

**PERCEIVED FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE
PROMOTION IN MUMIAS SUGAR COMPANY LIMITED**

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Requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Business
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted to any other University for examination purposes.

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This proposal has been submitted for presentation with my approval as the University supervisor.

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Date _____

09/11/12

S N M NZUVE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project work to my adored husband Stephen, my children Tevin and Tyler and my beloved parents, Agnes Nabwire Onga'mo and Dickson Caxton Onga'mo for their unwavering love, prayers and encouragement. You have always believed in me, thank you for all the support you provided.

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ABSTRACT

Employee promotions are a sensitive, emotionally loaded subject and the use of non-rational decisions regarding promotions can cause wide negative outcomes to organizations. This study, for the first time, aims to establish perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. The researcher adopted survey research design and the sample population consisted of 240 employees of Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and quantitative data was generated in this study. The research findings indicated significant differences in most of the factors relating to promotion. Work experience and academic qualification were ranked highest and employees agreed that they are factors influencing promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. These were followed closely by performance, length of service, merit, success in projects and multi-disciplinary professional knowledge. Luck, age, gender, personal similarities between supervisor's and employees, political tools, marital status and ethnicity or tribalism were considered to have medium influence on promotions. Employees neither agreed nor disagreed that they were factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Employees disagreed that the variables of who you know and not what you know and constant pressure by worker on the supervisor were factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of the participant's demographic variables on the promotion factors. The implications of the findings in terms of human resource management are discussed in the paper.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Management process consists of three fundamental parts; organizational planning, manpower planning and individual career planning. These parts provide a logical and systematic approach to the review of present and future utilization of the company's main asset i.e. its manpower. While an organization plans to staff effectively and with continuity, it must take into account the needs of the staff's growth in relation to skills and how it employs them (Mbabu, 2004). Employees are often concerned with pay scales, job opportunities, chances for promotion and other tangible aspects of careers than with what is best for the organization. Since organizational effectiveness is influenced by the organization's ability to help meet the needs of its staff, decision makers should consider career-related issues in establishing management practices Bateman and Zeithmal (1993). Individual career planning is therefore a critical aspect of the management process.

Employee promotion is a positive necessity for an organization and is one of the most important tools in Human Resource Management (Bore, 1997). Many scholars perceive promotion as one of the most important components of employer-employee relations (Bore, 1997; Fenwick & Bierema, 2008; James, 2000; Sharabi, 2008). As far as a worker is concerned, a promotion is not only an expression of gratitude and reward for effort, but also a chance for self-fulfilment and career advancement, satisfying an individual's need for achievement and success. On the other hand, for an organization promotion is both an expression of gratitude and a motivational tool. Employee promotion no doubt brings the additional benefit of "binding" the worker to the organization and preventing "brain drain".

1.1.1. Concept of Perception

Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environments (Robbins & Judge, 2011). Perception is not necessarily based on reality, but is merely a perspective from a particular individual's view of a situation. Our perception and judgement of a person's actions therefore will be significantly influenced by the assumptions we make about that person's internal state (Robbins & Judge, 2011). Factors influencing a person's perception can be broken down into three main categories, namely; the situation, the perceiver and the target. Factors in the situation may include: time, work setting, or social setting. Whereas the factors in the perceiver may

include: attitudes, motives, interests, experiences and expectations. Lastly, the factors in the target may include: novelty, motion, sounds, size background, proximity, and similarity (Robbins et al., 2011).

Arnold and Feldman (1995) advanced that perception has to do with the way in which we receive messages as interpreted information. Our perception of the world serves as a basis for our actions. Employees' perception of any process in an organization including promotion is therefore critical as individuals act and react on the basis of their perception not on the basis of objective reality. For each individual, reality is totally a personal phenomenon, based on that person's needs, wants, values and personal experiences. Thus, to the organization, employees' expectations are much more important than their knowledge of objective reality. It is not what actually is so, that affects their actions because individuals make decisions and take actions based on what they perceive to be reality, it is important that organizations understand the whole notion of perception and its related concepts to make readily determine what factors influence people's behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2003).

1.1.2. Employee Promotion

Employee promotion is defined by (Benowitz, 2001) generally as rewarding an employee's efforts by moving that person to a job with increased authority and responsibility. A 'Promotion may entail adjustment to a higher salary level. Promotion is a key aspect of staff development that focuses on the identified potential of an individual staff based on an objective assessment of his or her ability to perform responsibilities at a higher level in a specific functional area or other related areas requiring similar skills set. Koontz (1993) asserts that promotion is a change within the organization to a higher position that has greater responsibilities and requires more advanced skills. It usually involves higher status and an increase in pay. Promotion may be rewarded for outstanding performance or as a result of the firm's desire to better utilize an individual's skills and abilities.

Karimi (2010) observed that promotion is an important stage in human resources procurement. In any given institution, employees take positions and others possess special skills that make them suited to hold specific responsibilities. This makes the human resource personnel to promote some people in the process. Some are prepared through succession planning while others are recruited from outside the organization. In the past, promotion was used to measure career success of employees. Organizations kept ambitious people

challenged with a regular career ladder of jobs, all offering increased responsibility and compensation: not everyone can be the chief executive officer but many could make regular progress. As organizations have become flatter and leaner, cutting out layers of management, the approach of regular promotion is no longer available (Benowitz, 2001).

Mamoria (2005) advanced that promotions have the satisfaction of the promoted employee's need for self-esteem, belonging and security. They also provide an opportunity for self-actualization through more varied and challenging assignments. Individuals differ in their abilities and skills, jobs differ in demands they place on individuals and promotions are a way of the organization to match individuals to these jobs for which they are best suited. This matching process over time occurs through promotion (Benowitz, 2001). Kimathi (2000) added that promotions further strive to retain and motivate quality employees and deliver a message to poor quality employees either to improve or to go. There are two types of promotions, namely; career ladder promotion where an employee who has occupied a position with full potential for a period of time is upgraded to the higher grade level after demonstrating the potential to perform duties effectively and the non-competitive promotion where an employee in a career ladder position is automatically promoted without having to submit an application or compete with others for promotion for a position (Mamoria, 2005).

1.1.3. Factors influencing employee promotion in organizations

Koontz (1993) cites length of service as a factor influencing employee promotion in organizations. In these organizations, supervisors feel that an employee's loyalty as expressed by length of service deserves the reward of promotion. Merit as a factor is adopted by organizations as a way of motivating their employees to perform better. Merit is seen as a fair method of rewarding those whose performance is considered exemplary and in the process encourages everyone to strive to perform better. Currently, many organizations motivate their employees by linking rewards like promotions to excellent performance at work and achievement of the relevant qualifications for the position at hand. Here the use of performance appraisal basically entails trying to reward employees for their best work, by promoting them while hoping that this incentive will encourage other employees also to strive to work harder in future (Benowitz, 2001). Organizations have developed performance evaluation instruments that tie promotion to performance which in essence links an individual career progression to his or her level of performance or to a rating of competence.

On the other hand, qualification as a factor influencing employee promotion is directed towards contributing to the accomplishment of mission goals by staffing positions with high-quality employees capable of performing the relevant duties. Several studies (James, 2000; Taniguchi, 2006; Woodhams & Lupton, 2006; Moshe, Ofer & Javier, 2012) contend that depending on the organization, there are other factors influencing employee, namely; work experience, multi-disciplinary professional knowledge, gender, age, marital status, tribalism or ethnicity, educational similarities, similarities between employers and employees, success in projects, organizational politics- social relations with the “right” people, constant pressure by worker on the supervisor and luck. Perceived factors influencing employee promotion in organizations will be exhaustively tackled in chapter two.

1.1.4. Mumias Sugar Company Limited

Mumias Sugar Company Limited was established in 1973. The factory, which accounts for over 45% of the total sugar produced in the country had an initial crushing capacity of 1,250 tons of cane crush per day but has since expanded to 9,200 tons of cane crush per day after the installation of a diffuser. The major objectives of establishing Mumias Sugar Company Limited was to: provide a source of cash income for farmers; create job opportunities; curb rural-urban migration; reduce overdependence on importation and aim for self-sufficiency in sugar production. The company was privatized in 2001 and is publicly listed on the Nairobi Stock Exchange. Despite being mainly a sugar producing company, Mumias Sugar Company Limited has diversified into power production and currently supplies 28 megawatt of electricity to the National Grid. Future plans are underway to diversify into the production of other products like alcohol. (See Overview of Mumias Sugar Company, 2012).

Over the years, Mumias Sugar Company Limited has realized rapid growth as evidenced by its expansion and increase in employee base. Currently, Mumias Sugar Company Limited has over 597 employees' who comprise of both management and union members. The increasing employee base meant that the company had to develop a structured organizational structure that will ensure there is a clear cut between each employee's responsibilities as well as their career growth within the organization. The company's promotion policy encourages and provides equal opportunities for all staff to develop through promoting deserving, qualified and competent staff to positions in higher grades. The policy also states that an employee may be promoted to a higher grade provided he or she meets the following criteria: there should be a vacancy in the establishment for the promotion to a higher grade to be effected,

the higher position should be appropriately specified, including: minimum age requirement, minimum academic qualification, desired professional qualification, relevant work experience, performance assessment records and disposition of the candidate. In every financial year, the company through the human resources department compiles bi-annual and annual performance review reports that assist in determining potential employees for promotion (Mumias Sugar Company Limited Staff Promotion Policy, 2008).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Employee promotion is a positive necessity for an organization and is one of the most important tools in Human Resource Management (Bore, 1997). As part of the human resources system, it serves to encourage quality performance, represent a key aspect of internal selection system and mitigate employee turnover process (Johnson & Scholes, 1999). To an employee, promotion is not only an expression of gratitude and reward for effort, but also a chance for self-fulfilment and career advancement, satisfying an individual's need for achievement and success. In many organizations, the human resources department is charged with compiling performance appraisals which they deem fair and transparent hence assist the employer in determining potential employees for promotion. Kimathi (2000) contends that employees are of the general opinion that performance management processes are flawed, performance appraisals are subjective and unreliable as a basis for performance measurement and that in reality factors other than merit are used to make promotion decisions. Gilliland (1994) noted that without the perception of fairness, a system that is designed to appraise, reward, motivate, and develop can actually have the opposite effect and create frustration and resentment. The continuing debate and controversy on perceived factors influencing employee promotion in organizations is an issue that calls for more research.

Mumias Sugar Company has gradually moved from a traditional sugar manufacturing company located in the western part of Kenya to a leading sugar manufacturer within East Africa. In order to support this rapid growth and high number of customers the company always seeks to attract, develop, reward and retain outstanding individuals who are offered challenging responsibilities and development opportunities. However, in the recent past the company has experienced resignations from high performing and high potential employees leading to questions about their reward system particularly career growth (promotions). The questioning of the rationale behind promotions was more evident through a management staff

survey carried out in 2011 where staff expressed their displeasure with the performance management process and the rewards thereafter. This is therefore the basis of this research proposal to establish the perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

A number of studies have been carried out in Kenya on employee promotion. Mbabu (2004) studied Parliamentary Service Commission employees' attitudes towards promotion on merit and observed that the link between performance and promotion is completely blurred hence employees do not work hard to achieve promotion. Karimi (2010) focused on social capital and employee promotion at the Ministry of Medical Services Malindi district and found out that majority of the respondents indicated that there were no formal communication channels advertising promotion opportunities arising in the health facilities and most promotions were merely influenced by social networks. Olioka (2009) focused on promotion in relation to qualification and performance among Safaricom Limited employees and established that promotion is not associated jointly with performance and qualification amongst Safaricom employees in Nairobi. From the above studies, it can be concluded that more studies have focused on certain aspects of promotion but none of these studies has exhaustively tackled perceived factors influencing employee promotion in organizations. Thus this constitutes a knowledge gap that the present study seeks to fill.

1.3. Objective of the study

To establish perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

1.4. Value of the study

The findings of the study will be informative to the government and other stakeholders in terms of policy administration ensuring fairness in organizational promotion policies.

The results of this study will also inform policy makers at Mumias Sugar Company Limited on the perceptions of its employees on factors influencing employee promotion so as to enable them make informed decisions on how to improve employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The findings of the study will benefit human resources managers in refining promotion policies already in existence by highlighting the adequacy or inadequacy of promotion

policies. Consequently, it is expected that the study will form the basis for and stimulate research in order to develop a better understanding of career management in today's business environment.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concept of Perception

Employees are different in terms of how they view the world around them, how they interpret and react to different situations, and how they assign meaning to different phenomena (Dember, 1960). Perception is influenced by internal and external factors leading employees to see perceived objects, persons or events differently. External factors are characteristic of perceived objects or persons, which may include size, intensity, contrasts, repetition, motion, novelty, status and appearance. Internal factors in perception are characteristic of the perceiver. Perceivers have a tendency to use themselves as a basis for perceiving others, events and objects. Internal factors that can influence perception are needs and motives, past experiences, self-concept and personality (Nzuve, 2007).

Employees emerge with different perceptions of the same stimulus object because of three perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention. Selective attention arises due to the fact that employees are exposed to a tremendous amount of daily stimuli. The employees have a heightened awareness of stimuli that meet their needs or interests and minimal awareness of stimuli irrelevant to their needs. Selective distortion describes the tendency of employees to twist information into personal meanings. Selective retention asserts that employees will forget much of what they learn. They tend to retain information that supports the attitudes and beliefs for chosen alternatives (Kotler, 2003; Kibera & Waruingi, 1998).

Perception is largely selective. Selectivity of perception serves as a filter through which potentially important or favourable experiences will be allowed to flow, while potentially unimportant or unfavourable experiences are locked out. Extensions of these are selective exposure and selective retention (Kibera & Waruingi, 1998). Understanding of perception is essential to ensure that managers are aware of the problems that can arise from the process of attention and selectivity. According to research carried out by Kimathi (2000), employees are of the general opinion that performance management processes are flawed, performance appraisals are subjective and unreliable as a basis for performance measurement and that in reality factors other than merit are used to make promotion decisions.

2.2. Employee Promotion

Monappa & Sayyadain (1996) asserts the following as the main objectives of promotion in organizations: recognition of a job well done by an employee, a device to retain and reward an employee for his years of service to the organization and to build loyalty, morale and a sense of belongingness in the employee and a mechanism to improve upon other employees that opportunities are also open to them if they perform well. Equally, promotion is used to increase individual and organizational effectiveness and to enable the organization to utilize expertise to the optimum level by providing adequate opportunities to those who have developed expertise. Promotions may be a reward for outstanding performance but only if there is evidence of potential competency. Otherwise persons may be promoted to a level at which they are incompetent. Given the proper encouragement in an evaluation interview, most employees return to their jobs with a new determination to improve their overall performance and eventually be promoted (Haimann & Hilgert, 1972).

Promotion is a very attractive reward as it comes along with increased pay. It is an acknowledgement for work well done (good performance) as well as qualification for the new position, a perhaps bigger office and more holidays. Armstrong (2006) adds that promotion pay increases should be meaningful, say 10 per cent or more. They should not normally take the promoted employee above the midpoint or reference point in the pay range for his or her new job so that there is adequate scope for performance related increases. One good reason for having reasonably wide differentials is to provide space for promotions. In any organization where there are frequent promotional moves and where promotion arrangements cause problems, it is advisable to have a promotion policy and procedure which is known to both management and employees and this procedure should take full account of equal opportunity policies (it is often incorporated in equal opportunity policy statements) (Koontz, 1993).

The basic points that should be included in a promotion policy and procedure are: promotion vacancies should be notified to the human resources department; vacancies should be advertised internally; departmental managers should not be allowed to refuse promotions within a reasonable time unless the individual has been in the department for less than, say, one year, or the department has recently suffered heavy losses through promotions or transfers and finally promotion opportunities should be open to all, irrespective of race, creed, sex or marital status.

2.2.1. Promotion opportunities

Armstrong (2006) contends that promotion opportunities are positions within the organization hierarchy that require to be filled whenever possible by qualified candidates not from outside the organization workforce. When promotions opportunities exists in an organization, then first priority should be given to internal employees otherwise there will be little motivation for them to do a better job if better and higher paying jobs are reserved for outsiders. Most employees are motivated if they feel that they can move upwards in the organization. Haimann et al., (1972) states that in carrying out promotions companies can either choose to promote from within or from outside the company. The latter is usually used in promotions based on open competition and it is the policy of filling positions or making promotions from the most qualified people available whether from outside or inside a given organization.

James (2000) asserts that most organizations have policies for promoting their employees into better and more promising positions. This policy is widely practiced and is often of considerable significance both to the organization and the employee. For the organization it is a good source of trained people for better positions whereas for the employees it provides a powerful incentive to perform better. According to him if employees have worked for an organization for a period of time, more is known about them and the various attributes they bring to a job than even the best selection processes and interviews could reveal about outside applicants. Haimann et al. (1972) advanced that on the other hand new blood discourages current employees from becoming conformists and becomes necessary in some instances such as the company's inability to train staff internally especially for long, expensive and specialized programmes. Typically there are more employees available who are interested in a promotion than there are openings within an organization. Since promotions should serve as an incentive for employees to perform better supervisors believe that promotions should be given to those who have the best records of quality, productivity and skill.

However, in many situations it is difficult to measure these aspects of employees' performance objectively, despite a continuous effort by supervisors in the form of merit rating or performance appraisal systems (Armstrong, 2006). Given such advantages, why has external recruitment continued to grow so strongly at the comparative expense of internal promotion? This is because there is no conclusive proof that internal appointments are actually more successful; employees may be promoted because they do their job so well but find the new job beyond them. This is known as the Peter Principle- employees are always

promoted one step above their competence. Some employees also find it difficult to achieve the necessary respect when they started a few years back as internal staff. On the other hand, external recruitment allows prediction of future competent performance in the advertised position. Currently many organizations are striving to recognize good performers based on careful appraisals and sound selection and promote them for their effort. This has resulted in performance evaluation systems being introduced, modified and reviewed carefully to ensure promotion of the right employees and to aid in meeting efficiency objectives.

2.3. Factors influencing employee promotion in organizations

Mullins (2010) argued that there are many factors influencing employee promotion in organizations. He added that in the majority of cases, managers clearly stated merit or ability as the overt belief. However, the “if your face fits” syndrome also can be an apparent covert reason for promotion. Koontz (1993) cites length of service as a factor influencing employee promotion in organizations. Many supervisors are comfortable with the concept of length of service as a basis for promotion. Some supervisors feel that an employee’s loyalty as expressed by length of service deserves the reward of promotion. According to Rosenberg & Billikopf (1983) an employee would enter the organization at the lowest possible level and advance to a higher position as vacancies occur. Mathis *et al.* (2000) asserts that a job specification is a list that includes the knowledge, skills, and abilities an individual needs to perform a job satisfactorily. Knowledge, skills, and abilities include education, experience, work skill requirements, personal abilities, mental and physical requirements. The job specification therefore becomes a major point of reference during promotion to ensure that the employees being promoted meet the job qualifications requirements.

Qualification as a factor influencing employee promotion is directed towards contributing to the accomplishment of mission goals by staffing positions with high-quality employees capable of performing the relevant duties. Merit as a factor is adopted by many organizations as a way of motivating their employees to perform better. Merit is seen as a fair method of rewarding those whose performance is considered exemplary and in the process encourages everyone to strive to perform better. A salary increase obtained as a result of one’s promotion has a greater value than a salary increase that is given to everyone. This is supported by Thorndike’s law of effect which states that behaviours that are rewarded are more likely to be repeated than those that are punished (Burns, 1992). Merit systems rest on the principle that

only deserving employees' are promoted after a thorough assessment of their abilities for the next job of higher responsibility and status (Monappa *et al.*, 1996; Rosenberg, *et al.*, 1983).

Currently, many organizations motivate their employees by linking rewards like promotions to excellent performance at work and achievement of the relevant qualifications for the position at hand. Here the use of performance appraisal basically entails trying to reward employees for their best work, by promoting them while hoping that this incentive will encourage other employees also to strive to work harder in future Benowitz (2001). Many organizations have developed performance evaluation instruments that tie promotion to performance which in essence links an individual career progression to his or her level of performance or to a rating of competence. This is supported by findings of behavioural research which consistently demonstrates that performance levels are highest when rewards are contingent on performance.

Several studies (James, 2000; Taniguchi, 2006; Woodhams & Lupton, 2006; Moshe, *et al.*, 2012) contend that other perceived factors influencing employee promotion in organizations, include; work experience, multi-disciplinary professional knowledge, gender, age, marital status, tribalism or ethnicity, educational similarities, similarities between employers and employees, success in projects, organizational politics- social relations with the "right" people, constant pressure by worker on the supervisor (including presenting letters of recognition, certificates of excellence) and luck (or "being the right person at the right time"). According to Bonnie and Carolyn (2005) educational similarities (i.e. level of education, educational institution attended, and type of certification) are also factors considered by supervisors when making a decision regarding the promotion of employees. This notion is not unfamiliar to the Israeli organizational culture, for instance, where upper level managers who were formerly senior military commanders, ensure the addition of newly-retired high ranking military commanders to their organizations (Tzafir & Meshoulam, 2007). Although this is not a case of educational similarities, the similar background creates empathy and may be a factor which should be taken into consideration when making promotion related decisions (Bonnie, *et al.*, 2005; Tzafir, *et al.*, 2007).

Another interesting finding reported in the literature (James, 2000) is the correlation between personal similarities between employers and employees and promotion opportunities. The way, in which these similarities may be expressed between workers at the same level, or between a worker and a supervisor, is through sharing the same perspective, responding in similar ways, interpersonal trust, and personal commitment. The greater the number or degree

of similarities, the more "bonus points" (social capital) are credited to the worker. Thus, a particular worker becomes a natural candidate for promotion. This is typical of organizational politics and emphasizes the importance of personal connections in achieving promotions. Organizational political games are one of the tactics workers use to pursue personal interests, including pay and promotions (Vigoda & Drory, 2006; Deondra, 2006). Similarly, Singh, *et al.* (2002) and Deondra (2006) assume that workers, by not using political tactics or "impression games" are limiting themselves from achieving personal goals such as promotion. In order to survive and advance in an organization, workers must use political tools such as being familiar with the organizational culture, identifying the sources of power, nurturing relations with superiors, cooperating with colleagues and other figures of power and building a positive well-liked image.

According to several studies on employee promotion in Israel (Pasternak & Zaritzky, 2003; Tzafrir *et al.*, 2007) it was evident that although women were 48.4 per cent of the workforce in 2002, most of them were employed in traditional feminine occupations characterized by low wages, such as teaching, secretarial work, sales. Data from the Statistical Abstracts of Israel 2002 shows that although the percentage of women managers had doubled over the past 20 years, the percentage of male chief executive officers was almost 4 times higher than female chief executive officers. As for managers in the high-tech industry, there has been some progress. While in 1978, only 9 per cent of managerial positions were filled by women, by 2000, 22 per cent of all managers were women, even though women comprise only 34 per cent of the high-tech workforce (Wertzberger, 2001). Baldwin (1996) advanced that males have higher promotion rates than females in the Army and Navy, while females have higher promotion rates than males in the Air Force. However, male and female promotion rates are similar in the combined services, and male promotion-rate advantages generally have diminished or disappeared in recent years.

Smith (2005) examined the gap in promotion between women and minorities relative to White men and aimed to establish if the processes that determine promotions for White men are the same for minorities and women. According to the findings race and gender intersect to produce unique promotion outcomes for all groups. Specifically, promotion gaps between White men and their female and minority counterparts are largely a function of group differences in performance indicators and work commitment. Also, relative to White men, before receiving a promotion, Black men must work longer periods of time after leaving school and Latinos must accrue more years with their current employer. Finally, the

processes that lead to promotion do not differ between White men and White women, but relative to White men, Black women and Latinas must have more prior job-specific experience and more overall work experience before receiving a promotion—all else equal.

McCue (1996) examined gender differences in the time it takes to get a promotion using data from 1976 to 1988 of the Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics. The findings indicate that the period of time it takes to promote single women and men is comparable, whereas married women usually take a longer period of time to get a promotion. In contrast, time to promotion for male employees does not depend on their civil state.

Pekkarinen and Vartiainen (2006) studied gender differences in the metallurgical industry in Finland and the findings were that women usually take more time to get a promotion than men with similar jobs, even though women are consistently more productive than men. They thus conclude that women must exceed a much higher level of productivity to obtain a promotion than men. Vigoda *et al.* (2006) assert that private organizations operating in a competitive environment strive to maximize human potential to survive the business competition; therefore, promotion according to whom you know is more prominent in public organizations where there is little or no competition. Lack of promotion opportunities, flawed promotion processes or a perception of unfairness in the promotion decisions, are related to a low level of performance, a low level of loyalty and commitment (Bonnie *et al.*, 2005; McKay, 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) and high turnover and absenteeism (Chun-Hsien, Mu-Lan & Nai-Hwa, 2006; Eby, Allen & Brinley, 2005; Fairris, 2004; Saporta & Farjoun, 2003). Furthermore, it negatively affects employees' wellbeing and performance (Baptiste, 2008). Promotions are a sensitive, emotionally loaded subject and the use of non-rational decisions regarding promotions can cause wide negative outcomes to organizations.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

The researcher adopted survey research design. According to Fowler (2001) survey research is advantageous because it seeks to obtain information that describes factors under investigation and achieve unbiased representation of the population through appropriate sampling techniques. The researcher was also able to collect information that was not available from other sources as well as the method is less intrusive when examining sensitive topics such as employee promotion. Surveys are also used in collecting data from large populations that are not easy to observe directly.

3.2. Population of the Study

The population of study consisted of 597 Mumias Sugar Company Limited employees.

3.3. Sample Design

Stratified sampling technique was used to obtain a representation of a sample from the population since the population was not drawn from a homogenous group. A simplified formula was used by the researcher to calculate the sample size. This formula assumed a confidence level of 95% and maximum variability of 0.05 in a population as advocated by Israel (1992).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size and e is the sampling error.

$$n = \frac{597}{1 + 597(0.05)^2} = 240$$

The sample size of 240 was distributed as below:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Managers} \quad \frac{192}{597} * 100 = 32\% * 240 = 77 \end{array}$$

Supervisors $\frac{240}{597} * 100 = 40\% * 240 = 96$

597

Confidential staff $\frac{165}{597} * 100 = 28\% * 240 = 67$

597

Table 1: Sample Size

S/NO	MEMBERS OF STAFF	NUMBER OF STAFF	SAMPLE SIZE	PERCENTAGE
1.	Managers	192	77	32
2.	Supervisors	240	96	40
3.	Confidential staff	165	67	28
TOTAL		597	240	100

Source (Mumias Sugar Company Limited Human Resource Records, 2012)

3.4. Data collection

Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. Questionnaires are less expensive, provide informants with time to respond and can be easily adopted where the field of investigation is vast and spread over a wide geographical area. It is also superior in situations requiring information of personal nature. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A focused on personal information of the respondents whereas part B obtained information on perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. The process entailed the researcher visiting offices to drop and pick the questionnaires.

3.5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data was generated in this study. The researcher analysed data using percentages, mean scores, standard deviation and frequencies in order to arrive at conclusions. Percentages were used to summarize and reflect the relative weight of factors influencing employee promotion as perceived by the respondents. The frequencies were used to examine the distribution of responses to each of the factors. The means showed the magnitude of the weight a particular factor was given. To be able to obtain the percentages, frequencies and means the edited data was coded, labelled and then put into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), which was then run to generate the values for interpretation. The analysed data was then presented in pie charts and tables.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The research objective was to establish perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. This chapter presents the analysis and findings with regard to the objective and discussion of the same. The findings are presented in percentages, frequency, means and standard deviation.

Response rate

A total of 240 questionnaires, representing the sample size were randomly administered to selected respondents. The respondents were given a time frame of about two weeks to enable them respond. Follow up calls were made during the period. All questionnaires were returned completely answered. The collected data was analysed using the computer and specifically using SPSS.

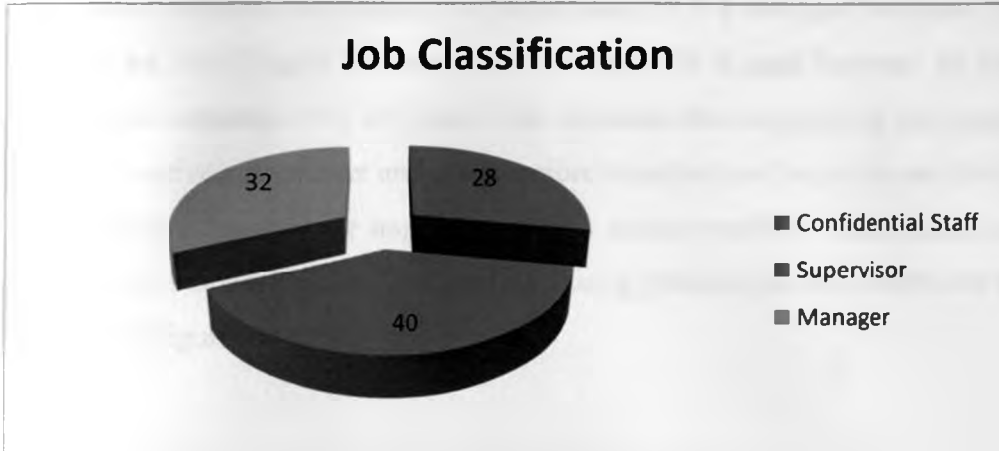
4.2. Demographic factors of the respondents

Part A of the questionnaire sought information on personal profile of the respondents. Data on job classification, gender, age, years of service, highest level of education, years respondents' have been in their current position and how many times an employee had been promoted since they joined Mumias Sugar Limited were analysed to determine the general classification of respondents. The results of the analysis and detailed explanations were given below and in Table 2.

4.2.1. Job classification of the respondents

The results for job classification indicated that majority of the respondents are supervisors making 40%, followed closely by managers 32% and confidential staff 28%. This could be attributed to the organization structure of Mumias Sugar Company Limited and a conclusion drawn that Mumias Sugar Company Limited has a very tall organization structure. Data analysed using percentages and results are summarized in Table 2 and figure 1.

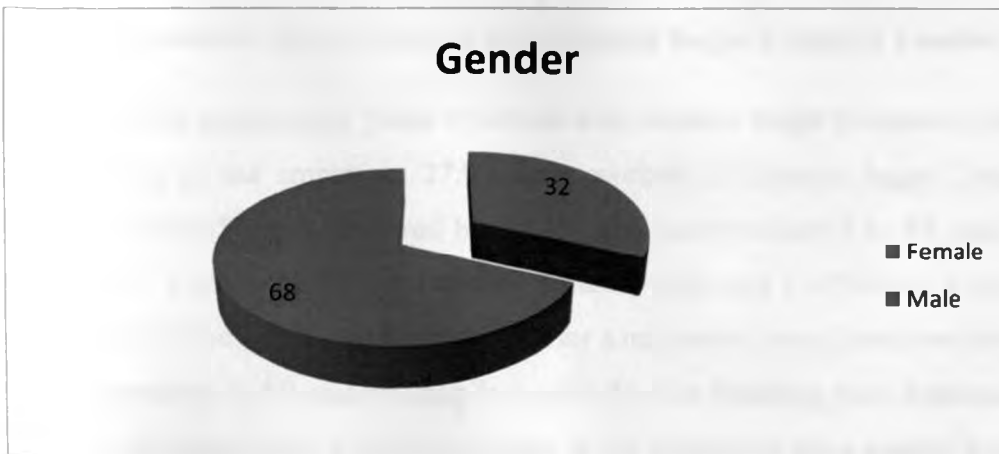
Figure 1: Job classification



4.2.2. Gender of the respondents

The entire sample consists of 68% male and 32% female. Further analysis on the gender shows that most confidential staffs are female while majority of the supervisors and managers are males. Despite this difference each category of respondents has both genders. It can therefore be concluded that the respondents were equally distributed in terms of gender despite there being gender disparity in the organization. Data analysed using percentages and results are summarized in Table 2 and figure 2.

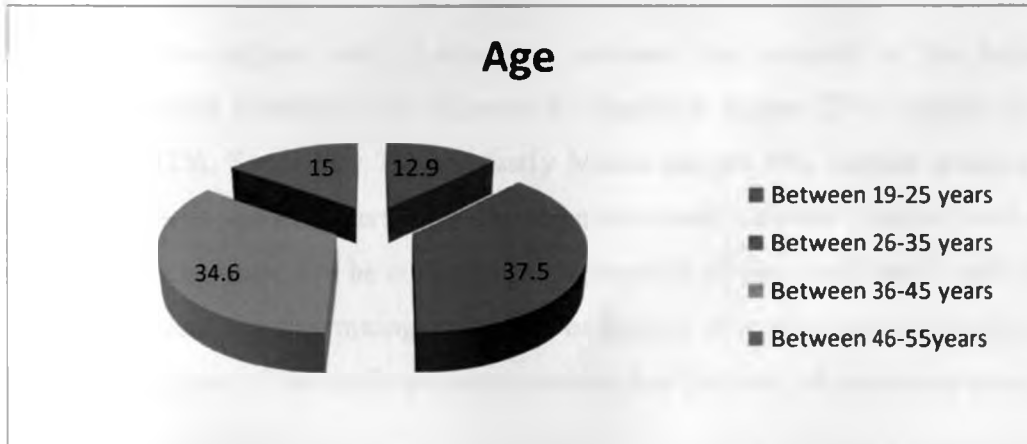
Figure 2: Gender



4.2.3. Age of respondents

The results indicates that majority of employees 37.5% are aged between 26 to 35 years, followed by 34.6% aged between 36 to 45 years, 15% aged between 46 to 55 years and 12.9% aged between 19 to 25 years. This indicates that majority of the respondents are in their most active age bracket and are therefore impatient and eager to see their careers grow. Any indication that they are stagnating in their current position makes them start considering alternative job opportunities. Data analysed using percentages and results are summarized in Table 2 and figure 3.

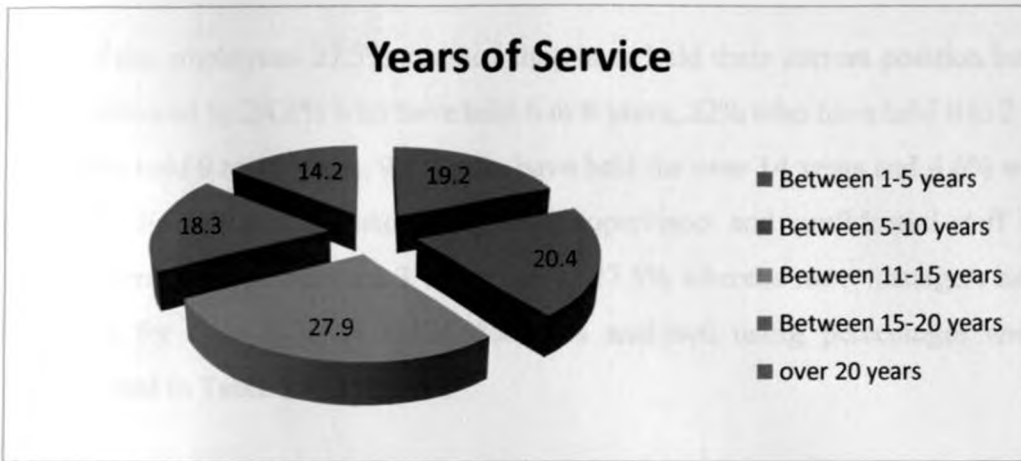
Figure 3: Age



4.2.4. Respondents' years of service with Mumias Sugar Company Limited

The results for respondents' years of service with Mumias Sugar Company Limited indicated that majority of the employees 27.9% have worked for Mumias Sugar Company Limited between 11 to 15 years, followed by 20.4% who have worked 5 to 10 years, 19.2% have worked 1 to 5 years, 18.3% have worked 15 to 20 years and 14.2% have worked for over 20 years. Most of the employees have worked for a number of years therefore have considerable work experience and began working immediately after finishing their diploma courses. This could be the reason why a large percentage of the employees have worked between 11 to 15 years. There is therefore a direct relationship between employees age, years of service with Mumias Sugar Company Limited and highest level of education. Data analysed using percentages and results are summarized in Table 2 and figure 4.

Figure 4: Years of Service

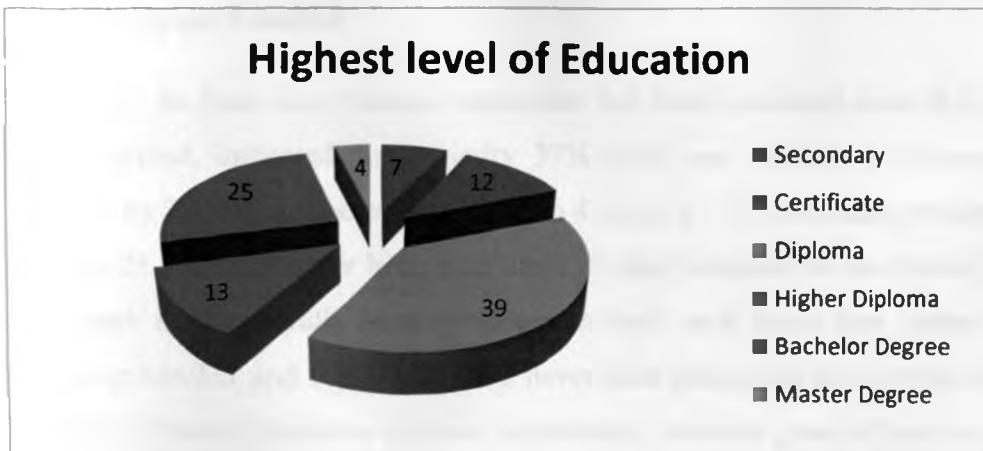


4.2.5. Respondents' highest level of education

The results for highest level of education indicated that majority of the employees were Diploma holders forming 39%, followed by Bachelor degree 25%, Higher Diploma 13%, Certificate 12%, Secondary 7% and lastly Master degree 4%. Further analysis shows that both supervisors and managers have attained a minimum bachelor's degree level with a 100% response. It can therefore be concluded that majority of the confidential staff at 39% were diploma holders and that managers at must be holders of a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The fact that most of the staffs are literate means that the level of awareness was quiet high.

Data analysed using percentages and results are summarized in Table 2 and figure 5.

Figure 5: Highest level of Education



4.2.6. Years respondents' have been in their current position

Most of the employees 27.5% claimed they have held their current position between 3 to 5 years, followed by 24.6% who have held 6 to 8 years, 22% who have held 0 to 2 years, 11.7% who have held 9 to 11 years, 9.6% who have held for over 14 years and 4.6% who have held 12 to 13. Further analysis shows that both supervisors and confidential staff have been in their current position between 3 to 5 years at 27.5% whereas most managers have held their positions for 6 to 8 years at 24.6%. Data analysed using percentages and results are summarized in Table 2 and figure 6.

Figure 6: How many years have you been in your current position?



4.2.7. How many times a respondent had been promoted since they joined Mumias Sugar Company Limited

The results for how many times a respondent had been promoted since they joined Mumias Sugar Limited, indicated that majority 37% have been promoted between 1 to 2 times, followed by 27.5% have been promoted 3 to 4 times, 11.7% have been promoted over 5 times whereas 23.8% have never been promoted. It can therefore be concluded that majority of employees have generally been promoted at least once since they joined Mumias Sugar Company Limited and those who have never been promoted have served few years at the company. There is therefore a direct relationship between years of service and how many

times an employee had been promoted since they joined Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data analysed using percentages and results are summarized in Table 2 and figure 7.

The following figures and Table represent the demographic factors.

Figure 7: How many times have you been promoted since you joined Mumias Sugar Limited?

How many times have you been promoted since you joined Mumias Sugar Limited?



Table 2: Demographic Factors

	DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1) Job Classification	Confidential Staff	67	28
	Supervisor	96	40
	Manager	77	32
	TOTAL	240	
2) Gender	Female	76	32
	Male	164	68
	TOTAL	240	
3) Age	Between 19-25 years	31	12.9
	Between 26-35 years	90	37.5
	Between 36-45 years	83	34.6
	Between 46-55 years	36	15
	TOTAL	240	
4) Years of service	Between 1-5 years	46	19.2
	Between 5-10 years	49	20.4
	Between 11-15 years	67	27.9
	Between 15-20 years	44	18.3
	over 20 years	34	14.2
	TOTAL	240	
5) Highest level of Education	Secondary	16	7
	Certificate	28	12
	Diploma	94	39
	Higher Diploma	31	13
	Bachelor Degree	61	25
	Master Degree	10	4
	TOTAL	240	
6) How many years have you been in your current position?	Between 0-2 years	53	22
	Between 3-5 years	66	27.5
	Between 6-8 years	59	24.6
	Between 9-11 years	28	11.7
	Between 12-13 years	11	4.6
	Over 14 years	23	9.6
	TOTAL	240	
7) How many times have you been promoted since you joined Mumias Sugar Limited?	1-2 times	89	37
	3-4 times	66	27.5
	Over 5 times	28	11.7
	None	57	23.8
	TOTAL	240	

4.3. Employee perceptions of factors influencing employee promotion

Part B asked respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements related to perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. A likert scale of 1 to 5 was used, where 5 = strongly agree, 4= agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. The mean scores were rated in the following manner: less than 1.5 ($M < 1.5$) = Strongly disagree, 1.5 - 2.5 = Disagree, 2.5 - 3.5 = Neither agreed nor disagreed, 3.5 – 4.5 = Agree and greater than 4.5 ($M > 4.5$) = Strongly Agree. A standard deviation of less than 1.5 (< 1.5) means there were no significant variations and vice versa.

4.3.1. Perception on work experience

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with work experience as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents agreed that work experience is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 4.18. The standard deviation of 0.92 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Work experience was therefore perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.2. Perception on academic qualification

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with academic qualification as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents agreed that academic qualification is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 4.08. The standard deviation of 0.99 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Academic qualification was therefore perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.3. Perception on length of service

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with length of service as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents agreed that length of service is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 3.92. The standard deviation of 1.14 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Length of service was therefore perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.4. Perception on luck (or "being the right person at the right time")

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with luck (or "being the right person at the right time") as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that luck (or "being the right person at the right time") is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 3.02. The standard deviation of 1.39 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. The perception that luck (or "being the right person at the right time") was a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was therefore neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.3.5. Perception on political tools

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with political tools as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that political tools is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.64. The standard deviation of 1.34 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. The perception that political tools was a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was therefore neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.3.6. Perception on constant pressure by worker on the supervisor

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with constant pressure by worker on the supervisor as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents disagreed that constant pressure by worker on the supervisor is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.27. The standard deviation of 1.1 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Constant pressure by worker on the supervisor was therefore not perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.7. Perception on success in projects

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with success in projects as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents agreed that success in projects is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 3.69. The standard deviation of 1.1 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Success in projects was therefore perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.8. Perception on merit

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with merit as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents agreed that merit is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 3.74. The standard deviation of 1.12 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Merit was therefore perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.9. Perception on performance

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with performance as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents agreed that performance is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 3.98. The standard deviation of 0.95 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Performance was therefore perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.10. Perception on who you know and not what you know

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with who you know and not what you know as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents disagreed that who you know and not what you know is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.48. The standard deviation of 1.27 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Who you know and not what you know was therefore not perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

4.3.11. Perception on gender

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with gender as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that gender is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.90. The standard deviation of 1.28 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. The perception that gender was a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was therefore neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.3.12. Perception on ethnicity or tribalism

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with ethnicity or tribalism as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that ethnicity or tribalism is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.5. The standard deviation of 1.35 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. The perception that ethnicity or tribalism was a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was therefore neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.3.13. Perception on personal similarities between supervisors and employees

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with personal similarities between supervisors and employees as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that personal similarities between supervisors and employees is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.69. The standard deviation of 1.28 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. The perception that personal similarities between supervisors and employees was a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was therefore neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.3.14. Perception on multi-disciplinary professional knowledge

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with multi-disciplinary professional knowledge as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 below. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents agreed that multi-disciplinary professional knowledge is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 3.5. The standard deviation of 1.09 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. Multi-disciplinary professional knowledge was therefore perceived as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

Table 3: Factors influencing employee promotion

Factors influencing employee promotion	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Work experience is considered when promoting staff	4.18	0.92
2. Academic qualifications are considered when promoting staff	4.08	0.99
3. Length of service in the company is considered when promoting staff.	3.92	1.14
4. Luck (or "being the right person at the right time") plays a role during promotions	3.02	1.39
5. In order to survive and advance at my work place, workers must use political tools such as identifying the sources of power and nurturing relations with superiors.	2.64	1.34
6. Constant pressure by worker on the supervisor (e.g. presenting letters of recognition, certificates of excellence) is a promotional factor in practice at my work place.	2.27	1.1
7. Success in projects is considered when promoting staff.	3.69	1.1
8. Promotion at my work place is purely merit based.	3.74	1.12
9. Promotion at my work place is performance based.	3.98	0.95
10. Promotion at my work place is based on who you know and not what you know.	2.48	1.27
11. Gender is considered when granting promotion rather than rational business considerations.	2.9	1.28
12. Ethnicity or tribalism is a factor considered by supervisors when making a decision regarding the promotion of employees.	2.5	1.35
13. Supervisors consider personal similarities between themselves and employees as a bonus point during promotion E.g. similar educational background, sharing the same perspective, responding in similar ways, interpersonal trust, and personal commitment	2.69	1.28
14. Multi-disciplinary professional knowledge is a factor considered when granting employee promotion.	3.5	1.09
15. Age of an employee is considered when granting employee promotion.	2.91	1.22
16. An employee's marital status is a factor considered when granting promotion.	2.59	1.3
Average Mean score / Standard Deviation	3.19	1.18

4.3.15. Perception on age

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with age as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 above. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that age is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.91. The standard deviation of 1.22 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. The perception that age was a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was therefore neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.3.16. Perception on marital status

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with marital status as a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation and findings summarized in Table 3 above. From the findings, the study found out that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that marital status is a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited with a mean of 2.59. The standard deviation of 1.3 was low indicating that most of the respondents did not have a significant variance on the answers they gave. The perception that marital status was a factor influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited was therefore neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.4. Overall ranking of employee perception on factors influencing employee promotion

This study measures the level of agreement or disagreement and variations of employee perception on factors influencing employee promotion. A ranking of the various factors was done according to their overall means and a mean of the means scores and standard deviation was obtained. This ranking was considered to establish the level of agreement or disagreement on factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. The findings were summarized in Table 3 above. The research findings as shown in Table 3 above shows that work experience and academic qualification were ranked highest and employees agreed that they are factors influencing promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited employees with mean scores of 4.18 and 4.08 respectively. These were followed closely by performance with mean score of 3.98 and length of service with mean score of

3.92, merit with mean score of 3.74, success in projects with mean score of 3.69 and multi-disciplinary professional knowledge with mean score of 3.5.

Luck, age, gender, personal similarities between supervisor's and employees, political tools, marital status and ethnicity or tribalism with mean scores of 3.02, 2.91, 2.90, 2.69, 2.64, 2.59 and 2.5 respectively were considered to have medium influence on promotions. Employees neither agreed nor disagreed that they were a factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Employees disagreed that the variables of who you know and not what you know and constant pressure by worker on the supervisor which had mean scores of 2.48 and 2.27 respectively were factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of findings

The primary objective of the study sought to establish perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. From the data analysis it was established that the respondents were equally distributed in terms of gender despite there being gender disparity in the organization, majority of employees are young and age between 26 to 35 years and have worked in Mumias Sugar Company Limited between 11 to 15 years. Most of the employees claimed they have held their current position between 3 to 5 years and have been promoted between 1 to 2 times thus there is a direct relationship between years of service with Mumias Sugar Company Limited and how many times an employee had been promoted since they joined Mumias Sugar Limited. Majority of the confidential staff are diploma holders while managers are degree holders thus the level of education has a direct influence on employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

Employee promotion is a positive necessity for an organization and is one of the most important tools in Human Resource Management (Bore, 1997). This research established that there are many factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. As described before, the most important factor influencing promotion is work experience followed closely by academic qualifications, performance, length of service, merit, success in projects and multi-disciplinary professional knowledge. This complies with one of the stated goals of the organization, namely "results orientation". The company's goals are achieved mainly through the success ratio of workers in various projects. Luck, age, gender, personal similarities between supervisor's and employees, political tools, marital status and ethnicity or tribalism were considered to have medium influence on promotions. Thus employees neither agreed nor disagreed that they were a factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Employees disagreed that the variables of who you know and not what you know and constant pressure by worker on the supervisor were factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

It was apparent that perceptions of factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited occur at different stages of an employees' career. The study showed that factors perceived among confidential staff influencing employee promotion were not

necessarily those perceived by supervisors and managers. Therefore the screening of the whole organization should be a continuous process so that in case a factor influencing employee promotion could not be identified at managerial level, it is identified at the other levels. The great and significant gaps between the scores given to political tools, who you know and constant pressure on the supervisor, can be explained by the organizational culture and the environment they exist in. The key to Mumias Sugar Company Limited organizational survival is to stay on the “cutting edge” of technological advances by operating in technology-driven markets. Therefore, the company is more exposed to the external environment, which is characterized by complex and global markets; in actual fact, the business environment directs them to competition and achievement.

Additional characteristics of today’s industries include a high growth rate (Harpaz and Meshoulam, 2004; Kunda, 2006), hence there are rapid promotions (Kunda, 2006). Our findings strengthen his prediction that the level of organizational politics is negatively correlated to the level of external pressure. The company’s highly skilled workforce must be able to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing and uncertain industry; hence, promoting the suitable workers for achieving the organizational business goals, have to be based mainly on work experience, performance, academic qualification, length of service, success in projects, merit and multi-disciplinary professional knowledge. The high ranking given to length of service in promotion decisions reflects the belief that length of service in the organization guarantees successful performance and shows employee loyalty in an organization that operates in a competitive market. On the other hand, it is possible that age received the lowest scores in the company since most of the workers are younger.

5.2. Conclusion

In Mumias Sugar Company Limited, supporting an organizational culture of innovation, diversity management and maximizing the personal potential, is essential to coping with environmental demands. Furthermore, the growth of the company is more dependent on the successful human resource management in terms of enhancing motivation, loyalty, and commitment and workers wellbeing. Promoting the most suitable candidates, regardless of subjective variables, is one of the main bases for reaching the above advantages. Promotions are a sensitive, emotionally loaded subject. Extensive use of non-rational considerations and a lack of transparency regarding promotions creates anger, frustration and low job satisfaction

(Baptiste, 2008) as well as a decrease in work performance, involvement and commitment and higher rates of absenteeism (Bonnie-Bei & Carolyn, 2005; McKay, 2004). Such a promotion process leads to turnover not only among the low level workers (Chun-Hsien, Mu-Lan & Nai-Hwa, 2006) but also among the middle and top managers (Eby, Allen & Brinley, 2005; Saporta & Farjoun, 2003).

In conclusion, the mission of human resources managers in organizations should be to ensure that the career paths planning will comply with the organization's strategy and needs and to set objective requirements for each promotion. Hence, to assure that those employees who contribute the most to the organization success will be promoted, by developing and using relevant criteria for promotions. In addition, more and more human resource managers today consider the promotion processes as a main issue in corporate social responsibility (Fenwick & Bierema, 2008). Global competition requires increasing efficiency of organizations, and obligates management to focus on improving the way in which promotions are determined. A survey such as this one, performed periodically in organizations, may help human resource management professionals to identify patterns or changes in employees' perceptions regarding the factors influencing promotions. Learning and development intervention can generate awareness among managers about non-relevant factors affecting their promotion decisions. With such intervention, managers will, hopefully, be able to focus on objective criteria regarding promotions to the mutual benefit of the company and the workers.

5.3. Recommendations

Promotions are a sensitive, emotionally loaded subject and the use of non-rational decisions regarding promotions can cause wide negative outcomes to organizations. It is important that organizations should perform surveys periodically to enable the human resource management professionals identify patterns or changes in employees' perceptions regarding the factors influencing promotions and ensure that promotions are only achieved using rational decisions. To make promotion policies even more effective, the management needs to review carefully the performance appraisal systems as a tool for measuring performance and refining promotion policies already in existence by highlighting their adequacy or inadequacy.

5.4. Limitations of the study

The research study was carried out in Mumias Sugar Company Limited where daily activities of sugar production are carried out on a day to day basis. This made it very difficult to easily reach the respondents who were in the factory as well as those in the field. It was also very difficult to get responses from management staff that were out of office most of the time. It involved booking appointments and sometimes holding abrupt meetings hence distorting the research plan. The study was also not able to get the views of the few staff that are based in their Nairobi office.

5.5. Suggestion for further research

The problem of perceived factors influencing employee promotion in organizations is clearly one that merits further study. Other researchers could look at the perception of other tangible or non-tangible factors influencing employee promotion in organizations in order to develop a better understanding of career management in today's business environment. Although this research focused upon employee promotion in a public company in the sugar industry, its methodology can be transferred to other organizations. Researchers could also follow the same methodology as discussed in this paper to find out perceived factors influencing employee promotion in other industries.

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APPENDIX 1: COVER LETTER

Lornah Stella Omany Onga'mo

P.O.Box 30238-00100,

Nairobi.

10th June 2012

Director of Human Resources,

Mumias Sugar Company Limited,

P.O. Private Bag,

Mumias, Kenya,

Dear Sir,

RE: Letter of Introduction

I am a postgraduate student pursuing Master of Business Administration (MBA), Human resource Management, in the School of Business University of Nairobi. The title of my study research project is "Perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited". Kindly grant me the permission to administer related questionnaires to 240 employees who will be picked at randomly. I have attached a sample questionnaire for your approval. Also attached is a copy of the research proposal.

All information will be treated as private and confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the research. A copy of the final paper will be easily available to you upon request so that the company may benefit from it.

Yours sincerely,

Lornah Stella Omany Onga'mo

D61/61715/2010

MBA Student.

S.N.M. Nzuve

Supervisor

School of Business

APPENDIX 11: QUESTIONNAIRE

Perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited

Introduction: This questionnaire seeks information on the Perceived factors influencing employee promotion in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. All information obtained will be used strictly for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please tick the box that best represents the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

Section A: Personal Information (Please tick as appropriate)

1) Job Classification

Confidential Staff

Supervisor

Manager

2) Gender: Male Female

3) Age: 19-25 years 26-35 years 36-45 years 46-55 years

4) How Many Years have you worked for Mumias Sugar Company?

1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years over 20 years

5) Highest level of Education

Secondary Diploma Bachelor Degree

Certificate Higher Diploma Master Degree

6) How many years have you been in your current position?

0 - 2 3 - 5 6 - 8 9 - 11 12-13 Over 14

7) How many times have you been promoted since you joined Mumias Sugar Limited?

1- 2 times 3 - 4 times over 5 times None

Section B: Perceived factors influencing employee promotion

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agreed nor Disagreed	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Work experience is considered when promoting staff.					
2. Academic qualifications are considered when promoting staff.					
3. Length of service in the company is considered when promoting staff.					
4. Luck (or "being the right person at the right time") plays a role during promotions.					
5. In order to survive and advance at my work place, workers must use political tools such as identifying the sources of power and nurturing relations with superiors.					
6. Constant pressure by worker on the supervisor (e.g. presenting letters of recognition, certificates of excellence) is a promotional factor in practice at my work place.					
7. Success in projects is considered when promoting staff.					
8. Promotion at my work place is purely merit based.					
9. Promotion at my work place is performance based.					

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agreed nor Disagreed	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. Promotion at my work place is based on who you know and not what you know.					
11. Gender is considered when granting promotion rather than rational business considerations.					
12. Ethnicity or tribalism is a factor considered by supervisors when making a decision regarding the promotion of employees.					
13. Supervisors consider personal similarities between themselves and employees as a bonus point during promotion E.g. similar educational background, sharing the same perspective, responding in similar ways, interpersonal trust, and personal commitment.					
14. Multi-disciplinary professional knowledge is a factor considered when granting employee promotion.					
15. Age of an employee is considered when granting employee promotion.					
16. An employee's marital status is a factor considered when granting promotion.					

Thank you for taking your time to fill the questionnaire and providing correct answers based on your opinion.