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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

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

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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-adoption 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.

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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
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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.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2Background.....	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.....	7
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.....	26
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

CHAPTER 6.....	80
CASE STUDY RESULT.....	80
6.1 Introduction.....	80
6.2 Factors that influenced the adopters’ decision to adopt the rice growing technology.....	80
6.3 Factors that influenced the adopters’ decision to discontinue the rice technology	89
6.4 Factors that influenced the non-adopters’ decision not to adopt the rice growing technology.....	92
6.5 Factors that affected the non-adopters decision post-2007.....	99
6.6. Suggested improvements to the rice policy.....	100
6.7 Summary.....	103
CHAPTER 7.....	104
DISCUSSION.....	104
7.1 Introduction.....	104
7.2 Classification of the case.....	104
7.3 Food security strategies.....	109
7.4 Agriculture extension and food security.....	110
7.5 Dual role of local food crops.....	111
7.6 An overview of adoption.....	111
7.7 Factors that influenced adoption decision.....	112
7.8 Summary.....	130
CHAPTER 8.....	133
CONCLUSION.....	133
8.1 Introduction.....	133
8.2 Summary of the main research findings.....	133
8.3 Implication of the findings.....	138
8.4 Evaluation of the methodology.....	139
8.5 Limitation of the research.....	140
8.5 Future research.....	140
REFERENCES.....	142
APPENDIX 1: Interview question guides.....	159
APPENDIX 2: Ethics approval letter.....	171

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

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