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## Promotional Rules and the Extent of Adherence by Management in Selected South-South Universities in Nigeria: An Ethical Overview

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the extent to which laid down promotional rules are adhered to by the management of selected south-south universities. The theoretical basis for this study is the Justice Ethical Theory and the Labeling Theory. The application of the Taro Yamen sample size determination formula gave the researcher 381 lecturers as the sample size out of the 8,180 lecturers of the 8 randomly selected universities that formed the population and 174 Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) members out of the 307 members that constitute the A&PC of the 8 randomly selected South-South universities. The A&PC members were interviewed to get a balanced view. The Regression Analysis and the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient tools were used to test the research objective and hypothesis. The findings shows that laid down promotional procedures and rules are not followed and also lecturers participation in the Academic staff union of universities (ASUU) activities reduces their gaining promotion by 29.90%. It also shows antagonism and victimization of academic staff is an on going occurrence. This study recommends among others that promotion of lecturers should be based on laid down criteria whether one is an ally of the Vice Chancellor or not, unbiased and fair appointment of lecturers into senate and other key positions, raising a standing committee to handle grievances and face-offs, as well as removal of Vice Chancellors as members of Governing Councils and the Appointment and Promotion Committees so that he does not become the prosecutor and the judge at the same time.*

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### **Introduction**

Most institutions or organizations have got laid down promotional rules and procedures, but complying with them is another issue. Armstrong (1995), stressed that the aims of laid down promotion procedures of an institution are first to provide employees with an equal opportunity to advance their careers within the organization in accordance with the opportunities available taking into account equal opportunity policies and staff own abilities and second, to enable management to obtain the best talents available within the institution or organization to fill more senior posts.

Job promotion is the movement or change within an organization to a higher position that has greater responsibilities and requires more advanced skills. It usually involves higher status and an increase in pay. It may also be a reward for outstanding performance or a result of the institution's desire to better utilize an individual's skill and abilities. Koontz and Weihrich (1994) also see promotion as a reward for past performance, but only if there is evidence of

potential competency; otherwise persons may be promoted to a level which they are incompetent.

Promotion opportunities should be open to all, irrespective of race, creed, sex, marital status, religion, and membership of the in-group or out-group. In any institution where promotional moves and promotion arrangements cause problems and suspicion, it is advisable to have a promotion policy and procedure which is known to both the management and to the employees of that institution. Also, this procedure should take full account of equal opportunity policies which should be incorporated into equal opportunity policy statements.

Happenings in some of the universities in South-South Nigeria and other parts of Nigeria concerning promotion have been subjective. The Guardian Newspaper of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 pointed out that subjective considerations and sentiments are used to advance unworthy persons in universities, while pettiness has informed the delay or denial of other person's promotion. Fellow of Nigerian Academy of letters, Prof. Ayodeji Olukoju stressed that undeserved promotions have made job satisfaction and morale drop. He again stressed strongly that promotion in Nigerian universities even up to professional level now are not based on merit, but based on religion, ethnicity, state of origin, sex, and membership of open and secret societies amongst other factors.

Tantua (2015) pointed out that because of the existence of promotion not in conformity or compliance with the laid down rules and regulations, we now term some Professors as Professors starting with capital letter 'P' and other professors with small letter 'p'. Forgeries and plagiarism are also used to gain promotion. Some university management compromise due process to promote academic staff. The immediate past chairman of LASU-ASUU, Dr. Adekunle Idris, pointedly accused Obafunwa's Administration of Lagos State University of circumventing the process of professorial appointments, saying some of the appointees were promoted to the highest academic level with only 13 papers including "Lesson Notes".

All university teachers in the Federal and State Universities in Nigeria supposedly belong to an umbrella body called the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU. Lecturers mostly, and other staff working in the university criticize the university's management policies and also the policies of the government, and these have led to face-offs, disagreements, and strikes between the government, ASUU and the management of universities.

Therefore Vice Chancellors are constantly looking for loyalists, allies and stooges to consolidate their positions one of the ways through which the Vice Chancellors reward their allies and punish their critics and perceived enemies as well as the perceived enemies of their 'kitchen cabinet' is through promotion and appointments to key positions. Academic staffs as well as other staff who are vocal and criticize the university's management policies are denied promotion. The Vice Chancellor allies are allowed to choose external examiners/assessors for themselves and are aided by the management of the university to gain promotion.

Promotion for the perceived enemies of the Vice Chancellors/Management and the perceived enemies of his 'kitchen cabinet' are been stifled. Lecturers' files get missing when they are to be appraised simply because they criticize the policies of the university's management. Lecturers

who are perceived as not been loyal to the Vice Chancellor have their papers for assessment missing in transit or are deliberately delayed. In some cases too, assessment papers are kept on the shelves purposely by the university's management unknown to the lecturer without sending them out for assessment just to victimize the lecturer.

Tantua (2015) further stressed that;

*“Lecturers who are kitchen cabinet members are promoted without meeting the criteria for promotion and are sometimes promoted with fake publications. Lecturers who belong to the inner circle commit offences that are unethical which are known to the management and are not persecuted. Even when the management gets petitions concerning them, the management pretends not to have seen the petition”. Pp 152.*

This stance again was buttressed by Emezue (2009) in Anele (2011) as he remarked that;

*“Some university senates have become an extension of the Vice Chancellors whims and caprices. The result is a senate acquiesces to every opinion of the Vice Chancellor whether good or bad. Minions are promoted and offered senate positions while hard working and responsible academics are relegated to the background” ... Pp63.*

Tantua (2015) carried out a study on ‘Trade Union Activism Among Academic Staff and Career Advancement in selected South–South Universities in Nigeria’ and found out that in one of the universities used for the study, the Vice Chancellor of the state university faced stiff opposition in their Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) meeting when he wanted to promote his kinsman a professor without meeting the laid down rules. The Vice Chancellor adjourned the meeting and reconvened the meeting at a later date and did not invite all those professors who opposed him making his kinsman a professor.

Also, the study brought certain interesting revelations to limelight. The management of the randomly selected South–South Universities stressed that lecturers and their union (ASUU) see themselves or the union as a parallel Government or Administration, and as such one of the ways to tame them is to deny them promotion.

Again according to the management of these universities, the disposition of a lecturer over the years of his stay in the university plays a significant role. If any lecturer has been confrontational or has been critical of the policies of the university, when it comes to promotion, it would be stifled irrespective of whether he meets the criteria or not. Because according to the management, it is pay back time.

Another reason the management of these randomly selected universities gave for not promoting staff when they have met the laid down criteria is lack of funds due to budgetary allocations. Promotion according to the management comes with increment in salaries and when the budgetary allocation cannot accommodate the increment, then no promotion would be given whether the criteria has been met or not. Again according to some of the A&PC members of the randomly selected universities who were the respondents, you will find up to 10 professors in a department in some cases, and no Graduate Assistants, Assistant Lecturers, Lecturer two and

Lecturer one and this takes a big slice into the funds of the university. They advised that there should be more professorial chairs from companies to lighten the financial burden of universities.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is based on the Justice Ethical Theory and the Labeling Theory. The Justice Ethical Theory posits that an ethical decision is a decision that distributes benefits and harms among stakeholders in a fair, equitable, or impartial way.

The implication is that Head of Institutions and Principal Officers should compare and contrast alternative course of action based on the degree to which the action will promote a fair distribution of outcomes. That is employees who are similar in their level of skill, performance, or responsibility should receive the same kind of pay. The allocation of outcomes should not be based on arbitrary differences such as gender, race, or religion.

The Labeling theory attempts to explain why certain people are viewed as bad and deviant while others engaging in the same behaviour are not. Labeling Theory recognizes that some individuals or groups in a system have the power to define labels and actually do define labels and go ahead to apply them to others.

The labeling theory attempts to explain why certain people or employees are victimized, sidelined, antagonized and viewed as deviants, delinquent, “bad kids”, “losers”, and are marginalized, while others whose behaviour is the same or similar are not seen in such harsh terms and are flavored .

Vice Chancellors, Directors, Head of Departments and other employees at the top hierarchy who have subordinates, represent the forces of law and order and who are able to impose definitions of conventional morality on others, do the labeling. Their label creates categories of deviance and expresses the power structure in the organization. By and large, the rules in terms of which defiance is defined are framed by Management and the people in the helm of affairs for the rank and file, framed by the wealthy for the poor, and by ethnic majorities for minority groups.

This reason is true of the educational system, where a superior officer or group of superior officers create an in-group and out-group situation. The work place is now becoming a war zone and employees are victimized at work. The tactics of victimization include antagonism, character assassination, verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, cold shoulder treatment, denial of promotion, missing files, termination of appointment and also death threats among others. Members of the in-group are appointed into key positions and members of the out-group are stagnated no matter how hard they work.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The cross-sectional survey method of research design was employed by the researcher. Primary source of data (information acquired directly from the respondents) and the secondary source of data (collection of already existing data) were used for this study. The study population consisted of all teaching staff of the 8 randomly selected universities used for this study in which comprised of 4 federal universities; University of Benin, University of Port Harcourt, University of Calabar and University of Uyo, as well as 4 State Universities which are Delta State

university, Ambrose Alli University, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, and Cross River State University of Technology; Past and Present ASUU Executives, and Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) members of the selected universities. The application of the Taro Yamen formula gave the researcher 381 lecturers as the sample size out of the 8,180 lecturers and 174 staff out of the 307 members that constitute the Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) of the 8 randomly selected south-south universities. Two sampling methods were adopted; the simple random sampling and the purposive sampling. The main instruments used for the collection of data include questionnaire, personal interview and observation. The Regression Analysis and the Spearman Correlation Coefficient were used for testing and analyzing the research objective and the research hypothesis. The test was computed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Descriptive statistical tools were also used for presentation and analysis. This also involved the use of frequency distributions and percentages. In this study, the instrument for primary data collection (questionnaire) was subjected to a face and content validity before professors in my university and its reliability was determined and ascertained through a pilot survey of thirty lecturers drawn from where I teach – Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt other than those in the south-south zone of Nigeria. A test-retest method was adopted. In measuring job promotion based on the movement from one position to a higher position in their respective universities, the respondents were required to rate the test items on a five point likert scale of; strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). The first part of the scale (left side) indicates a positive strength, while the second part (right side) indicates a negative strength.

### Research Objective

To examine the extent to which a lecturer's participation in academic activities and trade union activities influences their job promotion.

Here, job promotion is regressed against trade union participation.

Model summary for trade union participation and job promotion

Table 1.1

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.547 <sup>a</sup>	.299	.297	.42913

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trade Union Participation (Tolerance)

From the regression model summary in the table above, multiple correlation coefficient (R) = 0.547 indicates a strong positive linear relationship between the independent variable, trade union participation, and the dependent variable, job promotion. Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.299 indicates that about 29.90% of the variance in job promotion can be explained by variations in trade union participation. This figure measures the goodness of fit of the model and because of the low value of 29.90%, this model is said to be not a good fit.

**Table 1.2: Coefficient of trade union participation as a function of job promotion Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	2.946	.055		53.228	.000
Trade Union Participation (Tolerance)	-.242	.025	-.547	-11.113	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Promotion

Table 1.2 above shows that for 1 unit change in trade union participation, job promotion decreases by 0.242 units. This result is significant as the p-value (= 0.000) is less than  $\alpha$  (= 0.05) making the variable, trade union participation, an important and reliable predictor of job promotion. However, we need to test this result for overall significance. From the F-distribution table in Appendix G, the critical value obtained at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , d.f.N = 1, and d.f.D. = 289 is 3.92. Since  $F$  (= 123.5) is greater than the critical value (=3.92), and also since, the p-value (= 0.000) is less than  $\alpha$  (= 0.05), the decision is to conclude that trade union participation significantly influences job promotion among academic staff of universities in South-south Nigeria.

Therefore, a co-efficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) of 0.299 revealed that about 29.90% of the variance in job promotion can be explained by variations in trade union participation, which was found to be a reliable predictor since its F statistics returned significant.

### Hypothesis Testing

#### Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between trade union participation and Job Promotion in the South-South universities.

**Table 4.3: Result of Spearman correlation coefficient on trade union participation and Job Promotion**

#### Correlations

			Trade Union Activism (Tolerance)	Job Promotion
Spearman's rho	Trade Union Participation (Tolerance)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.649**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	291	291
	Job Promotion	Correlation Coefficient	-.640**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	291	291

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



Source: SPSS ver. 20.0 Output window

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

- This section of the study focused on the data generated during the field survey where the researcher subjected them to statistical analyses.
- We used the Simple Linear Regression Analysis and the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient in determining the extent to which a lecturers job activities and his trade union participation affects job promotion.
- Results from each analysis were tested for significance of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05 level of significance and the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 was the software package employed in analysis of data.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research has shown, using the major findings as a basis that laid down promotion guidelines are not adhered to by the management of South-South universities in Nigeria. Also the lecturers job activities and his participation in trade union activities significantly affects job promotion. In addition, there is a high rate of victimization of academic staff by the management of South-South universities as perceived by colleagues. Empirical analysis used two perspectives to present the nature of the relationship between the lecturers job activities and promotion; the first analysis enabled us to understand that the activities of a lecturer significantly affects job promotion.

The second analysis made us understand that the nature of the relationship was negative. What this implies is that the more an academic staff becomes vocal and engages in trade union participation, the less will be his/her chances for promotion in universities of South-South, Nigeria. Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made; promotion of lecturers should be based on laid down criteria whether he is an ally of the vice chancellor or not, raising a standing reconciliation/grievance handling committee which should have religious body leaders as its members, unbiased and fair appointment of principal officers and to key positions, removal of the Vice Chancellor as a member of A&PC and Governing Council so that he does not become the prosecutor and judge at the same time.

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