Trade Liberalization and Female Employment in the East African Community

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Abstract
The United Nations reported that just 47 per cent of women of working age participated in the labour market in 2020, compared to 74 per cent of men. Although there have been significant changes in the Gross Domestic Product and trade structure, structural changes in employment have been negligible in Sub-Saharan Africa and particularly in The East African Community. Despite being above the Sub-Saharan Africa average female Employment to Population, all the East African Community member states that are the focus of this study have had a declining Employment to employment-to-population ratio. The primary goal of this study is to look into the impact of trade integration on gender outcomes in the East African Community. This was achieved by combining the Phillips and Okuns law to link the relationship between unemployment and its direct and indirect variables. Annual panel data between 2000 to 2021 was utilised. The results show that trade openness has a depressing effect on the share of women employed in the agricultural sector and a positive effect on the share of female employment in the services sector. This trend could be explained by the closeness of the sectors, meaning that female workers do not need new skills to move between the agricultural and services sectors. For women to take advantage of job opportunities in the services sector that improve inequality there is a need to reskill women so that they can take advantage of higher-level job opportunities in the services sector.

Keywords: *Women employment, Structural transformation, Gender, Trade liberalization, Trade policy, Okun's law, Phillip's curve.*

1. Introduction
Women's labour-market positions are consistently worse than men's over the world. This fact has sparked policy debate at the international, regional, and local levels, as the empowerment of women is increasingly viewed as critical to economic development. According to Wodon, (2018) Women's lack of chances has significant economic consequences for them, their families, and their countries. Gender equality can provide significant benefits to women's welfare. As a result, their households and communities would gain enormously, and countries would be able to attain their maximum development potential. This argument has been echoed internationally, by the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3, and lately the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. Despite these efforts, the gender disparity in the job market has stubbornly persisted in both developed and developing economies (Konte & Tirivayi 2020). According to UNDP (2015), the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) economies are in the middle of this predicament already burdened by low incomes and poor human development.

The level of unemployment is a crucial economic indicator since it reflects the state of a nation's economy. Similarly, regardless of their level of economic growth, unemployment is a persistent thorn in the side of many economies around the world. The significant influx of job seekers into Africa's low-absorbing economies has been and is now a recurring concern for the leaders and policymakers of these countries (ILO, 2019). Little to nothing appears to have changed in terms of the use of human resources, despite enormous efforts and resources being mobilized and directed toward resolving this phenomenon through policies, programs, and initiatives. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the percentage of people who are economically active and seeking for employment who are unemployed but not yet employed includes both those who have lost their jobs and those who have willingly left their jobs (Mathenge & Muturi, 2021). Data from ILO show that the rate of men employment have remained above the women not only in SSA but also in the SSA sub-regions and has declined by only a small margin between 1991 and 2015. Noticeably the East African (EA) sub region had the smallest decline of the gender gap remaining fairly flat at 7 percent compared to North Africa and Central Africa sub regions who had 50 and 10 percent respectively. Konte & Tirivayi (2020) suggests that an in-depth analysis is needed to analyse the prominent sub-optimal advancement concerning reducing the gender employment gap.

The labour market in Sub-Saharan Africa cannot be fully comprehended by focusing just on the unemployment rate. Because social security systems remain inadequate in the majority of sub-regional nations, a large proportion of people of working age cannot afford to be unemployed. Instead, to maintain minimal living standards, they are compelled to engage in any type of occupation. As a result, the majority of people who are employed work in informal jobs, with poor pay and little social safety (ILO, 2019). According to Oslington, (2005) trade policy is not usually the prominent issue where employment inquiries are concerned, and when both are on the table employment rules the debate. A common belief among economists is that trade policy and unemployment should be discussed separately whenever they are topics of discussion, particularly when job losses are at the forefront of the conversation (Raifu, 2017). While this view may have some merit, it is essential to recognize the intricate relationship between trade policy and unemployment, as they can significantly impact each other.

Trade liberalization became more pervasive in developing nations during the 1980s and 1990s. A time when all of its members were guaranteed equal commercial possibilities by multilateralism. However, Narlikar, (2006), argues that emerging nations, which are affiliates of the one-member, one-vote framework global trading system, have not had any improvement in the agenda of equity and fairness. Traditional trade models have assumed that a country's competitiveness is determined by the endowment with the factor of productions relative to partners, or technological latitude. However, it has been demonstrated that technology inequalities as well as infrastructural, and investment between nations persist, which does not favour emerging economies. Because of this mismatch, trade usually results in a growth in exports (labour-intensive), in which low-skilled labour is in high demand and is acquired at extremely cheap wages (Ventura, 2014). In virtually all of SSA, women are still much more susceptible to informality than men are, and where vulnerable employment is prevalent, the gender difference is still noticeable. In some countries, such as Cameroon, The Gambia, and Zambia, women outnumber men by more than ten percentage points in informality rate. There is a significantly higher probability of women as opposed to men offering family labour, which is a major contributor to women's greater rate of informality. Just 15 percent of working men in the SSA are contributing family workers, compared to 33 percent of working women (ILO, 2019). Most nations' trade policies over the past 20 years have been focused on market opening and trade liberalization. The Washington Consensus, which predominated in the 1990s, made the assumption that free trade, along with investment liberalization, financial system deregulation, privatization of publicly owned businesses, and other measures, would facilitate the process of sustained economic growth and the growth of productive capacities. Higher rates of growth and

productivity would subsequently increase employment possibilities, maintain standard of living for both men and women, and give them an equal opportunity to profit from macroeconomic measures. However, trade policy and other macroeconomic policies were seen as "gender neutral" (UNCTAD 2011). Studies such as (Korinek Moise & Tange, 2021) have endorsed that notion; trade has primarily generated jobs in export-oriented industries, where employers would like to hire more women than men. Given that women represent a substantial portion of the relatively abundant factor in those nations, trade has demonstrated some favourable results for women when it comes to employment. Other OECD research reveals that while earnings in exporting enterprises may be greater for both men and women, the gender wage gap still exists in these firms in OECD economies. Trade can lessen gender discrimination because it increases competitiveness and makes it harder for local firms to absorb the extra expenses associated with discriminating against men and women. However, compared to businesses that primarily operate on the home market, a higher gender wage disparity has been observed in some OECD nations, particularly among highly qualified workers. The alleged explanation is that flexible working hours are crucial for exporting businesses, and women are thought to be less flexible when it comes to their working schedules. Additionally, it is well known that women have some limitations when acting as economic actors, such as a general lack of access to inputs, information, and technology (Korinek et al., 2021). Moreover, because they must divide their time between a job and domestic duties, women have less experience in the labour market. Furthermore, even at comparable skill levels, it has been established that men earn higher than women, and significantly fill informal jobs because they have fewer benefits and possibilities to find suitable employment. Although women's economic circumstances have improved somewhat, there has been little advancement in terms of formal employment because they are viewed as low-skilled workers (Ventura, 2014). These contradictions play out and stall the expected gains of gender equality. According to Jaffri Sana & Asjed (2015), equal pay for both sexes, especially for those with equal access to finance and inputs as well as identical levels of education and skills among others demonstrates gender equality. It also refers to the availability of jobs for both sexes. Women are a significant source of fresh labour and can boost economic growth by lessening the effects of ageing economies' diminishing labour forces.

Although there have been various efforts to encourage labour market gender equality, the mean Female Labour Force Participation Rate (*FLFPR*) has been declining (Jaffri et al., 2015). In Sub-Saharan Africa, female labour force participation as a percentage of the population (female) has fallen from 64 percent in 1990 to 63 percent in 2019. Furthermore, across all locations, the FLFPR has remained lower than that of their male counterpart. Sub-Saharan Africa stands out among developing regions for having relatively high female employment-to-population (ETP) ratios. Comblon et al., (2017) claim that compared to 20 per cent in North Africa, 50 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 65 per cent in East Asia, the ETP ratio for the region as a whole was close to 60 per cent. Consequently, compared to other locations, the gender gap in ETP is quite minimal. There are many explanations attributed to the reported great levels of involvement concerning the market for female labour. The first points to the large proportion of working age people who are employed in agriculture, which includes both men and women. Another factor has to do with the extreme poverty in the area, which means that most women cannot afford not to work. Notwithstanding the great intensities of involvement, numerous studies have exposed the existence of considerable differences in the ratios between the countries in the region (Comblon *et al.*, 2017).

In lower-middle-income nations (excluding those in sub-Saharan Africa), over 60 per cent of women who were in the labour force in 2019 worked in the services sector, compared to 40 per cent of women in sub-Saharan Africa. Notably, despite a growth in their participation in manufacturing and services since 2010, African women continue to work primarily in the agricultural and service sectors. Outside sub-Saharan Africa, women who participated in the labour force in lower-middle-income countries in 2019 were below 20 per cent, compared to

nearly 50 percent of women in agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa therefore continues to have the greatest rate of female labour force participation in the agriculture sector, however overall participation fell from 2000 to 2019. There are many explanations for the reported high levels of female labour market involvement. One is the large proportion of people who are working age who are employed in agriculture, which includes both men and women. Despite considerable changes in the EAC's GDP and trade structure, there have been limited changes in the employment structure. Among EAC partner countries, Rwanda and Tanzania experienced the greatest changes in of female employment distribution by sector. The majority of the population, particularly women, work in agriculture. According to the most recent data available, 96 percent of women are still employed in agriculture in Burundi, 76 percent in Kenya, 84 percent in Rwanda, 71 percent in Tanzania, and 77 percent in Uganda (UNCTAD, 2018). In terms of employment and economic activity, the informal economy accounts for a sizable share, especially concerning the most vulnerable persons in emerging economies. Women who work for themselves in East Africa are especially vulnerable to informality owing to gender-based constraints on employment for wages. The impacts of regional integration particularly in EAC focusing on the general well-being of the constituent countries have been studied in a variety of disciplines.

The EAC's gender implications, on the other hand, have gotten less attention (UNCTAD, 2018). Trade policies are not gender neutral in the real world because fluctuations in the volume of trade in a country as well as their pattern occur within the context of institutions and economic systems that frequently reflect gender bias. This has two repercussions. First, commerce results in gender-specific consequences. By altering relative pricing, production structure, employment trends, and relative incomes, trade has an impact on economies. Depending on their relative positions as wage employees, producers, and consumers, men and women often face different repercussions from changes in trade patterns and volumes within a country. Gender differences frequently have an impact on competitiveness in terms of strategies of trade and the degree of impact stemming from a certain set of measures of trade transforms into the expected performance of the economy. As an example, unequal access to markets and information, insufficient capacity for production, and weak infrastructure all result in disparate chances for men and women. Figure 1 shows the ETP for EAC 1991-2021.
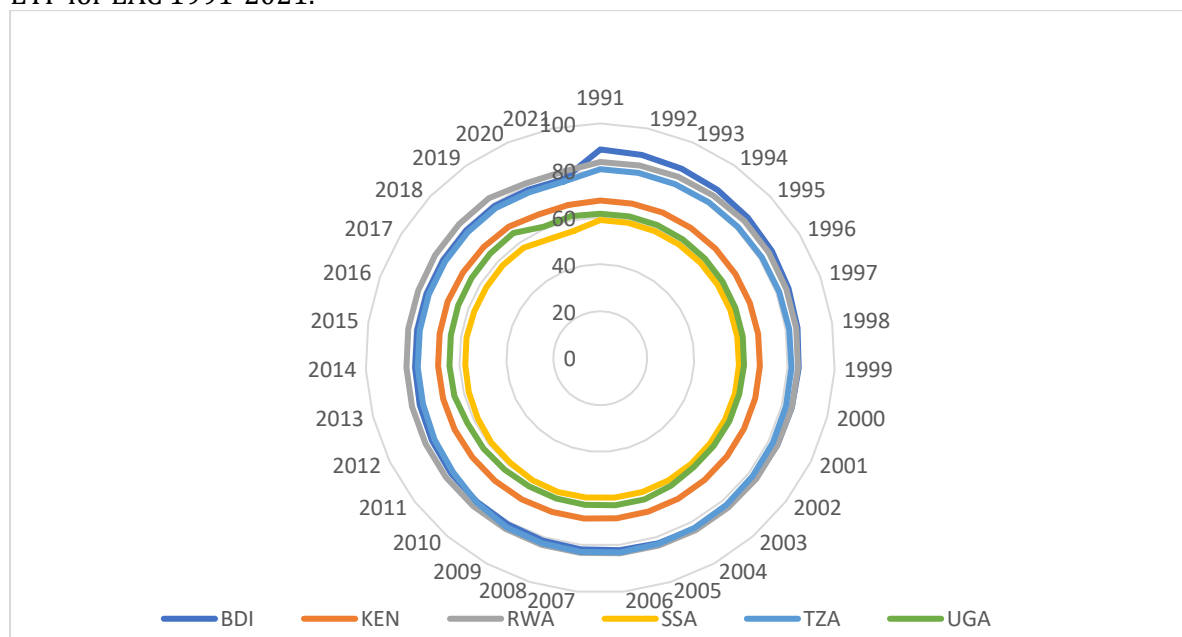

Figure 1: Female Employment to Population Ratio, 15+ (%) (Modeled ILO estimate)
Here, BDI= Burudi, KEN= Kenya, RWA= Rwanda, TZA= Tanzania, & UGA=Uganda
Source: World Development Indicators

Despite being above the SSA average female ETP, all the EAC member states that are the focus of this study have had a declining ETP. Between 1991 and 2021, Kenya saw her female ETP increase marginally from 67 percent in 1991 to 69 percent in 2016 and has declined since then. Uganda on the other hand female ETP has been the only exception having an increase from 62 percent in 1991 to 65 percent in 2019 albeit small for three decades. Burundi has seen an 11 percent point drop from 89 percent to 78 percent, Rwanda's 3 percent point decline from 84 percent in 1991 and Tanzania's 4 percent point from 81 percent to 77 percent over the last three decades. It is therefore important to study sub-regions to get a better understanding and formulate policies around the trade-inequality nexus. Although the EAC member states rank above other comparable developing countries such as Chile, and Mexico, the latter group has seen an increase in the female ETP ratio from 29 percent to 40 percent and 34 percent to 39 percent respectively between 1990 and 2020. The ETP is frequently regarded as a more reliable job creation or shrinking indicator than the unemployment rate. The employment-to-population ratio is less impacted by seasonal labour market variations than other indicators of labour force participation. In addition, the use of the "noninstitutionalized" civilian population as a denominator, excludes the following: people employed in the military; People confined to or living in mental institutions or facilities; prisoners; those living in residential care facilities such as skilled nursing homes and students. As a proxy for ETP this study adopted the sectoral proportion of women as a percent of total women employment. Figure 2 shows the trend in total unemployment in EAC.
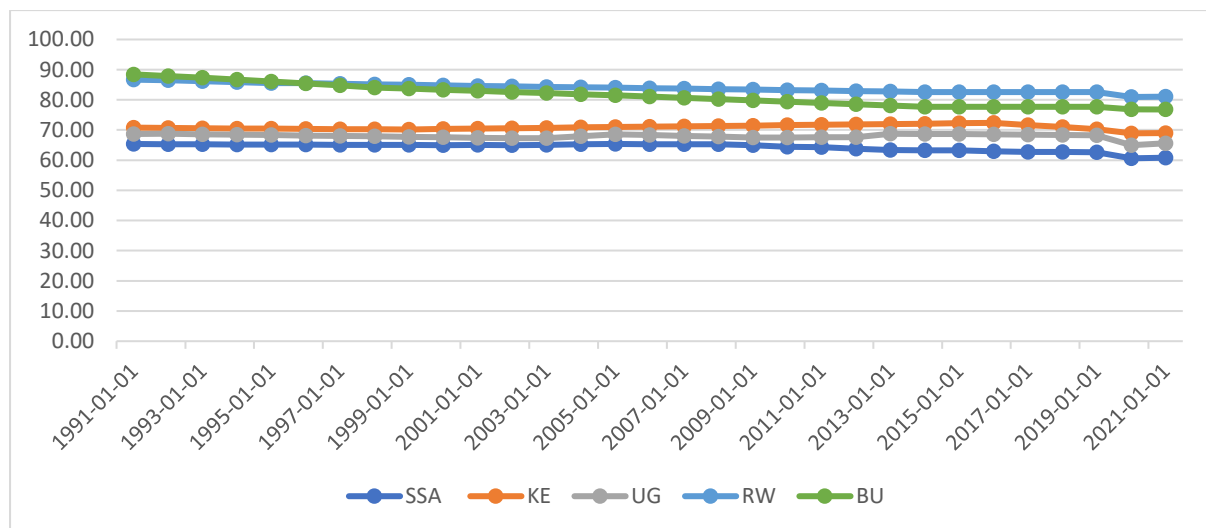

Figure 2: Total Employment to Population Ratio (%)
Source: World Development Indicators

As observed in Figure 1, EAC member states total employment to population is above the SSA average from 1991 to 2021 with a notable decline. In Rwanda and Burundi, employment has only declined by about 9 percentage points while Kenya and Uganda have seen a decline of about 3 percentage points over the last three decades. During the period between the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, the EAC had tremendous expansion in services as an economic activity and industry though at a smaller degree, with services overturning the dominance of the agricultural sector. However, the major alteration in the activities of the economy has been stabilizing since the mid-2000s. In comparison to SSA, the whole of EAC has a lower services and industry share in GDP and agriculture substantially commands a bigger proportion of GDP. Agriculture accounted for 31 percent of EAC GDP overall in 2016, compared to SSA's 18 percent. In comparison to the Sub-Saharan Africa average service share of 58 percent, the EAC's service share to GDP was only 47 per cent. SSA's contribution was similarly less than that of the industrial sector (22%). In SSA, the industrial sector contributes more to GDP than agriculture does. Services make up the bulk of

each country's GDP in the EAC area. Given the substantial significance that minerals play in its exports, the United Republic of Tanzania's industrial sector is extremely vital (UNCTAD 2019). In terms of trade in services share to GDP Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya albeit to a lower degree, have the highest percentages. Rwanda and Uganda, in particular, offer interesting case scenarios, due to their landlocked economies and lower trade openness. Agriculture contributes significantly to Kenya's GDP. This shows the slow structural change that the Kenyan economy has undergone in recent years (UNCTAD 2019). In general, using the average of SSA, all of the EAC member nations' GDPs have significantly higher agricultural proportions and smaller service shares. Apart from Tanzania, all the other member states of EAC have very low amounts of trade in industry when compared with the SSA mean. Such contrasts suggest the need for additional policies to help the EAC area transition from a rural/agricultural-based structure to one that is more focused on industry and services.

The labour market sectoral revolution is less prominent than the economic activity sectoral change, particularly for female employment. Despite the increasing shift in GDP composition toward services, the majority of people, particularly the majority of women, continue to work in agriculture in EAC partner countries. This is partly attributable to agriculture's low labour productivity, which necessitates the employment of additional labour in general. To ensure that the nation's food output demands are met, and free up labour from this sector, a structural shift in employment from the agricultural sector requires that the productivity of labour in the agricultural sector is increased as a necessity (UNCTAD 2019).
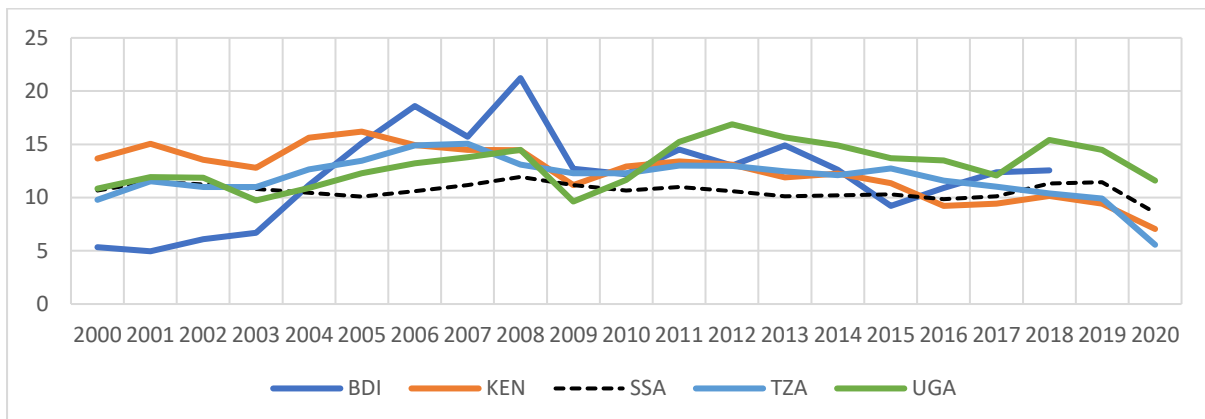

Figure 3: Trade in services (% GDP)
Here, BDI= Burudi, KEN= Kenya, TZA= Tanzania, & UGA=Uganda

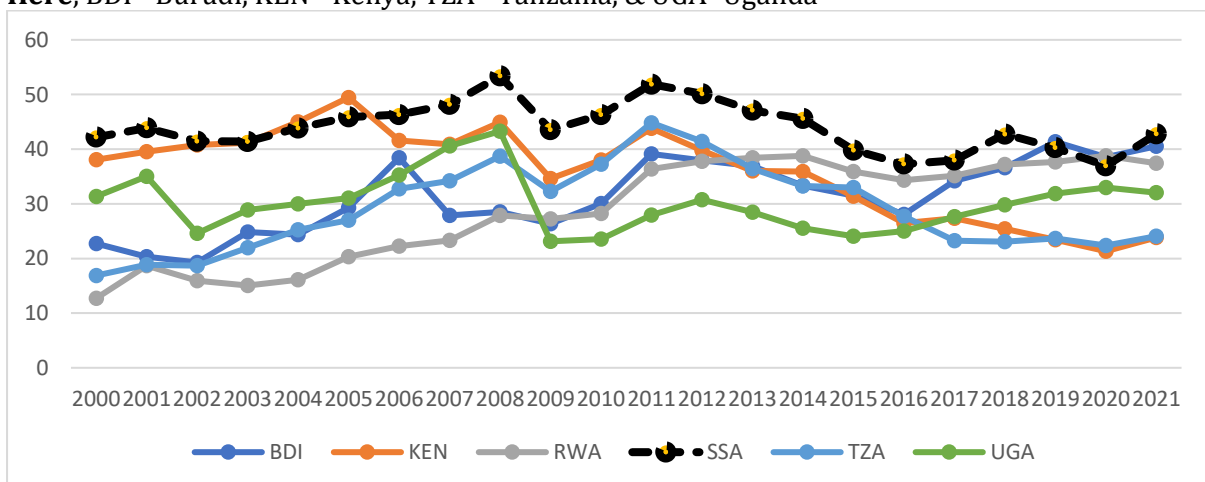**Figure 4***:* Merchandise trade % GDP
Here, BDI= Burudi, KEN= Kenya, RWA= Rwanda, TZA= Tanzania, & UGA=Uganda

From Figure 3 and Figure 4 trade in services and merchandise mirror the SSA trade pattern and the figures show a similar pattern. The trade in both merchandise and services has seen fairly constant albeit volatile. All member states exhibited an increasing trend between 2000 and 2008. The financial crisis of 2008-2009 was accompanied by a significant decline in global merchandise trade and trade recovered from 2009 and peaked in 2011 after which a decline ensued to date. Economists think that because of the anticipated benefits of trade, there is a tendency for trade to increase employment. However, many countries' actual experiences—particularly those that are developing—do not corroborate theoretical claims because many nations throughout the world suffer difficult problems including decreased employment despite integration and consequently increasing trade on a global scale (Raifu, 2017). As was previously mentioned, EAC is not an exception. The EAC as a whole has grown significantly to the point that, in 2021, it was in charge of the North and Central African sub-regions (African Development Bank, 2021). The sub-region is still dealing with a number of social ills, with unemployment being the most pervasive, despite the impressive growth and trade performance.

The 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) serves as the cornerstone of women's international rights (UNCTAD 2019). Various gender frameworks have been adopted locally by EAC members, and some of them have integrated gender issues into their trade strategy. The EAC treaty specifically acknowledges the contribution of women to the socio-economic development of the region and recognizes gender mainstreaming as a vital community principle. In 2017, EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill was enacted by the East African Legislative Assembly, to harmonize present gender frameworks among members. Such a measure provides an opportunity to develop a regional plan for integrating gender into trade policy. In terms of gender score (finding a job by women), Paraguay outscores (87%) four EAC members Rwanda (63%), Burundi and Uganda (73%) and Kenya (74%) (UNCTAD 2019). The availability of equality in a variety of areas, such as the provision of maternity and paternity leave, equal pay for labor of equal value, non-discrimination based on gender in employment, and equal working rights, is a prerequisite for finding employment. In the EAC, only Tanzania gets a score of 86 percent. These scores may however mask several work related shortcomings. In Burundi and Rwanda, for example, the law does not require equal pay for equal work. Similarly, in Rwanda, the law does not ban the firing of pregnant women (UNCTAD 2019). According to the United Nations, only 47 percent of women of working age were employed in 2020, compared to 74 percent of men, a gender gap that has been essentially stable since 1995. This implies that despite the robust legal framework, women have a long way to go to break the glass ceiling in the labour market, especially in the EAC region. By analysing how trade affects women's labour market in EAC, this study aims to fill an empirical gap in the growing body of knowledge on women and equality. The study therefore had three objectives:

1. To determine the effect of trade openness on women's employment in the agricultural sector in EAC
2. To determine the effect of trade openness on female employment in the services sector in EAC
3. To determine how trade openness affects female employment in the industry sector in EAC

2. Literature review

The rudimentary hypothetical underpinnings for the connection between many macroeconomic parameters and unemployment can be attributed to the Phillips curve (Phillips, 1958) and Okun's law (Okun, 1962). Phillips (1958) found evidence that the rate of pay increase and the unemployment rate in the United Kingdom are inversely connected. Phillips discovered that as the labour market constricted and the rate of unemployment fell, wages in nominal terms increased steeply between 1861 and 1957. Because price increases were inextricably linked to wage increases, this relationship became known as the inflation-unemployment trade-off. As a

result, the government may secure a lower unemployment rate at the expense of a higher inflation rate. This relationship is considered an unemployment and inflation trade-off because there is a general tendency for the unemployment jobless rate to fall when total demand exceeds economic capacity. Furthermore, as demand exceeds supply, wages and prices rise; as a result, higher prices are typically correlated with falling unemployment. Okun's (1962) study, which served as the theoretical framework for the demand-side explanation of unemployment, also looked at how real GDP changed in response to changes in unemployment. According to his research, there is an inverse relationship between changes in real GDP and changes in unemployment, and each increase in unemployment above 4 percent is associated with a three percent loss in real GDP. Alternatively, Okun posited a link between a percentage GDP gap and an unemployment rate larger than the natural rate of unemployment. To achieve a reduction in unemployment, real GDP growth must outperform potential output growth, according to this correlation. Pieters, (2018) argues that despite the lack of a clear trade–gender inequality relationship pattern globally, several channels by which gender equality can be improved by trade policy exist: first policies that promote competition by adopting new technologies hence reducing discrimination. Second are policies that involve upgrades of Technology that make jobs less physically demanding therefore favouring opportunities for women relative to men. Third, while trade openness policies can also induce a change in the sectoral production structure this can have positive or negative effects on gender inequality. Such findings are the key motivation on more studies on trade policy orientation in developing countries.

In examining the impacts on Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) of economic integration (Narayan et al., 2021) used Granger causality for the period 1999-2014. Their findings indicate that economic integration with high-income nations (rather than middle- and low-income countries) is most favourable to the FLFP in Vietnam. Furthermore, the study discovered that as Vietnam became more economically integrated, certain conventional determinants of FLFP (reproduction rate, female adolescents dropping out of secondary school, health status, government education spending, and life standard) were more (or less) important. The use of FLFP rate is a poor proxy for female employment because it includes those who are in the army. Compared with FLFP, the employment-to-population ratio is not as affected by seasonal fluctuations in the labour market. In addition, the use of the "noninstitutionalized" civilian population as a denominator, excludes the following: people employed in the military; People confined to or living in mental institutions or facilities; prisoners; those living in residential care facilities such as skilled nursing homes and students. Su, Tao Li, and Li (2020), whose study concluded that increasing trade openness improves female labour force participation initially but in the long run this relationship is reversed. Su, Tao Li, and Li (2020), contend that the findings are inconclusive, such that the more a country trades, gender equality improves. Labour force participation used in this study is an inadequate predictor of employment. Furthermore, it has been shown that the effects of exports and imports on work differ. This research therefore accounts for the inadequacy by adopting women's employment in agriculture and services to proxy trade openness. UNCTAD (2019) analysed the impact of trade integration on gender inequality in employment in both EAC and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). The study found that regional integration has been accompanied by a shift of sectoral employment towards the services sector. Overall, regional integration has not contributed significantly to the female employment. The study was restricted to the differences and similarities. Apparently, the same study points out that gender analysis should be carried out on a case-by-case basis. This study therefore offers a detailed study in the EAC with a view to unearth the implications of trade liberalization on female labour. Studies reviewed show that there is by now widespread recognition that trade Policies are not gender-neutral. Although the literature shows consensus on the trade-gender interaction, there are still empirical gaps in the analysis of trade policies. From the literature reviewed it is clear that while there is literature on the effect of economic integration on gender outcomes, literature at regional and sub-regional levels is sparse. Because of differences in sectoral composition of the economic and geographical characteristics, as well

as institutional and legal settings which impact on gender equality, gender analysis must be carried out on a case-by-case basis. Regional Economic Blocs (RECs) provide interesting case studies given their export orientation and the differences in socioeconomic characteristics of their member states which influence the welfare impact of regional integration. This therefore formed the basis of this study to study the unique characteristics of EAC integration effects on female employment. The most commonly used variable is the FLFP rate which most studies agree is a poor proxy of female employment.

3. Data and Methodology
3.1 Data and variables
The study adopted secondary and due to the data available, the dataset chosen is a cross-section dataset consisting of three (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) out of seven East African Countries covering a 21-year period, from 2000 to 2021.

Table 1: Variable Measurement and Definition

Name of Variable and symbol	Description	Data source
Dependent variable		
Female Employment in Agriculture(FAGRI)	The number of women employed in the Agricultural sector as a %of total female employment	World Development Indicators
Female Employment in Services (FSER)	The number of women employed in the Services sector as a % of total female employment	World Development Indicators
Female Employment in Industry (FIND)	The number of women employed in the Industry sector as a %of total female employment	World Development Indicators
Independent variables		
Inflation (CPI)	The rate of increase in prices over a given period of time measured by the consumer price index	World Bank
Trade in services (TSER)	Exports plus imports in services as a share of GDP	World Development Indicators
Trade in goods (TRG)	Exports plus imports in merchandise as a share of GDP	World Development Indicators
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	Foreign investment in the local economy (%)	World Bank
Population Growth (POP)	Population growth rate is the rate at which the number of individuals in a population increases in a given time period, expressed as a fraction of the initial population (%)	World Development Indicators
Per capita income (Y)	Per capita income measures the average income earned per person in a country in a specified year. It is calculated by dividing the area's total income by its total population (USD)	KNBS
Total debt Service (TDS)	The total amount that goes to servicing public and publicly guaranteed debt (%)	World Bank

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
CPI	9.451029	7.025711	-2.814698	34.08336
FDI	1.901307	1.692859	-.0588052	6.656597
POP	2.874438	.7780602	-.1121106	6.015691
GDP	25.73507	20.32759	1.902091	80.16517
TDS	2.158693	2.14265	.2164388	12.98728
TSER	13.56367	5.394479	3.628025	38.35872
TRG	32.01551	8.129533	16.51298	53.83401
FSER	19.0493	11.28249	2.41	38.14
FAGRI	77.9461	12.7508	54.05	96.85
FIND	3.0055	2.34174	.7	10.42

Source: Authors' computations (2023)

Inflation measured by CPI in EAC ranged between -0.2 in Burundi (2018), and 34 in Uganda (1994). The slightly high standard deviation of 7 masks the fact that inflation differentials in EAC

countries are not persistent, and have been converging since integration (Dridi & Nguyen, 2019). Foreign Direct Investment (inflows) as a proportion of GDP was at its peak in 2007 at (7%) in Uganda while it was lowest in Burundi at (-0.1%). The population growth among Burundi, Kenya Uganda and Tanzania has been between 1 percent and 4 percent since 2010. The range of minimum (-0.1%) and a maximum of 6 percent are due to the erratic trend in Burundi. the population growth of the other countries has been close as shown by the small standard deviation. Population growth in EAC ranges from 0.1 percent to 6 percent with a standard deviation of 0.8. this statistic does not show that between 2000 and 2018 the region's population increased by 67 percent according to (Kuzmin, 2020). The economic growth rate average within EAC was 25 percent albeit, the growth differs from country to country. Particularly Kenya's GDP (the largest in the region) expanded 6 times between 2000 and 2018 (Kuzmin, 2020). While the range of total debt service is narrow between 0.2 and 13 percent, according to the EAC secretariat the risk of debt distress remained high at 64 percent of GDP in 2019 for instance. The EAC protocol requires the EAC Member States to maintain a gross public debt ceiling of 50% of GDP in order to ensure public debt sustainability. As at 2022 Kenya, Uganda had surpassed this mark while Tanzania hovered around 40 percent. Considering that the exchange rate of the EAC member countries is volatile the total debt service also fluctuates immensely since the debt is foreign currency denominated. On average, the EAC member states trades more in goods (32 percent) compared to services (14 percent). As a proportion of GDP, the minimum and maximum trade in services was 0.2 and 13 percent respectively. On the other hand, the minimum and maximum trade in merchandise was 4 and 38 percent respectively. Concerning Female employment in EAC, agriculture is the key employment sector for women with the least being 54 percent, while the maximum was 96 per cent compared to services sector minimum of 2.4 percent and maximum 38 percent. Industry sector contributes least in employment of women in EAC with a range of 0.7 and 10 percent. Women constitute about 50 percent of the EAC population. Over time, there has been an agriculture-to-services alteration in the distribution of the economic sectors in EAC member countries, rendering the EAC economies to be services driven in female employment. However, this structural shift in economic activity has not been complemented by a shift in the employment structure with the same force, hence agriculture remains the main sector in terms of employment within the region (UNCTAD, 2018).

3.2 Model specification
There are several other determinants of unemployment beyond output and inflation. This study includes the following variables: trade openness, foreign direct investments, population size, and external debt. Trade openness manifests itself in the form of trade in services and trade in goods. Following (Mukisa et al., 2020) a linear empirical model was used to link unemployment to inflation, GDP, and other factors. According to OECD trade openness as an indicator measures a country or region's "openness" or "integration" in the world economy and will therefore trade openness was used as a proxy for integration. The estimable equations were specified as:

$$FAGRI_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 lnCPI_{it} + \beta_2 lnFDI_{it} + \beta_3 lnPOP_{it} + \beta_4 lnY_{it} + \beta_5 lnTDS_{it} + \beta_6 lnTRG_{it} + \beta_7 lnTRS_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \text{---3.1}$$

$$FSER_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 lnCPI_{it} + \beta_2 lnFDI_{it} + \beta_3 lnPOP_{it} + \beta_4 lnY_{it} + \beta_5 lnTDS_{it} + \beta_6 lnTRG_{it} + \beta_7 lnTRS_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \text{---3.2}$$

$$FIND_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 lnCPI_{it} + \beta_2 lnFDI_{it} + \beta_3 lnPOP_{it} + \beta_4 lnY_{it} + \beta_5 lnTDS_{it} + \beta_6 lnTRG_{it} + \beta_7 lnTRS_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \text{---3.3}$$

The dependent variables are the proportion of female employment as in agriculture, services and industry (FAGRI, FSER, FIND) sectors as a percent of total female employment. Inflation (CPI), per capita income (Y), population growth (POP), total external debt service (TDS), trade in services (TRS), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and trade in merchandise are the regressors (TRG). The effect of FDI on female employment is seen to be equivocal. FDI and domestic investment can both promote market labour mobility. According to the Phillips curve,

unemployment is inversely connected to inflation (CPI) in this scenario, hence a direct relationship is expected. According to (Jaffri et al., 2015) investment that leads to economic growth avails new opportunities work to both sexes. FDI in exporting firms increases labour demand. As a result, employers find it less expensive to hire female workers because they earn lower salaries, thus raising the proportion of female employment. Conversely, technology-based investment in the agro-manufacturing sector may lead to male computer and software engineers having an upper hand over women as a result of extra skills and education causing a lower participation of women in labour (Oostendorp, 2009). In a thriving economy, women have an easier and better chance of finding jobs, and they are more inclined to participate in the economy, resulting in more female participation in productive activities. A negative-growth economy, on the other hand, provides an obstructive environment defined by negative social and economic characteristics that further limit female employment opportunities. As a result, GDP Per Capita (Y) influences female employment positively. The lower the employment rates, the larger the population (POP). There are a great number of people looking for employment in developing countries; however, not everyone is qualified to find job; so, as the population density increases, the lower the probability of finding work for all residents, including women (Ventura, 2014). Theoretically, external debt promotes economic growth when channelled toward development-oriented projects. However, if a considerable percentage of the amount borrowed goes to foreign debt repayment, economic activity would fall, as will labour demand for the two genders (Mujahid, 2013). The bigger a country's trade in goods and services (TRG and TRS), the greater the employment prospects accessible, and the greater the odds for the residents to find work (Ventura, 2014) and therefore a positive relationship is expected.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

A descriptive and inferential study was performed to assess the influence of trade openness on female employment. To achieve this, the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values were utilized as descriptive statistics to describe the study variables. Inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis were used to investigate the impact of trade openness on female employment. The study's findings were presented in form of tables and figures. First, the Levin-Lin-Chu Test (LLC) was used to test for unit root. The following equation analysis forms the basis of the LLC test: $\Delta y_{i,t} = \beta_i + \delta_{i,t} + \theta_t + \rho_i y_{i,t-1} + \gamma_{i,t}$ where i=1,2…N, and t=1,2…T, which supports two-way fixed effects (β and Θ) as well as unit-specific time trends. Panel unit root test was carried out to establish stationarity and unit root at level was found in population, per capita income, trade in goods, share of female employment in services, and share of female employment in agriculture. It was found that at level, inflation, foreign direct investment, total debt service, trade in services and the share of women employment in services do not contain a unit root. Regressions could produce erroneous results if non-stationary variables were used, so the variables at first difference were used. Each variable was stationary on first difference at the 5 percent significance level.

Table 3: Levin – Lin – Chu Test

Variables at level				Variables at first difference		
	Z value	Prob.		Z value	Prob.	Order of Integration
CPI	-1.9724	.0243	Stationary	-7.0789	.0000	*I(0)*
FDI	-2.9398	.0016	Stationary	-5.6111	.0000	*I(0)*
POP	0.6180	.7317	Unit root	-9.6558	.0000	*I(1)*
GDP	-1.1012	.1354	Unit root	-7.4957	.0000	*I(1)*
TDS	-3.6048	.0002	Stationary	-4.0096	.0000	*I(0)*
TSER	-7.6859	.0000	Stationary	-4.4396	.0000	*I(0)*
TRG	-1.5691	.0583	Unit root	-5.1470	.0000	*I(1)*
FSER	-0.3769	.3531	Unit root	-4.1557	.0000	*I(1)*
FAGRI	-1.1453	.1260	Unit root	-4.3224	.0000	*I(1)*
FIND	-1.6802	.0465	Stationary	-1.0671	.0000	*I(0)*

Source: Authors' Compilation (2023)

Secondly, the Hausman test was utilised to investigate the connection between the dependent and independent variables in a model. Fixed and random effect are the two most commonly utilized panel regression estimate methodologies. If the value is significant, then the results to be adopted should be the fixed effects (FE) and the random effect (RE) should be adopted if the value is not significant. The Hausman tests becomes useful in all conditions where the following properties exist in a two model specifications and two estimators: one, in the restricted model (null), the estimator $\hat{\theta}$ is efficient, the estimator $\tilde{\theta}$ is consistent though typically not efficient; two, in the unrestricted model (alternative), the estimator $\hat{\theta}$ is inconsistent, the estimator $\tilde{\theta}$ is consistent. Then, the difference $q = \hat{\theta} - \tilde{\theta}$ should converge to zero under the null and diverge under the alternative hypothesis where q and $\hat{\theta}$ should be uncorrelated under the null hypothesis. $(var\hat{\beta} \text{ FE} - var\hat{\beta} \text{ RE})^{-1}$. The FE model's alternative and the null of the RE model both fit the Hausman situation: 1. In the RE model, the FE estimator and even the OLS estimate are consistent, and the GLS-type RE estimator is efficient by construction for Gaussian errors; 2. The FE model is consistent by design, whereas the RE estimator under the FE model is inconsistent due to the omitted-variable effect. The formula for the Hausman test statistic is m = q' $(var\hat{\beta} \text{ FE} - var\hat{\beta} \text{ RE})^{-1} q$, where $q = \hat{\beta}$ FE − $\hat{\beta}$ RE. Since the estimator for RE is effective, a bigger variance would be associated with any other estimator, the RE implies that $(var\hat{\beta} \text{ FE} - var\hat{\beta} \text{ RE})^{-1}$ is positive. Panel data was used and the Hausman test was used to select the most appropriate model and the results are presented in Annex 2. The Hausman estimator was statistically significant for the three objectives leading to the conclusion that random effects were not present hence the fixed effects model was preferred.

4.1 The Effect of Trade Openness on Female Employment in Agricultural Sector in EAC
Panel data was used and the Hausman test was used to select the most appropriate model. The Hausman estimator was statistically significant for the three objectives leading to the conclusion that random effects were not present hence the fixed effects model was preferred.

Table 4: Female Employment in the Agricultural Sector

	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|
CPI	.205131	.0605006	3.39	0.001***
FDI	-.3003204	.3725573	-0.81	0.422
POP	.410936	.5356029	0.77	0.445
GDP	-.2271705	.0403616	-5.63	0.000***
TDS	-.7073218	.2470864	-2.86	0.005***
TSER	-.2670923	.1075592	-2.48	0.015***
TRG	-.1211004	.0689325	-1.76	0.082*

*, **, *** significant at 10%, 5% and 1% significant level respectively.
Source: Authors' computations (2023)

The coefficients for foreign direct investment and population in the agricultural sector were found to be statistically insignificant, while inflation, income, trade in services and trade in goods were all found to be significant. Concerning agricultural sector women employment, trade in goods and trade in services, the coefficients are negative and significant at the recommended 5 percent and 10 percent level respectively. An increase in one unit of trade in services diminishes the agricultural share of women employment by 0.3 percent compared to a 0.1 percent increase caused by a unit increase in trade in merchandise. These results are well aligned with (Wamboye & Seguino, 2015) who found that a rise in trade openness reduces the employment of women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Equally in Cameroon, (Kuete & Voufo, 2019) concluded that liberalization of trade might not ordinarily contribute to a growth in export goods in sectors where women are disproportionally represented, and may not consequently create additional opportunities for women to work. Other studies such as (UNCTAD, 2016) no discernible impact of trade liberalization on women's well-being and economic empowerment. Trade openness has advantages and disadvantages meaning it may be valuable to women or be disadvantaged. Trade

openness in the modern times dictates that agricultural practices are intensive and highly specialized, leading to single cash crop farming, while on the other hand embracing diversification in agriculture. This trend is deviates from the traditional low-value staple crops farming to high-value agriculture. The outlined trends, principally commercialization and diversification in agriculture, generate significant hindrances for women (UNCTAD, 2016).The coefficient for Total debt service was found to be negative and significant. The results mean that if TDS increases by one unit, there is a reduction in women's employment in the agricultural sector by less than unity (0.7). Musindarwezo, (2018) argues that the African continent is faced with the huge challenge of public debt including their repayment premiums, meaning that they are left with little or no locally available finance to fulfil other obligations that may advance women's rights and move them towards gender parity. This means women bear a disproportionate segment in the servicing of this debt cost, considering that the borrowed financed are hardly ever employed in women's rights advancement endeavours. Governments choose to reduce spending by reducing compensation, bob cutbacks, which additionally erodes the female capacity in expanding their social support systems, acquire expertise, besides confidence gain. The inflation coefficient is statistically significant and positive. Women's employment in agriculture increases by 0.4 units for every unit increase in inflation. This is consistent with the Philips curve, which shows that unemployment and inflation have an inverse relationship. According to the Phillips curve theory, inflation and unemployment exists in a trade-off that occurs between unemployment and the growth rate of wages. With regard to the share of women employment in agriculture sector and GDP growth there was established a negative relationship. This implies that women's employment opportunities decrease with growth in GDP. Nica et al., (2023) posits that the higher the increase in GDP per capita, the more females are willing to leave the agricultural sector to other sectors. Such an association is referred to as the feminization-U. The industrial development idea contends that increased job opportunities result from economic growth. When the economy starts to industrialize, there is a short-term decline in female employment.

4.2 The Effect of Trade Openness on Female Employment in the EAC Services Sector

Table 5: The Effect of Trade Openness on Female Employment in Services Sector

	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t
CPI	-.1349063	.0413178	-3.27	0.002***
FDI	.2252596	.2544313	0.89	0.378
Pop	-.2177539	.3657804	-0.60	0.553
GDP	.2525779	.0275643	9.16	0.000***
TDS	.3383163	.1687432	2.00	0.048**
TSER	.1517109	.0734556	2.07	0.042**
TRG	.0930478	.0470762	1.98	0.051**

*, **, *** significant at 10%, 5% and 1% significant level respectively.
Source: Authors' computation (2023)

The coefficient for the total debt service is statistically significant and positive. For every 1 percent increase in the service servicing of debt as a proportion of GNI, the proportion the services sector women labourers rises by 0.3 percent. Female labour is primarily overly represented in a minor portion of businesses, particularly the service sector, where job access is simpler despite frequently lower pay and weaker job security. Women are disproportionately underrepresented in these fields even within them. At 1 per cent, the inflation coefficient is statistically significant and negative. The services' sector women share of total female labour in would falls by 0.13 for every unit of inflation. Sulasmiyati, (2019) posits that that a drop in tourism can be occasioned by inflation. Travel is perhaps one of the industry's most negatively impacted by rising inflation since consumers choose to reduce discretionary expenditure when their purchasing power decreases. A decline in visitors can consequently be linked to job loss because this industry is labour-intensive and disproportionately represented by women. At 1 percent level of significance, GDP has has a statistically significant coefficient which also positive

(0.3). The EAC economic forecast 2019 indicates that, like the rest of the world, the importance of the services sector has increased, with the sector average contribution in the regions GDP by 59 percent compared to 25.7 percent share of agriculture. In addition services sector has significantly boosted employment and the growth of the EAC economies. According to UNCTAD (2016), employment in services grows monotonically while agricultural employment shares decline with affluence. The two proxies of trade openness TRG and TSER had a positive coefficient that was also statistically significant at 5 per cent. The results however may not reveal what Li, et al (2019) pointed out that the relationship between trade openness and female labour participation is non-linear and it doesn't mean the more the better. (Nordås, 2003) also argues that export competing industries (TRG) employ women while import-competing industries employ men. It is therefore important to investigate which industries women are moving into in the services sector. Results from (Raihan et al., 2022) show that an increase in female involvement in services (TSER) can be attributed to an increase in the leisure industry. This is because progression in the tourism sector affords women enhanced political rights over and above improved educational, employment, and economic opportunities.

4.3 The Effect of Trade Openness on Female Employment in EAC Industry Sector

Table 6: Female Employment in the Industry Sector

FIND	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t
CPI	-.0701845	.0202422	-3.47	0.001***
FDI	.0750618	.1246497	0.60	0.549
Pop	-.1940811	.1792013	-1.08	0.282
GDP	-.0253428	.0135041	-1.88	0.064*
TDS	.3687689	.0826698	4.46	0.000***
TSER	.1156347	.035987	3.21	0.002***
TRG	.0280631	.0230633	1.22	0.227

*, **, *** significant at 10%, 5% and 1% significant level respectively.
Source: Authors' computation (2023)

The only statistically significant variable coefficients for female employment in the industry sector were inflation, Income, total debt service and trade in services. If inflation increases by 1 unit. the share of female employment in the sector is reduced by 0.07 units. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), females make up around 37 per cent of workers in the industry sector but this data excludes employment in micro-enterprises. Women also tend to be concentrated in low-level jobs, where they are poorly paid. Inflation often leads to slower job growth and a higher number of unemployed workers because firms find it difficult in keeping up with the increased cost of goods and services, leading to fewer jobs being created. In addition, workers may find that their wages are not keeping up with inflationary pressures, making it harder for them to stay employed. The variable total debt service presented a positive, and significant statistically coefficient at the recommended 0.05 level. This means that total debt service and the women labour in the industry sector as a share of total female employment have a positive relationship. The Word development indicators, show that the TDS as a proportion of gross national income has been on a decline in the EAC countries considered. The high cost of debt servicing means that it depletes the public resources that African countries sorely need to pay for public services like health (including sexual and reproductive health services), education, social protection, and care services. Despite the late charge in repayments, the results show that debt servicing has not fallen disproportionately on female workers. Although trade in services increases employment in services and industry, the effect in industry is comparatively smaller. A unit increase in trade in services increases employment in the industry sector by 0.1 units. Studies such as (Raihan et al., 2022) found the same results and concluded that trade in services particularly tourism improves women employment in services and industry but had a diminishing effect in the agricultural sector. WTO (2020), asserts that, as a strategy for value addition and to forge lasting relationships with clients, manufacturing firms are also exporting services at an increasing rate. These tactics enable nations to move up the value

chain and engage in new activities while building on their existing industrial skills. They are a source of economic diversification which may be beneficial to creating employment opportunities for women.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 Conclusion
The initial objective was to look at how women's employment in the agriculture sector in a few selected EAC countries is impacted by trade openness. The findings demonstrate that any increases in trade liberalization whether in goods or merchandise, the share of women employment in the agricultural sector declines. Several recommendations can be drawn from this analysis. First, the need for governments to implement complementary policies to address the job losses from trade liberalization, such as skills training and social protection measures for displaced workers. Second is concentration of agriculture such as a focus on monoculture export crops can improve women's employment, but it must be accompanied by policies to ensure equitable distribution of gains from trade and sufficient investment in other sectors to provide alternative employment opportunities for women. However, it may also call for expanding agricultural production lines, shifting away from lower-value goods like basic crops and toward more valuable ones like horticulture commodities. These trends, especially the diversification and commercialization of agriculture, appear to be the main reason why women in the EAC face so many challenges. The second goal was to look at how the services sector in terms of the share of women's employment is impacted by trade openness in particular EAC countries. The study discovered that as a percentage of GDP, trade in goods and services expanded the women workers as a share of total women employment in the services sector. When compared to the agricultural industry, this has the reverse effect. These conflicting findings point to the two way effect, in which females in the EAC may accrue consumer benefits as a result of low cost of food imports but not as employees. This could be a clue as to why the trade openness coefficient is statistically significant and beneficial for female employment in the services sector but negative for agriculture employment. Objective three explored the effect of trade openness (trade in services and trade in goods) on women employment in industry. Only the coefficient for trade in services was statistically significant. Trade in services particularly tourism improves women employment in services and industry but reduces women employment in agricultural sector. it can be concluded that as a strategy for value addition, manufacturing firms in EAC are also exporting services. These tactics enable nations to move up the value chain and engage in new activities while building on their existing industrial skills. They are a source of economic diversification which may be beneficial to creating employment opportunities for women.

5.2 Policy Recommendations
Several policy implications can be drawn from these findings. The EAC region does not follow the Kuznets structural transformation path (agriculture-industry) but rather follows the agriculture-services which is likely to promote inequality. The closeness of the sectors mean that female workers do not need new set of skills to move between agricultural and services sectors. Female worker's assistance in the form of reskilling to increase the employability of women in upper level jobs in the services sector would improve gender inequality. Efforts such as increased cooperation particularly ensuring the full implementation of EAC Treaty, article 115 where Partner States agreed to develop a collective and coordinated approach to the promotion and marketing of quality tourism into and within the Community. The full implementation of a single tourist VISA within the community can boost tourism hence the services sector and female employment opportunities. The effect of trade liberalization policies does not mean the more the better but should be treated based on which firms are growing in the services sector. This is because export-competing industries employ women while import-competing industries employ men. EAC countries should therefore promote trade policies targeting promotion of services sector exporting firms- firms that provide means to get women up the employment ladder in the sector. This goes beyond upgrading skills related to technology but acquiring new and more

appropriate technologies. For example, the majority of women who live in rural areas use rudimentary and time-consuming technologies in their informal production activities, which are typically in the agricultural sector.

5.3 Areas of Further Research

Findings stemming from this inquiry show that while agricultural sector loses 20 percent of female workers due to a 10 percent increase in trade openness. The findings can only deduce that part of that 20 percent is absorbed in the services sector. this however needs further analysis. In addition, there is need to investigate whether trade openness creates more employment opportunities for men in the agricultural sector and less in the services sector. More so it requires further analysis of whether the female job losses in the agricultural sector are taken up by men. Trade openness is also likely to enhance employment opportunities for women if the trade openness by EAC countries is with developed partners and on condition the EAC countries have a greater pool of educated women. This therefore calls for further research on who the trading partners in services are.

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