

Academic staff experiences of the promotion processes at the University of Cape Coast

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Abstract: This research examines academic staff promotions at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). The research utilized UCC academic employees (lecturers) as its population. The study surveyed 285 academics. Participants completed questionnaires and a semi-structured interview guide. The study analyzed data using descriptive statistics (means and SDs) and theme analysis. The survey found that academic staff's understanding of the promotion process focuses on rank or position progression, income and benefit increases, job title changes, and more duties. Most respondents need to learn more about digital possibilities to improve efficiency. The study found that the process is frustrating owing to delays in internal and external evaluation report submission, extensive paperwork processes, limited communication in document vetting, and fluctuating emphasis on the number of publications, categories of publications, research funds, and service hours. Some promotion committee members' unprofessionalism was also aggravating. The study recommends that the University of Cape Coast management set up a stronger execution strategy for promotion timeframes. The university should also digitize the promotion process to avoid bureaucratic tendencies and delays.

Keywords: Experiences, academic staff (lecturers), promotion process, frustrating process, exciting process

Introduction

Promotion in academic rank is the usual way of recognizing scholarly, teaching, and community engagement achievements of faculty members in academia. All over the world, there seems to be a dilemma that university promotion committees struggle with (McHugh, 1994). In the view of McHugh, with such a diversity of talents among the faculty, it is challenging to define standards for equitable assessment of the several diverse achievements of faculty. McHugh further stressed that the decision for promotion rests on a judgment of peers, who, in committees, reflect on all aspects of the nominee's career. The promotion of a nominee to a particular rank is an evaluative opinion based on established criteria. The decision on promotion application rests on a committee's judgment of quality built into such terminologies as research, teaching and outreach engagements (Perna, 2001). This applies to all higher educational institutions, including those in Africa and Ghana.

Due to their crucial position in the educational process, the academic staff significantly influences the attainment of these goals. Academic staff promotions in Ghanaian universities, including the University of Cape Coast, is frequently determined by the efficiency with which they carry out the responsibilities listed above. Academic personnel promoted from a lower level to a higher rank have shown scholarship and effective performance according to university norms. For instance, productivity at Nigerian universities is mainly centered on research and publications rather than teaching skills alone; hence, advancement in the workplace rests primarily on a person's research production (Owuamanam & Owuamanam, 2008).

A survey by Drennan and Beck (2000) revealed that while institutions' declared policies are to assess promotion candidates on teaching, service, and research, the latter was given the most weight. Badri and Abdulla (2004) say research articles, instructional techniques, presenting styles, and university and community activities are also important. Academic promotion decisions reflect work, activity, teaching, supervising, publishing, research, consulting, conferencing, administration, and community participation (Salmuni et al., 2007).

Rewards and incentives at universities have been linked to greater levels of employee engagement and performance, regardless of the nature of the promotion process. According to Salmuni et al. (2007), employees view promotions as the most desirable type of compensation because they believe they will increase both job satisfaction and pay. Promotion, according to the research of Santhapparaj and Alam (2005), significantly raises the level of work satisfaction. Ubeku (1975) shared this idea when he said that promotion not only results in a

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higher salary but also serves as public acknowledgment of the recipient's efforts and exertions, hence having a powerful motivational impact. Similarly, Turk (2008) argues that teachers may advance in their careers with an effective performance review system.

Academic promotion is integral to the University of Cape Coast's (UCC) culture and will likely retain its significance as long as UCC exists. The awards, as stated by Gentry and Stokes (2015), serve as mechanisms to both recognize high-performing professors and weed out those who aren't cutting it in the academic world. The criteria and procedure for promotion, however, remain imperfect. Certain faculty members deserve a pay raise because of their outstanding track records.

The academic promotion system has been plagued by difficulties ever since it was established, even to a point of questioning its process and procedures because of inconsistencies in policy formulation and implementation (Perna, 2001). The study's question is whether faculty are convinced by the promotional processes. To ascertain academic staff's experiences of the promotion processes at the University of Cape Coast, this investigation has been launched to empirically explore the phenomena using UCC as a case. The goal of this research was to explore the promotion procedures experienced by academic staff. To assist in the generation of evidence-based results pertinent to the study's overall objective, the following four questions were used to drive the study:

1. What are UCC lecturers' knowledge of the promotion process for academic staff?
2. How do UCC academic staff members describe the promotion process?
3. What aspects of the promotion process do UCC academic staff find most exciting?
4. What aspects of the promotion process do UCC academic staff find most frustrating?

Review of the literature

Human relations as a theoretical approach to staff promotion

This study impinges on human relation theory. Elton Mayo (1935-1950) was an Australian interested in employee motivation and commitment and the connection between employees and management through human relations. Human relation theorists are concerned with individuals, staff of an organization, and staff's sentiments, interests, views, innovation, awareness, and feelings. Under the theory, the management of higher educational institutions should always leave their doors open to receive, act, and share the problems of academics because issues of academics may count on Students' performances (Abdulumuni, 2021).

The university management and government ensure that problems that are related to academic staff promotions are addressed for quality performance and to close the communication gap with the academics and investigate other related issues to get their morale booster for the effective performance of their primary duties and maintenance of quality and standard because according to Mayo (1945) better communication enhances employee motivation and performance. Academics are always prepared to work well if their problems are investigated or addressed. In the view of Abdulumuni (2021), human relation theory calls on employers to take up the issues of their employees and find an appropriate solution to them through good communication for the achievement of organizational objectives.

Conceptualization and knowledge of the academic staff of promotion

A promotion raises a person's position in an organisational structure. The promotional process indicates a growth in the number of staff in a profession with better jobs compared to the past. In promotion, the level of responsibility increases, along with the level of achievement, facilities, status, and proficiency required, as well as the addition of earnings or salary and other allowances. Promotion is the assignment of more responsibility and power to an employee. According to Sikula (as mentioned in Abdulumuni, 2021), a promotion is technically a change from one post to another that entails income and prestige improvements. Promotion moves someone from a lower-status, lower-duty position to a higher-status, higher-duty post (Abdulumuni, 2021). Promotion is the elevation of an employee's rank or level within an organisational classified system, according to Wikipedia (2021). Salmuni et al. (2007) say the most attractive reward for employees is promotion, which boosts performance and goals. According to Turk (2008), an effective performance evaluation system would help educators make their mark in their faculty's organizational setting.

Simply put, promotion is the act of elevating a person to a higher position. There are various signs for promotion, including loyalty, qualifications, and accomplishment. The most prevalent method of internal mobility within an institution like higher education is promotion. According to Gupta (2011), a promotion adds responsibility, status, and income. It is an employee's ascent inside the organizational structure. Promotions are used to recognise

staff with superior performance and to encourage them to exert greater effort. One of the extrinsic benefits is promotion. Promotion is a significant aspect of a staff's life and career, which might influence their motivation. The promotion will encourage staff to accomplish a task with more efficiency and effectiveness to enhance their skill. The promotion status will provide staff with long-term happiness. Only by elevating their status and giving them a new title that reflects their increased accountability and responsibility because of their efforts, behaviour, and length of service to the organisation.

Benefits of academic staff promotion

Employees' motivation remains the key to success particularly promotion it gives not only financial but psychological satisfaction. According to Prasad (as cited in Abdulmumini, 2021), staff promotion with full remuneration will boost academic staff morale. This will help rescue the fallen quality of our graduates and push teachers to adopt a kind of student-centered learning concentrating on making students understand better. Of all motivating factors money leads, therefore, withholding promotion increment to salary kills morale much more than other factors of motivation because money plays a great role in the satisfaction of employee needs (Abdulmumini, 2021). This aspect confirms the opinion of Kreitner and Kinicki (2006), who noted that the supply of remuneration must be taken seriously because monetary rewards are one of the variables that contribute to employee happiness. This aspect confirms the opinion of Kreitner and Kinicki (2006), who noted that remuneration is something that is serious because monetary rewards are one of the variables that contribute to staff happiness. The provision of financial and non-financial benefits keeps the employees highly motivated.

Frey and Osterlob (2002) also emphasized that keeping extremely driven staff is an intentional effort to keep people dedicated to working relentlessly and eventually providing their maximum capabilities to attain the organisation's objectives. Academic staff can perform better only if the management creates good working conditions. Academics are the source of all developments. University education is the catalyst, the core, the heart, and the guiding strength behind a nation's strong economic, cultural socialisation, political, and industrial growth (Peretomode & Chukwuma, 2007). Based on these facts, higher education institutions need to prioritize training, office and housing accommodation, salary, and recruitment but also promotion of well-deserving academic staff to boost qualitative performance.

Factors hindering academic staff promotion

Nwachukwu (2004) argues that a demotivated staff is a problem for any organisation that fails to provide a positive work environment, fair pay, and opportunities for growth and development. Any organisation that ignores the needs of its employees will not achieve its objectives. Organisational success always rests on employees' commitments. Unsatisfied employees with low morale cannot contribute meaningfully to organizational development. A promotion that lacks financial benefits is of less importance if any. This has to do with the type of bad policies adopted by the state government, which does not favour its development. Supporting the claim made by Budhwar and Debrah (2001), who found that many developing nations suffer inadvertent impediments to progress owing to outmoded and unproductive human resource management systems such as slow procedures for promotion, bad attrition rates, etc. According to Onah (2008), progress cannot be made without a sufficient, trained, and enthusiastic labor force supported by an effective human resource management strategy.

Some African universities have been criticized for assertions of gaps in the promotional process because of intricate processes and substantial prospects on the work of a specific faculty member (Tettey, 2006). Some academic staff, specifically, staff below the status of a full professor, would prefer to advance based on teaching and evaluating students alone, despite the fact that there may be incidents of lack of openness in some universities. However, this hinders the growth of academic research and publishing. Mushemeza (2016) argues that tenured faculty members who teach the required number of hours per week, month, and semester, are accessible to students outside of class, conduct original research, supervise the original research of their students, administer meaningful assessments (such as homework assignments, exams, and internships), regularly participate in department and faculty meetings, and have a track record of positive evaluations should be considered for promotions. An instrument tailored to different staff echelons would evaluate them on those criteria.

Amongst faculty, opinions on how research papers should be graded diverge widely. While most would agree that producing work of a high standard is important, opinions vary on how to determine whether this standard has been met. Many proposed solutions to the assessment problem have been proposed, including both procedural and judging approaches (Matusov & Hampel, 2008). Important aspects of scholarship are reflected in the model's procedures. Applying clear rules makes it possible to see if the prospective professor has satisfied the prerequisites. The judgment model facilitates dialogue and evaluation of the candidate's scholarship, as stated by Gentry and

Stokes (2015). Colleagues make the call on the candidate's job quality and defend the evaluation in an open forum. Many people see the judgment model as a more equitable and democratic way to decide on tenure. This theory proposes that models are not necessarily complementary to one another. Those who rely on rigid rules and procedures typically succeed with routine matters, but struggle with out-of-the-ordinary ones. The latter are more likely to call for discretion while making a choice (Matusov & Hampel, 2008).

Methods

This section addresses the methodological approach to ensure that findings are well grounded in the evidence generated. The method is discussed along key themes, namely: study design; population; sampling strategy used to select sample size; data collection approach; data management and analytical approach; validity and reliability of research findings; and quality assurance and ethical considerations.

Data and methodology

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the promotion processes in the University of Cape Coast faced by faculty members. In accordance with this goal, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured face-to-face interviews and a questionnaire from the academic staff. Thus, a mixed-methods approach that allows for an explanation to unfold in a sequence is preferable for this investigation (Creswell & Plano, 2011). The researchers feel this is the best approach for exploring and explaining their quantitative findings through additional qualitative investigation. This provides a possible rationale for the observed outcomes (e.g., using follow-up).

All academic staff at the University of Cape Coast served as the population for study. For the 2020–21 school year, the Directorate of Human Resource estimates a need for a total of 1073 faculty members. Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Senior Research Fellows, Associate Professors, and Professors make up the target audience. This academic staff was used because the researchers believe that some of these participants have experiences from the promotion process and would therefore have a clearer understanding of how promotions work at U.C.C.

Recognizing the significance of the role of sampling selection in research, the researchers use an approach that provides the necessary information for data-driven conclusions that guide policy, practice, and suggestions for future research. Cohen et al. (2011) opined that the terms 'sample and sampling' are shorthand for "learning about the study population from a component taken from it. The study's sample size of 285 participants was determined after considering the study's aims, research questions, and mixed-method research design, as well as the procedure established by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample size comprised 279 participants for quantitative dimension and 6 participants for qualitative dimension.

Approval from UCC Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained to enable the researcher conduct the study. This helps the researcher seek permission from participants to be involved in the study. Data from 285 members of the University of Cape Coast's teaching and research faculty was collected using a questionnaire and an interview guide. The 279 faculty members who filled out the survey were visited by the researcher at their workplaces. Completed surveys were collected on the same day they were distributed. Due to COVID-19, some respondents (35%) completed the questionnaires virtually. Additionally, the researcher interviewed 6 academic staff (2 from each rank, starting from Lecturer/Research Fellow to Professor). These ranks were purposively selected based on their experience in the promotional process to attain such a level.

One of the main strengths of this study in terms of how it assures the validity and reliability of its research strategy relates to the pilot study and field test at the University of Education Winneba (UEW). In this investigation, triangulation was employed to increase the validity and reliability of the instruments. Two professionals in the field of higher education verified the instruments' accuracy and reliability (one from the CHSE-University of Maryland, USA, and IEPA-UCC). Twenty faculty members (12 men and 8 women) from the University of Education, Winneba, filled out the questionnaire for preliminary testing. The questionnaire's reliability estimate was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. A field test was also done to ensure the interview guide's reliability and validity. This provided both the impetus for, and the foundation for, the research that followed. Imperfections in the study, particularly in the research design, were ironed out after the pilot study. Validity and trustworthiness of this study's findings were ensured by using proper research follow-up activities and analytical methodologies to ground the conclusions in the data obtained.

The study's goal was to investigate the challenges that academics at the University of Cape Coast confront while applying for and receiving promotions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the study's quantitative data (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation). If the academic staff has a mean of means score of 2.50 or above, they are satisfied with the promotion process, and if it is 2.50 or lower, they are dissatisfied with the promotion process. Data from semi-structured interviews with study participants were analysed qualitatively using NVIVO. This ensured that thematic analysis was performed on the replies from the in-person interviews, identifying relevant concerns, observations, and lessons that can be used to better understand the perspectives of academic staff at the University of Cape Coast regarding the promotion procedures there.

The promotion processes at the University of Cape Coast were one of the primary focal point of this study. This critical agenda of the study was pursued vigorously to ensure that reliable reference material on the University of Cape Coast academic staff's experiences of the promotion processes is available for practice, capacity-building programmes, research and policy formulation. Besides, this undertaking would inform the consistent review of the academic staff processes at the University of Cape Coast.

The quality of the research outcomes was assured by submitting activity reports (in the form of inception reports, preliminary results, mid-term progress reports, publication and end of project reports) to the quality assurance desk of IEPA and DRIC for verification and scrutiny. Similarly, School/College presentations were held at least once in the life of the project to promote engagement with the wider University community.

Adherence to research ethics is a crucial issue as far as planning and execution of activities outlined in the study are concerned. As the research has University/industry dimension, it is critical that approval was sought from the Institutional Review Board of UCC to ensure that the research is planned and executed in line with the tenets of the ethical protocols of the university. The researcher adhered to the following to ensure that anticipated challenges, such as confidentiality of respondents and researcher biases, are controlled:

1. Holding information obtained in the strictest confidence and ensuring the anonymity of participants.
2. Independence and impartiality of researcher towards participants and the research.

key findings

In this section, we share participants' data that generated an abundance of insights and a variety of common threads that extended beyond the remit of this study. To answer the study questions, data was analysed. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods (means, standard deviations). Thematic analysis was used to examine the interviews' qualitative data. Following is a summary of the main takeaways from the data analysis:

A sample of 285 respondents was selected from the University of Cape Coast in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, including academic rank and year range that promotion was approved. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the demographic data. Tables 1 and 2 show the outcomes.

Table 1 Staff ranking

Description	F	%
Assistant Lecturer/Research Fellow	9	3.2
Associate Professor	38	13.6
Full Professor	9	3.2
Lecturer/Research Fellow	49	17.6
Senior Lecturer/Research Fellow	174	62.4
Total	279	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 1 shows that the majority (62.4%) of the respondents have obtained senior lecturer/research fellow in their rank. Lecturer/research fellow as a level of staff rank recorded at 17.6% and Associate Professor (13.6%). Additionally, the current educational entry requirement for an academic staff position is a doctoral degree the past eight years may account for the increase in senior lecturer/research fellow rank. Though some participants have Assistant lecturers/research fellows (3.2%), it highlights the initial educational benchmark for recruiting academic staff with master's certificates and 3.2% who have risen through the ranks as a result of promotion to become full professors.

Table 2 Year range that promotion was approved

Description	F	%
Below 6 months	9	3.2
6 - 12months	76	27.2
13 - 18months	49	17.6
19-24months	49	17.6
25 months and above	96	34.4
Total	279	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2021).

Table 2 shows that the majority (34.4%) of the academic staff's promotion were approved 25 months and above. Next, to this, years of experience 6-12 months recorded 27.2% of the respondents. However, 3.2% of the respondents indicated that their promotion was approved less than months after submitting application documents.

Academic staff's knowledge of the promotion process

The first research question was to gauge professors' familiarity with the University of Cape Coast's tenure and promotion policies for faculty. Means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data collected from respondents. The satisfaction threshold was determined by comparing the means and the mean of means to a value of 2.5. In general, if the mean is above the threshold, then the majority of respondents found themselves in agreement with the statement being tested. Table 3 displays the findings.

Table 3 Knowledge of promotion process

Description	M	SD
Promotion process of the academic staff...		
is basically about the advancement of the rank or position of an academic staff in the hierarchical system	3.31	.82
gives added responsibilities to the staff	2.97	.86
deals with change of job title of the staff	2.78	.94
deals with increase in salary	3.03	.74
involves increase in service benefits	2.53	.95
entails a total change in working environment	1.72	.68
is digitized making the process easy	1.47	.76
Overall	2.54	.82

Source: Field survey (2021)

The goal of this study question was to survey academic staff on their familiarity with tenure and promotion. It is evident that the item 'promotion process of the academic staff is basically about the advancement of the rank or position of academic staff in the hierarchical system' with a mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.82, it was the most extreme group of responses. Close by, the promotion process of the academic staff deals with an increase in salary (M=3.03, SD=0.74); the promotion process of the academic staff gives added responsibilities to the staff (M=2.97, SD=0.86); the promotion process of the academic staff deals with the change of job title of the staff (M=1.56, SD=0.75); promotion process of the academic staff entails a total change in working environment (M=1.56, SD=0.75). However, the statement 'promotion process of the academic staff is digitized making the process easy' recorded the least mean (1.47) and a standard deviation of 0.76) and 'promotion process of the academic staff entails a total change in the working environment ((M=1.72, SD=0.68).

The average score for this research question was 2.54, with a standard deviation of 0.82. The median score of academic staff was greater than 2.5, suggesting that the vast majority of respondents were familiar with the promotion process. This implies that most academic staff are knowledgeable that the promotion process is about the advancement of the rank or position, increase in monthly or annual salary and service benefits, change of job title, and gives added responsibilities. However, most respondents are less knowledgeable about digitisation making the process easy and affecting total change in the working environment. Views expressed during the semi-structured interview were consistent with this. Among the participants' most critical remarks are:

Yes, I am aware of such policies. Initially, a lot of those things were captured in the format statutes but upon revision, I think it came up as a separate policy document highlighting rank advancement, salary adjust, and other benefits. #IR1

I was then told to go and look for the basic publication information regarding the publishers, editors and other stuff of the articles and book chapters that I have submitted. Now, I am ready to put in my application and I am going to move to the next rank. #IR2

Description of the promotion process

Research Question Two sought to explore the promotional process. As such, the promotional process at the University of Cape Coast is subjected to different kinds of description but similar in one direction towards a frustrating end. Academic staff described their understanding of the promotion process as frustrating, not clear and transparent, long process, information does not come as and when you expect it to, and time consuming. The following statements by academic staff support this theme:

The processes are not clear. You actually don't know. There is lack of transparency in the entire process. Sometimes you don't even know where your application is, no communication going through and the inconsistency is too much. This is because there are no clear procedures outlined or the requirements that you need to be sure that from this level, I have finished that. #R2

I think in some instances, it depends on the shape of your nose. There is sometimes favouritism. I have heard and seen some people's documents, right from the submission at the department to the university A&P to the assessors and back take less than three months and there are times others delay. I will not say it is the fault of those who have to look at the document. May be sometimes it is from the applicants. But generally, I think there is too much delays in processing the documents and it can be very much frustrating. And I am in that situation right now. Information does not come as and when you expect it to. Sometimes it is from the grape vine that you will hear that it has moved from one stage to the other. #R4

Exciting aspects of the promotion process

Research Question Three sought to examine aspects of the promotion process academic staff find most exciting. Means, standard deviations, and recurring themes were used to examine the data collected from the respondents. The excitement level was determined by comparing the mean to a cutoff value of 2.5. In general, if the mean is above the threshold, then the majority of respondents are in agreement with the statement being tested. Tabulated below is the data gathered.

Table 4 Exciting aspects of the promotion process

Description	M	SD
Career progression	3.31	.59
Increase in monthly or annual salary	2.81	.78
Total change in working environment	1.72	.73
Total change in rank or position	3.06	.72
Total change in benefits and privileges	2.50	.72
Increase in allowances	2.31	.90
Opportunities for career development	2.69	.90

Source: Field survey (2019).

Table 4 displays participants' views of the most exciting aspects of the promotion process. The statements 'Career progression' with a mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.59 was the most extreme group of responses. Similarly, the statement 'Total change in rank or position' also recorded a mean of 3.06 with a standard deviation of 0.72. Close by, increase in monthly or annual salary (M=2.81, SD=.78); opportunities for career development (M=2.69, SD=.90); and total change in benefits and privileges (M=2.50, SD=.72). On the other hand, total change in working environment (M=1.72, SD=.73) and increase in allowance (M=2.31, SD=.90) fell below the cut-off point 2.5 as it highlights those participants do not find these exciting in the promotional process.

It is imperative to note that participants are excited about the career progression, change in rank or position, increase in month or annual salary, career development opportunities and total change in benefits and privileges that are the common end products of promotion. Similarly, the views of respondents expressed during the semi-structured interview corroborate with findings from the quantitative data. Among the participants' most critical remarks are:

The only exciting moment to me was when I knew I was due and I had my requirements according to what I know from the initial process. What you need to do in to qualify you for promotion. So, when I got to that stage, I was excited. Now, I am ready to put in my application and I am going to move to the next rank. #R3

The only exciting time is when you think it is due and you are putting together your documents. It is a bittersweet moment. This is because what you go through in putting together your documents is challenging. But then you are happy that the time has come for you to apply. It can be exciting. And then if you hear that the documents have come and the reports are positive, I am excited as well. As for the letter coming, it will delay and when it comes, you think you have gotten the information already and so it is nothing new. #R2

On the hand most of the respondents interviewed provided a divergent view. Some of the critical statements are:

Well, I don't think there were any exciting moments. This is because you put in your promotion, expecting to hear something, you don't hear anything. All you hear is, it has been sent for assessment, the reports are in, but you don't hear anything about your promotion. #R1

So, me at a point I just decided to forget about the promotion. This is because I knew that I have done my part by submitting and the rest is for those in charge to then see to it that my documents are assessed and then whatever results, it is I get to know about it. So, I closed my mind after following it up for some few months. #R4

Frustrating aspects of the promotion process

Research Question Four sought to determine aspects of the promotion process academic staff find most frustrating. Means, standard deviations, and recurring themes were used to examine the data collected from the respondents. To compare the degree of frustration to the means and mean of means, a cutoff value of 2.5 was utilized. In general, if the mean is above the threshold, then the majority of respondents found themselves in agreement with the statement being tested. Table 5 shows the final findings.

Table 5 Frustrating aspects of the promotion process

Description	M	SD
Long procedures and high demands from an individual in the promotion process	3.31	.82
Lack of transparency in the vetting of documents	2.94	1.02
Changes in faculty membership, department and college promotion and tenure committees may precipitate changes in expectations	2.75	.84
Poor attitude of promotion committee members	2.59	.88
Shifting emphases on number of publications, types of publications, research grants, amount of service, or focus on teaching may cause changes in expectations	2.75	.80
Delays in the promotional process in relation to both internal and external assessment reports	3.41	.80
Lack of clear effective communication in the promotion process	3.19	.93
Overall	2.99	.87

Source: Field survey (2021)

The intent of this study question was to ascertain aspects of the promotion process do UCC academic staff find most frustrating. It is evident from Table 5 that the item 'Delays in the promotional process in relation to both internal and external assessment reports' recorded the highest mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.80. Aside this, the statements 'Long procedures and high demands from an individual in the promotion process'

($M=3.31$, $SD=0.82$), ‘Lack of clear effective communication in the promotion process’ ($M=3.19$, $SD=0.93$), Lack of transparency in the vetting of documents’ ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.02$); ‘Shifting emphases on number of publications, types of publications, research grants, amount of service, or focus on teaching may cause changes in expectations’ ($M=2.75$ $SD=.80$); ‘Changes in faculty membership, department and college promotion and tenure committees may precipitate changes in expectations’ ($M=2.75$ $SD=.84$); and ‘Poor attitude of promotion committee members’ ($M=2.59$, $SD=0.88$).

The overall average score on this study question was 2.99, with a standard deviation of 0.87. The overall average score fell above the cut-off point (2.5) signifying a frustrating processing with regards to delays in the internal and external assessment reports submission, long procedures and high demands, lack of clear effective communication and transparency in vetting of documents, shifting emphases on number of publications, types of publications, research grants, amount of service, or focus on teaching may cause changes in expectations and poor attitude of promotion committee members. This was analogous to the respondents’ views during the interview. Among the participants’ most critical remarks are:

What I think probably is the lack of communication. I would recommend that at least at every stage of the process, applicant should be informed of how far their documents are and then how far the process is going. In terms of getting, it faster, because I don't know why it takes too long, I would just that whatever bureaucracies that are there should be reduced. #R4

Well, I think that it is largely because of lack of information flow. I was thinking that you will be prompted of how far your information process is gone. #R1

When I was told, the document was with an internal assessor and everyday day, every week, every month, for four good months and it is really sad to experience that. And then finally it goes and when the external assessor is delaying. I don't know which measures are put in place because when I hear my documents went out, it was last year September, and we are in July, next week is August, then it will be a year. Why do you allow an external assessor to keep somebody's documents for all these months and years? So, all those aspects are so frustrating. # R5

Discussion

The study revealed that most academic staff are knowledgeable of the promotion process is about the advancement of the rank or position, increase in monthly or annual salary and service benefits, change of job title, and gives added responsibilities. However, most respondents are less knowledgeable about digitisation making the process easy and effecting total change in a working environment. The study’s new conclusion corroborates Abdulmumini’s (2021) observation that promotion entails transitioning to a position of more prestige and responsibility. Abdulmumini elaborated by saying that promotions reflect how an employee moves up the institutional ladder. The results of this study are consistent with those of Gupta (2011), who found that promotions result in increased responsibility, prestige, and compensation. When an individual moves through the ranks in their institution, they are rewarded with more responsibility and prestige. Staff who have shown exceptional performance are rewarded with promotions to encourage them to keep up their excellent work. One form of extrinsic incentive is promotion.

Furthermore, the study showed that most of the academic staff sampled described their understanding of the promotion process as frustrating, not clear, and transparent; long process, the information does not come as and when you expect it to, and time-consuming. Supporting the claim made by Budhwar and Debrah (2001), who found that many developing nations suffer inadvertent impediments to progress owing to outmoded and unproductive human resource management systems such as slow procedures for promotion, bad attrition rates, etc. According to Onah (2008), progress cannot be made without a sufficient, trained, and enthusiastic labor force supported by an effective human resource management strategy. This has to do with the type of policies adopted by the state government, which does not favour its development.

The study found that academic staff was excited about a promotion call. Thus, most of the respondents agreed that they were excited about the career progression, change in rank or position, increase in a month or an annual salary, career development opportunities, and total change in benefits and privileges that are the common end products of promotion. The study finding correlates with the findings of Abdulmumini (2021) that among all motivating factors, money leads, therefore withholding promotion increment to salary kills morale much more than other factors of motivation because money plays a great role in the satisfaction of employee needs.

Similarly, Prasad (as cited in Abdulmumini, 2021) indicated that staff promotion with full remuneration would boost academic staff morale. Thus, academic staff motivation is still the key to success, particularly promotion. It gives not only financial but psychological satisfaction. It has been previously argued by Ubeku (1975) that a promotion has a big effect on a person's motivation because it comes with more money and is a sign that their hard work has been noticed. Gupta (2011) backs up the idea that being promoted to a higher post means taking on more responsibilities, getting more respect, and making more money.

The study further revealed that academic staff were not pleased and satisfied with certain aspects of the promotion process. Most of the academic staff agreed that the process is frustrating with regards to delays in the internal and external assessment reports submission, long procedures and high demands, lack of clear, effective communication and transparency in the vetting of documents, shifting emphases on the number of publications, types of publications, research grants, amount of service, or focus on teaching may cause changes in expectations and poor attitude of promotion committee members. Tetey (2006) revealed that reports of setbacks in promotional processes in African institutions are the results of extensive methods and heavy requirements on the output of a faculty, and the results of the current study corroborate such claims. Tetey went on to say that there might be situations of lack of openness in some institutions since some academic staff, specifically, faculty below the professorial level, would want to be promoted based on teaching and grading students alone. Matusov and Hampel (2008) found that several models, such as procedural and judging ones, have been proposed to deal with the assessment problems in promotion by the influence of assessors on the period, and these results are consistent with the findings of the current study. Furthermore, Gentry and Stokes (2015) suggested that assessors' perspectives might be influenced by the fact that professors have widely varying opinions on how publications should be evaluated.

Implications for practice

The management of the University needs to be intentional about the promotional activities of academic staff. Leaders of higher educational institutions should always leave their doors open to receive, act, and share the problems of academics as human relation theory demands. Consideration must be given to higher education institutions to critically review faculty members who provide excellent service to the university but have low research production; preventing them from receiving promotion through delays will result in great resignation.

Conclusion

The study found that if the government doesn't put enough money into its education sector to provide all promotion benefits for academic staff in the state's higher education to maintain quality and standard, it will have an adverse effect on the state's brighter future developments, and its academics will leave in search of other employment opportunities rather than staying to develop labour force to the country. The vast majority of University of Cape Coast faculty members are unhappy with the institution's procedure for promotion. Faculty members are often disadvantaged in earning as a result of delays in the promotion process in relation to both internal and external assessment reports and lack of clear, long procedures and high demands and lack of clear communication.

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions were made: 1) University management ought to review promotional practices and institute clear communication platform and information flow; 2) University management should design a framework establishing the strict implementation of timelines for promotion processes; 3) University management should adopt a more all-encompassing method of promotion evaluation for academic personnel that takes into account faculty concerns; and 4) University management should digitise promotion process to reduce bureaucracy tendencies and delays.

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Ethical consideration

The University of Cape Coast's Institutional Review Board (IRB) gave its stamp of approval after making sure the research was conducted in a way that respected human subjects' rights and ensured their safety.

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