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Tanzanian Food Origins and Protected Geographical Indications

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INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of agricultural local products, worldwide, are registered as Geographical indications (GIs). Consumers worldwide demand more unique origin products featuring a 'connect' with the land use systems producing particular qualities. GI support the achievement of food security by increasing the ability of traditional farming communities to acquire income that supports exchange entitlements through trade policies. (Blakeney, 2009).

In the current trade regime, GIs are confronted in quality forums with new social concerns and values, from biodiversity to food security. How intangible qualities combine in effective markets varies according to politics. FAO (2009) explains how GIs determine and influence food security by providing better income for producers and creating better economic access to food. GIs generate local economic benefit through greater market access and equity in international trade, thereby improving conditions for small/local farmers to sell their products and buy their necessities (Dagne, 2012). GIs "contribute to food security in rural areas, as far as they are considered and implemented as a rural development tool, and not only a commercial or legal one (Petrics and Eberlin, 2009).

GIs have potential as an economic policy instrument helping to transform the Tanzania agriculture-dependent economy through exploiting the unique attributes of their quality products like aroma, taste and colour. Tanzania has already demonstrated capacity to tap into the organic world market. Therefore protecting Tanzania's unique agricultural products using GI may lead to higher value-added products through product differentiation based on quality, providing consumers with certified information regarding product attributes, and enhance and preserve the identity and cultural heritage of the specific region where a product is produced (Blakeney et.al, 2012 and Dagne, 2015).

This paper presents preliminary results from VALOR a research project investigating conditions under which Africa and in this case, Tanzania food producers can add value by incorporating territory specific cultural, environmental and social qualities into marketing, production and processing of unique local, niche and specialty products. Investigation of cases of five origin products clove, coffee, rice, sugar and Aloe Vera for GI potential.

Material and Methods

The study used different methods and approaches to collect data addressing the main objective of this research. Field study undertaken between June 2014 and August 2014. Key informant interviews in Kilimanjaro, Mbeya and Zanzibar were carried out in order to get sufficient information of the study area, as well as defining origin products to be included in case study. Five target agricultural products in three regions selected from 14 agricultural products in a selection process, done by the researcher in a scoping study. The selection based on the following criteria: a) clear delimitation of production area, b) origin reputation of product, c) quality perceived by consumer in terms of taste/flavour, texture, aroma, appearance (e.g. colour, size). More of the criteria's: market potential (prices comparing with similar products), Geographical link (soil, land weather characteristics), Agricultural system (organic, traditional methods) and collective actions (formal or informal producer organisation).

In order to gather information about the product characteristics /attributes of the potential food origins in Tanzania (in three regions), an in-depth single case study analysis methodology developed by (Yin, 2006) was applied to five food origin products. The special attributes investigated were product unique characteristics, Common rules for the production and handling of the product; Marketing strategies; Geographical characteristics of the area. Complemented with short in-depth interview with consumers on the awareness of the unique quality of the product, the price difference for the product they buy compared to others in the same category; product seasonality and its demands; and the availability of niche markets. Survey using semi-structured questionnaires with producers and processors used to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Conducted focus group discussions with producer associations, while direct observation was for observing the cultivation methods and processing of the food products.

Results and Discussion

Mainland Tanzania has no law on GI's with exception of Zanzibar on the other hand has already recognised the potential of protecting its clove industry and has incorporated the GI law in its industrial act. Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA) and Ministry of Industry, Trade and Marketing are making efforts to have a comprehensive IPR legislation along TRIPS lines for mainland Tanzania.

For such a law to be feasible there is a need to analyse the unique characteristics of the potential food origin GIs in the country. The Five products selected from an inventory study of potential GI products in the country. These are Kyela Rice, Kilimanjaro Coffee, Kilimanjaro Alovera, Zanzibar cloves and (TPC) sugar and studied. Through a qualitative study, the unique characteristics of the products obtained from interviews, with local stakeholders: producers, consumers, sellers, processors and local governments. The unique attributes for each product linked to the area the products are produced with the source Geographical link. (Figure 1 and 2)

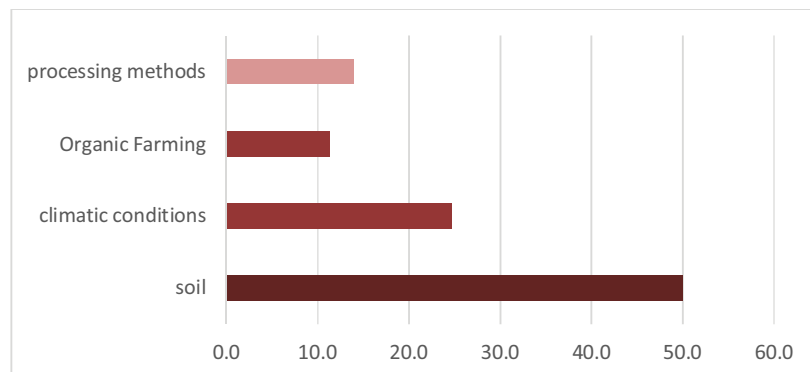
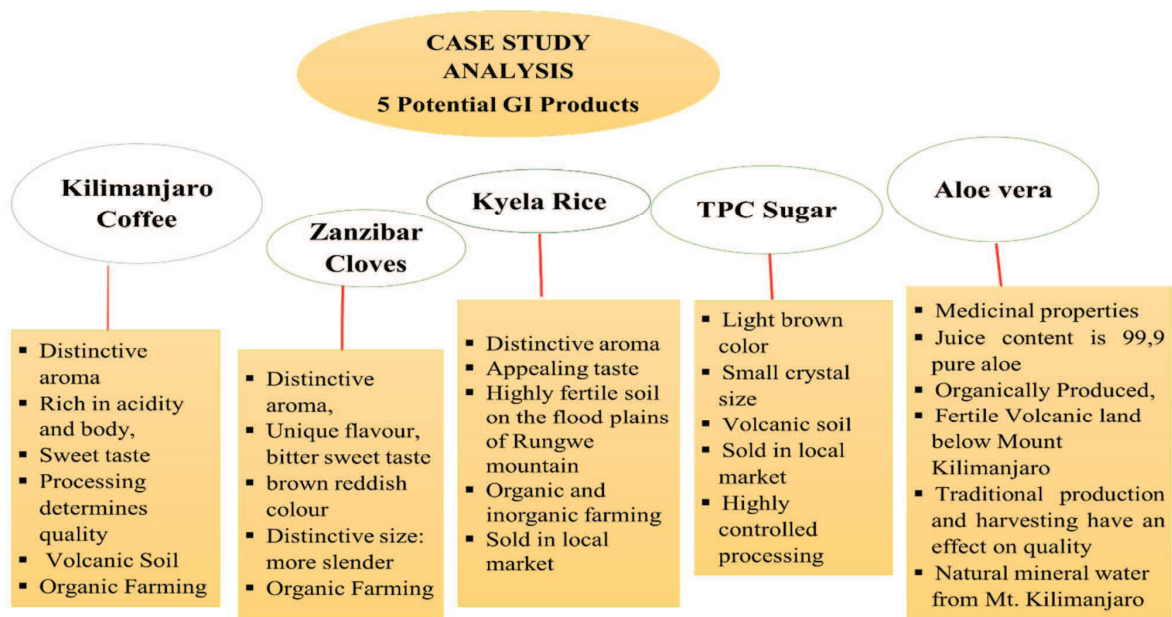


Figure1: Sources of specific qualities of the products

GI awareness

The researcher had to find out if producers were aware of the concept of GI. The fieldwork result showed that only 20% of the people knew the meaning or have heard of the term GI (80% had no idea). When asked if they had ever seen any of the EU logo used to identify a GI product, only 2% of the interviews said they had seen such logo and the rest 98% had never seen the EU logo. It in this case the researcher realised that most of the respondents were not aware of the concept of GI and were not aware of the link of the product to the territory, or a region where a given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the product are exclusively or essentially attributable. Majority of them were aware of the unique quality attributes that products in the different region had.

Figure 2: Product characteristics



Source: own presentation.

GI and Food security

Food security does not relate only to quantity and volume but also to quality and consumers preferences, economic (price and income) and physical access (proximity) of food products (ARIPO, 2012). Considering this, GI, by providing a better income for producers and creating a better economic access to food, can determine and influence food security.

GIs can pursue food security in a policy framework of food sovereignty, which focuses on three major priority areas: Ensuring access to productive resources; mainstreaming agro ecological production; and encouraging participation in trade and local markets. GIs may be relevant to the guarantee of food sovereignty through measures that address each priority area (Dagner, 2105).

In Tanzania, the government made a number of campaigns, programmes and reforms with the objective of attaining food security. Some of the policies and programmes formed are the 1984 National Food Strategy, the 1991 National Food Security Programme, the 1991 National Food and Nutrition Policy and 1978 Public Works for food security. However Kavishe (1993) pointed out how the implementation of the Agricultural policy and the strategy have not made any significant impact on the food security situation, this sends an alarm to find more way to ensure food security in Tanzania. Having GIs, the objective may be achieved, but with current absence of a national policy for GI products is the main limitation for products. Hence, access to new market in niche areas and a reinforcement of the national market is a key to the successful commercialization of the GI products.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed from the origin food producers how value addition by incorporating territory specific cultural, environmental and social qualities into marketing, production and processing of unique local, niche and specialty products. The cases investigated had prospects for Tanzania to advance in exports of geographical indications products, and allow smallholders to create employment and build monetary value, while stewarding local food cultures and natural environments and resources, and increasing the diversity of supply of natural and unique quality products.

Numerous crops/ products in Tanzania have potential for GI protection. Tanzania may gain by using GI to market its other largest crops such as, banana, and cashew nuts, as well as new non-traditional crops such as spices and oilseeds. Tanzania has an option of using GIs for its handcraft and products made in specific regions, especially those made around the safari destination areas. This marketing tool is of use in South Africa for SA wines, where tourists get to visit the sites of manufacture as well as buy products such as rooibos tea. GI can used as a tool for the Tanzanian regional association producer case to protect products and enable the farmers of such products to earn a higher price for their products and thus more income to sustain their lives.

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