Asia Africa's Impact on Middle East's Specialty Coffee Community

Kurniawan Arif Maspul*

University of the People; kurniawanarifmaspul@my.uopeople.edu

Abstract: *In an era when work entails accomplishment, personal progress, financial security, social connections, and finding meaning, the specialty coffee sector has become a magnet for experts from Asia and Africa looking to offer their skills to the Middle East's coffee value chain. This engrossing study dives into the motivations and preferences of labor from different regions, offering light on the unique dynamics that entice people to this particular sector and geographical context. The article investigates the cultural interchange, skill development opportunities, and career progression that attract workers to the Middle East's specialty coffee industry using prominent ideas such as the Pull-Push Theory, Resource-Based View Theory, and Cultural Diversity Theory. The findings not only demonstrate the transforming potential of work, but they also give critical insights for industry stakeholders, governments, and scholars interested in maintaining a thriving and inclusive coffee ecosystem in the region and beyond.*

Keywords: *Specialty Coffee, Cultural Exchange, Skills Advancement, Sustainable Coffee Ecosystem*

Introduction

Work has several facets, including achievement and productivity, personal growth, financial aspects, social contact, and the pursuit of purpose and meaning (Piero *et al*., 2021). Understanding the diverse nature of work is critical for understanding people's motivations and preferences across industries and value chains (Fisher, 2010; Forgeard *et al*., 2011). The purpose of this study is to investigate the interest in working in the specialty coffee value chain, with a particular focus on labor from Asia and Africa in the Middle East coffee value chain (Maspul, 2022). This article tries to bridge the existing gap in understanding why individuals from various locations are drawn to this specific industry and geographical setting by examining relevant theories and determinants.

While there is current literature on labor migration, coffee production, and the specialty coffee market, there is a paucity of particular study addressing the motives and desires of workers from Asia and Africa in the Middle East coffee value chain (Rhiney *et al*., 2021; Ruiz-de-Oña *et al*., 2019). The available studies frequently focus on wider topics such as labor migration trends, economic reasons, or cultural interchange without digging into the unique dynamics of the coffee sector (Maspul, 2023a; Thurston *et al*., 2013). As a result, there is a study gap addressing the factors that lead individuals from Asia and Africa to

seek employment in the Middle East coffee value chain, as well as how these factors align with relevant theoretical frameworks.

Understanding the motives and preferences of Asian and African workers in the Middle East coffee value chain is critical for various reasons. First, it provides insights into the characteristics of the Middle Eastern specialty coffee business, notably in terms of labor sourcing and skill acquisition. Second, it adds to a better knowledge of labor migration trends and economic prospects for Asian and African persons. Third, it provides essential information to industry stakeholders and policymakers about labor management, ethical sourcing, and the development of a sustainable and inclusive coffee business.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the characteristics that attract labor from Asia and Africa to work in the Middle East coffee value chain, with an emphasis on the specialty coffee market. It seeks to elucidate the motivations behind labor migration and the specific appeal of the Middle East coffee industry by applying relevant theoretical frameworks such as the Pull-Push Theory, Resource-Based View Theory, Cultural Diversity Theory, Dual Labor Market Theory, and Human Capital Theory. Furthermore, the study aims to provide light on the possible career progression and skill development opportunities that the Middle East coffee value chain offers to labor from Asia and Africa. Investigating the interest of workers from Asia and Africa in the Middle East coffee value chain is critical for understanding the dynamics of the specialty coffee market and labor migration patterns. This study intends to bridge the study gap and give significant insights for industry stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers interested in the coffee industry and labor dynamics by investigating key theories and determinants.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative study design to investigate the motives and preferences of labor from Asia and Africa in the Middle East coffee value chain. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted with coffee professionals currently working or who have worked in the industry. Participants are selected through purposive sampling to ensure diversity in nationality, gender, experience, and job roles. The discussion and observations are analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and patterns. Ethical considerations will be followed throughout the study process, and the findings provide valuable insights for industry stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers interested in labor dynamics and the specialty coffee industry in the Middle East.

Result and Discussion

Insights and Impacts of Coffee Professionals from Coffee-Producing Countries in the Middle East

The inflow of baristas and coffee roasters from coffee-producing countries in Asia and Africa into the Middle East's specialty coffee market yields major insights and ramifications. For starters, this movement promotes cultural exchange and diversity within the coffee sector. Professionals from coffee-producing countries exchange their coffee traditions, brewing techniques, and flavor profiles, strengthening the region's overall coffee

culture (Laberge, 2018; Maspul, 2023b). This cultural exchange contributes to a thriving and inclusive coffee community by increasing respect and understanding of various coffee origins and customs.

Second, specialists from coffee-producing countries bring to the Middle East their expertise and understanding of coffee cultivation, processing, and flavor profiles, resulting in knowledge transfer. Their expertise raises the bar for specialty coffee preparation and presentation, resulting in greater overall quality of coffee products in the region (Kim & Jung, 2016). This information exchange improves the skills and competences of local coffee specialists, enabling ongoing improvement in the coffee industry of the Middle East.

The presence of baristas and coffee roasters from coffee-producing countries, on the other hand, reflects the Middle East's expanding demand for specialty coffee, as well as altering customer preferences. It suggests that customers in the region are looking for unique and high-quality coffee experiences, which is fueling the growth of the specialty coffee business (Maspul, 2022). This need drives industry operators to diversify their offerings and spend in finding and presenting high-quality coffee to discerning customers.

Individuals from these regions benefit greatly from the migration of baristas and coffee roasters from coffee-producing countries to the Middle East, which gives considerable employment prospects and skill development. Working in a different market helps them to obtain valuable experience, broaden their knowledge and abilities, and potentially contribute to the growth of their home countries' coffee industries (Maspul, 2023c; Vellema *et al.*, 2015). Individuals and the coffee business benefit from this cross-pollination of talent and expertise, which fosters worldwide collaboration and skill enrichment.

Professionals from coffee-producing countries are present in the Middle East coffee sector, which has a favorable economic impact. It generates employment possibilities in these locations and adds to the economic growth and development of both the host and coffee-producing countries (Feyaets *et al.*, 2020). This movement provides revenue and strengthens economic relations between the Middle East and coffee-producing regions, thereby fostering long-term economic development and collaboration.

The movement of baristas and coffee roasters from coffee-producing countries in Asia and Africa to the Middle East's specialty coffee business gives interesting insights and ramifications. It promotes cultural interchange, knowledge transfer, and quality improvement in the coffee sector. Furthermore, it reflects changing consumer tastes, gives employment possibilities and skill development, and contributes to economic progress. Understanding these dynamics is critical for industry stakeholders, politicians, and researchers who want to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and long-term growth in the Middle East's specialty coffee business.

The Essence of Work in the Coffee Industry: Achieving Productivity, Growth, and Meaning in the Modern Era

Exploring the essence of employment in the specialty coffee sector, where achievement, personal development, financial security, social relationships, and a profound

sense of purpose all intersect. It's necessary to delve into the intricate dimensions of work and its impact on coffee professionals, including baristas and coffee roasters, using insights from influential theories such as Self-Determination Theory, Job Characteristics Model, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Social Exchange Theory, and the Meaningful Work Framework. Discovering how these theories shape the specialized mosaic of specialty coffee, where specialists strive for quality, personal growth, and a stronger connection to their art. From the development of skills and knowledge to the search of financial security and the development of meaningful relationships, this investigation sheds light on the multidimensional character of work in the specialty coffee sector; it will be exploring the transforming power of work, uncovering its significance and revealing the road to productivity, success, and meaning in the current era of specialty coffee professionals.

The quest of success and productivity is instilled in the work of coffee professionals such as baristas and coffee roasters. These individuals, according to the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), have an underlying psychological demand for competence, which they fulfill through their dedication to their profession. For example, baristas try to prepare and offer high-quality coffee beverages on a consistent basis, learning the art of extraction, milk texturing, and latte art. They take delight in their capacity to provide consumers with outstanding coffee experiences, showing their expertise and obtaining a sense of success. Similarly, coffee roasters methodically roast coffee beans, manipulating variables such as temperature and time to obtain the appropriate flavor profiles. Pursuing excellence in their profession not only improves their talents but also contributes to their overall well-being and self-esteem, as they constantly perfect their techniques and achieve excellent outcomes (Freeman *et al.*, 2012; Maspul, 2023c).

Personal growth is extremely important to coffee professionals such as baristas and coffee roasters in the specialty coffee sector. The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) highlights the importance of work characteristics in developing a sense of meaning and personal growth. For example, coffee professionals actively pursue skill development by immersing themselves in many facets of their industry. They are always expanding their understanding of coffee sourcing by visiting different origins and learning about the distinct flavor profiles associated with each place. Furthermore, they devote time to improving their roasting procedures, experimenting with temperature and duration to obtain optimal flavors. Baristas also participate in constant learning to master brewing processes such as pour-over, espresso, and alternative brewing techniques such as AeroPress or Chemex. Through these efforts, coffee experts learn new abilities, hone their knowledge, and enjoy personal growth in their coffee professions. They remain ahead of industry trends, improve their abilities, and contribute to the general evolution of the specialty coffee culture by embracing continuing learning and professional development (Maspul, 2023b; Waxman, 2006).

For coffee professionals in the specialty coffee sector, such as baristas and coffee roasters, financial stability is critical to their general well-being and capacity to follow their career goals. Maslow's Hierarchy of necessities (Maslow, 1969) emphasizes the importance of financial security and basic material necessities as fundamental physiological

prerequisites for self-actualization and fulfillment. Coffee experts rely on their work in the sector to produce revenue and pay their financial obligations. They may secure their fundamental necessities, such as shelter, food, and healthcare, by producing a regular income, which serves as the foundation for their entire well-being. Furthermore, financial security allows coffee professionals to invest in their professional development and passion for specialty coffee. It enables them to participate in workshops, courses, or industry events that expand their knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, financial security allows them to experiment with new brewing processes, test alternative coffee origins, and even pursue entrepreneurship in the coffee sector. Coffee professionals can pursue their passion for specialty coffee with confidence and focus if their financial stability is ensured, ultimately increasing their personal and professional contentment (Folmer, 2016; Maspul, 2023c).

Social ties and relationships are important parts of the job experience for coffee professionals in the specialty coffee sector, including baristas and coffee roasters. Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1961) emphasizes the reciprocal nature of workplace relationships, highlighting the necessity of social connections and support. Collaboration with coworkers, bosses, and clients fosters friendship, teamwork, and innovation. Baristas in a busy coffee shop, for example, rely on efficient communication and teamwork to maintain seamless operations and exceptional service. They exchange knowledge, brewing techniques, and comments to help each other improve. Building solid relationships in the specialty coffee industry not only provides a sense of belonging, but also emotional support and professional advancement. Coffee professionals frequently attend networking events, workshops, or competitions to connect with peers in the business, exchange ideas, and obtain insights into developing trends. These connections foster mentorship, project collaboration, and experience sharing, ultimately improving the overall work experience and fostering personal and professional development among coffee professionals (Maspul, 2023c; Turner & Endres, 2017).

The specialty coffee industry delivers a tremendous sense of purpose and meaning in the work of coffee specialists such as baristas and coffee roasters. According to the Meaningful job Framework (Rosso *et al.*, 2010), when people's values, interests, and ambitions are aligned with their job, it becomes a tremendous source of intrinsic motivation and fulfillment. Coffee professionals derive meaning and fulfillment from their work in the specialty coffee sector because they believe they are contributing to a greater good. They see their craft as a way to have a positive impact on the coffee community and society as a whole. Coffee professionals, for example, actively encourage sustainability by using ethically sourced coffee beans and supporting environmentally beneficial procedures. They prioritize fair trade and direct trade partnerships with coffee farmers, ensuring that their work benefits those involved in the coffee supply chain. They try to educate consumers and promote a better understanding for the intricacies of flavor, provenance, and brewing methods by prioritizing quality and the art of coffee. Coffee experts inspire others to cherish and respect the efforts that go into every cup of coffee through their passion to craftsmanship and the pursuit of excellence (Mestdagh *et al.*, 2017; Maspul, 2023b).

Furthermore, coffee professionals actively participate in community development within the specialty coffee sector. They attend events, workshops, and competitions that allow them to meet new people and share their expertise and experiences. Coffee professionals establish a supportive environment that stimulates growth, cooperation, and the exchange of ideas by fostering a feeling of community. Coffee professionals feel a great sense of fulfillment and intrinsic motivation when they discover purpose and meaning in their work (Baumeister *et al.*, 2016; Baumeister & Leary, 2017). Their enthusiasm for the craft extends beyond the act of creating coffee, as they appreciate the greater influence their work can have on individuals, communities, and the coffee industry as a whole.

The specialty coffee market provides a rich framework in which to investigate the essence of labor, where achievement, personal development, financial stability, social relationships, and a feeling of purpose all intersect. It's necessary to gain a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted nature of work and its profound impact on coffee professionals by understanding the underlying theories such as Self-Determination Theory, Job Characteristics Model, o's Hierarchy of Needs, Social Exchange Theory, and the Meaningful Work Framework. Coffee professionals are redefining the current era of work in the specialty coffee market by pursuing excellence, personal growth, financial stability, and meaningful relationships.

Coffee Connections: Asian and African Labor in Middle East's Specialty Coffee

The following ideas and criteria can be used to examine interest in working in the specialty coffee value chain, notably for workers from Asia and Africa in the Middle East coffee value chain:

1. Increasing Demand for Specialty Coffee: Increased interest in the Middle East coffee market has resulted from an increase in global demand for specialty coffee, which is distinguished by distinct flavors, greater quality, and traceability. Individuals are drawn to places with economic prospects and rising industries, according to the Pull-Push Theory (Lee, 1966). As a result, the Middle East's increasing specialty coffee market acts as a draw factor for labor from Asia and Africa looking for work in this value chain.

2. Coffee Production Expertise: Asia and Africa have long been known for their coffee-growing regions and have tremendous expertise and experience in coffee planting, harvesting, and processing procedures. According to the Resource-Based View Theory, enterprises or regions with distinct resources or competencies acquire a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Asian and African laborers' competence in coffee production is a vital resource for the Middle East coffee value chain, making them in high demand.

3. Cultural Exchange and Diversity: The Middle East's heterogeneous workforce from Asia and Africa promotes cultural exchange and the merging of various coffee traditions and skills. According to the Cultural Diversity Theory, varied workforces foster creativity, innovation, and adaptability (Cox, 1994). The Middle East coffee value chain's multicultural setting fosters a dynamic coffee culture that appeals to both local customers and tourists.

4. Economic prospects: When compared to other coffee-producing locations in Asia and Africa, the Middle East offers more job prospects and higher earnings. According to the Dual Labor Market Theory, workers relocate to areas with better job prospects and higher earnings (Martin, 1980). Working in the Middle East coffee value chain may provide economic prospects for labor from Asia and Africa to enhance their incomes and support their families.

5. Career Development and Skill Development: The Middle East coffee value chain provides opportunity for labor from Asia and Africa to enhance their talents and advance their careers. Individuals' skills and knowledge, according to the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 2009), contribute to their productivity and future earnings. Employees in the Middle East coffee sector can get specialized knowledge in specialty coffee preparation, brewing techniques, and customer service, boosting their competence and opening doors to future career opportunities in the coffee industry. To support a sustainable and inclusive coffee business, it is critical to maintain fair labor practices, ethical sourcing, and equal treatment of workers across the Middle East coffee value chain.

Sustaining Coffee Professionals in the Middle East: Talent Development and Cultural Exchange

The specialty coffee business is expanding rapidly in Middle Eastern nations such as Kuwait, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, making it critical to retain coffee specialists such as baristas and coffee roasters. It's critical to design effective strategies to attract and retain skilled professionals from Asia and Africa if the community understand the factors that drive labor migration and preferences in the Middle East coffee value chain (Eby *et al.*, 2013). This article delves into the importance of retaining coffee specialists, the social and cultural elements that influence their decisions, and a global strategy to assist their growth in the Middle East coffee business.

The specialty coffee industry's long-term success is dependent on a skilled staff. Skilled baristas and coffee roasters are not only necessary for specialty coffee establishments to preserve their quality and reputation, but also for driving economic growth. Their knowledge draws customers, creates income, and adds to the general growth of the region's coffee culture. Retaining coffee professionals provides market continuity and competence, maintaining a flourishing coffee business (Billet, 2002; Aknesia *et al.*, 2015).

Specific case studies can provide significant qualitative data to obtain insights into the motivations, experiences, and career progression prospects of coffee experts from Asia and Africa in the Middle East. These case studies showcase unique journeys, providing light on the personal goals and professional development of coffee professionals who have relocated to countries such as Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. It is possible to have a better understanding of the problems they encounter, the benefits they seek, and the impact they have on the local specialty coffee industry by reviewing real-life instances (Billet, 2002).

The cultural richness of the Middle East, as well as its dynamic coffee culture, play an important role in recruiting coffee professionals from Asia and Africa. A powerful lure is the potential for cultural interchange and exposure to various coffee cultures, flavors, and processes (Billet, 2011; Swain, 1990). Furthermore, the availability of economic prospects, such as increased income and possible career progression, encourages coffee professionals to relocate. Social networks and word-of-mouth recommendations from other coffee experts who have already traveled foster a sense of familiarity and trust, which facilitates labor migration to the Middle East.

A comprehensive worldwide plan is required to sustain coffee specialists in the Middle East coffee value chain. This strategy includes the following components:

1. Training and Development: To cultivate the knowledge of coffee professionals, implement continuing training programs and chances for skill growth. Workshops, certificates, and barista competitions promote professional growth and competence by providing opportunities for continual learning.

2. A Positive and Inclusive Work Culture: Create a positive and inclusive work culture that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of coffee professionals. Offering competitive pay, benefits, and opportunity for advancement enhances job satisfaction, loyalty, and talent retention.

3. Community Engagement: Through industry events, seminars, and gatherings, facilitate networking and collaboration among coffee experts. Creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, idea exchange, and camaraderie helps to grow the coffee community and professional relationships.

4. Cultural Integration: Encourage cultural integration among migrant and local coffee professionals. Organize activities to commemorate various coffee traditions, with the goal of increasing cross-cultural understanding and respect. A sense of belonging can be fostered within the coffee community by creating an inclusive environment that values varied opinions (Maspul & Almalki, 2023).

Maintaining coffee professionals in Middle Eastern countries such as Kuwait, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia is critical for the region's specialty coffee sector's continuous growth and development. These countries can attract and retain qualified workers by understanding the motivations and preferences of coffee experts from Asia and Africa, and by executing a global plan that stresses training, supportive environments, community participation, and cultural integration. This approach not only benefits the local coffee sector, but it also develops a worldwide coffee community based on talent, variety, and the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

Policy Implications and Future Study Directions for Sustaining Coffee Professionals in the Middle East

As the Middle East's specialty coffee sector continues to thrive, including countries such as Kuwait, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, it is also critical to consider the policy implications and future study directions for sustaining coffee professionals from Asia

and Africa, particularly baristas and coffee roasters. This article discusses the significance of providing opportunities for skill development, generating good working circumstances, and applying ethical sourcing procedures. It also suggests potential methods for industry players and government to develop a sustainable and inclusive Middle Eastern coffee sector. Through this it will also discusses future study objectives that will address unsolved problems and investigate the influence of labor migration and career trajectories in the coffee business.

Policymakers and industry stakeholders should examine the following strategies to keep coffee professionals in the Middle East:

1. Labor Management: Adopt policies that stress fair treatment, professional development, and chances for career advancement for coffee professionals. Establishing clear criteria for employment contracts, working hours, and benefits, as well as providing a supportive and equal work environment, can all contribute to this. To cultivate a motivated and satisfied staff, it is critical to build systems for addressing grievances and fostering worker welfare.

2. Ethical Sourcing: Encourage industry stakeholders to prioritize ethical sourcing practices by promoting fair trade and direct trade initiatives. Encourage supply chain transparency, ensuring that coffee professionals are fairly compensated and work under ethical conditions. Collaboration with coffee-producing countries in Asia and Africa can promote sustainable and responsible sourcing practices that benefit both the industry and the communities involved.

3. Possibilities for Skill Development: Invest in extensive training programs, workshops, and certifications to improve the skills and expertise of coffee specialists. Collaborate with industry associations, educational institutes, and international specialists to provide training on coffee brewing processes, roasting, cupping, and quality control. The coffee business can improve coffee quality and consumer experience by encouraging continual learning.

4. Favorable Working Conditions: Establish industry-wide standards for workplace safety, hygiene, and employee well-being to promote favorable working conditions for coffee experts. Encourage businesses to provide pleasant and well-equipped workstations, as well as adequate equipment and helpful resources, in order to boost productivity and job satisfaction. Prioritizing coffee professionals' well-being can help with long-term retention and job happiness (Maspul, 2023).

The following study directions are suggested to further enhance the sustainability of the Middle East coffee industry:

1. Long-Term Career Pathways: Investigate the long-term career paths of Asian and African coffee specialists in the Middle East. Investigate elements that contribute to their job advancement, such as access to advanced training, mentorship, and

entrepreneurship chances. Understanding the elements that determine career success can help to shape tailored support programs and policies.

2. Impact on Local Economies: Investigate the larger economic impact of coffee industry labor migration on the home nations of Asian and African coffee specialists. Examine how skilled labor outflows affect local economies, including potential loss of expertise and remittance flows. This study can help policymakers maximize the positive effects of labor mobility in both host and home nations.

3. Gender Dynamics: Examine the gender dynamics in the Middle East coffee business, with a particular focus on the experiences and prospects for female coffee professionals. Examine the obstacles to admission and advancement, as well as measures for fostering gender parity in the industry. Understanding and tackling gender gaps in the coffee industry can lead to a more inclusive and varied workforce.

4. Sustainability measures: Evaluate the success of Middle Eastern coffee sector sustainability measures. Examine how environmental practices such as waste management, energy-efficient procedures, and support for organic and shade-grown coffee production are being implemented. Identify prospects for future improvement and the opportunity for partnership with coffee-producing regions in Asia and Africa to promote sustainable coffee production techniques internationally (Maspul, 2023a).

Industry stakeholders and policymakers can develop a sustainable and inclusive coffee industry in the Middle East by considering the policy implications described above and embracing future research directions. The coffee business can attract and retain talented professionals from Asia and Africa by providing skill development opportunities, assuring good working conditions, and applying ethical sourcing procedures. Furthermore, study on long-term career trajectories, the impact on local economies, gender dynamics, and environmental initiatives will provide significant insights for informed decision-making and future improvements in the Middle East coffee business. This collaborative endeavor will help to build a thriving and socially responsible coffee ecosystem in the region and beyond.

Conclusion

The movement of baristas and coffee roasters from coffee-producing countries in Asia and Africa to the Middle East's specialty coffee business has spurred a cultural interchange, enriched the region's coffee community, and raised coffee preparation standards. This infusion of people adds significant skills and information, boosting the quality of coffee offerings and propelling the specialty coffee sector forward. It creates job opportunities, promotes economic progress, and stimulates international cooperation. Accepting this change and investing in skill development and ethical practices will improve the Middle East's position as a worldwide leader in the specialty coffee business, establishing a thriving and inclusive coffee ecosystem.

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