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**Factors Affecting Cassava Adoption  
in Southern Province of Zambia:  
A Case Study of Mazabuka District**

**Tionenji Phiri**

**2011**

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A Case Study of Mazabuka District**

A thesis prepared in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Applied Science in Agri-Commerce  
at Massey University, New Zealand



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**

**Tionenji Phiri**

**2011**

## Abstract

Southern Province of Zambia is a drought prone area and the main crop that is grown is maize which requires a high amount of rainfall. As a result maize does not do well in the area and there are frequent food shortages. The Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been promoting cassava technology which is drought tolerant to improve the food security in the area. However, the adoption of cassava technologies has been low. The findings of this study will inform the development of more effective strategies to improve food security in southern province of Zambia and it has done this by exploring the cassava promotion programme.

A single case study was used to investigate the factors that affect cassava adoption in Mazabuka district. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to select participants for interviews and observations. 40 farmers who included opinion leaders and 6 key informants were interviewed. The data was analysed using qualitative data methods.

The results of the study indicated that although a small number of farmers continue to grow cassava, the cassava promotion programme was a flawed programme because cassava did not meet the needs of the majority of the farmers. There was a mix of complex and interrelated factors that affected the adoption of cassava. These included internal and external factors to the farm and farm household and those related specifically to the characteristics of cassava relative to the farmers' existing crop of maize. Cassava is a substitute crop to maize.

The result of the study indicated that the farmers' adoption decision was based on the fact that they wanted a crop that would not only meet their food needs but also income. Cassava is a substitute crop and the farmers compared it with maize, an existing crop, which provided them with both food and income. Processing facilities and a market supported by government policy existed for maize and not for cassava. Land tenure was the internal factor, but not as a result of the length of time the lease

was held, but because of the conditions imposed on the leasers in terms of crops they were able to grow.

The most important factors were external factors and these included government policy and an aspect of extension service delivery. A competitive government policy that supported processing and marketing facilities for maize, undermined cassava, for which there was no processing facilities and only a small local market. Lack of training and knowledge amongst the local government agricultural extension personnel as to how to grow and process cassava impacted also on farmers' knowledge and hence adoption of cassava. Although the inputs for growing cassava were provided for free, they were supplied at the wrong time and this impacted also on farmers' willingness to grow the crop.

The research highlights the importance of using bottom-up and not top down approaches in food security programmes. The results suggest that it is important for food security policy and development interventions to understand the needs of farmers in terms of food, income and livelihoods.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank God who guided and protected me during my study and stay in New Zealand. Even when things were hard and difficult, he was with me.

I would like to thank the New Zealand Government for offering me the scholarship to further my studies at Massey University. Many thanks also go to the International Student Support office, especially Sylvia and Olive for their support during my study.

I would like to thank my major supervisor Ms Janet Reid for her valuable advice, insight and guidance throughout the research work. I am again thankful to my second supervisor, Dr. David Gray for his valuable guidance, constructive comments and support throughout my research work. Both have worked hard to keep me on the right track and complete my study.

I am also grateful to the lecturers and staff of the Institute of Natural Resources and the Institute of Animal Food and Nutrition for their support. I would also like to thank my friends and course mates for their support during my study and stay in New Zealand. Special thanks go to Mr Bornwell Mupeyo who informed me about the scholarship and encouraged me to apply for it.

My deepest thanks also go to all my family particularly my father Mr Lazarus Phiri my brothers, Kabvinira, Raphael, Shadreck, Justin and my sister Falesi for being the pillar for my academic progress. Sincere thanks go to the farmers who volunteered to be interviewed. Without sacrificing their valuable time to answer the questions, this study would not have been possible. I am grateful to the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives in Mazabuka district, Plan Zambia and PAM for their assistance and guidance during my data collection.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Ishmael, for his love, care and patience. Ishmael, you were my pillar of strength and your support and encouragement gave me a reason to look towards my goals. For these, I cannot thank you enough.



## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to Ishmael and the boys; Luundu and Nduba for the support and patience during the time I was studying and working on the thesis. I dedicate the thesis to my Dad, brothers and sister for their continued support and encouragement the time I was far away from home, without forgetting my late mother who made me realise the value of education at an early age.





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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ACF	Agriculture Consultative Forum
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DFID	Department for International Development
DMEWU	Database Management and Early Warning Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FRA	Food Reserve Agency
FoDis	Food Crop Diversification Support Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
JAICAF	Japan Association for International Collaboration of Agriculture and Forestry
MACO	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
MCB	Maize Control Board
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RTIP	Root and Tuber Improvement Program
PAM	Program Against Malnutrition
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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