



## Relationship between promotion and employees' performance: Evidence from the university of Abuja

Innocent Uchechukwu Duru<sup>1\*</sup> --- Millicent Adanne Eze<sup>2</sup> --- Abubakar Yusuf<sup>3</sup> --- Iyaji Danjuma<sup>4</sup> --- Abubakar Sadiq Saleh<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Economics, Rhema University Nigeria, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.

Email: [iud3r@yahoo.com](mailto:iud3r@yahoo.com)

<sup>2</sup>School of Business, Law and Social Sciences, Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom.

Email: [emillicent@gmail.com](mailto:emillicent@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>National Metallurgical Development Centre, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Email: [bbkr\\_yusuf2000@yahoo.com](mailto:bbkr_yusuf2000@yahoo.com)

<sup>4</sup>Department of Economics, Nigerian Army University, Biu, Borno State, Nigeria.

Email: [danjumaivyaji@gmail.com](mailto:danjumaivyaji@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup>Department of Banking and Finance, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria.

Email: [abubakar.saleh@nileuniversity.edu.ng](mailto:abubakar.saleh@nileuniversity.edu.ng)

### Abstract

*This study investigated the relationship between promotion and employees' performance at the University of Abuja. The study utilized a descriptive research design. The multiple regression methodology and descriptive statistics were employed for the analysis of data. The data was derived through structured questionnaires from 337 workers at the University of Abuja. The findings indicated that the university treats you fairly and equitably with regard to promotion, the university provides opportunities for career development and the university provides promotional opportunities had a positive influence on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. Conversely, the university is fair and equitable in its treatment of management had a negative impact on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. However, the university provides clear and consistent requirements for promotion, the university supports ongoing professional development, the university acknowledges the long hours you devote to work and the university rewards excellence in performance through a promotion system did not exert a significant effect on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. The University treats you fairly and equitably with regard to promotion, the university provides opportunities for career development and the university provides promotional opportunities had a positive influence on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. However, the university is fair and equitable in its treatment of management had a negative impact on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. The results suggest that the management of the University of Abuja should continue treating their employees fairly concerning promotion to increase performance. In addition, the university management should sustain their policies on promotions and career development. Furthermore, the management of the University of Abuja needs to review and reinforce the way it handles its management.*

**Keywords:** Employee's performance, Nigeria, Promotion, University of Abuja.

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## 1. Introduction

The realization of an organizational mission and vision in a world characterized by competition and uncertainties is contingent on the satisfaction of its workforce. Workers' satisfaction in organizations could be attained through promotion among other factors. In developing and developed economies, promotion acts as a veritable instrument for self-development, the attainment of workers satisfaction, the development of the spirit of competition, reduction of workers turnover, the attraction of skilled and industrious individuals and realization of optimal performance from the workforce. The low performance of universities in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general is a major challenge of the 21st century. There is no African university in the first 244 universities ranked in the web ranking of universities in the world (Webometrics, 2022).

The performance of employees in private and public institutions is a critical issue because it serves as the yardstick for employees' promotion to higher ranks. The recommendation of Chen and Silverthorne (2008) that the performance scores of employees should be used as the benchmark for promotion to foster hard work and competition among employees for the advancement of business organizations' growth and development underlines this. In the contention of Hameed and Amjad (2009) promotion is important to employees and the owners of the business. Arthur, Kaphova, and Wilderon (2005) stated that it inspires promoted workers to increase their productivity resulting in improvement in the general growth and development of organisations.

No wonder, Yasmeeen, Umar, and Fahad (2013) stressed that job promotion exerts a powerful effect on the performance of organizations. Thus, workers' promotion in organizations should follow laid-down promotion policies and practices. The findings of this study may inform the design of appropriate promotion practices to drive the productivity of workers at the University of Abuja. In addition, the findings would enable the policymakers of government to make knowledgeable decisions in the articulation of incentive policies in tertiary institutions. Furthermore, the findings may result in a policy for the attraction, satisfaction and retention of competent workers at the University of Abuja.

Armstrong (1984) stressed that promotion inspires individuals to work in an organization for a long time for the fulfilment of their needs, which subsequently results in increased performance and stability of organizations. Thus, as was stated by Tilahun (2019) "the loss of employee represents a loss of skills, knowledge and experiences which can create a significant economic impact and cost to the organization as well as impacting the needs of customers (p. 4).

The Nigeria's National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025, envisions an economy on the path to unlocking its capability in every sector of the economy for sustainable and all-inclusive national development (Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (FMFBNP, 2020). This plan is tailored towards the attainment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's pledge of removing 100 million Nigerians from poverty in 10 years. Specifically, 21 million permanent jobs are expected to be created by this plan by 2025. In addition, by 2025, 35 million persons are anticipated to be lifted out of poverty. As was stated in the plan, high-quality economic growth and a more inclusive economy are the avenues through which these goals can be accomplished using its youthful labour force and supplemented by the ability for implementation at national and subnational levels.

Therefore, Nigeria will grow meaningfully in the direction of unlocking its capacities in every sector of the economy for sustainable and all-inclusive national development with the efficient execution of this plan. As part of other issues for implementation, if the young workforces who are also part of the University system are not adequately motivated through promotions among others, this objective may not be achieved. Notwithstanding the presence of some academic and non-academic staff that are highly productive, generally, the University of Abuja is lagging far behind similar institutions in the universe.

Statistics from the ranking of world universities confirm this. This statistical fact underscores the poor performance of African universities in general and the University of Abuja in particular. No wonder, Duru, Eze, Yusuf, Udo, and Saleh (2022) stated that "the Federal Government of Nigeria has been deficient in the management of workers of government universities in Nigeria, particularly from the perspective of career advancement, remuneration and training of these workers" (p. 70). Again, regardless of the attempts by the management of the University of Abuja to promote its workers, some employees believe that promotions are delayed and characterized by nepotism as well, resulting in labour turnover particularly the loss of highly skilled employees.

Most of the time, all the employees qualified for promotions are not promoted. This prompts the question of whether the management of the University of Abuja engages in annual performance evaluation at the appropriate time and promotes their employees based on it to inspire them and prepare them to adapt to increased competition triggered by changes in economic and political environments, changes in technology and globalization to improve their performances?

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of promotion practices on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. The question to address is what is the influence of promotion practices on employees' performance at the University of Abuja? The rest of this paper is organized into five sections. The second section discusses the literature review and theoretical framework. The methodology was discussed in section three. Section four would focus on results and discussions. Section five consists of conclusion and recommendations.

## 2. Theoretical and Empirical Issues

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study was reinforced by the equity theory developed by Adams (1963). This theory proposed that employees would be motivated to work better when there is fair treatment in the workplace. In other words, when the promotion practices in an organization are fair, the motivation of employees increases resulting in increased performance and productivity respectively. Furthermore, this theory stressed the need for a balance between employees' work inputs and outputs in the workplace referred to as inputs and outputs. Perkins (2011) opined that this is the yardstick for determining what represents a fair balance of inputs and outputs.

Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) maintained that workers' impacts on the establishment, comprising of education level, hard work, loyalty, number of years with the establishment, skills and training constitute inputs. Contrariwise, the apparent reward that employees can obtain from this circumstance, which is promotion, in this situation is known as outputs or outcomes. Thus, in the contention of Adams (1965) the ratio of input to the output of workers should be compared to the ratio of input to the output of their co-workers in the same circumstances and workplaces. Hence, this theory strikes a balance between the ratio of input to the output of an employee to attain satisfaction which in this case is promotion. Thus, any establishment that wants to retain its employees needs to adopt equity principles concerning promotion.

This is premised on the fact that workers appreciate fair treatment contingent on their responsibilities. As far as the promotion of employees is concerned, workers compare their labours to climb through the stages of an establishment to their co-workers to draw motivation to boost their performance or not (Ansah, 2017). Adam's equity theory proposed that workers will be motivated, glad and work to boost the production level in the organization if inputs are justly and sufficiently rewarded by outputs (Adams & Kirst, 1998). By implication, if the efforts of the employees are yielding the desired reward for getting promotions compared to co-workers, it would motivate them to increase their performance. Hence, if workers' promotions are based on the results of the annual performance evaluation, there would be an improvement in the general performance of the organization. Bowles and Gelfand (2010) maintained that this happens if the annual performance evaluation results are used as the main standard for promotion in an establishment. In contrast, when the annual performance evaluation results are not utilized as a yardstick for promotion, workers will not be motivated to boost their performance in an establishment. It results in work dissatisfaction, low morale of workers, low workers performance and poor organizational performance. One of the ways through which employees can get this kind of promotion is nepotism. However, Ross and Kapitan (2018) claimed that the absence of equity at the workstation could prompt dissatisfied workers to leave their present jobs in pursuit of well-paid jobs or reduce the overall productivity of the organization by lowering their effectiveness at work.

Based on the equity theory, two things to be considered by managers for promotion are a uniform chance for promotion among all workers and the link between workers' inputs and outputs (Hellriegel, Slocum, & Woodman, 1998). As far as the current study is considered, the position of the equity theory is that promotion practices at the University of Abuja should be free and fair to motivate the workers to improve their general performance. Thus, when workers are satisfied with the University of Abuja's promotion practices, it would serve as a yardstick to perform better causing an increase in performance.

### 2.2. Review of Empirical Studies

The studies on the relationship between promotion and employees' performance (Ansah, 2017; Hidig, 2014; Ligare, Wanyama, & Aliata, 2020; Peter, 2014; Ratemo, Bula, & Makhamara, 2021; Rinny, Purba, & Handiman, 2020; Winoto, Surati, & Wahyulina, 2021) were little. First, Peter (2014) employed the survey research design and descriptive statistics to investigate the effect of promotion on employees' performance at Dar es Salaam City Council (DCC). The 150 employees employed for this study were selected from 300 employees utilizing purposive, convenience and simple random sampling techniques. The results revealed the awareness of promotion procedures among DCC workers. However, there was an emphasis that it should be spelt out clearly to all workers by the human resource department.

In addition, the results showed that promotion influenced the performance of employees and the organization respectively. Furthermore, the findings revealed that non-adherence to procedures of promotion affected individual and organizational performance respectively. These were in terms of accumulated promotion, poor performance, poor relations and labour turnover. Hidig (2014) used descriptive research design and inferential statistics to examine the link between promotion policies and employees' performance in Golis Company branches in Dhahar. The 160 employees employed for this study were selected from 267 employees utilizing purposive and systematic sampling techniques and the Slovene formula. The results revealed that promotion policies had a positive and significant relationship with employees' performance.

Ansah (2017) utilized the mixed method research design to determine the effectiveness of two criteria of promotion in engendering the performance of the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. Five assistant registrars and 200 senior employees constituted the sample. The findings indicated that supervisors had mixed opinions about the qualification criteria for senior staff promotion. In addition, the results showed that the systems of promotion had a significant influence on senior staff performance. Rinny et al. (2020) used the multiple linear regression methodology to investigate the relationship between compensation, job promotions,

job satisfaction and the performance of the academic staff of Mercu Buana University. The 77 employees employed for this study were selected from 332 employees utilizing the convenience sampling technique.

The findings indicated that job promotions and job satisfaction exerted a positive influence on the academic staff performance of Mercu Buana University. However, compensation had a negative and insignificant effect on the performance of the academic staff of Mercu Buana University. In Kenya, [Ligare et al. \(2020\)](#) used a survey research design, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to investigate the influence of job promotion on the performance of administrative police officers in Bungoma County. The 384 administrative police officers employed for this study were selected from 1318 administrative police officers utilizing simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and systematic random sampling methods. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between job promotion and the performance of administrative police officers in Bungoma County. [Ratemo et al. \(2021\)](#) used a survey research design, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to examine the influences of job promotion practices on workers' performance at Kenya Forestry Research Institute in Muguga. The 121 workers used for this study were chosen from 178 employees using a stratified random sampling method. The results indicated that job promotion practices exerted a significant effect on employee performance at Kenya Forestry Research Institute. The effect of demotion, promotion and transfer on work motivation and performance of the West Nusa Tenggara Regional Police was investigated by [Winoto et al. \(2021\)](#) employing the Structural Equation Model (SEM) Partial Least Square (PLS). The findings disclosed that promotion and transfer exerted a positive influence on work motivation.

Contrariwise, demotion exerted a negative effect on work motivation. However, motivation exerted a positive influence on the performance of West Nusa Tenggara Regional Police. The literature review indicated that studies on the relationship between promotion and employees' performances were limited. A number of the studies were undertaken in the context of other African countries. On the other hand, the absence of empirical studies on the nexus between promotion and employee performance in Nigeria informed this study. To the best of our knowledge, the only related previous study in Nigeria had a different focus. This was the study conducted by [Abdulmumini \(2021\)](#) on the impact of promotion on academic staff development in the State Higher Educational Institutions of Borno State. This study consequently intends to close this gap by examining the relationship between promotion and employee performance at the University of Abuja.

### 3. Methodology

This study was based on the University of Abuja and employed the descriptive research design. The 2145 employees of the University of Abuja formed the study population. It involves 640 academic staff and 1505 non-academic staff. The Yamane's formula was utilized to select a sample of 337 workers from the population of 2145 workers.

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

Where:

$n$  = sample size

$N$  = population

$e$  = allowable error (%)

Substitution into the formula yields:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{2145}{1 + 2145(0.05)^2} \\ n &= \frac{2145}{1 + 2145(0.0025)} \\ n &= \frac{2145}{1 + 5.3625} \\ n &= \frac{2145}{6.3625} \\ n &= 337.13 \end{aligned}$$

The sampling method used for this study was simple random sampling. It was utilized to ensure that each worker has an equal chance of being chosen in the sample. The instrument for data gathering was a structured questionnaire. The eight items established by [Krivokapic-Skoko, O'Neill, and Dowell \(2009\)](#) were used to measure promotion. On the other hand, we employed 11 items to measure workers' performance. Out of the 11 factors of work performance, productivity was utilized to measure it because it was extensively used by other scholars in the literature. Regression methodology and descriptive statistics were employed for the analysis of data. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to determine the presence of unique items from the construct of promotion.

### 4. Results and Discussions

Out of the Three Hundred and Thirty-Seven questionnaires administered to respondents, 300 questionnaires were retrieved. This denotes response and non-response rates of 89% and 11% respectively. A Cronbach-alpha reliability value of 0.969 and 0.859 was realized for work performance measures and construct

of promotion respectively. These values showed that the instrument was reliable. A Cronbach Alpha score of 0.932 was obtained for the whole instrument. These coefficients were deemed reliable for data analysis. Table 1 shows the background characteristics of the respondents. The background characteristics of the respondents are depicted in Table 1. It revealed that 220 respondents representing 73.3% were the academic staff. Conversely, 80 respondents representing 26.7% were the non-academic staff. It revealed that 116 respondents representing 38.7% had worked at the University of Abuja between 11 to 15 years. However, the rest representing 61.3% were distributed among less than 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, 16 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years and 26 years and above. From the angle of their marital status, 225 respondents representing 75% were married and 75 respondents representing 25% were single. However, 0 or 0% was shared equally by the divorced, never married, engaged to be married, widowed and separated. The findings showed that 235 respondents representing 78.3% were male and the remaining 65 respondents representing 21.7% were female. Furthermore, 124 respondents in the age group of 31 to 35 years representing 41.3% constituted the majority. Conversely, the remaining respondents in the age groups of 21 to 25 years, 26 to 30 years, 36 to 40 years, 41 to 45 years, 46 to 50 years, 51 to 55 years and 56 to 60 years represented 58.7%. In terms of education, 272 respondents representing 90.7% had tertiary education. In addition, 16 respondents representing 5.3% had secondary education. However, 12 respondents representing 4% had polytechnic education.

**Table 1.** Percentage distribution of respondents based on background characteristics.

Variable	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Type of staff	Academic staff	220	73.3
	Non-academic staff	80	26.7
	Total	300	100.0
Number of years worked	Less than 5 years	40	13.3
	6-10 Years	49	16.3
	11-15 Years	116	38.7
	16-20 Years	29	9.7
	21-25 Years	40	13.3
	26 Years and above	26	8.7
	Total	300	100.0
Marital status	Married	225	75.0
	Single	75	25.0
	Widowed	0	0.0
	Separated	0	0.0
	Never married	0	0.0
	Divorced	0	0.0
	Engaged to be married	0	0.0
	Total	300	100.0
Gender	Male	235	78.3
	Female	65	21.7
	Total	300	100.0
Age	21-25 Years	4	1.3
	26-30 Years	41	13.7
	31-35 Years	124	41.3
	36-40 Years	14	4.7
	41-45 Years	42	14.0
	46-50 Years	15	5.0
	51-55 Years	45	15.0
	56-60 Years	15	5.0
	61-65 Years	0	0.0
	66-70 Years	0	0.0
Total	300	100.0	
Education	No education	0	0.0
	Primary education	0	0.0
	Secondary education	16	5.3
	Polytechnic education	12	4.0
	Tertiary education	272	90.7
	Total	300	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022.

In Table 2, the evaluation of the effectiveness of promotion practices at the University of Abuja was done through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. The eight items used to measure promotion were adopted from Krivokapic-Skoko et al. (2009). The respondents were requested to assess their agreement level with the promotion practices at the University of Abuja.

**Table 2.** Influences of promotion practices at the University of Abuja.

Code	Opinion	Strongly agree (X5)	Agree (X4)	Undecided (X3)	Disagree (X2)	Strongly disagree (X1)	Sum	Mean	Std. dev.	Rank
PP1	The university provides clear and consistent requirements for promotion	275	424	174	88	37	998	3.33	1.28	1 <sup>st</sup>
PP2	The university treats you fairly and equitably with regard to promotion	50	500	150	136	47	883	2.94	1.19	2 <sup>nd</sup>
PP3	The university is fair and equitable in its treatment of management	45	252	177	210	64	748	2.49	1.13	4 <sup>th</sup>
PP4	The university provides opportunities for career development	190	116	126	212	85	729	2.43	1.33	5 <sup>th</sup>
PP5	The university supports ongoing professional development	245	92	102	86	151	676	2.25	1.53	7 <sup>th</sup>
PP6	The university provides promotional opportunities	215	128	96	44	171	654	2.18	1.54	8 <sup>th</sup>
PP7	The university acknowledges the long hours you devote to work	45	344	126	238	44	797	2.66	1.13	3 <sup>rd</sup>
PP8	The university rewards excellence in performance through a promotion system	45	360	99	70	133	707	2.36	1.38	6 <sup>th</sup>

**Note:** PP denotes promotion practices.

**Source:** Field survey, 2022.

The average of a five points ranking scale (3.00) was used as a standard for decision. If the mean value was  $\geq 3.00$ , the view was regarded as agreed. Conversely, if the mean value was  $< 3.00$ , the view was regarded as not agreed. The respondents agreed that the university provides clear and consistent requirements for promotion. It was ranked first and was the only promotion construct variable ranked above a mean score of 3.00. On the other hand, the respondents accepted that the remaining practices of promotion were ineffective at the University of Abuja. This was underscored by the ranking of these promotion practices below the mean score of 3.00.

**Table 3.** Factor analysis results of the construct of promotion.

Code	Factors and observed variables	Loadings	Eigenvalues	Percentage of variance
Factor: Promotion practices				
PP1	The university provides clear and consistent requirements for promotion.	0.713	4.199	52.483
PP2	The university treats you fairly and equitably with regard to promotion.	0.786	2.239	27.988
PP3	The university is fair and equitable in its treatment of management.	0.856	0.670	8.372
PP4	The university provides opportunities for career development.	0.851	0.292	3.645
PP5	The university supports ongoing professional development.	0.790	0.279	3.482
PP6	The university provides promotional opportunities.	0.779	0.157	1.963
PP7	The university acknowledges the long hours you devote to work.	0.405	0.124	1.554
PP8	The university rewards excellence in performance through a promotion system.	0.470	0.041	0.514
Total variance explained by motivation				100.000

**Note:** Extraction method: Principal component analysis. KMO measure of sampling adequacy = 0.754, Bartlett's chi-square 2304.44 with 28 D.F.,  $p < 0.05$ , and Bartlett's test of sphericity = 0.000.

The PCA result is shown in Table 3. No element of promotion practices was rejected. The whole factors showed good internal reliability and were validated for additional analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement assumption was satisfied. The relevance of the investigation was underscored by the KMO value of 0.754. The importance of factor analysis was further underlined by the significance of the Bartlett test of sphericity.

**Table 4.** Results of regression analysis.

Factor/Model	Unstandardized coefficients	Standard error	t-statistic	Sig.
Constant	0.636	0.187	3.397	0.001
The university provides clear and consistent requirements for promotion	-0.090	0.070	-1.300	0.195
The university treats you fairly and equitably with regard to promotion	0.556	0.087	6.425	0.000
The university is fair and equitable in its treatment of management	-0.309	0.081	-3.807	0.000
The university provides opportunities for career development	0.254	0.093	2.732	0.007
The university supports ongoing professional development	-0.237	0.135	-1.756	0.080
The university provides promotional opportunities	0.660	0.109	6.037	0.000
The university acknowledges the long hours you devote to work	0.003	0.098	0.031	0.976
The university rewards excellence in performance through a promotion system	0.039	0.081	0.488	0.626
Model parameters				
R <sup>2</sup>	0.571			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.559			
F-value (Sig.)	48.394 (0.000)			

**Note:** Dependent variable: Workers' performance.

The findings of the regression analysis are shown in Table 4. The findings showed that four factors of promotion practices had a significant relationship with workers' performance at the University of Abuja. The university treats you fairly and equitably with regard to promotion had a positive effect on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. The university is fair and equitable in its treatment of management had a negative impact on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. In addition, the university provides opportunities for career development exerted a positive influence on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. Furthermore, the university provides promotional opportunities had a positive effect on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. The findings revealed that promotion practices explained 57% of employees' performance at the University. The good fit of the model was underlined by the F-statistic of 48.394 and its significance estimate of 0.000.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Four out of the eight promotion practices did not have a significant effect on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. These are as follows: the university provides clear and consistent requirements for promotion, the university supports ongoing professional development, the university acknowledges the long hours you devote to work and the university rewards excellence in performance through a promotion system. In addition, three promotion practices had a positive effect on employees' performance at the University of Abuja. These are the university treats you fairly and equitably with regard to promotion, the university provides opportunities for career development and the university provides promotional opportunities. However, the university is fair and equitable in its treatment of management had a negative impact on employees' performance at the University of Abuja.

The study recommends that the management of the University of Abuja should continue treating their employees fairly concerning promotion to increase productivity. In addition, the university management should sustain their policies on promotions and career development. Furthermore, the management of the University of Abuja needs to review and reinforce the way it handles its management.

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