

## Employees Perception on Positive and Negative Factors Influencing Procedural Justice in Making Promotion Decision

**Dr. Nyaribo Misuko**  
Associate Dean  
Faculty of Commerce  
KCA University  
Nairobi, Kenya

### Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to find out the employees perception on factors influencing procedural justice in making promotion decisions. Promotion in organizations is a sensitive issue which must be handled carefully. Promotion may either make the organization achieve or fail to achieve its objectives depending on how it is managed. The researcher looked at the employee's perception on the positive and negative factors that are considered by employers in making promotion decisions. Positive factors are the factors which contribute positively to the success of the organizations while the negative factors negatively affect the organization. A sample was chosen from a population of students who are working and studying part time at KCA University Nairobi, Kenya. Data was gathered through a survey which was administered through a questionnaire. The sample for this study was one hundred and twenty. The researcher used a five point opinion scales to ascertain the perception of employees in regards to the positive and negative factors. The study found out that employers are influenced by both positive and negative factors in making promotion decisions. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that positive factors if considered in making promotion decisions gives employees a sense of belonging and commitment as well as motivates them while the negative factors if considered by the organization affect the morale and motivation of employees.*

**Key words:** Employee perception, procedural justice, promotion decision, distributive justice, positive and negative factors

### 1.0 Introduction

The current business environment has become very unstable and very competitive. For organizations to compete effectively they must take into consideration the resources they have in making decisions. Among the resources that create value for the organization is the human resource. In human resources management organizational justice is a key concept in understanding organizational behavior, (Cropanzano and Greenberg, 1997; Greenberg, 1990; Konovsky,). According to (Konovsky, 2000), Organizational justice offers individuals a reference frame which allows them to interpret organizational reality and to behave accordingly. Most organizations unlike in the past have realized the competitive advantage that human resources can create for the organization. For organizations to effectively and efficiently use human resource they must be motivated. One of the motivator factors that management has to invest in is the promotion. Companies spend substantial amount of money to train and develop employees so that they can have the necessary skills needed to perform their duties as well to comply with employment laws.

Despite this companies still experience problems with employees in relations to employee promotion decisions. Employees who perceive employee promotion decision as unfair are likely to be demotivated. It is therefore imperative that when promotion decision are made, the organization must look at certain factors which employees will perceive as positive factors which are universal and can be subjected to any employee without discrimination. The negative factors can be detrimental for organizations success if used as criteria for making promotion decisions. Promotion decisions need to be done procedurally. Procedural justice in promotion decision affects employee organizational commitment (Lemons and Jones, 2001). Promotion is a decision making process which allows employees in an organization to advance in career and positions and it is a vital part in career development of employees in all organizations. Promotion in an organization is a very sensitive topic and many scholars have shown a lot of interest in this topic and has become an interesting area of study in the recent past.

Different areas of promotion have been studied which include the effect of race on promotion (Powell and Butterfield, 1997) effect of gender and promotion (Blum, Fields and Goodman). Most of the research focuses on factors that organizations consider in making promotion decisions. This article examines the employee perception on various factors which influence procedural justice in making promotion decisions. Promotion decisions in organizations are important for both the organization and the individual to achieve their respective objectives. Fair promotion which is based on fairness plays an important role in assisting employees in achieving their own career goals as well as organizations achieving their objectives. Apart from the organization having their objectives, employees also have their own objectives which must be considered for them to be fully committed to the organizational objectives.

With the current business environment, the success of any organization depends on the quality of the future management, which is the product of quality of the promotion decisions. (Greening and Turban, 2000) put it that "Many firms realize the importance of attracting and retaining highly skilled quality employees as a necessary component for a competitive advantage" Organizations which choose to retain high skilled employees through promotion have often succeeded in meeting their main objectives.

To an individual employee, promotion provides both tangible and intangible rewards. The promoted employee enjoys status, power, better rewards, and more responsibility. This reward makes employees to be more satisfied, committed and increases the morale and motivation of employees who in return give their very best to the organization. "The bet milk theory".

The traditional meaning of promotion was an upward movement in the organizational hierarchy. Upward movement is however being challenged. (Baruch, 2004; Hall and Mirvis, 1995) are of the views that what is more required now is acquiring more skills and be employable. Most organizations are now looking for employees who have the skills and can perform the work. Acquiring more skills will make employees have employability skills, which makes them employable. Lateral rather than upward moves are becoming the order of the day. Unlike the lower level positions higher-level positions are limited and this makes the promotion decisions to be even a more complicated field of study.

The workforce has grown in diversity. Based on intensive research studies, (Hankin, 2005) pointed that one of the trends in the twenty first century world of work will be characterized by growing diversity in the workplace in terms of race ethnicity, nationality gender religion and sex orientation. This will be necessitated among other factors improvement in technology making the world to be a global village and increased competition. This diversity will lead to a more complicated situation in terms of making promotion decisions. Therefore the management role of making promotion decision must be in a way that is seen to be fair and procedural.

Career experts have pointed out that after the restructuring, downsizing and deleyering which has affected most companies (Casio, 2002) a vertical career development has become even more difficult. Career experts are opposed to the traditional career thinking and are advocating for a vertical movement as opposed to the horizontal movement. Whether vertical or horizontal, promotion decisions must be made in organizations irrespective of the size. Procedural justice must be seen to be done by the employees who are now being seen as assets for the organizational success

Employees who perceive the promotional decisions as unfair in an organization can never steer the organizations to achieve its objectives. Discrimination in promotional decision has been seen as the main reason why organizations are not able to achieve their objectives. It is important that organization and manages ensure that promotional decisions are perceived to have been done through procedural justice. Perceptions of unfairness in the organization will lead psychological stress and real sickness leading to absenteeism and job accidents (sashkin and William, 1990)

Procedural justice in promotional decisions leads to organizational commitment and reduces labour turnover. Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between procedural justice and organizational commitment. (Dailey and Kirk, 1992; Kanovsky and folger, 1987; Sweeney and mcFarlin, 1993) There is an inverse relationship between organizational commitment and turnover according to recent study. This also exists in mainland China according to (Chen and Francesco, 2000) Procedural justice in making promotion decisions leads to employee's commitment, which ultimately leads to achievement of organizational the objective For procedural justice to be effective organizational justice must be exercised. This an attempt to describe the role of fairness in the workplace

### 1.1.1 Distributive justice and procedural justice

Researchers have examined organization justice in two major dimensions. Distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributed justice is the perceived fairness in distributing rewards in the organization while procedural justice is fairness in the procedure used in making decisions in the distribution of rewards. Procedural justice is more concerned with the manner rewards are distributed. In this twenty first century where the workforce is more enlightened, more educated, more informed the procedure would be of more importance. Most questions that are being asked in the organizations are. Was the procedure followed? Procedure grant some control over the process and outcome attainment tend to be perceived by participants as fairer than the procedure that deny process control (Greenberg, 1990). Process control is the opportunity that the participants have in communicating their views and opinions in decision-making process The greater the process control the more the decision made is regarded as fair

In promotional decisions, the procedure that can be used to make the decision may include interview, performance review, psychological testing, qualification, and trainings Procedural promotion decisions are of utmost importance to the organization and to the employees themselves. For the organization it can provide a competitive advantage since competent employees are able to make strategic decisions to the organizations since the management of an organization depends on the quality of promotion decisions. For the employees promotion offers rewards such as status power, compensation, challenging work and responsibility.

Career progression in terms of promotion is seen as the reward that employees receive in an organization. Researchers have shown that an organizations that fails to observe procedural justice in promotion decisions which is associated with lack of career prospects leads to lower organizational commitment, lower job satisfaction, higher withdrawal intentions, turnover and absenteeism (De Sousa, 2002; Igbaria and Greenhaus, 1992)

### 1.1.2 Procedural justice in promotional decisions

Employees promoted through a system that they feel is unfair will not be successful in discharging their duties wholeheartedly to the organizational goals Persons who have been turned down for promotion may fill dissatisfied and this makes employee unproductive to the organization

Justice theory which is built upon equity theory endeavors to address the employee's assessment of how organizations practice distributive justice. Distributive justice is fairness in allocating or distributing rewards which in an organizational perspective include among other rewards promotion.

Procedural justice in an organization includes fairness of the procedures used to make reward decision. Employees who have a voice in the decision making process are more satisfied even if the decision is not on their favor. By merely taking part in the decision making process they feel part and parcel of the organization as well as important Research on employee on promotion decisions has been done and focuses on the effect of employee characteristics on promotion decisions.

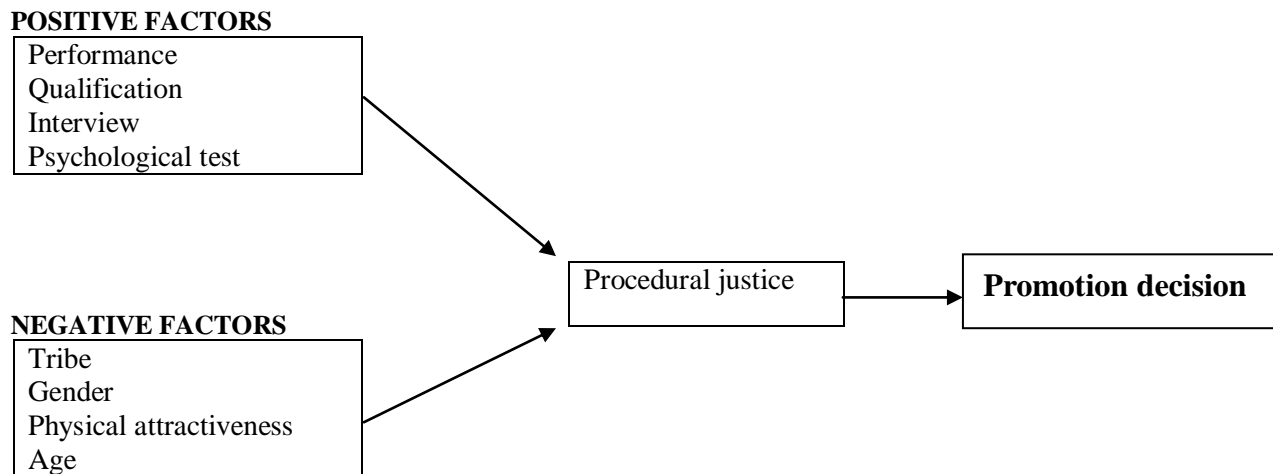
Demographic characteristics such as race, gender, physical attractiveness and age influence promotion decisions The more the procedural justice is followed in the promotion decision the more the employee is likely to be satisfied with the organizational outcome

#### ***Critical questions for the research problem***

- A) What is the perception of employees on the following *positive factors* (Performance, qualification, interview, and psychological test) in making promotion decisions
- B) How are the following *negative factors* (Tribe, gender, physical attractiveness and age) perceived by employees in making promotional decisions?

### 2.0 Theoretical Framework of the research

Based on an initial review of the literature, a framework for investigating the factors that influence promotions decisions in making were on developed and is presented.

**Figure 1: Factors influencing procedural justice in making promotional decisions**

The negative factors include tribe gender, physical, attractiveness, and age. These factors were labeled negative because when any of the factors is considered when making promotion in organizations they affect other employees negatively and the employees perceive that procedural justice has not been done.

From another perspective despite gender and age being seen as negative factors, they can as well be positive factors. There has been a lot of debate as regards to the inclusion of women in management positions. Therefore including women in management positions may be seen as a motivator and can as well be regarded as a positive factor. Age can as well be regarded as a motivator factor when organizations look at young people in terms of resources due to their vibrancy and hard working, more technologically empowered and can easily accept and adopt change.

For the purpose of this research, age and gender were looked at from the negative perspective. The researcher sought to find out the perception of employees on how the negative and positive factors affect employees while management is making promotion decisions. The employee perception was restricted to the different organizations where the respondents work.

### **3.0 Statement of the problem**

Procedural justice in the promotional decisions taken by the organizations improves the employee's commitment to the organization. Most organizations in developing countries do not consider procedural justice as important in making promotion decisions. This makes employees not be committed to the organization and the attainment of its objectives. The challenges most organization face is to make promotional decisions, which will be perceived as fair, and procedural justice followed. The positive factors as well as the negative factors are considered to ascertain whether procedural justice is perceived to have been done in most organizations.

Whenever employees are not promoted in an organization most of them cry foul in the procedural justice. In making promotion decision the managers must consider the positive factors for the promotion decision to be seen as fair as well as adhering to procedure. The positive factors include, Performance, qualification, interview and psychological test. The negative factors which affect procedural justice include race, gender, physical attractiveness and age which have an influence in making promotion decisions. The researcher therefore tries to find out the perception of employees if procedural justice is followed in their various organizations by looking at the positive as well as all the negative factors while making promotion decision.

### **4.0 Research Methodology**

The population of the study was students who are pursuing the evening programmes at KCA University. The sampling frame was drawn from students who are already employed pursuing under-graduate courses at KCA university. The respondents were from different organizations both small, medium and large and are engaged in the production of goods and services. They have experienced promotion decisions in their respective organizations.

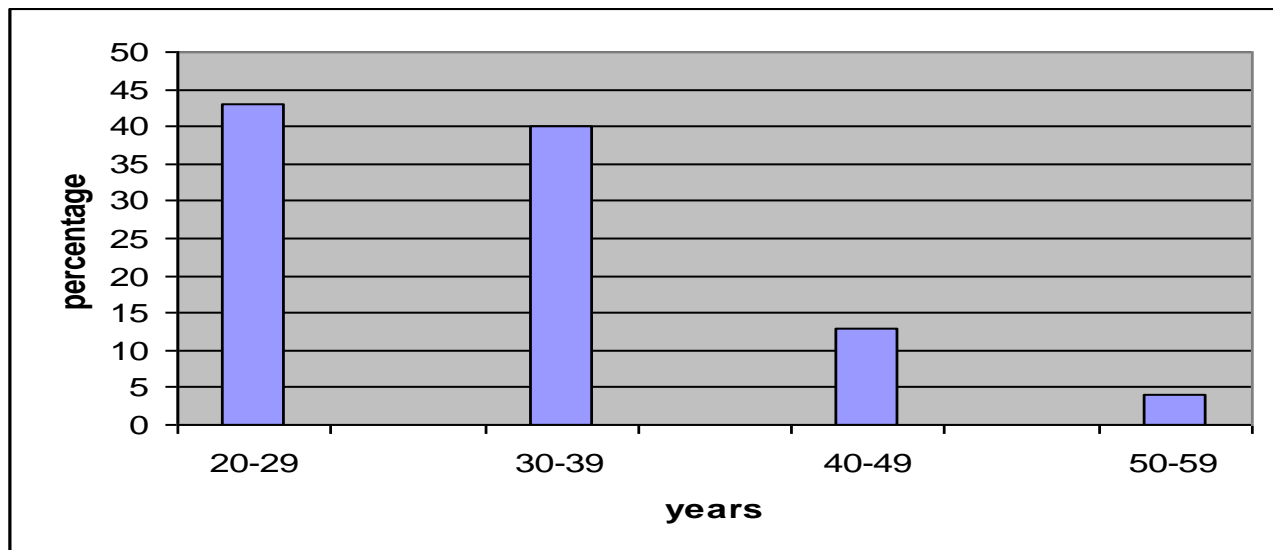
A total of one hundred and twenty students both male and female who are already employed were chosen as a sample for the research. The researcher employed non-probability method of sampling. Convenient method was used in selecting the sample and further purposive method was also used. The researcher choose respondents who are mature and working because of their exposure in the organizational promotional decisions making process Primary data was collected by use well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had both open ended as well as closed ended questions. Further a four-point opinion scale was used to rate the respondents perception on factors the managers considered in making promotion decisions. The data received was edited and coded and analyzed using the appropriate method .The researcher used excels to tabulate the data and draw conclusions. Graphs and tables were used to illustrate the response and conclusions were drawn

**5.0 Response Analysis**

**Table 1 Age-wise analysis**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	52	43
30-39	49	40
40-49	15	13
50-59	4	4
Total	120	100%

**Graph 1 Age**

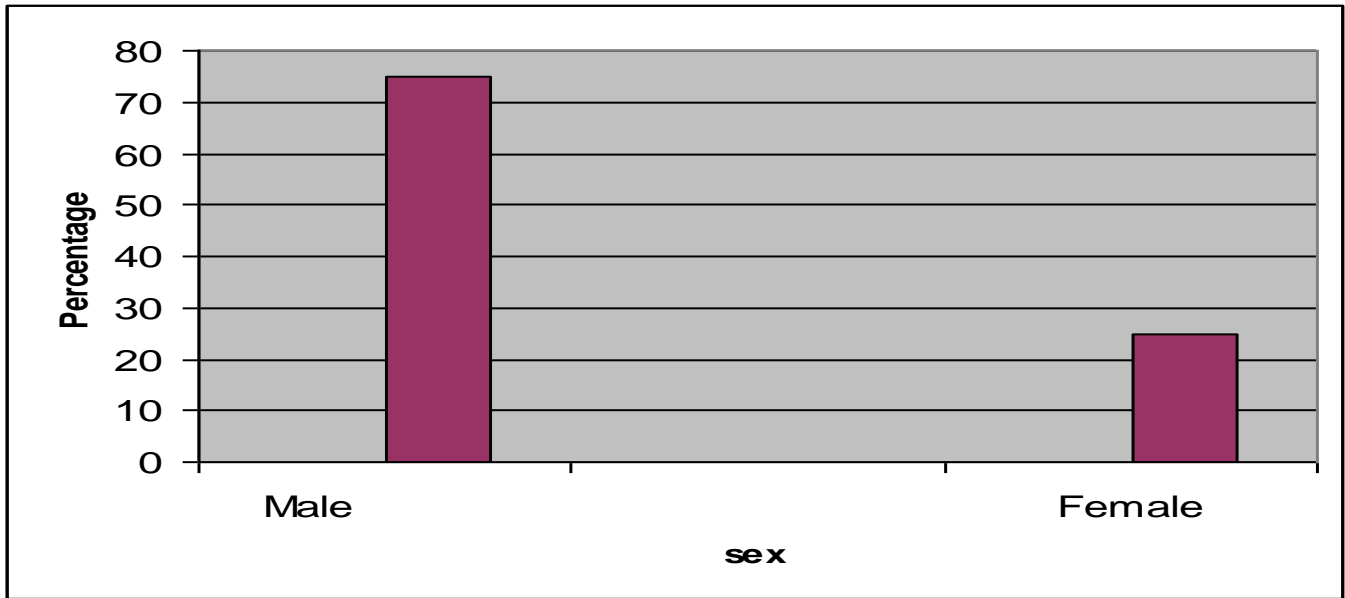


Of the total 120 respondents 43% were between the age of 20 -29, 40% were between the age of 30-39 , 13% were between the age of 40-49 and 4% were between the age of 50-59. Majority of the respondents were below the age of 40 year

**Table 2 Sex-wise analysis**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	90	75
Female	30	25
	120	100%

**Graph 2Sex**



Majority of the respondents were male comprising 90 (75%) of the total respondents while female were 30 representing 25% of the total respondents

**Table 3 Work experience-wise Analysis**

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage %
Less than five years	75	63
Less than ten years	26	23
Less than Fifteen years	15	13
Less than twenty years	14	11
Total	120	100%

**Graph 3 Working experience**

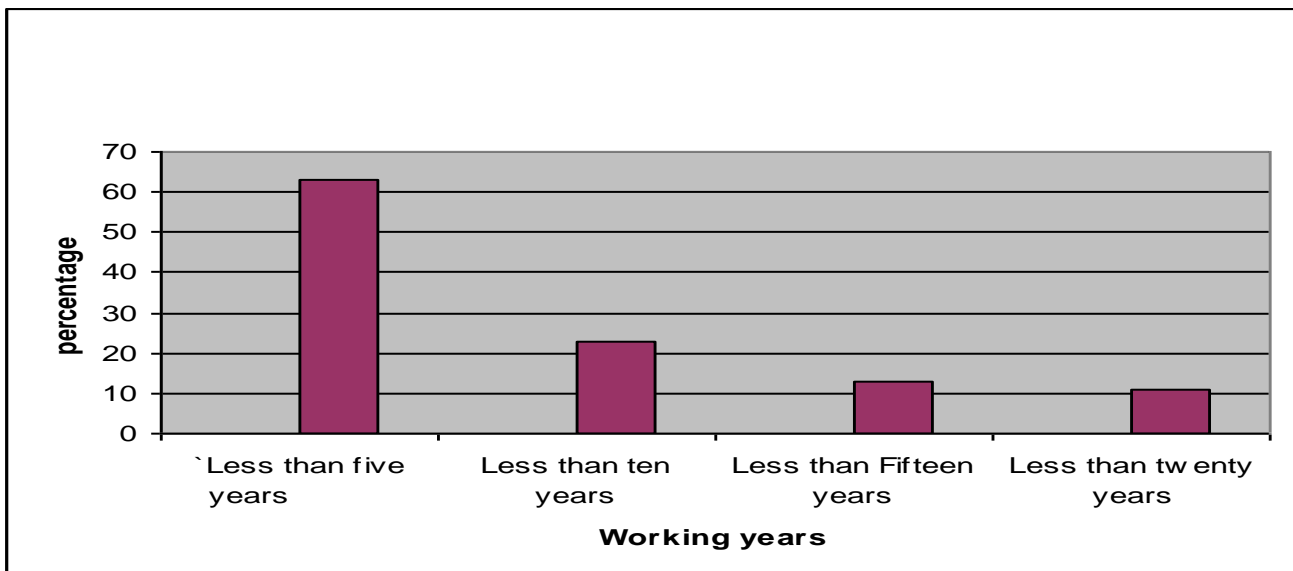
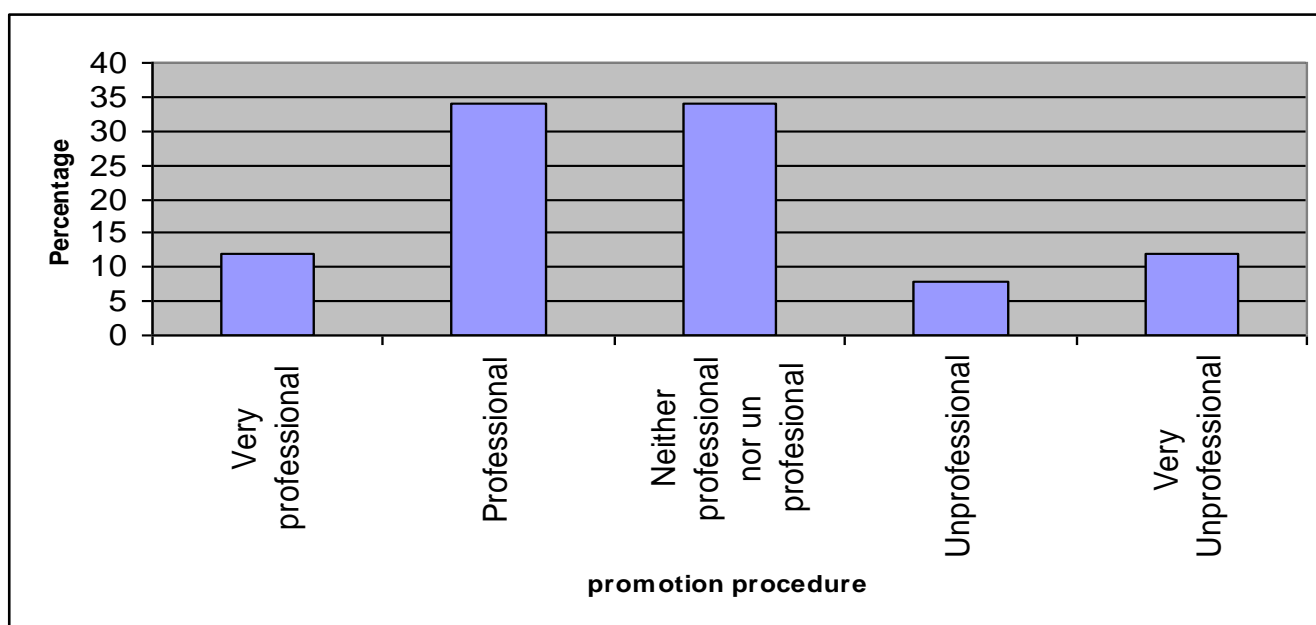


Table two reveals how long the respondents have been working in their respective organizations Majority of the respondents 75 (63%) have been working in their current job for less than five years, 26 (23%) have been working for less than ten years, 15 (13%) have been working for less than fifteen years and 14 ( 11%) have been working for less than twenty years

**Table 4 Promotion Procedure –wise analysis**

Promotion procedure	Frequency	Percentage %
Very professional	14	12
Professional	41	34
Neither Professional nor un-Professional	41	34
Unprofessional	10	8
Very Unprofessional	14	12
Total	120	100

**Graph 4: Promotion procedure**



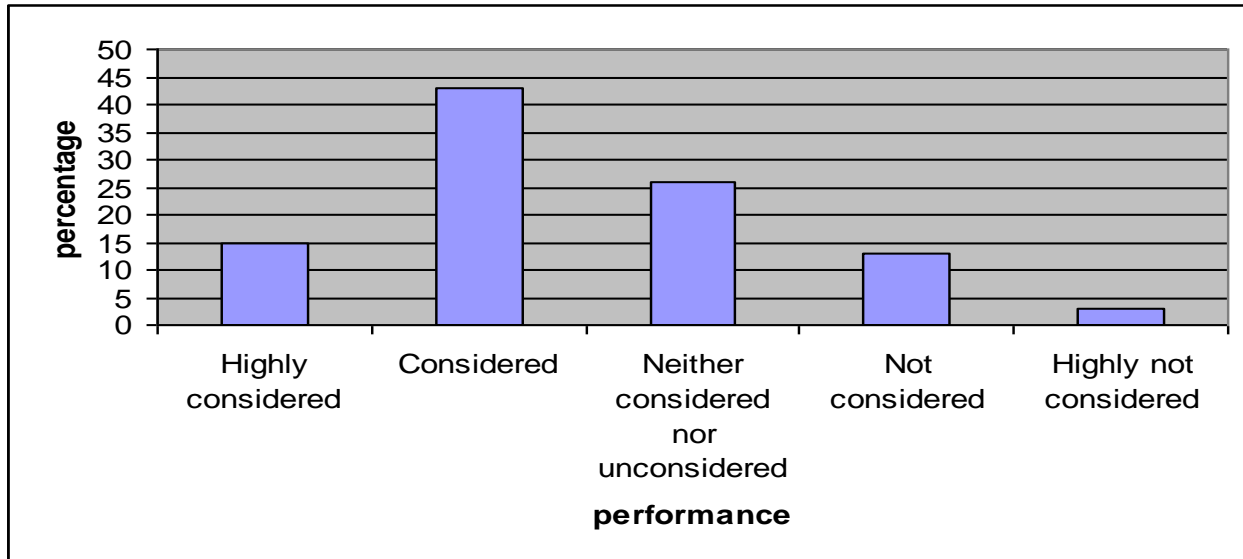
The respondents were asked to rate their perception on a five point opinion scale on how they perceive the promotion decisions made in their respective organizations.

14 (12%) were of the opinion that the promotion procedure were very professional, 41 (34%) professional, 41 (34) Neutral, 10 (8%) unprofessional and 14 (12%) were of the opinion that the promotion procedure was very unprofessional. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that promotion decisions were not very professional

**Table 5 Performance-wise analysis**

	Frequency	Percentage
Highly considered	18	15
Considered	52	43
Neither considered nor unconsidered	31	26
Not considered	15	13
Highly not considered	4	3
Total	120	100%

**Graph 5 Performance**

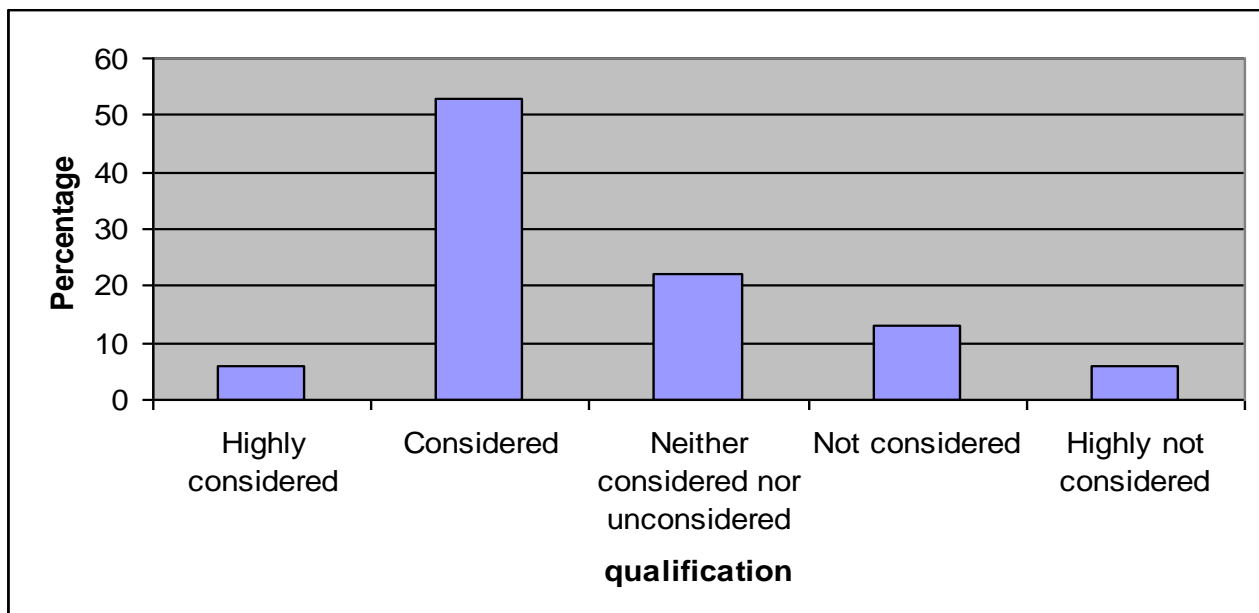


The respondents were asked to rate how performance is considered in making promotion decisions. 18 (15%) of the respondents were of the opinion that performance is highly considered in making promotion decisions. 52 (43%) were of the opinion that performance is considered, 31(26%) rated it neutral, 15(13%) said it is not considered and 4(3%) were of the opinion that performance is highly not considered.

**Table 6 Qualification-wise analysis**

	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly considered	8	6
Considered	63	53
Neither considered nor unconsidered	26	22
Not considered	15	13
Highly not considered	8	6
Total	120	100

**Graph 6 Qualification**



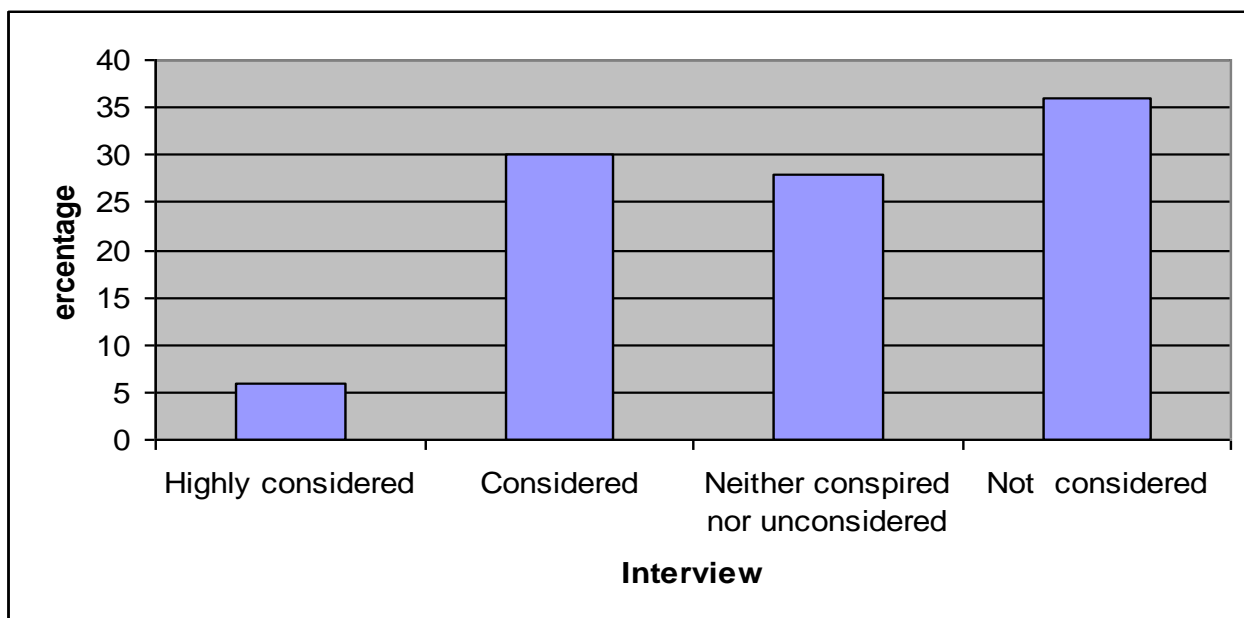


The respondents were asked to rate qualification on how it is considered in making promotion decisions 8(6%) were of the opinion that qualification is highly considered while 63(53%) indicated that it was being considered. 26(22%) were of the opinion that it is neutral while 15(13%) were of the opinion that it is not considered and 8 (6%) were of the opinion that qualification is highly not considered

**Table 7 Interview-wise analysis**

	frequency	Percentage %
Highly considered	8	6
Considered	37	30
Neither conspired nor unconsidered	33	28
Not considered	42	36
Highly not considered	0	0
Total	120	100

**Graph 7 Interview**



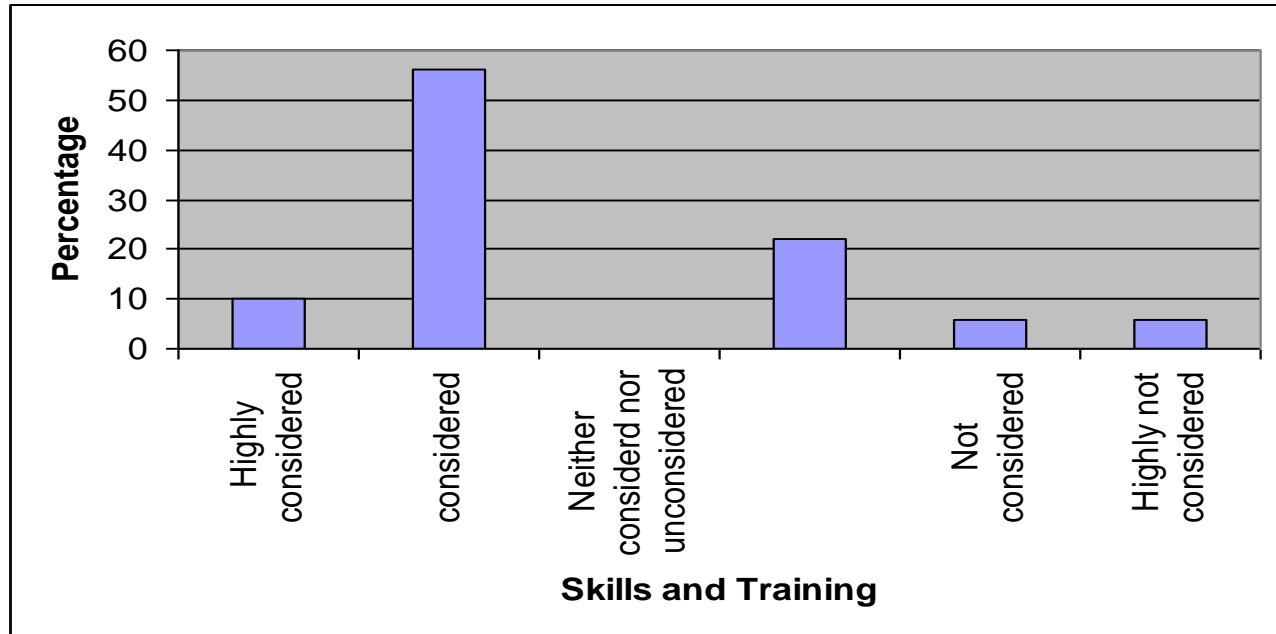
The respondents were asked to rate their perception on whether interview is considered in their organization in making promotion decisions.

Majority of the respondents 42 (36%) were of the opinion that interview is not considered while making promotion decisions 37 (30%) were of the opinion that interview is considered 33( 28%) were of the opinion that it is neutral

**Table 8 Skills and Training-Wise analysis**

	frequency	Percentage %
Highly considered	11	10
considered	67	56
Neither considered nor unconsidered	28	22
Not considered	8	6
Highly not considered	8	6
Total	120	100

**Graph 8 Skills and training**

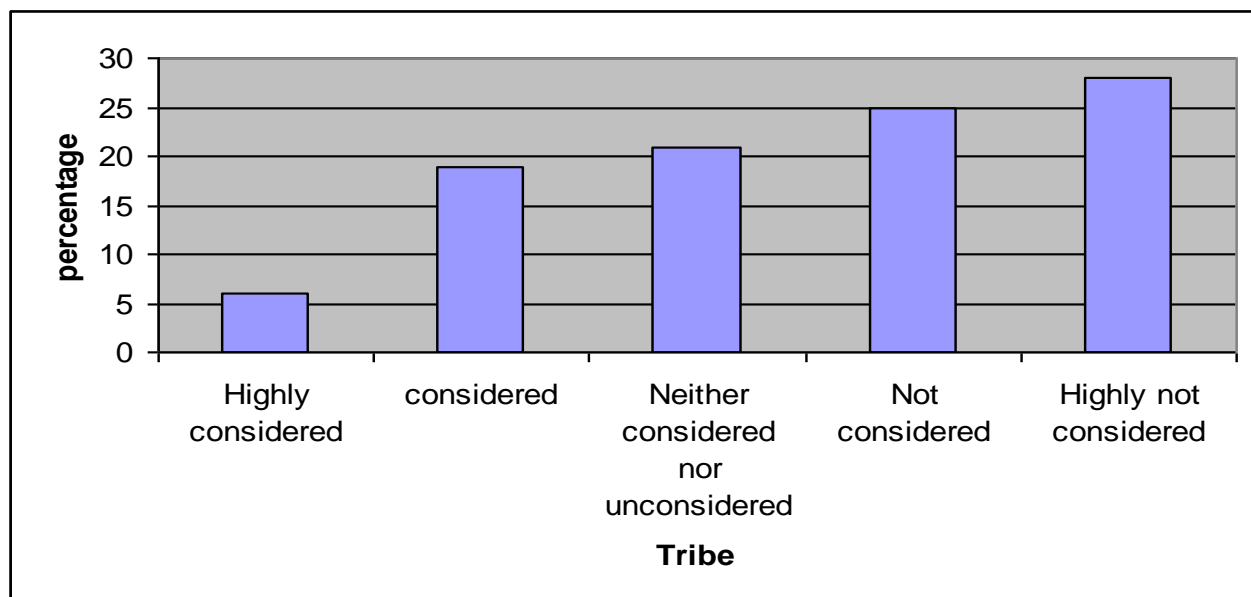


The total respondents perception on skills and training in making promotion decision were 67(56%) were of the opinion that skills and training is considered, 26(22%) were of the opinion that it is neutral. 11(10%) were of the opinion that is highly considered while 8(6%) were of the opinion that it not considered and highly not considered

**Table 9 Tribe-wise analysis**

	frequency	Percentage %
Highly considered	8	6
considered	23	19
Neither considered nor unconsidered	26	21
Not considered	30	25
Highly not considered	33	28
	120	100

**Graph 9 Tribe**

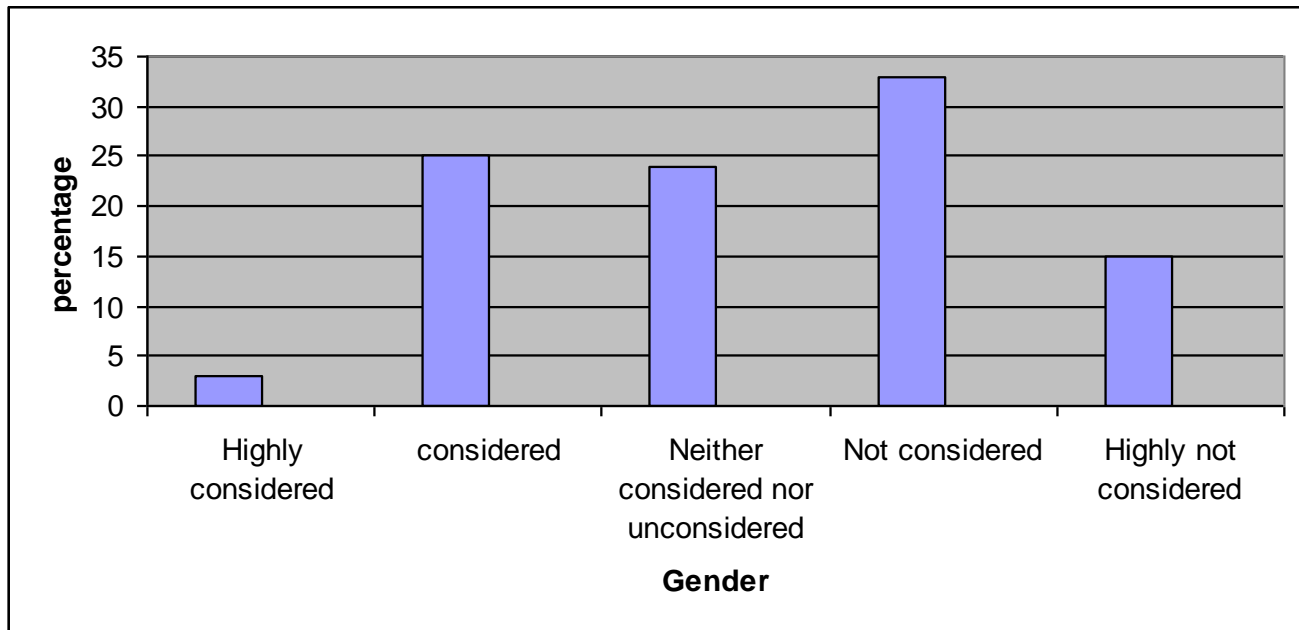


33(28%) of all respondents were of the opinion that tribe is highly not considered, 30(25%) were of the opinion that tribe is not considered, 23(19%) were of the opinion that it is considered, 26(21%) were neutral while 8(6%) felt that it is tribe is highly considered

**Table 10 Gender-Wise analysis**

	Frequency	percentage
Highly considered	4	3
Considered	30	25
Neither considered nor Unconsidered	26	24
Not considered	41	33
Highly not considered	19	15
	120	

**Graph 10 Gender**

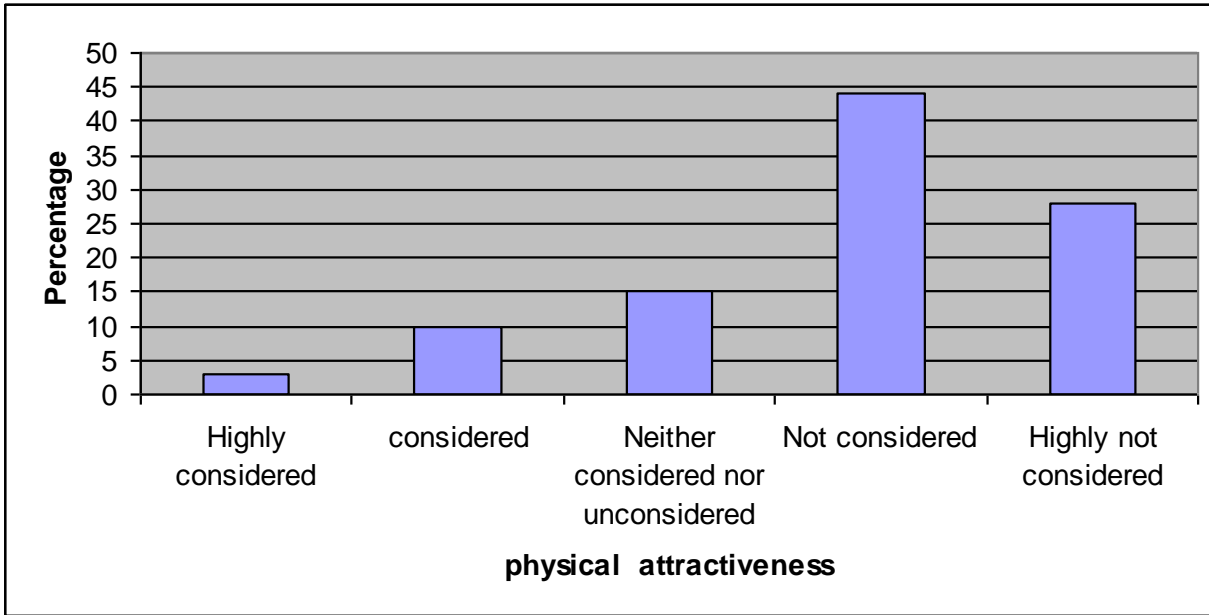


The respondents were asked to rate their perception on gender whether it is considered in making promotion decisions 41( 33%) of the respondents were of the opinion that gender is not considered when making promotion decision, 30(24%) were of the opinion that considered,26(24%) neutral,19(15%) were of the opinion that it is highly not considered while 4(3%) were of the opinion that it is highly considered

**Table 12 Physical Attraction-Wise analysis**

	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly considered	4	3
considered	12	10
Neither considered nor unconsidered	19	15
Not considered	52	44
Highly not considered	33	28
	120	100

**Graph 12 Physical attraction**

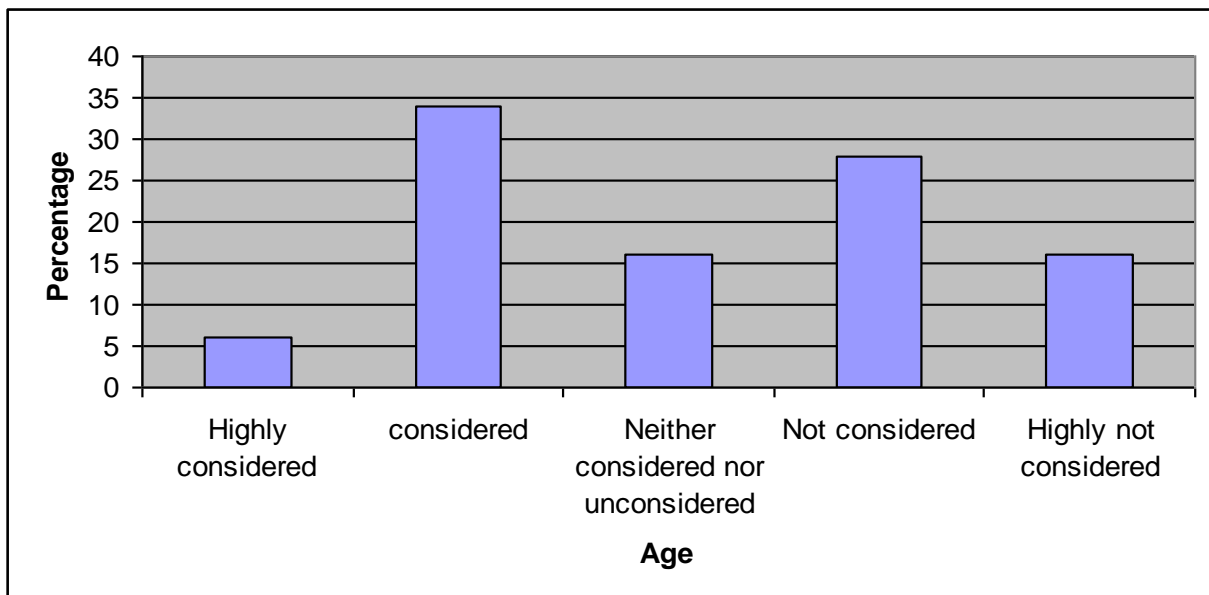


52(44%) of all respondents were of the opinion that physical attraction is not considered when making promotion decisions, 33(28%) were of the opinion that it is highly not considered, 19(15%) were of the opinion that it is neutral, 12(10%) were of the opinion that it is considered while 4(3%) Were of the opinion that it is highly considere

**Table 13 Age –wise perception**

	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly considered	8	6
considered	41	34
Neither considered nor unconsidered	19	16
Not considered	33	28
Highly not considered	19	16
	120	100

**Graph 13 Age**



The respondents perception whether age is considered in making promotion decisions were 41( 34%) were of the opinion that it is considered 33(28%) were of the opinion that it is not considered, 19(16%) were of the opinion that it is neutral and not considered while 8(6%) were of the opinion that it is highly considered. The participants were asked to rate how they perceive positive and negative factors affect their motivation Out of the total 120 respondents 110 constituting 91% were of the opinion that positive factors if considered in the organization increases their motivation while 10 constituting 9 % were of the opinion that negative factors also contribute to lowering the motivation of employees

### **6.0 Conclusions**

The study revealed that both positive and negative factors are present in most organizations. They are used by managers whenever management makes promotion decisions. The magnitude of the positive as well as the negative factors differs from organizations to organization.

When making promotion decisions it is important that human resource practitioners take into consideration of the positive factors. Positive factors if emphasized in making promotion decisions motivate employees in the organization. The employees are more likely put more effort since they know that the organization practices procedural justice. This will enable the organization and the employee to achieve their objectives.

In the contrary if negative factors are considered in making promotion decisions employees get frustrated and they are not motivated to work towards the achievement of organizational objectives. The negative factors should therefore be discouraged. It is therefore important that organizations exercise procedural justice when making promotion decisions.

In making promotion decision, it is important to consider performance, qualification interview and psychological test which improve the overall organizational performance. The negative factors, which include tribe, gender, physical attraction and age adversely, affect the overall performance of the organization by first affecting the motivation and morale of the employees. It is therefore extremely important that procedural justice is followed in making promotions decisions in organizations.

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