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Pathology of Faculty Members' rank Promotion in Universities and Higher Education Institutions Affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Abdolreza Gilavand

Employed Expert on Faculty Appointments, Department of Education Development Center, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran

ABSTRACT

The success of faculty members of medical sciences universities to promote higher ranks is through long-term evaluation of four educational, research, executive, and cultural performances them. This descriptive-analytical study was conducted in non-systematic review form in 2016 to under title of pathology of faculty members' rank promotion in universities and higher education institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of Iran. It was conducted based on views of experts and searching the international databases such as Thomson Reuters, Scopus, PubMed, EMBASE, Cochrane Library, and Iranian databases such as Magiran, SID, Iranmedex. Database without language restriction, since 2000 sources, with the MeSH term "Faculty promotion". At first, in the initial search, 188 articles were found, and finally, 21 of them which were related to the subject of this research were used. The promotion indicators of faculty members to ranks of assistant professor, associate professor and full professor are based on regulations of faculty member promotion. Paper-orientation and lack of attention to educational activities, the lack of appropriate quality and quantity indicators to assess the four activities of promotion, subjectivity of some promotion indicators, lack of transparent and fair promotion practices, heterogeneous processes and lack of expertized forces in promotion committees in some universities, lack of using promotion automation system in some universities, prolonged promotion process, unnecessary bureaucratic requirements, adding cultural Article in faculty member promotion since 2011 without covering all cultural activities examples are considered as major problems in faculty member promotion process.

Keywords: Rank promotion, Faculty members, Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Iran

INTRODUCTION

Promotion system of faculty members of universities is one of the major mechanisms in maintaining and improving the quality and efficiency of higher education and research activities in the country [1]. Members of faculty are important and key elements of higher education that their qualitative and quantitative decline has direct impact on higher education system performance of any country [2]. As status and role of higher education is determining in economic, social, political, cultural, and health development of any country and as skilled and required human resources of various sectors are trained by universities and higher education institutions, improving or developing this sector, especially faculty member promotion, has great importance [3]. Attracting and recruiting qualified specialists, retaining and promoting of professional life of faculty members are factors affecting efficiency and effectiveness of universities and higher education institutions [4]. One of the significant aspects of Iran's ancient civilization is pay due attention to the medical knowledge the turning point of which is establishment and development of Academy of Gondishapur (GS) in Khuzestan province of Iran in 1745 (271 AD) [5]. Promotion of faculty members in medical science universities of Iran to higher ranks is achieved by indicators determined by Ministry of Health and Medical Education. Promotion of rank is based on four educational, research, executive, and cultural activities. It depends on obtaining the score specified for each scientific rank and spending specified period

(three to five years) performed by qualitative and quantitative investigation of these activities [6]. Promotion system of faculty member of universities is one of the major mechanisms in maintaining and strengthening of quality and efficiency of higher education and research activities in country. Accordingly, as new regulation of faculty members universities and educational and research centers is under development and as maintaining and improving the quality of faculty members is one of the most important factors investigated in evaluation of specialized performance indicators of university, its realization create better results in outputs of tis system. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the pathologically the process of faculty members aim of this study was to determine pathological process of promotion among faculty members of universities and higher education institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education in Islamic Republic of Iran.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This descriptive-analytical study was conducted in non-systematic review form in 2016 to under title of pathology of faculty members' rank promotion in universities and higher education institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was conducted based on views of experts and searching the international databases such as Thomson Reuters, PubMed, Scopus, EMBASE, Cochrane Library, and Iranian databases such as SID, Magiran, Iranmedex using a searching strategy during 2000 to 2016 years. Database without language restriction, since 2000 sources, with the MeSH term "Faculty promotion" and "Faculty members". At first, in the initial search, 188 articles were found, and finally, 21 of them which were related to the subject of this research were used. The promotion indicators of faculty members to ranks of assistant professor, associate professor and full professor is based on regulations of faculty member promotion passed by Council of Cultural Revolution of country.

RESULTS

The overall objective of faculty members' promotion department of universities and higher education institutions is continuous investigating and evaluating of cultural, educational, research and executive activities of faculty members, leading finally to promotion and modification of faculty member of that university. In every university, the evaluation of certificate of promotion applicants is performed through selected committee of faculty, specialized committee of educational deputy of relevant medical science university, and finally audit board of university or central audit board of Ministry of Health and Medical Education. Four major components of promotion are as follows:

Article 1: it involves evaluation of cultural, educational, and social activities, and obtaining minimum 10 scores and maximum 30 scores, and after four years of stopping at current rank to be geographically full-time faculty member and 5 years to be full-time faculty member

Article 2: It involves investigation of educational activities and obtaining the minimum 40 scores and maximum 70 scores, and after 4 years of stopping at current rank to be geographically full-time faculty member and 5 years to be full-time faculty member

Article 3: It involves investigation of research and technology activities and obtaining the minimum 35 scores and maximum 45 scores for full profession rank (has no score ceiling), and after 4 years of stopping at current rank to be geographically full-time faculty member and 5 years to be full-time faculty member

Article 4: It involves investigation of scientific-executive activities and obtaining the minimum 10 scores and maximum 40 scores, and after 4 years of stopping at current rank to be geographically full-time faculty member and 5 years to be full-time faculty member. It noteworthy that in exceptional conditions including publishing the papers in journals (Science, Nature, lancet, JAMA, England) the waiting time for promotion to higher rank is deducted by one year[6].

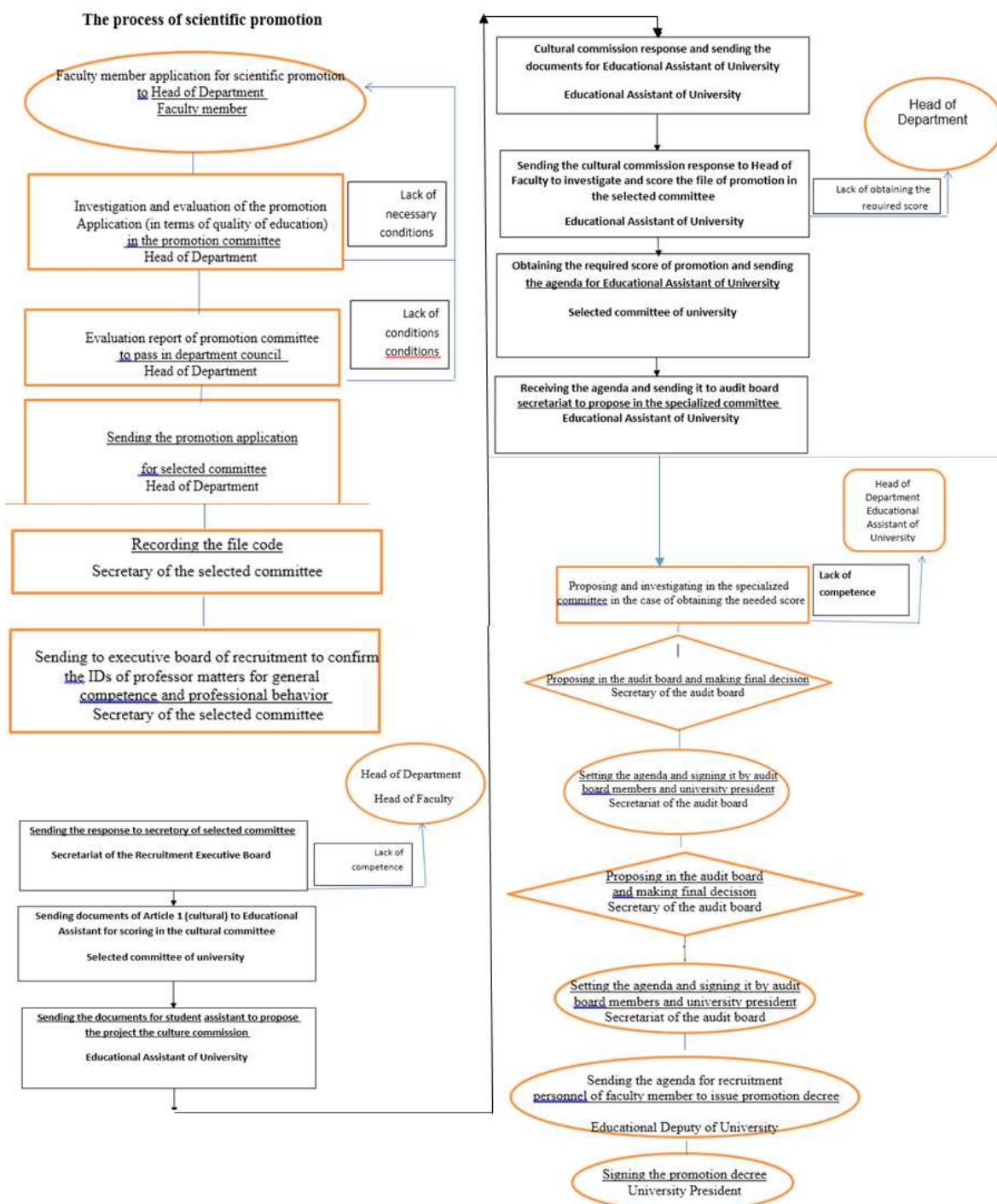


Figure 1: The process of scientific promotion

Many studies have been conducted In Iran and abroad in order investigate the process of faculty member promotion pathologically. In a study conducted by Mir-Hosseini et al (2008), criteria of Iran's promotion regulations were compared with other countries, and accordingly, some recommendations have been proposed for higher comprehensiveness of regulation in the area of greater attention to educational aspects of faculty member activities and considering the effect of research and scientific activities in context of society [7]. In a study conducted by Karimi et al (2014), the experiences of some faculty members on promotion process of faculty members have been investigated and discussed. In addition to specifying possible obstacles in the promotion process, some recommendations were suggested in this regard. In this study, lack of assessing the quality of activities, lack of homogenization in processes and lack of using expert forces in faculty committees were considered as main obstacles affecting the promotion process [8]. Karimi et al (2015) conducted a study titled as investigating the obstacles in the process of promotion of faculty members of University of Medical Sciences and Health Services of Mashhad. In this study, scores were assigned for faculty members in four major educational, research, executive and

cultural areas in which cultural Article, recruitment executive board performance and audit board performance obtained lower score. In this study, they proposed that transparent and fair promotion practices to be used, appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators to be developed for measuring the activities, and specialized forces to be employed in promotion committees of universities [9]. In a study conducted in 2015, Gilavand examined promotion regulation of faculty members in universities and higher education institutions of Ministry of Health and Medical Education. He believed that measures must be considered to modify and improve the promotion regulation to make it more objective, to use fair and transparent ways, to develop appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring activities, to homogenize the processes and use expertized forces in promotion committees of universities [10]. Tootoonchi et al. (2013) examined the views of faculty members of medical sciences universities of Iran, regarding the executive indicators of faculty member promotion. They showed that faculty members of medical sciences universities have not considered executive indicators of scientific rank promotion rational, while they considered achievement to these indicators acceptable. According to them, reviewing promotion criteria and adapting them with universities conditions and an equilibrium in distribution of energy among responsibilities and development of management skills, proving sufficient budget, equipment and facilities for executive tasks, and finally planning and facilitating the working procedure for faculty members, using and creating sufficient opportunity to participate in various committees and facilitating the cooperation with journals and professional committees can improve the achievement to executive service indicators [11]. In a study conducted by Majdzadeh et al (2009) they showed that 36.2% of faculty members have evaluated the status of faculty members inappropriate and participants have referred to necessity of transparency in promotion criteria. They also recommended that the process of investigations should be accelerated [12]. In a qualitative study conducted by Gardner and Blackstone (2013) in University of United States of America, they referred to two themes of time-consuming and lack of transparency [13]. Kimono (2005) also referred to difficulty in the promotion process of faculty members [14]. Zohal et al (2013) also referred to lack the necessary knowledge by faculty members to implement the promotion regulation, lack of familiarity with the provisions of promotion regulations, improper documentation of documents, and lack of proportionality between provisions of regulation and disciplinary and their jobs nature [15]. Member of the clinical faculty in a study conducted by Mazloumi et al (2013) announced the greatest educational need as familiarity with regulations related to promotion [16]. Sanfi (2012) also in his study referred to necessity of familiarity with promotion instructions and university policies [17]. Jabbari et al (2006) believed that the promotion of faculty members must be based on accurate and unbiased assessment to increase motivation and job satisfaction [18]. Results of a study conducted by Wise et al (2007), showed that judgments based on subjective evaluation of committee members leads to lack of justice implementation for applicants [19]. According to the study conducted by Majdzadeh et al (2012), audit board members should be replaced periodically [12]. Asayesh et al (2011) in their study concluded that motivational factors such as promotion lead faculty members toward paper orientation [20]. Additionally, Gandomkar et al (2011) showed that promotion regulation is one of the major concerns of faculty members especially those who are involved in education and lack of attention to education status. Participants described that research Articles of regulation are encumbrance and they believed that share and weight of research activities are highlighted than education, while education requires much time and energy than research and this creates attraction for research activities. Lack of objective evaluation of educational activities in the promotion regulation is another issue that faculty members are faced with it [21]. Chris and Bonton (2011) also reported that activities to promote basic sciences faculty members are easily measurable, but it is not true in clinical sciences. They also stated that most of promotion criteria are not examined annually and promotion criteria are not understandable since they have not been stated clearly [22]. Cultural, educational and social activates have been located in the first Article of faculty member promotion of universities and higher education institutions since 2011. Without doubt, cultural activities have special role in the social and religious value system of Islamic Republic of Iran and all agree on necessity of paying attention to this issue. However, there are many uncertainties in implementing the first Article of this regulation due to fact that some concepts are abstract and it is difficult to measure these abstract concepts [9].

CONCLUSION

According to what was said, Paper-orientation and lack of attention to educational activities, the lack of appropriate quality and quantity indicators to assess the four activities of promotion, subjectivity of some promotion indicators, lack of transparent and fair promotion practices, heterogeneous processes and lack of expertized forces in promotion committees in some universities, lack of using promotion automation system in some universities, prolonged promotion process, unnecessary bureaucratic requirements, adding cultural Article in faculty member promotion since 2011 without covering all cultural activities examples, and difficulty in measuring the abstract concepts are considered as major problems in the faculty members' promotion process.

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