

**A SURVEY OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE COMMISSION  
EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROMOTION ON MERIT**

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**D/61/P/ 8052/2000**

**A MANAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.**

**FACULTY OF COMMERCE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**SEPTEMBER 2004**

## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has never been presented for a degree in any other university.

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TO  
MY PARENTS FOR TRULY BEING A BLESSING  
MICHELLE AND MUKAMI FOR BEING THERE  
AND ALL THE NICE PEOPLE WHO WERE QUITE  
SUPPORTIVE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is difficult and perhaps impossible for a single mind to accomplish work as hard as this management project and a masters degree alone. There are people who helped me financially, physically, mentally and even spiritually and I cannot forget to thank them for their support.

Special and heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisor Mr. Omondi for his guidance, enduring support and inspiration throughout the research.

To my classmates and especially my group members- Judy, Kamathi, Lillian, Njoro, Susan and Waks whom we enriched each others lives and shared common experiences during the entire MBA programme I say a big "Thank you" to you all. You were a great source of inspiration and strength to keep going.

To my parents whose sacrifice and dedication towards my education has been enormous I can only say "To have you I feel truly blessed. I am grateful."

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## ABSTRACT

The study reported here is a survey of Parliamentary Service Commission employees' attitude towards promotion on merit. The study explored the opinions of employees towards the performance appraisal form, performance appraisal interview and their views on promotion on merit. It also sought to find out the factors that cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction with promotion on merit. The study finally sought the employees' recommendations on how to make promotion on merit more efficient and acceptable to employees.

The need for the study arose out of the urge to develop a better understanding of the link between promotion and performance and to help managers to refine promotion policies already in existence by highlighting the adequacy or inadequacy of promotion policies. This was as a result of the need for all organizations to improve their productivity and the current trends in the market place where organizations are rightsizing with a view of increasing the productivity of the fewer employees to surpass the total productivity of all employees before right sizing.

The study was exploratory in nature as not much research has been conducted in the area. A sample survey of Parliamentary Service Commission employees was carried out, data was collected using a structured self reporting questionnaire, based on Likert (1932) type of scale. The quantitative data was coded and analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The results were presented in frequency distribution tables, percentages and cross tabulations.

In conclusion, the findings of the study revealed that employees have negative attitude towards promotion on merit. This could be attributed to certain factors such as the weakness of performance appraisal to accurately capture performance indicators and measure them, the employees feeling that performance appraisal interview is not carried out fairly and impartially and the failure to link promotion to merit.

## CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

### 1.1 PROMOTION

Organization planning, manpower planning and individual career planning are integral parts of the management process, providing a logical and systematic approach to the review of present and future utilization of the company's main asset – its manpower. While an organization plans to staff effectively and with continuity, it must take into account the needs of the staff's growth in abilities and how it employs them. Careers are a prime concern of employees and they see administrative policies in relation to their personal careers. They are often concerned with pay scales, job opportunities, chances for promotion, and other tangible aspects of careers than with what is best for the organization. Since organizational effectiveness is influenced by the organization's ability to help meet the needs of its staff, decision-makers should consider career-related issues in establishing management practices Bateman and Organ (1991). The planning of an individual career pattern is therefore an important part of the whole. It is the key to success with the overall plan – or may destroy the plan Gordon McBeath (1979).

According to Koontz et al (1993) promotion is a change within the organization to a higher position that has greater responsibilities and requires more advanced skills. It usually involves higher status and an increase in pay. Promotion may be a reward for outstanding performance or a result of the firm's desire to better utilize an individual's skills and abilities. Promotions may be a reward for outstanding performance, but only if there is evidence of potential competency. Otherwise persons may be promoted to a level at which they are incompetent. Given the proper encouragement in an evaluation interview, most employees return to their jobs with a new determination to improve their overall performance and eventually be promoted Haimann (1995).

The aims of the promotion procedures of a company should be, first, to enable management to obtain the best talent available within the company to fill more senior posts and second to provide employees with the opportunity to advance their careers within the company in accordance with the opportunities available and their own abilities. In any organization where there are frequent promotional moves and where promotion arrangements cause problems it is advisable to have a promotion policy and procedure which is known to both management and employees and the procedure should take into account equal opportunity policies Koontz et al (1993)



Haimann (1995) states that in carrying out promotions companies can either choose to promote from within or from outside the company. The latter is usually used in promotions based on open competition and it is the policy of filling positions or making promotions from the most qualified people available, whether from outside or inside a given enterprise.

Most organizations peg career advancement to vertical promotions. Managerial jobs are thus arranged in an ascending hierarchical ladder, with the planned progression of individuals up the ladder. Ritchie et al (1988) contend that this concept of career advancement implies that promotion means success and not being promoted means failure. Drucker (1987) states that an entire generation has grown for whom promotion is the only 'real' satisfaction and failure to get one every year or two is equivalent to being a loser.

Jameison (1991) contends that most organizations have policies for promoting their employees into better and more promising positions. This policy is widely practiced and is often of considerable significance both to the organization and the employee. For the organization it is a good source of trained people for better positions whereas for the employees it provides a powerful incentive to perform better. According to him if employees have worked for an organization for a period of time, more is known about them and the various attributes they bring to a job than even the best selection processes and interviews could reveal about outside applicants for the same job.

According to Haimann (1995) there is little motivation for employees to do a better job if they believe promotions are reserved for outsiders. On the other hand new blood discourages current employees from becoming conformists and becomes necessary in some instances such as the company's inability to train staff internally especially for long, expensive and specialized programmes.

Typically there are more employees available who are interested in a promotion than there are openings within an organization. Since promotions should serve as an incentive for employees to perform better, supervisors believe that promotions should be given to those who have the best records of quality, productivity and skill. In many situations, however, it is difficult to measure these aspects of employee performance objectively, despite a continuous effort by supervisors in the form of merit ratings or performance appraisal systems Armstrong (1999)

According to Haimann (1995) promotion from within can be based on;

- Competency band approach
- Seniority or length of service
- Merit and ability

Competency band approach is the provision of a career map incorporating aiming points for individuals, who are made aware of the competence levels they must reach in order to achieve progress in their career. Employees are provided with aiming points and an understanding of what they need to do to reach them. Absence of such information may cause frustration and job dissatisfaction.

Haimann (1995) cites seniority or length of service as one criterion which has been used extensively in an effort to eliminate favoritism and possible discrimination. Many supervisors are comfortable with the concept of seniority as a basis for promotion. Some feel that an employee's loyalty as expressed by length of service deserves the reward of promotion. Basing promotion on seniority assumes that employees' ability increases with service. Although this assumption may be questionable and not always accurate, it is likely that with continued service, an employee's capacities to perform should improve.

If promotion is to be based largely on seniority then the initial selection procedure must be done carefully and each new employee should receive considerable training in various positions. Probably the most serious draw back of this method is that it may discourage younger employees who may not see any hope of being promoted in the near future.

Merit refers to an employee's past job performance whereas ability implies an employee's capability or potential to perform a higher-level job. Supervisors often are in the best position to determine the degree to which merit and ability are necessary to compensate for less seniority Haimann (1995)

Merit systems rest on the principle that only deserving employees are promoted after a thorough assessment of their abilities for the next job of higher responsibility and status, Monappa and Saiyadain (1996)

Good supervisory practice attempts to attain a workable balance between the concepts of merit and ability on one hand and seniority on the other. In selecting from among the most capable employees, the

supervisor may wish to choose essentially on the basis of seniority or he may decide that in order to be promoted an employee who is more capable but less senior will have to be 'head and shoulders' [i.e. far better than] those with more seniority otherwise the supervisor will promote the employee with greater seniority even if on a trial basis, Haimann (1995)

Promotion decisions are quite critical. The ideal solution of course is to combine both criteria equitably. However, promotion usually is a very subjective area that often leads to employee dissatisfaction and grievances. Realistically, unless there are unusual circumstances involved, it is unlikely that a supervisor will choose to promote an employee from among other eligible candidates on the basis of merit and ability alone without giving some thought to seniority.

It is always important for managers and supervisors to get the best performance from their workforce in terms of levels of production and quality of output. They are concerned with motivating and encouraging their employees to work effectively and many employers have adopted schemes that link promotion to performance.

Performance refers to how well an employee is fulfilling the requirements of the job. Basically, the quality of an employee's performance is determined by a combination of three factors:

- Effort - how hard a person works
- Ability - person's capability
- Direction - how well a person understands what is expected on the job.

The key to obtaining good performance therefore is to encourage efforts by employees, to develop their ability and to clearly communicate what they are expected to do on the job. A manager can use several means to ensure that employees are properly directed. Two of the best means of enhancing employee direction according to Foot et al (1996) are carefully developed job descriptions and performance appraisal systems.

Performance appraisal is often one of the techniques used to encourage, motivate and help employees improve their performance. It is difficult to motivate employees and if the organization or manager handles the complex process of performance appraisal in an inappropriate way, then instead of feeling motivated,

the employee may end up feeling totally demotivated by the experience. In recent years many organizations have sought to motivate their employees by linking rewards like promotions to excellent performance at work. Here the use of performance appraisal basically entails trying to reward employees for their past work, by promoting them while hoping that this incentive will encourage other employees also to strive to work harder in future Foot et al (1996)

This is based on the theory of behavior modification which takes into account Thorndike's "Law of effect" which states that "of several responses made to the same situation those which are accompanied or closely followed by discomfort (punishment) will be less likely to occur" Burns (1992).

This has led to many enterprises developing performance evaluation which ties promotion to performance which in essence links an individual career progression to his or her level of performance or to a rating of competence. It favors rewarding people differently according to level of performance or competence and it aims at motivating all employees and gives clear indications of what the organization expects from employees.

This is supported by findings of behavioral research which consistently demonstrates that performance levels are highest when rewards are contingent on performance.

## 1.2 ATTITUDE

According to Koontz et al [1993] managers of various enterprises have been criticized for not being responsive to the social attitudes, beliefs and values of particular individuals, groups or societies. But attitudes and values differ among workers and employers, rich and poor, different professions etc. This variety makes it difficult for managers to design an environment conducive to performance and satisfaction. It is even more difficult to respond to these forces when they are outside the enterprise yet managers have no choice but to take them into account in their decision-making.

Attitude can broadly be defined as a settled mode of thinking. Attitudes are evaluative. As described by Makin et al (1990) 'Any attitude contains an assessment of whether the object to which it refers is liked or disliked'. Attitudes are developed through experience but they are less stable than traits and can change as new experiences are gained or influences absorbed. Within organizations they are affected by cultural factors (values and norms), the behavior of management (management style), policies such as those

concerned with pay, recognition, promotion, the quality of working life and the influence of the reference group (the group with whom people identify)

Armstrong (1999) asserts that the degree to which the employee stakeholders are satisfied with personnel policies and practices as they affect them can be measured by attitude surveys that obtain opinions and perceptions of the employees on the extent to which they believe promotions, job evaluation, performance appraisal, performance related pay and grievance processes and procedures operate fairly. This in general refers to the climate of the organization.

Attitude surveys are a valuable way of involving employees by seeking their views on matters that concern them. They can be used to;

- Provide particular information on the preferences of employees
- Give warning on potential problem areas
- Diagnose the cause of particular problems
- Compare morale in different parts of the organization
- Obtain views about personnel policies and how they operate in such areas as equal opportunity, employee development, health and safety etc.
- Obtain views about processes such as job evaluation, pay determination and performance management in order to assess their effectiveness and the degree to which employees feel they are fair.
- Evaluate training
- Assess how organizational and other policy changes have been received to observe the effects of policies and actions over a period of time.
- Provide a basis for additional communication and involvement especially if the survey includes, as it should, discussions with employees on their attitudes and what actions they would like management to take.

Attitude surveys can be conducted by use of structured questionnaires, interviews or a combination of both, or by use of focus groups Armstrong (1999)

### 1.3 PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE COMMISSION

The government of Kenya has three arms: The parliament, the legislature and the Executive. Parliament has been fighting for independence from the other arms and it is in this endeavor that a constitutional amendment bill seeking for the establishment of the Parliamentary Service Commission by amending section 45 of the constitution was moved. The bill was passed and once the president gave his assent, the Parliamentary Service Commission was established in 1999. This was to allow parliament to employ its own staff and take care of its own administration. Before this period the activities of the National Assembly were run by the Central Government.

The Parliamentary Service Commission takes care of all issues related to parliament in Kenya; employment of staff, promotion, discipline. It also creates and abolishes offices in the Parliamentary Service Commission and provides services and facilities so that the National Assembly may function effectively. So everyone who works in parliament is under the Parliamentary Service Commission and not the central government. The Parliamentary Service Commission is made up of ten commissioners. There are three automatic appointees, the speaker, leader of government business and leader of the official opposition party. Out of the remaining seven four are nominated from the ruling party while the other three are chosen from the opposition. At independence, Kenya National Assembly had 158 members. Today there are 210 elected members, 12 nominated members and 2 ex official members; the Attorney general and the Speaker making 224 members.

The clerk is the administrative head and chief executive of the Parliamentary Service Commission. The Parliamentary Service Commission appoints the clerk who is the principal advisor on all parliamentary procedures, conventions and traditions to the speaker of the National Assembly, other presiding officers and honorable members. He is appointed by the treasury personally to be the accounting officer responsible for authorizing expenditure of funds voted by parliament to the National Assembly.

Under the clerk are a total of 365 employees of the Parliamentary Service Commission who form the support staff for the elected members of the National Assembly.

The Parliamentary Service Commission job groups are made up of 13 scales:

Scale 1 - the clerk of the national Assembly

Scale 2 - the 3 deputy clerks

Scale 3-4 - the heads of departments who form the top-level management

Scale 5-7- the entry point for graduates and other experienced staff who form the  
Middle level management.

Scale 8-13 - diploma and certificate holders the bulk of whom are clerical officers and subordinate-  
staff.

The Parliamentary Service Commission Act chapter 11 states that "the selection of candidates for  
appointment and promotions shall be based strictly on merit. In considering promotions, the following  
factors shall be taken into account:

- a) Efficiency
- b) Requisite qualifications
- c) Seniority
- d) Experience
- e) Sense of responsibility
- f) Initiative
- g) Power of leadership
- h) Power of expression
- i) Relations with staff
- j) Cooperation with members of the administration
- k) General attitude to the work of the service, namely: resourcefulness, willingness to undertake  
other assignments in times of crisis, quality of independent action in taking decisions and power  
of leadership
- l) General conduct

In addition promotion from one grade to another is subject to;

- Existence of a vacancy in the section
- Merit and ability as reflected in work results based on the performance appraisal system
- The approval of the Parliamentary Service Commissioners for scale 6 and above and  
the clerk of the National Assembly for scale 7 and below.

In addition to these considerations, an officer needs to have fulfilled the terms of his or her specific  
schemes of service which sets the minimum qualifications and or experience required for advancement

from one grade to another for promotion." One of the aims of the Parliamentary Service Commission schemes of service is to establish standards for development to the higher grades within the scheme on the basis of knowledge, ability and merit as reflected in work results.

An annual staff appraisal report is compiled to assist in determining an officer's potential for promotion.

Recommendations are made to the commission for promotion stating whether the person recommended is the senior employee in the department or grade eligible for promotion and where this is not the case detailed reasons are given in respect of each person in the same department or grade over whom it is proposed that the person recommended should be promoted. These reasons are usually based on the performance appraisal results.

This is usually a very important activity for Parliamentary Service Commission officers, and it is normally taken very seriously by all hence the feeling that it warrants/ calls for a study to find out the employees attitudes towards promotion on merit.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Findings from research demonstrate that employees are usually poorly motivated if their performance appraisal system does not tie the results of the appraisal to the organization's promotion policy Rue et al (1992).

Promotion on merit is adopted by many organizations as a way of motivating their employees to perform better. It is seen as a fair method of rewarding those whose performance is considered exemplary and in the process encourages everyone to strive to perform better. It is believed that a salary increase that is obtained as a result of one's promotion will have greater value than salary increase that is given to everyone. This is supported by Thorndike's law of effect which states that behaviors that are rewarded are more likely to be repeated than those that are punished Burns (1992).

The current policy at Parliamentary Service Commission is to promote employees on merit. This is in the belief that if employees link promotion to performance, they will be more motivated and will put more effort.



However findings from research carried out by Kimathi (2000) demonstrate that employees are of the general opinion that performance appraisal is subjective and unreliable as a basis for performance measurement and that in reality factors other than merit were used to make promotion decisions.

If relating promotion to merit is a desirable thing, why then is it that employees have no confidence in promotion on merit? It is the aim of this study therefore to find out if the employees of Parliamentary Service Commission link promotion to merit.

### **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To determine the attitude of employees in the Parliamentary Service Commission towards promotion on merit.
2. To identify the factors that influence Parliamentary Service Commission Employees' attitude towards promotion on merit.

### **1.6 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is hoped that the study will be of importance to Human Resource managers in refining promotion policies already in existence by highlighting the adequacy or inadequacy of promotion policies.

It will also be important to researchers who may wish to develop the study further through subsequent research. It is expected that the study will form the basis for and stimulate research in order to develop a better understanding of career management in today's business environment.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 PROMOTIONAL DECISION

Monappa and Sayyadain (1996), define promotion as the upward reassignment of an individual in an organization's hierarchy, accompanied with increased responsibilities, enhanced status, and usually with increased income, though not always so.

Monappa et al (1996), advance the following as the main objectives of promotion in organizations: recognition of a job well done by an employee; a device to retain and reward an employee for his years of service to the company and to build loyalty, morale and a sense of belongingness in the employee and a mechanism to impress upon other employees that opportunities are also open to them, if they perform well. Equally, promotion is used to increase individual and organizational effectiveness and to enable the organization to utilize expertise to the optimum level by providing adequate opportunities to those who have developed expertise.

The free enterprise system is based on the premise that rewards should depend on performance. This performance reward relationship is desirable not only in corporate level but also at individual level. The underlying theory, which provides the theoretical foundation for promotion on merit, is the Porter and Lawler's model of motivation (1968) which considers the relationship between effort-performance-reward for each individual and introduces the importance of having individuals perform jobs for which they have proper skills, abilities and traits.

Porter and Lawler modified and built upon Adam's (1963) Equity and Vroom's (1964) Expectancy theories of motivation also known as process theories of motivation. Their proposition is that managers are able to control employee behavior by linking the occurrence of the desired behavior to some form of reward thereby ensuring predictability of behavior. The intention is to introduce and enforce agreed norms of behavior and achievement of organization's objectives.

The major principles in Porter and Lawler's model to succeed is that performance must be measured accurately and systematically so that rewards can be distributed fairly. If this is not done fairly expending necessary efforts to do the job will seem senseless to employees.

One of the major objectives of promotion from within the organization is to motivate the employees. They must value their rewards both intrinsic rewards which are part of the job and occur when employees perform work, such as a sense of self actualization and accomplishment and extrinsic rewards administered by managers and supervisors. Examples would be job security, working conditions and fringe benefits. There is need to create an open system in which a large part of the members feel conditions are sufficiently open to their influence. So that, if they perform well, they can look forward to certain rewards. Situations in which only a small number of members feel that high effort on their part will result in increased rewards impact negatively on performance Thompson et al (1970)

There must also be a meaningful difference in rewards between high and low performers. If there are no meaningful differences, high performers will lose motivational intensity and probably cut back on their performance. Employees must also believe that good performance will be linked to achievement of the preferred rewards and that an organization hopes that all employees will consider long-term costs and opportunities although the reward is geared towards short-term results.

Patchen investigated the relationship between absenteeism and employees' feelings about fair treatment in promotion and pay and found that workers who felt unfairly treated in promotion had a significantly higher rate of absence than those who felt their pay was fair. He concluded that when employees feel that management is treating them unfairly or neglecting their interests, they feel relieved of the obligation which they, the employees, have assumed. Further, those who felt unfairly treated as to pay had a higher absenteeism rate Wendell (1987).

According to Handy (1993), promotion is done with laudable objectives of providing each individual with a satisfactory career and ensuring that the organization makes the optimum use of its managerial resources. However Handy (1993), asserts that promotion processes are beset by several shortcomings including; the feeling of frustration in employees who believe that they have not had the opportunities they wanted and merited; divisional managers may hold on to good workers at the expense of the total organization and of the individual careers; and in spite of centralized systems, it is usually possible for individual managers to promote from within their own department or their own range of acquaintances, possibly neglecting better workers and thus devaluing the system.

It is however clear that although these principles have their own weaknesses, it is evident that there is now

and always has been some relationships between promotion and performance.

Presently enterprises are striving to recognize good performance of employees based on careful appraisals and sound selection and promote them for their efforts. This has resulted in performance evaluation system being introduced, modified and reviewed scrupulously to ensure promotion of the right employees and to aid in meeting productivity objectives.

## **2.2 DETERMINING MERIT**

Performance appraisal is the main tool that is used in organizations to determine merit.

According to ACAS (1994) appraisals regularly record an assessment of an employee's performance, potential and development needs. The appraisal is an opportunity to take an overall view of work content, loads and volume, to look back on what has been achieved during the reporting period and agree on objectives for the next.

This definition clearly shows that the employee does get feedback about his or her past performance but indicates that in performance appraisal there is an opportunity to assess or judge various aspects of an employee's work performance, by looking back at how they have performed in the past and then by looking forward to agree on future objectives or workload.

Fletcher et al (1995) have gone further than this in their definition of appraisal and have said that the assessment of people is not the only thing we do when we appraise a person's work performance. They feel that there are two conflicting roles involved in appraisal, those of judge and helper. According to them 'appraisal' means judging the worth, qualities or values of something and in a work situation it is especially important that any judgments are fair and based on objective job-related criteria.

Secondly when we appraise people in a work situation we also try to help them to improve aspects of their performance. We may suggest alternative ways of behaving or suggest training courses or provide development opportunities in order to help employees improve their performance and assess their own development needs.

The performance appraisal interviews therefore represent an organization's provision of a formal opportunity in which to give feedback and be both judge and helper to the employee.

## **2.2.1 USES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SCHEMES**

According to Foot et al (1996) performance appraisal schemes may be used for a wide range of reasons some of which may conflict with each other but the main reasons are likely to include:

### **Performance**

Managers seek to review an individual's past performance and assess strengths, level of effort and areas where further development would be useful. Here the focus is on what the employee has actually done in the past and an attempt is made to build on the employee's strengths and make improvements in the other areas so that the employee can perform more effectively in the future.

### **Potential and development needs**

From an examination of past performance, many employers wish to identify as part of their human resource planning process or for individual career development, individuals with potential to take up new or more responsible or challenging positions within the organization. The concern here is not just with what the person has done in the past, but with trying to predict the level and type of work that employees will be capable of doing in the future and then helping them to reach their full potential so that the organization can also benefit fully from their talents and abilities.

### **Reward**

This use of performance appraisal basically entails trying to reward employees for their past work while hoping the incentive of a reward will encourage other employees also to strive to work harder in the future. In the recent years many organizations have sought to motivate their employees by linking rewards using a system like performance related pay to excellent performance at work.

## **2.2.2 BENEFITS OF A SOUND PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM**

Foot M et al (1996) outlines the benefits of a sound performance appraisal system under three entities as follows;

### **To an organization**

- ◆ It provides an evaluation of the organization's Human Resources.
- ◆ It gives an organization a basis for making future Human Resource decisions
- ◆ It increases the potential of the organization's present Human Resource for meeting the present and future needs of the organization.
- ◆ It improves employee morale and increases commitment.

### **To the supervisor**

- ◆ It provides the supervisor with a clearer picture of the employees understanding of what is expected on the job.
- ◆ It gives the supervisor inputs into each of the employee's development.
- ◆ It improves the productivity and morale of the supervisor's employees.
- ◆ It helps the supervisor to identify capable replacements for high-level jobs within the supervisor's work unit.

### **To the employee**

- ◆ Allows the employees to present ideas for improvements
- ◆ It provides the employee with an opportunity to change his or her performance.
- ◆ It lets the employee know how the supervisor feels about his or her performance.
- ◆ Assures the employee of regular and systematic reviews of performance.

There seem to be no consensus on the question of how frequently performance appraisals should be conducted. The answer seems to be as frequently as is necessary to let employees know how they are doing. Many organizations require a formal performance appraisal at least once a year. However most employees want to know how well they are doing more often than once a year. Therefore, it is recommended that supervisors do at least 2 or 3 reviews each year in addition to the formal annual performance appraisal.

## 2.3 LINK BETWEEN PROMOTION AND MERIT

It is fundamentally equitable to promote people in accordance to their Contribution. A survey carried out in the U.S.A and Britain shows that an overwhelming majority of companies have some type of a merit pay program which relates promotion to performance. For example in 1990 a case study of a major British clearing bank with a branch network in England and Wales-United Bank, on the implementation of a performance related reward scheme concluded that the scheme had succeeded because it had given positive direction and motivation to employees Elebert (1989).

A comparative survey of twelve Americans and nine Indian companies showed some interesting similarities in their objective of the performance appraisal. According to this study all the companies were found to use merit evaluation for determining promotion. A survey conducted in 1978 of 89 Indian manufacturing and sales companies revealed promotion as the most important objective of performance appraisal. Bolar (1978)

While the objectives of performance appraisal vary from culture to culture, organization to organization and in the same organization from time to time, the broad objective According to Monnapa and Salyadain (1979) is to identify employees for promotion.

The government of India (1983) established a very elaborate procedure for evaluating the performance of all employees at the end of the year. The objectives of this exercise were manifold, but it included among other key objectives to determine the upward mobility of the employees. It is therefore clear that the primary objective of a performance appraisal as far as an employee is concerned is promotion. It is believed that after an organization has implemented and conducted a systematic performance appraisal, the next step is to consider how to tie promotion to the outcomes of the appraisal. Steers (1981).

In Kenya, the civil servants are graded from lowest job group A to the highest job group T, the head of civil service. Promotions from job group A to job group H are done under delegated powers by the permanent secretary who is the authorized officer/ accounting officer in the Ministry (Cap 185 of the laws of Kenya) Promotions on job group J to Q are done by the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

In the above cases, educational and professional qualifications and experience required are set out in relevant schemes of service and allows an officer to be eligible for consideration for promotion to the next

grade. However the decision to promote or not is based on the individual performance in the promotion interview. The performance appraisal results hardly count as long as the performance results are not negative in which case the employee is supposed to have been informed by his or her immediate superior. Promotions above job group Q are done by the president through the head of the civil service.

There are many reasons why some organizations like the Kenya civil service are reluctant to relate promotions directly to performance, among other reasons, giving everyone an equal opportunity in a promotion interview is much easier. Usually this method requires very little justification and involves fewer hassles than relating promotion to performance.

According to Kimathi (2000) The code of Regulations in the Postcode E11 of KCCT states that "in considering employees for promotion first consideration will be given to merit. Where it is difficult to distinguish between the candidates using this quality seniority will be considered."

The revised scheme of service for Teacher's Service commission (June 2002) sets out the minimum qualifications and or experience required for advancement from one grade to another. It is emphasized, however, that the qualifications and other conditions set out in the scheme of service are basic minimum requirements, the fulfillment of which entitles employees for consideration for appointment or promotion. In addition, advancement from one grade to another will depend on:

- I. The existence of a vacancy in the authorized establishment;
- II. Merit and ability as reflected in work performance and results;
- III. The approval of Teacher's Service Commission in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

In other organizations the promotion policy may dictate that pay raises conform to the guidelines that are unrelated to performance, example due to risk involved in location of the office or cost of living for instance the United Nations (UN) bodies located in different countries.



## 2.4 PROMOTION DECISION AT PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE COMMISSION

The Parliamentary Service Commission Act chapter 11 states that the selection of candidates for appointment and promotion shall be based strictly on merit. The staff appraisal system is cited as being in place to assess an officer's performance in the job as comprehensively and objectively as possible with the help of full knowledge and understanding of the job description and job requirements. The information in the appraisal report is used in assessing the training needs and in determining the officer's potential for promotion. The staff appraisal report reflects a series of incidents covering achievements and failures over the review period and is normally submitted once at the end of every calendar year.

In addition to personal particulars, which include employment track record and qualifications, experience, an officer's self-assessment in terms of work performance and results is provided for. The immediate supervisor is required to give details on the performance of the appraisee during the period. In so doing, he or she is supposed to indicate any constraints which may have prevented the appraisee from achieving better results or performance from the job.

The immediate supervisor is also required to comment in detail on the potential for promotion and also make proposals for performance improvement of the appraisee. The reporting officer is also required to ensure that the appraisal report has been fully discussed with the officer being appraised.

The Head of Department gives his or her general assessment and the countersigning officer who could be the clerk or deputy clerk either signs the report or if he does not agree with the views of the reporting officer, he records the appropriate counterviews. The reports are then tabled before the performance appraisal panel for discussions and further rating. It is from this rating that the best performing employee(s) are identified and subsequently recommended for promotion.

It is therefore clear that the need to relate performance with promotion is generally supported by a large cross section of organizations managers and scholars to an extent that Robbins (1988) argues that the principle of promoting for performance is so logical and so deeply instilled in our value system that few attack it. He states that the allocation of rewards on the basis of performance is a revered concept in organizations.

## 2.5 SHORTCOMINGS OF LINKING PROMOTION TO PERFORMANCE

Despite good intentions however, in actual practice some problems crop up that often disturb the achievements of the objectives of linking performance to promotion. According to Burns (1995), "the allure of a system that provides greatest reward for superior performance is matched only by the difficulty of designing and using merit evaluation with no dysfunctional consequences."

A survey carried out in the U.S.A indicated that even though an overwhelming majority of U.S.A companies have some type of merit pay programs, most do a poor job of relating promotion to performance. Among weaknesses of merit evaluation is that most organizations believe their promotion system is designed to pay off merit, but the problem is that we find differing definitions of merit. According to Levinson (1976), merit evaluation purports to focus on behavior aspects of an individual employee, but in practice people are really appraised on how they do things.

Lack of clarity is another problem experienced with a performance appraisal system. The particular objectives of an appraisal scheme should be clarified before the scheme is designed in detail and should have been discussed with employees in order to take account of their views and to gain commitment to the appraisal scheme. Everyone needs to be clear what the appraisal scheme is trying to achieve. Any scheme however good the design is unlikely to succeed if the managers and the workforce are suspicious of the reasons for its introduction and are opposed to making it work effectively.

Other weaknesses of merit evaluation include lack of training and experience by supervisors who may make human errors like;

- Halo effect

This is the tendency to influence evaluation of other traits by the assessment of one trait, this takes place when traits are not clearly defined or are unfamiliar.

- Central tendency error

This refers to bunching of employees in middle, extreme low side or extreme high side of the scale. In most cases it reflects the personality of the supervisor.

- Recency effect

This refers to the proximity and closeness to appraisal period, employees take it easy for the whole year doing just enough to earn a salary, however come appraisal time he or she becomes very active.

Others include problems of criteria, that is if a discrepancy between the expected and the actual performance is pointed out, the question of whether the expected was fully defined and communicated to the employee arises. In the absence of such an attempt the appraisal reports are open to questioning.

The issues raised above essentially focus on the problems of reliability and validity of performance evaluation. That is, how do we know whether what is appraised is what was supposed to be appraised? Saiyaidain (1998). According to Thompson and Dalton (1970) when promotions are based on rating of results rather than on behavior, competent employees may not only be denied promotions but also become demotivated.

It is therefore widely recognized that there are many things inherently wrong with most of the merit evaluation systems. Therefore, trying to base promotion decisions on appraisal data leaves decisions to acrimonious debate. Hence no matter how well defined the dimensions for appraising performance on quantitative goals are, judgment on performance is usually subjective and impressionistic, to a level where in an article Nazi (1979) emphasized the need of delinking appraisal from promotion.

In reality however, there are many situations in which employees are actually penalized for high performance particularly when their supervisors consider this high performance as "rocking the boat." If the supervisor feels insecure about his/her performance, there could be a tendency to try to ensure that the employee being appraised does not become a threat to them by focusing solely on the aspects of the job that have not been handled well and failing to show recognition for jobs that have been well done. Other times the supervisor may resort to attacking aspects of the person's character that the person cannot do anything about.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.**

### **3.1 THE POPULATION.**

The population of interest consisted of the Parliamentary Service Commission employees.

The Commission had 365 employees as at March 2004.

### **3.2 THE SAMPLE.**

The sample consisted of 50 employees who were selected using the proportionate stratified random sample method from the list of personal numbers provided by the Human Resource department.

Proportionate stratified random sampling was preferred for this research because the employees of Parliamentary Service Commission are classified into scales from the chief executive to the lowest cadres, hence making it possible to avoid getting a sample that is biased towards the higher, middle or lower cadres. By use of this method therefore, we were able to arrive at a sample that was fully representative of all cadres of employees.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION.**

The data for the survey was collected by use of self reporting questionnaire based on Likert (1932) type of scale (summated rating method).

The questionnaire was administered through a "drop and pick technique".

The questionnaire was structured into 5 parts. The first part sought to gather the respondents' biodata while part 2 and 3 of the questionnaire employed a 5 point Likert scale to measure the extent to which the respondents are generally in favor of promotion on merit.

Part 4 dealt with attitude information seeking and part 5 dealt with the respondents' suggestions on the best way to improve promotion on merit.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

Questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Responses were coded to facilitate basic statistical analysis using the software package SPSS. The output from the package was presented in frequency distribution tables, graphs, percentages and cross tabulations. Descriptive statistics were used to enable comparisons to be made as to whether the responses converged or diverged in particular areas.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The data analysis was guided by the objective of the study which was to assess the attitude of Parliamentary Service commission employees towards promotion on merit. The response rate was 84% of the anticipated sample.

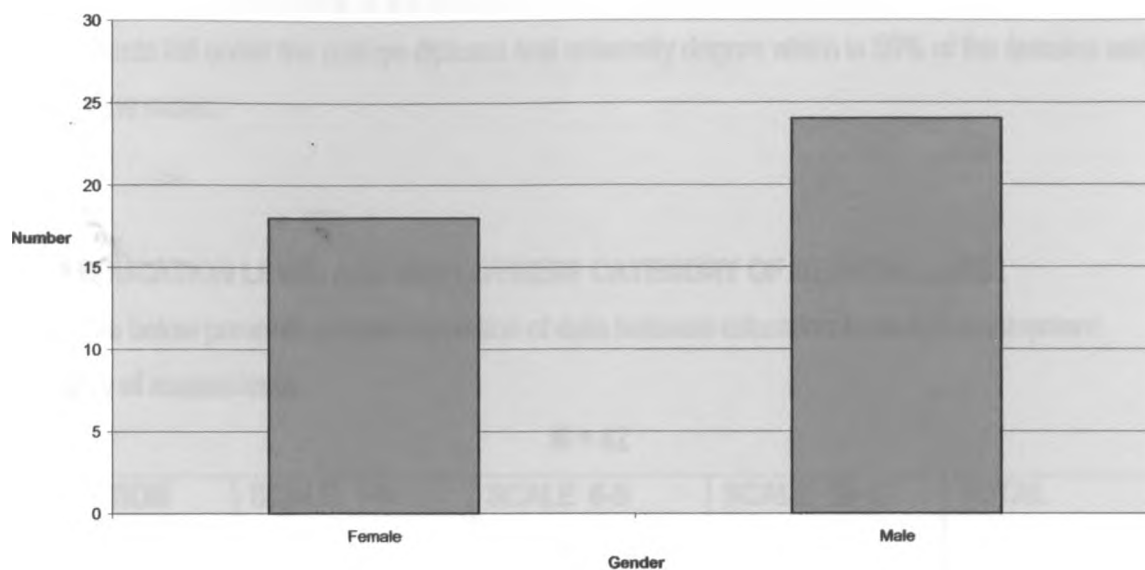
The data from the completed questionnaires is summarized and presented in form of tables, percentages and graphs. The analysis is presented in six parts as follows;

1. biodata characteristics
2. attitude of employees towards performance appraisal form
3. attitude of employees towards performance appraisal interview
4. employees attitude towards promotion on merit
5. attitude information seeking
6. Respondents' recommendations for improving promotion on merit.

#### **4.1 SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC**

The tables and graphs below present the demographic characteristics of the respondents, which include gender of respondents, education level, current scale, number of years worked at parliament, employees who have had promotions since joining Parliament and cross-tabulation of data of respondents on various categories.

#### 4.1.1 GENDER REPRESENTATION



Source: field data

From the sample of 42 respondents, eighteen (43%) are female while 24 (57%) are male.

#### 4.1.2 EDUCATION LEVEL AND GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

The table below presents a cross tabulation between education level and gender of respondents.

N= 42

EDUCATION LEVEL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Primary school	1	0	1
Secondary school	6	7	13
College diploma	6	8	14
University degree	3	6	9
Graduate degree	2	3	5
Others	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 (43%)</b>	<b>24 (57%)</b>	<b>42(100%)</b>

Source: Field data

N= Number of respondents

From both genders we have an equal number of people (7) with primary or secondary level of education but this forms 39% of the females while for the males this is 29% .Majority of the respondents fall under the college diploma and university degree which is 50% of the females and 58% of the males.

#### 4.1.3 EDUCATION LEVEL AND EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS

The table below presents a cross tabulation of data between education level and employment category of respondents.

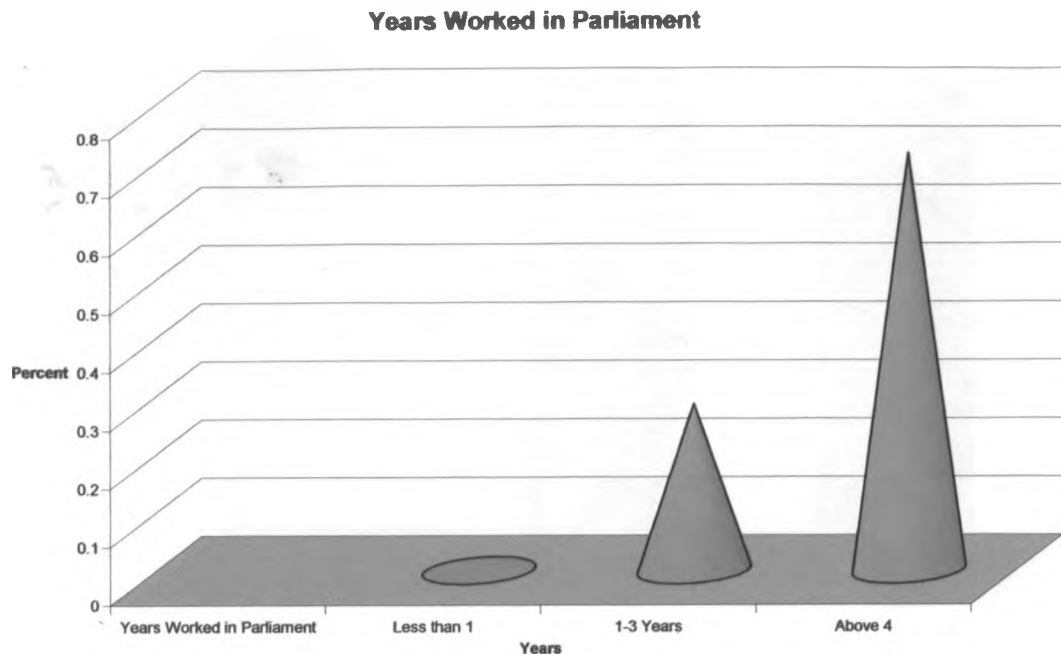
**N = 42**

<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	<b>SCALE 1-5</b>	<b>SCALE 6-9</b>	<b>SCALE 10-13</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Primary school	0	0	1	1
Secondary sch	0	2	11	13
College diploma	0	6	8	14
University degree	3	6	0	9
Graduate degree	2	3	0	5
others	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>
	<b>12%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field data

The respondents on scale 1-5 are senior officers who were 5 (12%) and have minimum education of secondary school while the respondents in scales 6-9 were the middle level cadre who were seventeen(40%) with post graduate education as the highest level of education. Scales 10-13 were the lower level cadre with twenty respondents (48%) and college education being the highest level of education in that cadre.

#### 4.1.4 YEARS OF SERVICE AT THE PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE COMMISSION

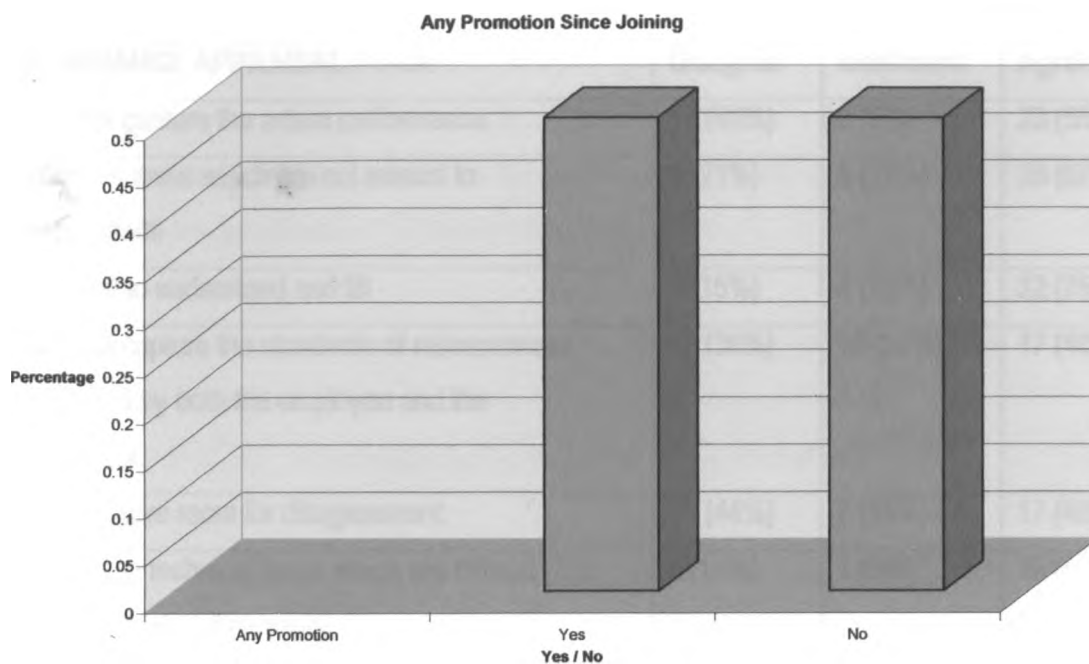


**Source: Field data**

The respondents who have worked at the parliamentary service commission for less than one year were 3% while 26% have worked for between one to three years and 71% of the respondents have been working at the Parliamentary Service Commission for four years and above.



#### 4.1.5 PROMOTIONS



**Source: Field data**

The sample was divided into two categories, those who had been promoted were 19 (45%) while 23 (55%) had not yet been promoted.

#### 4.2 THE EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM

The nature of this study was that it sought to get opinions from the respondents about promotion on merit. This stage analyses the attitude held by employees towards performance appraisal form. To do this the attitude score of each respondent was taken to indicate the attitude held. Those who scored 1 and 2 were taken to hold positive attitude as they disagreed with the statements, 3 as holding indifferent attitude, while those scoring 4 and 5 are considered holding negative attitude as they agreed with the statements. Positive attitude is taken as indication of agreement with performance appraisal form and negative attitudes as disagreement.

The table below shows employees attitude towards performance appraisal form.

N= 42

<b>PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Indifferent</b>	<b>Agreed</b>
1. Does not capture the actual performance	17 (40%)	2 (5%)	23 (55%)
2. Measures items which are not related to performance	9 (21%)	5 (12%)	28 (67%)
3. Is difficult to understand and fill	6 (15%)	4 (10%)	32 (75%)
4. Does not capture the standards of measurement as agreed by both the employee and the supervisor.	15 (36%)	10 (24%)	17 (40%)
5. Does not give room for disagreement.	18 (44%)	7 (16%)	17 (40%)
6. Is written in technical terms which are difficult to understand and measure	5 (11%)	1 (3%)	36 (86%)
7. Does not give enough space to explain about performance	24 (57%)	5 (12%)	13 (31%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>56%</b>

Source: Field data

From the sample of respondents twenty three (55%) of respondents had the opinion that performance appraisal form does not capture actual performance while seventeen (40%) disagreed and two (5%) were indifferent as to whether it captures the actual performance or not.

Twenty – eight (67%) of the respondents had the opinion that performance appraisal form measures items which are not related to performance while 9 (21%) of the respondents disagreed and 5 (12%) were indifferent.

Thirty –two (75%) of the respondents felt that the performance appraisal form is difficult to understand and fill while six (15%) disagreed and four (10%) were indifferent as to whether it was difficult to understand and fill or not.

Seventeen (40%) respondents had the opinion that the performance appraisal form does not capture the standards of measurement as agreed by both the employee and supervisor while fifteen (36%) disagreed and 10% were indifferent.

Out of the 42 respondents seventeen (40%) had the opinion that performance appraisal does not give room for disagreements while eighteen (44%) disagreed and seven (16%) were indifferent as to whether it gives room for disagreement or not. Thirty-six (86%) of the respondents felt that performance appraisal is written in technical terms which were difficult to understand and measure while five (11%) disagreed and 1 (3%) was indifferent.

Thirteen (30%) of the respondents felt that the performance appraisal form does not give enough space to explain about performance while twenty four (57%) disagreed and five (12%) were indifferent as to whether it gives enough space or not to explain about performance.

### 4.3 OPINIONS ON PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

In this stage the opinions of the employee towards performance appraisal interview were sought. Like in performance appraisal form stage, the attitude score was obtained using the same scale, indifferent score was 3, so that the score above it indicate negative attitude while below it denotes positive attitude.

The table below shows employees attitude towards performance appraisal interview.

N =40

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW	Disagreed	Indifferent	Agreed
1. Is a waste of time	7 (18%)	5 (12%)	28 (70%)
2. Is carried out by immediate supervisors as a matter of routine.	12 (30%)	7 (18%)	21 (52%)
3. Results are useless, they do not affect one's performance in anyway.	11 (27%)	4 (10%)	25 (63%)
4. Scores are awarded by immediate supervisors on the basis of ethnicity and politics.	9 (23%)	11 (27%)	20 (50%)
5. Scores depend on individual personal relationship with immediate supervisor and not based on performance.	15 (37%)	9 (23%)	16 (40%)
6. Scores are kept confidential from employees.	14 (35%)	6 (15%)	20 (50%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>54%</b>

Source: Field data

From the sample of respondents it is evident that the majority – 70% feel that the performance appraisal interview is a waste of time whereas 52% agree that the exercise is carried out by immediate supervisors as a matter of routine. More than half of the respondents -63% are of the

opinion that the results of the performance appraisal interview are useless and do not affect one's performance in any way whereas a paltry 27% disagreed with this statement.

Twenty (50%) of the respondents felt that scores are awarded by immediate supervisors on the basis of politics and ethnicity whereas nine (23%) of the respondents disagreed and 27% were indifferent. 40% of the respondents agreed that scores depend on the individual relationship with immediate supervisor and not based on performance while 37% disagreed and 23% were indifferent.

Half of the respondents were of the opinion that the scores are kept confidential fro employees while 35% did not concur and 5% were indifferent as to whether the scores are kept confidential or not.

#### 4.4 EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROMOTION ON MERIT

The analysis at this stage was as at the previous stage whereby scores 1 and 2 denoted a negative attitude, 3 is for indifference and 4 and 5 is for a negative attitude.

The table below shows employees attitude towards promotion on merit.

N =35

Attitude Towards Promotion On Merit	Disagreed	Indifferent	Agreed
1. Promotion is not based on performance appraisal results.	16 (46%)	7 (20%)	12 (34%)
2. Promotions are based on considerations like ethnicity.	9 (26%)	9 (26%)	17 (48%)
3. Promotions are on considerations like politics.	5 (14%)	5 (14%)	25 (72%)
4. Hard work does not assure one of promotion when an opportunity arises.	12 (34%)	3 (9%)	20 (57%)
5. Promotions are based on professional qualifications and not merit	14 (40%)	5 (14%)	16 (46%)
6. Promotions are based on technical qualifications and not merit.	15 (43%)	5 (14%)	15 (43%)
7. Promotions are based on academic qualifications and not merit.	12 (34%)	7 (20%)	16 (46%)
8. Promotions are based on seniority and not merit.	15 (43%)	7 (20%)	13 (37%)
9. The basis for merit assessment is incomplete.	7 (20%)	12 (34%)	16 (46%)
10. The basis for merit assessment is unclear.	10 (29%)	5 (14%)	20 (57%)
11. The level of promotion awarded is not equivalent to the merit level.	6 (17%)	7 (20%)	22 (63%)
12. The basis for merit assessment is unfair.	7 (20%)	7 (20%)	21 (60%)
13. Promotions should be based on promotion interviews and not on appraisal results.	7 (20%)	8 (23%)	20 (57%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>51%</b>

Source: Field data

From the sample of respondents it is evident that a majority 46% feel that promotion is based on performance appraisal results as compared to 34% who did not concur and 20% who were indifferent. The ethnicity and politics factors were brought out with 60% of the respondents agreeing that these two are the basis for promotions whereas only 20% disagreed and 20% were indifferent.

Hard work suffered a blow as a bridge towards promotion as 57% of the respondents did not feel that hard work would earn them a promotion. Twelve (34%) of the respondents were of the opinion that hard work would earn them a promotion when an opportunity arises whereas 9% were indifferent.

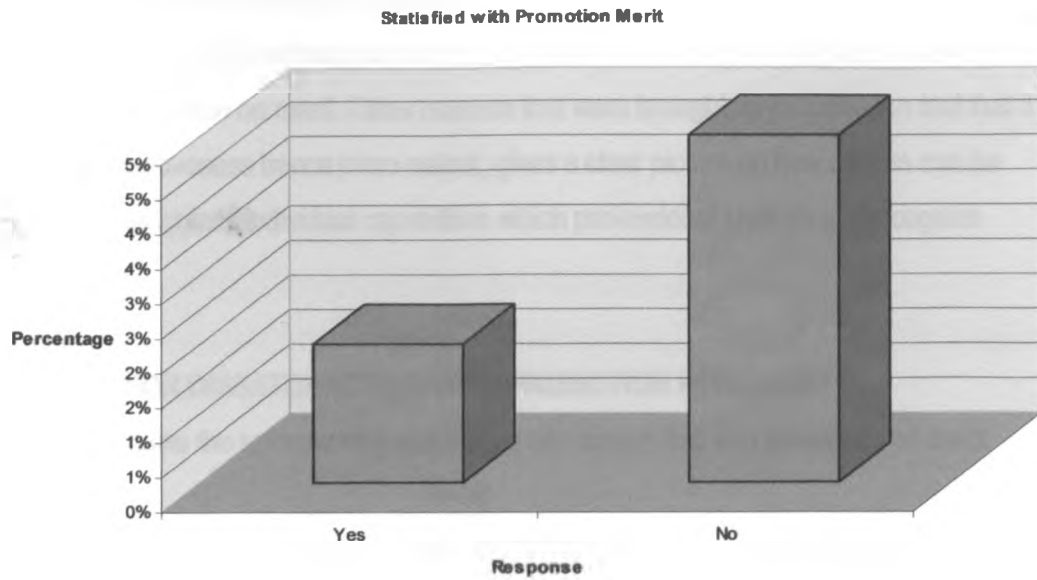
Of other factors that promotions could be based on such as academic, professional and technical qualifications, most of the respondents felt that these factors actually influence promotions as evidenced by 45% who agreed compared to 39% who disagreed and 16% who were indifferent. 37% of the respondents were of the opinion that promotions are based on seniority whereas 43% disagreed and 20% were indifferent.

Sixteen (46%) of the respondents were of the opinion that merit assessment is incomplete while 20% disagreed and 34% were indifferent whereas 57% feel that the basis for merit assessment is unclear while 29% feel that it is clear and 14% are indifferent. 18% of the respondents feel that merit assessment is fair and the level of promotion awarded is equivalent to the merit level but the majority – 62% disagree while 20% are indifferent.

It is the opinion of 57% of the respondents that promotions should be based on promotion interview and not appraisal results while 20% disagree and 23% are indifferent.

#### **4.5 ATTITUDE INFORMATION SEEKING**

The graph below shows the number of respondents who were satisfied with promotion on merit as compared to those who were not satisfied. From the graph it is evident that only a paltry 29% of the sample respondents was satisfied with promotion on merit whereas 71% were dissatisfied.



Source: Field data

#### 4.5.1 REASONS FOR SATISFACTION WITH PROMOTION ON MERIT

The table below shows the reasons why employees are satisfied with promotion on merit.

N=12

Reasons For Satisfaction With Promotion With Merit	Respondents	Percentage
Promotion on merit encourages hard work	10	83%
Promotion on merit is carried out in a free and objective way	4	33%
Promotion on merit reduces time wasted on complaints about unfairness	8	67%
Promotion on merit increases motivation and morale in organizations	11	92%
Promotion on merit increases team work	6	50%
Promotion on merit increases profitability through superior performance	6	50%
Others	3	25%

Source: Field data



The most popular reasons for satisfaction with promotion on merit includes the fact that promotion on merit encourages hard work 83% and increases motivation and morale in organizations 92%. However it is notable that all reasons put on the table above contributed to the respondents' satisfaction with promotion on merit. Other reasons that were brought up included the fact that it encourages competitiveness hence more output, gives a clear picture on how officers can be promoted and it recognizes individual capabilities which professional tests do not recognize.

#### 4.5.2 REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH PROMOTION WITH MERIT

The table below shows the reasons why employees are dissatisfied with promotion on merit.

N=30

Reasons For Dissatisfaction With Promotion On Merit	Respondents	Percentage
Promotion on merit has demoralized employees	26	87%
Promotion on merit is carried out in an unfair manner	27	90%
Promotion on merit encourages individual loyalty instead of team work	30	100%
Promotion on merit favors those that are well connected politically to the disadvantage of hard working people	27	90%
Promotion on merit encourages favoritism	28	93%
Promotion on merit discourages hard work	25	83%
Promotion on merit encourages tribalism or 'God fatherism'	18	60%
Others	5	17%

Source: Field data

All the respondents 100% who were dissatisfied with promotion on merit had the opinion that it encouraged individual loyalty instead of teamwork. The other most popular reasons for dissatisfaction were that promotion on merit encourages favoritism- 93% and that it is carried out in an unfair manner 90% and favors those that are well connected politically to the disadvantage of hard working people 90%

All the reasons put on the table above contributed to respondents' dissatisfaction with promotion on merit and 17% of the respondents gave other reasons which included;

- Being a politically charged work environment, if factors influencing promotion are not properly stated, abuse may be rampant.
- Promotion on merit discourages people from advancing in terms of technical/professional qualifications.
- Discourages further growth/ studies
- There are no clear guidelines on promotion requirements.
- Performance appraisal exercises can be biased especially in cases of supervisor differing with employee on touchy issues.

#### 4.6 RESPONDENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PROMOTION ON MERIT

The table below shows the recommendations suggested by the respondents to make promotion on merit more efficient and acceptable to employees.

N= 42

Recommendation for improving promotion on merit	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Employees should be trained on how to fill the performance appraisal form	28	67%
Employees should be explained the use of performance appraisal results	32	76%
performance appraisal form should be made as objective as possible	34	81%
Employees should get immediate feedback about performance	34	81%
An independent forum to handle disputes arising from performance appraisal rating should be created	30	71%
The performance appraisal exercises should be open and carried out regularly	31	74%
Others	6	14%

Source: Field data

Majority of the respondents 81% feel that the performance appraisal form should be made as objective as possible and that employees should get immediate feedback on performance. Other popular recommendations included explaining to employees the use of performance appraisal results 76% and carrying out of the performance appraisal exercise regularly and openly-74%. Only 67% feel the need to train employees on how to fill the performance appraisal form while 14% recommended other ways which such as;

- Supervisors should be trained on how to handle and appraise their juniors.
- Appraisals should be done based on different work performance and not just one specific task.
- Independent forum must follow aspects like training needs, performance goals etc. as evidenced in the appraisal forms.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.0 CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses and summarizes the findings of the study as they relate to the objectives of the study. It also includes the limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research.

#### 5.1 SUMMARY.

According to Kooontz et al (1993) promotion is a change within the organization to a higher position that has greater responsibilities and requires more advanced skills. It usually involves higher status and an increase in pay. Promotion may be a reward for outstanding performance or a result of the firm's desire to better utilize an individual's skills and abilities. Promotions may be a reward for outstanding performance, but only if there is evidence of potential competency. Otherwise persons may be promoted to a level at which they are incompetent. Given the proper encouragement in an evaluation interview, most employees return to their jobs with a new determination to improve their overall performance and eventually be promoted. Haimann (1995). Its purpose therefore is to improve both the utilization and motivation of employees.

The focus in this research has been employees' attitude towards promotion on merit. This is a promotion usually given to reward individual merit, in the belief that if performance is accurately and systematically measured and promotion fairly distributed on basis of performance then employees will be motivated to work even harder. Alternatively, if performance is not accurately measured and promotion fairly given on basis of performance, then expending necessary effort to do the job will seem senseless to employees, resulting in loss of motivational intensity and employee might cut back on their performance to the barely acceptable levels for them to retain their jobs. It is therefore evident from literature that organizations today need to tackle the issue of promotion seriously.

This study sought to shed some light on promotion on merit, a key area in management of human resource for superior performance. In addition it sought to find out the causes of positive or negative feelings and also increase the body of knowledge in this area of promotion. This will help managers and organizations improve performance through appropriate use of promotion of merit.

The objectives of this study were to determine the attitude of employees in the Parliamentary Service Commission towards promotion on merit and identify the factors that influence their attitude towards promotion on merit. In the first stage of the study a cross tabulation of biodata characteristics of respondents was carried out to enable comparisons. The cross-tabulation revealed that there was no systematic bias on selection of respondents, for example a cross- tabulation between gender of respondents and education level revealed that out of eighteen females and twenty four males five females and nine males were graduates which represented 33% of the two categories.

In the second stage of the study we focused on the first objective: to assess the attitude of Parliamentary Service Commission employees towards promotion on merit. This objective was broken down into three areas, firstly to find employees attitude towards the performance appraisal form, followed by their attitude towards performance appraisal interview and finally their attitude towards promotion on merit.

The study revealed that more than half of the respondents fifty six per cent (56%) had negative attitude towards performance appraisal form. Five per cent (12%) were indifferent towards performance appraisal form and thirty two (32%) per cent of the respondents had positive attitude towards the performance appraisal form. The major reasons given for negative feelings includes the opinion by respondents that the form is written in technical terms which are difficult to understand and measure (86%), that it is difficult to understand and fill (75%) and that it measures items which are not related to performance (67%). Therefore to improve the performance appraisal form, management should design the form such that it will be easier to be understood by employees and capture performance indicators and accurately measure employees' performance.

On performance appraisal interview the study revealed that fifty four per cent (54%) of the respondents had negative attitude towards performance appraisal interview. Eighteen per cent (18%) of the respondents were indifferent as to whether performance appraisal interview was serving its purpose or not while twenty eight (28%) of respondents had positive attitude towards performance appraisal interview. Thus majority of the employees feel that all is not well with the way performance appraisal interview is conducted with the major reasons given for the negative attitude being the opinion that the interview is a waste of time (70%), the results are useless, they do not affect one's performance in any way (63%) and that is carried out by

immediate supervisors as a matter of routine (52%). To improve on performance appraisal interview, the supervisors and employees need to be trained with a view of minimizing or eliminating human bias and that the results should be tied with the objective of carrying out performance appraisal interview, so as to make it more meaningful and focused.

Finally the study revealed that majority of the respondents (51%) had negative attitude towards promotion on merit. 19% were indifferent as to whether promotion on merit was good or not while 30% had positive attitude towards promotion on merit. The main reasons given by the respondents for their negative attitude towards promotion on merit is that majority felt that promotions are based on considerations like politics (72%) and that the level of promotion awarded is not equivalent to the level of merit (63%). 57% of the respondents were of the opinion that the basis for merit assessment is unfair and unclear, that hard work does not assure one of a promotion when an opportunity arises and that promotions should be based on promotion interviews and not on appraisal results(57%)

In the light of the above therefore it appears that the link between performance and promotion is completely blurred hence employees do not work hard to achieve promotion. For promotion to spur employees to higher performance the link between performance and promotion need to be established. This can be done by first improving performance appraisal form, the way interviewing is carried out and finally tying promotion to merit. This requires effort and commitment by the top management to make it succeed.

The second objective was to find causes for positive and negative attitudes. The study revealed that the popular reasons for satisfaction with promotion on merit includes the fact that it increases motivation and morale in organizations (92%), it encourages hard work (83%) and that it reduces time wasted on complaints about unfairness(67%) 25%of the respondents suggested other reasons which included that it encourages competitiveness hence more output, gives a clear picture on how officers can be promoted and it recognizes individual capabilities which professional tests do not recognize.

On the main reasons for respondents dissatisfaction with promotion on merit, the study revealed that all the respondents (100%) who are dissatisfied with promotion on merit felt that it encourages

individual loyalty instead of team work. 93% felt that it encourages favoritism while 87% were of the opinion that it demoralizes employees. 17% of the respondents gave other reasons which included;

- Being a politically charged work environment, if factors influencing promotion are not properly stated, abuse may be rampant.
- Promotion on merit discourages people from advancing in terms of technical/professional qualifications.
- Discourages further growth/ studies
- There are no clear guidelines on promotion requirements.
- Performance appraisal exercises can be biased especially in cases of supervisor differing with employee on touchy issues.

On the issue of suggestions and recommendations for making promotion on merit more efficient 81% of the respondents indicated that they should get immediate feedback about their performance and that the performance appraisal form should be made as objective as possible.

76% of the respondents felt that the use of the performance appraisal results should be explained to them while 74% indicated that the performance appraisal exercise should be open and carried out regularly. 14% of the respondents recommended other methods such as;

- Supervisors should be trained on how to handle and appraise their juniors.
- Appraisals should be done based on different work performance and not just one specific task.
- Independent forum must follow aspects like training needs, performance goals etc. as evidenced in the appraisal forms.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Promotion on merit is an important intervention tool for motivating employees and improving their morale in order to achieve high productivity. To make it even more effective the management needs to review carefully the performance appraisal form as a tool for measuring performance, improve on the way interviews are carried out with the view of making them more objective, tie

promotion to individual merit as measured through performance appraisal results and carry out periodical surveys to find out whether promotion on merit is achieving its objective.

Finally the management should make individual rating on personal qualities and traits open to the employees being appraised and allow controlling officers and the panel to rate employees on performance objectives. An independent forum should also be created to handle disputes arising from performance appraisal results. Lastly the results from both performance objectives and personal qualities and traits should count when considering employees for promotion. In this way organizations will be able to increase employees' motivation and increase productivity.

### **5.3 SUGGETIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The problem of promotion on merit is clearly one that merits further study. This study being exploratory in nature has provided insights on the problems facing the effective implementation of promotion on merit and identified probable causes of negative attitude towards promotion on merit.

The results of this study having been a case study cannot be said to be fully conclusive to all other sectors of the economy due to the different cultures that may be influencing employees in different sectors. Further study on different sectors of the economy would therefore give insights as to whether they hold different opinions or not.

A comparative study on the views of the top management versus those of the junior cadres would also go a long way in helping management understand how to make the process of promotion on merit more effective. Hence further study can be undertaken to establish conclusively whether they hold different opinions and investigate the reasons for it.



#### 5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The study was mainly constrained by the following limitations;

- The study did not consider a number of factors, which may influence perceptions among them age, training and other variables that can influence perceptions.
- This is a case study on only one organization and therefore it may not be used for generalization purposes. The corporate culture and values at Parliamentary Service Commission may not be the same with other organizations in Kenya or elsewhere for that matter.
- The study may also carry some of the weaknesses inherent in using questionnaires for data collection purposes. Apart from misinterpretation of items and definitions by respondents, answers to the questions may reflect an ideal situation rather than what is on the ground. The use of self-reported opinion or attitude is somewhat unreliable given biases of the respondent.
- The target respondents were all employees of the Parliamentary Service Commission. Some lower and middle level employees however seemed unable to trust the intentions of the researcher and hence may not have sincerely indicated all aspects in relation to the study.

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## APPENDIX 1

### LETTER TO RESPONDENTS.

University of Nairobi  
P.O Box 30197  
Nairobi.

Dear Sir /madam,

This questionnaire has been designed to gather information regarding employees' opinion towards promotion on merit. This information is to be used to complete a research project, a requirement for a degree in master of business administration at the University of Nairobi.

You have been carefully selected to take part in this survey. Kindly spare some time to fill the attached questionnaire to the best of your knowledge. This information is purely for academic purposes and all responses are strictly confidential. A copy of the research report will be availed to you upon request.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret mbabu  
MBA STUDENT

## RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE.

### PART 1: DETAILS OF THE EMPLOYEE

Please circle the number representing the most appropriate response according to you in respect to the following items;

**1. Your gender.**

- i) Female
- ii) Male

**2. Your marital status.**

- i) Married
- ii) Single
- iii) Widowed
- iv) Divorced
- v) Separated

**3. Your current scale**

- i) 1 - 5
- ii) 6 - 8
- iii) 9 - 13

**4. Your highest level of education**

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| i) Primary education    | iv) University education |
| ii) Secondary education | v) Graduate education    |
| iii) College education  | vi) Others (Specify)     |

**5. Your current department**

- |                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| i) Clerk's chambers | vi) Hansard             |
| ii) Personnel       | vii) Supplies           |
| iii) Accounts       | viii) Serjeant- at-arms |
| iv) Library         | ix) Catering            |
| v) Finance          |                         |

**6. Number of years worked at Parliamentary Service Commission**

- i) Less than 1
- ii) 1 - 3
- iii) 4 and above

**7. Number of other organizations you worked for before joining Parliamentary Service Commission**

- i) None
- ii) One
- iii) Two
- iv) Three
- v) Four or more

**8. Have you been promoted since you joined Parliamentary Service Commission?**

- i) Yes
- iii) No

**PART TWO:  
A. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL TOOL**

Tick against the most appropriate response about your feelings or opinions about a performance appraisal form.

- Where 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

<b>PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Does not capture the actual performance					
2. Measures items which are not related to performance					
3. Is difficult to understand and fill					
4. Does not capture the standards of measurement as agreed by both the employee and the supervisor.					
5. Does not give room for disagreement.					
6. Is written in technical terms which are difficult to understand and measure					
7. Does not give enough space to explain about performance					

## B. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

Tick against the most appropriate response that reflects your feelings or opinions about performance appraisal interview.

Where 1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

<b>PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Is a waste of time					
2. Is carried out by immediate supervisors as a matter of routine.					
3. Results are useless, they do not affect one's performance in anyway.					
4. Scores are awarded by immediate supervisors on the basis of ethnicity and politics.					
5. Scores depend on individual personal relationship with immediate supervisor and not based on performance.					
6. Scores are kept confidential from employees.					



### PART THREE: PROMOTION ON MERIT

For each of the following statements tick against the most appropriate response that reflects your feelings about promotion on merit.

- Where 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Promotion is not based on performance appraisal results.					
2. Promotions are based on considerations like ethnicity.					
3. Promotions are on considerations like politics.					
4. Hard work does not assure one of promotion when an opportunity arises.					
5. Promotions are based on professional qualifications and not merit					
6. Promotions are based on technical qualifications and not merit.					
7. Promotions are based on academic, qualifications and not merit.					
8. Promotions are based on seniority and not merit.					
9. The basis for merit assessment is incomplete.					
10. The basis for merit assessment is unclear.					
11. The level of promotion awarded is not equivalent to the merit level.					
12. The basis for merit assessment is unfair.					
13. Promotions should be based on promotion interviews and not on appraisal results.					

**PART FOUR: FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROMOTION ON MERIT.**

**N =35**

For the following questions please tick the appropriate answer.

1. Are you satisfied with promotion on merit?

Yes ( ) . No ( )

**If No Go to question 2.**

If yes proceed.

If you are satisfied with promotion on merit, which of the following reasons explain why (if some of the reasons, which explain why are not listed below- please write them in the space for 'others')

Tick the bracket to indicate the reasons that explain your satisfaction.

2. Promotion on merit encourages hard work ( )

3. Promotion on merit is carried out in a free and objective way ( )

4. Promotion on merit reduces time wasted on complaints about unfairness ( )

5. Promotion on merit increases motivation and morale in organizations ( )

6. Promotion on merit increases team work ( )

7. Promotion on merit increases profitability through superior performance ( )

8. Others ( Specify)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If you are not satisfied with promotion on merit which of the following reasons explain why (if some of the reasons are not listed below, please write them in thespace for others).

1. Promotion on merit has demoralized employees ( )

2. Promotion on merit is carried out in an unfair manner ( )

- 3. Promotion on merit encourages individual loyalty instead of team work ( )
- 4. Promotion on merit favors those that are well connected politically to the disadvantage of hard working people ( )
- 5. Promotion on merit encourages favoritism ( )
- 6. Promotion on merit discourages hard work ( )
- 7. Promotion on merit encourages tribalism or 'God fatherism' ( )
- 9. Others (Specify).  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**PART FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS.**

The following are recommendations suggested to make promotion on merit more efficient and acceptable to employees. Please tick the bracket to indicate the ones that you agree with (if some of the recommendations you wish to make are not included, please write them in the space for 'others').

- 1. Employees should be trained on how to fill the performance appraisal form ( )
- 2. Employees should be explained the use of performance appraisal results ( )
- 3. A performance appraisal form should be made as objective as possible ( )
- 4. Employees should get immediate feedback about performance ( )
- 5. An independent forum to handle disputes arising from performance appraisal rating should be created ( )
- 6. The performance appraisal exercises should be open and carried out regularly ( )
- 7. Others (Specify).  
.....  
.....  
.....