



Artisanal Coffee Quality Improvement Through Direct Trade Partnerships in Ethiopian Highlands: A Policy Analysis

Kudeshew Negusse¹, Gibasa Girmay^{2,3}, Yilufya Assemaa⁴, Mesafir Gebre^{3,5}

¹ Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Addis Ababa University

² Department of Research, Addis Ababa University

³ Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR)

⁴ Addis Ababa University

⁵ Department of Research, Hawassa University

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Correspondence: knegusse@outlook.com

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Author notes

Kudeshew Negusse is affiliated with Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Addis Ababa University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Gibasa Girmay is affiliated with Department of Research, Addis Ababa University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Yilufya Assemaa is affiliated with Addis Ababa University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Mesafir Gebre is affiliated with Department of Research, Hawassa University and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Abstract

Ethiopia is a major producer of coffee in Africa, with artisanal coffee from the Ethiopian Highlands known for its unique quality and flavor profile. However, challenges such as limited market access, lack of value addition, and inconsistent quality control hinder the full realization of these potential benefits. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative interviews with café owners, farmers, and traders, alongside quantitative analysis of trade data from selected regions in the Highlands. Direct trade partnerships have shown a significant improvement in quality control practices among participating farmers, leading to an average increase of 15% in coffee bean grades recognised by buyers. Farmers also reported a 20% rise in income due to better market access and direct pricing mechanisms. The findings suggest that fostering stronger partnerships between artisanal coffee producers and international markets can lead to substantial improvements in quality, profitability, and sustainability of the industry. Policy recommendations include incentivizing farmers through subsidies for improved agricultural practices, facilitating better market linkages with buyers, and promoting certification programmes to enhance product reputation and value.

Keywords: *Geographical Indications, Highlands, Direct Trade, Fairtrade, Sustainability, Ethnoecology, Participatory Development*

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