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Public Sector Leadership and the Implementation of Corruption Mitigation Strategies in Ethiopia

Alem Zeray Reda
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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Public Sector Leadership and the Implementation of Corruption Mitigation Strategies in

Ethiopia

by

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MA, Ethiopian Civil Service University, Ethiopia 2012

BA, Mekelle University, Ethiopia 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

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Abstract

Public sector leaders in less developed countries, like Ethiopia, experience challenges in implementing anticorruption strategies successfully. Ineffective strategy implementation exacerbates the adverse effects of corruption on organizations and the people at large. The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders regarding the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. The research question focused on senior public sector officials' lived experiences with the execution of anti-corruption policies. The conceptual framework was the strategic leadership theory, focusing on strategy implementation processes and related challenges. The data were collected from semistructured interviews with 15 participants recruited using a purposive sampling method. Using the modified van Kaam's transcendental phenomenological approach, interviews were recorded, transcribed with Speechmatics software, and analyzed using NVivo 12. Participants completed the transcript validation and member checking processes. The significant finding was that extreme political interference, unbalanced regional and federal administration interests, and poor government policies and strategies were the most significant barriers. The findings may contribute to positive social change by allowing public sector practitioners to engage stakeholders better and implement consistent measures to mitigate the adverse impacts of corruption. Furthermore, the findings may have social implications by supporting leaders in understanding the necessity of strategic planning and bridging the gap between federal and regional governments in strategy execution.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Mr. Syium Mesfin, Mr. Abay Tsheaye, and Mr. Abay Nebso, for their endless love and sacrifices for the people of Tigray.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Leadership in the public sector is a broad concept: diverse across multiple dimensions, continually changing, and influenced by the tasks, environment, and abilities required. For this study, the term *public sector* refers to government-owned organizations in Ethiopia delivering public services under the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development. The higher level of scrutiny among these organizations from internal and external stakeholders creates difficulties for leaders. Public sector leaders need to develop new strategies to deal with the continual change in customers' demands, politics, and new external pressures (Jean et al., 2019). Leaders must be capable of handling organizational complexity by instituting planning, organizing, controlling, and problem solving consistent with the principles of strategic leadership. Ensuring quality service delivery is typically a function of the effectiveness and quality of leadership (Sudha et al., 2016).

Corruption is a threat that breeds public distrust and weakens the organizational capacity to perform core functions and missions. Knies et al. (2016) posited that the more corruption interferes with public sector functions, the more it distorts policies, strategies, and implementation in Ethiopia. The prevalence of corruption affects investment, public and private sector productivity, and organizational sustainability (Bersisa et al., 2016). Corruption has a big effect on how a government operates; because of this problem, public sector leaders in Ethiopia fail to impose the required regulatory controls to address service delivery issues (Beyenet al., 2016). Depending on the pervasiveness of corruption, leaders must improve organizational productivity by focusing on public sector accountability and building integrity (Tadesse, 2019). The strategy for building integrity

and accountability must remain flexible, and leaders must adopt best practices to enhance the strategy's effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders regarding the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian government has long struggled to set different goals and policies related to public sector leadership. Bersisaet al. (2016) emphasized that, due to administrative and political corruption, the public sector experiences leadership inefficiency and difficulties in creating a sense of purpose and direction. A corruption mitigation strategy should build on an accountable and transparent environment with an effective monitoring and evaluation system (Transparency International, 2017). Public sector leaders have an obligation to improve their business climate by reducing the regulatory burden and improving transparency, which enhance growth (Godinez & Ling, 2015).

By shaping their organization's strategy, structure, and culture through shared values and responsibilities, public sector leaders can implement strategic leadership and combat corruption (Knies et al., 2016). Considering the strategic leadership framework, I conducted this transcendental phenomenological study to identify and report the public sector leaders' lived experiences in implementing corruption mitigation strategies. Illuminating the implementation of strategies to mitigate corruption may create positive social change by eliminating the negative consequences of corruption and improving societal well-being. The major sections of Chapter 1 include the background of the study,

the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research question, the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, and the significance of the study.

Background of the Study

The public sector is part of the economic and administrative apparatus concerned with providing national, regional, or local government services to the public. Mehret (2015) asserted that public sectors are state-owned institutions established to improve common interests through the provision of public goods and services. In Ethiopia, there are three branches of government: (a) federal, (b) nine regional states, and (c) local governments; they all have different functions, aimed at achieving greater public good through the provision of public services (Tessema & Habtamu, 2020). However, the absence of effective governmental leadership undermines transparency and accountability in the public sectors, which leads to dissatisfaction and a lack of trust in public institutions (Tadesse, 2019). The lack of transparency in public sector leadership and high levels of political interference and corruption undermine the effectiveness of public sector leaders of the Tigray region (Beyene, 2015).

Leadership is a central force in organizations, and leaders must take an active role in decision making and mitigating problems (Toprak et al., 2015). Knies et al. (2016) articulated the population's expectations that public sector leaders demonstrate accountability, rule following, political loyalty, and network governance. Because of a lack of effective leadership (Bersisa et al., 2016), many organizational leaders face difficulties in introducing appropriate strategies and policies (Ebrahim, 2018).

Ethiopia has an elaborate set of institutional frameworks to deal with corruption (Tadesse, 2019). The government has established numerous institutions to build and strengthen the anticorruption infrastructure, including the anticorruption agency, the Federal Ethics and Anticorruption Commission (FEACC), the auditor general's office, and the attorney general's office (Transparency International, 2018). However, these strategies have failed to have a significant impact on mitigating corruption (Elbanna et al., 2016). The implication is that the government in Ethiopia introduced measures to tackle corruption problems, but their effectiveness is far less evident.

The ineffectiveness of anticorruption strategies is due to poor implementation and subsequent consolidation, low political will to fight corruption, deficiencies of the existing institutions, and defects in the country's political systems (Mengesha & Richard, 2018). These factors pose challenges to effective leadership and manifest in their day-to-day activities to perform their leadership duties in mitigating corruption (Le & Kroll, 2017). The essential elements of a legal framework include clarity of the institution's mandate, which consists of its objectives, functions, and its powers to achieve them in an accountability structure (Alam & Onsamo, 2017).

As part of their control and evaluation mechanism, leaders of international and national organizations implement different corruption mitigation strategies (Transparency International, 2018); hence, the state of reform and execution of effective strategies varies in each country. Significant impediments and challenges are primarily associated with a lack of institutional capacity and organizational structure in Ethiopia, particularly in the Tigray region (Beyene et al., 2016). The public sector leaders lack clarity on the type,

level, and consequences of corruption, which leads to their inability to tackle the problems and sustain service delivery (Joyce, 2016). Hence, an effective corruption mitigation strategy requires an integrated approach in awareness creation, capacity building, and effective law enforcement. However, because corrupt acts can occur anytime and anywhere, strategies must be more preventive than reactionary (Rahman & Monica, 2018).

There is a growing consciousness on the ineffectiveness of public sector leaders, with demands to increase the effectiveness level in the Tigray region (Beyene, 2015). Given multiple stakeholders, the public sector is complicated (Ferlie et al., 2015); senior leaders must take the initiative to solve issues through strategic choices. Organizations that have well-designed and better-developed strategies, in most cases, perform better than those without successful strategies (Joyce, 2016). Accordingly, senior leaders in the Tigray region need to focus on building an organization that can quickly evolve effective adaptive solutions. Mengesha et al. (2018) posited leaders should understand the causes of corruption to develop strategies and focus on predetermined actions to assure quality service delivery.

Scholars following strategic leadership theory assume that the characteristics, values, and knowledge of leaders significantly influence performance (Quigley & Hambrick, 2015). Despite the importance of strategic leaders in organizational settings, clarity about their roles in controlling corruption using appropriate strategies is surprisingly scarce (Weeks, 2015). Leaders introduced routine mitigation approaches rather than creating a strategic plan to improve organizational performance (Teshome,

2016). For organizations with poor public service delivery and leadership inefficiency, introducing strategic leadership is a feasible option (Joyce, 2016). Accordingly, using the strategic leadership theory as a foundation, I identified and reported the lived experiences of senior leaders to illuminate the understanding of corruption mitigation strategy implementation.

Problem Statement

In the global business environment, many countries' public sectors are increasingly complex, nonlinear, and strategically demanding of effective leadership styles and effective leadership (Kunnanatt, 2016). Ethiopia's public institutions have undergone a series of reform processes, including leadership development, corruption alleviation, and civil service reforms (Mengesha et al., 2018). Two out of five Ethiopians report having paid a bribe to the tax services, and one third have paid a bribe to a land administration official (World Economic Forum, 2017). One in five Ethiopians have paid a bribe to obtain an electrical or water connection (World Bank, 2015). The recruitment and promotion in public sectors often depend on affiliation to political loyalty (African Integrity Indicator, 2017; FEACC, 2016). The causes of inefficiency and corruption are, in general, the lack of (a) strong institutions, (b) transparent policies, and (c) resources (Transparency International, 2018; FEACC, 2016).

The general problem is that corruption has been the main challenge in public sectors in Ethiopia in the past 5 years and manifests through bribery, embezzlement, and nepotism (Tadesse, 2019). Corruption in Ethiopia is the direct result of poorly designed institutional patterns and disorganized structures (Hassan, 2019). The implication is that

the public sectors are weak and cannot provide services for citizens. The specific problem is that the public sector senior leaders have difficulties in implementing corruption mitigation strategies, thus compromising services delivery in the Tigray region (Hassan, 2019).

The public sector leaders in the Tigray region have a limited understanding of anticorruption strategies (Mengesha et al., 2018). In 2001, Ethiopia established a centralized anticorruption agency and the FEACC; these agencies are charged with curbing corruption (Hassan 2019). However, corruption continues in all public sectors, indicating a failure of the anticorruption agency and the FEACC to institute effective anticorruption strategies. Most public sector leadership studies have revolved around the effects of corruption at the national level. The role and contribution of senior leaders in implementing corruption mitigation strategies is a lesser-investigated subject (Knies et al., 2016).

Specifically, examination of the lived experiences of leaders in the public sectors of the Tigray region has been scarce. Public sector leaders strive to implement corruption mitigation strategies despite the disparity between their concept and the actual situations (Glavas, 2016). I aimed to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders regarding the implementation of anticorruption strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. As a result, the information obtained from participants reflects the challenges to improving corruption mitigation strategies to increase public trust and potentially improve service delivery in the region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders regarding the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. This study's phenomenon of interest was how corruption mitigation strategies have been implemented in the public sector by senior leaders. Using purposeful sampling, 15 senior leaders from the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development of the Tigray region completed semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. I used the transcendental phenomenological approach to collect and analyze the data that represented the sample's experiences from the research population.

Research Question

What are the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders pertaining to the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia?

Conceptual Framework

Implementing anticorruption strategies addresses the issue of using power and resources to serve the interests of society (Sartor & Beamish, 2019). Implementing anticorruption procedures to improve organizations' sustainability ensures good governance and society's well-being. Strategic leadership comprised the conceptual framework for this study. The framework helped to clarify guiding principles of strategy formulation and implementation process. This study's framework evolved from the assumption that leaders need to increase their planning effectiveness and implement a corruption mitigation strategy. Strategic leadership helps leaders synthesize daily

experiences, values, abilities, and social connections and implement strategies that are transparent and accountable (Muzee et al., 2016).

When leaders can anticipate, envision, and think strategically, they can achieve the expected objective (Meuser et al., 2016). Strategic leadership has been widely accepted as a popular leadership style with a role in gaining competitive advantages (Yaokumah & Brown, 2014) through efficient strategy execution (Warren & Szostek, 2017). Strategic leadership involves integrating both the inside and outside environments of the organization and engaging in mitigating inefficiencies (Goleman, 2017). However, public organization leaders in Ethiopia face difficulties assimilating the external and internal factors in the planning and implementation processes (Tadesse, 2019).

To understand the applicability and advantages of strategic leadership, one can review different leadership theories, including transformational, transactional, emergent, and situational approaches (Meuser et al., 2016). Each leadership style emerged from earlier stages of leadership theory based on the demand for effective leadership (Northouse, 2016). The philosophy behind strategic leadership is an emphasis on tasks, people, and development (Mohammed & Ali, 2015) that allows senior leaders to set direction, develop strategic solutions, and move disruptive ideas into motion (Jones et al., 2017). Koohang et al. (2017) found that internal and external organizational collaboration (the shared responsibility and combined leadership processes) enhances social and economic performance for public sectors.

Failed corruption mitigation strategies are characterized by poor planning, inadequate monitoring, and lack of motivation (Beyene, 2015). The components of the

conceptual framework help underpin schemes relevant to a study's concepts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Thus, the role of the conceptual framework in this study was outlining and contextualizing the strategy planning, implementing, and evaluating process related to the purpose and research question. The conceptual perspectives within strategic leadership provide a multidimensional interpretation for acquiring insights into strategy implementation processes. Najmaei (2018) asserted that elements of strategic leadership help conceptualize the strategy formulation and implementation process. Accordingly, I identified and reported the senior public sector leaders' lived experiences about implementing corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region, considering strategic leadership concepts.

Nature of the Study

The qualitative method was selected for this research. The purpose of a qualitative study includes the discovery of actual lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017) and understanding the meaning of lived experiences attached to a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). In this qualitative study, I found meanings through analysis of data from interview questions related to implementation of mitigation strategies that participants found effective. The qualitative method allowed me to collect rich textual data to address the research question.

The quantitative research method, which involves applying deductive logic (Rahman, 2016) to static objective data (Boeren, 2018), rather than interpreting their meaning, was not the preference for this study. Numerical data and predetermined variables could not provide a detailed understanding of the leaders' experiences. The

quantitative method was therefore inappropriate for this study because it would not allow me to explore strategies effective in mitigating corruption.

Phenomenology is a qualitative research design that researchers use to explore participants' experiences and interpretations for a given phenomenon (Gray, 2009).

Moustakas (1994) classified qualitative phenomenological research into hermeneutic and transcendental. The hermeneutic approach allows a researcher to interpret meaning including his/her opinions, while the transcendental design helps a researcher identify and report participants' lived experiences obtaining an unbiased description of the raw data.

Accordingly, the transcendental phenomenological approach (Hussler, 2002) was applicable in this study to identify and report public sector senior leaders' lived experiences regarding corruption mitigation strategy implementation.

Other qualitative designs were considered but did not apply to this research. The grounded theory design depends on the comparison of interrelating themes and objective results (Basias & Pollalis, 2018) rather than identifying and reporting participants' subjective experiences and therefore was not appropriate for this research. A case study design involves the investigation of a phenomenon within its real-life context without a clear boundary between the phenomenon and context (Yin, 2014), which was not the most appropriate design for this study. For this qualitative phenomenological study, interviews of 15 participants (until data saturation) led to the identification of the lived experiences ascribed to the phenomena by senior leaders. Data were from semistructured interviews using open-ended questions. The data were hand coded to develop themes and

patterns from the answers provided by the interviewees. After the hand coding, the data analysis process led to the thematic findings.

Definitions

Customer satisfaction: The collective evaluation and the resulting psychological reactions to the consumption experience with a product/service (Ganiyu, 2017).

Corruption: An act that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of motive such as wealth, power, or status. (Transparency International, 2018).

Leadership: A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal by envisioning and embodying values (Gandolfi et al., 2018).

Mitigation strategy: A holistic approach that provides a framework for risk identification, prioritization, and development of operational responses to adverse events (Klein, 2016).

Public organization: Governments and all publicly controlled, nonprofit, organizations that deliver public programs, goods, or services and impact human life and society (Iacovino et al., 2015).

Strategic leadership: A leader's ability to anticipate, create a vision, empower followers, create participatory environment, and exercise flexibility for the viable future of an organization (Gakenia et al., 2017).

Strategy: A combination of all factors working together that makes the transformation process possible (Kraaijenbrink, 2015)

Assumptions

In qualitative inquiry, researchers use assumptions to frame themes into interpretive frameworks and understand their significance (Taylor et al., 2015). Assumptions should convey the meaningfulness of the study through justified procedures to enhance the strength of the research report (Crawford et al., 2016). The first assumption for this study was that the transcendental phenomenological approach would provide an organized way to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders. The second assumption was that the participants would be representatives of the population and experienced leaders to describe the information pertinent to the issue under study. The third assumption related to the data analysis and reporting procedure was that the local factors and interaction between the researcher and the participants might explain constructed themes.

Scope of the Study

In this study, interviews were with 15 senior public sector leaders in the Tigray region, focusing on corruption mitigation strategies. I delimited the scope to the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development of Tigray regional state in Ethiopia. The findings of this study represent only the experiences of the participants. Identifying and reporting senior leaders' lived experiences on the implementation of corruption mitigation strategy was the focus of the study. The data collection process involved only senior leaders and department heads with at least 3 years of leadership experience. The selection of the study's topic aligned with the goal to understand how senior public sector leaders

implement corruption mitigation strategies in the Housing and Urban Development Bureau of the Tigray region.

Delimitation

Badu et al. (2019) asserted that most qualitative research limitations are related to selecting appropriate research methodologies and the researcher's role. The purposeful selection of leaders involved considering their seniority, leadership position, and willingness to participate in the study. Employees and other stakeholders were not part of the interview process for this study. As a student, I was not able to conduct phenomenological research over multiple years because of limited time to graduate. The study was also delimited by the geographic location, the period in which this research occurred, choice of design, research questions, and interview questions. The findings of this study represent only the experiences of the purposefully selected participants.

Limitations

A researcher's identification of weaknesses and potentialities ensures transparency of the research process and results, which is significant to address limitations in the research design and methods (Badu et al., 2019). The first limitation was the potential for researcher bias due to more than 7 years of experience in a leadership position in public sectors. Keeping a reflective journal allowed me to understand my role as researcher, interviewer, and interpreter of the data generated via interviews, and to avoid biases. I relied on transcript validation and member checking of my analyses to filter out for any possible biases.

Given the scope and purpose of the study, timeframe, and unaffordable costs, interviewing a more comprehensive range of participants was not feasible. The selection of the purposive sampling technique allowed the identification of knowledgeable informants for in-depth information (Patton, 2015). Additionally, the thick descriptions of the research process provided a space in dealing with the limitations related to the transferability of findings (Ravitch et al., 2016). To address the limitations, I considered the implications in developing interview questions, reviewing theoretical perspectives, and choosing participants to assure the credibility of the study's results.

Significance of the Study

Due to leadership inefficiency, Ethiopia's public sectors are unable to create the premises to achieve organizational objectives (Tadesse, 2019). This study's findings may be significant to illuminate the understanding of anticorruption strategies and enhance organizational development through transparent and accountable actions. Public sector leaders implement corruption mitigation strategies to maintain sectoral sustainability and improve public trust (Transparency International, 2018). A clear understanding of anticorruption policies may improve a leader's ability to solve organizational problems and create positive social change.

Significance to Practice

Proper implementation of anticorruption strategies may improve organizational development and ensure public trust. However, the lack of knowledge, improper organizational structure, and leadership inefficiency challenges the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies (Wickert & De Bakker, 2015). Identifying and reporting

the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders helps illuminate the understanding of corruption mitigation strategy implementation. Understanding the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies may lead to a strategic change of its application to ensure organizational performance and public trust. The findings from this study represent insights for public sector leaders to consider as they develop strategies that support the implementation of anticorruption practices and mitigating challenges.

Significance to Theory

There is limited knowledge about how public sector senior leaders implement corruption mitigation strategies (Wickert et al., 2015). The complexity and type of corruption (Glavas, 2016) may contribute to the problem of anticorruption strategy implementation. Leaders of public sectors may be able to enhance their system to a transparent, accountable approach, which may lead to a structural change from personal perspectives to a social view. The findings of this study represent original contributions of knowledge for proper implementation of anticorruption strategies to gain public trust. Appropriately designed theoretical themes on public sector leadership could provide a holistic framework in shaping structure and corruption-related decisions (Vogel & Masal, 2015). This study's findings are also applicable to leadership styles, such as strategic leadership, to better understand different organizational forces.

Significance to Social Change

Creating positive social change means addressing social problems, such as public health, social inequality, and environmental pollution, using proper mitigation strategies. In solving the social issues and contributing to social change, public sector leaders must

focus on quality service delivery (Wang et al., 2016). Understanding the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies can lead to customer-friendly organizations creating and enhancing positive social changes. Use of this study's findings may positively affect the public sector leaders' practices at the regional and national level.

Understanding the lived experiences of participants and the challenges experienced in implementing corruption mitigation strategies may help develop appropriate strategies at the regional level. Specifically, the results of this study may help organizational leaders in the Tigray region improve their strategy implementation system, possibly increasing satisfied customers and potentially improving organizational performance. This study's findings represent a reference for other public sectors and stakeholders to improve anticorruption strategy policies at the national level. Thus, the achievement of positive social change could depend on the attention and collaboration of different stakeholders.

Summary and Transition

The underperformance of public sectors has led to demands for a clear strategy to mitigate corruption and improve service delivery (Sudha et al., 2016). There is a knowledge gap about how public sector leaders implement anticorruption strategies, based on the challenges in practice and arguments about the applicability. Understanding the experiences of senior leaders about the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies helped to fill the gap in the public sector leadership literature.

The qualitative research method was suitable for this study because it was easily applicable to the phenomena. I used the transcendental phenomenological design to

identify and report the lived experiences of public sector leaders pertinent to the implementation of anticorruption strategies. The findings from the study can be useful to other researchers who aim to understand the problems of corruption mitigation strategy implementation. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature that supports the purpose of the study and the conceptual framework of this study, including the nature of leadership, the significance of leadership theories, the challenges of public sector leadership, and the role of senior leaders in mitigating corruption.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Effective public sector leadership helps develop organizational performance, improve service delivery, and enhance customer satisfaction (Adanri et al., 2016). The Tigray region's public sector leaders have a limited understanding of corruption mitigation strategies (Teshome, 2016) that compromises service delivery and customer satisfaction. There is a lack of integration, commitment, and strategic directions in public sectors (Demircioglu et al., 2017). As customer satisfaction, organizational sustainability, and public trust erode, there is a need to understand senior leaders' roles in implementing strategies. Identifying and reporting senior leaders' lived experiences helps to highlight the problems in applying the anticorruption approach and its effect on organizational performance.

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders about the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. The decline in organizational performance and public trust and the importance and effective leadership to implement corruption mitigation strategies motivated this research. Thus, a context-specific understanding of anticorruption strategy implementation in the public sectors of the Tigray region was important to understanding and addressing challenges to enhance effective practices. Using the transcendental phenomenological study approach enabled leaders to share their experiences related to the successes, challenges, and implications on public organizations.

This chapter emphasizes key elements of the relevant literature concerning public sector leadership experiences on strategy implementation that magnify the problem of this study. This chapter will include the research problem, the purpose of this study, the literature search strategy, and the conceptual framework. A review of the traditional and contemporary leadership theories, public sector-related concepts, and ideas is also presented. At the end of this chapter, a summary of findings from the public sector literature is explored.

Literature search strategy

The search strategy for this study included browsing different electronic databases: bibliographic/global databases, which included Google Scholar, JSTOR, Emerald Insight, ProQuest, ABI/INFORM Collection and, ISI Web of Knowledge. Publisher database and journal websites, including Walden University Online Library, ScienceDirect, Oxford Journals, SpringerLink, Leadership quarterly, and SAGE Journals, included quality journals that frequently publish research on my topic of interest. Subject-specific databases, including Business and Management Database and Business Source Complete, also incorporated articles in a specific discipline, which added to the in-depth information on the topic under study.

In the literature review search strategy, it is essential to use keywords by breaking down the main topic into concepts (Davies, 2019). Accordingly, the key search terms used were *leadership, leadership inefficiency, public sector leadership, leadership theories and styles, strategic leadership, challenges in public sectors, mitigation strategies, corruption, Ethiopia, and Tigray public areas*. These keywords and phrases

led to peer-reviewed, publicly accessible information acquired to address the research problem and frame the research question.

Conceptual Framework

A researcher builds a conceptual framework to delineate the why or the how of a research study (Tobi & Kampen, 2018). The guiding principles of strategic leadership serve as the conceptual framework for this study, which evolved from the original upper echelon method developed by Hambrick and Mason (1984). Strategic leadership focuses on practical actions and top leaders' social construction that impact organizational outcomes (Mohammed et al., 2015). The upper echelon theory encompasses the idea that organizations reflect their leadership. The concept of strategic leadership contends that organizations reflect their top executives' experiences, values, and social connections (Muzee et al., 2016).

Understanding the core values of strategic leadership helps to outline a leadership role's characterizations for organizational performance (Hansen & Ferlie, 2016). The strategic direction provides a general understanding of the need for strategy formulation and implementation to mitigate inefficiencies. According to Rhys et al. (2017), strategic leadership's most important aspects are having shared values, a clear vision, and a shared understanding of organizational development. These elements help to formulate and implement appropriate mitigation strategies in the public sector.

Strategic leadership provides a way to carry out transformational change for public organizations' unique needs (Fuertes et al., 2020). The essential components incorporated in the framework include the planning process, long-term vision and

mission setting, policy implementation, and performance evaluation process (Mohammed et al., 2015). These elements impact the process of transparency, integration coordination, and collaboration of stakeholders in an organization (Awwad & Akroush, 2016). Simon et al. (2015) argued that strategic leaders control organizations using well-designed structures and systems to bring about sweeping changes in broad scope. Strategic leadership encompasses strategic planning and executing plans, which requires strategic thinking (Najmaei, 2018) to solve complex social problems and description of actions for appropriate follow-up procedures (Meuser et al., 2016).

Strategic thinking remains a catalyst for strategy implementation and to learn new things while institutionalizing innovative ways to adapt effectively to a complex and ever-changing environment (Awwad et al., 2016). Strategic leadership skills enable organizations to plan, act, and develop a competitive advantage (Najmaei, 2017). The strategic actions to be performed by leaders become holistic to incorporate institutional reforms, executive reporting systems, administrative discretions, and power retention to make sound decisions (Goldman & Scott, 2016).

Mohammed et al. (2015) argued that increasing leadership development enhances the skills and capabilities of strategic leaders. The need for effective leadership outweighs any other factor, and so, the senior leaders must emphasize the various interfaces to implement strategies within the organization (Haque et al., 2015). The coordination of activities, streamlining processes, aligning the organizational structure, and keeping employees motivated to strategy implementation are critical responsibilities of senior

leaders (Nkosi, 2015). Hence, public sector leaders should be capable of solving complex social problems, including corruption that arises in organizations (Zaidi et al., 2019).

Considering the problems of the public sector, implementing corruption mitigation strategies demands a well-integrated multidisciplinary approach and strategic leadership because corruption is interconnected with leadership approach, action, and behavior (Business Anticorruption Portal, 2017). Researchers have suggested that public sector leaders should employ strategic leadership to deal with strategy formulation and implementation (Mohammed et al., 2015), which aligned with the framework of this research. Implementing a strategic leadership approach requires continuous self-development to enhance a leaders' ability, organizational performance, and customer satisfaction (Zaidi et al., 2019).

Strategic leadership's philosophy emphasizes tasks, people, and development (Mohammed et al., 2015), which allows senior leaders to set direction, develop strategic solutions, and move disruptive ideas into motion (Sadiq & Hussain, 2018). With the strategic leadership concept, I identified and reported senior public sector leaders' lived experiences with implementing corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. The traditional and contemporary leadership approaches presented below help demonstrate support for the mutual dependence of leadership styles and contribution to strategic leadership style.

Literature Review

Leadership Theories

Leadership literature reflects how theories have evolved, through refinement and modification with the passage of time and experience, while remaining representative of relationships, behaviors, and emotional perspectives (Khan, 2017). Leadership theories transitioned from the traditional leadership approaches to newer conceptual aspects of contemporary society. The situations, contexts, working environment, and organizational complexities remarkably impact and are impacted by the leadership concept. For example, Vogel et al. (2015) noted that the structural features typical of public sectors, such as persuasive authority and weak communication across hierarchical levels, potentially undermine organizational effectiveness and inefficiency mitigation.

Leadership theories that emerged during the 21st century include transformational, transactional, charismatic, and strategic—categorized under modern leadership styles (Samul, 2020). Traditional leadership theories consist of trait, behavioral, situational, and contingency (Goksoy, 2016). Modern leadership theories emphasize the relational, collaborative nature of leadership (Samul, 2020). However, traditional leadership theories were focused on qualities that distinguished leaders from followers (Khan et al., 2016). There is a consensus that leadership theories have been refined and modified through time, and none of the theories is entirely irrelevant (Uslu, 2019). Reviewing these leadership theories highlights essential features to derive a strategic leadership framework and understand its applicability in public sectors.

Trait Leadership Theory

The trait leadership models, founded by Carlyle in the 1840s, emerged with an aim to evaluate the degree to which leaders' abilities were inheritable; the trait approach depends on the idea that good leaders are born and not made s (Harrison, 2018). Uzohue et al. (2016) postulated that personal characteristics and attributes are essential to leadership and traits promote leadership effectiveness. Accordingly, leaders' traits are crucial to achieving an organizational goal.

Behavioral Leadership Theory

The behavioral leadership model emerged during the 1950s after the discouraging results of the applicability of the trait approach, with a focus on the actions of leaders rather than on intellectual qualities or internal states (Harrison, 2018). Behavioral theories of leadership depend on the belief that great leaders are made, not born (Amanchukwu & Stanley, 2015). Unlike the trait approach, behavioral theorists assume that people can learn to become leaders through training and observation (Khan et al., 2016). This approach produced two-dimensional models, including consideration and initiating structures.

Harrison (2018) posited that a leader's behavior determines a systematic comparison of autocratic and democratic leadership styles. In an authoritarian environment, employees follow the absence and presence of the leader; conversely, efforts continue in a democratic climate even when the leader is absent. The implication is that leaders must consider the effect of people, relationships, behaviors, production,

and task essentials (Fiedler, 2006) that affect the leader's tasks, including planning, organizing, and coordinating (Pittman & Scully-Russ, 2016).

Contingency Leadership Theory

The contingency models, offered by Fiedler (1967) and House et al. (1997), contend that effective leadership is a combination of qualities of the leader and the situations around them. The contingent leadership model depends on the idea that effective leadership is situation-dependent, and the leader must respond to the situational variables in making decisions (Greenleaf, 1977). The leader's decision-making ability, decision acceptance by subordinates, and subordinate maturity (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) are also decisive situational factors.

According to contingency theorists, the leadership style, which is operative in some circumstances, may not be effective in others (Khan, 2017). There is a combination of task-oriented and relationship-oriented style to accord with the organizational demand (Bass, 1997; McCleskey, 2014) that fulfills the contemporary leadership theories concept. The following section includes modern leadership theories, such as transactional and transformational, along with how the aspects of these theories can function together in strategic leadership theory.

Transactional Leadership Theory

The transactional leadership theory depends on the interaction of leaders and followers to perform a series of tasks aimed to advance organizational and individual benefits (Burnes, 1978). The leaders and followers enact different approaches and actions, affecting overall organizational efficiency and distinct benefits. Transactional

leadership aims at maintaining existing structure by emphasizing three dimensions: (a) conditional rewarding, (b) management with expectation (active/passive), and (c) complete freedom (Bass, 1985). The conditional rewarding depends on clear preconditions that clarify the role and task requirements for the subordinates achieving desired outcomes. Conditional rewarding is an important tool for leaders in the public sectors (Jacobsen et al., 2015) that strengthens feelings of competence because it provides positive feedback on performance (Bhargawi & Yaseen, 2016).

Transactional leaders monitor follower behavior, anticipate problems, and take corrective actions before the behavior creates serious difficulties (Megheirkouni et al., 2018). Conversely, passive leaders wait until the behavior has created problems before acting (Timothy et al., 2014). The three dimensions of transactional leadership, determined by supervision and performance, motivated by rewards or punishment, depend on transactions of pecuniary and nonpecuniary character (Bass, 1985).

Transactional leaders do not recognize individuals' contributions beyond the stated goal to achieve, nor do they give an incentive for going beyond the reached target (Khan, 2017), which may not motivate followers for advanced achievements. Leaders who follow this type of model offer less employee empowerment and focus on the transaction-by-transaction events and short-term outcomes (Khuong & Hoang, 2015). The transactional leadership model has a stagnant nature, practicing the same approach; this ensures that situational factors will be difficult to resolve (McClesky, 2014).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory is the most studied, debated, and influential leadership theory (Berkovich, 2016). Transformational leaders are attentive to overall organizational outcomes and employee demands through the consideration of reform and innovation (Burns, 1978). According to Chen et al. (2017), the main responsibility of transformational leaders is to alter individual awareness to serve organizational objectives and exploit the inherent motivation of subordinates to pursue desired outcomes.

Transformational leaders comprehend the current needs of followers and activate a realistic shared vision of the future, while developing the appropriate strategies to realize such vision (Berkovich, 2016) through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration (Deschamps et al., 2016). The cumulative use of these components affects the culture, participation, situations, and context within the organization.

Using the combination of the four transformational leadership components helps facilitate charisma (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015) and motivates and inspires followers in goal-setting and visioning processes. Some critics of transformational leadership stated that the leader's influence at work is unclear (Siangchokyoo et al., 2019). The overlap between the constructs of idealized influence and inspirational motivation makes them difficult to study, lacking sufficient identification of the impact of situational factors on leadership effectiveness (Mills & Boardley, 2016). The contemporary leadership theorists demonstrated how successful leadership is often both task-oriented and relation-oriented, such as the strategic leadership (Berkovich, 2016).

Charismatic Leadership Theory

Grabo et al. (2015) asserted that charismatic leaders are typically friendly and warm, but also strong, dynamic, and powerful. As Nikoloski (2015) posited, leaders who display charismatic behavior inspire followers to get a collective feeling that reduces personal barriers, making information sharing and follower visioning more fluent. Properly applying all necessary procedures and applications assures the charismatic leader's commitment to develop continual change mindset and achievable vision.

An organized information sharing approach has a significant impact on creating change mindset, organizational effectiveness, and knowledge integration (Minbaeva, 2017). Nikoloski (2015) suggested that a leader's charismatic acts in managing an organization's human and material resources create a participatory environment and boost employees' ability to innovate. Charisma is crucial for leaders and managers who understand the range of influence and build their power, influence people, and create suitable work environment (Grabo et al. 2015).

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership refers to the capabilities of leaders in anticipating, envisioning, maintaining flexibility, thinking strategically, and empowering employees in ways that lead to high performance (Jaleha, 2018). The core purpose of strategic leadership is understanding and managing the influence of top executives on sectoral performance (Singh et al., 2016). Strategic leadership theory emphasizes tasks, people, and development that allow senior leaders to set directions, develop strategies, and move disruptive ideas into motion (Sadik & Hussain, 2018).

Strategic leaders have an adaptive capacity to respond to the dynamism and complexity of the organizational environment (Parakhina et al., 2017). Hence, it is a combination of charismatic, transformational, transactional, leadership (Bass, 1985; Meuser et al., 2016), as an inclusive process to set practical action. Quigley et al. (2016) contended that strategic leadership has limited leverage on performance due to inertial forces in the form of organizational and other environmental constraints. Jaleha (2018) asserted that the external environment could be the moderating variable that defines the direct influence of strategic leadership on performance. Senior leaders interact with the internal and external environment, combining attributes into their emotional and strategic capabilities.

Strategic leadership is at the heart of a set of important activities that decide long-term objectives; identifying and utilizing an organization's basic competencies, as well as putting in place control measures, all contribute to organizational stability (Fuertes et al., 2020). Leaders, on the other hand, must plan for, comprehend, and build a synergy of corporate culture, stakeholder participation, and critical thinking. Senior leaders execute responsibilities and develop a visionary outlook by combining short and long term demands of the organization (Sadik & Hussain, 2018).

There is a confusion about the idea that the leader's role is not significantly different from the task of a manager, who focuses on a routine and day-to-day activities rather than strategic actions. According to Dubin et al. (2015), strategic leaders are concerned with not just managing the now, but also with setting up a framework for where the organization needs to be in the future. The implication is that the leader should

have a clear vision of the organization and specific targets outlined, implementing core competencies in terms of resources and capabilities of an organization.

The strategic leadership capabilities revolve around developing human capital and social capital through continuous capacity building programs to sustain organizational performance. Hoglund et al. (2018) posited that the public sector ends up in a mutually inclusive choice between the ends and the means to align the organization with external needs and opportunities. Leaders should decide purposefully and understand the value of strategy by addressing processes of planning, formulation, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring (Ferlie et al., 2015).

Strategic leadership in the private sector emerges as the most advantageous, as embraced by CEOs and their top management teams (Schutte & Barkhuizen, 2016). However, administration in public sectors, confronted with conflicting leadership styles arising from law enforcement and service functions, may experience a strategizing conflict of interest. Joyce (2016) asserted that the customer expectations and the actual performance in the public sectors have negative implications which lead to demands for strategic leadership. In this way, I attempted to develop further the understanding of mitigation strategy implementation in the public sector by addressing the research problem and research question.

Leadership and Organizational Performance

Leadership, by its nature, is a complicated phenomenon that Burns (1978) superbly described as “the most observed and the least understood phenomenon on Earth” (p. 2). Burns’ statement reflected that leadership is the most critical component in

the success and failure of an organization, which requires the alignment of the leader's commitment and opportunities. For example, the primary goal of public sector organizations is to achieve greater public good and show responsiveness to general needs by bringing individuals to the center of decision making (Buick et al., 2015).

Accordingly, leaders' commitments would align with such opportunities.

Most of the contemporary leadership studies were about the critical factors relevant to organizational performance, including followership and corporate environment (Zaech & Baldegger, 2017). The combination of factors through which leadership activity arises include the leader, context, and followers, influenced by traits, behaviors, and cognitions, which collectively impact organizational performance (Hernandez et al., 2011). Combining these factors helps the public sector leaders to practice more inclusive leadership styles and implement corruption mitigation strategies (Anderson & Sun, 2017).

Searching for the link between leadership and organizational performance revealed a lack of general standards on how leadership impacts organizational performance (Goswami et al., 2016). However, leaders must develop a good interactive set of behaviors, such as humor, which facilitates cooperation and open communications with and among members, which leads to goal attainment (Buick et al., 2015).

Jacobsen et al. (2015) theorized that there are variations among organizations' cultures, structures, followers, and stakeholders that make it difficult to measure through universal standardization. To situate the public sector with societal context, the character, function, and jurisdiction of the leadership encompasses the exploration of opportunities

for the public good (Silva & Fernandes, 2015). The combined effect of leadership ethics, obligations, and boundaries of leadership is ideally the maintenance of quality service delivery. Additionally, House (1997) asserted that higher interrelation between cognitive elements, individual and group behaviors, promotes transparent work environment and maximize organizational performance.

Considering the issues presented above, attempts continued to capture the impact of different factors on organizational effectiveness and the leaders' contributions remain crucial. The influence may be especially pronounced in specific public and private sectors where leaders exert a high level of control in achieving significant positive change (Kapucu & Ustun, 2017). In private sector organizations, the role and authority of leadership may be clearer, often echoed in public sector leaders (Phillips et al., 2015). Leaders in the public sector can only be effective if they have clear instructions, authority, and motivation to assist people while also minimizing inefficiencies with proper techniques (Meuser et al., 2016).

The continual change in organizational environments led to the demand for effective organizational structure (Shinwon et al., 2015) that impacts the effectiveness of leadership. Change in organizational structures and pre-set expectations sometimes cause the failures to adapt to trends and advancements in corporate environments (Hartnell et al., 2011). While leaders assume the responsibility to maintain required proficiency to meet societal demands, leaders must adapt to change, and manage change to achieve higher performance. McLean and Beigi (2016) noted that the leader who understands the

dynamics in the organizational environment can work to manage the changing demands from followers and stakeholders to assure effectiveness.

The growing societal orientation towards organizational success or failure led to a renewed consideration of desired traits, including the emotional intelligence of leaders and followers (Doe et al., 2015). There is a debate concerning emotional intelligence and if it is something learned or innate. Nevertheless, organizational performance reflects the emotional intelligence qualities of both the leader and followers, evaluated considering the working environment (Tyler, 2015).

Beyond emotional intelligence, the leader's skill of collaboration and knowledge sharing facilitates supportive and participative leadership situations that positively impact organizational performance (House, 1997). Leaders should be strategic, flexible, and open to adjusting their leadership approach based on situations and the characteristics of the followers and stakeholders (Kapucu et al., 2017), which requires a combination of personal disposition and competencies. From this viewpoint, developing strategic thinking requires the ability and willingness to understand situations proactively while strategizing the organizational factors to address the public demand.

Public Sector Leadership

A clear understanding of leadership approaches and their applications to different contexts and situations has significant importance for organizational success. Knies et al. (2016) posited that the research conducted on public sector leadership remains far less extensive than the available literature on the private sector. Prior empirical studies in public sector leadership appeared in the 1960s, led by Guyot (1962), emphasizing the

variations in the motivations of public and private sector leaders. Selznick (1984) further stressed the transition from administrative leadership to an institutional leadership that responds to the social needs and pressures of environments. While leadership theory initially revolved around the private sector predominantly, scholars and practitioners of the 1980s and 1990s increased the focus on public leadership, which led to its growing prominence in the peer-reviewed literature (Knies et al., 2016).

Contemporary scholars continued to study public sector leadership, including roles, networks, and leadership styles (Currie et al., 2011). Among the highlighted concepts was accountability leadership (Jacobsen & Andersen, 2015), oriented toward more integrative and multilevel leadership approaches and the dynamic processes of public sector leadership. Leadership research expanded in a global scale, including attention to public sector service leadership, despite many recognized limitations (Agyepong et al., 2018). Ongoing studies are nevertheless valuable because they capture the basic feature, as well as the unique aspects of the public sector, with due attention to organizational effectiveness.

Previous researchers demonstrated how public organizations act in a pluralistic context in which leaders address multiple internal and external interests at once (Alford & Greve, 2017). Pluralistic organizing tensions are inherent in the public sector, which develops various bureaucratic processes to deal with these tensions (Hansen et al., 2016). The bureaucratic process is more complicated in public sectors and requires both traditional and nontraditional hierarchical strategies, including partnerships and collaborations (Höglund et al., 2018). The traditional hierarchical bureaucracy pushes

leaders to focus on the implementation of rules and regulations, official functions, and the separation of politics from the administration.

Kim and Lee (2018) asserted that, although public sector institutions strive to provide services to citizens, senior leaders face the challenges of managing complex bureaucracies and corruption. As noted by Bennis (1994), the major problem of public sector leadership is that leaders oppress rather than encourage followers and act as superiors instead of leaders. While the private sector leaders focus on growth, profit, and competitive advantages (Höglund et al., 2018), public sector leaders must focus on both private and business-like elements, along bureaucratic lines, to generate long-term and outcome-oriented results.

Public Sector Leadership in Ethiopia

The modern public sector in Ethiopia, established in 1907, under Emperor Menelik II, began with the formation of new ministries. Later, Emperor Haile Selassie, I introduced various reform measures for the modernization of public leadership and the appointment of salaried and educated personnel in civil services, based on the criteria of loyalty to the monarch and family status, rather than merit (African Integrity Indicator, 2017). The Derg (1974–1991) continued the emperor's centralization policy and significantly affected the development and professionalism of public organizations (African Integrity Indicator, 2017). The public sector during the three regimes was not a neutral policy implementer, responsive to the peoples' interests, transparent and accountable. Desta et al. (2015) implied the public sectors were not loyal to the public's demand and corruption compromised the public trust of public sector organizations.

The government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia tried to reform the public sector in three phases. The first phase (1991–1995) was a structural adjustment from a socialist and unitary system to a market economy and federal system (Tadesse, 2019). The second phase (1996–2002) built the capacity to promote democracy and good governance. The third phase (2003 to date) involved minor changes in the service delivery throughout the nine regional states (Bersisa et al., 2016).

Different models emerged to reform the public leadership, including radical reform, incremental reform, and moderate managerialism (Bersisa et al., 2016), with the goal of adjusting the public organizations' structures and functions. The design plan for quality service delivery in Ethiopia was initially to strengthen the public institutions by launching the Change Army, improving leadership effectiveness, and supporting the planning process of regional governments. Initiatives taken by the government assured the establishment of a legal framework that defined the scope of the public sector, with the decentralization and devolution of powers to the nine regional states, and the establishment of civil service institutions with policies and directives (Desta et al., 2015).

Although the government designed the public sector reform programs to address inefficiency and ineffectiveness, there was poor implementation of the policies and strategies that resulted from the lack of clear strategy direction (FEACC 2016). Ethiopia operates a two-tiered system of government that balances the federal sector and the nine regional states. At all levels of government, there have been descriptions of the public sector as complacent, morally bankrupt, lacking integrity, and irresponsible (Beyene, 2015). According to Mo Ibrahim's Index of African Governance (2015), the public sector

service delivery score for Ethiopia was 46% in 2016 and 47% in 2017, which is close to the continental average of 51%, but far below the highest score of 83%.

Tigray regional state is one of the nine regional states found in Ethiopia, committed to implementing the public sector reform program in all public sectors. According to the 2015-2016 Tigray Bureau of Finance and Planning Annual Report, the lack of transparent and accountable planning process impairs the public sectors' effectiveness. Incapability, weak commitment, and political interference are the fundamental factors that impede the role of leadership in implementing corruption mitigation strategies (Desta et al., 2015). The ongoing study of public sector senior leaders pertaining to the implementation of corruption mitigation in the Tigray region represents an important contribution to the public sector, policy makers, researchers and practitioners (Beyene, 2015).

Strategic Leadership in Public Sectors in Ethiopia

In conducting this research, I sought an alternative solution to public sector leadership in Ethiopia, considering their mission is to serve the public. Tadesse (2019) posited that the dominant leadership styles in Ethiopia are team and hierarchical. The hierarchical and autocratic leadership styles are less ideal than a democratic and strategic leadership style when assuming an executive role (Hitt et al., 1995). A strategic direction as an alternative approach may help assure the effectiveness of the administration and service delivery in Ethiopia. Jaleha (2018) asserted that strategic leadership focuses on the capabilities of creating a sense of purpose that allows interaction with stakeholders to encourage high performance. Evans et al. (2017) further posited that the capabilities

allow strategic leaders to adjust the organization continuously in response to inefficiencies.

Besides other factors, the public sector leaders must develop competencies, including affective, cognitive, and psychomotor competencies (Schutte & Barkhuizen, 2016). These three competencies allow leaders to develop adaptive capacity, promote inclusion, preserve flexibility, and respond appropriately to the dynamism of the organizational environment (Meuser et al., 2016). The unique capabilities include anticipating, planning, maintaining flexibility, and empowering employees to generate new ideas (Hitt & Ireland, 1995), which makes the strategic leadership approach important to the public sectors in Ethiopia. Stowell and Mead (2016) found strategic leadership is important for coping with future changes, helping to guarantee the organization's survival and success.

Weeks (2015) asserted that the leadership understanding about challenges around the organization outlines the ultimate success, however the knowledge about their role in mitigating the problems remains elusive. Few studies included some reference to this vital aspect of strategic leadership (Jaleha, 2018; Quigley et al., 2016; Stowell et al., 2016); however, the emphasis of this literature was the impression that senior leaders are the key decision-makers who set directions and develop strategic solutions. The job security, connections with stakeholders, and autonomous motivations are essential predictors of senior leaders' influencing roles. (Week, 2015).

The major problems of public sector leadership in Ethiopia are not only the knowledge, skills, and abilities of leaders, but also include the self-conceptualizations of

their leadership capabilities and psychological resources to meet demands (Mengesha & et al., 2018). Poor planning, inadequate monitoring and evaluation of systems, and poor leadership motivation affected the role of leadership and the implementation of appropriate strategies (Beyene, 2015). Therefore, public sector leaders must tackle these challenges by making choices about the strategies they adopt to enhance their competitive advantage and to incorporate good governance and public trust.

In Ethiopia, the public sector leadership appears to lack a clear leadership style and strategy for managing and improving service delivery. Bersisa et al. (2016) opined that Ethiopian public sector leadership needs to institutionalize and develop a commitment to address the public interest. The public sector outcomes are suboptimal, due to substantial political interference, hierarchical bureaucracy, corruption, and conflicts of interest between different stakeholders (Debela et al., 2020). The prevalence of these factors and the presumed lack of strategic leadership are the primary issues facing public sector organizations. Leaders must enact a composite of behaviors that influence followers to produce the desired organizational outputs, with due attention to middle and lower managers with roles in initiating strategies.

Gandolfi and Stone (2018) claimed that the leaders who make strategic decisions must consider the impact of their decision in and out of the organization. Strategic leaders guide and lead change, and champion a mindset of change within the organization (Baird, 2017). A study conducted by Adanri and Thakkar (2016) highlighted the understanding that strategic leadership approach facilitates decision making which impacts organizations. Moreover, Hambrick and Finkelstein (1987) considered a strategic leader

as possessing absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity, and managerial wisdom. Likewise, Stowell and Mead (2016) described strategic leadership as creating a vision for a desirable future, setting the direction, and building the skills to achieve that future.

Ethiopian public sector leaders need a comprehensive leadership style, viewed as a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of the vision, mission, and strategic objectives (Tadesse, 2019). The best of these leaders articulates a sense of purpose, create effective teams, prioritize and sequence initiatives, and redesign organizational structures. Strategic leaders have a role to play in determining strategic direction, managing the organization's resources, maintaining core competencies, developing human capital, and establishing strategic controls.

Laitinen et al. (2018) asserted that the public sector involves complicated processes, requiring strategic change in terms of strategic plans, felicitous implementation, and strategic thinking. Thus, the design of strategic leadership is an integrated group of practices that build an organization's capacity for change (Hunitie, 2018). Schutte and Barkhuizen (2016) hypothesized that public sector organizations require knowledgeable, committed, and proactive leaders to assure sustainability. Leadership requires a deep understanding of the role of the people in the ultimate success of the mission and vision of the organization (Gandolfi et al., 2018). Strategic leaders understand strategic planning as the key factor to organizational effectiveness and sustainability (Fuertes et al., 2020) and depend on the participation, involvement, and values of leaders, followers, and other stakeholders.

Strategic leadership in the Ethiopian public sector can integrate strategic planning harmoniously to encourage higher performance. Strategic planning paves the way to a clear recognition of flexibility in terms of goals, policies, strategies, and processes to manage inefficiency (Bryson, 2016). In an era characterized by rapid and continuous change, organizations must strategically plan and retain knowledge capital for organizations to be productive and responsive to the needs of the society. Strategic planning helps leaders transform their followers through regular communication, while presenting themselves as role models and encouraging their followers to achieve the mission and goals of the organization (Jahala, 2018).

Public sectors in Ethiopia have different features that affect leaders and organizational performance. According to Tadesse (2019), leader recruitment may not involve a merit basis. More emphasis may be on the leaders' political background than their achievements in leading organizations (Desta, 2015). Little effort may occur to balance the technical skill requirements and the leadership skill requirements in public sector organizations; rather, the assignment of leaders substantially depends on political loyalty. World Bank (2015) noted that the root cause for leadership inefficiency in the public sectors is excessive political interference, which affects decision-making ability.

Effective leaders in Ethiopia should be knowledgeable, selfless visionaries, committed to a willingness to share power with their subordinates (Tadesse, 2019) and elicit others' participation (Hunitie, 2018). The resultant view is of leadership in the public sector that represents a collective effort of leaders and followers expressed in joint actions for the public well-being. The best strategy is a combination of several leadership

styles, working together in a synergistic system for a better future; effectiveness and efficiency may be attainable through such a leadership style.

Challenges of Public Sector Leadership

Public sector organizations are the medium for good governance, public trust, and the delivery of adequate services. In societies where the provision of service delivery is heavily dependent on the government, the leaders of public sector organizations must exhibit a high level of effectiveness (Agyepong et al., 2018). Public sector leaders are central to making public sector organizations function effectively (Lane et al., 2009). Public sector leaders face different problems, including presence of a rigid bureaucracy, institutional corruption and political corruption, which negatively affects the provision of public goods and services (Solomon & Steyn, 2017). The following subsections include an address of these problems, as described in the peer-reviewed literature.

Bureaucracy in Public Sectors

Weber (2015) first introduced the concept of organizational bureaucracy as a means of achieving organizational efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery through authority, division of labor, hierarchy, rules, regulations, procedures, and runtime job performance. The underlying assumption of Weber's model is that leadership that provides legitimacy to an organizational system is legal-rational rather than traditional (Alornyeku, 2011). Organizational bureaucracy is fruitful if placed under legal-rational leadership, while knowledge, qualifications, and experience are the criteria for the selection of leaders able to transform the system from a traditional to a more modern

bureaucracy. The gap between the people and the administration characterizes the traditional bureaucratic culture, emphasizing rules rather than services to the people.

The characterizations of the public sectors in Ethiopia included that of an excessive and closed bureaucracy that strains the delivery of services. Anderson and Anechiarico (2015) theorized that bureaucrats are preferable to politicians for technical tasks for which ability is more important than effort. However, excessive bureaucracy negatively affects social and economic development, especially in developing countries (Alornyeku, 2011). Excessive bureaucracy makes public organizations more arthritic, less able to achieve their core missions, and less responsive to service users. Poor customer service, rigid adherence to procedures, and weak leadership practices characterize the administration in the public sectors.

Lane and Wallis (2009) described the multilevel structure of the public sector that one can interpret as a series of efforts to break through hierarchical (vertical), functional (horizontal), and external organizational boundaries to achieve more flexibility and innovation. The link between leaders' effectiveness, particularly within public institutions, and their bureaucratic performance are among findings published in the management literature (Hooghe et al., 2015). However, there is a resistance in the public sectors to changing the bureaucratic values to more modern bureaucratic norms, which affects the customers who seek quality service delivery (Lapuente et al., 2020). The lack of a clear bureaucratic structure presents a fundamental leadership challenge related to institutional and political corruption in Ethiopia.

Institutional Corruption

There is no single satisfactory and internationally accepted definition for the term *corruption*, because what may seem to be corrupt in one sector may not necessarily be perceived as such in others (Ghebrehiwet, 2017). According to the report of Transparency International (2016), corruption is a behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private status gains or rules violations in association with the exercise of certain types of private influence. The causes of corruption are different in countries, depending on their economic, social, and political situations. However, the size and structure of the government, the political system, and the quality of institutions have fundamental associations with the causes of corruption (Enste & Christina, 2017).

According to the World Public Sector Report (2019), corruption fuels conflict and erodes both interpersonal and institutional trust. More specifically, environmental uncertainty and knowledge-based risk are the primary uncertainty and risk that influence leader's decision. Corruption appears in every stage and level of the public sector and hinders the quantity and quality of goods and services. Conversely, Sartor et al. (2019) asserted that the lack of corruption assures good governance. In a society, such as Ethiopia, the presumption is that corruption is systemic and institutionalized and magnifies sectoral inefficiency. In addition, the anticorruption strategies were not considered as an important element in development projects and design neither was it considered as an essential element in policy plans (Ayferam et al., 2015).

The poor performance of the public sectors reveals the ineffectiveness of the institutions, which are characterized by poor service delivery and a lack of candor. In

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2015), Ethiopia ranked 104th out of 180 countries, and with its civil services considered to be bureaucratic, inefficient, and lacking transparency and good governance. According to the transparency international report (2017), administrative corruption is especially prevalent and becomes a severe challenge in public sectors, such as land administration, taxation administration, housing and urban development. Ayferam et al. (2015) claimed that the lack of checks and balances, complex service systems, ambiguous policies and strategies, are contributing factors to corruption in Ethiopia.

Institutional corruption compromises transparency and accountability, leading to dissatisfaction and a lack of trust in public institutions by the citizens (African Development Bank Report, 2015). Inefficacy persists in public sectors because of corruption, and senior leaders yield easily to negative influences from their environments, instead of insisting on the recognized ethical values and standards in their organizations (Rose-Ackerman et al., 2016). Additionally, Farouk et al. (2016) asserted that the failure to maintain established moral values results in systemic corruption in which transparency, accountability, and responsiveness are inadequate. This implies that the ethical orientations of leaders strongly relate to the followers' job satisfaction, commitment, and the prevalence of corruption (Policardo et al., 2018).

The political system, level of interference, and excessive centralization of power increase the opportunity for corruption (Enste et al., 2017). Corruption in public sectors occurs when government officials leverage their ability to alter the policies, regulations, and procedures that govern the distribution of goods and services. Where official power

is poorly standardized or too exposed to private influence, the possibility for extreme corruption is high (Sartor & Beamish, 2019). Hence, senior leaders should adopt and exhibit ethical leadership behavior, which helps minimize bribery and build efficiency.

Political Corruption

Corruption in Ethiopia ranges from petty to grand acts, as impediments to its development, further exacerbating poverty (Ayferam et al., 2015). Lack of accountability and transparency, lack of clear regulations and authorization, and low institutional control levels contribute to corruption in the country (Teshome, 2016). Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (2018) ranked Ethiopia 113 out of 129 countries based on the prevalence of corruption in the public sectors. The implication is that corruption poses a severe problem to the overall wellbeing of the population.

There is a problem of capacity to control corruption at all levels, negligible political will, and diminished legal commitments to hold accountable powerful actors implicated in corruption. Ethiopia lost \$26 billion to illicit financial outflows between 2014 and 2016 (Bertelsmann, 2018). There is a high risk of corruption in Ethiopia's land administration with petty corruption, land grabbing, corruption in the auctioning process, and state capture common in the sector (Business Anticorruption Portal, 2017). The country's legal and institutional land administration structure was criticized for being unnecessarily complicated (Lindner, 2014). Several elements in Ethiopia's current land administration system create potential entry points for corrupt activities.

Kebede (2013) identified that lack of clear policies, weak institutions, lack of accountability and transparency, lack of clear regulation and authorization, and low

institutional control are the main causes of political corruption. The effects of political corruption on the state can ultimately contribute to the paralysis of its institutional set up because it has consequences on the rule of the politics and the operating rules of the political system (Kebede, 2013). The success of anticorruption measures depends on the quality and commitment of the staff in watchdog agencies. Staff members of such agencies should be of the highest quality in terms of skills, experience, and ethical behaviors (Enste et al., 2017). In contrast to these requirements, most government officials in Ethiopia are committed to party loyalty and politics (Freedom House 2018; Bertelsmann, 2018).

Legal and Institutional Anticorruption Framework

Ethiopia signed different anticorruption conventions, including the United Nation Convention against Corruption in 2003 and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption in 2004 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015). The legislative framework to prevent corruption in Ethiopia is strong on paper; however, the public sector leaders do not implement it effectively and remain politically influenced (Business Anticorruption Portal, 2017). The FEACC, established in 2001 to enforce anticorruption laws, does not implement what it stated.

Ayferam et al. (2015) asserted that there is a lack of leadership commitment in implementing the legal frameworks in Ethiopia's public sectors. Besides the federal anticorruption commission, in Ethiopia, there are also regional anticorruption commissions in Ethiopia (Desta et al., 2015). Beginning in 2007, seven of the nine regional states established their own Ethics and Anticorruption Commissions (EAC) to

fight and prevent corruption in their respective regions. However, the public sectors in all the regions still face a critical challenge concerning implementing mitigation strategies (Desta et al., 2015). The lack of knowledge and skills of public sector leaders and political interference appear to be the primary factors contributing to the legal framework's inefficiency, manifested in the deterioration of customer satisfaction and public trust (Alam et al., 2017).

It is evident that corruption is a significant problem in the Tigray region (Ghebrehiwet, 2017). Corruption in the area manifests in terms of monetary, institutional, and political influence, with implications on the public sector's performance. The EAC of the Tigray region traced the high rate of corruption, specifically in the housing and urban development bureau. The service delivery declined due to corruption and lack of practical leadership skills (Teshome, 2016). The senior leaders lacked the understanding of the institutional system and corruption mitigation strategies (Ghebrehiwet, 2017). Implementing mitigation strategies demands a well-integrated, multi-disciplinary approach from committed leadership (Business Anticorruption Portal, 2017).

The 2018 revised proclamation also established Ethical Liaison Units at all levels of Public Offices and Public Enterprises (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). They are supposed to coordinate an address of ethical issues and ensure that public sectors are corruption-free and transparent; however, its integrity as an institution of truth-seeking and justice has been seriously compromised by political leaders' interference. Ethiopia ranks 107 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (Transparency International, 2018).

Researchers suggested that public sector leaders should employ strategic leadership to deal with challenges and mitigate the problems properly (Enste et al., 2017). Using the strategic leadership framework, I used qualitative research methods to identify and report the lived experience of senior public leaders pertaining to the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

Effectiveness Factors in the Public Sectors

Effectiveness in the public sector depends on a variety of factors, including competence, responsibility, transparency, and participation in decision-making. Florina (2017) stated this efficacy depends on the quality of employees, the quality of leadership, and environmental suitability. The plausible effectiveness factors of public sectors depend on the internal and external environmental factors that influence and shape decisions (Mohammed et al., 2019).

The effectiveness of public sector organizations indicates the extent to which institutions can deliver the goals for which they were set up through a sustainable economic environment. A dilemma organizational leaders and managers sometimes face is how to deal with external factors (e.g., economic, political, technological), and internal factors (e.g., organizational culture and structure) (Mohammed et al., 2019). The following section contains a concise description of these external and internal environmental factors and how they influence and shape decision-making and effectiveness in the public sector.

External Environment

Organizations' external environment includes economic, political, technological, and social factors. Organizational leaders must monitor these factors to identify, predict, and manage the trends, issues, and opportunities that their organizations face (Florina, 2017). Organizations must fit in with, adapt to, and exploit the forces in their external environments. The type, size, and mission of an organization determines its external environment (Silva & Fernandes, 2015) that leaders manage to deliver quality service and provide customer satisfaction.

Economic factors fall under the external environment, which influences public sector decision-making and performance. The world is facing unprecedented economic challenges, forcing public institutions improving through reforms (Rhys et al., 2017). The economic factors facilitate achieving monetary objectives, social goals, and high-quality service. In public organizations, the mission is central to the strategy; assessed are the values in terms of the accomplishment of the mission, rather than revenue earned (Silva et al., 2015). However, most public sector organizations are unable to meet the demand from citizens on their own and require support from stakeholders. To be more effective and efficient in providing services, leaders must implement appropriate reforms and strategies (Florina, 2017).

The external environment also comprises the political factors that influence and shape the decisions and service delivery processes in the public sector. Morgan (2016) theorized that the degree of political interference determines the function and stability of the public sector. The political environment is usually described in terms of wider

political systems and their distribution, as well as the concentration of powers that influence decision-making (Karo & Kattel, 2016). Despite the political environment, building an innovative public sector is critical for leaders to stay relevant and continue providing citizens with value. Providing value is the responsibility of all public servants, even in difficult political environments where individuals at every level may feel a lack of power and influence.

Several scholars demonstrated that stable and clearly stated political actions lead to better development outcomes, such as economic growth, public investment, and social infrastructure (Martínez et al., 2015). The political system and the agenda behind political missions received heightened attention because these determine institutional form. Moreover, a mature political environment encourages public sector leaders to implement policies and strategies that enable stability and public trust.

According to Lember et al. (2018), technological capacities are increasingly critical elements of organizational capacity. Because the technological capacity exists through feedback processes and interaction among public organizations, markets, policy networks, and citizens. Technology affects the delivery of tasks within a given framework of resources and authority (e.g., reputation, coordination practices, and politics) through changing the role of bureaucracy and work organizations (Karo et al., 2016). Organizations with technological capacities can enact rapid change in their existing leadership capacities and cumulative change in their structure, division of tasks, and leadership practices (Lember et al., 2018). While technology has been instrumental in

helping improve service delivery, its importance to policy coordination in public sectors has less prominence.

Most studies on technological use were in the private sector. These studies revealed how leaders in the private sector changed work environments because of different technologies, especially information communication technology. Organizations with successful technological practice have flat hierarchies, platform-based services, and peer production (Karo et al., 2016). The continuous demands of citizens increase pressures on public sector leaders to do the same as private sector leaders concerning technological capacity (Martínez et al., 2015). Therefore, leaders require technical decisions and capabilities to support their planning and implementation processes that lead to greater efficiency. However, the leaders should understand their role in interpersonal, informational, and decisional positions (Lember et al., 2018). Internal and external stakeholders' participation in public sectors as a collective process facilitates the knowledge sharing and communication (Karo et al., 2016).

Internal Environment

The public sector internal environment is composed of factors that occur inside the organization, but which can cause organizational changes. Among others, the organizational culture, structure, and change management influence the organization's success (John et al., 2015). Maleka et al. (2015) stated that culture can be the critical factor in competitive success, as it can facilitate motivation, commitment, and the development of people. Organizational cultural values and national cultural setting influence the behavior of individuals within organizations (Knein et al. 2020).

Organizational culture is a combination of tactics, knowledge, social interconnections, and specificity that help organizations in response to environmental complexity and change (John et al., 2015).

Organizational culture relates to levels of job satisfaction. For example, individuals of Western countries mostly have individualistic cultures in which they do not prefer to bring relationships to workplaces (Saha & Kumar, 2018). Unlike the Western culture, Africans prefer to work in groups. Collectivist tendencies exist among Africans (Awasthy et al., 2015). Hence, public sector organizations must develop their own culture to use as a set of boundaries for its employees' and other stakeholders' behaviors (Knein et al. 2020) and leaders must understand the cultural system and interpretations to develop efficiency.

The organizational structure shows the formal link between different segments of the firm, which helps to adapt business models to increasingly demanding customers to interact in achieving stated objectives. Fischer and Sciarini (2016) posited that organizational structure is simply the process by which public sectors formally group and coordinate tasks. For any organization to be effective and efficient, its organizational structure must be in line with the organization's core objectives (Estalaki, 2017). If organizations are consistent with their own principles, then their efficiency increases and they are successful in achieving organizational goals (Stouten et al., 2018).

Organizational structure in the public sector is hierarchical, with people at each level having commitment to reach organizational goals and contribute toward fulfilling public demand (Dustin et al., 2018). All organizational structures may lead to challenges

based on the circumstances surrounding the organization and mediation of the hierarchical demands. Ghiasipour et al. (2017) posited that department loyalty, new management, confusion regarding institutional goals, and miscommunication are some challenges organizational structures encompass. The implication is that, without proper communication, processes grow disorganized and result in misalignment of the organization's objectives.

Role of Leadership on Potential Intervention Strategies

Scholars agree that the effective integration of different factors determine organizational performance. However, clearly stated is the role of leadership in implementing mitigation strategies to impact organizational outcomes (Solomon et al., 2017). A leader who intends to intervene in organizational challenges must address six interrelated questions: What are the vision and missions of the firm? Who are the customers? What is the plan? What does the customer value? What is the outcome? What are the values? (Saha & Kumar, 2018). There is a demand for the leaders to commit to answers to these questions and analyze challenges so that the organization's affluence is promotable and sustainable. However, this commitment is largely lacking to date in Ethiopia.

Leadership commitment is the central factor in designing and implementing intervention strategies, depending on the change or solution needed in the organization; this commitment motivates and guides employees to carry out the processes (Dustin et al., 2018). Achieving results in an ever-changing and increasingly competitive world requires proactive leadership committed to higher performance. A committed leader must

go through the process of leadership development to become successful and influential. When education, knowledge, and experience combine, leaders can plan, manage, coordinate, organize, and control (Akpapere et al., 2019). These are the true functions of committed leaders.

As human resources are the main part of the organization, effective leadership maintains the employees' trust levels by allowing them to participate in the planning, implementing, and evaluating processes (Bhargavi et al., 2016). The leadership must introduce appropriate intervention strategy, to mobilize the employees towards a common mission and organizational objective. Van der Voet et al. (2016) posited that the leadership must be able to quickly mobilize employees and other significant stakeholders to respond to new challenges. Leaders have a special responsibility and instrumental role in ensuring employees are recruited, maintained, trained, and motivated to accomplish the goals and objectives. Moreover, senior leaders are considered as an antecedent to develop commitment among employees in public sector.

Effective leaders create a conducive environment to insure strong organizational culture that motivates employees and builds organizational performance (Saha et al., 2018). Senior leaders have a key leadership role in developing the vision through consultation rather than dictation. However, where a traditional culture exists, and the workforce does not have the appropriate decision-making skills, leaders must create the conditions for the required culture to develop. Jyoti et al. (2015) asserted that inefficient public sectors need motivated and proactive leaders who can adopt new culture and respond to challenges with appropriate strategies.

Where there are well-established processes and organizational cultures, the workforce tends to operate within a comfort zone toward quality service delivery. Buick et al. (2018) suggested organized change management is a challenge best addressed with a collaboration of individuals within an established organizational culture. Senior leaders equipped with necessary leadership skills and critical thinking have the potential to produce high performance (Jyoti et al., 2015) proficient at positively utilizing competencies and limitations of their subordinates in the achievement of organizational objectives (Akpapere et al., 2019).

Leaders have a responsibility to give due attention to external factors such as competition, customer demand, and global market trends, as well as internal factors such as employee motivation, innovation, and organizational culture (Haque et al., 2015). One of the leadership duties is to manage the process of change in organizations to sustain operational credibility. With stakeholder participation, leaders must identify underlying problems and establish the organization's need to change and communicate a positive view of the future. Igbaekemen et al. (2015) posited that those effective leaders clearly state the roles and responsibilities of individuals, provides instructions about the vision and mission, and explains how to implement it.

The Meaningfulness of Selected Research Design

The research objective for this study was to identify and report the lived experiences of top leaders in the public and private sectors in Ethiopia, Tigray, regarding the implementation of an anticorruption strategy. The inclusion of public-sector practitioners in academic research contributes to the advancement of theory and practice

(Fahimnia et al., 2015). The findings of this study may provide information that senior public sector officials can use to create a successful anti-corruption strategy (Reefke & Sundaram, 2017). Understanding the perspectives of different organizations could help policymakers make better decisions (Brandenburg et al., 2014).

The methodological approach of a given study represents how an investigator can find answers to the research problem (Patton, 2015). A qualitative research method in the field of leadership study facilitates the understanding of meanings derived from data which participants attach to the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015).

Hammarberg et al. (2016) asserted that qualitative methods in the field of leadership help answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective from the standpoint of the participant. Considering the general guidelines of qualitative research, the purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders pertaining to the implementation of mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia.

Different scholars used qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches to the study of leadership and its related issues. Quantitative methods rely on the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe, explain, predict, or control variables surrounding the phenomena of interest (Patton, 2015). For example, Asiri et al. (2016) concluded from their quantitative study that senior leaders' commitment has a positive relationship with organizational performance. Arif (2018), in his mixed research, found that transformational leadership and organizational performance have a strong relationship. The quantitative study has conducted by Hui et al. (2019), based on

empirical data, demonstrated that transformational leadership style and work engagement significantly relate to innovative work behavior. Using a descriptive case study, Trevisol et al. (2019) analyzed the role of leadership and organizational life cycle in a company union, linking theories to the employers' associations.

The phenomenological design previously allowed researchers to identify and report the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experiences surrounding a given phenomenon among individuals and groups (Denzin et al., 2017). Phenomenology helps us learn from the experiences of others, including in business, social, and cultural contexts (Neubauer et al., 2019). For example, Kagotho et al. (2016) applied the phenomenological research design to the study of experiences with and perceptions of corruption within public health systems of Kenya.

In this study, the transcendental phenomenological approach was used to promote an understanding of the experiences of senior leaders about corruption mitigation strategy implementation. The identification and report of the lived experiences of senior public sector leaders in undertaking leadership roles helped to improve understanding of and knowledge about the strategy implementation. The discovery of the essence of the meaning attached to the uniqueness of the roles of senior public sector leaders in the specific Ethiopian service settings helped to fill a gap in the related literature about the general phenomenon of public sector leadership experiences.

Gap of Public Sector Leadership in Literature

McLean and Beigi (2016) contended that a large portion of scholarly literature is about the profitability and leadership appropriateness of the private sectors, despite the

ongoing debate concerning the mission and nature of the public sectors in the service of society's interests. Different scholars agreed that public sector leadership is complicated in nature; however, what remains questionable is how to strategize the public sector and mitigate organizational inefficiency (McLean et al., 2016). There is a consensus in the literature that public sector leaders should be change agents, visionaries, and idea champions who must constantly identify problems and mitigate accordingly (Meuser et al., 2016). Knies et al. (2016) hypothesized that the disparity between the concept of leadership styles and the complicated nature of the public sectors might contribute to the challenges leaders face.

There is a splash of knowledge about the policies that senior public sector leaders implement in their organizations to alleviate inefficiency (Johnsen, 2016). The existing leadership literature provides little information on universal measurements of leadership effectiveness, appropriateness of leadership style, and public sector performance (Hernandez et al., 2011; Jaleha, 2018). In their research, Jacobsen et al. (2015) pointed out implementing a corruption mitigation strategy depends on the flexibility and commitment of the leaders, which is a problem in public sector organizations of Tigray region. This may stem from the fact that public sector leaders need a more comprehensive approach that includes strategizing the mitigation tactics through combining political and managerial tasks (Alam et al., 2017).

Although most public sector leadership research focused on the nature and importance of leaders, leadership style, and organizational effectiveness, a gap still exists in understanding senior leaders' role in mitigating corruption, especially in Ethiopia.

Bersisa et al. (2016) emphasized that leadership achievements depend on the applicability of mitigation strategies; however, problems surround designing clear roles to guide and evaluate senior leaders' performance with a coherent policy. In this research, I focused on senior leaders' lived experience and how they implemented mitigation strategies to promote understanding of a phenomenon unique to Ethiopian senior public sector leaders in the Tigray region. The growing societal demands for quality service delivery increased pressure on public sector leaders to react to customer requirements.

Summary and Transition

An abundance of literature reflected the importance that scholars attached to strategic leadership concepts applied to the delivery of quality service and the promotion of positive social change. Thus, there is a corresponding need to improve understanding about its appropriateness. Part of the reason for its prevalence in literature may be because of the debate about the complex nature of public sector leadership. Several theories, strategic implications, and a horde of reasons were advanced to explain the concept of strategic leadership.

In addition to other determinant factors, leadership commitment and critical thinking are central factors in designing and implementing intervention strategies, depending on the change or solution needed. Organizational effectiveness and customer satisfaction are imperative to leadership and management. Thus, mitigating inefficiency in a strategic way is a basic instrument for promoting service delivery.

Understanding the implementation of mitigation strategies may be essential to public sector leaders to assure quality service delivery and enhance positive social

change. The transcendental phenomenological approach was useful for the identification and understanding of the lived experiences of senior leaders in the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development of the Tigray region, Ethiopia, promoting knowledge about both leadership and the implementation of mitigation strategies.

Most leadership studies concentrated on private sectors and quantifying the relationship between leadership and organizational performance. Studies conducted to understand the lived experience of senior leaders in the study area were largely absent from the published body of knowledge. The finding from this study might fill the gap by offering meaning from senior leaders' lived experiences within its natural settings. The focus on the need for proper corruption mitigation strategy implementation brings attention to the need to capacitate organizations to remain sustainable and trusted. Chapter 3 includes the details about the research method, instrumentation, trustworthiness, and ethical issues.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders regarding the implementation of corruption mitigation in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. Corruption mitigation strategies vary across organizations depending on leadership effectiveness, leadership style, and organizational structure (Goha & Arenas, 2020). Anticorruption strategy implementation involves different procedures and cooperation among different stakeholders with respect to leadership, organizational structure, and sound policy within an organization (Transparency International, 2017).

The study's focus was to understand how public sector senior leaders implement effective corruption mitigation strategies in the public sectors of the Tigray region. In this chapter, I discuss the method and design in detail. These elements include the rationale for selecting the research design, the researcher's role, and ethical issues, as well as the data collection instruments, participant selection criteria, and data analysis procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design for this study was a qualitative transcendental phenomenological approach. The research design is the foundation for investigating and addressing the research question (Khan, 2014). Researchers use the transcendental phenomenological approach to understand the lived human experience with complementary endpoints in description (Patton, 2015). One primary research question guided this study: What are the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders about the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region in Ethiopia? The

phenomenon of interest is the implementation of anticorruption strategies with a focus on the experiences of public sector senior leaders.

The quantitative research method involves predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (Williams, 2007). A mixed-methods design can enhance the creation of conceptual models and the development of new tools, but it is resource consuming (Regnault et al., 2018). Those approaches did not align with this study; instead, the aim was to identify and report the lived experience of senior leaders about the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies. The qualitative method was appropriate, as it allowed me to create understanding from the participants' data.

The phenomenological research design is more effective for describing, rather than explaining, subjective realities (Moustakas, 1994) of participants' insights, beliefs, and actions (Husserl, 2002). Researchers use the phenomenological design to understand phenomena based on the essence of individuals' lived experiences (Patton, 2015). In this study, I identified and reported the lived experience of senior public leaders using a phenomenological research design.

The two major approaches, hermeneutic phenomenology (Van Manen, 2014) and transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), represent philosophical assumptions about experiences and ways to organize and analyze phenomenological data. Meaning is the core of transcendental phenomenology, a design for acquiring and collecting data that explain the essence of human experiences. By contrast, hermeneutic phenomenology requires reflective interpretation of a text to achieve a meaningful understanding (Moustakas, 1994) and description of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014).

The transcendental phenomenological approach best suited this study. Most previous research on public sectors in Ethiopia has been from employee perspectives rather than leadership views. Using the transcendental phenomenological approach, I could identify and report the lived experiences of senior leaders regarding the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development in the Tigray region.

Other research designs were inappropriate for this study because of their focus, and results. For example, a case study design was not ideal for this study because it involves focusing on details derived from extensive evidence over time (Yin, 2014). Researchers using the analytical survey approach attempt to test theories in the field by exploring the association between variables (Patton, 2015). These two research designs were not appropriate for this study because my goal was to find meaning from the participants' lived experiences. Reporting the lived experiences of participants requires eliminating researcher biases (Moustakas, 1994), which was necessary in this study.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's personal bias in a study may affect the validity of the study; thus, there is a need for reflection to acknowledge the possible biases and mitigate them (Ravitch et al., 2016). In qualitative research studies, researchers must access participants' thoughts and feelings (Patton, 2015). In this phenomenological qualitative study, I facilitated the data collection process. My focus was on deriving meanings from participants' responses by collecting, organizing, and analyzing raw data and reporting the findings using a descriptive and interpretive approach.

The main task of researchers in the phenomenological method is analysis of rich textual data to derive meaning (Sanjari et al., 2014). As a primary instrument for data collection, I interviewed participants using Zoom online conferencing. Qualitative researchers and participants interact during interviews to build relationships for data collection (Patton, 2015). The interviews occurred in a respectful manner to motivate participants and bring practices into words to deliver meanings. Denzin et al. (2017) posited that a qualitative researcher discovers phenomena in their ordinary environment that could be understood through people's experiences. Throughout the interviews, I took notes and carefully observed the participants' nonverbal language and emotions while answering questions.

A researcher has many tasks, including planning the research design, formulating research questions, providing a framework foundation, and directing the study (Ravitch et al., 2016). In the phenomenological model, a researcher's main task is to collect and analyze data from participants representing their experiences. Unlike other forms of research where researchers seek independent realities through objective means, qualitative researchers become observers and facilitators of data collection (Roger et al., 2018). To identify and report the lived experiences of senior leaders to promote understanding, I conducted the interviews while motivating participants to recount their experiences and deliver clear information.

My experiences in leadership positions helped form the perspective needed to develop the research topic and purpose. During the interview process, my experience helped me to assess the potential value of probing additional issues not addressed in the

literature review. According to Speziale et al. (2007), researchers should identify and understand their personal biases that may influence the research process and the results. My connection with the study topic was based partly on my experience as a department head in a public sector. I worked as a department leader in the public sector for 7 years, and I am familiar with the situations leaders face in government-owned organizations in Ethiopia that deliver public services under the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development. However, I did not conduct this study in connection with my profession or specific department. I remained motivated to offer meaning from the participants' lived experiences about the implementation of anticorruption strategies in public sectors of the Tigray region.

For this study, I selected public sector leaders I did not know to avoid bias from any personal relationships. Moustakas (1994) suggested that nothing be determined in advance; a researcher focuses on actual participants' perceptions. Through *epoche*, I set aside any value judgments of data contributed by the respondents. Interview questions included precise language to keep the research process transparent. With all my personal dispositions and values as the researcher, I facilitated the interpretative process. Thorough analysis revolved around the overarching research question and data derived from multiple interviews to enhance credibility in the findings.

I recruited participants from the population through a purposeful sampling approach. This study required data on how public sector senior leaders implement anticorruption strategies and the meaning of those experiences. Participants confirmed

that they met clearly stated criteria, including leadership experience in a decision-making position and experiences with strategies to mitigate corruption.

As a primary research instrument, I evaluated each step and kept a reflective journal to mitigate bias in the data collection, analysis, and presentation processes. The potential bias due to my professional background was eliminated using member checking (allowing participants to review the results and suggest revisions that accurately reflected their meaning). Additionally, I used the bracketing process to explain any practical knowledge about senior leaders' roles in implementing anticorruption strategy. Ortlipp (2008) asserted that reflective journals create clarity about a researcher's history, values, and assumptions to control bias and make it visible to the reader.

Ravitch et al. (2016) asserted that, in addition to selecting an appropriate research methodology, researchers must also have ethical considerations. In this study, I paid attention to ethical issues to ensure the study met the standards of qualitative research. The cornerstone of ethical research is informed consent (Denzin et al., 2017). Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, their role in the data collection and review process, any identified risks, and the use of data. The participants were not deceived in any way, and procedures conformed to the standards of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The research population is an aggregate of the population from which the participants are selected (Asiamah et al., 2017). The population for this study was public

sector leaders in Ethiopia who work as bureau heads, deputy bureau heads, core process owners, and department heads. For purposes of this study, the term *public sector* refers to government-owned organizations in Ethiopia that deliver public services under the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development. Those leaders have the responsibility to plan, evaluate, and coordinate activities all over the organizational hierarchy (Bersisa et al., 2016). My goal was to identify and report on the lived experiences of senior public sector leaders pertaining to the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies in the Tigray region.

The sampling strategy for this study was purposeful. Purposeful sampling can lead to in-depth data necessary to meet the requirements of the qualitative phenomenological approach (Patton, 2015). As the random sampling method is best suited for the quantitative approach, the nonrandom purposive sampling allowed for the identification of a representative sample that provided in-depth insights (see Merriam et al., 2016; Patton, 2015). The purposeful sampling involved the use of the group characteristics strategy of key informants (Patton, 2015). The key informants' strategy was used to select participants who have experiences related to the phenomenon under study and that will allow the researcher to answer the research question (Ravitch et al., 2016)

Denzin et al. (2017) stated that researchers must thoroughly specify their study population by clearly defining their distinctions, experiences, and contributions to the study's main goal. The criteria for selecting the sample leaders were experience, age, and willingness to participate. In phenomenological studies, selecting participants

encompasses general considerations such as age, gender, relevant experience, and willingness to participate (Moustakas, 1994). The primary inclusion criteria for this phenomenological study were that the participants had at least 5 years of experience as a bureau head, deputy bureau head, core process owner, or department leader in the public sector in Tigray. They were between 25 and 55 years of age and were willing to participate in this study. As such, participants beyond these criteria were excluded from the study.

Identification of the senior leaders was possible through publicly available contact information. Website listings of emails and telephone numbers were how I obtained initial contact information for prospective participants likely to meet the eligibility criteria. Initial contact with participants was via email and telephone, inviting the individuals to participate in the study and communicating the criteria (see Appendix A). Potential participants who responded to the invitation were prequalified to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. This process for establishing that participants met the requirement involved a preinterview discussion via telephone. The actual interviews using Zoom conferencing averaged 38 minutes in duration.

According to Bernard (2013), studies that use a qualitative phenomenological research method should have a sample size of between 5 and 25 participants. For this study, 15 purposefully selected participants were involved and data saturation was achieved. Data saturation occurs when no new information arises from continued data collection and full details on the phenomenon emerge (Moser et al., 2018). An initial interview of 12 participants was done. An additional three participants were interviewed

until redundancy of information was achieved. No new ideas appeared to emerge after the additional interviews, which indicated data saturation.

Instrumentation

I intended to identify and report on the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders using information derived from insightful interview data. The interview approach is the best fit for qualitative research because it helps uncover meaning from participants' responses about a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). The semistructured interviews with open-ended questions (see Appendix B) facilitated open dialogue that enabled participants to explain their experiences in implementing corruption mitigation strategies. Previously conducted research and other review literature served as a background for developing the interview questions for this study. Ravitch et al. (2016) posited those prior studies guide researchers to understand what other scholars conducted in the past and offer information in constructing the questions. Therefore, the literature on public sector leadership and corruption mitigation strategies served as the basis for framing the interview questions.

The development of the data collection protocol stemmed from an understanding of the phenomenological transcendental design focusing on senior leaders' lived experiences. This study's interview protocol was self-developed to align with the study's purpose and to answer the research question (see Appendix C). The interview questions were open-ended, which according to Patton (2015), is helpful to collect in-depth information from participants consistent with the study's purpose. Open-ended interview questions allow researchers to identify and report on participants' lived experiences using rich data (Taylor et al., 2015).

Expert Review

Evaluating, assessing, and checking the quality of the research instrument is a significant step and assures research validity and credibility. Field tests and experts' reviews help to identify unclear or ambiguous statements in the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) and ascertain the research instrument's quality (Patton, 2015). In this study, I used three expert panelists that included researchers in the leadership field to comment on my research instrument as part of the expert review. The feedback from the experts helped me refine, group, and rewrite the interview questions. Based on the feedback from the expert review, the instrument was revised and distilled before use in the main study. Conducting an expert panel helps researchers assess the study instruments' quality before the actual research (Dikko, 2016) and validated for clarity, consistency, and alignment with the purpose and central research questions of the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Dikko, 2016).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment

Recruitment is the dialogue between an investigator and a potential participant before the initiation of the consent process (Patel et al., 2003). The recruitment process started with identifying participants by contacting them via email about their years of experience, seniority, and willingness to participate in the study. The recruitment process had two main goals: to recruit a sample that adequately represented the target population and recruiting sufficient participants to meet the study's sample size and requirements.

The population for this study included public sector senior leaders in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

The participants chosen for this study were office heads, deputy office heads, and department heads. All the participants had a minimum of 5 years of experience in a leadership position, ensuring a common understanding of the phenomenon. According to Moustakas (1994), considering the participants demographic factors such as age, gender, and experience (see Appendix C) helps to get the appropriate participants. I conversed for about 5 minutes with the participants who responded to the invitation email (see Appendix A) to reiterate the purpose of the study, clarify informed consent, and discuss the interview process. I scheduled Zoom interviews at convenient times selected by participants.

Participation

In qualitative studies, participation is defined as a conversation in which the researcher poses questions, and the participants provide answers face to face, by telephone, or via internet or email (Moser et al., 2017). For this study, I conducted interviews using recordable zoom conference. After selecting potential participants using a purposeful sampling method, I telephoned to discuss the process steps. I prepared the informed consent document for the participants to read and sign and scheduled interviews. The possible types and sources of information in this study were answers to questions in Zoom interviews of 15 senior leaders of the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development of Tigray region. All the participants were informed of their rights

including to withdraw from the study at any time without penalties or consequences and data collection did not begin until after each participant signed an informed consent form.

Data Collection Techniques

As a principal investigator, I conducted the data collection for this research study. The data were from semistructured interviews to obtain thick, rich data from participants' responses (Moser et al., 2018). Having a well-defined and developed data collection strategy is a crucial step in qualitative research. Paton (2015) asserted that the planned data collection process helps with obtaining appropriate information and addressing the research questions.

In qualitative studies, the data collection processes determine the findings. Therefore, it is essential to specify the proper methods used to gather and record data and justify why these methods are the most suitable (Moser et al., 2018). Patton (2015) noted that interviewing is the primary underlying data collection approach in qualitative phenomenological research. Phone calls and emails were served as a means of communication to schedule interviews and discuss the necessary eligibility, informed consent, and data collection information. Zoom conferencing was the means of conducting the interviews.

Before the interview, I prepared the proper tools, such as a recording device and a charged computer. I scheduled appointments with participants ahead of the actual interview date to discuss availability to avoid conflicts or cancellations of the formal interviews. The data were from 15 purposefully sampled leaders which was enough to reach data saturation. Data saturation is used to determine the sufficiency of sample size

for the information obtained in qualitative studies (Patton, 2015). Data saturation occurs when the data provides maximum details on the phenomenon (Korstjens et al., 2018).

A zoom video conferencing is a cost-effective and relatively easy way to collect qualitative data, with security options (Archibald et al., 2019). Zoom conferencing enabled the ability to pick up on nonverbal, sensory, and emotional signs, such as facial expressions and voice inflections (Archibald et al., 2019). I used a Zoom video conference platform for the interview, during which times, the cues conveyed a set of concepts and ideas to understand participants' experiences.

Interviews occurred within 2 weeks following initial contacts. Before the interviews, I sent the participants the consent forms, and I received them back via email. The participants agreed to the consent form permitting the sessions to be recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Data collection expectations were that each interview would take 30 to 45 minutes. I prepared an interview protocol that included open-ended interview questions (see Appendix C) to collect data from the participants in semistructured interviews. In qualitative phenomenological research, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to elicit the same information from each participant (Belotto, 2018). They also provided the flexibility to probe deeply into the detailed descriptions of experiences that participants shared.

After completing each interview, I uploaded the audio file of the recorded interview to the Speechmatics transcription software for transcription. The notes obtained during the interview with four participants who were not willing to be recorded were manually transcribed. Each transcription took between 2 and 6 hours to complete. Within

5 days after transcribing data, each participant was emailed a copy of the transcript for validation to ensure the accuracy of their ideas and ensure I had accurately captured each participant's responses. The participants reviewed the summary of the analyzed data aligning to the member checking process. Member checking is a validation process that achieves dependability and reliability (Yin, 2014). All the participants did the transcript validation. However, eight participants were willing to do the member check to verify the accuracy of the conclusions drawn within five days after summarizing the data analysis. Seven participants, however, chose not to perform members checks after viewing and approving their transcripts. The participants' approval of the transcribed interview guaranteed the information to be used in the data analysis and reached 15 participants.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis process is a way to discover patterns, themes, and meaningful categories and uncover a better understanding of a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). In this transcendental phenomenological study, I illuminated the phenomenon via reporting what the participants described and experienced. To identify and report on the meaning of participants' lived experiences, I applied the modified Van Kaam's method of data analysis process. To analyze a phenomenological data the researcher, must follow the horizontalization, phenomenological reduction, thematizing, validation, textural description, and structural description (Moustakas, 1994). Starting the initial phase of the data analysis process, I followed the epoche protocol to view the participants' descriptions of their experiences while consciously setting aside my predispositions.

As part of the analytical process a researcher must prepare and organize transcripts, field notes, and other memos (Saldaña, 2016) for analysis. Most importantly, I organized every single word from the recorded zoom interview in the verbatim transcript, which aligned with the transcendental phenomenological approach to this study as an initial step for the data analysis process. The notes taken from 4 participants during the interview process and the zoom interview audio tape of 11 participants was transcribed by basic pen and paper and Speechmatics transcription software respectively.

The horizontalization was the first stage applied from the modified Van Kaam data analysis approach. This necessitated a thorough reading to compile a list of all participants' statements regarding their lived experiences with equivalent value for each information (Moustakas, 1994). Merriam et al. (2016) asserted that the horizontalization process helps researchers identify and highlight similar words and phrases representing a meaning segment. In this step, I clustered the pieces into themes and synthesized the themes into descriptions of the text to form a fuller sense. The second step is to identify invariant elements and determine the participants' understanding of the phenomenon using a reduction and elimination process. In this step, I reevaluated each of the coded components according to their relevance to the phenomenon under study. Gray (2009) asserted that the phenomenological reduction process helps identify and eliminate information that does not reflect the participants' lived experiences.

According to Moustakas's (1994) modified Van Kaam method, the third step in the data analysis process is clustering and thematizing. In this step, I grouped and clustered similar elements into thematic labels that display the participants' experiences. I

clustered initial meaning pieces and themes to build meaningful expressions from interview transcriptions. The fourth step was the validation process, which required a reevaluation of the central themes to ensure the constructed themes' validity. The central themes emerge from the previous step and reflect the study participants' shared experiences and perceptions (Grumstrup & Demchak, 2019). In the fifth step, I built an individual textural description of each interview transcription experience using the validated themes. The sixth step in this study was developing structural descriptions of each participant's lived experience. That step depended on the constructed textural description (Moustakas, 1994).

Finally, I created a textural-structural description of the participants' lived experiences to convey invariant elements and themes. Using the imaginative variation, I clustered the themes into textural and structural descriptions to construct a composite structural description and universal structural descriptions of the meanings that reflected the public sector senior leaders' lived experiences. The final analysis led to a report that included the interpretation of results, limitations, and generalizations of the study. In summation, the use of the modified Van Kaam data analysis method helped in magnifying the participants' lived experiences.

Software

Although NVivo 12 plus was not used to code data for this study, it was utilized to organize and manage data storage. The Speechmatics transcription software also used to transcribe the interviews. I manually hand-coded the information gathered from participants according to Moustakas' (1994) modified Van Kaam data analysis method.

For researchers who prefer visual and interactive techniques, NVivo might constrict and constrain work processes (Zamawe, 2015). In this research study, NVivo software was utilized for data storage and to identify the connections of categories and themes to create meanings. As a result, there was an audit trail for corrections and opportunities to use automated coding of data for this research investigation. NVivo 12 did not take over the analysis process from the researcher, whose responsibility it was to isolate meaning from patterns detected in the data. For example, I could link a paragraph from one source to another section in either the same or another source; however, the meaning from these findings was dependent on thoughtful analytical conclusions.

Coding

In qualitative research, coding is an essential aspect of data analysis. The coding procedure consisted of the researcher creating labels, themes, or tags to provide meaning to the data (Saldana, 2016) and described the data essence (Ravitch et al., 2016). For this research project, the data were hand coded, and identified participant quotes relevant to the research question. The coding process began after verbatim transcription, using the modified Van Kaam approach, go over each participant's interview transcript (Moustakas, 1994). In a qualitative data analysis process, the coding process supports generating themes and assigns meanings to participants' lived experiences (Saldaña, 2016; Ravitch et al., 2016). I kept a code out with descriptions during the development process that supports the data organization and trustworthiness (Saldana, 2016).

Discrepant Cases

Addressing discrepant cases refers to the deliberate strategy of searching for substitute information that may contest the anticipated research findings (Merriam et al., 2016). Although researchers may have to state the basis for the conclusions in looking at incompatible cases, there are no specific procedures for doing so (Patton, 2015). The approach for treating discrepant issues in this study involved the sense of skepticism incredulity considering the assumptions, responses, and interpretations for contending descriptions (Ravitch et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). The unsupported discrepant cases are discussed and analyzed for conclusion in the summary of findings, contributing to the research's general findings and trustworthiness (Patton, 2015).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness stems from the paradigmatic foundations of an investigation (Williams et al., 2007). Establishing trustworthiness dispels doubts and instills confidence in the carefulness of the research procedures and processes (Patton, 2015). By applying credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability to the research process, it is possible to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Addressing the issue of trustworthiness helps narrow the gap between the nature of facts and the link between the researcher and the object of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Accordingly, I focused on avoiding personal biases and creating trustworthiness in all stages of the study.

Credibility

Credibility informs the truth value of information gathered from the participants' lived experiences and original interpretations, enhancing the integrity of the study's findings (Guba et al., 1989). To ensure credibility, researchers must have self-awareness about the research design and instruments to be used (Ravitch et al., 2016). Thus, I collected information using Zoom interviews from 15 participants, to obtain multidimensional perspectives. Scholars agree that the credibility of a study should be achieved using different strategies, including engagement to reduce research bias, peer-debriefing, and participant validation (Noble et al., 2015).

I presented the analysis to the interviewees to obtain feedback about my interpretation and discuss their lived experience consistent with the member check. The initial data interpretation was available to each participant to check the accuracy of the interviews' transcripts 5 days after the data collection process is completed. Additionally, I used feedbacks and comments from my research committee members as part of a peer-debrief processes. The changes obtained from the expert review on the research instruments and interview questions enhanced the credibility of the study's findings.

Transferability

The study's transferability represents the applicability of the results to other contexts and the extent to which findings can transfer to different settings (Guba, 1989). I provided a complete description of the data and context so readers can compare to other meanings based on as much information as possible, and transfer aspects of the study findings by considering different contextual factors (Ravitch et al., 2016). Researchers

support the transferability process by providing transparent data collection, data analysis, and an outline of how they identified and chose their participants (Moon et al., 2016).

Transferability relies on the reader's assessment that the results of the study are transferable to another context (Graneheim & Lundman 2004). Appropriate judgements about transferability depend on sufficient information from the scholar (Lincoln et al., 1985). I provide a detailed description of the process, context, selection, characteristics of participants, and data analysis process to ensure the findings' transferability to other contexts. Additionally, I conducted detailed interviews of senior public sector leaders that reflected their lived experiences. Using a purposeful sample of participants from the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development ensured that the specificity of information was representative of that population.

Dependability

Dependability is a process to evaluate the research accuracy through examining whether the data support the study findings, conclusions, and interpretation (Amankwaa, 2016) and show the stability of the results over time (Moon et al., 2018). An audit trail is an essential strategy to ensure qualitative research dependability (Hesham, 2017). The detailed record and description of the justified research design, methods, and procedures assured the dependability of this study. These recordings were incorporated through a reflexive examination of the research design and data collection phases. I included the step-by-step process, defining the study's purpose, discussing the data collection and analysis process, and detailing an interpretation of the study findings.

Ravitch et al. (2016) asserted that the sequencing of research methods and designs used in the research and creating a well-articulated rationale for the choices result in enhanced study dependability. This notion means that creating a solid research design increases the alignment of the research components, enhancing the ability to obtain data to answer the research questions. Dependability also encompasses accepting changes in the field and documenting related explanations and reasons (Cope, 2014). The feedback from expert review increased the clarity of the data collection instrument and enhanced this study's dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity or potential for the similarity of the study's data accuracy and relevance, as given by different people (Elo et al., 2014). Research confirmability is achievable when the researcher demonstrates the data representing the participants' lived experience is cleared of researcher bias (Cope, 2014; Hesham, 2017). I was engaged in a reflective and thoughtful writing of the questions that aligned with the research purpose, research problem, conceptual framework, and preempted ethical issues and concerns. Additionally, I kept reflexive notes to discuss biases in the research process by recording all personal feelings, thoughts, and prior knowledge after each interview, consistent with the reflexive journal.

Confirmability pertains mainly to the participants' responses (Lincoln et al., 1985). To ensure confirmability, I used the actual response of the participants in the data analysis process that reduced biases in the research process. An audit trail included interview audiotapes, transcripts, and relevant documents, including all raw data, pilot

forms, preliminary schedules, procedures, designs, strategies, and data reconstruction and synthesis products. As the focus of this study was to identify and report on senior leaders' lived experiences, the removal of researcher bias, as recommended by Moustakas (1994), applied using the epoche concept to put aside prejudices regarding the phenomenon.

Ethical Procedures

Sanjari et al. (2014) asserted that voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, deception avoidance, and transparency are important ethical considerations in research. Complete research is a moral and ethical endeavor; it should ensure that the study participants are free from harm during their involvement (Kerkale et al., 2006). Until obtaining IRB approval, I was not soliciting participants nor collecting data. I used a protocol of informed consent developed by Walden University to ensure participants' protections and obtained approval from the IRB before moving on to the data collection process. The invitation and consent forms were approved by the IRB with approval number 02-19-21-0669393.

Researchers face ethical challenges at all stages of a study, from designing to reporting, that depend on the nature of the study, participants' behavior and sensitivity, and the quality of data to be collected and reported (Eysenbach & Till, 2001). Some important ethical concerns that should be considered while carrying out qualitative research are anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent (Sanjari et al., 2014). To minimize and illuminate the issues, I gave due attention to participants' rights and responsibilities, confidentiality, the research methodology, and the limits of the researcher's interactions with participants (Denzin et al., 2017).

In addressing the ethical concerns related to recruitment and data collection, I adhered to the principles of respect and fulfillment of commitments, as described by Kerkale et al. (2006). I started participant recruitment after obtaining permission from the IRB to proceed to data collection. With full disclosure and transparency about the study's goals, I ensured the participants were participating voluntarily. By and large, researchers must be aware of the impact their questioning can have on participants and develop a reflexive approach to minimize the risk of harmful effects (Clarke, 2006).

All data for this study was preserved on password-protected devices, including Zoom interviews and audiotapes. Other written documents will be stored in a secure cabinet. The information will be kept until it is permanently removed. Before being appropriately disposed of, data will be retained for 5 years. Any paper documents will be shredded, and electronic files will be wiped using a Microsoft surface data eraser software after 5 years' timeframe.

Informed Consent

The level of attention to ethical conduct broadened in response to society's expectations of greater accountability (Ravitch et al., 2016). Obtaining informed consent from participants ensures accountability and their willing involvement with the study (Williams & Pigeot, 2016). I used the informed consent document confirmed by Walden University before the actual interviews to inform participants about their rights, the purpose of the study, the procedures, and the potential risks and benefits. Participation was voluntary and the participants had the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalties.

The ethical issues of informed consent, risk or harm, confidentiality, and conflict of interest must be parts of a plan of how to manage these ethical issues (Babbie, 2017). I sent the informed consent document to the participants to inform them of the procedures, and they sent the completed forms back via email. By doing this, the participants provided signed consent to taking part in this study. Informed consent of volunteers also ensures they understand their rights of withdrawal at any time (Williams et al., 2016).

Confidentiality

In qualitative studies, confidentiality cannot occur when the traits of individuals or groups make them identifiable in research reports (Babbie, 2017). As part of the ethical consideration, confidentiality should be addressed at the time of data collection and the data cleaning process (Merriam et al., 2016). To ensure anonymity and to facilitate data processing, I assigned each participant a unique identifying code (PINS). The identification PINS involved a combination of demographic letters like M for male and F for female, and interview numbers like 1 for the first interview, role, and age of the participant. For instance, the first interview of a male participant as an office head aged 52 was “P1MBH52”, a second interview with a female deputy bureau head and 32 years of age was “P2FDBH32” and so on. Protecting confidentiality is an essential step to safeguard the participants in this study from potential harm (Patton, 2015). Data analysis unfolded using only the participants’ identification codes.

Patton (2015) posited that, during the research process, the researcher must have respect for the participants who are willing to share their time. I openly discussed any concern by the participants about the research process and respected the participants’

knowledge, expression of ideas, and experiences they shared. Data from Zoom interview are in the electronic data files in a password-protected computer and other forms of hard drive, and the data will be stored for 5 years as required by the university. Any paper documents will be shredded, and electronic files will be wiped using a Microsoft surface data eraser software after 5 years' timeframe.

Summary

In this study, I identified and reported senior leaders' lived experience in the office of Housing and Urban Development in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia. The implementation of a qualitative approach was appropriate because it allowed me to generate an understanding of the meaning of experiences, which according to Patton (2015) in the purpose of a phenomenological approach. A purposive sample size of 15 participants, each with at least 5 years of experience, completed interviews. The interview format was Zoom conferencing. Transcription of interview audio tapes led to hand coding and construction of themes supported by NVivo 12 analysis software.

The epoche process, phenomenological reduction, textural and structural descriptions, and essence synthesis were all considered part of the data analysis plans. The audiotapes of the interviews were transcribed and manually coded to generate themes. I made precautions to ensure trustworthiness and research quality by ensuring that the research was credible, transferrable, dependable, confirmable, and ethical. I recognized my role in the research process and the importance ethical guidelines. Chapter four will include a detailed report of the findings from the analysis conducted on the data collected for this study.

Chapter 4: Study Results

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to identify and report the lived experiences of senior public sector leaders regarding the implementation of anticorruption strategies in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia. The research revealed the difficulties that leaders encounter while implementing corruption mitigation strategy in the organization. Exploring these corruption mitigation strategies improves understanding of which risks dominate the sector, how risks are linked across the sector, and which actors are involved in implementing policy and strategy (Transparency International, 2018). Successful implementation cannot be achieved simply by the availability of international and national regulations. Aghion et al. (2016) asserted that effective strategy implementation requires a transformation of leadership behavior and values through continuous actions.

The research question for this study was the following: What are the lived experiences of senior public sector leaders regarding the implementation of anticorruption strategies in the Tigray region of Ethiopia? The goal in answering the research question was to understand and illuminate the meaning of participants' experiences, rather than to indicate the relationship between variables. A well-articulated research question is critical to deciding the specific research methods a researcher will use (Kalu et al., 2017). This study's research question aligned with the purpose and the methodological approach adopted for the research. In this chapter, I describe the process and outcomes of field testing, the research setting, demographics, data collection

processes, and data analysis procedures. Following these points are discussions of issues of trustworthiness, the study's results, and a summary of the findings.

Expert Review

As part of the research component, I conducted an expert review and received supportive feedback from experts about the interview questions. The panel included instructors with research experience in leadership and related fields and in developing emerging contexts. Their feedback helped to simplify the language to make the questions more precise and understandable and led to additional development of supporting questions. I grouped the interview questions (see Appendix A) into leadership, organizational structure, and stakeholder aspects aligned to the research framework and purpose, eliminating vague ideas and obtaining detailed information.

Research Setting

Participants who agreed to participate in this study were senior leaders working in the Tigray region's Bureau of Housing and Urban Development of Ethiopia. The research setting of public sectors in Ethiopia was significant in providing knowledge about anticorruption strategy implementation, and the results may reflect similar issues in other organizations. I conducted the initial participant recruitment process using publicly available contact information and my social network access. Interviewees had diverse work positions: office heads, department heads, core process owners, operation managers, and public relation officers.

Inclusion criteria to recruit participants were (a) employment position, (b) experience and knowledge relevant to anticorruption strategy implementation, (c) at least

5 years of experience in a leadership position, and (d) willingness to participate in an interview. These senior leaders' understandings are relevant to mitigation of the negative consequences of corruption, which is catastrophic to many organizations. Prior to the interviews, I explained the purpose of the research to participants and reassured them about confidentiality. I interviewed all 15 purposefully selected participants using the same semistructured interview format with open-ended questions. The interview protocol was a guide for the discussion with every participant.

Within 5 days after transcribing data, each participant was emailed a copy of the transcript for validation to ensure the accuracy of their data. Participants were asked to respond within 24 hours if they had any edits; all participants were satisfied with their transcript. Eight participants willing to participate in the member-checking process reviewed the summary of the analyzed data. They were confident with my brief and did not have anything to add. Seven participants chose not to participate in the member-checking process; however, confirmation on the transcribed interviews led to the inclusion of 15 participants' transcripts for data analysis.

Ethiopia's current political unrest created challenges during the data collection process. There was a change in interview dates suggested by participants because of internet access lockouts. However, there was no influence in responding to the interview questions, and data collection occurred as planned. Participants engaged openly during the interview sessions; however, two respondents had to change their schedules because of personal problems.

Demographics

Participants for this study were selected using purposeful sampling via email and other social networks. All 15 participants met the criteria to participate in the Zoom interview. Participants were asked five demographic questions that provided additional insight into their lived experiences pertaining to the implementation of anticorruption strategies. The reason for reporting baseline demographic characteristics is for assessment of external validity of trial results (Furler et al., 2012). Relevant demographic factors included for data extraction were (a) age, (b) language use, (c) employment status, (d) years of experience, and (e) educational attainment.

Research participants were senior leaders from the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Each participant had worked in the sector for at least 5 years. Of the 15 participants, nine (60%) were men and six (40%) were women. I did not use gender criteria to select participants. The work experience range for participants as organizational leaders was between 5 and 14 years. Their hierarchical positions included bureau head, deputy office head, department leader, core process owner, operation manager, and public relation head. The participants' ages ranged from 31 to 52 years. In terms of educational background, seven of the 15 participants (46.7%) had a bachelor's degree, five (33%) had a master's degree, and three (20%) had a doctoral degree. These demographic elements were critical components for the study's conceptual framework and trustworthiness of the findings. Table 1 shows the demographic information of participants in this study.

Table 1*Demographics of Participants*

Participant	Age	Sex	Employment status	Years of experience	Education
Participant 1	52	Male	Bureau head	10	PhD
Participant 2	32	Female	Deputy bureau head	14	Master's
Participant 3	35	Female	Department head	9	Master's
Participant 4	40	Female	Core process owner	7	Master's
Participant 5	42	Male	Department head	10	Bachelor's
Participant 6	36	Male	Operation manager	7	PhD
Participant 7	44	Male	Core process owner	6	Bachelor's
Participant 8	37	Female	Department head	5	Bachelor's
Participant 9	46	Male	Core process owner	7	PhD
Participant 10	38	Male	Department head	11	Bachelor's
Participant 11	31	Male	Department head	6	Bachelor's
Participant 12	34	Male	Core process owner	9	Master's
Participant 13	46	Female	Department head	8	Bachelor's
Participant 14	35	Female	Public relation head	12	Master's
Participant 15	45	Male	Department head	14	Bachelor's

Data Collection

The primary data were collected from semistructured interviews with 15 purposefully selected participants. I identified potential research participants by contacting 23 leaders via emails, phone calls, and social networks to yield 15 willing interviewees. I collected information from each participant to ensure they met the criteria. Four potential participants contacted declined to join because of personal and

organizational issues. Four leaders did not return initial telephone calls and email invitations until after data collection had begun.

The interview protocol contained eight open-ended questions, related probing questions, and opening and closing notes. The semistructured interview questions ensured participants were asked the same questions and led to data saturation. Initially, I interviewed 12 participants and realized some similarities in the responses. However, I conducted three additional interviews, bringing the total number of participants to 15, to confirm data saturation and to ensure there were no new answers for further themes.

Throughout the data collection process, I engaged in the *epoche* procedure according to Moustakas (1994). I discharged the predetermined ideas and concepts I had of corruption-related issues in the public sector. Considering the *epoche*, I presented the phenomena with a clear mind to new experiences and meanings (Moustakas, 1994). I also introduced myself to each participant by stating that I was a leader in another public sector.

After receiving IRB approval, I conducted data collection between March 3, 2021, and March 14, 2021. I used the Zoom online videoconferencing platform and the interview protocol as a means and an instrument for data collection. Zoom interviews were with participants in Tigray, Ethiopia. Participants chose the interview date that was convenient for them. Potential participants received the consent form via email, and I arranged interview dates, times, and methods to fit the participants' choices. Accordingly, I interviewed the selected participants in 11 days, with each interview lasting from 35 to 45 minutes.

During the interviews, I encouraged the participants to explain their experiences as clearly as possible and asked further questions for clarity. The interviews were recorded on a password-protected recording device. Five participants refused to be recorded, but I took notes of their responses during their interviews. The recording process enabled me to pay attention to the participants' insights and take important notes to ensure the information's depth and to avoid redundancy. Additionally, it simplified the verbatim transcription of participants' reflections for practical data analysis. The debates surrounding the regional political issues have created tensions across the country. There was a change in interview dates suggested by participants because of internet access lockouts. However, there was no influence in responding to the interview questions, and data collection occurred as planned.

Data Analysis

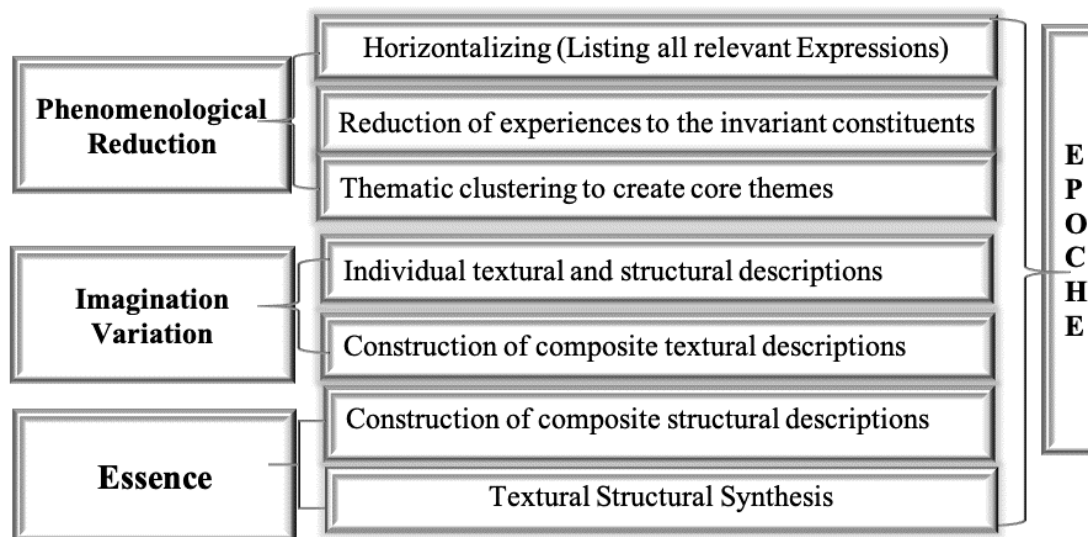
I analyzed data for this transcendental phenomenological study using the modified van Kaam approach, popularized by Moustakas (1994). After all interviews were complete, the participants verified their transcriptions. The data collected from the interviews were transcribed, hand coded, and transferred into Microsoft Word to obtain verbatim data. Verbatim transcription represents the exact words of the participants interviewed and a greater unit of text (Moustakas, 1994). I used the verbatim transcripts to document participants' responses and to reach the essence of their lived experiences. Helena (2002) asserted that, in a phenomenological study, a researcher needs to collect descriptions while preserving the spontaneity of the experiences. Furthermore, I captured

the participants' lived practices pertaining to the implementation of anticorruption strategies as a legitimate source of data.

The steps for data analysis involved Moustakas's (1994) modified van Kaam method (see Figure 1), including horizontalization, phenomenological reduction, thematizing, individual textural and structural description, composite textural and structural description, and textural structural synthesis. Considering the epoche process in all these steps, I collected and analyzed the data and described the meanings of the lived experiences. Patton (2015) stated that a phenomenological study aims to identify and report lived experiences from the participants' perspectives using reflective questioning.

Figure 1

Data Analysis Procedures



I began the analysis with the epoche process to set aside any potential bias. Moustakas (1994) recommended that researchers record their personal experiences with a phenomenon to limit those experiences' influence. Accordingly, I set aside my opinion

from my professional knowledge and eliminated the ideas and views I had during the entire research process. I reflected on what I knew and put those ideas aside before I began the analysis to develop meaning from the participants' perspectives. As Moustakas (1994) noted, the epoche process allows researchers to describe their prior knowledge and understanding through bracketing their personal experiences.

After the epoche process, I followed the horizontalization process. I reviewed each transcript and listened to the videos frequently to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. In this stage, I started coding by bracketing the process and focusing on the research question and the participants' responses. I began analyzing each transcript during horizontalization to categorize and ready the data for the phenomenological reduction phase. According to Moustakas (1994), horizontalization refers to the process of reading the interview transcripts repeatedly to identify significant statements and group those statements into themes. I assessed every sentence equally and removed repetitive words to arrive at meaningful themes.

I used the NVivo 12 Plus software and Microsoft Word to facilitate the data analysis process. I completed hand coding (literal coding), as described by Saldaña (2016), to code the data manually because this method is well suited for verbatim interview transcripts, and I ensured the participants' actual spoken words. Some of the codes included check and balance (P15MDH45: "We have to strengthen the check and balance system, because sometimes I observe a misunderstanding on the demarcations of the officials and external performance evaluators"); responsibility (P10MDH38: "I believe as a leader; we are afforded the same opportunities to be responsible to our

actions.”); and organizational structure (P1MBH52: “I guess our structure is the decentralized type because decisions are made in different departments and units. But some decisions are highly centralized.”). In the reduction phase, I focused on clustering the horizons into themes and organizing the themes into a textural description. (Moustakas, 1994).

I focused on the splitting method to analyze participants’ responses line by line to obtain a detailed description. Using the splitting method, I refined the data into smaller codable pieces based on participants’ responses and, aside from any preconceived ideas (Moustakas, 1994), generated meaningful themes and more nuanced analysis (Saldana, 2016). This approach aligned with the phenomenological reduction process detailed by Moustakas (1994), categorizing all participants’ statements to arrive at textural meanings. I reviewed the texts for overlapping or repetitive words and for words and phrases with similar, dissimilar, and relevant meanings.

Participants’ expressions that could not be developed into meaningful statements to arrive at the essence of anticorruption strategy implementation were eliminated which aligns with the phenomenological reduction. In addition, I eliminated expressions that could not be categorized in terms of corruption mitigation strategy implementation. Expressions unrelated to the phenomenon included participants’ statements such as the following: “Sometimes we enjoy together to skip away from work stress, just to feel free and live life,” and “We support individuals who need basic needs for their survival as part of social service.”

Completing phenomenological reduction led to the individual textural descriptions from each participant's responses. I used participants' quotes to describe anticorruption strategy implementation. Textural descriptions provide the "what" of the experience in a transcendental phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). I used textural descriptions to present participants' lived experiences. I formed invariant themes from participants' quotes including transparency, accountability, responsibly, strategic planning, organizational structure and leadership style.

The final step was to combine meanings by integrating the textural and structural descriptions and developing full statements of essence (Moustakas, 1994). Accordingly, I combined every structure to form a composite structural description and to build the essence of the issue under study. I identified some discrepant issues from the participants' responses. For example, Participant P3FDH35 believed their organization followed a strategic leadership approach and supported the implementation of anticorruption strategies. Participant P1MBH52 argued the organization failed to implement corruption mitigation strategies because of an absence of clear organizational structure that warrants attention. These were valuable cases, described further in the analysis section below.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Ravitch et al. (2016) asserted that establishing trustworthiness is about dispelling doubts and building confidence in the research process. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are the most used criteria for assuring the finding's trustworthiness (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The data collected in a qualitative study must help clarify participants' thoughts and feelings to interpret their experiences of the

phenomenon in each context (Patton, 2015). In this qualitative study, analysis of the data provided by the participants revealed the lived experiences of public sector senior leaders with the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the researcher's ability to consider all the complexities present during the research process and actions taken to reflect the data's actual value and interpretation of findings (Ravitch et al., 2016). To enhance credibility, I described my experiences as a researcher and verified the research findings. I used semistructured interviews to gather data and the peer debriefing and member-checking strategies contributed to the data validation process. The interview transcripts were sent to all participants for review and validation. Feedbacks from dissertation committee members also supported the research process and strengthened the credibility of the research instruments. The interviews occurred with open, and honest dialogue using the same interview protocol for each research participant. The feedback obtained from the expert review on the research instrument enhanced the credibility of the study's findings.

Transferability

Transferability refers to how qualitative studies can be relevant or transferable and how others can apply this study's findings to other specific context-specific settings (Ravitch et al., 2016). To facilitate transferability, I included detailed descriptions of the data collection process and analysis and a thick description of contexts. The in-depth report of the findings allows other researchers to replicate the study, thus achieving transferability (Patton, 2015). The thick descriptions of the research objective, clear

information of the research setting, participants, data collection, and analysis procedures also facilitate the transferability. These descriptions enable other researchers and practitioners to compare and consider contextual factors.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the constancy of the data over similar conditions. To ensure the dependability strategies, I provided detailed explanations of the study's research design, methods, and procedures. Ravitch et al. (2016) asserted that if the research process and descriptions of the study findings replicated with similar participants in similar conditions, the research study is dependable. The participant identification and recruitment process unfolded in a planned and transparent way, consistent with the principle of dependability. For further checkups and audit trails, I documented the research process and reflexive thoughts.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the study findings can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In support of this element of trustworthiness I described the data and interpretations of the findings, demonstrating that they are not figments of the inquirer's imagination. As part of this study's confirmability strategy, rich quotes from the participants depict each emerging theme provided. The transcripts and in-depth methodological descriptions also support the audit trails. Additionally, I kept a reflective journal to record thoughts, observations, and consistent quotes shared by participants of their lived experiences about the

Table 2*Theme 1: Implementation of Corruption Mitigation Frameworks*

Categories		Number of participants
Transparency	Report, audit institutions, media, communication, public access to information, strategy, internal and external controls, performance measurement.	14
Accountability	Legal framework, standards, policies, performance audit, appointment and dismissal, check and balance, evaluation and assessment, political involvement.	13
Responsibility	Mission, mandate, compliance management, leadership skills and competencies, efficiency, effectiveness, code of conduct.	12

Implementation of Corruption Mitigation Frameworks

As presented in Table 2, all participants' responses about their experiences regarding anticorruption strategy implementation showed efforts toward maintaining organizational objectives through transparent, accountable, and responsible methods. They explained that proper implementation of the three elements have a positive impact in the implementation of anticorruption strategies. Despite the restrictions to public access to information, the achievement of the public trust is more important.

Transparency

Fourteen of the 15 participants (93% of the sample) mentioned about factors that affect the implementation of anticorruption frameworks, including about reports, audit

institutions, media, communication, public access to information, strategy, internal and external controls, and performance measurements.

Participant P1MBH52 noted that, “The report system in our organization sometimes lacks clarity, to review and provide input to our financial management, performance measurement, and reporting processes, ensuring that it affects the trust level of the organization and the framework of anticorruption strategy.”

Participant P2FDBH32 said, “The follow-up over public visibility, outcomes, and impact through external feedback sported the organization’s image. We use audit committees made up of a majority of independent members. But there is a need to improve our Public access to information which is a basic pillar for openness.”

Participant P3FDH35 mentioned, “There is a reliable, clear, and relevant public reporting on our organization’s status, mandate, strategy, activities, financial management, operations, and performance. In addition, it includes the obligation of public reporting on audit findings and conclusions.”

Ten of the 15 participants (66.7% of the sample) talked about the restrictions of public access to information and the audit evidence which creates internal conflicts of interest between politically appointed leaders, organizations and the public. Participant P15MDH45 stated:

Truly speaking, in this organization, there are good experiences, but there are also a lot of compliance from society. Because of lack of clarity in the regulations, most of the stated principles are general. Our internal and external controls are a little bit lack precision. So, we need to develop more specific manuals and daily

guides. Sometimes our understanding of the concept of corruption and ways to mitigate the issue vary, meaning that we did not understand the level of corruption in our organization and the actions taken to minimize it. [I take this to] mean that we lack consistency in applying all the necessary actions.

Accountability

Thirteen of the 15 participants (86.7% of the sample) mentioned legal frameworks, standards, legislation and regulations, ethical rules, codes, policies, practices, performance audits, appointments, dismissals, checks and balances, evaluations, and assessment issues.

Participants P1MBH52 and P2FDBH32 mentioned there were: “Ethical rules, codes, policies, and practices aligned with the Federal Ethics and Anticorruption Commission code of ethics, but there are limitations to actively use in daily actions.”

Participant P3FDH35 stated:

We have legal frameworks and ethical codes, which helped identify the organization’s weak implementation areas and direct individuals, including officials [and] employees and the expected relationships between different bodies. However, it should require heightened inspection of transactions conducted by the leaders and politicians. Truly speaking, sometimes the regional anticorruption Commission provides assistance to integrate different stakeholders to address the risks of laundering the effects of corruption.

Participant P4FCPO40 said, “To ensure accountability in our organization, we need to follow transparent ways of appointment and dismissal procedures.”

Participant P5MDH42 explained that, “Our ethical requirements and obligations as an organization are not publicly known, which opens a hole to misinterpret strategies.”

Participant P8FDH37 pointed out that, “Some of the frameworks, strategies, and code of ethics are kind of crude [and] need simplifying and clarifying to improve efficiency and [the] issue of accountability.” Participant P9MCPO46 stated:

We don’t have any problem with the principles of accountability. The problem is aligning these principles with rule of law and effective regulation, like the anticorruption strategy. We try to practice in an accountable manner, but still, we need to improve its efficiency.

Participant P10MDH38 explained that the “Issues challenging us are such as personal ‘networking’ that makes actions taken by decision makers hidden. It could be sometimes unintentional, but we need more clearer actions to develop relationships.”

Participant P11MDH31 shared:

Things like a ‘family-based relationship’ at the organizational level hinder applicability of strategies for the planned objective, and we are conducting continuous evaluations to ensure that everybody is accountable for what he or she did, but it is challenging. For example, the ‘Appointment’ issue needs clarity with the principle, ‘The right person at the right place.’

Participant P12MDH34 stated, “Sometimes individuals who are low performers get rewards than punishment and they take themselves as a role model, but they are not.”

Participant P14FPR50 said, “We have a good strategy to solve problems, but I think we lack coordination top down and [vice] versa.” Participant P15MDH45 stated:

Everybody is accountable for what he or she did. I believe there is not such a complicated situation in our organization [but] I hear sometimes outside of my organization [that] there is no similar understanding about accountability, and it is expected. Additionally, we have to strengthen the check and balance system because sometimes I observe a misunderstanding on the demarcations of the officials and external performance evaluators. I think we need clear demarcation.

Participant P7MCPO44 said:

We do not have a problem with the concept of accountability, but we need active law enforcement for the credibility of our anticorruption efforts. Wrongdoers must be punished and there is a need to reduce corruption by increasing the risks related with corrupt practices.

Responsibility

Twelve of the 15 participants (80% of the sample) pointed out mission, mandate, compliance management, leadership skills and competencies, and efficiency and effectiveness issues in exploring the responsibility of different groups. Participant P4FCPO40 explained:

In our organization, there are different complaints about the service delivery. Some of the complaints indicate . . . corruption-related issues; however, our complaint management system is a little bit general instead of analyzing each complaint and put solution for problems. But now we are good to identify the sources and causes of the dissatisfaction and mitigate them with proper solutions.

Participant P5MDH42 said, “The organization’s responsibility and mandate are clearly stated, and everybody knows, but I believe our ‘leadership skill’ is compromised to implement strategies.” Participant P6MOPM36 stated:

In my opinion everybody is aware of his or her responsibility, but I observed a lack of moral responsibility in making rational decisions, which in turn justifies holding the culture of accountability for wrong actions. I believe that responsibility is a necessary feature of morality. Now a day, the leadership development program helps [us] build our competencies and identify problems, but it needs continuity.

Participant P7MCPO44 said:

We tried to reduce our organization’s inefficiency by basically, we’ve got the source of our problem in performing our responsibility satisfactorily. Now we need to introduce a new system to evaluate individuals based on their responsibility and resultant effects on the organization.

Participant P8FDH37 noted that, “I understand the mission of my organization, specifically my department, but you know that nobody can clap with one hand. There are good performances, and also significant limitations.” Participant P9MCPO46 mentioned that, “The responsibility of every individual needs to integrate towards the general mission of the organization.” Participant P10MDH38 explained:

I believe as a leader; we are afforded the same opportunities to be responsible to our actions. We do our best to develop our competencies, but.... in routine

activities, I understand that we have to be strategic in implementing the strategies including anticorruption strategies as our responsibility.

Participant P11MDH31 said, “As a leader for me, efficiency and effectiveness are the results of responsible individuals.” Participant P12MCPO34 mentioned that, “As my responsibility, I take part in identifying the problems in strategy implementation and deliver information for upper-level leaders, then taking measures based on the findings is . . . their responsibility.” Participant P13FDH46 stated:

Although we are not perfect, our department is a high achiever in relation to other departments, and we have received different rewards for those achievements. . . but I believe that all the work units in our organization are not in a similar status, you know the achievement is relative, some workers perform responsibly, and some.

Participant P14FPR50 said, “We have experience-sharing sessions once a week to bring individuals to [a] similar level of performance, and assess the degree of employees’ action towards responsibility. I think the organization becomes efficient and effective through step-by-step actions.” Participant P15MDH45 stated:

When someone being hired in an organization, he or she have a duty to perform and obligations to must perform. You know . . . during interviews to get job, individuals look like they are energetic, passion and responsible, but after being hired . . . it is another history. It is about morality, doing the right thing is not enough, rather making things right. Particularly when such complications

occurred, leadership including the politicians can play a vital role in changing attitudes.

Table 3

Theme 2 Underling Elements to Anticorruption Strategy Implementation

Categories		Number of participants
Organizational structure	Centralized, decentralized, hierarchical, departmentalization, unit based	14
Strategic planning	Mission, strategic goals, objectives, implementation plans, monitor and evaluation systems, participation	11
Leadership style	Transformational, transactional, strategic, democratic, participation, empowerment	8

Organizational Structure

Fourteen of the 15 participants (93% of the sample) acknowledged their organization followed a decentralized form of organizational structure, and that structure has a significant impact on the organization's performance. Participant P1MBH52 said:

I know there are different types of organizational structures. I guess our structure is the decentralized type because decisions are made in different departments and units. But some decisions are highly centralized, for example, decisions related to your study are more . . . centralized. Yeah, sure the organizational structure affects organizational performance. For example, in our organization, the boundary between departments in some tasks becomes difficult to penetrate. We try to solve problems by integrative systems to coordinate and communicate the departments and units depending on the problems, but it is not [an] easy task.

Participant P2FDBH32 shared:

Truly speaking, our organizational structure is decentralized, and there is clear departmentalization in practice because we want to ensure a focus on the customer's needs... We believe that the departmentalization approach is underutilized in our organization; departments that offer different kinds of services do not have full autonomy to make a decision in all activities.

Participant P3FDH35 stated:

I know we apply the decentralized system, but our organization chart does not reflect actual distinction between decision-making relationships, for example, recruiting, reward, information processing, and promotion, related things are something like . . . is highly determined by the above ones, you know what I mean.

Participant P4FCPO40 said:

I think our organizational structure is decentralized. Occasionally, we observe differences in the strategy and the system, [which] is why sometimes our organizational effectiveness has been compromised. . . . We prepare plans from the strategic plan with its own needs. We decide some by our own in the department. It minimizes the burden and waiting time for decisions. However, we have challenges in relating the plans with the anticorruption strategy.

Participant P5MDH42 explained:

Organizational structure is a very important tool in the functioning of an effective organization. ... For me, the organizational structure is a foundation for all the

actions to be performed by leaders and employees. It increased motivation of employees, and we have better communication with staff members. But I am not sure the effect of our organizational structure on implementing the anticorruption strategy.

Participant P6MOPM36 stated:

We said that our organizational structure is decentralized, but in practice, somebody can observe that [it is] a mix of centralized and decentralized. It is not clear, and it is confusing sometimes, and we talk about this in different meetings. .
.. The advantage I observed in our organizational structure is that it avoids duplication of resources in various departments; however, I am optimistic [that] there are significant actions to improve all over the performance of our organization.

Participant P7MCPO44 said:

In our organization, the decentralized structure helped empower low-level managers to make their own decisions that affect efficiency and performance standards...Our organizational structure lightens our workload and gives us space to focus on more strategic issues... Honestly speaking there is a conflict of interest. For example, leaders in different levels are [more] interested in routine tasks than strategic things to achieve organizational standards. Because of that we face difficulties to implement the anticorruption strategy.

Strategic Planning

Eleven of the 15 participants (73% of the sample) discussed creating a mission, identifying strategic issues, developing strategic goals creating action plans, and monitoring and evaluation systems necessary for strategic planning. Participant P1MBH52 stated:

We do have mission and vision, but there is a gap connecting with the values of the organization's responsibility. We have a strategic plan developed on a strategic objective focused on establishing our organizational direction, setting priorities, and identifying obstacles. The implementation of our strategic plan is not bad, but we need to improve our evaluation systems for better achievement.

Participant P2FDBH32 noted:

For me, strategic planning is a means of guiding achievements and measuring results... We give attention for creating a forum for understanding why our organization exists and the values that should influence the strategic planning, starting from preparation to the implementation phase. I can admit for you [that] our challenge is fostering communication and building teamwork among different stakeholders, including the board of directors, staff, and external constituencies. We prepare the principles that guide our organization's members as they follow the organization's purpose. . . . We have to integrate the strategic plan with different national and international policies and procedures.

Participant P3FDH35 said:

As a leader in this organization, I participated in the strategic planning process and provide input for the vision and environmental assessment aspects of the plan ... Sometimes the executives and political leaders set directions to the strategic plan, and sometimes they delegate that responsibility to someone else. Finally, they retreat in playing their role that he or she is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the plan. I think our strategic plan lacks flexibility to add important elements gained from the implementation.

Participant P4FCPO40 shared:

Of course, we have a strategic plan, and we follow steps to develop it. For example, we set directions, invite stakeholders, prioritize the core directions, and identify the role and responsibility of each actor. We establish a system for information exchange among staff, management, and key stakeholders.

Participant P5MDH42 explained:

To some extent, I'll say the strategic planning process gives [us] a chance to work together because at the implementation process it becomes easy to identify the weak and strong sides and improve as needed. In an organization like this, it's expected to have massive participation; this helps identify the core needs of our customers. ... Our organization gives multiple services to customers, so we have to satisfy those customers' needs through a sound decision-making process. If there is a visible strategy there could be better performance.

Participant P6MOPM36 said, “For me, including individuals and groups that might not be regarded as key stakeholders but who might contribute valuable perspectives helps develop good strategic plans and address the public demand.”

Participant P8FDH37 noted that, “They always cascaded the strategic plan to the entire organizational setting after completion of the planning process.”

Nine of the 15 participants (60% of the sample) acknowledged their planning process is participatory and is important for better achievement. Participant P9MCPO46 said, “Strategic planning is different from simply planning because as the name indicates, it is strategic, it is important, to compose all necessary elements and also [to create an] acceptable implementation plan and combine all resources, human and material.”

Leadership Style

Eight of the 15 participants (53% of the sample) acknowledged that the leadership style has an impact on strategy implementation, and their organization followed a transformational leadership style. Participant P2FDBH32 explained:

We follow a transformational leadership style and encompass [the] values and vision of our organization, and we encourage a participatory planning process. . . .

The planning process starts at the bottom of the organization and is compiled at a department level, then evaluated at the organizational level. The process includes significant individuals from other public and private sectors.

Participant P5MDH42 said:

We define our vision, planning, and communication action that has a positive, unifying effect on employees to set clear values and beliefs and to accomplish a

clear set of measurable goals. This implies that the vision of our organization comes first and drives other organizational elements, including the goals, objectives, programs, and positive outcomes.

Participant P6MOPM36 mentioned that, “Under the leadership style, we have procedures to plan and evaluate our process. I think we are good in planning through practicing the participatory approach and having an agreeable vision.” Participant P8FDH37 stated:

We have a system that can measure level of achievements in our organization. For example, we have customers’ complaint forms and department[s] that evaluate performance. When there is a complaint from customers, we see it from the angle of our organization’s values, mission, and vision.

Participant P9FCPO30 said:

The planning process in this organization is integrated across different departments and core process units, but sometimes the politicians interfere. I am positive that there are good things we work with the politicians and board members, but the expertise needs a space to perform their duties according to their responsibilities.

Participant P10MDH38 mentioned that, “We stimulate employees’ effort to be innovative and creative by reframing problems - creativity is encouraged. New ideas and inspired problem solutions are petitioned from employees and other stakeholders who support the process of addressing problems and finding solutions.” Participant P11MDH31 said, “We act as a coach or mentor and pay due attention to our employees’

needs for achievement and progress. So, when there is a difference in ideas, employees are not criticized because they differ from the leaders' ideas." Participant P12MCPO34 noted that, "We create awareness of the mission, vision, [and] mandate of the team and organization. We develop employees to higher levels of ability and potential and motivate them to look beyond their own interests toward the organizational benefits."

Transactional Leadership

Six of the 15 participants (40% of the sample) talked about the transactional leadership style. Participant P4FCPO40 said that, "we identify problems, considers alternative solutions, and then tells employees what they are to do." Participant P7MCPO44 explained:

As a leader, we identify the expectations of followers and [take] actions by establishing a close relationship between determination and reward. Significant power is given [in terms of how] to guide and evaluate the planning and vision setting. We determine the issue of participation from inside and outside the organization. After evaluating the performance, we reward employees.

Participant P13FDH46 said, "Of course we use a negotiating process with employees to motivate them. As a leader, we regulate the bargaining process and determine the benefits for positively estimated performance."

Democratic Leadership Style

Four of the 15 respondents (27% of the sample) said their organization's leadership style was democratic. They used different interpretations to explain the democratic leadership style. Participant P1MBH52 said:

Our organization leadership is more democratic because everything is processed in a participatory way. For example, we prepare an annual plan at the end of the year and invite employees and stakeholders from outside for additional input and to identify observed problems from the previous year.

Participant P14FPR50 stated:

We evaluate every department's plan against the strategic plan to assure interdependence between the plans, resources, and strategies... Our department leaders create a sense of identification with a shared vision, instilling pride and faith in followers. We empower and encourage employees to rethink their conventional practice and ideas and give individual opinions in the process.

Participant P15MDH45 shared:

We have evaluation and discussion sessions. Before I pressure others to accept my point of view, I make sure how they feel, so I can adapt my ideas to theirs... I oversee several employees but only attend when something especially interests me, which helps them practice decision-making and develop accountability. . . . When there is a need for information from others, I feel I have a right to ask, and when other leaders have a misunderstanding, I try to intervene and help.

Participant P7MCPO44 said:

As a leader, I give employees a chance to influence decisions from the beginning and develop responsibility and confidence. I present problems and relevant background information for employees, and then the members are asked for their ideas, especially in the planning process. However, due to differences in academic

background, and personal moral values, reaching a consensus in some issues is challenging. But generally speaking, we doing good.

Strategic Leadership

Two of the 15 respondents (13% of the sample) mentioned about the strategic leadership style and the applicability in their organization. Participant P3FDH35 said:

I would like to say that we follow a strategic leadership style because all our planning processes measure the vision, mission, and values of our organization. Directions flow from top to bottom and help [us] understand and use the strategic pillars for our planning process. We evaluate the performance of every department against the strategic plan; therefore, I stick with a strategic leadership.

Participant P4FCPO40 explained:

Ideally, I do have the understanding about the leadership styles... in our organization I observe a mix of different leadership styles, but the strategic leadership is more applicable. I think this situation in our organization contributed to the challenges related to anticorruption strategy implementation.

Table 4

Theme 3: Interdependence and Stakeholders' Engagement

Categories		Number of participants
Internal stakeholders' relationship and interdependence	Employees, board, politicians' departments, units, reports	15
External stakeholders' relationship and interdependence	Civil society, federal institutions, media, politicians, external auditors, reports	15

Interdependence and Stakeholder Engagement

All the participants understood their external and internal stakeholders and the nature, process, and level of engagement. Additionally, the participants mentioned all stakeholders had a positive impact on their organization's performance. Fourteen of the 15 participants (93% of the sample) said that without the active participation of stakeholders, it was impossible to achieve stated objectives. Participant P1MBH52 said:

We have internal and external stakeholders who are involved in our mission and affect the decision-making. They participate in the planning and implementation process in a meaningful way. For me, stakeholder engagement is viewed as a vital component of accountability. We consult stakeholders on strategic plans of departments and evaluate performances. We have a memorandum of understanding with all internal and external stakeholders.

Participant P2FDBH32 explained:

In this organization, we use the stakeholder engagement process as a sensing mechanism to get information about the expectations of society from our service. We take the political leaders and board members as political stakeholders, and usually they control, evaluate, and assess the anticorruption strategy implementation on a quarterly basis. The media, civil society, and the federal institutions also play an important role in supporting our mission.

Participant P3FDH35 claimed:

I don't have any disagreement with the stakeholders' involvement in our organization because their influence plays a pivotal role to evaluate our

performance strategically and in a structured approach. Sometimes I observe failures to document results and act on information gained from the stakeholders.

Participant P4FCPO40 said:

We have a successful stakeholder relationship, and it reduce[s] customers' criticism, thus contributing to building the image of our organization. I have a positive view about their contribution, specifically on the issue of the implementation of anticorruption mitigation strategies where external auditors evaluate our performance based on stated measurements every 6 months.

Participant P5MDH42 explained:

The stakeholders' engagement in our organization is divided into three categories: engage, communicate, and inform, which describes stakeholders with whom engagement is necessary and how to communicate with each other. We have a quarterly meeting about our performance department heads, employee representatives, and stakeholders. The meeting is led by board members, [and] sometimes we invite customers.

Participant P6MOPM36 said:

In most of our activities, we use our stakeholders' energy to execute the organization's aims. It is useful because our stakeholders deliver valuable information in most cases to make our decisions and improve our performance.

The information from our stakeholders supports building our strategic plan.

Participant P8FDH37 shared:

As a top leader in this organization, we prepare a strategy and its implementation approach together with our stakeholders, so they are very important to fulfill the society's

demand and [maximize] our values. But sometimes we face difficulties to identify proper stakeholders and their needs. Occasionally, we disagree with politicians on some issues. They have their own agenda. You know what I am saying. It is extremely difficult task.

Participant P9MCPO46 said, “As a service delivery sector, we try to have representative stakeholders’ gender, age, and religion and we have a system for feedback and following up issues raised during consultations, evaluations, and meetings.”

Participant P10MDH38 explained:

We dedicate time and resources in attempting to recognize common interests between our organization and stakeholders, which leads to a win-win outcome. Our stakeholders’ engagement process assists in reducing customers’ complaints in our service; there is no big gap between us and the stakeholders. Except sometimes we have irreconcilable issues with . . . politicians.

Participant P14FPR50 said,

Our primary principle in stakeholders’ engagement is building trust in all the planning and implementation stages. Like some other things we do, we majorly try to keep close relationship with our customers and stakeholders. We make sure that we interact with them appropriately. When you have a proper relationship with them, it can facilitate your actions and decision.

Participant P11MDH31 noted that, “Our stakeholders’ engagement process is clear and helps monitor and evaluate organizational performance. We use reports, social media, and brochures to reach our customers and notice significant developments.”

Participant P15MDH45 mentioned that, “We select stakeholders depending on our

mission and objective, and we get benefits, including enhanced reputation, strengthened capabilities, [and] improved relations.” Participant P12MCPO34 said that, “The continuous evaluation with board members and external auditors facilitate service delivery in our organization and develops a better ability to mitigate corruption risk...we have a two-way exchange of information, analysis, and reporting between the organization and stakeholders.” Participant P7MCPO44 said “Our reporting system needs improvement and transparency.” Participant P13MDH40, said:

Successful corruption mitigation strategies seek to reduce an official’s monopoly power by administrative reforms and enhance accountability. Such methods comprise a system of checks and balances designed to manage conflicts of interest in our sector and limit situations that negatively impact the common good. In such activities, the media is inevitable to strengthen performances failures.

Table 5

Theme 4: Barriers in Implementing Anticorruption Strategy

Categories		Number of participants
Contexts	Commitment, awareness, skilled manpower, ICT implementation	13
Strategic barriers	Policies, strategies, power misuse, politicians, interest, auditors	9
Organizational barriers	Capacity building, unclear organizational structure, cooperation, stakeholders	7

Barriers

All of the Participants identified challenges that affect the implementation of anticorruption strategies, including strategic challenges, organizational environment, contextual factors, and reputation problems. The contextual factors mainly encompass some of the challenge participants experienced while implementing their organizations' anticorruption strategies.

Context. Thirteen of the 15 participants (86.6% of the participants) talked about different contextual factors that affected the organizations' performance, including lack of awareness, lack of commitment, lack of skilled person-power, and underdeveloped information communication technology implementation.

Participant P1MBH52 said:

For me, the implementation of a corruption mitigation strategy cannot be a single effort by our organization. To have a real impact on corporations, everybody must be committed and work together. What I observed in some instances is that we pressure each other to obligations and commitments and then retreat from accountability. So, commitment is very, very important to achieve those goals.

Participant P3FDH35 mentioned that, "We need a focused and targeted multistakeholder initiative to improve the level of commitment. The other thing is that inadequate salaries motivate everybody to seek supplementary income through unethical activities, and [they may] develop a carelessness." Participant P4FCPO40 said:

When we work in isolation, without wider public support, it is obvious that we become vulnerable to poor performance. We have an awareness creation program

twice a week, but its result is not enough, so we have to raise the public's understanding of our problems and other issues.

Participant P5MDH42 said, "The use of media outlets and other social media outlets to raise awareness is not sufficient."

Participant P6MOPM36 shared:

In my opinion, the basic problem is the issue of communication with the public and media; without communication, it is impossible to create awareness. It helps clarify the differences between types and degrees of corruption in our organization and gives clear information for society.

Participant P7MCPO44 said, "Raising awareness of employees and society on issues pertaining to corruption in our organization helps promote transparent and accountable service delivery to society." Participant P8FDH37 said, "Skilled manpower is essential to improve organizational performance and create a transparent environment. We have a problem of professionals in some positions of our department." Participant P10MDH38 mentioned that, "Our ICT department is not advanced [enough] to support our report system, and we have difficulties in reaching the public to receive feedback about their satisfaction."

Strategic Barriers. Nine of the 15 participants (60% of the sample) talked about issues related to policies and strategies, politicians' misuse of power, and the mismatch between regional and federal interests, all of which affect the implementation of anticorruption strategies.

Participant P6MOPM36 said:

As we know, preparing updated policies and strategies is the responsibility of [the] federal government, but some directives and regulatory documents arrive late, after problems have occurred, and sometimes the regulations and strategies are not clear. The responsibility of the federal government of Ethiopia and regional states is clearly stated in [the] constitution. I think it is not intentional, but there is a clash of interest, specifically about the implementation of the anticorruption strategy.

Participant P2FDBH32 explained:

There is a clear interference of politicians in the decision-making process. This by itself is corruption—the power misuse of politicians by itself is corruption—and with such a situation it is difficult to implement strategies, whatever the strategy is. Truly speaking, the demarcation between politics and administration is blurred, and clearly it is different in practice, so how can you mitigate the problem? For me it is difficult. We must stop lying to the society.

Participant P8FDH37 shared:

As a public institution leader, I need space to work and make decisions on the behalf of the organization. Incredibly, at any time the mission can be changed by political bodies, but it is not their mandate. We develop a strategy, a vision, but it cannot easily depart from their influence. If you refuse, the consequence will be a little bit harsh, you understand me? Yeah, that is how we live, and it is part of the business. So, tell them to leave for us a space to move the organization forward.

Participant P14FPR50 said, “The politics issue is a headache for me. It is the basic problem and affects the possibilities of attaining the entire anticorruption mitigation strategy. It affects our charisma, but we cannot do anything, just follow instructions.”

Participant P9MCPO46 said, “For example, the strategy from [the] Federal anticorruption Commission is more general; it does not address the specific issues.”

Organizational Barriers. Seven of the 15 participants (46.6% of the sample) discussed the organizations’ internal problems, such as lack of capacity building, unclear organizational structure, lack of measurements, and lack of cross-organizational cooperation. Participant P1MBH52 stated:

We have capacity-building problems to support employees and unit leaders, and we have planned schedules, but most capacity support remains fragmented because instead of following the schedule, we try to manage operation by operation. It is difficult to capture and fill the gap and cross-sectoral issues strategically. But it is not bad as such.

Participant P4FCPO40 said:

The capacity-building activities are not founded on needs assessments and do not include appropriate measures to see from the angle of organizational change and individual skill building. We evaluate this scenario [during] every 6 month’s meeting, but we know we have to improve it. Nowadays, we try to depend on needs assessments to fill the existing gap.

Participant P3FDH35 explained:

In my opinion, the basic problem is unclear organizational structure because the organizational structure is a cornerstone for all organizational elements. You know, without clear organizational structure, it is impossible to mitigate problems. Corruption is complex, and it is impossible to avoid like other simple problems. In the meantime, we try to apply participatory planning and decision-making approaches to have an agreeable environment.

Participant P6MOPM36 said:

Someone can see the organizational structure may have little effect in mitigating corruption, but for me, other elements are secondary. We have to stand to have a participatory, acceptable, and clear structure. It is a primary thing to look after existing strategies, and reach a consensus between different parties.

Participant P9MCPO46 mentioned that, “I think the problem we have to address is improving the cross-organizational cooperation because fighting corruption with strategy needs a collaboration and active involvement of different bodies.” Participant P10MDH38 said, “We have a cooperation with other stakeholders, but it is not enough. We need to mobilize to a higher level of action.” Participant P12MCPO34 explained:

Personally, I believe our relationship with other organizations is not focusing on strategic things, rather in tiny actions, because I’ve seen decisions performed out of the agreement we have in the memorandum of understanding. It is not trustworthy; we have to listen each other.

Composite Textural Descriptions

The composite textural description contains the general participants' experiences with the implementation of anticorruption strategies in the public sector in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia. For successful strategy implementation, participants pointed out various factors that help improve organizational performance. For the successful implementation of corruption mitigation frameworks, considerations were given to transparent and accountable actions taken by public sector leaders, and the degree to which leaders perform their responsibility was a determinant factor. Defining vision, identifying mission, and exploring implementation plans were supported the strategic planning process and the successful adherence of organizational performance.

Interdependence and stakeholders' engagement indicated the level of interdependence with internal and external stakeholders, including board members, politicians, community members, federal institutions, and external auditors. While implementing corruption mitigation strategies, there were significant challenges that determined the public sector's performance. The challenges included both organizational and external factors that hindered the implementation of anticorruption strategies. The challenges included strategic challenges, organizational deficiencies, and other contextual problems associated with outdated policies and strategies, politicians' misuse of power, and unclear organizational structures.

Composite Structural Descriptions

The composite structural description shows the participants' lived experiences of the underlying factors and contexts that determine the practices. Participants indicated

strategic planning was developed participatorily and was essential to implement anticorruption strategies, with some limitations. Participant P3FDH35 said, “Sometimes the political leaders set directions to the strategic plan, but they retreat in playing their role that he or she is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the plan.” An appropriate organizational structure is essential to accommodate other organizational elements necessary to satisfy public demand. The participants explained that the leadership style practiced in the organization must be defined and transparent to carry out the organization’s mission.

Interdependence and stakeholder engagement need attention to build mutual benefit and address the public need. The aspect of performance evaluation (capacity building and planned cross-organizational cooperation) was also an expressed determinant factor in implementing anticorruption strategies. Participants indicated leadership’s role was crucial to run the organization and to meet intended objectives with all limitations. Parallel to the comprehensive underlying factors, some barriers determine the implementation of anticorruption strategies. The participants described politicians’ misuse of power, unbalanced regional and federal government interests, and unclear organizational structure as the fundamental challenges. Lack of awareness, lack of communication, and underdeveloped ICT use also made it challenging for customers to track the efforts made by leaders in the Tigray Region’s public sector.

Textural–Structural Synthesis

The Bureau of Housing and Urban Development of the Tigray Region of Ethiopia implemented anticorruption strategies. The central government designed the policies and

procedures, and the regional government incorporated those policies and guidelines into a specific organizational strategic plan. The anticorruption strategy was composed of national and international regulations but lacked local considerations. The anticorruption strategy's practices included the concepts of transparency, accountability, and responsibility for sustainable performance. In implementing the corruption mitigation strategy, interdependence among different organizational units and external key stakeholders was vital. Through this interdependence and involvement, stakeholders were able to collaborate and communicate during the strategy's implementation. When mobilizing the organizational elements, guiding direction, identifying problems, and creating a conducive environment, the role of senior leaders was vital.

The underlying factors that emphasized the anticorruption strategy's implementation were strategic planning, organizational structure, and leadership style. Senior leaders reinforced these and defined vision and mission, a culture of values, commitment, capacity building, and proactive management. The experiences gained were not without associated problems, such as excessive political interference, unbalanced regional and federal government interests, and an unclear organizational structure that affected the implementation of the anticorruption strategy. The contextual factors underlying the challenges included lack of commitment, lack of awareness, lack of skilled workforce, and technological insufficiencies.

Discrepant Cases

Participant P1MBH52 posited that the implementation of anticorruption strategy needs an organized effort. He said:

For me, the implementation of a corruption mitigation strategy cannot be a single effort by our organization. Everybody must be committed and work together to have a real impact on corporations. In some instances, I observed that we pressure each other to obligations and commitments and then retreat from accountability. So, is very, very important.

Despite putting this concept into the analysis process by marking it, there were no more discussions from other interviewees supporting the idea. From the analysis, almost all of the participants described various forms of anticorruption strategy related problems in their specific departments and the organization at large.

Similarly, Participant P11MDH31 argued that the family-based relations at the organization hinders the applicability of strategies for the planned objective, stating, “We are conducting evaluations to ensure that everybody is accountable for what they did, but it is challenging. The appointment issues need clarity with the principle of commitment. The right person at the right place.” Although I did not confirm these cases after the analysis, I would not entirely mark down these assertions given this study’s scope.

Summary

In this chapter, I compiled the analysis of the information collected and reported the findings gained toward the study’s research question. The findings indicated the Tigray Region’s Bureau of Housing and Urban Development used the anticorruption strategy considering the national directions. However, the system did not incorporate the situation at a regional level. The results also show the anticorruption strategy implementation needs collaboration among internal and external stakeholders.

Participants shared the impact of excessive political interference and the conflict of interest between the federal and regional governments. Participants discussed the importance of strategic planning, transparency, accountability, and responsibility for implementing the anticorruption strategy.

Regarding the challenges, participants shared experiences about government policies and regulations, politicians' power usage, the strategic challenges of organizational structure, and leadership style. The participants also described the challenges in terms of the lack of awareness, lack of capacity building, and technological deficiencies. In the next chapter, I presented the contribution of the findings to knowledge in the leadership field, the limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to identify and report the lived experiences of senior public sector leaders regarding the implementation of anticorruption strategies in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The study's phenomenon of interest was how corruption mitigation strategies are executed in the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development by senior leaders. Few studies in the literature include an address of anticorruption strategy implementation in developing countries' public sectors (Kapucu et al., 2017; Meuser et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2015). This study's findings are vital to identify and group the challenges to implementing anticorruption strategies in the Ethiopian public sector.

Foundational to this study's conceptual framework were the principles of the strategic leadership theory. Elbanna et al. (2016) asserted that the strategic leadership theory involves a focus on organizational vision, mission, strategic goals, and monitoring and evaluation systems. Accordingly, this study's interview protocol was aligned to the components of strategic leadership theory.

The nature of the study was qualitative transcendental phenomenological, revolving around the experiences of senior leaders with anticorruption mitigation strategies, interpreted to advance shared meanings (Patton, 2015). Based on the purpose of the study, semistructured Zoom interviews were used to collect data. Purposeful sampling methods led to the selection of participants in the sample. After data collection, hand-coding methods led to the identification of key constructs and themes. NVivo 12 software was useful during the thematization process through the identification of commonalities in the collected data.

The key findings were (a) fragmented implementation of corruption mitigation frameworks with an emphasis on the issues of transparency, accountability, and responsibility; (b) unclear government policies and irregularities with federal and regional regulatory agencies result in power misuse of politicians; (c) organizational deficiencies due to the absence of clear leadership style, organizational structure, result in internal and external stakeholder misalignment, poor communication, and commitment; and (d) inconsistent capacity building and awareness creation framework, inefficiency in ICT implementation, and lack of skilled workers were the major challenges in implementing the anticorruption strategy. In the next section, data interpretation is presented through the analysis of data collected from the literature review and interviews.

Interpretation of the Findings

Estalaki (2017) asserted that strategies are easier to implement when they include clear organizational objectives with appropriate follow-up and assessment procedures. Results from this study include findings that senior leaders in the Bureau of Housing and Urban Development in the Tigray region face challenges in implementing anticorruption strategies. Ten of the 15 participants (60% of the sample) mentioned a mismatch between their corporate goals and general anticorruption strategy. Transparency international (2018) reported that cascading institutions' specific objectives into corruption mitigation plans facilitates leaders' actions to implement strategies. In this sense, anticorruption strategies demand an alignment of policies, rules, and guidelines supported by transparent processes.

Twelve of the 15 participants (80% of the sample) expressed that their organizations provided capacity building and leadership development programs, although the programs lacked continuity. Alam et al. (2017) found that planned, continuous, and task-oriented capacity building promotes transparency and accountability and ensures successful implementation of policies and strategies. This study's findings also confirmed that continuous capacity building and leadership development programs are vital to familiarize leaders with their responsibilities within their organizations. Capacity building prohibiting corruption explicitly outlines the organization's values and contributes to an ethical environment, providing staff and partners with clear frameworks of accountability and integrity (Transparency International, 2016).

Fourteen of the 15 participants (93% of the sample) discussed the strategic planning processes and their contributions to the implementation of anticorruption plans. Previous study findings have been that a strategic plan is a combination of clear vision, mission, strategic objectives, and monitoring and evaluation systems (Andersen et al., 2015; Berkovich, 2016; Bhargavi et al., 2016). The participants confirmed that their organization's strategic plan encompassed these components; however, the monitoring and evaluation system lacked clarity to measure every unit's performance.

Organizational structure plays an essential role in the successful implementation of anticorruption strategies. Twelve of the 15 participants (80% of the sample) confirmed that the decentralized leadership structure brought decision making closer to people and aided with understanding the corruption mitigation strategy. This explanation is aligned with the findings of Dustin et al. (2018), who posited that a decentralized organizational

structure can be an effective means of implementing strategies in a participatory way. Likewise, the interviewees mentioned strategy implementation difficulties in lower departments and among top-ranked senior executives.

Discussed by participants in the study were different leadership styles, along with related issues (namely, the planning, participation, and evaluation processes). However, there was a notable difference among the participants' perceptions about leadership and the style their organizations practice. Based on the analysis of the interviewees' documented perceptions, 53% of the participants described a transformational leadership style, while 40% of the participants described a transactional approach; other styles described included a democratic leadership style reported by one third of the participants, with 13% describing a strategic leadership style. Toprak et al. (2015) posited that an organization that employs appropriate leadership styles has a higher probability of achieving its organizational goals. Findings from this study appear to be consistent with the idea that leadership theories can overlap in concepts and in principle (Hunt et al., 2019).

All (100%) of the participants in this study mentioned the stakeholder selection and involvement process as steps for the success of planning and strategy implementation. Emphasized was the concept of interdependence and stakeholders' engagements in planned efforts for positive effects of the anticorruption strategy execution. Kunnanatt (2016) found that stakeholder participation is an essential contribution to the design and implementation of policies and strategies. The participants

mentioned that effective stakeholder involvement increases transparency and accountability.

Enste et al. (2017) found that excessive political interference hinders smooth progress in combating corruption and leads to unfair justice administration, consistent with the findings from this study. Eight of the 15 participants (53%) indicated that moderated, planned, and specified politicians' involvement in decision making processes supported the fulfillment of organizational missions. Participant P8FDH37 said, "Incredibly, at any time, the mission can be changed by political bodies, but it is not their mandate. There is a strategy and action plan, but it cannot easily depart from their influence." The participant added, "If you refuse, the consequence will be a little bit harsh." The findings of Alam et al. (2017) also confirmed that the lack of political maturity and specific politician involvement makes those responsible liable to misuse their powers.

All the participants identified significant barriers that affect the implementation of anticorruption strategies, including strategic challenges, organizational challenges, and contextual factors. Under the organizational barriers, they addressed lack of capacity building, unclear organizational structure, and lack of cross-organizational cooperation. These findings support the organizational barriers found by Kebede (2013) that associated with public sector leadership, strategies, and capacity building. Participants described the outdated policies and strategies and conflicts of interest between regional and federal government as strategic problems.

The strategic leadership lens allows for the incorporation of different concepts to better understand anticorruption strategy implementation. With the strategic leadership perspective, the various concepts in this study related to strategy implementation were intertwined for consistency in understanding the experiences of senior public sector leaders in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. The significant concepts extracted from the conceptual framework of Hambrick and Mason (1984) include vision, mission, planning, strategy, stockholders, and shared understanding of organizational development.

Limitations

The limitations of a given study refer to the design or methodology characteristics that affect the research process and the interpretation of the findings (Lincoln et al., 1985). With respect to the data collection method, one potential limitation included that each interviewee had a different leadership position and background. Perceptions may therefore have been influenced by a general lack of experience in the implementation of strategies. However, the step-by-step procedures, thick descriptions provided, and well-articulated rationale for selecting the methodology ensures the dependability of the study results (Ravitch et al., 2016). To ensure representativeness, I provided a detailed description of the participants' experiences. Additionally, I was able to recruit 15 participants who shared a similar understanding of anticorruption strategy implementation, and I considered the issue of data saturation, including reaching the minimum number of participants to aid in acquiring in-depth information.

The second limitation was the difficulty to generalize the findings due to irregularities in the leadership positions in scope, structure, and direction. This

hierarchical difference among the leaders potentially impacts the ability to make generalizations due to the vast array of potential effects perceptions of conflict. Personal bias stemming from my professional experience in a leadership position was another limitation. To minimize personal bias, I kept a reflective journal and considered the epoch procedures as a solution. Additionally, obtaining feedback from the participants as part of the member-checking process limited potential bias.

The third limitation was that employee outside of the leadership positions were not part of the sample for this study. The employees' input may have been substantive because of their attachments to the strategies in their daily activities and direct relationships with customers. However, the participants were limited to office heads, department leaders, and core process owners.

Recommendations

Highlighted among the findings in this study were the perspectives of practitioners regarding their experiences with the implementation of anticorruption strategies. Accordingly, the following recommendations include meaningful areas of future research that could help fill the knowledge gap in the literature. This study revealed that the anticorruption strategy implementation practices in the Tigray region lack transparency and accountability. The presence of transparent practices in the public sector has a large impact on strategy implementation and promotes efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness (Dustin et al., 2018). Future studies could occur to explore and contextualize the anticorruption strategy dimensions, which could serve as a framework for other similar mitigation strategies.

Organizational structure plays a crucial role in ensuring participation and commitment to the successful implementation of anticorruption strategies in the public sector (Dustin et al., 2018). Further studies could include the exploration of how organizational structure specifically determines organizational strategy implementation and the interdependence of strategy implementation and stakeholders' involvement. Having a timely and specific policy was additionally crucial for the successful implementation of corruption mitigation strategies. Future studies could encompass how governmental policies affect organizational corruption mitigation strategies and corporate sustainability. Asamoah (2017) found that having an effective leadership style is a potent source of successful strategy implementation and sustained competitive advantage.

An exploration of strategic planning effects can help to demonstrate the vital components of effectiveness, including vision, mission, organizational objectives, participation, and leadership commitment. This study was limited to senior public sector leaders' perspectives; they talked about the anticorruption strategy implementation issue from their organization's point of view. Therefore, further investigation could include identifying employees' attitudes regarding the challenges and prospects in implementing anticorruption strategies.

All of the participants identified the various challenges that affect the implementation of anticorruption policy vis-a-vis strategic challenges (e.g., outdated policies and strategies, politicians' misuses of power, the mismatch between regional and federal interests), organizational barriers, and contextual factors (e.g., lack of commitment, awareness, skilled manpower, and ICT implementation). Future studies

could include exploration and contextualization of these barriers and determination of their degree of influence on implementing corruption mitigation strategies and providing positive performance insights.

Implications

The findings from this study may improve knowledge of how to create positive social change by addressing public sector problems, such as planning, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and strategy implementation. Anticorruption strategy frameworks, created to mitigate corruption and to focus on societal development, have inherent implementation problems due to internal and external factors (Elbanna et al., 2016). Understanding the challenges in implementing anticorruption strategies can lead to enhanced customer satisfaction, public trust, and positive social changes at the organizational and governmental levels.

There is potential for social change when stakeholders begin to see that participation is essential for successful strategy implementation. The findings from this study support broader stakeholder engagement because participants indicated successful anticorruption strategy implementation arose from the cooperation of internal and external stakeholders. The results of this study might enhance organizational leaders' understanding of the necessity of stakeholders' participation across the dimensions of transparency and accountability.

The insights about the anticorruption strategy implementation derived from this study may increase public sector leaders' foci on strategic leadership components to mitigate negative consequences. Fawad et al. (2018) found that implementing a strategic

leadership framework entail considering tasks, people, and development that allow senior leaders to set directions, develop strategies, and put disruptive ideas into motion. The research findings help magnify the needs to close the gap in the strategy, increase the communication between different work units, and increase the level of public trust. The lack of participation and capacity building emphasized in this research study might help public sector leaders recognize the need to strengthen the organizational environment.

At the governmental level, policy makers and strategy designers must begin to see the need to incorporate region-specific policies to support anticorruption strategies. In particular, federal regulatory agencies can shift their level of involvement in the region with the appropriate supportive approach. The federal agencies play a key role in evaluating, assessing, and providing corrective measures that support regional public sectors in implementing anticorruption strategies. This study is an indicator to government leaders of the need to determine and adopt policies that can best contribute to empowering organizational leaders and effecting positive social change.

In this study, the principles of the transcendental phenomenological design were used to collect and analyses data. The findings represent insights gleaned from the methodological possibilities in regard to identifying and reporting experiences related to anticorruption strategy implementation. The qualitative, in-depth information could lead to a quantitative analysis of the relationship between organizational variables and the implementation of strategies in the public sector. Furthermore, mixed studies could be useful to further explore themes and quantitatively measure predetermined variables to add value to the depth of knowledge gained.

Given the findings from this study, public sector leaders should recognize the importance of strategic planning, defined organizational structure, and collaboration of internal and external stakeholders to successful strategy implementation. Strategy design and implementation are a central part of an organization, and thus, senior leaders should be at the forefront of capacitating the organization. The engagement of internal and external stakeholders is essential to show them the need to implement strategies, which could address the challenge related to corruption.

Conclusion

This study's findings represent contributions to the literature on leadership, corruption-related issues, and the implementation of anticorruption strategies. The insights from this study could serve as a foundation for further studies on related strategies in the Tigray region and public sectors in other areas of Ethiopia. The lack of defined organizational structure, outdated policies, strategies, regional and federal government conflicts of interest, and excessive political interference in the decision-making process are the most significant barriers to the strategy implementation. The contextual factors underlying the challenges included lack of commitment, lack of awareness, lack of skilled workforce, and technological insufficiencies.

The interdependence and engagement of different organizational units and external stakeholders emerged from the data as vital to the successful implementation of corruption mitigation strategies. Additionally, the senior leaders' roles in mobilizing the organizational elements, guiding directions, identifying problems, and creating conducive environments appear essential to corruption mitigation strategic success. Capacity

building, and legal interventions were factors identified for successful strategy implementation. Organizational frameworks focusing on knowledge also play pivotal roles in the successful implementation of anticorruption strategies. Senior leaders should design policies that balance political power, discretion, and accountability to support strategy implementation and organizational reform, if needed.

The implementation of an anti-corruption strategy in Ethiopia's Tigray region is undeniably complicated. Regardless, organizations cannot achieve absolute strategy implementation performance overnight. However, a concerted and coordinated effort by public sector senior leaders and stockholders to recognize the planning and implementation of strategies is critical. Organizational leaders should also communicate successful strategy implementation alternatives to employees and customers to get them involved in their operations as much as possible. The cumulative result will motivate organizations to move forward sustainably and tackle challenges in a participatory way.

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Appendix A: Invitation Email

Greetings,

My name is Alem Reda. I am a Ph.D. student in Management at Walden University. I am researching the lived experiences of senior leaders pertaining to public sector leadership in Ethiopia encompassing mitigation strategy implementation. I believe research will promote understanding of leadership and experiences surrounding corruption mitigation strategy implementation to assure organizational performance, customer satisfaction, and positive social changes at large. The research helps to fulfill the Ph.D. program's requirements while magnifying meaning of senior leaders' experiences with respect to public sector service and organizational mitigation strategies.

Being part of this interview and the information that you may provide would not pose any risks and harm. You are chosen based on your presumed leadership position and experience. I am requesting your participation, starting with the verification that you meet the eligibility criteria as a member of the study population. I will request your permission to conduct an audio-recorded zoom video interview may last as long as 30-45 minutes. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Thank you for your time and willingness to contribute valuable information that can have positive implications for practice, theory, and society. Please reply to this email to indicate your interest in becoming a participant in this study.

Respectfully,

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your role as a leader in your organization?
2. How would you describe implementation of corruption mitigation strategy within your organization?
3. What does corruption impact society's well-being mean for you?
4. Tell me about the interrelationships among the departments and units in
5. implementing anticorruption strategy in your organization?
6. Could you describe the role organizational structure plays in implementing corruption mitigation strategies?
7. What are your lived experiences with leadership styles that you may have practiced within your organization?
8. Could you please describe how stakeholders are engaged in the corruption mitigation process?
9. Describe for me the barriers that you have experienced affect the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies?
10. If you have any additional thoughts about your experiences as a leader about the corruption mitigation strategy implementation to add, I welcome your thoughts now.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Date:

Time:

Interviewee Code #:

Age:

Sex:

Education:

Position:

Number of Years in current role:

Parts of the Interview	Interview Questions
Introduction	Hello. My name is Alem Reda. Thank you for your time and cooperation with the study. Your insights will be very important to this study. I estimate the interviewing would last for about 30-45 minutes and this interview is going to be recorded. It is likely that our conversation will lead to additional questions or requests for clarifications, which is a natural part of the semistructured interview process. I will start with the initial interview questions. Before we start Did you have any questions?
Question 1:	Tell me about your role as a leader in your organization? Can you describe a typical leadership function? Do the functions share common or different goals?
Question 2:	How would you describe implementation of corruption mitigation strategy within your organization? Is there any Corruption mitigation policy and strategy in your organization? How would you describe the implementation in terms of Transparency? How would you describe the implementation in terms of accountability? How would you describe the implementation in terms of check and balance? Could you give me some examples of observed problems in the corruption mitigation strategy?
Question 3:	What does corruption impact society's well-being mean for you? Could you give me some examples? Could you describe the accountability process for leadership? Please tell me how you measure your customers satisfaction?

Question 4:	<p>Tell me about the interrelationships among the departments and units in implementing anticorruption strategy in your organization? Could you give me examples of the interrelatedness and interdependence? Does your organization organize capacity building program on the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies?</p>
Question 5:	<p>Could you describe the role organizational structure plays in implementing corruption mitigation strategies? How important is the structure to the implementation of anticorruption strategy? Could you tell me the function of the structure for transparency and accountability?</p>
Question 6:	<p>What are your lived experiences with leadership styles that you may have practiced within your organization? Could you describe the planning process in your organization? How would you describe the participation of employees in planning process?</p>
Question 7:	<p>Could you please describe how stakeholders are engaged in the corruption mitigation process? Tell me about the strategy you follow with other stakeholders? Who would you consider to be political stakeholders? Who would you consider to be social stakeholders?</p>
Question 8:	<p>Describe for me the barriers that you have experienced affect the implementation of corruption mitigation strategies? Please give me some examples? How have you managed to deal with these barriers?</p>
Question 9:	<p>If you have any additional thoughts about your experiences as a leader about the corruption mitigation strategy implementation?</p>
Closing statement	<p>Thank you for your time. You have shared valuable insights that will be useful for this study. I appreciate it. If you have any questions about anything now would be the time to ask me. We are finished here. I will contact you if I need to clarify any statement and would share my discussions of findings with you at the end of the process. You will have seven days to respond otherwise I would assume you agree with my summations. Thank you, again.</p>
