ABSTRACT

Due to the physical demands and chemical use involved in agricultural work, it is one of the most dangerous professions in terms of safety. Roughly 70% of Kenya's rural population is employed directly or indirectly in the agricultural industry, which produces about 26% of the country's gross domestic product. Despite its significant contribution through both formal and informal employment, casual workers in this sector are not always assured of their safety. Most agricultural workers are always at risk of physical injuries, accidents, acquaintance to hazardous chemicals and infections, which negatively affect their productivity. In order to increase productivity, this study sought to identify the work characteristics, socio-economic factors and labour productivity among agricultural workers in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. The research employed a descriptive survey methodology. A sample of 188 small scale horticultural crops agricultural workers was used in this study. The respondents were selected using a cluster random sampling technique. Data on work characteristics, such as workload, access to training, use of personal protection equipment and access to information, were gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire. Data were collected on socio economics factors affecting adoption of safety measures such age, education, access to phone and electricity, internet, household size, total land size and gender labour performance among agricultural workers to enhance improved productivity. Adoption of safety measures was measured by level of accidents and significant effect of socio-economics factors. The data collected was analysed using STATA version 17. To assess how socio-economic factors, affect the adoption of safety measures, a multinomial logit regression model was employed and a multiple regression model was used to determine how the adoption of safety measures affects labour productivity in order to increase economic productivity. The average labour productivity was 3.626 units. The result of this study showed that access to internet, gender, education, group membership and farming occupation significantly contributed ($p < 0.05$) to the adoption of safety measures which further contribute to the economic productivity growth. However, access to electricity, phone, age, household size and total land size did not significantly contribute ($p > 0.05$) to the adoption of safety measures therefore no effect on production. Access to electricity, phone, age and education had statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) effect on labour productivity. Results on work characteristics revealed that 10.16% of the agricultural workers had taken through written risk assessment analysis guideline from extension officers, 18.72% received safety training, 28.88% cleaned personal clothing after use and most seek advice pertaining to safety measures from local agro vets. This study concluded that agricultural workers with high level of education, membership to agricultural worker’s groups and access to internet leads to increased adoption of safety measures due to technological advancement in accessing new information leading to an increase in agricultural productivity. Access to training, use of personal clothing, use of casual labourers, access to information on safety measures, availability of first aid kits in case of an accident leads to reduced injuries. Access to electricity increases labour productivity as there is enhanced use of machines. Moreover, agricultural workers with high level of education showed increased labour productivity. The study recommends training agricultural workers on the importance of work safety practices. For improved labour productivity, there is need to enhance farmers access to electricity for increased mechanization.