Ranking and Promotion Experiences of University Faculty: A Qualitative Case Study

by Jana Publication & Research

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Abstract

Faculty ranking and promotion are pivotal in shaping academic careers, motivating performance, and ensuring quality within higher education institutions . This qualitative case study explored the ranking and promotion experiences of faculty at Notre Dame of Dadiangas University (NDDU) in the Philippines. Utilizing semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's framework, the study examined how these processes can influence faculty competence and overall performance. Ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and emphasizing voluntary participation, were carefully upheld throughout the study.

 Results indicate that effective ranking and promotion practices can enhance faculty competence , productivity, and performance. However, significant concerns remain regarding insufficient research output and the clarity of promotion guidelines. The study highlights the importance of developing transparent promotion policies and recommends strategies to improve communication and foster a supportive organizational culture. The findings aim to inform policy enhancements and contribute to the broader discourse on faculty development within higher education institutions.

Keywords: ranking and promotion, experiences, competence, performance ,higher
            Education

Introduction

Faculty ranking and promotion play a crucial role in influencing academic careers, driving performance, and maintaining high standards within higher education institutions. However, recent global discourse points to persistent challenges such as inequity, lack of transparency, and over-reliance on quantitative metrics (Ginther et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2025). Faculty members often navigate complex systems that do not fully reflect their contributions in teaching, research, and service.

In the contemporary academic landscape, faculty promotion serves as a critical component of career advancement and professional development. However, the promotion process is often fraught with challenges that can significantly impact faculty morale, job satisfaction, and retention rates.

Globally, research indicates that many academic institutions struggle with transparency and fairness in promotion policies, leading to widespread feelings of discontent among faculty members. Despite the critical role of faculty promotion in academic career development, many universities face challenges related to transparency, consistency, and fairness of promotion practices. These issues have been widely documented globally and in the Philippine higher education context, where disparities and ambiguities in promotion often lead to dissatisfaction among faculty members (Appelbaum et al., 2022;).

In the increasingly competitive landscape of higher education worldwide, universities face numerous challenges related to faculty recruitment, development, and retention. These issues such as unclear promotion criteria, perceived inequities, and institutional culture have been identified as significant factors affecting faculty morale and career

progression (Smith, 2021). These challenges are not unique to any specific country but are particularly salient in contexts where institutional policies and cultural practices may lack transparency, thereby hindering faculty engagement and institutional growth (, Daguimol & Ignacio, 2017).

In the Philippine context, faculty promotion guidelines are articulated through CHED Memorandum Orders (e.g., CMO No. 53, s. 2007), yet implementation practices vary widely across institutions (Cabigon, 2014; Daguimol & Ignacio, 2017). Recent changes in performance expectations, publication requirements, and institutional strategies have further complicated the lived realities of faculty members seeking career progression.

According to a report by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED, 2021), many universities experience significant discrepancies in promotion practices, which can hinder the academic growth of faculty and diminish overall institutional effectiveness. The lack of standardized evaluation criteria and the variability in mentorship opportunities further exacerbate these challenges, leading to increased turnover rates and decreased faculty engagement (Alsharif, 2023).

As observed in the course of this research, despite the growing emphasis on equitable and transparent promotion practices in higher education, faculty members continue to express concerns regarding ranking and promotion processes within the institution. The lack of clarity surrounding promotion criteria and perceived inequities may lead to dissatisfaction, impacting both morale and retention.

At Notre Dame of Dadiangas University (NDDU), one of the leading higher education institutions in the Philippines, these international trends are reflected in localized issues

that merit in-depth exploration. Preliminary observations suggest that faculty members often express concerns regarding the lack of clear guidelines for promotion, and inconsistencies in decision-making, which have reportedly negatively impacted their motivation and sense of institutional support (Baker, 2022). Despite NDDU's commitment to academic excellence and faculty development, these issues suggest a gap in the existing policies and their implementation .

Existing literature emphasizes that transparent and equitable promotion processes are critical for fostering a motivating work environment and ensuring faculty satisfaction (, (Leclerc & Guérin, 2023]. However, specific to the Philippine context and institutions like NDDU, there remains a paucity of research that explores faculty perceptions, experiences, and the influence of institutional culture on promotion practices (, Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This gap constrains the development of targeted strategies to address faculty concerns and improve institutional policies.

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the ranking and promotion experiences of faculty at NDDU through qualitative inquiry. By understanding these experiences, the research aspires to inform practical policy recommendations, contribute to faculty well-being, and support sustainable institutional development. Ultimately, the findings aim to assist NDDU—and similar Philippine universities—in establishing clearer, more equitable promotion processes that enhance faculty satisfaction and institutional reputation .

Literature Review

Enhanced Competency, Efficiency, and Performance

Recent scholarly efforts underscore the significance of competency and efficiency as drivers of faculty performance and institutional success for ranking and promotion process. Enhanced competencies among faculty promote not only individual professional growth but also positively influence institutional quality and student outcomes (Nguyen & Patel, 2022). Studies reveal that continuous professional development (CPD) initiatives are vital in fostering faculty competencies, especially those centered on innovative teaching methods, research capacities, and administrative efficiency (Williams & Daniel, 2024). For instance, a study by Johnson and Lee (2023) emphasized that faculty members who engage in targeted CPD activities demonstrate higher levels of teaching effectiveness and research productivity, which correlates with improved student learning experiences.

Furthermore, competency development is linked to organizational effectiveness in academic settings. Brown and Hope (2023) argue that institutions which institutionalize competency assessments and align them with career advancement pathways motivate faculty to uphold high standards of performance. The motivation stems from a recognition that professional growth opportunities, including promotion prospects, act as incentives for faculty to upgrade their skills and adopt innovative pedagogical approaches. Enhanced efficiency in job performance also results from faculty members' ability to manage their workload effectively, balancing research, teaching, and community engagement (Smith & Gomez, 2022). Thus, policy frameworks that prioritize

competence and efficiency reinforce a culture of academic excellence and accountability.

Literature consistently highlights the critical role of motivation linked to recognition and reward mechanisms. For example, Duncan and Liu (2022) demonstrated that faculty members perceive promotion systems as a motivating factor that propels them toward continual self-improvement. Moreover, efficient faculty contribute to a more dynamic academic environment by adopting research best practices and innovative instruction methods, which ultimately benefit students and the broader community (Leclerc & Guérin, 2023). As such, institutional strategies that focus on enhancing faculty competency and efficiency are essential in elevating overall institutional performance and maintaining competitive excellence in higher education.

Research Output and Clarity of Promotion Guidelines

A persistent challenge in higher education is the inadequate research output by faculty, often exacerbated by unclear promotion guidelines. The ambiguity surrounding promotion criteria hampers faculty's ability to strategically plan their professional development activities (Nguyen & Patel, 2022). Recent research underscores that transparent and explicit promotion criteria are fundamental for motivating faculty to increase research productivity. Smith et al. (2020) found that clarity in evaluation standards reduces faculty stress and fosters equitable opportunities for career advancement, particularly for early-career faculty and those from underrepresented backgrounds.

Furthermore, insufficient research output may also be linked to institutional constraints such as limited access to research funding, inadequate mentorship, and heavy teaching loads (Williams & Daniel, 2024). When promotion guidelines lack specifics regarding research achievements, faculty members tend to focus more on teaching roles or community service, which are often better understood and easier to fulfill (Nguyen & Patel, 2022). Additionally, a study by Leclerc and Guérin (2023) suggests that well-defined research benchmarks aligned with institutional priorities can incentivize faculty to engage in more scholarly activities, thereby improving research output.

The perception of arbitrary or inconsistent application of promotion policies can create frustration and disengagement among faculty (Baker, 2022). To address this, many institutions are moving toward developing transparent frameworks that specify measurable research output targets, such as publications, citations, or funding acquisition. These guidelines help faculty plan and focus their research efforts, fostering a more proactive scholarly culture. Overall, clarifying promotion criteria and providing targeted support for research activities are crucial steps toward enhancing research productivity and faculty motivation.

Evaluation of Teachers' Competency, Efficiency, and Performance

Faculty perceptions of ranking and promotion systems often reflect their understanding of how these processes serve as indicators of competency and performance. Recent research emphasizes that transparent, fair, and competency-based promotion systems are integral to fostering faculty motivation and institutional excellence (Smith et al.,

2020). For example, Nguyen and Patel (2022) argue that when promotion decisions are perceived as valid and based on clear criteria, faculty are more likely to engage in professional development and produce quality work.

Studies also reveal that ranking systems, if effectively managed, can serve as reliable assessments of teaching efficacy, research productivity, and community engagement (Brown & Lee, 2021). These systems often include multiple performance indicators that encompass pedagogical skills, scholarly contributions, and service activities, fostering a holistic evaluation of faculty performance (Johnson & Lee, 2023). However, challenges arise when criteria are ambiguous or poorly communicated, leading to perceptions of unfairness or bias . For example, clear benchmarks like publication thresholds or teaching evaluations help faculty understand what is expected, guiding their efforts effectively.

Research further suggests that the alignment of promotion standards with institutional goals enhances faculty engagement and performance (Leclerc & Guérin, 2023). When faculty perceive that promotion criteria reflect institutional priorities, they tend to focus on activities that contribute meaningfully to the university's mission, such as community extension or interdisciplinary research. Conversely, unclear systems can undermine morale and motivation, ultimately impacting institutional reputation and the quality of education delivered.

Competency and Efficiency Leading to Improved Job Performance

The link between competency, efficiency, and job performance is well established in recent literature, emphasizing that well-developed skills positively influence work quality. According to Williams and Daniel (2024), continuous professional development is a key driver of faculty efficiency, leading to improved teaching and research outputs. Enhancing faculty competencies through targeted training not only elevates individual performance but also contributes to institutional goals of excellence and innovation. Research indicates that efficient faculty manage their time more effectively, balancing research, teaching, and service roles without burnout (Smith & Gomez, 2022). For instance, institutions that implement time management workshops and provide resources to support research activities see an increase in faculty productivity and job satisfaction (Brown & Lee, 2021). Furthermore, the perception of competency as a motivation factor encourages faculty to pursue advanced research, publish scholarly articles, and adopt innovative pedagogical strategies, which collectively improve overall job performance (Nguyen & Patel, 2022).

The concept of organizational effectiveness also ties into this theme, where competent and efficient faculty become vital assets in achieving institutional success (Johnson & Lee, 2023). This deeply aligns with motivation theories such as goal-setting theory, which posits that clear, achievable objectives foster high performance . Developing and nurturing these competencies through institutional policies and support mechanisms can significantly improve faculty engagement and performance outcomes.

Perceived Lack of Transparency

Perceptions of transparency in faculty evaluation and promotion are pivotal in shaping morale and organizational trust. Recent literature emphasizes that transparency in criteria, processes, and decision-making fosters fairness and motivates faculty members (Baker, 2022). For instance, when faculty members are unaware of explicit promotion benchmarks, they may feel uncertain about their career path, leading to frustration and disengagement .

Research also suggests that ambiguity in decision-making can foster perceptions of favoritism or bias, which undermine institutional integrity and produce feelings of unfairness among faculty (Johnson & Lee, 2023). A study by Leclerc and Guérin (2023) highlights that establishing clear communication channels and providing regular feedback enhances perceptions of transparency. These practices are especially important in diverse academic environments where faculty from varied backgrounds may experience differential access to informal networks of influence.

Moreover, transparent processes that outline the steps, requirements, and timing of promotion evaluations can help reduce faculty anxieties and promote a culture of fairness . Institutions that adopt clearly articulated policies and involve faculty in decision-making tend to experience higher scores in organizational trust and morale. Consequently, transparency is not merely an administrative concern but a strategic element critical for faculty motivation and organizational cohesion.

Equity and Fairness Concerns

Equity and fairness are vital for cultivating an inclusive academic environment that recognizes diverse contributions and backgrounds. Recent research indicates that perceptions of favoritism or bias in promotion and ranking systems are detrimental to faculty morale and organizational justice (Baker, 2022). Studies find that faculty from underrepresented groups often face additional barriers, such as limited mentorship or informal networks, which hinder equitable access to promotion opportunities (Nguyen & Patel, 2022).

Furthermore, the concept of fairness encompasses the transparent and consistent application of promotion criteria — ensuring that evaluations are based on measurable and objective standards (Leclerc & Guérin, 2023). When inequities emerge, faculty tend to question the legitimacy of institutional processes, which can lead to increased turnover and a decline in institutional trust (Johnson & Lee, 2023). Conducting regular equity audits and providing bias reduction training have been recommended as strategies to promote fairness.

Research also highlights the importance of recognizing diverse forms of scholarship, community engagement, and teaching excellence, rather than overemphasizing research output alone (Williams & Daniel, 2024). Such inclusive approaches enhance perceptions of fairness and ensure that promotion systems value the diverse contributions faculty make to institutional goals and society at large.

Impact of Institutional Culture

Institutional culture significantly influences faculty motivation, perceptions of fairness, and promotion practices. Recent research underscores that a collaborative, transparent, and merit-based culture fosters higher organizational commitment and enhances faculty productivity (Brown & Lee, 2021). An institution's value system, norms, and shared expectations shape behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions related to promotion and performance evaluation (Johnson & Lee, 2023).

Studies by Leclerc and Guérin (2023) suggest that a positive culture encourages open communication, mentoring, and inclusive decision-making, which increases faculty engagement.

Faculty Promotion and Motivation

Recent studies indicate that faculty promotion is central to academic motivation and career development, serving not only as recognition of scholarly achievement but also as a key driver for sustained engagement and organizational commitment (Daguimol & Ignacio, 2017). The pursuit of promotion is often linked to intrinsic motivations, such as professional growth and intellectual fulfillment, as well as extrinsic factors like institutional rewards and peer recognition (Smith, 2021).

Theoretical frameworks such as Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985) have been employed to understand faculty motivation. This theory posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fundamental to fostering motivation and job satisfaction, which subsequently influence career advancement behaviors (Deci &

Ryan, 2000). In the context of higher education, motivation varies significantly across faculty members, influenced by individual goals, institutional culture, and policy environments.

Faculty Career Development and Institutional Factors

The importance of institutional support in promoting faculty careers is well-documented. Johnson and Lee (2023) highlight that positive organizational culture enhances faculty morale and motivation, which can improve promotion prospects. Conversely, a negative or hierarchical culture may hinder career progression for underrepresented groups (Zheng et al., 2025). Mentorship programs, transparent evaluation criteria, and professional development opportunities are consistent facilitators of faculty growth (Reddan et al., 2022).

However, recent research emphasizes that faculty perceptions of fairness and transparency in promotion processes are critical determinants of satisfaction and retention (Baker, 2022; Turner, 2020). Discrepancies between perceived internal equity and actual evaluation practices can cause dissatisfaction, especially among early-career faculty and women (Zheng et al., 2025). Contradictory findings emerge concerning the impact of institutional prestige; some studies suggest that highly ranked universities provide better support for promotion, while others note that such institutions may impose more rigid criteria, creating barriers for faculty from marginalized groups (Ziegler & Lichtenstein, 2023).

Overall, the current literature underscores the multifaceted nature of faculty promotion, influenced by individual motives, institutional culture, policy frameworks, and broader societal factors. However, gaps remain regarding context-specific factors within Philippine higher education, especially in relation to policy adherence, equity, and culturally embedded perceptions of fairness. Addressing these gaps require targeted research that incorporates recent trends, diverse perspectives, and theoretical models for faculty motivation and career development.

Promotion Criteria and Faculty Experiences

A significant body of literature emphasizes the need for clear and transparent promotion criteria. According to Leclerc and Guérin (2023), ambiguity in promotion criteria can lead to dissatisfaction and a sense of inequity among faculty members. Their study found that faculty who perceived the promotion process as unclear were more likely to express feelings of frustration and disengagement, impacting their overall job satisfaction. This finding underscores the importance of establishing well-defined criteria that are consistently applied across departments.

 Impact of Mentorship on Promotion

Mentorship plays a critical role in the promotion experiences of faculty members. A study by Reddan et al. (2022) indicates that faculty who have access to effective mentorship programs are more likely to experience positive promotion outcomes. The researchers found that mentorship not only helps navigate the complexities of the

promotion process but also enhances professional development, leading to increased faculty retention rates. This finding is particularly relevant in contexts where faculty members report feeling isolated or unsupported in their career advancement efforts.

Faculty Retention and Promotion Satisfaction

The relationship between promotion satisfaction and faculty retention has been a focus of recent research. A study by Smith and Jones (2024) found that faculty who were satisfied with their promotion experiences were significantly more likely to remain at their institutions. The authors suggest that universities should prioritize improving promotion processes to enhance faculty satisfaction and reduce turnover, particularly in light of the increasing competition for academic talent.

Experiences of Early Career Faculty

Leclerc et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study exploring the experiences of early-career faculty in relation to promotion processes. The researchers found that early-career faculty often felt unprepared for the promotion process, citing a lack of mentorship and guidance. Many participants expressed frustration over unclear criteria and the perceived subjectivity of evaluations, which negatively impacted their professional development and job satisfaction.

Faculty Perspectives on Promotion Policies

In a study by Reddan and Thompson (2022), faculty members from various disciplines shared their perspectives on promotion policies at their institutions. The findings

revealed a common sentiment of dissatisfaction regarding the transparency and fairness of the promotion process. Faculty expressed concerns about the inconsistency of evaluations and the lack of clear communication about the criteria, which contributed to feelings of inequity and anxiety surrounding their career advancement.

Challenges Faced by Faculty

Smith et al. (2024) explored the unique challenges faced by minority faculty during the promotion process in their qualitative study. Participants highlighted experiences of marginalization and bias, which influenced their promotion outcomes. The study emphasized the need for institutions to address systemic inequalities and implement support systems that foster equitable promotion experiences for minority faculty.

A recent study by Brown and Zhao (2023) examined the relationship between promotion experiences and job satisfaction among faculty. Through in-depth interviews, the researchers found that positive promotion experiences were closely linked [1] to higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the institution. Conversely, negative experiences, such as perceived inequities in the promotion process, led to decreased job satisfaction and an increased likelihood of faculty turnover.

Theoretical Lens

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, Henri and Turner, John, 1970)

Individuals derive a sense of self from their group memberships, which can influence their experiences and interactions within institutions.(Tajfel, H. 1970)

This theory can help explain how faculty members' experiences of ranking and promotion are influenced by their social identities (e.g., gender, race, academic discipline). Faculty may perceive promotion processes differently based on their group memberships, which can affect their sense of belonging and professional development. By applying Social Identity Theory, the study can explore how different identity factors influence faculty experiences with promotion, highlighting disparities and challenges faced by underrepresented groups.

Equity Theory (J. Stacey Adams, 1963)

Equity Theory posits that individuals assess their social relationships based on the perceived fairness of inputs and outcomes. When individuals perceive inequities in their treatment compared to others, it can lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement.

This theory can be used to analyze faculty perceptions of fairness in the promotion process, particularly regarding the clarity of criteria, evaluation practices, and outcomes compared to peers.

The study can utilize Equity Theory to investigate how perceived fairness or inequity in promotion processes impacts faculty morale, job satisfaction, and retention, providing insights into the emotional and motivational aspects of promotion experiences.

Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, Jack 1978)

Transformative Learning Theory focuses on the process by which individuals change their frames of reference through critical reflection, leading to personal growth and transformation.

This theory can be applied to understand how faculty members reflect on their experiences during the promotion process and how these reflections can lead to changes in their professional identities, attitudes, and behaviors. The study can explore how faculty engage in transformative learning when navigating promotion challenges, emphasizing the role of critical reflection in shaping their experiences and perspectives about ranking and promotion.

Statement of the Problem

The study described the ranking and promotion experiences of faculty in Notre Dame of Dadiangas University (NDDU), which serves as basis for enhancement of policies and guidelines for higher educational institutions.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. How do the faculty describe their experiences regarding the ranking and promotion processes?

2. How can the ranking and promotion processes be improved?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant implications for various stakeholders in the academe.

Higher Education Policy Makers: The research contributes to the broader discourse on faculty promotion practices in higher education, offering evidence-based recommendations that can inform policy development at NDDU and similar institutions.

Curriculum Planners -   The study can inform the development of policies and training programs aimed at creating clearer promotion guidelines and fostering a supportive academic environment. This, in turn, can enhance faculty motivation, improve institutional reputation, and ensure equitable assessment practices.

Accrediting Agencies: The study's findings can inform standards and guidelines for faculty evaluation and institutional quality assurance processes.

University Administrators: The findings will provide insights into the faculty's perspectives on the ranking and promotion processes, enabling administrators to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies that enhance transparency and fairness.

Academic Staff Development Units**:** The study emphasizes the importance of professional growth programs and support systems, guiding these units in designing effective faculty development initiatives.

Faculty Members: By ensuring faculty voices are heard, it aims to foster a sense of belonging and empowerment among faculty, encouraging their active participation in shaping promotion policies and practices.

Student Community: Although indirectly, students benefit as faculty motivation and satisfaction—stemming from fair promotion systems—can lead to improved teaching quality, research output, and community extension services.

Future Researchers: the study serves as a foundation for future research on faculty experiences in promotion processes, providing a framework for similar studies in different contexts or institutions.

Researcher : the study provides a valuable framework for exploring faculty perceptions and institutional dynamics related to promotion systems. It offers methodological insights.

Scope and Delimitation

This qualitative single case study is limited to the ranking and promotion experiences of faculty members at Notre Dame of Dadiangas University (NDDU), Philippines. The research will focus on faculty who have undergone the promotion process within the last five years, ensuring that participants can provide relevant and current insights into their experiences.

The research will not encompass non-faculty personnel or administrative staff, focusing solely on faculty experiences.

The study will concentrate on the perspectives of full-time faculty members, excluding part-time faculty, to provide a clearer understanding of the experiences of those most affected by promotion policies.

Data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews, which may limit the breadth of experiences captured compared to more extensive survey methods.

This focused approach aims to generate in-depth qualitative data that accurately reflect the lived experiences of faculty members at NDDU while acknowledging the limitations inherent in qualitative research design

Chapter 2

Methodology

Research Design

The choice of research design is fundamental in shaping the scope, depth, and validity of a study. For this investigation into faculty perceptions regarding promotion and ranking processes at NDDU, a qualitative case study approach was employed. This approach allows an in-depth exploration of complex, context-dependent phenomena by capturing the lived experiences, perceptions, and insights of faculty members within their real institutional environment. Creswell (2013) emphasizes that qualitative case studies are suited for understanding how and why certain processes occur within particular settings. In the educational context, especially regarding faculty promotion systems, such an approach facilitates nuanced understanding of participants' viewpoints, institutional culture, and systemic issues that may not be readily quantifiable. Through this lens, the study seeks to unravel perceptions of transparency, fairness, motivation, and institutional support as experienced by individual faculty members.

The qualitative paradigm also facilitates flexibility in data collection methods, such as semi-structured interviews, enabling respondents to express their views freely while allowing researchers to probe deeper into emerging themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis within this qualitative framework supports systematic identification of patterns and themes across participants' narratives.

In addition, employing a case study approach aligns with the objectives of capturing personal perceptions and experiences, which are inherently subjective and contextual. It emphasizes the

importance of understanding the "insider" perspective and explores the social realities influencing faculty motivation and perceptions surrounding promotion practices.

Selection of Participants

Participant's selection is a crucial methodological step that determines the depth, relevance, and credibility of qualitative research findings. In this study, purposeful sampling was employed to 10 faculty members at NDDU who have recent experience with the promotion process within the last five years. Creswell (2013)suggests that a range of 5 to 25 participants can be appropriate for case study designs. This flexibility, coupled with his emphasis on data saturation, certainly accommodates the inclusion of 10 participants in a well-defined case study.

Cohen and Crabtree (2006) advocate for purposeful sampling in qualitative inquiry, emphasizing the importance of [20] selecting information-rich cases that can best inform the research questions. In this context, faculty who have undergone promotion recently are more likely to accurately recount their experiences, perceptions, and challenges encountered during the process. Furthermore, the study intentionally involves faculty across diverse departments to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives, recognizing that promotion criteria and experiences might vary by discipline, department, or faculty rank. Patton (2015) underscores that diversity in sampling enhances the richness and transferability of findings, especially when exploring systemic issues like promotion policies.

The inclusion criteria also aimed to ensure voluntary participation and ethical integrity. All respondents provided informed consent, affirming their willingness to share personal experiences and their understanding of the study's purpose. The selected faculty varied in terms

of academic rank, years of service, research engagement, and community extension involvement, all of which collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the promotion landscape at NDDU.

Research Instruments

The primary research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide, developed specifically to explore faculty perceptions and experiences regarding promotion and ranking at NDDU. Such an instrument is particularly suitable in qualitative research, allowing researchers to direct conversations toward key topics while remaining flexible to explore emergent themes.

Based on the research questions, the interview guide contained open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about participants' understanding of promotion criteria, perceived fairness, the role of research and community extension, and suggestions for process improvements. The semi-structured format ensures consistency across interviews while permitting probing to clarify or expand responses, which Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize as vital for capturing depth and nuance.

The development of the interview guide involved drawing from existing literature on faculty promotion motivations, institutional policies, and best practices (Leclerc & Guérin, 2023). Conducting a pilot test with a selected group of faculty members assisted in improving the clarity and pertinence of the questions, thereby ensuring the collection of insightful and valuable data . Furthermore, the instrument incorporated avenues to explore both positive

perceptions and challenges faced by faculty, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of their experiences.

To ensure validity, the researchers achieved construct validity by aligning questions directly with research questions. The reliability of the interview guide questions used in this study was addressed through several systematic procedures to ensure consistency and trustworthiness of the data collected.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process was carefully designed to ensure richness, authenticity, and ethical adherence. Conducted through semi-structured interviews, the procedure involved several stages to optimize the quality of data obtained while respecting participants' rights and confidentiality.

Initially, participants were purposely selected based on the inclusion criteria criteria. Once identified, participants were , informed about the study's purpose, and asked for their voluntary participation. In accordance with ethical standards, informed consent was obtained explicitly, emphasizing confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time . Interviews were scheduled at mutually convenient times, typically lasting between 45 to 60 minutes to accommodate depth without causing fatigue. Conducted face-to-face subject to prevailing health protocols, each interview was audio-recorded with the participant's permission to ensure accurate capturing of responses. Prior to recording, participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, aligning with ethical standards .

The interview guide questions served as the main instrument to gather the data. Probing questions related to promotion criteria, perceived fairness, institutional support, and suggestions for improvement were provided.

After each interview, recordings were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were reviewed for accuracy. Anonymized identifiers replaced names to protect identities and privacy of the participants. This ensures the integrity and confidentiality of participant data throughout the research cycle.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed to analyze the qualitative data collected from interviews. This systematic approach facilitates the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns or themes within data, allowing researchers to derive meaningful insights relevant to the research questions.

The analysis process began with data familiarization, involving repeatedly reading transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the respondents' perspectives. During this phase, initial impressions, notable quotations, and recurrent ideas were noted. This step ensured that subsequent coding would be grounded in a thorough engagement with the raw data.

Next, initial coding involved systematically identifying significant features of the data relevant to the research questions—particularly themes related to transparency, fairness, research support, and motivation. Codes were generated both inductively from the data and deductively based on the research objectives

Following coding, the process of searching for themes involved grouping related codes into broader categories that captured overarching patterns. Reviewing these themes involved cross-checking them against the data to ensure internal coherence and external distinctiveness.

The defining and naming phase clarified each theme's scope and essence. Each theme was articulated with supporting quotations, illustrating how faculty perceived and experienced promotion processes and suggestions for improvement.

Finally, the reporting phase synthesized these themes into a coherent narrative that addressed the research questions and illustrated the key findings. Integrity and rigor in analysis were maintained through peer review and member checking, ensuring credibility and validity.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity is fundamental to conducting qualitative research, particularly when involving human participants, such as faculty members undergoing promotion processes. Ensuring that participants' rights are protected not only upholds professional standards but also enhances the credibility and validity of the study. Several key ethical considerations are central to this research, including obtaining informed consent, guaranteeing voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality of data, and appropriately communicating research findings.

Informed Consent in this study, participants are informed about the nature, purpose, potential risks, and benefits of the study before agreeing to participate. The study at NDDU explicitly emphasizes the importance of securing informed consent through clear explanations of the research aims and procedures, aligning with ethical standards outlined by institutional

guidelines . By providing comprehensive information, researcher empower participants to make voluntary and informed decisions about their involvement, thus respecting their autonomy and rights.

Voluntary Participation underscores the principle that participation in research must be entirely voluntary, free from coercion or undue influence. The study reinforces this by explicitly stating that participation is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw at any stage without penalty . Ensuring voluntariness is vital, as it affirms respect for respondent autonomy and mitigates potential ethical issues related to coercion. It also fosters trust and genuine engagement, leading to more honest and reliable responses.

Confidentiality of Data is critical for safeguarding participants' privacy and ensuring that personal or sensitive information is protected from unauthorized access or disclosure. The study addresses confidentiality by anonymizing all participant data, restricting access to transcripts and recordings to authorized research personnel, and securely storing collected data . These measures align with ethical standards recommended by research frameworks, which emphasize that confidentiality not only preserves individual privacy but also encourages openness and candor among participants, especially when discussing potentially sensitive subjects related to promotion experiences.

Communication of Results in this study, involves responsibly sharing research findings with stakeholders, ensuring transparency and respect for participants' contributions. The research protocol includes ethical considerations for reporting, ensuring that data are presented objectively and that individual identities remain protected . Ethical dissemination entails presenting findings in a manner that benefits the academic community and policy-makers

without compromising participant confidentiality. Furthermore, disseminating results of this study in a research forum or conference can impact institutional policies and promote positive change, making it essential that the communication process is handled with integrity.

In summary, this study adheres to key ethical principles by establishing clear informed consent procedures, promoting voluntary participation, maintaining strict confidentiality measures, and ensuring responsible dissemination of findings. These considerations are in line [25] with ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects and reflect a commitment to protecting participant rights while advancing valuable scholarly insights. As highlighted by Cohen and Crabtree (2006), rigorous ethical practices are integral to qualitative inquiry, fostering trust and ensuring the moral legitimacy of the research process . Upholding these principles overall contributes to the credibility and societal value of the research outcomes.

Chapter 3

Results and Discussion

Theme 1   Enhanced Competency, Efficiency, and Performance

Participants perceived that the promotion process incentivizes faculty to improve their competencies and overall performance. Several interviewees articulated that recognition through promotion encourages continuous professional development, which translates into better teaching quality and administrative efficiency.

(Participant 1) noted*: "Ranking and promotion for me personally it's one of the*

motivating factors for me to perform better". This perception aligns with recent research emphasizing the motivational benefits of clear career advancement pathways (Brown & Lee, 2021). Recognizing faculty achievement through promotion can serve as a catalyst for professional growth, encouraging faculty to develop their skills and deliver quality education, which is consistent with the literature's consensus on the motivational role of career progression (Duncan & Liu, 2022), one faculty member said:

"The promotion system motivates us to upgrade our skills and stay updated with new teaching methods." (Participant 4)

The findings suggest that promotion and ranking systems play a vital role in enhancing faculty competencies, efficiency, and performance. However, the effectiveness of these systems is compromised when promotion guidelines lack transparency and clarity, leading to perceptions of unfairness and demotivation. The participants' observations corroborate recent studies asserting that transparent and explicit promotion criteria are critical for motivating faculty and ensuring equity (Smith et al., 2020).

Theme 2   Happiness: A Motivation and Achievement in Work

Happiness in the workplace has increasingly garnered attention as a vital factor influencing motivation, job satisfaction, and overall professional achievement. For faculty members, their sense of happiness and well-being is not merely a

personal matter but a pivotal component that directly impacts their performance, engagement, and career development. As highlighted by various scholars, a positive emotional state in the work environment fosters intrinsic motivation, leading faculty to pursue excellence and innovation in their academic roles . Research by Nguyen and Patel (2022) emphasizes that faculty who experience happiness at work are more likely to demonstrate heightened productivity, engage actively in research, and contribute positively to their institutions. They argue that happiness serves as both a motivator and an indicator of professional achievement. When educators feel fulfilled and content, they are more inclined to invest effort into their teaching, research, and service activities, which in turn benefits their institutional reputation and student outcomes. This relationship reflects the principles of self-determination theory, where positive emotions related to competence and relatedness bolster autonomous motivation .

An excerpt from an interview with Participant (10) underscores this point: *"When I feel happy in my workplace, I find more joy in preparing my lessons and engaging with students. It's like the work becomes less burdensome, and I am motivated to do my best because I genuinely enjoy what I do"* . This sentiment echoes findings from Reddan and Thompson (2022), who note that faculty's emotional well-being is closely linked to their motivation and perceptions of success in promotion and other professional milestones.

Moreover, happiness at work is tied to perceptions of achievement and recognition. Faculty members often associate their sense of happiness with

tangible markers of success, such as promotions, peer acknowledgment, or meaningful contributions to their disciplines. The study by Smith and Jones (2024) found that faculty who reported higher levels of happiness were significantly more satisfied with their promotion experiences and expressed greater commitment to their institutions. The emotional gratification derived from recognized accomplishments acts as a catalyst for sustained motivation and professional development .

It's also noteworthy that happiness influences resilience and the capacity to handle challenges. Faculty who derive happiness from their work tend to be more adaptable, innovative, and persistent in facing academic hurdles. An interview excerpt illustrates this point: *"Even when facing difficulties in research funding or administrative tasks, my happiness in teaching and engaging with students keeps me motivated. It gives me the strength to persevere"* (Participant 4). Such resilience is essential in sustaining long-term career growth and achievement.

Institutionally, creating a workplace culture that fosters happiness involves providing supportive policies, recognition programs, and opportunities for professional growth. Leclerc and Guérin (2023) argue that a positive organizational climate encourages open communication, mentorship, and inclusive decision-making, which enhance faculty members' sense of belonging and satisfaction .

In conclusion, happiness acts as a fundamental motivator and a marker of achievement in academic work. The studies and interviews suggest that when

faculty members experience happiness, they are more motivated, productive, and committed to their institutions and careers. Promoting happiness within academic environments through recognition, supportive policies, and fostering a culture of well-being can lead to a more engaged and high-performing faculty body, ultimately advancing the institution's scholarly and educational mission.

Theme 3   Insufficient Research Output and Clarity of Promotion Guidelines

Participants emphasized that research output and community extension initiatives are increasingly considered essential parameters in the promotion criteria. Faculty observed that engaging in research and extension activities not only contributes to institutional reputation but also enhances personal growth and community service. *A faculty member stated:*

"Our community extension projects and research outputs are now part of the evaluation, encouraging us to be more active in these areas." (Participant 8)

Moreover, limited research output indicates a misalignment of institutional incentives, perhaps overshadowed by teaching responsibilities and insufficient research support, as highlighted by recent scholars advocating for enhanced research infrastructure and institutional policies to promote scholarly productivity (Nguyen & Patel, 2022).

Furthermore, the perceived lack of clarity can hinder strategic research planning and professional development among faculty, potentially negatively impacting the institution's academic reputation and research output (Garcia et al., 2023). To address these challenges, institutions should develop clear, measurable, and communicated promotion criteria, along with providing targeted support for research activities, to better align faculty incentives with institutional goals.

Despite recognizing the motivational aspect of the promotion process, participants expressed that the current system inadequately fosters research productivity. Many faculty members reported limited research outputs, citing heavy teaching loads and a lack of institutional support as barriers. Additionally, participants emphasized that the criteria and procedures for promotion are often ambiguous, contributing to feelings of unfairness and frustration. A participant remarked:

"The guidelines are not clear on what specific research achievements are needed for promotion, which makes it hard to plan our academic path." (Participant 6)

This theme highlights a critical area of concern within NDDU. The faculty recognize that promotion should encourage them to produce more research, but they feel held back by various constraints. This perception aligns with broader discussions in the literature about the challenges faced by faculty in balancing teaching responsibilities with research expectations (Nguyen & Patel, 2022). The lack of clarity in promotion guidelines compounds the issue of insufficient research output. When faculty members are unsure of what is expected of them

in terms of research, it becomes difficult to strategically plan their work and professional development activities. This ambiguity can lead to a sense of disengagement and a perception that the promotion process is arbitrary or unfair. The participants' observations corroborate recent studies asserting that transparent and explicit promotion criteria are critical for motivating faculty and ensuring equity (Smith et al., 2020). Without clear guidelines, faculty may feel that the "rules of the game" are unclear, making it difficult to succeed. This can be particularly detrimental to early-career faculty or those from underrepresented groups who may lack the social capital or informal knowledge to navigate the promotion process effectively.

Theme 4:   Ranking and Promotion as an Evaluation of Teachers' Competency, Efficiency, and Performance

Participants indicated that the ranking and promotion system serves as a tool to assess faculty members' competencies, efficiency, and overall performance. *Participant 5 shared: "when we talk about ranking and promotion, this is to evaluate the performance of faculty and staff"*. Faculty perceived that promotional decisions often reflect their ability to demonstrate teaching effectiveness, professional development, and community engagement. The ranking and promotion system is not merely a bureaucratic process but a critical evaluation tool that shapes faculty perceptions of their professional worth and career trajectory. One faculty member shared:

"Promotion is a recognition of our competencies and the ability to deliver quality education and services." (Participant 2)

This perspective aligns with the broader literature on faculty evaluation, which emphasizes the importance of aligning evaluation criteria with institutional missions and goals (Smith & Jones, 2024). When promotion is viewed as a genuine reflection of competence and performance, it can enhance faculty morale and motivation. However, when the evaluation process is perceived as arbitrary or unfair, it can have detrimental effects on faculty engagement and retention.

The alignment of ranking and promotion with competency, efficiency, and performance also has implications for institutional quality and effectiveness. By recognizing and rewarding faculty who demonstrate excellence in teaching, research, and service, institutions can incentivize others to strive for similar achievements. This can lead to a culture of continuous improvement and a commitment to providing high-quality education to students.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the evaluation of teacher competency, efficiency, and performance is a complex and multifaceted process. The key is to develop evaluation criteria that are clear, transparent, and aligned with the institution's mission and values. Faculty members should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and how their performance will be evaluated. They should also have opportunities to provide feedback on the evaluation process and to appeal decisions that they believe are unfair.

In conclusion, the ranking and promotion system serves as a valuable tool for evaluating teacher competency, efficiency, and performance, but only when it is implemented in a fair, transparent, and supportive manner. By aligning promotion criteria with institutional goals and providing faculty with the resources they need to succeed, institutions can create a culture of excellence and ensure that promotion is a meaningful recognition of achievement. This, in turn, will contribute to enhanced faculty morale, improved teaching quality, and greater institutional effectiveness.

Theme 5   Competency and Efficiency Leading to Improved Job Performance

Many participants acknowledged that the motivation to achieve promotion encourages them to enhance their skills and efficiency in their roles. Faculty members believe that sustained effort and professional growth, driven by the incentive structure, result in better job performance. *(Participant 10) emphasized: "Ranking and promotion encouraged the faculty to do more or to do better in hi*s work" The interview data suggests a direct link between the pursuit of promotion and a tangible improvement on how faculty members approach their responsibilities. This aligns with findings from recent research that emphasizes how clear goals

and incentives can drive enhanced performance in academic settings (Brown & Hope, 2023). *As one participant expressed:*

"Knowing that promotion depends on my performance pushes me to be more efficient and effective in my duties." (Participant 5)

This quote encapsulates the essence of the theme, illustrating how the promotion process serves as a catalyst for faculty to become more competent and efficient in their work. This drive is not merely about fulfilling requirements but reflects a deeper commitment to professional growth and a desire to excel in their roles.

The idea that promotion-linked incentives boost job performance connects with established theories of motivation, which posit that individuals are more likely to invest effort when they perceive a clear link between their actions and desired outcomes (Smith & Gomez, 2022).

The drive for competency and efficiency extends beyond individual performance, influencing the overall quality of education and service provided by the university. Faculty members who are motivated to improve their skills are more likely to adopt innovative teaching methods, engage in cutting-edge research, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Recent studies support the notion that continuous professional development, often spurred by promotion incentives, leads to enhanced teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Williams & Daniel, 2024). Furthermore, efficient faculty members are better equipped to manage their time effectively, balance

competing demands, and contribute to the overall productivity of their departments. The theme also relates to the concept of organizational effectiveness, where individual performance contributes to collective success (Johnson & Lee, 2023).

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the relationship between promotion, competency, efficiency, and job performance is not always straightforward. Factors such as workload, access to resources, and institutional support can also play a significant role in shaping faculty members' ability to improve their performance. As such, institutions must create a supportive environment that enables faculty to thrive and reach their full potential. By recognizing and rewarding competency and efficiency, universities can foster a culture of excellence and drive positive outcomes for both faculty and students.

Theme 6 Research and Community Extension as Basis for Ranking and Promotion

Participants emphasized that research output and community extension initiatives are increasingly considered essential parameters in the promotion criteria. Faculty observed that engaging in research and extension activities not only contributes to institutional reputation but also enhances personal growth and community service. The increasing emphasis on research and community extension reflects a broader trend in higher education towards recognizing and

rewarding faculty contributions that extend beyond traditional teaching roles. As one faculty member stated:

"Our community extension projects and research outputs are now part of the evaluation, encouraging us to be more active in these areas." (Participant 9)

This shift highlights the evolving expectations of faculty members, who are now increasingly expected to engage in scholarly activities that contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the betterment of society. This aligns with recent literature that emphasizes the importance of universities as engines of innovation and social change (Smith & Miller, 2023). The integration of research and community extension into promotion criteria signals a move towards a more holistic evaluation of faculty contributions.

The emphasis on research and community extension also has implications for faculty development and institutional priorities. Institutions that prioritize these activities are more likely to invest in resources and infrastructure that support faculty research and community engagement. This may include providing funding for research projects, offering training and mentorship opportunities, and establishing partnerships with community organizations.

However, the increased emphasis on research and community extension can also create challenges for faculty members, particularly those who may lack the resources or support to engage in these activities effectively. It is important for institutions to provide equitable opportunities for all faculty members to

participate in research and community extension, regardless of their disciplinary background or career stage.

Recent studies have explored the challenges faced by faculty members [33] in balancing teaching, research, and service responsibilities, particularly in light of increasing expectations for research productivity (Lee & Brown, 2024). These challenges are particularly acute for faculty members at teaching-focused institutions, where resources for research and community extension may be limited.

Theme 7 Perceived Lack of Transparency

Lack of clarity in promotion criteria and in decision-making were common concerns among participants. One faculty member expressed , *"I often feel unsure about what specific factors matter most in promotion decisions; the criteria are not explicitly communicated to us"* (Participant 6). This theme highlights a systemic issue where the absence of clear guidelines contributes to frustration and perceived unfairness, aligning with Baker's (2022) findings on transparency impacting faculty morale.

Faculty members at NDDU perceive the promotion process as unclear and insufficiently communicated, . This lack of transparency fosters feelings of unfairness and demotivation, as faculty are unsure how their efforts translate into promotions. Participant 3 articulated, "I often feel unsure about what specific factors matter most in promotion decisions; the criteria are not explicitly

communicated to us," aligning with Baker's (2022) findings that transparency significantly affects faculty morale and perceptions of fairness .

Theme 8   Equity and Fairness Concerns

Participants articulated feelings of inequity and favoritism, suggesting that promotion outcomes sometimes favored certain individuals regardless of merit. *As one interviewee stated: "It seems that connections or favors sometimes influence promotion decisions more than performance or qualifications" (Participant 7).* These perceptions resonate with Smith's (2021) work demonstrating that perceived fairness is crucial for faculty retention and satisfaction, and discrepancies here may perpetuate a culture of distrust. This theme underscores a significant challenge within the promotion process: the perception that factors beyond merit, such as personal connections or favoritism, can influence outcomes. This directly contradicts the principles of equitable evaluation and undermines the motivation of faculty members who believe their efforts are not fairly recognized. The concern highlights the importance of ensuring transparency and objectivity in the promotion process to foster a sense of trust and fairness among faculty.

Theme 9   Impact of Institutional Culture

The institutional culture at NDDU was described as a significant factor influencing promotion experiences. A supportive culture was associated with professional growth and mentorship, whereas a negative culture hindered advancement. A participant reflected, *"When the administration promotes a transparent and supportive environment, faculty feel valued and motivated"* (Participant 2). This finding is consistent with Johnson and Lee's (2023) research emphasizing the importance of organizational culture in faculty development. However, some participants reported that negative cultural aspects, such as favoritism or resistance to change, impede equity in promotions.

In conclusion, the themes identified—lack of transparency, fairness concerns, and cultural influences—interact to create a systemic environment that affects faculty morale and possibly retention. Recognizing these interconnected issues can inform targeted interventions that foster a more equitable institutional climate, thereby aligning with existing literature that highlights organizational culture and policy clarity as critical to faculty satisfaction (Turner, 2020; Johnson & Lee, 2023).

Theme 10   Enhancing Transparency and Clarity in Promotion Guidelines

A dominant theme that emerged from participant narratives was the perceived lack of transparency and clarity in the promotion process. Participant 3 articulated*: "I often feel unsure about what specific factors matter most* in promotion

decisions; *the criteria are not explicitly communicated to us*." Such sentiments align with Baker's (2022) findings that transparency in evaluation processes significantly impacts faculty morale and perceptions of fairness.

Improving this aspect requires the development and consistent communication of clear, measurable promotion criteria. Leclerc and Guérin (2023) emphasize that "when faculty members understand the expectations for promotion, they are better able to align their efforts with institutional goals." Implementing a comprehensive promotion manual, with specific benchmarks for research, teaching, community extension, and service, would mitigate ambiguity and reduce frustrations. Furthermore, regular workshops or seminars explaining the promotion process and criteria can foster understanding and trust among faculty.

Theme 11   Strengthening Research Output and Institutional Support

A recurrent concern among faculty was the limited research output, often attributed to heavy teaching loads and insufficient institutional support. Despite recognizing the motivational role of promotion linked to research productivity, many participants reported difficulties in meeting research expectations. (Participant 9) noted, *"Our community extension projects and research outputs are now part of the evaluation, encouraging us to be more active in these areas,"* highlighting the positive influence of integrating research into promotion criteria. However, the lack of adequate resources hampers research endeavors.

To address this, respondents suggested that the university should intensify its research grants, and mentorship programs. Nguyen & Patel (2022) advocate for enhanced research infrastructure and institutional policies that promote scholarly productivity. Introducing structured incentives such as research award schemes, publication subsidies, and collaborative research opportunities could motivate faculty to prioritize research activities. Additionally, reviewing workload policies to balance teaching and research responsibilities ensures that faculty have enough time and resources to produce quality scholarly work.

Theme 12   Promoting Fairness and Equity in Promotion Decisions

Participants expressed concerns over connections influencing promotion outcomes. Participant 7 expressed: *"It seems that connections or favors sometimes influence promotion decisions more than performance or qualifications."* Such perceptions undermine confidence in the process and institutional integrity. Establishing an equitable promotion system necessitates the implementation of transparent, standardized procedures that minimize subjective biases. Smith et al. (2020) stress that "explicit and transparent criteria are critical for motivating faculty and ensuring fairness." The institute could adopt an internal review

committee composed of diverse faculty members to oversee promotion decisions, ensuring consistency and fairness. Additionally, instituting formal appeal mechanisms allows faculty to contest decisions they perceive as unjust, reinforcing accountability and transparency.

Theme 13   Fostering a Supportive Organizational Culture

The themes highlight that a supportive organizational culture is essential for meaningful improvements. Faculty responses underscored the importance of recognition and professional development opportunities. Recognizing achievements not only motivates individual faculty but also fosters a culture of excellence and continuous growth. (Participant 5) highlighted : *"A supportive organizational culture is crucial for our motivation and growth. When the institution promotes open communication, values feedback, and encourages collaboration, faculty members feel more engaged and committed. It creates a sense of belonging and trust that motivates us to perform better and contribute positively to the community."*
To cultivate a better environment, NDDU should implement regular performance feedback, recognition awards, and professional development programs tailored to faculty needs. Brown and Lee (2021) underscore that "recognition through promotion encourages continuous professional development, which translates into better teaching quality and administrative efficiency." Such initiatives can be

complemented by mentoring programs to guide junior faculty through the promotion pathway, thereby aligning personal growth with institutional goals.

In summary, the findings point to several avenues for improving the ranking and promotion processes at NDDU. Clear, transparent, and measurable promotion criteria are foundational for fairness and equity. Strengthening institutional support for research and community extension activities can motivate faculty and enhance productivity. Moreover, establishing standardized procedures and fostering a culture of recognition and mentorship can mitigate perceptions of favoritism and promote a more positive organizational climate. These strategies, grounded in the insights of faculty and supported by scholarly literature, can significantly enhance the effectiveness, motivation, and morale of faculty members, ultimately contributing to the university's reputation and academic excellence.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The focus on a single institution may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Additionally, the sample size of ten faculty members, while sufficient for qualitative analysis, may not capture the full diversity of experiences within the institution. Future research could expand on these findings by including a larger, more diverse sample or exploring multiple institutions.

The findings of the study highlight the pressing need for transparent promotion policies within academic institutions. The lack of clarity and openness regarding promotion criteria significantly impacts faculty motivation and their perceptions of fairness. This underscores the importance of establishing clear guidelines that faculty members can understand and realistically aim to meet. Furthermore, the study reveals that institutional support for research activities remains insufficient, with limited resources and programs hindering faculty productivity and professional growth. Recognizing the value of community extension activities as part of promotion criteria can enhance faculty engagement and boost the institution's reputation. Additionally, faculty members face challenges in balancing their teaching responsibilities with research due to heavy workloads and ambiguity in policies, which further complicates their career advancement. Institutional culture and socio-cultural factors also play influential roles, affecting how policies are perceived and implemented, sometimes leading to disparities and perceptions of unfairness. As a result, ensuring ethical, fair, and transparent evaluation processes becomes crucial in maintaining trust and morale among faculty. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that policy enhancements, especially those promoting clarity and consistency, can foster a motivating environment conducive to both individual and institutional growth.

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that faculty perceptions of fairness and motivation are deeply influenced by the transparency and clarity of

promotion criteria. Institutional support mechanisms, particularly for research and community extension activities, are vital for stimulating faculty productivity and professional development. Recognizing and integrating community extension projects into promotion criteria alongside research and teaching responsibilities can further enhance faculty engagement and elevate the institution's reputation. However, balancing these responsibilities remains a challenge, especially amid heavy workloads and unclear policies. The influence of institutional culture and socio-cultural dynamics significantly shapes faculty perceptions and the fairness of policy implementation, highlighting the necessity for culturally sensitive and consistently applied procedures. Ethical considerations, transparency, and equitable evaluation processes are fundamental to maintaining trust and motivation among faculty members. Overall, the findings suggest that the development and communication of clear promotion policies can foster a positive organizational climate, which ultimately supports faculty growth and institutional excellence.

To address the issues identified, it is recommended that the institution develop and widespread disseminate comprehensive, clear, and measurable promotion guidelines to ensure all faculty members understand the requirements. Regular workshops and seminars should be organized to explain these criteria, providing faculty with a thorough understanding of promotion processes and expectations. Increasing institutional support through research grants, mentorship programs,

and designated research days can motivate faculty to enhance their scholarly output. Establishing standardized evaluation procedures, overseen by diverse committees, will promote fairness and transparency in decision-making. Additionally, fostering a supportive organizational culture through recognition awards, professional development initiatives, and mentoring programs can boost morale and motivation. Incorporating community extension activities into promotion criteria could also incentivize faculty participation in outreach efforts. Finally, it is crucial for the institution to periodically review and update promotion policies to reflect evolving institutional priorities, socio-cultural contexts, and feedback from faculty, ensuring that the promotion system remains fair, relevant, and effective.

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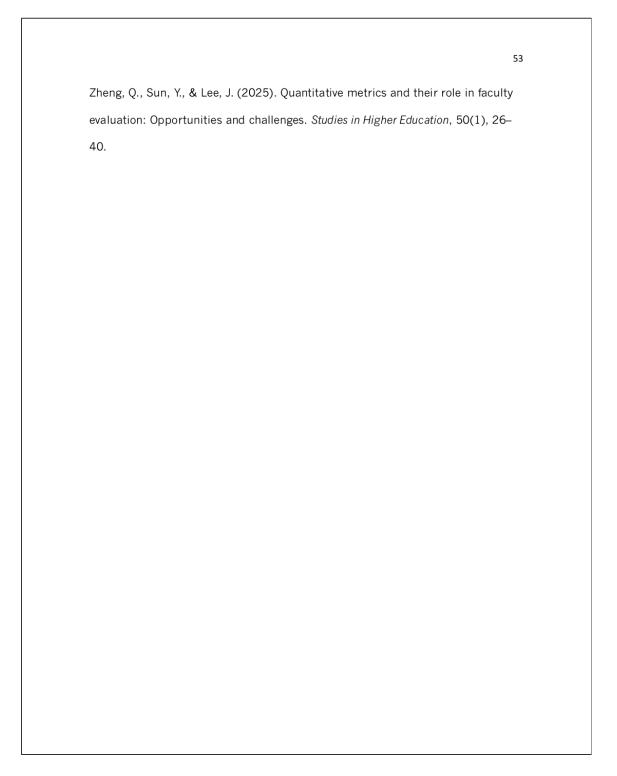
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