DECENT WORK AND COFFEE SECTOR: ARE THE COFFEE ESTATES IN KENYA COMPLYING WITH DECENT WORK IN PRODUCTION AND PRIMARY PROCESSING?

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Abstract: *Coffee plays a big role in Kenya. It contributes to 30 percent of agricultural jobs and country's exports. However, casual workers within coffee estates still get challenging employment conditions including long working hours, unfair wages, limited social capacity, and lack of collective bargaining that results in poor living standards and job insecurity. And also, no research shows compliance with decent work in the Kenyan coffee sector. This study sought to provide new literature about decent work compliance in production and primary processing within Coffee estates in Kiambu county. Snowballing sampling method was used to collect data among 385 casual workers from EAAGADS, Fairview, Maakiou, and Magumu coffee estates. Descriptive statistics and inductive logic were used to generate decent work indices from statistical indicators explaining each decent work pillar. Decent work indices 0.41and 0.44 show the low compliance of social dialogue and safety at workplace dimensions respectively. Results, also show the effort has been done under productive employment and social protection dimension as shown by indices of 0.65 and 0.51 respectively. Moreover, there is a need for ILO inspection to ensure whether there is a promotion of decent work practices within coffee production to promote the living standards of coffee casual workers and also the stimulation of sustainable development of the County as well as the Country.*

INTRODUCTION

Decent refers to the opportunities for both men and women workers to get full and productive employment conditions, workplace equality, job security, social protection, and human social dialogue (International Labour Organization [ILO],2019). It ensures the development of the human being in the global economy through the rapid transformation of work. It takes into account all categories of employees involved in every value chain in a given economy and it is an important strategy to fight against poverty, hunger and also promotes good health and economic wellbeing (Ali, 2013). Decent work combines philosophical, legal, economic, sociological and psychological perspectives (Di-Fabio & Maree, 2016).

Physiological perspective is associated with the self-esteem and how it is affected by community culture aspects.

Decent work legally focuses on the system of law that governs labour to have an access to new job opportunities and also in the achieving of policies that strengthen the employment conditions. In terms of economics, it focuses on the right of labour by ensuring a favourable environment that create work enjoyment. Sociological perceptive refers to different changes in decent work concept over time. Lastly, psychological perspective looks at decent work in terms of job satisfaction in terms of workers' expectation and work quality, the intrinsic quality of work in terms of good health and economic well-being of workers, and desirability of work that implies the characteristics that improve workers' situation assessment and their contribution (Zammitti et al., 2021).

In Kenya, the compliance of decent work is determined by various factors including work and wages, compensation, holidays, work security, participation in family responsibilities,

maternity and work, employment injury benefits, social security, fair and equal treatment at workplace, and the situation of child and forced labour (Ahmad, 2021). In this country, the prediction of wages follows the labour institution act 2007. This acts that the employee's salary equals the minimum wage that provide the consistent decent life with human dignity. In Kenyan agriculture, the minimum wages vary according to the knowledge, skills and practices that an employee has (Gok,2013). Decent work contributes to the poverty reduction by addressing the nature and quantity of employment opportunities. Decent work comprises an integrated approach to the development and economic growth that ensure the generation of employment opportunities, representation and social protection of all workers (ILO,2007).

Coffee production tend to be a labour intensive due to the type of activities that are performed manually. This leads to the inclusion of short-term and casual workers from plantation to harvesting (Mureithi, 2008). During the harvesting and processing of ripe coffee beans, workers may be required to work extra hours to maintain the quality (ILO,2018). Several different health risks involved in coffee production and primary processing including injuries from sharp tolls and repetitive movements, exposure to harmful chemicals including pesticides, illness from coffee dust, and consequences caused by human exposure to sun and heat (Verité fair labour, 2019). In Kenya, coffee sector employs about 30 percent of the agricultural labour force (ICO, 2019). These workers still get the deficit of decent work which is shown by various indicators including lack of decent wages and work hours, risky working conditions for workers. These working conditions lead to various health problems that occur due to the use of pesticides, the risks of being attacked by reptiles such as snakes during production practices. Workers also lack self-protection due to a lack of protective kits such as masks, gloves, and other first-aid kits (Mureithi, 2008).

Child labour is one of the major problems in majority of coffee estates, where children work alongside their parents to supplement their families' income. They also help their elder family members and parents to achieve their production quotas as per estate requirements. Children are even more vulnerable to the risks faced by adult individuals because they are in most cases involved in picking and sorting cherries, pruning trees, weeding, and fertilizing. The estimates data from Oxfam shows that one-third of coffee harvesters in Kenyan coffee are under 15 years old which accounts for 26 percent of the total coffee labour force. Child labour is mostly increasing in commercial estates that use quota requirements for their workers which have led to the increased inclusion of children to help their parents or other mature family members meet their quotas (Verité fair labour, 2019). Casual labour in both estates and smallholder farms is one of the vulnerable groups. According to ILO, over 20 percent of estates labour is on a casual basis due to reasons like unpredictable happening during harvesting and means of avoiding labour laws that require benefits for full-time workers. Women in coffee production are concentrated in lower-skilled tasks including fieldwork, harvesting, and primary processing activities yet they work for more hours than their male counterparts (Verité fair labour, 2019).

Kiambu county produce 22% of the total coffee in Kenya (Agriculture and Food Authority, 2020). The coffee estates in this county still experience the deficit of decent work compliance especially among casual workers who perform their duties in coffee production and primary processing. Majority of these workers get challenges that are associated with lack of decent wages and work time, lack of compensation in terms of overwork, lack of protective kits, and lack of freedom for collective bargaining which contribute to poor livelihoods and job insecurity (Mureithi, 2008). The literature shows the situation of decent work in Kenyan coffee production but there is still a gap on evidence of how Kenyan coffee estates comply with decent work. This study aimed to provide the contribution on the existing literature by measuring decent work compliance within coffee estates in Kiambu County of Kenya

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON DECENT WORK MEASUREMENT

According to Anker et al. (2002); Ghai (2002) and Burchell et al. (2014), the choice of indicators to be used during the measurement of decent work depends on the availability of data and sample size available. The analysis of decent work depends on living standards measurement study -integrated survey on agriculture (LSMS-ISA) dataset which is made up of either individual or household level data that are derived from the set of questions that refer to the employment for which indicators can be defined (Habtamu et al., 2016). Job and Mary (2017), in their research about Gender and decent work in the cassava value chain specifically on its production and on-farm processing, the OLS model was used to analyze how both male and female gender participate in the production and on-farm processing of cassava in the study area. That research found that social-economic factors including experience, number of years, education background, extension contact, access to credit, and farm income influence the participation opportunities of both women and men.

Muthui (2019), did his research by comparing the status of decent work among Kenyan smallholder piggery producers. The researcher subjected the main five indices to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) in the evaluation of decent work status and assessment of the data suitability for factor analysis. The research found that both economic and human development has contributed to decent work. The study used PCA to overcome the issue of multiple levels of simultaneous measurements which refer to a common problem in decent work. The approach of Duffy et al. (2017), was considered by using psychological results of work to develop a decent work scale ranging from a 15-factor scale and 5 sub-sectors that correspond to 5 components of decent work. The study implicates that, apart from the decent indicators provided by ILO, the nature of various Agri-enterprises influences the adoption of different indicators' approaches to be used. Kouamé (2017), constructed decent work index based on entropy and inertia approaches that allowed orthogonal axis computation to measure statistical dimensions. The normalization method was used to obtain the decent work indices ranging from 0 to1. This range allowed the researcher to classified calculated indices into high and low decent work compliance.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Area

The study was carried in Kiambu county, one of the counties that highly grow coffee in Kenya. Coffee estates in this county lead in hiring casual workers where each estate employs between 100 and 500 casual workers (CIDP, 2018).

Sample size determination

Research selected 385 respondents that were proportionately distributed in four coffee estates that are EAAGADS, Mackiou, Fairview and Magumu. The sample size was determined based on the formula adopted by Kothari (2004). This formula is suitable when there is unknown exact number of population size (Al-Subaihi, 2003).

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} \qquad (1).$$

Where n stands for the sample size, z is the z-value at the confidence level of 95 percent (z=1.96). P which is equal to 0.5 means the probability of the targeted population meets study characteristics that were measured. Q refers to the probability of the targeted population that does not meet the characteristics measured by the study and it is computed as 1-p (1-0.5=0.5), e is the accepted error at 95% confidence interval.

Sampling Procedure

Multistage sampling procedure was used in this study where 3 sub-counties (Kiambu, Ruiru, and Juja) were purposively selected based on high rate of coffee production and availability of active coffee estates. The study randomly selected EAAGADS, Fairview, Magumu, and Maakiou coffee estates and lastly, the Snowball sampling method was used to reach the respondents in each selected estate. This method was suitable for this research due to sensitive questions that were being addressed to casual labourers that should have been caused by biased information due to fear of losing their jobs if the researcher employed the other method. Thereafter, Primary data was collected by using personally administered questionnaires to the selected casual workers in each coffee estate.

Analytical Framework

The research used proxy measures of ratified conventions of international labour organizations. This method grouped statistical indicators and legal frameworks that are based on major elements of decent work to measure decent work compliance within coffee estates in Kiambu. According to Bescond et al (2003), and ILO (2013), the main indicators that were used were based on four main dimensions (pillars) of decent work. The research considered inductive logic to generate the individual decent work index on each pillar (dimension). Adequate earnings and productive employment dimension were indicated by four main indicators that are Decent Wage which referred to the employees with a monthly salary that is above the minimum basic wages in the agricultural sector of Kenya, and professional training which showed the number of employees who get professional training about their work, decent workhour which explained the number of employees who work not more than 48 hours per week and overtime compensation as the indicator of the employees who get payment in case of overwork.

Safety in the workplace dimension was explained by six indicators that are free kits which show the employees who get protective kits while working at zero cost, first aid skills which shows the employees who have first aid skills in case of emergency at the workplace, sexual harassment which indicated the number of employees with sexual harassment problem, forced labour to show the employees who were forced to do some kind of jobs, discrimination was used to indicate the employees who experience the discrimination at workplace based on different factors and equal working opportunities were used to indicate employees who get working opportunities equally. The third pillar of decent work is social protection which was determined by three main indicators that are participating in family responsibilities where this indicator was showing the employees whose work schedules allow them to engage in other family responsibilities, non-financial benefits indicated the number who get other work benefits apart from the wage and free medical indicator was considered to show the employees who get free medical care in case of work injuries. Lastly, the researcher employed three indicators to show the decent work indices based on the social dialogue dimension. The considered indicators are agreement where was showing the employees with a formal work agreement, participation in decision making which showed employees who can participate in decision making about their salaries and other working conditions, and notification before the end of the agreement.

A respondent with a positive answer on mentioned indicators as per ILO standards was coded as 1 while employees with negative answers were coded as 0. After grouping all indicators under their dimension, the researcher weighted those indicators equally since there was no superiority assumption between them. A researcher calculated the index under each decent work dimension by using the arithmetic mean of each indicator score. The process generated individual indices of each employee which were ranging between 1 and 4 and these indices were normalized to get the DWI under each pillar.

$$\text{Normalization DWI} = \left[\frac{Actual\ Value - Minimum\ Value}{Maximum\ value - Minimum\ Value}\right] \quad (2)$$

Equation 2 was used to determine compliance with decent work within coffee estates of Kiambu County. The average DWI was calculated to show the current situation in the study area. The DWI which is above 0.5 was considered a sign of high decent work compliance while the DWI which was below or equal to 0.5 was considered a sign of low decent work compliance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Decent Work Practices in Relation to International Labour Organization (ILO) Standards Performed by Coffee Estates in Kiambu County

Table 1 present the current situation within the study area for the achievement of decent work practices as per ILO standards. On the practices that are related to productive employment, results showed that respondents equivalent to 85% had decent wages, 78% had decent working hours, and 59.5% got work training. But on the other side, there was a low achievement of compensation in the case of overwork where only 37.1% of respondents got compensation for overworked hours. Contrary to the research about decent work compliance in Coté d'Ivoire, where respondents equivalent to 36% had a decent wage, 57.52% had decent working hours and 8.5% got professional training (Kouamé, 2017). Under the safety at work pillar, results showed that 92.7% of respondents did not experience forced labour, 99.2% did not experience sexual harassment, 87.3% did not experience discrimination in the workplace, and 89.9% experienced equal working opportunities between men and women casual workers. The respondents who claimed the deficit of equal working opportunities reported that men get hard and complicated tasks compared to women. There was a low achievement on other safety at workplace practices where only 20% of respondents had access to free protective kits and 43.9% did not have first aid skills in case of emergency. The respondents reported that the discrimination was based on the tribe and local language which was different from the majority of people in Kiambu.

On decent work practices under the social dialogue pillar, results showed that 61.3% of respondents had work schedules that allowed them to take on other family responsibilities, 60.8% were able to access free medical care in case of work injury or other work sicknesses, and only 27% of respondents were able to get non-financial benefits apart from medical and other facilities mentioned above. The majority of respondents reported that they got non-financial benefits in terms of free accommodation, cooking woods, day care for respondents' children, Christmas party, and milk for those who work within estates that have livestock sections. Results showed that in terms of social dialogue, 58.7% of respondents get a notification before the end of their work, 53.2% experienced freedom for participating in the decision-making process about their work, and 23.9% had formal work agreements. This low rate of giving formal agreements depends on how coffee is a seasonal crop, which means that coffee estates' managers refuse to give formal agreements to the workers to avoid extra costs in case of low peak season. On the other side, the majority of respondents who had formal agreements were between one to three months agreements. This study showed the achievement of decent work practices more than other studies done in different areas of the planet. According to Oppong (2019), in his study about decent work and working poor in Ghana, 22.97% of respondents were able to get a decent salary, 76.08% got decent working hours, and only 4.14% accessed free medical care. In Coté d'Ivoire, 7.99% of the study respondents had a formal contract and 3.14% of respondents accessed the free medical service (Kouamé, 2017).

Table 1. Decent work practices in relation to ILO Standards

Practices	Outcomes	Frequency (%)
Decent wages	Employees with wages above minimum basic wages	85
	Employees with wages below the minimum basic wages	15
Decent working hours	Employees with decent working hours per week	78.2
	Employees who work overtime hours per week	21.8
Overtime compensation	Employees who get compensation in case of overtime work	37.1
	Employees who do not get compensation in case of overtime work	62.9
Training	Employees who get training	59.5
	Employees who do not get training	40.5
Work agreement	Employees with a formal agreement	23.9
	Employees without a formal agreement	76.1
Forced labour rate	Employees under forced labour	7.3
	Employees not under forced labour	92.7
Notification before the end of the agreement	Employees who get a notification before the end of the agreement	58.7
	Employees who do not get the notification before the end of the agreement	41.3
Participation in family responsibilities	Employees whose schedules allow them to take on other family responsibilities	61.3
	Employees whose schedules do not allow them to take on other family responsibilities	38.7
Sexual harassment	Employees who face sexual harassment	0.8
	Employees who do not face sexual harassment	99.2
Discrimination	Employees who experience discrimination at work	12.7
	Employees who do not experience discrimination at work	87.3
Equal working opportunities	Employees who get equal working opportunities	89.9
	Employees who do not get equal working opportunities	10.1
Freedom for participation	Employees who get the freedom to participate in decision-making about their work activities	53.2
	Employees who do not get the freedom to participate in decision-making about their work activities	46.8
Non-financial benefits	Employees who get non-financial benefits	27.0
	Employees who do not get non-financial benefits	73.0

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Protective kits	Employees who get free protectives kits while working	20.0
	Employees who do not get free protectives kits while working	80.0
Fast Aids skills	Employees who have fast aids skills in terms of emergency	43.9
	Employees who do not have fast aids skills in terms of emergency	56.1
Medical care	Employees who get free medical care in case of work injury	60.8
	Employees who do not get free medical care in case of work injury	39.2

Source: Primary data collection, 2022

The compliance with decent work practices by Coffee Estates in Kiambu County

Table 2 presents the Decent Work Indices (DWIs) based on each pillar of decent work. DWI1 which equals 0.65 shows that there is improvement in the adequate earnings and productive employment dimension. This index proves the achievement with the productive employment indicators at a good rate. The majority of employees within coffee estates in Kiambu County get a decent wage, decent working hours, and training respectively. But on the other side, the majority of employees are still experiencing zero compensation in case of overtime work which contributes to the reduction of DWI1. The compliance with this dimension is because of coffee estates that are under collective bargaining agreement (CBA) where there is a fixed minimum basic wage for unskilled employees who work within them. CBA also states the decent working hours that employees should not exceed per week. Employees get professional training as a way of reducing the waste of coffee but not for being professional. Despite being a member of CBA, some employees still get challenges due to the department in which they are working. Some employees still do not get what CBA expects them to get. And the reason behind this is that supervision from both CBA and ILO is not consistent

The decent work index based on safety at workplace dimension (DWI2) which is equal to 0.44 proves the low compliance with the safety indicators. Casual workers within coffee estates in Kiambu County still get a deficit in terms of safety at workplace indicators. The majority of employees which is over 80 percent do not get protective kits while working and above 60 percent do not have first aid skills in terms of emergency. Estates highly complied with other security indicators including no sexual harassment at 99.2 %, no forced labour at 92.7%, equal working opportunities at 89.9%, and zero discrimination at 87.3%. According to Nizami (2013), compliance with safety in the workplace in the IT sector was very low and was also associated with negative effects due to the work pressure that exists in that sector to meet deadlines. This failure of compliance with safety at the workplace is connected to the low compliance of productive employment where workers often experience longer working hours. 54% of respondents in that research reported that

they were admitted to the hospital due to work-related health problems that increased their stress levels. Workers reported that the nature of their work increased the chance of getting diseases including eyestrain, backache, stiff neck, depression, heart disease, and hypertension. The low compliance with safety at the workplace among casual workers was been also found in India. Casual workers are always forced to work under unhealthy as well as dangerous conditions. The statistics showed that 45.9% of respondents reported that their jobs affect health conditions. Workers also reported the harassment at workplace and the majority of these problems are found in rural areas where agricultural practices take place (Breeta & Amit, 2020). This shows that safety at work is the most sensitive pillar since it directly affects the workers' healthy. Literature shows that compliance with safety in the workplace in the IT sector was very low and also associated with negative effects due to the work pressure that exists in that sector to meet deadlines. This failure of compliance with safety at the workplace is connected to the low compliance of productive employment where workers often experience longer working hours. 54% of respondents in that research reported that they were admitted to the hospital due to work-related health problems that increased their stress levels. Workers reported that the nature of their work increased the chance of getting diseases including eyestrain, backache, stiff neck, depression, heart disease, and hypertension Nizami, 2013). The low compliance with safety at the workplace among casual workers was been also found in India. Casual workers are always forced to work under unhealthy as well as dangerous conditions. The statistics showed that 45.9% of respondents reported that their jobs affect health conditions. Workers also reported the harassment at workplace and the majority of these problems are found in rural areas where agricultural practices take place (Breeta & Amit, 2020). This shows that safety at work is the most sensitive pillar since it directly affects the workers' healthy.

A decent work index based on social protection (DWI3) which is equal to 0.51 shows medium compliance with social protection. The estates comply with social protection indicators including the schedules that allow employees to take on other family responsibilities at 61.3 %, and employees who get free medical care in case of work injury at 60.8 %. The coffee estates still have low compliance with social protection indicators which is in terms of non-financial benefits at the rate of 27%. The literature shows that majority of casual workers in developing countries experience a deficit in terms of complying with social protection. This is because of how these workers are excluded from labour legislations (ILO,2021). This implies the loss of their income in case of work injury that ends into chronic poverty, stagnating yields and acute vulnerability in many rural parts of Africa (Stephen, 2009)

Lastly, the decent work index based on social protection (DWI4) which is equal to 0.41 shows the low compliance with social dialogue. The majority of casual workers within selected coffee estates of Kiambu County still get a deficit in terms of getting formal work agreements. This is because coffee is a seasonal crop which means that if estates make

formal agreements with casuals would increase the cost on the estates' side. Due to the lack of formal work agreements, employees also do not get the freedom to participate in making decisions about their wages and working conditions. This also results in the end of jobs without notification, where employees report to the workplace and find that there is no work. Social dialogue plays a significant role towards the livelihoods change of the employees. In Kenya, the collective negotiations within General Wage Council resulted into the increase of minimum wages at 18% in 2017. Also, it allowed casual tea and flower pickers to rise 23% of their wages (Otieno,2018).

Table 2. Decent work indices based on decent work pillars in Kiambu county

Variable	Observation	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
DWI1	385	0.65	0.292	0	1
DWI2	385	0.44	0.209	0	1
DWI3	385	0.51	0.314	0	1
DWI4	385	0.41	0.362	0	1

Source: Primary data collection, 2022

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the various work literature on the analysis of decent work in agriculture, no study has looked at decent work compliance among individual casual workers. This shortfall in literature contributes to the limitation of designing specific policies that can help improve the quality of employment conditions and reach the ILO's decent work standards. The study proposed a new approach to assessing decent work compliance based on each pillar dimension. This is a different approach compared to the existing ones where decent work is determined in general without separating dimensions. The reason why the research proposed this method is to show how different coffee estates comply with each dimension of decent work. This helps to show where coffee estates are still behind so that improvement can be done. The study used the approach of the arithmetic mean of each indicator score to construct an individual decent work index based on four decent work dimensions. Since decent work covers different indicators measured under each dimension, categorical variables were weighted to obtain indices. The research also grouped individuals into those with high compliance with decent work and those with low compliance with decent work.

The results show that the average compliance of decent work is still very low specifically under social dialogue and safety at a workplace with indices equivalent to 0.41 and 0.44 respectively. The coffee estates tried to put the effort into the other two dimensions but also the compliance with social protection is still low at the index of 0.51. There is an improvement in adequate earnings and productive employment at 0.65. All these indices show that more efforts are still needed in coffee production and primary processing to ensure decent work practices among casual workers as a way of improving their livelihoods. The study suggests that ILO inspectors and other policy designers should ensure that casual labourers are getting what ILO standards and labour market laws and regulations expect them to get. Consistent supervision is needed to confirm whether there is a promotion of decent work practices within coffee production and primary processing in Kiambu County, Kenya. This will promote the living standards of coffee casual workers and also stimulate sustainable development of the County as well as the Country. Estate owners and managers should note that job creation is not sufficient without looking at the quality of these jobs. This implies that policy measures should be considered to ensure the quality of available jobs.

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