

## **How Group Potency Affects Employee Job Satisfaction in Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sugar Manufacturing firms in Kenya are recently experiencing a decrease in productivity and the future of the sugar firms seems dingy. The purpose of this study was to assess how group potency affects employee job satisfaction in sugar manufacturing firms in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive and correlational survey designs. The simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used. The research instruments were tested through the test re-tests method and reliability analysis which gave a Cronbach alpha value of 0.833. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The following were the study findings: regression analysis conducted on the effect of group potency and employee job satisfaction revealed a positive and significant correlation between these two variables, ( $r = 0.213$ ,  $b = 0.1804$ ,  $t = 2.067$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). It

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was recommended that the Human Resource Department should develop and maintain teamwork through capacity building to realise optimal employee productivity. It is hoped that the results would add knowledge and contribute to theory development critical for academia and policy makers in the sugar sector in particular Kenya.

*Keywords: Group potency; employee job satisfaction; sugar manufacturing firms.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Group potency is the collective belief in success, in other words, it is a group's collective belief that it can succeed. Group potency has a strong positive relationship with performance. It is because of this relationship that scholars and practitioners have studied this construct [1]. Potency is, therefore, measurable, authentic, and significant. It is a phenomenon that is not completely explained by collective motivation [2].

Group potency is also defined by several authors [3,4] as collective beliefs about the group member's capability that the group can be effective in a diverse condition of task. The construct of group potency is rooted in the Theory of Social Cognition and is a group-level construct parallel to the individual-level variable of self-efficacy, because both are motivational constructs that reflect appraisals of capabilities [3,5,6].

According to [7] nearly two-thirds of all Fortune 500 companies utilize teams of various types in the work environment. However, group work is thought to be even more frequent. Because of the prevalence of groups, the study of group potency and the development of knowledge of groups are important. [8] in their study on highly effective teams: a relational analysis of group potency and perceived organizational support found out that group potency is one key determinant shown to positively influence the effectiveness and performance of groups and teams.

Groups of people are thought of more and more as the source of knowledge construction [9]. There are many studies measuring outcomes of group potency. Most studies focus on identifying the level of potency and assessing the ability of the participants to perform a task or produce some type of output [1]. Gibson studied 294 U.S. and Hong Kong university students. She divided them into 30 groups with 4-5 members in each group at each university and measured the groups' efficacy using survey tools. Next, she

gave each group the same business simulation exercise to complete. The findings indicated that group efficacy (potency) has meaningful influence and impact on group ability to successfully complete a task [10].

Employee job satisfaction (EJS) is the feelings and thoughts of employees about their work and place of work. As a result, job satisfaction is all about to satisfy one's needs at work place [11]. [12] stated that there are some factors, which are related to job satisfaction, that is, work substances, age, sex, educational level, work place environment, location, colleagues, income and timing of work and all these factors affect employee job satisfaction in one way or another. For the purpose of employee satisfaction many theories have been developed. The most important theory is Maslow's Need Theory. It is based on human hierarchical needs. On the other hand, job satisfaction relates to significant conventional views, which are formulated via [13]. Maslow's theory is based on fundamental and external element such as accomplishment, acknowledgment, duty, pay, plan, interpersonal interaction, management, and operational atmosphere.

Kenya has experienced an influx of imported goods; amongst them is sugar from COMESA member states, which has significantly skewed the local sugar market in favour of imported sugar. This has resulted in some sugar manufacturing firms closing business which has not just largely affected the livelihood of communities solely dependent on sugar cane farming in Western Kenya but equally caused adverse impact on Kenya's National income, hence adversely affecting employee job satisfaction. The researcher intended to investigate the extent to which group potency affects employee job satisfaction in Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

The study was carried out to assess how group potency affects employee job satisfaction in sugar manufacturing firms in Kenya.

## 1.2 Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis guided this study: H<sub>0</sub>1: Group potency has no significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

This study will inform the management of Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya on how they can help move teams higher on the continuum of effectiveness and efficiency which is vital to organizations. This is important because increasing efficiency and effectiveness increases goal attainment and ultimately productivity of these firms and employee satisfactions. Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya are experiencing decrease in productivity, complaints about quality of service, products, employee job dissatisfactions in terms of profitability, commitment and turnover, absenteeism and degree of autonomy. The companies owe a lot to creditors [14] and these firms are no longer lucrative.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction is considered a strong predictor of overall individual well-being [15], as well as a good predictor of intentions or decisions of employees to leave a job [16]. Beyond the research literature and studies, job satisfaction is also important in everyday life, more so in relation to Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya.

Lester et al. [4] in their finding indicate that the potency beliefs of a group can be raised by inducement from other influence. The recent researches suggest that management support has a positional effect on group potency [6]. The employee job satisfaction was significantly higher on group potency and cohesion in family business [17].

Studies done by [18] on the challenges facing the implementation of differentiation strategy in the operations of the Mumias Sugar Company Limited found out that there was inadequate interdepartmental communication and lack of cohesion which were affecting performance. They suggested that these could be handled through regular staff meetings which enhance team work and creativity. This pointed out that the company was not working in a climate of cooperation and collaborative problem-solving, which is achieved through teamwork.

Kegode [19] points out that the Kenyan sugar industry has been revolving around shortages, inefficiencies; inability to compete with imported sugar, perennial losses and political interferences which cumulatively have a negative bearing on industry's performance. Despite huge stakeholder investments, self-sufficiency in sugar has remained elusive over the years as consumption continues to outstrip supply.

A study by [20] indicated that decline in sugar sales was attributed to many reasons such as; high local sugar prices as compared to imported sugar, high sugar cane production costs, sugar manufacturing costs and influx of cheap imported sugar under the COMESA protocol. Their study also concluded that price related factors significantly contributed to poor performance of local sugar manufacturing firms in Kenya under the imperfect market conditions. They further observed that the local sugar manufacturing firms in Kenya experienced closing sugar stocks estimated at 28,113.3 Metric tonnes per annum for the period 1996-2005, which according to Kenya sugar Board, a national body mandated to manage sugar issues in the country, largely attributed to high pricing of domestic sugar against cheaper imports. This study sought to establish the role that group potency plays in employee job satisfaction in Mumias Sugar Company Limited and consequently the decline in productivity.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive and correlational survey designs. The study targeted a total of 365 Unionisable employees, 20 middle level management (general managers and senior managers) and 10 top level management (directors of the departments) using Mumias Sugar Company Limited as a case study.

Stratified sampling technique was used to categorise top level management, middle level management and unionisable employees. Simple random sampling was used to select 110 employees out of a total population of 365 employees. This procedure gave everyone in the target population an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study. The sample size of employees was determined by use of [21] recommendation that a sample size of 10% to 30% is representative enough of the study population. Number of employees:  $30/100 \times 365 = 110$  employees. The 20 middle level management and 10 top level management were

selected using purposive sampling (see Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1. A sample frame**

Strata	Population	Sample size
Top level management	10	10
Middle level management	20	20
Unionisable employees	365	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>140</b>

Source: Mumias Sugar Company Limited (2013)

The study used both questionnaires for employees and interview schedules for middle and top management for data collection. Primary data was collected from the questionnaires and interview schedules. Secondary data was obtained through study of available literature and financial records from Mumias Sugar Company Limited, Kenya Sugar Board. Relevant documents were also obtained from annual reports, bulletins and sectoral surveys. In order to ensure validity of the instruments, the developed instruments were presented to the supervisors and experts in the field of Business to evaluate their applicability and appropriateness of the content, clarity and adequacy in relation to the research objectives and research questions. Construct validity was ensured by using short, simple and precise questions capturing only necessary information on group potency and employee satisfaction, minimizing biases and avoiding sensitive issues. [22] points out that validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgment. Validity was also checked during piloting where pretest and re-test method that was done before the actual data collection.

Reliability analysis measured the relevance and correctness of the instruments [23]. The research instruments were tested through the test re-tests method and reliability analysis which gave a Cronbach alpha value of 0.833 which was above the threshold value acceptable by [23] On the basis of the results of piloting process, the instruments were duly modified to meet performance standards before being used for data collection.

Data was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially (Pearson Correlation Coefficient and simple regression analysis, at 95% confidence

level, p-value  $\pm 0.05$ ). Quantitative data collected was input in Statistical Package for Social Sciences software, version 16 while qualitative data collected from the field was analyzed using content analysis. The simple regression model used was:

**Model 1:** Independent variable (group potency) and dependent variable (employee satisfaction)

$$P = \alpha + \beta_1 gp + e$$

where

P = employee satisfaction; gp= group potency; e = standard error

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The aim of this section is to describe the characteristics of the respondents, which is likely to have a bearing on their response to the research questions. These characteristics have been broken down into four main groups: age, gender, working experience and education levels of respondents. Results in appendix Table 4.1 show that the age brackets of the respondents were distributed as follows: in the age bracket of 18-24 years (21.5%), 25-34 years (34.9%) 35-47 years (28.9%) while above 48 years (23.7%). Results indicated that there was a significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) difference in the variation among age groups since the expected uniform distribution across age groups was not represented by 25% in each age bracket. This was an indication that the respondents had varied age distribution and therefore gave different views on the assessment of the effects of group potency on employee job satisfaction in Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya.

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender and the results are recorded in appendix Table 4.2. The results illustrated that there was no significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) variation in the gender distribution among the respondents since the expected 50% was almost attained because the male and female respondents who participated in the study were almost equal. Results show that the males were 69(51.1%) while females were 66(48.9%).

The study sought to find out the experience of the respondents this was aimed at determining

the number of working years and in turn know how much experience they had been exposed to concerning group potency and employee job satisfaction in Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya. The results are shown in appendix Fig. 4.1. Similarly, there was a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) variation in the working experience of the respondents among the respondents, because the expected 20% expected in the working experience of the respondents was not realised. The results pointed out that 97(71.9%) of the respondents have been working for less than 5 years, 15(11.1%) have been working for a period of 5-10 years, 8(5.9%) for a period of 10-15 years, 15-20 years 7(5.2%) and over 20 years 8(5.9%). This translates to the fact that the respondents are familiar with the company operations and therefore could give accurate information as far as the effects of teamwork on employee job satisfaction were concerned.

The study sought to find out formal educational levels of respondents. To help understand this, respondents were asked to indicate their formal educational levels. The results are recorded in appendix Fig. 4.2. The results show that there was a significant variation ( $p < 0.05$ ) among the educational levels of respondents. Results illustrate that 80(59.3%) of respondents had certificates, 33(24.4%) had diploma education level, 17(12.6%) had bachelor's degree and 5(3.7%) had masters' degrees. This indicated that majority of the respondents in Mumias Sugar Company Limited had attained at least minimum academic and professional qualifications. [24] also noted that measures of work experience had the highest correlations with measures of job performance. Therefore, these people bring into the organization different needs, experiences and aspirations and they belong to different groups/classes in terms of age, gender, educational level and experience. The results were consistent with what [25] noted that there is significant scope for education to play a role in influencing the perceptions of people towards key aspects that surround them, in this study the effects of group potency on employee job satisfaction.

#### 4.2 Employee Job Satisfaction

This section focuses on the variables of employee job satisfaction like productivity, profitability, commitment and turnover, absenteeism and degree of autonomy. The results are shown in the Table 4.3. When the respondents were asked whether they were

productive, 22.2% strongly agreed, 55.6% agreed, 9.3% were undecided, 7.4% disagreed and 5.19% of respondents strongly disagreed. Sixty point seven percent (60.7%) of respondents were of the opinion that the company made profitability, 3.7% of respondents were undecided, 17.03% disagreed and 18.5% strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents (70.4%) indicated that employees were commitment to their work, 11.1% were undecided, 13% disagreed while 5.19% of respondents strongly disagreed. On the question asked whether absenteeism was on the rise, 5.19% of respondents strongly agreed, 33.3% agreed, 7.4% of respondents were undecided, 48.1% of respondents disagreed and 5.6% strongly disagreed. On the issue concerning the degree of autonomy, varied responses were received: 18.5% of respondents strongly agreed, 42.2% agreed, 7.4% of respondents were undecided, 20.0% of respondents disagreed while 11.9% strongly disagreed.

#### 4.3 Effect of Group Potency on Employee Job Satisfaction

This section sought to establish the effect of group potency on employee job satisfaction in Sugar Manufacturing Firms. This was achieved by asking the respondents to respond to the various questions asked on the group potency and employee job satisfaction. The responses of the respondents were based on the five point Likert scale and were scored as follows: strongly agreed (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). The results are recorded in Table 4.4.

The results indicate that the company had shared beliefs about members' capability in performing their duties in Mumias Sugar Company Limited accounting for 77.8% of respondents while 12.6% disagreed. On the question asked whether there was collective building of faith in a better future, 35.6% of respondents strongly agreed, 46.7% agreed, 3.7% of respondents were undecided, 8.1% of respondents disagreed and 5.9% strongly disagreed. Similarly, 40.76% of respondents were of the opinion that there was strong team commitment towards achievement of goals, 32.6% of respondents were undecided, 23.7% disagreed and 2.96% of respondents strongly disagreed. With reference to the question on whether members sacrifice for what they believe in, 39.3% of respondents strongly agreed, 45.2% agreed, 5.2% of respondents were undecided,

7.4% disagreed while 2.96% strongly disagreed. The question on whether there was collective identity of the group, 28.9% of respondents strongly agreed, 17.03% agreed, 20.7% of respondents were undecided, 31.1% disagreed and 2.22% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Therefore, the respondents gave different views on how group potency affects employee performance.

Regression analysis conducted on the effect of group potency and employee job satisfaction revealed a positive and significant correlation between these two variables ( $r = 0.213$ ,  $b = 0.1804$ ,  $t = 2.067$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This correlation between group potency and employee job satisfaction was marginally weak because the correlation and regression values obtained were below the score of 0.5 which is the average/moderate score. The results are illustrated in Table 4.5. What is worth mentioning is that the variables on members sacrifice for what they believe in ( $r = 0.167$ ,  $b = 0.146$ ,  $t = 2.46$ ) and there is collective identity of the group ( $r = 0.174$ ,  $b = 0.134$ ,  $t = 1.25$ ) had positive and insignificant correlations ( $p > 0.05$ ). [4] in their finding indicate that the potency beliefs of a group can be raised by inducement from other influence. The recent researches suggest that management support has a

position effect on group potency [6]. The employee job satisfaction was significantly higher on group potency and cohesion in family business [17]. Interview schedules showed that group potency in these Sugar Manufacturing Firms was affected by many cases of corruption, lack of employee commitment, lack of incentives, poor leadership among thick layers of management, nepotism and tribalism and poor remuneration structure which is inequitable across the various classes of employees. These factors attributed to a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) positive association between group potency and employee job satisfaction.

Therefore, based on this study hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) that states that group potency has no significant effect on employee job satisfaction was rejected since a statistically significant ( $r = 0.213$ ,  $b = 0.1804$ ,  $t = 2.067$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) correlation was established between group potency and employee job satisfaction.

The following were the variables that affected employee job satisfaction in the Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Kenya. These variables were ranked from the best to the least as shown in Table 4.6. These factors consequently affected group potency in these sugar firms.

**Table 4.3. Employee job satisfaction**

Variables	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Productivity	30(22.22)	75(55.6)	13(9.3)	10(7.41)	7(5.19)
Profitability	22(16.30)	60(44.4)	5(3.7)	23(17.03)	25(18.5)
Commitment	25(18.5)	70(51.9)	15(11.1)	18(13.0)	7(5.19)
Absenteeism	7(5.19)	45(33.3)	10(7.4)	65(48.1)	8(5.9)
Degree of autonomy	25(18.5)	57(42.2)	10(7.4)	27(20.0)	16(11.9)

Key: SA = strongly agree, A = agree, U = undecided, D = disagree and SD = strongly disagree; n = 135

**Table 4.4. Effect of group potency on employee job satisfaction**

Variables	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Company has shared beliefs about members' capability in performing their duties	30(22.2)	75(55.6)	13(9.6)	10(7.4)	7(5.2)
There is collective building of faith in a better future	48(35.6)	63(46.7)	5(3.7)	11(8.1)	8(5.9)
There is strong team commitment towards achievement of goals	24(17.8)	31(22.96)	44(32.6)	32(23.7)	4(2.96)
Members sacrifice for what they believe in	53(39.3)	61(45.2)	7(5.2)	10(7.4)	4(2.96)
There is collective identity of the group	39(28.9)	23(17.03)	28(20.7)	42(31.1)	3(2.22)

Key: SA = strongly agree, A = agree, U = undecided, D = disagree and SD = strongly disagree; n = 135

**Table 4.5. Effect of group potency on employee job satisfaction**

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	Regression coefficient, b	Std.Error (E)	t-value	P-value at Sig. at 2-tailed
Company has shared beliefs about members' capability	0.365	0.348	0.26	4.426	<0.05
There is collective building of faith in a better future	0.221	0.216	0.165	3.932	<0.05
There is strong team commitment towards achievement of goals	0.136	0.058	0.174	0.967	<0.05
Members sacrifice for what they believe in	0.167	0.146	0.154	2.46	>0.05
There is collective identity of the group	0.174	0.134	0.203	1.25	>0.05
<b>Overall Correlation</b>	<b>0.213</b>	<b>0.1804</b>	<b>0.191</b>	<b>2.067</b>	<b>p&lt;0.05</b>

Source: Field Data, 2013; n = 135; dependent variable : employee job satisfaction; Independent variable: team cohesion

**Table 4.6. What affects employee job satisfaction in sugar firms**

S/NO.	Items	Percentage	Rank
1	Corruption	32.6	1
2	Mismanagement & greed	20.7	2
3	Crop husbandry/lack of incentives	15.6	3
4	Poor leadership	11.9	4
5	Nepotism/tribalism	8.2	5
6	Poor remuneration structure	4.4	6
7	Advancement in technology	3.7	7
8	Importation of tax –free sugar	2.9	8

n= 135

Results indicate that corruption is ranked as number one factor (32.6%) that affects employee job satisfaction in the Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Mismanagement and greed was ranked number two (20.7%), followed by crop husbandry/lack of incentives (15.6%), poor leadership (11.9%), nepotism/tribalism (8.2%), poor remuneration structure (4.4%) and lastly advancement in technology (3.7%) while importation of tax –free sugar (2.9%). A similar study by [20] showed that decline in sugar sales was attributed to many reasons such as; high local sugar prices as compared to imported sugar, high sugar cane production costs, sugar manufacturing costs and influx of cheap imported sugar under the COMESA protocol. Their study also concluded that price related factors significantly contributed to poor performance of local sugar manufacturing firms in Kenya under the imperfect market conditions. They further observed that the local sugar manufacturing firms in Kenya experienced closing sugar stocks estimated at 28,113.3 Metric tonnes per annum for the period 1996-2005, which according to

Kenya sugar Board, a national body mandated to manage sugar issues in the country, largely attributed to high pricing of domestic sugar against cheaper imports.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Regression analysis conducted revealed a positive and significant correlation between group potency and employee job satisfaction which was not strong. This meant that group potency in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was not strong enough to enhance and sustain employee job satisfaction. This weak correlation was caused by factors like many cases of corruption, lack of employee commitment, lack of incentives, poor leadership among thick layers of management, nepotism and tribalism and poor remuneration structure. Since group potency is one key determinant shown to positively influence the effectiveness and performance of groups and teams, it was found low in these sugar firms and this explains low productivity and consequently, low employee job satisfaction.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and the conclusions of the study:

- i) The Human Resource Department should develop and maintain teamwork to realise optimal employee productivity. This means that the firm needs to mobilize and deploy team resource leading to team effectiveness of the firm.
- ii) Leadership support, sound remuneration structures, incentives should be enhanced in the organisation since they are the most important input factors to successful fulfillment of team processes and team effectiveness.
- iii) The vices like poor leadership traits, corruption, nepotism and tribalism, mismanagement and greed should be fought and dealt with from the top management and discouraged across the organizational structures and be replaced with accountability and transparency with clear policies on recruitment and selection, promotion, employee participation and deployment of staff.
- iv) Since most sugar manufacturing companies are becoming insolvent, they should adopt turnaround management which is a process dedicated to corporate renewal. This method uses analysis and planning to save troubled companies and returns them to solvency, and to identify the reasons for failing performance in the market, and rectify them.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1**

**Table 4.1. Age of respondents**

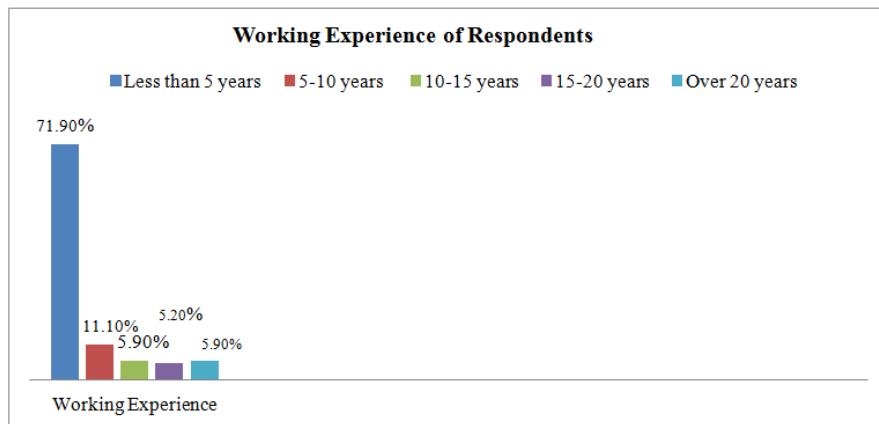
Age of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
18-24 years	29	21.5
25-34 years	35	34.9
35-47 years	39	28.9
Above 48 years	32	23.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Data, 2013

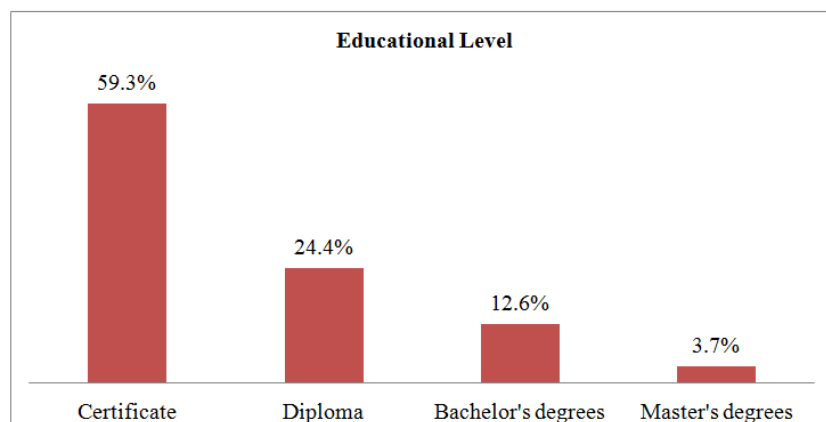
**Table 4.2: Gender of respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	69	51.1
Female	66	48.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Data, 2013



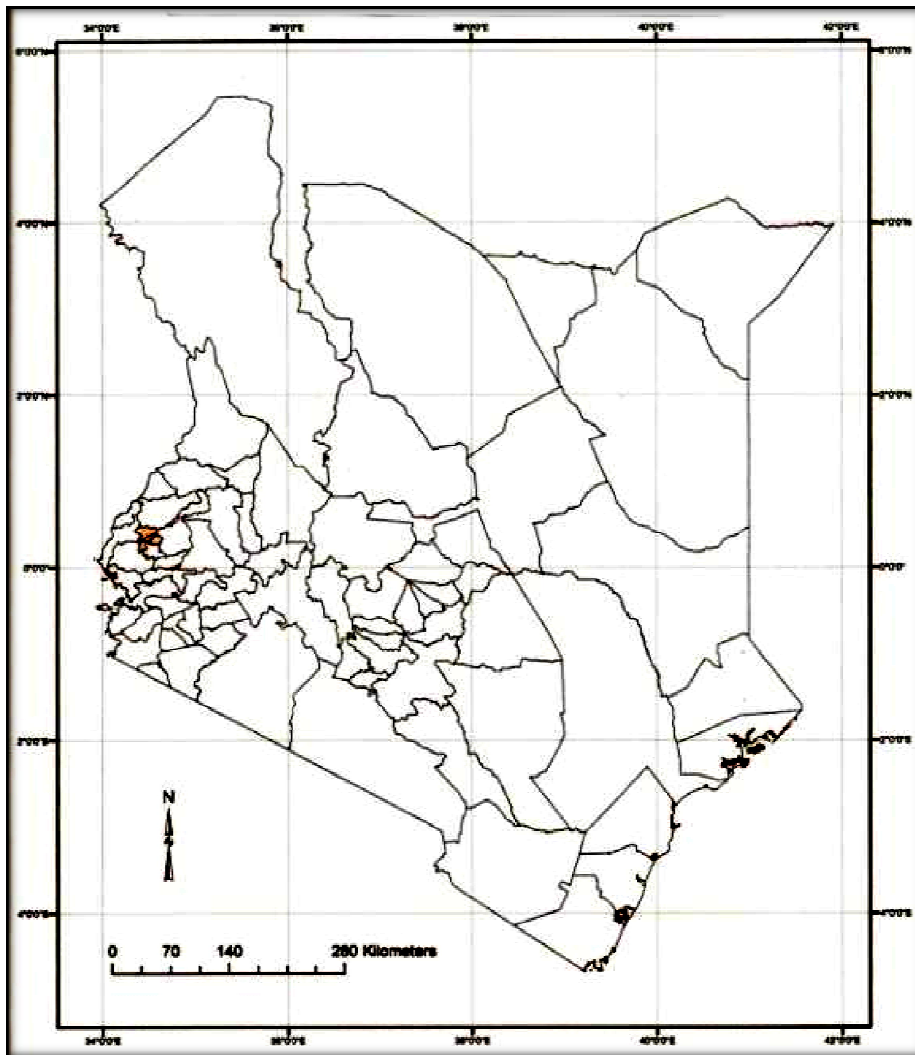
**Fig. 4.1. Working experience of respondents**



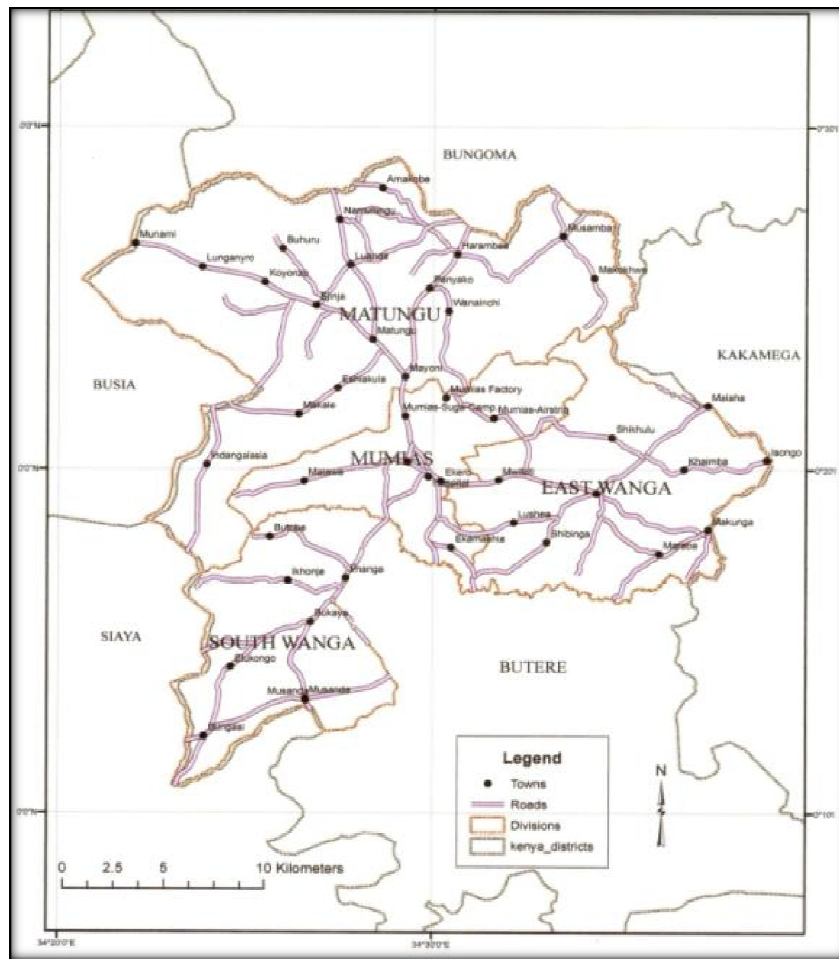
**Fig. 4.2. Education level of respondents**

Source: Field Data, 2013

**APPENDIX 2: MAP SHOWING STUDY AREA IN KENYA**



### APPENDIX 3: MAP OF SHOWING MUMIAS SUGAR COMPANY LIMITED



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