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Job Promotion Practices and its Associated Problems: The Case of Non-Teaching Staff in an Academic Environment

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Abstract

In State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) of the Philippines, guidelines on promotion of support staff is different from the teaching personnel. This study analyzed the practices and problems encountered in the promotion of support staff in the academe. A survey was conducted in the SUCs of Eastern Visayas Region, utilizing a questionnaire patterned from the Philippines' Omnibus Civil Service Commission rules. Generally, the key officials of the academic institutions perceived that the standard promotion practices of the support staff has been implemented to the fullest extent and in the majority of instances. Majority of the problems in promotions were generally perceived to adversely affect the implementation in some instances only. Some promotion practices have both positive and negative impressions to the overall promotion process. A definite and more objective guideline in promoting the support staff of the academe may improve the practice and would eventually minimize its associated problems.

Keywords: promotion practices; administrative staff; human resource management; academic institutions.

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1. Introduction

Promotion is one of the important human resource management practices in any organization. In the Philippines' academic institutions, human resource management usually put emphasis on the teaching personnel being the frontliners and key players of the organization. State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) follow a very definite set of guidelines in the promotion of the teaching personnel such as the modified Common Criteria for Evaluation (CCE) of faculty positions and the Qualitative Contribution Evaluation (QCE) as established and prescribed in the National Budget Circular (NBC) 461 issued on June 1, 1998. These evaluations are done every three years which means that faculty positions are reclassified and the faculty member might be promoted to a higher academic rank. On the other hand, the non-academic personnel or the non-teaching staff is not covered by the NBC 461 guidelines but rather adopt the standard promotion practice as prescribed in the Philippine's National Position Classification and Compensation Plan. The standard promotion practices has no specific date by which a promotion needs to occur, and in any period a worker is either promoted, left in the same job or in rare cases, demoted [1].

The unique features of the academe are that some of the key officials and/or administrators who are holding faculty positions are involved in the promotion process of the non-teaching staff. This situation might have some bearing in the promotion practices that would prevail in the organization since key officials and/or administrators holding faculty positions are used to the promotion guidelines of the teaching personnel rather than the standard promotion practices. This study is an attempt to describe the implementation of the standard practices as well as the problems in the promotion of the non-teaching staff in an academic environment.

Several studies identified the different factors and practices related to promotion decisions of managers in different organizations. According to Stumpf & London [2], factors likely to influence promotion decisions include the decision process, attributes of the decision maker(s), the organization's promotion policies and support systems, and other elements of the organizational and environmental context. Deshpande and his colleagues [3] studied the promotion decisions of managers from a large not-for-profit organization and found out that the performance level as well as organizational connections of an employee influenced promotion decisions. On the other hand, Armenis & Neal [4] in a study conducted in a multinational beverage company revealed that senior managers make promotions decisions in a manner consistent with recognition-primed decision-making theory. In a study on making recent promotion decisions involving the U.S. business executives, senior managers place a great deal of weight on the candidate's interpersonal skills while older managers ranked communication skills as more important than did the younger managers [5]. Cox & Nkomo [6] revealed that the age of a candidate is a factor in the promotability of employees. In the entire promotion process, environmental factor played a more complex role than expected [7].

Previous studies described the different factors and practices in the promotion of employees by different organizations. In the academic environment dominated by faculty with different promotion guidelines from that of the non-teaching staff as promotion guidelines, the implementation of the standard promotion practices of the latter has not been studied at length.

This paper described the extent of the standard practices and the perceived problems encountered in the promotion of non-teaching staff in an academic environment. In this study, a survey was conducted to the key officials of the SUCs of Eastern Visayas Region, Philippines to analyze the extent of implementation of the different promotion practices, the seriousness of the problems encountered and the associations between the different practices and problems in promotions.

The main limitation and constraint of this study is that the job promotion practices as well as the problems encountered were evaluated on the basis only of the perceptions of the respondents. The respondents were limited also to those at the top management only who are directly involved in the promotion process. The study did not attempt to include perception data of those in the lower rank or employees who were subjected to the promotion process. Further, the study is limited only to academic institutions which are operated by the government or the SUCs.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in the SUCs in Eastern Visayas, Philippines. The respondents of the study in each SUCs were: 2 vice presidents, 4 deans, 4 heads of units and sections, and the 1 human resource management officer. For the 11 SUCs in Eastern Visayas, the total respondent of the study is 110. The selection of respondents was based on their function as supervisors and as to their involvement in the promotion and management of the human resources which include the support staff. Thus, the vice presidents for Administration and Academic Affairs in each SUCs were chosen as samples, while the deans and the section heads were randomly selected and limited to only 4 each in every SUCs inasmuch as that there are SUCs who has more than four colleges and/or departments. The Human Resource Management Officer of every SUC was also included because of their direct involvement in human resource management.

The study utilized a survey questionnaire as the main instrument patterned from the Philippines' Omnibus Civil Service Commission (CSC) rules Book V of Executive Order 292, as amended [8]. The first part contained statements design for the respondents to assess the extent on the implementation of Promotion of non-teaching personnel. The second part of the questionnaire measures the extent of seriousness of the problems met in the implementation of promotion.

A rating scale of 1 to 5 was used in the questionnaire to let the respondents describe their perceptions with regard to the extent on the implementation of promotion and the seriousness of the problems met, respectively. Tables 1 and 2 present the description of the scales used in evaluating the perception of the respondents on the extent of implementation of promotion and seriousness of the problems met, respectively.

Descriptive analysis (central tendency and frequency counts) was used to describe the perception of the respondents on the extent of implementation as well as the seriousness of the problems encountered in the promotion. Spearman-rank correlation analysis was carried out to determine relationships among the different promotion practices and problems encountered.

Table 1: Description of the scales used in evaluating the perception of respondents on the extent on the implementation of promotion

Scale	Description
1	Not implemented- when the practice was not implemented at all
2	Unsatisfactorily implemented – when the practice was almost not implemented and in few instances
3	Satisfactorily implemented – when the practice was implemented to a moderately extensive degree and in some instances
4	Very Satisfactorily Implemented – when the practice was implemented to the fullest extent and in the majority of instances
5	Excellently Implemented – when the practice was implemented to the fullest extent and in all instances

Table 2: Description of the scales used in evaluating the perception of respondents on the seriousness of the problems met in promotion

Scale	Description
1	Not serious – if the problem does not exist
2	Less serious – if the problem adversely affects the implementation of the promotion to the non-teaching personnel in few instances
3	Moderately serious – if the problems adversely affects the implementation in some instances
4	Serious – if the problem adversely affects the implementation of the promotion to the non-teaching personnel in many instances
5	Very Serious – if the problem adversely affects the implementation of the promotion to the non-teaching personnel in all instances

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Implementation of Promotion Practices

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents as to their perceptions on the implementation of the 8 standard promotion practices considered in the study. Majority of the respondents perceived that all the promotion practices were very satisfactorily implemented, and nobody perceived that the practices were not implemented at all. Further, no respondents perceived that the promotion practices 1 to 7 were unsatisfactorily implemented, while only 1 (or 0.9%) of the respondents perceived that the non-discrimination in promotion (promotion practice 8) was unsatisfactorily implemented. The median rating of 4 (which means very satisfactorily implemented) coincides with the scale having the highest frequency counts in all the promotion practices considered in the study. The result suggests that majority of the key officials of the SUCs claimed that the

standard practices in the promotion of support staff in the academe were all implemented to the fullest extent and in the majority of instances. This might be due to the fact that the SUCs always adheres to the pertinent rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission with regards to human resource management.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents as to their perception of implementation of the different promotion practices

Promotion Practice / Perception	**f**	**%**
1. Knowledge, skills, and attitude is fairly considered in promotion evaluation		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	0	0
Satisfactorily implemented	16	14.5
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	79	71.8
Excellently Implemented	15	13.6
Total	110	100
2. Performance rating of the employees is a strong factor for promotion		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	0	0
Satisfactorily implemented	11	10
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	87	79.1
Excellently Implemented	12	10.9
Total	110	100
3. Insiders are priority for promotion		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	0	0
Satisfactorily implemented	12	10.9
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	78	70.9
Excellently Implemented	20	18.2
Total	110	100
4. Promotion is considered incentive and reward system		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	0	0
Satisfactorily implemented	18	16.4
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	75	68.2
Excellently Implemented	17	15.5
Total	110	100
5. Promotion is always based on ranking		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	0	0

Satisfactorily implemented	17	15.5
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	76	69.1
Excellently Implemented	17	15.5
Total	110	100
6. Employees are aware on the policies and procedures regarding promotions		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	0	0
Satisfactorily implemented	31	28.2
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	60	54.5
Excellently Implemented	19	17.3
Total	110	100
7. Merit and seniority are basis for promotion		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	0	0
Satisfactorily implemented	33	30
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	75	68.2
Excellently Implemented	2	1.8
Total	110	100
8. There is no discrimination on the practices regarding promotions		
Not implemented	0	0
Unsatisfactorily implemented	1	0.9
Satisfactorily implemented	38	34.5
Very Satisfactorily Implemented	64	58.2
Excellently Implemented	7	6.4
Total	110	100

3.2 Problems encountered in the implementation of promotion

Table 5 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents as to their perceptions on the seriousness of the problems encountered in the implementation of promotion. Majority of the respondents (51.8%) perceived that the problem on too much favoritism in promotion is moderately serious, while almost half (42.7%) of the respondents perceived the same problem as less serious. On the problem of nepotism among high ranking officials, majority and more than half of the respondents (58.2%) perceived it as less serious, which is followed by more than one-third (37.3%) of the respondents who perceived it as moderately serious. Only one of respondents (0.9%) perceived the above problems under the ‘serious’ category which means to have adversely affects the implementation of the promotion to the non-teaching personnel in many instances.

On the other 3 remaining problems considered in the study, majority of the respondents perceived them as less serious, while none of them perceived the problems as ‘serious’ and ‘very serious’. The median ratings of all the problem coincide with the category having the most number of frequency counts.

Generally, the result indicates that majority of the problems were 'less serious'. The problem on too much favoritism in promotion was observed to be the only one with 'moderately serious' median rating which is described as had adversely affects the implementation in some instances as perceived by the respondents. It would appear that the problem on too much favoritism in the promotion of support staff in the SUCs is more evident compared to the rest of the problems. Since the guidelines in promoting the non-teaching staff is not so definite as compared to that of the faculty, favoritism might be perceived as promotion decisions may be based on subjectivity of the appointing authority. This has been supported by Berger *and his colleagues* [9] which asserted that personal preferences for certain workers would give the managers the incentive to distort performance ratings by promoting the most favored rather than the most able workers in situations where performance is not perfectly observable and is mainly based on subjective measures.

3.3 Association of Variables

Figure 1 shows the different variables having significant associations. The correlation analysis to determine the association between the promotion practices and the problems encountered has yielded the following results:

1) The practice of prioritizing insiders in promotion is negatively associated with the perceived problem on too much favoritism ($r_s = -0.234$, *p-value* $= 0.014$). The result suggests that when the practice of prioritizing insiders in promotion is upheld, perceptions of too much favoritism is less likely observable. This might be due to the fact that the usual practice in most government institutions including the academe is to give preference to the insiders when there are vacant higher positions in the organization rather than hiring the non-insiders. Thus, when insiders are preferred, key officials will perceive a fair and non-favoritism promotion practice of the organization.

2) The practice of promotion based on merit and seniority is positively associated with the perceived problem in corruption as a result of buying promotion ($r_s = 0.226$, *p-value* $= 0.018$). The result suggests that when promotion based on merit and seniority is practiced, corruption as a result of buying promotion is more likely perceived by the key officials of the academe.

Between the different promotion practices, prioritizing insiders in promotion is negatively associated with the non-discrimination practice ($r_s = -0.278$, *p-value* $= 0.003$) which suggests that the practice of prioritizing insiders is more likely to favor discrimination in promotion. This might be because having this practice, it could be obviously perceived that there is discrimination due to giving of preference to insiders rather than the non-insiders which might be equally or more qualified.

Between the different problems in promotion, too much favoritism is positively associated with too much influence peddling in promotion ($r_s = 0.213$, *p-value* $= 0.025$) which suggest that the perceived problem of too much favoritism tend to go along with the problem of too much influence peddling in promotion. This two problems are obviously related as 'too much influence peddling in promotion' could be perceived as the result of 'too much favoritism'.

Table 5: Frequency distribution of the respondents as to their perception on the seriousness of the different problems on promotion

Problems in Promotion	**f**	**%**
1. Too much favoritism in promotion		
Not serious	1	0.9
Less serious	47	42.7
Moderately serious	57	51.8
Serious	5	4.5
Very Serious	0	0
Total	*110*	*100*
2. Nepotism among high ranking officials		
Not serious	4	3.6
Less serious	64	58.2
Moderately serious	41	37.3
Serious	1	0.9
Very Serious	0	0
Total	*110*	*100*
3. Promotion is not based on merit system		
Not serious	12	10.9
Less serious	77	70
Moderately serious	21	19.1
Serious	0	0
Very Serious	0	0
Total	*110*	*100*
4. There is too much influence peddling in promotion		
Not serious	24	21.8
Less serious	67	60.9
Moderately serious	19	17.3
Serious	0	0
Very Serious	0	0
Total	*110*	*100*
5. There is corruption as a result of buying promotion		
Not serious	33	30
Less serious	69	62.7
Moderately serious	8	7.3
Serious	0	0
Very Serious	0	0
Total	*110*	*100*

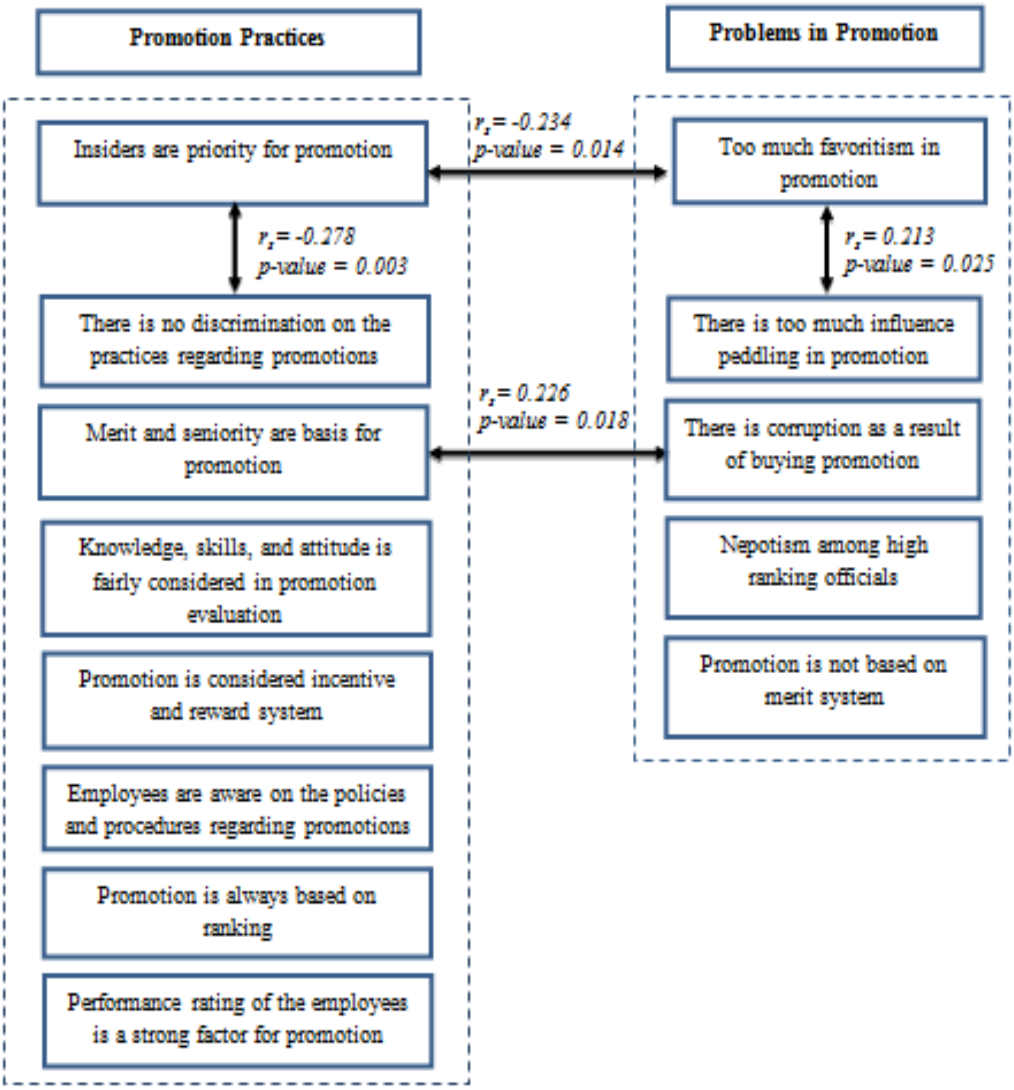

Figure 1: Diagram of the different promotion practices and problems showing their relationship

4. Conclusion and recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Generally, the key officials of the academic institutions are satisfied with implementation of the standard promotion practices of the non-teaching personnel. Problems has been perceived mainly due to the more subjective guidelines for promotion of the non-teaching personnel in the academe.

Some promotion practices have both positive and negative impressions to the overall promotion process. The practice of prioritizing insiders in the promotion of non-teaching personnel is observed to discouraged favoritism but encouraged the practice of discrimination. The practice of merit and seniority in promotion is perceived to be associated with the problem of corruption as a result of buying promotion. The problem of too much favoritism and of too much influence peddling in promotion are directly related with each other. A

definite and more objective guidelines in promoting the support staff of the academe may improve the practice and would eventually minimize its associated problems.

4.2 Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the academic institutions needs to review their promotion process in order to minimize or possibly eliminate problems that could be encountered in implementing the practices. It is recommended to prioritize insiders in promotion to avoid perceived problems on too much favoritism which might relate to problem on to much influence peddling promotion. Promotion by merit and seniority needs a very careful consideration to avoid problem in corruption as a result of buying promotion.

The result of this study could be used as a valuable input to the Philippine's Civil Service Commission and other concerned authorities in crafting a more enhanced mechanism and a sound policy in the promotion of workers or employees. A more objective promotion guideline similar to that of the teaching personnel is recommended to be adopted also with that of the support staff.

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