



Evaluating Farmer Cooperatives' Growth and Sustainability in Rwanda: A Mixed Methods Study

Gaterwa Uwizeye¹, Kabega Bizimana²

¹ African Leadership University (ALU), Kigali

² Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA)

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Correspondence: guwizeye@outlook.com

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Author notes

Gaterwa Uwizeye is affiliated with African Leadership University (ALU), Kigali and focuses on Law research in Africa. Kabega Bizimana is affiliated with Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) and focuses on Law research in Africa.

Abstract

Farmer cooperatives play a crucial role in agricultural development, particularly for smallholder farmers in Rwanda. However, their growth and sustainability remain uncertain due to varying economic conditions and market dynamics. The study utilizes both quantitative survey data from 200 smallholder farmers and qualitative interview data from 50 cooperative leaders. Data analysis employs statistical tests for quantification and thematic coding for qualitative insights. Quantitative results indicate that cooperatives with higher membership densities (over 30%) experienced a significant increase in average yields by 15% compared to those below this threshold. Qualitative interviews revealed themes around leadership challenges and resource allocation strategies. The mixed methods approach reveals synergies between quantitative metrics and qualitative narratives, offering insights into cooperative effectiveness that can inform policy and practice for sustainable agricultural development. Policy makers should prioritise support for cooperatives with higher membership densities to enhance collective bargaining power and resource efficiency. Further research on leadership training programmes is recommended to address ongoing challenges.

Keywords: *African Development, Cooperative Analysis, Methodological Framework, Smallholder Farmers, Sustainability Assessment, Quantitative Methods, Qualitative Research*

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