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Adverse Impact of Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises on Small Local Agribusiness Enterprises. Case Study of Kapiri-Mposhi District in Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

The small local agribusiness enterprises are building blocks of the economy in both developed and developing nations. Their presence has been observed deep in rural towns and outskirts of most towns and cities. However, the coming in of Foreign Direct Investment through Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises has adversely affected the small local agribusiness enterprises through competition. Several studies have been conducted on the impact of Foreign Direct Investments on the overall national economy. Nevertheless, there has been less attention on the adverse impacts the multinational enterprises have on the small local agribusinesses. Therefore, this paper assesses the adverse impact Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises have on small local agribusiness enterprises in Kapiri-Mposhi district in Zambia. A cross-sectional study was conducted using an interview-based questionnaire on 315 small local agribusiness enterprises. Purposive sampling was used on the registered small local agribusiness enterprises owners and sales representatives. The collected data was analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences through descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Chi-square and degree of freedom were used to test the degree of association between the independent and dependent variables. The level of significance of $q < 0.05$ and confidence interval of 95% were considered as statistically significant. The results showed that 60% of respondents indicated that the Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises are present in Kapiri Mposhi. Of the 60% respondents, 86% experienced competition in terms of location and sales as Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises were well located and had more customers as they traded both in retail and wholesale. To alleviate the adverse impact, government should introduce policies that are favorable to small local agribusiness such as: restrict Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises to be selling products on wholesale only; introduce import tax exempt; and offer low interest loans for them afford strategic locations in the central business area.

Le piccole imprese agroalimentari locali sono gli elementi costitutivi dell'economia sia nei paesi sviluppati che in quelli in via di sviluppo. La loro presenza è stata osservata nelle città rurali e nelle periferie della maggior parte dei paesi e delle città. Tuttavia, l'arrivo di investimenti diretti esteri attraverso le imprese multinazionali dell'agrobusiness ha influenzato negativamente le piccole imprese

agroalimentari locali attraverso la concorrenza. Sono stati condotti diversi studi sull'impatto degli investimenti diretti esteri sull'economia nazionale nel suo complesso. Ciononostante, c'è stata meno attenzione agli impatti negativi che le imprese multinazionali hanno sulle piccole imprese agricole locali. Pertanto, questo articolo valuta l'impatto negativo che le imprese agroalimentari multinazionali hanno sulle piccole imprese agroalimentari locali nel distretto di Kapiri-Mposhi in Zambia. Uno studio trasversale è stato condotto utilizzando un questionario basato su interviste su 315 piccole imprese agroalimentari locali. Il campionamento intenzionale è stato utilizzato sui proprietari di piccole imprese agroalimentari locali registrate e sui rappresentanti di vendita. I dati raccolti sono stati analizzati quantitativamente utilizzando il pacchetto statistico per le scienze sociali attraverso statistiche descrittive e inferenziali. Il Chi-quadrato di Pearson e il grado di libertà sono stati utilizzati per testare il grado di associazione tra le variabili indipendenti e dipendenti. Il livello di significatività di $\alpha < 0,05$ e l'intervallo di confidenza del 95% sono stati considerati statisticamente significativi. I risultati hanno mostrato che il 60% degli intervistati ha indicato che le imprese multinazionali dell'agrobusiness sono presenti a Kapiri Mposhi. Del 60% degli intervistati, l'86% ha sperimentato la concorrenza in termini di ubicazione e vendite, poiché le imprese multinazionali dell'agroalimentare erano ben posizionate e avevano più clienti in quanto commerciavano sia al dettaglio che all'ingrosso. Per alleviare l'impatto negativo, il governo dovrebbe introdurre politiche favorevoli alle piccole imprese agroalimentari locali, come ad esempio: limitare le imprese multinazionali dell'agroalimentare a vendere prodotti solo all'ingrosso; introdurre l'esenzione dall'imposta all'importazione; offrire prestiti a basso interesse per permettere loro di ottenere posizioni strategiche nell'area centrale degli affari.

Keywords: Adverse impact, Kapiri-Mposhi, Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises, Small Local Agribusiness Enterprises, Zambia

1 – Introduction

Small local agribusiness enterprises have been observed deep in the rural parts of most towns and cities in both developed and developing countries. According to Mubita *et al.* (2017) and Anyanwu, (1998), small businesses have their presence rooted in places where large business corporations cannot be found due economic reasons. Such places are mostly rural towns and peri urban. Some of these small businesses are agribusinesses. In recent years, agriculture worldwide has undergone major changes to meet both the current and the future food demands for a growing and increasingly rich and urbanized population. Therefore, small local agribusiness enterprises have continued to play a major role worldwide especially in developing countries' goods and service provision equation (Fan & Rue, 2020). Moreover, small local agribusinesses serve as the building blocks of the world's developing economies (Amanor & Chichava, 2016). Corcioli *et al.* (2022) and Habib and Sarwar (2013), further highlighted that, small agribusiness enterprises present new employment opportunities for the local population and provide an immediate access to goods services for the community. Despite small agribusinesses serving as the building blocks of the world's developing economies, global business interactions have been the hallmark of agribusiness enterprises through Foreign Direct Investments (FDI).

The FDI through its *Multinational Agribusiness Enterprises* (MNABEs) have reshaped economic outlook in both developed and developing countries through exports (Kubik, 2023). The FDI have made it easy for countries to access international markets and international currencies through established Multinational Corporations (MNC) and Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) such as MNABEs (Cambazoglu *et al.*, 2014). The 1991 policy change

introduced economic liberalization from the state centered economic reforms. The agricultural reforms of 1994 ushered in agricultural liberalization which put state supported agricultural system to an end (Rakner, 1998). This led to the inflow of MNABEs in Zambia's agriculture sector. The MNABEs have since enjoyed fiscal incentives that accord investors tax holidays, change in government regulations and policy alignment to suit the demands and expectations of foreign investors (Meyer *et al*, 2014). Nevertheless, there has been no meaningful trickle-down benefits to the local community and the small local agribusiness. The MNABEs from emerging economies like India and China have soared and become major international players, thus providing massive trade competition with the small local agribusiness (Rama, 2017). Therefore, this paper assesses the adverse impact of the MNABE on local small agribusiness enterprises in Kapiri-Mposhi rural district in Zambia.

2 – Literature Review

2.1 – Location of Study Area-Kapiri Mposhi

Zambia is a land locked country which is located in Southern part of Africa below the Equator. The map in Figure 1 shows the Central Province of Zambia within which Kapiri Mposhi District is located.

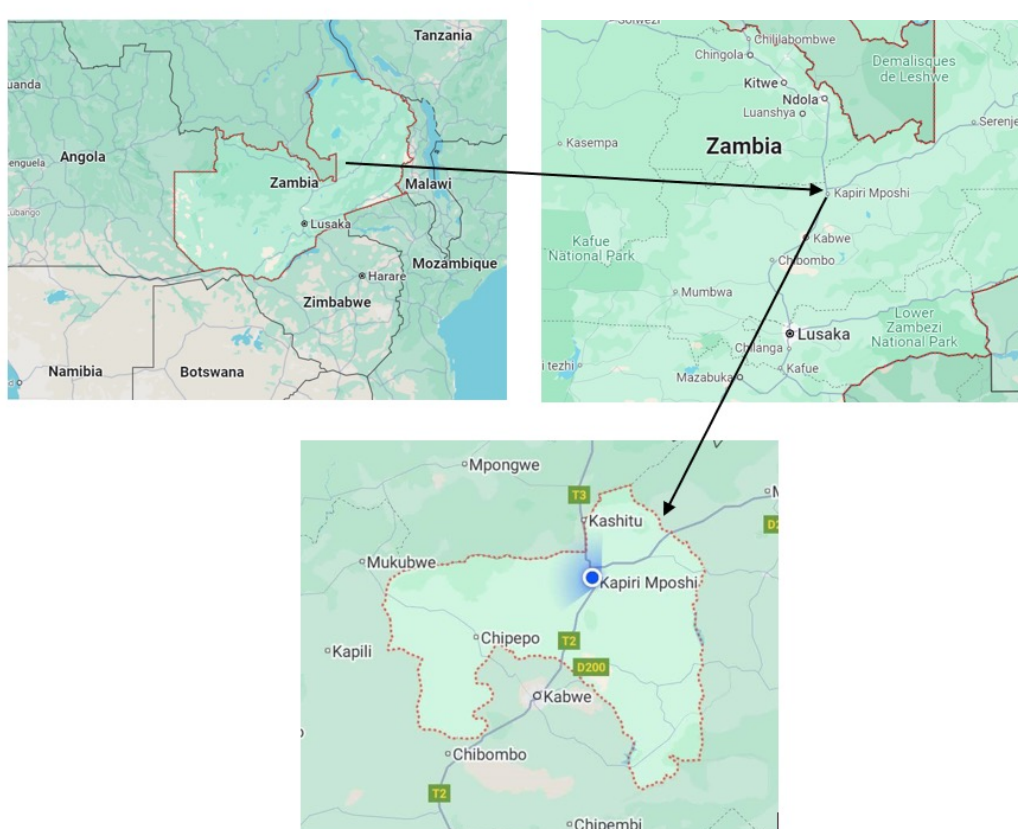


Fig. 1 – : Map of Study Area- Kapiri Mposhi District (Source: 2024 Google Map)

At the time of the fieldwork, Kapiri Mposhi had an estimated area of 17, 219 square kilometers with part of the western area covered by Lukanga Swamps. The district has a total

population estimated at 371,068 of which only less than 5% of the population live in urban part of Kapiri Mposhi (Malambo, 2019). The district currently has no industries which are functional. Majority settlers in the peri urban part of the district are former workers of once powerful and the only industry, the Kapiri Mposhi Grass Plant (KGP) which closed in 1998. For former employees of KGP to survive, many resorted to farming and establishing small trading businesses such as small agribusiness ventures.

2.2 – Economical and Agriculture Activities in Kapiri Mposhi District

In Central Province, farming for both smallholder and commercial scale is an important economic activity. The dominant type of farming practiced in Kapiri Mposhi is smallholder farming. It accounts for over 90 percent of economic activities in the region (Malambo, 2019; Sichingabula, 2000; CSO, 1994). The small holder farmers generally enjoyed great deal of support from the government between 1973 and 1990 through agricultural support institution such as National Agriculture Marketing Board (NAMBOARD), Zambia Cooperative Federation (ZCF) and Lima Bank (Malambo, 2013). Which were government funded, owned and controlled parastatal organizations. However, after the introduction of multi-party politics and liberalization economic policies in 1991, the institutions collapsed due to withdraw of subsidies by government and, new, largely privately owned institutions, emerged (Cliffe, 1997). Institutions such as Miombo and Omnia Fertilizer companies, Maize Research Institute (MRI), export and import group (ETG), Amiran, Farmarama and many others. This was coupled with mushrooming of small agribusiness enterprises to bridge the increasing demand of agriculture inputs left by withdraw of government support.

2.3 – Importance of Small Local Agribusiness in Zambia

According to Hinson *et al.*, (2019) Agribusinesses have huge impact on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ASD) which has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were adopted by United Nations (UN) of which Zambia is a signatory. Agribusiness based SDGs not only tackle economic status of the majority of the world's poor but also social sustainability. Some of the SDGs that are directly connected and are pertaining to social sustainability are SDG number one – *No poverty*, and number two – *Zero hunger*. The small agribusinesses play a vital role in responding to the needs of subsistence farmers in terms of provision of agriculture products to enhance food security. Therefore, small local agribusinesses' impact in developing countries like Zambia, goes beyond just trade (Tersoo, 2014).

In Zambia, the concept of lifetime employment is slowly disappearing, and people have turned to self-employment and enterprise creation especially in agribusiness. (McElwee, 2020; Auty, 1991). It has targeted agriculture as a priority sector for poverty reduction and food security, because two thirds of the population live in rural areas and rely on agriculture and agriculture income activities (Agnes *et al.*, 2019). Small scale farmers, if well-integrated into a diversified rural economy, can contribute even more to inclusive growth and employment generation and empower them to manage resources sustainably. It is estimated that increasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per Capita by 1% in agricultural, goes as far as reducing poverty

gap five times more when compared to a percentage increase in other sectors among the poor (Ureña *et al.*, 2022; Christiaensen, Demery & Kuhl, 2011).

However, this has not been achieved due to massive competition the sector is facing from MNABEs. The MNABEs are displacing the once strong holds for small local agribusiness enterprises where majority of its habitats largely rely on the agriculture-based activities for business, employment and day to day activities (Central Statistical Office, 2012). This may contribute to business failure among emerging small agribusiness in Zambia as suggested by Musonda (2015) that business start very well yet fail within few years of operation. This may be because of competition especially from MNABES.

A study done by Espineda, (2023) reviewed that agribusiness is an attractive place to work from in the agriculture industry. The study results showed that agribusiness is exceptionally desirable in relation to other available local micro, small and medium enterprises despite the presence of MNABEs. This shows that unlocking the country's growth potential requires a sustained investment in small local agribusiness.

2.4 – Presence and Impact of Multinational Agribusiness Enterprise

Several studies have shown the entrants of MNEs in developing countries which has been necessitated by economic globalization (Nugroho & Lakner, 2022; Corcioli *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, the MNEs have been searching for new markets in developing countries. Also, the desire of developing countries to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (Boddewyn, 2016). This has dictated the hosting of MNEs with the hope of benefiting from economic spillovers (Narula & Pineli, 2017).

The impact of the MNABEs in developing countries economy cannot be ignored (Corcioli *et al.*, 2022; Fiedler & Karlsson, 2016). Several studies have been conducted on the impact of MNEs on small local businesses. The study conducted in Brazil by Corcioli *et al.*, 2022; Da Silva & Gonçalves, 2019) highlighted the fact that Brazil's agricultural policy indirectly subsidized foreign investments to the detriment of smallholder farmers and local agribusiness. This is because there is an indirect transfer of public resources to transnational companies involved in agribusiness production chains. The research further reviewed that transnational companies have pushed for government investment incentive such as tax waiver on both imports and exports (da Silva & Gonçalves, 2019). On the imports side, MNABE have lobbied for tax waivers for them to have farming implements imported at almost zero or extremely low cost with small scale farmers as their main target customers (Goel, 2018). However, the conditions are farfetched to be met by small scale farmers or local agribusinesses due to lack of capital or red tape documentation procedures. These challenges faced by small scale farmers have ended up benefiting multinational enterprises who tend to meet the conditions. In Kazakhstan, findings by Rakhmatullayeva *et al.* (2020) on impact of MNABEs on the economic growth between 2000 and 2017 shows that there was little benefit to the local population despite government offering tax incentives. This was because MNABEs could externalize their profits to their home countries. However, the study by Fu *et al.* (2021) showed the MNEs contributes to economic spillovers which benefits the host countries.

There is a growing literature on the relationship between MNABEs and economic growth. The injection of capital and technology stimulates competition in the local market. It has impact

on economic growth and takes place through increased productivity, human capital accumulation, research and design activity, and technological and productivity spillovers (Slesman, Abubakar & Mitra 2020). Impact on economic growth can be greater if the types of MNABEs that the country receives stimulates domestic investment activity (Abubakar *et al.*, 2019; Blomström & Kokko, 1996). Nguyen (2023) emphasized that the MNEs could diffuse their advanced technological and managerial expertise to promote entrepreneurial activities to compete domestic entrants, force them out of the market and eventually cause undesirable economic consequences.

The MNABEs affect small local agribusinesses as they change the way of doing business. The MNABEs can provide their products at a fraction of the cost meaning that to compete with them, small businesses are forced to lower their prices or face extinction (Alfaro *et al.*, 2015; Basu, 1998). This is because the MNABEs buy their products directly from manufacturers at factory prices. Moreover, the MNABEs have access to financial capital compared to small local agribusinesses. Gichichi, Mukulu & Odhiambo (2019)'s study revealed that majority of the coffee smallholder agribusinesses in Murang'a Kenya, do not access entrepreneurial finance. thus, they opted for own savings as a mean of financing their micro and small agribusiness enterprises.

This situation has allowed multinational agribusinesses trade with easy and at almost zero competition from the small local agribusinesses. The availability of funds helps MNABEs to tradeoff prime locations along the road frontage where there is good business (Lorenzen *et al.*, 2020). This is supported by the fact that the MNEs in agribusiness sector consider location choice as one of the most important organisational factors (Buckley, 2016; Dunning, 2008). Also, Duanmu (2012) emphasised that location choice is core to the managerial decisions of MNEs when engaging in foreign direct investment. Lorenzen *et al.* (2020) suggested that MNEs seek locations that high potential markets which are preferably cities.

The agribusiness is one sector in Zambia that has been influenced greatly by the MNABEs. The MNABEs are taking up business opportunities in peri urban towns where economies and food security equation is largely dependent on agriculture-based activities (Ngoma, 2013). Therefore, some form of protection from already established MNABEs such as Amiran, Seedco, Omnia, Export Trade Group (ETG), Farmarama and many others is required. Currently, the local small agribusinesses in Kapiri-Mposhi are facing great competition with MNABEs causing a huge destabilization in the operations and sustainability of local agribusiness enterprises.

3 – Data and Research Methods

The study was undertaken in November 2023 during the peak farming season preparation. The study was carried out in Kapiri-Mposhi district. The targeted population for the study was 2500 registered small local agribusiness enterprises owners in Kapiri-Mposhi district. The study Only considered registered small agribusiness enterprises with Patent and Company Registration Authority (PACRA) and Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA). The study used an interview-based questionnaire for easier and faster collection of data as respondents were busy as self-administered questionnaires were going to be challenging to them. The questions were constructed after a thorough literature review on impact of MNABEs on small local agribusiness enterprises in other parts of the world by several scholars. The survey was used because it has

the potential to generalize a large population (Mouton, 2008). A sample size of 315 small local agribusiness enterprises owners were purposively and randomly selected. Data was collected upon receiving consent from the respondents and ethical approval by the University of Zambia Biological Research Ethics Committee (UNZABREC). The sample size was determined by using sample size determination table (Adam, 2020).

The data were quantitatively analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM version 1.0.0.45. by means of descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations. Pearson Chi-square and degree of freedom were used to test the degree of association between the independent and dependent variables.

According to Joanna and Michael (2017) Pearson's chi-square is used to assess two types of comparison: tests of goodness of fit and tests of independence. A test of goodness of fit establishes whether or not an observed frequency distribution differs from a theoretical distribution. A test of independence assesses whether paired observations on two variables, expressed in a contingency table, are independent of each other. Therefore, the Pearson's chi-square in this study was used to test the relationship between the variables. The confidence interval of 95% and the level of significance of $\alpha < 0.05$ were considered as statistically significant.

4 – Finding and Discussion

According to 60% of respondents, the MNABEs were present in their area of operation as presented in Figure 2. The 60% is a clear confirmation of the presence of MNABEs in Kapiri Mposhi district especially in Peri-Urban. The results are similar to studies by Nugroho & Lakner (2022), Corcioli *et al.* (2022), Narula & Pineli (2017) who suggested that MNEs are present in developing countries. The 40 % respondents who indicated that they do not have MNABEs in their trading areas represents small local agribusiness enterprises which are situated deep in the villages, far away from the town center in the outskirts where MNABEs have not yet reached. This is similar to research finding by Lorenzen *et al.* (2020) which revealed that MNEs tend to concentrate in city region kind of environment.

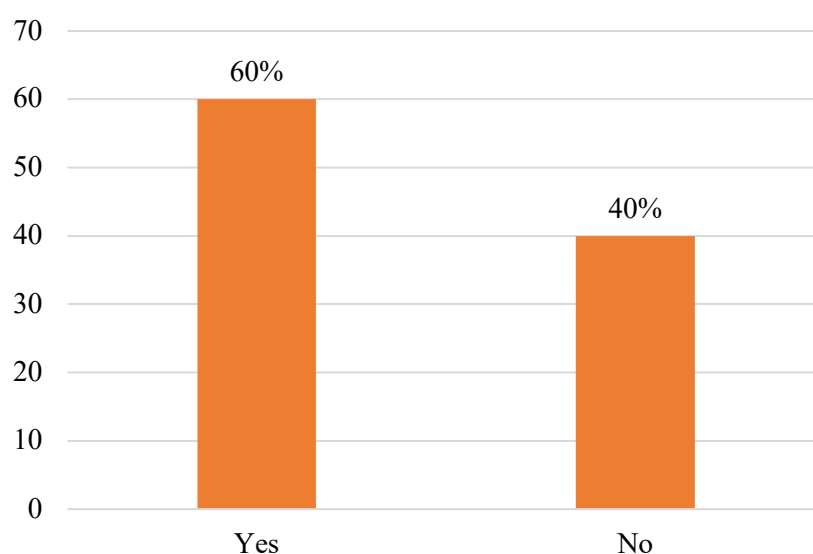


Fig. 2 – Presence of Multinational Agribusinesses in Kapiri Mposhi

The results from Figure 3 shows that 86% of the small local agribusinesses experienced competition from MNABEs. In addition, this competition is echoed in Figure 4 which presents the kind of companies small local agribusinesses expect more competition to come from. The competition is mostly from multinational enterprises which make up the MNABEs.

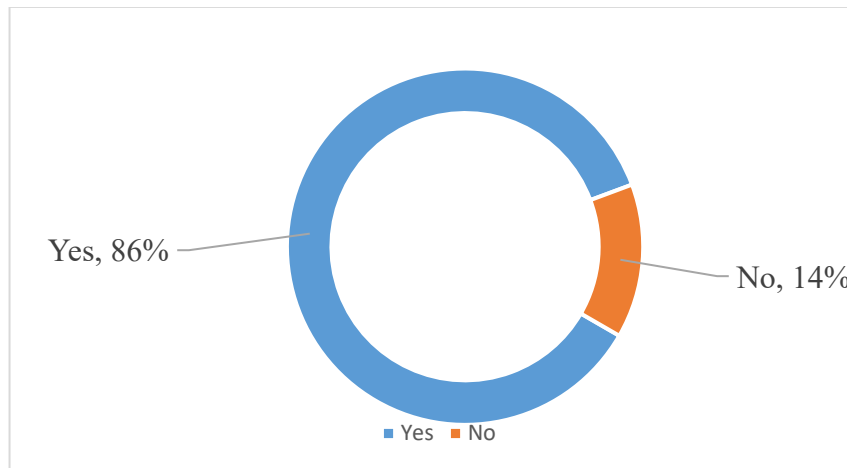


Fig. 3 – Competition from MNABE

These results show that the MNABEs negatively impact the small agribusinesses enterprises are similar to Corcioli *et al.*, 2022; Da Silva and Gonçalves, 2019 who found that MNEs negatively impact small businesses. However, the results are different from the findings by Fu *et al.* (2021) as the spillover do not benefit the small agribusiness enterprises in terms of enterprise growth.

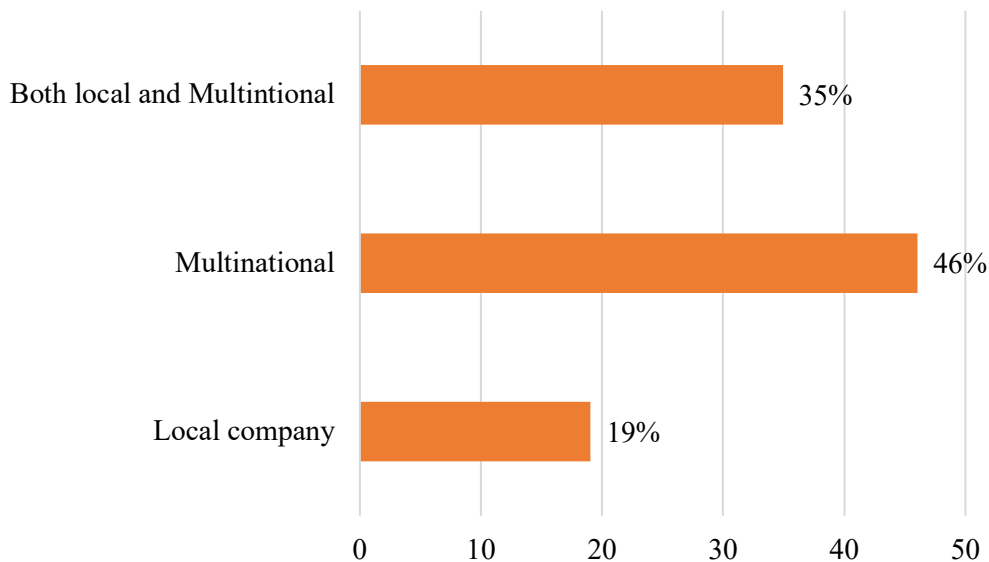


Fig. 4 – Companies where Competition is Expected

Following the competition from the MNABE, 61% and 33% of respondents indicated that they would have good sales and fair sales respectively in the absence of MNBE in their trading area as shown in Figure 5.

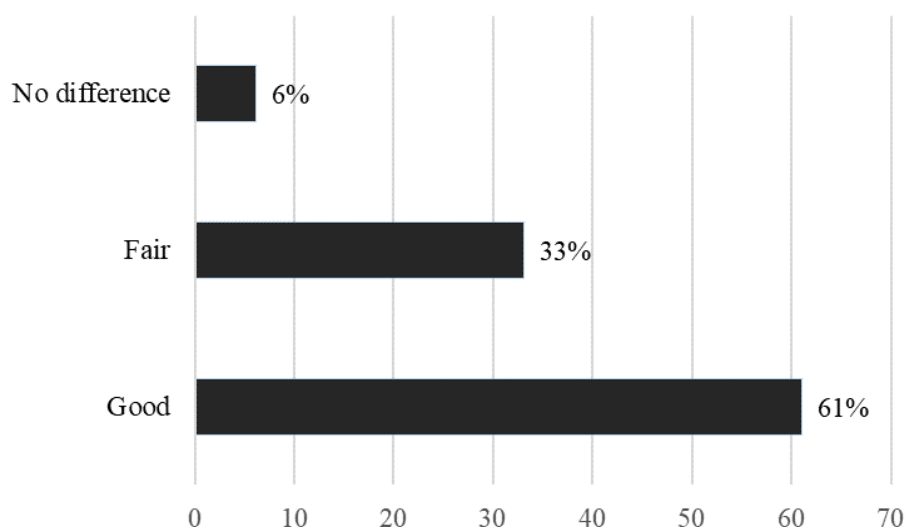


Fig. 5 – Expected Sales in the Absence of Multinational Agribusinesses

The results suggest that the small local agribusiness would make more sales in the absence of MNABEs that have kept on displacing them from strategic business locations as supported by Lorenzen *et al.* (2020) and Central Statistics Office (2012).

The presence of multinational agribusiness was crossed against its impact on small local agribusinesses in terms of experienced competition, expected competition, companies where more competition is expected and expected sales in the absence of MNABEs using cross tabulations. The results are presented in Table 1. The findings show a statistical relationship between the independent variable which is presence of multinational agribusiness and the dependent variables which are in terms of impacts as p-values were all less than 0.05 for significance at the 95% confidence interval. Therefore, this significant relationship shows that MNABE have adverse impact on small local agribusiness enterprises in Kapiri-Mposhi.

The competition was cutting across several variables such as product range, pricing, sales and marketing, location, access to finance, government support (tax wavers), access to cheaper supply of commodities and community support (they were preferred by customers).

The results from this study are similar to findings by Rakhmatullayeva *et al.* (2020); da Silva and Gonçalves (2019) who found that MNABEs have an effect on the economy as the results of adverse impacts they have on the small businesses through competition. Moreover, this study's findings are similar to the findings by Nguyen (2023); Ly Slesman, Abubakar and Mitra (2020); Alfaro *et al.* (2015); Basu, 1998) who found that MNABEs negatively affected small local agribusiness in terms of competition on the market may cause their closure. These scholars cited technological advancement and high-quality human capital as having cutting edge advantage over small local businesses. However, this study established that MNABEs provided a great deal of competition to small local agribusiness when it came to finding best location for their business, product range, pricing, sales and marketing, access to finance, access to cheaper supply of commodities and community support. The MNABEs where centrally located at busy central spots unlike small local agribusiness.

The results of this study are different from the findings by Abubakar *et al.* (2019); Blomström & Kokko (1996) who found positive impact MNABEs have small local agribusiness if the

MNABEs stimulate domestic investment activities. However, this study found that the relationship between the MNABEs and small local agribusiness was purely competitive as the MNABEs were selling products both on wholesale and retail to customers. Furthermore, MNABEs having access to cheaper commodities made them complete unfairly on the market. The MNABE tend to have capacity to import good at cheaper prices compared to small local agribusiness enterprises who buy from these same MNABEs at wholesale price.

Table 1 – Cross Tabulation between Presence and Impact on the Small Agribusiness

Impact	Frequency (%)	Presence of Multinational Agribusinesses		Pearson Chi-Square	df	p-value
		Yes N(%)	No N(%)			
Experienced Competition						
Yes	86	184(100)	0(0)	73.7	1	0.000
No	14	86(65)	45(35)			
Expected Competition						
Yes	78	184(100)	0(0)	128.74	1	0.000
No	22	60(46)	71(54)			
Companies where Competition is Expected						
Local Agribusinesses	19	60(33)	0(0)	307.77	2	0.000
Multinational Agribusinesses	46	124(67)	21(16)			
Both	35	0(0)	110(84)			
Expected Sales in Absence of Multinational Agribusinesses						
Good	61	184(100)	7(5)	287	2	0.000
Fair	33	0(0)	105(80)			
No difference	6	0(0)	19(15)			

5 – Conclusion

According to the study findings, it is evident that MNABEs are present in Kapiri Mposhi, and they have adverse impact on small local agribusiness enterprises performance this is contrary to several studies which highlights the benefit which MNABEs bring to the host town and country in general. The MNABEs have adversely impacted small local agribusiness in the district on the number of items such as location. The study revealed that MNABEs have taken up most ideal business locations in the central business areas leaving most small local agribusiness poorly located off main road and farmers entry points. This situation has adversely

affected sales for the small local agribusiness enterprises. Furthermore, the access to cheaper supply of products directly from the manufacturer or home office of MNABEs has greatly worked to their advantage. While on the other hand it has made it very difficult for small local agribusiness enterprises to compete against MNABEs. The study also established that MNABEs' ability to trade in both retail and wholesale has a huge negative impact on small local agribusiness enterprises' customer base. The fact that small local agribusiness enterprises still buy agriproducts from MNABEs at wholesale price just like any other customer or co makes it very difficult for them to improve the product sales.

Overall, the small local agribusiness enterprises experienced competition from MNABEs such as ETG, Omnia and Farmarama which were famous. The competition was attributed to low prices offered by MNABEs, sales and marketing, location, access to finance, government support, access to cheaper supply of commodities and community support.

Therefore, to alleviate the adverse impact MNABEs have on the agribusinesses in the rural and peri-urban of Zambia, like Kapiri-Mposhi, government should give good incentives such as zero to low interest loans to local agribusiness enterprises through cooperatives so that they can compete favorably with the MNABEs. The government should also provide easy import tax exemption to small local agribusinesses that join together in order for them to import or produce agricultural commodities. Additionally, the government through policy formation should restrict MNABEs from selling their products on retail so that it should be left to the small local agribusinesses.

5.1 – *Limitation of the Study*

The study was limited to only formally registered small agribusiness enterprises with PACRA and ZRA despite having a good number of small agribusiness enterprises operating without any form of registration. This is because informal agribusinesses are common in out skirts of the town and Kapiri Mposhi town centre. Another limitation was that the study only involved a questionnaire survey. More research is recommended where informal agribusinesses are included and interviews and observations should be used as data collection tools besides questionnaires.

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