

**Defining Promotion Management: An investigation into the neglected human behavioural and perceptive elements of managing employee selection and subsequent promotion.**

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## **Abstract:**

### **Purpose:**

Thorough investigations in the larger picture of promotion management has been sparse, with most authors explaining the term from an organisational perspective, and are ignoring the human behavioural element. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the possible impact that promotion management could have on employees, while also discussing how employee behaviour may impact the managerial process. It also assesses the steps managers take to select employees for promotion.

### **Methodology:**

In total 5 people were interviewed, all from different companies, 1 participant through Microsoft Teams, 1 through an in-person interview and 3 through a questionnaire with identical questions to the interviews. All of the interviews were conducted over the space of around 20-25 minutes and featured anywhere between 18-21 questions depending on the answers given. Questionnaires were constructed with 13 main questions and 4-5 sub-questions beneath some of the main questions.

### **Findings:**

Everyone's perception is different in terms of how they see managerial processes without substantial information. Participants all deemed themselves 'deserving' of a promotion both in times when they were not promoted and when they were promoted. Interesting perspectives given from both events as missed promotions were deemed to have been unfairly treated by management while the receiving of the promotion was deemed to have been fairly treated. It is also found that the reality in which employees are promoted is much more straightforward

compared what theory believes is correct and that rank-order-tournaments rarely exist, if at all. Social constructs such as social tie-strength and impression management have rare cases where they are influential.

**Value:**

This paper establishes human behaviour as a key ingredient in promotion management. Organisations and more specifically managers must consider these factors when searching for the right employee(s) to promote. Often organisations should focus on managing the post promotion risks, such as demotivation in those that do not receive a promotion, by proper communication of information between managers and employees.

**Keywords:**

Management, Promotion, Employee selection, Communication, Motivation, Impression Management, Perspective.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Promotion management is an elusive target. Papers, despite extensive research compiled within the last century regarding employee relations, human resource management and management as a whole has been expansive, almost infinite, yet there is a distinct lack of information regarding promotion management, or otherwise worded as employee selection and promotion. There are most certainly definitions that regard the organisational meaning, simplistic definitions in educational textbooks that discuss the topic very little, touching on it only in passing. This introduction segment will serve to establish what is known specifically regarding promotion management.

To establish what essentially the management of job promotion is, it is essential to understand what a promotion is. A promotion entails the idea of a change within one's position in the company, on the smaller scale generally signalling a raise in pay grade, alongside the increase in the number of responsibilities the individual has to attend to, while on the larger end of the spectrum meaning major title increases, which in turn increases the authority and social status of the individual, large increases in pay and a complete change in the responsibilities of an individual (*Sihabudin, 2018*). However, a promotion also brings added pressure to an individual's job, which is not something that everyone can handle.

Next, it is important to establish the meaning of management, or more specifically, human resource management. This is very difficult to specifically define. The simple definition of 'the way employees are developed, selected and deployed' bares little resemblance to the reality and wide scoped nature of human resource management as a whole. The ambiguity surrounding its definition, or the lack there of, has largely led to the dismissal of its practical application by many (*Johnson, 2009*), or has remained something that is difficult to implement and deploy to its full extent (*Harper, 2021*)

There are in fact two different forms of HRM that appear prevalent, soft HRM and hard HRM. The soft approach implies the importance of aligning HR strategy to the organisational strategy. It acknowledges that the employees of the company are in fact assets, and are a source of competitive advantage (*Johnson, 2009*). Soft HRM emphasises the need to gain the employees' trust and commitment towards the organisation. It relies heavily on the behavioural science, concepts and theories from such research as McGregor's Theory Y, or Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (*Johnson, 2009*), as commitment from employees' is generally gained from the use of motivational factors in the business itself, namely and not limited to promotions. In simplified terms, soft HRM implies that being nicer to the employees will result in higher commitment and productivity, thereby increasing profits.

Hard HRM stands on the opposite end of the spectrum. In large it disregards the human element, with the focus being completely on the organisational goal and the best possible means to achieve such a goal. Its sole duty is to make money for the shareholders (*Johnson, 2009*). Generally it has been found that the hard HRM approach creates distrust and low commitment within the employees and leads to higher turnover rates, increased costs for the organisation and overall works against its own objective by decreasing the overall productivity of the company (*Johnson, 2009*).

The reasoning why an organisation selects employees to promote is twofold. Firstly, there is usually a role to fill, whether that's due to the opening of an already existing position or a brand-new position being created. It is cheaper to promote an individual to fill the spot, alongside the added benefit of experience within the organisation that could result in better outcomes than hiring someone to fill the spot. Secondly, it is theorised that promoting an employee may motivate or remotivate them, making them less likely to leave the organisation (*LULESCU, 2020*). Of course, it is unlikely that someone will be simply promoted to remotivate them, but it is an element that cannot be overlooked.

Organisations can implement as many well thought out plans as they want, but if they do not consider the human element they might as well not implement them at all. Human behaviour drives businesses forward. If an organisation cannot get their employees to be on the same page and relatively motivated to work, they will fail. Every decision that has a bearing on the employees at large runs the risk of adverse effects on employee morale and behaviour.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Main question: What is the overall meaning of Promotion Management?

There is a lack of actual definition and description that relates to promotion management and what there is refers to the organisational hierarchy perspective, rather than the management of humans, and the subjective nature of perspective of managerial decisions.

2. What are the basic elements that are contained, and which surround the field of promotion management?

The basis for this thesis entails what info there is currently known about management, further specifying into Human Resources Management and promotion management. This is a platform that can be built upon, shaping it more into an overall view of promotion management. Participants should be able to provide insight into such topic.

3. Do people who get promoted believe they deserved the promotion?

The assumption is that humans have the tendency to overestimate their own capabilities and underestimate their co-worker's level of skill.

4. What are the actual factors used by managers to determine who gets a promotion?

Managers likely use certain metrics to measure factors that influence the outcome of the promotion race. This study aims to find out if there are actual measurements or if managers use their own perception and biases to select employees.

5. Is there a possibility that managers decisions can be swayed by personal biases/social constructs?

This study aims to find if there are any reasonable circumstances in which managers may be swayed by their own personal biases or by other social constructs.

6. Is there an overlapping theme that appears throughout the entirety of the study?

What is the common theme that appears throughout the study, if there is one at all.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This study focuses on the definition of promotion management, inclusive of the human factor, of discussion around best-use methods for employee selection, impacts of promotion managerial decisions on motivation and employee's possible influences of outcome, all pertaining to an overall definition of promotion management. This chapter will discuss a number of elements. An in depth the research design of the study, including the chosen research method, the sample that was chosen and the data gathering process for this study. The limitations of the research will also be covered, and a description of the ethical considerations will be described. Finally, a description of the data analysis procedure will be described.

### **2.2 Research Design**

Research can be defined as a systematic study into and the analysis of resources and materials to establish statistics and attain new conclusions (*Nabi et al., 2017*). Research design is mostly considered to consist of two methods: Qualitative and Quantitative. A third, Mixed-Methods approach exists, but is lesser used and in circumstances of much larger research (*Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, 2004*). Qualitative research explores the depth of information while Quantitative methods explore the breadth of information. Qualitative methods are generally considered as inductive, creating theories and hypothesis from the information gathered while Quantitative methods tend to be deductive, where a hypothesis is first created, and the information gathered then proves or disproves said hypothesis (*Warren and Karner, 2010*).

For the purposes of this research, a qualitative approach was chosen. Qualitative research, in terms of Saunder's view is an interpretivist outlook. An interpretivist approach intends to look at the social world from a particular point of view, and to try to comprehend the socially constructed meanings around the topic being researched (*Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2012*). Qualitative research also highlights people's personal views and words rather than the quantitative method, which highlights factual evidence through numerical data.

### 2.2.1 Why Qualitative?

Qualitative approach was almost certainly the best choice, although not without its own limitations. The study relies heavily on perspective and by that it means the subjective views of individuals regarding the topic. Social setting, the relationship between manager and employee plays a large role in uncovering the behavioural and motivational elements of promotion management, and although through the exploration of a tight number of case studies, alongside the interviews conducted with a small number of participants allows for the exploration of such information.

However, the choice was not made due to previous studies using similar methods. In fact, most studies which measure motivational impacts often use quantitative approaches to highlight the impact of motivation/demotivation. Despite this, the perspective nature of the study meant that real impacts were useless to measure, as the important aspect was the perceived impact.

## 2.3 Sampling

Sampling refers to the selection of certain data sources, or in human terms people, through which information is accessed and collected. Certain factors are considered when choosing the data sources to ensure that the information collected pertains to the study topic, alongside ensuring validity by meeting certain criteria (*Mugo, 2002*). For this study specifically there were no requirements in either gender or age.

### 2.3.1 Sampling Method & Size

The sampling was done on a convenience basis. The idea of the study is that it should be generally applicable to most organisations, and on a micro-scale to individuals working within a company. This means that there was one simple requirement, which was the subject had to have been promoted by a company, so they can recall the experience, both before and after, and its impact both behaviourally and motivationally. There were a number of ideal, but not required elements, such as having missed out on a promotion opportunity and geographically being based in Ireland, which most participants also met. There were no preferences or needs in terms of gender and age.

The participants were reached through Snowball sampling, meaning the data collection started with one participant, who then through word-of-mouth acquired a few more candidates, bringing the total number to 5. This was around the intended minimum number, as the lack of defined industry would likely give a wide range of answers to discuss. 7 participants would have been the ideal amount.

## **2.4 Data Gathering Instrument**

Human perspective is a key element of the study, as it is something that current literature regarding promotion management is missing. It was decided that for participants to be able to fully express their opinions on the questions, an interview would be the best means to do so. The interviews were planned to be semi-structured. Due to time constraints not all of the participants were able to attend to an interview, and they had to be sent a questionnaire instead. To keep consistency, the interviews and the questionnaire had the same questions.

The first interview conducted was considered as the pilot study. A set of questions were determined after the completion of the Literature Review, which then formed the basis of the interview. Any questions that were asked that were not already predetermined were taken note of, and were a large part of the formation of the second interview, alongside becoming the structure and form of questions that were on the questionnaire.

While the questionnaires had the answer written to them, for the interviews a note taking approach had to be used. Information discussed was not all transcribed, but instead noted in bullet point format, with keywords included to essentially re-assemble the answers in the findings section.

### 2.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are one of the main qualitative approaches adopted by researchers. They can be unstructured, semi-structured and structured. Unstructured interviews are essentially conversations, with no particular order, nor a predetermined set of questions (*Dana, Dawes, Peterson, 2013*). For this study, there were certain elements that the researcher looked for, and the expected variety of industries and therefore answers could run the risk of not obtaining information on specific topics. A structured interview is a more quantitative approach due to very direct questions often leading to 'Yes/No' answers instead of discussion (*Wright,*



*Lichtenfels, Pursell, 1989*). The questions presented by the researcher needed to gather perspective within the answers, meaning that the firmly structured interview was also not a good option. Semi-structured interviews offer a middle-ground, as there is a thematic framework to follow, but the questions are not in a specific order, nor are they necessarily phrased the same way. The questions are often open-ended and leave room for diversity within the answers (*Kallio et al., 2016*). The intent to discuss personal experiences meant that this was deemed the correct form of interview structure.

There were two participants that were interviewed in the end. One participant, in his mid-20s was competent at using technology and was comfortable to conduct the interview online through the use of Microsoft Teams. The other participant was interviewed in person as they possessed less skills in using technology and were reasonably close to the researcher. Both interviews progressed similarly and in terms of timeframe both took around 20-25 minutes. Occasionally the participants were provided with some extra information on some of the questions as the original answers they provided proved that the questions were sometimes too ambiguous as to what aspect of their work it was referring to. While these corrected the direction of the answers, the way the information was delivered could possibly have narrow the answer ranges, limiting the data.

#### 2.4.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire was created to attempt to fill in for the interviews. All candidates were technologically adept to be able to respond, either by filling out the Word document, or through responding with the answers in the email itself. The amount of people that were available to collect data from remained the same. Understandably, a questionnaire would mean that less discursive data would be collected, due to the limited possibility of a back-and-forth conversation.

Questionnaires can also be taken as a more quantitative form of interviews, once again due to the limited discussion. On the positive side, questionnaires are a convenient and low-cost way of obtaining value.

The questionnaires had to follow a very similar path to the interviews. This meant that there were a few elements that needed to be corrected and amended before sending them out by email.

One important aspect was the formation of a structure, both in layout and in terms of the specifics of the questions. Some of the previously mentioned ambiguous questions had short descriptions/examples added to guide the answers. Participants were encouraged to write as much as they can, instead of answering the questions with a simple 'yes' or 'no', which would have been possible and easy to do otherwise. This had mixed results. One respondent's answers often did not exceed a single sentence, while another respondent answered with one or two paragraphs of answers.

## **2.5 Limitations of the research**

### 2.5.1 Sampling

One of the main limitations of qualitative research is the fact that the number of people that the researcher gathers data from is relatively low. While there was a wide variety of answers, some ideas were not reaffirmed by the answers, and have possibly created further basis for research. Having more candidates to interview would mean more information gathered. The other problem with the uneven number is that it can create biases towards a certain result.

There were also a couple of mistakes made during the deciding of candidates. Using convenience as a sampling method was not the ideal choice, but due to time constraints there was no other realistic choice. Secondly, some candidates were unable to answer for question relating to missing out on a promotion, as the requirements did not state that the person had to have that experience.

### 2.5.2 Data Gathering Instruments

There are limitations in both interviews and within questionnaires. Interviews, while providing plenty of information, are inherently a discursive form of data gathering. This means there is a wide range of data that needs to be interpreted. They are also take a fair amount of time to complete, if we take into account the organising of the meeting. Depending on the location, there may also be travel costs associated with it.

Questionnaires on the other hand, especially in the case of this study, suffer from variety of length. Given that there is no discussion between the researcher and the participant, it is difficult to guide them towards a certain length of answer or push for more information. This meant that while the answers remained varied, the length of discussion received also greatly varied. While as a whole the questionnaires were successful with plenty of data gathered, it did range from single sentence answers to paragraphs and even further study recommendations from another. A second issue with the questionnaire turned out to be clarity. While there were short details/instructions as to what the question was related to, there was the rare, but existent variance of topic in the answers.

### 2.5.3 Mistakes during purpose decision

One of the main purposes of this paper is for it to be applicable to a very wide variety of industries, as it more provides an understanding of the concept of promotion management, rather than explain how it would apply to any specific industry.

This desire in a way is one of the main limiting components of the study. The data gathered does give what was wanted, which is evidence of differences between industries and perception towards said differences, yet there is a distinct lack of answer to anything specific. By narrowing down the research to a specific industry, there would have been a chance to create a deliberate ‘best plan of action’ rather than an overarching definition that needs to be shaped depending on industry. However, the hope is to make it understandable enough that it can in fact be shaped using this study as a basis.

## **2.6 Ethical considerations**

### 2.6.1 Anonymity

The anonymity and confidentiality is a key element of ethical considerations when conducting primary source research. Researchers are expected to keep participants anonymous when publishing personal information that was collected throughout the gathering process (*Warren, Karner, 2010*). Details were explained to the participants and ensured their names would not be used anywhere other than personal notes for the duration required by NCI guidelines. Participants in the Findings & Analysis chapter will be referred to as Participant 1- 5, and their names only recorded in the notes and not published. In terms of security of the documents, they are kept behind a non-automatic login OneDrive account, which means it is essentially stored on three devices. A desktop computer with a password login, a laptop also with a password login and a smartphone with a pattern lock-screen.

## **2.7 Data Analysis**

After the data collection process, the results of the collection were placed into a single document, where answers to the same questions could be compared and contrasted. The order of the questions themselves had a form to it, and it could be used as a progression curve for the Findings and Analysis chapter. Transcribing the data was not possible as there were no recordings available. Technical troubles prevented the Teams meeting to be recorded while the in-person interviewee was not comfortable being recorded, even if it was just audio. The questionnaires themselves provided written answers, even if there was some variance in length and detail.

## **Chapter 3: Literature Review:**

### **3.1: Basis of the thesis, setting the foundation for further building:**

Early elements of looking into the research topic required the search for the very foundation on which the topic will be built, which translates to finding out what the term ‘promotion management’ entails. This is a key element of the research for multiple reasons. Firstly, it is important to establish basics so that the starting point can be understood by any reader. Secondly, establishing an understanding of promotion management allows it to be used as a mouldable foundation, that can either be supported by future information or possibly changed based on other factors shifting the view in a different direction.

Very notably, however, the term ‘promotion management’ is seemingly used in very rare circumstances, within mostly textbooks. There is a lack of variance around it, with most of them leading to the same organisational perspective of promotion management.

Sihabudin is one of only a few individuals who mentions the idea of promotion management within text, however only presenting a very organizational focused definition, in which he describes what a promotion means to a person in terms of position within the hierarchy. To establish a definition in the findings section this suits rather well, as the organizational focus is the basis on which there will be human nature and human perspectives built on top of, creating an overall definition of promotion management. Sihabudin’ findings of promotion management are limited to a short paragraph within his paper, as the paper is intended to focus on the benefits of employee training. Others who mention promotion management are either in complete alignment with Sihabudin’s explanation or take even less effort to describe its meaning.

Similarly to promotion management, it is important to establish the types of human resource management that is employed by organizations purely to establish context for both the topic at hand and for the reader. The most common way of looking at human resource management is the Soft HRM/ Hard HRM approach (*Johnson, 2009*). This explains two very distinct methods of HRM, with soft HRM implying that caring for the employees are the most valuable resource and caring for their physical and mental wellbeing works best while hard HRM implies that complete focus on performance and nothing else is the most effective method (*Johnson, 2009*). These two approaches are generally taken as two completely opposite, and therefore have almost no overlap with each other.

Given the fact that a job promotion is considered a motivational factor on the organisation's side of things, it implies that it befits the soft HRM category. HRM entails the use and leading of employees to attain goals. Thereby, we can decipher a conclusive definition of what promotion management entails.

However, due to the relatively recent outbreak of COVID-19, some organisations have had to find a way to boost performance while dealing with the challenging task of maintaining morale during some trying times (*Bienkowska et al., 2022*). This involves mixing of the two previously mentioned approaches. The "soft" element pertains to giving employees self-fulfillment and job enrichment opportunities through training and coaching, while the hard pertains to pay cuts and downsizing (*Bienkowska et al., 2022*). Although this would seem viable, realistically it more stands as a crisis management approach to HRM and given the source's recency, and it still mentioning soft and hard HRM as the main approaches, it would be safe to say that it remains to this day the primary way of looking at HRM.

### 3.2: Human Perspectives

An extremely important element in the exploration of human reaction to negative results (in the form of not being promoted), some elements of behavioural science need to be discussed.

Firstly, the term ‘deserving’ is one of the main focuses of this segment. Deserving is a term closely connected with someone’s perception of their own self, meaning there would be variance from person to person. Unfortunately, there are not many official papers regarding the meaning of ‘deserving’, apart from dictionary meanings, and one which talks about it from a spiritual perspective (*Butsu, 2018*). The latter, while largely incongruent with the HRM perspective being taken in the thesis, does present interesting ideology that can be aligned with the likes of organisations, with the idea being that we may not demand/deserve anything from the world as the world existed prior to the human. In this sense it can be translated to the organisation, where in most circumstances the organisation was there before the worker, and unless certain requirements are met by the employee, they remain underserving of a promotion.

This also leaves a large amount of room for further studies. Many of the unused papers discuss the systematic poverty lines within a population and deriving from that who is economically deserving of government support and who is not, but of course, none discuss the term ‘deserving’ contextualised within an organisation, and what it means behaviourally and mentally for an employee.

Communication is also a major element of human perspective. The more information a person receives, the picture they create in their heads becomes more and more clear. Of course, one’s own biases still apply, but in the case of an organisation it is important for the managers to learn to communicate with employees to avoid the possibility of workplace conflicts (*Morreale. Osborn, Pearson, 2000*). However, in recent studies it is found that communication is not done often enough. In a recent study of 616 managers employed in the United States,



69% of them said that they are uncomfortable communicating with employees (*Solomon, 2016*). Furthermore, over a third (37%) said that they are uncomfortable giving feedback to which the employee might respond negatively, coupled with the 20% who said they are uncomfortable with communicating recognition of achievement (*Solomon, 2016*), means that employees may often be left to their own self-assessment in terms of performance. Non-communicative managers can create perspective issues for both the employees' self-assessment while depriving them of possible motivational factors by not acknowledging achievement.

### **3.3 The importance of motivation and the theory around it:**

Organisational motivation theories are extremely popular and are a large part of how business can craft reward schemes and keep employees invested in their work. Most of the motivational theories essentially present the same factors of motivation but describe different means of obtaining them and group them differently.

One of the most popular motivational theories is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow presented a pyramid-like structure in which there are five different types of needs: Physiological, Safety, Belongingness and love, Esteem and lastly Self-Actualisation (*Vaughan, 2020*). Maslow proposed that the lower needs have to be satisfied first before someone can be satisfied by the ones higher up. While his theory in terms of motivational factors is correct, it has been time and again disproven that lower needs have to be satisfied first (*McLeod, 2018*). Some may not need all five but need Safety and Self-Actualisation. This depends on a person's personal needs and differs from one to another. For the understanding of human motivation, Maslow' theory stands as the most adaptable for today.

The means of acquiring motivational factors disregarded, the pyramid effectively displays the decreasing likelihood of a person needing such motivational factors, while also displaying a large majority of the possible motivational factors a human might need (*Fallatah, R.H.M, Syed, 2018*).

One of the more recent types of motivational theories is called ‘lifetime perspective on human development’ which by itself is not a title of a single theory, but rather the empirical study of psychological and psychosocial development within individuals as they progress through different age groups (*Rudolph, 2016*). In contrast, other theories such as the ‘stage perspective’ characterise development as a fluid and continuous process for each individual, rather than grouped by age (*Rudolph, 2016*). Lifetime perspective, while not definitive, can provide a framework for organisations to provide job enrichment opportunities based on age to try to motivate people (*Rudolph, 2016*).

There are a few issues, however. Firstly, there is the issue of individual motives, whereby each person is motivated by something different. An organisation may have difficulty crafting a plan that would be inclusive of everyone’s wants and needs. Secondly, there is a correlation between age and loss of work motivation. The higher the age of an individual, the higher the chance that they are not motivated by career progress, but are looking towards retirement instead, while younger people have the tendency to care about career progression (*Kielerstajn, 2008*). This limits the lifetime development theories validity given the drop off in motivation in regard to age, and of course stages in career.

So in reality, why should motivation matter to organisations? Motivation is a force that drives humans towards obtaining goals, whether that’s their own goals, or the goals set for them (*Shahzadi, Javed, 2014*).

There is a significant relationship between employee motivation and employee performance, with the less motivated a person is, the worse they will perform at their job (*Shahzadi, Javed, 2014*). Intrinsic rewards, such as an objective of a promotion, have great motivational capacity and are able to keep motivation high in companies where these rewards are offered often (*Danish et al., 2015*).

Most motivational theories seem to have some or all elements disproven, yet there are new motivational theories continuously being researched and developed. This leads to the belief that motivation is a complex topic, of course it being variable from person to person, and extremely difficult to pin-point the correct way to motivate an individual. There is most certainly no gap within literature on this topic, yet what is still missing is a proven, definitive method of motivation.

### **3.4 Crafting a means to evaluate:**

When organisations are looking to promote employees, they generally need a way to evaluate performance. Competitions are a generally good way to gather participants and gather information on comparative performance (*Li, 2019*). Competitions, for at least those that wish to participate generally possess a competitive spirit, they want to win and to be better than others (*Spurk, Keller and Hirschi, 2019*). Combine this with a reward, and the upward limit of employee's performance can be explored. Sports, which are naturally competitive due to tournaments, often utilise trainings as a means of finding player's limits by putting them through rigorous testing (*Mujika, 2017*). Within an organisational context, employees are essentially encouraged through competition to provide their best to obtain their reward. Their 'best' is compared against one another to find who has the best performance.

Tournament theory is a useful piece of literature that assists in describing the advantages and the disadvantages of reward structures that are based on relative rank rather than those that focus on absolute levels of output (*Connelly et al., 2014*).

Tournament theory implies that organisational promotion and reward schemes can be modelled after sports tournaments, whereby the individuals or teams compete against each other throughout a period and several rounds to obtain their winnings (*Banks et al., 2021*). Similarly in organisations, tournaments can be used as a means for individuals to advance to a higher position within the hierarchy and obtain an increase in pay relative to their rank, gain prestige and social status (*Lazear and Rosen, 1984*). CEO's being paid high salaries can often be seen as a motivating point for some, with the thought of one day climbing the ladder high enough to reach that position (*Harford, 2006*). This is a part of tournament theory.

Evaluation of the participants is important within the tournament. As such competition usually pits two individuals against each other, measuring absolute performance is almost useless, as in reality the organisation is looking for the most optimal performance amongst the employees, rather than attempting to measure against a set performance expected by the organisation. The one who gets the promotion is the one that is best amongst their peers (*Banks et al., 2021*). The competition incentivises individuals to compete against each other and to achieve superior performance against their peers (*Banks et al., 2021*).

For the organisation, the benefits of such a tournament are twofold. Firstly, motivation increases amongst those who compete in the tournament, which may remotivate some individuals, overall increasing morale in the company. Secondly, everyone that competes attempts to increase their performance, raising the productivity of the business (*Banks et al., 2021*). Of course, the extent of these benefits can vary from organisation to organisation, depending on the number of people willing to compete.

Conversely there can be negative impacts of using tournaments in the workplace. As competition increases the likelihood of uncooperative behaviour and unethical behaviour increases due to the emphasis on quantifiable relative job performance (*Banks et al., 2021*). Some individuals may choose to not cooperate in the completion of tasks, seeking to gain advantages over their rivals (*Main, O'Reilly, Wade, 1993*). This can lead to counterproductivity, withholding of information and most egregiously sabotaging others' work. The inherent 'winner takes all' nature of the competition can lead individuals to try to take a win at all cost approach, creating adverse effects on their co-workers and the organisation at large (*Banks et al., 2021*).

While the overly competitive approach of some is rather difficult to limit due to human tendency and variation, what can be limited, and what promotion management literature often fails to mention is the adverse effect on individuals who are not selected for the promotion. Those who lose out in the competition may not be losing by much, but given the promotion is usually given to one individual, the margin is essentially a non-factor (*Lazear and Rosen, 1981*). Losing out in a tournament has the potential to create demotivation and reduce organisational commitment. Some, who only lose by a small margin may even choose to leave the company, as they believe their talents might be recognised elsewhere (*Banks et al., 2021*).

The outcome of a rank-order tournament can also often be swayed by social tie strength. Those who form stronger ties within similar demographics to themselves, as social capital accumulates more to those involved within similar demographics (*Banks et al. 2021*). Information may flow more freely within social groups of similar demographics and give access to more information and resources than those of low tie formation (*Boyle, Shapira, 2012*). With extra information and resources, these social networked groups can positively influence their chances of promotion, compared to those with relatively low or no social tie formation (*Banks et al., 2021*)

Tournament theory and rank-order tournaments is not something that is often discussed in literature around promotion management. It is often discussed what a promotion does, but even as previously discovered, they are all very segmented and often fail to consider larger elements that play into promotion management. It can be argued that a large portion of the overall responsibility promotion management, being the management of a competition between employees, is overlooked and is in fact a neglected part. This is merely theory, and while here it is considered that rank-order tournaments are the best means to finding correct candidates, in reality this might be a completely neglected aspect, maybe even rightly so.

### **3.5 Impression management**

Impression management is the process by which individuals attempt to influence their own image, or more specifically the perception of others regarding their own image (*Rosenfield et al., 1995*). Individuals attempt create desirable social identities, as through that they become their ideal selves (*Vinnicombe, Singh, Kumra, 2002*). By changing the perception of others through false responding and hedging (*Danioni, Barni, 2021*), they not only create a better image of themselves, but in fact also create better materialistic opportunities for themselves (*Vinnicombe, Singh, Kumra, 2002*).

While from a managerial perspective this is generally disruptive in creating a clear view of individuals, it can also be taken as a somewhat positive aspect. Individuals who create an ‘ideal image’ of themselves often find those values important for themselves and progression, and while they might not possess all values, or at least not fully, they understand the importance and value of each of those traits and may in the long term strive to become their projected selves (*Danioni, Barni, 2021*).

Managers may have trouble disconnecting the real individual from the one they project, but as long as they stick to measurements of metrics rather than personal biases towards individuals, they can find the correct people to promote.

### **3.6. Employee selection:**

As previously discussed, management may choose to run a competition to measure the performance of individuals, or they may choose to measure the absolute performance without comparison and without a competition. However, the measurement of metrics is not always something that is employed by management (*Akinbowale, Lourens and Jinabhai, 2014*).

Essentially, there is more to finding the right employee than just performance. For some organisations, it may be difficult to measure performance, such as for till workers in retail shops. More commonly, there are other factors at play that managers often look for in employees.

There will be a couple of assumptions made for this segment. Firstly, it is assumed that there is communication already established between the managers and the employees, as many of these measures rely on communication between the employees and the manager to gather information. Secondly it is assumed that a rank-order tournament is in play at the organisation, thereby setting a fair chance for everyone to provide their best.

- They look for self-starters:

One of the first things a manager should look for in an individual is initiative. They should be able to complete their jobs without much direction from other, understanding the terrain and task at hand, and having the knowledge to complete it without other's input (*Cremin 2003; Prossack, 2018*). Generally, within the tournament, given the comparative nature of it, deciding who is better at taking initiative might be easy, but measurement requires time and in most instances communication. Individuals generally fall into a set category. They either wait to be given work, which is the least self-starting category, ask for work, recommend work that they themselves could do, complete work and report back often, or the most proactive, which is completing work and reporting back occasionally (*Campbell, 2000*). While the second last category is not the most proactive, it should be noted that regular performance updates from an individual may yield better chances at receiving a promotion, due to closer social ties with the manager.

- Looking at the performance:

This is the most obvious and important one, looking at performance data from the employees. Given the assumption that there is a rank-order tournament within the organisation, managers can compare relative performance between two individuals (*Banks et al., 2021*). However, how managers measure output is very difficult to define. For some organisations, due to the nature of the work, it may be difficult to find a quantifiable measurement metric for performance and would have to rely on the manager's own perception as a basis for performance appraisal, while for other it may be easier to calculate performance bases on pre-determined metrics (*Akinbowale, Lourens and Jinabhai, 2014*). Measurable metrics vary greatly depending on the market they are in.



- They look for those who take responsibility:

Employees who can take on and handle more responsibility are looked at favourably by managers (*Prossack, 2018*). An employee may choose to take on more responsibilities by either taking the initiative to complete more tasks or by requesting extra duties (*Prossack, 2018*). During the tournament this may end up skewed due to participants' willingness to take on extra work to prove their worth.

Responsibility may also arise in the form of admission of mistakes. Managers appreciate honesty from employees, and while it is not the most important aspect, can often be of advantage for an individual who shows remorse for mistakes and shows willingness to improve (*Christensen, Mackey and Whetten, 2013*). Managers must cater to this by creating an organisational environment in which employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions, rather than simply punished for it (*Christensen, Mackey and Whetten, 2013*).

- They listen to employees:

As previously mentioned, the importance of communication between managers and employees cannot be undervalued. By creating social ties with the employees, managers may be able to gather crucial information about individuals which they cannot receive from statistics alone. One such thing is understanding of personality. Generally moving up a position will require an individual to work alongside more people than before (*Prossack, 2018*), to communicate with them. If they are terrible to work with, it is unlikely that they should be promoted. A manager by themselves might not be able to receive such input alone, as employees often engage in impression management themselves and procure a different image to managers than they do to their normal colleagues (*Rosenfield et al., 1995*). By listening to others, they can discern a better image of an individual.

- Soliciting feedback from supervisors:

Like the previous point, managers may often talk to supervisors for better understanding of performance and personality. Supervisors pay attention to how an individual completes their job and provides feedback to the manager, yet they are often neglected in relaying information between employees and managers (*Purcell, Hutchinson, 2007*), which would be crucial in terms of the amount of information that can be received.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

While a lot of these elements almost seem exclusive from one another, they link very tightly. Managers create a strategy by which they plan to select an employee for promotion, whether that's through a formal competition where the prize is clearly indicated, or informally through their own perception. The formal one appeals to the motivational theories, whereby employees become motivated by the prospect of higher pay and social status within the organisation. Those who are selected may or may not be motivated by the prospect of achieving their goal. Those who are not selected may become demotivated, which can somewhat be controlled through communication.

## **Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis:**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 will utilise the results of the interviews and questionnaires that were completed and analysed in Chapter 2. This research focuses on a demographic of workers who had been promoted in their workplace, as the research pertains to defining the overall process of promotion management and employees' perceptions regarding management in light of promotional activities. Participants were asked questions regarding what they think promotion is, if they had missed out on promotion opportunities, both ones they actively contested in and ones which they were notified of afterwards, the means by which they obtained their promotion and finally their views of management and other around them.

The structure of the findings section relies heavily on the order of the interview questions, which can be viewed in full in Appendix A. Some questions from the interview will be thematically grouped, as some answers would otherwise create an overlap in information. Answers are occasionally attributed to certain industries based

### **4.2 Demographic definition**

As discussed in the Methodology chapter, the research was conducted through interviews and with an originally intended sample size of 7 or 8 people, of which in reality there were 5 respondents. In total, 2 semi-structured interviews of which one was a pilot study, which formed the basis for the questionnaire that was sent through email to the remaining participants. The researcher had no requirements in terms of age of participant or the industry in which the participant was working in, but they were taken note of.

The sampling of the participants was based on convenience, with the only requirement being that they have been promoted in the workplace. Snowball sampling was also used, and the 2 individuals interviewed reached out to eligible contacts, who then completed the questionnaire. People who completed the questionnaire were not required to reach out to others. Participants in this study are assigned their own number ranging 1-5, and the word ‘participant’ is shortened to the letter P. An example of a participant name is P2. P1 and P2 are participants from the interviews, while P3-5 are participants from the questionnaire. P1 and P2 will not have any direct quotes, as they were unable to be recorded due to technical reasons and privacy reasons respectively, meaning there are no transcripts for the interviews, only notes.

### **4.3 Findings and Analysis**

#### **4.4 What is a promotion?**

The first question that was asked of participants was what they thought the term ‘promotion’ meant, and most of the answers stayed relatively similar, and some offered examples of traits/elements that management might look for. They were also asked what might be the reason someone gets promoted.

The most open definition came from P2, who deemed a promotion to be “*Any sort of reward*”, meaning both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, although she did allude to the idea that generally it means a raise in either pay or position. The latter part is something that every participant agreed on, which is generally confirmed within secondary sources. One example of this is Sihabudin (2018), who stated: “...*promotion is a change of job or employee status/position from a lower level to a higher level.*”

Furthermore, participants generally agreed on the reasoning for why someone might get promoted. P1 stated that an individual may be promoted once they have perfected their capabilities at performing their current role, and is deemed capable of taking on extra responsibilities. Others, such as P3 worded it as “...a reflection of successfully completion of the requirements fitted to the given employee”. This establishes a small difference in the perception of individuals. Some, like P1, deem it possible to obtain promotions through perfecting their capabilities at carrying out current responsibility, while P3 states that an individual only needs to pass certain requirements for forward progression.

Literature leans on the idea that performance is a key element in decision making for managers (Prossack, 2018), but is in fact not the only factor, as factors such as ability to take initiative (Cremin, 2003), ability to take responsibility (Christensen, Mackey and William, 2013) and ability to co-operate with others are highly valued (Prossack, 2018).

#### **4.5 The term ‘Promotion Management’**

Out of the 5 participants, only P3 had seen or heard the term ‘promotion management’. She understood it is in reference to employee selection and its procedures but had no understanding of its specifics. Her role in an advisory company had allowed her to see several companies of different sizes and explained how SMEs often do not have HR procedures, while multinationals always do. A relatively recent study found that 68% of companies that have 1-10 employees do not have a HR function. 36% of companies with 11-50 staff do not have a HR function, with the figure only dropping to 29% for medium-sized businesses with 50-250 employees. Primary reasons for not having a HR function consist of cost and citing that they do not have enough employees to warrant a HR function (Newenham, 2015). Having no HR explains why there are no processes regarding promotion.

P1 had an interpretation of the term given his knowledge of company procedures. In his workplace, they have designated levels, as they are software engineers. This is not uncommon in technology businesses. What his presumption was that promotion management would be a set of procedures that would carry out a shift of personnel in the levels. A position opens up, someone gets promoted into the place from one level lower and then that position is also filled from another level lower, and so on. Hire a new employee into the lowest level to save costs.

The idea behind this question was to potentially gather views on a relatively unknown term, however, given that most participants had no idea as to what it is, it only proves the goal of this study, the idea that this term should be developed further.

#### **4.6 Views on formality of promotion methods**

Participants were asked about the formality of the employee selection process used by their company, more specifically what they think was the level of formality. It is important to note that some of the responses were perceptions of the formality used rather than reality, this will be highlighted. Once again, the paper is not necessarily based on just factual information of the actual process, but the perception of such, as it is what determines an individual's behaviour. Perceptions may be correct or incorrect. Formal selection involves the measurement of metrics and performance, while informal is regarded as using perception and biases as a means of evaluation.

P5 had a very interesting answer. He noted: *“There is a formal way and there are metrics to support that decision, but these are used only so that they can point out why some colleagues, who are requesting promotion, can be kept on lower level of position.”* He also notes that decisions are made based on whose demands are acceptable, with those within reasonable demand range getting promoted, while those with unreachable demands usually get rejected and leave the company.

P1 mentioned that their company has a formal process, by which candidates are interviewed, albeit in the form of an informal conversation. P2 perceives that their means of promotion usually involve only taking into account experience and not level of skill, while P4 notes that the company she works at has strict performance measurement systems in place.

This is a wide variety. If anything this shows that there is no set ways in which companies make decisions, however, judging by the writing style of some of the answers, there is a sense that 3 out of 5 candidates, specifically P2, P4 and P5 are unhappy with the methods applied by their managers.

#### **4.7 Managerial communication:**

Communication between management and employees is crucial. It is a connecting point that allows workers lower in the hierarchy to receive information, and remained in the loop regarding the reality of situations. Not receiving the correct information, or the correct amount of information can result a skewed perception, passing of misinformation and speculation which can cause behavioural impacts on the employees. Participants were asked about this in the interviews/questionnaire.

The answers were generally similar to each other, with each participant stating that there was always communication regarding performance, but not much information regarding organisational strategy and information for the overall picture.

P3 states: *“In banking sector the companies are so huge (number of staff, net profit, etc) they are using a slicing method to help the operation. What I mean by that is: - you are working in a “black magic box” = you don’t have to know more about the whole process only the process steps in which you are involved”*. P5 agrees and states that *“Only the required amount of information is shared.”*

With no information other than the required amount being shared it is possible that employees are often left in the dark regarding the overall objective they are working towards. In a later section of the Findings, it will be discussed how this links with an issue regarding not being promoted.

#### **4.8 Not being promoted/being promoted: The effects, reasons and consequences**

This is the key element of this paper. The means of how people were promoted has been explored, what remains to explore is the impact. Decisions that impact a person’s life has behavioural and motivational impacts on that person. Participants were asked to recall times when they were promoted, and for some where it was applicable, times when they were passed on for a promotion. This part will be divided into sub-sections, where answers for each element will be explored.



#### 4.8.1 Not being promoted (known/unknown)

Early on during the research it was identified that there are two ways in which someone might miss out on a promotion. First way is that the person is conscious of the promotion opportunity and is willingly participating in trying to achieve such promotion. Secondly, the person is unconscious of the fact there is a promotion opportunity and only finds out about it after someone else had already been promoted, whether that's through higher management or through co-workers. Participants were asked about their experiences regarding this, if they had an experience with it at all. P5 is the only person who has lost out both on a known and unknown opportunity, while P1 and P4 had experience missing out on a known opportunity, with P2 being the only one having missed out on an unknown opportunity by itself.

#### 4.8.2 Known Opportunity

Interestingly, all 3 participants who had an experience with missing out on known opportunity had very similar answers. In terms of immediate effect of not getting the promotion, each participant mentioned that they were demotivated/lost enthusiasm towards the job. However, there were small discrepancies in terms of what they had a negative outlook towards. P1 said that once he was passed on for a promotion, he had a sour/negative outlook towards the job itself. P4 said "*I applied for a better position and when I found out my boss didn't support my application, I lost my enthusiasm*" indicating a negative outlook towards the boss/management and P5 mentioned "*...it was demotivating in preparing for another promotion*", meaning he was specifically not keen on pushing for another promotion.

While missing out on the promotion alone may have created these outlooks, they are most certainly perpetuated by how the selection process was handled and responded to by management. P1 cited that management was biased towards the other candidate, but was willing to admit that he was fairly informed of the opportunity. He also remembers that he once the other candidate was promoted, he was not informed as to why he did not get the promotion. P4 also believes that the process was not handled fairly, but cited that due to workplace confidentiality is not able to share specifics. Management informed her that “*There was a better candidate*”. P5 said that “*...it wasn't fair. They selected employees based on years of experience, not level of skill or meritocracy promoted by the company. The reason was that it was easier to explain to HR.*”. He also says that he was informed by management his performance was not suited but was not compared to other workers and was not given a proper reasoning as to why he was not chosen. Overall it appears that the demotivation was exacerbated by the fact that management did not handle the situation well and there was not enough information flowing between candidates and management. Once again the communication issue arises, as management may have had their reasoning, yet was not communicated to the candidates, therefore creating a discord in perception and reality. Of course, not to discredit participants' answers, it can also be reality that management did mishandle the situation.

Participants were also asked if they had any behavioural change towards individuals who did get the promotion, and while P1 and P4 both had no changes, they did mention that it was also their friends that got promoted. P5 cited that he had a small behavioural change towards the person and did not state they were a friend. A limitation of the small number of interviews is that no realistic correlation can be established between the two factors, however, from this study we may assume behavioural changes depending on the level of social tie with the person being promoted.

### 4.8.3 Unknown Opportunity

While both P2 and P5 lost out on unknown opportunities, they cite different reasons as to why they did not receive the promotion. P2 recalls that she was early on in her career at the company, and while she possessed the skills necessary to be promoted, she understood she did not have the experience necessary. She was also motivated by not getting promoted, as she believed that if she continued to work the same way, she would eventually be also promoted. P5 mentions “*Yes, but it was rather my fault, as I didn’t browse the opportunities, which is in my interest.*” meaning he believes there was more he could’ve done to find the opportunity. However, in the next question regarding the reason why there might have been no notice, he mentions “*Maybe they preferred to hire a specific people, or HR is just inefficient in promoting this opportunity.*” Signifying he feels there was more to it than just his own mistake. Both of these candidates mention that no information was given to them about the reasons as to why they were not promoted, yet in a weird twist they were neither demotivated or annoyed in the situation, with both considering their own ‘mistakes’ as a part of the reasoning.

Neither participant recalled any behavioural change towards the individual that got promoted. In terms of attitude towards management, once again a shift can be witnessed, with P2 mentioning that she was annoyed at management as there was no fair chance given to her, while P5 stated his feelings as “*HR is lazy*”.

When comparing the known and unknown results it is an interesting aspect that those who knew of the opportunity were both affected motivationally in a negative way and garnered negative feelings towards management, while those who did not know of the opportunity had either no impact or were positively affected, but a negative outlook towards management remained.

#### 4.8.4 Do they perceive they deserved the position?

An important element of this study is to discuss the perception of the participants. One of the questions asked regarding missing out on a promotion is whether or not they felt they deserved the position more than the person that ended up getting it.

The answers came back mostly as they were expected they would. Participants in almost every case stated that they deserved the position either more than the other person, or that they deserved it just as much, E.g. P4: *“Absolutely, the other person did not meet a basic requirement”* and P5 in the case of the known opportunity: *“Sometimes me, sometimes another colleague deserved it more.”*

Interestingly, in the cases of the unknown opportunity, P2 stated that they do not think they deserved it more, but should have had the opportunity to compete for it. P5 outright said that they did not deserve it more than the other.

The researcher began the research with the presumption that people usually either underestimate other’s skill and competence, or they overestimate their own capabilities, possibly both. While these answers do neither confirm nor deny this presumption, it can be stated that overall the participants were generally convinced they deserved the position or at least an opportunity for the position.

### **4.9 Getting Promoted**

Participants were also asked similar questions in regards to their promotion, to see if their outlook had changed or if it remained the same. Firstly, it is important to establish the effects of being promoted, as a promotion theoretically should motivate an individual, alongside establishing a parallel to the previously discussed negative impacts of not being promoted.

Answers could be grouped in three different ways. Participants who were notified of an open position (P1, P3), people who were offered a position at a relatively random time (P2, P4) and those who requested a promotion (P5).

Participants were also asked if they had set a career goal prior to the promotion/job. Its importance is that it can bear weight if someone merely got promoted, or if they got promoted to a position they had consciously hoped to achieve.

The main question that was asked in regards to their promotion assumed that there were only two ways in which someone would be promoted. One was being notified of an open position and a pseudo/real competition would be in place to facilitate the selection process. The second was random timing, where management would decide to promote an employee having deemed them ready, but this would be short notice, and of course only promoted with the employee's approval. P5 introduced a new concept not considered before, which was getting promoted at the request of the employee.

#### 4.9.1 Notified Promotion

P1 talked in detail about his promotion, describing the process by which he was selected, and how it affected him. He was notified of a job opportunity but noted there was nobody else internally informed of such position, the job was posted online, however. He was remotivated, as this new position was in connection to his masters degree. He also believes it was fairly handled by management as he was kept in the loop with information.

P3 was in a way not notified personally, but “*the promotion event related to mid-year or year end business year review events.*”, meaning that it was expected that good performance may result in a promotion. She also notes “*Sometimes, when the management get to know that the employee started to look after another job, or did something well, but the promotion did not happen yet, they schedule it during the above-mentioned events.*” meaning those who did not receive a promotion may be notified of a promotion half a year before they get it. In terms of motivation, she is more motivated as she is now getting a higher salary, but does note that everyone has different inspirations. In terms of fairness, she notes that in the multinational company the process was not handled fairly, but in the SME it was.

#### 4.9.2 Random Timed Promotion

P2 recalled her promotion as a randomly timed promotion. She was requested for a meeting in the manager’s office and was offered a higher position. In terms of motivation, she became motivated by the prospect of another promotion. She also believes it was handled fairly as others were also offered the job, but they refused the position.

P4 mentions that she was promoted randomly, according to her team leader “*based on my abilities and the quality of my job.*” In terms of motivation, her answer is a rather neutral “*Even though this is the most boring job of my life, I’m grateful to be given a less stressful task.*”. She is also not very precise about her answer regarding fairness: “*Sometimes we think nothing is handled fairly.*” from which the researcher assumes that she means her promotion was not handled fairly, or at least perceived as such by others.

Something to note here is that the four participants mentioned so far agree, at least to some extent, that their promotion processes were handled fairly. The question here that can be proposed is whether or not their co-workers would say the same.

As previously mentioned, those who are not informed of reasons may feel cheated out of an opportunity, not to mention the fact that these same participants perceived their non-promotion as, to some extent, unfair by management. Limitation here is that the participant's co-workers were not interviewed regarding this, although it would require naming the participant and that may violate confidentiality.

#### 4.9.3 Requested Promotion

The last method by which someone was promoted was by request. This is an aspect that had not been considered until this point. Most literature refers to the idea that employee selection is a managerial process involving review of a number of factors. However, what the researcher failed to interpret is that these factors can be explored by management at the request of the employee if they initially perceive the employee could be eligible for a promotion.

P5 cites that "*The opportunity was opened due to my request and was dedicated to me*". In terms of motivation he says that it "*...motivated me to look for more opportunities in the future.*" Given the promotion was dedicated to him that there was no real competition, but given the position was due to his request it is possible that other were not notified at all.

#### 4.9.4 Do they perceive they deserved the promotion?

Similarly to the non-promoted section, this same question was asked for the time they got promoted. Answers were generally the same across the board, essentially uniform in the idea that they all deserved the position, with only one exception.

P2 confidently responded that she deserved the position and that nobody else had the qualifications. P3 agrees in saying that they deserved the promotion but cites the reasoning as having done extra jobs and worked harder than other: "*Sure I deserve that's why I work so hard and do extra jobs.*".

P4 responded with the fact that she did not see the performance data and cannot judge the others, but believes she was deserving of the position. P5, given the position was made available on his request and suited to him, believes that he is deserving of the position.

Interestingly, while the answers are the same in terms of if they feel they deserved it or not, they do cite different reasons as to why. P2, P3 and P5 had different reasons, which were lesser or not high enough qualifications, lesser performance and no interest from co-workers, while P4 was unsure of the reasoning.

P1 is the only participant that had an unsure answer, where he stated that it was 50/50 and more relied on the idea that it was rather due to luck, being in the right place at the right time. This was a rather intriguing answer, as it was generally expected that every participant would answer with the belief they deserved the promotion. Unfortunately P1 was the pilot study and was not asked about communication like the others, meaning there is not information whether this is due to better communication within the business, or possibly just more awareness of surroundings.

As expected, individuals generally have a better outlook towards their own work than the work of others. When comparing the answers for the non-promotion and the promotion events, it is a clear turnaround.



#### 4.10 Social Ties

In the literature review the impact of social tie strength was briefly discussed. It implies that people may be able to gain advantages from being in good relationship with others in the workplace, whether that is with the management itself or if it is with others who may be able to assist in getting a promotion. Participants were asked if they perceive they had gained any advantages due to social tie strengths.

P1 answered that he was in good communication with the manager, hence why they knew about his masters course, and gave him the promotion to accommodate the change in studies. P2 insisted she gained no advantage from social ties. P3 cited "*We are advisors, working continuously with clients, whose satisfaction level determine or sale position. Yes, it is always part of it*" meaning she always tries to build a good relationship with clients who may put in a good word for her. P4 mentions "*No, managers hardly greet us, we don't have any connection.*" albeit she mentions nothing about others in the workplace, but given the lack of managerial contact, it is unlikely anyone would be able to sway a manager, and P5 feels that he has no experienced in gaining advantage in the workplace through social ties, but understands the concept as he has heard of it before.

The importance of this question was to decipher whether managers can be swayed by participants connection to either the manager itself, or other who may give them an advantage. It is a very limited in scope question and most certainly not enough to give a definitive answer, as it lacks a number of important aspects. However, these participants had varying answers with some gaining advantage, some not, corresponding with relationship between them and the benefactor. Ethical considerations are a large element as to why this may be more problematic to further engage with, as it would be unethical to ask managers to discuss reasoning and their own beliefs regarding the promotion of the participant.

#### 4.11 Impression Management

Some studies have indicated that employees often change their behaviour in the workplace to project a more ideal image of themselves (*Rosenfield et al., 1995*). Participants were asked if they had engaged in impression management. The comparison value used for what could be considered 'normal' behaviour was how they would normally behave around friends and family.

P1 mentions that given he is a younger employee, working with people who are also relatively young, they are almost expected to be less professional and therefore did not have to change much. P2 and P4 both answered that they did not change a thing. P3 had an interesting answer, citing that "*adoption is a key factor in every position, regardless of the experience. Just at the really beginning, the attitude should be change more dramatically.*", meaning she is constantly adapting her behaviour from company to company, depending on the atmosphere and what is necessary. P5 also believes he had to change his behaviour, with technical skills alone not being enough: "*It is not enough to be technically good, the social skills of presenting your results also matter, and a professional, and sometimes arrogant (non-friendly) way of communication is also expected.*"

While in theory it is common practice for one to change their behaviour for their benefit, in reality it seems less common. Out of the 5 participants only 2 of them said that they changed their behaviour. P3's answer is understandable, as she is an advisor, moving from company to company, meaning adapting her behaviour is crucial for at least a baseline success, while P5's answer almost seems to focus on an idea that if you don't project an ideal self you get left behind, a highly competitive environment.

#### **4.12 Opinions on others**

Prossack (2018) notes that one element that managers often utilise, or at least should, is soliciting opinions of others around an employee they wish to promote. Participants were asked if their opinion had ever been requested by management regarding another individual.

P5 was the only participant that answered that he had no been requested to give an opinion on an employee. P1 and P2 both had a big influence in the promotion of another employee, with P1's opinion on a fellow worker allowed her to be promoted, while P2 mentioned that once she had been promoted to a supervisor role she was often asked about her opinion on agency workers, with one person being offered a position after her positive review of him. P3 and P4 both said they had been asked for their opinions but they have not seem to have had an impact.

This is one of the aspects that was less important, but still needed to be examined. Firstly it proves that in most cases management do not rely on just their own opinions of individuals but look for a more input from others. Secondly, literature mentions that this is something that managers do and is used as confirmation of such.

#### **4.13 Overarching Limitation**

This study purely focuses on employees that have been promoted and only by chance they have all been promoted to also a relatively low position. The assumption is that at higher levels there may be more professional methods by which people are selected for position, which is not particularly explored through these participants. Further study may choose to explore to members of organisations in high positions to get a new perspective. This study also does not explore the managerial perspective. They may have their own views regarding this, and further studies may choose to explore this area.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations:**

### **5.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to uncover the larger scope of promotion management, with great detail focusing on the participants' input on both regarding their own opinions and emotions regarding their own situations, while also taking input regarding their perceptions of managerial processes and decisions. The discussion chapter of this study will thematically group the previously explored findings of the interviews and implement a mixture between the findings and previous literature. This section hopes to achieve results regarding the theory versus reality of the topics covered.

### **5.2 Sample Demographics**

It is important to note that this study was conducted on a convenience basis with no requirements towards age, gender or industry. The 5 participants involved were requested to answer the questions with their own views and experiences they had worked for. The goal was to create a diverse range of answers and identify themes from them. However, 5 participants is a low number to create an overall definitive answer with. This cannot be taken as a reasonable representative demographic, but due to timeframe restrictions this study presents an understanding of the results from this group.

## 5.3 Findings Discussion

### 5.3.1 Lack of competition in reality versus the tournament theory

One of the main elements of the literature review was the discovering of a theoretical best-fit solution to the employee selection process. Competitions, in theory can be implemented into a promotion process to ensure that there is fair participation and there is a means to compare and contrast the performance of individuals against each other (*Li, 2019*). The ‘competitive spirit’ within individuals also ensures that top-performance can be measured (*Spurk, Keller, Hirschi, 2019*).

However, according to primary research within this study it is clear that formal competitions are a rarity, even as far as to say non-existent. None of the participants noted any level of competition between themselves and others. Management generally tried to keep the topic under wraps with P1 being the only one notified, P2 being called in for a position and although she believes that others were called in, she was never actually told this information. This is in stark contrast to the findings of tournament theory. It directly takes the opposite direction.

While there is seemingly no literature covering the reasoning for this, a few different assumptions can be made. One of these is that generally the position that the participants were promoted to (apart from P3) were essentially promoted to one level above the baseline. It is likely that companies simply do not have the time or money to conduct proper research for a position that is relatively easy to replace and it is easier to look at quick, already metrics/ opinions and take action based on those.

That being said, participants when not promoted had a tendency to have the view that management did not handle the process well, while seemingly handling it well when they were eventually promoted, meaning employees generally do not find this to be particularly good. This also indicates that those who are getting promoted tend to have more information given

their way then those not getting promoted, creating a fairer picture for one person. Secondly, this raises the question of whether or not management should potentially put more effort into informing others of processes and reasons. A study done in the United States showed that 69% of managers are uncomfortable communicating with their employees (*Solomon, 2016*). Communication is a key element to ensure that everyone understands the context for themselves and it is not done enough.

While tournaments may be a step too far in terms of organising for a low-level promotion, there should be something done with the current methods, even if it is as simple as communicating more information between employees.

### 5.3.2 Difference in what employees believe management looks for and what literature states they look for

Participants were asked what a promotion was, alongside the reasons for why someone might be promoted. Participants like P3 cited the idea that once someone reaches the skill level that the higher position requires they get promoted. P1 stated that he believes once someone can perform their responsibilities perfectly they should have the opportunity to be promoted. This, while worded differently, pertains to the same idea of performance. P5 makes a mention that experience was a large factor in being promoted.

According to literature they are correct to some extent, as performance does make up a majority of the reasoning for granting a promotion, but is by far not the only factor that gets considered (*Akinbowale, Lourens and Jinabhai, 2014*). Literature states that managers often look for personal traits such as being able to take initiative (*Cremin, 2003*), and those that are able to take responsibility, both in the form of extra work (*Prossack, 2018*) as well as taking responsibility for their own actions (*Christensen, Mackey and Whetten, 2013*).

Once again this can be linked back to the idea of realistic methods by which employees are selected. Given that management usually do not carry out full evaluations of employees, there is the possibility that they might be looking for factors that are easier to explain, such as experience or performance, rather than subjective values such as initiative or taking responsibility.

A perception issue also arises here. Participants believe in a reason for why somebody else was promoted, and often believe they were promoted for performance or other reasons, while in reality it could be something else. P1 is one the only participants who was kept in the loop with information about why he is receiving the promotion, while the rest were promoted without proper reasoning. Processes seem to be revealed rarely and could have a negative impact on those who do not receive a promotion.

### 5.3.3 Mental investment

An interesting part of the findings was the fact that those who were not made aware of a promotion opportunity until afterwards exhibited a much less negative, self-reflective response in comparison to those who knew of the opportunity and did not get it. P1 mentions how he was annoyed by the managerial decision and had a very negative outlook towards the company, while P5 noted that *“but it was rather my fault, as I didn’t browse the opportunities, which is in my interest.”*, which is self-reflective, albeit he still noted that HR could have done more to promote the opportunity. Despite the sample size being small, it oddly corresponded with each other.

As previously mentioned, competitions can generate better performance due to the ‘competitive spirit’ that each person has (*Spurk, Keller, Hirschi, 2019*). This is a very simplified term. In reality, what this means is that people who are aware and are willingly taking part in trying to achieve something have a psychological investment in trying to obtain it (*Spurk, Keller, Hirschi, 2019*). They become more emotionally attached to the prize, meaning when the eventual loss of such pseudo-competition happened, they were frustrated. By not knowing of the opportunity, P2 and P5 did not have the chance to become invested in the prize, while P1 became frustrated at the workplace due to the perception of being unfairly treated.

So what’s the solution here? In terms of fairness, it would make sense to involve everyone. In terms of keeping everyone level headed and focused, keeping a promotion could potentially work. It’s a double-edged sword really. Keep it fair and unless proper communication happens prepare for disgruntled employees, or keep it as hidden as possible but risk losing the trust of employees by withholding information. Morality would say keep it fair, but morality is not always an aspect that makes businesses profitable. As mentioned, proper conversation can help adjust for these, but it is unlikely that organisations have time to devote to debriefs.

#### 5.3.4 Being Deserving

The topic of deserving is very interesting as it is one of the most subjective, psychological topics. When looking at promotions, minimum requirements would generally constitute a line where once a person has passed such requirements they are eligible for a promotion (*Sihabudin, 2018*), therefore constituting a point after which the individual is ‘deserving’ of the promotion. But what about deserving compared to others? Can a person deserve something more than another? This is difficult to measure.



While this study does not present definitive answers to this, as almost no study could, the topic of self-assessment and comparison should be of note. In most cases, participants of this study said that in the situations where they missed out on promotions they felt they either deserved it just as much or deserved it more than the individual that got the position. But this is according to themselves. Research shows the individuals are either not able to see themselves through other's eyes correctly, or have a close, but generalised idea of themselves, mostly reflective of what they think of themselves (*Kenny, DePaulo, 1993*).

Hence, another question was asked of the participants regarding the communication within their organisations, mostly pertaining to common information practices. P1 confirmed there are performance reviews every 6 months within his company. P3 also mentioned that there are performance reviews every half-year. P4 mentioned that performance feedback is often given, although usually it is for negative reasons. Of course, companies are likely not allowed to share the performance of others, which means co-workers' performance is difficult to measure, while their own performance should, theoretically be correct, clear and given to them relatively often.

We cannot know if management was correct in their decision (returns to the idea if they truly 'deserved' it), but what can be deciphered is that annoyance/discord can be created by potentially underestimating their co-workers' skills and capabilities and deeming them 'undeserving'. That's not to say they are incorrect in their feelings, but a lack of information creates a lack of clarity, which can cause employees to be disgruntled.

#### 5.3.5 Social Ties and Impression Management

The last topics explored in the Findings chapter were the influences of ideal behaviour projection and the occurrence of social ties and their strength if in existence.

These factors can have an influence on the ability of a manager to see the true selves of individual if the person is projecting a much more ideal image of themselves, or if they are swayed (added bias) by those who are in close connection with them.

Previous literature had taken note that individuals create desirable images of themselves through false responding and hedging to create better materialistic opportunities for themselves (Danioni, Barni, 2021; Vinnicombe, Singh, Kumra, 2002). An individual may do this to management themselves or to the entire workforce to gain an advantage. Vinnicombe, Singh and Kumra (2002) make a mention of the gender difference within their studies, with a note to how men are much more likely to engage in impression management, but due to the age of the study it was excluded from the literature review, seemingly rightly so, as there is one male and one female participant who reported they changed their behaviours.

However, while it sounds sinister in nature, impression management can happen naturally due to organisational context. As P3 notes “*adoption is a key factor in every position*” meaning intentionally changing your behaviour depending on the organisational context. For example, a surgeon must act professional on the job, not necessarily to gain promotions, but a humorous behaviour might not be suitable for the tasks they have to do.

Managers have to be careful not to be deceived by idealistic projections. While it is generally difficult for someone to be completely different from the projected self, managers can solicit information from both supervisors who may be responsible for the employee, or the employee’s co-workers during the evaluation process (Prossack, 2018).

Social ties can also have an impact on the selection process. One may be in good relationship with the manager, which can occasionally result in bias towards them.

Not many of the participants reported that they had gained benefits from good social ties. P1 mentioned how being in good communication with the manager he was able to notify her of

the study path he was taking and was subsequently promoted to a position that suits it. P3 notes that her salesperson-like role means she needs to build good social connections, which in turn helped her get into the role. The others noted no advantage gained from social ties, making the real impact of such possibilities much smaller than anticipated.

#### **5.4 Summary of Findings**

This part of the chapter summarises the results and previous discussion into a concisely readable segment.

1. Competitions as recommended by tournament theory have much less relevance than anticipated. In reality, decisions are made usually without the notice of many people and never by formal organising of a tournament. Lack of notice regarding these opportunities interestingly creates less negative effects within the participants involved in the study. Participants informed of promotion opportunities created more intense negative attitudes. Psychological investment plays a large part in this. Those who are not informed do not develop a personal investment for the prize, therefore do not suffer loss when passed on. Conversely, participants who knew of the promotion opportunity developed an investment, therefore suffering loss when they did not get promoted. Information regarding why the participants were not promoted was rarely shared.
2. In terms of fairness and level of 'deserving' participants had a generally positively biased outlook towards the process by which they were promoted by compared to when they lost out. Participants reported that the process by which they were promoted was fair, and that they deserved the promotion. When they were not promoted they perceived the process as unfair, and that they either deserved the promotion more or

evenly compared to person that got promoted. While this study did not explore deep enough on this topic to come to a definitive answer, the assumption is that due to the lack of managerial communication witnessed nowadays in organisations meant that reasons were not given, and participants were left to create their own opinions. By getting informed of the process when they were getting promoted allowed them to witness first hand the 'fairness'. Others involved in the process likely did not see it that way.

3. The reality of how employees are promoted always depends on the organisation's values, which is different everywhere. Participants of this study generally cited experience and performance as the key reasons why people get promoted in their companies. Literature notes that personality traits may come into play during the decision making process, but the assumption once again is that it is more important in higher positions.
4. According to the information derived from the participants, impression management and social ties record little impact in the decision-making process, more specifically they are not prevalent enough to have a large scale impact. Impression management is highly tied to the nature of the job and often participants' behaviour was unchanged unless the organisational context required it. The existence of substantial and beneficial social ties is rare, but are powerful means of being one step ahead of the competition.
5. Communication is a key element of promotion management. Participants' behaviour and motivation was largely driven by their own perception of reality. Through communication, key information can be passed on, dampening the effects of a misconstrued perception. Without information, participants became demotivated and

often frustrated at management in the company. One participant recalled how employees would often value themselves up after missing a promotion and take their talents elsewhere. During their promotion, they were informed of the steps being taken and had a much more positive outlook towards the processes.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Organisations**

Communication is key

Human perception develops based on the information the brain receives and is then interpreted into our own opinions and thought regarding certain things. These perceptions are easily misled if the information our brains receive is insufficient, meaning that our brain creates the rest of the picture itself. Employees who are promoted are already kept in the loop about their upcoming position, generally due to legal requirements and administration. However, those that are not promoted may develop adverse effects, which can, if not corrected, impact the performance of an organisation. Even worse, if they feel they have not been treated correctly, they can choose to take their talents elsewhere, which is costly in terms of advertising the position (monetary) and in terms of time, as candidates need to be picked for interviews and then interviewed for position.

The best way to avoid this is to open communication channels with the employees. Allow employees to express their feelings while having the necessary information to fill out their perception of the overall picture. Once again this can, depending on the uptake of the communication channels, be a timely endeavour, but it may end up being worth the time and definitely monetary cost to inform employees compared to having to search for new ones.

## Workplace tournaments

While the Findings chapter uncovered that workplace tournaments are uncommon in today's day and age, by no means should they be neglected. Firstly, they are by no means costly. Given the fact that the competition is held internally, there needs to be no cost associated advertising, only information communicated with the employees. The competition needs not to involve all employees from that level, but is ideal to make the process fair. A time period must be set in which the employees' performance can be closely observed and evaluated. Participants of the tournament must have their performance measured against each other, as measuring absolute performance is close to useless in a competition designed to compare employees. Comparing employee performance allows management to pick a candidate with the most desirable aspects for the new role.

However, there are a few caveats to workplace tournaments. Firstly, there are certain jobs where the measurement of performance is almost impossible. In these cases, performance cannot be compared to each other and a tournament is essentially pointless.

Secondly, time constraints. The time period in which performance is measured needs to be long enough that continuous performance can be measured, but short enough for the position to be filled in as fast as possible. Herein lies the problem. Positions at a higher rank generally have more importance and need to be filled fast, while lower positions often do not have enough importance to invest a month of time into comparing performance.

Hence, workplace tournaments should be used in niche scenarios where time constraints are not an issue, usually associated with positions which have no urgency in regards to needing to be filled.

## **5.6 Limitations of the study**

This area particularly focuses on what could be improved on the study in a mostly ideal scenario.

Firstly, the sample size of 5 is very small for a study like this. The number of participants alone gave a very limited scope of the perception of promotion managerial processes. The study should be carried out with many more participants of diverse ages, gender and industry to gather a more wholistic view of the processes from the view of the employee. Higher positioned participants, particularly those in managerial positions would be ideal to gather for further research to understand a view from the other side.

Secondly, the problem with involving human behaviour into a study like this is that it is almost impossible to apply every single aspect of it to the topic. The study was limited to motivational, perceptive and behavioural aspects. Each of these aspects have so many elements to them that a short thesis like this is not enough to explore them fully. Narrowing the research to one aspect at a time may produce a more informational piece, but overall could be out of context without the other elements.

Thirdly, better sampling methods can be chosen. Due to time constraints the participants were chosen on the basis of convenience, using snowball sampling to gather more participants. The requirements for participants to be eligible was also very loose. More parameters would allow the study to be more consistent.

## **5.7 Recommendations for further research**

This section of the paper focuses on the opportunities that may be available to support or contrast the findings of this study. Various gaps in the research were found throughout the duration of the project.

Firstly, this study had no restraints on age of the participants. The range of age was 27-47. This leaves both an employed demographic on either side of the age range, from 18-27 and also 47-65 on the further end. Further research may choose to target these demographics, but may also choose a demographic within the already explored age range, due this study only having a small number for proper representation, not to mention the lack of focus on age in this paper in the first place. Age is a crucial element within work culture, as one would assume that younger workers may be more on the lookout for ways to climb in the hierarchy, while those approaching the retirement age would be less likely to be seeking opportunities. These are important aspects than can be explored.

Secondly, as noted in previous limitation sections there was no industry designated for the study. Research into specific industries may make it possible to construct reliable and specific information pertained to that industry. This study analysed a more generalised, surface level idea of promotion management and human behaviour associated with it.

The third and most important element that could be of further study is the inclusion of the managers into the research. This study in particular explores the perception of employees who have been promoted towards the managers and the promotion managerial processes. A nice piece to contrast it could involve research into the same topic but flipping the questions towards the managers.



## 5.8 Conclusion

The final chapter allowed discussion around the idea of promotion management, the processes and decisions as perceived by those who were either promoted or missed out on a promotion. At large, the results from the primary data gathered differs to that which is stated in literature. Literature states the managerial processes of promotion management in a theoretical, idealistic way, while in reality not much of it is used.

Despite the literature indicating workplace tournaments as a realistic means by which employees can be selected, they are largely unused. Management often selects individuals for a promotion without giving others a fair opportunity to compete. This, as opposed to what someone might think initially, actually causes less negative effects and in some cases motivates employees. In more rare cases where employees are informed of the opportunity for promotion but miss out on it, there is a larger emphasis on feelings of unfair treatment. This is due to psychological investment. Those who make an effort to gain a promotion are invested in a prize, upon not winning, they become demotivated and usually annoyed at the organisation, perpetuated by the lack of communication usually witnessed within a company between managers and employees. Communication is the key to solving the problem. Upon each stage of the process it was realised that managers often fail to communicate with those not receiving a promotion, leaving them with less information and a misinterpreted perception of reality although their perception may also be correct. When the participants were promoted they believed that they were deserving of the position and the process had been handled fairly. This could be due to more information being given to them, or possibly due to self-serving bias, this study is inconclusive in that element. Social constructs, such as social tie-strength and impression management play have little impact on the final decision, with impression management only ever being present in situations where organisational context requires it, while social ties appear rarely enough that they should not be considered a reasonable factor.

Overall promotion management refers to the process by which employees eligible for promotion are evaluated and chosen for the higher role. In addition, it should also be about the controlling of employee perception by allowing adequate information flow between management and the candidates to ensure everyone understands the reasoning behind decisions.

### **5.9 Personal Learning Statement**

The completion of the dissertation was an extremely challenging task, both from a motivational standpoint, alongside the difficulty of the task itself. Throughout the Master of Arts in HRM I have had a great interest in the human element, more specifically the psychological element. Given that motivation was one of the more important topics within the psychological aspect of the course, I decided early to attempt my dissertation on a topic connected with motivation. I believed that most information around HRM and management revolves around the organisational side of the subject, rather than what it is perceived like from the human eye and mind. The topic of promotions seemed like an aspect that would pertain very well to the motivational topic, but the specifics of the dissertation changed countless times over the past few months. The completion of the dissertation is one of, if not my biggest accomplishments in life, regardless of whether it succeeds or if it fails, I will be proud of it.

One of the main skills that I have learned from the completion of the dissertation are research skills. Over the past 4 years I had no idea the possibilities of commands within either the library website or Google scholar. However, the main research skill I take away from this is the ability to construct and carry out interviews and write detailed questionnaires. I am now able to analyse data, construct themes in my head and deliver them to paper in a much more segmented way.

The importance of the skills and experiences I have learned are impossible to value and I will cherish them for my professional career and beyond.

One of the main challenges for me was my ability to manage time. I have always been reluctant to start anything where I was stepping into the unknown and this dissertation was specifically what it was, a complete unknown. Coupled with my ADHD, it was an absolute struggle to get going with it, which in reality only happened around three weeks before the deadline. It took new methods for me to be able to complete this. Firstly, I learned to keep distractions, like my phone at a distance to keep me focused on the task at hand. Secondly, I set myself daily goals to which I kept myself religiously. Each chapter become its own assignment and I treated it as such, keeping to its specific guidelines.

Overall I would say I am happy with how I completed the dissertation. I found information that I needed and despite my early fears that I would not be able to make a comprehensible dissertation, I do believe the performance was at least half-decent. The challenges I have faced have taught me many valuable lessons and methods and I am more confident person for it, which will be very valuable to me in my upcoming professional life.

In the words of my supervisor, its not the end result that matters, it's the journey, and my god has that journey been incredible.

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## Appendix A.

### Interview questions:

My thesis focuses on the human perception element towards management, in regard to employee selection processes and promotion.

I have added short guidance to some of the questions to help guide the answers somewhat, as the range of results can be quite broad for some of them.

Answer these with as much information as possible. There is no such thing as a wrong answer. Take into consideration that for some you might not know real answer to, in those cases try to answer with what you think of it.

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.

Gender:

Age:

Type of company:

1. What do you think a promotion is? What might be the reasons someone might get promoted?
2. Have you heard of the term promotion management?
3. Do you think managers within your organisation have a set way of promoting people?
  - *Is it formal, and they are measuring performance and other metrics? Or are they using informal methods, such as their own perception of people, and applying their own biases (not necessarily unfairly)?*
4. How is the communication between management and employees?
  - *Are there continuous performance appraisals, is everyone kept in the loop with information, or are they often hard to reach?*
5. Did you set yourself a career goal when you started working?
  - 5.1 Did you obtain those goals?
  - 5.2 (If yes) Did reaching those goals motivate you further, or did you become content with just reaching your goal?

6. Have you ever actively participated in trying to gain a promotion? How were you made aware of the opportunity? Were other made aware of this promotion opportunity?
  
7. Have you ever lost out on a promotion that you were consciously trying to get? If yes, how did that affect you behaviourally? Was there a negative impact to your motivation?
  - 7.1 Did your behaviour towards the employee who received the promotion change?
  - 7.2 Do you feel that you deserved the promotion more than them?
  - 7.3 Do you think the selection process was handled fairly by management? If no, what do you think the reason was?
  - 7.4 Were you informed about why you didn't get the promotion?
  
8. Have you ever lost out on a promotion opportunity which you were not made aware of until afterwards? How did that affect you behaviourally? Was there negative impact to your motivation?
  - *Example of losing out unaware: Management promoting a co-worker without you receiving any notice the opportunity was available without prior notice*
  - 8.1 Do you think there was a reason why there was no notice?
  - 8.2 Did your behaviour towards the employee who received the promotion change?
  - 8.3 Do you feel that you deserved the promotion more than them?
  - 8.4 Were you informed about why you didn't get the promotion?
  - 8.5 What were your feelings towards higher management afterwards?
  
9. Once you got the promotion, was it one you were participating in trying to get, or was it randomly timed?
  - *Was it a position opportunity you were informed about and then competed for, or was it a sudden promotion with no prior notification*
  - 9.1 How did it affect you behaviourally and motivationally?
  - 9.2 Do you think you deserved it, or was there someone more deserving than you?
  - 9.3 Do you think it was fairly handled by management? (*Everyone had a fair opportunity to compete*)

10. (If answer to 9 was yes) What was the information given about it? Did everyone receive the same information?

11. Do you think you gained any form of advantage from social connections/ties in getting the promotion?

- *Good relationship with managers/ people in higher positions/ colleagues that might've given an advantage in getting promoted*

12. Did you have to change anything about your normal behaviour to get the promotion, or in the workplace at large? Do you think it helped you in getting the promotion?

- *Normal being how you might behave with friends, family, just who you are as a person*

13. Were you ever asked for your opinion on another person by higher management?

*Essentially asks if you have had a helping hand in the promotion or non-promotion of another*