

## Employee Promotional System and Induced Performance among Senior Staff of University of Cape Coast

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the effectiveness of the two promotion criteria in inducing performance among senior staff of UCC. Mixed method research design was adopted. Sample size comprised five assistant registrars and 200 senior staff. The study found that there were mixed perceptions about the promotion qualification criteria of senior staff among the supervisors. Also, it was revealed that promotion systems have critical influence on the level of performance of senior staff. It was therefore recommended that the human resource department of the University should organise a sensitisation programme to explain the promotion processes to senior staff. This will help to disabuse their thoughts and perceptions about unfair application of promotion system as well as the use of affinity by some staff to secure promotion. Also, the human resource department should develop clear guidelines for the implementation of the promotion system. This should include the time for feedback and response from the promotion review board or committee. This guideline will also help to bring transparency in the promotion process and avoid the unnecessary delays and frustrations staff have to go through before securing promotion.

### Introduction

The long-term viability and competitiveness of any business organisation depends on the performance of its employees and the extent of their contribution towards the achievement of the goals assigned them by managers (Malik, Ghafoor & Naseer, 2011). According to Aguinis (2009), employee performance is an important topic to put emphasis on, in order to raise awareness among workers about their own potentials and to get better outcomes from them. A critical element concerning employee performance is that it is used as the basis for promoting employees to higher positions with greater tasks and responsibilities to influence decision making. As a result, Hameed and Amjad (2009) suggested that credible systems and structures should be adopted by organisations to assess the performance of its employees.

Appiah (2010) defines employee performance as the degree of a worker's achievability to pre-determined business objectives. Dessler (2008) identifies three basic metrics used by organisations in assessing the level of employee performance: productivity, efficiency and training. The productivity metrics measures the amount of work an employee accomplishes in specific amount of time. The efficiency method assesses how much effort and/or expense is required for an employee to execute assigned tasks. Written tests or post-training surveys are two ways to immediately evaluate the impact of an organisation's training initiatives.

According to Stone (2008), the aim of performance measurement is to increase the motivation of employees, provide on time and quick feedback, provide fairness in the structure of the organisation, provide equal opportunities, support the employees and help them improve themselves. Chen and Silverthorne (2008) suggested that employee performance scores should always form the basis for promotion to encourage competition and hard work among workers to advance the growth and development of business organisations. Armstrong (2009) argues that since employee promotion is mostly associated with higher order duties or increased workload, responsibilities and authority, organisational managers should always assess their ability to perform such tasks. In other words, performance assessment or appraisal should precede promotion and form the basis for choosing an employee over other equally qualified applicants or workers.

Promotion or career advancement is a process through which an employee of a company is given a higher share of duties, a higher pay-scale or both (Rehman, Zaheer & Sufwan, 2007). According to Hameed and Amjad (2009), promotion is not only beneficial for employees but is also highly crucial for the employer or business owners. It boosts the morale of promoted employees, increases their productivity and hence improves upon the overall growth and development of business organisations (Arthur, Kaphova & Wilderon, 2005). Every organisation or workplace has a certain job hierarchy structure according to which an employee advances in that entity and gets promoted. Appiah (2010) indicated that promotion is not just a reward that an employee is given for his/her continued good performance but is the proof that an employer thinks that it is time to add more responsibilities to an employee's existing set of responsibilities.

Owing to the merit an employee has to the organisation, promotion might be a necessity in order to retain that particular employee. However, Stone (2008) argued that promotion should not only be considered as a means of merely rewarding employees but also should be taken as a means towards placement of employees in positions they fit. In this view, promotion touches not only the welfare of the employee but also that of an organisation. Therefore, promotion of employees in organisations should be carefully implemented by following specific policies and procedures. Contrary to that, promotion turns into a setback to the employees' performance

(Dessler, 2008). This implies that employee promotion systems and processes have critical influences on their performance.

As a result, Rehman et al. (2007) recommended that organisational managers should ensure fairness and strict adherence to promotion criteria to enhance employees' perceptions about the promotion management processes. According to Brown and Heywood (2005), employees' perceptions about the promotion systems and criteria in an organisation influence the extent to which they are motivated to increase their performance to merit opportunities for promotion.

In Africa, the large informal sector and cultural issues such as family and ethnic affiliations influence objective assessment of employee performance in many organisations (Appiah, 2010). Thus, since the performance-promotion nexus is mostly attached to salary adjustment, increase in authority and welfare, many informal elements are employed to influence employee performance assessment and promotion processes. According to Armstrong (2009), this is most evident in service organisations where performance assessment indicators are more subjective.

The University of Cape Coast is one of the public universities in Ghana with the mandate to provide quality education through the provision of comprehensive, liberal and professional programmes that challenge learners to be creative, innovative and morally responsible citizens. The University is currently organised into five colleges. The University has three categories of employees – senior members, senior staff and junior staff. The senior staff are intermediary level of employees who assist the senior members in their management duties, while supervising the activities of the junior staff. There are two main categories of senior staff at the University – administrative and research staff. There are four promotion designations under each grouping of senior staff – administrative assistant/research assistant, senior administrative assistant/senior research assistant, principal administrative assistant/principal research assistant, and chief administrative assistant/chief research assistant. Each promotion designation is accompanied by different welfare packages and responsibilities. The focus of the study was on the administrative senior staff.

The University of Cape Coast currently has two promotion systems for the senior staff category. These are incremental (seniority) and training metrics. With the incremental metrics, staff are entitled to qualification for promotion to the next higher designation in the senior staff category within a specified number of years of continuous service. This promotion system is seen as a reward for loyalty of service and the belief that one has gained enough work experience and competence to be given higher order duties and tasks. The training metrics involves the use of higher educational certificate to gain promotion. This system implies that a higher certificate training may have given a worker more insight into handling higher order tasks in the organisation. As a result, whereas some workers gain promotion through the incremental metrics, others use the training system to achieve promotion. However, the system is open to everyone to decide the promotion system that may deem fit for him/her. It is observed that whereas workers who use the training model use relatively few years to rise through the promotion rungs, those going by the incremental model use almost their whole working career to advance through the system. This sometimes generates apathy among workers in terms of which promotion system really induces performance among the employees. This study, therefore, sought to examine how the promotion systems of the University afford employees to gather the necessary experiences and competencies to execute their functions creditably.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Employee motivation is a critical element in organisations' human resource management processes. In as much as it enables organisations to select employees to occupy key positions to influence decision making, Grund and Sliwka (2007) asserted that promotion is a form of rewarding hard work. As a result, Kuvaas (2007) posited that employee promotion system should largely be informed by and encourage performance. Thus, performance management should be at the focus of promotion systems of business organisations. However, Torrington and Taylor (2008) posited that before promotion systems of organisations could induce the expected performance levels among employees, the workers should perceive the systems and the qualification criteria as fair and objective. This is mostly achieved when there is fair application of rules governing promotion among employees.

The critical role of senior staff as intermediary workers at UCC is such that their promotion systems should focus on encouraging hard work and inducing performance. This would enable them to effectively support management in implementing strategic policies in the university as well as supervising the junior staff for the smooth administration of the institution. The educational qualification for senior staff at UCC range from a Diploma as the minimum entry to Masters Degree without rigorous research or thesis. Workers under the four categories of senior staff are entitled to promotion within a specified number of years, depending on one's designation.

Using such incremental promotion through time, it will take a worker about 27 years to rise from the minimum designation to the highest without advancing his or her educational qualification beyond a First Degree. This long process is considered ideal in building the capacity of the worker in the working ethics, values and

principles of the university to induce performance. However, an individual who enters the university with a Diploma and is able to upgrade his or her educational level to the Masters level could use less than 10 years to rise through the rungs of senior staff. This process is also seen as adequate for the worker to acquire higher knowledge and skills to improve his or her performance as well as enable the worker to perform supervisory role on others.

However, in many cases, there happens to be a silent rift between senior staff employees who adopt the incremental promotion system and those using the training or educational advancement system. Whereas workers using the incremental promotion system perceive the others as not having the requisite experience to induce the necessary performance, those with the training system perceive the others as not having the educational qualification and enlightenment to effectively handle higher order services to realise the expected performance levels. In other words, each category of senior staff using different promotion qualification system in the university downplays on the competencies and capacities of the other to effectively execute higher order functions and induce the expected performance levels. This study sought to examine how each of the qualification criteria in the promotion system of senior of UCC induce performance.

### **Research Objectives**

The general objective of the study sought to conduct a comparative study on the effectiveness of the two promotion criteria in inducing performance among senior staff of UCC. The specific research objectives were as follows:

1. Examine the perception of senior staff employees on the promotion qualification criteria in UCC.
2. Assess the relative impact of the promotion qualification criteria on employees' performance.
3. Assess the perception of management administrative staff on how the two promotion qualification criteria induce performance among senior staff.

### **Research Questions**

The study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. How do the senior staff of UCC perceive the promotion qualification criteria?
2. How do the promotion qualification criteria of UCC impact on the performance of senior staff?
3. How do the management administrative staff perceive the two promotion qualification criteria in inducing performance among senior staff of UCC?

### **Theoretical Groundings**

The study was guided by ERG theory by Clayton Alderfer, acquired-needs theory by David McClelland, and equity theory by Adams. Thus, the study was influenced by both need-based and process motivational theories on how they influence the performance levels of employees.

#### **ERG Theory**

ERG theory, developed by Alderfer in 1969, is a modification of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Instead of the five needs that are hierarchically organised by Maslow, Alderfer proposed that basic human needs may be grouped under three categories, namely, existence, relatedness, and growth. Existence corresponds to Maslow's physiological and safety needs, relatedness corresponds to social needs, and growth refers to Maslow's esteem and self-actualisation. ERG theory's main contribution to the literature is its relaxation of Maslow's assumptions. For example, ERG theory does not rank needs in any particular order and explicitly recognises that more than one need may operate at a given time.

Moreover, the theory has a "frustration-regression" hypothesis suggesting that individuals who are frustrated in their attempts to satisfy one need may regress to another. For example, someone who is frustrated by the growth opportunities in his job and progress toward career goals may regress to relatedness need and start spending more time socialising with co-workers. The implication of this theory is that organisational managers need to recognise the multiple needs that may be driving individuals at a given point to understand their behaviour and properly motivate them.

Relating this theory to the study shows that employees' quests to rise through the promotional rungs of an organisation are driven by existence, relatedness and growth. Thus, employees who perceive the benefits associated with a particular promotion rung would be more motivated to increase performance and make quick advances towards the criteria to qualify them to occupy such positions. Employees who are motivated by growth needs are more encouraged to rise quickly to the top (Armstrong, 2004). Accordingly, the promotion qualification criterion adopted by an employee is influenced by his or her motivational need. However, Armstrong (2007) posited that the qualification criterion adopted by an employee is largely influenced by his or her perception on the level of fairness of the promotion system as well as past experiences with the system. Consequently, an employee's level of performance is partly driven by his or her motivational need.

### **Acquired-Needs Theory**

According to this theory, individuals acquire three types of needs as a result of their life experiences. These needs are the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power. All individuals possess a combination of these needs, and the dominant needs are thought to drive employee behaviour (*McClelland & Burnham, 1976*). Those who have high need for achievement have a strong need to be successful. They are preoccupied with doing things better than they did in the past. These individuals are constantly striving to improve their performance. They relentlessly focus on goals, particularly stretch goals that are challenging in nature. They are particularly suited to positions, where there are explicit goals, feedback is immediately available, and their effort often leads to success. In fact, they are more attracted to organizations that are merit-based and reward performance rather than seniority. Because of their success in lower level jobs where their individual contributions matter the most, those with high need for achievement are often promoted to higher level positions. In other words, employees with high need for achievement use their performance to gain promotion and rise through the rungs to managerial positions.

Individuals who have a high need for affiliation want to be liked and accepted by others. When given a choice, they prefer to interact with others and be with friends. Their emphasis on harmonious interpersonal relationships may be an advantage in jobs and occupations requiring frequent interpersonal interaction. According to *Spreier (2006)*, such people rise through the promotional rungs of organisations through their associations and affiliations with others in higher positions and not based on their real work output. In managerial positions, a high need for affiliation may serve as a disadvantage because these individuals tend to be overly concerned about how they are perceived by others. The work environment may be characterised by mediocrity and may even lead to high performers leaving the team (*Trevis & Certo, 2005*).

Finally, if one's actions contain elements of getting work done by influencing other people or desiring to make an impact on the organisation, he or she may have a high need for power (*McClelland & Burnham, 1976*). According to *Spreier (2006)*, employees with a high need for power want to influence others and control their environment. McClelland's theory of acquired needs has important implications for the motivation of employees. Managers need to understand the dominant needs of their employees to be able to motivate them. While people who have a high need for achievement may respond to goals, those with a high need for power may attempt to gain influence over those they work with, and individuals high in their need for affiliation may be motivated to gain the approval of their peers and supervisors.

### **Equity Theory**

The equity theory strikes a balance between an employee's input and output to derive satisfaction. It compares the input-output ratio of employees to the input-output ratio of their colleagues in similar situations or organisations (*Adams, 1965*). Inputs are the contributions people feel they are making to the organisation, including the person's hard work, loyalty to the organization, amount of time with the organisation, level of education, training and skills (*Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002*). Outcomes are the perceived rewards someone can receive from the situation, which in this case is promotion or recognition. With respect to employee promotion and performance, employees compare their efforts to rise through the rungs of an organisation to their colleagues to derive motivation to further increase their performance or not.

In other words, employees are more motivated to increase their performance if they perceive their efforts as more rewarding in terms of gaining promotion in relation to others. This occurs when results from performance assessment becomes a major benchmark for promoting employees to higher positions in an organisation (*Boules & Gelfand, 2009*). On the other hand, employees are less motivated to increase their performance when they perceive other colleagues promoted to higher positions as less performing. This mostly happens when employees use high need for affiliation to gain promotion in a system. According to *Khalifa and Truong (2010)*, imbalances in the input-output ratio could also result from unfair treatment and experiences of employees with respect to the application of promotion rules and guidelines.

### **Concept of Employee Promotion**

According to *Khalifa and Truong (2010)*, promotion refers to advancement of an employee to a higher post carrying greater responsibilities, higher status and better salary. It is the upward movement of an employee in the organisation's hierarchy, to another job commanding greater higher authority, higher status and better working conditions. Promotions are used to reward employees for better performance and to motivate them for greater effort (*Brown & Heywood, 2005*). *Torrington and Taylor (2008)* indicate that promotion is not only a way to add more responsibilities to an employee but is a major form of boosting employee motivation and morale. This results in high productivity and prevents a company from losing its valuable and important employees.

*Stone (2008)* posited that every organisation has to specify clearly its policy regarding promotion based on its corporate policy. This enables employees to strive to meet the various tenets of the policies to merit or qualify for promotion. According to *Aguinis (2009)*, the promotion policy should be applied uniformly to all employees



irrespective of their background, and should be fair and impartial without given room for nepotism and favouritism. Appiah (2010) recommends that promotion qualification criteria should be more objectively verified and minimise management's discretion and subjective indicators. Khalifa and Truong (2010) posited that a good promotion system provides equal opportunities for all categories of employees in all departments and sections of an organisation.

### **Models and schemes of promotion**

Berman, Bowman, West and Wart (2010) broadly categorised the models and schemes for employee promotion into non-competitive and competitive.

#### **Non-Competitive Promotion Scheme**

Promotions that are based on the standard set of achievements and accomplishments of employees are known as noncompetitive promotions. In such promotions, employees are promoted once they reach a certain milestone in their career journey, irrespective of variable features like performance and dedication (Berman *et al.*, 2010). These types of promotions work seamlessly for all the employees, and there is no scope for a bias or unfair appraisal.

1. Time scale promotion (Based merely on seniority) – A time scale promotion is a kind of a non-competitive promotion which takes place after the person has spent a standard or fixed number of years working for the organisation or working at a particular position in the organization (Arthur *et al.*, 2005). Seniority based systems promote candidates in a cohort with either: the most experience in the job; the most experience in the organization; or the most experience in the industry. According to Armstrong (2007), when firm-specific human capital accumulates uniformly over time, and there is little variation in the initial ability of employees, seniority acts as a useful proxy for performance. However, if learning rates and ability are heterogeneous then a seniority system cannot guarantee that the best performer will be promoted. In this situation, seniority is a weak selection device.
2. Accretion of Duties – In the case when a person has to be promoted due to an increase in his/her workload or duties is also a non-competitive method of promotion.
3. Adhocracy – In some cases, an organisation may have to promote someone without following any policy but just to meet the needs of crucial or urgent times or situations.

#### **Competitive model of promotion**

A competitive model of promotion is a method in which employees have to prove their worth to employers in order to be promoted to a higher rank or position (Berman *et al.*, 2010). Unlike the non-competitive method, this method takes into account employee performance, productivity, skills, experience, knowledge and other such factors. There is a comparison of employees on the basis of their hard work and performance in this model.

1. Merit-based promotion – Merit-based promotions are competitive types of promotions in which a person is promoted on the basis of their skills, performance, knowledge, hard work and qualifications. According to Torrington and Taylor (2008), merit-based promotion depicts an individual employee's skills, knowledge, ability, efficiency and aptitude as measured from education, training and past employment record. The merit and the ability of the individual is a great tool to measure the overall worthiness of the employee's promotion.
2. Merit-cum-seniority – Merit-cum-seniority promotions are those types of promotions where a balance between the merit as well as the seniority of the individual is kept in mind before considering a promotion.

#### **Concept of Employee Performance**

Employee performance is the successful completion of tasks by an individual, as set and measured by a supervisor or organisation, to pre-defined acceptable standard while efficiently and effectively utilizing available resource within a changing environment (Aguinis, 2009). Thus, performance is associated with quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of the output, presence/attendance on the job, efficiency of the work completed and effectiveness of work completed (Aguinis, 2009). Chen and Silverthorne (2008) argued that employee performance has to be considered as a multi-dimensional concept. On the most basic level one can distinguish between a process aspect (i.e., behavioural) and an outcome aspect of performance. Dessler (2008) reported that regular performance assessment of employees is required to inform management's decisions on training programmes needed to build their capacities to effectively and efficiently execute their tasks. Employee performance measurement uses the following indicators:

1. Quantity: The number of units produced, processed or sold is a good objective indicator of performance. However, Hameed and Amjad (2009) cautioned managers on placing too much emphasis on quantity at the detriment of quality.
2. Quality: The quality of work performed can be measured by several means. The percentage of work

- output that must be redone or is rejected is one such indicator (Appiah, 2010).
3. **Timeliness:** How fast work is performed is another performance indicator that should be used with caution (Stone, 2008). It should be measured against quality.
  4. **Cost-Effectiveness:** The cost of work performed could be used as a measure of performance especially when the employee has some degree of control over costs.
  5. **Absenteeism/Tardiness:** An employee is obviously not performing when he or she is not at work. Other employees' performance may be adversely impacted by absences too. As a result, the punctuality and regularity of an employee could be used as an indicator for performance.
  6. **Creativity:** It can be difficult to quantify creativity as a performance indicator, but in many serviced jobs, it is vitally important. Supervisors and employees could keep track of creative work examples and attempt to quantify them.
  7. **Adherence to Policy:** This may seem to be the opposite of creativity, but it is merely a boundary on creativity. Deviations from policy indicate an employee whose performance goals are not well aligned with those of the company.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a mixed method research design. This enabled the researcher to combined both qualitative and quantitative techniques in the selection of respondents, data gathering and data analysis. The study population comprised assistant registrars and senior staff of UCC. Assistant registrars were made part of the study population because they supervise activities of the senior staff and, as a result, were used to help assess the performance of the senior staff. There were 43 assistant registrars and 1428 senior staff in the university, making a total study population of 1471. One assistant registrar was randomly selected from each college, making a total of five. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, a population of 1471 requires a sample size of 302. However, due to time and resource constraints, coupled with the lack of interest shown by some of the workers, a total of 205 respondents were engaged by the study. This represents a response rate of 67.9 per cent.

The sample size comprised five assistant registrars and 200 senior staff. Simple random sampling was used to sample the senior staff respondents. The aim was to give each member an equal chance of getting selected into the sample. Interview guide and questionnaire were used as instruments for gathering data. Whereas interview guide was used for the assistant registrars, the questionnaire was used for the senior staff. Interview guide was used for assistant registrars because of their extensive experience in the promotion system and performance assessment of senior staff in the university. Questionnaire, on the other hand, was used for the senior staff because they were all perceived as literates who could read and self-administer the instrument without the support of the researcher. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data from the interview guide, while descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data from the questionnaire.

### **Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results and discussion of the data gathered from the field. The section is organised under the background characteristics of respondents, perception of senior staff employees on the promotion qualification criteria, the relative impact of promotion qualification criteria on employees' performance, and perception of management administrative staff on how the two promotion qualification criteria induce performance among senior staff.

#### **Background Characteristics of Respondents**

Description of the background characteristics of the respondents was critical as it explained differences in their perceptions on promotion and performance in the university. From the study, the majority (58%) of the respondents were females, while 42% were males. Further, 34% of the respondents were within 21-30 years of age, 37% were within 31-40 years, whereas 16.5% and 12.5% were within 41-50 years and 51-60 years of age, respectively. The results show that employees under the senior staff category cut across all age cohorts. The mean age of the respondents was 33.8 years with a standard deviation of 9.4. From the study, 18% of the respondents were within the Administrative Assistant designation within the senior staff employee category, 44% were Senior Administrative Assistants, while 25.5% and 12.5% respectively were Principal Administrative Assistants and Chief Administrative Assistants. Most (43.5%) of the respondents were with the Colleges, 20% were under the Central Administration, 11% were with the hospital, 5.5% were with the halls of residence, whereas 13.5% and 6.5% respectively were with the library and other sections such as catering and hospitality, media and estate. The study found that 45.5% of the respondents used the training metric to advance in the promotion rungs, 32.5% used the incremental (seniority) metric to rise through the rungs, while 22% used both training and incremental metrics to gain promotion. The study further found that whereas most of the

respondents within the ages of 21-40 years used the training method (by securing higher certificate) to gain promotion, those within 41-60 years of age largely depended on the incremental system to secure promotion.

### Perception of senior staff employees on the promotion qualification criteria

As part of the process of assessing the perception of the respondents on the promotion criteria, they were asked to express their views on the clarity on the promotion criteria. From the study, the majority (60.5%) of the respondents admitted that the promotion criteria were clearly stated, while 39.5% denied clarity on the criteria. The results show that the majority of the respondents were clear in their minds on steps or efforts that could enable them gain promotion. However, some of the senior staff did not have clear understanding about the promotion system. The study found that, in some cases, the administrative supervisors had to prompt their senior staff that they are due for promotion before they activate the process.

Table 1 presents results on the perception of the respondents about fairness in the application of the promotion criteria.

Table 1: *Fairness in the Application of Promotion Qualification Criteria*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	18	9.0
Agree	44	22.0
Indifferent	13	6.5
Disagree	95	47.5
Strongly disagree	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey (2017)

Table 1 shows that 31% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the promotion qualification criteria among senior staff of UCC were fairly applied, while 62.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed. The results show that the majority of the respondents perceived the application of the promotion qualification criteria as biased. Thus, even though the majority of the respondents indicated that the promotion criteria are clearly stated, they however did not perceive the implementation process as fair. This is in consonance with the finding of Stone (2008) that establishing clear and objectively verifiable promotion criteria is one thing and ensuring fairness in the implementation process to induce commitment and dedication from employees is another issue.

The respondents were requested to indicate their perception on the issue that the promotion system rewards hard work. The results are presented in Figure 1.

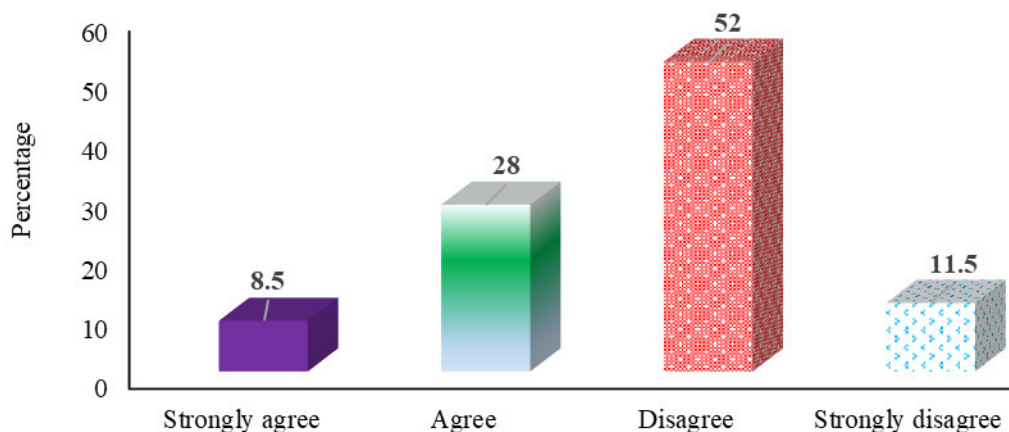


Figure 1: Perception on promotion system rewarding hard work

Source: Field survey (2017)

The Figure shows that 36.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the senior staff promotion system of UCC rewarded hard work, while the majority (63.5%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. The results show that the majority of the respondents did not see the connection between staff promotion and hard work. Some of the respondents further complained that the success of the promotion process largely depends on the supervisor or the office one works, and one's affiliation with members on the appointment and promotion committee. This is likely to negatively influence the commitment of senior staff on the performance appraisal process as well as institutional efforts to increase performance.

The study examined further the perception that one's affinity with management as a key requirement for promotion. From the study, the majority (58.5%) of the respondents admitted that one's affinity with

management is a key requirement for promotion, 34.5% denied, while 7% were indifferent. Some of the respondents accused the management of the University of using affinity to fast track the promotion staff close to them. Thus, some of the respondents were of the view that their counterparts at the Central Administration and those working under influential Heads of unit of the University were more favoured in the promotion system than others outside the direct view of management. This negative perception is likely to impact on the extent to which promotion system could induce performance and other organisational development goals such as commitment and dedication among the senior staff.

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of satisfaction with the promotion system of the University. From the study, the majority (55.5%) of the respondents reported of their dissatisfaction with the promotion system of senior staff, while 44.5% indicated that they were satisfied. The dissatisfaction of the majority of the respondents with the promotion system could negatively influence their commitment to hard work and increased performance as described by Torrington and Taylor (2008) that the perception of employees about promotion and reward systems is a critical factor in driving their performance.

### Impact of promotion qualification criteria on employee performance

This section assesses impact of the promotion criteria on employees' performance. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the promotion criteria for senior staff encouraged them to always complete their job tasks on time. This was important because timeliness in job task delivery is considered an essential element in performance assessment. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: *Promotion Qualification Criteria Encouraging Staff to Always Complete Job Tasks on Time*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	22	11.0
Agree	61	30.5
Disagree	97	48.5
Strongly disagree	20	10.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey (2017)

Table 2 shows that 41.5% of the respondents admitted that the promotion qualification criteria of senior staff in the University encouraged them to always complete their job tasks on time, whereas the majority (58.5%) denied being encouraged by the promotion criteria. Some of the respondents added that they mostly completed their job tasks on time to avoid pressure and ensure the smooth running of their offices but not with the aim of gaining promotion. This could be attributed to their negative perception about the promotion system.

The study examined the level at which the promotion qualification criteria motivated the respondents to be punctual at work. From the study, whereas 39.5% of the respondents admitted that they were motivated by the promotion qualification criteria to be punctual at work, the majority (60.5%) denied being motivated by the promotion system. This is likely to reduce the amount of time majority of the respondents spent on their job tasks as explained by Khalifa and Truong (2010) that lateness to work reduces quantum of work that could be assigned to and executed by an employee. As a result, Malik et al. (2011) suggested that human resource management strategies should be directed at encouraging employees to be punctual and regular at work.

The study further assessed the extent to which the respondents were motivated by the promotion qualification criteria for senior staff to be regular at work. From the study, 48% of the respondents admitted to be motivated by the promotion qualification to be regular at work, whereas a little over half (52%) denied. However, some of the respondents added that even though they are not motivated to be punctual or regular at work, they are mostly punctual and regular to avoid queries from their supervisors and also maintain good reputation among colleagues and areas of work. The results show that the respondents were more concerned about the sanctions attached to the elements of poor performance than the anticipated rewards associated with increased performance. This was largely due to the perceived missing link between hard work and promotion qualification criteria.

Another issue considered under the section was the extent to which the promotion qualification criteria for senior staff promoted their commitment to work. The results are presented in Figure 2.



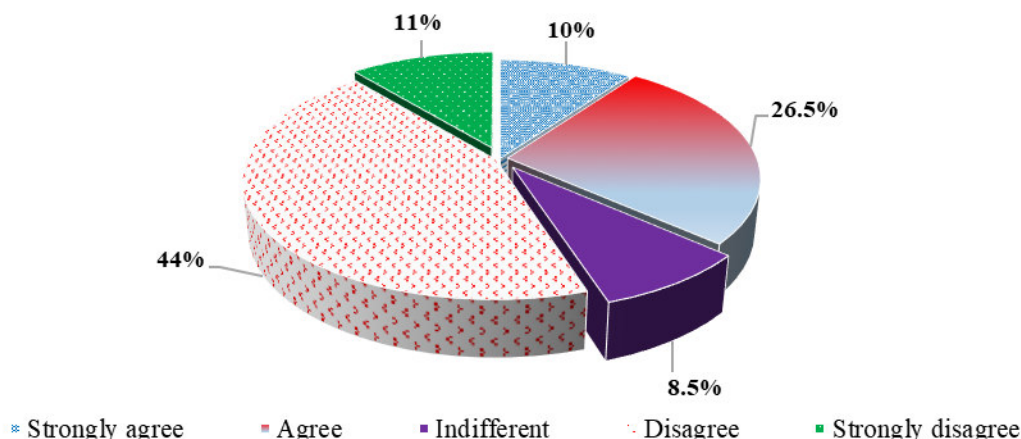


Figure 2: Promotion qualification criteria promoting commitment to work  
 Source: Field survey (2017)

Figure 2 shows that 10% of the respondents strongly agree that the promotion qualification criteria for senior staff promoted commitment to work, 26.5% agreed, 8.5% were indifferent, whereas 44% and 11% respectively agreed and strongly agreed. The results show that the majority (55%) of the respondents were not encouraged by the promotion qualification criteria to increase their commitment to work at the University. This shows that other factors apart from the promotion qualification criteria motivated the majority of the respondents to increase their commitment to work. This is not consistent with the assertion of Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) that employee promotion system should be structured in a way to encourage increased performance by stimulating dedication and commitment to work.

The respondents were further requested to indicate the extent to which the promotion qualification criteria promoted them to be committed to their supervisors. From the study, the majority (61.5%) of the respondents admitted that the promotion qualification criteria encouraged or compelled them to be committed to their supervisors, 28.5% denied, while 10% were indifferent. The results show that the majority of the respondents were more committed to their supervisors than the structures and systems instituted to promote increased performance. This was attributed to the role of supervisors in performance assessment and promotion. This posture is likely to increase the use of affinity to gain promotion rather than performance.

Thus, the study found that supervisors had to endorse the promotion form indicating their perception about one's promotion before one could send the forms to the human resource department. As a result, workers were more committed to their supervisors than the organisational processes. This manifested by performing additional roles outside the official job schedules for their supervisors. The implication is that the central role played by supervisors in the promotion of senior staff is compelling many staff to develop good relationship with them and use that affinity to enhance the promotion processes. Some of the respondents further indicated that punctuality and regularity at work largely depended on the type of office and posture of the supervisors.

Another issue considered was the extent to which supervisors do corrections on output of workers. From the study, the majority (77%) of the respondents admitted that their supervisors do minimal corrections on their working outputs, while 23% denied. The results imply that the majority of the respondents perceived themselves as high performers on their jobs. This is because minimal corrections on their work outputs means less time used to execute tasks, and less waste created in the execution of tasks.

The study further examined the proficiency levels of the respondents in computing. This was essential since most of the job tasks of senior staff require the use of computer. The study found that the majority (66.5%) of the respondents admitted to having good proficiency in computing to execute their job tasks, whereas 33.5% rated their proficiency levels as low. The study, however, found that most of the respondents were proficient in the use of Microsoft Word. Many of the respondents were also used to drafting their works on papers and later typing them out for their supervisors. This may slow down the task execution processes.

### Perception of management administrative staff on how the two promotion qualification criteria induce performance among senior staff

This section examined the perception of administrative supervisors of the senior staff on how the two promotion qualification criteria induce performance. The study found that there were mixed perceptions about the promotion qualification criteria of senior staff among the supervisors. Whereas some supervisors were satisfied with the promotion qualification criteria, others were dissatisfied. The main reason for those who were satisfied was that staff had the liberty to adopt any of the two systems available. On the other hand, those who were not satisfied indicated that the promotion qualification criteria is not fair to the older staff who finds it difficult to

study. One of the supervisors stated,

*“The system is not favourable to the older staff who have sacrificed so many years to work for the university and were not granted study leave or were disallowed by their unit heads because of the offices they held... now they have the experience but they cannot go back to school to fast track their promotion... they will have to rely on this incremental promotions which will take their whole working criteria without graduating to senior members”.*

The statement above shows how the promotion qualification criteria for senior staff favour young workers, with the ability to study for higher certificates, more than the older ones. It also shows that some unit heads intentionally prevent some staff to adopt the training metric to secure promotion. This was because the training metric mostly involves workers taking long leave to attend academic classes thereby disrupting operational processes.

The supervisors were requested to indicate how the two promotion qualification criteria encouraged performance among senior staff. From the study, all the respondents admitted that both promotion qualification criteria encouraged increased performance among senior staff. They indicated that staff try to increase their skills and performance to match up with the additional responsibilities they are given. However, some of the supervisors indicated that senior staff who use the training method without the necessary experience mostly have some challenges at the initial stages. One of the supervisors stated,

*“The development of the skills and competencies of senior staff to effectively assume higher responsibilities following promotion largely depends on the administrative heads... if we give them more work to do and correct them, they will improve and be up to the task... however, if we do everything by ourselves or work with few serious staff because we do not trust the rest, we will end up grooming people who are less competent for higher positions”.*

The narration above shows the central role of administrative supervisors in preparing senior staff to assume higher responsibilities. The implication is that performance management of senior staff is more of practicing on the job.

Another supervisor added that *“some staff rush to school for higher certificate to gain promotion without the requisite experience... most of such staff find it difficult to meet the performance benchmark for their promoted positions”.* The narration shows that higher certificate does not necessarily imply increased performance. The result also shows the importance of practical experience in the promotion and performance nexus of senior staff. The central issue is how the management of the university could relate performance with experience and higher certification. Experience should be measured not only in terms of time but also with skills and competence. The existing promotion qualification criteria on seniority places much focus on the time one spends on a particular rung on the promotion ladder. Nonetheless, attempts to draw relationship between promotion and performance should factor into the process practical demonstration of their expected roles.

The supervisors were requested to indicate their views on fairness in the application of the promotion qualification criteria among senior staff. There were mixed views among the supervisors with respect to fairness in the application of the promotion qualification criteria. Those who perceived the promotion qualification criteria as fair reported that the description is clearly stated in the appointment letters, and as a result, employees are at liberty to apply for promotion anytime they think they have satisfied any of the promotion qualification criterion. However, those who perceived the application of the promotion system as unfair indicated that the promotion of some staff delay unduly when others have theirs done quickly. This adds to the perception of the majority of the sampled senior staff that staff in certain sections and under particular unit heads have their promotions fast tracked than others. This negative perception is likely to breed apathy among senior staff in terms of building their confidence in the objectivity of the promotion process. According to Brown and Heywood (2005), apathy in the promotional system reduces employees' morale, commitment and performance levels. One of the supervisors reported, *“It is very disturbing to see your colleagues getting promotion while yours have been delayed for over a year without any justifiable reason... I have one staff here I want to go and follow her promotion tomorrow... it has been almost one year since she applied but no feedback from the human resource department... meanwhile others she applied with have received their promotion”.* This shows how the promotion system frustrates staff at some point.

The study further examined the differences in the experiences with senior staff receiving promotions from the two promotion qualification criteria. From the study, the general view was that those who use incremental promotion metrics were slightly higher than those with higher education certificate. This was because those with the incremental or seniority metric were able to support operational processes with organisational memory and use their experiences to supervise or control junior staff better than those with the training metric. However, it emerged that those with training metric were more innovative than those with the incremental metric. Thus, those with the incremental metric were mostly stuck to the old ways of doing things, whereas those with the training metric mostly try to use different ways doing things. The supervisors, therefore recommended for job rotation to enable senior staff learn from different supervisors to enable them gain much experience.

## Conclusions

Promotion systems have critical influence on the level of performance of senior staff. However, promotion should not be viewed as an act in single point in time, where the documents of an employee are reviewed and decision taken, but rather a process of grooming staff to assume higher responsibilities at sometimes in the future. This should involve deliberate efforts by both the direct supervisors and the appointment and promotion committee to examine practically the abilities of all candidates and their capacity to administer their roles. The study found that the incremental promotion qualification criterion induced performance slightly ahead of the training metric. This was largely attributed to the experience gained through repetitive activities. However, employees who used the training metric to gain promotion were considered to be more innovative because of their exposure to other practices. The study, therefore, concludes that the University should create a system to promote both experience and innovativeness under each promotion qualification criterion to enhance the performance of senior staff to effectively administer their roles.

## Recommendations

1. The study recommends that the human resource department of the University should organise a sensitisation programme to explain the promotion processes to senior staff. This will help to disabuse their thoughts and perceptions about unfair application of promotion system as well as the use of affinity by some staff to secure promotion.
2. The study suggests that the human resource department should develop clear guidelines for the implementation of the promotion system. This should include the time for feedback and response from the promotion review board or committee. This guideline will also help to bring transparency in the promotion process and avoid the unnecessary delays and frustrations staff have to go through before securing promotion.
3. The study suggests that the human resource department should sensitise the administrative supervisors on the need to define clear roles and responsibilities for each senior staff. This will help eliminate underutilisation of staff and underdevelopment of their skills to merit promotion.
4. The study recommends that the human resource department should intensify the job rotation practice for staff to enable the senior staff learn from different supervisors. This will enable them to acquire different experiences and innovative skills to administer their roles effectively for promotion. With this process, employees who are less used in particular sections or departments could have their skills enhanced in other departments.
5. It also recommends that the human resource department should regulate the use of the training metric for promotion. Thus, staff should be made to serve for some number of years before qualifying for study leave. In addition, the situation where some staff acquire higher certificate without the knowledge and prior approval from the human resource department should be restricted. This will enabled all staff to acquire some level of experience before acquiring higher certificate to gain promotion. This process will help establish a balance experience and innovation in the promotion-performance nexus.
6. It is recommended that the training and development section in collaboration with information and communication technology department should organise computer training programmes for senior staff. This programme should include all Microsoft Office applications and other softwares considered useful in administrative duties. In addition, the human resource department could make some these softwares mandatory promotion qualification criterion for senior staff at different levels. Knowledge on Microsoft Office programmes will help to boost the performance of senior staff.
7. The study recommends that the human resource department should make the promotion system for senior staff more practical by given applicants real administrative issues to address. As a result, performance level expectations for senior staff at the various rungs should be established. This will help compel most senior staff to involve themselves in the operational processes to gain adequate experience and skills to merit promotion. This will also help to bring some balance between the two promotion qualification criteria as staff will have to acquire certain skills before securing promotion.

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