The influence of gender and age on choice of flood adaptation strategies: A case study of Zambia and Namibia..

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It is reported that flood events will increase due to variability and change in climate, thus increasing the number of people exposed to flooding disasters. This exposure negatively impacts rural households' livelihoods. Women, men, young, old has distinctive vulnerability and this shapes the choice of flood adaptation strategies. This calls for a need to adopt group specific interventions to strengthen local adaptive capacity to flooding for the affected population. The purpose of this case study was to determine the adaptation strategies to floods adopted by rural households in the Zambezi region of Namibia and Mwandi district of Zambia. The study further examined how gender and age influenced the choice of different adaptation strategies. Six focus group meetings and a questionnaire survey of 207 randomly sampled households were conducted in the flood prone areas of the study. Descriptive statistics results on the adaptation strategies indicated that a majority of the households in Namibia learnt to live with floods (86%),practiced mafisa cattle trade (86%), flood water harvesting (68%), practiced early and late planting (63%), prayed (55%), practiced conservation agriculture (54%) and fish farming (53%). In Zambia the adaptation strategies were; conservation agriculture (91%), acquiring better skills on preparedness (66%), flood water harvesting (63%), praying (60%), and flood proofing (52%). Logistic regression analysis showed that age positively and significantly influenced the likelihood of taking up adaptation strategies such as tree planting, relocation to higher ground, flood water harvesting, early and late planting. The older the respondents the more likely they were to adopt the strategies mentioned. More young ones were more likely to adopt acquiring better skills on flood preparedness and mafisa cattle trading than the old ones. Gender positively and significantly influenced mafisa cattle trade ($p<0.01$), male headed households were more likely to adopt mafisa cattle trading than the females. The study concludes that factors such as age and gender influences the choice of any adaptation strategy. For policy purposes, this suggests that relevant stakeholders' interventions should consider gender and age in order to enhance the adaptive capacity of rural households to flooding. This study will inform decision makers and practitioners to consider women and men, young and old in designing programs and projects aimed at strengthening disaster risk reduction and management in the two countries and under similar environments.