Experiences of Academic Staff Towards Promotion and Professional Development in Selected Public Universities in Tanzania: A Situational Analysis

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Abstract

There has been a constant debate regarding fairness during the promotion process and academic growth among the academic staff in higher education around the world. In the context of Tanzania, higher education depends on the academic qualifications, ranks, experience and level of job satisfaction among their academic staff for quality teaching, research and consultancy works. This mixed study focused on the experiences and attitudes of 85 staff on promotion and motivation from a selected public university in Tanzania. Quantitative data were collected from 74 academic staff, 1 professor, 4 senior lecturers, 30 lecturers, 25 assistant lecturers and 14 tutorial assistants. Moreover, 3 staff from the human resources directorate and 8 heads of academic departments were interviewed. The results demonstrated that the majority of the academic staff (82%) were satisfied with the sponsorship process in local and overseas trainings (N = 61) and the duration of three years for new promotions (N = 65 and 88%). On the other hand, the majority of the academic staff were dissatisfied with being involved in decision-making for in-service training opportunities (N = 65, 88%). Similarly, academic staff were dissatisfied with the promotion criteria and promotion process (N = 60, 81%) and (N = 45, 60%) respectively. The qualitative data revealed the dissatisfaction of academic staff on awareness of the current institutional promotion criteria and standards that may open loopholes for rude administrations. It was concluded that promotion in various universities has been associated with some micro politics and hullabaloos. Since academic staff qualifications are global, criteria for promotions should remain homogeneous, fair and equal to all staff.

Keywords: *Promotion, Job Satisfaction, Motivation, Job Dissatisfaction, Public Universities, Tanzania;*

INTRODUCTION

The quality of higher learning institutions is linked with the academic qualifications of the available staff. The seniority of academic ranks of the teaching staff can be used to determine strengths of teaching, research and consultancy of any university. Globally, the core functions of any higher education institution are teaching, conducting research and providing consultancy services to the community (URT, 2005). Kumar and Kannappa (2016) argue that academic growth is linked with work benefits like salary, promotion, professional growth and other monetary benefits. Struggles for academic growth appear to take a centre stage in various higher education institutions as many academic staff are beginning to realize its potential to individual career growth and seniority. Msuya (2016) views promotion as the clear path towards academic career growth and seniority in academic institutions. Furthermore, Msuya and Loisulie (2017) contend that when academic staff are satisfied with promotion criteria and promotion process, their job satisfaction level within the organization improves. There is a consensus (Jawabri, 2017; Masanja, 2018, Msuya, 2016) that the satisfied academic staff will improve the quality of work, work commitment, creativity and organization citizenship. Hence, job satisfaction is the real predictor of happy workers and productive staff who will attain the organizational goals in higher educations.

In contrast, the job of dissatisfied academic staff may remain detrimental to the institutions. Studies (Robbins, 2001; Chung, 1997 & Tomey, 1996; Msuya, 2016 & Oshagbemi 2000) have propounded that job dissatisfied academic staff may leave (exit) an organization, create conflicts in their organization, complain, may become insubordinate, steal organizational property, absent themselves, shirk (dodge) part of their responsibilities, divide their loyalty, and neglect responsibilities. Specifically, studies (Mkumbo 2014 & Masanja 2018) have identified a job dissatisfaction syndrome among academic staff in Tanzania caused by narrow opportunity for academic growth and work benefits. Despite the core functions that are attached to higher education institutions, these institutions are also the gastronomy of intellectuals and home of braved people that should nurture for high quality human resources to be used in different developmental sectors.

Since 2005, the higher education sector in Tanzania has experienced drastic changes in the establishment of both new and upgrading of public

and private universities. The establishment of Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) in 2005 accelerated the mushrooming of higher learning institutions in Tanzania. Rapid growth of tertiary education from a single institution with 14 students in 1961 to 58 institutions of higher education in 2019 with 206,305 students has raised a critical question of staffing, quality and job satisfaction among the academic staff (URT, 2019). Teaching in higher learning education institutions has its own tradition and culture. University teaching is very hierarchical (Omari, 2013). Quality of teaching, research and consultancy activities in any higher learning institution depends on the availability of qualified academic staff with higher educational ranks (TCU, 2019). Similarly, job performance among academic staff may depend on their skills and qualifications obtained through academic professional growth and job satisfaction. Hence, the promotion of academic staff from one academic rank to another stirs up the level of skills, seniority and work benefits. Any impediment during the process of promotion may hinder the attainment of job satisfaction and subsequent work performance of an individual staff.

As earlier observed by Mitchell (1978) in Sedarmayanti (2004), employee performance includes several aspects, namely: (1) quality of work, (2) promptness, (3) initiative, (4) capability and (5) communication. Dissatisfied academic staff tend to become detrimental to the attainment of the organizational goals and students' performance (Msuya, 2016). In addition, there have been numerous complaints on the process of promotion and the desired work benefits among academic staff in Africa, Tanzania included. For instance, Tettey (2006) perpetuates that in African universities, there are growing allegations of delays in promotion. These delays are reported to result from long procedures and high demands on productivity of an individual academic staff. Tettey (2006) also reports the cases of lack of transparency in some universities and some academic staff in need of being promoted based on teaching and grading students alone. Further, studies (Msuya, 2016; Mkumbo 2014 & Omari 2013) have revealed the dark path towards academic promotion in various higher learning institutions in Tanzania. It is on this aspect that the present study explored the perceptions of academic staff on the promotion process and work performance in public universities in Tanzania.

Undeniably, the prospect of public universities in Tanzania requires early warning to the administrators on the satisfaction of academic staff on the

promotion process and work benefits among their academic staff. Additionally, contemporary sustainable strategies to curb any existing challenges related to promotion and work benefits is a wise and prompt decision. Hence, it was necessary to illuminate these matters through a careful study guided by three research objectives:

i) To explore the perceptions of academic staff towards promotion process and academic growth in public universities in Tanzania.
ii) To assess the role of academic staff in the promotion and professional development process in public universities in Tanzania.
iii) To propose the organized strategies to improve the promotion process and academic growth among academic staff in public universities in Tanzania.

METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study used mixed research methods with multiple research techniques that brought rich information for an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of academic staff on promotion and work benefits in higher education institutions in Tanzania. As pointed earlier by Creswell & Plano (2011) and Creswell (2014) cross-sectional studies involve collecting and analysing data from two or more locations or groups of people at a particular point of time. In this study, simple random sampling and purposive sampling were used to get 85 participants from the selected public university in Tanzania. Out of 85 participants, 74 were academic staff with different academic ranks and education level sampled through simple random technique. Three (3) staff in the directorate of human resource and eight (8) heads of academic departments were sampled through purposive sampling technique.

Various data collection methods and instruments were employed. To be specific, self-administered (in presence of the researchers) questionnaires were distributed. Academic staff were required to fill the questionnaires and return them physically to researchers. This technique was employed based on its efficiency in collecting data and providing immediate feedback when clarification is required by the respondents (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010). Apart from questionnaires, heads of departments and staff from the human resource directorate were subjected to face-to-face interviews for collecting their views about promotion process at this university.

On documentary analysis, the researcher used recruitment and promotion policy for academic staff and harmonized scheme of service for academic staff. The researcher obtained a copy of the harmonized scheme of service for academic staff and the used criteria for promoting academic staff to various academic ranks in public universities in Tanzania. This helped in obtaining general information on the criteria for academic staff promotion and the expected salary scale after promotion. A review of documents was done and an analysis through coding and theme development was conducted as maintained by Creswell (2015).

Validity, reliability and trustworthiness were properly considered. For the case of face validity, questionnaire items were validated by a panel of three researchers (authors of this article) and some of the questionnaires' items were revised for content and context reasons. For internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha of coefficient was calculated and the value obtained was interpreted using Nunnaly (1978) guideline that considers a statistical value equal to or above 0.7 as reliable (Nunnaly, 1978). Early familiarity with the participants was done to clarify the purpose of the study before the actual data collection, as recommended by Shenton (2004) to improve credibility. There was no ethical violation, as the participants of this study were contacted for their consent and their names were kept anonymous. The researcher used a pseudo name (a selected university) to refer to the public university which was involved in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Socio-demographic Data of the Academic Staff
The study involved various academic staff, including tutorial assistants (TA) to professors with different characteristics as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Participants' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Variables		Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
Sex	Males	43	58.2
	Females	31	41.8
	Total	**74**	**100.0**
Academic rank	Professors	1	1.4
	Senior Lecturers	4	5.4
	Lecturers	30	40.5
	Ass. Lecturer	25	33.8
	TA	14	19.0
	Total	**74**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2021

The respondents for this study were academic staff from the rank of Tutorial Assistants (TAs) to professors. As shown in Table1, out of 74 respondents who filled in the questionnaires, 43 (58.2%) were males while 31 (41.8%) were females. The analysis strongly suggests that numerous of the respondents 30 (40.5%) were lecturers, followed by assistant lecturers 25 (33.8%) while professors were the least 1 (1.4 %) followed by senior lecturers 4 (5.4%) of the total respondents.

Perceptions of academic staff towards promotion process in public higher education in Tanzania

This objective sought to understand the perceptions of university academic staff towards the promotion process. Data were collected through a questionnaire and interviews from the respondents. As presented in Table 2, the quantitative data from questionnaires revealed that most of the respondents were dissatisfied with most aspects of the promotion process. Among the seven variables that the respondents were requested to depict their satisfaction or dissatisfaction level, only two of them were reported to be satisfied with them while they were dissatisfied with five of them. See Table 2.

Table 2: Academic Staff's Opinion on Promotion and Professional Growth in Public Higher Learning Institutions (N=74)

S/N	STATEMENT	DISSATISFACTION LEVEL						SATISFACTION LEVEL					
		VD		D		Total	Total	S		VS		Total	Total
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	Satisfaction with promotion criteria	24	32	36	49	**60**	**81**	10	14	4	5	**14**	**19**
2.	Satisfaction with promotion process	25	34	20	21	**45**	**60.8**	18	24	11	15	**29**	**39**
3.	Satisfaction with involvement in decisions making for in-service trainings	29	39	36	49	**65**	**88**	5	8	4	5	**9**	**12**
4.	Satisfaction with university sponsorship process in local and overseas trainings	7	9	11	15	**18**	**24.3**	21	28	40	54	**61**	**82**
5.	Satisfied with the interval of three years (duration) for new promotions	5	8	4	5	**9**	**12.2**	36	49	29	39	**65**	**88**
6.	Satisfied with feedback on promotion decisions	43	58	25	34	**67**	**90.5**	4	5	2	3	**14**	**19**
7.	Satisfied with the duration between date of promotion and salary increment	62	84	11	15	**72**	**97.3**	1	1	0	0	**1**	**1**

KEY: VD = Very Dissatisfied, D = Dissatisfied, S = Satisfied, VS = Very Satisfied
Source: Field Data, 2021

Satisfaction Level

As presented in Table 2 above, most of the academic staff were satisfied with two aspects of the promotion and professional development in higher education institutions in Tanzania. Data indicate that academic staff were more satisfied with opportunities for academic growth in the aspect of university sponsorship process in local and overseas trainings. This is because 61 (82%) academic staff were satisfied, while only 13 academic staff were dissatisfied with the sponsorship process in local and overseas trainings. Second, most of the academic staff were satisfied with the interval of three years (duration) for new promotions (88%) in higher education institutions.

Likewise, qualitative data from in-depth interview revealed different feelings among academic staff on satisfaction with the university sponsorship in local and overseas trainings, as well as promotion duration and criteria for promotion. The interview with informants revealed that most of the academic staff who were satisfied with the sponsorship given by the university included the tutorial assistants as well as assistant lecturers. It was noted that the tutorial assistants as well as assistant lecturers were the most beneficiaries of the sponsorship given by the university, unlike the lecturers and senior lecturers as well as professors. Informants reported that they were provided an opportunity to study in local universities and international universities where the university engages itself in paying the tuition fee as well as meals and accommodation costs for any sponsored student to undertake their master and doctorate degrees. However, respondents reported of the limited opportunities for oversees sponsorship by the University compared with local sponsorship.

On this regard, one of the respondents said:

> *I applied for my PhD studies at one local University in Tanzania, and then I informed my employer (the University) of my admission to that University. The employer (the University) sponsored my studies from the beginning to the end. I was given all the requirements to further my studies. These included tuition fees, meals and accommodation, research fund and thesis production costs. After graduation, I submitted my academic certificate, and I was promoted to the rank of lecturer (Interview with the lecturer)*

On the other hand, informants who were not satisfied with the sponsorship provided by the university included those who were seeking

sponsorship for their post-doctoral studies. It was noted from the informants that most of the Universities had no procedures for sponsorship for the academic staff who wished to do their post-doctoral studies outside the country. The interview with one senior lecturer revealed that the university could not support a person who wanted to do his/her post-doctoral studies. Regarding this, one informant reported that he got an opportunity to do post-doctoral studies that were partially funded by the hosting University in terms of research costs, while the meals and accommodation costs were self-funded. With this opportunity, the home university was requested to offer the sponsorship for meals and accommodation cost. However, the informant reported that the university failed to offer such sponsorship because it was not stipulated in the university policies.

Similarly, data in table 2 above indicate that the academic staff were satisfied with the interval of three years (duration) for new promotions. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents reported being satisfied with the interval rate of three years. However, the in-depth interview with the academic staff noted different views regarding the three-year interval for academic promotion. Most of the interviewed academic staff believed that the three years were effective if one met the necessary conditions to be promoted. The necessary conditions mentioned included training (professional development), doing research and publication and consultancy activities. Further, academic staff explained of their dissatisfaction regarding the contribution of teaching towards promotion of which is the main activity they reported focusing on. Academic staff reported that they were filling in open performance appraisal system forms (OPRAS) every year. However, they were not seeing the contribution of these forms to their promotion despite their executing all duties and meeting the agreed performance. Instead, they complained that they were instead required to make publications for being promoted. On this, one lecturer said:

> *Three years are sufficient for promotion, but I think this does not apply very much to academic staff. This is because for an academic staff to be promoted, you need to do more than what is stipulated in the three stipulated years. Mostly, you will need to publish, attend conferences, and have book chapters or consultancy report. Therefore, no matter what you will do in terms of teaching and other university responsibilities, if you do not have sufficient publications the three years for promotion are not in your favour.*

On the other hand, the interview with senior lecturers and professors revealed that they were very satisfied with the three years' interval for academic promotion. It was argued that for the growth of the university, including being ranked high, it depended on the seniority of the academic staff found within the university. Therefore, having a few years for academic promotion was a merit for the aspiring academicians to work tirelessly and make sure they achieved the university goals by doing substantial research. Therefore, the three years to them would provide an opportunity for an academic staff to grow academically within a short time and make the university have sufficient senior members of the academy. Further, the interview showed that the prosperity of the university relied on senior members of the university who were considered to be trusted by different local and international organizations for conducting research and consultancies. Therefore, the three years for promotion, as it was found, were satisfying for ensuring personal professional growth and the university growth.

Dissatisfaction Level
As pointed in table 2, available data show that most of the respondents were not satisfied with different procedures regarding the promotion and professional development among academic staff within the universities. For instance, the findings show that the respondents (academic staff) were dissatisfied with the promotion criteria (81%), promotion process (60.8%), involvement in decisions making for in-service trainings (88%), feedback for promotion decisions (90.5%) and duration between date of promotion and salary increment (97.3%) as presented in table 2.

The qualitative data also revealed the informants' dissatisfaction in different aspects. The data collected through the interview with the respondents showed that the respondents were dissatisfied with the promotion criteria. The respondents thought that the criteria set for promotion included three main objectives of the member of the academic staff at the University that reflected the core functions of the University including teaching, research and consultancy. On this, the informants stated that the weight given to the core activities differed from one another. Among the three, research activities were mentioned to have big weight compared to others, followed by consultancy and then teaching being the last one. Informants further reported that teaching, which is the core activity, was consuming more of the instructors' time, but it was not being given due weight. On this aspect, informants believed that teaching

as one of the core activities of the university should be given more weight compared to other activities. During the interview, one lecturer had these to say:

> *As a lecturer, I am supposed to have three teaching courses. At the same time, I must prepare the manuscripts for research publications and search for consultancies. Having three courses entails nine teaching hours in a week. This needs time for preparation, time for constructing assignments, providing and marking students' assessment works and providing feedback. With this, much time is spent on teaching. These results in lecturers having limited time for concentrating on other activities such as publications. However, the promotion criteria do not acknowledge the much amount of time spent on teaching. Instead, they focus on other activities involving research.*

Another lecturer added:

> *There is a problem with promotion criteria. First, the required journals for publications are not much clearer. It is said that you should publish in international journals, and you should not publish in journals requesting payment while there are credible open access journals that require payment for article processing charges (APC) like Springer open and other Scopus Indexed journals. Secondly, the weighting of the book chapter is not given the required number of points on promotion criteria even though much effort is put in writing it compared to published papers in a journal.*

The arguments as revealed by the two informants is the evident that some of them are not satisfied with promotion criteria because of different reasons, including the criteria for journals in which publish their papers in, as well as the weight given to different works. Therefore, it is important to discuss together with the academic members of the staff to see and agree together on the clear criteria for promotion. This should reflect the core functions of the university as stipulated in the university charter.

Apart from the promotion criteria, informants also were not satisfied with the promotion process. One of the highly claimed aspects by the informants was the process of reviewing the published articles. It was reported that the process, which involves internal and external review process, was taking too long time to be accomplished. Further, informants reported that even the review process was not very much fair. On this basis, one of the informants reported of the university undergoing the review to papers published from the high reputable journals with high-impact factor. It was noted that this was against the regulations given by

the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU), which stipulates, "articles published in highly reputable journals with significant impact factors (IF) and listed under Scientific Citation Index (SCI) or indexed in well-known databases should not be reviewed based on quality of the paper. This is because it is evident that such papers would have gone through rigorous review before being accepted for publication" (TCU, 2019).

Informants reported that they were using much of their time, energy and resources to strive for publishing in reputable journals, then the reviewers give them very few points that do not resemble the journal used for publication.
On this regard, one of the respondents said:

> *The review process is not fair; however, it is not a blind review because it is easier to access the published article from the search engines. Therefore, the reviewer may review the paper based on personal interest or the relationship with the person whose articles are under review. This happens mostly to external examinations of the submitted articles.*

Others reported that because the reviewers are not paid for the process of reviewing the articles submitted, it is difficult for a person reviewing a paper to concentrate on reading and providing feedback timely. The interview with the heads of academic department revealed that one of the difficult tasks was to find the right person to review the articles submitted for academic promotion. They reported that they needed to find the person qualified to read the academic papers, very specifically the senior member of the academic staff. However, the senior members were reported to be very busy. The HoDs were also of the view that after identifying them, it might take a long time for them to bring the feedback to the department. This was making the process to take a long time, thus making a given academic staff member think that the right was not granted timely.

Further, the respondents reported of not being satisfied with the duration of effecting the salary after new promotion. The discussion with the respondents revealed that the essence of new promotion was also reflected in receiving the new salary because the promotion go hand on hand with the increase in responsibilities. Respondents reported that they were being given the promotion letter without salary increase while effecting the responsibilities stipulated on the promotion letter. The

respondents reported that the effect on salary could sometimes take place after six months or one year. Such kind of delay was reported not being friendly and discouraging to members of academics because they were given more responsibilities without being paid the actual amount of salary. For instance, one had these to say:

> *I was promoted since last year, but I have not yet been paid the new salary up to this year. It is almost eight months now since I was promoted. From the time I was promoted, I have been doing all duties regarding the new promotion. However, this is not reflected in my salary. It is better that when you are promoted, your salary should be effected immediately.*

Based on the findings from the respondents regarding the academic staff promotions, it can be argued that when promotions are given, it is essential to ensure that the academic staff receives the salary for the respective promotion. This will enable the one being promoted to work with motivation towards achieving personal and institution goals. If this is not considered, there is a likelihood of continued dissatisfactions among academic staff, which subsequently results into compromising of the academic activities.

The Role of Academic Staff in the Professional Development Process in Public Higher Education in Tanzania
Data for this objective aimed at exploring the role of academic staff in the professional development process. To achieve this objective, the researcher ascertained the knowledge of academic staff regarding the process of professional development and promotion. Two categories of the respondents were included in the collection of data, involving the academic staff and heads of academic department who had the direct role to ensure their academic staff were growing academically and were promoted accordingly. The interview with the academic staff wanted to know whether they knew the guidelines used to assess academic promotions in their institutions, and when they were required to apply for the promotion. Further, they were asked the promotion criteria for different levels; such as assistant lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers to professor, as well as points, required, the forms required to be filled for application for promotion and the approving organ for promotion.

Table 3: The Qualitative Responses of the Academic Staff (N = 18)

Question	Responses
Which guidelines are used to assess academic promotion in your institution? (criteria)	Government guidelines on public servants' promotion
	The recruitment, promotion and retention criteria 2017
	Open performance review appraisal system
	Standing order
	Harmonized scheme of service for public Universities
	Upon successful completion of a particular level of studies
	Acquired due credits through, teachings, publications and consultancy
When to apply for a new promotion?	When one has acquired the required qualification and submitted an application
	Any time you feel you are eligible
	Commencement of the employee new year
	After three years, if you have qualifications
	Four years after the last promotion, provided you have required publications or have completed Master's or PhD studies
	Six-months before the decision of the organs' meeting (HRMC and Senate meeting)
Which forms should be filled during application for promotion in your institution?	OPRAS Forms, not aware about other forms
	Request forms for promotion, OPRAS forms
	I don't know
	Required forms for promotion
	None, i.e. you submit certificates or publications with a covering letter
Which organs approve promotion in your institution?	The University Council
	Starts at Department promotion Committee, College Board, HRMC and Senate
	College board
	Departmental examiners Boards, college boards and Universities.

Source: Field data (2021)

Assessment guidelines for academic promotion
The analysis of the data gathered from participants revealed that most of the participants had limited knowledge of the guidelines and procedures for assessment of academic promotion in their institutions. For instance, most of the respondents believed that the Open Performance Review Appraisal System (OPRAS) was the guideline that was used for assessing academic promotion. Further, a significant number of the respondents revealed several assessment guidelines including acquiring due credits through teaching, publications and consultancy, successful completion of particular level of studies and harmonized scheme of service for public Universities. On the other hand, few respondents had the knowledge regarding the guidelines guiding the assessment of academic promotion.

The respondents reported the recruitment, promotion and retention criteria 2017 as the guideline responsible for academic promotion. In this aspect, most of the respondents who seemed to have limited understanding of the assessment guidelines used for academic promotion included the tutorial assistants and assistant lecturers while lecturers and senior lecturers seemed to have understanding of the assessment guidelines for promotion. For instance, one assistant lecturer said:

> *I think when you complete a particular level of education, say master's or PhD, you need not fill the form, instead you write a letter and submit your academic certificates then you are promoted.*

Another lecturer added that:

> *We currently have a harmonized scheme of service that shows the rank and the required promotion criteria. As you earn the required points either in publications supported by teaching, you will be required to fill in the form for applying for a new promotion.*

Regarding the responses given by the academic staff, it can be said that most of the junior staff, such as tutorial assistants and assistant lecturers were not clearly aware of the promotion process, whereas lecturers had some knowledge on the promotion criteria. Based on the findings, it is difficult for the academic staff to understand their role within the promotion process if they do not even understand the guidelines used for assessing their academic promotions.

Application of new promotion
The interview with the respondents also wanted to elicit the understanding and role of academic staff on the specific time of applying for the new promotion. The responses of the participants showed that they were not sure of the specific time for applying for the new promotion. Participants had varied views regarding the time for applying the new promotion. For instance, respondents differed on the terms of specific time for promotion. Whereas some reported three years to four years after one promotion, others reported six months. Further, other respondents believed that the application time was the time when a person had acquired the required criteria for promotion. This could be in terms of the academic progression such as attainment of Master's education and Doctor of Philosophy or attainment of sufficient points from publications. Similarly, some respondents reported of application being done at every beginning of the academic year, while others reported that the application could be done at any time. From the analysis of the reported views by the

respondents, it is shown that few (17%) respondents knew the right time for applying for the new academic promotion, while most of them (83%) did not know the right time for application of the new promotion. This entails that it is difficult for the academic staff to plan effectively for academic promotion if they do not exactly know the right time to apply for the academic promotion. This may result in the academic staff not making enough publications, therefore, failing to reach the required criteria due for promotion.

Promotion application forms
Furthermore, the participants were requested to mention the application forms required for applying for the new promotion. The findings revealed that all the interviewed participants were not aware of the required forms to fill in for application for the new promotion. Among the mentioned forms for application for the new promotion included OPRAS forms (72%), request forms for promotion (50%). Other respondents (17%) reported that they were not aware about promotion request forms while others (11%) reported that there were no required forms for application for new promotion, instead, it included the submission of certificates accompanied by a covering letter. Such responses are the evident that academic staff had insufficient knowledge regarding the way for applying for new promotion. During the interview with one assistant lecturer, the following was reported:

> *I do not think whether there are forms special for requesting a new promotion. What I know is that as you finish studies, you do submit your certificates and letter to the employer to notify him that you have completed studies. Thereafter, the employer will promote you automatically.*

Promotion approval organs
Respondents were also requested to describe the approving organs for academic promotions. The findings revealed that 61% of the respondents reported the University Council as the approving organ of the new promotion. Further, 39% believed that promotion approval started from Department Promotion Committee, College Board, HRMC and Senate. On the other hand, 22% of the respondents reported that the promotion approval organs included the Departmental examiners' Boards and College Boards. The responses from the participants are the evidence that most of the respondents were not aware of the approving organs. Instead, they were aware of some of the committees responsible for the discussion

of the promotion request such as department committee, College Board, HRMC and senate. However, few of them were aware of the approving organ, which is the University Council. In such a situation, it can be viewed that if the academic staff do not know exactly the approving organ, then it is difficult for them to understand their role for academic promotion.

From the qualitative data obtained during the interview, academic staff, regardless of their academic ranks and level, agreed that they had the obligation to understand and use the available promotion criteria in their specific institutions. However, most of the junior academic staff with the rank of tutorial assistant and assistant lecturers had little understanding of the available promotion criteria in their institutions. For instance, during the interview one tutorial assistant   said:

> *"Actually, I do not know the promotion criteria for any level in this university, even though I have stayed for two years in this university. All the same, the promotion issues are important for the potential academic staff who are about to apply for that level. I am struggling to complete my Master' degree on time".*

Organized Strategies to Improve Involvement of the Academic Staff in the Promotion and In-service Training in Higher Education

Data on this objective were from twelve (12) participants collected through in-depth interview. The interview was conducted among the academic staff with different academic ranks and work experience. The researcher involved professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, assistant lecturers and tutorial assistants with the working experience ranging from 2 to 21 years in higher learning institutions in Tanzania. Respondents were asked to reveal the best strategies that could be adopted to improve the promotion process among the academic staff in Higher Learning Institutions in Tanzania as well as the key methods that could be adopted to improve effective involvement of the academic staff in their promotion process in higher learning institutions.

Awareness programmes to academic staff

The interview with heads of department (HoDs) and Human resource officers showed that there was the need to provide education to academic staff members on issues regarding academic promotions. HoDs reported that most of the academic staff did not know the procedures for academic promotions. Therefore, when the time reached, they failed to follow the

right procedures instead; they started blaming others for the delay of their process without understanding the process that was to be followed. Further, human resource officers reported that the process of academic promotion was a procedural action. Therefore, all procedures must be observed. However, it was reported that academic staff were not aware of the required procedures, and therefore they were thinking that they were being delayed in the process of the promotion. It is on this aspect that they requested for education provision for academic staff. The education could be in forms of awareness programmes, workshops and trainings. During the interview, the respondents had these to say:

> *The university management should establish special awareness programs on promotion criteria and its traditions among the academic staff from the departmental level to develop an understanding of the required criteria for promotion and procedures taken for promotion (HoD)*

Another head of department suggested that:

> *There is a need to develop a documentary video or any other ICT-based materials for enhancing skills and knowledge of promotion among the academic staff.*

One Human resource officer believed that:

> *We are planning to ensure that academic staff promotion criteria and other related guidelines are accustomed to all academic staff during the orientation and probation period.*

The findings by the head of the departments and human resource officers show that for effective understanding of promotion criteria and process, academic staff must be aware of the procedures and this can only be done by providing awareness programmes to them. If the academic staff are conversant with the procedures and criteria, it is expected that they would be at the best position to adhere to the required standards and therefore make necessary efforts for being promoted for self-welfare and that of the University.

Developing a standard criterion for evaluating journal articles

The respondents believed that there is a need to review the criteria for evaluating journal articles. The interview with the senior lecturers reported that the criteria for evaluating the journal article should be reviewed on the essence that all papers published in highly reputable journals with significant impact factors (IF) and listed under Scientific Citation Index (SCI) or indexed in well-known databases should not be

reviewed based on quality of the paper. Respondents reported that such papers go under a rigour process of review, therefore; they do not need to be reviewed any more. In contrary, it was noted that such published papers also needed to be reviewed. It is on this notion that academic staff members requested of developing a new standard criterion for evaluating a journal article.

On this aspect, one of the lecturers had these to say:

> *The university should adopt a standard criterion for valuing and rewarding papers published in credible, indexed International Referred Journals with an excellent and rigor editorial and screening process. These may include journals such as Elsevier, Scopus, Springer, and the Nature.*

Developing a mechanism for internal and external assessment

Heads of department reported of establishing a mechanism that would ease the process of internal and external assessment of papers. Heads of departments reported that they were the ones at the level of departments who were required to seek for internal and external reviewers. However, they further reported that the process was not friendly because the reviewers were not paid anything. Therefore, it would be difficult to give them the period for reviewing and submitting their assessment outputs/report. On this aspect, the heads of department maintained that the university should see the mechanism of paying the reviewers to motivate them to timely read and review the work provided. This could help the heads of department to supervise them and ensure timely feedback. During the interview, one of the respondents had these to say:

> *For successful promotion, there must be a time framework for both internal and external reviewers to guide them. There must have a time interval from the initial stages for promotion to final decision. To ensure this, both internal and external reviewers need to be remunerated.*

Another respondent added:

> *There is a need to establish Fair Internal Assessment Criteria for papers and book chapters for fair scrutiny and selection of internal reviewers. Likewise, the rigor review process should back the assessment criteria for published journals for internal and external reviewers, regardless of the charges paid during the publication.*

Based on the views by the academic staff and heads of department, it can be viewed that the process of delay may be due to lack of ability by the heads of department to supervise the internal and external reviewers because they do not have any formal agreement that can be supervised.

Therefore, if the reviewers will be remunerated/paid, the heads of department will be able to supervise them and therefore, make necessary and timely follow up to ensure that the process of review does not take much time.

Establishment of promotion unit in universities
Respondents were also of the view that for an effective promotion process in the University, there was a need to establish an independent unit under the office of human resource responsible for promotion issues. Respondents reported that at the time, there was no specific office where a person could go to ask about the promotion progress after one had applied for the promotion. On this issue, respondents argued that having a specific office dealing with promotion issues could ease the process of follow-up in case of delays, as well as make the academic staff understand what is supposed to be done for promotion to be successful. During the interview, the following views were noted:

> *The University should think of establishing an independent unit to handle all promotion issues and other related academic professional development matters. This will help to have a point of reference on all matters regarding promotions and professional development of the academic staff.*

Furthermore, the respondents believed that the University should establish an online system of applying for the promotion. Respondents reported that when there is an online application system, it is easy to make follow-up and trace the development/progress of the application. They further reported that online system would help in encouraging transparency and accountability because it would show the office in which the promotion process has been delayed and therefore, make it easy to trace the reason behind that delay and address it immediately. Again, one of the respondents had these to say:

> *University institutions should adopt the use of online/ICT-based applications to handle promotion activities. This will encourage transparency and accountability.*

Low level of academic staff satisfaction on the process of staff promotion in higher education institutions in Tanzania may have immeasurable implications on staff turnover and poor job productivity. Regular academic staff exit syndrome to other private institutions and in political activities may have been geared by dissatisfaction with the promotion process, late promotion or lack of in-service training. Earlier study by

Kumar & Kannappa (2016) confirms that late promotion is associated with poor level of staff job satisfaction, which has implicates to poor job performance level and low productivity in an organisation. According to Fredericksen, (2011) employees who have a perceived probability of being promoted based on their valued efforts and productivity (output), tend to exert more efforts and yield to higher outputs to the organisation than the dissatisfied ones. It is now worth urging that public universities and other higher education organisations in Tanzania require an effective promotion process to curb the perceived growth of 'production starvation' just due to failure to maintain and promote the best staff for sustainable organization.

Undeniably, if the current situation remains unattended and unimproved, there are all possibilities that public universities will experience poor productivity due to rampant growth of staff counter-productive behaviours (Msuya, 2022). The study findings on objective one have indicated low level of staff job satisfaction and high level of dissatisfaction. Under such an intricate situation, both less satisfied and dissatisfied staff are at high risk of dropping their employment for open vacancies in other organisations (Fredericksen, 2011; Vance, 2006). Employees' turnover is expensive for an organisation as it will trigger new staff selection, recruitment and train. Similarly, Al-Suraihi, et al., (2021) viewed turnover negatively as it affects the performance and profitability of the organization. In the same line Noor, et al. (2018), contend that, every time an employee leaves the company, productivity is reduced due to the learning curve involved in working and understanding the organization, which impacts the organization's profitability. On a serious note, public universities in Tanzania could not afford to get double effects of losing qualified and experienced academic staff and incurring cost for hiring new academic staff.

Generally, results have shown that, factors such as delay of change in salaries after promotion, involvement of staff in the promotion process, late or lack of feedback on promotion decisions and promotion criteria are among the variables that elevated to high levels of dissatisfaction. Studies (Malik, Danish & Munir, 2012) have to emphasize that all work organisation to ensure that they consider control of factors leading to dissatisfaction to avoid employee turnover. The complexity of staff promotion and professional development procedures as presented in the results may, on the other hand, be a hindering factor for higher education

academic staff to exert efforts towards seeking for promotion. This is because, career progression itself comes with increased job complexity as workers are promoted to higher level positions (Russo, 2016) and hence the process should be more enabling than restricting.

The other findings in this section are the roles of academic staff in the promotion process. The benefits of high effort (on the left-hand side) must exceed the cost of effort (e) on the right-hand side (Fredericksen, 2011). Moreover, the longevity of the promotion process may also be a discouraging factor that leads to feelings of dissatisfaction among academic staff. For instance, academic staff are expected to comprehend all about assessment guidelines for academic promotion, send application for new promotion, fill in the promotion application forms and wait decisions throughout promotion approval organs. Complexity of process leads to stress over the employee who, as a result, with prolonged feelings of dissatisfactory decide to leave the organisation (Al-Suraihi, et al., 2021). Different from other institutions, promotion in higher education involves publications and consultancies, which are highly demanding tasks to go through and therefore having other complex promotion processes may be highly contributing to exerting stress on staff that consequently leads to turnover.

Fairness and justice in the promotion process and opportunities for further training are vital for employees and organizational development. In situations where organizations are not taking efforts to minimize biases and favouring in the promotion and training opportunities, such organization will ditch. Saharuddin and Sulaiman (2016) presented findings about promotion scenarios of less-fair promotions practiced by the institution where the employee who deserved to be promoted do not receive promotion while employees that should not be promoted are promoted. In such scenarios, the seeds for staff job dissatisfaction are propagated and consequently retard staff on aligning their efforts towards accomplishing university core functions. Chabaya (2015) revealed that most South African higher education promotion processes lack a fair and equitable academic promotion practice, leading to promotion of undeserved staff. Responsively, Teymouri, et al. (2007) while emphasizing on fair staff promotion, insisted on the maintaining objectivity and consistent by promoting impartiality and neutrality to ensured fairness of the promotion decisions. These arguments commonly

consider fairness in the process of promotion as a major factor to be considered by higher education institutions.

On the effective strategies for employee promotion in public universities, it is important to employ inclusive and open promotion and staff development strategies in higher learning institutions to raise the academic staff trust and fairness of the processes. In this matter, Vance (2006) asserts that employees who are engaged in the promotion process and their work are well committed to their organizations, hence ensure the competitive advantage of their companies or organizations. In the same view, Mampane, (2020) emphasizes on vast advantages of involving academic staff in the process of promotion in higher education institutions in South Africa. Involvement is a strategy for awareness building and improved learning of the process of promotion and promoting the academic staff to fulfill their roles in the process.

Moreover, for effective promotion and staff development in public universities, the use of formal and stable framed promotion procedures is mandatory. The promotion procedures ought to be clear, well followed and well known to all academic staff of higher education institutions. Prasad, (2012) argues that if procedures are followed and promotion conducted fairly, employees in an organization may become comfortable. Thus, in the procedures, there is a need for establishing a special unit for promotion at the higher education institutions. Studies strongly suggest that most higher education institutions have a promotion committee which sits to hear the promotion applications and deliberate on them (Gilavand, 2016, Mampane, 2020). The perceived advantages of a special promotion and staff development unit over a committee is that, the promotion unit would be fully engaged with staff development activities as their core function. The promotion unit may acquire the physical facilities such as an office, may have qualified staff to provide training to all academic staff to strengthen their knowledge of promotion and staff development. The same unit may remind, identify and sensitize staff who are potential or have overdue for promotion. Most importantly, this unit may reduce some levels of prolonged hierarchies during the promotion process and may encourage staff-organization relationship and organization citizenship.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
This study revealed that most of the academic staff were not satisfied with the promotion process in different aspects including promotion criteria,

involvement in decision-making for in-service training, feedback for promotion decision and date of promotion and salary increment. However, they were satisfied with few aspects, including university sponsorship in local and overseas trainings and a three-year (duration) interval for new promotions. Despite this positive gesture, the academic staff were dissatisfied with different aspects of promotion. It was also noted that most of them, especially junior academic staff, had limited knowledge of the process of promotions including the required time for applying for new promotion, promotion criteria and the approving organs for the new promotion.

It is on this aspect that the study recommends different measures to improve about academic promotions in higher learning institutions, including the provision of awareness programmes to academic staff to equip them with relevant knowledge on academic promotions. Further, the Universities need to develop a standard criterion for evaluating journal articles as well as to improve the internal and external assessment procedures through remunerating the reviewers to mitigate about review delay, thus creating fairness to publishers. Lastly, the study recommends for the establishment of promotion units in universities to enable those applying for promotions to seek relevant information regarding the promotion process and progress towards their promotion applications.

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