

**A SECTORAL ANALYSIS OF TRADE OPENNESS AND WOMEN EMPLOYMENT
IN SELECTED EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES**

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**A RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than Kenyatta University for academic credit.

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ABSTRACT

The volume of trade within the East African Community declined as a share of Gross Domestic Product between 1995 and 1998, whereas trade openness improved for Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya by 26 and 8 percentage points, respectively, between 1998 and 2008. The worst trade regime, with a typically negative trend, took place between 2011 and 2021. The overall trade openness of the three member countries decreased between 2000 and 2019. Notably, female employment has fallen in the agriculture sector while rising in the service sector. This study was inspired by the fact that agriculture remains the main sector for employment in the East African Community. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the effect that trade openness has on female employment both for the agriculture and service sectors. The general objective of this study was to analyse trade openness and women employment in selected East African Community countries. The specific objectives were: to examine how trade openness affects female employment in the agricultural sector in selected East African Community nations; and to examine how trade openness affects the employment of women in the services sector in selected East African Community countries. Annual panel data from 1994 through 2019 was analysed. The Hausman test was used to identify which of these effects were significant between random and fixed effects. The results showed that trade openness had a negative effect on female employment in the agricultural sector while it had a positive effect in the services sector. This implies trade openness has shifted female employment pattern from agriculture to services sector. The study concludes that efforts should be made to retain female workers in agriculture by retraining them, while promoting their employment through trade facilitation services and support with marketing. The policy recommendations are that specialty importers and processors also purchase and sell the women empowerment messages that go with the products they sell. Women workers are also involved in family care work and therefore employers could adopt family friendly work arrangements such as flexible hours which would promote their ability to sustain employment. Concerning agricultural sector, the study recommends retraining of female workers in the agricultural sector to improve their skills set as well as providing credit to enable them move from lower cadre employment in agriculture.