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Factors Affecting Rice Adoption in the Solomon Islands: A Case Study of Fiu village, Central Kwara’ae Constituency, Malaita Province

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Agri-Commerce at Massey University, New Zealand

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2012
MASEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

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Student's Name: SIMON BAETE

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Date: 29/05/2012
Abstract

In 2006, the Solomon Islands (SI) Government implemented the National Rural Rice Development Programme (NRRDP) through the Rice Section of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, aimed at promoting the adoption of rice growing by SI farmers. However, the low level of rice adoption raised questions relating to the successful implementation of this programme.

To investigate the factors that have contributed to farmers’ decision to adopt or not to adopt the rice technology, a single case study was used involving farmers of Fiu village, in Malaita Province. Data was collected between June and July 2010 through semi-structured interviews with selected farmers who adopted the rice technology including those that did not; FCRP leaders; and government officers (extension and the rice official). The findings of this study revealed that several factors influenced the adoption decisions of farmers and these were the characteristics of technology, internal factors, and external factors. The characteristic of the technology that influenced farmers’ decision to adopt is relative advantage. The internal factors include personal characteristics of the farmer such as previous experience, proximity of the farm, land free of dispute, availability of a water source and cultural factors whereas external factors identified include government policy, infrastructure development in the area, agro-climatic condition, access to extension service and market. It was found that in late 2010, the adopters discontinued the use of the technology and their decisions were mainly influenced by factors such as poor leadership, poor implementation of the rice policy, and poor extension service. The results also revealed that many farmers did not adopt the rice technology in 2007 and their decisions were influenced by factors such as: relative disadvantage, complexity and incompatibility of the technology, input and labour intensive, land using, and risk. The study also shows that observability, poor leadership and the government’s failure to implement the rice policy post 2007 influenced the non-adopters decision to continue with the non-adoptions of the technology.

This research suggests that for a community rice project such as the FCRP to be successful, the government should facilitate the availability of funds to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to ensure that the ministry is able to provide the necessary support to the farmers thus promoting their confidence in government’s ability to support the implementation of the project. In addition, the selection of leaders who have the right skills, knowledge, and attitudes to manage and drive the project was integral in ensuring the success of the project.
Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to thank the New Zealand Government for granting me a scholarship to undertake my postgraduate study at Massey University. Many thanks also to the Massey University International Student Support Office: Sylvia Hooker and her team. Your unrelenting support is very much appreciated.

It is difficult to put into words my deep gratitude to my two supervisors, Dr. Elena Garnevska and Dr. David Gray. Their guidance in this study has been beyond measure. Dr. David Gray, I used to read acknowledgements by students you had supervised and I always wondered about the strength of their affection for you — and now I understand. Your guidance with the analysis chapter of this study has been invaluable.

My sincere thanks go to the Solomon Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Malaita Agriculture Division, and the farmers of Fiu village who volunteered to be interviewed. Without sacrificing their valuable time to respond to the case study questions, this study would not have been possible.

I wish to express my profound appreciation and love to my late wife’s family members in Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, and American Samoa, who have stood behind me throughout these difficult times and to them I say “MALO AUPITO” for everything. My sincere thanks and love also go to my fellow Solomon Islands students studying at Massey during 2010 and 2011: Gloria and family, Elizabeth and family, Hickson and family, Tutuo and family, Simon Iro and family, Clarence Loe and family, and James Kwaimani, for their prayers, support, and encouragement. To all of them I say “TAGIO TUMAS NA EVRIWAN.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my children, for their love, patience and understanding “BAOLE’A BA’ITA NO’O FAMOURU”. To my parents, sisters and brothers, thank you for your spiritual support all through these years: there is no-one like you all. Above all, my thanks to Almighty God, for through him all things are possible.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my dear late wife who gave her life for the cause of completing this thesis……

To my dear late wife, Mateaki Nomolo Seilani Baete, thank you for your undying support and for your unselfish love

…and to my children who make my life worth living

To my sons, Andrew Baete and Sunia Baete, and my daughter Lesieli Baete, thank you all for showing me what unconditional love is.
# Table of Contents

Abstract...................................................................................................................................i
Acknowledgement.................................................................................................................. ii
Dedication.................................................................................................................................. iii
Table of Contents....................................................................................................................... iv
List of Table.............................................................................................................................. vii
List of Figures.......................................................................................................................... viii
Abbreviations........................................................................................................................... ix

## CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION......................................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Background......................................................................................................................... 5
1.3 Research problem.............................................................................................................. 5
1.4 Research questions............................................................................................................ 6
1.5 Research Objectives......................................................................................................... 6
1.6 Organisation of the thesis............................................................................................... 6

## CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS.............. 7
2.1 Introduction....................................................................................................................... 7
2.2 General overview of the Solomon Islands....................................................................... 7
2.3 Solomon Islands Economy............................................................................................... 10
2.4 The Solomon Islands agriculture sector........................................................................ 12
2.5 National Agriculture and Rice Policy............................................................................ 15
2.6 NRRDP Implementation (2006-2010).......................................................................... 16
2.7 Malaita Province............................................................................................................. 20
2.8 Agriculture sector of Malaita Province.......................................................................... 22
2.9 NRRDP implementation in Malaita Province............................................................... 23
2.10 Summary....................................................................................................................... 25

## CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW.............................................................................................................. 26
3.1 Introduction....................................................................................................................... 26
3.2 Food security.................................................................................................................... 26
3.3 Food security strategies................................................................................................. 27
3.4 Food security and agricultural technology adoption...................................................... 28
3.5 The extension service and its role in technology adoption and food security......28
3.6 Technology adoption..........................................................................................29
3.7 Adoption process.........................................................................................30
3.8 Factors that influenced the adoption of agriculture technology..................32
3.9 Impact of agricultural technology adoption on food security and income....48
3.10 Summary........................................................................................................49

CHAPTER 4..........................................................................................51

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY....................................................................51
4.1 Introduction.................................................................................................51
4.2 Research strategy......................................................................................51
4.3 Case study design......................................................................................52
4.4 Overview of the single embedded case study...........................................53
4.5 Case selection............................................................................................53
4.6 Sampling procedure...................................................................................55
4.7 Sample size................................................................................................56
4.8 Respondents’ profiles...............................................................................56
4.9 Design of data collection protocol..............................................................59
4.10 Data collection...........................................................................................60
4.11 Data analysis............................................................................................62
4.12 Ethical considerations...............................................................................63
4.13 Summary.....................................................................................................64

CHAPTER 5..........................................................................................65

CASE DESCRIPTION..................................................................................65
5.1 Introduction...............................................................................................65
5.2 Central Kwara’ae Constituency (CKC).........................................................65
5.3 Case study village of Fiu.............................................................................66
5.4 History of rice growing in Fiu village..........................................................72
5.5 The formation of the Fiu Community Rice Project......................................73
5.6 The decision-making structure of the Fiu Community Rice Project..........75
5.7 NRRDP support to the Fiu community rice project (2007-2010)..............76
5.8 Rice cultivation and production practices....................................................76
5.9 Rice production and marketing....................................................................78
5.10 Summary.....................................................................................................79
List of Tables

Table 1.1: Rice exports from the Solomon Islands 1977-1986.................................2
Table 2.1: Value of food imports into the Solomon Islands .......................................14
Table 4.1: Relevant situations for different research strategies ......................................51
Table 4.2 : Status of the nine rice project in the Malaita Province.................................55
Table 4.3 Types of respondents and sample size......................................................56
Table 4.4 Personal profile of the farmers who have adopted rice technology.............58
Table 4.5 Personal profile of the farmers who have not adopted rice technology ......59
Table 4.6 Documents and archival records collected and their sources......................61
Table 5.1: The Central Kwara’ae Constituency population by ward.......................66
Table 7.1 Farmer and farm characteristics.............................................................105
Table 7.2 Community group characteristics..........................................................106
Table 7.3 Village and programme characteristics....................................................107
Table 7.4 Characteristics of rice and local staple crops.............................................108
Table 7.5 Government support to the FCRP..........................................................109
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Rice consumption pattern in the Solomon Islands (1987-2008)..........................3
Figure 1.2 Rice imports into the Solomon Islands (1987-2008)........................................4
Figure 2.1 Map of Solomon Islands..................................................................................8
Figure 2.2 Structure of Rice Section within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock....16
Figure 2.3 Map of Malaita Province...............................................................................21
Figure 2.4 Structure of Rice Section in Malaita Province..............................................24
Figure 4.1: Basic types of design for case studies..........................................................53
Figure 4.2 Diagram of the embedded single case study method.................................54
Figure 5.1 Map showing the Central Kwara’e Constituency in the Malaita Province......65
**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSD</td>
<td>Asian Pacific Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSA</td>
<td>Brewers Solomon Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBSI</td>
<td>Central Bank of Solomon Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>Church of Melanesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCRP</td>
<td>Fiu Community Rice Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPL</td>
<td>Guadalcanal Plantation Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock</td>
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<td>MAD</td>
<td>Malaita Agriculture Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>NRRDP</td>
<td>National Rural Rice Development Programme</td>
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<td>NERICA</td>
<td>New Rice for Africa</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>Provincial Rice Coordinator</td>
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<td>SIDTIS</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Diagnostic Trade Integration Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIG</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Government</td>
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