Nature of Employment and Its Effect on the Quality of Life of Employees in SMTEs in Mombasa County, Kenya

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Tourism is an important economic sector globally contributing to economic development of many countries. Though the tourism sector has been credited with the creation of millions of jobs to populations' worldwide, there has been wide-ranging apprehension on its capacity to improve the populaces' quality of life. This study therefore sought to establish whether the nature of jobs created had an influence on quality of life of employees working in the STMES found in Mombasa County, Kenya. A mixed methods research design using the embedded approach was adopted. Primary data was collected using researcher administered semi-structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The target population was the 1,572 employees in the SMTEs. Probability Proportional to Size Sampling was used for the SMTEs employees where a total of 464 employees formed the sample size while purposive sampling was used for interview respondents. Linear regression was used to analyse quantitative data while tables were used for data presentation. The nature of employment had a statically significant effect on employees' quality of life ($R = 0.881$; $P = 0.000$; $V = 0.804$). This finding has implications for developing a regulatory framework that would enable SMTEs to create productive employment in that, it is a wake-up call to the government to re-look at the implementation of the economic blue print (Vision 2030) and identify functional implementation strategies it can use to ensure its overall goal of providing a high quality of life for citizens is achieved.

Keywords: SMTEs, nature of employment, quality of life, productive employment

Introduction

The significant role of the tourism sector in economic development of countries worldwide is well acknowledged (Copeland, 1991; Adams & Parmenter, 1995; Sinclair & Stabler, 1997, UNWTO, 2011; WTTC, 2014). Increasing tourist numbers globally is used as a key indicator of economic development. This is so majorly because of unlimited business opportunities availed by tourists through accommodation, transport, recreation, entertainment and many activities that support the tourists' stay at a destination (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). In Kenya, tourism has continued to be an important source of foreign exchange earnings and employment creation (KNBS, 2015). For instance, the total contribution of travel and tourism to employment including jobs directly supported by the industry was 9.2% of total employment (543,500 jobs) in 2014 and was

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expected to rise by 1.5% to 552,000 jobs in 2015, then 732,000 jobs by 2025, which represents an increment of 2.9% p.a. over the period (WTTC, 2015). If these current statistics and projections are anything to go by, there is no doubt that the travel and tourism sector will continue to contribute to economic growth through employment creation.

Despite rapid growth of the tourism sector over the years and its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment creation in Kenya (UNWTO, 2015; WTTC, 2015), there has been wide-ranging apprehension that this growth has not availed satisfactory opportunities for the creation of productive employment that could lift a bulk of the population out of poverty particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Kapsos, 2005; Fox & Gaal, 2008; McKinsey, 2012). The World Bank (2013) has identified inclusive growth as a key component of including of the poor in development. In as much, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2015's eighth (8) goal aims to promote inclusive growth and sustainable economic growth through productive employment and decent work (UNDP, 2016).

By the time of caring out this study, literature focusing on how Small and Medium-sized Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) may contribute to inclusive growth was scanty (CAFOD, 2014; Collier, 2014; World Bank, 2008; Commission on Growth and Development, 2008). Further, though tourism has been touted as a labour intensive industry creating millions of jobs (UNWTO, 2015a; WEF, 2013; WTTC, 2014) there appeared to be a dearth of literature on the nature of employment created and the ability of such employment to translate to an improved quality of life for the labour force. This study was therefore conducted with the aim of filling this gap specifically for employees working in the STMES found in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Theoretical Underpinning

The study was pegged on two theories: the inclusive growth theory and the subjective hedonism theory. Though several definitions have been put forth for inclusive growth (Klasen, 2010; Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2012; OECD, 2013), here is no universally accepted definition of the inclusive growth concept. However, one common feature that appeared to run across the definitions is the ability of incomes generated from employment to translate to an improved quality of life and wellbeing for a majority of the labour force. The most critical component of inclusive growth is the creation of decent jobs (World Trade Organization (WTO), 2012) which in turn paves the way for broader social and economic advancement. Economic growth would be considered inclusive if it translates to an improved quality of life for a majority of the population (Cielito, 2010; Alexander, 2015; OECD, 2016). If the SMTEs, which employ majority of the labour force, are able to create productive employment which translates to an improved quality of, it will be deemed that they have played a role in lifting large numbers of the population out of poverty which ensures that as economic growth occurs, poor people who comprise majority of the population are not left behind but included in the growth process hence the term "inclusive growth". Globally, SMEs have been identified as major drivers for inclusive growth (OECD, 2017; OECD, 2018a). This is due to their potential to create job opportunities across geographic areas and sectors, employing broad segments of the labour force, including low-skilled workers, and providing opportunities for skills development. SMEs contribute more than one third of GDP in emerging and developing economies and account for 34% and 52% of formal employment respectively (OECD, 2017).

The concept of inclusive growth is related and supported by quality of life theories on the view that the employment generated by SMTEs should translate to an improved quality of life for the labour force. According to the quality of life theory of subjective hedonism (Schwarz & Strack, 1999) when a person

evaluates his/her quality of life they base the evaluation on information that is appropriate and relevant to them thus the best way to measure quality of life is through that person's own evaluations. This, as propounded by Bognar (2005) is best carried out by surveys with questions about people's happiness or overall satisfaction with their lives or with particular dimensions of their lives. To this end, respondents are asked to give their evaluation of quality of life by indicating their level of happiness or satisfaction on some ordinal scale. This study therefore adopted the subjective hedonism theory to measure quality of life from the subjective perspective.

Nature of Employment and Quality of Life

According to Liu 1976 as cited in Rokicka (2014), there are as many definitions of quality of life as there are people. However, the simplest and most straight forward definition is that provided by Delibasic et al. (2008) who define quality of life as "the degree of wellbeing felt by an individual or group of people". This may best be measured using the subjective criteria which exists in the individual's consciousness and researchers are able to identify them only form the individual's responses (Susniene & Jurkaukas, 2009). Quality of life is influenced by many factors and conditions such as personal and family life, income, employment, working conditions among others (Ruzevicus, 2016). Further, Rokicka (2014) asserts that even though there is no universally accepted definition of quality of life covering all aspects of the phenomenon, this should not be an obstacle preventing its measurement.

Albouy, Godefroy, and Lollivier (2012) recommend that, measuring a person's quality of life should entail assessing their situation in terms of several different dimensions such as in material terms, health, housing conditions, insecurity among others then deducing whether they are in a position to have a "satisfactory" quality of life. In their study, they used nine (9) aspects of quality of life, i.e., material living conditions, financial risks to which people are exposed to, health, level of education, working conditions, involvement in public life, contact with others, economic security and physical security. They found that, people with a low standard of living possibly brought about by their low incomes were disadvantaged in all dimensions of life in that they had to cope with greater financial constraints, with material living conditions that were distinctively inferior, more difficult working conditions and lower levels of economic and physical security. Additionally, Moscardo (2009), Aref (2011), and Aceleanu (2012) revealed that having a job was associated with quality living by about 90% of the population. However, these studies did not go further to state the kind of jobs that would result in improved quality of life. OECD's (2009) study found that SMEs that generate jobs are an important channel for inclusive growth and poverty reduction in both emerging and low income economies. Thus, putting in place strategies to improve their productivity can help governments achieve economic growth, hence improve the quality of life for low skilled workers. Moreover, entrepreneurial opportunities in SMEs present an opportunity for economic and social participation and upward mobility by enabling disadvantaged or marginalized groups to create their own opportunities to participate in the economy which is key in driving the inclusive growth agenda (OECD, 2017).

Although the concept of quality of life is implicit in much academic literature, many academicians have explored it in terms of the contribution of tourism to residents' quality of life (Moscardo, 2009; Kim, 2002; Jurowski & Uysal, 2002; Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013). Additionally, most studies have focused on employee quality of work life in general (Jerome, 2013; Kubendran, Muthukumar, & Priyadharshini, 2013; Subhashini & Ramani, 2014; Aarthy & Nandhini, 2016). However, literature focusing specifically on how the nature of

employment created by SMTEs would contribute to an improved quality of life for employees was missing.

Research Methodology

This paper was part of a research thesis "Small and Medium-sized Tourism Enterprises as Drivers for Inclusive Growth: Perspectives of the Regulatory Framework in Mombasa County", among the study the objective was to examine the effect of employment on the quality of life of employees working in SMTEs in Mombasa County. The study utilized a mixed methods embedded design where a questionnaire was the major method of primary data collection while data gathered through semi-structured interviews played a supportive role. The target population was the 1,572 employees working in SMTEs in the County where a total of 464 employees calculated at 95% confidence level and 5% precision level (Israel, 1992) and a finite population correction factor (Rose, Spinks, & Canhoto, 2015) formed the sample size. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on four (4) respondents selected through purposive sampling from the Tourism Regulatory Authority, Kenya Coast Tourism Association (KCTA), Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers and Caterers (KAHC), and Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO). Purposive sampling was considered the most appropriate because, it was deemed that the respondents targeted in the four organizations would have the information sought by the study. The primary data collection was conducted for a period of six months from October 2016 through March 2017.

Pretesting of the data collection instruments was conducted on respondents randomly selected from the target population comprising 2% of sample size from each stratum but who were not included in the actual data collection. Questions that appeared difficult or not easily understood by respondents were rephrased using simpler language while those that had been repeated were removed. Additionally, some statements on Likert scales that yielded negative reliability coefficients were reworded while those that yielded unacceptable coefficients were deleted as per the recommendations from the statistical package used to test the reliability of the research instruments. Content validity (De Vos et al., 2002) was established using a panel of experts; three (3) Tourism Regulatory Officers, one (1) representative from a Tourism Trade Association in Mombasa County, and one (1) Statistician. They assessed the format, wording, content, overall appearance of the instruments and their ability to meet the study objectives. Internal reliability of the research instruments was determined using the reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004). The questionnaire for SMTE employees was found to have a reliability coefficient of 0.855. Data gathered through semi-structured interviews and from various government documents were analyzed using content analysis (Polit & Hungler, 1995; Elo & Kyngas, 2008). A letter of authorization from Graduate school was obtained as well as written permission to conduct the research from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) by way of a research Permit. Respondents were informed of their rights to voluntarily consent to provide the information sought and assured that appropriate anonymity and confidentiality procedures would be adhered to.

Findings and Discussion

Response Rate

The primary data collection exercise came to a close after six months with three hundred and eighty-seven (387) questionnaires for SMTEs employees having been collected for analysis representing a response 83% which was considered significantly valid.

Demographic Profile and General Information of Respondents

Gender distribution of SMTEs employees was almost equal at 52.2% ($N = 387$) Male and 47.8% Female, suggesting that employment opportunities in SMTEs appeal to either gender posibly due to affirmative action campaigns that have been conducted over the years, enabling both men and women to compete on a level platform and the job. Majority of SMTEs employees (59.9%, $N = 387$) fell in the 26-35 years' age category followed by the 36-45 years' age group (20.9%) while those of 46 years and above had the least representation at 4.1% of total respondents surveyed. This finding suggests that most (74.9%) SMTEs in the county employed young people who were aged 35 years and below possibly because they are considered energetic, innovative and take instructions better than the older generation who are mostly considered as rigid and resistant to change. SMTEs employees with diploma level of education were the majority at 60.5% ($N = 387$) while those with Bachelors' degree had the least representation comprising of 13.4% of total respondnets surveyed during the study. This finding suggests that most people working in the SMTEs in the county had diploma level of education and below comprising of 86.6% ($N = 387$) of total respondnets sruveyed. The reason for this could be twofold. First, it could be that SMTEs employers may have a distorted view that graduates are expensive hence they may not afford them or they may not be in a position to meet graduate expectations. Second, it could be that graduates shy away from employment opportunities in SMTEs probably due to the low salaries offered in such establishments. As Harris and Reid (2005) found, most graduates rarely consider employment in SMTEs due to the perception that SMTEs not only offer lower salaries and benefits compared to larger firms but also there is a lack of clearly defined graduate positions, lack of training opportunitites and lack of formality in roles and career paths. The duration an individual has worked/served in an enterprise denotes the attractiveness of the job in terms of the benefits offered and the general working environment, majority of SMTEs employees (51.4%, $N = 387$) had worked in their respcetive establishments for a period of 2-3 years while those who had worked for above five (5) years had the least represntation at 10%. Although most SMTEs (47.5%) had existed for five (5) years and above as depicted the general this study, only a partly 10% of employees had worked in their respective SMTEs for above five (5) years. This finding suggests that there could be a high employee turnover in these SMTEs. There is a probability that SMTEs do not provide attractive packages, clear paths for career progression and training opportunities hence cultivating employee loyalty becomes an uphill task for the owners/managers. Further, majority of SMTEs employees (48.8%, $N = 387$) earned an average monthly income of Kshs 20,001-30,000 while those who earned an average income of above Kshs 40,000 had the least representation at 4.1% of total respondnets surveyed. This finding infers that most SMTEs (85.5%, $N = 387$) paid salaries of Kshs 30,000 and below to their employees.

Effects of Nature of Employment on the Quality of Life of Employees

This study was based on the philosophy that if the employment generated by SMTEs led to an improved quality of life for the labour force, it would have contributed to lifting large numbers of the population out of poverty which would ensure that the employees working in these SMTEs are included in the growth process as economic growth occurs hence the term "inclusive growth". Explicitly, inclusive growth as the ultimate dependent variable in this study was measured on how the employment contributed to employee's quality of life. To measure the SMTEs employees' quality of life, the approach proposed by Bognar (2005) using subjective indicators revolving around epitomes of the subjective hedonism theory (Schwarz & Strack, 1999) underpinning this study was applied. To this end, tenets touching on how the employees' jobs had influenced

their quality of life or how their lives had changed since they got the job were put on a five-point Likert scale. SMTEs employees were then requested to indicate their degree of agreement with the statements on a scale of 1 to 5. Means and standard deviations for each variable were then calculated using descriptive analysis as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Effect of Nature of Employment on the Quality of Life of Employees Working in SMTEs in Mombasa County

	N		Mean	Std. deviation
	Stat	Stat	Std. error	Stat
The benefits offered by the enterprise provide financial security for me and my family	387	2.09	0.037	0.737
Since I got this job, I have been able to buy material things such as household items that make my life comfortable	387	2.12	0.049	0.969
My employer provides medical cover as one of the benefits to employees	387	3.22	0.057	1.124
The pay from my job enables me meet educational needs for my family and myself	387	2.14	0.046	0.896
I feel I have made progress in achieving my life goals	387	2.15	0.051	0.997
I am content with my job hence no need to worry about the future	387	2.19	0.048	0.948
I feel my life is complete and worthwhile working in this job	387	1.97	0.050	0.993
Valid N (listwise)	387			

Factors closer to five (5) represent the strongest values. Source: Research findings.

The results in Table 1 show that 6 variables yielded low mean scores (M ≤ 2) and low standard deviations which suggests that most answers from survey respondents fell in the disagree column. Only one variable, i.e., "my employer provides medical cover as one of the benefits to employees" produced a mean score at the neutral point (M = 3.22, SD = 1.124) and a high standard deviation which would mean that respondents had mixed reactions towards this variable. These findings imply that majority of SMTEs employees disagreed that they felt their lives were complete and worthwhile working in their jobs (80.7%, N = 387); the benefits offered by their enterprises provided financial security for themselves and their families (80.8%); they had been able to buy material things such as household items that made their lives comfortable (71.8%); the pay from their jobs enabled them meet educational needs for self and family (76.2%); they felt they had made progress in achieving life goals (73.3%) and that they were content with their jobs hence they were not worried about the future (69%).

To support this finding, a general question was posed where the SMTEs employees were asked to indicate their view on whether they felt their current jobs had generally contributed to an improvement in their quality of life.

Table 2

SMTEs Employees' View on Jobs' Contribution to Overall Quality of Life

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	59	15.2
No	328	84.8
Total	387	100.0

Source: Research findings.

Majority (85%, $N = 387$) indicated that they felt that their lives had not improved while the rest indicated otherwise as shown in Table 2. These findings infer that majority of the SMTEs employees felt that their jobs had not contributed to an improvement in their quality of life, possibly due to the meager income SMTEs employees earned (Kshs 30,000 and below). This therefore denied them financial security hence they were not able to afford material living conditions and other elements that would make their lives worthwhile. This finding corroborates Albouy et al. (2012)'s finding that low incomes exposed individuals to a low standard of living thus disadvantaging them in all dimensions of life such that majority had to cope with greater financial constraints, inferior material living conditions, more difficult working environments, and lower levels of economic and physical security. This result suggests that the jobs created by SMTEs in the County may not be described as productive or decent and therefore employees in these enterprises may be left out of the growth process as economic growth occurs as put forward by ILO, UNCTAD, UNDESA, WTO (2012). This finding further supports the ideas of Kapsos (2005), Fox and Gaal (2008), and McKinsey (2012) who noted that despite the tourism sector having experienced rapid growth worldwide, there has been wide-ranging apprehension that this growth has not created adequate productive employment to lift a bulk of the population out of poverty particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Following these results and a review of literature, it was imperative to establish whether there was a relationship between the nature of employment and employees' quality of life. Consequently, it was hypothesized that there was no significant effect of nature of employment on employees' quality of life. Since data for both variables were ordinal (on Likert scales) it was appropriate to convert them to interval data for linear regression to be conducted. To this end, composite scores were calculated for both variables then linear regression analysis used to test the hypothesis applying the model $Y = a + \beta X + e$

where, Y = SMTEs employees' quality of life;

$\quad$ a = constant/intercept;

$\quad$ β = Slope (beta coefficient for nature of employment);

$\quad$ X = nature of employment;

$\quad$ e = error term.

Table 3

Model Summary[b] for Nature of Employment and Employees' Quality of Life

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	$df1$	$df2$	Sig. F change
1	0.881[a]	0.838	0.816	3.43301	0.816	196.335	1	385	0.000

Notes. a. Predictors: (Constant), nature. b. Dependent variable: quality.

Computed using $\alpha = 0.05$. Chi-Square test: $X^2 = 3066.898$; $df = 336$; $P = 0.000$; Cramers' $V = 0.804$.

The R value in Table 3 which usually represents simple correlation between the dependent and independent variables is 0.881. This indicates a high degree of correlation between nature of employment and employees' quality of life. The R^2 value which normally indicates how much of the total variation in dependent variable (quality of life) can be explained by the independent variable (nature of employment) is 0.838 which implies that 83.8% of employees quality of life can be explained by the nature of their employment which is quite significant.

Table 4

ANOVA^a for Nature of Employment and Employees' Quality of Life

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
	Regression	2,313.912	1	2,313.912	196.335	0.000^b
1	Residual	4,537.427	385	11.786		
	Total	6,851.339	386			

Notes. a. Dependent variable: quality. b. Predictors: (Constant), nature.

Table 4 shows that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable which in this case is employees' quality of life ($P = 0.000$). The coefficients (Table 5) provide information to predict SMTEs employees' quality of life and determine whether the nature of employment created by SMTEs statistically contributes to the model by looking at the "sig" column ($P = 0.000$).

Table 5

Coefficients^a for Nature of Employment and Employees' Quality of Life

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.316	0.563		14.766	0.000
	nature	0.611	0.022	0.581	14.012	0.000

Note. a. Dependent variable: quality.

From Table 5, the regression equation was presented thus: SMTEs employees' quality of life = 8.316+0.611 (nature of employment), which infers that for every additional element of nature of employment, SMTEs employees' quality of life is expected to increase by the value indicated in the "B" column. The *P* value of below 0.05 ($P = 0.000$) suggests that these findings may be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. To endorse the validity of the findings generated through linear regression analysis, it was imperative to apply other statistical methods. To this end, Chi-square test of significance and Cramers' *V* were used. As indicated in the caption in Table 3, the findings revealed a statistically significant high association between the nature of employment and employees' quality of life ($X^2 = 3,066.898$; *df* = 336; *P* = 0.000; Cramers' *V* = 0.804). This result shows that the nature of employment created by SMTEs had a high statistically significant effect on employee's quality of life. On this premise therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

Previous studies on quality of life revealed that having a job was associated with quality living by about 90% of the population (Moscardo, 2009; Aref, 2011; Aceleanu, 2012). The results of this study revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the nature of employment created by SMTEs and employees' quality of life. These results are significant in at least one major respect in that although literature indicated that having a source of income was associated with quality of life for majority of employees, these studies neither went further to elaborate on the nature of jobs that would lead to an improved quality of life nor provided parameters that were used to measure the nature of employment. This study explicitly looked at nature of employment in terms of income benefits, working hours and balancing work and non-work life, security of employment and skills development and training relating it with quality of life in terms of economic and physical safety, material living conditions, education and overall experience of life. This is thus a novel finding and contribution to knowledge in the tourism industry.

This finding has key implications for developing a framework that may enable SMTEs to create productive employment and therefore spur inclusive growth. Specifically, the implications are twofold. First, this finding is a wakeup call to the government to re-look at the implementation of the economic blue print (Vision 2030) which aims to transform the country into a newly industrializing middle-income, providing a high quality of life for all her citizens. Precisely, it is imperative for the government to identify functional implementation strategies it can use to drive this agenda to ensure that its overall goal of providing a high quality of life is achieved. Second, under the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development (UNDP, 2016) which Kenya ratified in the year 2016, the concept of productive employment and inclusive growth feature prominently. Therefore, crafting strategies that will facilitate SMTEs to create product employment will enable Kenya to make a major stride in her quest to promote sustained inclusive growth through full productive employment and decent work as espoused in the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is worth noting that the data for this study were collected from a one-time measurement of data (cross-sectional data) in a specific setting i.e. Mombasa County. Additionally, there could be some exogenous and endogenous factors such as spending behavior, family size among others that may have affected the ability of incomes earned by SMTEs employees to translate to an improved quality of life. Although such factors were tentative and outside the scope of this study, it is imperative that more research is undertaken on the relationship between the nature of employment and employees' quality of life probably taking some of these variables into account before the association between these two variables is clearly understood and concluded. These results therefore need to be interpreted and applied with caution.

Conclusions

This finding is wake-up call to the government to re-look at the implementation of the economic blue print (Vision 2030) and identify functional implementation strategies that can be used to ensure that its overall goal of providing a high quality of life for citizens is achieved. This may be achieved by developing a framework that would enable SMTEs to create productive employment, as well as promoting sustained inclusive growth through full productive and decent work in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ratified in the year 2016. Although this study found that the nature of employment had a statistically significant effect on employees' quality of life, there could be some factors such as spending behavior, family size among others that were not captured in this study. It is therefore imperative that more research is undertaken centering on these factors before the association between aforementioned variables is clearly understood and concluded.

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