, Porter and Steers (1973), and Price (1977) indicate that sex, age, educational level, and tenure often account for significant variance in withdrawal behavior. Sex has frequently been a correlate of turnover; however, males withdraw more often in some studies, females in others. The sex linkage with withdrawal appears to be contingent on several variables such as the type of job and the labor market. In their study males were predicted to have higher voluntary turnover than females because of the sex-role stereotype and low pay associated with the teller's position. No prediction was made for the relationship between sex and involuntary turnover. Age and tenure have demonstrated fairly consistent negative relationships with turnover. As one gets older and is in an organization longer, one is less likely to leave voluntarily. Involuntary turnover also is likely to be less a function of tenure because poor performers would have been asked to leave before much tenure was accrued. Cited on (A. Stumpf ,1981; 151).

Lee (2006; 1956) found that, seniority rewards did not positively predict turnover, but fringe benefits explained the unique turnover variance and savings plan contributions negatively predicted turnover.

### 3.6. *Turnover in higher Institutions.*

Although faculty turnover is of ongoing interest to college and university administrators, surprisingly little research has been produced in this field, and there is no heavily subscribed national study. Much of the research is related to gender differences rather than to general faculty turnover. No unified system of studying turnover has emerged as a model to follow, making it difficult to make reliable comparisons across institutions. (Scroggins, 2005)

[Featherman & Hauser \(1978\)](#) argued that, Higher education exposes students to new knowledge, skills, and relationships. It is a primary means by which individuals ensure their place in the more financially secure classes of society, (Cited on Dougherty and Andrews, 2007; 1).

Higher education institutions, like all large employers, must face the issues of the turnover and retirement of its employees. Turnover and retirement require that institutions and organizations replace outgoing talent with individuals having comparable experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities. To accomplish this task, organizations must have appropriate policies and procedures in place to hire replacements that have knowledge and skills equal or superior to those of previous employees, recognizing that each rotation occurs at an increased cost to the institution. This means that organizations must have the ability to recruit, train, and retain qualified workers, which will soon become an even bigger concern as employers face the prospect of large numbers of baby

boomers anticipating retirement, compounding expected turnover and retirement rates (Haskel D, 2006; 1)

Schools with high turnover indicate that, something about their social fabric is unhealthy. Thus high teacher turnover is problematic not just because it causes disruption to the effectiveness of the organization, but because it indicates underlying issues that also improved overall success (Odland, 2007; 21). While it is important for policy makers at the macro level to understand how teacher retention in the field of education can be improved, it is also important for administrators in school to understand how retention at the school level can be improved (pg. 18)

### *3.7. Addressing turnover at departmental level*

The Departments need to initiate an active process of addressing teacher turnover. This process should engage all relevant levels of the system, namely, from the human resource directorates at national and provincial levels, to districts and schools. The following elements regarding teacher turnover should receive attention:

1. Addressing teacher turnover must cater for the immediate turnover generated needs and then address the long-term needs. Immediate needs generated by teacher turnover could include an audit of posts in relation to vacant, unfilled posts or posts held by temporary teachers. This should yield exact figures of vacant posts and the demand for teachers. This way, shortages of teachers and the curriculum areas can be identified and "excess teachers" can be matched to vacant posts. Alternatively, vacant posts can be advertised and temporary teachers appointed permanently.

2. A database of unemployed teachers and their areas of specialization need to be compiled in order to determine whether there are shortages or not.
3. To cater for long-term teacher turnover-generated needs, an audit of teacher demand and supply in relation to demographic needs of different provinces and districts needs to be undertaken. It must be determined if there are real teacher shortages and what curriculum areas exhibit this shortage or if there is an oversupply of teachers and in which curriculum areas. In this way, it will be possible to determine strategies needed retention strategies in the case of turnover prevalence or adequate supply, retraining of teachers in other areas of need in the case of an oversupply.
4. Strategies to deal with future teacher turnover trends, shortages and or abundance will have to be initiated. Departments must have accurate and regularly updated data about how many teachers are leaving the system and why they leave. These data are crucial to gauge the effectiveness of policies and understand the turnover trends.
5. In curriculum areas like mathematics, science and technology, recalling teachers who have resigned and offering incentives to young graduates in these areas should be considered. It must be borne in mind that the private sector snaps up these graduates and offers better salaries.
6. Departments must compile retirement projections in order to cater for future teacher demand needs, (Xaba, 2003, 289-90).

## Chapter Three

### Results and Discussions

This part deals with the presentation of data, and its analysis. To collect the data and extract findings, questionnaire was prepared and distributed to heads of different department at all compass of the university, except the faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Bishoftu Campus) which was not included because of the difficulty of access. Out of the total of 55 departments visited at Addis Ababa city, 7 were unwilling to accept, thus a total of 48 questionnaire was distributed to different department heads, and a total of 38 (80%) was returned and used for this project, while 10 (20%) remained uncollectible. In addition, a document consisting of employees issue on turnover was also reviewed.

#### 3.1. Results

The next section presents the data gathered from heads of departments and the document reviewed.

Whether attrition is a chronic problem or not was asked in order to see the level to which the heads of departments recognize and understand that it is a problem in their respective unit and their response is summarized in the following table.

**Table 3 -1: Department responses on severity of turnover problem- sample department.**

Attrition has been a chronic problem in my department		
Yes	No	Total
13 (34%)	25 (66%)	38 (100%)

**Source; response of the 38 department heads (primary data)**

As indicated on the above table, 13 or 34% responded that turnover is not a chronic problem while the majority, i.e., 25 or 66% responded that it is not a chronic problem in their department.

The following table summarizes the total number of academic staff that are currently engaging on their activity, being categorized based on their nationality, and gender.

*Table 3-2; Academic staff by nationality and gender- sample department.*

Total	Nationality		Gender	
	Ethiopian	Non-Ethiopian	Female	Male
799 (100%)	753 (94%)	46 (6%)	111 (14%)	688 (86%)

**Source; response of the 38 department heads (primary data)**

Of the total 799 academic staff in 38 departments, 753 or 94% are Ethiopian, where as 46 (6%), are foreigners (non-Ethiopian). Out of the total the number of female staff is 111 (14%) and that of male workers is 688 (86%).

But when one observes the academic degree of these employees, the majority, i.e. 418 (52%) are MSC/MA holders, while PHD holders, and BSC/BA degree holders constitute 280 (35%), and 101 (13%) respectively. This is clearly indicated in the following table.

**Table 3-3: Academic staff by academic degree- sample department**

Academic Degree	Total number	Percentage
BSC/BA	101	13%
MSC/MA	418	52%
PHD	280	35%
Total	799	100%

**Source; response of the 38 department heads (primary data)**

When looking in to the academic rank of these employees, the figure is indicated in the following graph, the majorities are lecturers, i.e. 352(44%), Assistant professor 210(26%), where as the remaining constitutes, Graduate assistant 47(6%), Assistant lecturer 65 (8%), Associate professor 92(12%), and Full professors account for 33(4%).

**Table 3-4: Academic staff by academic rank departments- sample department.**

<i>Academic rank</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Graduate Assistant	47	6%
Assistant Lecturer	65	8%
Lecturer	352	44%
Assistant professor	210	26%
Associate professor	92	12%
Full professor	33	4%
Total	799	100%

**Source; response of the 38 department heads (primary data)**

The next section presents Academic staff (including Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian) who left the University from the 38 departments during the last five years.

According to the response of head of different departments, during the last five years a total of 137 academic staff left the University, of which Ethiopian academic staff constitute 89(65%),and the remaining 48(35%) are Non- Ethiopian.

The overall turnover for the 38 departments during the last five years, which include Ethiopian and foreigners, the primary data, indicates an absolute figure of 137, but the rate of turnover is 17.12%

Total number of academic staff who left from 38 departments

during the last five years

Currently working academic staff in these 38 departments

$$(137/799) \times 100\% = 17.12\%$$

Out of this the rate of turnover for Ethiopian academic staff is found to be (89/753) X100% which is 11.82%

Regarding the proportion of the components of those who left these 38 departments from different dimensions, like gender, academic degree, and academic rank of the staff the following result is obtained.

Comparing the gender of staff that leaves the University, it is found that males leave more than female, this is in terms of an absolute figure. Of the total 137, 20(11.6%) are female, and the remaining 117(85.4%) are male staff.

The next table summarizes the proportion and composition of academic staff who left the 38 departments based on their academic degree.

*Table 3-5: Academic staff turnover by academic degree - sample department*

<i>Academic Degree</i>	<i>Number of staff who left from the University</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
BSC/BA	12	8.76%
MSC/MA	63	45.98%
PhD	62	45.26%
Total	137	100%

**Source; response of the 38 department heads (primary data)**

Of those who left the University MSC/MA holders have the largest share 63, while BSC/BA, and PHD degree holders are 12, and 61, respectively.

The following table shows the rate of turnover of academic staff from the point of their academic rank.

*Table 3-6; Academic staff turnover by academic rank- sample department*

<i>Academic rank</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Graduate Assistant	1	0.73%
Assistant Lecturer	12	8.76%
Lecturer	52	37.96%
Assistant professor	41	29.93%
Associate professor	15	10.95%
Full professor	16	11.68%
Total	137	100%

**Source; response of the 38 department heads (primary data)**

As indicated on the above table 52(37.96%) of those who left the University during the last five years are lecturers, 41 (29.93%) are assistant professors, 16 (11.68%) are full professors, 15(10.95%) are associate professors, 12 (8.76%) are associate lecturers, and 1(0.73%) is a graduate assistant.

Academic staff on study leaves, and those who did not return from their study are presented below

Totally there are about 106 academic staff who are on study leave, out of this, 17(16%) are females, whereas 89(84%) are male staff, of these, a total of 34(32%) are expected to get their MSC/MA, while the remaining 72(68%) are expected earn their PHD degree.

Academic staff who did not return from study leave are presented by the following table

*Table-7: Academic staff who did not return from overseas study*

<i>Over due period</i>	<i>Total number of staff who did not return</i>
Less than 1 year	13
2-3 years	23
4 years	6
Above 4 years	17
Total	59

**Source; response of the 38 department heads (primary data)**

Among those who went for study, 13(22%) are late by less than one year,23(39%) are late by more than 2 years but less or equal to 3 years, 6(10%) are late by more than 3 years but less than 4years. And 17(29%) are late by more than 4 years.

On the other hand according to the documentary reviews of academic staff turnover of the whole department for Ethiopian staff during the years 1997 -2000 EC (2005/6-2008/9GC) a total of 226 Ethiopian staff left the University during the past four years.

*Table 3-8: Ethiopian academic staff who left the University during the last four years  
(1997-2000EC)*

<i>Academic Rank of staff who left the University during the last four years</i>	<i>1997 (2005)</i>	<i>1998 (2006)</i>	<i>1999 (2007)</i>	<i>2000 (2008)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Graduate assistant	5	6	5	10	26	(11.50%)
Assistant Lecturer	7	3	6	2	18	(7.94%)
Lecturer	30	30	44	17	121	(53.54%)
Assistant professor	11	9	27	8	55	(24.34%)
Associate professor	0	1	0	2	3	(1.33%)
Full professor	0	0	2	1	3	(1.33%)
Total	53	49	84	40	226	(100%)

**Source: secondary data (document) review.**

Table 8 indicates that in the year 1998EC large number of academic staff left the University relative to the other years. But when calculating the overall turnover rate of Ethiopian academic staff of the University over these four years, it is found to be 14.5%. According to their academic rank, of those who left the University during the indicated years, the majority are lecturers, constituting 121(53.54%), while assistant professors 55(24.34%), Graduate assistant 26(11.5%), Assistant Lecturer 18(7.94%), Associate professor and full professors both are equal having both 3 (1.33%) shares.

*Table 3-9: Ethiopian academic staff who left the University during the years 1997-2000EC classified based on gender.*

<i>Gender</i>	<i>1997(2005)</i>	<i>1998(2006)</i>	<i>1999(2007)</i>	<i>2000(2008)</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Male</i>	43	44	74	36	197(87.2%)
<i>Female</i>	10	5	10	4	29(12.8%)
<i>Total</i>	53	49	84	40	226(100%)

**Source: secondary data (document) review.**

Document review reveals that as the above table indicates over the last four years the trend of turnover with regard to gender of academic staff, during the years 1997-2000EC, the total number of male Ethiopian staff is 197(87.2%), while that of female is 29 (12.7%)

In addition the documentary review indicates that the academic staff members left the University for Different Reasons like personal reasons, disciplinary reasons, change of organization, unknown reasons, not returned from study leave, others not returned from sabbatical leave and remain there, this is summarized using the following table.

*Table 3-10: reasons for leaving the University*

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Personal reasons	144	63.7%
Not returned from sabbatical leave	14	6.2%
Not returned from study leave.	23	10.2%
Unknown reasons	39	17.3%
Change of organization	2	0.9%
Disciplinary reasons	4	1.8%
Total	226	100%

**Source: secondary data (document) review**

*Table 3- 11 Ethiopian academic staff who left the University during the last four years, across disciplines (faculties)*

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Social science and Education	61	27%
Medical	43	19%
Technology	42	18.6%
Science	37	16.4%
FBE	32	14.16%
Law	7	3.1%
Veterinary Medicine	2	0.9%
Music and Art	2	0.9%
Total	226	100%

**Source: secondary data (document) review.**

Across different disciplines (faculties/school/collage), faculty of education and social science constitutes the highest percent 61(27%) followed by medical faculty 43(19%), technology 42(18.6%), science 37(16.4%), FBE 32(14.16%), law 7(3.1%), veterinary medicine and music school, both accounting for 2(0.9%).

*Table 3-12: distribution of turnover across professional rank and Faculty of academic staff who left the University (1998-2000EC)*

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Professional rank of staff who left the university (1998-2000EC)</i>						
	Grad. Assistant	Ass. lecturers	<b>Lecturers</b>	Ass. Professors	Assoc professors	Full professors	Total
SS & Education	2	3	25	10	—	—	40
Medical	—	1	14	19	1	3	38
Technology	14	3	19	6	2	—	44
Science	1	2	18	7	—	1	29
FBE	1	3	7	3	—	—	14
Law	—	1	3	3	—	—	7
Vet. Medicine	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Music and Art	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	18	13	<b>86</b>	49	3	4	173

**Source: secondary data (document review)**

The above table indicates that lecturers (86) left more than other groups of academic staff during the year 1998 to 2000 EC. It is also indicated that technology faculty was affected (44) more, followed by social science and education faculties.

### **3.2. Discussion**

The focus of this project is the voluntary employee turnover because it is found that involuntary turnover is beyond the control of an employee, in addition, for decades, voluntary employee turnover has received considerable attention in not only organizational researches but also managerial practices because of its association with many kinds of financial cost and latent negative outcomes. In recent years, with the new economy and information age booming, human resource with knowledge, technology and skills has been adding value to the organization and become one key element of core competency. Professional and technical staff is more costly to replace and their quitting will result in loss of substantial technical knowledge, (Yang, et al 2007; 4474)

No one recognizes the cost and problem of turnover. Table 4-1, presented in the result part indicates, most department heads responded that turnover is not a chronic problem in their relative section. They do recognize as if turnover is not a problem in their department, this emanates from the lack of understanding of the cost of losing human resource. Literatures indicate that a loss of a single qualified person costs the organization much. As many departments did not see turnover as a problem. Others admitted to have to deal with the negative effects of early career departures of employees.

The cost of replacing these was revealed as high. The experience base was established as having paramount importance, (Rivera, 1999:2)

According to Netswera, et al ( 2005; 36), the success of the most competitive companies throughout the world, including higher education institutions, lies in their highly skilled employees on which these institutions spend millions to retain. As evidences in the result section of this paper has shown, turnover for the 38 departments is 17.12%. Interm of the University's objective of producing a high caliber work force, the loss of this much academic staff from 38 departments is too costly, because replacing a single person requires a huge cost interms of time and monetary terms. If a given department faces budgetary constraint it will immediately react; but for the loss of a single staff no one says anything. Mobley (1982: 15-31), argued that, Even if organizations of the future have 'virtual' employees, they will need to manage them as a resource. When an employee leaves, this can have a variety of effects that not only impact on the organization, but also the individual employee and wider society, (cited on Morrell, 2001; 5)

On the other hand, table 4-5 indicates the composition of those employees who left the University during the past five years, as per the primary data for the 38 departments, among those who left the University majority were MSC/MA degree holders (63) followed by PHD holders(62), but this fact has never been observed eventhough literature reveals the cost of losing best employees to be enormous beyond monetary quantification. Also worth noting is that the loss of one competent employee to a competitor institution strengthens the competitor's advantage, (Netswera, et al 2005; 36)

Regarding the academic rank of instructors in the University the majority are lecturers 52 (37.96%) while assistant professors 41(29.93%) and full professors 16 (11.68%) succeed. Eventhough professors are few and precious for the country; they share the largest percent of those who leave the University. If the trend continues like this it will affect the University's expansion goal. Therefore, voluntary quits by high- level employees are an expense that deserve serious attention and further investigation,(Pigors and Myers, 1981).

As far as gender is concerned, the number of female staff is much less than the number of male instructors, i.e. female staff constitutes 111(14%), while male staff covers the remaining 688(86%). When one observes the composition of those who left the departments during the last five years, for these groups, females' costitute 20 and males constitute 117 out of the 137 but if one tries to see the turnover of both groups taking the current number of female and male staff at the 38 departments, females have a turnover rate of 18% while that of males is 17%. This can be attributed to many reasons behind. Given the few females in the University, having too much of them leaving has its own implication for the decision to be made. According to Cotton and Tuttle (1986; 63), gender effects on turnover are less reliable among non-managerial and nonprofessional employees, whereas they are stronger among professional versus other employees. Gender therefore appears to be a better predictor of turnover for the more professional jobs. Thus in case of Addis Ababa University too, further research is needed on why females leave more than males given that they are few in number.

In most cases instructors of higher education institution have an access to get scholarship opportunities, but most of them do not return back to the University after completing their study. This is another kind of turnover as per this project. Accordingly, of those staff who went for study, majority seem not to return, i.e. 78% of them are those who are delay by more than two year. Thus they are treated as if they do not return, because as per the University's legislation, a person who does not return from study within a maximum of 18 months is treated as absent. In addition review of documents (secondary data) indicates that study leave is one of the reasons for turnover.

In the long term this will certainly strengthen Ethiopian higher education. However, educational opportunities abroad often lead to 'brain drain', while even the short-term absence of professors and administrators presents significant challenges at the home institution. Extra teaching responsibilities fall onto the colleagues who remain behind, and a wide range of development and research projects are often handed off to less-experienced and less-qualified staff. Meanwhile, the movement of individuals from one university to another or out of higher education altogether is pervasive throughout Ethiopia. Staff turnover takes place at all levels, driven by the desire to improve earnings and to move from rural toward urban areas. Constant staff turnover wreaks havoc on an institution's capacity to operate efficiently and to manage long-term planning and development, Reisberg L (2010)

Documentary analysis yields an overall turnover rate of 14.5% for academic staff of Addis Ababa University during the past four years (1977-2000EC), for the average total population of the University 1,559 this rate should not be deemed simple. Because the

cumulative effect of this turnover would harm the University in the short and long run if it continues in this manner. As Dee (2004; p. 593) pointed out, “some degree of turnover is inevitable and perhaps desirable, although high rates of faculty turnover can be costly to the reputation of an institution and to the quality of instruction.”

Both secondary and primary data indicates that lecturers leave more than the rest groups. But the total figure of full professors is exaggerated on the primary data for the 38 departments this is so because the primary data is collected for both Ethiopian and Non-Ethiopian and Non-Ethiopian are naturally expected to leave up on the completion of their contract, except few. With respect to discipline area there is relatively high turnover around social science and education, succeeded by Medical faculty.

Finally, the documentary review indicates that the rate of turnover across different time periods is changing from time to time, even-though the trend is not constant a loss of single person can not be undermined. Table 3-12, indicates the composition of turnover of academic staff being classified as faculty versus their professional rank for the period between (1998 and 2000 EC), and it is shown that lecturers left more than other staffs with different rank and for the same period, technology faculty was more affected by academic staff turnover .In the category of lecturers social science and education faculty shows the greatest number, this category contains a combination of two faculties.

## Chapter Four

### Summary of findings, Conclusions, and Recommendation

Summary Conclusion and recommendation are made based on the review of related literature, results of statistical analysis and discussions of findings as follows:

#### *4.1. Summary*

The aim of this project was to investigate Addis Ababa University academic staff turnover. This is selected as an issue because no one was concerned about the staff turnover and there is no well organized data that gives a clue about the issue of employee turnover. The target population for this project was academic department heads that are able to provide academic staff turnover information in addition secondary data of the years 1998-2000EC was reviewed. The works of different scholars, books were reviewed and presented in literature review part. In order to see the nature and extent of turnover, primary data were collected from heads of departments using questionnaire that was devised to see staff turnover by classifying the academic staff based on gender, academic rank, professional rank, and discipline, of which 38 was returned and the result indicates that within five years in the 38 departments a total of 137 academic staff voluntarily left the University due to different reasons, of these lecturers take the largest share among other groups of staff members like graduate assistants, assistant lecturers, assistant professors, and professors. Gender-wise males dominate females in absolute terms in the 38 departments but the rate of turnover is reverse in that females have higher rate of turnover (18.%) than male staff (17.%). Review of documents show the same result. In addition discipline-wise social science and education faculty share the largest among other

faculties. While conducting this project different limitations were faced by the researcher, like lack of well organized data, unwillingness of respondents, and misplacement of different departments that consume time and result in an unnecessary effort.

#### ***4.2. Conclusions***

Based on the result of data presentation and analysis, upcoming conclusions are made:

- i. The result of data analysis shows that Addis Ababa University is suffering from chronic academic staff attrition (turnover), even though most heads of departments are unconscious about the nature and extent of turnover in the university as well as their respective unit.
- ii. Surprisingly, the rate of female staff leaving the University is generally higher compared with the total turnover rate and male turnover rate. This phenomenon should be monitored and possibly calls for more detailed analysis.
- iii. Further more, lecturers continue to show the greatest turnover rates followed by, assistant professors, and professors.
- iv. Finally, turnover is found to be high around social science and medical faculties.

## ***5.2. Recommendation***

For the identified problems regarding academic staff turnover, the following are the implications and recommendations forwarded based on findings:

- i. Because higher education institutions are the base for production of the productive work force of the country, attention should be given to those inputs, (instructors) of the University, as they are highly responsible for shaping the generation, i.e. the university has to see the issue of staff turnover as a basic issue.
- ii. Specifically the human resource department has to emphasis on the employees issue not only with regard to the recruitment and other human resource management issues but also with turnover, so that updated information can be obtained and timely decision be taken.
- iii. Each department should be able to maintain its own record of instructors' profile, so that if new head of department is nominated he/ she can easily get familiar about the department in general and employees issue in particular and forward the information to the related body on timely basis.
- iv. The data indicates that the number of female staff is less than male staff, and on the rate of turnover, the reverse is observed. Thus the government and the University or responsible body should see this issue strategically so that number of females would be improved and their rate of turnover decreased. In order to do so affirmative action could be one way.
- v. The University should devise a retention mechanism for lectures and for those higher ranked people like professors and assistant professors because the data indicates that they are the once that are ranked at higher level in terms of turnover,

- and it is very difficult to replace those persons easily within a short period of time.
- vi. In general, to minimize the employee turnover to a reasonable level; Addis Ababa University should design human resource management strategy that can attract new qualified and maintain the currently existing academic staff. This can be done by designing different retention mechanisms, like facilitating motivational mechanisms, improving compensation schemes, creating conducive academic environment, connecting their contribution to the industry.

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# *Appendices*